

Euroskepticism and support for radical right parties

By

Wouter van der Brug
Universiteit van Amsterdam/ASSR
&
Meindert Fennema
Universiteit van Amsterdam/IMES

Paper prepared for presentation on April th 1st 2008 in the conference on
“Representation, Immigration , and the 2009 election to the European Parliament, at
the Indiana University.

Corresponding author:

Wouter van der Brug
Universiteit van Amsterdam / ASSR
Department of Political Science
Oudezijds Achterburgwal 235
1012 DK Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Phone: + 31(0)20 5252765; Fax: +31 (0)20 5253681
E-mail: W.vanderbrug@uva.nl

Introduction

In the last two decades of the twentieth century many western democracies have seen the rise of parties that have been labelled extreme-right (Ignazi, 1992; Hainsworth 2000), New Radical Right (Kitschelt 1995), Radical Right (Norris 2005), right-wing populist (Van der Brug and Mughan 2007) or anti-immigration parties (Fennema 1997). More recently, researchers have noticed that popular support for further European integration has decreased in many European countries. This paper investigates to what extent feelings of Euroscepticism affect support for right-wing populist parties.

When Fennema (1997) studied the ideologies of the Western European parties that belong to this group, he concluded that the main thing these parties have in common is their fierce opposition against immigration, reason why he proposed to call them anti-immigrant parties, and more recently anti-immigration parties. This term is well suited to describe West-European parties of the radical right. However, if we include parties from central or Eastern Europe, the term ‘anti-immigration’ does not capture the core concerns of these parties. Because immigration into these countries is very limited, these parties have not mobilized against immigrants. Rather, they have promoted strong right wing nationalism and as such they have mobilized anti-EU sentiments, as well as anti-Semitism (in particular the Polish Self Defence and the Hungarian Life and Justice) and hate against other ethnic groups, in particular the Roma. So, when looking beyond the context of Western Europe –as we do in this paper– the term radical right is to be preferred (see also Norris 2005).

There are reasons to expect that radical right parties will benefit from an increase in Euroscepticism. Even though most of these parties were initially pro-European, they became increasingly Eurosceptic, particularly after the enlargement with central European countries in 2004 and 2007 (Mudde 2007: 160). Moreover, a recent study by Kriesi et al. (2006) suggests that a new political cleavage has developed in Western Europe that divides the losers and winners of globalisation. According to this thesis, the losers of globalisation are in favour of measures to shield national economies from international competition, in favour of more restrictive immigration policies and against moves towards further European integration. Accordingly, the rise of radical right parties should be seen in the light of the development of such a new cleavage. This notion is not entirely new, because other

scholars have also interpreted the rise of radical right parties as a reactionary response to the rise of postmaterialist values: a silent counter-revolution (e.g., Ignazi, 1992; Minkenberg 2002). If positions on European integration are components of the new globalisation-cleavage, and if the rise of radical right parties can be explained by this new cleavage, we may expect a relation between EU-attitudes and support for right-wing populist parties.

In this paper we estimate at the individual level the extent to which support for right-wing populist parties is affected by attitudes towards the EU. We employ data from the European Elections Study 2004, which contain relevant data on support for 11 radical right parties: the Austrian FPÖ, the Danish Dansk Folkepartit, the French Front Nationale, the German Republikaner, Laos (from Greece), the Hungarian Justice and Life Party, the Italian Alleanza Nazionale and Lega Nord, the LPF (from the Netherlands), Self Defense (Poland), the SNS (Slovakia).

EU-enlargement and support for radical right parties

Different kinds of theoretical approaches exist to explain support for radical right parties, as well as differences in aggregate support for such parties. These approaches have looked at the demand side as well as supply side factors. In this paper we focus on the motivations of individual voters to support radical right parties, which is why our focus is mainly on the demand side: voters and their grievances and preferences. Different explanations have been brought forward.

Until the late 1990s, socio-structural models inspired most research on the radical right. According to this perspective, the rise of radical right parties should be seen as a backlash response to modernization. The crux of these explanations is the suggestion that support for radical right parties comes from citizens who feel threatened by rapid changes in postindustrial societies. Manual workers with low education tend to lose their jobs as a result of changes in modes of production. Moreover, they are competing with immigrant groups for scarce resources such as jobs and houses. These "losers of modernity" (Betz 1998) feel threatened by rapid social change and tend to support radical right-wing parties out of general discontent. Research has shown that voters who fit Betz' profile —the so called "angry white men"— are more likely than other citizens to support radical right parties (e.g., Lubbers 2001; Lubbers et al. 2002). However, socio-structural models tend to have

very limited power to explain support of radical right parties (e.g., Mayer 1998; Riedlsperger 1998; Van der Brug et al. 2000; Van der Brug and Fennema 2003). Quite the contrary: more than is the case for the established parties, successful radical right parties such as the Austrian FPÖ in 2000, and the Dutch LPF in 2002 drew their support from all social strata (Van der Brug and Fennema 2003; van der Brug 2003). Recently, Betz (2002) dropped his claims about the “losers of modernity”.

Models of *policy - and ideological voting* have not been popular among scholars who study the support for radical right parties, because many researchers find it difficult to believe that voters would vote rationally for what they consider a racist or neo-fascist party. Policy voting models consider voters as rational consumers of policy programs and political parties as providers of such programs. In elections several parties provide their policy programs and voters choose from these alternatives. Of course voters do not know the content of all these programs. To be able to choose with restricted information on these programs, voters rely on other indications of the party programs. They tend to rely on general information and images that refer to the ideological profile of the parties. The policy voting model predicts therefore that even with limited information the voters’ decisions in the ballot box are based on the content of the party programs (i.e., on issues and ideological positions). Electoral research has shown that votes for many radical right parties — particularly the more successful ones— are predominantly based on policy orientations, which are expressed in left/right positions and attitudes towards immigrants and immigration (Kitschelt 1995; Van der Brug et al. 2000; Lubbers c.s. 2002; Van der Brug en Fennema 2003; Mughan en Paxton 2003).

Previous studies have shown that the issue of European unification had surprisingly little effect on support for radical right parties (e.g., Van der Brug and Fennema 2003; Van der Brug, Van der Eijk et al. 2007; De Vries 2007). However, most of these studies were conducted in a period when European integration was not very politicised. If this has changed, the effect of these attitudes may have gained in strength.

Data and method

The question whether attitudes towards Europe exert a strong or a weak effect on the electoral attractiveness of radical right parties, is similar to asking whether a glass is

half empty or half full. Such questions cannot be answered without some frame of reference: comparisons to other effects. This study contains two types of such comparisons. We will compare the effects of attitudes towards European integration with the strength of the effects of other predictors of party support. Moreover, we will compare these effects with the effects of EU-attitudes on support for other (established) parties. Data from the European Elections Studies provide an excellent opportunity to make these comparisons, because the data sets contain comparable information about a large number of parties from all sorts of ideological denominations. For this study we will use data from the European Election Studies 2004, which was conducted immediately following elections to the European Parliament. It consists of cross-sectional surveys using random samples from the electorates of most of the member states of the European Union. In this study we use the surveys from ten countries with one or more parties of the radical right. In Austria 1,010 respondents were interviewed, in Denmark this was 1317, in France 1406, in Germany 596, In Greece 500, in Hungary 1200, in Italy 1553, in the Netherlands 1586, in Poland 960 and in Slovakia 1063. The total sample in these countries thus consists of 11,191 respondents, about 1,119 on average per country.

To compare the motives to support a radical right party with the motives to support other parties we employ a method that was proposed by Van der Eijk and Franklin (1996). In each country voters were asked, for each party in their political system,¹ how likely it was (on a scale of 1 to 10) that they would *ever* vote for it. These questions have been carefully designed to yield measures that can be interpreted as the propensity to vote for each of the parties (van der Eijk and Franklin 1996; van der Eijk 2002; Van der Eijk et al. 2006). These measures can be regarded for ease of exposition as preferences, but we know that voters make their choice in each election for the party they most prefer.²

Having measures of vote propensities serves many purposes, but in this paper the most important function is to provide us with a dependent variable that is comparable across parties (from the same party system, as well as from different party systems): the propensity to vote for a party. When the data matrix is stacked so that

1 In practice the parties asked about included only those with representation in the national parliament or those widely expected to obtain representation in the European Parliament.

2 In practice this occurs about 93% of the time in established EU member states.

each voter appears as many times as there are parties for which vote propensities have been measured (and other variables have been appropriately transformed as explained below), the question can be posed "what is it that makes a vote for a party attractive to voters?" We already know that voters virtually always choose to vote for the party to which they give highest propensity to vote (see note 2). So an answer to the question "what is it that makes a vote for a party attractive to voters?" is also an answer to the question "what determines which parties are voted for?" The use of this measure to analyse the determinants of party choice has been validated elsewhere (Tillie 1995; Van der Eijk et al. 2006). There are three conceptual and methodological reasons for using the 'propensity to support' questions as a dependent variable to answer our research questions.

The first reason is that the 'propensity to support' items allow for a research design that is truly comparative (see below). Were we to use party choice as our dependent variable, we would have to conduct separate analyses for each of the countries. Now we can analyse party preference in one single analysis in which all parties from all countries are included. Alternatively, one could do a comparative analysis with a research design proposed by Lubbers, Gijsberts & Scheepers (2002). They estimated a logistic regression model in which the dependent variable has two values: whether the respondent voted for a radical right party (1) or not (0). This design is not suitable to answer our research question, because it does not allow one to assess whether voters use different criteria to evaluate radical right parties than to evaluate other parties.³

Secondly, some of the radical-right wing parties that we are interested in attract so few votes that estimates of the effects of different variables on decisions to vote for any of these parties are highly unreliable. Since the 'propensity to support' items are asked of all respondents, the parameter estimates are more robust. Finally, if we want to understand the choice process, we cannot afford to look only at the result of that process (the party or candidate voted for), i.e., use party choice as the dependent variable. This is because we lack important information that we need to model this choice process, such as the (differences among) preferences for parties not voted for as well as the preference for the party one did vote for. This information is essential because we know that most voters in Western European countries find more

³ Moreover, a dependent variable that distinguishes only between radical right and other parties does not realistically reflect the electoral process.

than one party attractive. So, in order to model the motivations underlying the support for radical right parties, we need information about the attractiveness of all parties to all respondents. Since this is what the 'propensity to support' items actually measure, we can analyse the choice process by using these questions as our dependent variable (this argument has been elaborated in more detail elsewhere. See, Van der Eijk 2002; Van der Eijk et al. 2006; Van der Brug et al. 2007).

The EES 2004 asked this question for 11 radical right parties, all mentioned in the introduction, from 10 European countries: Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Slovakia. To assess whether voters evaluate these 11 parties by the same criteria as other parties, our study concentrates on the electoral attractiveness of all parties (75 in total) in the ten political systems included in this study. A valid way to analyse individual and inter-party level variations in party preferences simultaneously can be realised by arranging the data in the so-called 'stacked' (or 'pooled') form that was first proposed by Stimson (1985) and after that applied frequently in electoral research (e.g., MacDonald, Listhaug and Rabinowitz, 1991; van der Eijk and Franklin, 1996; Westholm, 1997). In this stacked data matrix each respondent is represented by as many 'cases' as there are parties for which (s)he was asked to indicate the vote propensity. This matrix allows us to apply multiple regression to explain parties' electoral attractiveness. By adding characteristics of the political systems and the parties as variables in the stacked data matrix, such characteristics can be included as variables in these regression analyses. In order to assess whether voting for radical right parties involves a different kind of decision than voting for other parties, we will estimate interaction terms for a radical right party on the one hand, and a set of independent variables on the other. Before getting into this, let us discuss which independent variables are in the equation for predicting parties' electoral attractiveness, and how these are treated in the stacked matrix.

The first predictor of party preference is the subjectively perceived distance between a voter and the respective party in the data matrix on a left-right continuum. Policy voting implies that the closer a party is to someone's own position in terms of policy positions, the more attractive this party will be for the person in question. The questionnaire contained a battery of items in which respondents were asked to indicate their own position as well as that of each political party on a 10-point scale of which the extremes were labelled left and right. These positions are indicative of very

general policy preferences. From these responses perceived left-right distances were computed. The stronger the effect of perceived left-right distance on electoral attractiveness, the stronger the extent of ideological voting.

The European Elections Study 2004 also contains measures of the positions of respondents on European integration and their perceptions of party positions on this issue. Respondents are asked to place themselves and a number of parties on a 10-point scale of which the extremes are labelled 'European unification should be pushed further' (at 1) and 'European unification has gone too far already' (at 10). On the basis of these variables we created another predictor of party preference, i.e., the perceived distance on this scale between each respondent and the respective party in the data matrix.

Other predictors of party preference are three attitude scales: approval of the current national government, approval of the European Union and satisfaction with the way democracy works. The latter is not regularly included in models of party choice, but since the paper investigates radical right parties that are sometimes critical of parliamentary democracies, we included this measure. The survey also contained the question "what is the most important problem facing the country?" The responses were coded in categories, and we created dummy variables, one for each of the categories. These were used to assess the influence of political priorities on party preferences.

In addition to these attitude scales, we included a number of socio-structural and demographic variables in the model: social class, education, gender, religion and age. Class is measured with a variable asking for the respondent's subjective idea of his/her social class. Religion is a composite variable of religious denomination and church attendance.

Creating the stacked data matrix produces a dependent variable, "party preference", that is generic in the sense of having no party-specific meaning. The problem here, though, is that the relationship between dependent and independent variables are usually directionally specific. For example, approval of the European union can be expected to have a negative effect on support for a radical right party, whereas it might have a positive effect on support for a party that is more pro-Europe. In the case of the effect of left/right ideology and the European unification scale, this directionality problem could be easily overcome by computing the distance between each party and each respondent. However, this could not be done in the case of the

socio-structural variables and the other attitude scales, because the surveys do not contain matching party characteristics for them.

The solution to this problem is to estimate linear regressions for each party separately, before constructing the stacked matrix. In these regressions we use one independent variable to predict vote propensities for each of the parties separately. The predicted scores of these regressions, or y-hats in statistical parlance, are saved and used as the new independent variable. These y-hats are simply linear transformations of the original independent variables, scaled according to the dependent variable, i.e. the ten-point vote propensity variables.⁴ Therefore, they are useful for the analysis of the stacked data matrix since they are comparable across parties and countries. In this way, we created independent variables, one at a time, party-by-party and country-by-country, which could be included in a stacked data matrix in which the dependent variable is composed of party preferences for all parties across all countries. That is the dataset employed in this study (see e.g., Van der Eijk and Franklin, 1996; Van der Brug, 2004). This transformation was done for the following independent variables in our model: social class, gender, religion, education, age, issue importance, government approval, satisfaction with democracy and EU-approval. One outcome of this transformation of these independent variables is that their effects will *always be positive*.⁵ The dependent variable contains the original scores on the 10-point the propensity to vote items.

Finally, we included a variable at the party level, *party size*, which represents a strategic consideration that voters may take into account: when two parties are about equally attractive on all relevant accounts, voters tend to vote for the largest one because it stands a better chance of achieving its policy goals. Party size is measured by each parties' proportion of seats in parliament.

In a number of subsequent steps we will assess to strength of the effect of attitudes towards the EU on support for radical right parties. First, we will present the proportions of explained variance of models in which the predictors are two items that measure attitudes towards the EU. We will present the explained variance of these

⁴ These scores present problems of analysis unless they are centred round the mean y-hats for each of the parties. In practice we subtract the mean value for each party, turning all of them into deviations from zero.

⁵ Except for odd cases where statistically insignificant effects can become negative in multivariate models.

regressions separately for the radical right wing parties and for the other parties in each country. Secondly, we will present the results of multivariate models for all 75 parties. Also, we will do the same for the subgroup of 11 radical right parties, and for the 64 other parties. These analyses will allow only for an *ad oculos* comparison of differences in the effect parameters. As a final step we will therefore explore whether significant interaction effects exist between each of the radical right parties on the one hand and attitudes towards the EU on the other. This will be done for the model that was estimated for the total of 75 parties. Such interaction effects, were they to exist, would indicate that EU-attitudes have a significantly stronger or weaker effect on support of radical right parties than on support for the other parties.

Datasets such as ours present certain problems of analysis. The main one is a lack of independence between the vote propensity scores given by the same person to different parties. In a separate appendix we discuss how we handled these problems, and how we weighted the data in each analysis.

Results

Table 1 presents the proportions of explained variance of models with two independent variables. The first predictor is the distance between parties and respondents on the 10-point European unification scale ('European unification should be pushed further', versus 'European unification has gone too far already'). The second predictor is a question whether the European Union is 'generally a good thing', 'generally a bad thing', or 'neither good nor bad'. This item was recoded into two dummy variables, and the variable in the stacked data set is the \hat{y} of regressions of these two dummies on the propensity to support each of the parties. In Table 1 we present the proportions explained variance of the regressions conducted separately for each country and for radical right and other parties.

Table 1: Effects of EU-attitudes on party support (Adjusted R²'s)

	Radical right parties	Other parties
Austria	.053	.022
Denmark	.072	.044
France	.074	.035
Germany	.027	.029
Greece	.031	.076
Hungary	.020	.022
Italy	.072	.052
Netherlands	.032	.019
Poland	.045	.046
Slovakia	.036	.055
All countries	.047	.036

The first thing to note is that attitudes towards the EU exert only a small effect on the support for parties in these 10 countries. About 4 per cent of the variance in party support can be explained by attitudes towards the EU. Moreover, there is not much difference between radical right parties and other parties in this respect. Across 11 radical right parties, 4.7 per cent of the variance in the propensity to support them can be attributed to EU-attitudes. This is about one per cent more than for the other 64 parties (3.6%). The strongest effect of EU-attitudes can be found in the case of the French Front National: 7.4 per cent of the variance in support can be explained by attitudes towards the EU. This is substantially more than for the other parties (3.5 per cent on average). Similar differences exist in Austria in the case of the FPÖ (5.3%, whereas it is only 2.2% for the other parties and in Denmark for the Dansk Folkepartit (7.2 versus 4.4 per cent). There are, however, also examples where it is the other way around. EU attitudes have a smaller effect on support for LAOS, the radical right party in Greece, than it has on support for the other Greek parties (3.1 versus 7.6 per cent). The same is true of the SNS in Slovakia (3.6 versus 5.5 per cent).

These first preliminary analyses do not suggest that EU-attitudes are very important for the vote, neither for the radical right parties, nor for the other parties in the party systems. However, it could be the case that the differences between radical right parties and other parties become more pronounced when we control for other predictors of vote propensities. Therefore, Table 2 presents three multivariate analyses.

Table 2: full models for the explanation of party support in 10 countries

	All 75 parties			11 radical right parties			64 established parties		
	b	SE	Beta	b	SE	Beta	b	SE	Beta
Social class	.542	.034	.073**	.600	.106	.073**	.534	.037	.072**
Religion	.645	.032	.115**	.808	.094	.109**	.627	.031	.120**
Gender	.725	.106	.038**	1.089	.166	.072**	.677	.122	.033**
Education	.495	.044	.057**	.542	.117	.068**	.493	.048	.056**
Age	.408	.053	.041**	1.103	.333	.030*	.396	.054	.043**
Importance of issues	.614	.042	.074**	.655	.083	.098**	.607	.046	.069**
EU approval	.430	.039	.059**	.651	.084	.099**	.396	.042	.052**
Government approval	.650	.019	.211**	.591	.045	.126**	.647	.020	.214**
Satisfaction with democracy	.323	.036	.045**	.514	.084	.064**	.307	.040	.044**
Perceived distance European unification	-.071	.008	-.052**	-.081	.012	-.080**	-.068	.009	-.050**
Perceived distance on left-right	-.362	.008	-.280**	-.264	.011	-.259**	-.385	.008	-.286**
Radical right party (dummy variable)	-.536	.037	-.062**						
Party size	4.321	.089	.229**	5.163	.506	.109**	4.303	.088	.222**
R ² -adjusted	.336			.234			.331		
Number of clusters (respondents)	8,801			8,583			8,798		
Number of units of analysis	67,088			9,667			57,421		

*: significant at $p < .01$; **: significant at $p < .001$.

In the first model in Table 2, a more fully specified model is estimated for all 75 parties, in the second one only the 11 radical right parties are included, and the third analysis includes the 64 other parties. Before we turn to our comparisons of the effects of EU-attitudes, we will first discuss the overall results. In the analyses of all 75 parties a (dummy) variable was included that distinguishes the 11 radical right parties from the 64 others. The regression coefficient for this variable tells us whether any differences exist between the electoral attractiveness of radical right parties on the one hand and 'mainstream' parties on the other, after controlling for the effects of the other independent variables. In other words, the coefficient tells us whether - after we take the effects of social characteristics, policy preferences, etceteras into account - radical right parties are considered more or less attractive than other parties. This effect is negative and significant, which means that, after all factors that affect preferences for parties have been taken into account, preferences for radical right parties are still on average lower than preferences for other parties (0.54 units on a 10-point scale).

Judging by the magnitude of the standardized coefficients, in all three years the left/right distance between parties and voters is the strongest determinant of electoral preferences. The significance of the left/right dimension for structuring the behaviour of voters has been observed by many scholars (e.g., Fuchs and Klingemann, 1990; Van der Eijk and Franklin, 1996; Hix, 1999; Schmitt, 2001). Another finding is that *party size* is the variable with the second strongest effect on party preference. The positive effect of party size shows that, after controlling for policy positions and social characteristics, voters consider a larger party more attractive than a smaller one. Voters who wish to influence policy making take into account the strategic consideration that a large party has a better chance than a smaller one to realise its policy goals. So, electoral preferences are determined by a combination of *ideological* and *pragmatic* considerations.

The magnitude of the effects of socio-structural variables and issue priorities, is quite stable, and these effects are substantially weaker than those of left/right ideology and party size. Government approval, on the other hand, has a strong effect, and the effect is substantively in 2004 than it had been previously. In 1999, the standardized effect of government approval was 0.09, whereas in 2004 it is 0.22. Compared to the other years, voters tend to base their electoral preferences more than in previous years on their evaluation of the performance of parties in government.

This suggest that the electoral process is undergoing a transformation from input oriented legitimacy to output oriented legitimacy in terms of the Eastonian model of the political process (Easton, 1965). Since this is beyond the scope of this paper, we will not explore this matter further here. Both indicators of EU-attitudes have a rather weak effect on the propensities to support parties.

How does this general model compare to the model for the 11 radical right parties? The most important conclusion of Table 2 is that most of the effects are quite similar in magnitude. Note that as a result of the linear transformations of most of the independent variables, those parameters are necessarily positive, so that no conclusions can be drawn about the direction of the effects. Socio-structural and demographic characteristics —gender, age, religion, social class and education— have almost the same weak effect on electoral preferences for radical right parties as on electoral preferences for other parties. Also, the effect of left/right distance on electoral preferences is very similar for the two groups of parties. Judging by the standardized coefficients, two variables exert weaker effects: party size and government approval. In contrast to what one might expect *a priori* on the basis of the nationalist ideologies of parties of the radical right, differences on the issue of European integration exert an effect on preferences for radical right-wing parties that is very similar to the effect it has on preferences for other parties. The same goes for citizens' satisfaction with the EU. The standardized regression coefficients are slightly higher, but for both groups of parties, the effects of EU-attitudes are very modest.

The comparisons between electoral preferences for various radical right parties and other parties have so far been made for all 11 parties of the radical right together, and on an *ad oculum* basis. The design of our analyses, with a stacked data matrix in which electoral preferences are studied for all parties simultaneously, provides the opportunity to systematically study differences among the radical right-wing parties, and, also between radical right-wing parties and other parties. If a variable has a different effect for one party than for all other parties, the regression model should contain an interaction term between the respective party on the one hand and this variable on the other.

To estimate these interactions, we estimated two models. The first model is the model in Table 1 estimated for all 75 parties with one extra variable added: an interaction effect between the dummy variable that separates the radical right parties

from the other ones and distance on the issue of European unification.⁶ Model 1 in Table 3 presents the parameter estimates of this interaction term, as well as the main effects of distance on European unification. The models also included the effects of the other independent variables presented in Table 1, but these are not presented, because to assess whether the determinants of support for radical right parties is different from the determinants of support for other parties, we are only interested in the interaction effects.

Table 3: Interactions with radical right parties

		Distance European Unification
Model 1	Main effects	-.071**
	11 radical right parties	.003
Model 2	Main effects	-.071**
	Interactions with	
	FPÖ	.000
	Dansk Folkeparti	-.122***
	FN (French)	-.005
	Republikaner	.087*
	LAOS	.034
	Alleanza Nazionale	.026
	Lega Nord	-.012
	LPF	-.001
	Justice and Life	.066*
	Self Defence	-.087
	SNS	-.027

Source: European Elections Study 2004

* significant at $p < .05$; **: significant at $p < .01$; ***: significant at $p < .001$.

Model 1 shows that EU-attitudes do not have a significantly stronger or weaker effect on support for these 11 radical right parties than for the other 64 parties. The interaction effect is .003 and not significant. In other words, anti-EU feelings contribute hardly to support for the radical right.

In the second model we look at the 11 radical right parties separately. Instead of a dummy variable for the 11 radical right parties together, we added 11 dummies

⁶ The method does not allow us to estimate interaction effects for the other variables in the model. The reason is that their effects were originally estimated with a procedure that involves a linear transformation of the original variables. This procedure provides a valid way to estimate the strength of each of the independent variables, but at the same time rules out the possibility to estimate interaction effects. As the topic of this paper focuses primarily on the effect of party size and left-right distance (two variables that were not transformed) we do not consider this to be a problem here.

for each one of them. And we added the interactions between these dummy variables and distances on European unification. The relevant results of this model (Model 2) are presented in the lower half of Table 3.

Since the variable is a distance measure, we expect the effect to be negative: the larger the difference between one's position and a party, the lower the preference for this party. This is what the main effect does indeed show. To interpret the interaction effects, these should be compared to the main effect. If the interaction effect is significant and negative, the variable EU-unification has a stronger effect for this party than for the other parties in the analysis. This is only so in the case of the Dansk Folkepartit. In two cases, the interaction effect is significant and positive: the German Republikaner and the Hungarian Justice and Life party. For them, the issue has a significantly weaker effect than for the other parties.

Conclusion and discussion

There is increasing evidence that, in terms of how they attract votes, radical right parties are not so different from other parties (Van der Brug et al. 2000; Van der Brug and Fennema 2003). This study zoomed in on the role of attitudes towards the EU, and found that the effects of these attitudes on support for radical right parties are similar to such effects on support for other parties: in both cases these effects are weak. In addition, we found that the effects of socio structural variables are weak, and very similar to the effects of socio structural variables on other parties. This means that radical right wing parties, like most other parties, attract their support from across all different strata in society. Finally, neither dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy, nor dissatisfaction with European unification, nor dissatisfaction with the government exerts a strong effect on support for radical right parties. Because of all these similarities, we should be careful not to think of supporters of radical right parties as the 'losers of modernity' as Betz (1994) used to call them, who support these parties to express general feelings of discontent.

Previous studies have showed that negative feelings towards immigrants are important predictors of support for radical right parties. Unfortunately, the EES 2004 does not contain indicators of attitudes towards immigrants. This means that the modest effects of attitudes towards the EU could even be somewhat overestimated, because at the level of individual citizens, negative feelings towards immigrants are correlated with Euroskepcis (e.g., Van der Brug and Van Spanje 2007).

Because of their nativist ideologies (e.g., Mudde 2007), nationalist feelings are at the heart of the ideologies of radical right parties. Therefore, one would have expected that the effect of EU-attitudes would have been more important for the support for these parties. Our analyses showed that this is not so, except for the case of the Dansk Folkepartit. Only in Denmark had the issue of EU-unification and enlargement been politicised to such an extent that these attitudes translate into electoral preferences.

There are reasons to expect that issues of EU-enlargement and further EU-unification could become more contested in other countries as well, and could, as a result, become more important as predictors of radical right support. First, with debates on further enlargement, particularly of Turkey, the future of the EU is likely to become increasingly contested. Secondly, these debates are related to topics such as national sovereignty and national identities. It is well known that nationalism is a strong political force, and is at the heart of the ideologies of radical right parties. The example of the Dansk Folkepartit demonstrates that if the future of the EU becomes politicised, attitudes towards the EU can become rather strong predictors of support for a radical right party. Thirdly, when radical right parties became successful in electorally mobilizing discontent with immigration policies, established parties of the right have to some extent co-opted their programs. Asylum policies and immigration policies have become stricter in various Western European countries, so that radical right parties have to some extent lost their 'unique selling proposition'. In response, they may well decide to emphasize more on the negative aspects of EU-policies. For established parties, which have been largely responsible for transferring national sovereignty to the EU, it will be difficult to co-opt the policies of radical right parties on EU unification, since that would be inconsistent with their past behaviour. So, it seems quite rational for radical right parties to attempt to politicise this issue more when the 2009 European Parliament elections are getting closer. Whether they will attempt to seize this opportunity, remains to be seen.

APPENDIX

The stacked matrix, combining party preferences for the 75 parties from 10 political systems has a total of 67,088 units of analysis, after deletion of missing cases in the dependent variable. To estimate the parameters of the regression models, units of analyses are weighted in two steps. As a result of the weight factor applied in the first step, respondents in each system are weighted in such a way that their party choice in the European Elections 2004 reflect exactly the actual election results. In the second step this weight variable is multiplied by a (different) constant for each system, so that the ten systems in the stacked matrix contain the same number of cases. This weight variable was used for the analyses in which all parties from the 10 different political systems are analysed simultaneously. Each time groups of parties are selected, the variable generated in the first stage is multiplied by yet different constants for each system, so that in all regressions presented in Table 2 the 10 systems in the stacked matrix contain the same number of units of analysis each.

Because we stacked the data, the unit of analysis is no longer the individual respondent, but the respondent/party combination. Since these are not independent observations, we computed panel corrected standard errors, and reported significance on the basis of these tests. To be precise, we did these analyses in STATA, using the robust estimate of variance (known as the Huber/White/Sandwich estimate of variance) and the “cluster” option to adjust for the dependency among observations pertaining to the same respondent (Rogers, 1993; Williams, 2000). Each of the 8,801 respondents was defined as a separate cluster.

References

- Betz, H-G. (1994). *Radical Right-wing Populism in Western Europe*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Betz, H-G. (1998). Introduction, In: Hans-Georg Betz & Stephan Immerfall (eds.), *The new politics of the right: neo-populist parties and movements in established democracies*. Basingstoke: Macmillan: 1-10.
- Betz, H-G (2002). Rechtspopulismus und Rechtsradikalismus in Europa. *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft* 2003/2, 251-264.
- De Vries, C.E. (2007), *European Integration and National Elections*. Amsterdam: De Vrije Universiteit.
- Easton, D.A. (1965), *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*. New York: John Wiley.
- Fennema, M. (1997). Some conceptual issues and problems in the comparison of anti-immigrant parties in Western Europe. *Party Politics* 3: 473-492.
- Fuchs, D. & H.D. Klingemann (1990). The left-right scheme: theoretical framework. In: M.K. Jennings & J. van Deth (eds.), *Continuities in Political Action: A Longitudinal Study of Political Orientations in Three Western Democracies*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Hainsworth, Paul, ed. 2000. *The Politics of the Extreme Right: From the Margins to the Mainstream*. London: Pinter.
- Hix, S. (1999). Dimensions and Alignments in European Union Politics: Cognitive Constraints and Partisan Responses. *European Journal of Political Research* 35:69-106.
- Ignazi, P. (1992), 'The silent counter-revolution: Hypotheses on the emergence of extreme right-wing parties in Europe'. *European Journal of Political Research* 22(1): 3-34.
- Kitschelt, H. (1995). *The Radical Right in Western Europe. A Comparative Analysis*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Kriesi, Hanspeter, Edgar Grande, Romain Lachat, Martin Dolezal, Simon Bornschie, and Timotheos Frey. 2006. Globalization and the transformation of the national political space: Six European countries compared. *European Journal of Political Research* 45:921-956.
- Lubbers, M. (2001). *Exclusionistic Electorates. Extreme right-wing voting in Western Europe*. Nijmegen: ICS-dissertation.
- Lubbers, M., M. Gijsberts & P. Scheepers (2002). Extreme right-wing voting in Western Europe. Accepted for publication in the *European Journal of Political Research*.
- Macdonald, S.E., O. Listhaug, & G. Rabinowitz (1991). Issues and Party Support in Multiparty Systems. *American Political Science Review* 85:1107-31.
- Mayer, Nona (1998). The French National Front. In: Hans-Georg Betz & Stephan Immerfall (eds.), *The new politics of the right: neo-populist parties and movements in established democracies*. Basingstoke: Macmillan: 11-26.
- Mayer, N. & P. Perrineau (1992). Why do they vote for Le Pen? *European Journal of Political Research* 22 (1): 123-141.
- Minkenberg M. (2002). The New Radical Right in the Political Process: Interaction Effects in France and Germany. In: Martin Schain, Aristide Zolberg and Patrick Hossay (eds.), *Shadows over Europe: The Development and Impact of the Extreme Right in Western Europe*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 245-268.
- Mudde, C. (2007), *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Mughan, A. & P. Paxton (2003). *Immigrants, Prejudice and Politics: A Model of Populist Party Voting*. Paper presented at the Joint Session of Workshops 2003 of the ECPR, in Edinburgh.
- Nieuwbeerta, P. & W. Ultee (1999). Class Voting in Western Industrialized Countries, 1945-1990: Systematizing and Testing Explanations. *European Journal of Political Research* 35:123-160.
- Norris, P. (2005). *Radical Right: Parties and electoral competition*. New York, NY: Cambridge UP.
- Riedlsperger, M. (1998). The Freedom Party of Austria: From Protest to Radical Right Populism. In: Hans-Georg Betz & Stephan Immerfall (eds.), *The new politics of the right: neo-populist parties and movements in established democracies*. Basingstoke: Macmillan:27-44.
- Schmitt, Hermann. 2001. "Zur vergleichenden Analyse des Einflusses gesellschaftlicher Faktoren auf das Wahlverhalten: Forschungsfragen, Analysestrategien und einige Ergebnisse." In *Wahlen und Wähler. Analysen aus Anlaß der Bundestagswahl 1998*, eds. Hans-Dieter Klingemann and Max Kaase. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Stimson, J.A. (1985). Regression in Space and Time: A Statistical Essay. *American Journal of Political Science* 29: 914-47.
- Tillie, J. (1995). *Party Utility and Voting Behaviour*. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.
- Van der Brug, W. (2003), 'How the LPF fuelled Discontent: Empirical Tests of Explanations of LPF-support'. *Acta Politica. International Journal of Political Science* 38(1): 89-106.
- Van der Brug, W. (2004), 'Issue Ownership and Party Choice'. *Electoral Studies* 23(2): 209-233.
- Van der Brug, W. & M. Fennema (2003), 'Protest or mainstream? How the European anti-immigrant parties have developed into two separate groups by 1999'. *European Journal of Political Research* 42(1): 55-76.
- Van der Brug, W., M. Fennema & J. Tillie (2000). Anti-immigrant parties in Europe: Ideological or protest vote? *European Journal of Political Research* 37:77-102.
- Van der Brug, W & A. Mughan (2007), 'Charisma, Leader Effects and Support for Right-wing Populist Parties'. *Party Politics* 13(1): 29-51.
- Van der Brug, W. and C. van der Eijk, with H. Schmitt, M. Marsh, J. Thomassen, M. Franklin & S. Bartolini (2007), 'The Future of European Elections: 2004 and Beyond'. In: W. van der Brug & C. van der Eijk (eds.), *European Elections and Domestic Politics: Lessons from the Past and Scenarios for the Future*. University of Notre Dame Press.
- Van der Brug, W., C. van der Eijk & M. Franklin (2007), 'EU Support and Party Choice'. In: W. van der Brug & C. van der Eijk (eds.), *European Elections and Domestic Politics: Lessons from the Past and Scenarios for the Future*. University of Notre Dame Press.
- Van der Brug, W. & J. van Spanje (2007). Immigration, Europe and the 'new' cultural cleavage. Paper presented at the fourth General Conference of the European Consortium of Political Research in Pisa, Italy, from 6-8 September 2007.
- Van der Eijk, C. (2002). Design Issues in Electoral Research: Taking Care of (Core) Business. *Electoral Studies* 21 (in print).
- Van der Eijk, C. & M. Franklin (1996). *Choosing Europe? The European Electorate and National Politics in the Face of Union*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

- Van der Eijk, C., M. Franklin, & W. van der Brug (1999). Policy Preferences and Party Choice. In: H. Schmitt & J. Thomassen (eds.), *Political Representation and Legitimacy in the European Union*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Van der Eijk, C., W. van der Brug, M. Kroh & M. Franklin (2006), 'Rethinking the dependent variable in electoral behavior — on the measurement and analysis of utilities'. *Electoral Studies* 25(3): 424-447.
- Westholm, A. (1997). Distance Versus Direction: The Illusory Defeat of the Proximity Theory of Electoral Choice. *American Political Science Review* 91:865-83.