

Fear, Anger and Voting for the Far right:
Evidence from the November 13, 2015 Paris Terror Attacks
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Abstract: The conjecture that negative emotions underpin support for far right politics in Europe is common among pundits and scholars. However, the conventional account holds that authoritarian populists catalyze public anxiety about the changing social order and/or deteriorating national economic conditions, and this anxiety subsequently drives up support for the far right. We propose that while emotions do indeed play an independent causal role in support for far right parties and policies, that support is more likely built upon the public's anger rather than fear. This article explores the relative impact of fear and anger in reaction to the 2015 Paris terror attacks on the propensity to vote for the French far right party, the Front National, in the 2015 Regional Elections. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, we find anger is associated with voting for the FN, while fear is associated with voting against the FN. Moreover, anger boosts the FN vote most powerfully among far right and authoritarian voters. On the other hand, fear reduces support for the far right among those same groups.