The electoral success of the radical right in Western Europe: origins, influences and trends

Introduction

With a fusion of nativism, authoritarianism and populism, the radical right began to achieve widespread electoral breakthroughs in Western Europe in the 1980s. Over twenty years have passed since its inception, and the radical right continues to gain in strength. This paper will examine the reasons behind the radical right’s ascendancy in Western Europe. Specifically, it will focus on factors that have influenced the emergence and electoral success of the French *Front National*, Austrian *Freiheitliche Partei*, and Flemish *Vlaams Belang*.¹

The first part of the paper begins by considering when a demand for the radical right will exist, and how that demand is formed. I will begin by discussing two definitions of the radical right, and its core elements. The results of various Eurobarometer surveys will provide a window into right-wing perceptions, and be used as a foundation to consider how attitudes of nativism, authoritarianism, and populism are formed. Based on the results of the Eurobarometer surveys, I will argue that a country lacking nativist attitudes is less likely to have a voter demand for a radical right party, even if that same country possesses authoritarian and populist values. I will then consider, and critique, the theories posed by Cas Mudde and Herbert Kitschelt to explain the demand for the radical right. As part of this discussion, I will dispute aspects of Mudde’s contention that all three core radical right values are commonplace throughout Europe, and contend that Kitschelt’s theory – which considers a voter’s education, economic circumstances and employment opportunities – is a useful tool for explaining how a demand for the radical right is created.

¹ Known as *Vlaams Blok* until 2004.
In the second part of this paper, I will explore specific factors that affect the electoral success of the radical right. I will discuss how public legitimacy can bolster the appeal of the radical right and examine the impact that core convergence or divergence has on radical right electoral fortunes; it will be suggested that a core divergence of major parties resulting in those on the right moving further in that direction can be of electoral benefit to the radical right as it can bring their agenda into the mainstream. Finally, the paper will discuss commonly held assumptions about the influence that district magnitude and proportional representation has on the electoral fortunes of the radical right, and attempt to dispel them.

Who are the radical right?

Many definitions of the radical right exist. For the sake of brevity, I focus on two definitions presented by academics whose theories and insights are used throughout the paper.

Extremism and populism expert Cas Mudde suggests that the radical right possesses an ideological core composed of three elements. These elements are nativism (an ideology purporting that states should be exclusively occupied by members of the native group); authoritarianism (a belief in a strictly ordered society which severely punishes infringements of authority); and populism (anti-establishment sentiments that suggest the general will of the people should always take precedence in politics).²

Roger Eatwell, a far-right specialist, has identified four traits that characterise the radical right: anti-democracy; nationalism; racism; and the strong state.³ If a literal definition of democracy is

used – ‘a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives’\(^4\) – then it is difficult to see how elements of the radical right can be considered anti-democracy, particularly when they may form political parties and participate in the democratic process. Therefore, a broader concept of anti-democracy is needed. If it is considered that at the heart of democratic thinking is a willingness to tolerate diversity and accept other points of view as legitimate, it becomes easier to see how the extreme right may be anti-democratic.\(^5\) Eatwell notes that right-wing extremists are ‘monists’ rather than ‘pluralists,’ believing there is only one true way. This is accompanied by a commitment to authoritarianism, particularly a desire to impose the correct line on others.\(^6\)

Extreme-right nationalism in Europe ‘stresses the holistic community over the individual, and tends towards intolerance of diversity’.\(^7\) This can be seen in contrast to nationalism in the USA, which can be be more individualistic.\(^8\) The post-WWII extreme right in Europe has been concerned with protecting the nation against outsiders. While outsiders may include minorities such as gays and feminists, the term is more commonly used to describe Jews and immigrants, with an ‘immigrant’ for the extreme right even including people who have lived in the country for one or more generations.\(^9\)

Historically, racism on the extreme right focussed on the hierarchy of races, or race conspiracies (often with Jews being targeted as conspirators).\(^10\) In the 21\(^{st}\) century, however, the extreme right has embraced what is called the ‘new racism’, which ‘holds that nations and races are not

\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^7\) Ibid.
\(^8\) Ibid.
\(^9\) Ibid., 10.
\(^10\) Ibid.
so much superior or inferior, as different: each should live ‘naturally’ in its own home, respecting others’. 11

Lastly, the far right yearns for a strong state. Traditional features of such a state include authoritarianism, strong leadership, and militarism. 12 A strong state is not to be confused with a big state that provides welfare support. For the far right, the state should be strong but small.

There is substantial overlap between the radical right factors identified by Mudde and Eatwell, with Eatwell’s somewhat more detailed list broadly fitting within the ideological headings identified by Mudde. Therefore, I consider that the key features of the radical right are populism (which, due to its anti-establishment nature, can also include the anti-democracy element identified by Eatwell); nativism (essentially a fusion of racism and nationalism as defined by Eatwell); and authoritarianism (subsuming Eatwell’s ‘strong state’).

**Demand factors**

What gives rise to the demand for a radical right party, and how are attitudes of nativism, populism and authoritarianism formed? In 1967, Erwin Scheuch and Hans Kligemann outlined their “normal pathology” theory which holds that “populist radical right values are alien to Western democratic values, but a small potential exists for them in all Western societies; hence, a normal pathology”. 13 For Schech and Klingemann, what turns this potential into reality is rapid socio-economic change. 14 Within every industrial society undergoing transformation, there are elements that cannot cope with the ensuing economic adjustments and social and cultural

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11 Ibid.
12 Eatwell and Mudde, *Western Democracies and the new extreme right challenge*, 10.
Such elements become the losers in the process of modernisation, and react to their changed circumstances with rigidity, closed-mindedness and xenophobia, blaming minorities for their hardships.\textsuperscript{16}

Mudde disputes Scheuch and Klingemann’s claim that radical right values are alien to Western democratic values, and argues that radical right values are in fact widely held throughout Europe. Mudde relies primarily on the results of various Eurobarometer surveys to demonstrate that many Europeans possess a far right ideological core. To show support for nativist beliefs, Mudde cites the prevalence of actual racism among respondents to the 1997 survey, with two-thirds of respondents admitting that they were racist to some degree.\textsuperscript{17} More classical nativism, according to Mudde, is found in the fact that 65 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement that ‘our country has reached its limits; if there were to be more people belonging to these minority groups we would have problems’.\textsuperscript{18} To demonstrate the existence of authoritarian attitudes, Mudde points to the 2003 Eurobarometer survey, which found that 85 per cent of the EU-25 population agreed with the statement, ‘Nowadays there is too much tolerance. Criminals should be punished more severely.’\textsuperscript{19} Holding that anti-establishment sentiments are a staple of radical-right populism, Mudde refers to the finding of the 2003 Eurobarometer survey that revealed 75 per cent of respondents did not trust their political parties.\textsuperscript{20} Given the preponderance of right-wing values held throughout Europe, Mudde concludes that ‘the real

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Mudde, “The Populist Radical Right”, 7-8.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 8.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 9.
question should not be why populist radical right parties have been so successful since the 1980s, but why so few parties have been successful given the generally fertile breeding ground.\(^\text{21}\)

However, Mudde’s discussion of the Eurobarometer surveys does not acknowledge the fact that radical right values are not shared equally by all the EU countries that were respondents to the survey. For instance, in his discussion about racism and nativism, Mudde does not take into account the fact that significant statistical differences exist between the respondent countries. The countries that had the highest number of racist respondents to the 1997 survey were Belgium, France, and Austria.\(^\text{22}\) Similarly, a question designed to test whether respondents favoured assimilation or integration (an attitude that could arguably go towards nativism) revealed that Belgium, Austria and France were the respondent countries most in favour of assimilation.\(^\text{23}\) Further, Belgium, Austria and France comprised three of the top five countries with respondents who believe that, ‘Our country has reached its limits; if there were to be more people belonging to these minority groups we would have problems’.\(^\text{24}\)

It matters that Belgium, France and Austria had the highest number of racist/nativist respondents because those are the same three countries within the EU where right-wing populist parties have had the greatest electoral success.\(^\text{25}\) In 1999, Austria’s far right Freiheitliche Partei took part in a coalition government, and the Flemish Vlaams Blok and French Front National have increased their voting share to 15 and 10 per cent respectively.\(^\text{26}\) Conversely, two of the countries with the lowest number of racists – Spain and Portugal – are also countries that, since freeing themselves

\(^{21}\) Ibid., 12.
\(^{22}\) Eurobarometer, “Eurobarometer opinion poll 47.1”.
\(^{24}\) Eurobarometer, “Eurobarometer opinion poll 47.1” – Greece and Germany took the first and third place respectively.
\(^{25}\) Westin, “Racism and the Radical Right: European Perspectives” 102.
of fascist regimes, have steadfastly refused to embrace the radical right. By presenting the Eurobaromenter statistics as a whole, and not acknowledging the discrepancies between respondent nations, Mudde arguably implies that an equal number of racists/nativists are found throughout Europe. This is not true, and the countries with the highest number of racists are also countries where the far right has experienced the greatest degree of electoral success.

However, it is true that the other two core ideological factors identified by Mudde – authoritarianism and populism – show less regional variation. For instance, while the statement about criminals being shown too much tolerance was supported by 97 per cent of Cypriots, and only 70 per cent of Danes, the vast majority of respondent nations hovered between the 80-89 percentile range. Similarly, the third core radical right value identified by Mudde – populism – also shows considerable regional continuity. The average level of distrust for political institutions throughout the EU was 75 per cent; only two countries – the Netherlands and Denmark – recorded levels of distrust less than 60 per cent.

Despite the generally high level of system distrust and authoritarian attitudes found throughout Europe, only in Belgium, France and Austria has the far right experienced any particular electoral success. This suggests that it is not enough for a country to have high levels of one, or even two, of the far right ideological traits. Rather, it is necessary that high levels of all three factors be present. This is arguably why Belgium, France and Austria – countries that possess the tifecta of a high amount of racists/nativists who sympathise with authoritarian and anti-establishment sentiments – have elected far right parties. The results of the Eurobaromenter also

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suggest that a country that is not concerned about the radical right issue *par excellence* – namely, immigration – may not have the demand for a radical right party.

Overall, it can be argued that Mudde is generally correct to conclude that some radical right sentiments are not alien to Western democracies. How, then, are attitudes of nativism, authoritarianism and populism formed, and does modernisation play a role in the formation of such attitudes, as Schech and Klingemann suggest?

In his 1995 book *The Radical Right in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis*, Herbert Kitschelt contends that orientation to the economic right or left is determined primarily by employment and education rather than economic class.\(^{29}\) The increasing international economic competition that is a result of advanced capitalism and globalisation in the post-industrial world can lead employees to seek to ensure the market viability of the firm or industrial sector responsible for his or her employment.\(^{30}\) Generally, the occupations and sectors exposed to international competition tend to be low-skill professions.\(^{31}\) If comprehensive welfare measures exist in the relevant country, employees in internationally competitive industries are likely to oppose further redistributive measures, such as welfare, that would drain resources from investment and the private purse.\(^{32}\) As the right usually opposes welfare measures, it may garner support on economic grounds from workers who feel their job is in jeopardy.

This very job insecurity may fuel nativism – a core element of radical right ideology. In the imagination of the far right, the immigrant looms large as a potential job-stealer and welfare


\(^{30}\) Ibid., 5-6.

\(^{31}\) Ibid., 8.

\(^{32}\) Ibid., 5-6.
recipient. It is plausible to suggest that a person who is concerned about holding on to his or her job would resent migrants, who may either potentially ‘steal’ that job or receive welfare benefits which could ultimately jeopardise the worker’s industry. In this way, the job insecurity that is the legacy of a post-industrial state competing in a global market may encourage the development of nativist beliefs – an ideologically important element for far right supporters. As Kitschelt concludes, ‘A culturally parochial...potential is particularly strong among the losers of the economic modernisation process within the working class, primarily manual workers with few or obsolete skills. This potential appears to be recognised by the radical right itself, with a key political slogan of Front National being, “two million immigrants are the cause of the two million French people out of work”.

Support for the contention that job insecurity fuels nativism is illuminated by the 1997 Eurobarometer survey, which discovered a link between racism and job insecurity. The respondents who declared they had racist feelings were often ‘dissatisfied with their life circumstances and feared losing their jobs; they felt insecure about the future (“the situation will get worse”); and/or had experienced a deterioration of their personal situation’. The Eurobarometer survey did not reveal a significant correlation between unemployment and racism. Rather, the relevant factor was the fear of losing one’s job. This can result in the situation where radical right voting is linked to increasing unemployment, yet the radical right

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34 Kitschelt, The radical right in Western Europe, 9.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
are not necessarily receiving support from people who have lost their jobs.\(^{39}\) Robert W. Jackman and Karin Volpert have sought to explain this asymmetry by suggesting that higher rates of unemployment can encourage the appeal of the radical right by providing a pretext for ‘mounting the xenophobic appeals that characterise these political movements’.\(^{40}\)

Employment experiences are not just be responsible for the creation of nativist beliefs – those same experiences may also lead to the development of authoritarian attitudes. Kitschelt concludes that it is the lower skilled workers, with their combination of limited education and occupational experience of processing objects, who are particularly vulnerable to authoritarian appeals.\(^{41}\) Individuals who work in an organisation where social relations are at the heart of the work process – for example, in health care or education – have a propensity towards a reciprocal, egalitarian design of democratic politics and cultural institutions. This is not the case for individuals who are employed in jobs ‘where they manipulate objects, documents, and spreadsheets generated by other instrumental players’.\(^{42}\) Such employees are guided by rules and orders which make authoritarian decision-making seem natural.\(^{43}\)

Kai Arzheimer and Elisabeth Carter provide some empirical support for this aspect of Kitschelt’s theory. After studying data from national election studies to investigate the impact of socio-economic variables on radical right voting, Arzheimer and Carter found that professionals were

\(^{39}\) Jackman and Volpert, “Conditions Favouring Parties of the Extreme Right in Western Europe,” 511.
\(^{40}\) Ibid., 517.
\(^{41}\) Kitschelt, *The radical right in Western Europe*, 9.
\(^{42}\) Ibid., 7.
\(^{43}\) Ibid.
least likely to vote for the radical right, whereas people employed in routine non-manual jobs, or manual jobs, were more likely to vote for the radical right.\textsuperscript{44}

Kitschelt also argues that cognitive capabilities also make people more libertarian or authoritarian.\textsuperscript{45} Individuals with greater cognitive abilities are more likely to master their social environment which will lead them to seek political participation, equality and self-governance in all social institutions.\textsuperscript{46} By contrast, individuals with lower cognitive abilities can only conceive of social reality through crude schematisations, and are therefore more inclined to opt for authoritarian modes of collective decision-making.\textsuperscript{47} Put simply, those with low levels of education are more likely to sympathise with an ideology of far right authoritarianism than those with high levels of education.

Again, Arzheimer and Carter’s study provides some empirical support for Kitschelt’s propositions. Arzheimer and Carter found low levels of support for the radical right in countries such as Belgium, France and Austria among people with a university education.\textsuperscript{48} However, a similarly low level of support for the radical right was also found among people who have no education, or only a primary school education.\textsuperscript{49} Rather, it is the people with a middle school education who were most likely to vote for the radical right.\textsuperscript{50}

According to Eatwell, the last core far right value – an anti-establishment populism – can develop when trust in existing political structures is weakened. A decrease in trust can result

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 429.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 429.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 429.
when a government embodies weak leadership, corruption, and economic failures.\textsuperscript{51} Arguably, support for this proposition is found in the results of the 1996 World Values survey, which revealed that right-wing voting is higher in countries where government durability is lower and cabinet members are more likely to make public their disagreement with decisions.\textsuperscript{52} It is possible that unstable governments that do not provide a unified front may mean that mainstream politicians and the parliamentary system loses legitimacy in the eyes of the people. That government scandals and allegations of corruption can also cause an anti-system attitude in voters is borne out by the steep decline in satisfaction with democracy experienced by the Belgian respondents to the 1996 Eurobarometer survey. This decline in trust is arguably a consequence of the fallout from the Dutroux paedophile scandal that engulfed the government in the mid 1990s.\textsuperscript{53}

Factors affecting electoral success

Thus far, this essay has considered when a demand for the radical right will arise, and what leads a voter to develop the nativist, authoritarian, and populist characteristics that are linked with radical right support. It will now consider specific factors that may impact on the electoral success of the radical right.

According to Kitschelt, the convergence between the major right and left political parties can open up electoral space for the far right.\textsuperscript{54} When the major right and left parties converge towards the centre, that leaves open a space in which the radical right may develop a strategic

\textsuperscript{51} Eatwell, “The Dynamics of Right-Wing Electoral Breakthrough,” 29.
position, and present itself as a plausible alternative to the existing mainstream right-wing party.\textsuperscript{55} Although this element of Kitschelt’s theory received much critical interest, it has also been discredited in an investigation carried out by John Veugelers and Andre Magnan which found that extreme right parties have actually benefitted from a core \textit{divergence} in the party system, where the major right party drifts even further in that direction.\textsuperscript{56}

In attempting to explain the impact of core divergence, Piero Ignazi has suggested that the politics of outbidding – where either a conservative party or radical right party move further to the right – may be to the benefit of the radical right.\textsuperscript{57} A mainstream conservative party can only move so far to the right before it risks being deserted by its traditional followers.\textsuperscript{58} However, a far right party is not affected by any similar constraints, and can make radical promises without strategic hindrance.\textsuperscript{59} Another explanation for why the radical right may benefit from core divergence is that sentiments often promoted by the radical right – such as the demonisation of immigrants – may be de-tabooed if picked up on in mainstream political discourse.\textsuperscript{60} This contention also receives support from Jackman and Volpert, who suggest that if the major parties respond to a challenge of the radical right by moving further to the right themselves, radical right viewpoints are put on the mainstream political agenda, and achieve some legitimacy.\textsuperscript{61} This is of importance, as Eatwell suggests that radical right parties need legitimacy in order to achieve a major breakthrough.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{55} Kitschelt, \textit{The radical right in Western Europe}, 17.
\textsuperscript{56} Veugelers and Magan, “Conditions of far right strength in contemporary Europe”, 855.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} Lubbers, Gijsberts and Scheepers, “Extreme right-wing voting in Western Europe,” 350.
\textsuperscript{61} Volpert and Jackman, “Conditions Favouring Parties of the Extreme Right in Western Europe,” 503.
\textsuperscript{62} Eatwell, “The Dynamics of Right-Wing Electoral Breakthrough,” 28.
more than just a fringe, and have goals that are achievable.\textsuperscript{63} Eatwell notes that the most successful radical right parties are those that have avoided the taint that arises from a clear association with fascism or traditional racism. It is also possible that the far right may gain legitimacy if other public figures react positively to its sentiments. Rudd Koopmans and Susan Olzak have explored the importance of legitimacy in encouraging right-wing violence. Koopmans and Olzak found that if reactions to right-wing violence in the media or by public figures are even partly positive, the likelihood of further right-wing violence increases. While right-wing violence is not the same as right-wing voting behaviour, it seems plausible that positive reactions from public figures to radical right policies may help a radical right party to gain legitimacy in the eyes of voters, and help it improve its electoral chances.

Electoral systems also need to be considered when assessing the fortunes of the radical right. Proponents of a majoritarian political system claim that proportional representation is conducive to political extremism, and cite the success of \textit{Front National} during the proportional 1986 elections, as well as the more recent success of the Austrian \textit{Freiheitliche Partei}.\textsuperscript{64} This argument may make intuitive sense because electoral rules impact political parties, and ‘proportional electoral systems make life easier for smaller parties’.\textsuperscript{65} However, as demonstrated by Elisabeth L. Carter in her influential 2002 study, the assumption that proportional representation encourages political extremism lacks empirical support.

Electoral systems are believed to affect the votes that parties receive when voters go to the polls. This is because the mechanical effect of the electoral system – that is, the way that votes become

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{64} Elisabeth L. Carter, “Proportional Representation and the Fortunes of Right-Wing Extremist Parties,” \textit{West European Politics} 25, no. 3 (2002): 125.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
seats – produces a psychological effect on voters and party elites.\textsuperscript{66} This psychological effect takes place when a voter realises that the mechanical workings of the electoral system results in small parties being under-represented.\textsuperscript{67} A vote for a small party may become ‘wasted’ and the voter may therefore choose to vote for a major party.\textsuperscript{68} Further, after considering the mechanics of the electoral system, party leaders may choose not to compete in certain elections where representation is not guaranteed.\textsuperscript{69} This relationship between the mechanical and psychological effects of the electoral systems means it is reasonable to assume that the stronger the mechanical effects of the electoral system, the stronger the psychological effect will be on voters and party elites.\textsuperscript{70} Therefore, the more that an electoral system discriminates against minor parties and favours major parties, the more likely it is that a voter will favour a major party.\textsuperscript{71}

Carter tested the assumption that proportional representation promotes political extremism by investigating the influence of district magnitude and electoral formula.\textsuperscript{72} District magnitude refers to the number of representatives elected in a district.\textsuperscript{73} Majoritarian electoral systems usually have a district magnitude of one, whereas proportional systems have multi-member districts. District magnitude is considered to be critically important when determining the proportionality of the electoral result.\textsuperscript{74} In proportional systems, the proportionality of electoral outcomes improves as district magnitude increases.\textsuperscript{75} However, some electoral systems recognise that too large a district magnitude may enable parties to gain parliamentary

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 126-127.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 127.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 128.
representation with a very small vote share, and introduce legal thresholds to prevent this from happening.\footnote{Ibid., 128 and 131.} If legal thresholds exist, district magnitude no longer determines the vote share a party must win to gain parliamentary representation.\footnote{Ibid., 131.} To take account of this, Arend Lipjhart created an estimate of an ‘effective threshold’, which is a percentage of the vote a party must win to ensure parliamentary representation.\footnote{Ibid.} After adopting Lijphart’s approach in her study, Carter found that a negative correlation between the right wing extremist vote and the effective threshold exists.\footnote{Ibid., 132.} However, the correlation is not statistically significant, and Carter therefore concluded that ‘high district magnitudes and low legal thresholds...do not appear to translate into high electoral scores for parties of the extreme right’.\footnote{Ibid.} Carter suggests that this implies that voters are either unaware of the effect of district magnitude on proportionality of electoral outcomes, or that voter awareness of the impact of district magnitude is outweighed by other concerns.\footnote{Ibid.}

Carter also examined the impact of electoral forumale – the method used to translate votes into seats – on voter support for the radical right.\footnote{Ibid., 133.} Majoritarian formulas are believed to systematically favour larger parties because smaller parties find it difficult to secure the majority of votes that are necessary to win a seat.\footnote{Ibid.} Therefore, it would make sense for radical right parties to perform better under proportional formulae than majoritarian formulae. However, Carter demonstrates that no clear relationship exists between the formula and the electoral fortunes of the radical right. Radical right parties have underperformed under majoritarian
formulae (such as Britain) but have also performed poorly in countries with proportional formulae (such as Greece, Portugal and Spain). Further, some radical right parties have performed well under proportional formulae (such as in Austria and France in 1986) but have also experienced electoral success under majoritarian formulae (such as France).

Carter’s conclusions suggest either that the psychological constraints that electoral mechanics impose on voters are weaker than has been suggested, or that people are voting for the radical right for other reasons. For instance, it is possible that a voter who is supporting the radical right as a form of protest may be uninhibited by the psychological constraints of district magnitude and electoral formula.

Conclusion

This essay has sought to shed light on the factors in an electorate that give rise to a demand for a radical right party, and considered how the operation of electoral systems can impact on the success of a radical right party at the polls. I began by considering what factors can encourage a demand for the radical right. Despite Cas Mudde’s contention that a core radical right ideology composed of nativism, authoritarianism and populism is widely held throughout Europe, the results of the Eurobarometer surveys indicate that such values are not uniformly held throughout Europe. This is particularly the case with nativism – an attitude that corresponds to radical right success, and suggests that a country lacking in nativist viewpoints will similarly lack sympathy for the radical right. I then discussed Herbert Kitschelt’s theory that education and employment experiences form attitudes that may lead a voter to support the radical right, and the empirical evidence that supports Kitschelt’s theory.

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84 Ibid., 134.
85 Ibid.
In second part of the paper, I explored factors that impact on the electoral success of the radical right. I examined Kitschelt’s theory that the radical right benefits from a core convergence between the major parties, and also explored empirical and theoretical suggestions to the contrary. As part of this discussion, I argued that a core divergence is in fact associated with right-wing electoral success, and may lead to a de-tabooing of the radical right issues promoted by insurgent parties, and granting of radical right legitimacy. Lastly, I discussed Elisabeth L. Carter’s empirical study into the impact that district magnitude and majoritarian and proportional representation has on the electoral fortunes of the radical right, and revealed that the commonly assumed psychological constraints associated with a perception of ‘vote wasting’ do not appear to hinder a voter from supporting the radical right.
Bibliography


