

Fall 11-6-2015

Explaining The Varying Success of Radical Right Parties in European Union and National Elections

Jakub Wondreys

Southern Illinois University Carbondale, j.wondreys@siu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/gs_rp

Recommended Citation

Wondreys, Jakub. "Explaining The Varying Success of Radical Right Parties in European Union and National Elections." (Fall 2015).

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at OpenSIUC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Research Papers by an authorized administrator of OpenSIUC. For more information, please contact opensiuc@lib.siu.edu.

EXPLAINING THE VARYING SUCCESS OF RADICAL RIGHT PARTIES IN EUROPEAN
UNION AND NATIONAL ELECTIONS

by

Jakub Wondreys

B.A., Roma Tre University, 2013

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts

Department of Political Science
in the Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
December 2015

RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

EXPLAINING THE VARYING SUCCESS OF RADICAL RIGHT PARTIES IN EUROPEAN
UNION AND NATIONAL ELECTIONS

By

Jakub Wondreys

A Research Paper Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the field of Political Science

Approved by:

Dr. Stephen Bloom, Chair

Dr. Benjamin Bricker

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
November 6, 2015

AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

JAKUB WONDREYS, for the Master of Arts degree in Political Science, presented on November 6, 2015, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: EXPLAINING THE VARYING SUCCESS OF RADICAL RIGHT PARTIES IN EUROPEAN UNION AND NATIONAL ELECTIONS

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Stephen Bloom

In this study, I explain-as other scholars have-the growing success of radical right parties in Europe. I also address conceptualization and classification issues. Contrary to other scholars, I compare party performance across two different elections: European and national. Also unlike the vast majority of studies that focus exclusively on Western Europe, this study looks more broadly at all members of the European Union, including those in Central and Eastern Europe. My main argument is that the radical right will perform better in European than in national elections. In explaining why parties should perform better in the former rather than the latter, I emphasize the impact of Reif & Schmitt's (1980) second order national elections theory and its implications, and of the electoral system. I also test the impact of one of the most denominated determinants of the radical right success in national elections. My findings confirm that radical right parties generally perform better in European elections and that it is mostly because of their second order national contest nature. The electoral system is also significant, in cases where it differs across the the elections. Testing for the difference in the radical right parties' performance between national and European elections and for the impact of various indicators on the success of the radical right in national elections also allowed me to reconsider the importance of some of the most denominated determinants of the success of the radical right and evaluate the validity of the second order national elections model.

Keywords: Political parties, Radical right, Elections, Europe, European Union, Second order elections, electoral systems

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
ABSTRACT.....	i
LIST OF TABLES.....	iv
Introduction.....	1
What is the radical right?	3
European radical right parties	12
Explaining the support for radical right parties	14
Models and variables	27
Results	31
Conclusions	34
REFERENCES	38
APPENDICES	
Radical right parties in the European Union.....	42
Vita.....	43

LIST OF TABLES

<u>TABLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Table 1 – The Radical Right in National and European Union elections 2014.....	26
Table 2 – Model1	31
Table 3 – Model2 and Model3 – OLS	32

Introduction

Many observers and journalists emphasized the surprising success of extreme right wing parties in the elections to the European Union parliament in 2014, and expressed concerns about the recent growing support of right-wing extremism in Europe. However, if we closely look at radical right parties' performance over the past several years, we observe that these assumptions are mostly incorrect and their predictions exaggerated. First, the radical right is not a recent phenomenon in Europe. Even though most of the theories about radical right parties are quite recent, some social scientists have tried to address the reasons for the radical right success for almost two decades. Betz (1994) points out that radical right parties started to grow as early as in the late 1980s. I argue that some of these parties emerged even earlier. Some parties have ties to fascism from the interwar and World War II periods, such as the Italian Social Movement – National Right (MSI-DN), which was founded in 1946 and gained 56 seats in the Italian parliament in 1972. Second, the success of the radical right is not constant or growing, but varies over time (Arzheimer & Carter 2006). For example, Ellinas (2010) observes how support for the French National Front took off in legislative elections in 1990s only to decrease in the next few elections. What most scholars have failed to observe is that the support for the radical right not changes only over time but also varies depending on the type of elections in which the party competes. This argument might offer a better explanation of the success of the radical right than the other common theories which have produced very inconsistent results. I argue that radical right parties will generally perform better in the European Union than in national elections. There might be several possible reasons for the variation in the party performance across these two types of elections. Here, I emphasize what I believe are the two most plausible explanations.

First, parties occasionally compete under different electoral rules in European and national elections. Maurice Duverger's (1959) influential theory about mechanical and psychological effects of electoral rules emphasizes that voters in majoritarian systems think twice about casting their votes for smaller parties. According to Duverger, disproportionality of these systems causes underrepresentation and thus causes people to vote strategically to not waste their votes. The performance of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) across the two type of elections is a case in point. In 2015 national elections, under majoritarian electoral rules, UKIP gained only one seat in the House of Commons, whereas it won 27% of the vote in the elections to the European Parliament under proportional rules.

Second, European elections are only 'second-order *national* elections' (Reif and Schmitt 1980). This means that voters generally think of European elections as less important. Norris (2005, 151) further argues that elections to the European Union Parliament are simply a mid-term referendum on national governments. This may influence the fortunes of radical right parties. The voters may be more tempted to vote for radical right parties in the European Union elections as they are less concerned about the possibility that extremists could actually govern them directly. The voters may also be more prone to listen to the simple messages of these parties in the European elections, whereas in the national elections they will expect more detailed political program that covers a range of issues. Finally, the voter, by voting for the radical right in second-order European elections, may be sending a message of protest to the mainstream parties back home. Some scholars argued that it is not the second order national contest nature of the European elections that makes the smaller parties more successful in them, but particular European Union issues that smaller parties address in European elections (Ferrara and Weishaupt 2004). Considering the anti-EU agendas of many radical right parties, this suggests another

reason we should expect them to perform better in the European Union rather than in national elections.

As Mudde (2007) points out, the research about the radical right is limited to Western Europe. I include radical right parties from both Western and Eastern Europe. Studying radical right parties across the European Union avoids the problem of selection bias and selection on the dependent variable that could lead to biased estimates (Geddes 2003).

The paper is organized as follows: I discuss important problems of categorization and coding which have affected the results of various studies about the radical right, suggest some propositions on how to overcome them, and provide an analysis of radical right parties which I include in my dataset. Second, I examine existing studies that which have tried to explain the support for the radical right. Third, I demonstrate how the type of elections affects the radical right vote and theorize about the reasons why radical right parties perform better in European elections. Finally, I test my arguments and analyze the findings.

1) What is the radical right?

The scholarly work on the radical right has suffered through the years from often misleading and untested assumptions about radical right parties' nature. These assumptions may seem logical at first glance, but do not work well in reality. Mistakes in classifying the individual parties, a lack of testing, and Western centrism are arguably the main reasons for the inconsistent results of the studies which have tried to explain the success of the radical right.

As some of the studies about the radical right have correctly pointed out (Mudde 1995, 2007; Ignazi 2003; Hainsworth 2008), there is not standard criteria according to which parties are classified and defined as radical right. This is potentially a critical problem for studies which are interested in comparing across states. One simply cannot be an expert on every country. No

clear definition of the characteristics of the radical right and a general lack of knowledge about particular parties may lead to the erroneous inclusion of some parties. The end result may include problems with testing and misleading findings. Therefore, there is a need to clearly establish the distinctive features of the radical right. Mudde's (2007) study regarding the populist radical right is arguably the first large study dedicated mostly to the conceptualization and classification of these parties. As conceptualization and classification are not the main goals of this study, I follow Mudde and other scholars who have dedicated a great deal of time and effort to this issue. However, I also try to update their work and offer my own suggestions.

Some scholars emphasized the problem of how this particular party family should be classified (Ferraresi 1996; Ignazi 2003; Mudde 2007). However, this study is not interested here in such terminological battles. In my opinion, it is of minimal importance whether the adjective in use is 'extreme' (Ignazi 2003) or 'populist radical' (Mudde 2007). Rather, it is crucial to understand what makes the party radical or extreme, and what distinguishes it from other political parties.

In this study, I use the term radical right, which follows Mudde's (2007) terminology. The term 'radical' stands for the harsh language that these parties adopt when addressing their political opponents (Betz & Johnson 2004), immigrants, minorities, globalization, and other issues. I believe that the same definition could be used for the term 'extreme' in this context. The selection of 'radical' is merely practical here as Mudde's work is the one that I am using the most in this part of the study. More importantly, contrary to Mudde and other authors (i.e. Betz 1994), I am not using the term 'populist'. Populism can be defined as an ideological feature which "considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an

expression of the general will of the people” (Mudde 2004, 543; 2007, 23). Although I recognize that populism is an important feature of modern radical right parties, I am not solely interested in the ‘populist’ radical right, but in the radical right generally. In practice, this means that I am not excluding the parties which Mudde codes as ‘nonpopulist’ radical right, and others call ‘extreme’ right (Ferraresi 1996; Bustikova & Kitschelt 2011), or ‘old’ and ‘traditional’ extreme right (Ignazi 1992, 2003). There are ideological differences among the parties, but I do not believe that subdivision is necessary for this study. Moreover, I argue that this division is also extremely difficult in practice and only adds to the existing conceptual chaos. I emphasize two reasons why.

First, there are methodological problems that make this kind of distinction very difficult. Mudde (2007, 49) argues that ‘nonpopulist’ radical right parties are openly neofascist, undemocratic, elitist, and therefore non populist. Bustikova & Kitschelt (2011, 148) argue that the ‘radical’ right pursues authoritarian objectives within the boundaries of the democratic system, while the ‘extreme’ right wants to replace democracy with authoritarianism. Ferraresi (1996, 10-11) claims that what he calls the ‘radical extreme’ right embraces violence and illegal means as a legitimate tool of political struggle. However, he acknowledges that this distinction is mostly conventional and cannot be followed too rigidly. In my opinion, none of these studies provide enough evidence for such a division. The theory regarding the necessary subdivision of the radical right is therefore based mostly on unproven assumptions about certain parties. This is caused by the fact that it would be difficult in practice to find enough evidence that a given party is explicitly neofascist, neo-Nazi, elitist or undemocratic. Such divisions also preclude comparative research and testing.

Radical right parties in particular are very careful not to overstep certain boundaries of political conformity erected by the democratic systems in which they compete. Most of the European postwar constitutions are explicitly antifascist. Therefore, open propaganda of fascist ideology and ties with the old regimes could potentially mean many years in prison for the parties' leaders and members and the dissolution of the parties. In consequence, parties are usually very well aware of the limits of their rhetoric and actions. Radical right parties are as strategic as any other political parties. Generally, they find a 'safe' level of radicalization to avoid legal issues and remain attractive to a group of voters. On the other side of the political spectrum, communist parties face the same kind of issues, especially in Central and Eastern Europe.

An example of how difficult it is to find sufficient evidence that the party is neofascist, neo-Nazi, and openly supports violence can be found in the failed attempts (2011, 2012) of German officials to ban the extremist NPD (National Democratic Party), which Mudde (2007, 49) names as one of the main examples of the 'nonpopulist' radical right. The selection of 'democratic' in the party name is hardly a coincidence. As argued above, radical right parties are strategic players. The more extreme the party's real intentions, the more careful the party will be about openly expressing them.

Second, contrary to Mudde, I do not believe that the presumed ties with fascism or more extreme anti-system positions necessarily mean that the party is elitist and not populist. Indeed, I believe that all modern radical right parties are populist to some extent, whatever their political doctrines. There is a clear overlap of issues between more and less extreme wings of the radical

right that makes a distinction among them based on populism very difficult. For example, the program of the German NPD looks very similar to any other populist radical right party¹.

To conclude, trying to forcibly make the separation between the less and the more extreme radical right seems to produce more damage than utility. For example, Golder (2003) is trying to make a similar distinction as other authors cited here, using similar criteria, and codes as neofascist some of the parties that Mudde codes as populist (i.e. British BNP). Therefore, although it is obvious that there are some differences between the single parties, I believe that to draw rigid boundaries between the subgroups of the radical right is often very difficult and too much emphasis on this issue has had only counterproductive results thus far.

To classify radical right parties, we need to look for certain ideological features which distinguish them from other political parties. I agree with Mudde (2007) that the parties that are only populist or ethno-regionalist should not be included in the radical right party family. Recognizing the differences among these parties can sometimes be very tricky. First, one cannot be an expert on every party or pursue field research in all of the countries of Europe, and therefore must rely on secondary sources which are sometimes of questionable quality. Second, there is often scant data available on an individual party. Taking these two points into account, the classification used in this study is not without weaknesses. I acknowledge possible shortcomings in the coding of parties from countries which are out of my area of expertise.

I do not believe that trying to enumerate vast and complex sets of distinctive features is plausible here. Considering the differences between parties and the continuous evolution of their agendas, it only adds to confusion and it may result in mistakes in classification that could lead to misleading results. Therefore, I use Mudde's minimum definition (2007, 15) and emphasize

¹ "Themen", *NPD*, accessed October 31, 2015, <https://npd.de/themen/>.

only one truly distinctive feature of the radical right. This core feature is a radical form of nationalism that is similar to what Mudde (2007, 19) refers to as 'nativism' and defines it as a combination of nationalism and xenophobia. Radical right nationalism has to be understood in terms of this combination.

Scholars have provided different definitions of nationalism. Benedikt Anderson (1983) defines the nation as an imagined community. It is imagined because, although its members do not necessarily know each other, they imagine that they live in some sort of communion together. This community is imagined both as limited by its borders and sovereign. Hobsbawm (1990) emphasizes the importance of proto-national bounds – or preexisted feelings of collective belongings – for the creation of such communities, and the necessity of units of territorial political organization for the modern nationalism. Anthony Smith (1987) suggests two other important features for nationalism: citizenship (in a legal sense) that connects classes and strata in a community of theoretical equals and insiders, and common culture that is expressed by shared meanings and values.

Radical nationalists define the nation in a similar way, but with an emphasis on the exclusive character of their individual imagined communities. Everything that is outside the borders of the nation must be necessarily different. The nation in the eyes of radical nationalist is under continuous attack from the outside and therefore must be protected. Cofrancesco (1986, 66-67) in explaining the differences between the left and the right, argues that the goal of the right is to defend roots and tradition. For the radical right this applies even more. Preserving homogeneity of the nation is its ultimate goal.

Radical right parties built their ideology on a dichotomy of 'us' and 'them' emphasized by Connor (1994) in his book about ethnic nationalism. 'Them' can be distinguished from 'us'

by visible and also non-visible ‘cultural’ factors. The latter applies especially in the cases of ethnic minorities. Bustikova & Kitschelt (2011, 148) use another dichotomy according to which the radical right should build their ideology: ‘friend’ and ‘foe’. The goal of the radical right parties is protection of the nation and preservation of national culture and traditions that are believed to be threatened by ‘them’.

However, we should distinguish who is truly conceived here as an enemy and a threat. Radical right parties do not automatically see all of the other nations as enemies or inferior. In many cases, the parties follow at least to some extent De Benoist’s (1983) theory that nations should be considered different but equal. For instance, many parties believe in cooperation between individual European countries, even though with clearly defined boundaries and rules. They do not necessarily consider their nation superior to others. Some parties apply double standards regarding the sensitive theme of immigration. Immigrants from outside of Europe, and especially from Muslim countries, are seen as a real threat to the nation, whereas immigrants from other European countries, or non-European Christians, are arguably more acceptable to the radical right. For example, the leader of the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), Heinz-Christian Strache, in reaction to the current refugee crisis in Europe, called for the building of an army patrolled fence on the Austrian border and for admitting Christian rather than Muslim refugees². According to Grumke, radical right parties tend to cooperate with each other. He argues that ‘ultranationalist’ ideologies of radical right parties which should erect walls between the single parties are in reality not a hurdle for cooperation between them. He believes that this is a consequence of globalization, which is conceived as a common enemy (Grumke 2013, 13). However, this is not always the case. For instance, Marine Le Pen—the head of the French

² Heinz-Peter Bader. “Austrian far-right leader balmes U.S., NATO for migrant crisis.” *Reuters*, September 5, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/09/05/us-europe-migrants-austria-strache-idUSKCN0R50HP20150905>.

National Front—and Gert Wilders—leader of the Dutch PVV—refused to cooperate with the Hungarian Jobbik party, the Greek Golden Dawn party, and the Bulgarian Attack party in the European Parliament³ even though they all share euroskeptical anti-globalization stances. Moreover, where there are disputes over territory and national minorities, as in the cases Slovakia and Hungary, the cooperation is barely imaginable.

I suggest that in defining radical right parties, anti-immigration and anti-globalization policies are key additional features of radical right nationalism. They can both be considered implications of radical nationalist ideology and can be used as indications that the party is a member of the radical right party family.

Anti-immigration and anti-minority policies are clear expressions of the nationalist beliefs examined above. Bustikova & Kitschelt (2011, 148) argue that appeals to the nation and to the significance of collective national identity are strong indicators that the party is a radical right one, and a strict refusal of immigration is the product of these appeals. Pardos-Prado (2015, 352) claims that the emergence and stabilization of the radical right in Europe is a consequence of immigration, and that immigration is at the core of the radical right agenda. In Central and Eastern Europe, the radical right concentrates more on ethnic minority issues as levels of immigration are not as large as in Western Europe (Pirro 2014; Mudde 2007). With the current refugee crisis, there is growing Islamophobia and antipathy toward non-European immigrants among the public. As a result, many radical right parties in the CEE now see mass immigration as one of the most important issues on their agendas.

The anti-globalization characteristics of the radical right are another important implication of radical nationalist ideology and strong indicators of the radical rightism of the

³ David O’Riordan. “Le Pen says no deal between National Front and Jobbik.” *Politics.hu*, June 6, 2014, <http://www.politics.hu/20140606/le-pen-says-no-deal-between-national-front-and-jobbik/>.

party. Abedi's (2004) term 'anti-political establishment parties' seems to be a good fit for radical right parties. The 'global system', usually seen as represented by the United States and multinational institutions like the European Union, is blamed for mass immigration, for threatening national sovereignty, and for consumerism that threatens the survival of national culture and the national economy. Former leader of the German NPD, Ugo Voigt, claims that the consequences of globalization are "poverty, unemployment, dismantling of social services, and environmental destruction" (Botsch & Kopke 2013, 38). Strache (FPO) blames the United States and NATO for the recent refugee crisis in Europe⁴. National governments and politicians are also often a target for the radical right. They are accused of serving the 'global system' and selling out their nations. In an interview with Hungarian Budapest Times, Márton Gyöngyösi, deputy leader of Jobbik's parliamentary fraction, stated that blaming the EU and the West for the economic problems of the country is not enough and called the political elite of the country co-responsible for the loss of all Hungarian national wealth and all Hungarian national property⁵. In some cases, radical right parties have been part of government coalitions and have become more integrated into the system (i.e. FPO in Austria in 2000). However, according to Hainsworth (2008, 11), this does not necessarily mean that they have completely abandoned their ideologies and values that lay outside the mainstream.

The radical left-wing shares some anti-globalization characteristics with the radical right-wing. However, there are clear differences between the two. The anti-systemic features of the radical right derive from radical nationalism, whereas the extreme left usually rejects nationalism

⁴ Heinz-Peter Bader. "Austrian far-right leader blames U.S., NATO for migrant crisis." *Reuters*, September 5, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/09/05/us-europe-migrants-austria-strache-idUSKCN0R50HP20150905>.

⁵ J. Arthur White. "Jobbik to Wilders and Le Pen: liberalism and Zionism are the enemies, not Islam." *The Budapest Times*, February 22, 2014, <http://budapesttimes.hu/2014/02/22/jobbik-to-wilders-and-le-pen-liberalism-and-zionism-are-the-enemies-not-islam/>.

following the Marxist tradition. Following Bobbio's universal distinction between right and left according to their attitudes towards the value of equality, leftists are egalitarians and give importance to what makes people more equal, even though they recognize that there is no perfect equality. Rightists, on the other hand, give more importance to what makes people unequal (Bobbio 1994, 71). Egalitarians believe that inequalities are mostly social and as such can be eradicated. Anti-egalitarians believe that inequalities are natural and cannot be eradicated (1994, 67). Therefore, the extreme left should be defined as 'anti-liberal egalitarianism', whereas extreme right 'anti-liberal anti-egalitarianism' (Backes 2010, 172).

2) European radical right parties

As suggested by Mudde (2000a, 23-24; 2007, 39), I believe that qualitative content analysis is the best method to classify radical right parties. I include the most relevant radical right party for each country that competed in the European Union elections and the closest national elections. I do not believe that it is necessary to discuss here all individual parties and their features. I have no reason not to follow to a large extent Mudde's (2007) classification. His dataset, however, needs to be updated. For this sake, I provide my own analysis where I believe this is needed. The list of the parties that I code as radical right can be found in the appendix. I divide the parties into three groups here.

The first group consists of radical right parties that have been included by Mudde and have been a part of the European party systems for many years, and as such do not need any further introduction. These parties have also been included by almost all of the scholars dedicated to this subject. Among these parties we can count the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), the Belgian Flemish interest-former Vlaams Blok (VB), the British National Party (BNP), the

Danish People's party (DF), the French National Front (FN), the German Republikaner (REP) and the National Democratic Party (NPD)⁶, the Italian League North (LN), and the Swedish Sweden Democrats (SD).

The second group consists of the parties that Mudde includes, but are not always included in datasets. This is the result of studies either being out of date or Western-centric. There are no reasons not to believe that these parties should be classified as radical rightist. These parties include: The Bulgarian Attack (Ataka), the Croatian Party of Rights (HSP), the Polish League of the Polish Families (LPR), the Portuguese Renovator Party (PNR), the Romanian Greater Romania Party (PRM), the Slovakian National Party (SNS), and the Slovenian National Party (SNS).

The third group consists of the parties that Mudde does not include. I believe that this is primarily because he considers them non populist or not radical enough. Some of them also might not have existed when he wrote his book. Among these parties we can count the Cypriote ELAM which is a sister party of the Greek Golden Dawn; the Czech Worker's Party (DSSS, previously DS) and Tomio Okamura's Party of Direct Democracy (SPD) that has yet to compete in an election; the already mentioned Greek Golden Dawn; the Hungarian Movement for better Hungary (Jobbik); the Italian neofascist Casa Pound, which under the label "Sovranita" (Sovereignty) supports Matteo Salvini's League North; the Latvian National Alliance; the Maltese Imperium Europa (IE); the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) of Gert Wilders; the Polish National Movement (RN), which in the October 2015 national elections—as a part of the Kukiz'15 movement (total 42 seats)—gained 9 seats in parliament; and other smaller parties. In

⁶ Mudde does not include NPD, because he does not consider it a populist party. I have discussed my reasons why to include it in the previous parts of this study.

none of these cases are there reasons to doubt the parties' radical right affiliation. That is unfortunately not the case for the other parties in this group. Among those are the Estonian EKRE, the Finnish Finns Party (PS), the Lithuanian Order and Justice (TT), the Polish Congress of the New Right (KNP), and the British Independence Party (UKIP). However, after analysis of these parties' programs, speeches and interviews with their leaders, and the public image they possess, I conclude that although there may be some doubts about radical nationalism and anti-systemic character of these parties, there are enough indicators to include them in our dataset. For example, the Estonian EKRE - which was one of the most questionable parties - states in its manifesto that the demographic situation of the country does not allow any new mass migration. The main values of the party are family and fatherland, and the party stands against the destructive ideas of cultural Marxism, multiculturalism, and postmodern liberalism⁷. Moreover, I have profited from writing this study during the period of a large refugee crisis in Europe. The mentioned parties' reactions to the crisis were generally quite similar in their content to the reactions of any other radical right party examined here, supporting their assumed radical right affiliation. Finally, the incentives for the voter to vote for one of these parties will arguably be the same or similar to those for any other radical right party examined here.

3) Explaining the support for radical right parties

After introducing the conceptualization and classification of the radical right, I concentrate on the main goal of the research which is to explain the varying rate of success of the radical right. As was previously mentioned, the support for the radical right is not constantly growing (Elinas 2010; Mudde 2014). Instead, it varies quite unpredictably over time. This makes it difficult to identify the factors which could generally explain why people give their votes to the

⁷ "Bauska Deklaratsioon", *EKRE*, accessed October 29, 2015, <http://ekre.ee/bauska-deklaratsioon/>.

radical right. Commonly denominated determinants of the success of the radical right have largely proven unable to explain the vote for radical right parties across countries and elections. This may have been caused, among other reasons, by the measurement problems of these potential causes.

I argue that one of the best explanations for the success of the radical right is the type of elections in which the party competes. I expect the radical right to generally perform better in European rather than in national elections. Moreover, the factors which have been proven largely inconsistent in explaining the electoral fortune of the radical right in national elections, may be more useful in explaining the difference in the radical right performance between different elections, which would suggest their persistent importance for radical right voting theories. I therefore separate out the potential causes of electoral success for the radical right in national and European elections.

Explanations for the success of the radical right in national elections

The political climate of distrust and disenchantment has been seen as a precondition for the success of the radical right (Betz 1994, 67). From this perspective, the vote for the radical right can be seen as a mere protest vote and the radical right parties as ‘parties of discontent’ (1994, 38). However, Betz admits that the protest vote does not have an absolute impact on the success of the radical right, as radical right parties and electorates violate the conditions necessary for the protest vote theory to apply. First, voters of radical right parties are not disinterested in politics. Second, traditional radical right parties in Western Europe managed to extend their electoral base and develop strong loyalties among their voters. Finally, radical right voters have been proven to have a distinct ideological identity (1994, 61-63). Therefore, the

politics of resentment should be rejected as a pure interpretation of the vote for the radical right and different ideological, socio-economic, and institutional determinants of the electoral fortune of radical right parties should be explored.

Often denominated determinants of the vote for the radical right are anti-immigration sentiments on the public demand side, and parties' ethnocentric and xenophobic appeals against immigration and ethnic minorities on the party supply side. Betz (1994:64) argues that what most clearly differentiates the voter of the radical right is the importance he or she gives to certain issues. Immigration is arguably the most important of them. But is immigration the sole reason why a voter selects a radical right party?

According to Art (2011, 4), theories about immigration determining the electoral fortunes of radical right parties are contradicted by examples of countries where high levels of immigration did not lead to electoral success for the radical right. The main example here, according to Art, is the case of Sweden. The selection of the Swedish example is unfortunate as the radical rightist Sweden Democrats gained 20 seats in Swedish Parliament already in 2010, and 29 seats with almost 13% percent of votes in the last parliamentary elections in 2014. According to some recent polls, they are now even considered the most powerful Swedish party⁸. Nevertheless, Art may still be correct that rates of immigration do not generally determine the success of the radical right. However, I believe that it is not because immigration issues are not important to radical right voters, but because immigration rates are not good estimators of the politics of immigration. I will address this further below.

⁸ Richard Orange, "Anti-immigrant Sweden Democrats now the biggest party, according to poll." *The Telegraph*, August 20, 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/sweden/11814498/Anti-immigrant-Sweden-Democrats-now-the-biggest-party-according-to-poll.html>.

Golder (2003, 441), in his cross-national quantitative study assumes that “higher levels of immigration help extreme right parties”. He argues that if there is a conviction that immigrants are a threat to national identity and culture, then voters have “no option than vote for the extreme right” (2003, 439). In his model, Golder estimates immigration using the percentages of foreign born populations in the individual countries. He finds positive results for his hypothesis when the vote is for parties that he codes as populist. However, there are several problems here. First, Golder does not include any Eastern European country in his dataset. In some of the Eastern European countries, like Hungary for instance, the foreign-born populace is almost nonexistent and yet there exist successful radical right parties. Second, I argue that the foreign born population is not a good measure for immigration. As Golder (2003, 445) himself points out, people do not necessarily know how many immigrants live in the country. And even if they would know, I argue that what is important are their negative perceptions about migrants and immigration. People do not necessarily see a large number of foreigners in their homeland as a problem. Finally, key targets of the radical right are illegal migrants. The foreign born population variable does not take illegal immigrants into account.

The studies testing similar hypotheses as Golder on the local level produced mostly consistent results about the impact of immigration on the vote for the radical right. Bonnetain’s (2004) study about variation of extreme right voting in France demonstrates that high levels of immigration have a positive impact on the radical right party’s performance. Rink, Phalet, and Swyngedouw (2008), in testing the factors that suppose to determine electoral success of the Belgian Vlaams Blok (VB), come to the conclusion that a large immigrant population will increase support for the party. However, these hypotheses still cannot be considered to have an absolute value. Generally, the problems with the immigration rates as an estimate for

immigration persist. For example, in Eastern Germany there is only a very small, if any, immigrant populace, and yet the extremist NPD usually performs better there than in Western Germany where the immigrant populace is significantly larger. Moreover, the anti-immigrant rallies of the PEGIDA⁹ movement, which is based in Dresden, attracted thousands of people in Eastern German cities, while mostly failed to have similar success in Western German cities¹⁰. Therefore, immigration rates do not seem to fit as an absolute determinant of the success of the radical right.

This does not necessarily mean that the issue of immigration should be immediately rejected as a cause for the vote for the radical right. I believe that other estimates for immigration are preferable. I rely on Eurobarometer public surveys regarding the most salient national concerns. The use of surveys should better reflect negative perceptions of immigration among the population and take account of opinions about illegal immigration. It also shows the generalized significance of the issue in society. It is clear that not all of the people who expressed the belief that immigration is the most important issue that their country faces will necessarily vote for the radical right. However, we can assume that it is almost certain that most radical right voter will be among them. The use of surveys may be problematic for radical right studies, as voters are usually reluctant to admit their support for such parties (King 1997; Bloom 2003). Nevertheless, in this case people expressed their concerns with certain issues and not their direct support for a particular party. Therefore, I believe that there is no reason to doubt their sincerity in this case.

⁹ Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident.

¹⁰ "Record numbers of anti-PEGIDA protesters in Germany." *DW*, January 1, 2015, <http://www.dw.com/en/record-numbers-of-anti-pegida-protesters-in-germany/a-18186886>.

In the pan-European context, there may be another problem in explaining the vote for the radical right through immigration. It is assumed that in Central and Eastern Europe, immigration should not be a concern as there are few immigrants. Pirro (2014, 247) argues that explaining the electoral performance of radical right parties in terms of negative perceptions toward immigration is not very useful in the countries where immigration is not a salient issue.

However, I believe the assumption that immigration is not a salient issue in the CEE might be erroneous. The previously mentioned case of Eastern Germany demonstrates that it is possible to gain electoral support with programs based on anti-immigrant policies even though there are only a few immigrants in the country or region. Again, I argue that what matters here is the belief that immigration is a concern, and not how many immigrants are in the country. I believe that the CEE countries are similar to Eastern Germany. Indeed, the reactions of the public in the CEE to the recent refugee crisis seems to confirm this assumption. Public opinion in the CEE is almost unanimously against accepting asylum seekers from countries outside Europe, and especially from Muslim or African countries. Islamophobic and anti-immigrant attitudes are widespread around the CEE countries even though there are low numbers of Muslims and immigrants from outside Europe in these countries.

Some scholars argue that more important than immigration in the CEE should be the issue of ethnic minorities (Mudde 2005; Pirro 2014). However, the testing for the impact of ethnic minorities on the radical right vote in the CEE has quite surprisingly mostly negative results. Bloom (2013) concludes that the large minority population in Latvia did not have a positive impact on the vote for extreme right. Not only the numbers but also the negative sentiments about minorities do not seem to increase voteshare of radical right parties. For instance, in the Czech Republic, where xenophobic sentiments against the Roma population and

anti-Roma rallies are quite common phenomenon, radical right parties mostly failed to gain any success in both national and European elections. Although the vast majority of the existing studies about the most successful radical right party in the CEE–Hungarian Jobbik–argues that the party’s success should be tied with a growing anti-Roma sentiment in the country (i.e. Barlai & Hartleb 2011), Varga (2014) in his qualitative study argues that there is no empirical evidence for these statements. He demonstrates with compelling evidence that Jobbik profited more from the economic discontent of the population than from anti-minority sentiment, and gained success only after a radical shift in the party program from anti-Roma issues to economic issues in 2010.

Because of problems with the inconclusive findings of studies and measurement and data problems, I do not test here for the impact of the size of ethnic minorities on the radical right vote and, as explained above, I believe that immigration is now an important issue in the CEE as well. Therefore, there should not be a problem in testing for immigration as a determinant of the radical right success even in the CEE countries.

Worsening economic conditions expressed by high levels of unemployment is arguably the most often cited economic indicator of the success of the radical right. I believe that the assumption that unemployment matters derives from the quite common belief that the typical radical right voter comes from a lower stratum of society that is usually more vulnerable to unemployment problems. Rink, Phalet, and Swyngedouw (2008) find significant evidence that voters for the Belgian VB are more likely be people with lower socio-economic status. However, this might be the case in Belgium, but not necessarily in all of the European countries. Bustikova and Kitschelt’s (2011, 171) cross-national study concludes that there is a variation in socio-demographic profiles of radical right voters and therefore it is “impossible to create a unified, cross-national profile of a radical-right voter”. Cross-national studies (Norris 2005; Arzheimer

and Carter 2006) do not seem to find evidence that high rates of unemployment alone would have a positive impact on the electoral fortunes of the radical right.

Golder (2003, 439) argues that “unemployment increases the vote for extreme right parties when immigration is high, and unemployment does not affect (or lowers) the voteshare received by extreme right parties when immigration is low”. National level studies testing the impact of unemployment, and of the interaction between high levels of immigration and high levels of unemployment, ended up with inconsistent results. Bonnetain (2004) argues that in the case of France, unemployment, as immigration, has a positive impact on extreme right voting. Rink, Phalet, and Swyngedouw (2008) did not find significant evidence of unemployment increasing the support for the VB, even where the immigrant population is sufficiently large. Finally, Bloom (2013) concludes that in Latvia the combination of worsening economic conditions and a large minority population did not have a positive, but indeed a negative, impact on the performance of the radical right.

Type of electoral system is often mentioned as an institutional factor that is expected to affect the electoral performance of radical right parties. According to Jungerstram-Mulders (2003, 29), “different political systems provide different opportunities and limitations for Far Right parties to succeed in the electoral arena”. In general, the type of electoral system is considered to have significant effects on the electoral fortunes of the smaller parties (Duverger 1959; Eatwell 2000). Some scholars have argued that the more proportional the electoral system, the greater are the chances for extreme right candidate to be elected. By contrast, the less proportional the electoral systems, the more discouraged will be the voters to select the extreme right candidates (Jackman and Volpert 1996). This logic follows Duverger’s theory about the mechanical and psychological implications of the majoritarian system. As the party needs always

to have a majority to win a seat in parliament, the smaller parties have only limited chances to get any representation. They will probably be unable to perform better than the larger parties every time. The system is therefore disproportional, because the percentage of vote does not determine the level of representation gained. For example, the British UKIP won almost 13% of votes in the last parliamentary elections, but only held one seat in the House of Commons. As the voters are well aware of this, they will most likely prefer not to waste their votes and select the party that has better chances of getting more seats in the parliament (Duverger 1959, 226-26).

Some scholars do not find enough evidence that proportionality of the electoral system has significant effects on the electoral success of the radical right (Carter 2004; Norris 2005). Arzheimer and Carter (2006) even find a significantly positive impact of disproportionality on the success of the radical right. Surprisingly, their study does not include Great Britain which contrary to most other European countries, has a majoritarian electoral system. In a cross-national study focusing on national parliamentary elections, it would be problematic to find empirical evidence for the significance of the electoral system, as the vast majority of European countries adopt proportional electoral systems. However, testing for the difference between party performances in national versus European parliamentary elections permits me to directly compare the performance of the same party under different electoral rules, and therefore to reevaluate the importance of the electoral system for the success of the radical right.

Comparison of radical right performance in EU and national elections

The variation in the success of radical right parties between national and European Union elections remains largely understudied. This is quite surprising to me as it seems that the radical right has performed consistently better in European Union than in national elections. One of the

few scholars that has mentioned the possibility of this variance is Almeida (2012). He argues that electoral breakthroughs of selected radical right parties suggest that “radical right parties face a more favorable opportunity structure in the context of European Parliament elections than in national first-order contests” (2012, 141). However, his study is more centered on the impact of European integration and does not compare the performance of single radical right parties across national and European Union elections. Reif (1984) suggested that extremist parties generally perform better in second-order national elections, but again does not provide a comparison of single radical right parties’ performances. Hix and Marsh (2007, 501) tested for the radical right gains and losses in European Union elections, nevertheless it is not quite clear how they have classified radical right parties, and therefore which parties they include or exclude.

I emphasize the type of election as a possible determinant for the success of the radical right and compare radical right parties’ performances in European parliamentary elections with the same parties’ performances in national parliamentary elections. From the first part of the study, it should be clear which parties I include and why. I discuss and test the possible causes of the expected difference in the vote. This kind of testing also allows me to reevaluate the importance of some of the indicators of electoral success of radical right parties that I have discussed here. I emphasize two possible causes of difference in the party performance between the two elections: the second order national contest nature of European Union elections, and the already discussed electoral system.

European parliamentary elections are often viewed as ‘second-order national competition’ (Reif and Schmitt 1980; Reif 1984; van der Eijk and Franklin 1996; Norris 1997, 2005). That is because “they are secondary to the main (national) electoral contest, and they are ‘national’ contests rather than ‘European’ contest” (Hix and Marsh 2007, 496). Reif and Schmitt

(1980) argue that voters may vote differently in second-order national elections, and favor smaller rather than larger parties. Reif (1984), as previously mentioned, also suggests that more extreme parties would gain more seats in second-order national contests. There might be two possible reasons for this. First, voters might vote more sincerely, rather than strategically, in second-order national elections (Oppenhuis, van der Eijk and Franklin 1996). Second, the voters might see European Union elections as a useful tool for them to express their dissatisfaction with the national government (Hix & Marsh 2007).

The questions that different studies try to answer are how much European Union issues matter in European elections (Norris 1997; Marsh 1998; Hix & Marsh 2007; Hobolt, Spoon and Tilley 2008), and therefore to what extent European elections are truly second-order national contests. Although some scholars suggest that the nature of European Union elections has changed, and that European issues have begun to matter (Ferrara and Weishupt 2004; Hobolt, Spoon and Tilley 2008), others conclude that European parliamentary elections are still to a large extent second-order national contests (Norris 1997; Hix and Marsh 2007). Although I do not fully discard the possibility that European concerns matter more than they used to, this may be caused by the fact that European issues have simply become more important in the domestic political arena (Hix and Marsh 2007, 499; Hobolt, Spoon and Tilley 2008: 112). Considering this, I argue that it will more likely be the implications of a second-order national elections model that makes radical right parties perform better in European Union elections. I emphasize three features of the second order model that should help us understand why radical right parties should perform better in elections for the European parliament.

First, the aforementioned issue of sincere versus insincere voting might matter. People who vote in national elections for a party that has better chances of forming a government, but

who on ideological, group identity, or personal grounds prefer another party, are voting insincerely. The same voters may be more sincere in European elections and cast a vote for the party they like best. The consequence is that relatively insignificant parties on the national level perform better on the European level (Marsh 1998, 593; Almeida 2012, 141). The voter can also move instrumentally from sincere choice in national elections to insincere in European elections in order to express temporary dissatisfaction with his or her party (Oppenhuis, van der Eijk and Franklin 1996, 303-29). The critical fact is that European elections do not select the national government. When voters are relieved of this kind of responsibility, their behavior may take a different course (Marsh 1998, 597).

Second, second-order national elections are assumed to be of less importance. Significantly lower turnouts in European elections suggest that people largely assume that these election do not matter (Marsh 1998, 597). I argue that this conviction is present among the people who vote in these elections as well. The consequence is that a voter might be less afraid to select candidates that are considered controversial or radical. Here as well, the crucial factor is that these elections do not select the national government, and therefore do not personally affect the voters in individual countries.

Finally, the single-issue vote is more likely in European Union elections. In first-order national elections, voters have to consider a complex set of issues, as the choice of the national government is assumed to have direct effects on many aspects of their lives. Therefore, the voter in a first-order national election will most likely not select the parties that do not address fully these issues. In second-order elections, on the other side, the national government is not selected and the voter, in consequence, might vote for a party just because of the single domestic issue

that concerns him or her the most. In the radical right case, this will arguably be the problem of immigration.

Table 1 - The Radical Right in National and European Union elections 2014

Country	Party	National Elections	European Elections (2014)	Electoral System
Austria	FPO	20.5% (2013)	19.72%	proportional
Belgium	VB	3.7% (2014)	4.26%	proportional
Bulgaria	Ataka	4.5% (2014)	2.96%	mixed
Croatia	HNS	2.8% (2011)	6.88%	proportional
Cyprus	ELAM	1.08% (2011)	2.69%	proportional
Czech Rep.	DSSS	0.86% (2013)	0.52%	proportional
Denmark	DF	12.3% (2015)	26.60%	proportional
Estonia	EKRE	8.1% (2015)	4.00%	proportional
Finland	PS	17.6% (2015)	12.90%	proportional
France	FN	3.66% (2012)	24.86%	majoritarian
Germany	NPD	1.5% (2013)	1%	mixed prop
Greece	GD	6.3% (2015)	9.39%	proportional
Hungary	Jobbik	20.3% (2014)	14.67%	mixed prop
Italy	LN	4.10% (2013)	6.15%	mixed prop
Latvia	NA	16.6% (2014)	14.25%	proportional
Lithuania	TT	7.3 % (2012)	14.25%	mixed
Malta	IE	bellow 0.5% (2013)	2.68%	proportional
Netherlands	PVV	10.1% (2012)	13.32%	proportional
Poland	KNP	1.06% (2011)	7.15%	proportional
Portugal	PNR	0.31% (2011)	0.46%	proportional
Romania	PRM	1.47% (2012)	2.70%	mixed prop
Slovakia	SNS	4.6% (2012)	3.61%	proportional
Slovenia	SNS	2.2% (2014)	4.04%	proportional
Sweden	SD	12.9% (2014)	9.67%	proportional
United Kingdom	UKIP	12.6% (2015)	26.77%	majoritarian

Sources: for the European Union elections - official website of the European Parliament (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/>). For the national elections - IFES election guide (<http://www.electionguide.org/>), and other national level sources.

In table 1, we can observe the differences in radical right parties' performances across the 2014 European Union elections and the closest national elections. In most cases, the radical right performed better in European Union elections. However, we have some negative cases as well, most notably Hungary and Finland. Both cases can arguably be explained by the fact that we can

hardly consider the Jobbik and the Finns party small parties anymore. Both of them are among the most powerful parties in their countries. Therefore, voters might not be reluctant to vote for them in national elections, and the second-order national elections theory does not apply anymore. In four cases the distance between the elections was more than two years. Obviously, time can have some effects here. The incentives of voters can change over time, and parties can suffer internal crises, changes of leadership, or face different sort of scandals that could influence their fortunes in different elections. Unfortunately, I cannot control for this kind of problems, and I acknowledge that the time issue can be one of the possible shortcomings of this study.

From the discussion above derives the main hypothesis of this study: *The type of election in which it competes will have an impact on the success of the radical right party. Radical right parties will most likely perform better in second-order national European Union elections than in first-order national parliamentary elections.*

4) Models and variables

I use quantitative methods to test my hypothesis for the difference in success of radical right parties in national and European elections. First, I use a paired t-test model to compare radical right parties' performances in European and national elections. Second, I use two ordinary least squares regression analysis models to explain the difference in party performances between the two types of elections, and to reexamine the impact of the various explanatory variables for the electoral fortunes of the radical right in national parliamentary elections. The obvious problem of the two ordinary least squares regression models is the small number of observations, which might affect the reliability of the results. The results of the testing therefore do not have an absolute value, however they demonstrate significance and offer interesting suggestions. In the

future, the inclusion of more elections should provide the quantitative testing with more reliability.

In the first model, I test the hypothesis that radical right parties generally do better in European Union elections in comparison to national elections. I employ a paired t-test model¹¹ that allows me to demonstrate the average difference in the parties' performances between the two elections, and the statistical significance of this difference. This model has two dependent variables. First, *National elections*, is the voteshare of the radical right in the closest national parliamentary elections to the respective European Union elections. Second, *EU elections*, is the voteshare of the radical right in European Union elections. The first paired t-test compares the voteshare of the radical right in elections for the European parliament in 2009 with the voteshare of the radical right in the corresponding national parliamentary elections. The second does the same for the 2014 European Union and corresponding national parliamentary elections, and the third for the combination of the two sets. I have only 23 observations in 2009 to 25 in 2014. That is caused by the fact that in Estonia, to my knowledge, there was no radical right party competing in the 2009 elections, and Croatia was not a member of the European Union in 2009 and therefore had no European elections that year. Both datasets exclude the countries where there is no radical right party: Ireland and Luxembourg. Spain is also excluded because, although the radical right exists there, it is so marginal that it was impossible for me to find voteshares of any of the radical right parties for all sets of elections.

In the second model, I test for the indicators that possibly cause variance in the vote for the radical right between European and national elections. The dependent variable is the difference in the voteshare of the radical right between European and national elections

¹¹ Rosie Shier. "Paired t-tests." *Mathematics Learning Support Center*; accessed October 30, 2015, <http://www.statstutor.ac.uk/resources/uploaded/paired-t-test.pdf>.

(European – national). I have four independent variables. First, *immigration the most important national concern*, captures peoples' perceptions about immigration. Second, *tendency not to trust the national government*, expresses peoples' mistrust in their national governments. Third, *tendency not to trust the European Union*, stands for peoples' mistrust of the European Union. Finally, *electoral system*, measures whether the electoral system is majoritarian or proportional.

I use Eurobarometer survey data from the beginning of the year 2010 for the 2009 set, and from the end of the year 2014 for the 2014 set. As already explained, I believe that Eurobarometer surveys present the most accurate estimates, especially for immigration. To estimate the effects of the proportionality of the electoral system, I put 100% score for the countries that adopt majoritarian electoral system – United Kingdom and France, and 0% score for the countries that use more proportional electoral rules. Similarly to the previous model, I test for the two sets of elections first separately and then combined. The two sets combined give me the possibility to enlarge my number of observations and support the results obtained in the single set tests.

Other variables for trust in national and European institutions could be added to the model. I did not include them in my model for three reasons. First, since my model does not contain a large number of observations, inclusion of more independent variables could cause problems with the degrees of freedom. Second, in pre-testing of the model, all of these variables were largely insignificant. Finally, I believe that the used trust variables generally capture the perceptions of the people about the national government, and the European Union.

In the third model, I test for the impact of the discussed factors on the increase of the radical right vote in national parliamentary elections. The dependent variable, *national*, is the voteshare of the radical right in the most recent national parliamentary elections. The first two

independent variables, *immigration the most important national concern* and *tendency not to trust the national government*, express exactly the same as in the previous model. Two added variables are *unemployment*, which captures the unemployment rates for each country, and *unemployment*immigration*, which measures the interaction between unemployment and concerns about immigration.

For measuring the concerns about immigration and tendency not to trust the national government, I use Eurobarometer surveys from the years when the election took place (2011-2015). For unemployment, I use the rates for each year and each country provided by eurostat¹². As this model is used mostly to demonstrate the possible differences in the importance of the same independent variables across European Union and national elections, I include only the most recent national elections from the years 2011 till 2015.

¹² “Unemployment rate, 2003-2014.” *Eurostat*, accessed October 30, 2015, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Table_2_Unemployment_rate,_2003-2014_\(%25\).png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Table_2_Unemployment_rate,_2003-2014_(%25).png)

Results

Table 2 –Model 1

<i>The radical right performance in 2009 European and corresponding national elections</i>					
Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]
EU elections	23	0.0773087	0.0112003	0.0537147	.0540807 .1006367
national elections	23	0.0645522	0.0111984	0.0537057	.0413281 .0877763
diff	23	0.0127565	0.0072761	0.0348949	-.0023332 .0278462
Ha: mean(diff) < 0	Ha: mean(diff) != 0	Ha: mean(diff) > 0			
Pr(T < t) = 0.9533	Pr(T > t) = 0.0935	Pr(T > t) = 0.0467			
<i>The radical right performance in 2014 European and corresponding national elections</i>					
Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]
EU elections	25	0.094196	0.0162859	0.0814283	.0605836 .1278084
national elections	25	0.070752	0.0131098	0.0655488	.0436948 .0978092
diff	25	0.023444	0.0128206	0.0641029	-.0030164 .0499044
Ha: mean(diff) < 0	Ha: mean(diff) != 0	Ha: mean(diff) > 0			
Pr(T < t) = 0.9600	Pr(T > t) = 0.0799	Pr(T > t) = 0.0400			
<i>The radical right performance in 2009 and 2014 sets combined</i>					
Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]
EU elections	48	0.0861042	0.0100095	0.069348	.0659676 .1062407
national elections	48	0.0677813	0.0086047	0.0596149	.0504709 .0850916
diff	48	0.0183229	0.0074964	0.0519364	.0032422 .0334037
Ha: mean(diff) < 0	Ha: mean(diff) != 0	Ha: mean(diff) > 0			
Pr(T < t) = 0.9908	Pr(T > t) = 0.0183	Pr(T > t) = 0.0092			

In table 2, we can see the results of the first model. In all three paired t-tests the average difference between the elections was positive and significant. In the 2009 set, the radical right performed on average 1.3% better in EU elections. In the 2014, the average difference was even higher at 2.3%, and in the combination of the 2009 and 2014 sets 1.8%. As we can see, all differences in means were significant. This supports the suggestion that the radical right will most likely perform better in European elections rather than in national parliamentary elections, and allows us to test for the possible explanations of the variation in the vote across elections.

Table 3 - Model2 and Model3 – OLS

Variable	Model 2			Model 3
	Difference 2014 EU and corresponding national elections	Difference 2009 EU and corresponding national elections	Differences EU/national 2009 and 2014 combined	Radical right performance in national elections 2011- 2015
Immigration the most important national concern	0.21**(0.09)	0.21**(0.09)	0.20***(0.06)	-0.59 (0.36)
Tendency not to trust the national government	0.14 (0.09)	0.06 (0.04)	0.10**(0.05)	-0.29 *** (0.09)
Unemployment				-0.58(0.58)
Unemployment*immigration				5.32 (5.15)
Electoral system	0.13*** (0.04)	0.05** (0.02)	0.09*** (0.02)	
Tendency not to trust the European Union	-0.04(0.09)	-0.05 (0.07)	-0.04 (0.05)	
Constant	-0.08(0.05)	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.06(0.03)	0.32*** (0.07)
Observations	25	23	48	25
Adjusted R-squared	0.54	0.36	0.48	0.29

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05,

Table 3 shows the results of the two regression models. In the second model public concerns about immigration had a positive and significant impact on the difference in voteshare across national and European Union elections in both the 2009 and 2014 sets of elections, and an even more significant ($p<0.01$) impact when the two sets were combined. The effects of tendency to not trust the government were positive and close to significance (slightly above $p<0.05$) in the separate sets, and significant when the two sets were combined. Tendency not to trust the European Union had an insignificant impact in both the separate and combined sets of elections. Finally, electoral system had significant and positive effects on the difference in the vote for the radical right across the two types of elections in both the separate and combined sets.

In the third model, public concerns about immigration had an insignificant impact on the vote for the radical right in the most recent national elections. The tendency not to trust the national government had a significantly negative impact. The effects of unemployment rates alone were insignificant. Finally, the impact of the interaction between public concerns about immigration and unemployment rates on the radical right vote in national elections was positive, but insignificant.

Some of the results are worth highlighting. The significant effects of public concerns about immigration in the second model and the insignificance of the same variable in the third model seems to confirm our hypothesis that the voters in European Union elections vote more sincerely and ideologically than in national elections. Voters in national elections are arguably more strategic, and therefore vote for the party that has a better chance of winning the seats in national parliament, no matter what their main concerns are. Moreover, it seems to confirm the assumption that since voters are not selecting the national government in European Union elections, they will be more prone to vote for the party that concentrates its agenda on a single issue and offers more radical solutions to the problem that for the voter matters the most. In national elections the voters will be less prone to vote for the same party as they will require the party to address multiple issues, and will be more careful to cast their votes for radical parties as there might be a possibility that these parties could govern them.

The positive impact of the tendency not to trust the government on the difference in the vote between European Union and national elections, suggests the possibility of the protest vote in European Union elections. This means that, by voting for a radical right party in European Union elections, the voters try to send a message of discontent to the governing parties they have voted for, or would vote for, in national elections. It also seems to confirm the validity of the

second-order national elections model. The negative impact of the same variable on the success of the radical right in national elections should not be that surprising in this context. It suggests that, different to European Union elections, the vote for the radical right in national elections is not a protest vote. Once again it seems correct to assume that the voters vote more strategically rather than ideologically in national elections.

The insignificant effects of tendency not to trust the European Union on the increase of the difference in the vote between European and national elections seems to confirm once again the validity of the second-order national elections model. It suggests that voters will most likely not vote for radical right parties because of their anti-EU agenda, and that voters still more likely conceive of European Union elections as second-order national contests. Finally, the significant and positive impact of the electoral system confirms that the difference in the voteshare of a radical right party will be larger when the party moves from majoritarian to proportional electoral rules, and confirms the hypothesis that mechanical and psychological factors of majoritarian systems in general influence the electoral fortunes of radical right parties.

Conclusions

This study provides several contributions to the ongoing debate about the electoral success of radical right parties. First, it is different to other studies about the radical right, because I explain the success of radical right parties through comparison of radical right parties' performances across national and European Union elections. The impact of the type of elections on the success of the radical right has been rarely mentioned in the studies about the radical right, and even when it has been, it has not been given any large importance, and has mostly remained untested. Reif & Schmitt's (1980) second-order national elections theory can be used as an

explanation of the difference in the vote for the radical right across national and European Union elections. The term ‘national’ is important here. European Union elections, although theoretically about European Union issues, will most likely still be conceived of by voters as national elections with a crucial difference: that national government is not elected in them. Radical right parties seem likely to profit from this kind of setting as some scholars have suggested (Reif 1984; Almeida 2012). The results of the testing indeed seem to confirm the validity of the second-order national elections model in explaining the difference in vote for the radical right across national and European Union elections. It is possible that with time and enlargement of the powers of the European Parliament, European issues will begin to matter. However, that should not change the advantageous position of the radical right in these elections. Radical right parties are usually parties that address European Union issues a lot, especially recently. Their negative views on the European Union and the growing euroskepticism in European societies give these parties a good chance to gain success in European elections, even if they lose their second-order national contest nature. However, thus far the testing has not provided significant evidence of an impact of European Union issues on the difference in the vote for the radical right between national and European Union elections. The results of the testing also confirmed that the change in electoral system, from majoritarian to proportional, would have a significant impact on the radical right performance across the two types of elections. This should be a contribution to the debate on the general impact of institutional factors on the success of the radical right.

Second, I also introduce a different kind of measurement for some key independent variables. Particularly, I emphasize the importance of measuring immigration in terms of peoples’ perceptions about it, rather than in terms of immigration rates. People usually do not know how many immigrants are in the country, and even if they do, it does not necessarily mean

that they are concerned with immigration and have negative views of it. Moreover, foreign-born populace rates cannot take into account the number of illegal immigrants in the country. In consequence, in this study, I use Eurobarometer public surveys about the most important national concerns, which I believe offer a better kind of measurement of immigration than foreign-born population rates.

Third, I believe that I bring some important insights on the conceptualization of radical right parties. I do not believe that it is necessary to divide the radical right party family into subgroups, at least if one is interested in the causes of radical right success. Similarities between the parties across the assumed subfamilies, as well as disinclination of the most extremist parties to openly state their most extremist stances, make it very difficult to erect clear boundaries between the assumed subfamilies of the radical right. The subdivision of the radical right would also make testing even more problematic. Significant updates have been made to the list of radical right parties. Some of them have never appeared in studies on the radical right. I do not pretend to be an expert on all of the parties in my dataset. In some cases, I have found more evidence of the party's radical right affiliation, and in other cases less. However, I believe that all of the parties included are conceived by the voters as radical right. Obviously, national level studies would be better fitted to confirm this assumption.

Four, I include the vast majority of European countries, including those from Central and Eastern Europe. Most studies about the radical right are limited to Western Europe. There are several successful radical right parties in the CEE as well that should not be excluded. Because of the different socio-economic and socio-demographic realities, there might be large differences in the kind of issues, and the way the parties address them, between Western and Eastern Europe.

Not taking into account the CEE countries may therefore lead to misleading results in findings, as we have seen in some of the studies mentioned here.

There are admittedly limitations to the study. The small number of observations might be problematic. However, I believe that the findings I have are a good start, and bring some important indications about the voters' incentives to vote for the radical right in the different types of elections. It would be interesting to observe if the trend outlined in this study will continue. It might be also plausible for future research to look at the differences in radical right performance between national and regional elections. If Reif & Schmitt's (1980) theory is fully valid, I would expect radical right parties to perform better in regional elections as well. Obviously, national level studies would be better suited to this kind of research. Finally, although I might have expressed some criticism of different theories, that does not mean that I do not recognize the contribution of all the authors mentioned in this article. Without their work, this study would hardly be possible.

REFERENCES

- Abedi, Amir. *Anti-Political Establishment Parties*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Almeida, Dimitri. *The Impact of European Integration on Political Parties: Beyond the Permissive Consensus*. New York: Routledge, 2012.
- Anderson, Benedikt. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London New York: Verso, 1983.
- Art, David. *Inside the Radical Right: The Development of Anti-Immigrant Parties in Western Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Arzheimer, Kai, and Elisabeth Carter. "Political Opportunity Structures and Right-wing Extremist Party Success." *European Journal of Political Research* 45, no. 3 (2006): 419-443.
- Backes, Uwe. *Political Extremes: A Conceptual History from Antiquity to the Present*. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Barlai, Melani, and Florian Hartleb. "Extremism in Hungary." In *Extremismus in den EU-Staten*, edited by Eckhard Jesse and Tom Thieme, 413-428. Wiesbaden: VS, 2011.
- Betz, Hans-Georg. *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe*. New York: St. Martins Press, 1994.
- Betz, Hans-Georg, and Carol Johnson. "Against the current – stemming the tide: the nostalgic ideology of the contemporary radical populist right." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 9, no.3 (2004): 311-327.
- Bloom, Stephen. "Minority Group Size, Unemployment, and the Extreme Right Vote: The Crucial Case of Latvia." *Social Science Quarterly* 94, no. 3 (2013): 796-810.
- Bobbio, Norberto. *Left and Right The Significance of a Political Distinction*. Translated and introduced by Allan Cameron. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Bonnetain, Philippe. "Behind the Polling-Booth Curtain and Beyond Simple Speculations: Toward a Causal Model of Far-Right Voting Behavior- Some Evidence from French Presidential Elections of 2002." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 37, no.2 (2004): 419-29.
- Botsch, Gideon, and Christoph Kopke. "'National Solidarity–no to globalization': The economic and sociopolitical platform of the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD)." In *Right-Wing Radicalism Today*, edited by Sabine von Mering and Timothy Wyman McCarty, 37-59. Routledge: New York, 2013.

- Bustikova, Lenka, and Herbert Kitschelt. "The radical right and its nearby competitors: Evidence from Eastern Europe." In *Europeanising Party Politics?* edited by Paul G. Lewis and Radoslaw Markowski, 143-178. Manchester: Manchester University Press 2011.
- Carter, Elisabeth L. "Does PR promote political extremism? Evidence from the West European parties of the extreme right.", *Representation* 40, no. 2 (2004): 82-100.
- Cofrancesco, Dino. "Fascismo: destra o sinistra?" In *Fascismo e nazionalsocialismo*, edited by Karl D. Bracher and Leo Valiani, 55-140. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1986.
- Connor, Walker. *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- De Benoist, Alain. *Le idee a Posto*. Naples: Akropolis, 1983.
- Duverger, Maurice. *Political Parties Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*. Translated by Barbara and Robert North. London: Methuen, 1959.
- Eatwell, Roger. "The extreme right and British exceptionalism: the primacy of politics." In *The Politics of the Extreme Right: From the Margins to the Mainstream*, edited by Paul Hainsworth, 172-92. London: Pinter, 2000.
- Eijk, Cees van der, and Mark Franklin. *Choosing Europe? The European Electorate and National Politics in the face of Union*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996.
- Elinas, Antonis A. *The Media and the Far Right in Western Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Ferrara, Federico, and J. Timo Weishaupt. "Get Your Act Together: Party Performance in European Parliament Elections." *European Union Politics* 5, no. 3 (2004): 283-306.
- Ferraresi, Franco. *Threats to Democracy: The Radical Right in Italy After the War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Geddes, Barbara. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003.
- Golder, Matt. "Electoral Institutions, Unemployment and Extreme Right Parties: A Correction." *British Journal of Political Science* 33, no. 3 (2003): 525-34.
- Grumke, Thomas. "Globalized anti-globalists: the ideological basis of the internationalization of right-wing extremism." In *Right-Wing Radicalism Today*, edited by Sabine von Mering and Timothy Wyman McCarty, 13-21. Routledge: New York, 2013.
- Hainsworth, Paul. *The Extreme Right in Western Europe*. London: Routledge, 2008.

- Hix, Simon, and Michael Marsh. "Punishment or Protest? Understanding European Parliament Elections". *The Journal of Politics* 69, no. 2 (2007): 495–510.
- Hobolt, Sara B., Jae-Jae Spoon, and James Tilley. "A Vote Against Europe? Explaining Defection at the 1999 and 2004 European Parliament Elections". *British Journal of Political Science* 39, no. 1 (2009): 93–115.
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. *Nations and Nationalities since 1780*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Ignazi, Pierro. "The Silent Counter Revolution: Hypotheses on the Emergence of the Extreme Right-wing Parties in Europe." *European Journal of Political Research* 22 (1992): 3-34.
- Ignazi, Pierro. *Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Jackman Robert W., and Karin Volpert. "Conditions Favoring Parties of the Extreme Right in Western Europe." *British Journal of Political Science* 26, no. 4 (1996): 501-21.
- Jungerstram-Mulders, Susanne. *Uneven Odds: The Electoral Success of the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, the Vlaams Blok, the Republikaner and the Centrumdemokraten under the Conditions Provided by the Political System in Austria, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands*. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 2003.
- Marsh, Michael. "Testing the Second-order Election Model After Four European Elections". *British Journal of Political Science* 28, no. 4 (1998): 591–607.
- Mudde, Cas. "Right-wing Extremism Analyzed: A Comparative Analysis of the Ideologies of Three Alleged Right-wing Extremist Parties (NPD, NDP, CP'86)." *European Journal of Political Research* 27, no. 2 (1995): 203-24.
- Mudde, Cas. *The Ideology of the Extreme Right*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000.
- Mudde, Cas. "Racist extremism in Central and Eastern Europe.", *East European Politics and Societies* 19, no. 2 (2005): 161-84.
- Mudde, Cas. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Mudde, Cas. "The far right in the 2014 European elections: Of earthquakes, cartels and designer fascists." *The Washington Post*, May 30, 2014.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/05/30/the-far-right-in-the-2014-european-elections-of-earthquakes-cartels-and-designer-fascists/>.
- Norris, Pippa. "Second-order elections revisited". *European Journal of Political Research* 31(1997): 109–114.

- Norris, Pippa. *Radical Right: Voters and Parties in the Electoral Market*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Oppenhuis, Erik, Cees van der Eijk, and Mark Franklin. "The Party Context: Outcomes." In *Choosing Europe? The European Electorate and National Politics in the face of Union*, edited by Cees van der Eijk and Mark Franklin, 287-305. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996.
- Pardos-Prado, Sergi. "How Can Mainstream Parties Prevent Niche Party Success? Center-right Parties and the Immigration Issue". *The Journal of Politics* 77, no.2 (2015): 352–367.
- Pirro, Andrea L.P. "Digging into the breeding ground: insights into the electoral performance of populist radical right parties in Central and Eastern Europe". *East European Politics* 30, no. 2 (2014): 246- 270.
- Reif, Karlheinz, and Hermann Schmitt. "Nine Second-Order National Elections: A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of European Election Results." *European Journal of Political Research* 8, no. 1 (1980): 3-45.
- Reif, Karlheinz. "National Electoral Cycles and European Elections." *Electoral Studies*, no 3 (1984): 244-55.
- Rink, Nathalie, Karen Phalet, and Marc Swyngedouw. "The Effects of Immigrant Population Size, Unemployment, and Individual Characteristics on Voting for the Vlaams Blok in Flanders 1991-1999". *European Sociological Review* 25, no.4 (2009): 411–424.
- Smith, Anthony. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.
- Varga, Mihai. "Hungary's 'anti-capitalist' far-right: Jobbik and the Hungarian Guard". *Nationalities papers* 42, no. 5 (2014): 791-807.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A**Radical right parties in the European Union**

Country	Party
Austria	Freedom Party (FPÖ)
Belgium	Flemish Interest (VB)
Bulgaria	Attack (Ataka)
Croatia	Croatian Party of Rights (HSP)
Cyprus	ELAM
Czech Republic	Worker's party (DSSS) Party of Direct Democracy (SPD) National Democracy (ND)
Denmark	Danish People's Party (DF)
Estonia	EKRE
Finland	Finns Party (PS)
France	National Front (FN)
Germany	National Democratic Party (NPD) Republikaner (Rep)
Greece	Golden Dawn
Hungary	Jobbik
Italy	League North (LN) Forza Nuova (FN) Casa Pound (CPI)
Latvia	National Alliance
Lithuania	Order and Justice (TT)
Malta	Imperium Europa (IE)
Netherlands	Party for Freedom (PVV)
Poland	Congress of the New Right (KNP) National Movement (RN) League of Polish Families (LPR)
Portugal	National Renovator Party (PNR)
Romania	Greater Romania Party (PRM)
Slovakia	Slovakian National Party (SNS) People's Party - Our Slovakia (ĽSNS)
Slovenia	Slovenian National Party (SNS)
Spain	Espana 2000 National Democracy (DN)
Sweden	Sweden Democrats (SD)
United Kingdom	UK Independence Party (UKIP) British National Party (BNP)

VITA

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University

Jakub Wondreys

j.wondreys@seznam.cz

Roma Tre University
Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, March 2013

Research Paper Title:

Explaining The Varying Success of Radical Right Parties in European Union and National Elections

Major Professor: Dr. Stephen Bloom