Support for the Extreme/Radical/Populist Right in Western Europe: Ideology or Protest?

The Extreme Right in Western Europe

Recent events?

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- Right-wing extremist motivation for murder of CDU politician. Role of social media & AfD?
-

Last week: Switzerland and the Mediterranean Countries

- ▶ Very old & stable democracy: Success for a particular kind (mainstream party) of Extreme Right party
- ▶ New Mediterranean democracies
  - ▶ Next to nil success in Spain and Portugal
  - ▶ Somewhat mixed success in Greece
    - ▶ The church leadership as an Extreme Right actor?
    - ▶ LAOS + Golden Dawn
- ▶ Unusual situation in Switzerland

Readings

- Brug, 2003
- Brug, Fennema and Tillie, 2000

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- ▶ More specifically: What motivates the voters of the Right?
- ▶ Today, two prominent contenders
  - ▶ Pure, non-ideological protest
  - ▶ Ideology

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    - ▶ Ideology
- ▶ Various attempts to test hypotheses/update knowledge

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- ▶ Today, two prominent contenders
    - ▶ Pure, non-ideological protest
    - ▶ Ideology
- ▶ Various attempts to test hypotheses/update knowledge
- ▶ The usual suspect: Wouter van der Brug

Meindert
Fennema

Wouter
van der Brug

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Why do people vote for the Extreme Right?

- ▶ Whole host of theories to explain electoral behaviour
- ▶ Most important factors:

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Why do people vote for the Extreme Right?

- ► Whole host of theories to explain electoral behaviour
- ► Most important factors:
  - ► Party identification
  - ► Issues
  - ► Candidates
  - ► (Value orientations)
- ► W vdB & Fennema/Tillie: Why a separate mechanism for Extreme Right parties (vs. mainstream parties)?
- ► Brug, Fennema and Tillie, 2000: only Dutch centre democrats would count as "protest" (based on 1994 data)
- ► Has the situation changed in 1999? → Brug, 2003

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What is a "'protest vote"'?

- ▶ "(Pure) Protest" hypothesis popular since the 1960s
- ▶ Protest votes have a different quality, but what makes them special?
- ▶ Linked to "social characteristics"-hypothesis: "alienated" segments in society protesting against elites?
- ▶ W vdB & Fennema: four types of voting
  1. Clientelist voting: personal, non-political gain

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  1. ~~Clientelist voting: personal, non-political gain~~
  2. "Idealistic" voting: Vote for the party which is closest to your own policy position

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    1. ~~Clientelist voting: personal, non-political gain~~
    2. "Idealistic" voting: Vote for the party which is closest to your own policy position
    3. "Pragmatic" voting: Vote for the party which is closest *and* most likely to affect policy

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    4. "Protest" voting: . . .

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A definition of protest voting

van der Brug/Fennema: 59-60

"The prime motive behind a 'protest vote' is to show discontent with the political elite by voting for a party that is an outcast .... We have evidence that the political elites in all West European countries consider anti-immigrant parties to be dangerous political outcasts .... If, therefore someone wants to use their vote to scare the elite, a party stigmatised by the political elite will be an attractive option"

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► Consequences:
  ► Ideological proximity should be a weak predictor
  ► Larger parties not necessarily more attractive
  ► *Cordon sanitaire* will not work

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    - ▶ *Cordon sanitaire* will not work
- ▶ Problems / interesting cases: Italy (AN), Austria (FPÖ), Progress Party (NO), PVV (NL) ...

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Which data?

- ▶ European Election Studies
- ▶ Parallel national surveys, carried out since 1979
- ▶ Rather complex structure
- ▶ http://www.ees-homepage.net/
- ▶ Here: data for seven countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Netherlands, Germany, Italy) / eight regions
- ▶ 1999 European Elections – 10 anti-immigrant parties
- ▶ Somewhat unusual items

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Probability of a future vote

- ▶ Most election studies: "Which party would you vote for if there was a General Election tomorrow"
- ▶ Problems:
  - ▶ Voters might be more or less indifferent between to or more parties
  - ▶ Voters will never, ever vote for one, two or more parties
  - ▶ Voters might vote for a party in unusual circumstances
- ▶ Standard item ignores the full set of preferences

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The item

"We have a number of parties in Britain each of which would like to get your vote. How probable is it that you will ever vote for the following parties? Please specify your views on a 10-point-scale where 1 means 'not at all probable' and 10 means 'very probable'. If you think of the Labour Party: what mark out of ten best describes how probable it is that you will ever vote for the Labour Party?"

▶ Same question for Conservative, LibDems, Greens, BNP, . . .
▶ In all seven countries

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▶ Lots of fancy names ("electoral utitlity", "subjective
probability") to refer to this simple measure

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The "Stacked Data Matrix" experience

- ▶ With k parties in country X, we have up to k subjective probabilities per voter
- ▶ That makes k variables
- ▶ We want to know if/how voting for the Extreme Right is different from voting for other parties
- ▶ We generate up to k cases per voter by "stacking" the information
- ▶ Finally, information for all voters from all countries is stacked

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The "Stacked Data Matrix" experience

name	pLab	pCons	pBNP
Donald	9	4	0
Goofy	7	9	1
Micky	x	8	10

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$\longrightarrow$

name	party	p
Donald	Lab	9
Donald	Cons	4
Donald	BNP	0
Goofy	Lab	7
Goofy	Cons	9
Goofy	BNP	1
Micky	Cons	8
Micky	BNP	10

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Micky	BNP	10

► Many, many cases
► Probably best to replace party names with a dummy for XR parties

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Stacked again
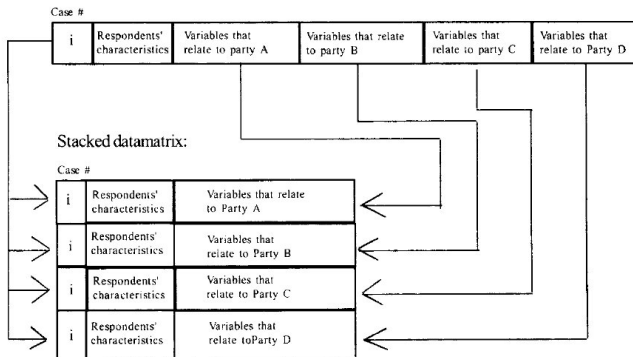
Figure 1. Transformation of original datamatrix into a stacked datamatrix.

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Independent variables

- ▶ Subjective left-right distance
- ▶ Policy agreement
  - ▶ European Integration
  - ▶ Immigration, economy, environment (voodoo)
- ▶ Additional control variables (class, income, education, religion, approval of government)
- ▶ Party size (interpretation?)

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What kind of evidence?

- ▶ No direct information on voter motivations (and the authors would discount it)
- ▶ "Circumstantial evidence"

Table 1. Types of party preference based on ideology and power as independent variables

		Power (party size)	
		Weak influence	Strong positive influence
Policy agreement (left/right and/or issues)	Weak influence	(Potential) protest votes	Pragmatic/clientelist votes
	Strong influence	Idealist votes	Pragmatic/idealist votes

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Model

Subjective Probability of Vote for Party =constant

$+$ ideological distance

$+$ policy agreement(s)

$+$ controls

$+$ party size

▶ Estimation over all pairs of voters/parties

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Findings for 63 parties

Table 1. Regression analyses to explain party preferences (standardised coefficients)

	All parties	Anti-immigrant parties (N = 10)	Other parties (N = 53)
Party size	0.24	0.27	0.23
Left/right distance	−0.29	−0.28	−0.29
European integration distance	−0.08	−0.08	−0.08
European Union approval	0.08	0.09	0.09
Government approval	0.09	0.10	0.09
Importance and satisfaction about policies:			
European integration	0.03	0.02ns	0.03
Immigration	0.06	0.13	0.05
The economy	0.05	0.09	0.05
The environment	0.07	0.04	0.07
Social class and income	0.09	0.03	0.10
Religion	0.12	0.07	0.13
Education	0.04	0.06	0.04
Dummy anti-immigrant party	−0.01ns	–	–
Adjusted R^2	0.31	0.36	0.29

Note: ns = not significant at $p = 0.05$.
Source: Van der Eijk et al. (1999).

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Interpretation

- ▶ Votes for mainstream parties
- ▶ And for Extreme/Radical Right parties
- ▶ Can be explained by the same mechanisms

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- ▶ Votes for mainstream parties
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- ▶ Are the coefficients different? Should we specify interactions?

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Interpretation

- ▶ Votes for mainstream parties
- ▶ And for Extreme/Radical Right parties
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- ▶ Are the coefficients different? Should we specify interactions?
- ▶ Residuals: Difference between expected and observed probability of a vote
- ▶ Can we model/explain these differences?

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- ▶ Residuals: Difference between expected and observed probability of a vote
- ▶ Can we model/explain these differences?
- ▶ Do the effects of our variables vary across parties?

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Deviations

Table 2. Results of regressions to explain residuals of the general model

	Ideological distance (left-right)	Distance European Unification	Party size	Adjusted R-square
Ten anti-immigrant parties	0.07	0.03ns	0.14	0.02
FPÖ	−0.24	0.03ns	–	0.05
Dansk Folkeparti	−0.05ns	−0.01ns	–	−0.00
Alleanza Nazionale	−0.01ns	0.00ns	–	−0.00
Vlaams Blok	0.08ns	0.00ns	–	−0.01
Fremskridtspartiet	0.14	−0.02ns	–	0.02
French *Front national*	0.17	0.09ns	–	0.04
Lega Nord	0.22	−0.05ns	–	0.04
Republikaner	0.24	0.18	–	0.10
Wallonian *Front National*	0.26	0.13ns	–	0.08
Centrumdemocraten	0.41	0.09	–	0.19

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Estimates are *deviations* from estimates in table 1

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Finally: Findings

- ▶ By and large, the same mechanisms apply
- ▶ But for some parties, ideological/policy distances are more or less irrelevant
- ▶ So voters for these parties might be motivated by "protest"
  - ▶ Dutch Centre Democrats
  - ▶ Belgian FN
  - ▶ German Republicans
  - ▶ Italian Lega Nord
  - ▶ (French FN)

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    - ► Dutch Centre Democrats
    - ► Belgian FN
    - ► German Republicans
    - ► Italian Lega Nord
    - ► (French FN)
- ► But this applies to left-right and integration only – what about immigration?

Class questions

- ▶ Is this vdB's definition of "protest" plausible?
- ▶ Which parties are classified as "protest"? In the light of your knowledge, is this classification convincing? Which other, "modern" parties could be classified as "ideological" / "protest"?

Readings I

📄 Brug, Wouter van der (2003). "How the LPF Fuelled Discontent.
Empirical Tests of Explanations of LPF Support". In: *Acta
Politica* 38, pp. 89–106. DOI: 10.1057/palgrave.ap.5500005.

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"Anti-Immigrant Parties in Europe: Ideological or Protest Vote?"
In: *European Journal of Political Research* 37.1, pp. 77–102.