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Canadian Multiculturalism and the Absence of the Far Right

Cas Mudde, *University of Georgia*

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EMMA AMBROSE and CAS MUDDE

University of Georgia

The far right has never been a prominent force in Canadian politics or society. Traditionally, they more resembled the North American than the West European model: ideologically dominated by right-wing populism and white supremacy, organizationally characterized by factionalism and sectarianism. The extreme right seems an almost negligible force today, in part reflecting a similar decline in the United States, while the radical right has so far been unable to build upon the recent upsurge of Islamophobia, as in Western Europe. We argue that the failure of the Canadian radical right is primarily the result of Canada's unique multiculturalism policy, which is based on a combination of selective immigration, comprehensive integration, and strong state repression of dissent on these policies. This unique blend of policies has led to a relatively low level of opposition to multiculturalism and has left little legal and political space for far right politics.

INTRODUCTION

Canada is one of the most culturally diverse advanced industrial countries in the world. In addition to its indigenous First Nations population and its large and powerful French-speaking minority in the province of Quebec, it has a huge more recent immigrant population, increasingly from Asia. Almost half of the population in its biggest city Toronto is foreign-born![1] Canada is a proud immigration country and has for decades promoted one of the most elaborate policies of multiculturalism. And while multiculturalism has come under attack in most West European countries where far right parties have

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gained significant electoral successes, Canada remains seemingly immune to a far right challenge. What explains this surprising absence of the Canadian far right?

Drawing upon literature on both far right parties in Europe and immigration policy in Canada, we argue that the failure of the Canadian far right is primarily the result of the country's unique multiculturalism policy, which is based on a combination of selective immigration policy, comprehensive integration policy, and strong state repression of dissent on these policies. This distinctive blend of policies has led to a relatively low level of opposition to multiculturalism and has left little legal and political space for far right politics.

A QUICK WORD ON TERMINOLOGY

Scholars of what we here call the far right use a myriad of different terms and definitions with no sign of an emerging academic consensus on both the conceptualization and the categorization of the parties of interest. The term extreme right was most popular in the 1980s, while radical right dominated the debates of the 1990s. In the 21st century, radical right and right-wing populism vie for prime position, although various combinations of the two are commonly used. This is not the place for an elaborate discussion of the war of words within the field. Suffice it to say that there is more agreement on the key features of definitions and on the classification of most parties than the terminological confusion seems to indicate.[2] At the same time, it is important to provide a clear definition of far right so that readers know what we are, and are not, talking about.

We use the far right as a container term for both the extreme right and the radical right. With regard to the terms left and right, we follow the Italian political theorist Norberto Bobbio, who distinguishes between these two key political terms on the basis of the propensity to egalitarianism.[3] The term right refers to ideologies that hold that the main differences between groups of people are natural and should not be altered by the state. Or, more broadly and succinctly, according to right-wing ideologies, political order is grounded in nature.

We distinguish between the mainstream right and the far right on the basis of their position on liberal democracy, which is accepted by the former and rejected by the latter. More specifically, the extreme right rejects democracy per se, that is, both popular sovereignty and majority rule, while the radical right accepts democracy but challenges *liberal* democracy, in particular pluralism and minority rights.[4] While most successful far right parties have been radical right, such as the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) and the French National Front (FN), there are some recent examples of extreme right

success too, most notably Golden Dawn in Greece and the Movement for a Better Hungary or Jobbik in Hungary.

THE FAR RIGHT IN CANADA

Overall the Canadian history of the far right resembles that of the United States more closely than that of Western Europe. At the end of the 19th century, populist groups emerged in the agrarian regions of Western Canada and (anti-Asian) nativist groups developed in more urban centers in British Columbia.[5] Populism remained influential in Western Canada, in particular the Canadian Prairies, but was not very radical, let alone extremist. While some of the international literature on the radical right refers to the Social Credit Party and the Reform Party,[6] these parties were populist and right-wing, but not primarily nativist.[7]

Canadian extreme right organizations have also been fairly rare and small and have been mostly influenced by developments in the United States.[8] The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) garnered some support in the 1920s, small fascist groups existed around the Second World War, notably the Christian National Socialist Party (PNSC) of Adrien Arcand in Quebec, and white supremacist groups emerged in the 1970s. While the number of organizations in the 1980s was quite impressive (ca. 130), the number of identified activists was not (ca. 450).[9] In most cases, the organizations were simply branches of US white supremacist groups, counting only a handful of members. The most (in)famous Canadian extreme right group was undoubtedly the Western Guard, founded in 1972. It no longer plays an important role in Canadian far right politics and neither do its former members.[10]

Canada also lacks a history of extreme right terrorism and violence. The scant research notes that the Canadian extreme right committed 159 violent acts in the period 1960–90; much less than in the United States or Western Europe.[11] Most attacks were in the biggest city of the three most populated provinces: Ontario (49.7%), Quebec (25.8%), and British Columbia (21.4%). Six people were killed and 112 people were injured by extreme right violence in this 30-year period.[12] Like in other countries, the typical action was more or less a random assault on a minority bystander.

Today, no prominent extreme right organizations exist in Canada, as is often lamented on the "white nationalist" Stormfront website. In fact, the "Stormfront Canada" section mentions very little activities and seems mostly a contact forum for isolated white supremacists.[13] Most of the groups mentioned in the (old) threads are no longer active, such as the Canada KKK (link goes to a relationship therapy group), the Aryan Guard, which disbanded in 2009 after a pipe bomb attempt, and the Heritage Front, which dispersed around 2005. The situation is akin to the far right skinhead subculture. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) estimated that there were roughly 600

skinheads in Canada in the early 1990s, mostly situated in cities.[14] Most Canadian skinheads were associated with US groups that are no longer very relevant (for example, Aryan Nations, RaHoWa, White Aryan Resistance).[15] On various Internet forums posters claim that international organizations like Blood & Honour (B&H) and Hammerskins Nation (NHS) have chapters in Canada, but there is little evidence of activity. Far right skinheads on the Stormfront portal are directed to the Ontario National Socialists (ONS) and the National Socialist Party of Canada (NSPC), neither of which is particularly active.

There are no clear Canadian equivalents of contemporary radical right parties like the FN and FPÖ. One party that has been linked to the radical right by some Canadian media in recent years is the Wildrose Party (WP), or Wildrose Alliance Party, formerly led by Danielle Smith. The WP developed out of the Alberta Alliance Party in 2008 and has contested elections in the state of Alberta with increasing success. In the 2012 state elections, it placed second with 34.3% of the vote and 17 (out of 87) seats. Individual WP politicians have been criticized for making nativist statements. For example, candidate Ron Leech said in a radio interview:

> I think as a Caucasian I have an advantage. [. . .] When different commu-
> nity leaders such as a Sikh leader or a Muslim leader speak, they really
> speak to their own people in many ways. As a Caucasian, I believe that
> I can speak to all the community.[16]

Also, a former WP candidate, Deepshika Brar, withdrew her candidacy and said that the party is anti-immigration and does not want new Canadians as members.[17]

The official party manifesto does include some strong authoritarian (law and order) points but is relatively moderate on populism and includes no open nativism. Regarding immigration, the party mainly wants Alberta to have the same powers as Quebec has, that is, to independently create an "effective and streamlined immigration policy."[18] Still, the policy it wants to implement is far from restrictive in a comparative perspective (let alone nativist):

> A provincial immigration system, if administered properly, will greatly
> benefit Alberta's economy by making it easier for qualified and finan-
> cially sponsored working-age immigrants to enter, integrate, have their
> foreign educational credentials recognized, and contribute to Alberta on
> a permanent basis.[19]

The situation is similar with regard to Islamophobia, that is, the irrational fear of Islam and Muslims, the main agenda of the Western far right today. So far, Islamophobia has not been very visible in Canada and Islamophobic

groups and individuals operate in the margins.[20] The English Defence League (EDL) is the model for various radical Islamophobic groups in Canada, most notably the tiny Canadian Defence League (CDL).[21] The CDL seems merely to have an Internet-presence, including a Facebook page, which was liked by only 3,908 people in late July 2014.[22]

While the CDL is only known to a small group of people, the EDL has received significantly more media attention in Canada. In January 2011, the Jewish Defence League of Canada organized a "support rally" for the EDL in the Toronto Zionist Center. As they watched a speech by then EDL leader Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, also known as Tommy Robinson, who spoke through an online video feed from England, anti-racists protested outside of the center.[23] While the EDL and militant Islamophobia have been broadly denounced in the Canadian media, they have received quite favorable attention from the right-wing Sun News Network, in particular by controversial British-Canadian journalist Michael Coren.[24]

The situation is slightly different in Quebec, where, undoubtedly inspired by developments in France, a debate has emerged over the banning of the veil. In March 2010, Quebec Justice Minister Kathleen Weil introduced Bill 94, which laid out under which conditions public institutions can make accommodations to employees or to the public. The bill was criticized for targeting Muslims and addressing a nonexistent problem; allegedly, only a handful of women in Quebec cover their faces in the name of their faith. One Parti Québécois member of the Quebec Parliament, Louise Beaudoin, supported the bill with the argument: "Religious freedom exists, but there are other values. For instance, multiculturalism is not a Quebec value. It may be a Canadian one, but it is not a Quebec one."[25] Still, Islamophobic groups, like the tiny Ligue de Défense Québecoise (LDQ), were inconsequential in the debate, and the bill was mainly supported on the basis of liberal democratic arguments (among others by the Quebec Council on the Status of Women).

THE USUAL SUSPECTS: DEMAND-SIDE AND SUPPLY-SIDE FACTORS

A seemingly boundless body of political science literature exists that seeks to explain the electoral success of far right parties.[26] Less common, of course, are studies attempting to explain why a far right party does not exist or is not electorally successful, although such occurrences could be equally helpful in further understanding the appeal, mechanics, and sociology of far right politics.[27] The absence of a strong far right party in Canada cannot be fully explained by the demand-side and supply-side factors most commonly linked to the emergence of far right parties.
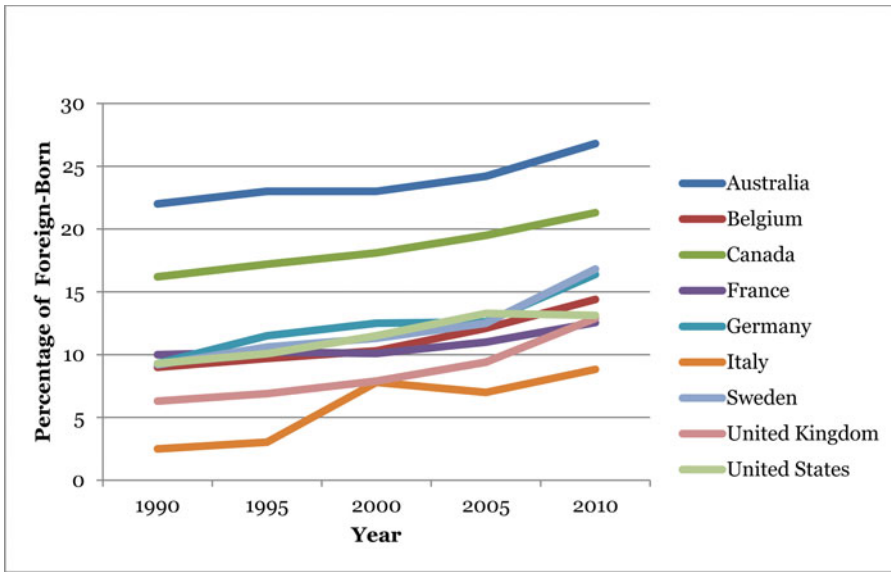
FIGURE 1 Foreign-born population as percentage of total population by country.

Demand-Side Factors

Until recently the electoral success of far right parties was explained almost exclusively on the basis of so-called demand-side factors, which try to comprehend why there would be a demand for far right parties in the first place. It was simply assumed that once there is a demand for far right politics, such parties will emerge and successfully contest elections. The two most important demand-side factors, already identified in Klaus von Beyme's seminal publication on the third wave of the postwar far right in Western Europe,[28] are immigration and unemployment.

The idea that the postwar rise of far right parties is best understood as a xenophobic response to the increasing levels of immigration is widespread within both academia and the media.[29] Canada, however, has accepted a relatively high number of immigrants since the mid-20th century but has not seen any strong political force emerge in opposition. When held up against European countries with and without successful far right parties, Canada has experienced a similar, and at times higher, rate of immigration over the past several decades. Consequently, Canada has one of the highest percentages of foreign-born populations in the West, roughly 150% of the percentages in most West European countries and the United States (see Figure 1).[30]

Clearly, then, the level of immigration cannot explain the lack of success for the Canadian far right. In fact, the relatively high level of immigration should help create a very favorable breeding ground for far right parties in
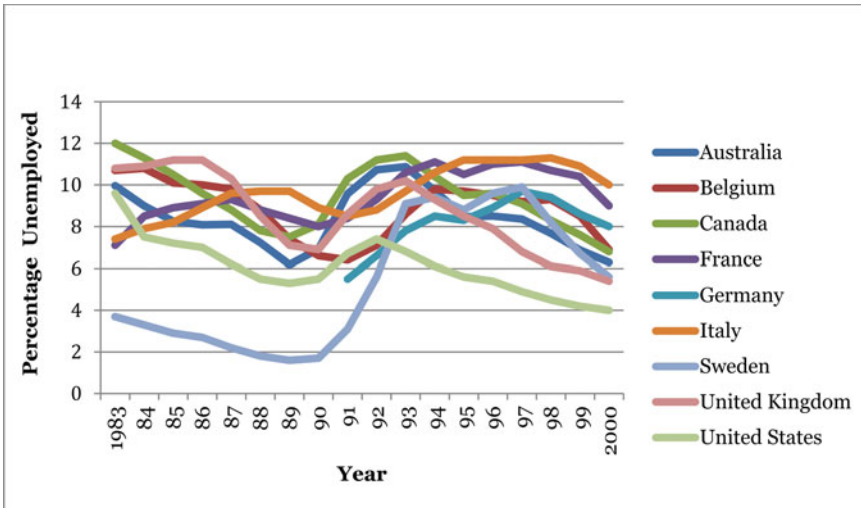
FIGURE 2 Unemployment by percentage of country's population 1983–2000.

Canada. A similar conclusion can be drawn with regard to levels of unemployment.

While convincing evidence demonstrates that a higher unemployment rate fosters (modest) growth in far right support,[31] this explanation sheds no light on the Canadian situation. For the better part of the 1960s and 1970s, unemployment remained fairly moderate, averaging around 7.7% for the latter half of the 1970s.[32] In the 1980s, however, Canada saw a serious spike in unemployment levels. This was during a time that the country experienced the effects of a particularly brutal economic recession and unemployment levels reached alarmingly high levels of well over 10%.[33] In a comparative perspective, unemployment rates in Canada were much higher than in West European countries and the United States throughout the 1980s and the early 1990s (see Figure 2).[34] Towards the turn of the century, these rates began to decline, following the general trend of global unemployment rates.

Overall, then, the demand-side factors cannot explain the absence of a successful far right party in Canada. In fact, they rather point to a very fertile breeding ground, given that previous studies have found that particularly the *combination* of high level of immigration and unemployment is conducive to far right electoral success.[35]

Supply-Side Factors

Several decades of empirical research into the electoral success of far right parties have shown the limitations of the explanatory power of demand-side factors. In understanding the electoral breakthrough of far right parties,

so-called (external) supply-side factors are crucial. Of particular importance is the political opportunity structure (POS) for far right parties. Some supply-side factors that shape the POS are similar to all new parties, but some are specific to those of the far right. According to the literature on Western Europe, far right parties profit from electoral systems that are relatively open and party systems with large space on the right side of the political spectrum.

The importance of electoral institutions to the success of radical right parties has led to a sustained debate within political science. Most authors agree that proportional representation systems with low electoral thresholds are most favorable, while far right parties are much less likely to emerge, and persist, in "electoral systems that encourage strategic voting."[36] According to Duverger's Law, plurality systems compel voters to make calculations regarding the most impact of their votes. But, while Canada employs plurality electoral systems at both the national and regional levels, research shows that the potential psychological factors actually run counter to Duverger's Law.[37] The main reason for this is that Canadian politics has always had weak partisan identifications and "national elections are heavily influenced by short-term factors, notably party and leader affect and issues—even, at times, (such as the 1988 election) by *single* issues."[38]

Consequently, Canada's party system has never been a strict two-party system, as associated with plurality systems, but rather a "two-party-plus" system.[39] Initially stable, the party system has witnessed several successful newcomers, though mostly with a strong regional basis, since the late 1980s; most notably the Reform Party in the West and the Bloc Québécois in the East. These parties have been able to profit from the cyclical waves of anti-partyism in the country.[40] On top of that, the near annihilation of the governing Progressive Conservative Party in the 1993 elections shows that the Canadian party system is far from frozen. While it is too early to call whether the new equilibrium will be a competitive multiparty system or a "one-party-plus" system, there is no doubt that the Canadian party system is open to massive electoral shocks and (geographically concentrated) challenger parties.[41]

According to research on Western Europe, the most favorable political space for far right parties exists when the (two) main parties converge ideologically and the mainstream right-wing party is relatively centrist.[42] This leaves a lot of political space on the right side of the political spectrum, which a far right party can potentially exploit. Despite the multidimensional character of Canadian politics, several studies have noted the ideological convergence of its main parties, starting already before the 1980s.[43] At the same time, they note that Canadian parties are not very ideological and regularly change their position on issues.[44] This, in combination with the fact that all main parties enthusiastically support Canada's multiculturalism (see below), would mean that there is a lot of space to stand out for far right parties.

In short, the usual suspects cannot fully explain the absence of a successful far right party in Canada. Theoretically, the country's relatively high levels of immigration and unemployment should create a significant demand for far right politics. And, while new parties have a harder time under a plurality system than under a proportional system, several other new parties have been able to gain and sustain electoral success, particularly since the mid-1980s. Finally, while there is no traditional ideological convergence between Canada's main parties, significant space exists on the right end of the political spectrum, particularly with regard to the immigration issue.

LITTLE DEMAND: THE MULTICULTURAL MASSES

So, the question remains, why has there not been a successful far right party in Canada? We believe that the main demand-side explanation is the broad popular support for multiculturalism. Multiculturalism and openness towards immigrant communities are principles officially endorsed by most Western countries today. But whereas this support remains largely limited to mission statements and White Papers in other countries, in Canada the public has also bought into it.

"Canadians Are the Most Tolerant People in the Developed World: Report," headlined *Maclean's* in 2011.[45] In the article, the Canadian magazine proudly stated: "At 84 per cent on average, Canadians report the highest community tolerance of minority groups—ethnic minorities, migrants, and gays and lesbians—in the OECD, where the average is 61 per cent." This was a fairly self-serving conclusion, however, given that the question asks whether citizens "think that the city or area where they live is a good place to live for immigrants from other countries."[46] In other words, Canadians think Canada is a very tolerant place. But is it?

According to a 2008 cross-national survey[47] on attitudes towards immigration, Canada is the only Western country in which a plurality of respondents says that immigration has a positive impact on their country (see Figure 3). While the percentage falls short of a majority (39%), Canada is the only country where more people see a positive than a negative effect. Though the gap is only +4% in Canada (that is, 39% positive, 35% negative), it stands out strongly in comparison to other countries. The gap is −38% in Germany, −40% in France, −45% in the United Kingdom, and a staggering −63% in Belgium. Perhaps more telling, even other traditional immigration countries, like Australia and the United States, have a clear negative score (−14% and −38%, respectively).

Other data confirm that Canada has fostered a much more accepting society for immigrants and their culture than other Western countries. For example, Canadians are the most likely to agree with the statement that immigrants make their country a better place to live and that immigrants are
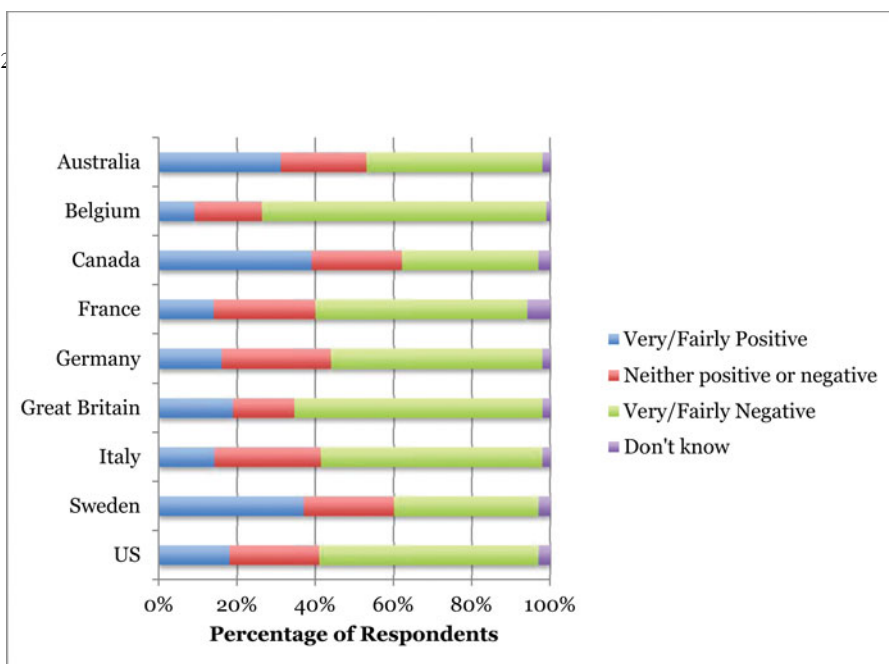
FIGURE 3 "Would you say that immigration has generally had a positive or negative impact on [country]?"

good for the economy. They are also the least likely to say that there are too many immigrants in their country, that immigration has placed too much pressure on public services, and that immigrants have made it more difficult for natives to find a job.[48]

Interestingly, Canadians are the most likely to feel strongly that immigrants with high educational or professional qualifications should be given priority in entering the country (see Figure 4).[49] Support for this is not only (much) higher than in European countries, it is almost twice as high as in the United States (62% versus 33%).

In conclusion, the idea that Canada is a very tolerant country toward minorities is not just something that the Canadian elites propagate and the Canadian masses repeat but it is actually supported by survey research. Compared to other Western populations, Canadians are much more supportive of immigrants and their culture. In fact, Canada is the only country where more people see immigration as a positive rather than a negative phenomenon.

CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM

This leaves one last question: Why are Canadians much more supportive of multiculturalism than citizens in other Western democracies? Cultural and historical narratives, often favored by Canadian elites, conveniently ignore Canada's racist history towards both indigenous people and immigrants. We argue that the support for multiculturalism, and perhaps more accurately the
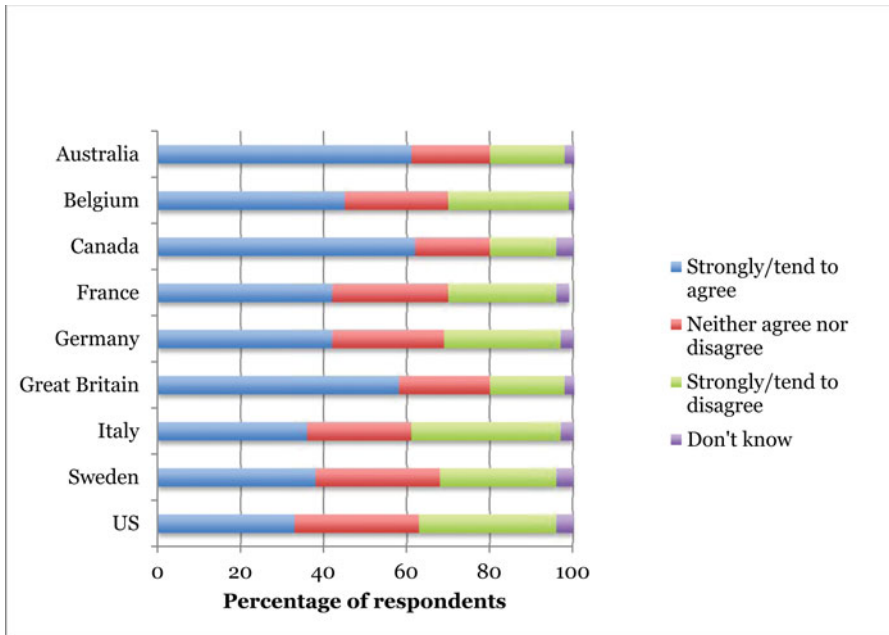
FIGURE 4 "Priority should be given to immigrants with higher education and qualification who can fill shortages among certain professions in [country]."

lack of opposition to multiculturalism, is to a large extent a relatively recent political creation. It is the consequence of Canada's unique multiculturalism policy, which contains three pillars: a selective immigration policy, a multi-culturalist integration policy, and strict state repression of dissent on these policies.

A Selective Immigration Policy

As a settler nation, Canada encouraged immigration from various groups of settlers to fulfill the needs of the young Canadian nation in terms of labor and settlement throughout the 19th century. *The Dominion Lands Act* of 1872 opened up the expanses of western Canada to incoming immigrants, granting 160 acres to immigrant families at zero cost. European immigrants became the first settlers in the western part of Canada.[50] From the late 1880s until the turn of the century, immigration to Canada consisted largely of the western settlers and contract workers. Immigrants were admitted specifically for the purpose of staffing a particular industry or sector of the economy. These contract workers were a much more diverse group than the largely European population that had settled in the west of the country. Chinese, Japanese, Lebanese, and Sikhs were also recruited to work as contract work-ers in industries such as the Canadian Northern Railway. While Asian contract

workers were among the more desirable recruits for manual labor jobs from the perspective of the employers, far more Europeans than other groups were recruited.

> Undoubtedly more Asian workers would have been recruited, except for the extent of the public's hostility at that time toward Asians. Both organized labor and nativist groups opposed the contract laborers as being scabs, and these groups put enormous pressure on the Canadian government for exclusionist policies.[51]

Canadian natives were strongly opposed to immigrants who appeared to place a strain on the country and who did not assimilate well. Public opinion and pressure led to increasingly exclusionary immigration policies from the Canadian government. In addition to enacting policies that restricted immigration from less desirable populations, the Canadian government enacted policies that sought to exclude already existing immigrant populations. Perhaps the most restrictive of these was an amendment to the Franchise Act in 1895. This act, The British Columbia Elections Act, disenfranchised "any persons of Mongolian or Chinese races" from all national elections.[52] It was only after the Second World War that they regained the right to vote.

Until the end of the Second World War, Canada remained reluctant to admit non- European immigrants and denied entry to most applicants. Hostility towards the existing Asian immigrant population escalated and the government eventually succumbed to popular pressure to restrict immigration, especially from Asia. At the same time, very few Jewish refugees were admitted to Canada. After initially agreeing to accept a modest number of Jewish refugees from Europe, the Canadian government quickly reneged on this policy. Moreover, it enacted policies harmful to the Jewish population residing within Canada. As Freda Hawkins details, "The Mackenzie King government in Canada—ultra-cautious, anti-Semitic, hostile to refugees and immigrants from non-traditional sources—resisted all pressures to help, and moved slowly to admit displaced persons from Europe after 1945."[53]

It was not too long after the Second World War that Canada began reversing its closed-door immigration policy. But, while it did open its doors to peoples displaced by the war, this act of generosity was marred by the selective procedure of admitting immigrants. An unofficial quota system for Internationally Displaced Persons (IDPs) was introduced, placing people from the Baltics and Western Europe at the top and Jews at the bottom of the list of desirable migrants.[54] International agencies and the Jewish lobby within Canada had been pressuring the government during and after the war to accept Jewish and other refugees. The Mackenzie King government eventually relented, when it became evident that Canada's economy was outpacing
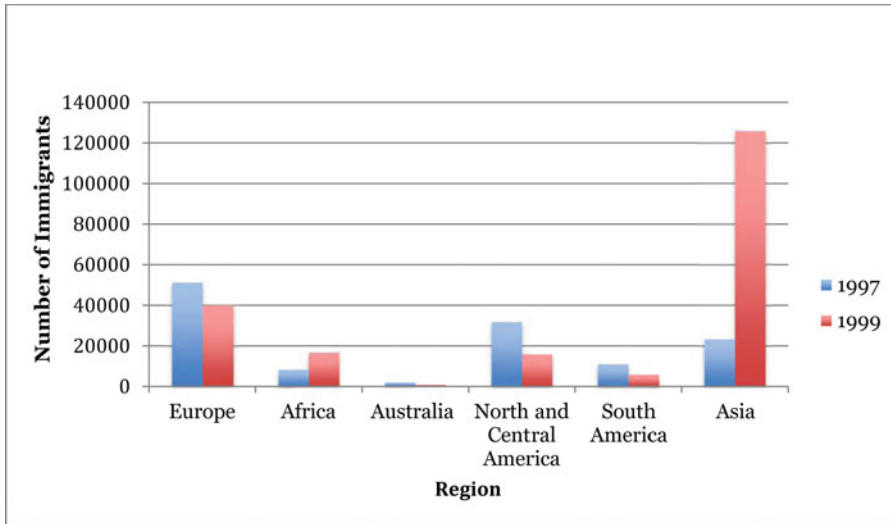
FIGURE 5 Number of immigrants to Canada by region of last residence, 1972 vs. 1999/2000.

the rate at which the country could supply laborers. A recruitment program was promptly instituted; one that ushered survivors out of European IDP camps and into the Canadian industrial landscape.[55] Representatives from the Canadian government even traveled to Europe to handpick immigrants they thought would best integrate into Canadian society.[56]

Although Canadian immigration did become more comprehensive as the 20th century wore on, government policy continued to rely heavily on the discretionary powers of the Department of Immigration. As a result, while admitting a larger number, Canada continued to grant admission to immigrants deemed easy to assimilate. This meant that Canada admitted primarily European immigrants for the greater part of the 20th century, including large numbers of British, Dutch, Hungarians, and Americans. Consequently, the level of "visible minorities" within Canada remained quite low during the 19th and better part of the 20th centuries.[57]

Figure 5 presents the regional origin of immigrants who arrived in 1972 and in 1999/2000.[58] It shows that Canada admitted largely European and American immigrants in the 1970s, but that this had changed at the turn of the 20th century, leading to a massive spike in Asian immigrants.[59] This change probably came about as a result of two processes: (a) an ongoing attempt to redress the wrongs committed by past immigration policies and (b) a burgeoning appreciation, at the level of both the governmental and the public, for the need and importance of multiculturalism.

Although Canada has opened its doors to more diverse peoples from all corners of the world, the government has maintained a strong focus on the need to import highly skilled and professionally advanced individuals.

TABLE 1 Unemployment Rates (in %) of "Native"-Born vs. Foreign-Born Populations in Nine Western Countries.

Country	"Native"-born	Foreign-born	Difference "native"-born vs. foreign-born
Australia	3.4	8.2	+4.8
Belgium	5.8	15.1	+9.3
Canada	**7.2**	**8.9**	**+1.7**
France	8.5	15.1	+6.6
Germany	5.4	9.4	+4.0
Italy	8.0	11.7	+3.7
Sweden	6.0	16.0	+10.0
United Kingdom	8.0	9.4	+1.4
United States	6.6	7.5	+0.9

Their refugee policy has become increasingly generous, but other forms of immigration emphasize skills, education, and professional experience as part of a points system, which has been in place in Canada since 1967.[60] This system awards potential immigrants visas based on their aptitude for integrating into the Canadian society and labor force. Desirable skills include a high level of education, exemplary French or English language skills, and work experience.[61]

Canada also has arrangements with various individual countries with regard to seasonal migration. One example of this is the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP), which grants farmhands from East Caribbean countries a temporary visa to fill seasonal openings.[62] This dual system of points and temporary worker programs has enabled the country to cultivate a permanent population of highly trained and skilled professionals, while still using temporary visas to fill necessary job openings that are not desirable to average Canadians.[63] Through the careful crafting of immigration policy over the past 150 years, Canada has been able to generate an immigrant population that meets the needs of the Canadian labor market without creating strong ethnic divisions within Canadian society.

Today, immigrants in Canada are highly skilled and educated relative to those in other Western countries, including the United States. However, Canada's "visible minority" population is relatively high, around 30% of the entire Canadian immigrant population in 2013, of which around half are born in Canada.[64] This is much higher than in France, for example, which had an entire "visible minority" population of around 15% in 2011.[65] Unlike many European countries with high rates of immigration, the unemployment rate of immigrants is quite low in Canada. Moreover, the discrepancy between foreign-born populations and "native" populations is quite small (see Table 1).[66]

Even more striking is the fact that the number of recent immigrants with a university degree is twice as high as that of "native" Canadians with a university degree.[67] Table 2 compares the number of highly skilled

TABLE 2 Highly Skilled Immigrants by Total Number, Percentage of Total Immigrants, and Percentage of Total Population in Nine Western Countries

Country	Total Number of High-Skilled Immigrants	Percentage of Total Immigrants
Australia	650,562	11%
Belgium	125,725	11.2%
Canada	**1,429,675**	**20.4%**
France	1,011,424	14%
Germany	1,172,126	12%
Italy	246925	5.1%
Sweden	125,610	9%
United Kingdom	965,693	13.7%
United States	5,868,683	13.2%

immigrants, that is, immigrants with a bachelor's degree or other tertiary degree, among several high-immigration countries. After the United States, Canada has the highest total number of highly educated immigrants.[68] However, the country truly stands out in terms of the high proportion of highly skilled immigrants among the total immigration population. One in five immigrants in Canada are highly skilled, which is almost twice as many as in the other Western countries.

Previous studies have shown how selective immigration policies can temper opposition to immigration in two different, if related, ways.[69] First, by simply having an official immigration policy, the Canadian state signals to its population that immigrants are legal and wanted and that it controls immigration. In sharp contrast, West European countries also have significant immigrant populations but are officially not immigration countries. This signals to the native populations that immigrants are illegal and unwanted and that the state is not in control of its borders. Second, Canada has carefully selected immigrant populations that are most likely to suit the country's labor market needs and least likely to create sharp cultural or ethnic divisions. In contrast, West European countries try to mold their immigrant populations only once they have already been legally admitted. This logically creates more cultural and economic tensions.

A Multiculturalist Integration Policy

The integration buzzword was particularly prevalent throughout Western Europe in the 1980s and 1990s. Today many Europeans view the actual success of integration as quite limited.[70] Canada, on the other hand, is frequently touted as a country that has genuinely and successfully embraced integration (often referred to as multiculturalism).[71] Phrases like the following are ubiquitous in Canadian official government documents: "Through multiculturalism, Canada recognizes the potential of all Canadians, encouraging them

to *integrate into their society* and take an active part in its social, cultural, economic and political affairs."[72]

The country's embrace of multicultural integration was partially a public response to the increased presence of immigrants, but the Canadian federal government also actively propagated it to quell Quebec separatist sentiments in the east of Canada. In 1971, Prime Minister Trudeau announced a multi-cultural strategy, intended to lessen ethnic divides between Quebec and the rest of Canada, with the following words:

> The government will support and encourage the various cultures and ethnic groups that give structure and vitality to our society. They will be encouraged to share their cultural expression and values with other Canadians and so contribute to a richer life for all of us.[73]

The integration policy became gradually incorporated into the worldview of the Canadian population, taken initially as a means for a united Canada and later as a tool for merging the country's diverse cultural experiences, including those of more recent immigrants.

Canada's contemporary multiculturalism is unique in the world because of the comprehensiveness of the policy, on the one hand, and the political commitment to the policy, on the other.[74] Canada was making forays into multiculturalism even before the advent of the model in Western Europe. Unlike most countries in Western Europe, however, Canada has maintained a strong commitment to the multiculturalist approach, which is deemed largely successful within the country.[75] While multiculturalism was the modus operandi for most West European integration programs throughout the 1970s and the 1980s, a public backlash against the policies and their perceived ineffectiveness led governments to roll back these initiatives and institute more restrictive and rigorous civic integration policies instead.[76]

In Canada, multiculturalism has remained the official government policy, irrespective of the party composition of the government. Instead of shifting towards a civic integration model, it has maintained its commitment to the pluralistic approach of multiculturalism, characteristic for its reach and rigorous enforcement.[77] It is one of only three officially multicultural countries in the world (with Australia and Sweden) and the only to pass a Multiculturalism Act (in 1988).[78] Canadian multiculturalism is based on "an inclusive citizenship" that "ensures that all citizens can keep their identities, can take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging."[79] Perhaps most tellingly, Canada does not see multiculturalism as something temporary, which will eventually be replaced by a more assimilationist policy, but as an essential component of Canadian identity.[80] As the government website states: "Canadian multiculturalism is fundamental to our belief that all citizens are equal."[81]

State Repression

Although support for immigration and integration is much more widespread
than in other Western countries, even Canada harbors a sizeable minority
that opposes the multiculturalism policies. This part of the population consti-
tutes a potential electorate for a far right party. While the Canadian pluralist
electoral system provides a few more hurdles than the more proportional
systems in Western Europe, it has proven to be penetrable by new parties.
But far right parties confront a specific problem within Canada: one of the
strictest and most rigorously enforced antidiscrimination legislation regimes
in the world.

Canada has one of the highest scores in terms of promoting and up-
holding antidiscriminatory legislation.[82] In a comparison with other Western
countries, Canada received the highest score in the Migrant Integration Policy
Index (MIPEX), even one point higher than that of Sweden (89 versus 88),
widely considered one of the most tolerant and inclusive countries in the
world. Unlike other countries, including immigration countries like Australia,
Canada awards antidiscrimination legislation a higher status than other leg-
islation.[83] Public campaigns and mandated programs in the workplace that
speak to inclusion and multiculturalism are pervasive in Canada. The state
also closely tracks the progress of immigrants and other minority groups so
as to better understand if and how its educational campaigns improve their
situation.[84]

In addition to a host of multiculturalism and antidiscriminatory pro-
grams, promoted from grade school up to nearly all levels of employment,
the Canadian government takes a very active and hard stance against acts of
hate speech and hate crime.[85] Outlawed by the criminal code, hate crime can
refer to any act that harms or threatens to harm the member of a given group.
The prison sentence for committing a hate crime in Canada can extend up
to five years.[86] Because of the (potential) association with violence, the strict
hate crime laws are broadly supported within society. While hate crime is
not usually a facet of far right parties and most other Western countries take
similarly strong measures, these laws are not that important in explaining
the lack of far right electoral success in Canada.[87]

Rather, it is the strict regulation of speech, and the very broad definition
of hate speech, that could impact the ability of far right parties to develop,
as opposition to immigration can easily be construed as hate speech. Article
318(4) of the national criminal code of Canada defines hate speech as inciting
hatred against any "identifiable group" in a public space, which according to
Article 319(1a) is punishable by up to two years of imprisonment.[88]There are
a number of additional safeguards against hate speech at the provincial level,
usually included in a human rights decree.[89] Most contentious, perhaps, is
Section 13 in the Canadian Human Rights Act, which prohibits individuals
from the use of hate speech both over the telephone and on the Internet.

This statute has been twice challenged in court but was upheld both times.[90] Canada has also instituted laws that prohibit the spread of any propaganda regarding any ethnic group.[91]

Research on far right parties in Europe has shown that a repressive legal and social climate can undermine the possibilities for electoral success. Among others, far right parties that are ostracized tend to moderate less (often) than those that are not.[92] Partly related to this is that they also have more problems with attracting qualified party members, which hampers their development as an effective electoral and political organization.[93] Finally, strict hate speech laws limit the prominence and scope of political and public debates on immigration, the electoral and political bread-and-butter issue of far right parties.[94] This is highly apparent in Canada, which, with the notable exception of the province of Quebec, has no real debate on the official multiculturalism policies.

CONCLUSION

Despite the "insatiable demand" for studies on the far right,[95] there is virtually no academic research on the situation in Canada. At first sight, this is perhaps not that surprising, given that the far right has been both electorally and politically marginal in the country. But this at least begs the question why this is the case, particularly given that Canada has one of the largest immigrant populations among Western countries. In fact, according to the most popular theories of far right party success, Canada should prove a fertile breeding ground for anti-immigrant mobilization. Levels of immigration have been consistently high, while unemployment has (at times) also been comparatively high. Moreover, while the electoral system is not ideal, new parties have successfully emerged and the party system has proven quite volatile in the past decades.

We have argued that the weakness of the Canadian far right is a consequence of the unique state policy of multiculturalism. Where in other Western countries multiculturalism has fueled the electoral success of far right parties, in Canada it has prevented its success. Canada's official policy of multiculturalism has negatively affected both the demand side and the supply side of far right politics. By carefully constructing its immigration policy, admitting types of immigrants that are particularly difficult to critique, the country has been able to prevent a nativist backlash to successive waves of mass immigration. This means that the demand-side for anti-immigrant politics is much smaller in Canada than in other Western countries, including many countries with much lower levels of immigration. At the same time, the high level of state repression of debate on immigration issues has hindered the development, expression, and mobilization of far right politics.

These findings are relevant to the broader academic literature on far right parties in at least two important ways. First, as had already been noted in immigration studies, it shows that the link between levels of immigration and demand for far right politics is more complex than is generally stated. There is not just a difference between non-white non-European immigrants and white European immigrants, which has become somewhat less relevant because of intra-EU immigration from Eastern Europe, but also between nonskilled and skilled immigrants. Second, the Canadian case shows the complex *interplay* of demand-side and (external) supply-side factors. While most studies nowadays do list both demand-side and supply-side factors, they rarely describe the ways in which these factors *interact*.

But the findings also have policy relevance, particularly in light of the growing pressure by major economic players within the European Union to introduce a more open immigration policy, targeting in particular easily employable and highly skilled immigrants—who would obtain a blue card, the EU's answer to the US green card. So far few political parties have dared to openly support such a policy in public debates, given the widespread anti-immigration sentiments within the populations and the existence of (sometimes well-organized) far right parties eager to exploit these sentiments.

It is important to stress that the Canadian approach consists of a combination of three policies, and it is the *combination* that has created the positive results. Simply introducing a selective immigration policy, targeting high-skilled workers, will still lead to conflicts as long as countries do not define themselves as immigration countries and at best halfheartedly support multiculturalist integration policies. Remember that the original guest-worker programs of the 1950s and 1960s were also strictly based on the economic needs of the receiving countries.[96] However, outside of a broader ideological context of multiculturalism, guest workers were purely defined in terms of economic need of the host country, which made the later reality of unemployed guest workers seem like an oxymoron to many citizens.[97]

Yet, even if West European countries copy the full Canadian multiculturalism policy, there are at least temporary problems to overcome. Most importantly, given the different history of immigration in Europe, where temporary guest workers became permanent immigrants with hardly any public debate, many Europeans do not trust that mainstream parties are capable and willing to control immigration. It will take a consistent and consequent effort to overcome this distrust, which is particularly high among the potential electorate of far right parties. Moreover, in most West European countries, the genie is out of the bottle in the sense that immigration and multiculturalism are now openly and critically discussed and far right parties have in some cases established themselves in the national party systems. This will make the (re-)introduction of state repression, in a similar vein as in Canada, not only more difficult to implement but also harder to get publically accepted.

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NOTES

1. According to the Web site of the Ontario Ministry of Finance, "Toronto's foreign-born population accounted for 46.0% of its total population in 2011." See http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/demographics/census/nhshi11-1.html (accessed 21 July 2014).

2. For a more elaborate discussion, see Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Chapters 1–2.

3. Norberto Bobbio, *Left and Right: The Significance of a Political Division* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

4. See Mudde, *Populist Radical Right*, Chapter 1.

5. See, for example, David H. Laycock, *Populism and Democratic Thought in the Canadian Prairies, 1910 to 1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); J. F. Conway, "Populism in the United States, Russia, and Canada: Explaining the Roots of Canada's Third Parties," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 11(1): 99–124 (1978).

6. See, for instance, Neil Nevitte, André Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil, Richard Johnston, and Henry Brady, "The Populist Right in Canada: The Rise of the Reform Party of Canada," in Hans-Georg Betz and Stefan Immerfall, eds., *The New Politics of the Right: Neo-Populist Parties and Movements in Established Democracies* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1998), 173–202; Pippa Norris, *Radical Right: Votes and Parties in the Electoral Market* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

7. David Laycock, *The New Right and Democracy in Canada: Understanding Reform and the Canadian Alliance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

8. Peter Li, "Racial Supremacism under Social Democracy," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 27(1): 1–18 (1995).

9. Stanley R. Barrett, *Is God a Racist? The Right Wing in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

10. See Bonnie Burstow, "Surviving and Thriving By Becoming More 'Groupuscular': The Case of the Heritage Front," *Patterns of Prejudice* 37(4): 415–28 (2003).

11. Jeffrey Ian Ross, "Contemporary Radical Right-Wing Violence in Canada: A Quantitative Analysis," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 4(3): 72–101 (1992).

12. Ibid., 92.

13. See www.stormfront.org/forum/f40 (accessed 24 Feb. 2014).

14. Ross did note that skinheads were the single largest group of perpetrators of extreme right violence, believed to be responsible for 16.4% of all extreme right violence in the period 1960–90. See Ross, "Contemporary Radical," 96.

15. The most notorious Canadian extreme right skinhead group was the Aryan Guard, which was responsible for a campaign of terror around Calgary, before being disbanded in 2009. Michelle Jarvie, "How Neo-Nazis Think: Calgary Photojournalist Spends Three Years Following Skinheads' Lives," *Calgary Herald*, 9 Sept. 2012.

16. Jen Gerson, "'Caucasian Advantage' Quip Casts Shadow Over Wildrose Campaign Despite Poll Lead," *National Post*, 17 April 2012.

17. See "Wildrose Member Withdraws from Nomination Contest," www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/wildrose-member-withdraws-from-nomination-contest-1.1093003 (accessed 22 Feb. 2014).

18. *Wildrose Policy: Comprehensive Ideas and Solutions for Alberta* (Edmonton: Wildrose, 2011), 79.

19. Ibid.

20. Islamophobic attitudes are much less prevalent among the Canadian public than in other Western countries (most notably Western Europe and the United States), even if some polls show that

they are on the rise. John Geddes, "Canadian Anti-Muslim Sentiment Is Rising, Disturbing New Poll Reveals," *Maclean's*, 3 Oct. 2013.

21. Joel Busher, *The Making of Anti-Muslim Protest: Grassroots Activism in the English Defence League* (London: Routledge, 2013).

22. See www.facebook.com/pages/Canadian-Defence-League/196328817044491 (accessed 24 Feb. 2014). Oddly enough, the Facebook page is mostly talked about by Facebook users in the Isle-de-France (Paris) area of France.

23. Stewart Bell, "Anti-Islam Group Draws Fierce Protest," *National Post*, 11 Jan. 2011.

24. See, for example, his extremely favorable interview with "Tommy Robinson"; see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdxQNZn64w8 (accessed 22 Feb. 2014).

25. See Barbara Key, "Multiculturalism 'Is Not a Quebec Value,'" *National Post*, 19 Jan. 2011.

26. See Mudde, *Populist Radical Right*, Chapters 9–11.

27. For some exceptions, see Eoin O'Malley, "Why is There No Radical Right in Ireland?," *West European Politics* 31(5): 960–77 (2008); Jens Rydgren, "Radical Right Populism in Sweden: Still a Failure, But for How Long?," *Scandinavian Political Studies* 25(1): 27–56 (2002).

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29. Christopher Andersen, "Economics, Politics, and Foreigners: Populist Party Support in Denmark and Norway," *Electoral Studies* 15(4): 497–511 (1996); Matt Golder, "Electoral Institutions, Unemployment and Extreme Right Parties: A Correction," *British Journal of Political Science* 33(3): 525–34 (2003).

30. The bulk of the data is from OECD iLibrary, International Migration Database, www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/data/oecd-international-migration-statistics_mig-data-en (accessed 22 Nov. 2013) and The International Migrant Stock by Destination and Origin of the United Nations: Population Division, http://esa.un.org/unmigration/TIMSO2013/migrantstocks2013.htm?msdo (accessed 21 Aug. 2014). Additional data for France and Italy (before 2000) come from The World Bank Database and their Data Set on International Migrant Stock, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SM.POP.TOTL (accessed 21 Aug. 2014) and Index Mundi, http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/france/international-migrant-stock (accessed 21 Aug. 2014).

31. For example, Golder, "Electoral Institutions"; Marcel Lubbers, Peer Scheepers, and Merove Gijsberts, "Extreme Right-Wing Voting in Western Europe," *European Journal of Political Research* 41: 345–78 (2002). For a more elaborate and critical study, see Tim Spier, *Modernisierungsverlierer? Die Wählerschaft rechtspopulistischer Parteien in Westeuropa* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2010).

32. Data are from Statistics Canada, www.stats.gov.nl.ca/statistics/Labour/PDF/UnempRate.pdf (accessed 14 Jan. 2014).

33. David Card and W. Craig Riddell, "A Comparative Analysis of Unemployment in Canada and the United States," in David Card and Richard B. Freeman, eds., *Small Differences That Matter: Labor Markets and Income Maintenance in Canada and the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 149–90.

34. The data for EU countries come from Eurostat, (epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_unemployment_lfs/data/database) (accessed 17 Jan. 2014), for Canada from Statistics Canada (www.stats.gov.nl.ca/statistics/Labour/PDF/UnempRate.pdf) (accessed 17 Jan. 2014), and for the United States from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNS14000000) (accessed 17 Jan. 2014). Data for Germany are only available as of 1991.

35. Golder, "Electoral Institutions," 432.

36. Terri Givens, *Voting Radical Right in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3.

37. Jennifer Merolla and Laura Stephenson, "Strategic Voting in Canada: A Cross Time Analysis," *Electoral Studies* 26(2): 245 (2007). A quasi-experimental study similarly found a weak psychological and a moderate mechanical effect of the Canadian electoral system. André Blais, Maxime Héroux-Legault, Laura Stephenson, William Cross, and Elisabeth Gidengil, "Assessing the Psychological and Mechanical Impact of Electoral Rules: A Quasi-Experiment," *Electoral Studies* 31(4): 829–37 (2012).

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42. See, among many others, Elisabeth Carter, *The Extreme Right in Western Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Norris, *Radical Right*.

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44. Ibid.; William Cross and Lisa Young, "Policy Attitudes of Party Members in Canada: Evidence of Ideological Politics," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 35(4): 859–80 (2002).

45. http://www.macleans.ca/general/canadians-are-the-most-tolerant-people-in-the-developed-world-report/ (accessed 5 Aug. 2014).

46. OECD, *Society at a Glance 2014: OECD Social Indicators* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2014), 136.

47. With regard to the latter statement, Germany was just below Canada and France, which were tied. See *Global Views on Immigration* (2011), www.ipsos-na.com/download/pr.aspx?id = 10883 (accessed 23 Dec. 2013).

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. John M. Bumsted, *Canada's Diverse Peoples: A Reference Sourcebook* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 140.

51. Ibid., 160.

52. Freda Hawkins, *Critical Years in Immigration: Canada and Australia Compared* (Montreal: McGill's-Queens Press, 1991), 27.

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57. Visible minorities are defined by the Canadian government as individuals who are non-Caucasian in race and also not of aboriginal descent. See Statistics Canada: Classification of Visible Minorities, http://www.statcan.gc.ca/concepts/definitions/minority01-minorite01a-eng.htm (accessed 22 Feb. 2015).

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59. Ibid, 282.

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61. See "Six selection factors – Federal skilled workers," www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/apply-factors.asp (accessed 22 Feb. 2014).

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65. Patrick Lòzes, "France's Minorities Under Fire," *The Guardian*, 26 March 2011.Most other countries do not keep statistics on "visible minorities," which makes a cross-country comparison impossible.

66. Data from the *OECD Factbook 2013: Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics*, http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/content/book/factbook-2013-en (accessed 14 Jan. 2014).

67. See Diane Galarneau and René Morissette, "Immigrants' Education and Required Job Skills," *Perspectives* (2008), www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-001-x/2008112/pdf/10766-eng.pdf (accessed 23 Feb. 2014).

68. The OECD ascribes the indicator "ISCED 5/6" for an education level of a bachelor's degree or other tertiary degree, which is how we define a "highly-skilled immigrant." Data are from United Nations International Migrant Stock by Destination and Origin (2010), esa.un.org/unmigration/TIMSO2013/migrantstocks2013.htm?msdo (accessed 23 Feb. 2014); United States Census Bureau: International Data Base, www.census.gov/population/international/data/idb/informationGateway.php (accessed 23 Feb. 2014). Total immigrant numbers are from 2010 and taken from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, international migrant stock by destination and origin, http://esa.un.org/unmigration/TIMSO2013/migrantstocks2013.htm?msdo (accessed 22 Feb. 2014).

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72. See Immigration and Citizenship for Canadians (Sept. 2013), www.cic.gc.ca/english/multiculturalism/index.asp?utm_source=www.cic.gc.ca/multi/index-eng.asp&utm_medium=brochures&utm_campaign=ENG_Multiculturalism (accessed 22 Feb. 2014), emphasis added.

73. Sarah V. Wayland, "Immigration, Multiculturalism, and National Identity in Canada," *International Journal of Group Rights* 5(1): 33 (2007).

74. Keith Banding and Will Kymlicka, "Canadian Multiculturalism: Global Anxieties and Local Debates," *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 23(1): 43–72 (2006).

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77. Banding and Kymlicka, "Canadian Multiculturalism."

78. Sarah V. Wayland, "Immigration, Multiculturalism and National Identity in Canada," *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 5(1): 33 (1997).

79. http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/multiculturalism/citizenship.asp (accessed 5 Aug. 2014).

80. Wayland, "Immigration, Multiculturalism," 50.

81. http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/multiculturalism/citizenship.asp (accessed 5 Aug. 2014).

82. See MIPEX Results Anti-Discrimination (2010), www.mipex.eu/play/map.php?chart_type=map&countries=2,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,7,5,6,4,3,1,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34,35,36,38,39,37,40,41,42,43,44&objects=220&periods=2010&group_by=country (accessed 23 Feb. 2014).

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97. For an excellent discussion of this dilemma, see Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Thomas Schmid, *Heimat Babylon: Das Wagnis der multikulturellen Demokratie* (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1993).

Emma Ambrose is an MA student in the Department of International Affairs at the University of Georgia. Previously she worked as an intern at the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) in Washington, DC.

Cas Mudde is Associate Professor in the Department of International Affairs at the University of Georgia. He is the author of *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), which won the 2008 Stein Rokkan Prize and was named an Outstanding Academic Title by *Choice*. His recent publications include *Political Extremism* (Sage, 2014, four volumes) and *Youth and the Extreme Right* (IDEBATE, 2014). He is currently working on books on populism (for Oxford University Press) and the Israeli settler movement (for Cambridge University Press). He is coeditor of the *European Journal of Political Research*.