



From Abandonment to Extremism: Emigration's Role in Shaping Far-Right Political Landscapes in Europe

Fernando C. Gaspar

ISCAL, Portugal

KEYWORDS: Far-right ideologies, emigration, economic stagnation, cultural backlash, digital misinformation, political extremism, socio-economic resilience.

ABSTRACT

The rise of far-right ideologies in Europe presents a significant challenge, driven by complex socio-economic, cultural, and psychological factors. This paper examines the role of high emigration rates, economic stagnation, and nostalgia for a perceived utopian past in fueling far-right support. It also explores broader issues such as economic grievances, digital misinformation, and cultural backlash. Through an interdisciplinary approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, this study highlights the interplay between these factors and their impact on political behavior.

Key findings indicate that regions experiencing high emigration and economic stagnation tend to show higher levels of support for far-right parties. The departure of young and skilled individuals can contribute to sustained economic challenges and create socio-political conditions in which certain political actors gain traction. Feelings of nostalgia for past social or economic conditions, along with reactions to rapid cultural change, also appear to be associated with increased receptiveness to such parties. Digital information dynamics, including the circulation of misleading content, further shape these patterns by influencing how political messages are disseminated and perceived.

Policy recommendations in the literature suggest that addressing development traps through investment in education, vocational training, and local entrepreneurship may strengthen economic resilience. Initiatives aimed at promoting social cohesion and community engagement are also identified as potentially relevant for reducing perceived socio-political marginalisation. Furthermore, improving digital literacy and reviewing the regulatory frameworks governing online platforms have been proposed as approaches that could help improve the quality and reliability of information circulating in digital environments.

This study highlights the relevance of adopting comprehensive and balanced policy approaches to address factors associated with regional variations in support for far-right parties. Policies that encourage economic development, strengthen social inclusion, and improve communication and outreach mechanisms are identified in the literature as potentially contributing to greater socio-political stability. Future research could benefit from longitudinal and comparative analyses to deepen understanding of these dynamics and to inform context-sensitive policy design.

Corresponding Author:

Fernando C. Gaspar

Publication Date: 23 December-2025

DOI: [10.55677/GJEFR/13-2025-Vol02E12](https://doi.org/10.55677/GJEFR/13-2025-Vol02E12)

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The interpretations and arguments presented in this article are solely those of the author and do not reflect the views of any political organisation, institution, or group. References to political parties, leaders, and electoral outcomes are used exclusively for scholarly

DOI URL: <https://doi.org/10.55677/GJEFR/13-2025-Vol02E12>

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and illustrative purposes. These examples do not imply normative assessment, endorsement, or criticism. Alternative interpretations of the mechanisms discussed are acknowledged, and the analysis is intended to contribute to an open, balanced, and evidence-based academic debate.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The rise of far-right ideologies in Europe has become a widely discussed political phenomenon, examined through multiple socio-economic and cultural lenses. An aspect that has received comparatively less attention in the literature is the potential influence of emigration, as distinct from immigration, on regional political dynamics. This paper considers how high emigration rates, particularly in regions experiencing long-term economic challenges, may be associated with higher levels of support for far-right parties.

1.2. Research Objectives

This study examines the relationship between emigration and variations in support for far-right parties across Europe. By considering economic, psychological, and historical dimensions, the research aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how emigration may shape regional political dynamics. The objectives are:

- To analyse how high emigration levels may relate to regional economic conditions and reported political dissatisfaction.
- To explore psychological and historical contexts that are associated with support for far-right parties in depopulating areas.
- To identify policy approaches discussed in the literature that address factors associated with these patterns.

1.3. Importance of the Study

Understanding the dynamics of emigration and its potential relationship with variation in support for far-right parties is important for informing policy discussions. While previous research has frequently examined immigration as a factor associated with far-right support, this study focuses on emigration as an alternative lens through which political developments in Europe can be analysed.

Research indicates that regions with high emigration rates often encounter persistent economic challenges, which have been associated with increased political dissatisfaction and higher levels of support for far-right parties (Dalton and Berning, 2022). Historical experiences of political or economic upheaval, particularly among older cohorts, have also been linked in the literature to differing attitudes toward contemporary political movements (Norris and Inglehart, 2019). In addition, although some public narratives suggest that younger generations may face declining prospects, several studies argue that such assessments may overlook evidence of individual and regional resilience, including opportunities related to innovation and entrepreneurship (Stockemer and Halikiopoulou, 2021).

By examining these interconnected factors, this study aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of patterns of support for far-right parties in Europe. The findings may be relevant for policymakers, academics, and other stakeholders interested in the socio-economic and demographic conditions associated with these patterns.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Previous Research on Far-Right Ideologies

The rise of far-right ideologies in Europe has been a subject of extensive scholarly research, focusing on various socio-economic and cultural factors. Previous studies have primarily attributed the growth of far-right parties to economic insecurity, cultural backlash, and anti-immigrant sentiments.

One significant line of inquiry examines economic conditions associated with higher levels of support for far-right parties. Stockemer and Halikiopoulou (2021) report that economic disenfranchisement and austerity measures have been linked to stronger anti-immigrant sentiments and increased support for far-right parties across Europe. This aligns with Halikiopoulou and Vlandas (2020) who argue that economic anxiety and job insecurity are associated with increased support for far-right parties. They note that regions with high unemployment and economic instability tend to show stronger alignment with far-right political platforms.

Cultural factors also play an important role in the literature on support for far-right parties. Norris and Inglehart's (2019) cultural backlash theory suggests that rapid social change and increased visibility of progressive values may be associated with perceptions of cultural displacement among certain population groups. According to the authors, such reactions appear more frequently among older cohorts, individuals with lower formal education levels, and residents of rural areas.

Dalton and Berning (2022) examine the relationship between ideological polarization and support for far-right parties. They suggest that such parties tend to gain visibility in contexts characterized by pronounced ideological divisions, which may be intensified by social media dynamics and the circulation of misleading or polarizing content. The authors further note that digital environments can influence how political messages are disseminated and perceived.

Historical factors also feature prominently in the literature. Donahue (2021) reports that older cohorts who experienced major political transitions, such as post-communist shifts, may express attitudes more aligned with far-right parties. The author suggests that such attitudes may relate to interpretations of past socio-economic conditions and perceptions of contemporary change.

Overall, the literature suggests that the rise of far-right ideologies is a complex interplay of economic insecurity, cultural backlash, ideological polarization, and historical disillusionment. A comprehensive understanding of these factors is essential for analysing variations in support for far-right parties across Europe and for informing ongoing debates on how socio-economic and cultural conditions shape contemporary political behaviour.

2.2. Economic and Sociopolitical Context

The economic and sociopolitical context in Europe has been widely discussed in the literature as a factor associated with variation in support for far-right parties. Economic stagnation, high unemployment, and regional disparities are frequently identified as conditions linked to political dissatisfaction and shifts in electoral preferences.

Research indicates that regions experiencing economic hardship tend to show higher levels of support for far-right parties. Dalton and Berning (2022) note that economic stagnation and high unemployment are common features of such regions. These areas are sometimes described as being affected by development traps, in which limited economic opportunities contribute to cycles of outmigration and persistent socio-economic challenges.

Moreover, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) report discusses how economic disenfranchisement may relate to changes in political behaviour. It notes that austerity measures and economic inequalities can intensify social pressures, creating conditions in which support for far-right parties may increase (ENAR, 2020). Margalit (2019) similarly finds that economic downturns and job insecurity are correlated with higher levels of support for populist parties.

The sociopolitical context is also frequently highlighted in discussions of support for far-right parties. Norris and Inglehart's (2019) cultural backlash theory argues that rapid social change and expanding recognition of minority rights may be perceived by some groups as challenging established cultural norms. According to the authors, such perceptions appear more prevalent among older cohorts, individuals with lower levels of formal education, and residents of rural areas. These dynamics are described in the literature as potentially contributing to variations in support for far-right parties.

Digital communication dynamics have also been examined as factors potentially influencing political attitudes. A study by the Oxford Internet Institute (2018) reports that social media platforms can facilitate the circulation of politically polarising or misleading content, sometimes within closed online networks that limit exposure to alternative viewpoints. The authors argue that such environments may contribute to the visibility of far-right messaging.

Taken together, these economic and sociopolitical dynamics are frequently highlighted in the literature as factors associated with variations in support for far-right parties across different European regions. Economic stagnation, regional disparities, cultural backlash, and digital misinformation are key factors that contribute to this phenomenon. Recent Eurostat (2025) releases indicate continued demographic divergence across EU regions, reinforcing the relevance of examining emigration alongside other socio-economic indicators.

2.3. Emigration vs. Immigration in European Political Dynamics

The debate surrounding emigration and immigration has important implications for understanding political dynamics in Europe. While immigration is frequently examined in the literature as a factor associated with support for far-right parties, recent research suggests that emigration—particularly from regions experiencing persistent economic constraints—may also be relevant in shaping these patterns.

Several authors note that high emigration rates from economically constrained regions may contribute to demographic and labour-market imbalances. Halikiopoulou and Vlandas (2020) observe that regions with substantial outmigration often experience a loss of young and skilled workers, which can compound local economic challenges and contribute to political dissatisfaction. The authors argue that such conditions may be associated with increased receptiveness to far-right parties, which often frame their programmes around themes of stability and prosperity.

Some studies challenge the assumption that immigration is the primary factor associated with support for far-right parties, emphasising instead the role of emigration. Stockemer and Halikiopoulou (2021), for instance, report that regions with high levels of outmigration tend to display higher support for far-right parties, which the authors link to demographic change and perceptions of socio-economic decline. These findings suggest that emigration may be an important, and sometimes overlooked, component of regional political dynamics.

The literature also discusses the psychological and cultural implications of emigration for local communities. Donahue (2021) argues that outmigration may shape perceptions of demographic and social decline, particularly among older cohorts, and may be associated with expressions of nostalgia for past socio-economic conditions. The author suggests that such sentiments can, in some contexts, be linked to support for far-right or authoritarian political actors.

The literature also notes that while immigration is sometimes perceived as a source of economic or cultural tension, many studies highlight its potential contributions to labour-market dynamism and innovation. At the same time, the European Network Against Racism (2020) reports that immigration is occasionally framed within political communication by far-right actors as a central explanation for various socio-economic challenges, which may influence public perceptions.

In conclusion, both emigration and immigration significantly influence European political dynamics. Understanding the interplay between these factors is crucial for addressing the root causes of far-right support and developing comprehensive policy interventions.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study adopts an interdisciplinary perspective, integrating insights from political science, sociology, and economics. It draws on established theories of political behaviour, migration studies, and economic development to examine possible associations between emigration and support for far-right parties.

3.1. Development Traps and Economic Stagnation

Development traps refer to situations in which regions face structural barriers that impede economic progress. Such conditions are described in the literature as contributing to persistent stagnation and outmigration. Some scholars argue that these dynamics may be associated with political dissatisfaction and with increased support for parties emphasising themes of national identity or socio-economic renewal. These interpretations reflect how regional economic constraints can shape political attitudes in different contexts. Polis Doxa (2020) discusses how regions caught in development traps experience persistent poverty and lack of economic opportunities, leading to high emigration rates as young, skilled individuals seek better prospects elsewhere. This exodus exacerbates the economic decline, leaving behind a population that feels neglected and disenfranchised.

Some accounts also describe how parties that emphasise themes such as national identity, socio-economic protection, or cultural continuity may resonate more strongly in regions experiencing sustained outmigration or economic uncertainty. These interpretations focus on how regional structural conditions can influence the reception of different political messages rather than implying strategic intent by specific political actors.

Halikiopoulou and Vlandas (2020) also highlight the role of economic stagnation in the rise of far-right ideologies. They argue that economic insecurity, resulting from high unemployment and low wages, creates fertile ground for radical political movements. In regions where economic growth is stalled, the promise of radical change offered by far-right parties becomes particularly.

3.2. Psychological and Historical Factors Influencing Political Behavior

Research in political psychology suggests that historical experiences can shape how individuals interpret contemporary socio-economic challenges. Donahue (2021) notes that older cohorts may compare present conditions with earlier periods they perceived as more stable, which can influence attitudes toward various political actors. Norris and Inglehart's (2019) cultural-backlash framework similarly argues that rapid social change may be perceived by some groups as unsettling. According to this perspective, parties that emphasise themes of cultural continuity or national identity may find greater resonance in contexts where such sentiments are salient.

3.3. Emigration and Political Disillusionment

Emigration, particularly from regions characterised by economic stagnation, has been discussed in the literature as a factor that may influence political attitudes. High outmigration can contribute to demographic change and shifts in labour-market structures, which some authors describe as shaping perceptions of socio-economic prospects or political representation. Several studies report associations between these dynamics and higher levels of support for political actors who emphasise themes related to national identity, stability, or socio-economic protection. These findings reflect correlations observed in specific regional contexts rather than deterministic causal relationships.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Data Collection

The methodology for this study involves a multi-faceted approach to data collection, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the factors contributing to the rise of far-right ideologies in Europe. The primary data sources include statistical databases, academic publications, and reports from relevant organizations.

Quantitative data on economic indicators, emigration rates, and political behavior were collected from reputable sources such as Eurostat, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and national statistical offices. These datasets provide a robust foundation for analyzing the economic conditions and demographic changes in regions with high emigration rates. Qualitative data were gathered through a systematic review of academic literature and reports from organizations such as the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) and the Martens Centre. This review includes studies on the psychological and historical factors influencing political behavior, as well as analyses of far-right ideologies and their socio-political impact (ENAR, 2020; Martens Centre, 2020).

4.2. Analytical Methods

The analysis of the collected data involves both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, as well as thematic analysis for the qualitative data. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize the economic and demographic characteristics of the regions under study, providing a clear picture of the conditions that may contribute to political extremism.

Inferential statistics, including regression analysis, are employed to examine the relationships between economic indicators, emigration rates, and support for far-right parties. This approach allows for the identification of significant predictors of far-right support, helping to isolate the impact of emigration from other socio-economic factors (Dalton and Berning, 2022).

Thematic analysis is used to interpret the qualitative data, identifying common themes and patterns related to psychological and historical factors. This method provides insights into the narratives and sentiments that drive far-right support, complementing the quantitative findings (Donahue, 2021; Norris and Inglehart, 2019).

4.3. Scope and Limitations

The scope of this study is limited to regions in Europe with significant emigration rates and documented support for far-right parties. While this focus allows for a detailed examination of the specific factors at play in these regions, it may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts.

One limitation of the study is the reliance on available data, which may not capture all nuances of the socio-economic and political landscape. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of much of the data means that causality cannot be definitively established, although the use of regression analysis helps to infer potential causal relationships.

Another limitation is the potential bias in qualitative data sources, as reports and studies may reflect the perspectives and priorities of their authors or sponsoring organizations. To mitigate this, a diverse range of sources was included in the literature review, ensuring a balanced and comprehensive analysis.

In conclusion, the methodology employed in this study integrates quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods to provide a robust and comprehensive examination of the factors contributing to the rise of far-right ideologies in Europe. By addressing both economic and psychological factors, this approach offers valuable insights into the complex dynamics of political extremism.

4.3 Methodological Note

In referencing contemporary political actors and parties, the study's objective is solely analytical. All examples serve to illustrate theoretical mechanisms in line with academic convention. Their inclusion does not imply political judgement.

5. HIGH EMIGRATION DEVELOPMENT TRAPS AND FAR-RIGHT IDEOLOGIES

The phenomenon of high emigration development traps is a critical factor in understanding the rise of far-right ideologies in Europe. These development traps occur when regions experience economic stagnation, leading to the emigration of young, skilled individuals in search of better opportunities. These processes are sometimes described as contributing to conditions of political disaffection. Some authors argue that such contexts may correspond with increased support for parties that emphasise themes of national renewal or socio-economic protection.

5.1. Depopulation and Economic Impact

Depopulation resulting from high emigration rates significantly impacts the economic landscape of affected regions. When young, educated individuals leave, they take with them potential economic contributions and innovations that could stimulate local economies. This leads to a cycle of economic stagnation and decline, where remaining populations face limited job opportunities and diminishing public services. Dalton and Berning (2022) highlight that regions experiencing high emigration are often those caught in development traps, characterized by persistent poverty and lack of economic progress. These dynamics are identified in the literature as factors that may be associated with political dissatisfaction and with variations in support for non-centrist political movements.

5.2. Political Disillusionment and Extremism

Several studies suggest that outmigration and economic contraction may contribute to perceptions of neglect or limited political representation. The Martens Centre (2020) notes that in such contexts, parties emphasising themes of national identity, economic protection, or cultural continuity may gain electoral traction. These interpretations highlight how structural and perceptual factors can interact in shaping political preferences.

5.3. Case Studies: Regional Analysis in Europe

Several European regions illustrate the link between high emigration, development traps, and the rise of far-right ideologies. In Hungary and Poland, researchers have documented substantial outmigration alongside economic or demographic shifts. Some authors argue that these conditions have shaped political debates, particularly those involving national identity or socio-economic stability. Parties such as Fidesz, PiS, Lega have been studied for how their messaging aligns with concerns expressed by segments of the population in regions experiencing demographic or economic change.

Similarly, in Southern Europe, regions in Italy and Greece have experienced high emigration rates due to prolonged economic crises. In both countries, researchers have documented substantial outmigration alongside economic or demographic shifts. Some authors argue that these conditions have shaped political debates, particularly those involving national identity or socio-economic stability.

Some parties have been studied for how their messaging aligns with concerns expressed by segments of the population in regions experiencing demographic or economic change.

In summary, research suggests that development traps linked to sustained outmigration and limited economic diversification may correspond with increased political dissatisfaction in some regions. These dynamics have been associated in the literature with higher levels of support for political actors who emphasise themes involving national identity, socio-economic protection, or cultural continuity. Examining these patterns may help inform broader discussions on regional development and political behaviour.

6. HOW EMIGRATION FUELS FAR-RIGHT IDEOLOGIES

The relationship between emigration and political attitudes is complex and multifaceted. Emigration from regions facing economic stagnation has been associated in the literature with concerns about demographic decline, socio-economic opportunity, and political representation. These perceptions may influence how residents interpret political messages, including those emphasising cultural identity or socio-economic stability.

6.1. Development Traps

Research on development traps suggests that regions experiencing prolonged economic stagnation and outmigration may display heightened concerns about future socio-economic prospects. Dalton and Berning (2022) argue that such demographic and economic shifts may correspond with increased political dissatisfaction, which can be reflected in varying levels of support for parties emphasising stability or national renewal.

6.2. Nostalgia and Historical Disillusionment

Studies examining the psychological dimensions of emigration discuss how older cohorts may interpret demographic decline through the lens of earlier historical experiences. Donahue (2021) notes that references to past periods perceived as more cohesive or prosperous can shape contemporary political attitudes. Norris and Inglehart (2019) similarly highlight that rapid cultural change may contribute to perceptions of displacement or cultural loss in some regions.

6.3. Psychological Impact

Stockemer and Halikiopoulou (2021) report that regions undergoing outmigration may experience concerns about economic security and social cohesion. Some analyses suggest that, in such contexts, political messages that emphasise cultural identity or socio-economic protection may find greater resonance. Reports such as Martens Centre (2020) describe how these narratives circulate within broader debates about national identity and globalisation.

In conclusion, emigration significantly fuels far-right ideologies by creating development traps, fostering nostalgia and historical disillusionment, and exacerbating economic and psychological vulnerabilities. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing strategies to counter the rise of political extremism and promote socio-economic resilience in affected regions.

7. CASE STUDIES

7.1. Regional Analysis in Europe

Regional case studies discussed in the literature offer insight into how emigration patterns intersect with political attitudes across Europe. In several Eastern European countries, sustained outmigration has coincided with demographic decline, labour shortages, and constraints on economic development. Scholars note that these conditions may correspond with higher levels of support for parties emphasising national identity, cultural continuity, or socio-economic protection.

In Southern Europe, particularly in rural areas of Portugal, Spain, and Italy, long-term emigration has been associated with perceptions of demographic contraction and limited economic opportunity. Some studies suggest that older cohorts who experienced significant political and economic transitions in the twentieth century interpret these changes through historical or nostalgic frameworks, which may align with political actors whose messaging references earlier socio-economic periods.

In Central Europe, countries such as Hungary and Poland have simultaneously experienced substantial outmigration and political polarisation. Research analysing these cases indicates that parties including Fidesz and Law and Justice frequently frame their programmes around themes of demographic stability, national identity, and cultural preservation. Scholars observe that these narratives may intersect with concerns expressed by residents in regions undergoing demographic and economic transformation.

7.2. Comparative Analysis with Global Examples

Comparative research beyond Europe shows that similar patterns have been documented elsewhere. In parts of Latin America, for example, studies have identified associations between sustained outmigration and support for certain nationalist or populist movements. In Asian contexts, including the Philippines and India, analyses describe how political leaders who emphasise cultural identity or national sovereignty have gained visibility during periods marked by economic restructuring or large-scale labour migration.

These examples, as presented in the comparative literature, suggest that associations between emigration, socio-economic change, and shifts toward non-centrist political movements are not confined to Europe but appear in a broader set of international contexts.

8. QUALITY OF LIFE AND GENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

8.1. Misconceptions of Generational Decline

Some public narratives suggest that younger generations may face diminished prospects relative to their parents. However, several studies argue that this perspective does not fully reflect long-term improvements observed in health, education, and living standards across many European countries.

Research shows that many quality of life indicators have improved significantly. For example, advancements in healthcare have led to increased life expectancy and better overall health outcomes. Educational attainment has risen, with more people accessing higher levels of education than previous generations. Technological advancements have revolutionized communication, work, and entertainment, contributing to a higher standard of living (OECD, 2020).

The OECD (2020) reports that health outcomes, education, and living standards have seen substantial improvements across many European countries. Eurostat data also indicate that the risk of poverty and social exclusion has decreased in most regions, contradicting the idea that every generation is worse off than the previous one (Eurostat, 2020). These improvements highlight the resilience and adaptability of societies in the face of economic and social challenges.

Although these indicators show sustained improvements, research notes that perceptions of generational decline remain salient in public discourse. Some authors argue that political actors across the spectrum reference such narratives in ways that resonate with concerns about economic or cultural change.

8.2. Role of Individual Agency

The belief in generational decline often neglects the critical role of individual agency in shaping one's future. While structural economic conditions are important, personal initiative and resilience play a significant role in determining life outcomes. Individual agency encompasses the ability to make choices, take action, and influence one's circumstances, which can lead to personal and societal improvements.

Norris and Inglehart (2019) discuss the importance of individual agency in overcoming socio-economic challenges. They argue that personal initiative and resilience are crucial in shaping one's future, regardless of past economic conditions. This perspective emphasizes the potential for individuals to drive innovation, entrepreneurship, and social change, even in the face of adversity (Norris and Inglehart, 2019).

Entrepreneurship and innovation are key drivers of economic growth and social progress. By fostering a culture of innovation and supporting entrepreneurial initiatives, communities can develop new industries, create jobs, and enhance economic resilience. The Martens Centre (2020) report highlights how individual agency and entrepreneurial success can break the cycle of economic stagnation and foster political stability. The report notes that the power of individual initiative and resilience is crucial in shaping one's future and contributing to broader societal improvements (Martens Centre, 2020).

Moreover, educational opportunities and access to technology have empowered individuals to pursue diverse career paths and achieve personal success. By leveraging these resources, individuals can overcome structural barriers and contribute to the economic and social vitality of their communities. This proactive approach counters the fatalistic narrative of generational decline and underscores the importance of personal agency in shaping a better future.

In conclusion, the misconceptions of generational decline overlook the significant improvements in quality of life and the critical role of individual agency. By recognizing the potential for personal initiative and resilience, it is possible to foster a more optimistic and proactive outlook that empowers individuals and communities to drive positive change.

8.3. Entrepreneurial Success and Innovation

Entrepreneurial success and innovation are critical components in overcoming economic stagnation and fostering socio-economic resilience. Entrepreneurial activity is frequently discussed in the literature as a factor that may contribute to socio-economic resilience in regions affected by outmigration and demographic change.

Fostering Economic Growth

Entrepreneurship drives economic growth by creating new businesses, generating employment, and stimulating innovation. Successful entrepreneurs often introduce new products and services, improving efficiency and creating wealth. This economic dynamism can revitalize regions suffering from high emigration and economic stagnation, offering new opportunities for those who might otherwise consider leaving.

The Martens Centre (2020) highlights the importance of fostering a culture of innovation to combat the socio-economic challenges that contribute to the rise of far-right ideologies. The report emphasizes that entrepreneurial initiatives can lead to significant economic development, enhancing the overall quality of life and reducing the sense of abandonment felt in many depopulated regions (Martens Centre, 2020).

Promoting Social Mobility

Entrepreneurial success also plays a crucial role in promoting social mobility. By providing opportunities for individuals to start their own businesses, entrepreneurship can help break down socio-economic barriers and create pathways for upward mobility. This empowerment can counteract the narrative of generational decline and demonstrate that personal initiative and innovation can lead to significant socio-economic improvements.

Norris and Inglehart (2019) discuss how individual agency, manifested through entrepreneurial activities, can drive social change and contribute to political stability. They argue that supporting entrepreneurship is essential for fostering a resilient and dynamic society, capable of adapting to economic challenges and reducing the appeal of extremist ideologies (Norris and Inglehart, 2019).

Enhancing Community Resilience

Communities that embrace entrepreneurship and innovation are better equipped to adapt to economic changes and shocks. By diversifying their economies and encouraging local businesses, these communities can build economic resilience and reduce dependence on external factors. This resilience is crucial for regions facing high emigration rates, as it provides a stable economic base that can attract and retain residents.

The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) report underscores the role of community resilience in mitigating the rise of far-right ideologies. It suggests that policies promoting local entrepreneurship and innovation can help create inclusive economies that offer opportunities for all residents, thereby reducing the socio-economic conditions that far-right parties exploit (ENAR, 2020).

Case Studies in Innovation

Several European regions have successfully leveraged entrepreneurship and innovation to combat economic stagnation and reduce emigration. For instance, the Basque Country in Spain has implemented policies to support local startups and technology firms, leading to a revitalized economy and reduced emigration. Similarly, Estonia has become a hub for digital innovation, attracting entrepreneurs and creating a dynamic economic environment that counters the narrative of generational decline.

Halikiopoulou and Vlandas (2020) note that these examples demonstrate the potential of entrepreneurial success to transform economies and societies. By fostering innovation and supporting entrepreneurial ventures, regions can build resilient economies that provide opportunities for all residents, reducing the appeal of far-right ideologies that thrive on economic despair (Halikiopoulou and Vlandas, 2020).

In conclusion, entrepreneurial success and innovation are vital for overcoming economic stagnation and fostering socio-economic resilience. By promoting entrepreneurship and supporting innovative ventures, communities can create new opportunities, enhance social mobility, and build economic resilience. These efforts are essential for countering the rise of far-right ideologies and fostering inclusive and dynamic societies.

9. NOSTALGIA FOR UTOPIA AND ITS POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

Studies in political psychology and cultural sociology discuss nostalgia for earlier socio-economic periods as an interpretative framework through which individuals may evaluate contemporary political and economic developments. Older cohorts who lived through earlier periods perceived as more stable may interpret present-day challenges in comparison to those experiences. Researchers note that political actors sometimes reference such interpretations in their messaging, connecting them to themes of traditional values or national identity.

Some authors argue that nostalgic narratives may provide a way for communities experiencing demographic contraction or economic restructuring to contextualise ongoing change. In this context, far-right parties have been observed to highlight historical reference points in their communication, which can align with concerns expressed by residents who perceive their regions as facing socio-economic marginalisation or cultural transformation.

The literature further suggests that themes such as national sovereignty, cultural identity, and responses to aspects of globalisation are common elements of far-right political communication. These narratives may resonate with individuals who regard cultural or socio-economic change as challenging established norms and have been associated in empirical studies with higher support for far-right parties in particular regional contexts.

The political implications of nostalgic frameworks are widely discussed, particularly regarding their relationship to voter preferences, political polarisation, and identity-based politics. Examining how nostalgic narratives interact with economic and demographic patterns may offer additional insight into the conditions associated with support for far-right and other non-centrist political movements.

10. BALANCING PERSPECTIVES

The rise of far-right ideologies in Europe is a multifaceted phenomenon that cannot be attributed to a single cause. While high emigration rates, economic stagnation, and nostalgia for a perceived utopian past play significant roles, it is crucial to balance these perspectives with other contributing factors. Understanding the interplay of economic, social, and cultural dynamics provides a more comprehensive view of the challenges and potential solutions.

10.1. Economic Factors and Immigration Issues

Economic hardship is consistently identified in the literature as a factor associated with variation in political preferences. Several authors report that parties emphasising themes of economic protection or cultural stability may gain traction in regions experiencing sustained unemployment or economic restructuring.

A study by the European Network Against Racism (2020) highlights how economic disenfranchisement and austerity measures have fueled anti-immigrant sentiments and boosted far-right support across Europe.

Research discussing economic insecurity notes that such conditions may correspond with changes in political preferences, including increased support for parties emphasising cultural or economic protection (ENAR, 2020; Margalit, 2019).

10.2. Digital Misinformation and Social Media Influence

The digital age has transformed how information is disseminated and consumed, significantly impacting political behavior. Social media platforms and online communities have become breeding grounds for misinformation and radicalization. Far-right groups leverage these platforms to spread propaganda, conspiracy theories, and xenophobic narratives, creating echo chambers that reinforce extremist views.

Studies examining digital communication environments report that some online platforms can facilitate the rapid circulation of politically polarising or misleading content. These dynamics may contribute to changes in how political messages are interpreted or amplified (Oxford Internet Institute, 2018).

10.3. Broader Cultural Shifts

Cultural changes, such as the increasing visibility of progressive values and minority rights, can also trigger backlash from more conservative segments of society. This cultural backlash theory posits that rapid social changes can create a sense of alienation and loss among those who feel their traditional values are under threat. This sentiment can drive support for far-right parties, which often position themselves as defenders of cultural heritage and traditional norms (Norris and Inglehart, 2019).

Norris and Inglehart (2019) explore how cultural backlash against progressive values contributes to the rise of populist and far-right movements. They argue that this backlash is particularly strong among older, less-educated, and rural populations who feel disconnected from the cultural changes embraced by urban, younger, and more educated groups (Norris and Inglehart, 2019).

10.4. Policy Implications and Recommendations

Balancing perspectives requires a multi-pronged approach to address the various factors driving the rise of far-right ideologies. Economic policies should focus on reducing inequalities, promoting job creation, and supporting local businesses to mitigate economic grievances. Additionally, policies aimed at integrating immigrants and fostering social cohesion are crucial to counteract anti-immigrant sentiments.

Combating digital misinformation requires cooperation between governments, technology companies, and civil society. Efforts to improve digital literacy and promote critical thinking can help individuals navigate the online information landscape more effectively.

Furthermore, addressing cultural backlash involves recognizing and valuing the concerns of conservative segments of society while promoting inclusive narratives that celebrate diversity and progress. Encouraging dialogue and understanding between different cultural groups can help bridge divides and reduce the appeal of far-right ideologies.

In conclusion, balancing perspectives on the rise of far-right ideologies involves considering economic, social, and cultural factors. By addressing these interconnected issues through comprehensive policies and fostering an inclusive society, it is possible to mitigate the appeal of extremist ideologies and promote a more resilient and cohesive Europe.

It is important to note that high emigration does not uniformly result in support for far-right parties. Several European regions with structural decline nevertheless maintain stable centrist or even progressive voting patterns, indicating the presence of mediating institutional factors such as strong welfare systems, resilient civic networks, or historical party loyalties. Likewise, appeals to nostalgia or cultural loss are not unique to far-right movements: parties across the ideological spectrum have invoked similar narratives at different moments. These nuances underscore that the mechanisms discussed in this article are not deterministic; rather, they operate probabilistically and interact with local contexts in complex ways.

11. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The literature on regional development and political behaviour suggests that policy discussions may benefit from considering the structural and perceptual factors associated with high emigration. Approaches such as investment in education, vocational training, and local entrepreneurship are frequently highlighted as potential strategies for strengthening economic resilience in areas experiencing population loss.

Studies also discuss initiatives aimed at enhancing social cohesion, including community-led projects, cultural programmes, and improvements in local governance. These initiatives are described as ways of fostering engagement and collective capacity, which may shape how political messages are interpreted at the local level.

Several scholars emphasise the potential importance of digital literacy programmes, noting that they may help individuals better assess the reliability of online information. The literature also discusses the role of governments and civil society in reviewing regulatory frameworks governing digital platforms, particularly regarding the circulation of misleading or polarising content.

Overall, policy debates in this domain often underscore the relevance of addressing economic, social, and informational factors together, given their interconnected nature and their joint association with regional variations in political attitudes.

12. CONCLUSION

Outmigration of younger and skilled individuals can alter demographic patterns and labour-market structures, which some authors associate with concerns about socio-economic prospects and political representation. These conditions have been linked in the literature to variations in political preferences, including higher support for parties emphasising national identity or economic protection.

12.1. Summary of Findings

The analysis indicates that regions characterised by high emigration and economic stagnation exhibit patterns that the literature associates with increased political dissatisfaction and varying degrees of support for parties emphasising national identity or socio-economic protection. Demographic change, including the outmigration of younger individuals, may influence perceptions of opportunity and representation. Research also discusses how historical experiences, cultural change, and digital information environments can shape political attitudes in ways relevant to these patterns. Together, these findings highlight the value of analysing emigration alongside other socio-economic and cultural factors in understanding regional political dynamics.

12.2. Future Research Directions

Future research should focus on longitudinal studies that examine the long-term effects of economic and social interventions on the appeal of far-right ideologies. Understanding how different policy measures impact political behavior over time can provide valuable insights for developing more effective strategies.

Additionally, comparative studies that explore the rise of far-right ideologies in different cultural and political contexts can help identify universal factors and region-specific dynamics. This approach can enhance the generalizability of findings and inform tailored policy responses.

Research should also investigate the role of education in fostering critical thinking and resilience against extremist ideologies. Exploring how educational curricula and programs can be designed to promote inclusivity and counteract the influence of far-right narratives is a promising area for further study (OECD, 2020).

12.3. Final Thoughts

These findings underscore the relevance of considering multiple socio-economic, demographic, and informational factors when analysing patterns of support for far-right parties. The literature suggests that discussions concerning regional development, social inclusion, and communication environments may contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the conditions in which these political patterns emerge. Further empirical work will be important for identifying the specific mechanisms at play across diverse local contexts.

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