PARTY COMPETITION AND PUBLIC DEMAND AFTER THE FINANCIAL CRISIS:

radical right parties in established democracies

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Abstract

While major theoretical work on the Radical Right (RR) was developed before the 2008 Financial Crisis, electoral results over the last decade have initiated an extensive debate within the Radical Right voting literature. From the post-crisis work on the RR we have already learned a great deal about those who vote for these parties in Western Europe. Nevertheless, we know less about who radical right parties actually compete for votes with and what differentiates their voter base from these competitors' voter base. This study comparatively analyzes political competition based on the empirically grounded criteria coming from individual-level data. I ask two questions: First, does the political competition differ for radical right parties when they compete for votes with (a) center- right and (b) leftist parties. Second, what are the implications to political competition when a radical right party competes with an incumbent party and what when it competes with other opposition party. To respond to these questions I test several theoretically informed hypotheses through a pooled and separate case-by-case analyses. Empirical findings suggest a striking irrelevance of the indicators of retrospective economic protest voting among the RR electorate, irrespective of which parties' voters they are analyzed against. Nevertheless, salience of position issues along with, to some extent, prospective economic voting, provides information on where might the radical right competitive advantage reside in comparison to other parties.

Key words: voting behavior, radical right, party competition, issue-based voting, economic voting

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Introduction

Extensive work has been produced in an attempt to understand Western Europe's radical right (RR) upsurge, providing supply-side and demand-side explanations for its success (Golder 2016; Mudde 2007; Arzheimer 2018). On one hand, supply-side analyses place an emphasis on party behavior. While Downsian (1957) model is often taken as a deductive tool for studying mainstream party behavior, explanations of electoral successes of niche parties who do not chase the median voter required certain modification of the original spatial models. Instead of looking solely at issue proximities, recent theoretical work sheds light on the importance of issue salience and issue ownership in accounting for the success of these parties (Meguid 2005). Therefore, issue ownership-based analyses have become more common, whereby positions of radical right parties are hardly understood without taking mainstream party positions into account (Meguid 2005; Mudde 2010). In fact, analyses based on issue salience and issue ownership have become more relevant as the emergence of a new structural conflict in Europe has transformed traditional dimensions of political competition, moving the focus to cultural issues and creating space for new political parties (Kriesi et al. 2006).

On the other hand, studies on the demand-side, examine factors that produce demand for political parties at the micro-level. Literature on the radical right electorate often links support for these parties to modernization, socio-cultural, and/or economic grievances (Golder 2016). We have learned that citizens who vote for radical right parties in Western Europe are EU sceptics, they often hold *populist attitudes* and have high levels of political distrust (Akkerman, Zaslove, and Spruyt 2017; Alexander and Welzel 2017; Inglehart and Norris 2016; Oesch 2008; Rooduijn 2017; Voogd and Dassonneville 2018; Zhirkov 2014). We have also learned that the radical right voter base in Western Europe is predominantly composed of service and production workers

(Oesch and Rennwald 2017), and citizens with anti-immigration attitudes (Goodwin, 2011; Green, Sarrasin, Baur, & Fasel, 2016; Rydgren, 2008; Stockemer, 2016).

Euroscepticism and anti-immigration are commonly considered to be core issues on the basis of which RR in Western Europe receives electoral support. Recent evidence on electoral volatility in Europe suggests that mainstream parties have difficulties competing with the radical right for ownership over these issues, because immigration and EU skepticism have nothing to do with traditional social divisions alongside which the mainstream parties were formed (Bakker, Jolly, and Polk 2018; Hong 2015; Kriesi 2010). Rather, some authors argue that these issues constitute a new dividing line termed *transnational cleavage* on which radical right niche parties outperform mainstream parties (Hooghe and Marks 2018).

In order to avoid assuming individual-level mechanisms behind the party competition, I aim to (1) rely on voter level data to determine which parties radical right actually competes for votes and (2) examine what differentiates radical right voters from competing parties' voters. Two different analyses – pooled and separate – will serve answering two research questions. First, I ask what affects the choice for radical right parties, if these parties compete with (a) centre-right parties and (b) leftist parties. I will test several theoretically informed hypotheses on radical right voters and see how they hold when these parties compete with competitors from different ends of the political spectrum. Second, in separate country-by-country tests, I asses the relative contribution of the economic protest voting versus issue-based voting, and ask whether competing parties' status - being in opposition or in power – affects the political competition between RR and these parties.

Below, I first review the theoretical work on right-wing upsurge as well as the theory and empirical findings on radical right voting. Second, I formulate hypotheses of the present study. In addition, I employ micro-level data together with an expert survey on political parties in order to determine radical right parties, their competing parties and salient issues throughout the examined period. While party competition scholarship largely assumes voter behavior on the basis of party behavior analysis (Downes and Loveless 2018; Meguid 2005), I believe that micro-level approach to party competition might have both theoretical and empirical contributions.

1 Radical Right in Western Europe

1.1 Broader context: theoretical debates and concept clarification

This section aims to clarify what is exactly meant by the radical right in Western Europe and what is its relation to similar terms. First, I will briefly review some of the recent debates on the emergence and electoral results of right-wing populist parties in broader sense. In the second part of this chapter, I move on the radical right party family and review the comparative literature on issue-based voting among these parties' electorate. Lastly, I examine protest- and economic voting among radical right's supporters. Second and third part of this chapter will also be accompanied by the formulation of hypotheses of the present study.

A large number of recent studies in the broader literature have examined the challenges that pluralist liberal democracy is facing. Radical right parties have, therefore, often been put under broader terms and the causes of consequences of their success have been analyzed accordingly. One of these umbrella terms is *right wing populism* which brings together a wide range of right wing parties who share certain political views. In *Distinguishing Liberal Democracy challengers*, Pappas (2016) differentiates between three groups of political parties which, according to him, pose threat to contemporary liberal democracy: antidemocratic, illiberal and populists parties.

The first group is labeled extreme political parties, both left and right, who stand against the very principles of representative democracy. Pappas lists Greece's Golden Dawn on the right end of the extreme and Germany's Die Linke on the left. The second group is composed of political parties who claim to protect the interest of native-born citizens against immigrants. These parties are not considered to be antidemocratic for they do not challenge the democratic order itself as long as it serves the natives. Nativist parties are predominantly concentrated in

Western, politically liberal countries, and their political success is perhaps conditional on the extent of ethnic and racial heterogeneity in a given society. European examples are the Freedom party of Austria (FPÖ), Party for Freedom (PVV) in Austria, the Finns Party (PS), Alternative for Germany (AFD) and National Front (FN) in France. Lastly, the third challenger of liberal democracy in Pappas' view is populism. He describes populist parties as those who simultaneously endorse democracy and illiberal political agenda, with Fidesz being a typical example.

Nevertheless, the difference between nativist and populist parties appears to be rather blurry. Nativist political parties, by definition, endorse illiberal political views for they act against the pluralist principle of liberal democracy. On the other hand, some of the parties and politicians often called *illiberal democrats* openly violate democratic procedures and change the rules of the political game in their own favor while in power (Freedom House, 2017), which brings in question the usefulness of the phrase *illiberal democracy*. This has perhaps led to the widespread usage of populism, as a term which covers exclusive, anti-pluralist parties in Europe who claim to have an indisputable right to represent the will of *the real people* in their countries (Müller 2017).

Adopting this broad term, scholars have examined reasons that enabled populist breakthrough. Prompted by the 2016 US elections, Galston (2017) analyzes macro-level trends and concludes that technological change, aided by the Great Recession and mass migration, is a source of social divisions in established democracies. He argues that new modes of production based on more knowledge-intensive economies, have caused divisions into new elites on one side, and those *left behind* in the new age of production. While the former group refers to educated mobile citizens who control sources of power and are ready for these technological

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challenges, the latter group is composed of less educated citizens from rural areas who, according to Galston, right wing populist parties have managed to massively mobilize. The Great Recession and mass migration facilitated this process of growing social cleavages, making socioeconomic and security issues more salient in the last decade.

Aside from class-based analyses, liberal democratic institutions are also identified as one of the possible factors of right-wing populist upsurge. Mueller (2017), for instance, engages with the statement of some politicians and parties who claim to speak in the name of the *silent majority* or *neglected people* and points toward mainstream political parties arguing that a proportion of their electorate feels excluded from political decision-making processes, which might bring into question the effectiveness of political representation by mainstream parties.

While these explanations within the broader literature suggest a number of plausible reasons for the right-wing success in the aftermath of 2008 Great Recession, in the remain of this study I will focus exclusively on radical right parties that will be empirically defined for this study and selected accordingly (chapter 2), in order to avoid terminological confusion. Undisputedly, many of the aforementioned factors to a greater or lesser extent also account for the radical right's electoral success. Nevertheless, understanding these parties' voters requires going down the ladder of abstraction. Therefore, in the pages that follow I review theoretical debates and empirical findings related to the radical right's voter base only.

1.2 Radical right electorate: Issue-based voting and formulation of hypotheses

1.2.1 Economy

In a chapter of his book entitled *It's not the economy stupid!*, Mudde (2007) disputes one of the core principles of Kitchel's winning formula for the radical right, claiming that RR economic program does not constitute a key principle of this party family. On one hand, the radical right cannot be described by neoliberal economic views for this substantially varies across cases. Mudde describes RR economic position as a combination of neoliberal and welfare chauvinist policies in which core is nothing else but the *nativist economy* (p. 122). On the other hand, given that radical right parties are often far from political power, they seem to benefit by emphasizing identiterian issues and keeping economy secondary, as an instrument to pursue their nativist/authoritarian/populist agenda (p. 132). In addition, rather rare studies that compared radical right and moderate parties on socioeconomic issues have shown that radical right voters are not significantly different from mainstream parties with regard to economic policy preferences (Ivarsflaten, 2002). While the RR is similar to mainstream parties regarding economic policies, their radicalism comes to the fore in socio-cultural issues (Ivarsflaten, 2002).

However, the post-2007/2008 financial crisis literature finds that the demand for redistribution policies generally increased among the European electorate (Olivera, 2014). Interestingly, it also seems that some radical right parties changed their programmatic focus. The case study on the National Front in France, for instance shows that this party placed more emphasis on economic policies in its 2012 portfolio moving towards the left on micro- and macroeconomic issues, while giving cultural issues less importance (Ivaldi, 2015). On the other hand, it seems that the weakening party polarization in the UK accounts for the support for UKIP. In other words, the two main parties' move towards political center has left some voters

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disoriented, which UKIP took advantage of. This is more noticeable in the case of Labor Party whose voters, due to the weakening of party's distinctive features after its move to the center, first defected to the Conservative Party and then to UKIP, once this party became politically significant (Evans & Mellon, 2016).

In light of their economic nationalism, radical right parties are skeptical of the common market, they advocate protectionist policies and adopt anti-globalization political agenda. For instance, the National Front in France adopted a strong protectionist position in its 2014 European manifesto, claiming that the party would *stop the country's contribution to the European budget, introduce taxes at France's borders, stop all EU bailout plans, regulate the banking system, and vote against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership* (Ivaldi, 2015, p. 11). RR support for the capitalist economy together with economic protectionism and skepticism of the free market is perhaps best captured by the term *social market economy* (Mudde, 2007, p. 124), which implies that the RR electorate is mixed class-wise. Recent findings have lent some empirical support for this thesis. On one hand, mixed results are found on the redistribution preferences and satisfaction with the economy (Rooduijn, 2017; Zhirkov, 2014). On the other hand, Oesch and Rennwald (2017) suggest that this voter base is composed of both working- and middle-class segments in society, while the RR receives its strongest support from service and production workers.

If the *post-crisis shift to the left* hypothesis (H1) among the radical right electorate is correct, these voters will be supportive of redistribution of wealth from rich to poor. In addition, if the *social market economy hypothesis* (H2) holds, RR electorate will favour increasing taxes to increase public services.

1.2.2 Non-economic issues

In the recent debate on democratic deconsolidation in the Journal of Democracy Alexander and Welzel (2017) qualify an argument that the progressive cultural shift produced a growing divide between those holding illiberal- and liberal moral values. This homogenized marginalized social classes and made them easier to mobilize. Put another way, these authors suggest that liberal democracy has changed its meaning in a relatively short period of time, which made older and marginalized social groups more distant from younger, educated, and more liberal generations. The essence of this argument is that right wing populist electorate did not follow the cultural shift, and was left behind holding illiberal moral values. These values include some of the relatively new liberal norms, such as those related to sexuality which is why the radical right attracts voters who oppose same-sex marriages. For these reasons, if *illiberalism hypothesis* (H3) applies to the radical right voters, they will be opposed to same-sex marriages.

In addition, a number of non-economic issues on which the RR mobilizes its voters emerged as a reaction to progressive cultural change. In other words, cultural backlash hypothesis suggests that vote for the RR comes as a reaction to the change towards post-materialist values (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Norris, 2016). One of these post-materialist issues is associated with the environmental protection to which the Green parties are committed. Hence, if the *cultural backslash hypothesis* (H4) holds, when will be in favour of economic growth taking priority at the cost of environmental protection.

Lastly, the marginalization of the RR electorate is usually followed by greater concerns over security issues. In periods of economic uncertainty, the politicization of security often comes as a useful political strategy for the mobilization of voters. Mudde (2010) argues that security is one of the issues over which the RR succeeded to *establish ownership* in the

competition with mainstream parties. An additional such issue on which the Radical Right is hardly challenged is the anti-EU position. In other words, periods of crisis present an opportunity structure for nationalist and anti-globalist parties to mobilize and direct dissatisfaction against the supranational bodies. Since European Union is often perceived as an elite-driven project, this dissatisfaction easily translates into the dissatisfaction with mainstream political parties. Two testable hypotheses derive from this paragraph. First, if the *tough on crime hypothesis* (H5) is correct, RR voters will tend to support policies to combat crime, even if that entails restricting privacy rights. Second, if the *anti-EU* hypothesis (H6) is correct, RR voters will be opposed to the European Union. Due to the complexity of the meaning of the European Union, I will use multiple indicators to test the anti-EU hypothesis (Chapter 3).

1.2.3   Immigration

Mudde (2007) uses the term nativist democracy to describe radical right ideology. While radical right parties claim to be democratic and often advocate for more direct democracy, their democracy is almost always nominal, for these parties *oppose some fundamental values of liberal democracy* (ibid. p. 31). These fundamental values are above all, but not exclusively, related to the protection of minority rights. It is not uncommon to hear a far right politician claiming, whether implicitly or explicitly, that they are in favor of democracy as long as it serves the natives. Ever since the 80s and 90s immigration crisis, immigration has been seen as one of the main issues over which the radical right successfully mobilizes its voters in Western Europe (Mudde 2013, 1999; Van Spanje 2010). In fact, previous research has proven the centrality of immigration issue in lending support to radical right parties (Mudde 2007; Goodwin 2011; Van der Brug, Fennema, and Tillie 2000; Ivarsflaten 2008), whereby it is the perception of threat that predominantly accounts for anti-immigrant attitudes (Green et al., 2016; Stockemer, 2016).

Nevertheless, it is important to note that anti-immigrant attitudes do not necessarily mean that radical right voters also hold xenophobic attitudes (Rydgren, 2008).

Finally, taking the aforementioned into consideration, I may expect that if the *anti-immigration hypothesis (H7)* is correct, RR voters will support more restrictive policies on immigration. However, to be clear about my domain of inference, this study does not analyze motivation behind the potential anti-immigrant attitudes. In other words, my analysis will reveal whether the radical right electorate differs from the centre-right and leftist voters with respect to the anti-immigration policies, but it will not be able to say whether support for these policies is motivated by mere skepticism, xenophobia, racism, or something else (Rydgren, 2008).

1.3   Political dissatisfaction and protest voting

When writing about the protest vote and dissatisfaction in this study, I do not think of the claim to legitimacy commonly found among *populist* politicians and parties (Müller 2017; Canovan 2002). Neither I intend to measure anti-elitist attitudes or dissatisfaction with mainstream parties. Rather, in this study I predominantly think of these terms in light of the post-financial crisis economic dissatisfaction with incumbents, and the consequent potential economic electoral punishment and/or reward. Given that I am interested in grievances caused by the economic crisis, I will evaluate the literature on economic voting in somewhat broader terms.

The role of economic concerns among voters in their support for political parties shows great variation across cases and depends on a wide range of variables. Nonetheless, in general terms, we know that economic concerns account for roughly one third of election outcomes (Lewis-Beck and Paldam 2000). When thinking about economy-based voting, there are few

aspects that are worth noting, such as temporal dimension of economic evaluation or personal vs. national economy-based assessments.

Starting with temporal dimension, one can differentiate between retrospective and prospective voting (for an overview, see Dalton, 2013). On one hand, the former refers to citizens' evaluation of incumbent's past economic performance. Based on judgements related to how the governing party performed during its time in office, citizens decide whether to reward or punish it on the election day. On the other hand, prospective economic voting refers to expectation on how a party would perform if it were elected, and this expectation is usually based on party's past government performance, except if it has never been in power.

Furthermore, it is important to point out that in order to make up their mind about whether political parties perform well or badly, voters can rely on cues from their own environment (Fiorina 1981). One of these cues come from citizens' personal experience and refers to their economic well-being. In other words, when voters decide whether to vote for the incumbent based on their (dis)satisfaction with personal economic situation, we speak of 'pocketbook' hypothesis (Nannestad and Paldam 1994). By contrast, according to the 'sociotropic' hypothesis, voters rather tend rely on their judgements about national economic situation when deciding who to vote for (Nannestad and Paldam 1994). For instance, Kinder & Kiewiet (1979) look at congressional elections between 1956 and 1976 and find that perceptions of national economic situation considerably outweigh the impact of personal economic concerns on election outcomes.

To summarize, voters generally neglect long-term economic performance and mostly care about recent economic changes, they seem to be more affected by the perception of national

rather than personal economic situation when going to the polls and negative economic changes are more likely to attract voters' attention than positive ones (Lewis-Beck and Paldam 2000). Nevertheless, a direct contribution of one's economic considerations to the voting decision remains difficult to estimate and this becomes even more complex in multiparty systems compared to two-party systems.

In the same vein, the relevance of economic concerns in understanding the radical right support base is a disputed matter. Analyzing post-economic crisis literature on radical right voting, Stockemer (2017) notes that *the list of studies that find no relationship between economic crisis, in general, or high unemployment, in particular, and increased support for the radical right is as long as the list of studies that report a positive association* (pp. 3-4). Hernández & Kriesi, (2016) find that incumbents and other mainstream parties have been electorally punished after the economic crisis, which these authors see as an event that only accelerated long-term dealignment processes (Chiaramonte and Emanuele 2017; Dalton and Weldon 2007; Pharr, Putnam, and Dalton 2000). Recent research has also shown that, unexpectedly, regions severely hit by the crisis have not seen a significant increase in support for radical right parties. By contrast, regions which have mainly been immune to crisis have witnessed the highest increase in support for the radical right. However, the effect of the crisis itself, i.e objective economic situation, is either very small or insignificant, while *it appears that it is more the "fear from the economic crisis" rather than a real economic crisis that fosters increased support for the radical right* (Stockemer 2017). In a similar vein, Grittersova, Indridason, Gregory, & Crespo, (2016) demonstrate that austerity measures do not foster support for radical political parties. These policies rather reinforce the competition between mainstream left- and right-wing parties. The

importance of the aforementioned *fear factor* is the reason why I include subjective perceptions of national and personal economic performance in this study.

As far as this part of the study is concerned, my intention is to test the relative contribution of economic- and issue-based voting in the support for radical right parties versus competing parties. To do this, I formulate my hypotheses in somewhat broader terms compared to the previous section. In other words, given that radical right parties are often claimed to thrive on the widespread dissatisfaction with the incumbent's performance (for instance Hernández and Kriesi 2016), I expect (H8) radical right parties to benefit from economic voting when competing with incumbent parties for votes. Therefore, If the *retrospective economic voting hypothesis* (H8a) holds Radical right parties will benefit from the retrospective electoral punishment of the incumbent. Similarly, if the *prospective economic voting hypothesis* (H8b) is correct, radical right parties will benefit from the negative anticipation of incumbent future economic performance. Retrospective economic voting will be operationalized through the evaluations of both national and personal economic situation. I do not make further projection on which of these indicators will work across cases. My intention is just to attempt to test an overarching theory of retrospective voting through different operationalizations of the concept. The hypotheses 8a and 8b will also be tested in the context of a pooled analysis.

Finally, in cases where radical right parties compete with other opposition parties I do not expect that they will necessarily benefit from economic voting. Put differently, I have no strong theoretical reasons to believe that other opposition parties will not take advantage on incumbent's struggles with economic performance. Therefore, if the *issue-based voting hypothesis* (H9) is correct, radical right parties will benefit from issue-based voting when competing with other opposition parties. Hypotheses 8 and 9 are complementary rather than

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exclusive. I do not assume that the presence of issue-based voting excludes the relevance of economic indicators or vice versa. Nevertheless, I do assume that economic and issue-based voting generally take priority over each other in situations explained under H8 and H9. That is, in general terms, economic voting explains radical right's competition for votes with incumbent parties (H8), whereas issue-based voting explains radical right's competition for votes with other opposition parties (H9).

1.4   A brief overview of the hypotheses and research aim

As indicated in the introduction, two sets of hypotheses will be empirically tested in this study. The first set will be tested through a pooled political competition analysis between (1) radical right parties and centre-right and (2) radical right parties and leftist parties. This set of hypotheses includes the following: the post crisis shift to the left (H1), social market economy (H2), illiberalism hypothesis (H3), cultural backslash (H4), 'tough on crime' (H5) anti-EU, (H6) anti-immigration (H7), retrospective (H8a) and prospective (H8b) economic voting. On the other hand, with regards to the second set, I analyze economic voting (H8) and issue-based voting hypotheses (H9) in competition with different competing parties.

Two sets of hypotheses elaborated above serve answering two main questions of this study: First, on the aggregate level, I test several theoretically informed hypotheses to understand what affects voting for RR parties when these parties compete with ideologically different party families. Second, in separate country-by-country analyses, I ask whether or not the political competition differs for radical right parties if their competitors are (a) in power and (b) in opposition.

Aside from two separate questions, the reason for deciding to also run separate analyses is that some information might be overlooked if I base my conclusions about the radical right parties' political competition solely on a pooled analysis. The aggregation of data necessarily entails the loss of information, and I would not be able to see whether findings on a pooled level are be distorted due to distinctive features of some radical right and competing parties. Therefore, I decide to disaggregate my data and answer additional question about the radical right political competition in this second step of my analysis.

Political competition has frequently been approached from the party-level perspective, where scholars analyzed competing parties' behavior connecting these strategies to electoral results (Meguid 2005; Downes and Loveless 2018). What might be missing in this context is that this approach perhaps overlooks the micro-level data behind party strategies. On one hand, we do not know whether or not voters care about party positioning on certain issues and whether or not parties are *beating* their competitors (a) due to a given issue and (b) because of a position they have taken up on that issue. On the other hand, political competitors for votes in the pollical arena are often assumed on arbitrarily determined.

In the chapter that follows, I present the political competition analysis based on empirically grounded criteria. In this approach, individual-level data is given much more weight, while I also consult data from the party-level. In the third and fourth chapters, I will first deal with the case selection and variable selection, elaborate on the datasets that I employ, and then turn to the empirical analysis. In the final part, I will briefly discuss my findings and reflect on implications to the radical right parties' political competition.

2   Case selection

2.1   Radical right parties

The selection of radical right (RR) parties was based on two criteria. First, I utilize the Chapel Hill expert survey 2014 where political scientists who specialize in political parties rank them on the basis of parties' views on personal freedoms, democratic participation and rights. Experts rank these parties on a 10-point scale ranging from Libertarian/Postmaterialist (0) to Traditional/Authoritarian (10), with the middle of the scale standing for political center (5). I classify those parties who are ranked 8.0 or above as radical right or far right parties. Second, I examine only those radical right parties (as defined in the first criterion) that are politically relevant. Political relevance or political significance for radical right parties in this article is defined as having won at least 5% of votes in the European Elections. Therefore, my selection of RR parties is based on (a) expert survey and (b) vote share, and only those RR parties that meet both of these criteria will be included in the main analysis. Table 1 displays experts' rankings of RR parties (parties ranked over 8.0) on the aforementioned scale from countries who participate in the European elections, together with standard deviations. In this table, I also show the vote share of these parties in the European Elections.

Table 1. Parties' ideological position (based on Chapel Hill expert survey) and electoral success in the 2014 European elections

Country	Party	Ideological position		Electoral result in the 2014 European elections
		mean	sd	
Belgium	Flemish Interest (VB)	9.00	.71	4.26%
Denmark	Danish People's Party (DF)	8.40	1.17	26.6%
Germany	Alternative for Germany (AfD)	8.69	1.44	7.1%

	National democratic party of Germany (NDP)	9.82	.40	1%
Greece	Golden Dawn (XA)	10.0	.0	9.39%
	Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS)	8.33	.87	2.69%
	Independent Greeks (ANEL)	8.56	1.01	3.46%
France	National Front (FN)	8.92	2.11	24.86%
Italy	Lega Nord (LN)	9.14	.69	6.15%
Netherlands	Party for Freedom (PVV)	7.78[1]	1.56	13.32%
UK	UK Independent Party (UKIP)	9.29	.95	26.77%
Austria	Freedom Party of Austria (FPO)	8.80	.79	19.72%
Finland	True Finns (PS)	9.11	.60	12.90%
	Christian Democrats (KD)	9.00	1.00	5.20%
Sweden	Sweden Democrats (SD)	9.24	.70	9.67%

As indicated above, only parties ranked 8.0 or above will be classified as radical right parties. There is one exception from this rule and it pertains to the finish case. Given that one of the extremes on the scale on which experts rank these parties is called Traditional/Authoritarian, this leaves room for some parties from Christian Democratic party family to be ranked under what I classify here as radical right parties. The reason for this is that Christian democratic parties take up positions on moral and cultural issues that are considered traditional, which is in line with their Christian values. This makes them score relatively high on Libertarian/Postmaterialist - Traditional/Authoritarian scale. Nevertheless, most of these parties fall under the 8.0 rank and therefore differ from authoritarian radical right parties who have highest scores on this dimension. However, in certain cases Christian democratic parties also

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[1] The only Dutch party ranked above 8.0 is the Reformed Political Party (SGP). Nevertheless, this party participated in 2014 European Elections in the coalition and therefore I am not able to estimate its unique vote share. On the other hand, I decide to display PVV position given the proximity of its ranking to 8.0 and relatively high sd. In addition, PVV is often identified as populist radical right in the Netherlands and has significant electoral result in European elections.

happen to be ranked within the highest category, as this category is defined in this paper. Hence, since I differentiate Christian democratic party family from radical right niche parties who thrive on newly salient issues and protest voting, I preserve the right not to consider those Christian democrats who fall within the highest category on the scale as radical right parties. This is the case with finish Christian democrats.

In addition, I do not display Spain in table 1 because there is only one party in this country, the People's Party (PP) which is a borderline case, i.e which scores 8.0 on ideological positioning. However, just like in the finish case explained above, the PP belongs to the Christian democratic party family, rather than to the radical right. There are two additional instances when a party is ranked above 8.0 in the expert survey but are not included in the analysis: (1) parties that did not participate in the European elections. This is the case with the Movement for France (MPF); (2) parties that did not participate in the elections alone but in a coalition. An example is the Reformed Political Party (SGP) in the Netherlands, whose unique vote share is difficult to estimate given that this party ran for votes together with its coalition partner the Christian Union (CU).

2.2   Competing parties

Having determined which radical right parties will be included in the analysis, in the second step I examine which parties does the radical right compete with in different cases based on the voter level data. In other words, I rely on voting propensity measures from the European Election study 2014 and examine which parties are second and third preference for radical right voters. I will also take into consideration ideological position and electoral result of competing parties. Competitors' ideological position might tell us something about the nature of political competition in different countries.

Concerning the voting propensities or voting probabilities, these measures consist of a 10-item scale asking respondents *how likely are you to ever vote for this party,* and these questions will be employed only for purposes of determining RR political competitors. To determine these competitors, I single out respondents who are very likely to vote for the radical right and look at who is their other preferences. In other words, I single out those respondents who score 8-10 on the voting propensity question related to radical right party in a given country, and examine which party do they name as their second and third preference. First two parties that average 3.0 or more on voting propensities will be considered as competing parties. However, if aside from the RR no other party averages more than 3.0 I will assume that RR voter base in that country is stable, loyal and not likely to switch and not analyze political competition in that country, because points 0-3 on the scale stand for very low voting probabilities. Moreover, out of parties which voters rank as their secondary preferences, I select maximum two political parties. Assuming that radical right voters might also be considering three or more other political parties when deciding who to vote for, is perhaps hardly cognitively plausible from the perspective of practical decision making (Lau, 2003). Therefore, I do not believe I would add much to the political competition explanation by including more than two competitors if these meet the empirical criteria.

Finally, once I have determined RR's political competitors, in the main analysis I take into consideration all of the respondents who reported they voted for radical right party and competing parties.

Table 2 shows RR competitors, their ideological position and vote share in 2014 European elections. In each case, I display a party (parties) that I select and the first party below

the cut off, i.e. the first one that stays out of the analysis. As indicated above, I select maximum two of those parties that average above 3.0 as RR voters' secondary preference.

Table 2. Radical right's competing parties; RR voters asked how probable is it that they will ever vote for other parties, from 0 (not at all probable) to 10 (very probable)

Country	Party	RR voters' voting Propensities (VP)	Ideological position		Electoral result in the 2014 European elections
			mean	sd	
Denmark	Liberals (V)	5.03	5.70	1.95	16.70%
	Social Democratic Party	2.95			
Germany	CDU/CSU	4.06	6.00	.91	35.30%
	Social Democratic Party (SDP)	3.65	4.15	1.07	27.30%
	The Left	2.91			
Greece	Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA)	3.24	2.11	1.27	26.57%
	Independent Greeks (ANEL)	3.06	8.56	1.01	3.46%[2]
	The River	2.67			
France	Union for Popular Movement (UMP)	3.81	7.17	1.53	20.81%
	Independents	2.60			
Italy	Let's Go Italy (FI)	5.73	7.29	1.50	16.81%
	Brothers of Italy (FDL)	5.22	9.29	.76	3.66%[3]
	New Centre-Right	4.53			
Netherlands	Socialist Party (SP)	4.16	4.11	1.90	9.60%
	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD)	3.59	5.13	1.96	12.02%

[2] This party won bellow 5%. In accordance with the previously established criterion of political significance, I consider this competitor not to be a politically significant political party and, therefore, I exclude it from further analysis

[3] In the coalition with Alleanza Nazionale (AN)

	Democrats '66	3.36			
UK	Labour Party (LP)	3.15	3.43	1.13	24.76%
	Conservative Party	2.87			
Austria	Austrian People's Party (OVP)	3.10	7.20	1.32	26.98%
	Austrian Social democratic Party	2.96			
Finland	Finish Centre (KESK)	5.02	7.00	1.00	19.70%
	Finish Social Democrats (SDP)	4.34	3.22	.97	12.30%
	National Coalition	4.06			
Sweden	Moderate Coalition Party (M)	4.28	4.67	1.56	13.65%
	Social Democratic Labour Party (SAP)	3.53	3.62	1.20	24.19%
	Liberal People's Party	2.59			

As Table 2 shows, in most cases RR's first competitors are parties who score around 5.0 or more on the ideological position' scale, meaning that radical right parties predominantly compete for votes with centrist and moderate right parties. There are three exceptions: the Netherlands where the RR competes with the center left party, UK where the Labour party turns out to be second most preferred choice for UKIP voters and Greece, where Golden Dawn voters report Syriza as their second choice. Furthermore, it is also worth noticing that in most cases parties which the radical right competes with are mainstream parties. Lastly, a party which appears to meet the selection criteria for political competition analysis but will not be considered is the second competitor in Italy, Brothers of Italy. The reason is that this party took part in 2014 European Elections in a coalition and even in this coalition had relatively weak electoral result. Hence, I consider this party to be a politically non-significant competitor and decide to keep it

out of the analysis. Political competition in Italy will, therefore, be examined between the radical right Lega Nord and moderate right Let's Go Italy or Forward Italy.

The final selection of political parties, both radical right and competing parties, is presented in table 3. In the third column of this table one can also see the number of respondents included in the main analysis. In the main analysis, I take into consideration all of the respondents who reported they voted for radical right and competing parties.

Table 3. Radical right (RR) and competing parties (CP) selected for the political competition analysis

Country	Party	Government participation
Denmark	Danish People's Party (RR)	No
	Liberals (CP)	No
Germany	Alternative for Germany (RR)	No
	CDU/CSU (CP1)	Yes
	Social democratic Party (CP2)	Yes
Greece	Golden Dawn (RR)	No
	Coalition of the Radical Left (CP)	No
France	National Front (RR)	No
	Union for Popular Movement (CP)	No
Italy	Lega Nord (RR)	No
	Let's Go Italy (CP)	No
Netherlands	Party for Freedom (RR)	No
	Socialist Party (CP1)	No
	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (CP2)	Yes
UK	UKIP (RR)	No
	Labour Party (CP)	No
Austria	Freedom Party of Austria (RR)	No
	Austrian People's Party (CP)	Yes
Finland	True Finns (RR)	No
	Finish Centre (CP1)	No
	Finish Social Democrats (CP2)	Yes

	Sweden Democrats (RR)	No
Sweden	Moderate Coalition Party (CP1)	Yes
	Social Democratic Labour Party (CP2)	No

Table 3 shows opposition parties and parties who participated in their national governments in May 2014 during European elections. As this table shows, no radical right party was in power over this period. In addition, competing parties were in the government in Germany and Austria, while in the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden only one of the two competing parties were members of the government. In other cases, radical right parties seem to compete for votes with opposition parties: Denmark, Greece, France, Italy and United Kingdom.

3 Data and variable selection

Overall, three sets of variables will be included in the analysis. The first involves indicators of economic voting, while the third one covers sociodemographic control variables. When it comes to the second set, it covers variables that I label political issues. While the first and third set will be included in every analysis, this one represents a group of political issues from which I select those that are reported as important on voter/party level. Therefore, I do not include every position issue variable in every case. Even though there will be significant overlapping with regards to position issues analyzed in different cases, I refrain from using the same set in every political competition analysis as there might be instances where an issue is not considered important either on party or voter level. In the remain of this section, I first elaborate criteria on which I base the selection of political issues and then display variables' properties.

My selection of issues for the political competition analysis will be based on two sources. First, as for my primary source, I rely on what RR voters and CP' voters report to be important issues that motivated them to turn out to vote in the 2014 European elections. An attitudinal variable closely related to the issue indicated by voters will be included in the analysis if this issue was considered relevant by at least 5% of either RR or CP' voters. I say *closely related* attitudinal variable because not every issue identified as more or less salient was directly followed by an attitudinal scale variable referring to it, and asking respondents about their position on that issue. In other words, the issues of Unemployment and Economic growth are, for instance, in the questionnaire followed by almost the exact same questions related to the job loss report, and/or estimation of future and past national economic performance. On the other hand, however, while voters of some parties might have reported European values and Identity to be important motivation for them to turn out to vote, there are no direct questions asking about

respondents' views on European values or European identity. Therefore, in the cases like this I will rely on available questions which are closely related to these issues, such as the question on *feeling as a citizen of the EU*.

To sum up the first criterion, guided by the most salient political issues identified by the radical right and competing parties' voters in the dataset, I will attempt to cover all of the areas that these respondents considered important in the 2014 European elections. I display graphs (1-11) with the most important issues as reported by the respondents in the next chapter together with the decision about which political issues to include in the empirical analysis, which will be followed by the very analysis. Issue selection and empirical analysis will be done for each case separately in the next chapter. Before proceeding to this step, I will briefly elaborate the second source on which I base my variable selection as well as variables' properties and their levels of measurement.

With regards to the second source for the selection of political issues, I look at the most salient issues on the party level throughout 2014 as identified by experts in the Chapel Hill survey. Each expert within this database ranked one issue as the most important, one as the second most important and one as the third for each political party. Experts' ranks were later simply added together, so that an issue which received the most first ranks ended up as the most important/salient issue for a given party in 2014, accompanied by the second and third most important issues following the same logic (Bakker et al. 2015). Table 4 shows the first three most important issues for selected radical right and competing parties in 2014.

Table 4. Most important/salient issues for political parties in 2014. The data come from the Chapel Hill expert survey

Country	Party	Most important issues
Denmark	Danish People's Party	Immigration, Public services, EU integration
	Liberals	Public services, Immigration, Redistribution
Germany	Alternative for Germany	EU integration, Immigration, Public services
	CDU/CSU	EU integration, Security, Public services
	Social democratic Party	EU integration, Redistribution, Public services
Greece	Golden Dawn	Immigration, Nationalism, Anti-elitism
	Coalition of the Radical Left	Redistribution, Anti-elitism, Public service
France	National Front	Immigration, Multiculturalism, Anti-elitism
	Union for Popular Movement	State intervention, Public services, Immigration
Italy	Lega Nord	Immigration, EU integration, Anti-elitism
	Let's Go Italy	Public services, Deregulation, EU integration
Netherlands	Party for Freedom	Immigration, Multiculturalism, Ethnic minorities
	Socialist Party	Redistribution, Public services, EU integration
	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy	Public services, Deregulation, Security
UK	UKIP	Immigration, EU integration, Anti-elitism
	Labour Party	Public services, Redistribution, Immigration
Austria	Freedom Party of Austria	Immigration, Anti-elitism, Nationalism
	Austrian People's Party	Public services, Deregulation, Urban vs Rural
Finland	True Finns	Anti-elitism, EU integration, Social lifestyle
	Finish Centre	Decentralization, Urban vs rural, Public services
	Finish Social Democrats	Public services, redistribution, state intervention
Sweden	Sweden Democrats	Immigration, Nationalism, Multiculturalism
	Moderate Coalition Party	Public services, Deregulation, State intervention
	Social Democratic Labour Party	Public services, Multiculturalism, State intervention

The first set consists of four variables related to economic voting. Two of these four variables refer to the retrospective evaluation and the future anticipation of the national state of economy: *what do you think about the economy? Compared to 12 months ago, do you think that the general economic situation in* (country name) *...?; And over the next 12 months, how do you think the general economic situation in* (country name) *will be?* Both questions were measured

on the 5-point scale ranging from 1 – a lot better to 5 – a lot worse. However, before the analysis was conducted, both variables were recoded, so that higher scores mean positive views on the state of economy. Apart from these two determinants of retrospective and prospective evaluations of economy, the third and fourth variables are categorical and refer to one's personal economic situation. That is, respondents were asked to indicate whether their household experienced a decrease in income during the last two years, and if they or someone in their household lost their job (1 - yes, 2 - no).

The second set involves, on one hand, a number of questions related to specific political issues. On each issue, respondents were giving responses on a 10-ajtem scale. The following issues were included: State regulation and control of the market (0 – fully in favor of state intervention in the economy, 10 – fully opposed to state intervention in the economy); Redistribution of wealth (0 – fully in favor of the redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor in (country name), 10 – fully opposed to the redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor in (country name); Spending (0 – fully in favor of raising taxes to increase public services, 10 – fully in favor of cutting public services to cut taxes); Same-sex marriage (0 – fully in favor of same-sex marriage, 10 – fully opposed to same-sex marriage); Civil liberties (0 – fully support privacy rights even if they hinder efforts to combat crime, 10 – fully in favor of restricting privacy rights in order to combat crime); Immigration (0 – fully in favor of a restrictive policy on immigration, 10 – fully opposed to a restrictive policy on immigration); EU integration (0 – the EU should have more authority over the EU Member States' economic and budgetary policies, 10 – (country name) should retain full control over its economic and budgetary policies; Environment (0 – environmental protection should always take priority even at the cost of economic growth, 10 – Economic growth should always take priority even at the cost of

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environmental protection); European unification (0 – has gone too far, 10 – should be pushed further.

On the other hand, if there are I instance where voters report the credibility of EU institutions as an issue, or where experts identify Nationalism as a salient issue on the party-level, I also include variables related to these issues. For instance, as far as Nationalism is concerned, I rely on a national identification variable *do you feel attached to our country (1 = yes, totally – 4 = not at all).* This variable was recoded before the analysis so that higher scores mean stronger attachment to the country. When it comes to the EU-related variables, I emply EU identification (equivalent to the national identification variable), trust in the EU institutions *you trust the EU institutions country (1 = yes, totally – 4 = not at all)* which was also recoded.

Lastly, two control variables are included in every analysis: gender (male/female) and age which is divided in five categories (1 = 16/18-24, 2 = 25-34, 3 = 35-44, 4 = 45-54, 5 = 55-64, 6 = 65+).

4 Empirical analysis and case-specific political issues

As indicated above, my primary source of information on which variables to include in the empirical analysis will come from the voter data. In European Election Study (EES) dataset, respondents had the opportunity to select one of the political issues from the list that prompted them to go to the polls. Therefore, this data source is a valuable base for my variable selection decision because it asks respondents directly about their motivation to vote, and covers a wide-range of political issues. In many cases, voters' reports on salient issues will cover most (if not all) of the important issues identified on the party level (Table 4). Nevertheless, in those cases where some of the most salient issues in 2014 parties' manifestos and campaigns (Table 4) are not reported by voters, I consider experts' evaluations and cover these political areas as well. Hence, taking into account both voter- and party-level data on important issues, my intention is to attempt to cover all relevant political areas that might play a role in the 2014 European elections political competition analysis between radical right and their competing parties.

4.1 Pooled analyses: Radical right vs Centre-right and Leftist parties

Having previously determined radical right parties and their competitors (Table 3), I pool elections where the radical right competes with centre-right and leftist political parties in order to test the first set of my hypotheses. I do not include all of the radical right parties from table 3 in both of these analyses. Rather, when it comes the competition with the centre-right, I only consider those RR parties whose either second or third competitor is a center-right party. Therefore, eight cases are considered in the radical right vs centre-right competing party analysis: (1) Denmark – Danish People's Party and Liberals, (2) Germany – Alternative for Germany and CDU/CSU, (3) France – National Front and Union for Popular Movement, (4) Italy – Lega Nord and Let's go Italy, (5) Netherlands – Party for Freedom and People's Party for

Freedom and Democracy, (6) Austria – Freedom Party of Austria and Austrian People's Party, (7) Finland – True Finns and Finish Centre, (8) Sweden – Sweden Democrats and Moderate Coalition Party.

On the other hand, the same criterion applies to the radical right vs leftist parties analysis. In this case, five countries will be included in the analysis: (1) Germany – Alternative for Germany and Social Democratic Party, (2) Greece – Golden Dawn and Coalition of the Radical Left, (3) The Netherlands – Party of Freedom and Socialist Party, (4) United Kingdom – UKIP and Labour Party, (5) Finland – True Finns and Finish Social Democrats, (6) Sweden – Sweden Democrats and Social Democratic Labour Party.

There are apparently ideological differences between parties that I bring together in the pooled analysis on both sides. For instance, Coalition of the Radical Left is perhaps considerably more left ideologically than Social Democratic Party of Germany. Nevertheless, if this has any implications to the political competition, I presume country-by-country analyses will tell us what these implications are. Bellow, I will first display the most important issues as reported by radical right, centre-right and leftist parties voters in the EES 2014 dataset. After determining which political issues to take into consideration, I proceed with the very analysis.

Graph 1. The most salient issues for Radical Right (RR), Centre-Right (CR) and Leftist Parties' (LP) voters in %
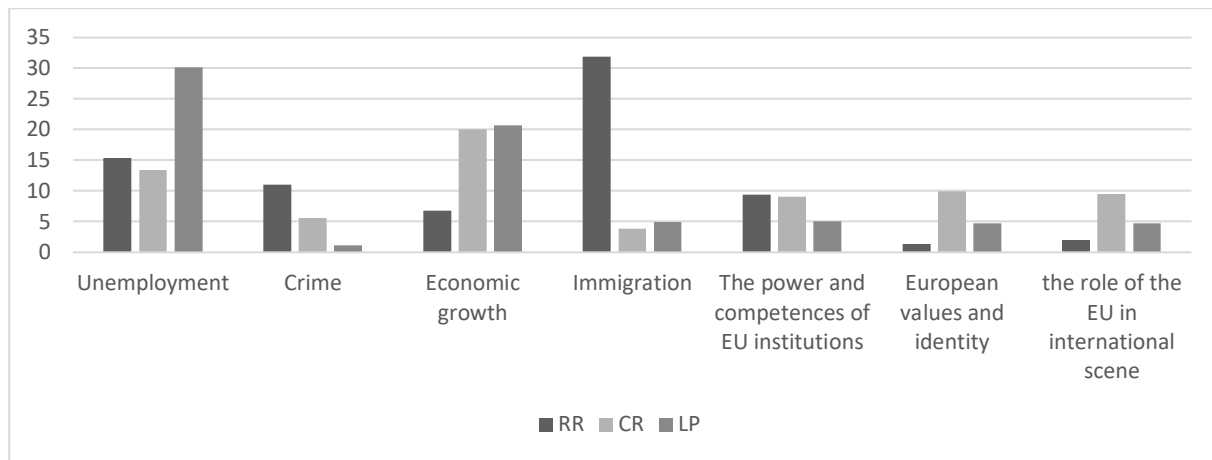
As Graph 1 shows, economic valence issues, such as the unemployment and economic growth, seem to play an important role for all three groups of voters. Apart from these, immigration and security (crime) are very salient among RR voters, while the issues related to the EU are also frequently identified as important. Therefore, in addition to economy-related indicators, I decide to include in the analysis the issue of combating crime, immigration, trust in the EU institutions, identification with the EU, same-sex marriages and the question of further EU unification. When it comes to the EU-related variables, trust in the EU institutions is included due to the salience of EU institutions' competences. Identification with the EU and same sex marriages are included due to the relevance that voters attribute to European values and identity. While I consider the first of these two variables because it is directly related to the issue of European identity, the second one is taken into considerations for reasons elaborated in the third hypothesis. Finally, I include the further EU unification because I consider it is related to the issue of the EU role in international scene. Decision about which variables to include in the country-by-country analyses will follow the same logic outlined above.

While in separate analyses country-specific issues based on voters' reports will be complemented by expert reports on what issues were salient on the party-level, this data is not available in this step due to the nature of pooled analysis. Therefore, since right-wing issues are fairly covered, in the pooled analysis I decide to also consider issues commonly identified as leftist issues, such as taxes vs public services (spending) and redistribution of wealth. Lastly, in order to test my fourth hypothesis, I also consider the issue of environmental protection. Let me now turn to the empirical analysis.

Tables 5-15 show odds of ratio, the effect of a predictor on odds of the respondent's intention to vote for the radical right (RR) as opposed to voting for competing parties (CP). RR parties are always coded 1 while competing parties are coded 0, meaning that beta coefficients above one indicate positive correlation between a given predictor and voting for the radical right. Referent categories for independent categorical variables have the following values: job loss – yes = 1, income decrease – yes = 1, and gender – males = 1.

Table 5. Logistic Regression models, the likelihood of voting for the Radical right versus (a) Centre-right (CR), N = 1072 and (b) Leftist parties (LP), N = 840

RR vs	CR	LP
Economy past	1.155	1.008
Economy future	1.059	.885
Job loss	1.133	.876
Income decrease	1.101	**.569***
Trust EU institutions	**.477***	**.587***
Identification EU	.829	1.004
EU unification	**.875***	**.818***
Redistribution	**.888***	**1.287***
Spending	.810	1.047
Same-sex marriage	1.009	1.033
Immigration	**.896***	**.670***
Combat Crime	.990	**1.129***

Environment	1.001	1.010
Gender	**1.532****	1.351
Age	**.876****	1.012
Nagelkerke R^2	**.279****	**.540****
Hosmer and	6.566	3.203
Lemeshow test (χ^2)		

*p < .05
**p < .01

Table 5 shows the effect of predictors on odds of the respondent's intention to vote for the radical right versus Centre-right and leftist parties. As we can see in Table 5, the odds of voting for RR do not increase with the perception of poorer national economic performance. Moreover, the voters who reported they experienced an income decrease are almost twice as likely to vote for the leftist parties than for the RR. Therefore, in terms of the subjective economic indicators, I find no support for retrospective economic voting (H8a) and prospective economic voting hypotheses (H8b). In addition, radical right voters have significantly lower levels of trust towards the EU institutions compared to the other two groups of voters. Similarly, they are opposed to further European unification. These findings speak in favour of the anti-EU hypothesis (H6).

With regards to the redistribution preferences, RR voters fall in-between centre-right and leftist parties' voters. In other words, RR voters favor redistribution of wealth from rich to the poor compared to centre-right voters (support for H1) but they are at the same time significantly less supportive of these policies when compared to the leftist voters (contrary to H1). Besides, no empirical support is found for the social market economy hypothesis (H2). Additionally, supporting a restrictive policy on immigration increases the odds of voting for the RR, which is consistent with the anti-immigration hypothesis (H7). While there is no statistically significant difference between radical right and centre-right voters when it comes to the 'tough

on crime' hypothesis, RR voters appear to be significantly more supportive of restricting privacy rights in order to combat crime than LP voters which lends some evidence to support to H5. Furthermore, illiberalism (H3) and cultural backslash (H4) hypothesis do not seem to have empirical support in either case. Out of the controls, younger males are more likely to vote for RR parties compared to the Centre-right, whereas there is no statistical difference in comparison with leftist parties' voters. Lastly, the proportion of explained variance in RR vs CR and RR vs LP is roughly 28% and 54% respectively.

4.2 Country-by-country analyses

As indicated previously, only issues mentioned by more than 5% of voters of at least one political party, either radical right or its competitor, are displayed in graphs. Aside from issues bellow 5%, the percentage of those who indicate 'other' issue is also not displayed, as it does not help with the decision which issues to include in the analysis.

4.2.1 Denmark

Graph 2. The most salient issues for Danish People's party (DF) and Liberals'(V) party voters in %
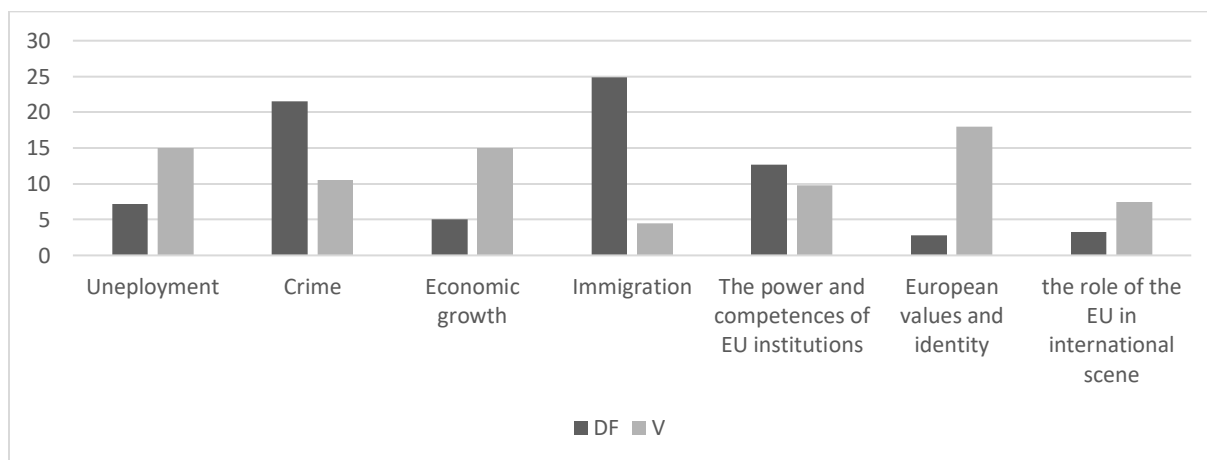
Graph 2 shows that the most important issues for Danish People's party and Liberals' voters are those related to socioeconomic concerns, immigration, security (crime) and the EU. Therefore, aside from economic indicators, I decide to include in the analysis variables related to immigration, combating crime, trust in the EU institutions, identification with the EU, same-sex marriages and the question of further EU unification. In addition, I will also cover spending and redistribution, since these issues were identified by political experts as important for these parties in 2014 (Table 4).

Table 6. Denmark: Logistic Regression models, the likelihood of voting for Danish People's Party (DF) versus Liberals (V), N = 274

| Df vs	V
Economy past	.820
Economy future	.956
Job loss	1.634
Income decrease	1.735
Trust EU	**.428****
Identification EU	.744
EU unification	.886
Redistribution	.879
Spending	.933
Same-sex marriage	1.085
Immigration	.911
Combat crime	1.036
Gender	.936
Age	.978
Nagelkerke R^2	**.327****
Hosmer and Lemeshow test (χ^2)	7.849

*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$

The variables selected in the Danish case seem to account for roughly one third of the variance (Table 6). This proportion of variance explained stands for the significant improvement from null model. However, out of the selected predictors only trust in the EU institutions shows

statistical significance in the Danish case (Table 6). Lower level of trust in these institutions increases the odds of voting for the Danish People's Party when compared with liberals. Indicators of economic voting do not display statistical significance. On the other hand, given that the EU is among the most salient issues for DF, this lends some empirical support to the issue-based voting hypothesis (H8) in the RR-competitor competition analysis. It is worth noting that the Liberals' party was an opposition party in 2014 (Table 3).

4.2.2 Germany

Graph 3. The most salient issues for Alternative for Germany (AfD), CDU/CSU and Social Democratic Party (SDP) voters in %
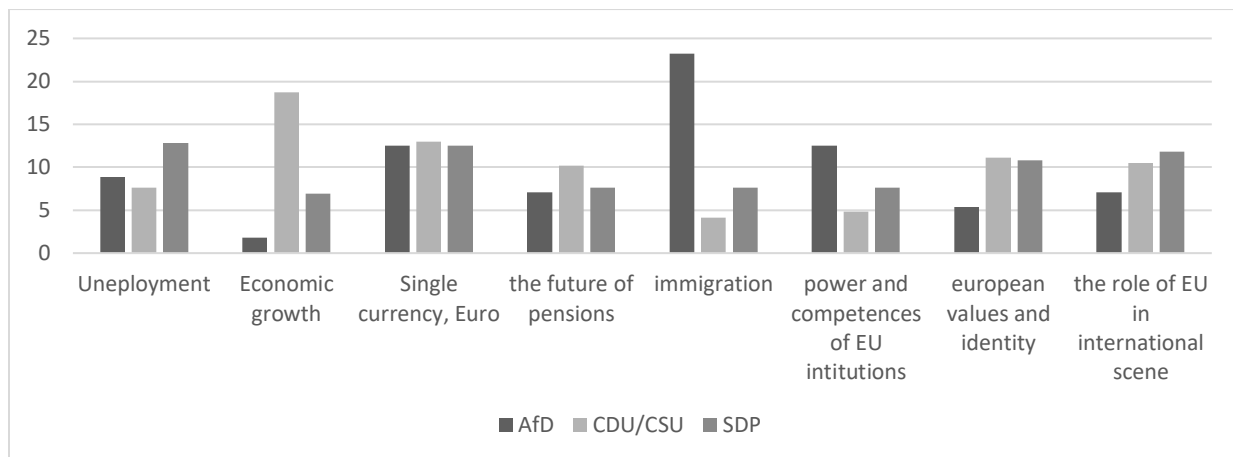
As Graph 3 displays, that the most salient issues among German radical right and the two of its competitors appear to be the single currency, future of pensions, unemployment and EU-related issues. AfD voters also seem to care markedly more about immigration than the voters of two other parties. For these reasons, the issue of immigration, trust in the EU institutions, identification with the EU and unification and EU vs domestic control of country's budgetary policies. The latter has not come up so far, but I decide to include it in this case due to the importance voters attribute to the issue of single currency (euro). Besides, I will not consider further variables which would account for the issue of the future of pension, because I believe it

is fairly covered through the economic variables. Lastly, I also take redistribution and spending into account, as these issues were found important on the party level (Table 4).

Table 7. Germany: Logistic Regression models, the likelihood of voting for AfD versus (a) CDU/CSU: N = 308 and (b) SDP: N = 280

| AfD vs	CDU/CSU	SDP
Economy past	.780	.545
Economy future	**.322**∗∗	.745
Job loss	1.917	1.238
Income decrease	.388	.726
Trust EU	**.450**∗	**.407**∗
Identification EU	.739	**.501**∗
EU unification	**.704**∗∗	**.705**∗∗
Redistribution	1.035	1.066
Spending	.954	.988
Budgetary policies	.931	.961
Same-sex marriage	1.003	1.044
Immigration	.899	.891
Gender	**3.577**∗∗	**6.166**∗∗
Age	**.638**∗∗	**.716**∗
Nagelkerke R^2	**.463**∗∗	**.526**∗∗
Hosmer and Lemeshow test (χ^2)	4.661	2.423

∗p < .05
∗∗p < .01

As Table 7 shows, those who have low expectations of the future national economic performance are more likely to vote for the AfD than CDU/CSU. Apart from this, anti-EU attitudes seem to play an important role, with the AfD voters having significantly lower level of trust in the EU institutions and opposing further EU unification. These findings provide some empirical support for H8 and H9. When it comes to age and gender, AfD voters seem to be younger males. With regards to the competition with SDP, no economic indicators appear to play a role which means no support for H8. As regards the issues on the other hand, holding anti-EU

attitudes increases the odds of voting for the AfD. The proportion of explained variance is roughly 46% and 53% (Table 7).

4.2.3 Greece

Graph 4. The most salient issues for the Golden Dawn (XA) and Coalition of the radical Left (SYRIZA) voters in %
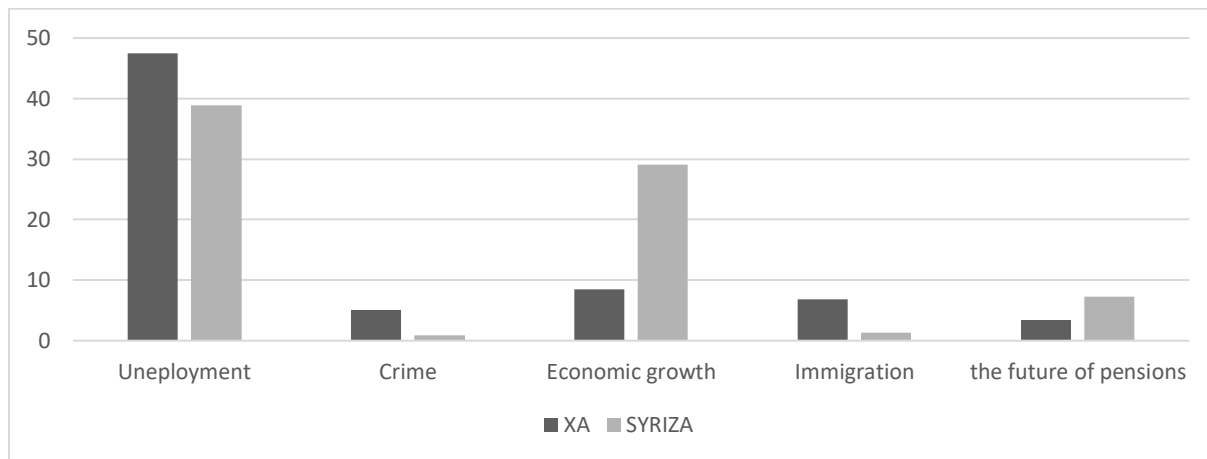
Golden Dawn and Syriza voters do not seem to be particularly divided among the issues that motivated them to vote in the first place (Graph 4). In other words, economic concerns play a major role for these voters. By far the most salient issue is unemployment and is followed by economic growth. Additionally, the voters attribute some importance to combating crime, immigration and the future of pensions. Aside from these issues, the analysis also includes redistribution, spending and nationalism, as these were found relevant in the expert survey (Table 4). The variable that I use for nationalism refers to *feeling close to one's own country*. Therefore, I actually use national identification to cover the saliency of nationalism on the party level. Even though these concept have some important differences, they are closely related and I believe for this purpose the item referring to the identification with a country will fairly cover what is meant by nationalism (Blank, Schmidt, and Westle 2001).

Table 8. Greece: Logistic Regression models, the likelihood of voting for XA vs Coalition of the radical left (SYRIZA), N = 270

| XA vs	SYRIZA
Economy past	1.002
Economy future	**.341****
Job loss	1.789
Income decrease	1.156
Redistribution	**1.190***
Spending	.995
Nationalism	.951
Immigration	**.670****
Combat Crime	1.089
Gender	**2.143***
Age	.806
Nagelkerke R^2	**.347****
Hosmer and Lemeshow test (χ^2)	8.538

*p < .05
**p < .01

As table 8 displays, the model explains something more than a third of the variance in analyzing the competition between of Golden Dawn and Syriza. Golden Dawn's voters seem to be significantly more skeptical when to the future national economic performance which lends support to the prospective voting hypothesis (H8b). Furthermore, being opposed to the redistribution of wealth from rich to poor and in favour of a restrictive policy on immigration increases the odds of voting for Golden Dawn (XA). Since immigration appears to be one of the core issues of XA voters (Table 3), this supports H9 to some extent. Lastly, males are as twice as likely to vote for XA than Syriza.

4.2.4   France

Graph 5. The most salient issues for National front (FN) and Union for Popular Movement (UMP) voters in %
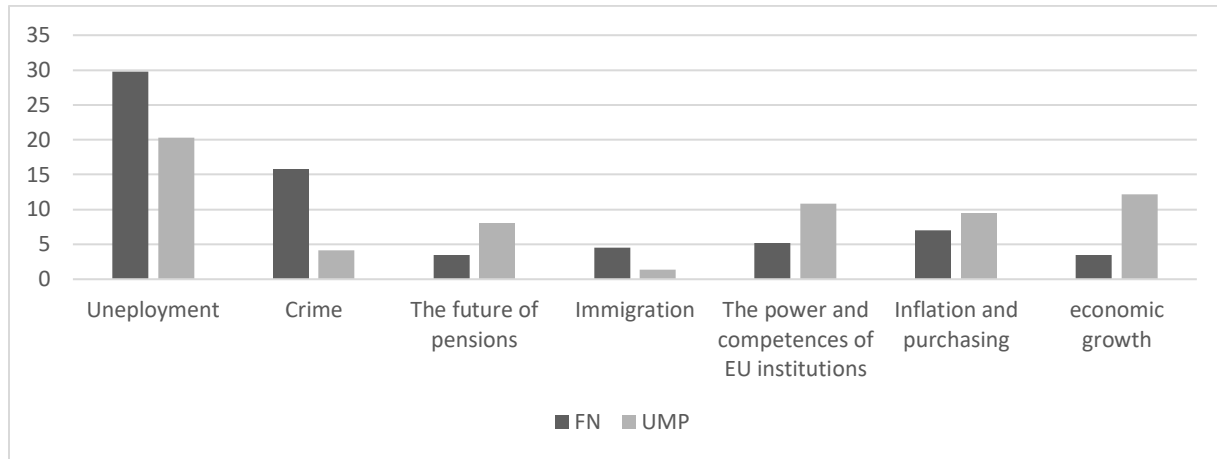
Aside from unemployment and economic growth, Graph 5 shows that FN and UMP voters mention crime, EU institutions, pensions, immigration and inflation and purchasing. Relative to previous analysis, inflation and purchasing is a new issue that turns out to be important for these two French parties. However, no new variable will be included to account for the salience of this issue, as I assume that the indicators of economic voting will cover the issue of issue of inflation and purchasing. Aside from these, I also decide to include state intervention, and spending (public services vs taxes) in accordance with findings in Table 4.

Table 9. France: Logistic Regression model, the likelihood of voting for FN versus UMP, N = 104

FN vs	UMP
Economy past	.599
Economy future	.610
Job loss	1.408
Income decrease	.688
Trust EU	**.193**∗∗
EU unification	**.747**∗

|	
State intervention	.977
Spending	.852
Immigration	.948
Combat crime	.906
Gender	2.611
Age	**.541**∗∗
Nagelkerke R^2	**.602**∗∗
Hosmer and Lemeshow test (χ^2)	8.261

p < .05
∗∗p < .01

In the French case, political competition is analyzed between two opposition parties. Table 9 shows that the model accounts for roughly 60% of variance. We can see that there is no support for economic voting hypotheses (H8a and H8b), as indicators of economic voting do not exert significant effects. On the other hand, EU skepticism seems account for the difference between the two groups of voters with FN voters being significantly more skeptical of the EU institutions and further EU unification (Table 9), which is consistent with H9.

4.2.5 Italy

Graph 6. The most salient issues for Lega Nord (LN) and Let's go Italy (FI) voters in %
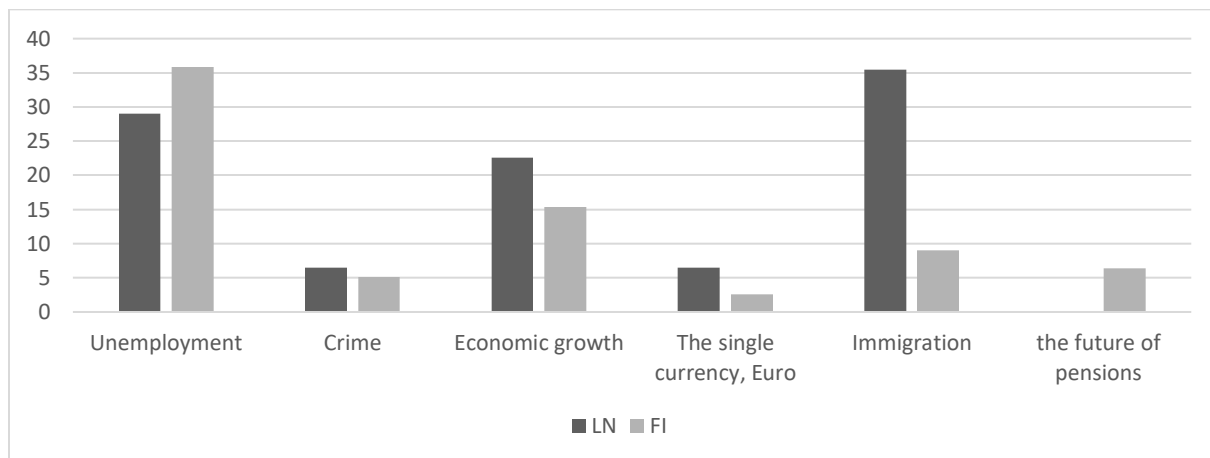
As Graph 6 shows, Italian Lega Nord and Let's go Italy voters mostly have economic and immigration-related concerns, followed by the issue of the single currency and combating crime. These will be covered by the related variables, as elaborated in previous cases. Furthermore, I also take redistribution and spending into consideration, due to the salience of these issues on the party level (Table 4).

Table 10. Italy: Logistic Regression model, the likelihood of voting for LN versus FI, N = 81

LN vs	FI
Economy past	.720
Economy future	1.509
Job loss	.569
Income decrease	1.412
Trust EU	.610
EU unification	1.125
Redistribution	.979
Spending	.857
Budgetary policies	1.146
Immigration	.986
Combat crime	.948
Gender	.764
Age	1.360
Nagelkerke R^2	.158
Hosmer and Lemeshow test (χ^2)	4.288

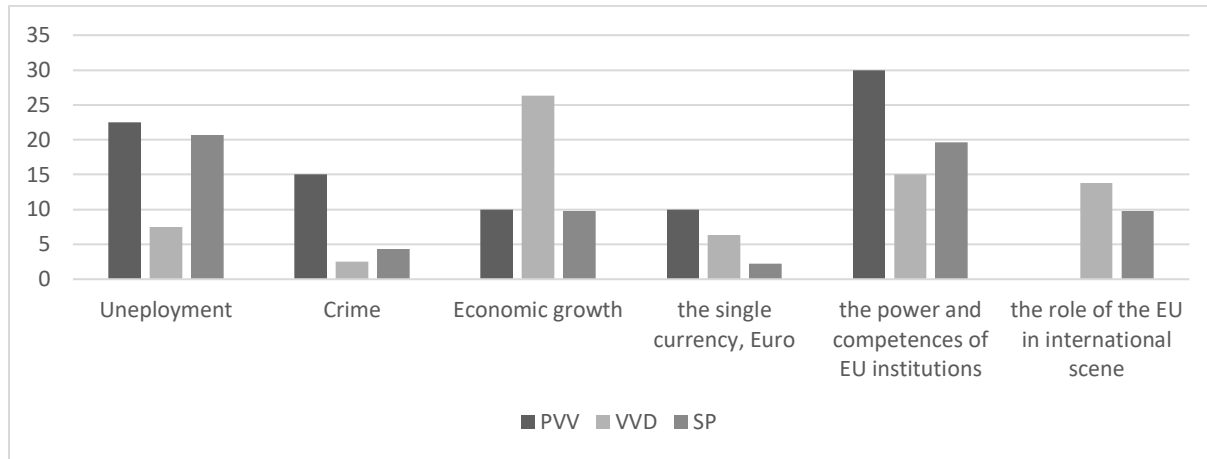*p < .05
**p < .01

As we can see in table 10, the model does not show significant improvement from null model. Therefore, I will refrain from interpreting results in this case.

Graph 7. The most salient issues for Party for Freedom (PVV), Socialist Party (SP) and People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) voters in %

Graph 7 shows that Dutch voters care about the EU institutions, EU role in international scene, the single currency and combating crime. Consistent with other cases, they also attribute high relevance to economic issues. In addition, spending and redistribution seem to be important on the party level (Table 4) which is why the will also be a part of the empirical analysis.

Table 11. Netherlands: Logistic Regression model, the likelihood of voting for PVV versus SP, N = dd and VVD, N = 106

PVV vs	SP	VVD
Economy past	1.651	.830
Economy future	.989	.442
Job loss	1.674	1.541
Income decrease	1.704	.771
Trust EU	.843	.505
Identification EU	.647	**.441**∗
Redistribution	1.204	**.538**∗∗
Spending	**1.290**∗	1.346
Budgetary policies	1.043	1.249
Immigration	**.710**∗∗	.704

|		
Combat crime	1.157	.819
Gender	.533	1.016
Age	.890	.926
Nagelkerke R^2	**.477****	**.641****
Hosmer and Lemeshow test (χ^2)	8.776	6.228

*p < .05
**p < .01

As Table 11 indicates, in the competition with other opposition party (SP), the Dutch RR voters seem to be more opposed to spending and in favour of a restrictive policy on immigration. On the other hand, when compared with the party in power, favouring redistribution policies and being in having lower trust in the EU institutions seems to increase odds of voting for the radical right. Nevertheless, in both cases economic indicators do not exert significant effects while issues play a role. Therefore, in both cases I find no empirical support for the economic voting hypothesis (H8), but find support for issue-based voting.

4.2.7 United Kingdom

Graph 8. The most salient issues for UK Independent Party (UKIP) and Labour Party (LP) for voters in %
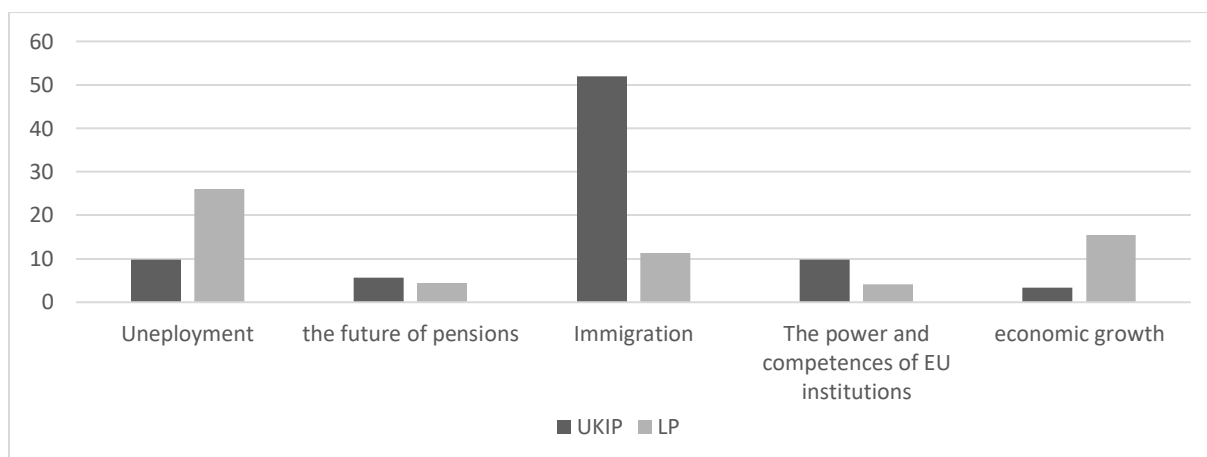
UKIP and Labour Party voters report immigration and unemployment as most important issues. Furthermore, the power and competences of EU institutions and economic growth seem

to play somewhat smaller role, while these voters also attach some weight to the future of pensions. In addition to these, expert find two more issues to be important within the Labour Party: Spending and Redistribution (Table 4), and they will be considered accordingly.

Table 12. United Kingdom: Logistic Regression model, the likelihood of voting for UKIP versus the Labour Party (LP), N = 191

| UKIP vs	LP
Economy past	1.610
Economy future	**.492***
Job loss	3.088
Income decrease	.876
Trust EU	.554
EU unification	**.615****
Redistribution	**1.483****
Spending	1.055
Budgetary policies	1.129
Immigration	**.761****
Gender	.796
Age	.943
Nagelkerke R^2	**.688****
Hosmer and Lemeshow test (χ^2)	2.651

*p < .05
**p < .01

Table 12 shows the results for two opposition parties in the UK. The models seems to account for almost 70% of the variance. In the competition for votes, the UKIP party seems to benefit from the pessimistic views of future national economic performance. In addition, these voters are also more skeptical of the EU unification, more opposed to the restrictive policies on immigration and to redistribution of wealth (Table 12). According to these findings, I can say there is empirical support for both economic voting, i.e. a prospective aspect of it (H8b), and issue-based voting hypothesis (H9).

4.2.8 Austria

Graph 9. The most salient issues for Austrian Freedom Party (FPO) and Austrian People's Party (OVP) for voters in %
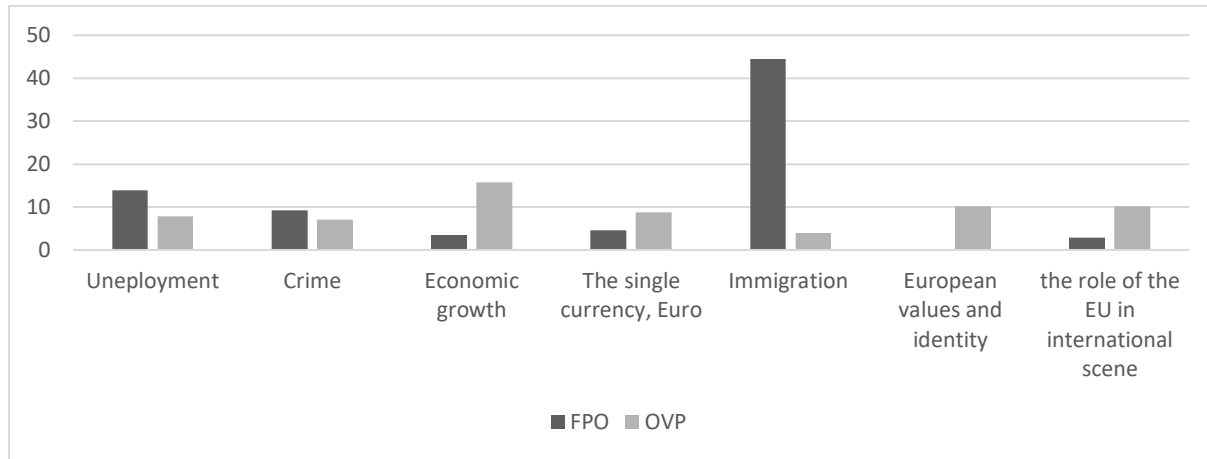
Graph 9 shows that immigration is by far the most salient issue for the radical right in Austria. In addition, EU-related issues, the single currency and combating crime seem to be relevant for the political competition analysis between these two groups of voters. Furthermore, the expert survey also suggests that the inclusion of the issues of spending and nationalism.

Table 13. Austria: Logistic Regression model, the likelihood of voting for FPO versus the OVP, N = 214

FPO vs	OVP
Economy past	.711
Economy future	.893
Job loss	.720
Income decrease	1.711
Nationalism	**1.735***
Identification EU	**.465****
EU unification	.918
Spending	1.120
Budgetary policies	**1.241****

|	
Immigration	1.019
Gender	**1.988***
Age	**.665****
Nagelkerke R^2	**.435****
Hosmer and Lemeshow test (χ^2)	11.573

*p < .05
**p < .01

Austrian RR appears to benefit from the EU-related issues (Table 13). In other words, those who weakly identify with the EU are more than twice as likely to vote for FPO. At the same time, FPO voter base seem to identify significantly stronger with their country. Furthermore, these voters are also significantly more in favour of their country controlling its economic and budgetary policies, as opposed to the EU authority over the member state with this regard. Taking this into account, while I find no evidence for the economic voting (H8), there seem to be support for issue-based voting (H9). Out of the controls, the FPO voters are younger males, consistently with other RR parties' voters. The model explains roughly 44% of the variance.

4.2.9 Finland

Graph 10. The most salient issues for the True Finns (PS), Finish Centre (Kesk) and Social Democrats (SDP) voters in %
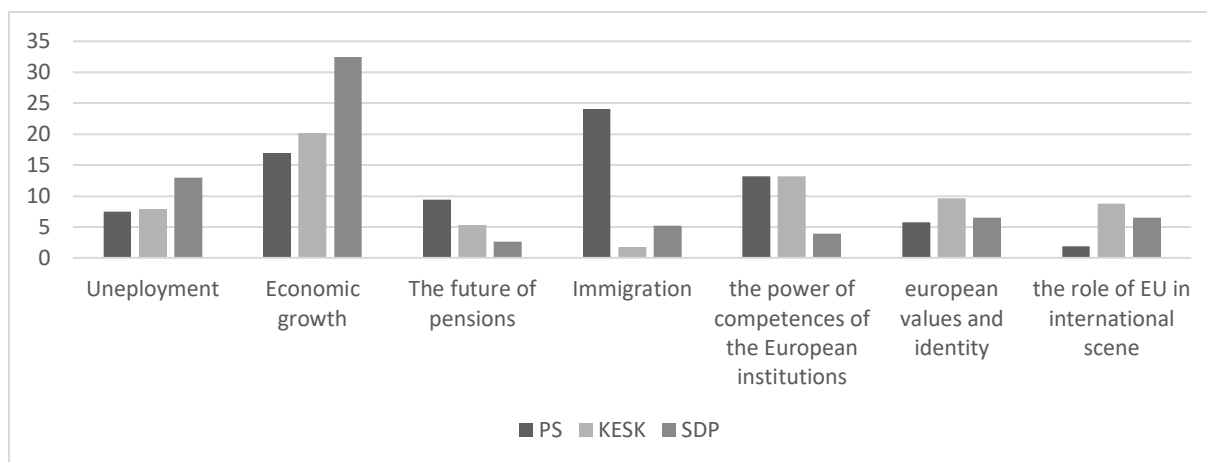
Graph displays the most salient issues among finish RR and its competitors. We can see that the EU-related issues are the most important, together with economic concerns. Furthermore, immigration and the future of pensions seem to play a significant role. Apart from these political issues, I also include spending in the analysis of PS vs KESK voters, and state intervention and redistribution as additional variables (Table 4) for PS vs SDP analysis.

Table 14. Finland: Logistic Regression model, the likelihood of voting for PS versus the (a) KESK, N = 158 and (b) SDP, N = 119

PS vs	KESK	SDP
Economy past	.879	.428
Economy future	1.499	**2.687***
Job loss	.767	.430
Income decrease	1.162	.644
Trust EU	.555	**.353***
Identification EU	1.083	.616
EU unification	.961	.856
State intervention	N/A	1.034
Redistribution	N/A	**1.576****
Spending	1.154	1.181
Same-sex marriage	.950	1.007
Immigration	**.700****	.848
Combat Crime	1.112	1.229
Gender	**4.030****	3.747
Age	.792	**.605***
Nagelkerke R^2	**.367****	**.589****
Hosmer and Lemeshow test (χ^2)	3.832	11.366

*p < .05
***p < .01*

As Table 14 shows, PS benefits from anti-immigration attitudes when compared to the KESK voters. When compared to the party in power at the time, it benefits from low expectations of the future economic performance and low trust in the EU institutions. PS voters

in this case also seem to be considerably more opposed to redistribution, which presents a common finding when RR is compared to a leftist party. While redistribution is not PS' issue, the EU appears to be (Table 3), which is why I conclude that both H8b and H9 are supported in this case. The proportion of the explained variance is roughly 37% in the first case, and 60% in the second.

4.2.10 Sweden

Graph 11. The most salient issues for the Sweden Democrats (SD), Moderate Coalition Party (M) and Social Democratic Labour party (SAP) voters in %
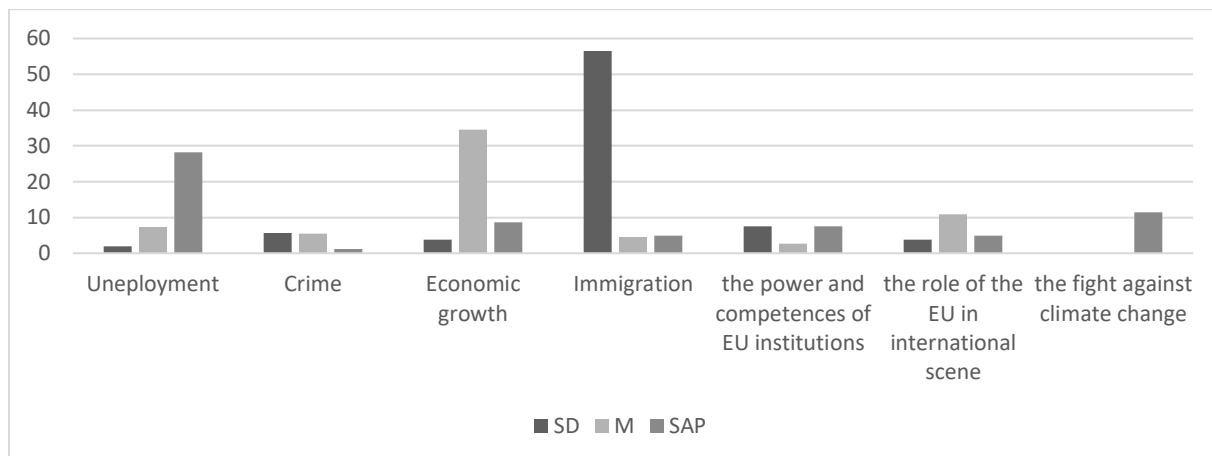
Finally, the Swedish case shows that RR voters attach by far the greatest weight to the issue of immigration. Voters of all three parties report some relevance to the EU-related issues and combating crime, while economic indicators consistently remain to be salient. Besides, for the first time there is significant weight attached to the fight against climate change, but also among SAP voters, which is why the environmental issue will only be included in the SD vs SAP analysis. Furthermore, the issues of nationalism, state intervention redistribution and spending are found relevant among some of these parties (Table 4) and will be included accordingly.

Table 15. Sweden: Logistic Regression model, the likelihood of voting for SD versus the (a) M, N = 131 and (b) SAP, N = 198

SD vs	M	SAP
Economy past	.741	1.091
Economy future	**.512***	.674
Job loss	1.076	2.165
Income decrease	1.137	1.365
Trust EU	N/A	1.161
EU unification	**.711****	.860
Nationalism	N/A	.615
State intervention	.970	1.015
Redistribution	N/A	**1.598****
Spending	**.734***	**1.659****
Immigration	**.572****	**.329****
Combat Crime	.888	.982
Environment	N/A	.796
Gender	2.193	.196
Age	1.064	1.368
Nagelkerke R^2	**.638****	**.786****
Hosmer and Lemeshow test (χ^2)	12.758	10.865

*p < .05
**p < .01

Table 15 shows that, in the competition with the centre-right incumbent party, Swedish RR benefits from the opposition to further EU unification, skepticism about future economic performance, opposition to immigration and support for spending. This lends support to both economic voting (prospective H8b) and issue-based voting (H9). On the other hand, redistribution, spending and immigration seem to differentiate SAP and SD voters, whereby SD voters are more opposed to redistribution and spending, but also more supportive of a restrictive policy on immigration. Since there is a statistically significant effect of a RR core issue and no effects of economic voting, there is no support for H8 but there is some support for H9. Lastly, the proportions of explained variance are fairly high in both cases: 64% and 79%.

5 Discussion and conclusions

Table 16. An overview of whether or not the findings support hypotheses

| | | H1 | H2 | H3 | H4 | H5 | H6 | H7 | H8 | | H9 |
									H8a	H8b	
Pooled analysis											
RR vs CR		yes	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	no	no	
RR vs LP		no	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes	no	no	
Country-by country											
Denmark (op)									no	no	yes
Germany	gov								no	yes	yes
	gov								no	no	yes
Greece (op)									no	yes	yes
France (op)									no	no	yes
Italy (op)									no	no	no
Netherlands	op								no	no	yes
	gov								no	no	yes
UK (op)									no	yes	yes
Austria (gov)									no	no	yes
Finland	op								no	no	yes
	gov								no	yes	yes
Sweden	gov								no	yes	yes
	op								no	no	yes

op – competitor is an opposition party
gov – competitor is a member of the coalition government

In this study, I have utilized individual-level data to analyze political competition between radical right parties and empirically determined competing parties. I have refrained from relying on arbitrary criteria with regards to the case and variable selection, and from

assuming voting-level mechanisms that underlie political competition between parties. On a more aggregate level, I have taken advantage of several theoretically grounded hypotheses in order to test whether or not the political competition differs for radical right parties when these parties compete for votes with (a) centre-right parties and when they compete with (b) leftist parties. In addition, I have broken down my cases to separate country-by country analyses in order to test whether or not political competition differs for radical right parties if these parties compete for votes with (a) other opposition parties and (b) incumbent parties.

Table 16 displays an overview of the research findings. Whereas the competition between the radical right and centre-right, and radical right and leftist parties on the aggregate level does not seem to differ substantially, perhaps the most staking results are those related to economic voting. In other words, there is a surprising irrelevance of retrospective economic voting in radical right political competition analyses. I have employed three indicators of retrospective voting: one related to the evaluation of national economic performance and two related to experience of personal economic hardship. None of these has been found to increase odds of voting for radical right parties as opposed to their competitors, in any of the conducted analyses. At the same time, some instances of prospective economic voting have been found in country-by-country tests. Actually, in 5 cases negative expectations of future economic performance increase odds of voting for the radical right: in Germany (AfD vs CDU/CSU), Greece (Golden Dawn vs Syriza), United Kingdom (UKIP vs Labour party), Finland (True Finns vs Social Democrats) and Sweden (Sweden Democrats vs Moderate Coalition Party).

The noticeable irrelevance of retrospective economic voting perhaps comes close to Stockemer's (2017) recent findings on RR post-crisis electoral success. In his article entitled *some new and unexpected findings* on radical right in western Europe, Stockemer finds that the

success of these parties was barely triggered by the financial crisis, whereby it turned out that the RR actually benefited most in the regions which were not severely hit by the crisis. Hence, Stockemer brings up the importance of the *fear* of the crisis in RR voting.

Thinking of my findings in this vein, the presence of prospective economic voting in some of my cases comes as no surprise. Put differently, the presence of prospective economic voting with simultaneous absence of the retrospectively-reported economic hardship, only confirms that the fear of crisis might actually be motivating some voters to vote for the radical right. Moreover, since radical right parties do not appear to be beneficiaries of the incumbent retrospective electoral punishment, a fruitful line of inquiry would be to explore conditions under which radical right parties manage to successfully utilize the *fear factor* for mobilization purposes. However, it is important to note that I cannot know whether the absence of an effect among retrospective voting indicators is due to the irrelevance of retrospective voting itself, or due to the omission of some institutional-level variables. For instance, one of the potential reasons could be the difficulty to clearly identify if the party in power is responsible for a given economic situation (T. T. Hellwig 2001; T. Hellwig and Samuels 2007). The clarity of accountability might, therefore, be one of the variables that plays a role, but which I have not accounted for in this study. Overall, the motivation beyond the lack of retrospective economic voting in RR support is beyond the scope of this study.

One more interesting finding is the importance of anti-EU attitudes in most of the selected cases. EU skepticism is not a surprising result when it comes to anti-globalist, nationalist radical right parties (Halikiopoulou, Nanou, and Vasilopoulou 2012; Bornschier 2010; Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2002). Nevertheless, variables related to the anti-EU attitude have proven equally or even more relevant to RR voting than the anti-immigration position. In the

present-day context of even more widespread uncertainty about the future of the Union, and of the potential unification of the radical right on the European scene, these findings might serve as an additional warning that substantial changes within the Union are needed. I have covered the question of European identity, trust in the EU institutions and, maybe this discussion somewhat less important, issues of further unification and control of states' budgetary policies. Looking at these indicators, I have concluded that the radical right parties mobilize more effective against the competing mainstream parties based on the anti-EU indicators, than they do on the basis of economic hardship or perhaps even more than on anti-immigration.

Lastly, this study makes three contributions. First, I provide empirically grounded criteria for the political competition analysis. In addition, I show the importance of distinguishing aggregate and separate/country-specific cases for political competition, at least with regard to the radical right parties. Third, on a causal level, my research findings indicate the overestimation of retrospective economic protest voting in the explanation of RR electoral performance.

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