Supply-Side Enablers of the Radical Right Success: Populism, Party Cooperation, and Immigration Salience in Europe

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Abstract

Scholars agree that the radical right has become an important force in the party systems across the world since their initial breakthrough in the early 1980s, with some parties even partaking in government. While demand-side explanations have been thoroughly explored, we know little about how much populist rhetoric of the radical right, the mainstream right party's position on immigration, and collective *cordon sanitaire* by parties limit the radical right success. Using the recently published V-party data, this study focuses on 31 radical right parties in 22 European countries between 1999 and 2019. Results show that while populism has little effect on the radical right success, collective *cordon sanitaire* and a stricter immigration position by the center right depress the vote for the radial right. Finally, as expected, the study finds that when the center-right party emphasizes immigration in their program, they accordingly boost the support for the radical right. The broader implications of this study are important for both scholars and parties alike. For both mainstream and radical right parties this study shows which aspects to focus on to remain relevant in the volatile electoral arenas (e.g., whether by adjusting their immigration position, emphasizing the populist rhetoric, engaging, or disengaging with certain parties). For scholars, it adds to the current body of literature and paves the way for further analysis on the strategies of mainstream and radical right parties.

Acknowledgments and dedications

I dedicate this thesis to my mum. Thank you for all the love.

This thesis in its form would not be here without my supervisor Mariyana Angelova who had stoic patience for my rudimentary quantitative skills, my endless questions, and often impossible suggestions. I thank my other supervisor, Luca Varadi, for giving me the space to explore my research interests and to find my own way. I thank her for her kind words and encouraging advice. I am immensely grateful to Timo Lochocki who has sparked my interest in right wing populism during my undergraduate studies and who has ever since been a great source of wisdom and support. I thank my friends who made life in the pandemic-stricken Vienna livable, and even enjoyable, you know who you are. I thank everyone who has extended their hand for support, it means to me more than I could possibly express. Any errors or omissions that may have been made are solely my own.

Vienna, Austria Marta Vuković

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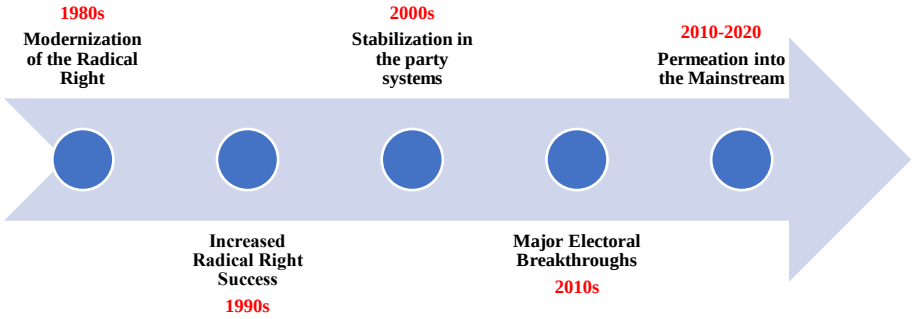
The Puzzle

In light of their ongoing success, the radical right has received substantial attention from scholars (Norris 2005; Norris and Inglehart 2019; Mudde 2007; Lochocki 2017). Some argue that increased immigration has either directly or indirectly prompted the rise of the radical right (see, e.g., Hangarter et al. 2018; Edo et al. 2019), while others emphasize that globalization has made certain parts of the population feel 'left behind' by their politicians, resulting in the increased support for the radical right 'challengers' (Betz 1994). Considering that some of these radical right actors have permeated into the mainstream, and even managed to participate in government, it has been argued that 'the traditional' mainstream parties have altered their strategies in response (Heinze 2018). For instance, Macron has recently been accused of catering to the radical right by adopting a law aimed at combatting religious "separatism" in France and "liberating French Islam from foreign influences" (The Guardian 2020). Do the new strategies adopted by the center-right work at keeping the radical right at bay, or do they, in turn, only legitimize the radical right positions? Additionally, does reluctance to cooperate with the radical right party hinder their success?

As the diagram below shows, the radical right has achieved continued success since their initial breakthrough in the 1980s, with some parties even participating in government. Therefore, it is not unlikely to assume that strategies of the mainstream parties towards these radical right 'challengers' have also changed, as the latter achieved greater success. Today, when the radical right seems to be ossified in party systems across Europe, how do the strategies of the traditional mainstream parties affect the former's success?

An Illustration of the Radical Right Development in Party Systems (1980-2020)



Introduction

How important is the populist rhetoric for the success of the radical right parties? Does mainstream parties' refusal to cooperate with this party family limit its electoral prospects? Does increased opposition to immigration of the mainstream right hinder the radical right success?

Scholars often look at the demand-side explanations of the radical right success, such as individual voter attitudes (see, e.g., Rydgren 2008; Kehrberg 2015). While these explanations highlight some of the conditions which make the voters more or less likely to endorse radical right parties, they neglect to pay attention to the role of parties in mobilizing voters (see, e.g., Ellinas 2010). As a partial rectification of this, scholars consider the effects of the so-called supply-side factors, such as the presence of charismatic leadership (Ellinas 2010), and convergence of the mainstream parties on the left-right scale (Kitschelt 1995; Hobolt and Tilley 2016; Meguid 2005). However, some important supply-side factors are omitted from the existing analyses. Namely, even though substantial scholarly attention has been given to populism and its importance for the success of the new radical right parties (see, e.g., Mudde 2007; McDonnell and Albertazzi 2008; Betz 2018), the effects of the populist rhetoric have rarely been tested. How much does the populist rhetoric appease the often-xenophobic stances of this party family, helping attract the wider electorate? Additionally, the effects of interparty relationships are underexplored (see, e.g., Hutter and Kriesi 2021). Does the center-right's "toughness" on immigration stymie or enable the radical right electoral fortunes? Some scholars suggest that opposition to immigration by the center-right only legitimizes the radical right's position (see, e.g., Arzheimer and Carter 2006), while spatial theory proponents argue that it prevents the radical right's breakthrough

(Meguid 2005). Finally, does *cordon sanitaire* or refusal to cooperate with this party family limit its visibility and in turn, its electoral success?

Finding out whether these factors have a significant effect on the success of the radical right can pave the way for future strategies for both the mainstream parties and the radical right. The findings would allow us to go beyond contextual factors (e.g., levels of immigration, unemployment levels) which are often difficult to change at once. It answers the question of what other factors play a role in the success of the radical right apart from the mere increase in immigration paired with economic precarity.

This study relies on a quantitative research design that ensures high external validity, as it looks at 31 radical right parties in 22 European countries between 1999 and 2019. The use of triangulation to classify the radical right and the center-right parties ensures that the study explores the same phenomenon across countries and years. Finally, using the most recent expert survey data allows us to identify the latest trends in interparty competition and gain insight into how parties' positions on specific issues affect their electoral power.

The first chapter covers the existing literature on the radical right, identifying the shortcomings of the *economic insecurity thesis* and the *cultural backlash thesis*. The second chapter presents the hypotheses and explores the rationale behind them. The third chapter introduces the methodology used in this study, detailing the measurement of different variables, and explaining how parties were classified. The fourth chapter presents the results of the study and delves deeper into their implications for our understanding of interparty competition. Chapter 5 outlines the limitations of the study and specifies its originality. Finally, the conclusion sums up the findings and their implications and offers ideas for future research.

1. Literature Review

When does the radical right win?

With the radical right being "the fastest-growing party family in Europe" (Chou et al. 2019), scholars have given ample attention to this "phenomenon" (e.g., Norris 2005; Mudde 2007; Rydgren 2004; Lochocki 2017; Norris and Inglehart 2019). Two dominant explanations for the success of the radical right can be identified. The first thesis argues that the success of the radical right is a product of cultural backlash – the native population feels threatened culturally by the large inflows of immigrants with supposedly different traditions and ways of life. For instance, Rydgren (2008) shows that those who believe that immigration needs to be stopped to reduce tension in society are twice as likely (in Norway) to vote for the radical right parties. Another strand of literature espouses the 'economic insecurity thesis', i.e., the native population fears that immigrants can harm their economic position (e.g., the cutting/ loss of unemployment benefits). As Kitschelt (1995) asserts, the support for the radical right is "fuelled by the fear of less skilled workers and marginal small producers that they will be displaced by immigrants" (Kitschelt 1995, 31). The following section covers the two approaches in more detail and identifies their shortcomings.

Immigration and the Cultural Backlash Thesis

Scholars often emphasize levels of immigration as one of the main drivers of success of the radical right (e.g., Gerdes and Wadensjö 2010; Hangarter et al. 2018; Edo et al. 2019;). Betz and Swank (2003) find a positive relationship between the number of asylum seekers and voting for the extreme right. Nonetheless, data shows that countries with low levels of immigration or with low levels of the foreign-born population (e.g., Poland and the Czech Republic) are also witnessing the rise in support for the radical right parties (Eurostat 2020).

Therefore, a deeper analysis is needed to help explain why the radical right is successful in a myriad of very different contexts.

Instead of focusing on immigration levels per se, some scholars explore whether voters' perception of immigration can help explain voting for the far right (e.g., Rydgren 2008). Accordingly, a prominent strand of literature finds a strong link between anti-immigrant attitudes and voting for the radical right (see, e.g., Rydgren 2008; Lubbers et al 2002; Norris 2005; Norris and Inglehart 2019). Rydgren (2008) shows that "voters who strongly believe in the need to stop immigration in order to reduce tension in society were between 2.0 times more likely (in Norway) and 6.3 times more likely (in Belgium) to vote for the radical right, compared to voters who neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that immigration must be stopped in order to reduce tension" (747). Nonetheless, it is difficult to identify where the negative perception of immigrants stems from – whether from parties that demonize immigrants or from intrinsic beliefs that immigration is threatening to one's position in life. For instance, in another work, Rydgren (2003) shows that the presence of populist radical right parties can increase levels of xenophobia and racism in a country. If parties frame immigrants as threatening for the economy, for the culture, and one's identity, it can spur negative attitudes towards foreigners. Front National, a radical right party in France, asserted in its 1990s campaign that immigration "threatens the survival of the French nation, the security of its territory, the integrity of its patrimony, its culture, its language." (Betz 1993, 417). Political messages which generate fear for the loss of one's identity can potentially be successful in mobilizing voters. In defense of the cultural backlash thesis Williams (2006) poignantly writes, "it is not that people do not fear poor conditions, but perhaps that they view these as more easily reversed than loss of identity, culture, and values" (Williams 2006, 4-5).

Even though immigration levels and the perception of natives towards immigrants are certainly pertinent explanatory factors, alone they cannot fully explain why radical right parties win across different contexts and at different times. As stressed earlier, the radical right has been successful in places that experienced very little immigration as well as in those that were confronted with the rapid immigrant influx. Why did both Germany and Poland see the rise of this party family?

Economic Backlash/ Economic Insecurity Thesis

Another strand of literature identifies radical right voters as "modernization losers" (also known as "globalization losers"), where 'losers' are understood as those who do not have individual exit options at their disposal (when it comes to external circumstances), but must rely on sources of collective mobilization (Betz 1994; Kriesi et al. 2006). Manual and low-skilled workers are particularly vulnerable as the entry for their positions is considerably low, meaning that they are more likely to feel threatened by the immigrant workforce. Another factor that makes this group vulnerable is the automation of many traditionally manual jobs. Finally, globalization has allowed for the offshoring of manufacturing to countries with cheaper labour, drastically lowering the number of manufacturing and low-skilled jobs available to European workers. Considering these difficulties which the working class and the low-educated population is faced with, scholars find strong causal links between the less educated, low-wage workers and voting for the radical right (Arzheimer and Carter 2006; Evans 2005). This hypothesis is based on the group-conflict theory in which competition for resources and individual economic position affect one's voting preferences (Dancygier and Donnelly 2013; Pardos-Prado 2015). Members of certain parts of the population feel economically threatened by immigrants who, in theory, could occupy the same positions, and increase the competition for their jobs. Therefore, it is expected that low-

wage and low-skilled workers are more likely to place their vote with the radical right. In line with this theory, Swank and Betz (2003) find that the existence of universal welfare, as a means of alleviating economic insecurities, depresses the vote for the radical right.

Similarly, Hobolt and Tilley (2016) argue that economically disadvantaged voters tend to punish mainstream parties for bad economic performance. They suggest that an increasing electoral success of the 'challenger' parties in the EU is a result of the mainstream parties' convergence on policies of austerity in the aftermath of the euro crisis. Using survey data to measure people's perception of economic change, they find that "people who were adversely economically affected by the economic crisis are more likely to defect from mainstream parties to challenger parties" (Hobolt and Tilley 2016). This finding is in line with the economic voting model which states that voters punish governments for poor economic performance (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000).

On the contrary, Schwander and Manow (2017) show that the 'globalization/modernization losers' thesis cannot explain the recent success of the AfD in Germany. Looking at the aggregate district-level data, they find that unemployment and average income levels cannot predict voting for the AfD. On the other hand, they find a positive relationship between early and contemporary right-wing support. Namely, districts which voted for radical right parties in the past were more likely to vote for the AfD, implying that a 'tradition of radical right voting' can better explain voting for the radical right than the economic insecurity thesis. This finding is in line with *partisan motivated reasoning* which assumes that partisan identification, rather than people's ideological stance, motivates voters' choice (see, e.g., Bolsen et al. 2014). If parties presume that their voters are motivated by partisan identifications, they can shift their positions more freely without the fear of voter alienation.

Asking why the support for the far right is so *unstable,* Arzheimer (2009) uses the Eurobarometer survey data from 1980-2002 to find that while levels of immigration and unemployment are important, it is their interaction with political factors which produce the "best" electoral results. He predicts the lowest levels of support for the extreme right in systems with low unemployment rates, minimal welfare benefits, and minimal immigration. This finding shows that economic explanations are no panacea and that often a more in-depth analysis is needed to explain the rise of the radical right. As scholars often point out, no single explanation is sufficient to elucidate the rise of radical right (e.g., Kitschelt 1995; Norris 2005), instead, a combination and interaction of different factors can help identify which 'mix' is the most impactful in predicting electoral fortunes of the radical right.

Finally, the economic insecurity thesis poses another 'chicken or the egg' causality dilemma. Does the economically disadvantaged part of the population intrinsically fear immigrants as 'job takers' or is this narrative presented to them by party leaders, and they are simply more susceptible to it than other members of the population? To name one example of this neatly packaged narrative about immigrants, the Finns Party presents the following equation in its 2019 electoral manifesto: "Finnish children must go to schools plagued by mould and bad indoor air - wages of Finnish workers are no longer sufficient. At the same time, migrants are living comfortably on Finnish social security payments and other benefits." (The Finns Party's Election Program, 2019, 5).1 Therefore, party strength, leaders' narratives, and interparty competition should be additionally examined for more insights into whether they have the power to influence and mobilize voters. It must not be disregarded that parties compete for votes in competitive and volatile electoral markets where voters vote not

1 Full manifesto available here: https://www.perussuomalaiset.fi/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Eduskuntavaaliohjelma-2019_SU_In_English_1.pdf

only based on their ideological beliefs but also considering the party's ability to win seats in parliament (the so-called *strategic or tactical voting).* Therefore, scholarship suggests that party cohesion and whether the party can distinguish itself from others in its stance should be considered (Eatwell 2006; Meguid 2008). Do voters *believe* Marine Le Pen when she says that "France, land of human rights and freedoms, was attacked on its own soil by a totalitarian ideology: Islamic fundamentalism" (Le Pen 2015), and if they do, do they believe that *she* is the one who can stop this?

Party Convergence and Current Supply-Side State of the Art

As shown earlier, neither the cultural backlash thesis nor the economic insecurity thesis can fully explain why the radical right succeeds in some periods and some places and not others (see, e.g., Schwander and Manow 2017). In addition to these two central strands of literature, scholars have explored how interparty competition and other supply-side factors affect electoral fortunes of the radical right (Kitschelt 1995; Meguid 2005; 2008). What parties "have to offer" should not be seen as insignificant in predicting voter choice for the radical right. This is to say that the power of radical right parties to mobilize voters should also be considered (see, e.g, Ellinas 2010). Kitschelt (1995) stresses the importance of opportunity structures created by the mainstream parties for the triumph of the radical right. He defines political opportunity structure as "a configuration of resources, institutional arrangements, and historical precedents allowing a given political outcome to emerge" (Pardos-Prado 2015, 352). Using comparative analysis of the Western European countries, he finds that the convergence of the mainstream parties towards the center of the left-right dimension opens a window of opportunity for the radical right parties. Relying on the spatial voting theory, other scholars, too, find that mainstream party convergence opens up space for the "challenger" parties (Kitschelt 1995; Hobolt and Tilley 2016; Spoon and Klüver 2019; Rydgren 2004).

Nonetheless, how much party positions on specific issues enable or disable radical right breakthrough has been less explored. In other words, does the convergence of the mainstream parties on the issue of environment matter as much as their convergence on the issue of immigration in creating the space for the radical right? While the study of Dahlström and Sandell (2012) partially rectifies this shortcoming by testing how the mainstream parties' opposition to immigration affects the electoral fortunes of the anti-immigrant parties, they only test for Sweden and only for one year (2008). This study intends to fill that gap by exploring the effects of the center-right party's immigration position on the success of the radical right across Europe between 1999 and 2019. The immigration position, as opposed to other issues, is chosen given that scholars almost unanimously agree on its importance for the radical right party program (see, e.g., Meguid 2005; Betz and Johnson 2004).

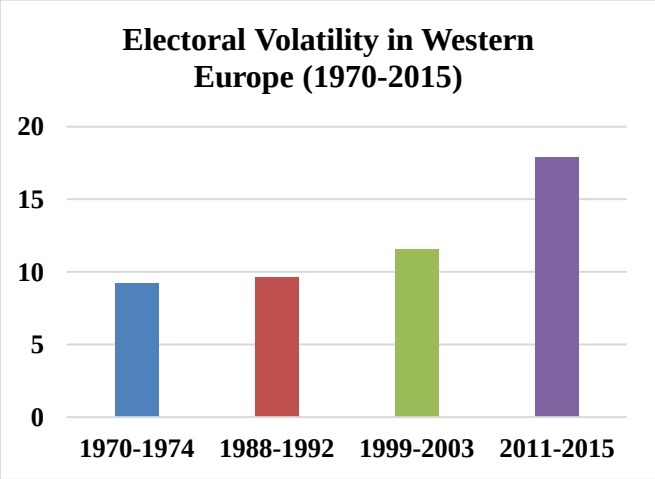
Furthermore, despite the substantial attention dedicated to explaining how the mainstream parties' willingness to cooperate can influence the success of the radical right parties, studies that use large-n analysis to pin down the extent to which this factor affects the electoral prospects of the radical right are lacking. For instance, Art (2007) argues that the lack of marginalization of the FPÖ in Austria both by the media and by the mainstream parties has facilitated the success of this radical right party. However, he only compares two countries, and he does not support his argument with data, but rather theorizes about the potential causalities. While an in-depth qualitative study of Austria and Germany is certainly of merit, as it allows for a deeper level of analysis, it prevents high external validity and extrapolation of results to other cases. Similarly, Heinze (2018) finds that strategies of disengagement (*cordon sanitaire)* are more effective at limiting the influence of the radical right parties than the strategies of engagement. Nonetheless, the study is limited to four Scandinavian countries and includes only a small variety of selected election periods.

Building on this, scholars look at mainstream party positions on immigration to see how those may affect the fortunes of the radical right (see, e.g, Arzheimer 2009; Pardos-Prado 2015). Arzheimer (2009) finds that how prominently the immigration issue appears in the mainstream parties' manifestos has a positive effect on the success of the radical right. This finding confirms the hypothesis that more attention given to this issue by the mainstream only validates it and boosts the success of the radical right. The same study, on the other hand, finds no connection between the "toughness" of mainstream party positions and voting for the radical right. The hypothesis that is not confirmed by this finding is that if the mainstream opposes immigration, it leaves less 'space' for the radical right. For instance, if the Austrian People's Party positions itself against open borders and emphasizes border control, the Freedom Party of Austria does not have much space to offer something considerably different without assuming a very extreme position (which runs the risk of driving voters away). The existing literature offers contradictory findings. While Arzheimer (2009) finds no significant correlation between the positioning of the center-right on immigration and the electoral support for the radical right, Arzheimer and Carter (2006) affirm that more opposition towards immigration by the mainstream parties causes the issues which the radical right thrives on to become legitimized, resulting in the latter's electoral success. Additionally, Arzheimer (2009) covers the period between 1980 and 2002, a period which undoubtedly saw a rise of the radical right across Europe, but it simultaneously gave little time to the center-right parties to adapt to the novelties in party systems. Therefore, given that party systems are not unchanging silos, but rather lively mechanisms which respond to social circumstances, it is important to retest whether, with the increased volatility, parties interact with one another in a different way. Scholars have argued that a steady increase in the number of parties that compete in elections has inevitably affected electoral volatility, causing party system instability (Pedersen 1979). Data shows that

electoral volatility has only become greater with time (as shown here). Emanuele (2015) confirms a steady increase in electoral volatility in Western Europe over time using Pedersen's volatility index, which is equal to the net percentage of voters who changed their votes from one election to the next (i.e., ceteris paribus, if voter A switched their vote from the FPÖ to the ÖVP and voter B switched from ÖVP to FPÖ, the net volatility is zero). The consequence of the increased volatility is that it puts into question the 'cleavage theory' presented by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) which assumes that people vote according to the ossified social cleavages (e.g., worker vs. owner), which then results in the "freezing of party systems". Instead, Dassonneville and Hooghe (2015) show that European electorates are much more likely to switch votes today as a result of an economic downturn than was the case before. Therefore, we must seek other explanations for the changing voting behavior. For instance, how much does the party's positioning on one issue affect who voters vote for, and as a consequence, the party's electoral success? For that reason, I will test whether the center-right's opposition to immigration has any effect on the radical right success in more volatile periods.

The novelty of this study stems from the fact that it explores the significance of both external and internal "supply-side" factors that are rarely investigated together. Apart from the well-known economic and cultural explanations for the rise of the radical right, how much does the populist rhetoric or other parties' refusal to cooperate with this party affect its electoral outcome? This research should provide new insights into the effectiveness of the spatial voting theory and the modified spatial voting model which includes issue salience and issue ownership. Additionally, the findings of this study should be helpful for mainstream and radical right parties alike to narrow their focus on strategies that help them remain relevant in the volatile electoral arenas.

Electoral Volatility in Western Europe (1970-2015)



The graph is based on Emanuele's (2015) dataset which calculates electoral volatility according to the Pedersen Index. It shows that whereas net vote change was less than 10% in the 1970s and 1980s, it jumps to almost 20% by 2015.

2. Theory

Defining the Radical Right

By 2021, radical right parties have found themselves a safe cradle in the European party systems, with some of them consistently coming up as the top three parties in the national elections (e.g., FPÖ in Austria and SVP in Switzerland). As Norris (2005) points out, "too many gains have occurred in too many countries to accept the idea that the radical right is simply a passing fad or fashion" (Norris 2005, 8). However, the increased presence of this party family on the electoral scene has not brought more conceptual clarity. Often terms "the far right", "the populist radical right", and "the extreme right" are used interchangeably. Some scholars, on the other hand, adamantly oppose this amalgamation of terms (see, e.g., Mudde 2007). Ascertaining what is meant by the radical right and agreeing on the terminology is an essential step that precedes the analytical moment. Namely, it answers the crucial question of what parties should be included in the analysis. If we use criteria that are too narrow, we run the risk of including only very few parties, leaving others that deviate even slightly, on the outside. If we, on the other hand, use a more generous definition, we may end up bundling different phenomena together and failing to measure what we are supposed to measure. Hence, choosing "the right" definition is an essential precondition for empirical analysis.

Scholars often stress the importance of nationalism in the ideology of the radical right (Mudde 2007; Rydgren 2003; 2007), where nationalism is expressed by the party's endorsement of ethnic homogeneity and opposition to immigration. Scholars assert that radical right parties are right-wing primarily in socio-cultural terms (Rydgren 2007), even though many are also right-wing in economic terms. An exception is, for instance, the Polish

Law and Justice Party which is culturally highly traditional (e.g., opposed to immigration and homosexuality), but is economically socialist (Norris 2020). "Extreme right" or "right-wing extremist" parties are believed to be those which are opposed to democracy and reject the basic foundations of the constitutional order (Brubaker 2017; Kitschelt 2007; Rydgren 2018; Mudde 2007). Radical right parties, on the other hand, "merely" object to the functioning of representative democracy and often call for more direct decision-making processes (Mudde 2000; Rydgren 2007). Mudde (2007) offers a minimum and a maximum definition of the populist radical right. In the former, he stresses that nativism, rather than nationalism or xenophobia, is at the core of the radical right ideology. He makes a distinction between nationalism and nativism because, arguably, the former can take different forms and can include civic and liberal nationalisms (for more about the difference between ethnic and civic nationalism, see, e.g., Breton 1988). Nativism, the author argues, holds that the nation should be inhabited solely by members of the native group. Rydgren (2003) has a similar understanding of the essence of the radical right ideology, but he chooses the term ethno-nationalism instead of nativism. Maximum definition, according to Mudde, in addition to nativism, also includes authoritarianism and populism (Mudde 2007, 22). Drawing from the theory put forth by Adorno et al. (1969), he defines authoritarianism "as the belief in a strictly ordered society, in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely" (Mudde 2007, 23). This conception of authoritarianism is different from the widely espoused one which sees it as an antithesis to democracy. Finally, Mudde (2007) defines populism as "a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite," and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people" (from Mudde 2007, 23). Similarly, Kitschelt (1995) defines the ideal type of

radical right as xenophobic, authoritarian, and promarket, excluding populism from the mix (Kitschelt 1995, 19, 42).

Following the logic of Mudde (2007) that not all radical right parties are authoritarian and/or populist and that not all populist/ authoritarian parties are necessarily radical right, this study follows the minimum definition where nativism is the necessary condition for belonging to this party family. Nativism2 is widely accepted in the scholarly literature as 'the core' of the radical right ideology (Kitschelt 1995; Norris 2005; Rydgren 2003). While accepting that populism, authoritarianism, and the free market ideology are common features of this party family, they are nonetheless not always present. If we define the radical right as only those parties which espouse nativism and the free market economy, are populist, and authoritarian, we lose some parties which are commonly accepted as radical right in the scholarly literature, such as the Law and Justice Party in Poland and the Finns Party (both economically socialist).

Hypotheses

Scholars identify two main approaches to exploring party success. Namely, we can look at the "supply-side" factors and the "demand-side" factors (von Beyme 1988; Rydgren 2007). The former focuses on the attitudes, predilections, and experiences of the radical right voters. The latter approach concentrates on the party itself – its manifesto, statements in the media by the party leaders, charismatic leadership. Investigating the interaction between parties in the electoral market can also be considered supply-side-oriented research. Wodak (2015) distinguishes between the internal supply-side – what the radical right offers, and the

2 The exact term varies across literature, but the essence of it is the same, e.g., Rydgren (2003) uses the term ethnonationalism, and Kitschelt (1995) argues that new radical right parties stand for exclusionary, particularistic understanding of citizenship confined to culturally homogeneous and ethnically exclusionary group of residents (Kitschelt 1995, 19-20).

external supply side – what other parties offer. I first explore the internal supply side – the position of the radical right on immigration and how populist the party narrative is, to identify its impact on the party success. Then, I look at the strategies of other parties.

Populist Rhetoric of the Radical Right

Betz (2018) speculates that "the contemporary radical right is, in its majority, a populist radical right" (139). Rydgren (2007) concludes that the new radical right-wing parties share a core ethno-nationalist xenophobia and anti-establishment populism" (Rydgren 2007, 242). Along similar lines, scholars often speculate about the importance of the populist rhetoric for the success of the radical right (see, e.g., Taggart 1995; Betz 2018, Bos et al. 2013). Populism is so often connected to the radical right that many scholars research populist radical right parties (PRRPs) as a separate party family (see, e.g., Betz 1993; Rydgren 2004; Mudde 2007; Lochocki 2017). It is, therefore, worthwhile exploring the extent to which populist rhetoric affects the success of the radical right. It is often assumed that the success of the new radical right parties coincided with their program modernization and the "break with the past". One of the prominent examples of this is Marine Le Pen's strategy of *dediabolisation* or policy moderation (Almeida 2013; Betz 2018). To expand their electorate, Taggart (1995) argues that radical right parties have adopted what he terms "new populism". He speculates that while fascist parties received little if any boost in support, parties that have tempered their agenda with issues of immigration and race have benefited. One such example is Jobbik in Hungary which started as a radical nationalist party in 2003 but whose president in 2020 announced that the party is redefining itself as Christian, conservative, and center-right.3 Therefore, this study assumes that populist rhetoric is one of the radical right strategies to make themselves more "palatable" to the wider electorate and

3 https://dailynewshungary.com/jobbik-sums-up-party-objectives-in-declaration/

proceeds to test how much if at all, the populist rhetoric affects the success of the radical right.

Before delving deeper into the matter, it is timely to define this ambiguous concept (see also, Ionescu and Gellner 1969; Canovan 1999). Most scholars agree that populists are anti-elitist, in that they present the established parties and the government as inherently corrupt while positing themselves as the representatives of 'the people' (Taggart 1995; Canovan 1999; Müller 2016; Rydgren 2018; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017). They use the Manichean approach of demonization of 'the other' to divide their respective societies into two opposing halves of 'us', the ordinary people, and 'them', the elites (Schulz et al. 2018; Eatwell 2006). Enemies can also be external – populists often present immigrants as undesirable outsiders. Additionally, but also complementary to the previous attribute, populists use plain language which should reinforce their belonging to 'the ordinary men'. From this, it can be concluded that populists' key characteristics are their anti-elitism and people-centrism. Albertazzi and McDonnell (2008) offer a compelling and an encompassing definition of populism as "an ideology which pits a virtuous and homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous 'others' who are together depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity and voice" (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008:3). Finally, scholars stress that populism is "a thin-centered ideology" which can be connected to both left-wing and right-wing ideological currents (Mudde 2004; Stanley 2008; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017). Alex Tsipras, former prime minister of Greece and the leader of Syriza, accusing the "oligarchs and lobbyists in Greece" of undermining his government is a paragon of left-wing populism (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017). On the other hand, the 2020 campaign poster of the FPÖ in Austria which shows the

Greens, the Austrian People's Party, and the Social-Democrats as bringing radicalized Islam into the country is an example of right-wing populism4.

In summary, scholars find multiple reasons why populism produces electoral results. Populists show a tendency to present the political situation as a crisis and imbue people with a sense of urgency for action. Because of this, Canovan (1999) contends that populism has the power to draw the previously unpolitical people into the political arena. Additionally, scholars argue that populist rhetoric tones down the radical aspect of the radical right parties, attracting a wider electorate (Taggart 1995). Therefore, I test the following hypothesis:

H1: The radical right party loses votes when it uses less populist rhetoric.

Party Cooperation with the Radical Right

Scholars often suggest that whether parties cooperate with the radical right parties or not matters for the latter's prospects of success (Downs 2001; Ziblatt and Levitsky 2018; Heinze 2018). Downs (2001) distinguishes broadly between the strategies of engagement and disengagement. He contends that mainstream parties which decide to ignore the radical right do so out of the belief that the lack of publicity and power will stymie the latter's chances for success. Parties may, on the other hand, also decide to engage with the radical right by, for instance, co-opting their policy positions. Building on the theory developed by Downs (2001), Heinze (2018) explores different strategies of the mainstream parties towards their right-wing populist challengers across four Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland), finding that strategies of disengagement (*cordon sanitaire)* are more effective at limiting the influence of the radical right parties than the strategies of

4 The poster can be found here: https://www.oe24.at/oesterreich/chronik/wien/fpoe-retuschiert-halbmond-auf-stephansdom/443996711

engagement. Similarly, Nancy Bermeo (2003) argues that distancing radical right parties before they gain momentum is important as it lowers their payoffs by reducing the influence they have on policy, prompting them to tone down their narratives. Art (2007) probes that endorsement of the far right in one of the biggest media outlets, as well as the lack of marginalization by the established parties, has allowed FPÖ in Austria to become politically legitimized and to achieve electoral success. In Germany, on the other hand, the author speculates that strong media and civil society opposition to the Republikaner has prevented them from becoming politically viable.

Why do scholars assume that the more parties distance themselves from the radical right, the less likely the radical right is to win? For one, many theories suggest that voters vote not only based on their ideological beliefs, but also considering the prospects of the party to enter parliament and influence policy (Gschwend and Meffert 2017). Voters want their vote to be effective and they therefore do not want to "waste" their vote on a party which has no chance to enter parliament (in systems of proportional representation) or win (in majoritarian systems) (Aldrich et al. 2018). If parties openly refuse to cooperate with the radical right, and this position is known to the voters, it will signal to them that the party has little chance to do what they promise in the campaign. Additionally, such a *cordon sanitaire* by the mainstream may prompt the voters to believe that the radical right's position is illegitimate. Namely, if all parties are refusing to work with this party, there must be something wrong with it.

Relying on previous research that suggests a link between party distancing and electoral outcome of the radical right (see, e.g., Downs 2001; Heinze 2018; Art 2007; Bermeo 2003), but acknowledging that a large-n cross-national analysis is lacking, this research will test the following hypothesis:

H2: The less willing parties are to cooperate with the radical right party, the more likely the latter is to lose.

Center-right's Opposition to Immigration

The anti-immigration stance is one of the key features of the new radical right parties (Betz 1994). Additionally, research has shown that anti-immigrant sentiment is a strong predictor of whether a person will vote for the radical right party (Rydgren 2008; Lubbers et al 2002; Norris 2005). If this is the case, using the spatial theory of voting (Downs 1957; Meguid 2005), it can be assumed that if a more established party endorses stricter immigration policies, it will reclaim some of the votes from the radical right party. If mainstream parties, on the other hand, mutually converge on positions, scholars find that they create an opening for the extreme party to win votes of those who diverge from the center (e.g., Kitschelt 1995; Hobolt and Tilley 2016). Accordingly, scholars contend that as a response to the increase in the vote share of the radical right parties, some center-right parties may decide to adopt "tougher" positions on immigration, such as stricter border control. This is known as the "position contagion" (About-Chadi 2016; Hutter and Kriesi 2021). The rationale behind this strategy is that a stricter position on the issue which the radical right mobilizes on can make the latter less relevant, and even redundant. Evidence for this is, however, mixed.

While Arzheimer and Carter (2006) show that a shift to the right by the mainstream right party has a positive effect on the electoral success of the radical right party, indicating that legitimization by the center-right of the radical right's policies increases the support for the latter, Arzheimer (2009) finds that 'toughness' of the established parties has no significant effects. Following the spatial theory, the hypothesis that is rejected by Arzheimer

(2009) is that if the established party assumes a tougher position on immigration, it leaves less space for the radical right. In the same vein as Arzheimer and Carter (2006), Dahlström and Sundell (2012) provide evidence that anti-immigrant parties benefit from the mainstream parties' toughness on immigration, confirming the legitimization hypothesis. Other scholars also speculate that mainstream parties' adoption of a more restrictive position can make the issues that the radical right mobilizes on more salient (Arzheimer 2009; Hadj Abdou, Bale, and Geddes 2021; Thränhardt 1995). These findings and speculations go against the spatial voting theory which suggests that voters choose their preferred candidates by whomever they feel closest to on the ideological continuum.

Meguid (2008) argues that mainstream parties shifting their position on a given issue dimension affects the success of niche parties. Unlike the scholars mentioned above, she finds that generally accommodative strategies of the mainstream parties result in vote loss for the niche parties. For example, she argues that when the Conservatives adopted a tougher stance on immigration in the 1970s, it obstructed the potential breakthrough of the British Front National (Meguid 2008, 91).

Who will voters choose if both the center-right and the radical right adopt stricter immigration positions? In response to some of the mainstream parties' adoption of anti-immigration stances, Jean-Marie Le Pen prophesized that voters will still prefer 'the original' over 'the copy', as the voters have already been disappointed by the latter (Mudde 2004). However, it can also be the case that if no other party in the system is even mildly opposed to immigration, the radical right wins, capturing voters who are both extremely and mildly opposed to immigration. On the contrary, if the center-right assumes a 'tougher' position on immigration by, for instance, limiting the number of immigrants who can enter the country, the mildly opposed voters may shift to the center-right. Additionally, as Meguid (2008)

poignantly pointed out, the mainstream parties have more media presence, as well as more legitimacy among the electorate, leading to their overall increased electoral power.

Some of the more recent political developments also confirm that center-right's opposition to immigration can stymie the radical right. For instance, the Austrian People's Party led by Sebastian Kurz, which adopted a stricter immigration stance has been able to hinder the success of the Freedom Party of Austria in 2019. While it is difficult to say with certainty that the immigration stance of the ÖVP and the vote share for the FPÖ are directly correlated, especially considering also that the latter has experienced party rift which led to the expulsion of the party head Heinz-Christian Strache from the party, an assumption in this direction is not specious. Are such examples far and wide, representing outliers that only prove the rule, or is there more to this spatial theory-driven assumption? Given the mixed results by researchers, the current study aims to test the following hypothesis on the sample of 31 radical parties in 22 countries in Europe from 1999 until 2019:

H3: The more the center-right party opposes immigration, the less likely the radical right is to win.

Center-Right and Immigration Salience

Scholars argue that given that the immigration crisis has increased the politicization of the immigration issue, and consequently the success of the radical right parties which thrive on it, many mainstream parties have adopted strategies of the so-called "salience contagion", i.e., they have decided to put more emphasis on the immigration issue in their programs (Abou-Chadi 2016; Hutter and Kriesi 2021). It is, therefore, important to understand how the adoption of the "salience contagion" strategy has affected the success of

the radical right. If the mainstream parties pick up the issues of the radical right, does it facilitate or hinder the success of the latter?

Arzheimer (2009) finds that how prominently the immigration issue appears in the mainstream parties' manifestos has a positive effect on the success of the radical right. This finding confirms the theory that the more the mainstream parties focus on the issues of the radical right, the more they signal to the voters that they should care about the given issue. In the same vain, Ellinas (2010) argues, "the eagerness of mainstream parties to gain from growing public demands for cultural protectionism presents Far Rightists with opportunities to enter the political mainstream." (Ellinas 2010, 28).

Unlike the classical spatial theory which assumes that parties compete in a unidimensional space and that voters vote for parties based solely on their ideological proximity to them, modified spatial theory additionally considers issue ownership and issue salience (see, e.g., Meguid 2005). Namely, how important is the issue of immigration to voters and who "owns" the issue? Meguid (2008) argues that the electoral fortunes of the niche parties depend on the strategies employed by the mainstream parties, as the latter have access to a wider set of resources (e.g., greater media access). Therefore, they can shape the competitiveness of their opponents and themselves not only through their position but also by altering salience and issue ownership (Meguid 2008, 14). This is to say that mainstream parties, considering their legitimacy in the electoral systems, and often large following, can influence which issues voters care about. If leaders of the center-right parties start to increasingly speak about immigration, Islamic fundamentalism, and religious separatism, this may be a signal to voters that they should care about those issues.

H4: The less the center-right party emphasizes the immigration issue, the less likely is the radical right party to win.

3. Research Design

The research focused on the radical right has experienced a boom in the last two decades, receiving attention from sociologists (e.g., Rydgren 2007; Hochschild 2016; Skocpol and Williamson 2017; Miller-Idriss 2018), as well as from political scientists (e.g., Norris 2005; Mudde 2007). Within disciplines, approaches to researching the radical right also differ. For instance, scholars of party politics often use quantitative methods to answer research questions related to the variation of the radical right success (Norris 2005; Arzheimer and Carter 2006; Arzheimer 2009; Hutter and Kriesi 2021). Others, on the other hand, resort to qualitative research methods, such as interviews and case studies (e.g., Art 2007; Albertazzi 2016; Heinze 2018). For instance, Art (2007) looks at the variation in the support for the far right in Germany and Austria using a qualitative case study approach. Neither approach is 'more correct'. Rather, they provide different insights and often answer different questions. Whereas Art (2007) provides a deeper contextual knowledge of the case studies, the quantitative analysis of Arzheimer (2009) allows for the wider extrapolation of the results across various contexts.

Given that the current study aims to check for the effect of the supply-side factors on the radical right parties in multiple contexts, it is fitting to use quantitative analysis. Additionally, considering that the dependent variable is continuous, the use of ordinary least squares regression (OLS) is apposite, as it allows for wider extrapolation of the results (i.e., greater external validity). Linear regression is useful for identifying the extent to which certain factors affect the response variable. Additionally, it can show the interaction between the effects, enabling the researcher to see how they influence one another. Running multiple models can indicate how much of the dependent variable is explained by the isolated independent variables (R^2). When it comes to the question of the minimum number of

observations, the literature suggests that the use of regression analysis should be justified by a sufficient number of observations, the common rule of thumb being at least 10-20 observations for each independent variable (Harrell 2015). A sample with too few observations is known as 'overfitting' and can lead to spurious results. While the current study is not on the larger side of the dataset, it ensures at least ten observations per explanatory variable, avoiding the risk of overfitting. I cluster the standard errors by country (CSEs)5.

Data

The field is abundant with datasets that measure party positions and citizens' attitudes on political issues (see, e.g., Kitschelt 2014; Mair and Katz 1992; Norris 2020). One of the most popular datasets is the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) which analyzes party manifestos across the world, from 1945 until today. It is widely used by party politics scholars (Meguid 2005; Arzheimer 2009; Abou-Chadi and Stoetzer 2020; Abou-Chadi and Wagner 2019) as it provides a reliable content analysis of parties' electoral manifestos, and accordingly, analysis of parties' policy positions. Its benefits include a wide coverage of countries and election periods. Nonetheless, the CMP dataset has many missing values on policy issues in each manifesto. This can be explained by the fact that some issues are

5 I also run a model with country dummies (fixed effects by country), but most likely due to the relatively low number of observations, only the variable of the center-right party's immigration salience is significant. The reason for the lack of support for other hypotheses may be that the model does not have enough power to tease out the effects on the DV. Controlling for fixed country effects reduces the number of observations to 51, merely sufficient to assume effects. Nonetheless, it is reassuring that the results in both analyses point in the same direction (i.e., more cooperation boosts the success of the radical right, the more the center-party supports immigration, the more likely is the radical right to win votes etc.)

discussed by the party leaders in the media but do not find their place in the manifesto, most likely due to their marginality in the party's program.

The European Social Survey (ESS), on the other hand, is useful when a researcher is interested in the "demand-side" explanations, as it is well-reputed for measuring people's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in Europe. It includes citizens' attitudes towards immigrants, the European Union, national institutions, information about whom they voted for in the last election.

As an alternative method to the general population surveys and manifestos, scholars have resorted to expert surveys for the assessment of party organization, policy stance, and electoral practices adopted by parties (see, e.g., Kitschelt 2014, Polk et al. 2017). This method uses experts' knowledge to identify party positions on different issues. Because experts can draw from a wide variety of sources to identify the positions (e.g., media coverage, newspaper articles, social media), as opposed to only looking at the manifestos, they can provide a more comprehensive assessment. One such type of survey is the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) which covers political parties in 31 countries and measures party positions on many important issues such as the environment, LGBTQ+ rights, and immigration, but also how prominent these issues are in party programs (issue salience) (Bakker et al. 2019). Some issues are nonetheless only measured in some years and not in others, preventing comparative analysis over time. To overcome the shortcomings of the individual expert surveys, the Manifesto Project, and the ESS data, I use the V-party dataset. This dataset combines expert surveys such as the CHES data (Bakker et al. 2020) and the DALP data (Kitschelt 2014), and the Global party Survey (Norris 2019) to provide a more comprehensive dataset. In addition to the amalgamation of the already existing datasets, it also includes coded assessments of 665 experts in 2020 where at least four coders provided

their assessment per observation. This has resulted in the dataset having expert–coded assessments of party organization and identity for most parties in most countries for the years 1970-2019. V-dem collected potential experts' biography, list of publications, website information, affiliation, country of origin, and highest degree, and then selected the coders based on five criteria: 1. "an individual's expertise in the country(ies) and thematic surveys they may be assigned to code", 2. connection to the country to be coded – (…) three out of five (60%) of the Country Experts recruited to code a particular country-survey should be nationals or permanent residents of that country", 3. "willingness to devote time to the project and to deliberate carefully over the questions asked in the survey", 4. Impartiality – "close association (current or past) with political parties, senior government officials, politically affiliated think-tanks or institutes is grounds for disqualification", 5. Diversity in professional background – finding experts who have different professional backgrounds and who are located at a variety of institutions, universities and research institutes (Coppedge et al. 2020, 13-14).6

Sample

My sample consists of thirty-one radical right parties in twenty-two European countries: twenty in the European Union plus Norway and Switzerland. Some EU countries were omitted because of their lack of radical right parties (e.g., Ireland, Portugal). In addition to the EU countries, the study includes Norway and Switzerland because both countries elicit similar socio-economic conditions to other Western EU countries and because both have had a longstanding presence of the radical right parties7. Additionally, I include countries from

6 More detailed information about the V-dem methodology can be found here: https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/94/87/94876a61-1682-4227-baa0-ab927645d507/method.pdf

7 Scholars often include these two countries in their analyses of similar phenomena (see, e.g., Arzheimer and Carter 2006; Arzheimer 2009; Norris 2005)

both the Eastern and the Western block, ensuring greater external validity. If I were to use only parties from Western Europe, one could argue that the results would not apply to countries in Eastern Europe where political culture is different and the level of democratic consolidation perhaps not as high. I use East/West division as a control variable to see whether a difference can be distinguishable. Therefore, my dataset includes the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Considering that the radical right party in a given election equals one observation, the dataset I use then has 100 observations for the period between 1999 and 2019.

Radical right Classification

I use a triangulation of methods to come to the most reliable classification of radical right parties. First, I rely on the party family classification used in the Chapel Hill Expert Survey. This variable consists of eleven categories where the first category represents radical right parties8. Next, I use the general left-right question in CHES: 'Please tick the box that best describes each party's overall ideology on a scale ranging from 0 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right)'. Using the expert survey data to assess party positioning on the left-right dimension is widely used and accepted by scholars (see, e.g., Norris 2005; Hobolt and Tilley 2016). For the question which measures the left-right positioning, I use a threshold of 8 and above to mark the party as radical right9. Triangulation allows for a more reliable assessment

8 While party family attribution is largely based on Derksen classification, it is additionally triangulated by membership or affiliation with EP party families, Parlgov classifications (Döring and Manow 2016) and self-identification. Scale: 1 = Radical Right; 2 = Conservatives; 3 = Liberal; 4 = Christian-Democratic; 5 = Socialist; 6 = Radical Left; 7 = Green; 8 = Regionalist; 9 = No Family; 10 = Confessional; 11 = Agrarian/Center;

9 The "lrgen" variable indicates the overall ideological stance of the party. 0 = Extreme Left; 5 = Center; 10 = Extreme Right;

of which parties belong to the radical right. Additionally, data availability combined with the use of clear criteria allows for easy study replications in the future. When I compare the outputs of the two variables ("family" and "lrgen"), there is a significant overlap in party classification (see Appendix for a complete list). Nonetheless, some discrepancies exist. For instance, whereas Lega Nord in Italy is classified as a regionalist party in the "family" variable between 2006 and 2013, the general left-right variable suggests that the party belongs to the radical right party family. Combining the outputs of the two variables with contextual knowledge10, I settle on thirty-one European parties in twenty-two countries (see below for the complete list of radical right parties included in the study).

10 I also consider which parties are classified as radical right in the prominent literature, looking especially at Meguid (2008, 45) and Norris (2005).

Radical Right Party Table

Party Name	Party Abbreviation	Country	Notes
Alliance for the Future of Austria	BZO	Republic of Austria	2008
Alternative for Germany	AfD	Germany	2013, 2017
Danish Peoples Party	DF	Denmark	2001, 2005, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019
Dawn of Direct Democracy	UPD	Czech Republic	2013
Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance	Fidesz	Hungary	2014, 2018
Finns Party	PS	Finland	2019
Flemish Block / Interest	VB	Belgium	1999, 2003, 2007, 2010
Fortuyn List	LPF	Netherlands	2002, 2003
Freedom and Direct Democracy Tomio O kamura	SPD	Czech Republic	2017
Freedom Party of Austria	FPO	Austria	1999, 2002, 2006, 2008,2013, 2017, 2019
Greater Romania Party	PRM	Romania	2000, 2004
Independent Greeks	ANEL	Greece	2012
Law and Justice	PiS	Poland	2001, 2005, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019
Liberal Union of Lithuania	LLS	Lithuania	2000
Movement for a Better Hungary	Jobbik	Hungary	2010, 2014, 2018
National Alliance	AN	Italy	2001, 2006
al Alliance / For Fatherland and Freedom /	NA/TB/LNNK	Latvia	2006, 2010, 2011, 2014, 2018
National Front	FN	France	2002, 2012, 2017
National Union Attack	ATA	Bulgaria	2005, 2009, 2013
North League	LN	Italy	2001, 2006, 2008, 2013, 2018
Party for Freedom	PVV	Netherlands	2006, 2010, 2012, 2017
People's Party Our Slovakia	LsNS	Slovakia	2016
People's Association / Golden Dawn	LS/CA	Greece	2012, 2015
Popular Orthodox Rally	LAOS	Greece	2009
Progress Party [Anders Lange's Party]	Fr	Norway	2001, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017
Slovak National Party	SNS	Slovakia	2006, 2010, 2016
Slovenian National Party	SNS	Slovenia	2004, 2008
Sweden Democrats	SD	Sweden	2010, 2014, 2018
Swiss People's Party	SVP	Switzerland	1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019
United Kingdom Independence Party	UKIP	United Kingdom	2001, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2017
We are family – Boris Kollar	SR	Slovakia	2016

'The Mainstream' Classification

Not surprisingly, there is also no scholarly consensus about what constitutes the "mainstream". Hobolt and Tilley (2016) contend that mainstream parties are those which often alternate between government and opposition. These parties tailor their positions according to their past experiences in office and their desire to enter office again. Similarly, Meguid (2005) posits that mainstream parties are "typically governmental actors" (Meguid 2005, 352). Considering the wide acceptance of this view of 'the mainstream' (e.g., Meguid 2005; Hobolt and Tilley 2016), this study assumes the same understanding here forth.

Center-right Classification

It is worthwhile exploring what center-right means both ideologically and conceptually. Scholars often contend that the concept of the center-right subsumes different 'party families' (Hadj Abdou et al. 2021), such as conservatives, Christian democrats, and liberal parties (Bale and Kaltwasser 2021; Hutter and Kriesi 2021). Despite the ideological heterogeneity that the center-right consists of, the classification is useful because it distinguishes parties that belong to the ideological center from those in the radical right group (Mudde 2019). Additionally, party amalgamation is useful for predicting which parties are more likely to cooperate in government through coalition formation. What are, then, the core characteristics shared by most center-right parties? Center-right parties, regardless of their further identification, most of the time propagate free market economy, law and order, and national security (Pardos-Prado 2015).

Using a similar approach to the one employed for the classification of the radical right parties, I first check what the left-right dimension suggests. The scale ranges from 0 to 10 where 0 represents extreme left and 10 extreme right. I select the parties which received scores between 5 and 8 by experts as ideologically center-right. Additionally, given that in my research the center-right party must also be mainstream and dominant in the elections, I

use contextual knowledge to identify the center-right party that would be the main competitor to the radical right. Some inconsistencies prompt us to move beyond the simple adoption of classification according to the CHES left-right scale. For instance, the Italian Lega Nord receives a score of 7 in the 1999 elections – a score which nominates it as a center-right party. Additionally, using just the left-right scale, we get several center-right parties in more atomized party systems such as Italy and Romania. Nonetheless, it would be spurious to include all those parties in the analysis given that it is unlikely that a party with very little support could affect the position and the electoral support of the radical right. Combining the left-right scale with contextual knowledge, I settle on the most prominent center-right parties in each country. For instance, in France, the main center-right party until 2015 was the Union for a Popular Movement. Since 2016, the position of the main center-right party has been taken by Emmanuel Macron's La République En Marche (see center-right party table for the complete list of center-right parties included in the study).

Center-Right Party Table

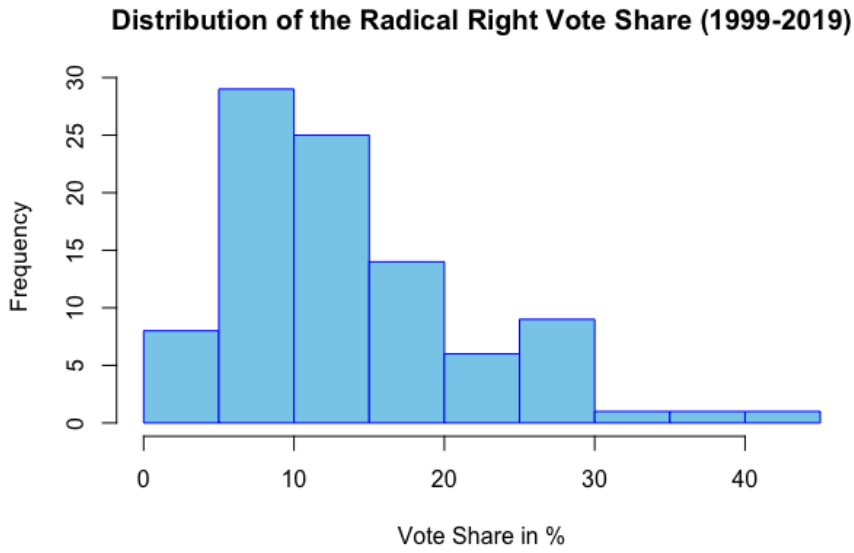
Party Name	Party Abbreviation	Country	Notes
Christian Democratic Union	CDU	Germany	2002, 2005, 2009, 2013,2017
Austrian People's Party	ÖVP	Austria	1999, 2002, 2006, 2008,2013, 2017, 2019
The Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats	Open Vld	Belgium	Known as the Party of Liberty and Progress until 1992
Christian Democratic and Flemish	CD&V	Belgium	Known as the Christian People's Party until 2001
Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria	GERB	Bulgaria	Founded in 2006
Civic Democratic Party	ODS	Czech Republic	2002, 2006, 2010, 2013, 2017
Liberal Party	Venstre	Denmark	2001, 2005, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019
National Coalition Party	NCP	Finland	1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019
The Republic Onwards!	LREM	France	Founded in 2016 by Emmanuel Macron
Union for a Popular Movement	UMP	France	The party was replaced by the Republicans in 2015
New Democracy (ND)	ND	Greece	2000, 2004, 2007, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2019
Forward Italy	FI	Italy	2013
Forza Italia (Go Italy)	FI	Italy	2001, 2006
Unity	-	Latvia	2010, 2011, 2014, 2018
Homeland Union—Lithuanian Christian Democrats	TS-LKD	Lithuania	2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016
Christian Democratic Appeal	CDA	Netherlands	2002,2003,2006,2010,2012, 2017
The Conservative Party	H	Norway	2001, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017
Civic Platform	PO	Poland	2001, 2005, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019
National Liberal Party	PNL	Romania	2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016 (no vote share for 2004 and 2008)
People's Party	PP	Romania	2012
Christian Democratic Movement	KDH	Slovakia	2002, 2005, 2010, 2012
Freedom and Solidarity	SaS	Slovakia	2010, 2012, 2016
New Slovenia—Christian People's Party	SLS	Slovenia	2000, 2004, 2014, 2018
The Moderate Party	M	Sweden	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018
Christian Democratic People's Party of Switzerland	CVP	Switzerland	1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019
the Conservative and Unionist Party	the Tories	United Kingdom	2001, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2017, 2019

Dependent Variable

Consulting other established literature on the success and failure of parties, I measure the variation of radical right party success by the party's vote share in a given election (see, e.g., Meguid 2005; Norris 2005; Abou-Chadi and Wagner 2019; Heinze 2018). As the

distribution plot suggests, most radical right parties achieve between 5% and 15% per election, with a limited number of parties reaching the support of over 20%.

Distribution of the Radical Right Vote Share



Independent Variables

Given the four hypotheses outlined in the theoretical chapter, the main model includes four explanatory variables. IV1 is the willingness of parties to cooperate with the radical right party. IV2 is the populist rhetoric of the radical right party (measured as a harmonic mean of anti-elitism and people-centrism), IV3 is the immigration salience of the center-right party, and IV4 is the immigration position of the center-right party.

IV1 – Radical Right Populist Rhetoric

Cross-national measures of populism are rare and far wide. There are several reasons for this. For one, populism, while hardly a new concept, has only reached the peak of its popularity in the last decade, attracting more scholarly attention. Secondly, given the lack of scholarly unanimity on what populism is, measuring it has proven more difficult. Some

studies which test for populist attitudes measure for three sub-dimensions: anti-elitism, demand for popular sovereignty, and belief in the homogeneity and virtuousness of the people (Schulz et al. 2018). This measurement is based on the core features of the populist rhetoric discussed earlier.

The Global Party Survey (2019) uses expert surveys to measure party positions, including the populist/ pluralist rhetoric. Although similar to the earlier expert surveys (e.g., CHES), it includes new measures (e.g., populism), and expands the geographical scope of the study to 163 countries (84% of all nation-states) (Norris 2020). For this study, however, we need a measurement of populist attitudes both across countries and years (between 1999 and 2019), making the data collection trickier.

The V-party dataset includes a measure of populism (0-1 scale) as a harmonic mean of the rescaled component variables that are measured separately: anti-elitism (v2paanteli) and people-centrism (v2papeople). That way, each component is given equal significance in influencing the overall populism score. This measurement includes two core characteristics of populism (Norris 2020; Müller 2016; Stanley 2008; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017), and while it omits how much the party calls for direct democratic decision-making, considering overall data limitations, it proves as the most comprehensive measure for this study. For anti-elitism, experts are asked the following question: "How important is anti-elite rhetoric for this party?" The answers range from 0 to 4, where 0 indicates that this party never makes statements against the elites, and 4 implies that anti-elitist rhetoric is very important and that the leadership makes statements against the elites whenever possible (Lührmann et al. 2020). For people-centrism, experts are asked the following question: "Do leaders of this party glorify the ordinary people and identify themselves as part of them?" Similar to anti-elitism, this variable ranges from 0 to 4. The

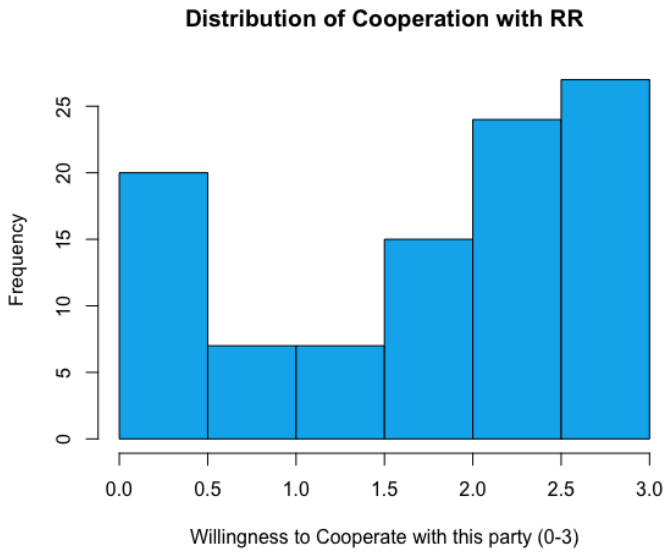
score of 0 is designated to the party leadership which never glorifies nor identifies with the ordinary people, and 4 receive parties which, according to experts, always glorify and identify with the ordinary people, which they claim to represent (Lührmann et al. 2020).

As mentioned earlier, whether the party espouses direct as opposed to representative democracy is not measured by the populism variable. Nonetheless, the party's call for direct democratic mechanisms (e.g., plebiscites and referenda) is, according to some scholars, an important aspect of populism (see, e.g., Canovan 1999; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017). Therefore, it is recognized here that whether the party endorses direct democratic mechanisms can affect its level of populism, and in turn, affect the dependent variable (vote share for the radical right), but this cannot be tested within the scope of this research due to data limitations. Party personalization can be considered as an additional confounding factor for party populism if it is assumed that more personalization allows for unmediated communication with his/her voters. For instance, Bos et al. (2011) argue that party leaders are particularly important for right-wing populist parties because these parties are new to the public, and as such, charismatic leaders can draw the media attention to the party. Because personalistic leadership has been commonly accepted by scholars as an important feature of contemporary populism (Caiani and Graziano 2016; Canovan 1999), i.e., how personalized the party is may affect how populist its rhetoric is and consequently its electoral outcome, the "party personalization" is included as a control variable in this study. The question that experts were asked is: "To what extent is this party a vehicle for the personal will and priorities of one individual leader?", where 0 means "not at all" and 4 indicates that the party is solely focused on the personal will and priorities of one individual party leader.

IV2 – Willingness to Cooperate

The second explanatory variable is parties' willingness to cooperate with the radical right party. The question that experts were asked was the following: "In the years before this election, to what extent have other parties distanced themselves from this party?" It is measured on a scale from 0 to 3, where 0 indicates refusal of all parties to accept formal or informal parliamentary support from this party, and 3 represents that one or more parties have accepted formal parliamentary support by the radical right, such as, for example, by forming a coalition or expressing willingness to do so. Rather surprisingly, the histogram shows a wide range among the observations. "Tails" of the graph suggest that many radical right parties are either not distanced at all (3) or are very distanced (0-0.5). Such an illustration can suggest that once the radical right breaks the glass ceiling by receiving support from at least one party, other parties are more likely to follow, leading to increased toleration of this radical right party.

Distribution of Cooperation with the Radical Right



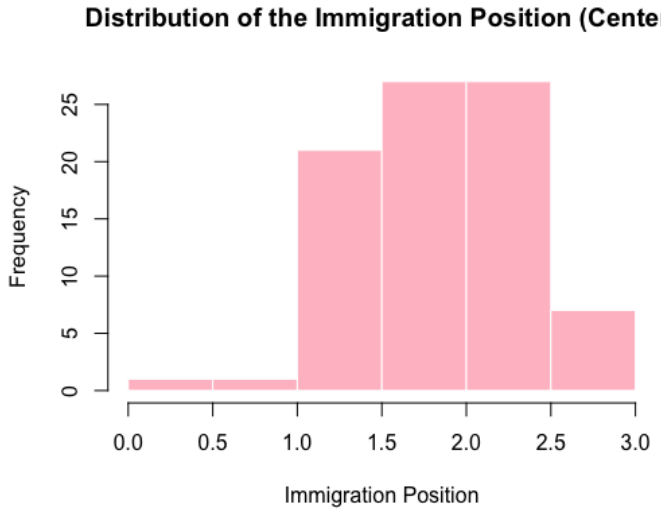
IV3 – Center-Right Immigration Salience

IV3 is immigration salience for the center-right party. Party experts were asked to identify up to three issues most relevant for the party's effort to gain and keep voters. This is a dummy variable where if immigration is one of the most salient issues for the center-right, it received 1, and if not, it received the score of 0.

IV4 - Center-right Immigration Position

IV4 is the measurement of the center-right's immigration position, ranging from 0 to 4, where 0 indicates complete opposition to immigration and 4 complete support. The question that experts were asked was the following: What is the party's position regarding immigration into the country? Histogram of the distribution of the center-right's support for immigration shows that most observations are located between 1.5 and 2.5, covering the opposition to immigration (1), ambiguity / no position (2), and immigration support (3). As expected for a center-right party, there are barely any cases in the corner left and corner right sides, indicating the lack of extreme positions.

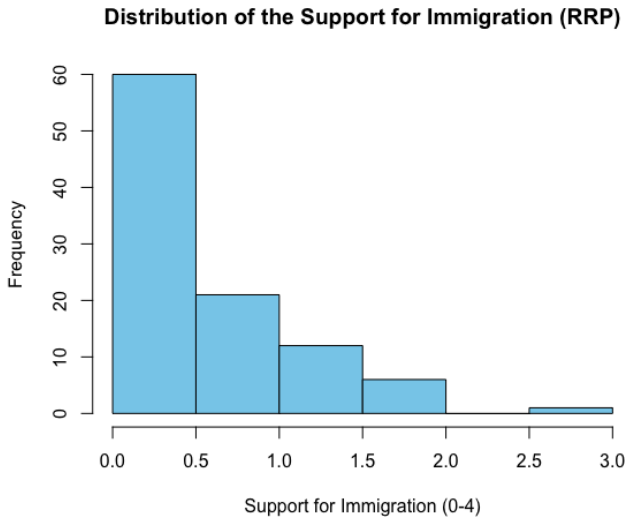
Distribution of the Center Right's Immigration Support



Additional Control Variables

Given that the focus of this study is on the key supply-side factors (see, e.g., Golder 2016), I consider potential confounding factors in my analysis to make sure that those I identified are indeed more relevant. Namely, scholars often stress the importance of internal party cohesion for its electoral success and endurance (see, e.g., Kritzinger et al. 2004). This variable asks to what extent leaders of the party disagree on party strategies with 0 indicating full disagreement and 4 implying full agreement. Additionally, given the importance of the immigration issue for the radical right (see, e.g., Betz 1994), the position of the radical right party on immigration is held as a control variable (v2paimmig - where 0 indicates strong opposition to immigration and 4 indicates support for almost all forms of immigration). It is measured in the same way as the immigration position for the center-right where experts are asked whether the party supports or opposes immigration in a given year on a scale of 0 to 4. Unlike the range of immigration support of the center-right, radical right parties are in the overwhelming majority strongly opposed to immigration (see here).

Distribution of the Radical Right Support for Immigration



4. Results

This research set out to test the effects of specific supply side factors on the success of the radical right parties in the period between 1999 and 2019. This section presents the results and the analysis.

Multivariate Analysis of Radical Right Party Vote Share

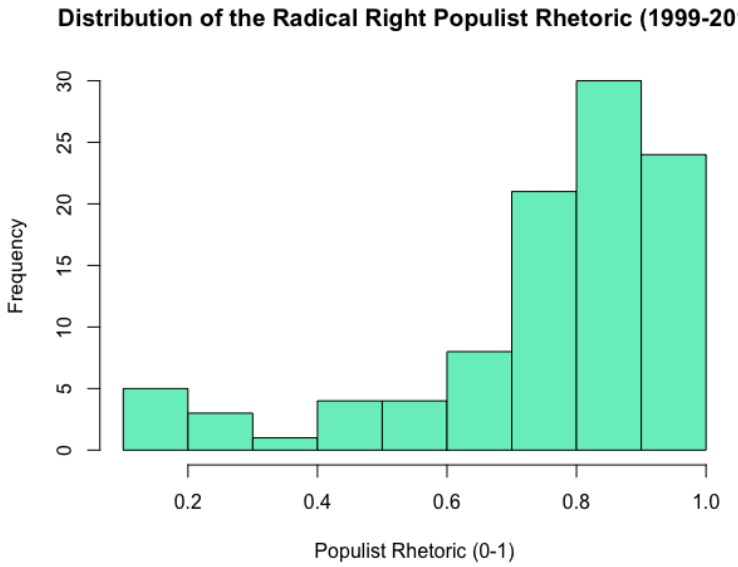
	Main Model	Model 2 (with region)
Region- Western Countries		-3.4063 (1.8379)
Cooperation with the PRRP	2.9883 (0.9139) **	2.8433 (0.9016) **
Populist Rhetoric of the PRRP	7.1088 (4.5133)	8.6108 (4.5091)
Center-right Immigration Salience	13.4431 (4.1985) **	16.1553 (4.3781) ***
Center-right Immigration Support	7.9131 (1.7799) ***	8.1161 (1.7527) ***
Radical Right Immigration Support	3.0790 (1.5413) *	2.1797 (1.5907)
Radical Right Party Personalization	0.7936 (0.6438)	0.4136 (0.6651)
Radical Right Internal Cohesion	0.7710 (0.7884)	0.5106 (0.7875)
Adjusted R^2	0.3956	0.4162
Observations	69	68

OLS model. Standard errors in parentheses. p < 0.1, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001.

Firstly, a relatively high R^2 of 40% indicates a good model of fit as it shows that independent variables collectively explain around 40% of variation in the vote share of the radical right. This is a good indication that the chosen model fits the data well.

Contrary to the expectations, populist rhetoric does not affect the vote share of the radical right. However, it should be noted that the range of the populist rhetoric variable is relatively small for a given sample, with the plot being skewed to the right, indicating that pluralist rhetoric (up until 0.5) occurs in less than 20% of all observations (see the plot below). This suggests that the variation in the populist rhetoric may be too small to show its effect on the radical right vote share. This is to say that changes in levels of the populist rhetoric from 0.8 to 0.7 may not impact negatively the radical right success, but a jump from 0.8 to 0.4 may. Nonetheless, this could not be tested given that most of the observations are found in the right-side corner of the graph.

Radical Right Populist Rhetoric Distribution



Regression results confirm that parties' unwillingness to cooperate with the radical right party hinders the latter's support. This finding shows that, collectively, the mainstream has the power to alienate the radical right and limit its electoral fortunes.

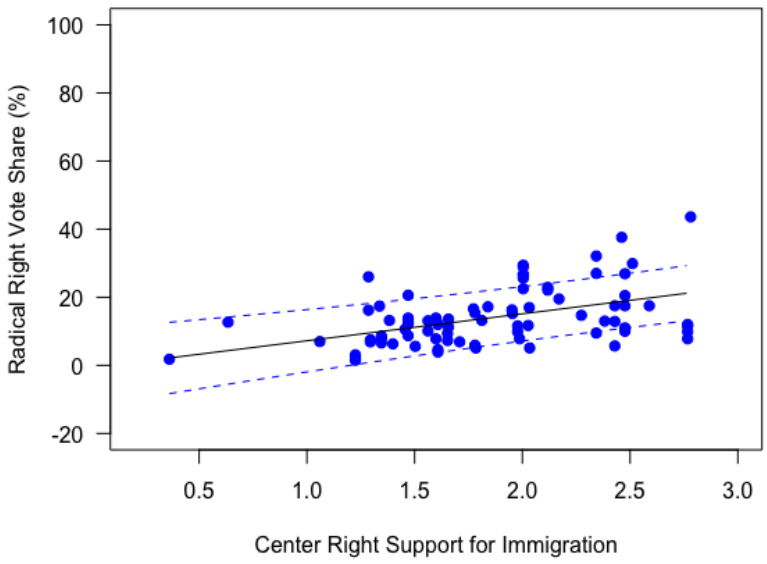
The results additionally confirm the hypothesis that when the center-right emphasizes the immigration issue (hence increasing its salience), it positively affects the support for the radical right. This finding is in line with the modified spatial theory which presumes that issue salience, as well as issue ownership, affect voter choices. If the center-right party emphasizes immigration in their program, they signal to the voters that this issue is important, in turn boosting the success of the radical right whose program is centered around anti-immigration rhetoric.

Given the overall regression results, it is confirmed that the success of the radical right is highly dependent on the main center-right party's strategies. More broadly, collective alienation of the radical right party helps in stymying the electoral success of the radical

right. Therefore, the study findings corroborate preceding speculations by scholars that "gate-keeping" is successful in preventing radical parties from gaining power (Ziblatt and Levitsky 2018).

Rather surprisingly, the regression results find a positive relationship between the radical right support for immigration and their vote share. While this is somewhat perplexing, looking at the range of the radical right support for immigration, one can see that a great majority of parties strongly oppose immigration (score between 0 and 1 on the scale of 0 to 4, more about how this variable is measured here). Therefore, there is a possibility that a slight moderation of the immigration position makes the party more 'palatable' to the wider electorate, increasing their popularity. Considering the centrality of nativism in this party family's programs, it is highly unlikely that complete support for immigration can yield positive electoral results.

Radical Right Vote Share as a function of Center-Right's Immigration Position Change



Lastly, the regression results indicate that the increased immigration support by the center-right party has a positive effect on the radical right vote share. The plot above shows the change in radical right vote shares as a function of change in the position of center-right with regard to immigration. It illustrates the linear relationship in which the more the center-right party supports immigration, the higher the vote share for the radical right is. Reasons for such a relationship can be multiple. For one, it can be that, given the center right's support of immigration, voters who even moderately oppose immigration see no other party apart from the radical right which resembles their stance. They are therefore incentivized to place their vote with the radical right even if their position on immigration is less "radical". This finding also shows that party positions on particular issues matter to voters. It is not merely the party's ideological stance on the left-right scale which predicts voting patterns. Instead, voters may weigh in on which issues are important to them and place their vote accordingly. In this case, if the voter is ideologically closer to the center-right party, but is unhappy with the lenient immigration policy, she may decide to give her vote to the radical right. Considering these findings, parties should carefully analyze the public to see which issues the public, as well as their target voters, in particular, care about the most during the elections.

5. The Originality and the Limitations of the Study

This study tests for a combination of factors that have been identified by scholars as important, but which have not yet been tested. Namely, populist rhetoric has been outlined by scholarship as one of the key characteristics of the new radical right (see, e.g., Betz 2018; Mudde 2007), but its direct effect on the electoral fortunes of the radical right remains unknown. Additionally, building on the spatial voting theory, this study tests whether the center-right's party positioning on a given issue affects the radical right's electoral fortunes. While many scholars argue that general convergence on the left-right scale of the mainstream parties leaves a window of opportunity for the radical parties, how party positioning on specific issues affects voting behavior has not yet been explored. Finally, this thesis looks at the period after the initial breakthrough of the radical right parties into the party systems, assuming that mainstream parties had time to adjust their strategies.

This study does not find causalities but rather correlations between the radical right vote share and the independent variables. While controlling for confounding factors allows for the assumption of causality, regression analysis cannot directly imply causation. Instead, it deals with dependence amongst variables within a specified model. Put differently, the findings of this study confirm that, for instance, more emphasis on immigration by the center-right is associated with the increased radical right vote share, not that the former causes the latter. Additionally, unlike some of the more ambitious studies (see, e.g., Norris and Inglehart 2019), this study has not aimed to provide a comprehensive explanation of why the radical right wins or loses. Instead, it focused on a number of supply-side factors to add nuance to the already existing explanations.

6. Conclusion

This research set out to explore the effects of the mainstream center party's strategies on the success of the radical right using the most recent data for the period between 1999 and 2019. After the initial breakthrough of the radical right parties in Europe in the 1980s, they have ossified their presence in the party systems across the continent. As it is almost unimaginable today to think of these parties as a passing fad, it is worth exploring how and to what extent mainstream party strategies affect their electoral fortunes *today*, when some of them have permeated into the mainstream and even participated in government (e.g., FPÖ in Austria, SVP in Switzerland, Fidesz in Hungary). Scholars have already provided some insights when it comes to how the mainstream can create opportunity structures for the radical right (see, e.g., Kitschelt 1995; Meguid 2005; 2008; Hobolt and Tilley 2016; Heinze 2018). Nonetheless, how much mainstream party position on a given issue, such as immigration, affects the prospects of the radical right has been less explored. Additionally, in 'the populist zeitgeist' scholars have often emphasized the importance of populist rhetoric of the contemporary radical right parties (Mudde 2004; 2007). Nonetheless, the effects of populism on these parties' electoral success have not been tested, a shortcoming that is rectified in this study.

The main findings of the study show that populist rhetoric, counter to the expectations, does not affect the support for the radical right. Additionally, contrary to the findings of other similar studies (e.g., Arzheimer 2009), this study finds that opposition to immigration by the main center-right party depresses the support for the radical right, confirming the spatial voting theory assumptions. Another finding of the study is that its position on immigration notwithstanding if the center-right party emphasizes immigration in its program, it boosts the support of the radical right. Finally, other parties' willingness to

cooperate with the radical right party positively affects the electoral fortunes of the radical right. These findings are important as they broaden our understanding of interparty competition and provide new evidence in support of both the classical and the modified spatial voting model, suggesting their parallel existence in the party systems. Namely, they point to increased importance of specific issues for voters. Unlike the voting patterns which followed ossified social cleavages in Western Europe and which have resulted in "the freezing of party systems" at the beginning of the 20th century (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), the results show that in contemporary party systems, party success largely depends on a) parties' stance on specific issues which go beyond the cleavage theory, and b) the strategies of other parties. Therefore, the results can, additionally, help both mainstream and radical right party leaders to identify the aspects to focus on in their strategies to remain relevant.

In future research, to better understand interparty relationships, it would be worth exploring how radical right positions and levels of the populist rhetoric affect the changes in strategies of the center-right. Put differently, as a consequence of the radical right's breakthrough and ossification in the party systems, do the center-right parties generally adopt more populist rhetoric, and if so, do they reap electoral benefits from such a strategy? Additionally, given the mixed results on the effects of the center-right's opposition to immigration on the radical right electoral fortunes (see, e.g., Arzheimer 2009; this study), it would be useful to find under which circumstances the center-right's opposition to immigration harms, and under which it boosts the success of the radical right. Given that the regression results show that collective alienation of the radical right party limits its success, future research can explore whether partial alienation is equally effective (i.e., when most parties refuse to cooperate but some show openness to the idea).

Appendix

A table of all the overlapping radical right parties according to the *party family* and the *left-right scale* variables (CHES)

Party	Year	L-R scale (0-10)	Country
AfD	2019	9.238095	Germany
AN	1999	8.166667	Italy
AN	2006	8.000000	Italy
ANEL	2014	8.777778	Greece
BNP	2010	9.928572	United Kingdom
BREXIT	2019	8.200000	United Kingdom
BZO	2006	8.830000	Austria
BZO	2010	8.285714	Austria
CD	1999	9.375000	Netherlands
DF	1999	8.857142	Denmark
DF	2002	8.850000	Denmark
DLF	2019	9.000000	France
DVU	1999	9.769231	Germany
EKRE	2019	8.461538	Estonia
EL	2019	9.000000	Greece
ELAM	2019	10	Cyprus
Fidesz–KDNP	2019	8.333333	Hungary
FN	1999	9.888889	Belgium
FN	1999	8.707143	Belgium
FN	2002	9.920000	France
FN	2006	10	France
FN	2010	9.214286	France
FN	2010	9.888889	France
FN	2014	9.636364	France
FP	1999	9.285714	Denmark
FPO	2002	8.630000	Austria
FPO	2006	9.670000	Austria
FPO	2010	8.928572	Austria
FPO	2014	8.700000	Austria
FPO	2019	9.100000	Austria
FvD	2019	9.538462	Netherlands
JL–PKS	2002	9.800000	Lithuania
JOBBIK	2010	9.470589	Hungary
JOBBIK	2014	9.714286	Hungary
Konfederacia	2019	9.526316	Poland
LAOS	2006	9.110000	Greece
LAOS	2010	8.818182	Greece
LAOS	2014	8.666667	Greece
LN	2019	8.789474	Italy
LPF	2002	8.375000	Netherlands
LSNS	2019	9.312500	Slovakia
MIEP	2002	9.710000	Hungary
MN	1999	8.278571	France
MPF	2006	8.630000	France
MPF	2010	9.000000	France
MPF	2014	9.100000	France
MS	1999	9.666667	Italy
NA	2014	8.300000	Latvia
NA	2019	8.454545	Latvia
NB	2019	9.000000	Denmark
NPD	2014	10	Germany
NyD	1999	9.000000	Sweden
PiS	2010	8.000000	Poland
PRM	2002	8.550000	Romania
PSNS	2002	8.500000	Slovakia
PVV	2006	8.800000	Netherlands
PVV	2010	8.615385	Netherlands
PVV	2014	9.250000	Netherlands
PVV	2019	8.692307	Netherlands
REP	1999	9.214286	Germany
RN	2019	9.750000	France
SD	2010	8.384615	Sweden
SD	2019	8.470589	Sweden
SNS	2002	8.290000	Slovakia
SNS	2006	8.310000	Slovakia
SNS	2010	8.000000	Slovakia
SNS	2014	8.357142	Slovenia
SNS	2019	8.714286	Slovenia
SPD	2019	8.846154	Czech Republic
TB–LNNK	2006	9.000000	Latvia
UKIP	2006	8.440000	United Kingdom
UKIP	2010	8.785714	United Kingdom
UKIP	2014	9.142858	United Kingdom
UKIP	2019	8.687500	United Kingdom
VB	1999	9.888889	Belgium
VB	2002	9.550000	Belgium
VB	2006	9.670000	Belgium
VB	2010	9.857142	Belgium
VB	2014	9.200000	Belgium
VB	2019	9.583333	Belgium
Vox	2019	9.714286	Spain
XA	2014	9.888889	Greece
XA	2019	10	Greece

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