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2017: Europe's Bumper Year of Elections

EDITED BY

Brigid Laffan & Lorenzo Cicchi



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2017: Europe's Bumper Year of Elections

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Preface

The European Union (EU) as it surpasses the 60th Anniversary of the signing of the Rome Treaty is experiencing considerable turbulence arising from a pronounced increase in uncertainty, risk and contingency both within the region, the neighbourhood and globally. Dynamics of disorder and disintegration compete with pressures for further functional integration in many spheres. Domestic politics in the member states are volatile as challenger parties transform electoral politics and party systems. Government formation and governing has become more difficult in hard times. The rise of parties that combine an anti-migration and anti-EU platform have exposed the growth of Euroscepticism among Europe's electorates. There is a mismatch between functional pressures for further integration and the capacity to supply collective policies. The future of the EU is being questioned in ways that would have been inconceivable as recently as 2008. This has been brought sharply into focus following the UK vote to leave. The Trump Presidency in the US in the first two years has proven to be an administration that is openly hostile to the European Union. Faced with these challenges, public opinion in EU27 is nonetheless becoming more favourable to the EU and the Austrian Presidential election in December 2016 have demonstrated that support for the EU can be successfully mobilized.

When the European Union welcomed its new members in May 2004 in what was the most extensive enlargement in its history, those gathered at Dublin Castle, had reason to be optimistic about Europe's Union. The EU had played a central role in easing the transition from a divided continent and a divided Germany to a Union that was continental in scale. The addition of 12 new states by 2007 transformed the geographic reach of the Union and underpinned its centrality as the core European institution above the level of the state. European regionalism, characterised by a wide policy remit and deep institutionalisation, seemed robust and resilient. What a difference a decade makes? Since Autumn 2009, just over seven years, the Union has been beset by multiple crises and the opti-

mism of spring 2004 has morphed into deep pessimism and a weakening of confidence that the Union can address its challenges and remain a vital part of the European state system. Internal EU divergence and tension is exacerbated by wider global transformations.

Europe's intertwined crises have unsettled many assumptions about the European Union. Gone are the assumptions that exit will never happen because it is too expensive or that EU governments have an institutional self-interest in the preservation of integration at any cost. Gone too is the hypothesis that crises have a rejuvenating effect on the EU. Moreover, entrenched integration paradigms such as 'integration through law' or stealth have been exposed to politicisation. Domestic, regional and global transformations require a new research focus on the Union and its future.

For these reasons, the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute has launched, at the beginning of 2018, the European Governance and Politics Programme (EGPP), an international hub of high-quality research and reflection on the European Union. The programme builds on the successful experience of the European Union Democracy Observatory (EUDO) which positioned the Robert Schuman Centre and the EUI at the forefront of research on the EU between 2006 and 2016. EUDO was organised on the basis of four Observatories which conducted a series of externally funded research projects, offered a platform for the dissemination of research via e-books and the EUDO Working Paper series, archived data at the EURO Data Centre, fostered engagement on EUDO Café and held an annual dissemination conference. The EGPP retains and develops many of EUDO's features in the framework of a multi-disciplinary approach. The core of its activities is funded by external research projects, that in turn foster the publication of research-led working papers, policy papers and publications in scientific journals. The EGPP also promotes engagement on contemporary issues through various events, including blog debates and thematic conferences and workshops. Each year it hosts an annual conference that focuses on a crucial theme for the European Union.

The inaugural annual conference was held on 8-9 March 2018 at the European University Institute campus in Florence, Italy and focused on 2017 as Europe's "bumper year" of elections. This year saw a wave of key elections all across Europe, starting with the Dutch general election in March. France followed soon after, with the first round of its presidential

election in April, and the second round in May. In September, Germany held federal elections, with the position of Chancellor a focal point of the campaign; Austrian, Romanian and UK citizens also went to the polls at the end of 2016 and during this turbulent year.

This edited volume contains a selection of the papers presented during the EGPP launch conference and is divided in two parts. The first part is composed by a series of four thematic chapters that focus on key political and electoral developments of 2017 in various countries, in addition to two chapters devoted to Brexit and to the European elections to be held in May 2019. Thomas Poguntke and Johannes Smith reflect on the relationship between party system change and the growth of populism. Catherine de Vries' contribution focuses on Europe's waning public support for international cooperation. James Dennison gives an explanation to the rise of anti-immigration parties in Western Europe. Joost van Spanje, together with Haylee Kelsall and Rachid Azrout also focus on anti-immigration parties, by looking at voter perceptions of reactions to these parties in three countries (France, Germany and the Netherlands). Richard Rose's chapter is devoted to the "contested outcome" of the Brexit referendum, and finally Brian Synnott's contribution discusses the outlook of the *Spitzenkandidaten* process for the 2019 European Elections. The second part is composed by a series of country-specific chapters. Endre Borbáth analyses the Romanian elections held in December 2016. Anita Bodlos, Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik, Martin Haselmayer, Thomas Meyer and Wolfgang C. Müller look at the "long campaign" before the Austrian election of October 2017. The next three chapters focus on Germany: Ferdinand Müller-Rommel explains how the selection of ministers happened after the German elections, and in particular after the collapse of the "Jamaica coalition" talks in November 2017. Marc Debus's chapter analyses party politics in a multilevel system and coalition formation between 2017 and 2018. Julia Schulte-Cloos and Tobias Rüttner look at the dynamics of party activism within *Alternative für Deutschland*. Two chapters, then, focus on France's 2017 presidential election: Romain Lachat applies the associative issue ownership theory to candidate preferences, and Elie Michel describes the performance of the *Front National* in this election as an "electoral impasse". Finally, Lorenzo Cicchi and Enrico Calossi discuss the reconfiguration of the Italian party system after the 2018 general election. Overall, these fourteen chapters cover many of the crucial elements of the European political and electoral landscape between 2016 and 2018, with a specific focus on Europe's "bumper year" of 2017.

The Contributors

Rachid Azrout is a researcher and lecturer of Political Communication in the Department of Communication Science, University of Amsterdam. He wrote his PhD dissertation on how EU citizens form opinions towards enlargement of the European Union and the role of the media in this process. After obtaining his PhD, he continued working on the topic of citizens' attitudes towards the European Union, but expanded his focus to include issues concerning immigration and minorities, electoral behaviour, political parties and polarization. He combines these more political science topics with communication science by also focussing on how individual exposure to specific media content influences the opinion formation process.

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Enrico Calossi, PhD, is Assistant Professor in Political Science and International Relations at the Department of Political Science at the University

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Marc Debus is a Professor of Comparative Government at the School of Social Sciences at the University of Mannheim, Germany, and currently serves as the Director of the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES). He studied Political Science, Sociology, Empirical Research Methods and History at the Universities of Marburg and Mannheim from 1999 to 2003 and received his PhD in Political Science from the University of Konstanz in 2006. His research interests include political institutions and their effects on the political process, party competition and coalition politics, and political decision-making in multi-level systems. Debus’ articles have been published in *The Journal of Politics*, *European Journal of Political Research*, *Party Politics*, *West European Politics*, *Electoral Studies*, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *Political Science Research and Methods*, and elsewhere.

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Haylee Kelsall is a second year Research Master student in Communication Science at the University of Amsterdam, and recipient of the prestigious Amsterdam Excellence Scholarship. She graduated *Cum Laude* from her BSc in Communication and Media at Erasmus University Rotterdam, where she was also awarded several scholarships and prizes for academic merit. Her Bachelor thesis titled *Empathy Legality Politics and Protection: Framing Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the UK Press* was published in the 2016 edition of the *SURE!* Journal. Whilst this focused on framing, her research interests have since developed and now lie at the intersection of political science and political communication. Haylee researches European politics and political behaviour, in particular European public opinion, voting behaviour and far right populist parties, media effects, and framing.

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Macmillan 2007); *Party Government in the New Europe* (ed. with Hans Keman, Routledge 2012); *Party Politics and Democracy in Europe (Essays in honour of Peter Mair)* (WEP Series) (ed. with Fernando Casal Bértoa, Routledge 2016); *The Oxford Handbook of Political Executives* (ed. with Rudy Andeweg, Robert Elgie, Ludger Helms, and Juliet Kaarbo, Oxford University Press 2019 – forthcoming).

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Richard Rose has been publishing about British general elections since 1959. His next book, based on Schuman Centre Workshops, will be “How Referendums Challenge European Democracy: Brexit and Beyond”. In pioneering the comparative study of public policy through quantitative and qualitative analysis he has given seminars in 45 countries across five continents and his writings have been translated into 18 languages. Rose holds an honorary doctorate from the European University Institute, where he is a Visiting Fellow of the Robert Schuman Centre, and founder-director of the Centre for the Study of Public Policy at the University of Strathclyde Glasgow.

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Bryan Synnott is a Communications Specialist with over 20 years’ work experience on EU affairs. He was the Communication Coordinator for the Party of European Socialists (PES) for the 2014 European Elections, helping devise and implement the campaign strategy. He was PES Candidate Martin Schulz’s press spokesperson during the 2014 ‘Spitzenkan-

didaten' campaign. During the campaign, he helped implement the first European wide 'get out the vote' effort through the 'knock the vote' campaign, with activists from PES Member Parties. In addition, on behalf of the PES, he negotiated terms for the series of debates between candidates. He is currently Member of Cabinet and Communication Adviser in the European Commission. He has a BA in Politics and History from University College Dublin and a Masters in European Integration from University of Limerick.

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Part 1 – Thematic and Comparative Chapters

The Crisis, Party System Change, and the Growth of Populism

Thomas Poguntke & Johannes Schmitt

Introduction

Parties are losing their stable societal anchorage and, as a consequence, party systems are becoming increasingly volatile. This general trend has been described and analysed many times. Parallel to a general increase in volatility and fragmentation, the addition of two new party families to the political landscape of Europe has transformed the format of party systems substantially over the past decades. First, the Green wave posed a substantial challenge to the established political forces in Europe. Yet, after a period of uneasy rapprochement, Green political demands became part of the political mainstream and Green parties were thus increasingly regarded as normal parties of government in Europe (Müller-Rommel and Poguntke 2002). Arguably, populist parties signified a more fundamental challenge. The first members of this heterogeneous party family raised their heads in protest against high tax levels in Scandinavia, actually preceding the emergence of Green parties (Borre 1977; Särlvik 1977; Valen and Martinussen 1977). The main populist wave, however, dates from the 1980s and after (Mudde 2004; Mudde 2013; Kriesi 2014). Mainly, but not exclusively, situated on the right of the political spectrum, they have largely remained outsiders, making government formation difficult.

Arguably, the economic turmoil following the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008 has accelerated the erosion of established party systems by inducing protest votes in general and support for populist parties in

particular. At the same time, the Euro crisis¹ and the concomitant political conflicts over austerity measures in some countries, and rescue packages in others, ended the widespread affirmative indifference of the mass European public toward the EU. Instead, European integration became politicized and the awareness of the repercussions of European decision-making on national politics and living conditions grew substantially (Hobolt and Tilley 2016). As a result, political parties across EU member states began to reconsider their stance on ‘Europe’. While Euroscepticism, with the notable exception of the UK, remained largely at the fringes of party systems during the by-gone age of permissive consensus on European integration (Taggart 1998; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004), it has now become more prominent across the political spectrum. In particular, populist parties have identified opposition to European integration as a promising theme to mobilize protest against the ‘established elites’.

This chapter takes a closer look at the impact of the Euro crisis on the format of party systems. More precisely, it asks: Has substantial party system change taken place within European countries? Have we seen a significant growth in populist parties? Have populist parties adopted Eurosceptic positions? And, finally: Has this been sustained, or can we identify a certain degree of ‘normalization’ now that the worst worries of the Euro crisis are seemingly over?

In order to disentangle ongoing trends and short-term effects of the crisis, this chapter takes a long-term perspective on party system change and presents data on volatility and party system fragmentation covering several decades. We can clearly identify the impact of the crisis in that the bulk of elections with very high volatility and a pronounced increase of party system fragmentation occurred after the beginning of the crisis. In addition, we demonstrate that a substantial portion of this change has been caused by the growing success of populist parties. Finally, we explore the relationship between populism and Euroscepticism and show that populists tend to mobilize against the EU.

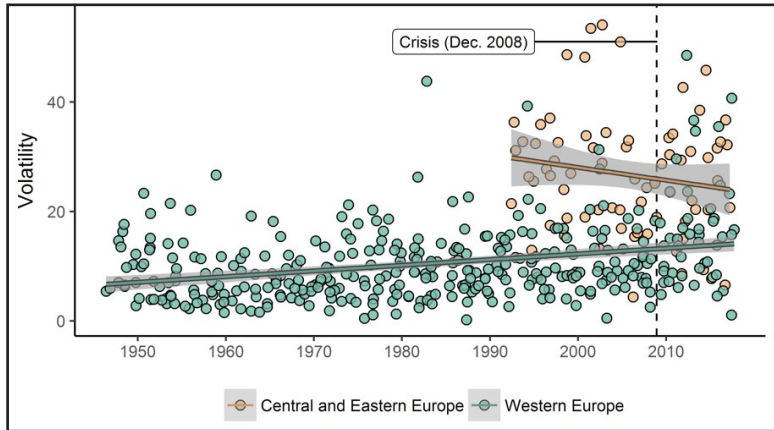
1 Throughout this chapter, the term Euro crisis is used to refer to the economic upheaval associated with the collapse of the investment bank Lehman Brothers in 2008 and the subsequent financial crisis in Europe. It is often also referred to as the sovereign debt crisis or the Great Recession.

European party systems on the move

The fluctuations of the vote as measured by volatility is a meaningful indicator of party system stability and also of individual voting behaviour (Bartolini and Mair 1990; Mair 1997; Pedersen 1979). In our context, we are primarily interested in the former—namely, the stability of party systems and hence their capacity to structure the vote.

When taking a long-term perspective, we can clearly identify a pattern in Western Europe where the crisis is associated with high volatility elections² while Central and Eastern European (CEE) party systems have been marked by high volatility ever since the democratic transformation (Figure 1.1). Following Hernández and Kriesi (2016, p. 209), we define all national elections since December 2008 as post-crisis elections. The crisis election in Greece exceeded even the hitherto all-time high of the 1994 Italian election when the party system of the so-called first republic collapsed (Bartolini and D’Alimonte 1996; Bardi 1996). In sum, it seems that Western party systems were clearly affected by the crisis while there was no systematic impact in newer democracies.

Figure 1.1 Total volatility within European party systems

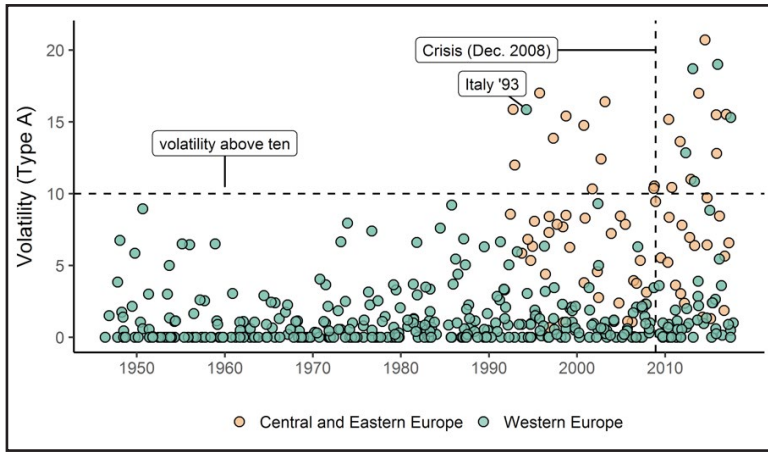


Note: The following elections with extreme values are excluded from the figure—Latvia 1993 with 97.2 and the Czech Republic 1992 with 69.3. Source: Our analysis is based on data compiled in Emanuele (2015) for Western Europe and ParlGov (Döring and Manow 2016) for Central and Eastern Europe. We took party change (e.g. mergers) and electoral alliances as defined by ParlGov into account.

2 We have included all countries in the European Union and, additionally, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland.

A closer look at the data—concentrating on replacement volatility caused by the entry of new parties and the demise of existing ones (type A volatility, see Neff Powell and Tucker 2014)—provides an even clearer image of the impact of the crisis on party systems: There are many unusually high volatility values which are attributable to the success of new parties (Figure 1.2). Again, Central and Eastern Europe has, by and large, never been characterized by stable party systems (*ibid.*).

Figure 1.2: Volatility caused by new challengers



Note: The following elections with extreme values are not included in the figure—Latvia 1993 with 81.3, Bulgaria 2001 with 43.4, the Czech Republic 1992 with 39.3, Latvia 2002 with 30.4 and Lithuania 2004 with 30.2. Source: Our analysis is based on data compiled in Emanuele (2015) for Western Europe and ParlGov (Döring and Manow 2016) for Central and Eastern Europe. We took party change (e.g. mergers) and electoral alliances as defined by ParlGov into account.

Yet, the impact of the crisis becomes evident if we look exclusively at Western party systems. Except for the 1994 Italian election, all elections with a type A volatility above 10 are clearly associated with the Euro crisis (see also Table 1.1). Remarkably, this covers the entire post-war period and includes many party systems that needed to consolidate after the Second World War. Not surprisingly, Southern Europe (Spain, Italy, Greece) was particularly affected. More than a third of all voters changed their voting decision in these elections and new challengers outpaced established actors. Yet, the highest score is that of the 2017 French parliamentary election which may mark the beginning of an entirely new party system in France.

Table 1.1: Western European party systems with high type A volatility

| Country | Election | Volatility (Type A) | Volatility (Total) |
|---------|------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| France | 11.06.2017 | 15.3 | 40.7 |
| Greece | 06.05.2012 | 12.9 | 48.5 |
| Iceland | 27.04.2013 | 10.9 | 34.7 |
| Italy | 27.03.1994 | 15.9 | 39.3 |
| Italy | 25.02.2013 | 18.7 | 36.7 |
| Spain | 20.12.2015 | 19.0 | 35.5 |

Note: All elections with type A volatility of 10 and above since the Second World War. Source: Our analysis is based on data compiled in Emanuele (2015).

Toward the fragmentation of European party systems?

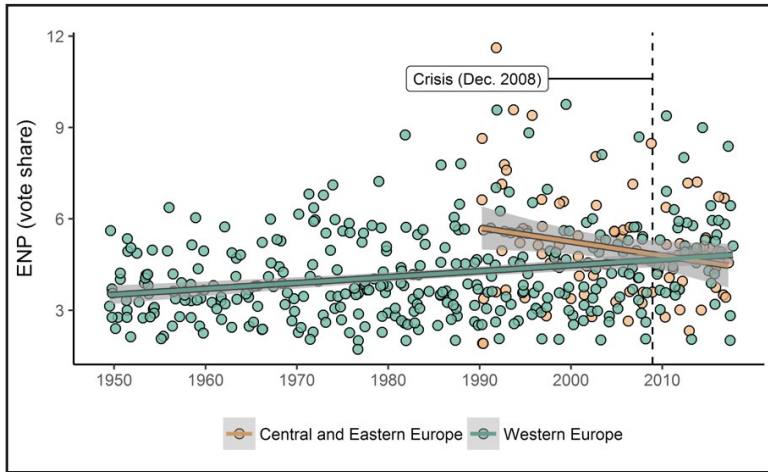
Rising levels of volatility are clearly associated with electoral instability. The link to party system change, however, is less straightforward because volatility does not necessarily imply a change in the format of party systems. The entry and success of new parties could hypothetically also represent the replacement of an established actor by a new one without alternating the patterns of interaction—which represents the essence of a party system (e.g. Mair 1997, p. 51; Mair 2006, p. 65). Party system fragmentation is an established, albeit incomplete, indicator of party system change, because even a changing number of parties is not automatically associated with a change in the patterns of interaction. A two-bloc system, for example, may become more fragmented but the pattern of bi-polar completion may remain intact. These limitations notwithstanding, it is a useful way of gauging party system change covering a large number of countries and elections. Hence, in a next step we focus on the change in the format of party systems as measured by fragmentation (Laakso and Taagepera 1979). Are the rising levels of volatility accompanied by parallel growth in party system fragmentation?

Here, the pattern is less clear. There are several Western European elections after the crisis began that are marked by usually high levels of party system fragmentation, but they are by no means unique. There is a clear long-term trend toward increasing fragmentation of party systems in Western Europe. In addition, we register very high party system fragmentation also for elections since the 1980s. Again, a clear trend is absent

in Central and Eastern Europe. If anything, we register declining fragmentation, but the negative slope of the regression line for CEE countries is mainly due to very high volatility in the early years after democratic transformation.

Figure 1.3: The trend of fragmentation in European party systems

Note: The effective number of parties is calculated based on parties' vote share.



Source: *ParlGov* (Döring and Manow 2016).

The picture becomes somewhat clearer if we look at the difference between a country's mean fragmentation before and after the beginning of the crisis for Western Europe alone. Table 1.2 lists all post-2008 elections where party system fragmentation was 1 point above the long-term mean of the country. It is evident that fragmentation rose markedly in many Western European countries after the onset of the crisis. Unsurprisingly, Greece stands out with a value of 4.7 above the average, but the Netherlands and Belgium also registered high values and even Germany did not go unaffected from this perspective. Thus, in some Western European countries we can observe changing patterns of party system format.

Table 1.2: West European party systems with extraordinary fragmentation (since December 2008)

| Country | Election | ENP | Difference to mean |
|----------------|------------|-----|--------------------|
| Austria | 28.09.2008 | 4.6 | +1.7 |
| Austria | 29.09.2013 | 5.0 | +2.1 |
| Belgium | 13.06.2010 | 9.4 | +3.0 |
| Belgium | 25.05.2014 | 9.0 | +2.6 |
| Cyprus | 22.05.2016 | 4.9 | +1.2 |
| Denmark | 18.06.2015 | 5.9 | +1.1 |
| France | 18.06.2017 | 6.4 | +1.2 |
| Germany | 27.09.2009 | 5.3 | +1.4 |
| Germany | 24.09.2017 | 5.1 | +1.2 |
| Greece | 06.05.2012 | 8.0 | +4.7 |
| Greece | 17.06.2012 | 4.9 | +1.6 |
| Iceland | 27.04.2013 | 5.8 | +1.7 |
| Iceland | 29.10.2016 | 5.8 | +1.7 |
| Ireland | 25.02.2011 | 4.4 | +1.3 |
| Ireland | 26.02.2016 | 5.9 | +2.8 |
| Netherlands | 09.06.2010 | 6.9 | +1.7 |
| Netherlands | 15.03.2017 | 8.4 | +3.1 |
| Spain | 20.12.2015 | 5.5 | +1.9 |
| Spain | 26.06.2016 | 4.8 | +1.3 |
| Sweden | 14.09.2014 | 5.3 | +1.5 |
| United Kingdom | 07.05.2015 | 3.9 | +1.0 |

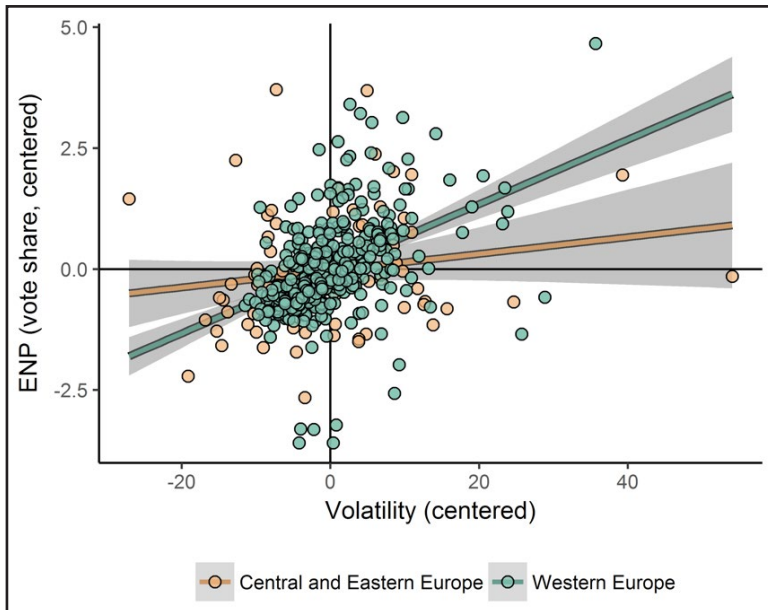
Note: All Western Europe elections with a fragmentation above 1 of the countries' mean value after 2007 are outlined in the table. The effective number of parties is calculated based on parties' vote. Source: ParlGov (Döring and Manow 2016).

The interplay of volatility, support, and fragmentation

We have so far only demonstrated that there is a parallel trend toward volatility and party system fragmentation, and that this is mainly a phenomenon of Western European party systems while Central and Eastern Europe has been characterized by high levels of volatility and fragmen-

tation ever since democratic transformation. In this section, we take a closer look at the interplay between both variables: Does high volatility lead to a changing party system format? To begin with, there is a relatively high correlation ($r = 0.34$) regarding within-country variance between volatility and fragmentation. Figure 1.4 shows the graphic representation of this association, which is clearly visible. We are not simply registering parallel trends across many party systems, but can show that volatility and fragmentation go hand in hand within countries. Changing electoral behaviour seems to lead to higher fragmentation and, therefore, to changing party systems.

Figure 1.4: Interplay between centred ENP and volatility



Notes: The ENP and the volatility values are centred by countries' mean values. The effective number of parties is calculated based on parties' vote share; data obtained from ParlGov (Döring and Manow 2016). Source: Emanuele (2015) for Western Europe and ParlGov (Döring and Manow 2016) for Central and Eastern Europe. We took party change (e.g. mergers) and electoral alliances as defined by ParlGov into account.

Regarding the magnitude of change, there are two ways of looking at this. First, the absolute levels of fragmentation and volatility indicate where party systems stand from a comparative perspective. Second, it is also

instructive to focus on the magnitude of change within a country relative to its long-term pattern of stability or fluidity. Table 1.3 lists elections characterized by a degree of change that was clearly higher than the national post-war mean. To this end, we use the following thresholds: elections with: (1) one point above a country's mean ENP; and (2) five points above a country's mean volatility. Hence, all elections are included where fragmentation and volatility are clearly above the long-term mean.

The results confirm that a high degree of party system change is primarily a Western European phenomenon. Only two elections in Central and Eastern Europe (Czech Republic 2012 and Slovakia 2016) reveal volatility and fragmentation values above the long-term average. On the contrary, many Western party systems have exhibited unusual dynamics and party system formats since the beginning of the crisis. Most conspicuously, the list contains mainly elections after the onset of the Euro crisis—21 of 26 elections in Table 1.3 were held after 2007. The magnitude of this recent party system upheaval becomes even more impressive if we remind ourselves that our data covers the entire post-war period including the phase of party system consolidation in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In a nutshell, many Western European party systems have experienced growing volatility and increasing fragmentation, which amounts to a substantial transformation of their party systems, both in terms of stability and their respective patterns of interaction.

To be sure, this is not a causal analysis but there is substantial *prima facie* evidence here that the crisis played a major role, and other research has provided fairly unambiguous evidence on this connection (see for example Hernández and Kriesi 2016). Besides the 'usual suspects' two countries deserve specific mention. Italy, for its absence, because the country has had so many highly fluid elections that the spectacular upheaval of the 2013 election—when the Five Star Movement came from nowhere to become the largest party—did not produce figures above our threshold (De Petris and Poguntke 2015). However, it missed the cut-off point narrowly with a volatility value of +23 and an ENP of +0.9 points above Italy's post-war average. At the other end of the spectrum is supposedly hyper-stable Germany, which experienced substantial party system change only in 2017 even though the writing had been on the wall for some time (Poguntke 2014). The crisis of government formation that followed the federal election clearly shows that the government formation capacity of the German party system has substantially deteriorated and indicates patterns of ideological polarization (Schmitt 2018).

Table 1.3: Elections marked by a high degree of change since the Second World War

| Country | Election | Volatility (centred) | ENP (centred) |
|--|----------|----------------------|---------------|
| <i>Before the Crisis:</i> | | | |
| Belgium | 1981 | +5.5 | +2.4 |
| Czech Republic | 1992 | +39.3 | +1.9 |
| Denmark | 1973 | +10.4 | +2.3 |
| Hungary | 1994 | +6.7 | +1.3 |
| Malta | 1950 | +16.1 | +1.8 |
| Norway | 2001 | +5.8 | +1.7 |
| Portugal | 1985 | +9.4 | +1.3 |
| Romania | 1992 | +10.9 | +2.0 |
| Slovakia | 2002 | +6.0 | +2.4 |
| <i>After the Crisis (December 2008):</i> | | | |
| Austria | 2008 | +10.5 | +1.7 |
| Austria | 2013 | +7.9 | +2.1 |
| Belgium | 2010 | +5.6 | +3.0 |
| Czech Republic | 2013 | +8.5 | +2.0 |
| Denmark | 2015 | +7.9 | +1.1 |
| France | 2017 | +23.8 | +1.2 |
| Germany | 2017 | +7.1 | +1.2 |
| Greece | 2012a | +35.7 | +4.7 |
| Greece | 2012b | +5.9 | +1.6 |
| Iceland | 2013 | +23.4 | +1.7 |
| Ireland | 2011 | +19.0 | +1.3 |
| Ireland | 2016 | +14.2 | +2.8 |
| Netherlands | 2010 | +10.1 | +1.7 |
| Netherlands | 2017 | +9.7 | +3.1 |
| Slovakia | 2016 | +9.9 | +1.1 |
| Spain | 2015 | +20.5 | +1.9 |
| United Kingdom | 2015 | +10.9 | +1.0 |

Note: table lists elections in countries where volatility was 5 points and 1 more 'effective party' above the post-war mean. Source: Our analysis is based on data compiled in Emanuele (2015) for Western Europe and ParlGov (Döring and Manow 2016) for Central and Eastern Europe. We took party change (e.g. mergers) and electoral alliances as defined by ParlGov into account. The effective number of parties is calculated based on parties' vote; data obtained from ParlGov (Döring and Manow 2016).

The success of the populist parties

In this section, we will move beyond the *prima facie* evidence on the impact of the Euro crisis on party system change and focus directly on the electoral fortunes of populist parties. There is a fairly widespread consensus in the literature to regard anti-elitism ('us vs. them') and the reference to an undiluted will of the ordinary people as the core elements of populism, understood as a 'thin ideology' (Mudde 2004; Kriesi 2014). Following this approach, we draw on the recent literature to identify populist parties in Europe (see van Kessel 2016; Stanley 2017; Taggart 2017; van Hauwaert and van Kessel 2018a; Poguntke et al. 2016 [the Political Party Data Base Project]).³






























The inherent connection between populist mobilization and the Euro crisis is fairly straightforward. Before the Euro crisis led to the politicization of European integration, it had largely been an elite-driven project based on a permissive consensus within European publics. As an elite project running into troubled waters, European integration represented an ideal focal point for mobilization against the allegedly ill-motivated imposition of elite decisions on the 'ordinary person'. Clearly, this mobilization could have left-wing overtones, arguably more popular in countries subjected to austerity measures, or it could come with a right-wing slant, as in some 'donor countries'. In sum, this should have led to the growing success of populist parties or, in other words, a substantial portion of party system change that we have identified above should be attributable to the success of populist parties.

As all our previous analyses have shown that developments differ between Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe, we focus separately on both regions. Table 5 shows the mean vote share of populist parties before and after the crisis in Western Europe. A clear majority of populist parties has been able to increase its vote share since the beginning of the crisis. What is more, amongst those that suffered an average decline are three special cases. First, Berlusconi's Forza Italia is a relatively old party which is susceptible to the ordinary electoral fluctuation and is hardly any longer a likely focus for protest voters. Second, the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ) was a break-away from the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), which has managed to win back most of its former voters. In other words, the growth of the FPÖ made up for the decline of

3 See Appendix A1 for a list of parties included in the analysis.



























the BZÖ. Third, the Dutch Fortuyn List collapsed soon after the assassination of its founder. Hence, if we discard these three cases we have a very clear picture of populist electoral growth in Western Europe since the crisis began. In Central and Eastern Europe, on the other hand, the impact of the crisis is not clearly visible. As a matter of fact, the number of populist winners (11) is smaller than that of populist losers (15). These results fit the well-known pattern of low party system institutionalization in CEE countries (Kriesi 2014; Neff Powell and Tucker 2014). In a situation of structural electoral fluidity, the additional shock from the economic crisis did not leave a clear mark.

Table 1.4: Mean vote share before and after the crisis in Western Europe

| Country | Party | Mean Voteshare (2000-2008) | Mean Voteshare (2009-2018) | Difference | |
|-------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|---|
| Italy | Five Star Movement | | 25.6 | 25.6 |  |
| Greece | Coalition of the Radical Left | 4.2 | 24.0 | 19.9 |  |
| Finland | True Finns | 2.8 | 18.4 | 15.5 |  |
| Spain | We Can | | 13.0 | 13.0 |  |
| Austria | Freedom Party of Austria | 12.8 | 23.2 | 10.4 |  |
| Germany | Alternative for Germany | | 8.7 | 8.7 |  |
| Sweden | Sweden Democrats | 2.2 | 9.3 | 7.1 |  |
| Netherlands | Party for Freedom | 5.9 | 12.9 | 7.0 |  |
| Greece | Golden Dawn | | 6.8 | 6.8 |  |
| Greece | Independent Greeks | | 6.6 | 6.6 |  |
| France | National Front | 7.8 | 13.4 | 5.6 |  |
| Ireland | Sinn Fein | 6.7 | 11.9 | 5.2 |  |
| UK | United Kingdom Independence Party | 1.8 | 5.9 | 4.0 |  |
| Germany | The Left / PDS | 6.3 | 9.9 | 3.6 |  |
| Denmark | Danish Peoples Party | 13.2 | 16.4 | 3.2 |  |
| UK | British National Party | | 1.9 | 1.9 |  |
| Switzerland | Ticino League | 0.5 | 0.9 | 0.4 |  |
| Switzerland | Swiss People's Party | 27.8 | 28.0 | 0.2 |  |
| Netherlands | Socialist Party | 9.6 | 9.5 | -0.1 |  |
| Greece | Popular Orthodox Rally | 3.0 | 2.8 | -0.2 |  |
| Norway | Progress Party | 18.4 | 18.1 | -0.3 |  |
| Denmark | Progress Party | 0.6 | | -0.6 |  |
| Italy | North League** | 5.6 | 4.1 | -1.5 |  |
| Belgium | List Dedecker | 4.0 | 2.3 | -1.7 |  |
| Belgium | National Front | 2.0 | | -2.0 |  |
| Austria | Alliance for the Future of Austria | 7.4 | 3.5 | -3.9 |  |
| Belgium | Flemish Block | 11.8 | 5.7 | -6.1 |  |
| Italy | Forza Italia** | 30.4 | 21.6 | -8.9 |  |
| Netherlands | Fortuyn List | 11.3 | | -11.3 |  |

Notes: ** Regarding Italy (Forza Italia and the Northern League), the second vote is taken into account. Source: Data obtained from ParlGov (Döring and Manow 2016).

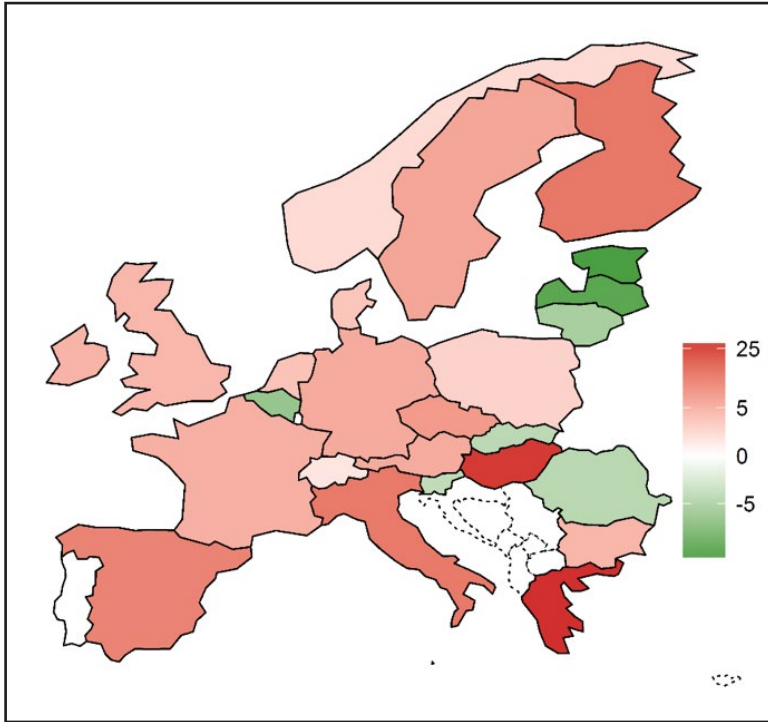
Table 1.5: Mean vote share before and after the crisis in Central and Eastern Europe

| Country | Party | Mean Voteshare (2000-2008) | Mean Voteshare (2009-2018) | Difference | |
|------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|---|
| Bulgaria | Citizens for European Development | | 34.1 | 34.1 |  |
| Hungary | Jobbik | | 18.4 | 18.4 |  |
| Slovakia | Direction - Social Democracy | 21.3 | 35.8 | 14.5 |  |
| Romania | People's Party - Dan Diaconescu | | 14.0 | 14.0 |  |
| Poland | Law and Justice | 22.9 | 33.7 | 10.9 |  |
| Czech Rep. | Public Affairs | | 10.9 | 10.9 |  |
| Slovakia | Ordinary People and Independent | | 9.8 | 9.8 |  |
| Poland | Kukiz'15 | | 8.8 | 8.8 |  |
| Czech Rep. | Dawn of Direct Democracy | | 6.9 | 6.9 |  |
| Hungary | Fidesz** | 42.1 | 48.8 | 6.7 |  |
| Hungary | Politics Can Be Different | | 6.4 | 6.4 |  |
| Bulgaria | Attack | 8.1 | 7.1 | -1.1 |  |
| Slovakia | Slovak National Party | 7.5 | 6.1 | -1.4 |  |
| Romania | Romanian National Unity Party | 1.4 | | -1.4 |  |
| Latvia | All For Latvia! | 1.5 | | -1.5 |  |
| Hungary | Hungarian Justice and Life Party | 3.3 | | -3.3 |  |
| Slovenia | Slovenian National Party | 5.4 | 2.0 | -3.4 |  |
| Slovakia | Alliance of the New Citizen | 4.7 | 1.2 | -3.5 |  |
| Poland | League of Polish Families | 5.7 | | -5.7 |  |
| Lithuania | Labour Party | 18.7 | 12.3 | -6.4 |  |
| Poland | Self-Defense of the Republic Poland | 7.7 | | -7.7 |  |
| Slovakia | Movement for a Democratic Slovakia | 14.1 | 4.3 | -9.8 |  |
| Romania | Greater Romania Party | 11.9 | 1.1 | -10.7 |  |
| Latvia | New Era | 20.1 | | -20.1 |  |
| Estonia | Res Publica Party | 24.6 | | -24.6 |  |
| Bulgaria | National Movement Simeon II | 31.3 | 3.0 | -28.3 |  |

Notes: ** Regarding the electoral support of Fidesz, the vote share of the electoral alliance is taken into account. Source: Data obtained from ParlGov (Döring and Manow 2016).

The East–West divide is also clearly depicted in Figure 1.5, which is based on the average gains and losses of populist parties in each country. By and large, we see that populist parties have made more electoral gains in Western Europe in the wake of the crisis. Except for Belgium, all countries registering a decline of populist party strength since 2009 are in Central and Eastern Europe.

Figure 1.5: Changes of populist vote share at the country level



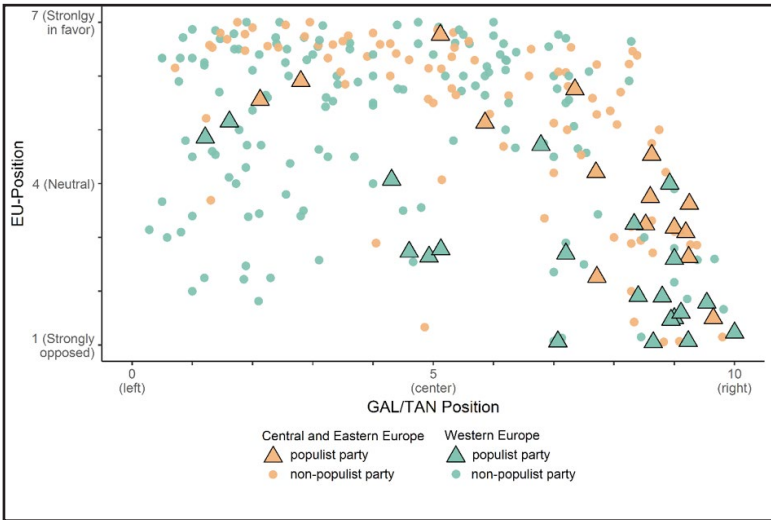
Notes: The figure is based on the difference of the mean vote share of populist parties for 2000–2008 and 2009–2018. Positive values (red colour) depict populist gains and negative values (green colour) reveal losses. Source: Author's own elaboration.

The finding that populist parties, particularly in Western Europe, have made electoral gains in the wake of the Euro crisis suggests that they have mobilized on anti-European issues. The Chapel Hill expert survey (CHES) data (Polk et al. 2017) facilitates a direct investigation of the relationship between a party's position on European integration and its location on the GAL/TAN dimension. Figure 1.6 depicts all parties included in the 2014 and 2017 CHES data sets (using the more recent data point where available) with populist parties marked by triangles. Most populist parties cluster at the anti-European and TAN corner of this two-dimensional space while most other European parties tend to be on the pro-European side and spread out fairly evenly across the GAL/TAN dimension. This clearly shows that populist parties tend to mobilize also on anti-Eu-

ropean positions (Hooghe and Marks 2002). There is a consistently clear and statistically significant relationship between populism, on the one hand, and Euroscepticism and GAL/TAN, on the other. At the same time, populism tends to be indifferent to economic and general left–right positions (see Table 1.6). Or, to put it differently, populism can have right-wing, left-wing and centrist incarnations (Kriesi 2014).

Viewed from a different angle, however, this could also be interpreted as a question mark behind the standard definition of populism. If most established parties are in favour of European integration, mobilization against the EU almost by default turns into mobilization against the established elites, which is part of the standard definition of populism. To be sure, the sequence of events is often in reverse order in that populist parties discovered the suitability of anti-EU positions that tended to fit neatly into their general anti-elite discourse, only to later tone it down. The Austrian FPÖ or the Italian Forza Italia are well-known examples of populist parties adopting Euroscepticism.

Figure 1.6: EU and GAL/TAN Positions in Comparison



Source: CHES 2014 and 2017 (Polk et al. 2017).

Table 1.6: Linear regression with populism as the independent variable

| Dependent Variable | Coeff. (Std. Error) | Squared R |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| EU Position ~ Populist Party | -1.976 (0.289) | 0.151 |
| General Left-Right ~ Populist Party | 1.366 (0.411) | 0.040 |
| GAL/TAN Position ~ Populist Party | 2.507 (0.464) | 0.100 |
| Economic Position ~ Populist Party | -0.568 (0.409) | 0.007 |

Source: CHES 2014 and 2017 (Polk et al. 2017). The sample includes 265 parties.

Concluding remarks

Our overview of party system change in European democracies shows that Western European systems have undergone substantial change since the onset of the Euro crisis while CEE countries have always been considerably more fluid. In the Western systems, the growth of volatility has indeed led to higher party system fragmentation. The degree of change stands out when viewed from a long-term perspective and clearly exceeds previous crisis elections. In consequence, the immediate impact of this has been felt in several countries over the past years in that government formation has become more difficult. Spain is a conspicuous example, the UK seems to be moving away from stable one-party governments and even hyper-stable Germany has been struggling with government formation. Some of this may be transitory as it will take some time until new parties are integrated into the coalition formation process. In contrast, the fluidity of CEE party systems conceals potential trends.

To be sure, our data does not establish a causal link between the crisis and party system change. Nevertheless, we present substantial prime facie evidence that this is in fact the case. This is in line with other research on this topic (see, for example, Hernández and Kriesi 2016; Hobolt and Tilley 2016). There is ample evidence that the Euro crisis has accelerated the growth of populism, particularly in Western Europe. Furthermore, populist parties tend to take Eurosceptic positions.

Arguably, the Euro crisis had its most profound impact on Italian parties where most significant political parties started flirting with a more or less pronounced anti-European stance, including Forza Italia, the Northern League and the Five Star Movement. Most recently, however, Forza Italia and the Five Star Movement have toned down their anti-EU

rhetoric noticeably. It almost seems that as elections approach, parties tend to reconsider the electoral payoffs of a radical anti-European position. Similarly, the Austrian FPÖ withdrew substantially from its previously radical anti-EU stance and no longer talked about a referendum, or an Öxit, in the 2017 election campaign. Also, the French National Front became more moderate on European integration in the run-up to the French presidential elections of 2017. It is not entirely implausible to attribute these changes partially to the shock of Brexit. In addition, parties that are at least within reach of governmental responsibility are confronted with the need to act responsibly—not just responsively (Mair 2009)—and this includes the French FN, the FPÖ and the Five Star Movement.

The United Kingdom is, as always, a special case when it comes to European matters. The Eurosceptic faction of the ruling Conservative Party was sufficiently strong to push for a national referendum on EU membership. To be sure, Prime Minister Cameron's decision to go to the country on EU membership owed much to the sudden rise of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) which is a classic single-issue party campaigning for Brexit. The party ended up with no showing in the post-Brexit vote elections of 2017. Mission accomplished. Another special case is the traditionally anti-European Sinn Féin in Ireland, which changed its position in the wake of Brexit. Confronted with the imminent prospect of a 'hard' border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, the party became considerably more pro-European.

Clearly, much depends on the action of political elites and it may be indicative that some of the most outspoken anti-EU campaigners have become more modest in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum. As the ongoing negotiations between the EU and the UK demonstrate, easy solutions are not easy to deliver, and this may inject a dose of responsibility into European public discourse at the eve of the European election campaign.

As the defining nature of populism is its ideological promiscuity, anti-European positions may not necessarily remain its main mobilization tool. As the German AfD exemplifies, anti-immigration positions may be electorally more rewarding. However, as immigration is closely connected to EU policy-making and easy solutions are not in sight, the 2019 elections to the European Parliament are likely to lead to a stronger representation of Eurosceptic and populist forces.

Appendix A1

Table A1.1: All identified populist parties

| Country | Abbr. | Name (English) | Name (Original) |
|----------------|---------|---|--|
| Austria | BZÖ | Alliance for the Future of Austria | Bündnis Zukunft Österreich |
| Austria | FPÖ | Freedom Party of Austria | Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs |
| Belgium | FN | National Front | Front National |
| Belgium | LD LDD | List Dedecker Libertarian, Direct, Democratic | Lijst Dedecker Libertair, Direct, Democratisch |
| Belgium | VB | Flemish Block | Vlaams Blok |
| Bulgaria | Ataka | Attack | Ataka |
| Bulgaria | BBB | Bulgarian Business Bloc | Balgarski Biznes Blok |
| Bulgaria | BNRP | Bulgarian National Radical Party | Balgarska Natsional-noradikalna Partiya |
| Bulgaria | GERB | Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria | Grazhdani za Evropeysko Razvitie na Bulgariya |
| Bulgaria | NDSV | National Movement Simeon II | Natsionalno Dvizhenie Simeon Vtori |
| Switzerland | LdT | Ticino League | Lega dei Ticinesi |
| Switzerland | SVP-UDC | Swiss People's Party | Schweizerische Volkspartei-Union Démocratique du Centre |
| Czech Republic | SPR-RSC | Rally for the Republic-Republican Party of Czechoslovakia | Sdružení pro republiku-Republikánská strana Československa |
| Czech Republic | UPD | Dawn of Direct Democracy | Úsvit přímé demokracie |
| Czech Republic | VV | Public Affairs | Veci veřejné |
| Germany | AfD | Alternative for Germany | Alternative für Deutschland |

| | | | |
|----------------|---------|---|---|
| Germany | Li/PDS | The Left / PDS | Die Linke / PDS |
| Denmark | DF | Danish Peoples Party | Dansk Folkeparti |
| Denmark | FrP | Progress Party | Fremskridtspartiet |
| Spain | P | We Can | Podemos |
| Estonia | ERP | Res Publica Party | Erakond Res Publica |
| Estonia | ERSP | Estonian National Independence Party | Eesti Rahvusliku Sõltumatuse Partei |
| Finland | SP P | Finnish Party True Finns | Suomen Puolue Perussuomalaiset |
| France | FN | National Front | Front national |
| United Kingdom | BNP | British National Party | British National Party |
| United Kingdom | UKIP | United Kingdom Independence Party | United Kingdom Independence Party |
| Greece | AE | Independent Greeks | Anexartitoi Ellines |
| Greece | LAOS | Popular Orthodox Rally | Laïkós Orthódoxos Synagermós |
| Greece | LS-CA | Peoples Association-Golden Dawn | Laikos Syndesmos-Chrysi Avg |
| Greece | SYRIZA | Coalition of the Radical Left | Synaspismós Rizospastikís Aristerás |
| Croatia | CL-LP | Croatian Labourists-Labour Party | Hrvatski laburisti-Stranka rada |
| Croatia | HSP-AS | Croatian Party of Rights-Dr. Ante Starcevic | Hrvatska stranka prava dr. Ante Starcevic |
| Hungary | Fi-MPSz | Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Union | Fidesz-Magyar Polgári Szövetség |
| Hungary | Jobbik | Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary | Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom |
| Hungary | LMP | Politics Can Be Different | Lehet Más a Politika |
| Hungary | MIEP | Hungarian Justice and Life Party | Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja |
| Ireland | SF | Sinn Fein | Sinn Féin |
| Italy | FI-PdL | Go Italy-The People of Freedom | Forza Italia-Il Popolo della Libertà |

| | | | |
|-------------|--------|--|--|
| Italy | LN | Northern League | Lega Nord |
| Italy | M5S | Five Star Movement | Movimento 5 Stelle |
| Lithuania | DP | Labour Party | Darbo Partija |
| Latvia | DPS | Democratic Party Saimnieks | Demokratiska partija 'Saimnieks' |
| Latvia | JL | New Era | Jaunais Laiks |
| Latvia | TB | For Fatherland and Freedom | Tevzemei un Brīvībai |
| Latvia | TKL-ZP | People's Movement for Latvia-Siegerist Party | Tautas Kustība Latvi- jai-Zigerista Partija |
| Latvia | VL | All For Latvia! | Visu Latvījai! |
| Netherlands | LPF | Fortuyn List | Lijst Pim Fortuyn |
| Netherlands | PVV | Party for Freedom | Partij voor de Vrij- heid |
| Netherlands | SP | Socialist Party | Socialistische Partij |
| Norway | Fr | Progress Party | Fremskrittspartiet |
| Poland | K | Kukiz'15 | Kukiz'15 |
| Poland | LPR | League of Polish Families | Liga Polskich Rodzin |
| Poland | PiS | Law and Justice | Prawo i Sprawiedli- wosc |
| Poland | SRP | Self-Defence of the Republic Poland | Samoobrona Rzeczy- pospolitej Polskiej |
| Poland | X | Party X | Partia X |
| Romania | PP-DD | People's Party-Dan Diaconescu | Partidul Poporului- Dan Diaconescu |
| Romania | PRM | Greater Romania Party | Partidul România Mare |
| Romania | PUNR | Romanian National Unity Party | Partidul Unitatii Na- tionale a Romanilor |
| Slovakia | ANO | Alliance of the New Citizen | Aliancia nového obcana |
| Slovakia | HZDS | Movement for a Democratic Slovakia | Hnutie za demokratické Slov- ensko |

| | | | |
|----------|-------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Slovakia | OLaNO | Ordinary People and Independent | Obyčajní ľudia a nezávislé osobnosti |
| Slovakia | SNS | Slovak National Party | Slovenská národná strana |
| Slovakia | SOP | Party of Civic Understanding | Strana občianskeho porozumenia |
| Slovakia | Smer | Direction–Social Democracy | Smer–sociálna demokracia |
| Slovakia | ZRS | Association of Workers of Slovakia | Združenie robotníkov Slovenska |
| Slovenia | SNS | Slovenian National Party | Slovenska nacionalna stranka |
| Sweden | NyD | New Democracy | Ny Demokrati |
| Sweden | SD | Sweden Democrats | Sverigedemokraterna |

Notes: Parties identified as populist parties based on van Kessel (2016); Stanley (2017); Taggart (2017); van Hauwaert and van Kessel (2018) and; Poguntke et al. (2016). The Political Party Data Base Project.

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Waning Public Support for International Cooperation? Some Lessons from Europe¹

Catherine E. de Vries

Introduction: International Cooperation Is Under Attack

Political and economic cooperation across borders is experiencing mounting levels of popular resistance. The outcome of the Brexit vote, the election of Donald Trump, and the electoral success of nationalist forces across the globe seem indicative of a growing backlash against international cooperation. While many thought ever-increasing international cooperation to be irreversible—in part because it was expected to lead to a universal acceptance of liberal and capitalist values (e.g. Fukuyama 1992)—isolationism, nationalism and protectionism are back on the political scene with a vengeance. While Donald Trump’s slogan to ‘Make America Great Again’ is at the heart of his campaign and current administration, Nigel Farage’s mantra of taking back control (‘we will win this war and take our country back’) dominated the Brexit campaign. Although we should not overestimate the extent to which current developments represent a ‘real’ break from the past—where identification with the nation-state and national interest have arguably always been important aspects of the political belief systems of citizens and elites alike (e.g. Anderson 1983, 1991; Waltz 1979)—something seemed to be have changed. A growing number of citizens and elites are willing to take considerable economic and political risks to protect what they perceive as vital national interests (be it societal cohesion, national control, borders, trade, etc.).

¹ A previous version of this chapter was presented at the ‘Challenges to the Contemporary World Order’ Workshop, Filzbach, 6–7 October 2017. I wish to thank all participants and especially Ben Ansell, Kate McNamara, Tom Pepinsky, Frank Schimmelfennig and Stefanie Walter for their extremely valuable comments and suggestions.

Recent developments in Europe perhaps most clearly illustrate this. On 23 June 2016, against the recommendation of most political and economic experts, the British people voted to reverse the status quo of European Union (EU) membership and leave the country-bloc. The result sent a shock wave through the political establishment in London, Brussels and across the globe. The weeks after the vote, over £100 billion was wiped off the London Stock Exchange, and the British pound and government bond yield reached record lows. Politically, the two major political forces in British politics, the Conservative and Labour parties, found themselves (and at the time of writing still are) in disarray over how to shape Britain's future relationship with the EU. After the vote, many embarked on a process of national soul searching. Why would the majority of the British public and so many politicians embark on such 'a monumental act of self-harm which will bewilder historians' in the future?² Two dominant answers have emerged. The Brexit result reflected: (1) a revolt of those left behind by globalization or; (2) represented a cultural backlash based on immigration fears and prejudice (for a discussion see Inglehart and Norris 2016; Clarke et al. 2017; Becker et al. 2017). These interpretations dovetail with the scholarly debate about the nature of public opinion toward supra-national government in Europe or international governance more generally, stressing both *economic interest* and *identity considerations* (for an overview see Hobolt and De Vries 2016).

The gloomy discussions in Britain stand in stark contrast with the situation on the European continent (the continent includes Ireland). Public support for EU membership has risen, at least in part because of Brexit (De Vries 2017, 2018). Against this backdrop, Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker presented an optimistic vision for Europe's future in his 2017 State of the Union address, stating: 'The wind is back in Europe's sails.'³ Juncker suggested that there is a real 'window of opportunity' between the series of domestic elections where centrist parties held their ground or pro-EU newcomers like Emmanuel Macron won and the period just before the 2019 elections for the European Parliament. His speech was not met with uniform optimism in Europe's national capitals. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte described Juncker as a hopeless

2 <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/article-50-brexite-theresa-may-eu-negotiations-paddy-ashdown-monumental-self-harm-bewilder-historians-a7656306.html> (accessed 22 February 2018).

3 http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-17-3165_en.htm (accessed 22 February 2018).

‘romantic’ and suggested that ‘people like him who have “visions” should perhaps see an optometrist’.⁴

In this chapter, I argue that important lessons can be learned from the recent developments concerning Brexit and public Euroscepticism more generally. These developments can especially inform our understanding of the popular backlash against international economic and political cooperation across the globe. The recent developments in Euroscepticism for example present important empirical puzzles that interest and identity explanations have difficulty addressing. For example, why is Eurosceptic party support highest in countries that have weathered the Eurozone crisis very well and economically benefitted most from the single currency? Why did people who were relatively well-off vote for Brexit? Why have feelings of national attachment in Europe remained remarkably stable in the last decades years or even declined in countries that also witnessed stark increases in Euroscepticism? Why do opinions toward intra-EU migration and free movement of people only partially correlate with Euroscepticism? I maintain that interest and identity explanations have overlooked one key aspect—namely, the willingness of people to take risks and support elites that propose status quo reversal.

In the ensuing sections, I integrate the notion of benchmarks taken from prospect theory—a theory of decision-making under risk, highlighted in my recent book *Euroscepticism and the Future of European Integration*—to account for people’s surprising willingness to take considerable risk by voting Brexit or supporting parties that advocate the reversal of the status quo of EU membership. The chapter is structured as follows. In a first step, I outline some of the empirical puzzles that the recent rise in Euroscepticism presents for both interest and identity explanations. Next, I introduce a theoretical lens that accounts for these puzzling findings and present some empirical support for it. Finally, I conclude by stressing the lessons that can be learned from the recent developments in Europe for grasping popular backlash against economic and political international cooperation more globally.

4 <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2017/09/15/mark-rutte-en-zijn-europese-vergezichten-13015657-a1573640> (accessed 22 February 2018).

The puzzle: What's going on in Europe?⁵

There is a flourishing literature on public attitudes toward European integration. Two dominant explanations of public opinion toward the EU have emerged: the economic interest and national identity explanations. The interest approach was introduced in the writings of Matthew Gabel (1998) and colleagues. Gabel argues that the removal of barriers to trade allows firms to shift production across borders and increases job insecurity for low-skilled workers whereas high-skilled workers and those with capital can take advantage of the opportunities resulting from a liberalized European market. As a result, high-skilled workers should be more supportive of integration, while low-skilled workers less so (Gabel and Palmer 1995; Anderson and Reichert 1995; Gabel 1998; Tucker et al. 2002). The second approach suggests that the European project is not only about economic cooperation, but also about the creation of a European identity and a sense of mutual obligation (Hooghe and Marks 2005, 2009; McLaren 2002, 2005; Kuhn 2015). Accordingly, people's attachment to their nation-state and/or perceptions of people from other cultures are seen as important drivers of support or scepticism toward the EU. Euroscepticism is shown to coincide with strong feelings of national identity and pride (Carey 2002), and most pronounced amongst those who conceive of their national identity as exclusive of other territorial identities compared to those who have multiple nested identities (Hooghe and Marks 2005, 2009). It is significantly weaker amongst those who are transnationally mobile or have been exposed to living in other EU countries (Kuhn 2015).⁶

The interest explanation dovetails with the idea that opposition toward the EU is mostly the prerogative of those left behind by globalization. Processes of economic internationalization and political integration in Europe have led to a resistance amongst the most vulnerable—who are demanding a fair distribution of wealth and jobs and for their government to take back control of borders—that pits them against cosmopolitan professionals living in the cities (see also Kriesi et al. 2008; Kriesi 2016). The identity explanation fits the notion that opposition toward the EU is mostly a form of cultural backlash. People with an exclusive national identity or strong attachment to the nation-state see an interna-

5 Parts of this section draw on De Vries (2018, Chapter 1).

6 A second set of studies has demonstrated that Euroscepticism is also related to hostility toward minority groups and immigrants (McLaren 2002, 2005).

tional organization as something that infringes on their sense of national belonging (Hooghe and Marks 2005, 2009). Liberal elites in Europe have stretched their economic, political, and cultural ideas too far, and segments of the population demand a correction (Inglehart and Norris 2016). Both perspectives are crucially important for our understanding of public opinion toward the EU, yet recent developments like the rise of Eurosceptic parties in national and European Parliament elections give rise to important empirical puzzles that both cannot fully address. Let me discuss some of these.⁷

A first puzzle emerges when we look at the 2014 European Parliament vote. Figure 1 plots the electoral support for hard Eurosceptic parties in the elections against a country's level of unemployment in the same year.⁸ Hard Eurosceptic parties are those that reject EU membership and campaign for their country to secede from the Union (Taggart and Szczerbak 2004). Examples can be found on the right of the political spectrum, like Marine Le Pen's National Front in France, Geert Wilders' Party for Freedom in the Netherlands or the United Kingdom Independence Party, but also on the left—take the examples of the Communist Party in Greece, the United Democratic Coalition in Portugal or the Left Party in Sweden. Furthermore, some hard Eurosceptic parties can be difficult to classify as left or right, as is the case for Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement in Italy for instance.

The aggregate predictions based on the interest explanation would suggest hard Eurosceptic parties to do well in countries that do not perform well economically (Eichenberg and Dalton 1993). When we look more closely at Figure 2.1, a quite different pattern emerges. Countries that have done relatively well during the Eurozone crisis, like Austria, Denmark, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Sweden, show the highest levels of electoral support for hard Eurosceptic parties, yet record low unemployment. Countries like Cyprus, Greece, Portugal and Spain—while hardest hit in the crisis—show little electoral support for hard Eurosceptic parties (Peet and La Guardia 2014). These results do not sit well with predictions based on the interest explanation.

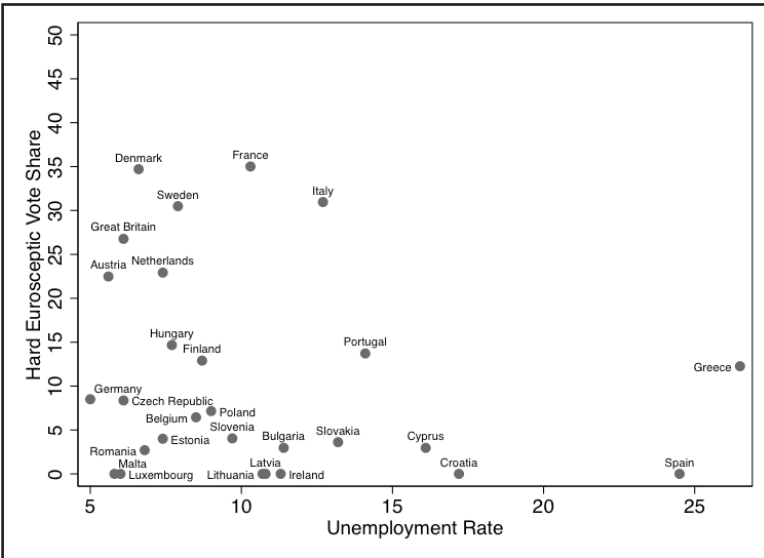
One could argue that these patterns in support for hard Eurosceptic

7 For a further discussion of empirical puzzles see De Vries (2018).

8 Figure 1 presents the vote shares obtained in the 2014 European Parliamentary election for all hard Eurosceptic parties in different member states. In some member states like Luxembourg, Spain or Malta no hard Eurosceptic party won seats in the 2014 election.

parties reflect the debtor–creditor relationships that emerged in the Eurozone crisis. Given that the Euro had yet to be introduced when the interest explanation was developed, debtor–creditor relationships could constitute a new way of understanding support through an economic benefit lens. This type of extension looks promising at first, but upon closer inspection is quite problematic.

Figure 2.1: Unemployment rate and hard Eurosceptic vote share in 2014



Note: Figure entries are the vote shares of hard Eurosceptic parties who received at least one seat in the 2014 European Parliament and the official unemployment rate in 2014 in percent. The correlation coefficient between the vote share of hard Eurosceptic parties and the official unemployment rate is negative and not statistically significant: Pearson's $R = -0.22$ ($p=0.26$). Source: Author's own calculations based on the official results, see European Parliament (2014) and Eurostat (2017).

Countries like Denmark and Sweden, where hard Eurosceptic party support is high, are for example not part of the Eurozone and do not contribute to the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) designed to safeguard and provide instant access to financial assistance programmes for member states of the Eurozone in financial difficulty.⁹ Support for hard

⁹ For more information on the structure see European Stability Mechanism (2017).

Eurosceptic parties is low in Germany and even non-existent in Luxembourg, two of the biggest net contributors to the ESM. The patterns of Eurosceptic vote shares in recent elections are not easily accounted for through the interest logic.

Can we establish a link between people's feelings of national identity and Eurosceptic party support? The identity explanation suggests that people who are most opposed to the EU and display a higher likelihood to vote for a hard Eurosceptic party, are those with an exclusive national attachment (Diez Medrano 2003; Hooghe and Marks 2005, 2009; McLaren 2002, 2005). Individuals who conceive of their national identity as exclusive of other territorial identities are likely to be considerably more Eurosceptic than those who have multiple and nested identities. This is because people with an exclusive national identity will see an international organization as a threat. Although this view seems compelling, Eurobarometer (EB) surveys—which have been polling people's views about European integration for decades—show that people's feelings of exclusive identity have remained remarkably stable over the years (European Commission 2016).¹⁰

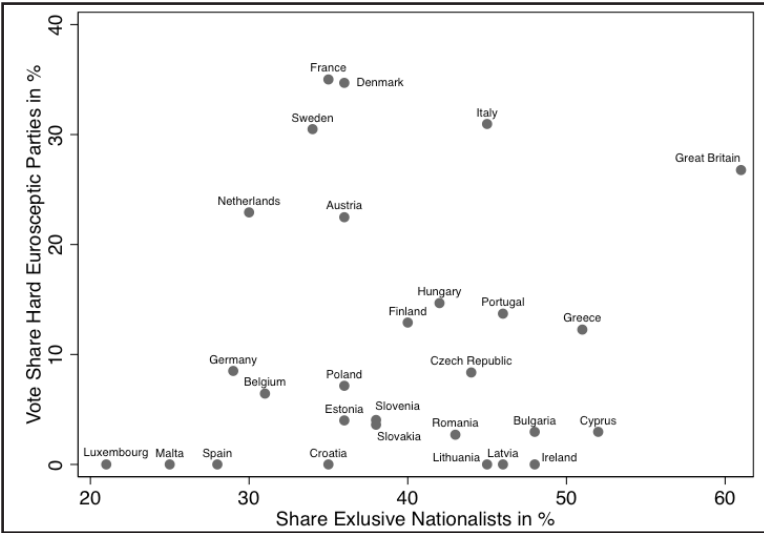
What is more, an examination of the relationship between people's feelings of exclusive national identity and Eurosceptic vote shares in the 2014 European Parliamentary election suggests that the correlation is very weak. Figure 2.2 pits the share of those who state that they feel exclusively national against the vote share of hard Eurosceptic parties in the 2014 European Parliament election for each member state. When we explore the relationship between the share of people who identify as exclusively national and the electoral support for hard Eurosceptic parties, we find little relationship between the two. In fact, in countries characterized by relatively high shares of those feeling exclusively national, we find very different levels of electoral support for hard Eurosceptic parties. While in Great Britain the share of those voting for hard Eurosceptic parties is considerable, in Greece or Cyprus, where also a large portion of the population feels exclusively national, support for hard Eurosceptic parties is rather modest. Equally, we find that in countries, like Ireland or Bulgaria, where the electoral support for hard Eurosceptic parties is very low, the portion of the population feeling exclusive national is quite high. Against this backdrop, it seems difficult to think that identity considerations are

10 Since the early 1990s, the EB survey has asked respondents if they feel national only, European only, or a mix of the two.

the determinants behind the recent spike in Eurosceptic sentiment.

Yet, it could be the case that identities matter only when they are activated by political parties, especially those on the extreme right of the political spectrum (Hooghe and Marks 2009; Hutter and Grande 2014).¹¹ If people’s feelings of national identity need to be activated by political parties, we would expect the share of those feeling exclusively national to show some affinity with the electoral success of extreme right parties.

Figure 2.2: Feelings of exclusive national identity and hard Eurosceptic party support in 2014



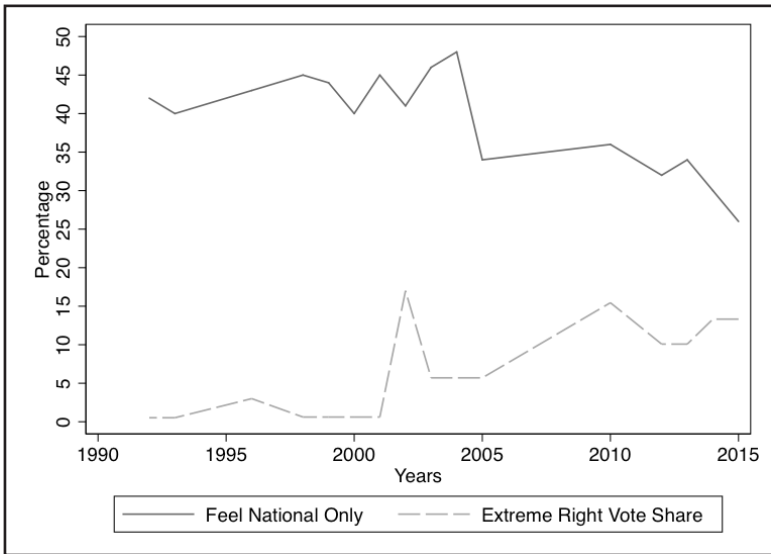
Notes: Figure entries display countries as coordinates based on the share of respondents who feel exclusively national and the vote share of hard Eurosceptic parties who received at least one seat in the 2014 European Parliament. The correlation coefficient between the share of respondents who feel exclusively national and the vote share of hard Eurosceptic parties is very small and not statistically significant: Pearson’s $R = 0.09$ ($p=0.63$). Source: Author’s own calculations based on official results (European Parliament 2014) and Eurobarometer surveys conducted in 2014 (European Commission 2016).

Yet, evidence from the Dutch case suggests that this might not be the case. Figure 3 below displays two time series: (1) the share of Dutch people

11 It is well established that political elites shape public support for the EU (Ray 2003; Hooghe and Marks 2005; Hobolt 2007; Hellström 2008; De Vries and Edwards 2009), although some studies have shown that this is a reciprocal process whereby parties both respond to and shape the views of their supporters (Steenbergen et al. 2007; Gabel and Scheve 2007).

who view themselves as exclusively national based on the EB surveys; and (2) the vote share for the different extreme right parties that have competed in Dutch elections—the Centre Democrats, List Pim Fortuyn and Party for Freedom—over the same time period.

Figure 2.3: Trends in feelings of exclusive national identity and extreme right vote shares in the Netherlands



Note: Figure entries represent the share of Dutch respondents who feel exclusively national and the vote shares of extreme right parties that obtained seats (Centre Democrats, List Pim Fortuyn and Party for Freedom) in Dutch elections in the time period. Source: Calculations based on Eurobarometer (European Commission 2016) and official Dutch election results (Kiesraad 2016).

The Dutch trends do not seem to lend much empirical support for the idea that extreme right parties activate feelings of exclusive national identity against the EU. While there was a steady increase in extreme right party support in the Netherlands from the early 1990s until 2015, Dutch people on average feel less exclusively national over the same time period. I am not disputing that those who feel exclusively national are more likely to harbour Eurosceptic sentiment but given that this share has been largely stable (or has even decreased) in the Netherlands, the recent rise in Euroscepticism seems unlikely to be due to increased feel-

ings of exclusive national identity.¹²

What we are missing: The importance of risk-taking and benchmarking in support for status quo reversal

It is important to stress that I am not disputing that both the interest and identity explanations are important—they clearly are. Rather, what I am suggesting is that they may not account for the recent rise in Euroscepticism. What both interest and identity approaches have failed to consider is people's willingness to take risk and support candidates or parties that advocate a reversal from the current status quo of EU membership. As I have argued elsewhere (De Vries 2017, 2018), public opinion toward the EU is best understood as a comparison of the benefits of the current status quo of membership and those associated with an alternative state—i.e. one's country being outside the EU. People are only willing to take the risk of voting for their country to leave the EU or casting a ballot for a party that advocates secession when they think that the alternative to membership is better.

The benefits of the alternative state—one's country being outside the EU—are both unknown and uncertain. They imply a counterfactual—namely, how would my country do were it not a member of the EU? Counterfactuals ultimately involve risk. Research suggests that due to imperfect information about what the future may bring, people will most likely favour existing benefits that are known to them over uncertain future ones (for a discussion see Hirshleifer and Riley 1992). The alternative state of one's country being outside the EU is largely unknown, so people will rely on benchmarks to compensate for these informational shortfalls. Based on the idea that people will look at the EU through the lens of the political system they know best, their nation-state, I suggest that people base their expectations about the alternative state by extrapolating from current conditions, most importantly current national economic performance and quality of government. The extent to which people support the status quo of membership thus crucially depends on their expecta-

12 One could maintain that activation here should be understood as the mobilization of feelings of exclusive national identity which previously lay dormant rather than with an increase in the share of those identifying as exclusively national. Although this may sound persuasive at first, it is hard to see how this interpretation fits the Dutch findings presented above, which document a *decrease* in the share of those with an exclusive national identity. Like utilitarian concerns, exclusive national identity considerations may not fully explain the developments in public sentiment about the EU in recent years.

tions about how well their country would do outside the European bloc and the information they use to form these beliefs. While people could in principle also benchmark the alternative state by judging how well countries like Norway or Switzerland fare that have never joined the EU, the transaction costs associated with leaving are fundamentally different as Brexit has made fundamentally clear.

One can think about this in the following way. Every individual (or group of individuals) derives some benefits from their country through the provision of public goods and services, such as roads, public television, national defence, etc. To be delivered efficiently, some public goods and service, such as trade, require international cooperation. Or certain problems transcend national borders and require international solutions, such as the climate change (Alesina et al. 2005; Hooghe and Marks 2001). Moreover, being part of the EU institutional architecture may deliver unique goods and services for individuals that the national systems in which they reside by themselves could not. These benefits, originating from the advantages of scale, however, can be perceived to come at a cost. Single market access in the EU, for example, currently also implies the acceptance of the free movement of people. This has already proven an important touchstone of dissent within electoral campaigns in some member states and was a central issue in the Brexit campaign (Clarke et al. 2017, see also Kriesi et al. 2008). Other perceived costs that have been highlighted by Eurosceptic pundits are that countries have to accept the jurisdiction of the European Court, or engage in some forms of financial guarantees, transfer payments or debt relief efforts, for example, through membership in the Eurozone.

The core insight of the benchmark approach is simple: what drives people's willingness to take risks and support a reversal from the status quo is the degree to which they think the alternative state is viable. In other words, what is important are people's expectations about how well they think would their country would fare outside the EU. When the benefits of the alternative state outweigh those of the status quo of membership people will be more willing to take a leap of faith and try their luck outside the EU.

One question that arises is why people would not attribute the good political and economic performance of their country to membership in the EU? An answer to this is what political psychologists have coined proximate responsibility attribution. Studies have shown that people

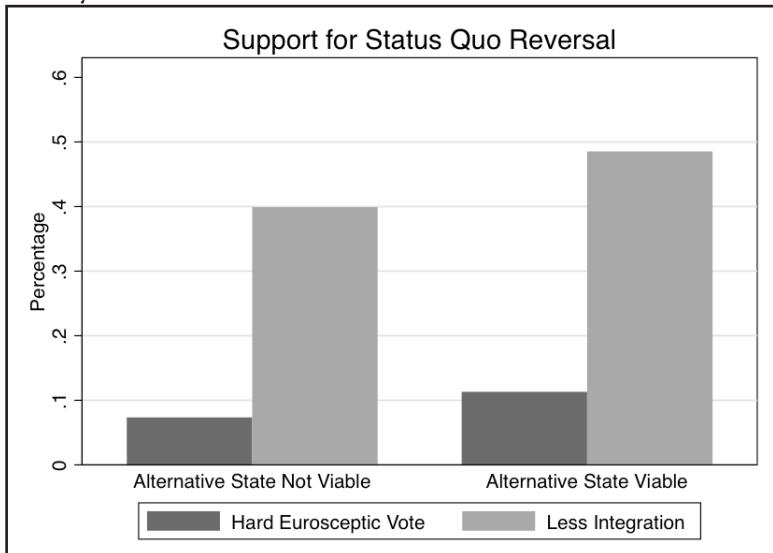
attribute credit and blame for policy to more proximate political forces (Feldman 1982; Gomez and Wilson 2008). Given the complex web of policy attribution in the EU and the lack of a clear executive (Hobolt and Tilley 2014), good economic conditions are most likely going to be attributed to the activities of national elites, and vice versa. The role that single market access has played here is arguably much less tangible for people.

Based on the benchmark theory of public opinion we derive hypotheses that diverge in important respects from the classical interest and identity explanations. For example, Euroscepticism is likely to develop in countries that do relatively well in terms of economic performance and quality of government, or amongst those that think that their country does better than other member states. While I cannot do the empirical testing of the idea of benchmarks full justice here (I provide a wealth of empirical evidence in De Vries 2018), Figure 2.4 provides some support for the idea that the viability of an exit option matters. Based on data from the European Election Study 2014, it displays: (1) the share of respondents who indicated they had voted in the 2014 European Parliament elections for a hard Eurosceptic party that advocates withdrawal from the EU; and (2) the share of respondents who responded in a survey question that they wished for less integration in Europe. The panel on the left in the figure displays these shares in countries that had unemployment levels above—and quality of government scores below—the EU average in 2014. The panel on the right shows the same information for countries that have performed above the EU average in terms of quality of government and have unemployment levels below the EU average (based on Eurostat 2017 and the Quality of Governance Standard Dataset 2016, published by the Quality of Governance Institute at the University of Gothenburg).

In line with the benchmark theory, Figure 2.4 shows that both support for hard Eurosceptic parties and less integration is higher in country contexts that do well in terms of economic and political performance, while support for a reversal of the status quo of EU membership or for parties who advocate this is less pronounced in countries that do relatively worse. This fits the idea that the viability of the alternative state matters for the extent to which people are willing to support status quo reversal. The notion of benchmarks helps us to understand why hard Eurosceptic party support is high in countries with good economic conditions or that support for Brexit was high in both economically deprived

as well as more prosperous areas of Britain. What these different groups of voters have in common is not necessarily a greater sense of economic grievance or exclusive national identity, but a positive national benchmark that makes the status quo of EU membership look like a bad deal.¹³

Figure 2.4: Support for reversal of status quo of EU membership by country context



Note: Figure entries represent the share of EU respondents who stated having voted for a hard Eurosceptic party and who wish to see less integration in Europe. Differences between country contexts are significant at the $p < .05$ level. Source: Author's own calculations based on: European Election Study (2014), Eurostat (2017) and Quality of Governance Standard Dataset (2016).

Brexit as a benchmark¹⁴

As I have outlined in the previous section, the benchmark theory suggests that people's attitudes toward Europe are ultimately rooted in a comparison—namely, one between the benefits of the current status quo of membership and those associated with the alternative state (i.e. one's country being outside the EU). People are only willing to take the risk of voting for their country to leave the EU or casting a ballot for a party that

¹³ For further empirical support for these expectations see De Vries (2018).

¹⁴ This section heavily draws upon De Vries (2017).

advocates secession when they think that the alternative to membership is better. The alternative state of one's country being outside the EU is largely unknown, so people will rely on benchmarks to compensate for these informational shortfalls. These include current national economic performance and quality of government, but also precedents of other countries leaving.¹⁵ Brexit provides such a precedent.

The immediate economic and political effects of the Brexit vote provided people with a crucial piece of information, namely what the costs or benefits of leaving might be. Directly after the vote, some of the possible political and economic costs manifested themselves. The result, for example, sent a shock wave through the stock and currency markets. Over £100 billion was wiped of the London Stock Exchange, the British pound and the 10-year government bond yield reached record lows, and the UK was stripped of its triple-A rating. In late 2016 and early 2017, many of the stock market losses were recovered. Yet, ever since the British government started to negotiate its withdrawal from the EU economic uncertainty has abounded.¹⁶ Political uncertainty was also considerable thanks initially to Cameron's resignation, but also due to debates about the nature of the exit and the tensions between the constituent parts of the United Kingdom. The new prime minister Theresa May took a hard line by stating that Brexit meant Brexit even if that meant leaving the single market.¹⁷ While her mantra 'Brexit means Brexit and we're going to make a success of it' could be seen as a successful holding strategy to contain the debate about what it all would mean in practice, it quickly unravelled and following the snap election in 2017 her position weakened. While the verdict on the exact costs of Brexit will only be known in the long run, the process of withdrawal from the EU will be associated with considerable political and economic uncertainty for a long time to come. It is that very uncertainty that feeds into the calculations in the benchmark model.

Based on the benchmark theory of public opinion toward the EU, I would expect support for the EU to increase when the benefits of alternative state look less favourable. When the alternative state of one's country being outside the EU looks less viable, support for the status quo of mem-

15 While people could in principle also benchmark the alternative state by judging how well countries that have never joined the EU—like Norway or Switzerland—fare, the transaction costs associated with leaving are fundamentally different.

16 For a discussion see *The Economist*, 16 July 2016.

17 For a discussion see *The Atlantic*, 17 January 2017.

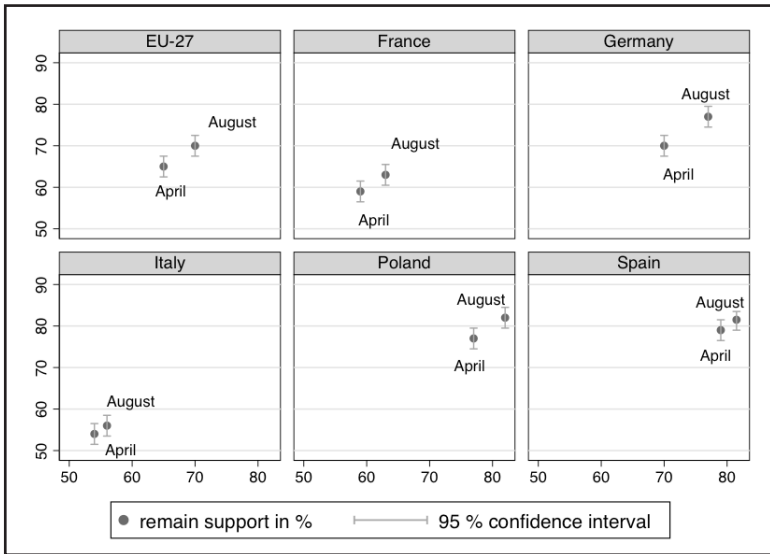
bership or even further integrative steps in Europe should rise as a result. The economic and political uncertainty immediately after the Brexit vote provides people with more information about the possible counterfactual, namely how well one's country would do outside the EU. Against this backdrop, I expect that immediately following the Brexit vote support for the EU should be higher in the remaining 27 member states.

Figure 2.5 below provides some support for this idea. It presents the results of the eupinions survey, a quarterly survey that aims to examine the public mood toward the EU and national political systems in the EU as a whole as well as in the six largest member states in terms of population (France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain. For more information see <http://eupinions.eu>). In 2016 two waves of the eupinions survey were conducted, one before the Brexit vote in April and one after, in August. In both waves respondents were asked how they would vote if a membership referendum were held today. Would they vote to 'remain' or to 'leave' the EU? Given that I am interested here in support for remaining in the EU pre- and post-Brexit within the EU-27, Figure 2.5 displays the percentage of those intending to vote remain in the EU (excluding Great Britain) plus the percentages in the five largest member states, namely France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain, where we conducted more in-depth studies. Note that I am not able to causally identify a Brexit effect as the surveys are not based on a panel where the same group of people get asked the question twice. Thus, there is no way of ruling out if factors other than Brexit played a role (in a previous study I deal with the causality issue through an additional survey experiment, see De Vries 2017). That said, the data is unique in the sense that I am able to gauge membership support in hypothetical membership referendums across the EU as a whole and within selected member states.

Figure 2.5 shows that overall support for one's country to remain in the EU is slightly higher in August 2016 compared to April of the same year. The increase is statistically significant for the EU-27 as well as Germany and Poland. The biggest jump in support for remaining in the EU is recorded in Germany (eight percent). Interestingly, the data shows that support for remaining in the EU is quite high overall—70% or higher in the EU-27, Germany, Poland and Spain. That said, it is much lower in France and Italy. In fact, in Italy support for remaining inside the EU hovers between 50 and 55%. This is perhaps a reflection of the fact that the EU, and especially the Euro, is a very divisive issue in Italian politics

thanks in no small part to the critiques voiced by the Five Star Movement against what they see as an inefficient European bureaucracy and heartless austerity. Although a referendum on the EU or Euro membership is unlikely given the Italian constitutional arrangements, if one were called, these findings suggest that the outcome of such a vote would be highly uncertain.

Figure 2.5: Comparing support for remaining in the EU before and after Brexit



Notes: The dots represent the percentage of people who would vote for their country to remain in the EU if a membership referendum were held today in the April and August waves of the eupinions survey, with 95% confidence intervals.

The results suggest that it will be crucially important for the EU and the national governments of the remaining 27 member states to make sure that the British example does not set a positive precedent. If the economic and political fallout turns out to be comparatively mild, and the British government is able to negotiate a relatively good deal while at the same time limiting immigration, this might have significant consequences for support for leaving the EU in other countries. In countries with vocal Eurosceptic political entrepreneurs—France or Italy, for example—having a positive example of how exit can combine trade with immigration controls could turn out to be a gamble that people might be

willing to take. Of course, for these countries to leave the EU would also mean leaving the Euro, which would make the transaction costs so much higher. Yet the question is: precisely how high? Nevertheless, in most of the remaining EU member states mainstream parliamentary majorities that are pro-EU or constitutional hurdles make exit referendums rather unlikely. That said, if a referendum were to take place, the findings presented here would suggest that the outcome would be highly uncertain.

Conclusion: What can we learn from Europe?

This contribution has highlighted the importance of benchmarks for public opinion about the EU. So far, public opinion toward the EU has largely been understood as a reflection of developments at the EU level. In other words, scholars have argued that people will either support or be sceptical about the European project based on what they stand to gain and lose from integration economically or in terms of their sense of belonging. The present contribution suggests that—although these factors are undoubtedly important—the degree to which people perceive that their country would survive or even thrive outside the EU is also key. Even people who themselves might gain from market and political integration in Europe might oppose it. If people think that the benefits of the alternative state exceed those of EU membership, support for integration may be low regardless of the overall positive benefits of integration for themselves or their country.

I wish to conclude this chapter by briefly spelling out some possible lessons we can learn from the European continent for understanding the development of opposition toward international cooperation across the globe. In my view, five such lessons stand out. First, the idea of benchmarks and the viability of the alternative suggest that people's views about international cooperation will be deeply rooted in national conditions and people's evaluations of them. This may bring about very distinct national narratives about globalization. I am not saying that we should not look for similarities across country contexts, but deep case studies of individual countries or regions within countries might prove very fruitful for understanding recent discontent (see for example Cramer 2016).

Second, economic grievances alone are unlikely to serve as a sufficient explanation for opposition to international cooperation. People are only willing to take the risk of changing the status quo when they think the gamble is worth it. This happens more often when the alternative state

looks viable. At the individual level, this can apply to people who have very little to lose, but equally to those who can afford to take a risk. This might lead to strange bedfellows: both the rich and the poor might be willing to change the status quo, while those in middling economic positions might be most prone to defend the status quo.

Third, the economic or political benefits that might arise due to increased international cooperation will be most likely attributed by people to national governments or systems (see De Vries 2018). This in turn will make the alternative state, i.e. one's country outside a Treaty framework, look more promising. This might point toward a possibly paradoxical process underlying international cooperation: increasing benefits associated with more economic and political cooperation across borders might over time become the risk-hedging mechanism that allows populations or individuals to turn against international governance itself (i.e. that which produced the benefit in the first place).

Fourth, when we continue to frame the debate about the roots of increasing opposition toward international cooperation in terms either economic grievances (the left behind) or cultural values (cultural backlash), we are missing something important. For one, the values and interest perspectives need not be mutually exclusive. Moreover, other factors might be important. Here, I have sought to draw our attention to potential additional factors, such as people's benchmarks or risk aversion. These factors could also help us understand when interest and values matter and how they interact.

Finally, it is important to remember that globalization—a term that refers to increasing international cooperation and increasing interdependence—is, like European integration, an inherently complex phenomenon comprising economic, political, social and cultural aspects that bring about tensions. In his seminal book on the topic, Dani Rodrik (2011) notes that globalization represents a 'trilemma' for societies—they cannot be globally integrated, completely sovereign and democratically responsive all at once. This suggests that there are inherent trade-offs and that it is crucial to study how people make them. This is something that I have begun to do when it comes to public opinion toward European integration (De Vries 2018). I encourage others to do the same when it comes to support or opposition to international cooperation more generally.

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Explaining the Rise of Anti-Immigration Parties in Western Europe

James Dennison

Introduction

One of the most noteworthy political trends of the twenty-first century has been the pronounced increase in electoral support for anti-immigration parties. In this chapter, we consider the causes of this phenomenon. We focus on ten parties in ten western European Union (EU) states, for both theoretical and methodological reasons. We justify our choice of these ten parties not by their *bone fide* credentials to be a member of a particularly party family, such as the ‘populist radical right’ as defined by Mudde (2016), but by the prominence with which they give anti-immigration preferences and the extent to which their supporters tend to be in accordance with those attitudes. However, each of the ten parties is regularly classified in party families labelled as ‘radical right’ (e.g. Rydgren 2018), ‘right-wing populist’ (Clarke et al. 2016), etc.

We focus on the theorized cause of national-level (or macro) variation in vote shares for anti-immigration parties that has received the most consistent empirical backing: namely, immigration rates. We argue that, despite the strong evidence of causation, a direct causal effect is unlikely because an exogenous event is unlikely to lead to a behavioural change without any intermediary change in cognition. We consider attitudinal change as the most obvious cognitive intermediary effect but find no evidence for an effect.

We then consider immigration’s salience as an issue amongst voters. We first show that there is strong correlation between the salience of immigration and voting for anti-immigration parties between 2005 and 2016 in nine of the ten countries considered. We then produce fixed-ef

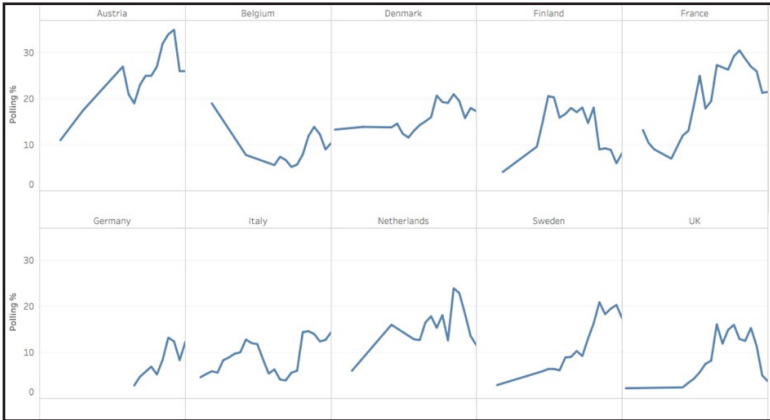
fects panel data models to show that, when tested separately, both immigration rates and immigration's issue salience have statistically significant positive effects on voting for anti-immigration parties. However, when tested simultaneously, the effect of neither is statistically significant, most likely because of multicollinearity. We also show that immigration rates increase immigration's issue salience. We then go on to test our full theoretical hypothesis—namely, that immigration rates have a positive effect on vote share for anti-immigration parties only via their positive effect on immigration's issue salience. We produce a multigroup structural equation model (SEM), which fully confirms our theoretical model.

The rise of anti-immigration parties

The rise of anti-immigration parties across Europe since the 1980s—and particularly during the late 2000s and 2010s—has been well documented in both academic (Inglehart and Norris 2017; Muis and Immerzeel 2017) and popular outlets (*Financial Times* 2017; *The Economist* 2016). In Figure 3.1, we show opinion polling and election vote shares for ten anti-immigration parties between 2005 and 2017. These parties are: the Freedom Party of Austria (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs); Flemish Interest (Vlaams Belang); the Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti); the Finns Party (Perussuomalaiset); the National Front (Front National); Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland); the North League (Lega Nord); the Party for Freedom (Partij voor de Vrijheid); Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna) and; UKIP.

Each of these parties has experienced a notable increase in support since 2005 except Flemish Interest and the Finns Party, though the former has experienced a significant local uptick more recently. The largest specific increases are: from 11% to 35% between 2006 and 2016 in Austria; from 12% to 21% between 2011 and 2015 in Denmark; from 7% in 2009 to 31% in 2015 in France; from 3% to 13% between 2013 and 2016 in Germany; from 6% to 24% between 2006 and 2015 in the Netherlands; from 4% to 15% between 2013 and 2015 in Italy; from 3% to 21% between 2006 and 2015 in Sweden; and from 2% to 15% between 2010 and 2016 in the UK. We can also see that in all ten countries, anti-immigration parties enjoyed local or absolute peaks in support around late 2015, after which support dipped in every country.

Figure 3.1. Opinion polling and election vote share for ten anti-immigration parties, 2005–2017



Source: Eurobarometer, Eurostat. Monthly average, all polling for parliamentary elections except the 1st round of the French presidential election

We choose the ten countries in this chapter's analyses according to four criteria. First, we do not consider post-communist countries for theoretical reasons. Central and East European (CEE) countries have distinct party systems, value sets within the electorate, migration patterns and—partially as a result—likely causal dynamics of support for anti-immigration parties that justify a separate analysis (see White et al. 2013). Second, we only consider EU member states. We do so primarily for reasons of data availability; the *Eurobarometer* data on which our later analyses are based is only carried out in these countries in Western Europe. Otherwise, we would have likely included the Norwegian Popular Party and Swiss People's Party in our analysis. Third, we do not include the Republic of Ireland, Portugal, Spain or Greece in our analyses. The first three do not have anti-immigration parties of any notable strength (for reasons discussed in O'Malley 2008, and Alonso and Kaltwasser 2014) and, as such, there is no variance in support to be explained. The reasons for the omission of Greece are less singular: there are at least three different parties with strong anti-immigration platforms (Golden Dawn, Χρυσή Αυγή), Independent Greeks (ΑΝΕΛ) and the Popular Orthodox Rally (ΛΑ.Ο.Σ), making analysis less simple. The most successful of these is akin to a neo-Nazi party far more so than the contemporary versions of the ten parties under consideration.

We select the years 2005 to 2017 due to data availability. One of the two independent variables of interest in the later analyses—issue salience—is only available from 2005, when it was first included in the *Eurobarometer* survey. We choose the parties that we do for each country because they were the primary anti-immigration party for all or most of the period under investigation. However, it is worth noting that during this period in three countries other anti-immigration parties were able to win seats in the national legislature at general elections. These were: the People's Party (*Parti populaire*) in Belgium in 2010 (1.3% of the overall vote) and 2014 (1.5%); the Brothers of Italy (*Fratelli d'Italia*) in 2013 (2.0%); the National Alliance (*Alleanza Nazionale*) in Italy in 2006 (12.3%); and the Forum for Democracy (*Forum voor Democratie*) in the Netherlands in 2017 (1.8%). Except for Italy, however, in all ten countries there was indisputably only one electorally relevant anti-immigration party during the time period in question. In 2007 the National Alliance merged with the centre-right People of Freedom party, making tracking its fortunes over time difficult.

Explaining the rise of anti-immigration parties: attitudinal transformation?

Numerous media commentators and political analysts have attempted to explain the rise of the above parties in recent years. Probably the most common explanation is a supposed widespread increase in anti-immigration sentiment amongst European electorates. Typical statements in news outlets include 'a wave of anti-immigrant sentiment is sweeping the world' (Dunt 2016). Similarly, political analysts have explained the success of anti-immigration parties by arguing that 'attitudes to immigration have turned more negative [...] in the US as well as in Europe' (Bloomberg News 2015).

However, the notion that European electorates are turning against immigration finds no evidence in survey research. Indeed, Dennison and Geddes (2017) use European Social Survey (ESS) data to show that in 14 European countries, between 2002 and 2016, attitudes to accepting immigrants 'from poorer countries outside of Europe' had become more positive in ten, had not changed in two, and had become more negative in two. Moreover, they showed that, between 2014 and 2016, during the biggest spike in polling for anti-immigration parties, attitudes became more favourable in nine countries, did not change in four and only became more negative in two. Similar increases in positivity toward the effects

of immigration on the economy, culture, quality of life, jobs, government accounts and crime can be tracked in most European countries—including the ten under investigation here—between 2002 and 2016 (see Heath and Richards 2016), as well as to acceptance of EU immigrants. Between 2014 and 2017 the Eurobarometer has asked respondents in all 28 member states about their positivity toward both EU and non-EU immigrants. In the vast majority of countries, there is increased net positivity to both groups. Overall, then, the notions that Europeans are becoming more negative to immigration and that this is the cause of the increase in support for anti-immigration parties can be rejected.

Academic explanations for the rise of anti-immigration parties

There is a well-developed literature on the determinants of support for populist radical right, far right, and anti-immigration parties, with a number of consistent findings. A theoretically important distinction amongst these studies is between those testing effects at the individual level, which are more numerous, and those doing so at the national level, which are more applicable for this chapter. The former group of studies have produced a number of debates but there is a general consensus on the typical socio-demographic and, particularly, value-based and attitudinal determinants of support for anti-immigration parties (see Arzheimer 2018) amongst individuals.

However, since these predictors are all fairly stable in the period under question in this study, we instead focus on aggregate-level (or 'macro') effects. In an overview of explanations of support for the radical right, Arzheimer (2018) identifies four such relevant effects. First, media effects based on theories of agenda-setting—the notion that individuals turn to anti-immigration parties following attention and framing by anti-immigration media cues—have 'attracted considerable interest'. However, 'the evidence is limited' (*ibid.*, p. 157) aside from a few studies such as Boomgaarden and Vliegthard (2007), who find a positive effect of attention given to immigration by the Dutch media on support for anti-immigration parties between 1990 and 2002 when controlling for unemployment and immigration rates. Second, 'high crime rates are supposed to benefit the radical right, but there is not much empirical evidence to back up this claim' (Arzheimer 2018, p. 156). Third, the effects of unemployment remain contested and are 'far from conclusive' (*ibid.*,

p. 155), with studies finding both positive, negative and nil effects on of national-level unemployment figures on voting for anti-immigration parties.

In contrast to the other three groups, 'results for the effect of immigration are less equivocal' (*ibid.*, 155). Indeed, Knigge (1998), Lubbers, Gijsberts, and Scheepers (2002), Golder (2003), Swank and Betz (2003), Arzheimer and Carter (2006) and Arzheimer (2009) all find positive effects of national immigration rates on voting for anti-immigration parties. Not only have immigration rates been repeatedly empirically validated as a determinant of support for anti-immigration parties, but they are also key to a number of theoretical explanations for voting for these parties. Perhaps the two most prevalent of these are the 'economic insecurity perspective' (also known as the 'losers of globalization' thesis) and the 'cultural backlash thesis' (Inglehart and Norris 2016). The first of these argues that higher immigration rates increase voting for anti-immigration parties because immigrants increase competition for resources and jobs, disproportionately negatively affecting certain socio-demographic groups who then express their dissatisfaction at the ballot box. The second explanation argues that individuals vote for anti-immigration parties because of the threat that they perceive high immigration rates pose to a homogenous, orderly, mono-cultural nation-state, which they are keen to preserve or resurrect. In this chapter we remain agnostic about which of these theories best explains voting for radical right parties. Instead, we note that both are likely to be theoretically incomplete when explaining the increase in support for anti-immigration parties.

A direct causal effect of immigration on voting for anti-immigration parties is unlikely because such an exogenous event is unlikely to lead to a behavioural change without any intermediary change in cognition (von Eckardt 1996). Psychologically, electoral behaviour presents individuals with a choice that necessitates decision-making: first, whether to vote and, second, for whom to vote. From the psychology literature, we know that decision-making is a multi-step process that has been defined in a number of ways. Yet it almost always includes some description of four steps: 1) the individual has preferences and goals; 2) the individual gathers information about the outside world; 3) the individual cognitively evaluates the outside world and options for behaviour and; 4) the individual chooses the option for behaviour that is most in accordance with their preferences given their understanding of the outside world and

their cognitive evaluation (Janis and Mann 1977; Pious 1993; Hall et al. 2007; Gold and Shadlan 2007; Moutsiana et al. 2013). According to this framework, a change in immigration rates would not be enough to lead directly to behavioural change; it would have to first lead to a change in the outcome of the cognitive evaluation of the accordence of preferences and options for behaviour, as deduced from external information. In short, there should be a cognitive change by which voting for anti-immigration parties is considered optimal whereas it was not before.

One outcome of this cognitive evaluation could be a change in attitudes to immigration—the individual's preferences. It could be that higher immigration rates make individuals more opposed the admittance of immigrants or less credulous toward the benefits of immigration. However, as has already been established, attitudes to immigration—both in terms of numbers to be accepted and perceived benefits and costs—have remained largely stable, with a tendency for greater positivity, in recent years. Less considered than preferences regarding immigration has been its salience—the individual's assessment of whether immigration is an important issue affecting their country (Wlezien 2005). Indeed, it has already been noted that 'at the national level these two dimensions [*preference* and *salience*] of public opinion move differently over time and in response to different macro-level variables [...] both dimensions need to be taken into account when assessing the overall climate of public opinion towards immigration' (Hatton 2016, p. 1). Hatton goes on to describe the different predictors of both preferences and salience but does not consider voting for anti-immigration parties in his analysis.

Given that salience is likely to be the result of both immigration rates, media interest, party cues and other concerns—not least the relative importance of other political issues at that time—it may be that salience can help explain the considerably greater volatility in support for anti-immigration parties than simple immigration rates. Furthermore, variation in salience may be the missing variable in the decision-making process of voting and part of the varying cognitive evaluation that is partly informed by immigration rates and predicts voting for these parties. In short, individuals will only vote for anti-immigration parties if they are opposed to immigration in some way *and* at those times that they perceive immigration to be of relatively greater importance than other political issues, which is likely to be partially informed by a perception of high immigration. This leads to the sole hypothesis of this chapter:

H1. Immigration rates lead to greater support for anti-immigration parties only via the positive effect they have on the salience of immigration as a political issue.

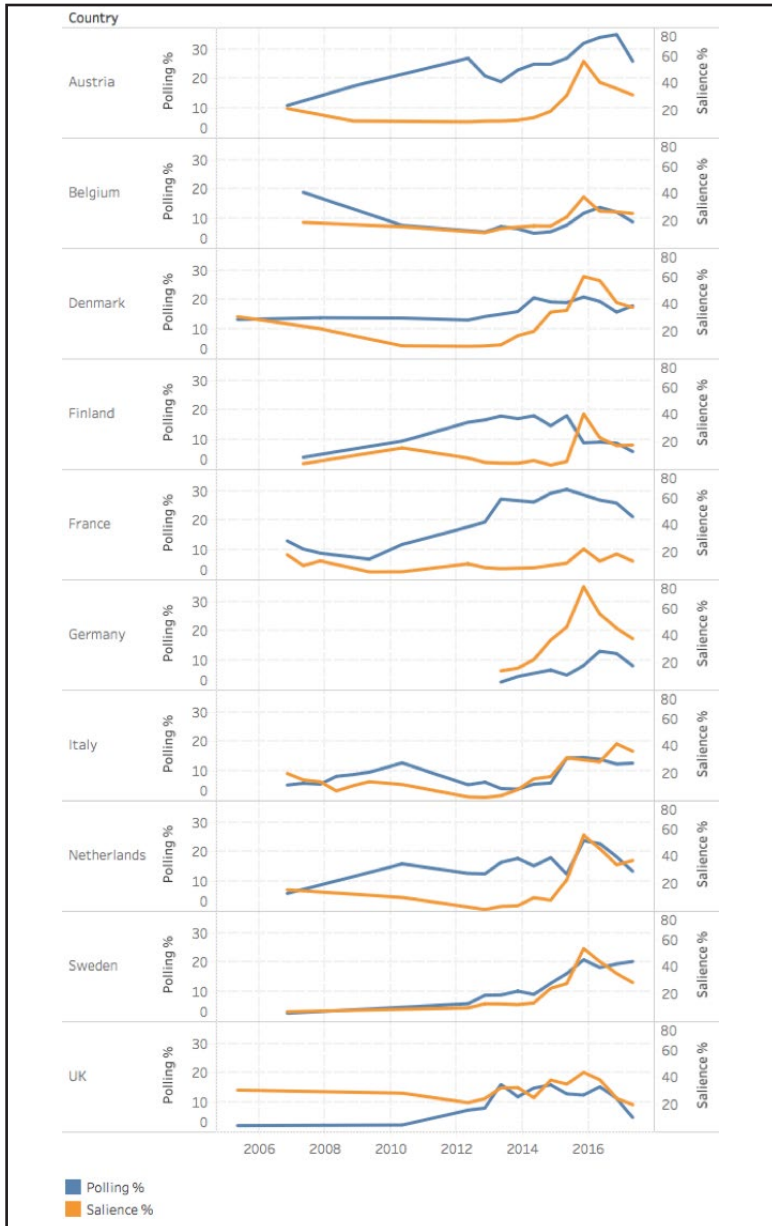
Indeed, Ford et al. (2015, p. 1,394) made a similar argument about the predictors of national immigration policy, arguing that ‘public opinion becomes an important factor when the prevailing mood is highly negative, and the issue is salient to voters and to the media.’ In the follow section, we seek to deduce whether there is any relationship between salience and voting for anti-immigration parties.

Salience and voting for anti-immigration parties

Since May 2005, the Eurobarometer has asked individuals from every EU member state what they ‘think are the two most important issues facing (OUR COUNTRY) at the moment?’ Surveys tends to be bi-annual, though in two years the Eurobarometer ran three, rather than two, surveys. Respondents are asked to pick two political issues from a range of 14, one of which is immigration.

There is a positive correlation between the percentage of individuals responding that immigration is one of the top two issues and the average polling in that month for anti-immigration parties in nine of the ten countries between May 2005 and May 2017. Only Finland shows no positive correlation between electoral support for the anti-immigrant party and immigration’s salience as an issue. The other countries all display correlations above 0.5 except France. In Figure 3.2, we see the ten correlations displayed graphically, all of which are clearly positive, except in Finland, and strong, except in France.

Figure 3.2. Correlations between polling for anti-immigration parties and percentage listing immigration as one of two most important issue affecting their country



Source: see Figure 3.1, Eurobarometer

The exact correlations and their p-values are as follows:

| Country | r | p | Observations |
|-------------|-------|------|--------------|
| Austria | 0.66 | 0.01 | 13 |
| Belgium | 0.50 | 0.10 | 12 |
| Denmark | 0.68 | 0.01 | 14 |
| Finland | -0.52 | 0.07 | 13 |
| France | 0.31 | 0.26 | 15 |
| Germany | 0.64 | 0.06 | 9 |
| Italy | 0.73 | 0.00 | 18 |
| Netherlands | 0.54 | 0.06 | 13 |
| Sweden | 0.90 | 0.00 | 12 |
| UK | 0.50 | 0.08 | 13 |

We now move on to testing the general effects of immigration salience on support for anti-immigration parties. To do this requires an econometric model that measures the effect of salience over time while controlling for country-specific effects—such as the effects of the electoral system, political culture, history, etc.—on each party’s polling. To do this requires fixed-effects panel data models that predict polling for anti-immigration party (y_{it}) in a country (i) at a certain time point (t) according to the effect of the predictors (x_{it} in that country at that time as well as an error term (ϵ_{it}). All country time-invariant unobserved effects are controlled for in the within-transformation of the fixed-effects model, which essentially controls for country-specific effects. This leaves a model using the following formula:

In Table 3.1, we show the results of four models that test the effect of salience (model 1), immigration rates (2) and both together (3) on support for anti-immigration parties. We then show the results of testing the effect of immigration rates on immigration issue salience. In model 1, we can see that issue salience has a positive, statistically significant effect on support for anti-immigration parties. Thus, a 1 percentage point increase in the salience of immigration should lead to a 0.179 percentage point increase in electoral support—an important effect given the high variation in salience as shown in Figure 3.2. In model 2, we show that—in accordance with previous findings in the literature—immigration rates have a positive, statistically significant effect on voting for anti-immigration parties.

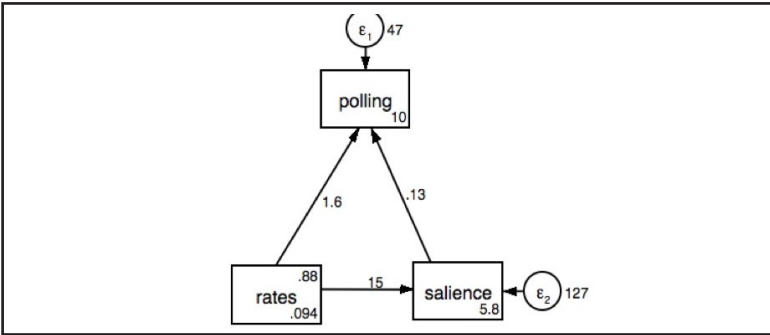
Thus, a 1% increase in that year's number of immigrants as a share of the country's population (using *Eurostat* data) has the effect of increasing national-level support for anti-immigration parties by over 13%. In model 3, we test the effects of both predictors simultaneously, finding no statistically significant effects (though both are positive), which is possibly the result of multicollinearity. Indeed, in model 4, we show that higher immigration rates have a positive, statistically significant effect on immigration's salience.

Table 3.1. Fixed-effects panel data models

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | Polling for anti-immigration parties | Polling for anti-immigration parties | Polling for anti-immigration parties | Immigration issue salience |
| Salience | 0.179*** | | 0.067 | |
| | (0.0329) | | (0.066) | |
| Immigration rate | | 13.455*** | 9.719 | 44.523*** |
| | | (3.375) | (4.839) | (6.305) |
| Constant | 10.173*** | 1.072 | 3.086 | -21.122*** |
| | (0.832) | (3.122) | (3.868) | (5.818) |
| Observations | 132 | 62 | 49 | 81 |
| R-squared | 0.196 | 0.238 | 0.267 | 0.416 |
| Number of ctry | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |

However, as interesting as these models are, they do not directly test the hypothesis of this chapter—that immigration rates lead to greater support for anti-immigration parties *only via* the positive effect they have on the salience of immigration as a political issue. To test this requires a multi-group (i.e. multi-country) structural equation model (SEM) in which the effects of both immigration rates and salience on support for anti-immigration parties are tested simultaneously, while testing the effect of immigration rates on salience. This model is displayed graphically in Figure 3.

Figure 3.3. Multigroup structural equation model of support for anti-immigration parties



Source: Author’s own elaboration.

The full results of this model are displayed in Table 3.2. These results confirm hypothesis 1. Only salience, and not immigration rates, has a direct, positive, statistically significant effect on support for anti-immigration parties while immigration rates have a positive, statistically significant effect on salience.

Table 3.2. Multigroup Structural Equation Model

| | (1) Polling for anti-immigration parties |
|-------------------|--|
| Polling <- | |
| Salience | 0.126* |
| | (0.055) |
| Immigration rate | 1.550 |
| | (3.204) |
| constant | 10.25*** |
| | (2.471) |
| Salience <- | |
| Immigration rate | 14.900*** |
| | (3.666) |
| constant | 5.788 |
| | (3.385) |
| Mean (rates) | 0.880*** |
| | (0.030) |
| Observations | 222 |
| Log likelihood | -1233.2996 |
| Number of country | 9 |

Conclusion

In this chapter we tested the hypothesis that higher immigration rates positively affect support for anti-immigration parties via the positive effect that they have on immigration salience. Whereas the positive effect of immigration rates on voting for anti-immigration parties is well established we considered it theoretically unlikely to be directly causal given the nature of human decision-making processes. Instead, we proposed that there is likely to be an intermediary change in cognition that follows the change in immigration rates but precedes a change in electoral behaviour. Using simple correlations, we showed that this is unlikely to be attitudes to immigration but is far more likely to be the salience of immigration as an issue. We then confirm this three-variable relationship, and thus our hypothesis, using a multigroup SEM.

There are several shortcomings with our analysis. First, our empirical analysis is solely at the national level yet its theoretical basis is at the individual level. There is therefore a risk of the ecological fallacy (Robinson 2009).¹ Unfortunately, the key data source for issue salience—Eurobarometer—does not include a variable about electoral behaviour. It does include a variable measuring party identification, though this varies far less than electoral support and the proportion reporting identification with anti-immigration parties is far less than their vote share, the key phenomenon this chapter seeks to explain. The second shortcoming of the chapter is that the selection of countries only includes those in Western Europe that have significant anti-immigration parties. Our analysis is not able to explain why high immigration salience in some countries—such as in Spain in the mid-2000s—did not translate into growth of an anti-immigration party. Finally, although the models we use—fixed-effects panel data models and a multigroup structural equation model—already prioritize robustness over efficiency, there may be confounding variables that we have omitted, biasing the results.

These shortcomings point to the next steps for research. First, the key theoretical proposition—that awareness of higher immigration rates leads to higher immigration salience in some individuals and then to voting for anti-immigration parties—should be tested at the individual level using panel data. Hypothetically, we might assume that salience is more likely to increase in those that have anti-immigration attitudes,

1 Note, however, King's (1997) suggestion that aggregate data can be used notwithstanding Robinson (1950).

although Hatton (2016) provides some evidence to doubt this, and that these latent anti-immigration predispositions are activated by immigration rates, along with other things such as cues from media and politicians. Due to data availability, such an analysis is currently only likely to be possible in a handful of countries.

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Isolated and Imitated? Voter Perceptions of Reactions to Anti-Immigration Parties in Three Countries

Joost van Spanje, Haylee Kelsall & Rachid Azrout

Introduction

‘These are the quarter-finals in trying to prevent the wrong sort of populism from winning’, the Dutch prime minister, Mark Rutte, announced two days before the 2017 Dutch general election. ‘The semi-finals are in France in April and May... then in September in Germany we have the finals’, he continued, adding ‘I want the Netherlands to be the first country which stops this trend of the wrong sort of populism.’

The ‘wrong sort of populism’ to which Rutte referred attracted international news media, intent on watching the ‘quarter final’ play out in the political arena. In the Netherlands, a new upset of the establishment seemed to be in the making—coming just a few months after the UK had voted to leave the EU and the US had elected Donald Trump as their president. Indeed, on 21 December 2016—seven weeks before the vote—Geert Wilders’ anti-immigration ‘Party for Freedom’ (Partij voor de Vrijheid, PVV) was leading in the aggregate poll of polls.¹ The PVV was projected to win between 31 and 37 seats in the lower house of the Dutch national parliament. Eleven weeks later, on election day, the PVV obtained only 20 of their projected 31 to 37 seats. ‘We’re hearing the message from all across Europe: the Netherlands stopped the wrong sort of populism!’ Rutte told his supporters afterwards. What had happened to the PVV’s predicted success?

1 For the Dutch aggregate poll of polls, see www.peilingwijzer.nl.

There are a multitude of reasons which have been advanced to account for this decline in PVV support. This chapter however, is concerned with establishing the extent to which the ‘parroting the pariah effect’ could have explained the reduction in electoral support for the PVV, and similar parties in France and Germany. ‘Parroting the Pariah’ implies a combined strategy on the part of an established party against a challenger party, where the established party simultaneously ostracizes the challenger within the political arena, while imitating its core policy positions. In this scenario, such a strategy essentially diminishes the likelihood of policy-oriented voters continuing to support the challenger. The reason for this is two-fold. Firstly, with little chance of government involvement (e.g. as a coalition partner) the challenger becomes less attractive for a voter who wishes to see their policy concerns addressed. Secondly, as established and more experienced parties would in such a scenario address their policy concerns, little reason remains to vote for the challenger party.

Earlier scholarship has found parroting the pariah to be an effective strategy for established parties to limit and/or diminish challenger party support, on both the left and right of the political spectrum. Evidence concerning the effectiveness of this strategy has been found across 15 different national contexts since 1944, using both experimental and non-experimental methods (van Spanje, 2018; van Spanje and De Graaf 2018; cf. van Spanje & Weber 2017). We seek to cross-validate these previous findings, and to further investigate the underlying mechanism by for the first time tapping voter perceptions of both these two strategies. After all, what matters for election outcomes is not reality (whether or not parties parrot another party and treat it as a pariah), but voters’ perception of reality (whether or not voters think that parties do so).

We tested the ‘parroting the pariah effect’ in the recent, highly relevant contexts of the three key elections in the fight against ‘the wrong sort of populism’, i.e. the 2017 Dutch, French, and German general elections. Drawing on voter perceptions across these elections also permitted the first individual-level analysis of the effects of ‘parroting the pariah’ in a non-experimental setting. This facilitated the testing of higher levels of susceptibility to the strategy of policy-oriented voters compared to other voters. It also allows this chapter to extend the current literature by taking into account voter perceptions of the extent to which a party is parroted and is a pariah. These perceptions differ considerably from perceptions

of political party experts, which have been used in the past (see, e.g., van Spanje 2018). For example, we found that a substantial minority of the German electorate expected the Alternative for Germany (AfD) to cooperate with the centre-right CDU–CSU. At the same time, these voter perceptions have electoral consequences, as we will see.

Theoretical background

Established parties are expected to respond to the presence of a challenger by employing either issue-based (e.g. Meguid 2005) or non-issue-based tactics (e.g. Downs 2012). Parroting the pariah can be viewed as a combination of these responses, where the practice of imitation (parroting) exemplifies an issue-based response, and ostracism (pariah) a non-issue-based response (van Spanje 2018). Recent research suggests that this combined strategy is effective, leading to diminished support for anti-immigration parties and communist parties amongst policy-oriented voters (van Spanje 2018; van Spanje and De Graaf 2018; cf. van Spanje and Weber 2017). However, these responses need not be combined—they may also be utilized by established parties as stand-alone means of reducing electoral support for challenger parties.

Issue-based response: The Parroting Effect

The parroting element refers to the imitation of a (challenger) party by other parties in terms of its core policy issue position. Applied to anti-immigration parties, established parties adopt a similarly restrictive stance on immigration issues. While they may not espouse such an extreme position as anti-immigration parties, there is evidence to suggest that established parties are indeed moving closer toward anti-immigration parties with regards immigration policy. An overview of established party manifestos in 15 countries since 1944 showed that in particular, criticism of the multiculturalist ideal has increased in the last 20 years (van Spanje 2018), partly as a reaction to anti-immigration party success (van Spanje 2010a; Han 2015; Abou-Chadi 2016, 2018). In other words, dominant established parties would appear to be moving closer toward the immigration policy positions of their anti-immigration challengers.

Meguid (2005, 2008) calls such a tactic an ‘accommodative strategy’. She argues that these strategies have a negative effect on the electoral support of anti-immigration parties:

[b]y challenging the exclusivity of the challenger party's policy stance, the accommodative established party is trying to undermine the new party's issue ownership and become the rightful owner of that issue. The established party is aided in this process by its greater legislative experience and governmental effectiveness. In addition, established parties generally have more access to the voters than challenger parties, allowing them to publicize their issue positions and establish name-brand recognition. Given these advantages, the established party 'copy' will be perceived as more attractive than the challenger party 'original' (Meguid 2005, p. 349)

The success of the 'Parroting Effect' finds further support in the work of Schain (2006) and Art (2006). Discussing anti-immigration party voters, Schain (2006) notes that often these are issue-oriented voters who cast their ballot in protest against established parties which they view as having 'ignored their interests and concerns.' He further argues that

(i)n some cases established parties can recapture [...] voters by co-opting and reworking the issues that defined the initial protest [...]. Co-optation of radical-right issues has operated quite successfully in the British case (in the 1970s), somewhat less so in the German case (in the 1980s) and not at all in the French case (in the 1990s) (p. 272).

Furthermore, Art (2006, p. 7) found some evidence that established parties in Germany and Austria were to some extent, able to 'decrease support for right-wing populism by adopting xenophobic discourse and strict policies on immigration.'

These observations support the assumption that when established parties draw on the issue-based tactic of parroting, electoral support for anti-immigration parties will often decline. We assume that the effects observed at the aggregate level are likely to be a reflection of a similar phenomenon at the individual level. Previous studies have mainly focused on aggregate effects, but if we wish to understand the process we may need to look at the individual level. Furthermore, we pay attention to what the actual individual-level mechanisms are, focusing on the perceptions of voters. We expect to find that voters who perceived an anti-immigration party parroted by another party to be less inclined to vote for that anti-immigration party (H1). The Parrot Effect is also presumed to be stronger as voters are more policy-oriented voters (H2). This is because voters who may be inclined to vote for a populist right-wing party for other reasons than policy preferences would be less likely to be affected.

Non-issue-based response: The Pariah effect

The second element concerns the pariah effect. Parties have various ways to react to one another—not only issue-based tactics such as imitating policy positions, but also non-issue-based tactics (cf. Meguid 2008). A common non-issue-based reaction of established parties to the emergence of anti-immigration parties is ostracism (Downs 2012; van Spanje and van der Brug 2007; van Spanje and van der Brug 2009; van Spanje 2010b). Downs (2012) regards this as simply refusing to engage in coalitions with an anti-immigration party, however other scholars view it more broadly. We considered a party to be a ‘pariah’ once others ruled out any aspect of political cooperation. This definition is in line with van Spanje (2018), as we have defined ostracism as the systematic refusal to politically cooperate with a party at any political level. Several anti-immigration parties can be considered ostracized in European politics, including the Flemish Interest (VB) in Belgium, and the National Rally (RN)² in France (van Spanje 2018).

Few scholars have considered how the electorate would respond to such a strategy however, and opinions remain divided concerning its ability to reduce support for anti-immigration parties. Some argue, often implicitly, that being treated as a pariah harms an anti-immigration party electorally, regardless of whether a formal *cordon sanitaire* as seen with the Flemish VB is in place. Schikhof (1998) and Art (2006, 2011), for instance, argue that ostracism hurts the recruitment potential of anti-immigration parties. As a result, anti-immigration parties cannot attract ‘the type of activists they need to succeed’ (Art 2011, p. 149) and instead attract extremists and outcasts (Schikhof 1998, pp. 150–154). Previous research suggests this is likely to scare away other voters, and particularly those interested in policy-making (Bargsted and Kedar 2009; Kedar 2009; Adams et al. 2005).

In contrast, Mudde (2007, p. 89) suggests that anti-immigration parties may receive votes due to their ‘pariah’ status:

The cordon [*sanitaire*] not only helps these parties to keep the Fundis and Realos together, as the exclusion by the established parties takes away the incentive to moderate, but it also helps the populist radical right parties to focus themselves fully on a vote-maximising strategy. Unlike established par-

2 The National Rally (Rassemblement National) was known as the National Front (Front National) until 1 June 2018. In this chapter, we refer to it by the new name, abbreviated ‘RN’.

ties, which have to keep in mind possible coalition talks after the election campaign, pariah parties like the Belgian VB need not concern themselves with these kinds of tactical considerations.

However, this interesting possibility is unlikely, as the VB has actually lost a large number of supporters over time. Moreover, it is not backed by firm theoretical considerations. We therefore formulated the hypothesis that voters who considered an anti-immigration party a pariah, would have a lower propensity vote for that anti-immigration party (H3). Note that a pariah effect was found for communist parties during the Cold War (van Spanje 2018). We also expected that the more policy-oriented voters are the stronger this effect is (H4), as an ostracized party offers little chance for their core policy concerns to be implemented. Voters who vote merely based on a political protest cannot be expected to react in this way.

The Parroting the Pariah Effect

In the Netherlands, Prime Minister Rutte combined these two responses, banking on a Parroting of the Pariah Effect on the PVV. To understand why this particular combination would be effective, van Spanje (2018) points to the reason why citizens would find an anti-immigration party attractive to vote for in the first place. Drawing on rational choice theories of voting (e.g. Downs 1957; Kedar 2009), which at present are the dominant paradigm in electoral studies, one can argue that many voters would opt for a particular party in order to have their preferred policies enacted. Given this assumption, there are generally two factors which would motivate an anti-immigration party vote. The first reason is that the voter had aimed to have the anti-immigration party enact the restrictive immigration policies they favoured—at least, to the extent that that party holds what Sartori (1976) calls ‘coalition potential’. The second possible reason is that they had aimed to have the anti-immigration party force others to enact those policies. That is, to the extent that that party had what Sartori (1976) calls ‘blackmail potential’.

In the first scenario an anti-immigration party with ‘coalition potential’ would be able to have direct influence on policy through a coalition partnership, while in the second the anti-immigration party vote would instead be used to signal other parties to the immigration concerns of the voter, and provide the anti-immigration party electoral support, which (if the concerns remain unaddressed by governing parties) could result in continued electoral losses for those who were in power. There is quite

some evidence that other parties actually adopt more restrictive immigration positions in response to anti-immigration party success (van Spanje 2010a; Han 2015; Abou-Chadi 2016, 2018).

When an anti-immigration party is afforded pariah status in the eye of the voter, the initial reason to vote for the anti-immigration party—‘coalition potential’—disappears. If no other party would cooperate with an ostracized party, the anti-immigration party will be left on its own, without any chance of directly serving any purpose to the voter who desired heavier restrictions on immigration.³ However, the anti-immigration party may have still appealed to the voter, as their signalling ability could push other parties further to the right on immigration matters, provided it received a good share of the vote.

In a case where the anti-immigration party was parroted, this value and consequently the second reason to vote for that party would vanish. When an established party reflects a similar anti-immigration stance in their policies as that party, little reason would remain to vote for the anti-immigration party. After all, there would no longer be a need to influence the established parties. Still, the voter may have desired the anti-immigration party itself to restrict immigration, particularly as a voter could not be sure the established parrot party would be as committed to the issue as the anti-immigration party, whose core policy issue was immigration from the start. It is only when a voter views an anti-immigration party as both parroted and as a pariah that neither of the two reasons to vote for the party remains. In other words, a rational voter would not have any reason to vote for a parroted pariah.

It is worthwhile to note that this does not necessarily mean that the voter would instead vote for the established parrot party. As the established party now addresses his or her primary policy concern, the voter might instead have opted to vote for a party which catered to his or her secondary policy goals. For example, a voter might be particularly worried about immigration and to a lesser extent that same voter may wish to see healthcare reforms implemented. She may then have opted to vote for a party whose healthcare policy aligned with her own desires, and not necessarily the party which had adopted the anti-immigration party’s stance on immigration. Of course, she may also have abstained from voting entirely.

3 That is, unless the anti-immigration party reaches an absolute majority of the vote, which is unlikely in a multiparty setting.

For a politically progressive reader, it may help to think in terms of environmental policy. Suppose a voter was concerned about environmental problems. That voter has two policy-driven reasons to vote for a country's Green party: to help that party obtain power, or to help it receive so many votes that other parties become greener in response. If, for some reason, the Green party were boycotted by all other parties and at the same time these other parties were just as green as the Green party, the voter would have no policy-driven reason remaining to vote for that party. Again, this is not to say that she would then vote for the (now just as green) established party. Rather, as she perceives her environmental concerns now addressed by others, she may instead opt to vote for an alternative party whose policies addressed her secondary concerns, or she may choose to abstain. In any case, a challenger that is a parroted pariah was expected to receive fewer votes (H5). The votes that that party loses were not just any votes, but policy-oriented ones (H6).

Note that the parroting the pariah effect is in line with findings that some European democratic regimes in the 1930s succeeded in diminishing electoral support for anti-democratic parties by using a similar two-fold strategy of repressing these parties and wooing their supporters (Capoccia 2005). The existence of such an effect has also been alluded to by Rummens and Abts (2010), and more implicitly in particular cases in Germany (Art 2006), Belgium (Pauwels 2011), and France (Mayer 2007; Minkenberg 2013; Shields 2010). However, the effect had no strong theoretical underpinning, or clear empirical support, until van Spanje and De Graaf (2018) and van Spanje (2018), who also consider voter heterogeneity. Moreover, the effect was tested on not only anti-immigration parties but also communist parties.

The 'parroting the pariah' hypothesis has been empirically tested through multiple approaches by van Spanje (2018), finding support in each case. Electoral results at the aggregate level were considered, with policy imitation (parroting) identified in manifestos, while ostracism was identified through both a literature review and interviews with party politics country experts. A similar approach has been used to investigate the phenomena over time, again finding support for the hypothesis (van Spanje and De Graaf 2018). Individual-level empirical support has been established with experimental evidence, and additionally through voter studies. In the latter, parroted parties which were also treated as pariahs were identified using the same methods as above, while voters' issue-in-

volvement was also considered in relation to their reported likelihood to vote for anti-immigration challengers. Support was again found for the combined use of these strategies, and, in line with the theoretical argument, it turned out that policy-driven voters were particularly susceptible. As such, the effect is hypothesized to be larger for policy-oriented voters.

The cases

While the parroting the pariah strategy may not have been truly adopted in France's 'semi-final' and the 'final' in Germany, it was employed by the established centre-right party in the Netherlands, the VVD. In the 2017 Dutch general election, Rutte—Prime Minister and VVD leader—adopted a clear deliberate strategy to both ostracize and imitate the anti-immigration party of interest: Wilders' PVV. On the 15th of January he told the news media that he would never politically cooperate with the PVV (isolating); while exactly one week later, on the 22nd of January, he followed with an 'open letter to all Dutch citizens' published in major newspapers. In this letter he went out of his way to copy the PVV's harsh rhetoric on immigration and immigrant integration (imitating), making statements such as that 'we feel uncomfortable when people abuse our freedom to spoil things, when they have come to our country for that very freedom'. Rutte repeated these messages at several points throughout the campaign, including during the one-on-one televised live debate against the leader of the PVV, Geert Wilders, on the eve of the elections.

In doing so, he emulated the strategy waged by his predecessor Frits Bolkestein against an anti-immigration party in the 1990s (van Spanje 2018). Other examples include VB in Belgium, that had been isolated since 1989 and lost unprecedented numbers of votes only after it had been imitated from 2007 onwards (Pauwels 2010) and RN in France, a pariah since the 1980s that incurred dramatic losses after Nicolas Sarkozy had taken the helm at the centre-right party in 2007 (Mayer 2007; Shields 2010). More generally, the parroting the pariah effect has been argued and demonstrated to have an average effect across 39 occasions concerning leftist and rightist parties in 15 countries since 1944 (van Spanje 2018).

In the elections which followed in France and Germany however, the parroting the pariah strategy does not appear to have been adopted. In France, the situation was less clear than in Germany. The candidate of the centre-right, François Fillon, can certainly be considered a parrot, who

beat the more moderate candidate Alain Juppé. However, to what extent he ostracized the anti-immigration party of concern, RN, is unclear. Moreover, in April he failed to make it to the second round of the presidential elections following a political scandal, which led to his loss of control of the centre-right party.

In Germany, the centre-right Prime Minister Angela Merkel had repeatedly solemnly sworn to never cooperate with the anti-immigration AfD. At the same time, since she had opened the German borders to over 890,000 refugees, predominantly from Syria, she had a radically different reputation on immigration issues than AfD. To sum up, she treated AfD as a pariah yet did not parrot that party—at least, in the eyes of most German voters she is unlikely to be seen that way.

Regardless, in light of the present study the extent to which the established centre-right parties have actually responded to anti-immigration parties through isolation and imitation may not matter. Instead, what matters is the extent to which voters recognize these responses, as these perceptions are expected to influence their likelihood to vote for the anti-immigration party. After all, for voters it is their perceptions, opinions and understandings of the political arena which ultimately aid in determining their vote choice. We thus asked voters in all three countries about their perceptions.

Data

To assess our hypotheses, we relied on panel survey data pertaining to the Dutch ($n=1,239$), French ($n=2,198$), and German ($n=3,453$) elections of 2017.

The source of the Dutch data was a study by van Praag and De Vreese (2017), fielded by the ESOMAR-compliant firm Kantar Public using CAWI. A sample of 2,144 respondents, representative of the Dutch electorate, was drawn from the Kantar Public database, which at the time of selection comprised 159,000 eligible Dutch voters. The respondents were interviewed in four waves. The first wave was mid-October 2016, and field work for the fourth—in which our key variables were measured—was conducted in the week that followed the 15 March Dutch general election, between 17–21 March 2017. In that wave 1,351 respondents were left, 1,239 of which answered both the parroting and the pariah question.

The French data sources were wave 16 and 17 of the DYNAMOB voter panel. This is a panel study for which respondents were invited to participate at least four times a year from 2013 until 2017. Respondents were provided with a free tablet and internet access to administer their answers and to limit attrition. The survey focused on 'Dynamics of Mobilization'. A team of researchers affiliated with Sciences Po Paris (CEE, CEVIPOF), Sciences Po Bordeaux (CED), Sciences Po Grenoble (Pacte) and the University of Montpellier (CEPEL) designed the questionnaires and collected the data. The National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies INSEE drew two random samples from census data in 2011 and 2014, adding up to 13,500 households in France (without Corsica). The sampling was stratified in multiple ways as well as clustered. From each household, French-speaking individuals between 18 and 79 years old who did not intend to move out within three months were randomly selected and recruited face-to-face, by mail or by phone. Both the ESOMAR-compliant agencies—TNS Sofres and Ipsos—were involved in the interviewing. Data was collected between 11 May and 9 June 2017 (wave 16), and between 19 June and 26 July 2017 (wave 17). The two-round elections took place on 23 April and the 7 May 2017 (presidential) and on 11 and 18 June (legislative). A total 2,297 respondents participated in both waves, of which 2,198 answered both the parroting and the pariah question.

The German data originate from the GESIS panel. This is a mixed-method access panel hosted by the GESIS Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Mannheim. It surveyed a sample that was representative of the German adult population. In 2013, permanent residents in Germany between 18 and 70 years of age were recruited using face-to-face interviews so that a total 4,900 participated in the first wave in early 2014. In 2016 a new sample of 18+ respondents was drawn from the General Social Survey (ALLBUS). In the present research we use information about these respondents from waves a11, d11, a12, d12 (demographics), eb (left-right self-placement), ec (various), and ed (intention to vote for the AfD). The field work dates for the relevant waves were from the 19th of April until the 13th of June (eb), from 14 June to 15 August (ec), and from 12–23 September (ed). The German general election took place the next day, on 24 September 2017. A total of 3,453 respondents answered the questions used in our analysis.

Measurements

The dependent variable was anti-immigration party support. This was measured in each country firstly through propensity to vote items, which aimed to capture the electoral utility of the relevant anti-immigration party amongst the electorate (see van der Eijk et al. 2006). Secondly, in the Netherlands we measured support through vote choice in the 2017 general election. This was also measured in France, where vote intention data was also available. In the case of France, intent and vote choice were measured for both the presidential and legislative elections of 2017. Vote choice was not available in the German data, instead we rely on vote intention in the 2017 general election which was measured in the 12 days right before that election. We have opted for multiple measures of the dependent variables in each country so as to be maximally confident in our findings.

The three key independent variables were party parroted status, party pariah status, and voter policy-orientation. With regard to parroted and pariah status, voter perceptions of both imitation and ostracism of the relevant anti-immigration party were measured in each context by the brand-new indicators. Two questions were added to each of these datasets: a question on isolating and a question on imitating. These questions were specifically designed for this study. The questions were: 'To what extent do you expect [the centre-right party] to cooperate with [the anti-immigration party] the next few years?' (isolating) and 'To what extent do you consider the immigration policy positions of [the centre-right party] different from those of [the anti-immigration party]' (imitating). The answers to these questions were measured on a scale ranging from 1 'rule out all cooperation' to 7 'will cooperate if necessary' (isolating) and from 1 '[the centre-right party] exactly the same as [the anti-immigration party]' to 7 '[the centre-right party] totally different from [the

anti-immigration party]’ (imitating).⁴ Both questions included a ‘do not know’ option. They were asked in the week after the Dutch elections, just ahead of the French legislative elections, and more than a month before the German elections. In each country we focused on only one anti-immigration party. In the Netherlands the relevant anti-immigration party was the PVV, in France RN, and in Germany AfD.

Table 4.1. Descriptive statistics of the parroting and pariah variables

| | Parroting | Pariah |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| France (N = 2,198) | 3.88 (1.60) | 4.37 (1.70) |
| Germany (N = 3,453) | 2.55 (1.56) | 5.86 (1.53) |
| Netherlands (N = 1,239) | 3.37 (1.57) | 5.64 (1.31) |

Note: Entries are means, with standard deviations in parentheses.

In Table 13.1 we show the descriptive statistics of our parroting and pariah measures. As both variables are measured from 1 to 7, we observe that on average German respondents think that the centre-right party does not parrot the anti-immigration party and that the anti-immigration party is treated as a pariah—which is in line with common knowledge, as mentioned above. Dutch respondents observed slightly less pariah status and considerably more parroting than in Germany, which also makes sense. In France, the perceptions are on average less pronounced, perhaps due to the fact that the concepts of isolating and imitating are less amenable to a majoritarian context. In all three countries, the entire range of potential answers was used by respondents. But with regard to the pariah measure,

4 Besides language differences, the questions differed slightly from country to country. In the Netherlands, respondents were asked about ‘other parties’ cooperating, not just VVD (from 2010 to 2012 the PVV formally lent support to a minority government of VVD and CDA). Also, respondents were asked about both VVD and CDA imitating, and we took the mean of these responses. In France, the phrase ‘differs from’ was replaced by ‘is the same as or differs from’ to introduce more balance. In addition, given the particular context the isolation question was changed to ‘To what extent do you expect Marine Le Pen to implement immigration policy in the coming years?’ with the answering options ranging from ‘Le Pen will be unable to implement any policies’ (1) to ‘Le Pen will surely implement many policies’ (7). In Germany, ‘immigration policy’ was translated ‘Flüchtlingspolitik’, which literally means ‘refugee policy’ but was recommended by German experts because a literal translation would confuse respondents. Finally, in Germany a propensity to vote AfD question was added (using a mandatory 1–7 scale), whereas in the Dutch and French versions a propensity to vote battery of questions was already included (using a 1–10 scale).

the relative high mean in the Netherlands and especially Germany led to a considerable skew in the distribution.

A voter's policy-orientation in terms of immigration policy was measured in three ways—based on questions on the importance of immigration policy, based on the 'most important problem' question, and based on questions tapping attitudes toward immigration. In the Netherlands, respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they considered various policy issues important—including 'immigration and immigrant integration'. These items were measured using a scale which ranged from '1' ('not important') to '7' ('extremely important'). In France, answers to the open question of what the respondent felt the most important issue facing the country was were coded '1' if it mentioned 'immigration' or 'law and order' or 'terrorism', and '0' otherwise. In addition, the French respondents were asked a battery of questions about immigration in particular, the answers to which were recoded to form a scale where a score of '1' represented weaker anti-immigrant attitudes through to '4' representing stronger anti-immigrant attitudes. A scale concerning immigration attitudes was also built in the German context, however this instead ran through to the score of '5' which represented stronger anti-immigrant attitudes. See Appendix A13 for the questions about immigration in France and Germany.

Control variables were also used to account for other predictors of anti-immigration party support outside of those hypothesized. In each country we controlled for age, gender, education level, and left-right position. In the Netherlands and Germany, we controlled for an individuals' degree of political satisfaction, while in France we included political apathy. In the tests that are marked 'with controls', we also kept constant political interest,⁵ attitudes toward immigrants, and immigration issue importance. Again, see Appendix A13 for the question wordings.

Methodology

As we did not harbour strong predictions concerning national differences and in light of the small N of included countries, we instead focused on similarities across the three in order to increase confidence in any trends which emerged from the data.

5 Political interest was repeatedly measured in all three countries, and a respondent's average score across these repeated items was used to determine their self-reported level of interest.

Data were analysed per country, using multiple linear and binary logistic regression analyses as appropriate. Three types of dependent variable were employed to test the hypotheses; propensity to vote for the anti-immigration party (all), anti-immigration party vote intention in a future election (in France and Germany) and anti-immigration party vote choice in an actual election (in the Netherlands and France). Multiple linear regression was used for hypothesis testing where propensity to vote for the anti-immigration party was the dependent variable, while binary logistic regression was used for vote intention and vote choice (i.e. respondents indicated they intended to vote or voted for the anti-immigration party, or they did not). Each hypothesis was tested in each national context first by including only the independent, dependent and where appropriate, interaction variables. In a second test for each hypothesis, the relevant control variables were added to the models.

To test the hypotheses concerning policy-oriented voters' susceptibility to the strategies, interaction variables were created. For this, voters who placed the most importance on immigration (in the Netherlands and France) or that held the strongest anti-immigrant attitudes (in France and Germany)—deemed most involved with the issue of immigration and therefore policy oriented—were assigned the value '1' while others were assigned '0'. See Appendix A13 for a detailed description of how immigration importance and anti-immigrant attitudes were measured.

Results⁶

We found strong support for just one of our hypothesized expectations. Before controlling for other relevant factors, for all hypotheses we found considerably more support than would be expected based on random chance alone. When including the appropriate controls, however, only

6 We also tested the susceptibility of two other groups of voters to these strategies. First, female voters were presumed to be more susceptible to the pariah effect and the combined parroting the pariah strategy due to their expected higher susceptibility to social cues and greater importance which they attach to a party's reputation (Harteveld and Ivarstlaten 2016). However, little evidence was found to support these assumptions, suggesting that gender plays no role in determining an individual's susceptibility to imitation and isolation strategies. Second, we tested the extent to which the parroting, pariah and parroting the pariah hypotheses held up more strongly amongst the most politically interested voters than amongst other voters, in analogy to the argument about policy-oriented voters (van Spanje 2018). This, however, yielded underwhelming results. This suggests that for the parrot hypothesis it is the policy oriented rather than politically interested who are most affected, and for the other hypotheses no group seems affected at all.

the Pariah Hypothesis holds up (H3)—and, to some extent, also the Parrot Hypothesis regarding policy-oriented voting (H2). See Table 13.2.

Table 4.2: Level of empirical support for each of our hypotheses

| H# | Party is... | Effect amongst... | Number of tests | Proportion of tests supportive of H |
|----|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| H1 | parroted | all | 8 | 0% |
| H2 | parroted | policy oriented | 12 | 42% |
| H3 | pariah | all | 8 | 83% |
| H4 | pariah | policy oriented | 12 | 17% |
| H5 | parroted pariah | all | 8 | 0% |
| H6 | parroted pariah | policy oriented | 12 | 0% |

Note: 'Proportion of tests supportive of H' is weighted so that each of the three countries contributed equally, because the French data allowed for more tests than the Dutch and German data.

The parroting effect

Firstly, we expected that when voters considered an anti-immigration party parroted by the established centre-right party in their country, they would be less likely to support that party (H1). We find support for this hypothesis in the Netherlands (2 out of 2 tests), and in France (3 out of 4 tests). As shown in Table 13.2, however, these effects were no longer significant once control variables were added. In the Dutch case, we find support for both propensity to vote for the PVV and for voting for the PVV on Election Day—but only without controls. A similar case can be seen in France, where the propensity to vote RN, the intention to vote RN in the legislative elections and also voting for Le Pen in the presidential elections all decreased as perceptions of Les Républicains parroting RN increased. Also here, these effects lost their statistical significance when controlling for additional contributing factors. Furthermore, it appears that parroting had no effect on RN voting in the legislative elections, neither with nor without controls. In the German case, we find no lower AfD support amongst voters who felt CDU-CSU parroted its core policy position in any of our models. We conclude that there is no support for H1.

Our second hypothesis posited that perceptions of a parroting anti-immigration party would diminish policy-oriented voters' support for the party. Without controls, this was corroborated in 42% of our tests, which is the weighted mean of the Dutch (2 of out 2 tests), French (2 out of 8 tests) and German cases (0 out of 2 tests). When taking into account appropriate controls, this remains the same—thus, still a 42% proportion, see Table 13.2. Full support was found for both PVV tests with and without controls, and for two tests of the propensity to vote RN in France (one using immigration importance and one using anti-immigrant attitudes), also both with and without controls. In these cases, policy-oriented voters became significantly less likely to vote for an anti-immigration party when they believed the main right party imitated its position. No evidence was found for any of the other RN tests, or for any of the AfD tests. We conclude that we find some empirical evidence in support of H2.

The Pariah Effect

Our third hypothesis concerned the pariah effect—that voters who considered an anti-immigration party ostracized would be less likely to vote for that party. We found strong support for this before controls (4 out of 8 tests), and even stronger after controls (6 out of 8 tests). In the latter case the pariah effect was vindicated in the Netherlands (2 out of 2 tests) and Germany (2 out of 2 tests), and limited support in France (2 out of 4 tests). This adds up to 83% support when weighted across countries—see Table 13.2. Dutch voters who perceived the PVV as ostracized were significantly less likely to vote for the PVV both in the 2017 general election in particular and in the future, both even after controlling for additional factors. In France we find evidence of the pariah effect with regard to the propensity to vote RN, and the Le Pen presidential vote. These however are only observed once additional confounding variables are kept constant within the model—not without controls, and not concerning the RN vote or RN vote intentions. In Germany, the more AfD was viewed as a pariah, the more both propensity to vote AfD in general, and intention to vote AfD in the 2017 election decreased, both also after controlling for other relevant factors. Figure 13.2 provides a graphic representation of how the intention to vote for the AfD in the 12 days before the general election was affected by perceiving AfD as a pariah two months earlier.

Figure 4.1. The predicted proportion of voting for the AfD by values of pariah status

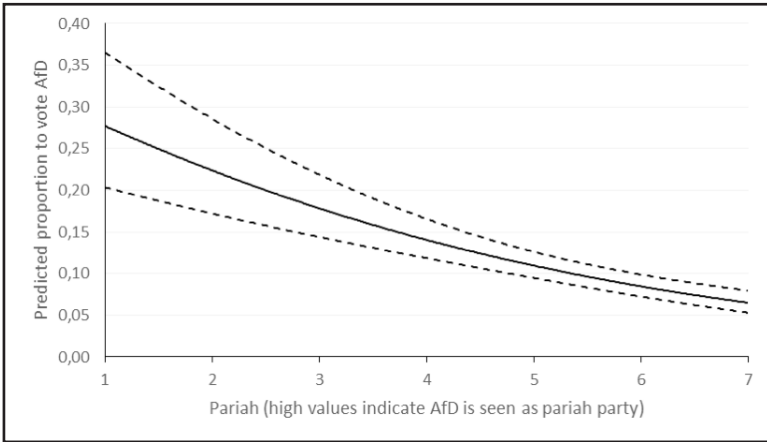


Figure 13.1 is quite suggestive, showing that voters' intention to vote for the AfD decreased as its pariah status increased in their eyes. To recap, pariah status reduced anti-immigration party support in the Dutch and German multiparty settings, yet perhaps less so in the majoritarian French context.

Our fourth hypothesis, by contrast, only found support in one test in Germany (17%, see Table 13.2). That is, three tests in France do not hold up after controlling for other relevant variables. As voters were more worried about immigration and perceived RN more as a pariah, their propensity to vote RN declined, and at the same time they became less likely to vote for Le Pen. Similarly, as voters were more anti-immigration considered RN ostracized to a greater extent, their RN vote intention went down. However, only the effect in Germany, on propensity to vote for the AfD, was robust to the inclusion of controls. As all other tests of H4 failed, only 1 in 8 resulted in support for this hypothesis.⁷ Thus, the hypothesis that the pariah effect would be stronger as voters are more policy oriented was not supported.

⁷ When we consider those voters who are maximally policy oriented concerning immigration in a dichotomous way instead of the entire degree of policy orientation (just as we did as an additional analysis for H2), the proportion of tests supportive of H4 decreases from 17% to 4%.

The Parroting the Pariah Effect

Our two final hypotheses concern the parroting the pariah effect. As shown in Table 13.2, none of our tests resulted in support of H5. This was the case regardless of putting the appropriate control variables in the models or not.

Our sixth hypothesis was not corroborated either. In only one of our models we found that the more policy oriented the voters, the more susceptible they were to the parroting the pariah strategy. This case pertains to anti-immigrant attitudes and the intention to vote for RN, and only without controls. After controlling, again 0% of support was left, see Table 13.2.⁸

Discussion

Can established parties discourage voters from casting a vote for an anti-immigration party? In elections across Europe, this has been, and continues to be, a major question that the political establishment and interested citizens alike are pondering. In the three 2017 key general elections, news headlines focused on the electoral performances of the PVV, RN, and AfD. In this chapter, we have analysed to what extent voters were dissuaded from voting for one of these parties, which voters, and under which circumstances.

We have found evidence for two of our six hypotheses. This said, the proportion of tests corroborating these two hypotheses differed considerably, 42% for H2 and 83% for H3. In addition, consistent evidence mainly stemmed from Dutch tests for H2, and from tests in all three countries for H3.

In the Dutch and French cases, we found some evidence that support for an anti-immigration party decreased when other parties imitated that party as voters were more driven by immigration policy (H2). In Germany, we did not consistently find this. Our hunch is that the wider gap in immigration policy position in Germany (between the AfD and Prime Minister Angela Merkel's party) makes it plausible that German voters who nonetheless saw large degrees of imitation belonged to either

8 As a robustness check, we replaced the dichotomous variable concerning policy-orientation with the continuous one, just as we did for H2 and H4. As a result, the proportion of tests resulting in support of H6 increases to just 17%, which is still not much higher than what would be expected based on mere chance.

a group of multiculturalists or a group of voters who were uninformed regarding immigration policy, neither of whom are likely to vote for the AfD anyway.

The (albeit limited) evidence for the parrot thesis lends support to arguments of earlier scholarship. In the eyes of the voter, and particularly the policy-oriented voter, centre-right parties which moved closer to the immigration policy of their anti-immigration parties appeared to be successful at diminishing those parties' support base, in line with the claims made by Meguid (2005), Schain (2006) and Art (2006). Such a finding is important not necessarily for the established party to attempt to woo anti-immigration party voters, but rather as a tactic to divert those anti-immigration party votes elsewhere. By addressing the issue of immigration in a similar fashion, the established party is able to diminish anti-immigration party support, and therefore limit the growth and power of the anti-immigration party politically.

Ostracizing a party, or at least voters believing a party to be ostracized, proved an effective tactic in the Netherlands and Germany, and to some extent this may also be the case in France (H3). In the majoritarian environment in France, this worked less well than in the Dutch and German multiparty contexts. This makes sense, as parties in the Netherlands and Germany have to cooperate with others to have policies enacted, so that ostracism may affect the calculations of Dutch and German policy-minded voters more than those of their French counterparts. Note that the pariah effect finding is in line with observations made by Schikhof (1998) and by Art (2006, 2011), and in accordance with a study of election results of communist parties during the Cold War in 15 West European countries between 1944 and 1989 (van Spanje 2018). However, it counters various analyses concerning anti-immigration parties in these countries in recent decades (van Spanje 2018).

Interestingly, we did not find the pariah effect to be stronger amongst more policy-oriented voters (H4). This may be an indication that voters' tendency to avoid a party with pariah status goes beyond its uselessness for policy-making. Similarly, we failed to find a general Parrot Effect (H1). With regard to the combined strategy of parroting the pariah, this appeared to be not effective in reducing anti-immigration party support (H5), not even amongst policy-oriented ones (H6). This is not very surprising in France and Germany, where simply no isolating and imitating occurred. In the Dutch case, however, this is surprising given experimental evidence of the parroting the pariah effect on the PVV (van

Spanje 2018), and given indications from earlier waves: Of those who found the VVD incapable of handling the immigration issue, 68% stuck to the PVV in the three months before the 2017 general election, whereas only 32% of those who found the VVD capable did. However, the specific questions on isolating and imitating analysed for this chapter were asked only after the election, together with reported vote choice, which may have contaminated the effects. So, earlier waves did not have these particular questions to rely on, and the questions may have been asked too late to detect any parroting of the pariah effect in the 2017 Dutch context.

Furthermore, it is interesting that voter perceptions vary considerably. For example, quite a few German voters observed 'parroting.' This is striking, because, due to Merkel's earlier refugee policy, the position of the CDU-CSU on immigration to us seems radically different to that of the AfD. These remarkable results underline the importance of asking voters about their perceptions of party politics rather than relying on other observers.

Our findings are quite intuitive. For example, the two hypotheses that find support are that voters are reluctant to vote for pariahs (H3), and that voters who worry about immigration tend to vote for an anti-immigration party more often if they see larger policy differences with the centre-right (H2). This said, endogeneity problems loom large. Concerning H3, there are indications that anti-immigration party support affects pariah perceptions rather than the other way round. This means our analyses may overestimate the pariah effect (H3). However, once controlling for various other relevant factors, the findings hold up in even more cases than without controls, which is a good sign. Moreover, the finding for AfD vote intention in September, months after measuring perceptions, makes us quite confident that there is a pariah effect. Turning to H2, the data indicate that perceived policy differences between parties systematically differ with the voter's stance on the issue. This opens up the possibility that, rather than those who perceive large differences with the main right party voting for an anti-immigration party, it is anti-immigration party supporters who tend to see a large gap. In other words, that there is a selection effect at play here rather than an effect of perceptions. Also for H2, however, we found that even after controlling for relevant factors the findings remained significant in three cases, which is reassuring. Furthermore, AfD vote intention was affected although asked several months after having tapped voter perceptions about the AfD, which also increases confidence in our findings.

Our chapter has several substantial shortcomings. First, this research was conducted in only three countries during one election in each country. On the one hand, it is perfectly possible that in these widely-advertised fights against ‘the wrong sort of populism’ results are more pronounced than in other times and places, particularly contexts in which immigration issues are less salient. On the other hand, ‘populist’ electoral successes in other countries and constant media attention highlighting anti-immigration party support could have served to enhance the legitimacy of the three anti-immigration parties under study. This could cause voters to become less susceptible to effects of isolating and imitating. Future studies, involving multiple elections across multiple contexts, should cross-validate our findings in other contexts, also re-testing the parroting the pariah effect.

Keeping in mind these limitations, it is important that we have for the first time tested voters’ perceptions of isolating and imitating, and found further evidence that either of the two can be an effective means of diminishing anti-immigration party support. The combined strategy appears to have had little effect in these recent examples. Considering that both experimental and non-experimental research has highlighted this as an effective means of reducing anti-immigration party support, this finding is quite surprising. Dutch Prime Minister Rutte may boast about it but there is little evidence that his strategy worked. Various reasons can be mentioned for this, including his own low credibility because of a series of promises he had not delivered on in earlier years, his short-term decision to ostracize his rival, and the fact that the PVV was an already established party in 2017. However, it will take the academic community a long time to reach consensus on the electoral effectiveness of his strategic ploy, if ever they do. By that time, Rutte will have proceeded to a next career move, propelled by the apparent success in his fight against ‘the wrong sort of populism’.

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Appendix A13: Question wordings

Netherlands

- Education level: 1=lower secondary or less, 2=higher secondary, 3=bachelor or uni, 4=master and above
- Left–right position: 1=right, 11=left, reverse code of variable DV90
- Political interest was asked on a scale running from 1 ('none at all') through 7 ('a lot')
- Immigration salience: 1=not at all important; 7=very important scale, mean of the variables CV130_2 and CV130_10
- Political satisfaction, scale of the mean of items CV740_1_COR through CV740_5_COR

France

- Education level: 1= Lower Secondary, 2=Higher secondary, 3=Bachelor or uni, 4=Master and above, recode of variable ea17_B18_rec
- Left–right position: 0=Right, 10=Left
- Political interest was measured on a scale which runs from 1 (‘very little interest’) through 4 (‘a lot of interest’), recoded from variables dn16_INTPOL, dn16_INTPRE2, ea17_I1
- Immigration salience: 1=immigration or terrorism or crime mentioned as most important, 0=something else mentioned as most important
- Immigration attitude: 1=pro-immigration attitude, 4=anti-immigration attitude, recodes of variables dn16_ETH2MUSU, dn16_ETH1ENRI, and MANY_IMM1
- Political apathy: 0 = lowest political apathy, 1=highest political apathy, a scale based on the items DEM_FUNC, POLS_CARE, MPS_CARE, POL_COMP, CHANGE_LEAD, and CHANGE_VOTE

Germany

- Education level: 1=Lower Secondary, 2=Higher secondary, 3=Bachelor/uni/higher technical college degree/master above, based on zEDU, and on variables d11d086b and a11d086b
- Left–right position: 1=Right, 11=Left
- Political interest was gauged by a scale from 1 (‘very little interest’) through 5 (‘very interested’), recodes of variables ecbo080a and ebzc001a
- Immigration attitude: 1=pro-immigration attitude, 5=anti-immigration attitude, scale based on mean of reversely coded eczj113a, eczj114a, eczj119a, and eczj120a
- Political satisfaction: mean of scale using variables ecbo081a, ecbo084a, and ecbo087a, recoded into 0=low political satisfaction, 1=high satisfaction

BREXIT: A Referendum Vote with a Contested Outcome

Richard Rose

Introduction

A referendum is a decisive vote on a single day, the outcome of which, however, is not decisive. It is thus one event in a long and dynamic process with causes that go well back in time and with uncertain consequences that stretch into the indeterminate future. In the case of the 2016 British referendum on withdrawing from the European Union, the causes go back to the Second World War and its aftermath, when Britain was the only major country not to be defeated and occupied. In a sense, the Brexit vote marked a return to the policy of the 1950s, when the Attlee and Churchill governments declined to participate in drafting European institutions that were authorized by the 1957 Treaty of Rome (Rose 1960; Young 1998; Bishop 2018).

Unlike what happens when the opposition party enters Downing Street the day after the winning a majority of seats in the House of Commons, the referendum majority for Brexit (that is, Britain leaving the European Union) could not be implemented the next day. This is because no one in Westminster or in Brussels knew what Brexit would mean in practice. Uncertainty was magnified when Theresa May became prime minister and pledged to the malleable silly putty principle: Brexit means Brexit. The effective meaning will be given to this slogan only by the approval of an Act of Parliament. Given the split over Europe within both the Conservative and Labour parties, neither May nor Jeremy Corbyn can control or even predict how many of their MPs will follow the party whip in critical votes on Brexit in the House of Commons. Even less pre

dictable are the amendments the House of Lords will impose. The prime minister's loss of a government majority after unnecessarily calling a general election in June 2017 has increased uncertainty by requiring a coalition of MPs from more than one party to secure a Commons majority giving statutory meaning to the referendum vote for the principle of withdrawal.

Any Brexit bill is subject to the constraints of a bounded democracy. Whatever British politicians would like it to include, it will require the assent of the European Union as well. Securing agreement involves a process of negotiation between representatives of the British government seeking a deal that Eurosceptic Tory MPs will support, and EU officials with the priority of maintaining the acceptance of EU obligations by its member states. To secure a parliamentary majority, British negotiators want to keep a maximum number of benefits with virtually no obligations. To prevent Brexit from undermining its authority, the EU cannot allow a departing country to have more benefits at less cost than the remaining 27 member states. In the absence of each side's red lines turning pink, the default position is that the United Kingdom will cease to belong to the EU in March 2019. This will give the new European Commission and Parliament that enter office in summer 2019 more time to deal with major problems of European integration without being encumbered by the objections of the UK, which has been opposing further steps to European integration ever since the European Economic Community became the European Union.

Long-term dynamics

For almost three-quarters of a century the British policy toward Europe has gone back and forth between opting out and opting in. The British response to the initial steps creating European institutions was to reject membership. In the 1960s both Conservative and Labour prime ministers hesitantly explored opting in to the nascent European institutions, but their efforts were unsuccessful. Uniquely amongst British politicians, Edward Heath shared the commitment to European integration of continental prime ministers and led negotiations culminating in 1973 that saw the UK join the European Economic Community with limited impact on member states. Critics on the left and the right, such as Anthony Benn and Enoch Powell, attacked joining as a threat to the sovereignty of the British Parliament. Harold Wilson sought to silence intra-party divisions

by calling a referendum in 1975; it produced a 64.5% vote in favour of retaining membership (Butler and Kitlinger 1976). Margaret Thatcher's commitment to the free market led to a Single European Market. She re-asserted the British readiness to value the EU in exclusively economic terms by securing a rebate on the British contribution to the EU budget.

The readiness of the great majority of member states to adopt policies promoting European integration was met by British resistance to inclusion in an ever-closer Union. To get parliamentary approval of the Maastricht Treaty on the European Union, Prime Minister John Major was forced to call a parliamentary vote of confidence in the government. Prime Minister Tony Blair's desire to promote himself as a leader in Europe was frustrated by domestic opposition. Blair promised a referendum on whether to approve a draft European constitution but did not need to call it because other countries vetoed it. Blair also promised a referendum on Britain joining the Eurozone but did not need to call it because of opposition by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, and the Treasury. In opposition, David Cameron promised a referendum on whether to approve or veto the Lisbon Treaty furthering European integration. An incidental consequence of Prime Minister Gordon Brown delaying calling a general election until 2010 meant that by the time that Cameron entered Downing Street the Lisbon Treaty was in effect. Cameron accepted this as a *fait accompli*.

During the 2010–15 parliament, anti-EU Conservatives switched from a reactive strategy of opposing further European integration to a proactive strategy of seeking a referendum on whether Britain should remain in or leave the European Union. Their influence on David Cameron was strengthened by the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) making withdrawal one of its major goals, and by UKIP winning the most votes in the 2014 election of British Members of the European Parliament. To appease his backbenchers and to reverse the defection of voters to UKIP, Cameron included in the party's 2015 election manifesto a promise to hold a referendum on withdrawal.

When the Conservatives won an absolute majority at that election, the first bill the Conservative government introduced in the new Parliament authorized a referendum on EU membership. Cameron expected that Tory Eurosceptics would be satisfied by him winning additional opt-outs from existing EU policies embedded in the *acquis communautaire*. The EU refused his demands. It feared that acceding to them would cause

a cascade of demands from other member states invoking the British precedent of securing release from clauses of the *acquis* that they disliked. The slight, symbolic concessions Cameron obtained were counterproductive. They demonstrated that the EU would not accept a reduction in the country's European obligations. The only way to achieve this would be by withdrawing from the EU completely.

The stark referendum choice

In contrast to a ballot for electing MPs, a referendum question normally offers a dichotomous choice between two positions on a single issue. Thus, an electorate that had returned MPs from 11 different parties at the 2015 British general election was given a choice between two stark alternatives: *Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?* The wording was chosen following careful evaluation by an independent research institute of how different terms were viewed by focus groups (House of Commons Library 2016). The threshold for winning the referendum—an absolute majority of votes—was abnormally high by the standards of British politics. No British party has won an absolute majority of vote in a general election since 1935.

The structure of a referendum choice differs from public opinion polls about attitudes toward the European Union, which always offer three or more choices. For example, the standard Eurobarometer evaluation of the EU asks: 'Do you think our country's membership of the European Union is a good thing, a bad thing, neither a good thing nor a bad thing, or don't you know?' This gives respondents the chance to give an answer that more accurately reflects their state of mind. It also means that the median group of voters usually has neither a positive nor a negative opinion of the European Union (cf. Rose and Borz 2016). A multiplicity of alternatives also means that the winner in an opinion poll has a plurality of votes. By contrast, in a referendum the winner must have an absolute majority of the votes cast. The British parliamentary election practice of converting a plurality of votes into a majority of seats in the House of Commons encouraged the British media and British politicians, including Prime Minister David Cameron, to confuse finishing first in an opinion poll with finishing first in a referendum ballot in which an absolute majority is required for victory.

Campaign alternatives. Political science theories identify three ways in which support may be mobilized in a referendum campaign.

Electors can cast a ballot in keeping with the position of their national party; they can follow a trusted leader; or they can vote on the issue on the referendum ballot (Marsh 2018). Divisions within the two largest parties, including ambiguities about the position of party leaders, left partisans with the task of having to choose which of their party's conflicting positions they preferred. The parties most united on the referendum issue—UKIP, the Liberal Democrats and the Scottish National Party—between them won just 25% of the vote in 2015 and only 12% at the post-referendum election in 2017. The influence of the parties was further reduced by a majority of the electorate no longer trusting any party leader (cf. Rose and Wessels 2018). Electors were therefore encouraged to focus directly on the issue on the referendum ballot: to stay in or to leave the European Union.

The EU had an expressed policy of favouring the United Kingdom remaining a member state. Notwithstanding the billions of euros that the European Commission and European Parliament spend in promoting understanding (that is, positive support) for the EU, it is debarred from taking any actions that could influence voters when a national vote is held. Thus, its public relations teams in EU offices in the UK and Brussels had to abstain from engagement with the British referendum ballot.

Under British law, public recognition and funds were allocated to a pair of officially designated groups to campaign for remaining in and for leaving the EU. Divisions within the major party removed the problem of creating a campaign organization composed of party leaders competing with each other for votes at a parliamentary election. The Conservative Party organization was officially neutral and the Remain group ostentatiously sought to be above party politics. The strategy was made easier by the Conservative Party organization being officially neutral and both major party leaders maintaining low profiles. On the Leave side there were divisions about campaign strategy and tactics. There could be no division on policy, since the referendum ballot offered the same stark dichotomous choice to voters throughout the United Kingdom.

The stark choice of the referendum question was matched by the stark choices that each side made in campaigning for votes. The two sides were not debating with each other about alternative means to a commonly valued goal, such as how to advance Britain's prosperity. Instead, they were debating mutually exclusive goals that each side owned, in an effort to mobilize their own supporters without engaging with what their opponents were saying.

Given the problems of the British and the Eurozone economies since 2008 and before, the Remain campaign followed Kahneman and Tversky (1979) in assuming that people tend to be more averse to risk rather than favouring uncertain benefits. It thus stressed the risk inherent in making a break from the status quo, British membership of the EU. The key risk that the Remain campaign emphasized was damage to the economy. Assumptions drawn from free trade theories about the costs of leaving the EU were fed into sophisticated econometric models to produce numerical data showing down to a tenth of a percentage point the predicted damage to economic growth that leaving the EU would cause. The numbers were publicized without the qualification inherent in any forecast: all other conditions remaining equal. Nor was any sensitivity shown to the error margin inherent in forecasts. The forecasts came not only from campaign groups but also from such institutions as the Bank of England. The forecasts were converted into per capita figures which, when multiplied to represent a four-person household and after being multiplied by a five- or ten-year period, showed that leaving the EU threatened a household loss of thousands of pounds.

A nationwide online survey of 1,517 people conducted by BMG Research at the start of the referendum campaign in March 2016 found that single-minded concentration on the economy was unwise. When the BMG Research Group asked Britons to identify the most important issue facing the country at the start of the 2016 referendum campaign, 36% put immigration and asylum first; only 9 per cent named the national economy (cf. Dennison 2018).

The Leave side emphasized political values from the past. It did not go so far back in history as Labour leader Hugh Gaitskell, who invoked the loss of a thousand years of British [*sic*] history when opposing Harold Macmillan's abortive effort to join what was then the European Economic Community. It invoked the state of Britain as it was in Winston Churchill's lifetime, a global empire and a country that could defend itself alone, and then with American help, while the six founding members of the EU suffered defeat and occupation. It also repeated the charge common in academic writings that the EU had a democratic deficit. Instead of advocating reforms to make the EU more democratic, the campaign advocated withdrawal to regain the full sovereignty of the British Parliament and prevent it from becoming a vassal of Brussels.

The Leave campaign sought to turn the EU's history against itself by emphasizing that the European Economic Community that Britain

had joined in 1973 had been transformed. It is no longer just a common market but a political Union of 28 member states and peoples. Many of these countries are more distant historically than the Anglo-American world in which most British people feel more at home. UKIP campaigners emphasized the threat to Britain from the free movement of people from low-wage countries in Eastern Europe to Britain. To this was added the prospect of an increased influx of asylum seekers and economic immigrants from war-troubled countries on other continents. Ironically, since Britain is outside the Schengen zone it has been far less affected than other EU members by the 2015 initiative of German chancellor to welcome asylum seekers into the EU. Even though leaving the EU would not place controls on immigration to Britain from India, Pakistan and former African colonies, this important distinction was hidden behind the symbolic appeal of taking back control of Britain's borders from Brussels.

Each side mistakenly branded the forecasts of the other side as false facts.¹ This was a category error: forecasts about the future are always a halfway house between historical truths and false facts, because when they are made there is no evidence to prove that they are true or false. They are non-facts that are either more or less supported by logical reasoning and extrapolations from verifiable evidence. By definition, forecasts made during a referendum campaign can be found to be more or less true only after the result is known.

Instead of fear, the Leave side offered a rosy vision of the future in which Britain, free of EU regulations, could establish itself as a global economic force by strengthening links with the old Dominions and the new Commonwealth, with China and with the United States. Few details were offered about how the country would achieve this promised goal in a world that had changed since the UK was the world's biggest trading nation. The Remain campaign dismissed these forecasts as unicorn visions, since there was no evidence of what was promised. Remain campaigners did not want to appear anti-British by arguing that global changes meant that Britain could never regain its past status and needed the European single market of half a billion people high-income countries as a secure base for its economic activity, regardless of what this meant for nominal sovereignty. It could and did cite evidence of the current scale of British trade with Europe and claimed its econometric models based on recent decades made its assumptions better than those of Leavers invoking pre-1939 maps in which almost one-quarter was coloured red to represent the British Empire.

1 <https://fullfact.org/europe/false-claims-forecasts-eu-referendums>.

A majority for change

The dichotomous nature of the referendum ballot produced a clear division of the vote. The 51.9% majority endorsing leaving the EU compares with the minority that was won by every British governing party since 1935. It was also much larger than the vote for the governing party at a recent British parliamentary election. Equally important, it was more than four times that won at the 2015 general election by UKIP, the party most united and most against the EU, and half again larger than the vote that David Cameron's party gained in winning a majority in the House of Commons in 2015. The Remain campaign claimed 16.1 million votes, a very large number by general election standards, but a losing share in a referendum requiring an absolute majority for victory.

The outcome was close in percentage terms and Remain supporters have complained that it is unfair and undemocratic for slightly more than half the electorate to mandate their views on everyone in society. The Leave side has emphasized its majority of more than 1.2 million votes over the losers. This was much greater than that required by the British standard of deciding who wins: a one-vote margin is enough. The turnout of 72.2% added to the authority of the Leave majority. It was more than double the UK turnout at the 2014 European Parliament election and six percentage points higher than the turnout at the 2015 parliamentary election.

The Act of Parliament authorizing the referendum did not contain a clause stating that the referendum decision was binding or advisory; its status was left vague. Legally, the referendum decision was not a binding Act of Parliament. This requires a recommendation by the government of the day and support by both Houses. Politically, the result has been treated as binding in principle. Having campaigned for the UK to remain in the EU, David Cameron resigned as prime minister within hours of the result becoming known. His successor, Theresa May, promptly replaced him unopposed after pledging to uphold the principle 'Brexit means Brexit'. A substantial majority of MPs in both major parties has accepted the principle that a direct democracy referendum majority has greater legitimacy than the traditional principle of British parliamentary democracy that MPs have the sovereign right to make decisions after debating the issues involved. In voting in the 2016 referendum, a majority of MPs in all major parties voted in favour of remaining in the EU.

Unlike many national constitutions, Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union gives any member state the unilateral right to withdraw from membership at any time it chooses to do so. Constitutionally, the British government has the power to notify the EU it is withdrawing. Prime Minister May was under conflicting pressures about the date. Whitehall officials wanted to delay until officials had plans in place to deal with the consequences of withdrawal, while pro-Brexit MPs wanted withdrawal accomplished forthwith, and at the latest within the two-year time limit specified in Article 50 for conducting negotiations about post-Brexit relations between the EU and the UK. Withdrawal was notified nine months after the June 2016 referendum, fixing the UK's becoming a non-member state at a date no later than 29 March 2019.

Political consent is necessary to implement an election commitment, whether stated on a referendum ballot or a party manifesto (Anderson and Mendes 2006). Within Westminster members of the cabinet must first agree the measures that will be put to Parliament and then secure approval by the House of Commons and the House of Lords of a number of complex bills required to replace existing clauses and laws that assume the UK is an EU member state with laws that reflect the legislative sovereignty of the British Parliament.

The groups campaigning for Leave and Remain cannot participate in giving consent to the implementation of the referendum decision because they were ad hoc coalitions that dissolved once the referendum was over, rather than political parties and government ministers. Nor have they left behind detailed plans for implementing Brexit. The Leave campaigners were intent on securing the maximum vote for withdrawal on 23 June 2016. Like opposition parties fighting a parliamentary election, they had little understanding of the difficulties of implementing their promises if they won. Moreover, both sides sought to make themselves appear non-political by giving prominent roles to businesspeople and advocates who were not Members of Parliament, the institution that is necessarily required to give majority consent to whatever is enshrined in the statute book and in treaties as the meaning of Brexit.

As the winners, campaigners for Brexit have been more than happy to give their consent to the 2016 referendum as binding in practice as well as principle and reject any talk of a second referendum. A big majority of Conservative MPs who cast a referendum vote to remain in the EU

and most Labour MPs likewise have accepted that the majority vote for withdrawal from the EU vote must be accepted. However, there is no agreement within either group about whether the consequences of Brexit should be hard, avoiding the obligations that go with maintaining participation in EU activities deemed to be to Britain's advantage, or soft, keeping significant economic and related links at the cost of accepting related EU legislation and sharing in EU administrative costs.

Theresa May became the unopposed choice of Conservative MPs as prime minister in July 2016 by pledging 'Brexit means Brexit' without spelling out what this means in practice. Since then she has been hesitant to set out an agenda for domestic legislation implementing Brexit or to propose an agenda of terms that the European Union will accept as suitable for the UK negotiating an agreement about the its relationship with the EU after it ceases to be a member state. After calling an election in June 2017 and spectacularly losing her majority, the prime minister has hesitated to state a view of her own about what Brexit will mean in practice for fear that this will lead to her deposition from Downing Street by a vote of Conservative MPs. Nor has she been able to stop Conservative cabinet ministers from campaigning publicly for conflicting hard and soft Brexit options and ridiculing proposals tentatively floated by Downing Street with her approval.

Campaigners for remaining in the EU have been divided about whether or how to give consent to leave it. Unlike academics free of electoral accountability, who can emphasize that the traditional doctrine of parliamentary democracy allows MPs to implement withdrawal, most MPs who voted Remain do not want to vote against the referendum verdict. Labour, the official opposition party, is divided. The official policy, backed by Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters, is to accept withdrawal to escape from pro-market EU policies inconsistent with left-wing Labour policies, while maintaining pro-labour social policies. An alternative approach is to agree to membership in the customs union and single market, with all the obligations these entail, including the particularly welcome protection for workers' rights and manufacturing jobs. Whereas the Socialist option has no support from other MPs, maintaining significant engagement with single market policies has some cross-party support, including from pro-EU Tory MPs and business groups.

Conflicting opinions about the meaning of Brexit are compounded by uncertainties about whether the House of Commons and the House

of Lords will approve whatever proposal May presents to Brussels and even greater uncertainty about whether parliamentary majorities will approve whatever agreement she might bring back that is acceptable both to European Union authorities and to Downing Street (Rose 2018). The uncertainties arise from the Conservative Party lacking a majority of MPs in the Commons and being in a minority in the Lords. To be sure of a majority, the party requires the support of the Northern Ireland Democratic Unionist Party. The Labour opposition would need to add the united support of at least four other parties to come close to rejecting a government policy unanimously backed by Conservative MPs. Since neither of the two largest parties is united on fundamental features of Brexit, the outcome of a decisive Commons vote on Brexit will be determined by how many Conservative MPs defect from the government's proposal; how united Labour MPs are in voting against the proposal; and what position other parties take on the final proposal that the Conservative government puts to Parliament.

Interdependence creates a bounded democracy

The theory and practice of British parliamentary democracy are national. A general election gives the government of the day the legitimacy to take whatever decision it wants as long as it is endorsed by a majority of MPs and not in contradiction of readily amended Acts of Parliament. The introduction of referendums has made a direct democracy majority a second source of legitimacy.

A structural challenge. The theory of national democracy is limited, being confined to policy-making in a closed political system. It assumes that, on its own or following a referendum, Parliament can make effective decisions independent of external constraints. This is the case as long as the object is solely within the power of the national government, for example, a referendum about election laws or legislation concerning local government. The old distinction between first-order national politics and second-order European politics is increasingly eroded as institutions of multilevel governance are engaged in making intermestic policies that have both an international dimension and domestic implications. When this is the case, the outcome of what a national government does is bounded by what is done by other governments, not least the United States; intergovernmental institutions such as the United Nations and the European Union; and international markets in currency and such com

modities as oil (Keohane and Nye 2001; Rose 2015, chapter 7). For European countries as well as the United Kingdom, interdependence has a major effect on the outcome of policies on refugees and migration, trade, interest rates and the foreign exchange value of the euro, the pound and the dollar.

In dealing with problems of interdependence, all national democracies are bounded democracies (Rose 2014). The leaders of small states recognize this as a fact of life, whether they have a single big neighbour like Austria has, or band together to increase their visibility and potential visibility, as is the case with the Benelux countries. They know from experience that whatever is decided nationally will be indecisive unless it takes into account or is co-ordinated with what other countries do. The attraction of the European Union is that it offers every member state juridical equality, for example, a seat at the table when discussions are held; and voting rights weighted to require a concurring majority of small and big states (Rose and Trechsel 2013).

For centuries after the English Crown gave up Calais in 1558 and Sir Francis Drake sailed around the world, the Crown has always been involved in a global system of political interdependence. However, Britain's position has changed radically from being the dominant economic power as the first industrial nation and ruler of a global empire (Bishop 2018). Britain's leaders from Churchill to Blair have been ready to proclaim that the country still has the capacity to punch above its economic and military weight in Washington, in the European Union and globally. They have been unwilling to accept that the British Parliament can no longer decide the outcome of all the policies for which it is nominally responsible. The popular British press has recognized interdependence only to denounce it and argue for making first-order national politics the only influence on decisions facing Britain.

To assess how the British public views interdependence, I designed a battery of survey questions addressing four areas of policy which necessarily involve interdependence: the global economy, military threats, immigration and terrorism. The questions were asked in a nationwide sample survey of conducted by BMG Research three months before the 2016 referendum. Respondents were asked how much risk they thought Britain faced in each area: a big risk, a fair amount, not much risk, no risk or they had no opinion.

Notwithstanding the insular appeal of the Leave campaign to take back control of government policies, a big majority of British people realize that there is no drawbridge that can be pulled up to isolate the country from the risks that arise beyond its shores. Terrorism was seen as the chief risk to the country. An absolute majority, 55%, thought it was a big risk and an additional third that it offered a fair amount of risk. Immigration came second: for 47% it presented a big risk to Britain and almost one-third thought it fairly risky. By contrast, only 22% thought problems in the global economy a big risk to the country. There is, nonetheless, awareness that problems in the global economy could constitute a fair amount of risk. Fear of military threats was much lower. Only one in eight saw this as a big threat, and an absolute majority saw little or no risk from military action.

In response to risks, a government has three broad choices: to emphasize self-reliance; working with a select ally on a particular issue; or dealing with common problems through an intergovernmental institution. The referendum ballot was confined to asking about Britain's participation in the European Union. However, this is not the only intergovernmental institution with which the United Kingdom is involved in dealing with common policies for intermestic problems. It relies on NATO for military security; it has a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council; and it has special relationships affecting immigration and terrorism with countries within the Commonwealth. The Remain campaign concentrated exclusively on the importance of the UK dealing with interdependent problems within the European Union. By contrast, the Leave campaign tended to emphasize dealing with immigration by pulling up a notional drawbridge, while dealing with the economy by concentrating on global rather than European trade.

To determine which, if any, intergovernmental institutions Britons believed would be best to work with, respondents were asked which of the following could best help Britain deal with the problem named. Five alternatives were offered in the same order for each question: the United Nations, the European Union, the United States, plus Britain must be able to look after itself on its own, and don't know.

Table 5.1 Share of British voters answering who can best help Britain address major issues (%)

| | UN | EU | USA | Look after ourselves | Don't know |
|-------------------------|----|----|-----|----------------------|------------|
| Problem | | | | | |
| <i>Global economy</i> | 8 | 18 | 6 | 46 | 22 |
| <i>Military threats</i> | 26 | 8 | 20 | 26 | 20 |
| <i>Immigration</i> | 6 | 19 | 1 | 59 | 15 |
| <i>Terrorism</i> | 23 | 11 | 14 | 34 | 18 |
| Average | 16 | 14 | 10 | 41 | 19 |

Source: BMG Research online survey of a stratified sample of 1,517 respondents, 17–23 February 2016.

The most common view, given on average by 41% of respondents, is that the best way for Britain to deal with major problems of interdependence is that the country must look after itself. By default, this strategy is passively supported by the one in five who do not know if any political institution can deal with major risks. This view appears to be an expression less of bulldog nationalism than of uncertainty about whether there is any institution—the United Nations, the American government or the European Union—that can offer effective help.

An average of only one in seven think the European Union is best suited to help Britain deal with major problems. The proportion rises to 19% seeing the EU as best suited to help Britain deal with problems of immigration, an issue of major importance in referendum voting. The alternative endorsed by the Leave campaign—Britain must be free to look after immigration on its own—was endorsed by more than three times as many people (Table). Similarly, almost one in five valued the EU for help in dealing with problems of the global economy, a position stressed by the Remain campaign. However, the position stressed by the Leave campaign—Britain must be free of EU constraints to look after its interests in the global economy—is endorsed by two and one-half times this number. Military threats and terrorism are the interdependent challenges that Britons see themselves as relatively less able to deal with alone. However, instead of turning to the EU for help, the most favoured institution for help is the United Nations, followed by the United States.

An outcome out of British hands. A referendum can be decisive in determining British withdrawal from the European Union, but it is indecisive about the outcome; a decision requires agreement between two separate but interdependent political systems. The Brexit referendum result has become an input to the EU political system in which British politicians have excluded themselves by notifying their withdrawal from the EU system (Rose 2018, Figure 2).

The EU position is determined by discussions within and between the European Council of 27 member states; the multi-national European Parliament in which British Conservative MEPs are marginalized; and a European Commission with a supra-national commitment to deal with interdependent problems by adopting policies that deal with an ever-closer Union. Since 2004 these institutions have been challenged by a majority of referendums in ten member states that have rejected specific EU policies (Rose 2018, Figure 1). EU institutions have responded by invoking their treaty powers to protect their supra-national authority (Rose 2018, Table 2). Ironically, the UK's unilateral decision to invoke Article 50 to withdraw from the EU is easier for Brussels to handle, because it removes an awkward partner, than the challenge to EU authority of an anti-immigrant Hungary referendum, because Hungary remains an EU member state.

EU institutions have been quicker than the British government in arriving at its red-line conditions for agreeing a post-Brexit relationship than has a divided British government. This is because the institutions share a common goal: to protect the authority of the European Union. This means that no country withdrawing from EU membership should continue to enjoy the same EU rights as member states. Any benefits it wishes to retain after withdrawal, such as participation in a customs union or free trade area, carry with them the obligation to accept regulatory, financial and judicial practices accepted by member states. Up to a point, these conditions may be modified by the EU negotiating team led by Michel Barnier, but its priority is clear: to protect the EU's authority vis à vis the remaining 27 member states. Therefore, it is against allowing the British government to cherry-pick exceptions to benefit its first ex-member state, benefits that could encourage 27 member states to seek exceptions to their current obligations by threatening withdrawal.

The British government is learning that the claim of Brexit campaigners that leaving the EU would enable it to take back control of

British policies is a half-truth (cf. Hannan 2016). The UK would like to negotiate major exceptions to existing EU policies vis à vis non-member states, retaining significant economic benefits while accepting light obligations. However, Article 50 not only gives the British government the right to withdraw from EU membership; it also gives the European Union the authority to decide conditions that must be accepted by the British government if any agreement is to be reached, such as guaranteeing the rights of EU citizens resident in Britain and maintaining an open border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The EU regards the policies that the British government has to date put forward as unacceptable. This leaves the British government a choice between making concessions to secure an agreement acceptable to the EU but challenged by pro-Brexit MPs as violating a direct democracy mandate or leaving the EU abruptly without any deal.

When the United Kingdom joined what was then the European Economic Community in 1973, the interdependencies of member states were limited. There were hopes and fears but no certainty about what Europe or the UK would be like two decades later, let alone two decades into the twenty-first century. A leading proponent of membership, Andrew Shonfield (1972), aptly described the decision as *A Journey to an Unknown Destination*. On 23 June 2016 the decision of a majority loosened Britain's European moorings. In accepting the direct democracy vote as having binding legitimacy, the British government is now steering the ship of state on another voyage to an unknown destination.

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'United in Diverse Campaigns': The 2019 Spitzenkandidaten Process, Procedural Solidarity and Party Diversity

Brian Synnott

Introduction

The 2014 European Election marked a new chapter in the definition of the European political space. Based largely on an ambitiously proactive interpretation of Article 17 paragraph 7 of the Treaty of Lisbon, it was an attempt to establish a lasting link between the result of the European elections and the Commission Presidency. The decision to select, run, endorse and ultimately elect—in the European Parliament on 15 July 2014—a Spitzenkandidaten, was a milestone. The step was the third and final one after the 26–27 June European Council, which had agreed to propose Jean-Claude Juncker as candidate for President of the European Commission, and the European elections of 22–25 May, which had made his political group, the European Peoples Party (EPP), the largest in the European Parliament. Proving the doubters wrong (Hobolt 2014), Juncker, the candidate for the EPP, became President of the European Commission. The defeated rivals—Martin Schulz of the Party of European Socialists (PES), Guy Verhofstadt of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), Ska Kellar and José Bové from the European Greens, and Alexis Tsipras with the European United Left–Nordic Green Left (GUE)—had each played a role in the legitimization of the process.

Using that first and historic 2014 campaign as a reference, this chapter examines how the Spitzenkandidaten process has evolved in 2014–2018 and assessed how it could play out during the European Parliament elections in May 2019. The thesis of the chapter is two-fold. Firstly, in 2019,

as in 2014, the European political parties will play a central role in the legitimization of the process. Secondly, the election of the Spitzenkandidaten should not be seen as a *single campaign*. Instead, it can be considered as four separate but linked operations. These four operations can be described thus:

1. Efforts of European political parties to commit their respective national parties to the process.
2. A traditional 'presidential' election campaign across the EU member states, managed by the European political parties.
3. A parallel education campaign to familiarize voters with the Spitzenkandidaten process, done with the help of the parties but led by the European Parliament and European Commission.
4. A campaign to ensure that the European Council endorses the 'winning' Spitzenkandidaten.

These four steps marked the chapters of the 2014 campaign and will again form the narrative arc of the campaign in 2019, over a significantly extended timeframe. In addition to these four factors the role of the European media was—and will again be—highly significant.

Developments in the Spitzenkandidaten process 2014–2018

Before assessing the multiple campaigns to be waged for the legitimization of the Spitzenkandidaten process, it is perhaps worth outlining political developments during the 2014–2018 period. Roughly speaking, these can be put in two categories: external political factors, and specific proposals related to the Spitzenkandidaten concept.

External political factors

The first category needs the least introduction, given the political volatility of the period. The headline events were: the 23 June 2016 decision by the United Kingdom's electorate to leave the European Union, the so-called 'Brexit'; the election of Emmanuel Macron as President of the French Republic on 7 May 2017; and the German elections on 24 September of that same year. Each of these events should be seen in the context of Spitzenkandidaten legitimization. The respective attitudes in

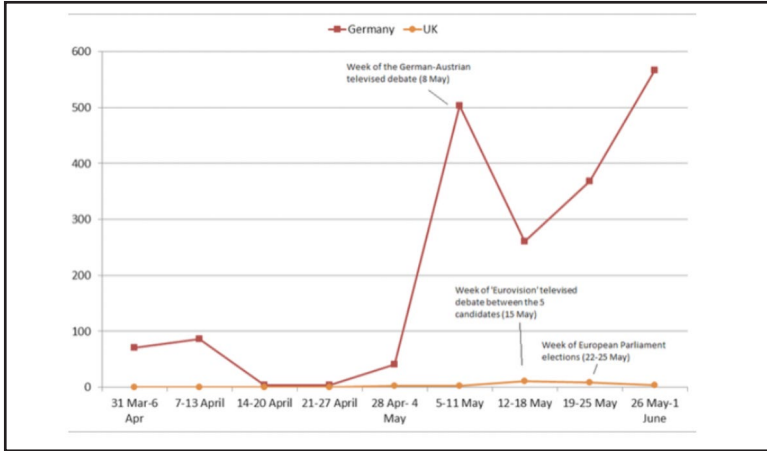
France, Germany and the United Kingdom influenced the process in 2014, and will have a profound impact in 2019—albeit, in the case of the United Kingdom, by the fact of its absence from the European election.

One further factor that can be noted, but which will not be considered in detail, is a trend that has no specific date to point to but is no less significant for it. This is the political 'weaponization' of social media—a factor where the 2019 election will be significantly different to that of 2014 (Nissen 2015). In 2014, it is true that the social media reach of the candidates was one of the significant 'successes' of the campaign (Peñalver García and Priestley 2015). However, the social media reach can be categorized as 'organic'. The campaigns were concerned merely with the content of rival campaigns' messages, rather than their validity or, indeed, their provenance. In 2019 such an approach cannot be assumed.

The influence of Brexit on the Spitzenkandidaten process

In 2014, UK media interest in the Spitzenkandidaten was remarkably low. The contrast between the number of mentions in the British press compared to the German press can only partly be explained by the nationality of the respective candidates in 2014 (Hix and Wilks-Heeg 2014). The attitude of then British prime minister, David Cameron, is well noted. His attempts to assert the primacy of the European Council as the institutional body to decide the next Commission President ultimately ran aground. The consistency of his position was matched by its futility, having only Hungarian prime minister Victor Orban for company in opposition to the 27 June 2014 decision to nominate Juncker.

Figure 6.1 German and British press covering the Spitzenkandidaten campaign



Number of articles in German and British citing both “Juncker” and “Schultz”, weekly from March 31, 2014. Source: Library Press Display searches (figure: Stuart Wilks-Heeg/The Monkey Cage)

However, one factor that is highly significant in Spitzenkandidaten considerations is the position of the respective UK members of the European parliamentary parties. The candidates of the three main parties suffered from a de facto ‘travel ban’ to the United Kingdom. EPP candidate Juncker was hamstrung by the decision of the UK Conservative Party to leave the EPP in 2009, thus ensuring Juncker having no ‘host’ party to come to. Schulz’ PES had a fraught relationship with the Labour Party, which indicated that it did not wish to have any visits, having also abstained from voting for him at the PES congress in March 2014. ALDE had held a congress in London in November 2013, but it was entirely separate from the election congress of late February 2014 in Brussels. Verhofstadt made only one, low-key visit to Manchester.

The absence of the UK from the 2019 election will remove the national party disinterest and the prime ministerial antipathy from the equation. It will also remove the virulently anti-EU London-based press. During the 2014 campaign, there was a reflex—certainly by the PES candidate—to temper policy specific messages that would have further antagonized the UK Labour party. The absence of the UK in 2019 could reduce somewhat the reserve of the candidates in portraying a pro-European message—in the many forms that can take.

The influence of the election of Emmanuel Macron as President of France

In 2014, France had been a solid if not spectacular ground for the promotion of the Spitzenkandidaten process. Under each of the four campaign criteria—national party support, traditional campaign, education of the electorate, persuasion of European Council—the French polity had performed comparatively well. The French prime minister, Manuel Valls, had campaigned with the PES candidate in both Lyon, and across the border in Barcelona. The then president, François Hollande, had stayed out of the direct campaign events but had been a strong supporter of the process being validated by the European Council in June 2014.

In 2019, the French government's attitude is different. The opposition of President Macron to the Spitzenkandidaten process has been crystal clear.¹ Instead, Macron has championed a transnational list of seats for the European Parliament. President Macron's party En Marche is not currently a member of any EU-level political party or any European Parliament political group. A decision by En Marche to join (or create) an EU political group ahead of the 2019 European elections is currently being debated.

The German election of September 2017

The federal election of September 2017 led to a period of political instability in Germany. The renewal of a grand coalition between Chancellor Merkel's CDU and the SPD has been secured, although without a great deal of enthusiasm. The ultimate continuation of this grand coalition will have a significant impact on European political space, and specifically the Spitzenkandidaten process in 2019.²

The grand coalition is seen by many in Germany as a pragmatic solution, particularly after the collapse of talks between CDU and FDP with the Liberals walking out on 20 November 2018. However, the 2014 election provides a precedent to illustrate that there are both advantages and disadvantages to a European election campaign. On 23 November 2013 a grand coalition was agreed. This meant that the parties would go in to

1 <https://www.euractiv.fr/section/elections/news/macron-soppose-au-systeme-des-spitzenkandidaten/>.

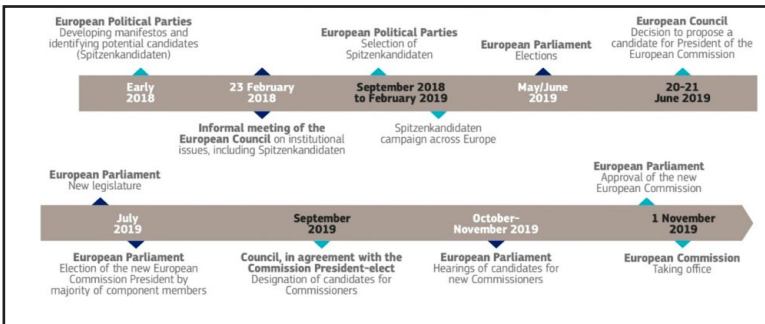
2 <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/12/germany-merkel-schulz-afd-spd-populism/547817/>.

the 2014 European elections as coalition partners. It would seem that the pattern is repeating for 2019. While this bodes well for the preserving the integrity of the Spitzenkandidaten process, it possesses risks in terms of the two main parties providing clear political distinctions between them. A necessary element in developing the process is through voter engagement, which are more easily stimulated by a credible and clear choice than options between two brands of the same product.

The specific proposals related to the Spitzinkandidaten concept

The beginning of 2018 saw a flurry of activity regarding the development of the Spitzenkandidaten. On 14 February, the European Commission issued a Recommendation on enhancing the European nature and efficient conduct of the 2019 elections to the European Parliament.³ Although not entirely focused on the Spitzenkandidaten, including reference to transnational lists, citizen dialogues and the, controversial, concept of merging of Council and Commission President, the Recommendation was clearly set up primarily to protect the Spitzenkandidaten process. The Recommendation followed on from a report adopted in the European Parliament, adopted on 7 February. It called the 2014 process a success and underlined that the 2019 elections would be an opportunity to further establish legitimacy. The report was adopted by 457 votes to 200, with 20 abstentions.

Figure 6.2 Timeline for the election of the new President of European Commission



Source: 'Building on the Spitzenkandidaten model'—European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC), European Commission

3 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/recommendation-enhancing-european-nature-efficient-conduct-2019-elections_en.pdf

The Parliament's rapporteur, Esteban González Pons (EPP, ES) stated that: 'The EU has to be more democratic, more transparent, or it simply will not be. The fact that citizens know the candidates for President of the European Commission before the elections is an important step in the right direction.'⁴ The reaction of the European Council to the Parliament's report and particularly the Commission's recommendation—issued on 23 February 2018—will be discussed in subsection titled 'The campaign to ensure European Council endorsement of the 'winning' Spitzenkandidaten' below.

One observation regarding this political activity relates to the timing. To have such public institutional positions 18 months ahead of the European Parliament election is a positive signal. It indicates a level of formal institutional investment that was not clearly present in 2014. More importantly, making these public positions clear so far in advance of the election shows an awareness of the separate 'operations' to ensure the Spitzenkandidaten process, namely national party commitment, 'presidential' campaigns, education of electorate about the process and the European Council proposal of an existing Spitzenkandidaten. The 18-month time frame will allow for a longer period to engage with national parties—the first of the four 'operations' listed above.

Efforts of European Political parties to commit their respective national parties to the process.

The following excerpt is a European Commission recommendation 'that informs voters about the affiliation between national parties and European political parties'

While taking account of the specificities of the national party political landscapes of the member states, national political parties participating in the elections to the European Parliament should make publicly known ahead of those elections and before the start of the electoral campaign, if and with which European political party they are affiliated and which lead candidate they support.

To the extent possible, national political parties should prominently display this information, including, where appropriate, the logo of the European political party, in all campaign materials, communications and political broadcasts.

4 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20180202IPR97026/spitzenkandidaten-process-cannot-be-overturned-say-meps>.

Having outlined some of the ongoing factors regarding the process, I would like to turn to the first of the four ‘campaigns’ or operations needed for 2019 if the result in 2014 is to be further developed. The ‘headline’ opposition to the Spitzenkandidaten process, as we shall see, has been through the voice of the European Council—namely, the Heads of State and Government who formally propose the President of the European Council.

This was not the only element of opposition to the process in 2014. Across the political spectrum, there was a patchy level of support amongst national political parties. An important distinction should be made here. Formally, and particularly during the respective ‘election’ congress of the parties, there was broad support for each nominee. The ALDE congress in Brussels (on 23 February), the PES congress in Rome (1 March), and the EPP congress in Dublin (6 March), all delivered warm messages and images of party leaders welcoming the election of Verhofstadt, Schulz and Juncker.

However, resistance to the process was in evidence before and after. The idea of any primaries being held to elect the candidates was a concept that did not make it off the drawing board, with the notable exception of the European Green Party.⁵ The *follow through* after the party congresses in support for the candidates over the 10–12 weeks to the elections was sub-optimal. With the exception of Germany, where Martin Schulz was heading the national list for the Social Democrats (SPD), there was no real *programmatic* promotion of the candidates. Outside Germany, and to a lesser extent Luxembourg, they had simply not been factored into the election campaigns of political parties. This absence of a programmed link to the Spitzenkandidaten process, and the European political parties in general goes further than the resistance to the call for party logos to be displayed, or respective candidates to be displayed in election literature as mentioned in the February 2018 Commission recommendation.

The dynamics regarding party support for the process were portrayed as pro or anti. But in reality, it was more nuanced. In France, Germany, Spain and, for reasons more related to the location of EU institutions, Belgium and Luxembourg, there was relative enthusiasm. Besides the clear-cut resistance in the UK, there was also considerable wariness in Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden (Peñalver García and Priestley 2015).

5 The European Greens held an online open primary with 22,676 people voting Ska Keller and José Bové from France as the lead candidates.

This reluctance regarding the process translated into support on the campaign. This is partly due to the classic 'second-order' nature of the election but can also be linked to the varying degrees to which national party hierarchies perceived the 'lead candidates' as a help or a hindrance to their electoral objectives.

The election manifesto of a national political party, even in a 'second-order' election, has an established place. The commitments made are usually specific, formally agreed and, sometimes, accurately costed. This is even more so when the elections are combined with other first-order elections, such as in Belgium, which carried out national and local elections in 2014 (and will again in 2019). Therefore, logically there is a degree of tension about aligning with the European party manifestos. As a consequence, and being the less established process, the latter were general in tone and content. This made it difficult to build clear distinctions between the European parties.

Perhaps the largest factor is the issue of funding. As a second-order election, the European Parliament campaign is also second tier when it comes to spending. The scarcity of funds can be considered as a factor in directly supporting the Spitzenkandidaten. This will be discussed in the next section.

A traditional 'presidential' campaign managed by the European political parties

The second campaign or operation relates to the need for strong campaigns by the candidates selected by the EPP, PES, ALDE and the Greens.

European party funding

The biggest barrier to the EPP, PES, ALDE and European Greens mounting 'traditional' Election campaigns is funding. In 2018, the entire election budget for the EPP amounted to 1.8 million for the PES, just over 1 million.⁶ For a 28 country wide campaign these were not, comparatively, large amounts. For context, there was a €10 million spend by the two big parties in Spain, PSOE and PP during the same European elections. Another illustrative example is Bulgaria, where the two big parties, GERB and BSP, spent the equivalent of €800,000 and €900,000

6 Peñalver García and Priestley 2015, p. 108

respectively for the 2014 campaign.⁷ Therefore, there needs to be a considerable increase in the financial capacity of the European parties. The Council has recently issued willingness to discuss political party funding with the European Parliament.⁸ The Council is examining how European political parties are formed. The aim is that they can only be established by national parties and no longer by individuals. Such European parties should ensure a genuine European nature by including parties from at least a quarter of the number of member states. The Council is also considering that the way funding is shared amongst European political parties should be adjusted. Out of the total budget, 10% would be shared with all parties, rather than the existing 15%, thus increasing the allocation of funds based on proportionality. At the same time, co-financing obligations for political parties would go from 15% to 10%.

These measures would have the probably not unintended consequences of bolstering ‘mainstream’ parties and thus those who are, generally speaking, pro-European Union. This gets to the crux of the issue. There is an obvious and understandable impulse to legitimize the European Union by the EU institutions. Funding the European political parties that reflect the political consensus is a natural corollary of this. However, the solidarity on a process should be kept separate from overt convergence on policy. As the *Financial Times* (2018) recently noted about the 2014 campaign: ‘There was hardly any ideological difference in 2014 between Mr Juncker and the other main candidate, Martin Schulz of the Socialist bloc, whose groupings were in any case in a grand coalition in the parliament.’ While the author would contest that in the *detail* of the respective manifestos, it must be conceded that there was an element of truth in how the campaign was perceived.

Turnout and the link to ‘Presidential campaigns’

Before addressing the need for an increased divergence between party and candidate positions in 2019, one can address some of the positives

7 Party Financing and Referendum campaigns in the in EU member states page 80, 73 [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/519217/IPOL_STU\(2015\)519217_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/519217/IPOL_STU(2015)519217_EN.pdf)

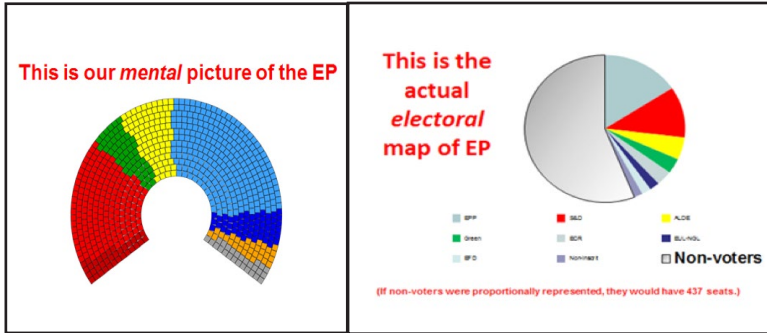
8 Funding of European political parties: Council ready to launch talks with Parliament http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/02/21/funding-of-european-political-parties-council-ready-to-launch-talks-with-parliament/?utm_source=dsms-auto&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Funding+of+European+political+parties%3a+Council+ready+to+launch+talks+with+Parliament

in the campaign. Chief amongst them is the effect on turnout. While the turnout in the European election decreased from 43.09% to 42.54% it can be argued that the Spitzenkandidaten process had a positive effect (Schmitt et al. 2015). The evidence is there that a presidential, i.e. a personalized, approach to the election helps mobilize voters in the European elections of 2014. Such evidence is a strong argument for pro-Europeans as to why the Spitzenkandidaten process should be supported and further developed.

The perception of the European Parliament as the two illustrations show, can be considered from the perspective of seats won, or a percentage of electorate who voted—i.e. turnout. The PES campaign was based largely on mobilizing as large a segment of the non-voters as possible. Called 'Knock the Vote', it was a training programme to mobilize campaign volunteers in PES Member Party 'traditional' areas. The trainers were the founders of political consultancy Leigey Muller & Pons. They went on to be the campaign organizers for Emmanuel Macron's successful French presidential bid. Their approach to election campaign and the mobilization of volunteers was influenced by American literature on voter mobilization. The distinction between the two campaigns is, of course, clear on turnout and on funding, with the French presidential election having a turnout of just under 75% and the winning candidate spending €16.8 million in total.

Whereas the PES campaign was run across 28 member states on a budget just over €1 million, with a turnout for the European elections of 42%. The point to note for 2019 is that, based on the principles applied by Leigey Muller Pons, in both campaigns, and indeed François Hollande's successful 2012 presidential bid, mobilizing traditional party 'non-voters' remains the key. However, to successfully apply this, substantial resources are required. Leigey, Muller and Pons commissioned a private policy paper for the PES that showed the positive influence of the 'Knock the Vote' campaign on voter turnout. The study isolated areas where the intended volunteer structure worked with similarly profile electoral districts where it had not. They found a small but significant increase in turnout where the knock the vote field campaign had been implemented (Liegey 2014).

Figure 6.3. European Parliament composition including non-voters



Source: Author's elaboration from European Parliament data

Debates between the main candidates

The debates have been cited in many publications as a significant part of the 2014 campaign.⁹ The author was directly involved in the preparation and negotiations for the three main debates. They were the Maastricht University: 'First European Presidential Debate'¹⁰ on 28 April 2014, the 'State of the Union' event here in this Institute in Florence¹¹ on 9 May, and the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) partnership with the European Parliament on 16 May.¹² These three events had three separate processes, in terms of negotiations between campaign teams, organization of the debate format and media impact.

In terms of negotiation between the candidates for the debates, the Maastricht debate, with the agreement of the University of Maastricht and Euronews, gave considerable say to the party representatives to decide the format. There were no introductory statements, three 30-minute slots on the economy, Euroscepticism, and foreign policy, and closing statements. Candidates had only 30 seconds to answer each question and a 'time bank' was used to allocate time fairly at the end of the debate.

9 <https://www.euractiv.com/section/eu-elections-2014/news/wrap-up-eu-spitzenkandidaten-debate-in-brussels/>.

10 'Europe's choice' First presidential debate, Maastricht University <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhafgcPeXes>.

11 State of the Union debate, European University Institute, Florence <https://stateoftheunion.eui.eu/2014/>

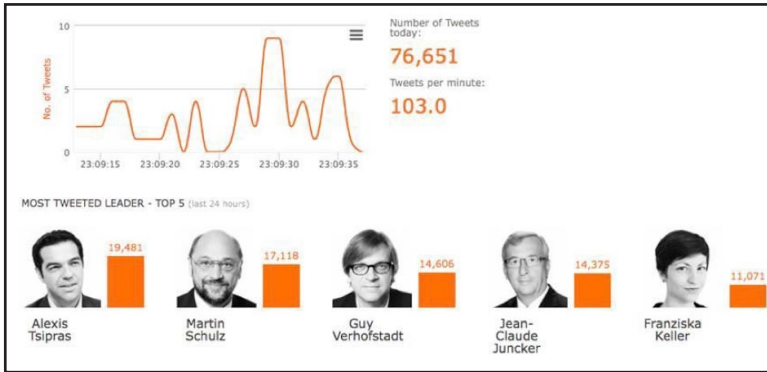
12 European Broadcasting Union/ European Parliament debate, Brussels <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0y-2Nd6mC9M>.

The event in Maastricht, organized by Euronews, was the most like a political event. There was a young and partisan crowd, the questions were vague but there was a sense of contrast between the candidates. Significantly, they were the only debate to have a traditional 'spin alley' where the candidates and their surrogates could hone their message of the night's proceedings. There were a significant number of journalists present and they had the most open access to the candidates of any of the debates.

The State of the Union edition in Florence was substantially, and in the author's opinion, negatively, affected by three factors. The debate was part of a wider, if obviously prestigious event, being but one part of a wider programme. Secondly, the nature of the questions while of merit, were long, academic and based on procedure. This had the effect of diluting any sense of contrast between candidates, as they were encouraged to respond based on European Union knowledge rather than ideological differences. And thirdly, the broadcast element, provided by SKY TV Italia, was an add-on rather than the central aspect. This gave the impression of an interesting conference being transmitted, rather than a televisual 'event' taking place.

The European Parliament (EP) and EBU debate, held in the plenary chamber, was the most well-funded, and logistically impressive. There was considerable and high-level organizational coordination. A preparatory committee, chaired by the EP and with the EBU and representatives of the parties present, began meeting some six months in advance. The production of this debate and the execution was of a professional standard that would have passed muster in any national political context. By any objective criteria, the televisual 'event' was planned, packaged and executed well. The problem was largely in the delivery. While the EBU had enthusiastically led the process, and the European Parliament was exemplary in preparing a first-class show, each partner had a weakness. In the case of the EBU it was in their tactics to engage national broadcasters. Format, language and in some media markets a lack of recognizable political faces, meant that while following the letter of the agreement to show the debate 'live' most national public service broadcasters did so only on specialized channels. The problem for the European Parliament lay in institutional obligations—it was not possible, despite national broadcaster pressure, to have a head-to-head debate, which in this case would have meant Juncker v Schulz. Instead, they were bound by their own procedural rules of reflecting the makeup of the parliament.

Figure 6.4 Twitter and Spitzenkandidaten



Source: *Third debate, Eurovision, Brussels 15 May—statistics on Twitter*

In summary, the debate in Maastricht can be seen as broadcaster-led and supported by academics. The Florence debate, meanwhile, was academic-led and broadcaster supported. In the case of Brussels, the debate was characterized by a broadcaster–institutional partnership. The weaknesses they shared were in low TV audience and in homogeneity of positions. In 2019 there needs to be a more strategic approach to the televised debates. There needs to be a stronger ‘narrative’ created between the debates. In 2014, even within the low audience base there was no real connection, or template, that illustrated that the debates were part of a wider campaign. If there is to be an increased audience, there should be further negotiations between stakeholders to ensure that a recognizable ‘brand’ is built regarding the debates. The format of questions, venue, even country can change, but there should be a familiar identity to each event. This will allow media to discuss which candidate ‘won’ each time—a valuable part of the marketing of any political set piece event.

The broadcasters should be in the lead. There are very valuable democratic principles regarding participation, institutional and even legal obligations. But the base criterion by which to judge any television event is by audience figures. For this reason, a clearheaded calculation should be made by academic and EU institutions that providing a package that delivers the best combination of member state media markets is the primary goal. A significant increase in audience figures is only a part of the picture for 2019. To judge the 2019 debates as a success there needs to be identifiable media moments—a clear divergence of opinion. In short,

what should be on display is a clearly identifiable political choice. In 2014 the debates were solemn if not soporific, and collegial if not clubbable. In 2019, we should see a clearer division. This is especially important between the big parties.

Familiarizing voters with the Spitzenkandidaten process

I've often described it as trying to fly a plane when you are building the wings at the same time.¹³ – Catherine Ashton, 2013

Although speaking about the role of the High Representative and EEAS, the words of Catherine Ashton can equally be applied to the Spitzenkandidaten process in 2014. The task of convincing national parties to commit to the procedure and run a European wide campaign was difficult on its own terms. Adding the need to educate the electorate as to the steps of the process made it an even more complicated task. The European Commission Recommendation of 14 February 2018 explicitly acknowledges the need to continue and develop the 'education' of the electorate. In the section 'Support for a candidate for President of the European Commission', it states that:

Sufficiently early ahead of the elections to the European Parliament, ideally by the end of 2018, each European political party should make known the candidate for the function of the President of the European Commission they support. Ideally by early 2019 they should also make known the candidate's own political programme. European political parties and their national member parties are encouraged to select their lead candidates in an open, inclusive and transparent way. National political parties should ensure that their political information, including their political broadcasts, in view of the elections to the European Parliament is also used to inform citizens about the candidate for the function of President of the European Commission they support and about their candidate's programme.¹⁴

The links between national parties and European parties is a good idea from an EU perspective but is difficult to enforce. Tying funding of the European parties to an obligatory level of transparency about these links

13 A Conversation with Catherine Ashton, German Marshall Fund, 16 March 2013, Brussels <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ci0rLgJ8z2w>

14 Page 4 Commission Recommendation https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/recommendation-enhancing-european-nature-efficient-conduct-2019-elections_en.pdf

as hinted by Commission President Juncker in the 2017 State of the Union Address, is again laudable but difficult to enforce.

However, in this case the devil is not in the details. The mere fact of proposals being formally made by the Commission and votes taken in the EP invests enough political capital to keep the prospects for the Spitzenkandidaten process healthy. Both institutions have skilfully elaborated that the process should be continued *in the name of democracy*. It is noteworthy that some members of the European Council tried to use the same argument regarding the introduction of transnational lists for MEPs. This did not receive nearly as much comment, nor indeed support as the Spitzenkandidaten. Such political positioning by the Commission and Council is important. As is the logistical support that each institution can provide in terms of promotional election material.

However, the political parties also have an important role to play. Much like the concept of grassroots mobilization to increase turnout, the best manner of convincing is by a familiar face. Such is the case for the Spitzenkandidaten. There is a greater chance of the concept being understood, accepted, and maybe embraced, if a familiar political figure, rather than a remote Brussels-based politician is the one doing the selling. However, there is some resistance to this. A good example is the PES congress 2014, which had, as part of the messaging to endorse candidate Martin Schulz, a series of leadership videos from national party leaders. These videos—almost all under 60 seconds—endorsed both Martin and the Spitzenkandidaten process. They fitted the template of a familiar face endorsing a new concept.¹⁵ And yet none were used by the respective member parties in their national campaigns. This was less due to an overt political resistance rather than that lack of a programmatic reflex to include it in the election strategy. In 2019, national member party leaders from all parties will have another opportunity to sell the concept.

Ensuring European Council endorsement of the ‘winning’ Spitzenkandidaten

Perhaps the most important criterion for any candidate is to be a member of a member state party that is in government. Without this, the simple step of the member state government nominating the candidate as that country's member of the European Commission is greatly reduced.

15 See: PES leader video endorsing Martin Schulz as Spitzenkandidaten <https://www.youtube.com/user/europeansocialists/videos>.

This consideration is an acknowledgement that the formal procedures to 'guarantee' the Spitzenkandidaten process still includes considerable gaps. It is also an acknowledgement that what is true for member states governments is also true when they meet as European Council. Here the scepticism regarding the process is well documented.¹⁶

Automaticity is the key word. The formal statement by Council President Donald Tusk stated that; 'On the issue of lead candidates—the so-called Spitzenkandidaten or Spitzenkandidatinnen—there was agreement that the European Council cannot guarantee in advance that it will propose one of the lead candidates for President of the European Commission. *There is no automaticity in this process.* The Treaty is very clear that it is the autonomous competence of the European Council to nominate the candidate, while taking into account the European elections, and having held appropriate consultations.' There was no categorical dismissal of the concept. The attitude at the 23 February 2018 European Council was resigned rather than fully opposed to the idea (Economist 2018).

The drama of the period 27 May–27 June 2014 provides insight into why there was such hedging (Peñalver García and Priestley 2015). Two days after the election there was a European Council meeting convened for 27 May. The crunch act was the press conference of German Chancellor Angela Merkel after the Council had concluded. When asked about the prospects of Juncker becoming Commission President she had stated, despite the EPP having publically reiterated that Juncker was 'their' candidate that; 'the whole agenda could be implemented by him but also by many others.' This comment set off a chain reaction that has been well documented. German television station ARD, newspaper tabloid Bild, Jurgen Habermas, and eventually, albeit behind the scenes, Juncker himself, all took stands to protect the integrity of the process. By the next morning (28 May) Merkel was publically briefing that Juncker was of course her candidate.

This instinct, by press and political figures, and the public reaction to it, is one of the strongest indications that the process will survive in 2019. The emotive language 'fraudulent', 'bullet to the heart of the EU', that the EU was at risk of 'abolishing itself', may have seemed over the top but it indicates *investment* in the process. The statement made by the

16 Remarks by President Donald Tusk following the informal meeting of the 27 heads of state or government on 23 February 2018: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/02/23/remarks-by-president-donald-tusk-following-the-informal-meeting-of-the-27-heads-of-state-or-government-on-23-february-2018/>

European Council on 23 February garnered headlines as being a negative assessment. However, there is a clear tacit acknowledgement of the process simply in the fact that it was not dismissed. Once candidates are selected for parties and profiles built, the democratic impulse will be difficult to stop beating.

The role of the media

If Spitzenkandidaten there should be, then Spitzenkandidaten there must be!¹⁷ – Rolf Deiter-Krause, ARD Television.

This plaintive cry by a veteran German journalist was perhaps the tipping point for the process. However, for the author, perhaps the most gratifying moment of the campaign came on the eve of the vote. The then Brussels bureau chief of the Financial Times telephoned to offer congratulations and admit that his and the Brussels press corps' scepticism had been misplaced, and that the Spitzenkandidaten process had established a credibility. Even if that credibility was as much based on the obvious efforts by the European political party to enhance democratic input, as the formal procedures thereof. The role of the media, and particularly the Brussels-based press corps, was central to the Spitzenkandidaten being a success in 2014. The authors observation is that a pro-European consensus amongst those based in the European capital, with the exception of certain parts of the UK press, certainly helped to sell the idea. But it is important to note that there was no big story, no European wide headline that proved that the Spitzenkandidaten process had gained any traction amongst general public perception. The debates for example were not well covered, the candidate tours rarely had 'embedded' journalists, and there were no set piece interviews with candidates. However, it was in the crucial period after the election—to defend the principle that a democratic promise made as to what a vote 'means' transcends an average political promise. Even more so, it would seem, in a new democratic experiment such as the European Union.

17 <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2016/01/04/how-the-spitzenkandidaten-process-and-junckers-reforms-might-shape-the-future-of-the-european-commission/>.

Conclusion

The 2014 European Election set out the steps of the Spitzenkandidaten process. The European political parties and the media have perhaps the most significant role. Added to this is the fact that while the European election is often referred to as a 'second-order' election, it can be more positively described as a 'turnout' election. The near 60% of 'dormant' votes, make this election one where the best 'ground game' could make significant and unpredictable gains. The 'presidential' dimension that the Spitzenkandidaten brings to the election is a positive factor in this equation. There is a lot to build on, but it worth noting that often historic processes have fragile origins.

For the 2014 story, there is of course the need to acknowledge that Jean-Claude Juncker would not have become President of the European Commission if a number of factors had not aligned. The fact of his opponent, Martin Schulz being European Parliament President was almost essential. The EP was the organization that stood to gain most from recognition of the process. Having an 'activist' president who could dedicate time and logistical support provided a very solid foundation. The personal relationship between Schulz and Juncker was not insignificant. They both understood their roles and the need for mutual support to give the process credibility and ultimately a chance of succeeding.

Schulz being head of list for his own national party in the election and being from the most populous and influential member state was the next factor to align. His being the face of the campaign for SPD allowed the most effect parallel education of the electorate about the Spitzenkandidaten. Essentially, they were 'primed' to expect delivery on this basis. This trigger that activated this priming was the German media reaction to Merkel's negative comments regarding Juncker's prospects to be endorsed at the post-election European Council. The effect this 'media backlash' had on Merkel was the element that brought the 2014 process 'over the finish line'. None of these factors can be identified in any formal institutional reading of the process, but they are all essential. For 2019 we can expect a similar story, but over a longer timeframe and with greater coverage.

The media space will be larger, with greater reference points for journalists and of course the precedent of the 2014 election with which to draw comparisons. The debates, if organized more with the TV audience

in mind and with TV journalists in charge, will bring a higher level of interest. The stories that can be brought from a campaign trail which can be traversed for at least three months longer, will help bring richness and colour. This will help familiarize the electorate with the process. But it is the European parties and their role in persuading their member parties to buy-in that will 'complete the circle'. That circle is one that goes from European parties' candidate selection to European Council post-election. The two main political parties have very publically committed to selection processes to have Spitzenkandidaten.^{18 19} The EPP congress was on 7–8 November 2018, in Finland. This is a full four months ahead of the 2014 cycle. The PES election congress will take place in early spring 2019.

Ann this is the strongest case for the Spitzenkandidaten process continuing, even thriving, in 2019. Both parties have fully and publically committed, if for different reasons. The EPP sees a very strong probability that it will again be the biggest group in the European Parliament. This is particularly so with the 20 seat 'penalty' that the PES, and its Socialists and Democrats (SD) group will incur with Brexit. The EPP by contrast have no seats and therefore no penalty from the withdrawal of the United Kingdom.

The PES on the other hand is preparing for the election as a 'turnout' election. With a 42% turnout there is huge potential if non-voters are reached. The need to reenergize and mobilize its base and progressive pro-Europeans is apparent. The added profile that the presidential dimension gives to the 2019 election could be significant. The final point is that when the European Council meets to discuss the outcome of the 2019 election many of the faces who will be tasked with nominating the winning Spitzinkandidaten, will be the same ones who have sat in the Party Election congresses 6–8 months prior to that moment of truth. They will be the very same elected prime ministers and presidents who publically championed 'their' party candidate and it will be very difficult to renege on that backing.

18 EPP urges European Council to commit to Spitzenkandidaten process <http://www.epp.eu/press-releases/epp-urges-european-council-to-commit-to-spitzenkandidaten-process/>

19 PES prime ministers discuss Spitzenkandidat and long-term EU budget <https://www.pes.eu/es/news-events/news/detail/PES-prime-ministers-discuss-Spitzenkandidat-and-long-term-EU-budget/>

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Part 2 – Country-Specific Chapters

When the Post-Communist Left Succeeds: The 2016 Romanian Parliamentary Election

Endre Borbáth

Introduction

There are two ways to characterize the December 2016 election for the Romanian parliament. On the one hand, the election represented *continuity*. With it came a large-scale victory for the post-communist left, the Social Democratic Party (Partidul Social Democrat, PSD). The PSD has been the single largest party in the Romanian party system since the transition, and the significant victory in 2016 reinforced its dominance. In this regard, the election served to counter the narrative of Eastern Europe drifting to the right and being seen as the breeding ground of nativist and Eurosceptic forces (Ban 2016; Constantin 2016; Meredith 2016; Norocel 2017). On the other hand, this election represented a *break* with the past. Three new organizations entered parliament, and the centre-right Democratic Liberal Party (Partidul Democrat Liberal, PDL) merged with the National Liberal Party (Partidul Național Liberal, PNL) to compete as a single formation.

This chapter presents an analysis of the 2016 parliamentary election, embedded in the longer-term evolution of politics in Romania. The analysis aims to investigate the extent to which 2016 represents continuity or a break with previous patterns of party competition. More specifically, the chapter explores what explains the large-scale victory of PSD, since in similar countries post-communist left parties are in decline. For this reason, the analysis of the long-term dynamic is traced back to the economic crisis, the legacy of which—as the chapter argues—continued to shape the 2016 election. Beyond post-communist left parties, examining

the conditions that helped the PSD succeed allows us to assess the reasons behind the resilience of mainstream parties in an era characterized by their widespread collapse (Hernández and Kriesi 2015).

The chapter identifies two conditions, which not only allowed PSD to survive, but contributed to its success: ideological flexibility, and opposition status during the economic crisis. Each of these factors are discussed in light of an original dataset on the demand and supply sides of politics. The 2016 parliamentary election is assessed against the long-term evolution of party competition, going back to the 2008 parliamentary election and the start of the economic crisis. The chapter takes stock of the developments leading up to 2016 and examines the factors behind the overwhelming victory of the post-communist left.

The chapter proceeds as follows. It starts with a short introduction to the institutional design and the party system. Then, it introduces some of the crucial events shaping the dynamic of party competition prior to the 2016 election. As the chapter argues, to understand some of the reasons behind the Social Democratic victory in 2016, one must grasp the politics of crisis management in the aftermath of 2008. In the next section, the chapter presents the programmatic space of the 2016 campaign, in comparison to the two previous elections in 2012 and 2008. The chapter concludes by summarizing the results and discussing the implications for the long-term dynamic of party competition in Romania.

Institutional design and the electoral system

After 1989, Romania adopted a semi-presidential institutional structure, with a directly elected president, who has similar but somewhat weaker prerogatives than the French counterpart. Upon consulting with the parties in parliament, the president nominates the prime minister who shares his or her role as the leader of the executive. The prime minister chairs the government which formulates and implements public policies. The prime minister is accountable to parliament and most often comes from the party with the highest share of mandates. Even though the prime minister has the greatest power in formulating public policies, the president can veto the parliament's decisions and make it difficult for the government to implement its program. In turn, parliament can suspend the president, subject to approval by a popular referendum, which, to be valid, requires a turnout of more than 50% of the electorate.

The system requires close cooperation between the two offices. Cohabitations, i.e. when the president and the prime minister come from different political parties, considerably sharpen the political conflict. In such situations, the partisan conflict penetrates the executive branch, with the government and the president often working to undermine each other's position. Driven by the idea of strengthening checks and balances, the 2003 constitutional reform extended the length of the mandate of the president to five years (Gherghina and Hein 2016). As a result of the reform, since 2004 parliamentary and presidential elections do not overlap, which increased the chances of cohabitations. Although the president is supposed to stand above party lines, all elected presidents have tried to help their own party gain power. Therefore, conflicts arising from cohabitation tend to escalate beyond regular political debates and target the institutions themselves.

Beyond the semi-presidential design, the electoral system is another source of controversy. Throughout the history of democratic elections, the electoral system has been changed frequently, sometimes driven by parties' perceived self-interest, sometimes due to pressure from 'below', from civil society actors. Despite frequent changes, all electoral systems kept some level of vote redistribution and ensured proportional seat allocation. The 2016 election was organized according to rules similar to those in place in 2004: closed party lists with 41 electoral districts (all counties, plus Bucharest) and a 5 percent threshold.

Historically, both the electoral system and the regulation of political parties was successfully used by established parties to facilitate cartelization and create a legal barrier for outsiders to enter parliament (Popescu and Soare 2014). According to the law on parties, to establish a new party it was required to collect 25.000 signatures, from citizens residing in at least half of the counties. The provision made it extremely hard to register new formations, moreover the threshold kept them outside of parliament even if they were registered. Therefore, small parties often became satellite organizations of more established formations and ran in coalition with them to ensure they pass the threshold. The law was changed in 2015 and made it possible to register a new party with three founding members. Nevertheless, the reform maintained the high barrier for newcomers by requiring them to collect the signatures of one percent of the electorate to place candidates (180.000 signatures in 2016). Ultimately, seven new parties contested the 2016 election (Dumitru and Voicu 2016,

p. 18), three of which entered parliament (USR, ALDE, PMP). In comparison to other Eastern European countries, the dynamic created a party system with relatively stable party labels (Haughton and Deegan-Krause 2015) and frequent pre-electoral coalitions.

The party system

Table 7.1 presents the electoral results and the development of the party system between 2008 and 2016. As the table shows, parliamentary elections in Romania have usually had a low turnout. Most of those who participate in these elections vote for a restricted number of mainstream parties. Until 2016 a relatively small share of voters was willing to vote for new parties (volatility A) and around 12% of the electorate fluctuated between existing formations (volatility B, see: Powell and Tucker 2013). As indicated in the introduction, this changed in 2016 when three new parties entered parliament and volatility A radically increased. Nevertheless, the effective number of parties stayed low, and vote for mainstream parties did not decline.

Table 7.1: Electoral results in parliamentary elections and party system indices (2008–16)

| | Election | 2008 | 2012 | 2016 |
|--------------------------------|------------------|------|--------------------|------|
| Election results (vote shares) | Mainstream left | | | |
| | PSD | 33.1 | 58.6 [*] | 44.1 |
| | ALDE | - | - | 5.5 |
| | Mainstream right | | | |
| | PNL | 18.6 | - | 19.5 |
| | PD/PDL | 32.4 | 16.5 ^{**} | - |
| | PMP | - | - | 5.2 |
| | Ethnic Hungarian | | | |
| | UDMR | 6.2 | 5.1 | 6.2 |
| | Radical right | | | |
| | PRM | 3.2 | 1.3 | 1.0 |
| | PNG | 2.3 | - | - |
| | PRU | - | - | 2.7 |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|------|------|------|
| | Anti-establishment reform parties | | | |
| | PPDD | - | 14.0 | - |
| | USR | - | - | 8.6 |
| Party system features | Turnout (Chamber of Deputies) | 39.2 | 41.8 | 39.5 |
| | Volatility A | 5.9 | 7.0 | 26.6 |
| | Volatility B | 11.6 | 11.9 | 4.0 |
| | Volatility A+B | 17.4 | 18.9 | 30.6 |
| | Effective no. of parties | 3.93 | 1.6 | 3.7 |
| | Mainstream party vote | 90.3 | 80.2 | 80.5 |

Based on their own characterization, mainstream political parties can be grouped into four families. Most of them have been present since the founding election in 1992: Social Democratic, National Liberal, Christian Democratic, and ethnic Hungarian parties. Even though these parties organized into all possible governmental coalitions, I discuss the National Liberal and Christian Democratic parties as the mainstream right, opposing the mainstream left, the Social Democrats. In addition, I introduce two types of challenger parties which have never been in government: the radical right and the anti-establishment reform parties.

As Table 7.1 shows, the single most popular party has been the Social Democratic PSD in all parliamentary elections examined here. The party usually ran in coalition with a small, Conservative Party (Partidul Conservativ, PC). In 2016 PC merged with a liberal faction and established the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (Alianța Liberalilor și Democraților, ALDE), under the leadership of former Prime Minister Tăriceanu. Although organizationally new, ALDE served as an electoral vehicle of established elites and acted as a satellite organization of PSD, representing continuity, rather than change.

* PSD ran in coalition with PNL, PC and UNPR, a small splinter party, as the Social Liberal Union (USL). I include the results of USL under PSD given PNL was the junior partner in the coalition

** PDL ran in coalition with two small parties, FC and PNȚCD

Several structural conditions contribute to the strength of PSD. Firstly, in line with Kitschelt's (2001) expectation, the patrimonial–communist legacy helped the formation of an enduring regime divide, where PSD emerged as the representative of the economic and cultural losers of the transition (also see: Rovny 2014). Secondly, extreme levels of income inequalities contribute to vastly different opportunities in rural and urban areas and lead to the formation of political communities with different sets of priorities. Thirdly, a well-developed party organization allows PSD to emerge as the only party present in some areas of the country, invest in clientelistic linkages, and, nevertheless, remove leaders charged with corruption. Therefore, PSD ticks most boxes on the list of predictors of successful party survival (Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2018), but since these predictors barely change between two elections, they do not explain the dynamic over time.

The second largest block is represented by the mainstream right, formed by the National Liberal PNL, the Christian Democratic PDL and most recently, the People's Movement Party (Partidul Mișcarea Populară, PMP). In 2008 and in 2012 PDL has been the largest formation on the right while PNL was usually considered a smaller, '20%' party. In 2012, the PNL ran in coalition with PSD, forming an electoral alliance across the left–right divide. Despite its popularity, the PSD–PNL coalition did not prove stable and by 2016 PNL merged with PDL, re-establishing the left–right poles. The merger seems to have ended the existence of PDL, with its former leader, the ex-President Traian Băsescu establishing PMP and entering parliament as a candidate of this party in 2016. Similar to ALDE, despite organizational novelty, PMP acted as an electoral vehicle of established political elites. Parties on the right, especially PDL (Fesnic 2011) have a less clear programmatic profile, but they are associated with liberal economic positions, and an anti-communist ideology. There is hardly any consistent programmatic difference between parties in this block.

The last party considered to be part of the mainstream is the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (Uniunea Democrată Maghiară din România, UDMR), representing—as the name suggests—the 1.2 million ethnic Hungarians living in Romania. The party has often been in government in coalition with parties from both the left and the right. UDMR does not take a position on the left–right axis and represents the ethnic Hungarian community on programmatic and clientelistic basis (Kiss and Székely 2016).

The remaining 10–20% of votes are relatively volatile and served as a breeding ground for challenger parties in a new party ‘subsystem’, as described by Haughton and Deegan-Krause (2015). Traditionally, radical right parties managed to secure these votes. As Stanley (2017, p. 145) notes, Romania experienced the rise of one of the earliest and most successful radical right parties, the Greater Romania Party (Partidul România Mare, PRM). Over time the strength of radical right parties has declined, and they have not entered parliament since 2004. The 2012 and the 2016 elections saw the rise of a new type of challenger: anti-establishment reform parties (AERP) as defined by Hanley and Sikk (2016, p. 523): (1) the People’s Party–Dan Diaconescu (Partidul Poporului–Dan Diaconescu, PPDD) and; (2) the Save Romania Union (Uniunea Salvați România, USR). As opposed to the challengers from the radical right, AERPs were less nationalistic and competed on fighting corruption. PPDD did not manage to endure the test of time, while USR benefitted from a wave of anti-corruption protests and survived until the time of writing.

From the economic crisis to the 2016 election¹

Amongst the legacies which influenced the 2016 parliamentary election, the politics of the management of the economic crisis occupies a prevalent role. Based on analysis of the long-term effects of incumbency during structural adjustment programs in Latin America and in Southern Europe by Roberts (2013, 2017), Hutter and Kriesi (2018) argue that a similar dynamic played out in Europe during the Great Recession. Namely, in countries where social democratic parties implemented austerity programs, following what Roberts calls a ‘bait-and-switch’ strategy, a long-term process of programmatic dealignment of the party system followed. In the reverse scenario, if similar economic programs were implemented by centre–right governments, the party system benefitted from the programmatic alignment and party positions became more crystalized. The current section shows that in the Romanian case a centre–right government implemented austerity policies and set the stage for subsequent patterns of interaction. The crisis dynamic benefitted PSD, to the expense of centre–right parties, mostly PDL. The legacies of crisis management played into the 2016 election and contributed to the historic victory of the Social Democrats.

1 I am grateful to the IMAS Marketing și Sondaje agency for providing me with the public opinion data on which this section is based.

In Romanian politics the first signs of the economic crisis started to appear after the 2008 parliamentary election. As a result of this election, the two largest parties decided to form a 'grand coalition', and the centre-right PDL governed together with the centre-left PSD. In June 2009 the PSD-PDL government turned to the IMF for a €20 billion credit line but postponed any predictably unpopular austerity policy until the presidential election later that year. Shortly before the presidential election, PSD left the government and campaigned from opposition against the re-election of President Băsescu, supported by PDL. Băsescu won a second term and used his influence to facilitate intra-parliamentary party switching to form a majority behind a PDL-UDMR government.

The narrowly supported centre-right, PDL-UDMR government took over and stayed in office until 2012, becoming the symbol of draconian austerity measures. These measures included a 25% cut of the salary of public officials, a cut of thousands of state jobs and an increase of VAT from 19 to 24%. Most austerity policies were justified by the demands of the IMF and implemented in close cooperation between President Băsescu and the PDL-UDMR government. In the aftermath of these measures the unpopular centre-right government survived seven motions of no confidence and continued in office until the beginning of 2012.

As Figure 7.1 shows, during the time the PDL-UDMR government was in office, voters were the most disenchanted. The share of those who thought the country was heading in the wrong direction peaked (Figure 7.1A), and trust in all three national political institutions (presidency, government, and parliament) plummeted (Figure 7.1B). Generally, more citizens tend to think that Romania is heading in the wrong direction and they tend not to trust the political institutions. However, even by national standards the crisis period stands out, with voters being remarkably negative between 2009-2012.

Figure 7.1a: Mood in Romania after the 2008 Parliamentary Elections

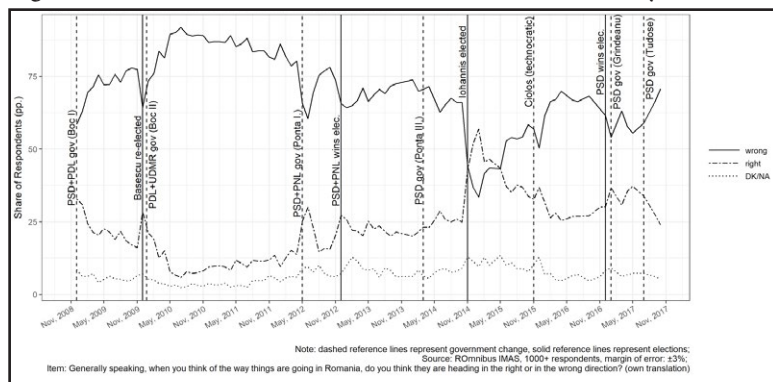
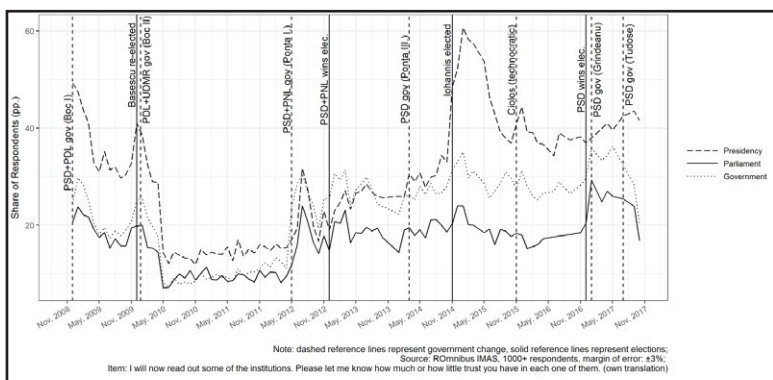


Figure 7.1b: Trust in Romanian Institutions after the 2008 Parliamentary Elections

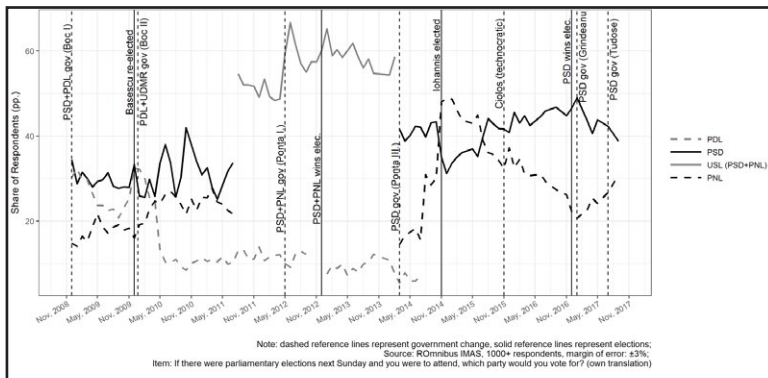


The change came in May 2012 when amidst heavy street protests and social opposition, the new PNL–PSD coalition managed to pass a motion of no confidence against PDL–UDMR and took over government. Shortly before the parliamentary election, the PSD–PNL organized a referendum to suspend President Băseșcu. Despite the overwhelming majority voting against the president, the turnout criteria were not met and Băseșcu stayed in office (King and Marian 2014). Given how institutions fell prey to parties’ interests, many considered the 2012 events around suspending the president a political crisis. Later that year the popular PSD–PNL won the election with almost 60% of the vote.

The popularity of PSD–PNL was mostly driven by the collapse of PDL. Figure 2 shows the evolution over time of vote intentions for the

main Romanian parties. As the figure shows, the flight of PDL voters dramatically increased once the party entered government: by May 2010, five months into the PDL–UDMR government, most of the voters the party lost in 2012 had already left. PDL traded its electoral popularity for government participation, a bargain closed by their historic defeat in 2012. PDL eventually ceased to exist as an independent organization, and what remained of it merged with PNL in 2014. As the figure shows, before PNL left the PSD–PNL coalition, the coalition was remarkably popular, and it consistently polled above 50%.

Figure 7.2: Trust in Romanian Institutions after the 2008 Parliamentary Elections



In line with the framework set out by Roberts, after the deeply unpopular centre–right government, the new PSD–PNL government tried to reverse many previously adopted austerity policies. In fact, it was these decisions and their mutual opposition to PDL/President Băseșcu which held the two programmatically distant parties together and drove their popularity. Once the antagonism faded, less than two years into their government, the PSD–PNL coalition collapsed. The final push came with the reluctance of PSD to support the PNL candidate at the 2014 presidential election. PNL became part of the opposition, while PSD managed to secure enough support for a single party government.

The 2014 presidential election proved to be less historic than many anticipated. Similarly, to 2009, PSD lost the election, and the PNL candidate Klaus Iohannis was elected to succeed Băseșcu. As both figures 7.1A and 7.1B show, the election resulted in unprecedented euphoria: for the first time, more people thought the country is heading in the right

direction than those who thought it is heading in the wrong direction. Moreover, trust in the presidency jumped to 60%, a substantially higher increase than in the aftermath of the 2009 presidential election. Most of the increase was due to Iohannis being seen as a credible candidate, willing and capable to reform politics. Therefore, none of the other institutions benefitted from increase in the level of trust (Figure 7.1B).

However, most of this euphoria was not grounded in strong programmatic convictions, but in identifying Iohannis as the person who will curb corruption and ‘reset’ politics. Equipped with weak constitutional prerogatives and being faced with a parliament dominated by PSD, Iohannis was meant to disappoint in delivering the fast and thorough political reforms his electorate was hoping for. Moreover, Iohannis was not able to build on his initially broad support to replicate Băsescu’s ‘achievement’ and form a PNL government. Therefore, PSD managed to stay in government until late 2015, when large anti-corruption rallies emerged, and Prime Minister Ponta resigned. The euphoria around the election of Iohannis proved short lived.

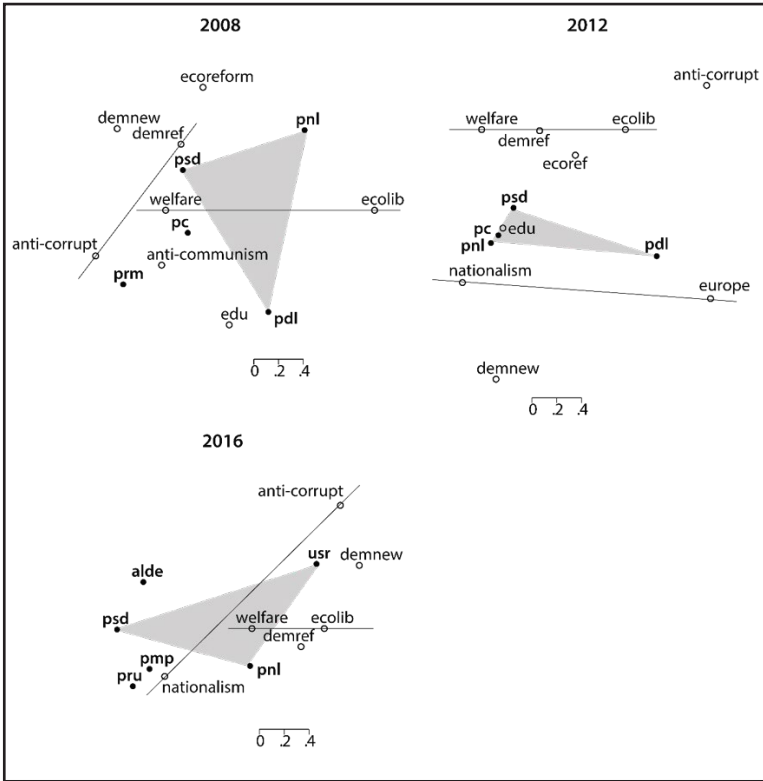
As a result of Ponta’s resignation, Iohannis nominated Dacian Cioloş to form a technocratic government, supported by both PSD and PNL. By this time, it became apparent that PNL had not managed to capitalize on the euphoria around the election of Iohannis (see Figure 7.2), and it did not have enough parliamentary or societal support to govern. Given that PSD did not wish to continue in office, a technocratic government seemed the most viable option for both big parties. The Cioloş government was formed and continued in office until the 2016 parliamentary election.

Programmatic issue space and the electoral campaign

To understand the extent to which the 2016 election provide the continuity or a break with previous patterns of party competition, Figure 7.3 illustrates the issue space and parties’ position in the 2008, 2012 and 2016 campaigns. The figure has been constructed based on a sample of articles from one daily right-wing newspaper (*Adevărul*) and one daily left-wing newspaper (*Jurnalul Național*). The coding follows the rules of core sentence analysis (Dolezal et al. 2012), with actors aggregated into parties, and issues aggregated into 15 larger categories (for additional analysis and further details see: Borbáth 2018). The figure has been constructed based on parties’ issue positions and salience with the use of multi-di-

dimensional scaling (MDS), weighted by similarities between issues and parties (Hutter and Kriesi 2018; Kriesi et al. 2012). Proximity represents parties' support for the respective issue.

Figure 7.3: MDS analysis of the programmatic space and party position in the 2008, 2012 and 2016 parliamentary electoral campaigns



Source: Author's own elaboration.

Figure 7.3 shows the high programmatic fluctuation between consecutive elections. While the issue repertoire stays relatively constant, with issues related to the economy (economic liberalism/welfare), politics (democratic renewal/reform, fighting corruption) and culture (anti-communism, nationalism) re-emerging, the dimensionality of the political space and party positions change. The only issue disappearing over time is anti-communism, still relatively important in 2008.

The programmatic space of the 2016 election seems to resemble the 2008 election rather than the election in 2012. Not surprisingly, the 2012 election was exceptional to the extent to which two blocks, the programmatically heterogeneous PSD–PNL and the largely unpopular PDL competed against each other. In 2012 the two most structuring issues were nationalism and Europe. On the one hand, PSD–PNL campaigned on a platform of returning Romania to the ‘people’ in the aftermath of what they saw as an illegitimate PDL government. On the other hand, the PDL campaigned with a program of saving democracy from what they labelled the anti-European PSD–PNL coalition. Economic issues provided a secondary dimension to the extent to which PSD–PNL attacked the austerity politics of the PDL.

The 2016 election stands out in several ways. First, during these elections, the most salient issue, ‘fighting corruption’ changed its role in party competition. As the 2008 and 2012 campaigns show, the issue had already appeared before, but its salience gradually increased. In 2008 ‘fighting corruption’ was a small issue associated with the radical right PRM, which promised to ‘clean’ the corrupt elite. All mainstream parties (PSD, PDL and PNL) were equally distant to the issue. In 2016 the radical right disappeared but ‘fighting corruption’ stayed on as the driving force of challenger politics. The new anti-establishment reform party, USR entered politics on a promise to curb corruption. Unlike in 2008, in 2016 the fight against corruption became the pole associated with anti-nationalist politics and nationalist parties (PRU, PMP, PSD) were the most distant to the issue

Second, during the 2016 election the structuring capacity of economic issues radically declined. In the 2008 and 2012 campaigns PSD claimed its traditional pro-welfare position in party competition. Parties on the right, as much as they took a position on the economy, were closed to economic liberalism. For instance, in 2012, the PDL was forced to defend its record in office during the crisis years and was still seen as the party of austerity. By 2016, economic issues were only important for PNL. As the largest party on the right, PNL took the opportunity to distance itself from the legacy of austerity politics and claimed to represent a pro-welfare position. PSD barely addressed economic issues and focused instead on attacking the anti-corruption camp with a nationalist agenda.

Third, the 2016 election has shown the U turn of PSD on political issues related to reforming/renewing democracy. In 2008 and in 2012,

these issues were very salient in the PSD campaigns. Most of the positions PSD took on this issue were about limiting or counter-acting what the party identified as anti-democratic practices by President Bănescu. Given the long-standing animosity between President Bănescu and PSD, the president's willingness to bend the institutional rules to serve his political interests, such as during the 2009 government formation (see e.g. King and Sum 2011), and PSD's attempt to use its parliamentary majority to suspend/undermine the president. These issues formed a core part of the overall programmatic appeal of PSD. After Bănescu left office in 2014—and PSD was in government between 2012 and 2015—the party did not speak anymore about reforming democracy. Following on the promises made by Iohannis, and the popular expectations around his election, it was parties on the right who mobilized on this issue. The issue appeared forcefully in the discourse of the anti-establishment reform party USR, but in less clear terms, PNL also promised to reform the democratic process.

Conclusion

The chapter started by outlining two perspectives on the 2016 election: continuity or break with the past. This election was analysed in the long-term dynamic of patterns of party competition, with a view on the evolution of the demand and the supply side of politics over time. While there were important changes 2016 brought, the election rather provided continuity with previous patterns of party competition. The findings can be summarized through the following four points.

Firstly, the election represented continuity with regards to the ideological structure of party competition. Programmatic instability, mainstream parties' ability to switch their positions and incorporate new issues in their programmatic appeal helped them survive. There are two important examples: political issues centred on reforming/renewing democracy and nationalism. Whereas in 2012 and 2016 the radical right disappeared, its core issue lived on, and the Social Democratic PSD incorporated nationalism in its ideological profile. From this perspective the 2016 election is rather similar to the dynamic in other Eastern European countries. Except, the Romanian the post-communist left managed to incorporate in its ideological profile its challengers' demands and thereby to avoid electoral decline.

Second, the continuing role of the legacies of crisis management has shown the importance of critical periods in structuring party competi-

tion. The opposition status of PSD during the key period of the economic crisis allowed the party to challenge the austerity packages implemented by its centre-right competitor. These austerity packages led to disenchantment amongst voters, a loss of trust in the most important political institutions and above all, the abandonment of the centre-right PDL party. PSD managed to capitalize on voters' disenchantment and—first in coalition with PNL, then alone—achieved historically high electoral scores. Centre-right parties did not recover from being associated with austerity, and after merging into one organization, PNL still struggled in 2016 to convince voters on its pro-welfare position.

Third, the institutional design reinforced both dynamics. The strong role of the presidency shaped the agenda of the parliamentary elections, and the personality/decisions of both Băsescu and Iohannis appeared in these campaigns. Despite having alternative electoral dates, parliamentary elections are clearly concerned with the presidency. The split incumbency that the semi-presidential design creates further blurs the programmatic position of parties and makes electoral accountability difficult. For instance, Băsescu's support for the austerity policies of the PDL-UDMR, made it possible for PSD to continue some of its opposition tactics from government and frame the 2012 election as a challenge against the ruling president.

Fourth, the 2016 election provided the strongest break with the past with regards to the role of anti-corruption politics. The election brought the breakthrough of the anti-establishment reform party USR, due to the party's ability to present itself in opposition to what it described as corrupt practices associated with all other formations. USR took over the discourse on reforming/renewing democracy from PSD and in conjunction with its anti-corruption rhetoric, the party managed to build a 'progressive' pole against nationalist formations. Unlike in the case of PPDD, the party's organic link to some of the protest groups helped them survive.

The Romanian case stands out in the current volume for two reasons: it is the only election from 2016, and it is the only one from a post-communist country. Despite being associated with some of the typical marks of post-communist politics (ideological and organizational instability, frequent government changes etc.), I believe the election is closer to some of the cases from 2017 than it first appears. Namely, in Romania as well as in some of the other countries, the election brought the victory of a nationalist, culturally conservative platform. Except, in this case, not the populist radical right, but the nominal 'left' represented these views.

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The Austrian Election of 2017: An Election Won in the Long Campaign

Anita Bodlos, Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik, Martin Haselmayer, Thomas M. Meyer & Wolfgang C. Müller

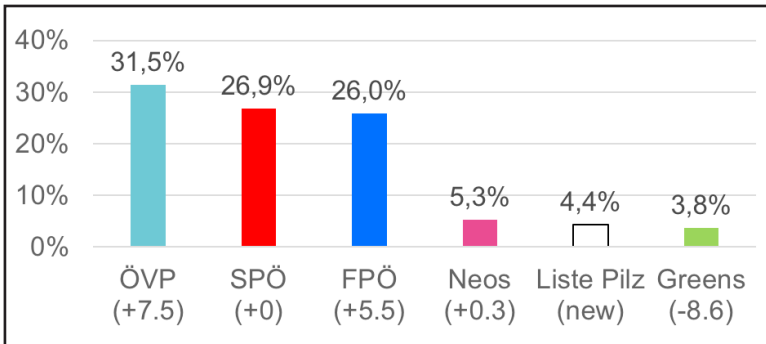
Introduction

The Austrian election of 15 October 2017 introduced significant change to Austrian politics. More precisely, it made the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) the strongest party and led to a centre-right government coalition between the ÖVP and the Freedom Party (FPÖ). It stands out in Austrian electoral history comprising 22 elections as one of three that produced a new leading party (1970 and 2002 being the others) and one of seven that led to (full or partial) alternation in government. The 2017 election was notable in that the second government party, which was considerably weaker than the Chancellor's party, was able to take the helm. The election also significantly restructured the parliamentary party system, the Greens and Team Stronach exit and adding the brand-new Liste Pilz (see Figure 8.1). In sum, the election produced a substantial shift to the right with the worst showing for parties of the left in the entire post-war period. At the same time this was a mobilizing election, with the strongest increase in voter participation (up five percentage points) since 1945, for an overall turnout of 80%.

How did this all come about? In this chapter we show that in terms of the main contenders of the election, its result seemed settled already some time before the 'official' campaign kicked off after the summer. This is what can be read from voting intentions registered in a multitude of surveys. It does not mean, however, that such outcome was taken for granted by the actors and that the campaign lacked drama. Indeed, drama combined with significant change in voter preferences in the long cam-

paign, conventionally defined as the year before the election (Norris et al. 1999). What happened in the long campaign, however, was triggered by yet another upheaval earlier in the inter-election period: the dramatic change in voting intentions that followed the ‘European refugee crisis’ of 2015. Non-partisan observers have characterized the handling of the crisis by the Austrian government as a case of ‘state failure’ and it was widely recognized as such within the electorate. The crisis made painfully clear the inbuilt tensions and resulting inertia of the incumbent grand coalition government under Chancellor Werner Faymann. In any case, the crisis highlighted the salience of the FPÖ’s core issue of immigration, created additional support for its positions, and made it the leading party in the polls. When the long campaign set in, the situation thus was not only significantly different from the 2017 outcome but also from the 2013 starting point (see Figure 3 below).

Figure 8.1: The 2017 electoral result



Source: Official electoral results: <https://wahl17.bmi.gv.at>.

The government parties’ slump in the polls of course did not remain unnoticed and led to strategic re-orientation and leadership turnover. Changes on the supply side, however, were not confined to the SPÖ and ÖVP. We discuss these changes in the next section. In separate sections, we then analyse the role of the leaders and issues in the 2017 election. Much of this focuses on the three main contenders: the SPÖ, ÖVP, and FPÖ. We devote a separate section to the main loser of the elections, the Greens, trying to understand why this party failed. In the final substantive section, we examine the Silberstein affair, the one event that stood out in the short campaign and that put many observers in doubt about how it might affect the election result. A brief conclusion follows.

The supply side restructured

Put simply, electoral volatility can originate from changes in voter demand or changes in party supply. The Austrian parliamentary election of 2017 clearly represents a case of substantial changes in the supply of parties, party policy, and party personnel. What is more, one could plausibly argue that the election itself was triggered by supply side changes (more specifically, the change in the ÖVP leadership in May 2017).

All relevant changes to the political supply side happened months (some even years) in advance of election day (see Table 8.1). After a turbulent year of intra-party conflict, near collapse of the government, party split-offs, and party leader changes between mid-2016 and mid-2017, the political events during the short campaign in September and early October 2017 pale in comparison. As we will show further below, aggregate public opinion held remarkably steady during the short campaign in September and October.

Table 8.1: Supply side changes in Austrian parties, 2013–2017

| Party | 2013 | Role during leg. period | Leadership changes | Entry/exit? |
|------------------|-------|-------------------------|---|----------------|
| SPÖ | 27 % | Senior coalition party | → C. Kern (May 2016) | |
| ÖVP | 24 % | Junior coalition party | → R. Mitterlehner (August 2014) → S. Kurz (May 2017) | |
| FPÖ | 21 % | Opposition | | |
| Greens | 12 % | Opposition | → U. Lunacek & I. Felipe (May 2017) | |
| Team Stronach | 6 % | Opposition | | → No candidacy |
| Neos | 5 % | Opposition | | |
| BZÖ | 3.5 % | Extra-parliamentary | | → No candidacy |
| Liste Peter Pilz | - | (founded in July 2017) | | → New entry |

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Most importantly amongst all supply side changes, two parties that had together received almost one in ten votes at the 2013 election, were basically defunct by October 2017. The Team Stronach, founded by Austro-Canadian billionaire Frank Stronach to stir up Austria's political class in 2013, proved to be little more than a collection of political fortune hunters with no coherent party structures or policy profile. It practically imploded within a year of the 2013 election. The BZÖ, founded in 2005 by Jörg Haider as a break-away from the FPÖ, had failed to clear the four percent threshold in 2013 and subsequently descended into oblivion. Together, Team Stronach and BZÖ had captured around 434,000 votes in 2013 (equivalent to 8.6 percent of the vote in 2017). The disintegration of these two parties alone thus guaranteed high levels of electoral volatility. However, in addition to these party exits, there were important changes in the top personnel of three other parties.

As Table 8.1 shows, both government parties, SPÖ and ÖVP, experienced party leader turnover between the 2013 and 2017 elections—the ÖVP even twice. The first one was just an echo of the frustrating electoral result of 2013. In 2014, the ÖVP replaced Michael Spindelegger, an honest but at times stiff conservative, with the somewhat more energetic and liberal Reinhold Mitterlehner, minister for science, research, and economic affairs. Mitterlehner prescribed his party a strategy of modernization and liberalization and at the same time banked on his and his team's economic competence. While it seemed quite successful initially, the refugee crisis shock put an end to it and called for another re-orientation.

This also holds for the SPÖ. The first stage of strategic re-orientation is often internal bewilderment, debate, and conflict, and this is what happened here. Driven by the real problem load of the asylum crisis and ÖVP pressure, Chancellor Faymann hoped to get away with policy adaptation. Consequently, government stalemate gave way to changes toward a more restrictive asylum policy. This, however, mobilized the left in the SPÖ the protest of which fed into the general discomfort that had built up in the party regarding Faymann's leadership. He was driven into head-over-heels resignation by public embarrassment and only lacklustre support amongst the party grandees. A coalition of some party grandees recruited Christian Kern, the then-CEO of the state-owned Austrian Federal Railways, to succeed Faymann at the helm of both, the party and the cabinet. This process and the deliberate break of the new leader with the Faymann legacy left considerable fissions in the SPÖ.

Under its new leader Chancellor Christian Kern, the SPÖ fundamentally renewed its government team, introduced programmatic innovation (Kern's 'Plan A'), and even made an attempt to open up to the FPÖ—a party it had categorically rejected as a potential coalition partner since 1986. The FPÖ overture met with internal resistance and got stuck quite early. Without a credible coalition alternative, Kern relinquished the idea of early elections and settled for a renegotiation of the coalition deal, betting his money on a rejuvenating of the grand coalition.

Such a rejuvenation was also in the interest of Mitterlehner. However, by mid-2017 the ÖVP leader had been severely damaged due to his lack of authority in the notoriously factionalized party (Müller and Steininger 1994), and in May decided to call it quits. This paved the way for the ÖVP's best hope, the 31-year-old foreign minister, Sebastian Kurz, to take over the party leadership. Kurz did so on the condition that there would be substantial centralization of intra-party power in the hands of the party leader. Within days he called for new elections to secure a mandate for himself and his policy program.

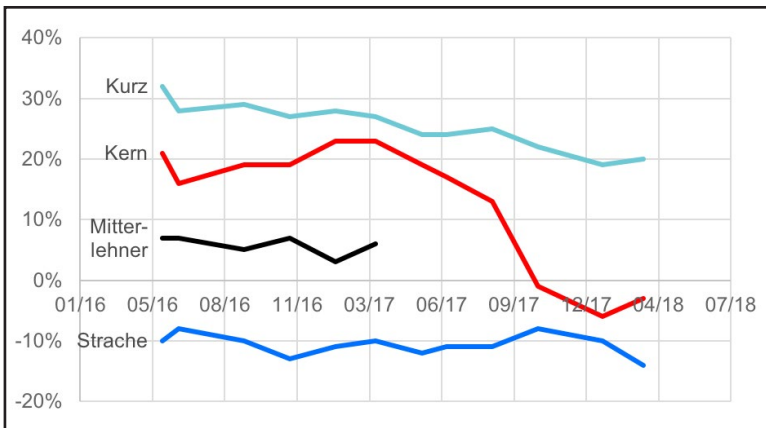
Amongst the opposition parties, only the Greens experienced turnover in party leadership. Eva Glawischnig who had been party leader since 2009 (acting since 2008) quit in May 2017, citing health reasons. The Greens then installed Ingrid Felipe, deputy-governor of the state of Tyrol, as the new party leader, and MEP Ulrike Lunacek as their top candidate for the election (all other parties cumulated both positions in one person). Glawischnig's sudden retreat did not mean the end of bad news for the Greens, though. When long-time MP Peter Pilz failed to secure a safe position on the party's federal election list at the party congress in June 2017, he left the party and founded his own list, taking with him not only several established Green politicians but also a large share of Green voters, thus contributing strongly to the party's disastrous election result. After 31 years of continuous parliamentary representation as one of the most electorally successful Green parties in Europe (Dolezal 2016), the Greens failed to clear the four percent hurdle in October 2017.

As the subsequent sections of this chapter will show, many of these supply side 'shocks' induced substantial responses by voters. Party leader turnover as well as the exit and entry of parties into the political arena strongly shaped the Austrian political landscape in the run-up to the 2017 election.

Leaders do matter

Even in an archetypical party democracy such as Austria, party leaders have grown more important in determining parties' electoral success. Two correlates of this trend are the continued erosion of party identification (Plasser and Sommer 2018) and the increased use of personalized campaign communication (Hayek 2016). The 2017 election is perhaps the most remarkable manifestation of the impact of party leaders on voters' party preferences in Austria to date.

Figure 8.2: Net trust in party leaders, 2016–2018



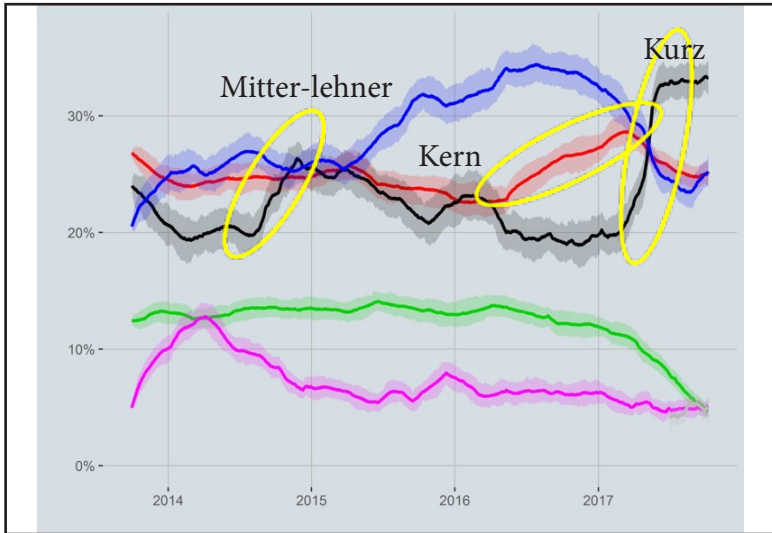
Note: Net trust in party leaders. Source: OGM/APA-Vertrauensindex (www.ogm.at).

The most relevant party leader change happened when ÖVP leader Reinhold Mitterlehner stepped down in May 2017 and was replaced by Sebastian Kurz. Kurz had been the leader-in-waiting for many in the party, not least due to his high popularity levels and his advocacy of a more restrictive immigration and asylum policy. As Figure 8.2 shows, Kurz had net trust levels (calculated as the difference in the proportion of respondents who trust a person and the proportion who do not trust them) between 20 and 25 percentage points higher than his predecessor's. He also maintained higher ratings than his direct opponent, the SPÖ's Christian Kern.

The massive gap in popularity between Mitterlehner and Kurz materialized when Kurz took over the party in May 2017. While the ÖVP had hovered around 20% in the polls for a year, the transition from Mit-

terlehner to Kurz proved to be a shot in the arm for the party. Within a few weeks, the party was propelled to the number one position, gaining somewhere between ten and 12 percentage points. Prior to that, the installations of Kern (SPÖ) in May 2016 and Mitterlehner (ÖVP) in August 2014 had themselves produced significant upticks in their parties' poll numbers (see Figure 8.3).

Figure 8.3: Polling averages over the course of the legislative period, 2013–2017



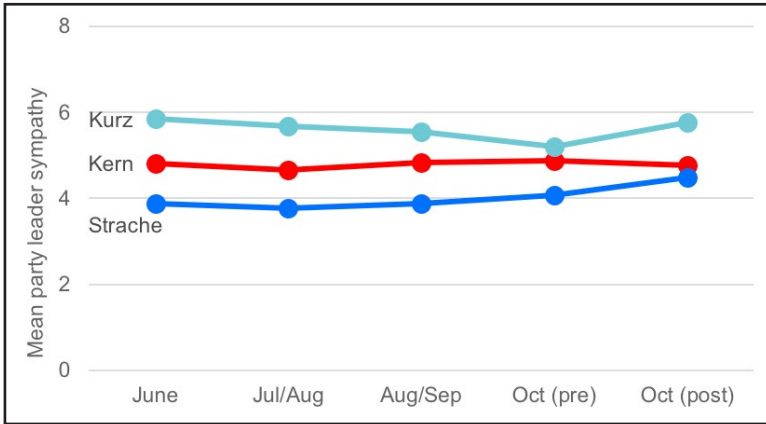
Source: Authors' calculations based on polling data collected by *neuwal.com*.

When Reinhold Mitterlehner took over the party leadership from Michael Spindelegger in August 2014, the ÖVP rose by about six points in the polls until the end of the year. An increase of similar size can be detected in the SPÖ's numbers after the transition from Werner Faymann to Christian Kern, although these gains took longer to materialize.

While party leaders and their popularity clearly shaped the parties' polling performance throughout the legislative period, there was not much movement induced by party leaders during the short campaign. Figure 8.4 shows that, amongst the leaders of the three major parties, Sebastian Kurz (ÖVP) remained ahead of Christian Kern (SPÖ) and Heinz-Christian Strache (FPÖ). However, the gap between the leaders narrowed somewhat in the run-up to the election. Thus, once the gains

from installing Kurz were realized for the ÖVP, not much further progress was made.

Figure 8.4: Party leader sympathy during the short campaign



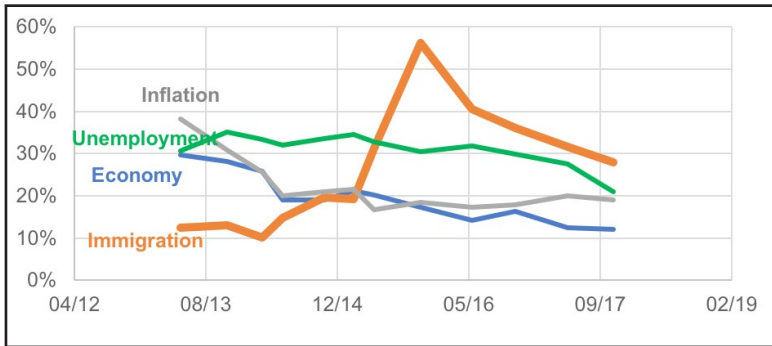
Source: AUTNES Online Panel 2017 (Wagner et al. 2018).

The changing issue landscape

Another remarkable element of the 2017 national election was its issue focus, which differed sharply from the previous election in 2013. As in many other European countries, the ‘European refugee crisis’ shaped Austrian politics between 2013 and 2017. At the peak of the wave in 2015, asylum seekers had filed 88,340 applications in Austria, more than four times as many as in the average year between 2000 and 2014.¹ This ‘shock’ not only affected ‘asylum’ as a rather narrow issue. Rather, other migration-related topics, such as whether family allowances should be cut for children living outside Austria, also gained prominence in the long campaign. In other words, in light of the European refugee crisis many issues related to the economy, education, and social welfare were framed as immigration issues in the public, the party, and the media agenda.

¹ All figures on asylum applications are taken from: Statistik Austria (2018): Asylanträge 2000–2016 nach Staatsangehörigkeit, available at: http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/bevoelkerung/wanderungen/asyl/index.html, accessed: 14.05.2018.

Figure 8.5: The public issue agenda in the long campaign



Note: Proportion of voters naming inflation, unemployment, the economy, or immigration as one of the two most important issues facing Austria. Source: Eurobarometer.

The changing public issue agenda in the long campaign is shown in Figure 8.5. Based on Eurobarometer data, it shows the share of respondents naming the respective issue as one of the ‘two most important issues facing Austria at the moment.’² Between 2013 and 2017, classic economic issues such as inflation, unemployment, and the state of the economy became less important in the voters’ eyes. In contrast, concerns about immigration increased significantly until November 2015 when 56% of the respondents indicated that immigration was one of the top two concerns for the country.

Along with a decrease in asylum applications in 2016, voter perceptions of immigration as one the most pressing challenges for Austria decreased again according to the Eurobarometer surveys. Yet despite the decline between 2015 and 2017, the immigration issue still figured prominently in the 2017 election campaign (see also Bodlos and Plescia 2018; Plasser and Sommer 2018; IMAS Report 22 2017). Data from the 2017 Online Panel (Wagner et al. 2018) suggests that ‘asylum’ and ‘immigration’ were still amongst the most salient issues in the electorate, reaching combined a salience of about 20%. In comparison, respondents considered issues of the welfare state as less important: pensions (11%), health and care (9%) as well as families (6%), employment (8%) or the economy (4%) were named less often as dominant current problems.

2 All figures relating to Eurobarometer data are taken from Eurobarometer (2017), available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/themeKy/42/groupKy/208>, accessed: 14.05.2018.

The increased salience of immigration was also reflected in Austrian media coverage: the share of newspaper articles referring to immigration almost doubled compared to the previous general election in 2013. Nevertheless, immigration was substantially less salient compared to other issues (like economy and budget, employment and welfare state, education or corruption).³

How did the Austrian parties deal with the ‘European refugee crisis’? After the initial wave of readiness to welcome asylum seekers or ease their journey toward other European countries in 2015, the government soon became more reluctant when security concerns were raised. Sebastian Kurz, then minister for foreign affairs and integration, became—along with other ÖVP ministers—one of the most critical voices demanding strict controls at EU borders and European solidarity⁴ as well as compulsory community service for unemployed refugees and a legal ban on the niqab.⁵ During the campaign, Kurz managed remarkably well to communicate his strategy, to stay ‘on message’. Borrowing a formulation from Norris et al.’s (1999, p. 53) analysis of Tony Blair’s 1997 campaign: ‘he stayed ruthlessly on message to the point of near-robotic incarnation of key themes and slogans’. In particular, he constantly proclaimed his leading role in the closure of the ‘Balkan route’ of migration, continuously took critical stances concerning immigration, and stressed demands on immigrants for the purpose of integration (Bodlos and Plescia 2018).

Data from party press releases issued during six weeks of election campaigns from 2006 to 2017 illustrate this shift to the right (Figure 8.6). The ÖVP took almost perfectly neutral stances on immigration between 2006 and 2013, but exclusively issued press releases with critical positions concerning immigration in 2017, resulting in a similar position as the far-right FPÖ. Like the ÖVP, the SPÖ also took substantially more critical stances in their press releases in 2017 compared to the previous election.

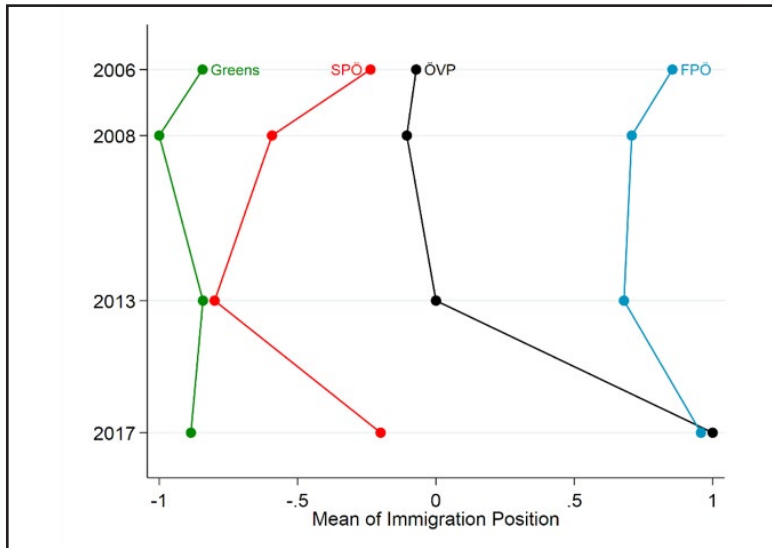
3 Galyga, Sebastian; Rettenegger, Gregor; Eberl, Jakob-Moritz; Boomgaarden, Hajo (08.05.2018): Themenverschiebungen in der Berichterstattung im Vorfeld der Wahl 2017, available at: <http://viecer.univie.ac.at/blog/detail/news/themenverschiebungen-in-der-berichterstattung-im-vorfeld-der-wahl-2017/>, accessed 25.05.2018.

4 ÖVP Bundesparteileitung (21.09.2015): ÖVP-Aktionsplan Asyl 3–Kurz: Nur sichere EU-Außengrenzen ermöglichen ein Europa ohne innere Grenzen–FOTO, available at: https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20150921_OTS0141/oevp-aktionsplan-asyl-3-kurz-nur-sichere-eu-aussengrenzen-ermoeglichen-ein-europa-ohne-innere-grenzen-foto, accessed 25.05.2018.

5 ÖVP Parlamentsklub (16.11.2016): Werteenquete (2)—Kurz: Integrationsgesetz umsetzen, available at: https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20161116_OTS0178/werteenquete-2-kurz-integrationsgesetz-umsetzen, accessed 27.08.2018.

Nevertheless, the SPÖ and especially the Greens are located closer to the supporting pole of the scale.

Figure 8.6: Party positions on immigration (based on press releases), 2006–2017



Note: Positions on immigration in the four latest Austrian election campaigns. The right pole indicates a critical position toward immigration, the left pole a supporting position.

Sources: AUTNES coding of press releases (Müller et al. 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; Müller et al. forthcoming).

The positional shift by the ÖVP was accompanied by an increase in salience dedicated to immigration, a trend also observable for the FPÖ and the Greens, but not for the SPÖ (not shown). Despite this increase in salience, immigration was still one of many issues in party press releases: The FPÖ emphasized immigration the most with about 13% of press releases dedicated to this issue, hence, leaving considerable leeway for other issues (Bodlos and Plescia 2018).⁶

The ÖVP and Sebastian Kurz thus chose an *accommodative strategy* (Meguid 2005) vis à vis the radical right FPÖ concerning immigration and asylum policies. The ÖVP shifted to the right by adopting several

6 See also Bodlos, Anita; Haselmayer, Martin; Haudum, Teresa (06.03.2018): War 2017 ein „Ausländerwahlkampf“? available at: <http://viecer.univie.ac.at/blog/detail/news/war-2017-ein-auslaenderwahlkampf>, accessed 28.05.2018.

FPÖ demands and hence undermining FPÖ support by offering a similar policy position backed up with the credibility of being fit for government and without the stigma of extremism lingering upon the FPÖ. The FPÖ reacted by means of a poster campaign claiming to be the original defender of native Austrians and confronted the ÖVP with pro-immigrant statements of the past.

Despite the accommodative strategy pursued by the ÖVP, the issue ownership (Petrocik 1996) of the immigration issue remained firmly in the hands of the FPÖ. About 37% of the respondents in a survey by the Austrian National Election Study (AUTNES) perceived the FPÖ as the party 'most competent' on immigration, whereas only 22% named the ÖVP. Amongst those considering immigration or asylum as important issue(s), a whopping 52% judged the FPÖ as the most competent party while the ÖVP share remained unchanged (Wagner et al. 2018). A different question format and a more fine-grained breakdown of the 'immigration' issue, however, show that the ÖVP was the much more credible party regarding issue-related international diplomacy (Plasser and Sommer 2018, 89). In effect, the ÖVP had succeeded with adding a new sub-dimension to the 'immigration' issue and managed to reduce its overall competence gap toward the FPÖ.

Demise of the Greens

The main losers of the election were the Greens. In December 2016, they had celebrated the election of their former party leader, Alexander van der Bellen, as Austrian president. Only ten months later and for the first time ever since they entered parliament in 1986, the party failed to pass the 4% threshold (Bodlos and Plescia 2018). This is even more surprising as the party had obtained 12% of the votes in the 2013 general election and was constantly polling above ten percent until spring 2017.

How could one of Europe's most successful Green parties (Dolezal 2016) lose so many voters in such a short period of time? We argue that the reasons are a series of intra-party conflicts in the long campaign and—as a consequence of one of those—the formation of a new party led by one of the Greens' founding members, Peter Pilz. Changing leaders to a rather unpopular top candidate five months before the election was another obstacle to the party's success. Finally, campaign dynamics, such as a focus on the three main contenders, and the threat of a right-wing coalition promoted strategic voting at the expense of the Greens.

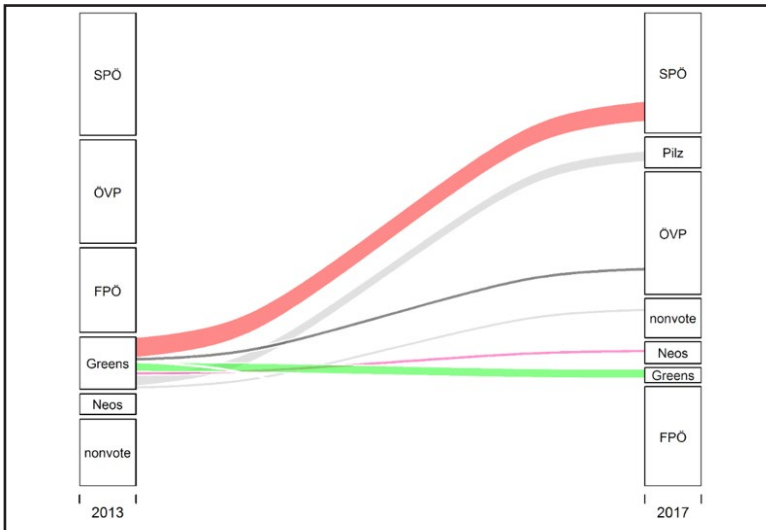
Intra-party conflict and Liste Peter Pilz

In early spring 2017, the Greens' party leadership clashed with the Green youth organization over the support for a Green student list. A bounded dispute escalated when the Young Greens asked the party leader, Eva Glawischnig, to step down.⁷ The issue was battled in the media arena, peaking with a round table on the country's most prominent political talk show on the intra-party conflict. When the party leadership sought to terminate the conflict by excluding the dissident youth organization, a scathing critique of Glawischnig from several high party officials leaked to the media. Glawischnig's image and leadership suffered severely during the conflict. Moreover, the party lost a group of motivated activists that could have been valuable during the campaign.

Roughly at the same time, trouble arose from the city of Vienna, home to the party's largest and electorally most relevant regional party branch. As a member of the regional government, the Greens supported a skyscraper project in the city centre that faced severe criticism from within and beyond the party. A group of dissidents urged for a binding ballot vote amongst Vienna's party members to determine the Greens' position on this delicate issue. The result of this vote was at odds with the party leadership, who refused to follow the rank and file despite earlier commitments. To preserve the government coalition, the Green regional parliamentary party group approved the project in early June. Again, media extensively reported on the issue and the intra-party conflict.

7 Junge Grüne (22.3.2017): Offener Brief an Eva Glawischnig: Fürchtet euch nicht; available at: https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20170322_OTS0069/offener-brief-an-eva-glawischnig-fuerchtet-euch-nicht, accessed: 22.05.2018.

Figure 8.7: Voter moves 2013–2017 (Green party)



Note: Values based on vote recall question in the 2013 election and the vote choice in the forthcoming election. Source: AUTNES Online Panel Study 2017 (Wagner et al. 2018) ($n = 2467-3,016$), using population weights.

By the end of June, the Greens held their national party congress to elect the party's national candidate list for the upcoming elections. Amongst others, Peter Pilz, one of their most experienced MPs with a national reputation as a corruption fighter, failed to make it onto the list. Pilz first announced his resignation, but soon reconsidered his choice. Supported by a group of MPs (from the Green and SPÖ parliamentary party group), he was able to present a self-named party on all tiers across the country. Liste Peter Pilz had neither an election manifesto nor a distinct policy profile. However, its leader was more strongly associated with the issue of fighting corruption (Plescia et al. 2018) than the prior issue owner, the Greens. The new party ran a successful low-budget campaign and—in contrast to and largely at the expense of the Greens—obtained parliamentary representation. Figure 8.7 shows that Green voters in the 2013 national election even opted for Liste Peter Pilz and the Greens in 2017.⁸

Despite votes lost to the new party, the figure reveals an even greater voter drain to the Social Democrats. This likely reflects strategic voting in

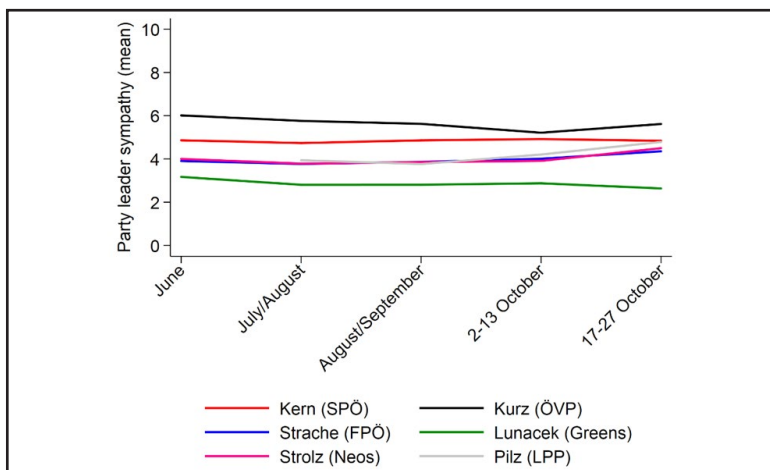
⁸ Studies based on other surveys report similar results, see Plasser and Sommer 2018: 85; Unterhuber 2018.

the face of the party’s losses in the polls (see Figure 8.3 above), a strong campaign focus on the three main contenders and the threat of a right-wing coalition of ÖVP and FPÖ.

Leadership change

A week after Sebastian Kurz took over the ÖVP leadership and rallied for early elections, the Green party leader, Eva Glawischnig, announced her retirement from politics for personal reasons. Thus, a few months ahead of the elections, the party had to choose a new party leader. The Greens opted for a separation of powers and presented MEP Ulrike Lunacek as top candidate; Tyrol’s party leader, Ingrid Felipe, took over the national party office. Lunacek had gained a reputation amongst her peers at the European parliament. She became vice-president of the Green parliamentary party group in 2013 and was elected vice-president of the parliament one year later. However, she did not receive the same level of appreciation in her home country—this was a drawback, as top candidates are increasingly important in party competition (Poguntke and Webb 2005; Karvonen 2010; Costa Lobo and Curtice 2015). Figure 8.8 shows that Ulrike Lunacek had the lowest sympathy scores of all the party leaders during the entire campaign, which indicates that leadership change was another ingredient for the Greens’ electoral decline.

Figure 8.8: Mean sympathy scores for top candidates in the 2017 Austrian election

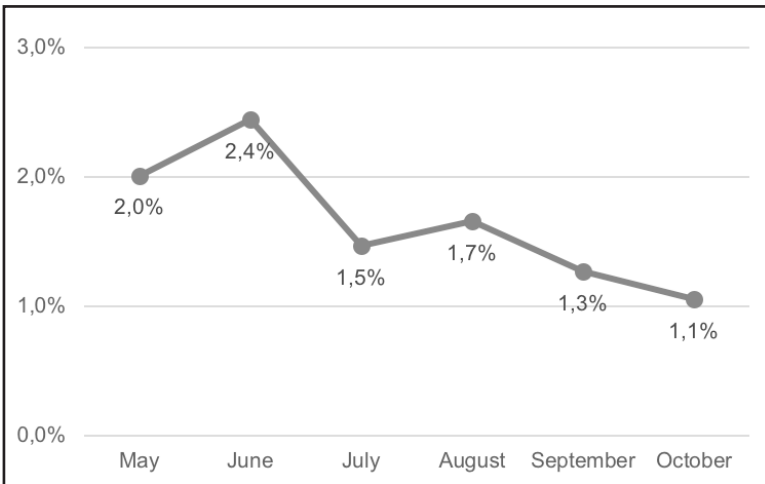


Note: Values based on an 11-point scale ranging from 0 (not at all likeable) to 10 (very likeable). Source: AUTNES Online Panel Study 2017 (Wagner et al. 2018) (n = 1833–2,235), using survey weights.

Campaign effects: much ado about nothing?

The short 2017 campaign started around the beginning of September, when several of the parliamentary parties launched their campaigns officially. As the publicly available polling indicates (see Figure 8.3 above), there were hardly any changes in aggregate party support after Sebastian Kurz took over the ÖVP leadership and Peter Pilz split from the Greens. The polls thus predicted a clear victory for the ÖVP and a neck-to-neck race between the SPÖ and FPÖ for second place.

Figure 8.9: Average absolute error in election polls



Note: Mean absolute deviation from election result for six parties: ÖVP, SPÖ, FPÖ, Neos, Liste Pilz, and the Greens. Source: Polls collected from neuwahl.com. Two polls conducted in early May (i.e. before the leadership change in the ÖVP) were discarded.

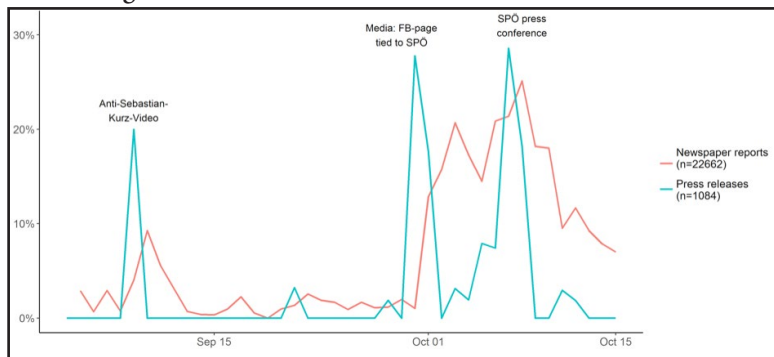
Note that the polls were already quite predictive of the election result by July 2017 (see Figure 8.9). The mean absolute deviation between the election results and a simple average of all polls in a month was 1.5 percentage points in July—not much higher than the 1.1 percentage points in the final pre-election polls fielded during the first two weeks of October.

While, in hindsight, the polls paint the picture of a less than exciting election campaign, the perception of many observers during the campaign was quite different. Attention focused in particular on a scandal involving the SPÖ's chief campaign advisor, Tal Silberstein, and fake

Facebook pages that used dirty campaign tactics against ÖVP lead candidate Sebastian Kurz (*inter alia* the pages mimicked attacks from a far-right source and also contained anti-Semitic material) (Tóth 2017; Thalhammer 2018). Apparently, some resourceful SPÖ campaign strategists had considered the gap in the polls too large to be closed even with a good ‘normal’ campaign and had decided to ‘go dirty’.

In late September, two media outlets broke the story that the Facebook pages—whose operators had previously not been disclosed—could, in fact, be linked to the SPÖ’s campaign (allegedly unbeknownst to party leader Christian Kern). This not only triggered the resignation of the SPÖ party manager, but it also generated a flurry of media reports, focusing a disproportionate share of public attention on the so-called Silberstein affair (see Figure 8.10).

Figure 8.10: Daily share of newspaper reports and party press releases mentioning ‘Silberstein’

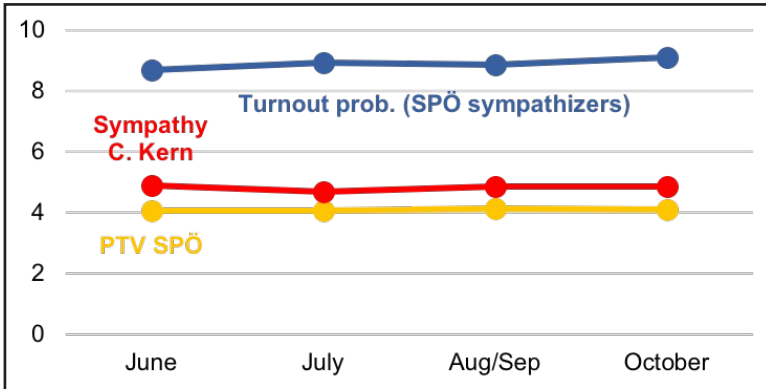


Source: AUTNES analyses of press releases 2017 (Müller et al. forthcoming) and media reports 2017 (Eberl et al. forthcoming).

Since the Silberstein affair became the dominant media topic in the last weeks of the campaign, many observers thought it possible that this would hurt the SPÖ’s chances in the election and boost support for the ÖVP. However, according to data from the AUTNES Online Panel, no such thing happened (Figure 8.11).

As Figure 8.11 demonstrates, neither the propensity to vote for the Social Democrats, nor sympathy for the party leader, Christian Kern, took a hit between the third and fourth panel wave that were conducted before and after the scandal broke, respectively. Nor was the probability to turn out amongst SPÖ sympathizers affected in any significant way.

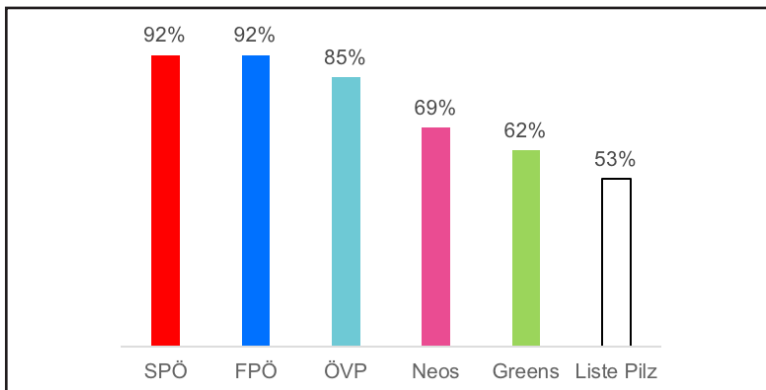
Figure 8.11: The non-impact of the Silberstein affair on SPÖ support



Source: AUTNES Online Panel 2017 (Wagner et al. 2018).

As Figure 8.12 shows, the SPÖ even retained more of its voters between early to mid-September (before the Silberstein scandal broke) and election day in October than most other parties. Further analyses demonstrate that many of the last-minute movements in the electorate may even have been *to the advantage* of the Social Democrats.

Figure 8.12: Voter loyalty between early/mid-September and election day



Note: Graph shows the percentage of party voters in the September wave of the AUTNES Online Panel that stayed loyal to the party on election day. Source: AUTNES Online Panel (Wagner et al. 2018).

Conclusion

The 2017 election brought significant change to Austrian politics. This chapter has argued that the election was decided quite some time before the campaign. In particular, the ‘European immigration crisis’ in 2015 had been a focusing event that caused significant change in the electorate. While it shifted the odds of winning the election toward the FPÖ it caused the SPÖ and ÖVP to select new leaders and change their strategies. Because of these supply side changes, the outcome of the election was not only significantly different from the 2013 result but also from what an election in the fall of 2015 or in 2016 most likely would have resulted in. This stresses the importance of the supply side for elections but it also highlights the importance of the election date. The Austrian constitution offers several ways to early elections and coalition contracts have regularly contained a rule that de facto allowed each partner to call for early elections. While such moves are always risky, in this case the gamble worked and allowed Kurz and the ÖVP to drive home what the polls promised. This was helped by a very streamlined and well executed campaign on the ÖVP side.

The introduction characterized the 2017 election in the context of Austria’s post-war elections. The true significance of the election, of course, will flow from its impact on how the country is governed. Being based on 113 of 183 seats (61.7%) and facing an opposition which largely still needs to accommodate to its new role in the government system (the SPÖ), to resolve internal problems (Liste Pilz), or to reorganize and prove their indispensability from outside parliament (the Greens), the incumbent ÖVP–FPÖ coalition has reason to look into the future with some optimism. In the first eight months of their reign, this has led to some ambitious policies and winner-takes-all behaviour in making appointments. Projecting such behaviour into the future could make the 2017 election a significant turning point in Austria’s post-war politics.

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Portfolio Allocation and the Selection of Ministers After the 2017 National German Election

Ferdinand Müller-Rommel

Introduction

After the collapse of Angela Merkel's three-way ('Jamaica') coalition talks (with the Greens and the Liberal party) in November 2017, the Social Democrats discussed the prospect of a third coalition government under a conservative chancellor. As the deal for a new government began to take shape, the chairman of the Social Democratic Party, Martin Schulz, publicly announced that he had 'decided' to join the new Merkel cabinet as foreign minister (*'Ich habe entschieden in die Bundesregierung einzutreten und zwar als Außenminister'*). This statement shocked not only party members but also the public since the respective political parties had not even approved the coalition agreement nor allocated the ministerial portfolios. The statement also opened a new public debate about two of the oldest questions in politics: 'who gets *what*' (Lasswell 1936) and 'who gets *in*' (Matthews 1960).

This chapter poses two general questions that are often raised by practitioners and scientists in German politics: Which political parties allocate which ministries for what reasons? Who are selected for a ministerial position amongst the pool of potential candidates? We will answer these questions in light of the existing theoretical and empirical approaches on portfolio allocation and ministerial selection. The allocation of ministries and the selection of ministers is in practice a sequential process whereby coalition parties first bargain amongst each other over ministerial posts. In a second step, each coalition party selects the person who will fill the ministerial post. The aim of this chapter is to investigate the mechanisms

of these processes, taking the government formation in Germany from January to March 2018 as a case study.

Sequence I: The allocation of ministerial portfolios

Theoretical approaches and empirical findings

Coalition formation in parliamentary democracies is usually based on three processes. First, the coalition partners negotiate and agree on a policy program for the governmental period (*coalition agreement*). Secondly, coalition partners specify the share of ministerial offices amongst them (*portfolio allocation*). Finally, coalition partners nominate and agree on individuals who then become ministers (*ministerial selection and appointment*).

The *literature on coalition agreements* is rather limited. Only Müller and Strom (2008) have provided a systematic empirical record of the different forms of coalition agreements in Western Europe. They have identified significant variations across countries and consistent national trends, e.g. informal agreements (in Italy); formal and short (Finland); formal and long (Belgium); exclusively policy documents (Austria and Denmark). The observed differences amongst the coalition agreements are explained by six clusters of variables: 1) the effect of time and space; 2) structural attributes of cabinets and party systems; 3) the preferences of the players; 4) political institutions; 5) features of bargaining situations, and finally; 6) exogenous 'critical' events (Müller and Strom 2008, p. 187).

The *literature on portfolio allocation* is more extensive and divided into two main strands: a quantitative and a qualitative explanation of the allocation of ministries amongst coalition partners (DeWinter 2002, p. 190f). The former approach simply investigates the number of ministerial posts for each coalition party while the latter approach asks why different parties get different ministries.

The **quantitative portfolio approach** dates to the early 1960s and has been inspired by game theoretical assumptions. Gamson (1961, p. 376) was the first to argue that any 'participant will expect others to demand from a coalition a share of the payoff proportional to the amount of resources which they contribute to a coalition.' Put differently, political parties receive the same percentage of portfolios as the percentage of seats they hold in the national parliament. Browne and Franklin (1973)

have tested this assumption on a data set of 13 European parliamentary democracies from 1949 to 1969. They found that there was nearly a one-to-one correspondence between party's seat contribution to the coalition and the number of portfolios it received in cabinet ($r=.93$) whereby a deviation is attributed to small parties and to the party of the prime minister. Small parties might get 'bonus portfolios' due to the pivotal positions they often occupy. These extra portfolios are also meant to assure their loyalty to the coalition and avoid potential defection to another coalition offering a better payoff.

Three decades later, Warwick and Druckman (2001) suggested the idea that not all portfolios are of equal value. The finance ministry might, for instance, have a much greater political weight than the ministry of social affairs (see also Larsson 1993; Laver and Shepsle 1994). Based on expert interviews the authors have identified the relative weight of different ministries. A few years later they reproduced basically the same results for Western and Central Eastern European countries (Warwick and Druckman 2005, 2006). Although the largest coalition party (*formateur*) and the small pivotal parties seem to receive more payoffs than their weight would mandate, 'seat share is by far the strongest determinant of portfolio allocations' (Warwick and Druckman 2006, p. 653f). Hence, 'Gamson's iron law of proportionality' (DeWinter 2002, p. 190) is still the strongest predictor of portfolio allocation even when taking the 'political weight' of different ministries into account.

The **qualitative portfolio approach** investigates the portfolio preferences of coalition parties. It assumes that different parties are likely to have different interests—and, as a result, different preferences—in the allocation of portfolios. Once a party controls a portfolio, it has the power to implement its ideological preferences in overall governmental policy, which might reinforce the electoral support of its clientele groups. Thus, party ideology is supposed to influence portfolio allocation.

Budge and Keman (1990) introduced the first empirical analysis on the preferences of political parties for specific ministries. Based on the party family approach (conservative, liberal, religious, socialist, and single-issue party families), they calculated the distribution of all ministries in 440 coalition governments in 13 European countries from 1945 to 1984. In a nutshell, they found that party families have substantive preferences for those ministries that are thematically close to their ideology and policy concerns. For instance, if conservative and religious parties

(i.e. Christian Democrats in Germany) are the largest parties in the coalition (*formateur*), it is expected that they will take the prime ministerial portfolio as well as the interior, foreign, and defence ministries. If there is no liberal or socialist party in the coalition, the conservatives are also expected to take the economic or the finance ministries as well as the education ministry. They also take the justice ministry, if no liberal party is in coalition and the ministry of agriculture if no agrarian party is in coalition.

Twenty years later, Bäck et al. (2011) conducted a similar policy saliency theory of portfolio allocation. Based on a new dataset combining party manifesto data with the ministerial appointments of political parties in 12 parliamentary democracies, they found a positive and significant effect of the saliency variable. As they note: 'our results give support to the idea that parties prefer, and aim to gain control over, ministries with a policy area of competence that was stressed in their electoral manifesto.' (Bäck et al. 2011, p. 466)

Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson (2005) suggested another qualitative measure to examine the portfolio allocation. They differentiate between three 'prestige types' of ministries (high, medium, low prestige) and investigate the portfolio preference of coalition parties within these types. 'High-prestigious ministries' are those with significant control over government policy and that are highly visible. Amongst them are the ministries finance and economics, foreign affairs, interior and defence. 'Medium prestige ministries' control significant financial resources, but have lesser visibility and policy impact, encompassing agriculture, education and science, labour, justice, health, transport, and economic development. 'Low-prestigious ministries' (such as the ministry for family and youth) have hardly any public visibility and are characterized by a lack of resources for patronage.

Who gets what in Germany?

After the election, leading members of the prospective coalition parties first negotiate on the policy program of the forthcoming government. Only after this step was completed did the coalition partners decide on the distribution of the portfolios. Both the governmental policy program as well as the distribution of portfolios is part of a written *coalition agreement*. On February 7, 2018, the three coalition parties (the Christian Democrats or CDU/CSU—these parties have formed an uninter

rupted electoral alliance since 1953—and the Social Democrats, SPD) formally approved the coalition agreement which contains 177 pages. It summarizes differentiated proposals of the coalition parties in the following policy fields: family and children (8 pages); education, science and digitalization (9 pages); labour and social policy (14 pages); economic, finance, energy, traffic, and agriculture (34 pages); social security (12 pages); migration and integration (7 pages); housing, development of cities and regions (14 pages); modern state, justice (14 pages); environment (7 pages); foreign policy, military, human rights, and the armed forces (20 pages); citizen participation, democracy (10 pages); working mode of the government and the parliamentary factions, and executive–legislative regulations (2 pages); distribution of portfolios (1 page).

The *portfolio allocation* took place after the policy issues of the government had come to an end. As predicted in the literature the CDU/CSU, which holds the majority of the parliamentary seats, received the prime ministerial post. Furthermore, the CDU gained six, the CSU three, and the SPD another six ministerial positions. Thus, the new German cabinet (Merkel IV) consists of 16 members (including the prime minister). The size of the new government does not differ for the Merkel III cabinet which served in office from 2013 to 2018.

Does this distribution of cabinet seats represent the parliamentary strength of the coalition parties as has been suggested in the above-mentioned literature by Gamson (1961) and Brown and Franklin (1973)? Although both coalition partners (CDU/CSU and SPD) lost a substantial number of parliamentary seats in the 2017 national election (down 105), we find that the parliamentary representation of both governing parties predicts 100% of their portfolio payoffs. We can also confirm that small parties (like the CSU as junior partner) receive a slightly better payoff than the major party (CDU) within the conservative party alliance. Thus, the relative impact of the CSU on government policy might be stronger than their share of seats in parliament. Overall, our findings are consistent with ‘Gamson’s law’ for both the Merkel III and IV cabinets (see Table 9.1).

Table 9.1: Who gets what? The ‘quantitative’ approach

| | Merkel III 2013–2018 | | | | Merkel IV 2018– | | | |
|---------|-------------------------|------|------------------------|------|---------------------|------|------------------------|------|
| Party | Seats in cabinet | | Seats in parliament | | Seats in cabinet | | Seats in parliament | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| CDU/CSU | 10 | 62.5 | 311 | 61.7 | 10 | 62.5 | 246 | 61.8 |
| CDU | 7 | 43.7 | 255 | 50.5 | 7 | 43.7 | 200 | 50.1 |
| CSU | 3 | 18.8 | 56 | 11.1 | 3 | 18.8 | 46 | 11.5 |
| SPD | 6 | 37.5 | 193 | 38.3 | 6 | 37.5 | 153 | 38.3 |
| Total | 16 | 100 | 504 | 100 | 16 | 100 | 399 | 100 |

Comparative research suggests that the numerical calculation of portfolio allocation might not be as fruitful as the qualitative distinction between portfolios. Thus, we shall examine the policy saliency of party families in cabinet. Interestingly enough, both large parties (SPD and CDU/CSU) in Germany have developed similar portfolio preferences over time—at least with regard to the most important ministries. This contradicts to the empirical findings by Budge and Keman (1990) on Western European parties in the 1980s. Obviously, the policy saliency and the portfolio preferences are less deviant between the new ‘cartel parties’ than between those of the old ‘catch-all party’ (Katz and Mair 1995). During the SPD/FDP coalitions (1969–1980), the Social Democrats continuously held the ministry of finance, defence, family, labour, and justice while during Helmut Kohl’s cabinets (1982–1994) the ministries of finance, defence, interior, family, and labour were allocated to the CDU. The foreign ministry was always under control of the minor coalition party (FDP and the Greens). Thus, in a ‘grand coalition’ these major portfolios had to be distributed equally between the CDU/CSU and the SPD.

A closer look at the *portfolio allocation* after the 2017 national election in Germany provides the following descriptive findings (see Table 9.2). First, in both cabinets (Merkel III and Merkel IV) the denomination and the number of portfolios remained the same. There have been only minor changes between the two Merkel cabinets (e.g. the interior ministry is now referred to as ‘interior, construction, and homeland’). Second, with one exception the portfolio allocation between the two governing parties did not change from the cabinets of Merkel III and Merkel IV. Only the ministry of economics switched from SPD to CDU/CSU and the finance

ministry from CDU/CSU to SPD. Put differently, the overall portfolio allocation between the two major political parties remained stable from Merkel III to Merkel IV. This clearly indicates that Chancellor Merkel wanted to signal 'governmental stability' after a six month period of extremely difficult coalition negotiations. Third, within the CDU/CSU the responsibility for two portfolios changed. The agriculture ministry—which has always been a domain of the Bavarian CSU—is now in the hands of the CDU, while the interior ministry switched from the CDU to the CSU. The latter implies a major impact of the junior partner within the Christian Democratic Alliance since the interior ministry is defined as one of the 'core' ministries to which the CSU had no access for a long time in the past.

Fourth, the responsibilities in particular policy fields have been sensibly divided up between the coalition partners (the 'heterogeneity principle'). Thus, the high-prestigious ministries are distributed amongst all three parties. The allocation of medium and low-prestigious ministries reflects the policy saliency of the different party families in cabinet. For instance, the ministries of labour, family, justice, and environment are in the hands of the SPD while the CDU/CSU controls the ministries of agriculture, health, transport, economic development, and science and education.

Fifth, the distribution of the three ministries with competences cutting across departmental boundaries has significantly changed from the Merkel III cabinet to Merkel IV. In the former cabinet (2013–2017) both the prime minister's office and the finance ministry were in the hands of the CDU/CSU while the justice ministry was held by the SPD. In the new cabinet both finance and justice ministries are under the control of the SPD although the Social Democrats have lower parliamentary representation than the Christian Democrats. Both ministers play a key role in cabinet. The minister of justice screens all government legislation prior to the political decision-making processes in parliament and cabinet. A similar function is served by the finance minister. He can interfere in any decisions with financial implications in all cabinet portfolios. Thus, controlling the ministries of finance and justice will clearly strengthen the impact of the SPD on overall government policy.

Sixth, in most important overlapping policy areas, the allocation of ministries remains divided between the coalition partners. This is particularly true for the finance ministry (SPD) and the economics ministry

(CDU), but also for interior (CDU/CSU) and justice (SPD). In these two overlapping policy domains both coalition partners need to coordinate the drafting of policy proposals before sending them to cabinet.

In sum, there has been little change in the quantitative and the qualitative allocation of portfolios from the Merkel III to the Merkel IV cabinet. One major exception is the exchange of the finance ministry (formerly CDU, now SPD) and the economics ministry (formally CDU, now SPD). Thus, Chancellor Merkel, has successfully forced a consensus process amongst the coalition partners that ensures the stability of the German government for the next legislature.

Table 9.2. Who gets what? The ‘qualitative’ approach

| High-prestigious ministries | Distribution of ministries by prestige type | | |
|--|---|--------------------|-------------------------|
| | Merkel III 2013–2018 | Merkel IV 2018– | Change in allocation |
| Finance | CDU | SPD | yes |
| Economics | SPD | CDU | yes |
| Foreign | SPD | SPD | no |
| Defence | CDU | CDU | no |
| Interior | CDU | CSU | party internally |
| Chancellor’s office | CDU | CDU | no |
| Medium prestigious ministries | | | |
| Agriculture | CSU | CDU | party internally |
| Environment | SPD | SPD | no |
| Health | CDU | CDU | no |
| Justice | SPD | SPD | no |
| Labour | SPD | SPD | no |
| Transport/Traffic | CSU | CSU | no |
| Economic cooperation | CSU | CSU | no |
| Low-prestigious ministries | | | |
| Family | SPD | SPD | no |
| Science and Education | CDU | CDU | no |
| For the classification of ministries see Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson (2005) | | | |

Sequence II: The selection of ministers

Theoretical and empirical findings

The literature on ministerial selection suggests that in parliamentary systems a small group of party leaders decide on the cabinet composition. They choose their government personnel according to the personal and competence characteristics of ministerial candidates, while constrained by constitutional, party and political considerations (Dowding and Dumont 2009). Overall, the analysis of ministerial selection focuses on two aspects: 1) the effects of the institutional conditions in selecting cabinet ministers and; 2) the individual characteristics of potential ministers.

The **institutional approach** to analysing the selection of ministers is based on principal-agent theory (Strom 2003). Scholars who have examined Westminster systems argue that prime ministers are agents of the parliament and principals of the line ministers. The collective government needs to govern well in order to maximize the parliamentary representation of the governing party after the next election. Thus, the cabinet serves as an agent of its party in parliament, delivering policy outputs that promise electoral success. In a one-party government constellation, prime ministers therefore usually select ministers who carry out policies that she strongly prefers (Berlinski et.al 2012). Yet the process becomes more complicated in coalition governments, where different parties have the same goals (i.e. vote maximizing) but different policy preferences and different intra-party factions. In these governments, all sorts of strategic in come into play. Empirical studies on coalition governments have therefore stated that it is not at all clear how principal-agent models can explain the selection of ministers under these complex strategic considerations. Furthermore, they argued that the selection of ministers is hemmed in by constitutional, party and strategic considerations (Dowding and Dumont 2009, p. 6ff).

Constitutional constraints are, for instance, given by formal rules about: 1) the size of a cabinet; 2) dual membership in parliament and cabinet; 3) specific denominations of certain portfolios; 4) the role of the head of state in cabinet appointment and; 5) the organization of the state (e.g. the existence of federal systems may dry the pool of 'ministerable' politicians at the national level). Party political constraints are basically due to different types of party governments. In a one-party government,

choosing ministers might be easier than in coalition governments where several parties with strong party leaders and various intra-party factions compete for ministerial positions. Strategic issues of the prime minister might also constrain the selection of ministers. For instance, the composition of cabinet needs to be balanced between ambitious and dynamic politicians who deal with policy issues that are in the public spotlight and more statesman-like ministers who focus on more traditional issues.

The **individual approach** to analysing ministerial selection dates to the early comparative studies by Blondel (1985), Dogan (1989), and Blondel and Thiébaud (1991). The later study is the most comprehensive and examines the profession of ministers in 13 Western European countries from 1945–1994. The authors found that a long parliamentary background is the main career path to ministerial office. Similar findings have been identified for the political careers of ministers in Southern Europe (Tavares de Almeida et al. 2003). One trait that has most recently received attention is the increasing selection of ‘technocrats’ and ‘outsiders’ for cabinet governments. A comparative longitudinal study covering 14 European countries found that ‘technocrats’—who do not usually belong to the group of party politicians—increasingly occupy key executive positions in cabinet and have therefore emerged as powerful actors in government decision-making processes (Costa Pinto et al. 2018).

Although these studies provide important information about the socio-demographic and political background of individual ministers, they do not provide sufficient answers as to why these ministers (and no others with similar background characteristics) have been recruited into cabinet. Thus, our knowledge on *why* individual ministers are selected for office is still limited.

Who receives a ministerial post in Germany?

Formally, the appointment of ministers is exclusively in the hands of the German chancellor. In practice, however, the selection of ministers rests with a small group of influential party leaders within the governing parties. While the chancellor may select the ministers of her own party after consultation with CDU and CSU party officials, she cannot choose the ministers of the coalition partner. In the SPD, the ‘nomination committee’ for ministerial position consists of the party leader and deputies of the party executive. Those who select the ministers in both coalition parties will look for a mix of different types of ministers to maximize the overall representative requirements (e.g. parliamentary faction, age,

gender, geographical origin) and of political competence (e.g. experience in national and state parliament and ministries).

In both parties, the selection of ministers is constrained by several political and strategic issues. Usually, the parliamentary factions lay claim to an acceptable share of seats in cabinet for reasons of strengthening executive–legislative relations and for organizing an effective governing. Second, members of the regional party executives (*Landesvorstand*) ask for representation of their states in cabinet, because this assures major impact of state interests on governmental policies. This is particularly true for highly populated, large states and for the states in East Germany. Finally, the political experiences of ministerial candidates matter for obtaining a cabinet position. Politicians who have served over a long period in the national parliament, or former ministers or junior ministers at the state and/or national level have a higher chance of being selected as a minister. The recruitment of outsiders, on the other hand, is usually not attractive for coalition parties since it may cause conflicts with the parliamentary faction and with the state executives.

Immediately after the coalition parties agreed on the government program, a small group of influential party leaders from the CDU/CSU party executive and the parliamentary faction decided on the names of their nine cabinet members. The decision on SPD ministers was not taken before the end of the intra-party popular vote of the coalition program in March 2018. The ministerial profile of the new Merkel IV cabinet reflects the representation of diverse interests of national parties and state governments as well as the individual political experiences of cabinet ministers. It also shows that there are more differences in the selection of cabinet ministers between the Merkel III und the Merkel IV cabinet than in the portfolio allocation of the coalition parties. More precisely a comparison between both Merkel cabinets provide the following empirical findings (see Table 9.3).

First, only three out of 16 ministers kept their portfolio from the Merkel III to the Merkel IV cabinet. Put differently, 81% of the ministers in the Merkel IV cabinet hold their portfolios for the first time. Second, only six out of 16 ministers served in both Merkel cabinets. In other words, more than half of all ministers (61%) in the Merkel IV cabinet are newcomers (see overview in Appendix A9). Third, many new ministers are also younger than their predecessors. Thus, the average age of all cabinet members has decreased from 54 to 52 years. Fourth, the propor

tion of female ministers has increased from 38 to 43%. In the Merkel IV cabinet, 7 out of 16 ministers are female. Fifth, all cabinet ministers are members of the national parliament. Thus, there is indeed a strong executive–legislation component in the selection of German cabinet members. Yet we find a higher proportion of former ministers and state secretaries represented in the Merkel IV cabinet, which indicates that governmental experience became a more important precondition for getting into cabinet. Sixth, political experience in local and regional governments are a further—albeit less important—factor for the selection of cabinet ministers. Finally, we find more ‘newcomers’ in the Merkel IV cabinet compared to the one before.

In a nutshell, the executive–legislative relation is still the strongest explanatory factor for the selection of ministers in Germany, but professional experiences in national governments becomes a more important reason for getting a cabinet office. Thus, our data confirm that the majority of German ministers are selected on grounds of their professional experience in politics. ‘Technocrats’ and ‘outsiders’ from the business world have—over the past decades—not been selected as cabinet ministers in Germany.

Table 9.3. Who gets in? The institutional and the individual approach

| | Merkel III (2013–2017) (N=16) | Merkel IV (2018–) (N=16) |
|--|--|--|
| Political experiences | | |
| Member of parliamentary faction (national level) | 81% | 75% |
| Former minister or state secretary (national level) | 62% | 69% |
| Former member of local/regional government (subnational level) | 25% | 31% |
| Newcomers | 19% | 25% |
| Age and gender | | |
| Average age | 54 years | 52 years |
| Female ministers | 38% | 43% |

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the portfolio allocation in the Merkel III and Merkel IV cabinets from both a quantitative and a qualitative perspective. It has also described the major characteristics that explain the selection of ministers to cabinet. Overall, we did not find any major changes in the portfolio allocation between the Merkel III and Merkel IV: the number of cabinet seats remained the same. There was no change in the denomination of ministerial portfolios and in the distribution of seats amongst the coalition partner. Furthermore, there was also no change in the pay-offs for the coalition parties and in the portfolio allocation between the coalition parties (except for one). Finally, with only one exception, we observed no change in the allocation of high, medium, low-prestigious ministries amongst the coalition partners. Regarding the selection process, we find that being a member of parliament and having professional governmental experiences still predicts more than 70% of the selection to cabinet. ‘Newcomers’ are still rare and ‘outsiders’ as well as ‘technocrats’ have not generally found a place in German cabinets.

So far, the bulk of theoretical approaches and empirical findings on the allocation of ministries and the selection of ministers in parliamentary democracies have developed in mutual isolation. What we need is a more systematic view on the linkage between portfolio allocation and ministerial selection. It would, for instance be interesting to examine under which conditions political parties negotiate for specific ministerial portfolios precisely because they have identified own party members who provide the necessary political experiences and skills for running that particular ministry. Future research should therefore seek to connect these different research traditions into a unified framework.

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Appendix A9

| Ministries | Merkel III (2013–2018) | Merkel IV (2018–) |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Prime Minister | Angela Merkel | Angela Merkel |
| Prime Minister's Office | Peter Altmeier | Helge Braun |
| Foreign | Walter Steinmeier | Heiko Maas |
| Finance | Wolfgang Schäuble | Olaf Scholz |
| Economics | Sigmar Gabriel | Peter Altmeier |
| Justice | Heiko Maas | Katarina Barley |
| Interior | Thomas de Maizière | Horst Seehofer |
| Defence | Ursula von der Leyen | Ursula von der Leyen |
| Labour/Social Affairs | Andrea Nahles | Hubertus Heil |
| Health | Hermann Gröhe | Jens Spahn |
| Agriculture | Hans Peter Friedrich | Julia Klöckner |
| Economic Development | Gerd Müller | Gerd Müller |
| Environment | Barbara Hinricks | Svenja Schulze |
| Transport/Traffic | Alexander Dobrindt | Andreas Scheuer |
| Science/Education | Johanna Wanka | Anja Karliczek |
| Family | Manuela Schwesig | Franziska Giffey |
| | | |

Pariah Parties, Policy Profiles and Party Politics in a Multilevel System: Coalition Formation in Germany, 2017–2018

Marc Debus

Introduction

The outcomes of government formation processes in modern democracies depend on the interplay of many factors. These variables have their origins in party-specific incentives like the expected payoffs in terms of offices and policies, incentives that emerge from institutional factors like the power of the head of state, the existence and competencies of the second chamber, or the multilevel structure of the political system, as well as contextual factors like the pre-electoral commitments of parties, intra-party conflict and the coalition preferences of voters and party supporters (for an overview see Laver and Schofield 1998; Müller 2009; Andeweg et al. 2011; Clark et al. 2013, pp. 465–524).

These general findings also apply to the government formation process in Germany on all levels of the political system. That is, political parties and their representatives on the national, regional and even the local level try to maximize their office and policy payoffs and consider incentives or restrictions that emerge from the respective institutional setting (e.g. Downs 1998; Pappi et al. 2005; Bräuninger and Debus 2008, 2012; Bäck et al. 2013; Debus and Gross 2016; Gross and Debus 2018). These patterns are also observable in the recent government formation processes in Germany on the state and federal levels. However, the electoral success of the ‘Alternative for Germany’ (AfD)—a right-wing populist party with a wide ideological spectrum ranging from market-liberal

orientations to racist–nationalist positions (see, e.g., Arzheimer 2015; Franzmann 2018)—altered matters considerably. The AfD, which has won parliamentary representation in 14 of the 16 state parliaments, in the European parliament and in the Bundestag in the time period since 2014, decreased dramatically the chances that a ‘traditional’ coalition between centre–left or centre–right parties could win a majority in the respective parliaments. The parties on the state level were—at least in terms of the government formation process—able to cope with the parliamentary presence of the AfD, which is excluded by the other parties from the government formation process, by forming ‘unusual’ coalition governments. These have included in 2016, for instance, the Christian Democrats (CDU), the Social Democrats (SPD) and the Greens in Saxony–Anhalt and the SPD, the liberal Free Democrats (FDP) and the Greens in Rhineland–Palatinate. However, on the national level the parties have failed to form a more complex coalition government. Negotiations between the representatives of the CDU, its Bavarian sister party, the CSU, the FDP and the Greens failed in November 2017. The formation of another coalition between the CDU/CSU and the SPD—also because of pressure from the German president whose role as an indirect formateur came into play in the fall of 2017—emerged as the only remaining coalition option because a minority government was rejected by Chancellor Merkel and the party leadership of the CDU and CSU.

This contribution seeks to explain why the government formation process in Germany after the 2017 Bundestag election was so complicated. The focus in the chapter is on institutional and contextual constraints and their impact on the coalition negotiations after the Bundestag election on 24 September 2017. The following section will therefore give an overview on the development of party competition in Germany after 2013 and discuss how the election campaigns, election results and government formation processes on the state level influenced the parties’ coalition strategies and the coalition negotiations after the 2017 Bundestag election.

Before presenting the policy profile of German parties in 2017, the third section presents the data in more detail. The findings show that a coalition between the CDU/CSU and the SPD was ideologically more cohesive than a so-called ‘Jamaica coalition’ between the CDU/CSU, the FDP and the Greens. Immigration was the key sticking point and was for the CSU and the Greens the most salient policy issue in 2017. While

the CDU, the FDP and the CSU (especially) favoured a more restrictive immigration policy, the Green party preferred a more permissive immigration policy. Furthermore, the distance on economic issues between the FDP on the side and CDU/CSU and the Greens on the other was remarkable, especially considering the economic policy dimension was highly salient for the liberal party. The conclusion summarizes the findings and discusses the role of additional factors that influenced the German government process of 2017 and 2018, in particular patterns of intra-party conflict.

Party competition and coalition politics in Germany after 2013

Two global processes have had a major impact on the development of the German party system, the parties' programmatic profile and, therefore, the patterns of coalition politics in Germany since the 2013 Bundestag election. The first was the European economic and sovereign debt crisis (e.g. Grande and Kriesi 2015), which resulted in the founding of the AfD initially as a Eurosceptic political party. The party almost won parliamentary representation in the 2013 parliamentary election. The second factor has been the ongoing European migrant crisis, which erupted in 2015. The latter saw integration and migration become the most important policy issue amongst German citizens (e.g. Kortmann and Stecker 2017) and resulted in the transformation of the AfD into a right-wing populist party with a strong emphasis on anti-migration and anti-Islam positions (Arzheimer 2015; Franzmann 2018).

While the AfD won parliamentary representation in 2014 in three East German state parliaments (it took between 9.7 and 12.2% of the votes) and won 7.1% of the vote share in the election for the European Parliament, the election results in early 2015 saw the parties' vote share decline. The then still predominantly Eurosceptic party won 5.5 and 6.1% of the votes for the state parliaments in Hamburg and Bremen, respectively. Polls indicated that the support for the party was decreasing up to summer 2015,¹ when the party split and the moderate wing amongst former party chair Bernd Lucke left the AfD and founded a new, market-liberal and Eurosceptic party which, however, was not successful

1 For a compilation of monthly and weekly polling results for the time period between 2013 and 2017, see for instance <http://www.wahlrecht.de/umfragen/politbarometer.htm> (accessed on 31 January 2018).

in any election. The remaining part of the AfD, which now adopted a clear socially conservative, nationalist and anti-immigration policy profile (Decker 2017, p. 59), benefitted from the waves of mass migration in the late summer and fall of 2015 and from the decision by the German federal government, led by Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU), to allow migrants to cross the border from Hungary into Austria and onward to Germany (for an overview, see Bieber et al. 2017).

Since there was no opposition in the Bundestag against the decision by the CDU/CSU–SPD coalition government, the AfD with its clear anti-immigration profile won support amongst citizens who did not feel represented by the migration policy of the federal government or the two opposition parties in the Bundestag, the Greens and The Left. This sense heightened in the wake of the New Year's Eve sexual assaults in several German cities (Schwarzbözl and Fatke 2016; Schmitt-Beck et al. 2017). While support for the AfD was already at 9% amongst likely voters before Christmas 2015, in 2016 the number reporting they would consider voting for the AfD in a hypothetical Bundestag election rose to between 11 and 13%.² Even more important, in March 2016 the AfD won parliamentary representation with more than 24% of the vote in another East German state (Saxony–Anhalt), but also in two important West German states: Baden–Wuerttemberg (15.1%) and Rhineland–Palatinate (12.6%). These election outcomes were an early signal that the AfD could not only win strong support amongst important segments of the electorate in the East German states, where electoral volatility is rather high, but also in Western Germany where traditional cleavage structures still exist and affect voting behaviour, albeit less so than in the past (see, e.g., Elff and Rossteutscher 2016; Arzheimer 2016).

The AfD is considered by the other parties represented in parliament as a pariah and is therefore excluded from the government formation process. Its electoral success therefore decreased the chances that a two-party coalition amongst centre–left parties (i.e. the SPD and the Greens) or centre–right parties (the CDU/CSU and the FDP) could win a parliamentary majority. Being aware of this scenario, the parties represented in the Bundestag elected in 2013—the CDU/CSU, the SPD, the Greens and The Left—as well as the FDP, which lost parliamentary representation in the German federal parliament for the first time, were more cautious to explicitly reject coalition options in the election campaigns of 2016

2 <http://www.wahlrecht.de/umfragen/politbarometer.htm>.

and 2017. For instance, the Free Democrats formed a coalition government with the SPD and the Greens in Rhineland–Palatinate in spring 2016 while in Saxony–Anhalt the Greens joined the incumbent coalition CDU–SPD government, which lost its parliamentary majority because of the electoral success of the AfD in this state. The Left, the SPD and the Greens formed a left-wing coalition government in Thuringia after the 2014 state election, and—with the SPD as the strongest party—in the state of Berlin in the fall of 2016. Given the existence of a broad range of party combinations that formed state governments in Germany, including coalitions between the CDU and the Greens in Hesse and (with the Greens as the strongest party) in Baden–Württemberg, there was a widely shared expectation that—with the exclusion of the AfD—several coalition options could be realistic scenarios for the federal government formation process after the 2017 Bundestag election.

However, the 2017 Bundestag election campaign and the parties' coalition strategies were significantly influenced by three state elections, which took place in March and May 2017. After nominating Martin Schulz as their candidate for chancellor and party chair in January 2017, the SPD saw its support amongst voters grew, so much so that the Social Democrats closed the gap with the CDU/CSU and in some polls even polled above the Christian Democrats.³ Because no poll gave a coalition between the SPD and the Greens a majority, the Social Democrats became more open toward a coalition with The Left and did not rule out a coalition between themselves, the Socialists and the Greens during the Saarland state election campaign in February and March 2017.⁴ The SPD's strategy was that replacing the CDU/SPD coalition government in the Saarland with a SPD-led coalition government that could include The Left and the Greens as junior partners would mobilize SPD members and supporters and would be an optimal start to the election year. Furthermore—and importantly for legislative decision-making on the federal level—the only chance a left-wing majority could win in Germany's second chamber, the Bundesrat, whose consent is needed for about 40% of all legislation (Stecker 2016), was to replace the coalition between the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats in the Saarland with a coalition that would exclude the CDU and the FDP. If the SPD together

3 See <http://www.wahlrecht.de/umfragen/politbarometer.htm>.

4 See <http://www.handelsblatt.com/my/politik/deutschland/vor-der-landtagswahl-im-saarland-rot-rot-gruen-die-neue-machtoption/19547456.html?ticket=ST-31022-aHT-6KLbwYoDjWyFukcyo-ap1> (accessed on 31 January 2018).

with the Greens had retained control over the state governments in North Rhine–Westphalia and Schleswig–Holstein (there with the support of the party of the Danish minority), which elected their state parliaments in May 2017, left-wing state governments in the Bundesrat would have controlled 37 of 69 seats before and after the federal election. Such a situation would have made life easier for a potential coalition government between the SPD, the Greens and The Left at the federal level. Yet, the Christian Democrats won the election clearly. This was not only because of their popular top candidate, the incumbent state premier, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, but also because they played on voters' concerns about the possibility of a coalition between the SPD, The Left and the Greens after the state election and its consequences for policy outcomes in the Saarland.⁵

The Saarland state election not only marked the end of the 'Schulz effect'—and thus also the SPD's stellar performance in public opinion polls—but also set the stage for the defeat of the SPD-led state governments in Schleswig–Holstein and, more importantly still, in the former social democratic stronghold of North Rhine–Westphalia. While in the northern state of Schleswig–Holstein, the CDU, the FDP and the Greens easily came to an agreement and formed a so-called 'Jamaica coalition', the Christian Democrats and the Free Democrats won enough seats in the North Rhine–Westphalian state parliament to form a majority government despite the AfD having won parliamentary representation. The Social Democrats fell back to 25% in the polls and all hopes of becoming the strongest party—or even of closing the gap with the CDU/CSU in terms of vote share—evaporated, before the critical phase of the Bundestag election campaign even started.

As indicated above—and because of the expectation that the chances for a conservative–liberal or 'red–green' two-party coalition government are low in a Bundestag that consists of six parliamentary party groups—the number of pre-electoral coalition rejections was significantly lower compared to previous Bundestag elections. Neither the CDU/CSU or the FDP ruled out a coalition with the Greens. Nor did the Social Democrats reject cooperation with The Left. The Christian Democrats and the Liberals refused a coalition with the Left, and all five established parliamentary parties—the CDU/CSU, the FDP, the SPD, the Greens and

5 See <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/martin-schulz-nach-saarland-wahl-aergern-abhaken-weitermachen-a-1140525.html> (accessed on 31 January 2018).

The Left—explicitly ruled out a coalition or cooperation with the AfD. It is important to note that the state of Lower Saxony scheduled an early election for 15 October 2017, which is decisive for the explanation of the outcomes of the coalition negotiations after the Bundestag election on 24 September 2017. The early election was due to the defection of a Green parliamentarian to the CDU, so that the incumbent coalition between the SPD and the Greens in Lower Saxony lost its parliamentary majority.

The outcome of the Bundestag election confronted the parties, as expected, with both a parliament of six parliamentary groups and one in which none of the traditional coalition formations—i.e. between the CDU/CSU and the FDP or between the SPD and the Greens—was able to command a majority. In contrast to the Bundestag elected in 2013, there was no longer a majority available for a ‘red–red–green’ coalition (see Table 10.1)—principally because the Social Democrats interpreted their result of 20.5% of the votes as a signal to end the ‘grand coalition’ and to become the main opposition party. Thus, the only possible option was a so-called ‘Jamaica coalition’ between the Christian Democrats, the FDP and the Greens. Representatives of these parties agreed to launch a discussion rounds after the state election Lower Saxony. There—surprisingly—the Social Democrats emerged as the strongest party, but the incumbent SPD–Green coalition lost its majority. While, at the federal level, the CDU/CSU, the FDP and the Greens held coalition negotiations for almost four weeks and drafted a discussion paper containing the agreed and partially agreed policy goals, in Lower Saxony the SPD and the CDU smoothly charted a coalition agreement after two weeks of negotiations, even though they had not worked together in coalition in Lower Saxony since 1970 (Koš and Spier 2008). On the federal level, the Free Democrats pulled out of coalition negotiations with the CDU/CSU and the Greens on 19 November because they were unable to obtain a commitment on their key electoral pledges like tax rate reductions.

Table 10.1 Vote share and distribution of seats in the 2017 Bundestag election

| Party | Vote share (%) (list votes) | Number of seats | Seat share (%) |
|----------|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| CDU/CSU | 32.9 | 246 | 34.7 |
| SPD | 20.5 | 153 | 21.6 |
| AfD | 12.6 | 94 | 13.3 |
| FDP | 10.7 | 80 | 11.3 |
| The Left | 9.2 | 69 | 9.7 |
| Greens | 8.9 | 67 | 9.4 |
| Others | 5 | - | - |
| Total | 100 | 709 | 100 |

Source: <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/bundestagswahlen/2017/ergebnisse.html>.

Because the SPD had decided not to be part of the government formation process directly after the election, the most likely scenario seemed to be new elections in spring 2018. The German constitution, however, requires several rounds for a chancellor's support to be tested in a new parliament before fresh elections can be called. On the third such round, only a plurality of votes is required—the German president must then decide whether to appoint the winning candidate or to call for fresh elections. Given this complicated procedure, President Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD), who had been the candidate of the grand coalition and assumed office in spring 2017, appealed to his party and its chair to revisit the hard-line stance and consider again joining a governing coalition with the CDU/CSU. The Social Democrats followed the president's advice and began discussions with the Christian Democrats, which resulted in a draft paper of the negotiated compromises. On that basis, a majority of 56% of the delegates of a special SPD congress voted in favour of starting official coalition negotiations. The coalition policy agreement finally won the support of a majority of CDU and CSU delegates in special party congresses, and of almost two-thirds of SPD members in a direct vote and the coalition government took office in March 2018.

Data and methods

To show how the policy profile of German parties influenced the complexity of the German government formation process in 2017 and 2018, we build on a dataset that includes not only information on the parties' positions on the relevant policy dimensions, but also on the salience attached by a party to policy dimensions (Bräuninger and Debus 2012; Bräuninger et al. 2018). The policy space is assumed to be two-dimensional, comprising a socio-economic left–right dimension and a conflict line differentiating permissive and restrictive positions on immigration (e.g. Kriesi et al. 2006). The selection of this second dimension is also based on the fact that immigration and integration issues were at the top of the political agenda in Germany since 2015 (Kortmann and Stecker 2017). To get an expert judgement on the policy positions of the German parties in 2017, we replicated the Benoit and Laver (2006) expert survey and performed a new expert survey amongst German political scientists in November 2017, in which almost 120 political scientists participated (see Bräuninger et al. 2018 for an overview). Just like in the Laver and Hunt (1992) and Benoit and Laver (2006) expert surveys, we refer to the average score of the expert judgements to estimate the party positions and the party-specific policy dimension saliency.

To measure the positions of the negotiation papers between the CDU/CSU, the FDP and the Greens from November 2017 and between the CDU/CSU and the SPD, published in January 2018, as well as of the coalition agreement between the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats, we apply the Wordscores technique (Laver et al. 2003). The Wordscores method provides—at least for the German parties—reliable information and shows a high correlation with other estimates on party positions like the ones of the Comparative Manifesto Project (see, e.g., Bräuninger et al. 2013; Hjorth et al. 2015). The positions of the two negotiation papers and the coalition agreement were estimated by including their full text into a Wordscores analysis that estimated the policy positions of election manifestos and coalition agreements in Germany on the state and federal level (Bräuninger and Debus 2012; Bräuninger et al. 2018). Reference texts are the manifestos of the CDU/CSU, the SPD, the FDP and Greens for the Bundestag elections in 1990, 2002 and 2017, the manifesto of the socialist PDS and The Left for the Bundestag elections in 2002 and 2017, and the AfD 2017 Bundestag election manifesto. Reference scores that provide information on the policy positions of the

respective parties in 1990, 2002 and 2017 stem from the expert surveys by Laver and Hunt (1992), Benoit and Laver (2006), and Bräuninger et al. (2018), respectively.

The distances between parties on the two selected dimensions are weighted by the party-specific relative saliency of the respective dimension. Parties with a focus on economic policy, for instance, will concentrate more on that issue when searching for their coalition partners while the programmatic distances between the parties on other policy dimensions should be less important (Hinich and Munger 1997). The applied measure of the programmatic heterogeneity of a party combination therefore takes the party-specific dimension saliencies into account (see Debus 2009, pp. 48–52).

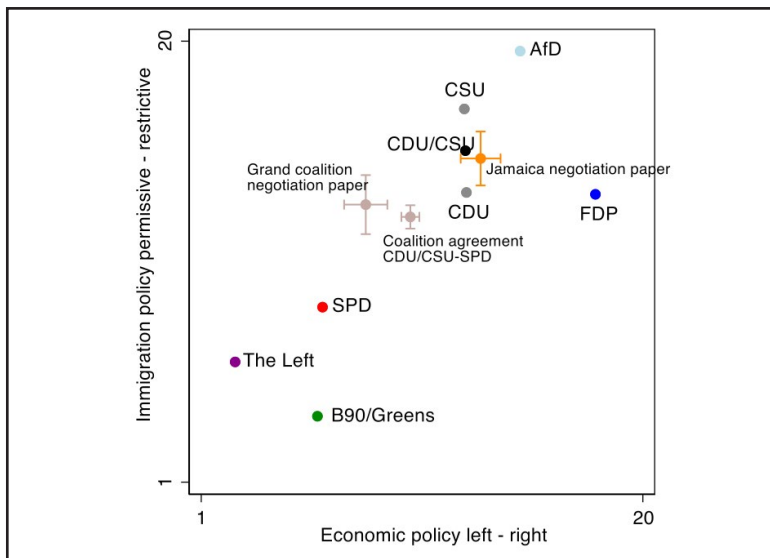
The policy profile of German parties and coalition policy agreements after the 2017 Bundestag election

Figure 10.1 presents the positions of German federal parties on an economic left–right dimension and on a policy dimension that differentiates between permissive and restrictive positions on immigration. In addition, Figure 10.1 shows the estimated positions of the negotiation papers that the CDU/CSU, the FDP and the Greens as well as the CDU/CSU and the SPD drafted and published after the negotiation rounds in November 2017, January 2018, and March 2018, respectively.

In terms of simple policy distances, there are two coherent blocs. The first consists of the Social Democrats, the Greens and the Socialists, which adopted not only economic policy positions that favour a strong state which intervenes in economic, financial and labour issues, but also prefer more permissive migration and integration policies. The second group of parties consists of the CDU/CSU, the FDP and the AfD. While all three parties, especially the Free Democrats, prefer market-liberal approaches to economic issues, they also share a common view on migration—preferring a more restrictive policy, especially the AfD and the CSU. This group of three parliamentary parties—the CDU and CSU are separate parties but have formed a common parliamentary party group at the federal level since 1953—with cohesive policy positions would have formed a comfortable majority in the parliament. But since the AfD is excluded by all other parties from the government formation process, neither the centre–right parties nor the parties located to the left of the centre on both policy dimensions under consideration controlled a majority in the

newly elected Bundestag. This simple illustration of the party positions on two key policy dimensions already demonstrates why the government formation process was so thorny in 2017. The pariah status of the AfD means a majority coalition needs at least one party from the other ideological camp.

Figure 10.1. Policy positions of German federal parties and coalition negotiation papers, 2017–2018



Note: Coalition negotiation papers are from: CDU/CSU–FDP–Greens (‘Jamaica’); and CDU/CSU–SPD (‘grand coalition’) Source: Bräuningner et al. (2018).

Finding a policy compromise thus becomes much more complicated, in particular when also taking the party-specific dimension saliencies into account (see Table 10.2). With the ‘Jamaica’ partners, immigration policy was more important for the CDU/CSU—and even more so for the Greens—compared to economic policy. For the Free Democrats by contrast, economic policy was clearly more important than immigration policy. It is therefore no surprise that the negotiation rounds between these three parties took more than four weeks and failed in the final instance. The distance between the position paper that emerged from the Jamaica negotiation rounds and the position of the FDP on the economic policy dimension—for the Free Democrats very important—was very large. In addition, the Greens would have had to accept rather restrictive

immigration policies although this dimension is of high salience to the Greens.

Based on the party positions and policy dimension saliencies, finding a policy compromise between the CDU/CSU and the SPD should have been much easier compared to the Jamaica constellation. Not only was the policy distance between the Christian and Social Democrats smaller on the two policy dimensions, but both dimensions are also of similar importance for the parties. The negotiated policy compromises, which CDU/CSU and the SPD published in a paper in January 2018 and in the coalition agreement in early February 2018, are located almost on the Pareto surface between the positions of the election manifestos of both parties and approximately reflect the arithmetic mean of the positions of both parties. The ideological heterogeneity—weighted by party-specific policy dimension saliency—was smaller for the CDU/CSU–SPD coalition (4.87) than the Jamaica one (5.26, see Table 10.3). A CDU/CSU–FDP coalition would have been the most homogeneous one in programmatic terms with a score of 1.36. These results indicate that neither a ‘grand coalition’ nor a ‘Jamaica coalition’ was the optimal outcome of the government formation process in terms of ideological cohesion within the coalition. However, the ‘grand coalition’ was the ‘lesser evil’ since an ideologically more compact coalition between the CDU/CSU and FDP did not win a majority in the Bundestag and a coalition between the Christian Democrats, the Liberals and the AfD was rejected by former two parties.

Table 10.2. Relative salience of economic and immigration policy for German federal parties in 2017

| Party | Economic policy | Immigration policy |
|----------|-----------------|--------------------|
| CDU/CSU | .479 | .521 |
| SPD | .541 | .459 |
| AfD | .327 | .673 |
| FDP | .582 | .417 |
| The Left | .552 | .448 |
| Greens | .428 | .572 |

Source: Bräuninger et al. (2018).

Table 10.3. Ideological heterogeneity of selected party combinations

| Party combination | Weighted ideological heterogeneity within coalition |
|--------------------|---|
| CDU/CSU–SPD | 4.87 |
| CDU/CSU–FDP–Greens | 5.26 |
| CDU/CSU–AfD–FDP | 3.17 |
| CDU/CSU–FDP | 1.36 |
| SPD–Greens–Left | 2.19 |

Note: Figures weighted by party-specific policy dimension saliency. Source: Bräuning et al. (2018).

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to analyse the government formation process in Germany after the 2017 Bundestag elections. Based on a description of the development of German party competition after 2013, the findings indicate that the policy profile of German federal parties on economic and immigration policies—in terms of positions and dimension saliencies—mattered for the outcome of the government formation process. A coalition between the CDU/CSU, the FDP and the Greens was ideologically very diverse, and neither the Liberals nor the Greens could enforce their policy positions on the dimensions that are of high importance to them (and their voters). Negotiations between the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats only started after the German president acted as a formateur and convinced the leadership of his party to start negotiations with the CDU/CSU.

The initial unpopularity within the Social Democrats of again forming a coalition government with the CDU/CSU under the chancellorship of Angela Merkel might have had a positive effect on the bargaining potential of the party in the negotiations (Baumann et al. 2017). However, looking to the future it might lead toward the breakup of the third grand coalition cabinet under her leadership. The positions of the SPD and the CSU on integration policy differ widely as Figure 10.1 has shown, and both parties have to stick to their electoral pledges in order to win back a clear policy profile, also in the lead up to elections for the state parliaments in Bavaria and Hesse in the fall of 2018. An open question, which needs to be discussed in future research, concerns the implications of the

contention in intra-party debates on the outcomes of the coalition negotiations, both in terms of government formation and policy.

An early dissolution of the parliament was not likely to result in an easier government formation process. If AfD and The Left were to receive a similar share of votes in a fresh election and the CDU/CSU did not win more than 35%, the members of the Bundestag would be in the same situation as in fall and winter of 2017/2018. It seems that German parties will have to get used to governing either in ideologically more heterogeneous coalitions (like in the Netherlands)—which requires party supporters and voters to accept and welcome policy compromises—or in minority governments like in Scandinavian countries. The latter is not as perilous as it sounds, as it could give either the Social Democrats or the Christian Democrats the chance to develop a new policy profile while in opposition.

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A Transformation from Within? Dynamics of Party Activists and the Rise of the German AfD

Julia Schulte-Cloos & Tobias Rüttenauer

Introduction

In contrast to many other Western European countries, post-war Germany has historically lacked an established, populist, radical right party (Ivarsflaten and Gudbrandsen 2011). One reason for the virtual absence of such a party¹—despite clear mobilization potential within the electorate—is Germany’s ‘fascist legacy’, which still stigmatizes a vote for the populist radical right (Decker 2013). In 2013, a group of former liberal-conservative party members and economics professors founded a policy platform which tapped into the public’s discontent about the repeated bailouts for Europe’s crisis-ridden debtor countries. Even though it was founded only seven months prior to the federal election in 2013, the party won 4.7 percent of votes and came close to entering the *Bundestag*. Subsequently, the party succeeded to achieve parliamentary representation in all following state elections as well as in the European Parliament.

While gradually gaining ground in the German multiparty system, the party also experienced an influx of members, leading to a factional struggle between the original neoliberal Eurosceptic segment and the more radical, culturally conservative wing of the party. In July 2015, the most visible and charismatic of the three original party leaders, Bernd Lucke, an economics professor, failed to achieve re-election at a party convention that was open to all current dues-paying party members and

1 Prior to the establishment of the AfD none of the populist radical right parties, which occasionally succeeded in state elections, could also persist in the federal electoral arena.

even to activists who applied for membership at the convention (Alternative für Deutschland 2015d; Alternative für Deutschland 2015a). In the following period, the party faced an internal split. This split not only brought about the former leader's resignation from the party (Franzmann 2016b; Arzheimer 2017) but also a 20% drop in the number of party members (Hensel et al. 2016, p. 8). Along with roughly 3,000 party members, the full 'scientific advisory board' left, which was made up exclusively of economists who belonged to the earliest group of party members (Franzmann 2016a; Arzheimer 2015). However, following this period of membership withdrawal immediately after the split, the party saw a rapid influx of new party activists. Just ten months later, the party had recovered from the fission and membership figures were even exceeding the numbers prior to the internal split, amounting to a 60% increase at the end of the year following the drop split.

We argue that these entry–exit dynamics within the young party, which had yet to institutionalize, brought about a compositional change of its membership base. Carefully specifying different hierarchical and spatial models, we show that: (1) the density of party members fluctuated substantially over time and; (2) this fluctuation significantly changed the compositional profile of party activists engaging in decision-making on party affairs. By relying on socio-contextual data and a novel dataset on the spatial density of AfD members across Germany, we estimate a pre-post design and demonstrate that *post*-fluctuation activists come largely from lower-income regions whereas *pre*-fluctuation activists were largely from more affluent areas. This finding is highly robust across different model specifications and geo-spatial scales of analysis. In light of the party's gradual shift to the populist right and the adoption of an Islamophobic party manifesto—which was developed and approved by party activists *post*-fluctuation—the findings suggest that the altered activist composition contributed to the party's radicalization.

Membership dynamics over time

Just like many other new parties and political entrepreneurs across Europe (Scarrow 2014, p. 193), the AfD granted decision-making power to the wider party base to incentivize membership enrolment. Those party members were deemed crucial for several reasons. In the initial stages of party set-up, the AfD depended on members to finance its campaigns, to create linkages with the wider electorate, and to build local

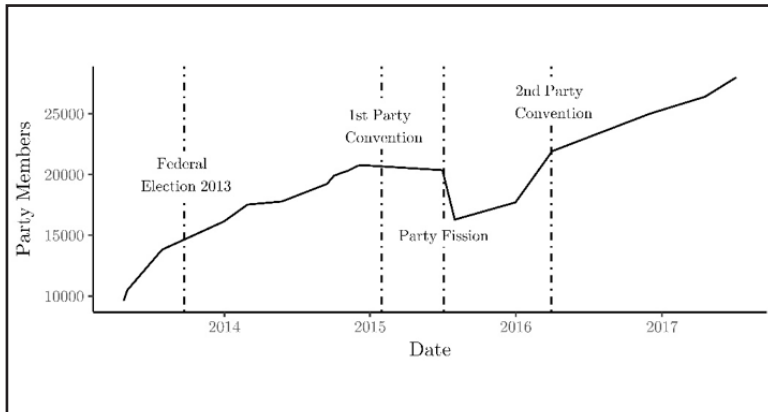
strongholds. Growing numbers of party members initially also served to prove the increasing political importance of the party, helping the AfD to gain some legitimacy within the German political system by indicating broad public support.

The early issues of the party's print magazine 'AfD Kompakt' illustrate that the original leaders were actively engaging in member recruitment. An increase in party members appeared beneficial for four reasons. The leaders were first trying to find candidates for local and municipal elections (see *Alternative für Deutschland* 2014a). Second, they wanted to attract activists who were willing to campaign for the party within the different regions of Germany. Third, the rapidly increasing member base of the party was widely covered by the media, adding to the public visibility of the party (*Alternative für Deutschland* 2015c). Finally, the party wanted to access public funding, which in Germany operates on a matching basis. According to the German party financing law, parties are only entitled to state funding up to the amount of annual revenue raised by themselves (see Federal Ministry of the Interior 2009, section 18 (5) Act on Political Parties; see also *Alternative für Deutschland* 2014b, p. 3). To access more than €5 million of state funding after the electoral successes of 2014, the young party needed a large number of fee-paying members. Consequently, in late 2014, the AfD attempted to recruit more than 2000 members within only three months ('Mitgliederoffensive'). While their recruitment strategy was effective in attracting the desired number of new activists, a close reading of the party's documents also reveals that the party lost more than 500 members, i.e. a quarter of those who had newly joined within the same period of time (*Alternative für Deutschland* 2015b, p. 3). Considering its as yet incomplete institutionalization, this volatility reflects the fact that only a fraction of activists retained stable ties to the young party.

Figure 11.1 illustrates the development of the net number of party members over time, linking the numbers to the internal party fission that the party experienced in its early phase. The graph also indicates the two points in time that we use to measure the composition of the respective members (first and second party convention). While membership figures need to be treated with caution (Heidar 2006, p. 303), we cross-validate the numbers reported by the party's print magazine with the annual reports by the president of the German *Bundestag* according to the federal law on political parties (see also Niedermayer 2017). The

graph visualizes the local minimum of member density stemming from the exit of many original members after the resignation of the party's founder. It is evident that member density fluctuated substantially over time. The aggregate numbers of membership density still conceal the entry–exit dynamics on the individual level as they present net-numbers of change. Party documents and statements from party officials, however, suggest that the fluctuation over time was even greater (Neuerer 2014). In view of the party's inclusive procedures of candidate nomination, leader selection and adoption of policy platforms, the composition of active party activists can be considered important for the evolution of the party's positional profile, its policy shifts, and its electoral competitiveness.

Figure 11.1: Development of AfD party members over time



Source: AfD Kompakt/ annual report according to federal law on political parties

We test whether the entry–exit dynamics changed the composition of the party activists by analysing the socio-spatial context of AfD activists at two different points in time. The first measure relates to the party's activist distribution prior to its largest membership fluctuation while the latter relates to the distribution afterwards. As discussed, this aggregate member density loss only reveals net changes of party members. Relying on those two measures, thus, presents an underestimate of the impact of fluctuations as the actual entry–exit dynamics over time were even larger in size. We now move to describe the data and method used to analyse whether the entry–exit dynamics had an impact on the compositional profile of party members engaging in party affairs.

Socio-spatial changes in the membership composition

Previous research uses population surveys to study changes in membership numbers (e.g. Ponce and Scarrow 2016) or cross-sectional surveys amongst party members (Seyd and Whiteley 2004; Kölln and Polk 2017; Webb, Poletti and Bale 2017). As we focus on the initial period of the party's existence, population surveys do not contain sufficient cases of AfD members. To the best of our knowledge, there are also no cross-sectional surveys amongst AfD party members available. Hence, we choose an innovative strategy to study the dynamic distribution of activists within the AfD by analysing the socio-economic context of party activists at two different points in time (for a similar design, see Goodwin, Ford and Cutts 2013). Though we do not have any information on the individual socio-economic status of party members, this contextual approach allows us to exploit the large regional disparities across Germany and analyse the changing membership composition of the party over time. The analysis draws on data of party activists of the German AfD attending the party convention in January 2015 and in April 2016. This data has been publicly released by an independent news organization (Indymedia 2016a; Indymedia 2016b). We used a completely anonymized version of this dataset to compute AfD activist density per spatial unit and link this information to socio-economic and cultural indicators. In drawing on socio-economic data on activists' neighbourhood composition and analysing dynamic changes thereof, we present a novel research design overcoming some of the problems emerging when surveying party members, like selective non-response amongst members or data truncation due to missing data on party leavers.

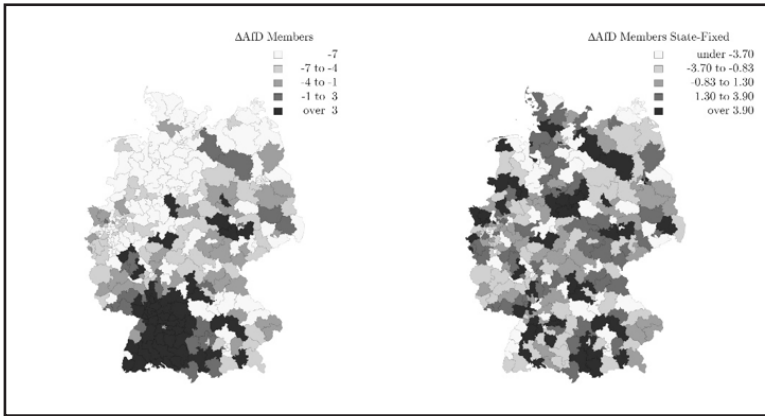
The number of AfD members for each geographical unit is calculated on two spatial scales. First, we conduct a federal level analysis by linking party members to 299 federal electoral districts. Second, to strengthen the robustness of our results and to further increase the between-variance of spatial clusters while minimizing the within-variance, we 'zoom' into the socio-economic context of activists. We move to a much smaller unit of analysis and study the change in the activists' neighbourhood composition on a micro-spatial level (city subdistricts).

The outcome of interest is the change in the number of AfD activists within each spatial district, which is computed as the difference between the number of AfD members from the first and the second convention. The independent variables are socio-cultural indicators of their regions

and neighbourhoods (Bundeswahlleiter 2017). We measure regional disparities across Germany by including the average income in each district, the unemployment rate, the percentage of non-native inhabitants as well as the share of people in old age. Exploiting the regional variation of low- and high-status settings, we examine whether the contextual composition of the German AfD has changed in the course of the density fluctuation.

In a first step, we regress the change in party members for each district on the socio-cultural covariates by using state-fixed OLS regression. Due to the inclusion of state dummies, the analysis relies only on the within-state variance of the dependent and independent variables. This controls for the different distances of states to the two locations of the conventions.² Figure 11.2 visualises the change in density of AfD activists on the federal level. Using absolute numbers without state-level ‘de-meaning’ (left panel), the number of AfD members decreased most strongly within those electoral districts that are geographically close to the location to the first (northern) and distant to the second (southwestern) convention. Yet, when accounting for different state means (right panel), the change in member density does no longer follow this distance-pattern.

Figure 11.2. Geographical Distribution of Δ in AfD members across Germany



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

2 This is based on the assumption that within a given state, the number of AfD members would have decreased randomly with increasing geographical distance (and *vice versa*) between the two conventions if the composition would not have changed selectively by the socio-economic context.

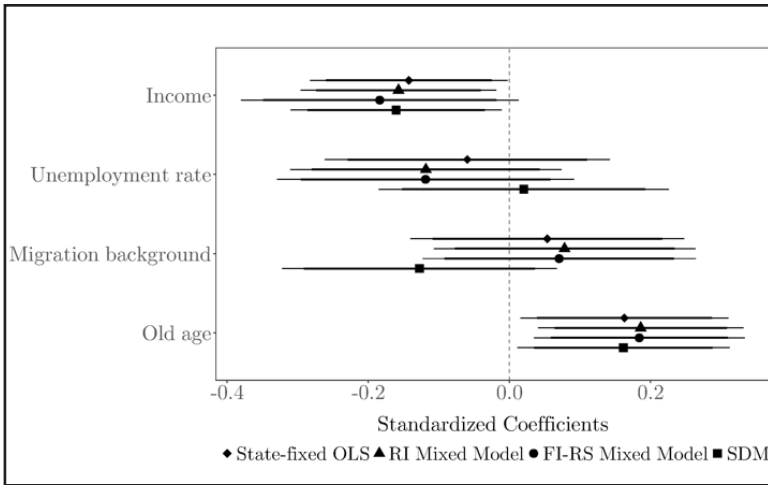
In a second step, we estimate two different multilevel models to take the clustered data structure into account: a random intercept and a state/city-fixed intercept random slope (FI-RS) model. While the former controls for the hierarchical data structure (districts nested in states and cities, respectively), the latter additionally allows for varying slopes between the different clusters and an individual intercept.³ Though the multilevel models account for the hierarchical nature of the data, these models ignore the geographical position of units within the respective cluster. *Moran's I* statistic reveals highly significant and positive autocorrelation between neighbouring sub-units (values of 0.618 / 0.230 for the change in members and 0.682 / 0.539 for income on the federal and city level), indicating that observations are autocorrelated on a more fine-grained level. Thus, we also estimate a Spatial Durbin Model (SDM) to account for this interdependence of observations by controlling for the values of the response variable as well as the covariates from neighbouring spatial units (e.g. LeSage and Pace 2009; Halleck Vega and Elhorst 2015).⁴

Figure 11.3 plots the coefficients of the socio-economic indicators on the change in the density of AfD party members across Germany (see also Table 11.1). All variables are standardized; hence, the effects can be interpreted in terms of standard deviations. Neither the unemployment rate, nor the share of citizens from non-native origin have a significant influence on the difference in AfD members between both conventions. The only socio-economic variables that significantly correlate with the change in AfD party members in a given spatial district, are the average income level and the age structure. The income effect is significant on the 5% level in three out of our four model specification accounting for the hierarchical nature of the data and the spatial clustering and significant on the 10% level in the fixed intercept and random slope model (see column 3 of Table 11.1), which mainly results from a loss of efficiency (as can be seen by the increased standard error). The income coefficient is negative, indicating that *post*-fluctuation significantly fewer AfD party members come from districts with a high-income level.

3 Note that the model we specify includes not one fixed intercept but an individual intercept for each higher unit (electoral district / city). This is essentially similar to fixed-effects panel models or within-group demeaning (e.g. Enders and Tofghi 2007).

4 The formal model is given by $y = \alpha + \rho W y + X \beta + W X \Theta + \varepsilon$, where y is response vector, X the matrix of covariates, β the standard coefficient vector, ρ a spatial parameter, Θ a second spatial parameter vector and ε the error vector. W specifies the $N \times N$ spatial weights matrix (all for neighbouring i and $j \neq i$, and otherwise). Throughout this chapter we use a row-normalized contiguity weights matrix, which defines all observations as neighbours that share at least one common border.

Figure 11.3. Socio-economic indicators predicting change in density of AfD party members (federal level, N= 299).



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The size of this effect appears also relatively large. For each standard deviation in income the districts experience a 0.143 to 0.184 stronger decrease in AfD members between the conventions. When increasing a region's income by two quartiles from the 25th percentile to the 75th percentile (this corresponds to around one-and-a-half standard deviations) and keeping all other variables constant, the density of AfD members observed *post*-fluctuation decreases by two members as compared to the density of activists observed *pre*-fluctuation. At the same time, there is a significant shift in the age structure of the districts where AfD members come from. In districts with a higher percentage of people in old age the density of AfD members increases in the course of the entry–exit dynamics (the size is comparable to the income effect).

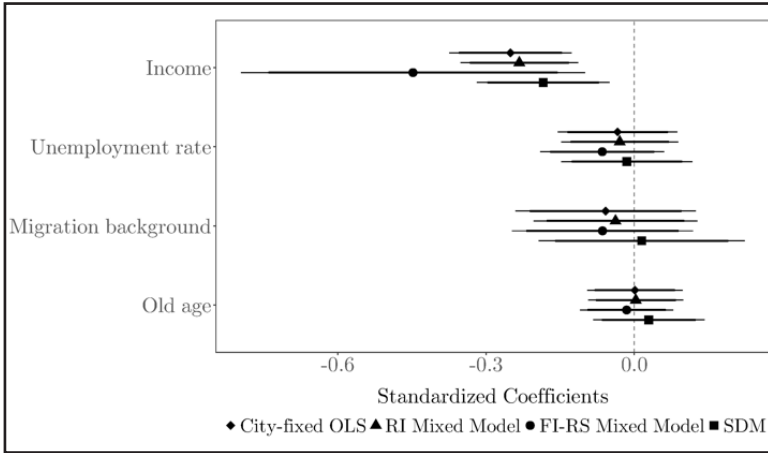
Table 11.1: Effect of socio-economic indicators on change in density of AfD party members (federal level)

| | State-fixed OLS | RI Mixed | FI-RS Mixed | SDM |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Income | -0.143** (0.071) | -0.157** (0.071) | -0.184* (0.100) | -0.161** (0.073) |
| Unemployment Rate | -0.060 (0.103) | -0.118 (0.098) | -0.119 (0.107) | 0.020 (0.102) |
| Migration Back- ground | 0.054 (0.099) | 0.078 (0.095) | 0.070 (0.099) | -0.127 (0.107) |
| Old Age | 0.163** (0.075) | 0.186** (0.074) | 0.184** (0.076) | 0.161* (0.083) |
| Constant | 1.538*** (0.159) | -0.279 (0.223) | 1.372*** (0.450) | -0.011 (0.039) |
| Observations | 299 | 299 | 299 | 299 |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.551 | | | |
| Log Likelihood | | -335.047 | -313.004 | -312.750 |
| Akaike Inf. Crit. | | 684.094 | 674.009 | 647.500 |

Notes: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Units of analysis are federal electoral districts. SDM: not the coefficients itself but direct impacts are reported.

These results support the idea that the party experienced a compositional change in its membership profile in terms of the members' socio-spatial context. Following the withdrawal of activists after the party's internal fission and the influx of new party members thereafter, party affairs were decided upon by members coming from districts with a lower average income and a higher percentage of people in old age than before.

Figure 11.4: Socio-economic indicators predicting change in density of AfD party members (city level, N= 485).



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

In an attempt to strengthen these findings, we 'zoom' into spatially much smaller units and predict the density of AfD members within city districts by taking the different *neighbourhood* compositions into account. The model specifications mirror the previous ones, only the spatial scale of the geographical units is much smaller (median number of inhabitants: 7,232), leaving us with N = 485 observations. We include both the two respective host cities (Bremen and Stuttgart) of the party conventions as well as two additional Western German cities (Frankfurt, Hamburg) and two Eastern German cities (Leipzig, Dresden). The associated socio-economic characteristics were obtained from the local statistical offices upon request. The coefficients for these models are shown in Figure 11.4. All coefficients support the findings from the federal analysis but the share of people in old age, which turns insignificant (see Table 2). The percentage of people in old age can be considered to measure 'low status settings' on the federal level as the young working population tends to move into economically strong regions. Yet, within the spatially smaller units of city subdistricts this selective out-migration of the young does not take place. Thus, while a high percentage of people in old age may indicate that a German region is socio-economically speaking disadvantaged (Untiedt 2016), this does not hold on the city level.

Table 11.2: Effect of socio-economic indicators on change in density of AfD party members (city level)

| | State-fixed OLS | RI Mixed | FI-RS Mixed | SDM |
|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Income | -0.251*** (0.063) | -0.233*** (0.061) | -0.448** (0.178) | -0.184*** (0.065) |
| Unemployment Rate | -0.034 (0.062) | -0.030 (0.060) | -0.065 (0.064) | -0.015 (0.062) |
| Migration Back- ground | -0.058 (0.093) | -0.038 (0.084) | -0.064 (0.093) | 0.015 (0.104) |
| Old Age | 0.001 (0.049) | 0.003 (0.049) | -0.016 (0.048) | 0.029 (0.056) |
| Constant | -0.396*** (0.111) | -0.055 (0.168) | -0.543* (0.288) | 0.005 (0.042) |
| Observations | 485 | 485 | 485 | 484 |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.154 | | | |
| Log Likelihood | | -661.897 | -648.558 | -655.710 |
| Akaike Inf. Crit. | | 1,337.793 | 1,325.116 | 1,333.420 |

Notes: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Units of analysis are city neighbourhoods. SDM: not the coefficients itself but direct impacts are reported. One case omitted because of an empty neighbours set.

As already observed on the federal level, *post*-fluctuation—even within the six cities considered here—the density of AfD members decreases significantly in high-income neighbourhoods. The magnitude of this effects is even slightly stronger, ranging from 0.184 in the SDM to 0.251 in the fixed-effects OLS model, and even 0.448 in the city-fixed intercept model with random-slopes for the predicting coefficients.⁵

5 The large effect in the FI-RS model is the results of varying slopes between cities.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the composition of AfD activists engaging in party affairs has changed during the party's formative period. In relying on a pre–post design, we show that the young party actor experienced substantial entry–exit dynamics owing to a rapid influx of new members and the withdrawals of others following an internal party split. Assessing the effects of the pronounced member fluctuation, we provide evidence that later party members significantly differ from their early counterparts regarding the socio-contextual characteristics of the regions they come from. By proposing a novel approach to study party members, our study overcomes some of the problems that emerge when surveying members, most importantly selective non-response amongst members or data truncation due to missing data on party leavers. The results of our analysis indicate that the AfD was subject to substantial alternations of its membership composition over time.

The compositional profile of the member base substantively changed in the process of the party's institutionalization. *Post*-fluctuation, significantly fewer AfD members come from high-income areas than *pre*-fluctuation. It is important to note that the design of our study does not allow us to draw conclusions regarding the individual characteristics of party members. Yet, we show that *post*-fluctuation activists come from statistically different social contexts. This result is very robust across model specifications and across different spatial levels of analysis. Evidently, the fluctuation of party members in the aftermath of the party fission and resignation of the original neoliberal party leader Bernd Lucke changed the overall composition of party activists engaging in internal party affairs and contributing to the party's formation of policy preferences.

At the member-based party convention relating to our *post*-fluctuation measure, the party adopted a highly culturally conservative and Islamophobic manifesto, which was developed and approved by the activists present at the convention (Alternative für Deutschland 2016). The adoption of the manifesto marked the end of the previous single-issue focus on neoliberal Euroscepticism (Hensel et al. 2016, p. 8). Franzmann (2017) offers a systematic analysis of the programmatic change of the AfD by relying on quantitative text analysis of every press release the party has issued during its existence (Franzmann 2017). His study finds a substantive change in the programmatic focus of the young party *post*-fluctuation. Prior to the party fission, the challenger actor emphasized both

economic and ‘new cultural’ issues, with a bias toward economic issues during the first months of its existence. Only after July 2015, when many of the original party members had left, did the party significantly shift its focus from a balanced composition of both cultural and economic issues to a virtually exclusive focus on the former set of issues. In light of the results of our analysis, this suggests that the compositional change of the member base that the AfD witnessed during its institutionalization, contributed to the party’s programmatic change and to its radicalization.

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Associative Issue Ownership and Candidate Preferences in the 2017 French Presidential Election

Romain Lachat

Introduction

The 2017 presidential election marked an important break in the French partisan landscape. Previous presidential contests have been dominated by the competition between candidates of two mainstream parties: the Socialists on the left and the Republicans (or its predecessors) on the right. However, in 2017 their respective candidates, Benoît Hamon and François Fillon, did not gather sufficient votes to qualify for the runoff. Instead, Emmanuel Macron of the new political movement *En Marche!*—who campaigned on a centrist platform—and Marine Le Pen of the right-wing populist *Front National* faced off in the final round. She confirmed her very strong standing in the polls, reaching the highest vote share the *Front National* had ever received in the first round of a presidential election, with 21%. The election was also characterized by a very strong result for Jean-Luc Mélenchon, leader of the far-left movement *La France Insoumise*, who outperformed by far the Socialist candidate Hamon, gathering almost 20% of first-round votes. The strengthening of populist candidates on both sides of the ideological spectrum, and the weak results of mainstream parties' candidates, have profoundly altered the traditional patterns of party competition in France.

These unexpected electoral results have prompted important questions about the determinants of citizens' candidate preferences. The decline of established parties—the candidates of the Socialist party and of the Republicans won together less than half of the cumulated vote shares they had received in the first round of the previous presidential

election in 2012—signals a weakening of the role of traditional partisan allegiances in anchoring citizens' votes. Also, the qualification of Macron and Le Pen for the second election round suggests that the traditional left–right divide, which has structured party competition for decades, has become less relevant. This may herald an important realignment process and the creation of new lines of partisan divide in France. Finally, the strong results of populist parties—which articulated fears linked with the economic and political consequences of globalization and European integration—underline the growing importance of issues that do not align on the traditional economic left–right divide.

Given this background, one might expect political issues, in particular those linked to the cultural dimension of the political space, to have played an important role in driving citizens' candidate preferences. This chapter will thus focus on the role of issue preferences in the explanation of citizens' candidate preferences in the 2017 French presidential election, and it will address two main questions. The first is which issues, and which underlying ideological divides, played a central role in explaining citizens' preferences. How strong was the impact of issues such as immigration and European integration, in comparison to the traditional economic issues? Second, this chapter will investigate the extent to which the impact of issue preferences varied *between candidates*.

Drawing on recent literature in the field of spatial models (Lachat 2018; Lachat and Wagner 2018; Mauerer et al. 2015; Wagner 2014), the chapter suggests that the impact of issue preferences on voting propensities may vary from candidate to candidate. In particular, it suggests that this expected variation in the impact of issue preferences should be related to associative issue ownership. This concept refers to the perception that a candidate is particularly engaged on a certain issue (Stubager 2017; Van der Brug 2017; Walgrave et al. 2012). A key hypothesis presented in this chapter is therefore that the electoral utility of a candidate will depend more strongly on those issues with which that candidate is associated in citizens' minds than on issues for which there is no such association.

Associative ownership as a moderator of issue voting

The role of issue preferences in the voting decision process is often analysed in a spatial modelling framework (Downs 1957; Merrill and Grofman 1999). It assumes that voters will evaluate the electoral attrac-

tiveness of the various candidates or parties based on how their policy proposals compare to their own issue preferences. Citizens' expected utilities for the various candidates in competition should thus be a function of the voter-candidate distances in a political space defined by one or several issue dimensions (Adams et al. 2005; Enelow and Hinich 1984). In this approach, the importance of issue preferences as determinants of voting choice can vary between respondents. Typically, citizens with a higher degree of political sophistication will, for instance, rely more strongly on issue preferences to evaluate parties (e.g. Rivers 1988; Singh 2010). However, it is usually assumed that the importance of issues does not vary *between parties or candidates* for a given voter. That is, spatial models expect citizens to have a fixed set of criteria with which all candidates are evaluated and compared. For instance, in a proximity model (Merrill and Grofman 1999) with K issue dimensions, the utility of citizen i for candidate j can be defined as:

1)

$$U_{ij} = \alpha_j + \sum_k \beta_k |x_{ik} - c_{jk}| + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

That is, the expected utility (U_{ij}) will depend on the distance between the voter's position (x_{ik}) and the corresponding candidate's position (c_{jk}) on the various issue dimensions, as well as on a candidate-specific constant (α_j), which captures variation in the popularity of candidates due to other factors. In that model, the impact of voter-candidate distances (the β_k parameters) is allowed to vary from issue to issue, but not between candidates.

However, some scholars have suggested that this assumption of spatial models may be too restrictive. Several studies have shown how the determinants of electoral utilities may vary between different parties or candidates (e.g. Lachat 2014; Lachat and Wagner 2018; Mauerer et al. 2015). In this chapter, I consider in particular the role of issue ownership as a potential moderator of issue voting. The issue ownership concept has long been recognized as a central factor in explaining party competition (Budge and Farlie 1983; Meguid 2005; Petrocik 1996). Parties or candidates may develop a reputation for attention and competence in dealing with specific political issues. They should seek to increase the perceived importance of these issues, as voters are expected to be more likely to

support the party that owns the issues that dominate the political agenda (Budge and Farlie 1983; Petrocik 1996; Petrocik et al. 2003).

More recently, scholars have suggested to distinguish between two facets of the original issue ownership concept, arguing that its associative and competence dimensions are conceptually and empirically distinct (Bellucci 2006; Stubager 2017; Van der Brug 2017; Walgrave et al. 2012, 2015). Competence ownership refers to the perceived ability to handle a given issue, while associative ownership points to the perception that a party is the one that attaches the highest priority to the corresponding problem. Furthermore, their role in the voting decision process should also differ. While citizens are expected to be more likely to support a party they deem most competent on a given issue (Bélanger and Meguid 2008; Walgrave et al. 2012), associative ownership is not expected to not have such a direct impact on the propensity to support a candidate (Stubager 2017; Walgrave et al. 2015). Rather, it may play an indirect role, influencing the importance of an issue as an evaluation criterion (Lachat 2014, 2018). A voter's support for a candidate is expected to be more strongly related to the voter's preferences on issues with which the candidate is perceived to be associated. For instance, attitudes toward the welfare state should play a stronger role in the evaluation of the electoral attractiveness of left-wing candidates, such as Hamon or Mélenchon. In contrast, the probability of support for the far-right candidate Le Pen is expected to depend more strongly on preferences in the domain of immigration, an issue which is often associated with right-wing populist parties.

This expected variation between candidates in the determinants of electoral utilities can be considered by modifying the standard proximity model. In that revised model, the utility of voter i for candidate j is defined as:

2)

$$U_{ij} = \alpha_j + \sum_k \beta_{kj} |x_{ik} - c_{jk}| + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

In contrast with the standard model of equation 1, the parameters are now allowed to vary across both issue dimensions (k) and candidates (j). I expect these parameters, which capture how strongly voter-candidate distances on a given issue influence electoral utilities, to be related to associative issue ownership.

Data

The main source of data on which I rely is the 2017 French Election Study. This is a panel study that started in late 2015 and ran for more than one-and-a-half years, covering both the May 2017 presidential election and the June 2017 legislative election. The dependent variable is a measure of a citizen's electoral utility for a given candidate. These were measured in wave 13, which was conducted in April 2017, shortly before the first election round. Respondents were invited to rate each candidate on an 11-point like–dislike scale, ranging from 0 ('do not like at all') to 10 ('likes a lot'). Note that while this question was asked for all 11 candidates, the analyses in this chapter will be limited to the main five candidates (Mélenchon, Hamon, Macron, Fillon, Le Pen).

Citizens' issue preferences were measured in the preceding wave (conducted in late March–early April). I rely for that on a battery of questions on policy preferences, which included the following items:

- The state budget deficit
- The ease with which firms can lay off workers
- The minimum wage
- The number of foreigners in the country
- Gay rights
- The harshness of criminal sentencing
- The participation of France in the European Union
- axes on polluting activities

All of these questions asked respondents whether the corresponding item should, in France, be (strongly) increased or (strongly) decreased, and answers were coded on five-point scales. To compute distances between voters and candidates on these issues, I rely on the candidates' positions that were coded as part of the Voting Advice Application 'La boussole présidentielle'. This included a longer list of issues on which candidates' positions were coded based on their electoral programme and public statements. Matching items could be found for each of the eight issues mentioned above, on which candidates' positions were also coded using five-point scales.

A key variable for testing this chapter's central hypothesis is associative issue ownership. To determine these candidate–issue associations, I rely on survey questions about voters' perceptions. In wave 13 of the

panel, the same in which candidates' ratings were measured, respondents were asked about which candidate cares most about a give policy domain.¹ The list of policy domains corresponds closely to the positional issues on which voters' and candidates' positions are measured. Such questions about associational issue ownership allow determination of which candidate is most often associated in voters' minds with a given policy domain. However, the distribution of answers may also be influenced by the overall popularity of candidates. This may be a problem for the present analysis, as the goal is to determine, for each candidate, the issues which are associated with him or her in citizens' minds. The starting point should thus be candidates, rather than issues. For that reason, answers to the battery of questions on associative ownership are transformed, in order to better capture which issues are linked to a specific candidate. For each issue, the strength of the candidate–issue association is expressed as the number of respondents who consider that this candidate is the one that cares most about the corresponding problem, as a ratio of the average number of respondents who see this candidate as caring most, across all issue domains. The corresponding association measures are presented in Table 12.1.

Table 12.1. Candidate–issue associations

| | Mélenchon | Hamon | Macron | Fillon | Le Pen |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Public finances | 0.4 | 0.3 | 1.9 | 2.7 | 0.4 |
| Workers' protection | 2.1 | 0.7 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| Minimum wage | 2.2 | 2.2 | 0.6 | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| Immigration | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 3.2 |
| Gay rights | 0.8 | 1.6 | 1.0 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Crime | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.7 | 1.6 | 2.0 |
| EU | 0.5 | 0.7 | 2.2 | 1.5 | 0.9 |
| Environment | 1.1 | 1.7 | 0.7 | 0.5 | 0.3 |
| Average N | 465 | 413 | 477 | 396 | 635 |

Notes: all ratios equal to or larger than 2.0 appear in bold.

¹ Note that two different question wordings were used. Half of respondents were asked about which candidate 'cares most' about a policy domain, while the others were asked about which candidate 'spontaneously comes to mind' when thinking about this policy domain. In the analyses of this chapter, both samples are merged.

In the case of Jean-Luc Mélenchon, for instance, for each of eight policy domains an average of 465 respondents see him as caring most about it. On the specific question of public finances, the number of respondents who see Mélenchon as caring most is much lower—204 respondents—corresponding to a ratio of 0.4. In the domain of workers’ protection, in contrast, 953 respondents think he is the one who cares most, which results in a ratio of 2.1. Based on these data, two measures of associative ownership are computed. First, I create a dummy variable to identify the ratios equal to or larger than 2.0 (printed in bold in Table 12.1). This variable leads to seven cases of associative ownership, one or two for each candidate. There are no particularly surprising results in this list of issue owners. The far-left candidate Mélenchon is associated with two traditional left-wing economic issues: workers’ protection and the minimum wage (sharing ownership of the latter with the socialist Hamon). The conservative candidate Fillon is associated with reduction of the public deficit. The far-right candidate Le Pen is very strongly linked to immigration, and also to the issue of crime. Macron, finally, has the strongest association with the question of European integration. Note also that no candidate is deemed to own the issues of gay rights and environmental protection.² While this first measure captures the strongest associations between candidates and issues, it ignores a lot of information by simply dividing all candidate–issue pairs into two categories. A second measure will thus rely on the exponential value of the ratio. I take the exponential rather than the ratio itself, in order to give more weight to increases in the strength of the association at large values.

To estimate the impact of issue preferences on candidate evaluations, as well as the moderating role of associative ownership, I proceed in two steps. First, I estimate the equation 2 model, separately for each of the five main candidates. By running candidate-specific models, the impact of issue distances is allowed to vary from candidate to candidate. The corresponding parameters are generally expected to be negative, showing that the likelihood to vote for a candidate should be negatively related to voter–candidate issue distances. Yet, the magnitude of these effects may vary in strength from issue to issue. As the dependent variable is

2 The candidate most strongly associated with the issue of gay rights is Hamon, but the ratio is below the threshold set for issue owners. Environmental protection is traditionally associated with Green parties. But they did not field a candidate in the 2017 race. Amongst the 11 candidates, the strongest association for environmental issues is with Jean Lassalle, a political outsider who campaigned mainly on the protection of rural regions.

a scale, this first series of models will be estimated with linear regressions. In a second step, I pool the estimated coefficients of the various issues and candidates and regress them on associative issue ownership. As the dependent variable of this second model is the value of an estimated parameter, the model will be estimated with a feasible generalized least squares (FGLS) regression, in which observations are weighted to account for the varying degree of uncertainty of the first-step model estimates (Lewis and Linzer 2005).

Results

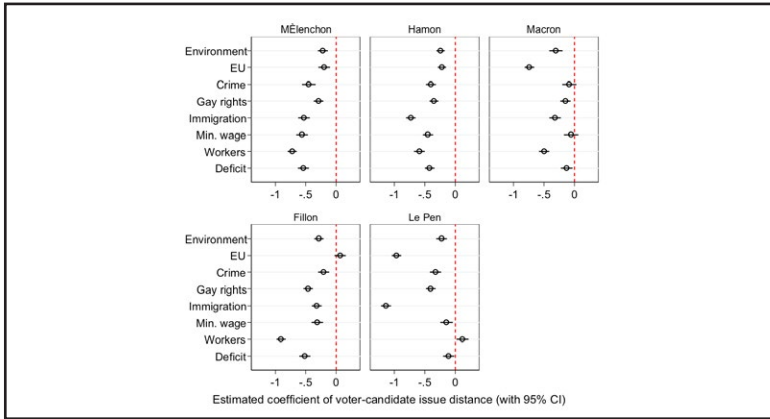
I first present the results of the candidate-specific models. Table 12.2 shows the estimated effect of absolute candidate–voter distances on the electoral utility of the five main candidates, and Figure 12.1 presents the same results in graphical form. Remember that the dependent variable is coded on a 0–10 scale, and that issue positions are measured on a 5-point scale, meaning that the distances can range from 0 to 4.

Table 12.2. Effect of voter–candidate issue distances on electoral utilities

| | Mélenchon | Hamon | Macron | Fillon | Le Pen |
|------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Deficit | −0.54*** | −0.42*** | −0.13** | −0.51*** | −0.11* |
| Workers protect. | −0.72*** | −0.59*** | −0.50*** | −0.91*** | 0.12* |
| Minimum wage | −0.56*** | −0.45*** | −0.05 | −0.31*** | −0.14** |
| Foreigners | −0.53*** | −0.73*** | −0.31*** | −0.32*** | −1.14*** |
| Gay rights | −0.29*** | −0.35*** | −0.14*** | −0.46*** | −0.40*** |
| Crime | −0.45*** | −0.40*** | −0.08 | −0.20*** | −0.32*** |
| EU | −0.20*** | −0.22*** | −0.74*** | 0.07 | −0.97*** |
| Environment | −0.22*** | −0.24*** | −0.30*** | −0.28*** | −0.22*** |
| Constant | 9.49*** | 9.70*** | 7.57*** | 8.10*** | 8.01*** |
| R2 | 0.20 | 0.27 | 0.13 | 0.21 | 0.35 |
| N | 6,534 | 6,539 | 6,538 | 6,538 | 6,532 |

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Coefficients estimated with OLS regressions.

Figure 12.1. Effect of voter–candidate issue distances on electoral utilities



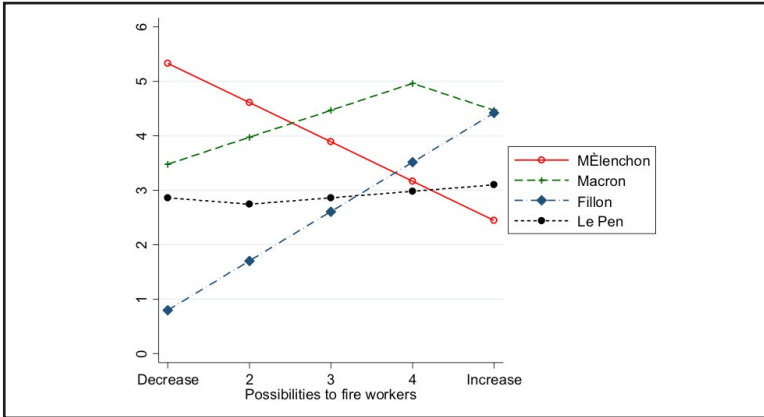
Note: Estimates based on Table 12.1. Source: Author's own elaboration.

With a few exceptions, all issues have a significant impact on the candidate utilities. This is perhaps not surprising given the large size of the sample, with more than 6,500 respondents in each model. More important, however, is to stress that the magnitude of these effects is quite large, and they vary substantively between both issues and candidates. Across all issues and candidates, the average issue distance effect is -0.38 . To illustrate the magnitude of this effect, consider a candidate who wants to strongly increase or decrease a given policy. If a voter moves from the candidate position to the middle position (a two-unit change), the predicted utility for this candidate will decrease by 0.76 , which is about a quarter of the standard deviation of candidate utilities. As preferences on several issues are related, the cumulative impact of typical changes in cultural or economic issue preferences will be even larger.

Turning now to the question of the variation between candidates, the above results clearly show that they are not all evaluated based on the same issue criteria. The strongest contrast is between Le Pen and the left-wing candidates, Mélenchon and Hamon. While the electoral utilities for the latter are most strongly related to economic preferences and to immigration, the degree of support for Le Pen stands in a very strong relation to immigration and EU-related preferences, while it is virtually unrelated to economic attitudes. Contrary to the standard assumption of spatial models, citizens do not appear to rely on the same criteria to evaluate all candidates.

This can be illustrated by computing how predicted candidate utilities vary as a function of citizens' positions. Based on the results of the Table 2 models, I compute the predicted electoral utilities for four candidates (omitting Hamon), as a function of respondents' attitudes toward workers' protection, EU integration, and immigration. These predictions are computed while keeping the other issue positions constant, at their average values. As shown in Figure 2, citizens' preferences regarding workers' protection are strongly related to their evaluation of Mélenchon and Fillon, who correspond best to the polar opposites of the economic left–right divide.³ The evaluation of Le Pen, in contrast, is unrelated to these economic preferences.

Figure 12.2. Predicted electoral utilities as a function of attitudes toward workers' protection



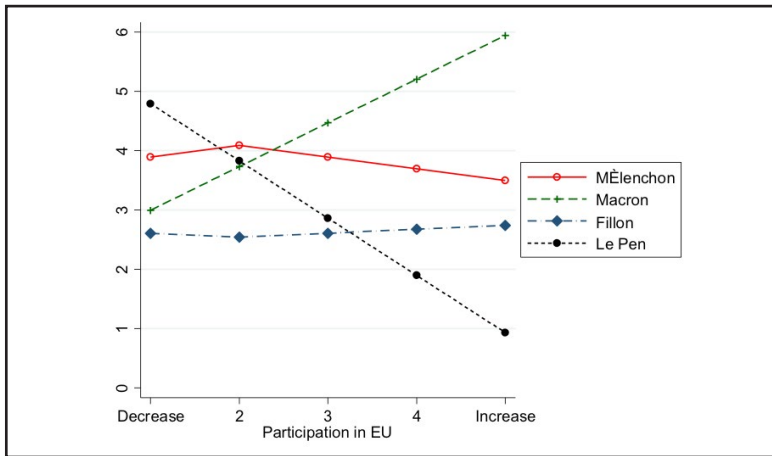
Source: Author's own elaboration.

The observed patterns are quite different when considering non-economic attitudes. Issue preferences in the domains of both European integration (Figure 12.3) and immigration (Figure 12.4) have a very large impact on the evaluation of Marine Le Pen. Attitudes toward the EU also have a strong impact on the evaluation of Macron, while being only very weakly related to the level of support for Fillon or Mélenchon. The effect of attitudes toward immigration, finally, is much weaker for the opponents of Le Pen, particularly for Fillon and Macron.

³ Note that I do not include confidence intervals in these graphs. Given the large number of observations, these intervals are always quite small. And including them would make reading the graphs more difficult.

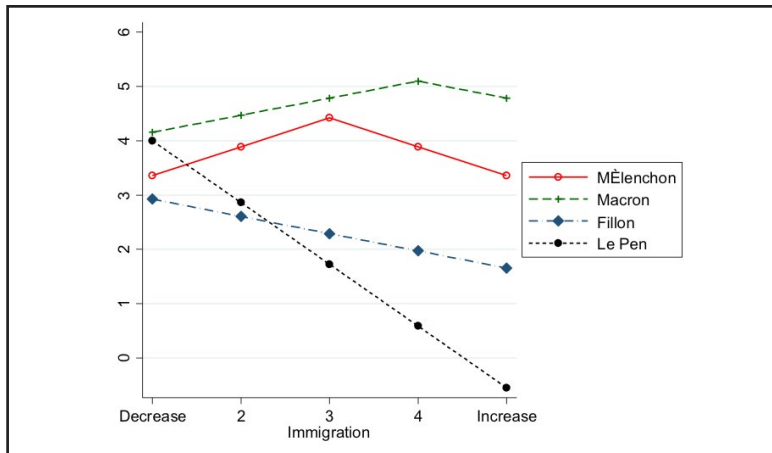
Of course, such differences in the impact of issue preferences are not equally strong for all issues or candidate pairs. Some issues seem to be equally important in the evaluation of all candidates. This is particularly the case for attitudes toward environmental protection and gay rights, which are also amongst the issues with the lowest average effect on party utilities, and which are not owned by any of the five main candidates.

Figure 12.3. Predicted electoral utilities as a function of attitudes toward European integration



Source: Author's own elaboration.

Figure 12.4. Predicted electoral utilities as a function of attitudes toward immigration



Source: Author's own elaboration.

So far, these results have offered much evidence in favour of the general hypothesis that the determinants of candidate utilities are not all explained by the same issue preferences—or at least that the impact of these preferences varies strongly in magnitude between candidates. This puts into question a central assumption of spatial models, which are usually based on the premise that a given citizen will compare the various choice alternatives with a fixed ‘vote function’.

The second main question raised in this chapter is linked with the explanation of such differences. I suggested that this variation in the effects of issue preferences should depend on the perceived associations between candidates and issues. To test this hypothesis, I turn to the second stage of the analysis, in which the estimated effects of candidate-specific models are regressed on candidate–issue associations. These results, presented in Table 12.3, confirm that associative ownership has a significant effect on the strength of the spatial component. In model 1, in which issue ownership is captured by a dummy variable, the relation between voter–candidate issue distances and electoral utilities is about twice as strong for the issue owner than for non-owners. The constant is equal to -0.28 , which corresponds to the estimated impact of preferences toward budgetary rigor, for a candidate that does not own that issue. The effects for non-owners vary somewhat from issue to issue, as shown by the corresponding issue dummies. The average effect of voter–candidate distances on non-owners is equal to -0.33 . When a candidate is the associative owner of an issue, however, the impact of citizens’ preferences is twice as large.

Table 12.3. Impact of issue ownership on the strength of the relation between voter–candidate issue distances and candidate utilities

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| | Coef. | Std. err. | Coef. | Std. err. |
| Ownership | | | | |
| Dummy | -0.32^{**} | 0.10 | | |
| Exp(ratio) | | | -0.02^{**} | 0.01 |
| Issue dummies (ref. Deficit) | | | | |
| Workers protect. | -0.18 | 0.15 | -0.23 | 0.16 |
| Minimum wage | 0.10 | 0.15 | 0.02 | 0.15 |
| Foreigners | -0.26 | 0.15 | -0.24 | 0.15 |

| | | | | |
|----------------|--------|------|-------|------|
| Gay rights | -0.05 | 0.15 | -0.05 | 0.16 |
| Crime | 0.05 | 0.15 | 0.01 | 0.16 |
| EU | -0.07 | 0.15 | -0.10 | 0.15 |
| Environment | 0.02 | 0.15 | 0.03 | 0.16 |
| Constant | -0.28* | 0.11 | -0.21 | 0.12 |
| R ² | 0.37 | 0.35 | | |
| N | 40 | 40 | | |

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Models estimated with FGLS regressions.

In model 2, which replaces the ownership dummy by a more encompassing measure, the effect is also significant. Remember that the ratio variable indicates how many voters view the candidate as owning the corresponding issue, in relation to the average number of respondents who consider this candidate as owning any issue. A ratio of 2, which corresponds for instance to the value observed for Le Pen on the crime issue, means that twice as many respondents consider that she is the one caring most about crime than the average number of respondents who think she cares most about any issue. When the ratio is equal to 0.5, corresponding to a case of a weak candidate–issue association, the predicted spatial coefficient is equal to -0.33 . The predicted effect becomes stronger with higher values of the ratio, with a predicted effect of -0.47 for a ratio of 2, and of -0.79 for a ratio of 3. Here again, the effect of associative ownership is not only statistically significant, but also substantially large.

To be more confident about this issue ownership effect, I performed a number of robustness checks, by changing the specification of the individual-level models: using quadratic rather than linear voter–party distances, controlling for political sophistication, and controlling for a variety of socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, social class, religiosity). Also, to minimize the risks that voters’ issue positions are influenced by their candidate evaluations, I re-estimated the models with voters’ issue positions measured in the first wave of the panel (that is, in November 2015). All these additional tests confirm the stated conclusions, by showing that the effect of issue distances is about twice as large for issue owners than non-owners. The corresponding results are presented in Table 12.4 for models based on the ownership dummy. Robustness tests conducted instead with the ratio variable lead to similar conclusions.

Table 12.4. Robustness tests. Models estimated with FGLS regressions.

| | Squared distances | Control sophistication | Control socio-dem. | Wave 1 issue positions |
|------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Ownership | | | | |
| Dummy | -0.08** | -0.31** | -0.30** | -0.25* |
| Issue dummies (ref. Deficit) | | | | |
| Workers protect. | -0.04 | -0.16 | -0.16 | -0.25 |
| Minimum wage | 0.03 | 0.09 | 0.07 | -0.05 |
| Foreigners | -0.10* | -0.26 | -0.28 | -0.38 |
| Gay rights | -0.02 | -0.05 | -0.03 | -0.20 |
| Crime | 0.00 | 0.05 | 0.04 | -0.01 |
| EU | -0.01 | -0.06 | -0.08 | -0.02 |
| Environment | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.01 | -0.04 |
| Constant | -0.06 | -0.28* | -0.26* | -0.17 |
| R ² | 0.41 | 0.36 | 0.37 | 0.38 |
| N | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 |

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Discussion

The 2017 French presidential election, like other recent electoral contests in Western Europe, was characterized by a rise of populist parties, intense debates on the national economic consequences of globalization, and an important transformation of the partisan landscape. These developments suggest that we may witness a phase of higher volatility and of weakening partisan attachments. This new political environment could also signal changes in the role of issue preferences and in the type of political divides that structure citizens' electoral choices. For that reason, this chapter has focused on the impact of issue preferences in the explanation of voters' candidate preferences. Such effects are most often analysed within the spatial modelling framework, which plays a central role in the study of electoral competition. It emphasizes the importance of issue preferences and policy proposals as determinants of candidate preferences. This relates to core aspects of theories of political representation, for which

issue or ideological congruence between citizens and their representatives is seen as a central characteristic of a well-functioning system of democratic representation (Mair 2008; Powell 2000). The various spatial models of voting choice which have been suggested in the literature share a key assumption about the determinants of party and candidate evaluations. It is normally assumed that a given citizen will compare the various contenders based on a fixed set of criteria.

This chapter has suggested that we rethink this assumption. The key hypothesis of the model introduced here is that citizens, when evaluating the electoral attractiveness of the various candidates, are more strongly influenced by the issues with which a given candidate is perceived to be associated. The results of the empirical analyses offer a lot of support for this hypothesis. Voter–candidate distances are more strongly related to the electoral utility for the issue owner than to the utilities for the other candidates. These differences are also substantively large, as the effect of citizens' preferences on their electoral utilities was found to be about twice as large for the issue owner. Rather than a unique vote function used to compare all candidates in competition, citizens rely on evaluation criteria that vary in importance from candidate to candidate. Furthermore, the results appear to be robust across various specifications of the candidate utilities models.

These results have important implications for the way we conceive the process of candidate evaluations. They also reveal substantial differences in the issues that explain the perceived electoral attractiveness of the five main contenders of the last French presidential election. The unprecedented support for Le Pen could suggest that her core issues—immigration, European integration, and the fight against criminality—have become more important in explaining citizens' choices generally. While these issue preferences play indeed a central role in explaining the perceived electoral attractiveness of the far-right candidate, their importance is far less for her opponents. Attitudes toward the EU, for instance, are strongly linked to support for Macron, but not for the left-wing candidates or Fillon. Similarly, voters' views on immigration matter a lot in explaining the electoral utilities for Mélenchon and Hamon, but not for Macron or Fillon. At the same time, the success of Macron and the weak scores of the Socialist and Conservative candidates could be interpreted as a decline in the role of the traditional left–right divide. But the results have shown that economic preferences remain central to explain the support for Fillon and the left-wing candidates.

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The Front National in the 2017 French Election: An Electoral Impasse?

Elie Michel

Introduction

In the first round of the 2017 French presidential election, Marine Le Pen finished in second position with 21.3% of the votes. With a record 7.6 million votes, a Front National (FN) candidate accessed the runoff for only the second time in history. Marine Le Pen lost the second round in the election, taking 33.9% of the votes—Emmanuel Macron obtained roughly the double the number of votes as the FN candidate. These results constitute an unprecedented success for the FN, yet they are, at the same time, rather disappointing. Indeed, the FN had enjoyed a favourable context in the year preceding the election and was benefitting from a positive electoral dynamic in the multiple second-order elections of 2014 and 2015. The most salient and mediatized issues of the months leading to the campaign seemed to coincide with the FN's traditional political agenda: the 2015 (ongoing) migration crisis in Europe, the 2016 Brexit and the election of Donald Trump, and the wave of terrorist attacks of 2015–2016 in France. In addition, Marine Le Pen entered the 2017 presidential race building on the historical successes of the FN in the intermediate elections, and she regularly claimed that the FN was 'France's number one party'. In point of fact, the FN had ranked in first position in the 2014 European elections (24.9%), and in the 2015 departmental (25.2%) and regional (27.7%) elections.¹ However, the FN did not manage to consolidate these results, as the Parti Socialiste (PS) perpetuated its electoral strategy of constructing a '*front républicain*' to block the FN from gaining any sizeable local executive power. For months before the elec-

1 These first-place wins were for FN as an individual party; some party coalitions garnered more votes overall.

tion, opinion polls had expected Marine Le Pen to win the first round of the 2017 election with between 22 and 29%, yet she underperformed in both rounds of the presidential election. The 2017 legislative elections occurred about a month after the presidential contest and they confirmed this half success. Because of the two-round, single-member district electoral system, parliamentary elections are conventionally unfavourable for the FN, and the radical right party finished third in terms of total votes. With 13.3% of the votes the FN gained only 8 seats out of 577 in the National Assembly—while this number is too low to constitute a parliamentary group, it is also the party's best performance in terms of seats since 1986.²

The 2017 French presidential election was exceptional from the campaign through to the final results, and the election marks, possibly, the 'making of a new party system' (Gougou and Persico 2017). However, this chapter takes a closer look at a paradoxical—and less visible—aspect of the 2017 election: while achieving its electoral record, the FN seems to have hit a glass ceiling. In particular, the strategic reorientations of Marine Le Pen's campaign—and more widely the programmatic shift she introduced in the FN—show signs of 'strategic deadlock' (Evans and Ivaldi 2018). In order to understand the extent to which the 2017 presidential election was critical for the FN, it is important to put it in perspective with the party's previous results and campaigning strategies. This chapter observes the strategy of the FN has been to adapt to changing constituencies, which has consequently led the party to a strategic impasse. The remainder of this chapter: (1) gives an overview of the ongoing transformation of the FN's constituency in 2017 and over time; (2) describes the recent institutional transformation of the FN; (3) analyses the main issues of the 2017 presidential campaign; and (4) concludes on the strategic failure and possible re-orientation of the FN.

The transformation of the FN constituency

The following description of the FN constituencies is based on secondary analysis of survey data extracted from the post-electoral studies conducted by the CEVIPOF (Centre de Recherche Politiques de Sciences Po) and the CEE (Centre d'Etudes Européennes). Notably, these data have constituted the core for analyses of each presidential campaign since

2 1986 is the FN's most successful legislative election, mainly due to the proportional representation system.

1988 and are published in the collection *Chroniques Electorales*.³

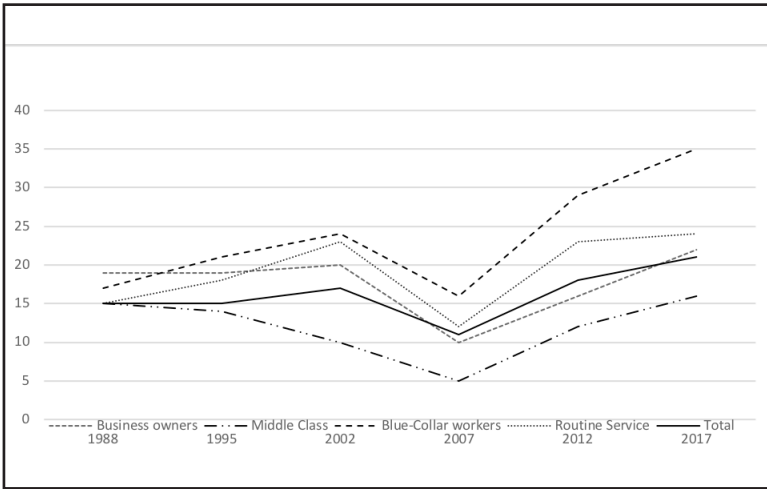
Studies of the FN's electorate have long pointed to a process of 'precarization' of FN voters over time. More precisely, the important working-class composition of the FN constituencies has been long established: the core of the FN's voters is found amongst the lower classes ('*électorat populaire*', Perrineau 2013) and blue-collar workers. Indeed, Betz argued of the proletarianization of the radical right voters has its roots in the early 1990s, and the working-class dimension of the FN constituencies is a long-term phenomenon (Betz 1994). Based on 1995 results, Perrineau has already identified the '*second lepénisme*' (as an opposition to a more traditional petty bourgeois electorate, Perrineau 1997), or more precisely described the working-class vote for the FN as '*ouvriero-lepénisme*' (Perrineau and Ysmal 1995). These authors argued that the sociological profile of the FN voters had consequences in terms of political preferences, which they labelled '*gaucho-lepénisme*' to stress the economically left oriented preferences of these voters. The working-class tint of the FN constituencies is also observable at the aggregate level. Industrial regions—with higher proportion of workers and long established heavy industries—tend to support the FN in higher proportions than others. Whether they are urban or rural, the regions with established industrial traditions—mainly located in Northeastern France—have become the FN's strongholds (Schwengler 2003, Perrineau 2018).

Figure 14.1 shows the evolution of the FN vote of four occupational groups between 1988 and 2017, following Oesch's (2006) classification of occupational classes. As expected, blue-collar and routine service workers vote for the FN in higher proportions than other social classes. Conversely, the middle class is increasingly less supportive of the FN. The political distinctiveness of the working class (the proportion of voters for a specific party amongst each of the different social classes) is increasingly in favour of the FN. The increase of the working-class vote for the FN is also steady over time: the gap between the working-class vote for the FN and the total vote is higher at every presidential election from 1988 to 2017. In 2017, 35% of blue-collar workers supported the FN, an overrepresentation of 14 points compared to the constituency at large. Notably, the overrepresentation of blue-collar workers in the FN constituencies increases independently of the party's electoral results.

3 Data for elections between 1988–2007 and 2017 are extracted from the CEVIPOF post-electoral survey, and data for 2012 from the *Enquête électorale française* of the CEE).

Indeed, the FN's electoral progression suffered from Sarkozy's victory in the 2007 presidential election. Yet the gap between blue-collar FN voters and the rest of FN voters is constant, which indicates that Sarkozy did not manage to attract the working-class voters of the FN any more than other occupational classes (as commentators had assumed).

Figure 13.1. The political distinctiveness of the FN constituencies (1988–2017)



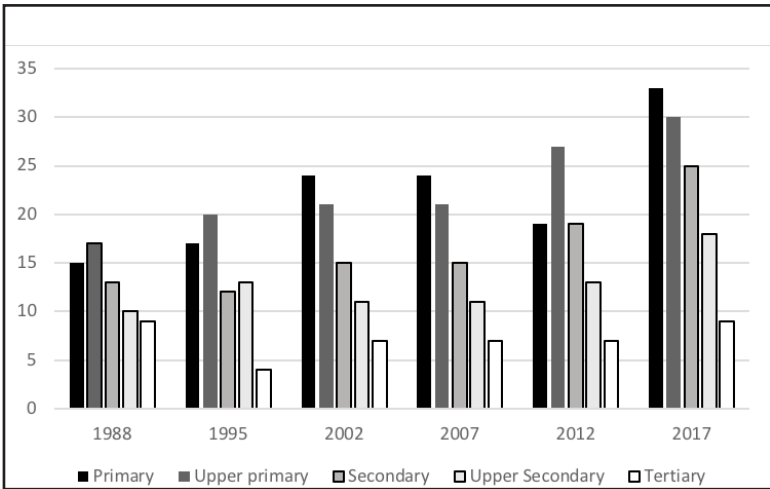
Source: Author's own elaboration.

Figure 14.1 does not report the farmers' vote due to statistically limited samples, yet the FN enjoys increasing support amongst farmers and rural populations (see Barone and Négrier 2015). This support peaked in 2017, with 23% of farmers voting for Marine Le Pen, while they had only been 8% to do so in 2012 (Perrineau 2018). Thus 2017 marks an important adjustment toward the FN amongst a constituency which is generally aligned with the mainstream right.

The occupational class structure of the FN vote provides an indication of its proletarianization, yet it does not uncover the entire transformation of the FN's electorate. An individual's level of education is shown consistently to be a strong predictor of the radical right vote (Mayer 2002; Arzheimer 2009). Figure 2 complements these results by showing that the educational gap in support for the FN is growing over time. Compared to individuals with higher education, the less educated tend to support

the FN in much higher proportions, and increasingly so over time. In the first round of the 2017 election, 33% of the less educated who turned out to the polls voted for Marine Le Pen. Note that it does not imply that the FN is the first party amongst less educated voters, since the less well-off tend to abstain rather than vote (Bornschieer and Kriesi 2013).

Figure 13.2. Vote for the FN according to educational attainment



Source: Author's own elaboration.

The constituency of the FN stands out in terms of sociological composition, but also in terms of issue priority. More than any constituency, the FN voters are concerned with fighting terrorism, limiting immigration and law and order. Yet, they also consider fighting unemployment and increasing wages more important than the average voter (Perrineau 2018). This trend confirms that, in addition to 'cultural threat issues', FN voters are also concerned with economic issues. Before looking at how the FN transformed its political preferences to mirror more closely those of its constituents (section 3), the next section deals with how the party institutionalized under Marine Le Pen's lead.

Professionalization, institutionalization and de-demonization

The recent literature studying the FN on the supply side is unanimous in describing the radical transformation the party has undergone in the

2010s. Assuming the party leadership in 2011, Marine Le Pen initiated transformations that have affected most aspects of the party. Its organization has been modernized—with a clearer hierarchy of party leaders, and a wider integration of activists—and somewhat normalized: it resembles more the functioning of mainstream political parties as opposed to the ‘one-man organization’ of former charismatic leader Jean-Marie Le Pen (Dézé 2016). Arguably, the FN has transformed from an anti-system party to a mainstream conservative party (although this process is still ongoing according to Shields 2014). One manifestation of this modernization is the capacity to better organize and present candidates in all local elections, which the FN had failed to do beforehand (Brouard and Foucault 2014). Indeed, thanks to its electoral results between 2012 and 2015, the FN has been able to build a ‘local power base of party cadres and grassroots network which would be key to Le Pen’s presidential bid in 2017’ (Evans and Ivaldi 2018, p. 87). Notably, the party has been able to rely on over 1,500 local council seats and over 400 departmental or regional councillors mainly elected in the 2010s. These elected officials have brought experience, greater professionalism, local relay, and (not the least important) significant financial contributions to the FN—through state subsidies and councillors’ party subscriptions. Marine Le Pen herself has claimed that her intention was to transform the party—she referred to this as a strategy of ‘de-demonization’ in order to break with the party’s reputation of scandals. This self-proclaimed process of *dédiabolisation* targeted particularly Jean-Marie Le Pen’s use of provocation and racial slurs.

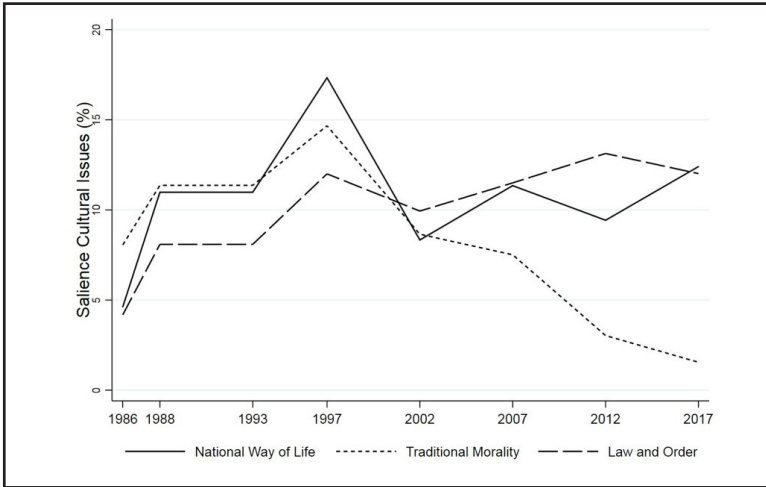
This transformation is highly visible in how the FN professionalized its campaigns, arguments, and electoral propaganda. In the later campaigns of 2012 and 2017, the FN produced comprehensive manifestos, which are far more evolved than the electoral propaganda used by former candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen. Even though Marine Le Pen bears the same name as the founder and historical party leader of the Front National, she represented herself as a candidate of ‘political rupture’, breaking away from the ‘awakeners’ of the party, and announcing the time of the ‘builders’. Her arguments are also strengthened by the extensive use of ‘official reports’ and ‘expert reports’ and the abundant use of public sources and statistics to increase the credibility of her program, which is another contrast to the discursive style of Jean-Marie Le Pen (Eatwell 2002). This detachment with her father climaxed with his expulsion from the party in 2015 (for repeated revisionist comments on gas chambers).

The 2017 campaign: inflexion of the 2012 strategy?

The FN's electoral success has been extensively studied, and a majority of contributions have explained the FN vote on the basis of the socio-cultural preferences of its voters, and chiefly their anti-immigration attitudes. On the supply side, consequently, the FN is often considered as a single-issue party, focused on immigration (Rydgren 2003). Yet, recent studies suggest this party—and its constituency—has been undergoing substantial transformations since its breakthrough in the 1980s, particularly with regards to socio-economic issues (Ivaldi 2015a). This is an incentive to study closer the actual political positions of the FN, and their evolution until 2017. Arguably, the Front National is not a single-issue party anymore, and it positions itself—and campaigns—on a wide variety of issues. To re-examine the Front National's political preferences this section first looks at the salience of issues, relying on the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) database. It consists of quantitative codes generated from counts of sentences and quasi-sentences where parties position themselves on policy issue. These have been collected and coded by the CMP and include political programs of parties from around 50 countries since 1945 (Volkens et al. 2013). The quantitative codes of party positions on policy issues is essentially salience-based. These therefore rely on the assumption that the more salient the issue, the more important it is for the party, and the more vehement the party is on this issue (Laver 2013).

In terms of socio-cultural preferences, the FN is arguably a characteristic radical right party—if not the typical case in Western Europe. It holds very conservative views on cultural issues, and especially a strong anti-immigration agenda. However, the FN is not a single-issue party, and promotes highly conservative positions on all cultural issues. Figure 14.3 shows that more than 25% of the 2017 manifesto was devoted to the 'National Way of Life' (as opposed to multiculturalism) and 'Law and Order'. However, the FN's positions on cultural issues at large have also evolved. For instance, references to 'Traditional Morality' have almost disappeared from the 2017 manifesto (referring to conservative positions on religion, family and morality). This evolution was very visible in the lack of investment by Marine Le Pen in the campaign against same-sex marriage in 2013, and it has been embodied by the more culturally liberal positions of Florian Philippot, her top advisor in 2017.

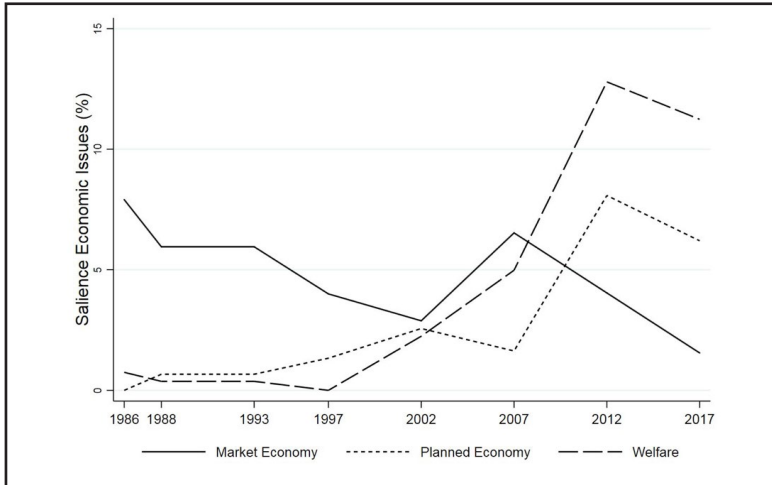
Figure 13.3. Salience of cultural issues in the manifestos of the FN (1986–2017)



Source: Author's own elaboration.

Betz had described the 'proletarianization' of radical right constituencies, and particularly that of the FN (Betz 1994). Indeed, the working class has become the core electoral clientele of the FN, particularly since the 2000s (Oesch 2008; Gougou 2015). On the other hand, there is evidence that the FN has operated a radical programmatic shift of its socio-economic positions (Ivaldi 2015a, 2015b), and particularly so with regards to positions on the welfare state (Lefkofridi and Michel 2017). However, both trends are rarely linked directly to each other in recent studies on the FN. The same Florian Philippot has turned into the symbol of this 'social turn' of the FN and he has largely influenced the FN in this direction.

Figure 13.4. Salience of economic issues in the manifestos of the FN (1986–2017)



Source: Author's own elaboration.

Indeed, the 'economic issues play a minor role in the Front National's ideological discourse' in the 1980s, but it shifts sensibly to address the blue-collar workers (potential voters) in the 1990s (Rydgren 2003). With Marine Le Pen's presidential bids in 2012 and 2017, the party promotes significantly more the expansion of welfare benefits (although strictly excluding migrants) and preferences for a (nationally) planned economy. By blaming unemployment on immigration and promoting chauvinist welfare policies because of the competition over scarce resources, the FN engages with welfare politics. Yet, Rydgren argued that these issues served as anti-immigration frames, in which the FN could develop its core ideology. On the basis of the dramatic increase of salience of welfare related issues in the 2012 manifesto—and of Marine Le Pen's repeated claims to 'transform' and 'adapt' the party (analyses of her campaign discourses)—I argue that the FN has operated a genuine programmatic shift. I would suggest that the relation underlined by Rydgren in the 2000s is reversed. The FN does not use welfare issues to frame their anti-immigration rhetoric anymore, but rather develops positions on the welfare state—and more broadly on the economy—using an anti-immigration frame, which is the party's trademark, the issue 'they own'. Yet, the promotion of more 'left-wing' economic policies is not as important in 2017 as in 2012. This may be the sign that the party had already tried, prior to the 2017 cam-

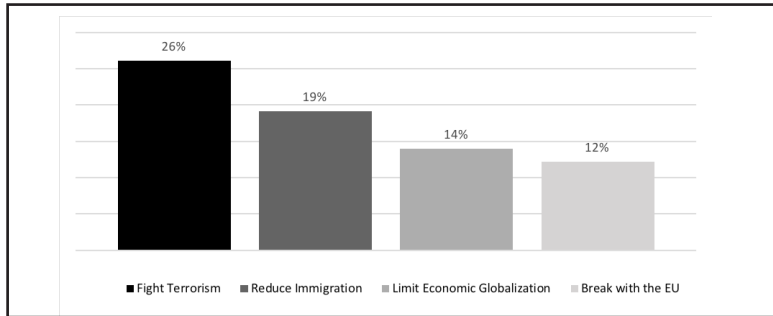
paign, to get closer to its original base of traditionally more economically right-wing petty bourgeois voters.

The remainder of this section confirms that the FN's political positions consist of a mix of cultural and economic preferences by analysing Marine Le Pen's campaign on Twitter, which shows the most salient issues for the FN's candidate. All the Tweets of the candidates of the 2017 presidential election have been collected in the 3 months prior to the election by the ICCP research project (led by Lorenzo de Sio at LUISS). Around 2,000 tweets were therefore manually coded on 24 issues, which were either valence of positional issues (the actual position of the parties was also coded for the latter). The tweet data excludes retweets and non-issue-based tweets and includes 401 individual tweets of Marine Le Pen in the three months before the first round of the presidential election. This data provides a comparative advantage over manifesto data (and particularly the CMP) because it is more dynamic (it evolves with the campaign while manifestos do not change) and because the coding categories can be redefined if necessary.⁴ This approach was successfully piloted during the 2014 EP elections in Italy (De Sio et al. 2018).

During the 2017 campaign, over 70% of Marine Le Pen's tweets concerned four issues: 'terrorism', 'immigration', 'economic globalization', and 'breaking with the EU' (Figure 14.5). The first two issues tap into the conventional cultural agenda of the FN: anti-immigration and law and order. It is to be noted that, in the context of the Islamic terrorist wave of 2014–2016 in France, the issue of 'fighting terrorism' is not solely linked to a security concern. Indeed, Marine Le Pen has consistently linked terrorism to immigration, the opening of borders, and Islam in general.

4 This is particularly relevant when relying on CMP data to study the Front National, since this dataset does not include a specific coding category for immigration related issues (Ruedin and Morales 2017).

Figure 13.5. Top issue tweeted by Marine Le Pen in 2017



Source: Author's own elaboration.

However, Marine Le Pen has also extensively addressed the issues of economic globalization and called consistently for economic protectionism. The 'social' dimension of the FN's positions can be interpreted as a direct address to the 'losers of economic globalization' who constitute an increasingly important share of her voters (as shown in the previous section). Marine Le Pen has remained rather vague on her anti-EU stances, calling for a referendum on France's membership in the EU—without directly calling for a 'Frexit'. Marine Le Pen's call to 'break with the EU' does not include membership to the Eurozone, which was coded separately. Marine Le Pen has campaigned little on the latter, entertaining a confusion about her position on the Euro, which peaked in her inability to explain her stance on the common currency in the debate with Emmanuel Macron days before the second round of the election.

Table 13.1. Positional and valence issues of candidates in the 2017 French election (share of tweets)

| | Positional | Valence | N |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-----|
| Arthaud | 58.8 | 41.2 | 68 |
| Poutou | 58.5 | 41.5 | 82 |
| Mélenchon | 59.7 | 40.3 | 414 |
| Hamon | 44.4 | 55.6 | 243 |
| Macron | 34.5 | 65.5 | 336 |
| Dupont | 45.7 | 54.4 | 46 |
| LePen | 65.6 | 34.4 | 401 |
| Fillon | 46.9 | 53.1 | 207 |
| Cheminade | 57.3 | 42.7 | 150 |
| Asselineau | 94.9 | 5.2 | 97 |
| Lassalle | 50 | 50 | 38 |

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Overall, Marine Le Pen's tweeting campaign shows that she adopted a confrontational style, typical of more radical challenger candidates. Indeed, over 65% of her tweets dealt with positional issues—that is confrontational ones—whereas Emmanuel Macron had a similar share of valence issues, i.e. conventional issues for which most of the electorate shares a similar goal.⁵ Table 14.1 shows that Marine Le Pen adopted the most confrontational campaign style on Twitter compared to the other candidates of the 2017 presidential campaign.

Electoral impasse: the failure of the left-wing shift?

The analysis of the issue and campaign salience of Marine Le Pen's 2017 presidential bid suggests that Marine Le Pen confirmed the 'left-wing turn of the FN'. Although to a lesser extent than in 2012, the FN candidate ranked the economy and globalization amongst her top priorities, and generally promoted preferences somewhat associated with the left, such as limiting economic globalization. I argue that this transformation of the socio-economic agenda of the FN is largely resulting from the increasing importance of blue-collar workers, and so-called 'losers of globalization' in the party constituency. Incidentally, conservative candidate François Fillon called Marine Le Pen a 'radical leftist' on several occasions. However, this programmatic strategy has proven electorally insufficient. Remarkably, Marine Le Pen addressed a direct message to the voters of radical left candidate Mélenchon, pointing to their convergence on socio-economic issues. Yet, in the second round, Marine Le Pen was not able to attract many votes from the left, while not benefitting from a strong support amongst conservative Fillon voters (Evans and Ivaldi 2018). These weak vote transfers point to the fact that the current strategy of the FN leads to an electoral impasse: while reaching a ceiling amongst economically left-leaning working-class voters, Marine Le Pen was also not able to mobilize the culturally conservative fringes of the mainstream right.

Additionally, the claims on the professionalization of the party and its candidate have also been shattered. Marine Le Pen has remained vague and inconsistent on major electoral issues (membership to the EU and the Euro) and has proven ill-prepared in the second-round debate,

5 Note that in this coding scheme, 'fighting terrorism' is coded as a valence issue, whereas Marine Le Pen has in fact been highly confrontational on that issue. Therefore, we could interpret her campaign as even more confrontational than this data suggests.

which has been considered to influence voters—negatively—for the FN (whereas campaign debates are usually considered to barely influence voters). Overall, Marine Le Pen has trapped herself in a ‘tribune isolation’ of conflictual politics during the campaign, which undermined her credibility as a political leader (Perrineau 2018). So far, the March 2018 congress of the FN has not provided a greater clarification on the party’s substantial strategy, but it confirmed Marine Le Pen as its almost uncontested leader.

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Reconfiguration of the Italian Party System, 2013–2018: A Two-Stage Political Earthquake?¹

Lorenzo Cicchi & Enrico Calossi

Introduction

The Italian election of 2018 has been described by many as a ‘political earthquake’ with effects so destructive they have been felt abroad, especially in Brussels. When elections provide outcomes that are particularly shocking, political commentators and academics often deploy the term ‘electoral earthquake’ to capture the nature of the impact. Indeed, observers used this evocative metaphor in Italy after the 2013 election (Chiaramonte and De Sio 2014). What we need, then, is an apt but novel descriptor for the events of 2018. In fact, the last two elections really ought to be considered part of the same seismic shock, the effects of which have been felt in in different arenas at various points in time.

The party system can be divided into three distinct arenas: the electoral arena, the parliamentary arena and the government arena. The Italian party system had not yet settled from the 2013 shock (when the change was perceived primarily in the electoral and parliamentary arenas) by the time of the 2018 election, when a further disruptive tremor was felt (the aftershock affecting also the governmental arena). Thus, if the 2013 election was the first stage in this long seismic process (the ‘earthquake’), the 2018 election was its second stage—a brutal ‘aftershock’ that laid complete waste to whatever had been left standing after the first.

¹ A previous version of this chapter has been published by the same authors as “The Italian party system’s three functional arenas after the 2018 election: the tsunami after the earthquake” in *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, Volume 23, Issue 4, pp. 437–459.

This chapter seeks to measure the changes wrought in the three arenas over these two seismic elections. From our perspective, this change must be viewed in a long-term perspective. Thus, we analyse the entire history of elections during the Republican era in Italy, i.e. the period 1948–2018. We devote significant attention to events in the so-called ‘Second Republic’—the institutional and political equilibrium seen in Italy after the 1994 election. Our analysis reflects a series of indicators for each of the arenas, relying on the theoretical speculations of Bardi and Mair (2008), who were the first to suppose that the complex concept of the party system might be disaggregated analytically into these three functional arenas of competition between political parties.

The chapter is structured as follows. The next part provides a description of the background and the results of the 2018 ‘aftershock’ election. We then present a review of the literature, covering the key works on the historical evolution of the Italian party system, from the period of so-called imperfect bipartitism (Galli 1967) to the emergence of polarized pluralism (Sartori 1976), and the more recent categorizations of the system’s evolution toward fragmented bipolarism (D’Alimonte 2005) and then transition—most recently—to contemporary tripolarism (Chiramonte and Emanuele 2018). The next section is empirical and analyses in detail the evolution of the three functional arenas over the entire 1948–2018 period. Here, we present first the descriptive statistics for each arena separately, and then comparatively, focusing especially on the key differences between the two ‘seismic’ junctures—that of 1994 and the one between 2013–2018. The final section draws the findings of the analysis together and offers some tentative conclusions about the possible future evolution of the Italian party system.

Background: Italy’s 2018 general election

In December 2017 the President of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella, issued a decree to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the Republic. New elections were then scheduled for 4 March 2018, to be conducted under a new electoral law. This came after a tumultuous 2013–2018 parliamentary term, in which the electoral system was subject to a series of incoherent reform attempts. The existing system—known generally as the Porcellum—was essentially proportional, but gave a significant seat bonus to the winning coalition or party. Some of the proposed changes to it were purely political, like the approval of the Italicum,

which was not so different from the Porcellum but was thought to work only for the Chamber of Deputies (a constitutional amendment in 2016 proposed to make the Senate non-elective). Others came after judicial interventions, for example the verdict handed down by the Constitutional Court in 2014 which mandated a weaker version of the Porcellum (without any seat bonus for the winners). After the 2016 constitutional reform attempt failed—having been rejected by voters at the December 2016 referendum—two different and contradictory electoral systems for the two chambers were in effect. Therefore, on 26 October 2017, a new electoral law—seeking to harmonize the electoral formulas of the Chamber and the Senate—was approved (Pedrazzani and Pinto 2018). The so-called Rosatellum provides that 37% of seats (232 in the Chamber and 116 in the Senate) are assigned by first-past-the-post and 61% (386 in the Chamber and 193 in the Senate) through a proportional formula with a threshold of 3% of valid votes cast on a national basis. The remaining 2% were reserved for the ‘Italians abroad’ constituencies. However the new electoral law, as had the Mattarellum and the Porcellum systems preceding it, incentivized parties to form pre-electoral alliances and coalitions (Chiaramonte and D’Alimonte 2018). In the event, prior to the 2018 elections only two were formed: one centre–left and the other centre–right. Next to the incumbent centre–left coalition (led by the Partito Democratico / PD in alliance with smaller partners), both the centre–right coalition (Forza Italia / FI, Lega—Salvini Premier, Fratelli d’Italia / FdI and Noi con l’Italia / NcI) and the stand-alone Movimento Cinque Stelle (M5S) had the highest chance of winning the election. In addition to these major competitors, other minor parties participated in the elections: Liberi e Uguali (LeU) and Potere al Popolo (PaP) on the left. The Casa Pound Italia (CPI) and Italia agli Italiani (IaI) on the right side also warrant mentioning (Valbruzzi and Vignati 2018).

In the event, the M5S—as a single list—won the most votes. Nevertheless, as a sum the centre–right parties obtained a greater vote share, winning a plurality of seats in the two chambers. Matteo Salvini’s Lega Nord emerged as the core of this centre–right bloc, surpassing the previously dominant Forza Italia. The centre–left alliance, led by former the prime minister Matteo Renzi, came third. No coalition having obtained a clear majority, Italy entered a political impasse, which took three long months to resolve, when the M5S and the Lega Nord finally reached an agreement to form a governing coalition, with their respective leaders as deputy prime ministers. The parties agreed to nominate Giuseppe Conte,

a M5S-linked law professor and non-parliamentarian, as prime minister (Valbruzzi 2018).

The enormous growth of Lega, whose vote share in 2018 was four times that obtained in 2013 (Orsina 2018), and the confirmation of the primacy of M5S amongst the Italian parties gave the impression of epochal change.² This set the stage for the winners—like the M5S leader Luigi Di Maio—to wax lyrical about the birth of a new, ‘Third Republic’. This cathartic climate was also exemplified by the informal name given to the new governing coalition—the ‘government of change’—chosen by the two partners to define their alliance (or ‘contract’, as they put it).

Despite these colourful developments, from the general point of view of the format and mechanics, the party system resulting from the 2018 election presents a continuity with that after the 2013 election. In fact, although some scholars, after the 2013 elections, had used the expression ‘three and a half pole’ party system (Cotta and Verzichelli 2016), because of the presence of the so-called ‘third pole’, the coalition under the leadership of the incumbent prime minister Mario Monti (Pasquino 2013), in 2018 the system kept its tripolar configuration as it had been substantially in 2013. This proves that the 2013 result was not a provisional deviation from the bipolarism that had characterized the ‘Second Republic’ up to that time. Five years later, Italy still has a tripolar party system.

However, some important transformations have occurred. For the first time in the history of the Italian Republic, the forces of the old ‘constitutional arch’ (largely comprised within the centre–left coalition) came in third. This meant they were well behind the centre–right coalition—but also the M5S group. In addition, the parties that only had dominated the parliament just five years before—the PD and the Popolo della Libertà, with 758 seats out 945—took just 34% of the seats in 2018.

The exceptionality of the 2018 election is largely due to the great success of the non-mainstream parties, which, for at least three reasons proved unique in Western Europe. First, parties that burst onto the scene and make a splash in their electoral debut typically cannot repeat this performance the second time around. However, the M5S, which had done well at its electoral debut in 2013 (25.6%), improved on this perfor-

2 Already in 2013, the M5s achieved the highest vote share of any single party in the Chamber of Deputies, if the ‘Italians abroad’ constituencies are excluded. However, at the time, the PD gained more seats, as it was part of the coalition that obtained more votes.

mance on the second try in 2018 (reaching 32.7%). Second, the Lega—reconstituted as a radical right party by Salvini (Passarelli and Tuorto 2018)—relinquished its original local and regional autonomism and therefore abandoned its previous name of Lega Nord per l'Indipendenza della Padania ('Northern League for the Independence of Padania'). This saw it expand its electoral base to the entire Peninsula and led to the quadrupling of its vote share. Third, the electoral strategy of conquering centrist voters by positively insisting on Europe and civil rights failed. This was the misfortune of the PD under Renzi, who had adopted that centrist strategy upon becoming leader in 2014. The result was the worst result ever for the left in Republican history (De Sio 2018).

Alongside these preliminary observations, the next section offers an original analytical framework for analysing in detail the electoral results and to include them in the historical tendencies that have characterized the evolution of the Italian party system.

Changes in three arenas of the Italian party system

The nature of the interactions between political parties is important to classify the different types of party systems (Sartori 1976). Simply, when there are not interactions between parties, we cannot speak of 'systems of parties' but only of 'sets of parties', which are 'mere sums of their parts' (Mair 2006). This assumption is agreed within the literature and represents the starting point of the scholars who work on the classification of the different kinds of system. This research focus prevented the literature from concentrating on other aspects of the party systems for quite a long time, above all the constituent elements of a party system. Already in 1979, Mogens Pedersen (1979, p. 1) stressed that the nature of interactions between different 'levels' of a party system are a crucial consideration:

A concise mapping of party system change would have to cover the levels of parliament and government, the level of the party as an organization, and the level of the electorate. Party system change, then, can be defined as the total set of changes in patterns of interaction and competition at these three levels as well as between them.

Luciano Bardi and Peter Mair (2008) took this point further, by interpreting party systems as multifaceted phenomena. They identified the existence of three dimensions: vertical, horizontal and functional. In this

chapter, we concentrate on the functional aspect. Actually, according to the authors, within party systems there are at least three different competitive arenas: electoral, parliamentary and governmental. The fundamental element that distinguishes these three arenas is that parties follow different principles while operating in the three different environments because the incentives they receive are different. Within the electoral party systems (or, one might say, ‘the electoral face of a party system’) parties are shaped by a survival logic: they compete for each individual vote. Put simply, competition prevails, even if its strategy is strongly influenced by the electoral formula applied: centripetal for the plurality systems, centrifugal for the proportional ones.

In the ‘parliamentary party system’, the logic is different. Usually, after elections, no clear (and unique) winner emerges and parties try to form post-electoral alliances to test support for forming an executive. Therefore, cooperation is necessary, and the coalition formation logic prevails. In the governmental arena, cooperation is sometimes the rule. At other times—usually when there are coalition cabinets—competition tends to exist as member parties (typically the junior ones insistently provoke the others in the coalition to assert their importance. This methodical approach is very useful for interpreting the Italian case, in which the three arenas are shaped by different logics of competition. Before the 1990s, the fragmented nature of the Italian party system saw polarization prevail in the electoral arena. This was because parties took particularized or extreme positions to seek votes. In the parliamentary arena, in contrast, cooperation prevailed. In distinct contrast, since the 1990s fragmentation has characterized more the parliamentary arena than the electoral one. Parties have been more competitive inside the parliament than during elections. Polarization has occurred even amongst parties in the same government. An example of this is the difficult relations amongst the ministers of the second Prodi government (2006–2008), when members of the same executive (the DS and Margherita ministers on one side and the left-wing ones on the other) adopted different positions and even publicly demonstrated in streets against the executive. Thanks to the analytical approach we adopt here, we can measure the extent to which change has happened in the three functional arenas of the Italian party system, with particular attention on the 2018 election. We chose two indicators—volatility and innovation—and we use two indexes to evaluate the most significant changes in the three arenas.

First, we employ the index of volatility. As defined by Pedersen, this index calculates the total amount of change experienced by all individual entities in a closed system. For each entity it calculates the net change of a particular characteristic between two periods of time, then takes the absolute value of this change (to prevent positives and negatives from cancelling out) and divides the result by the total amount of the characteristic in the system at the first and second time periods (Pedersen 1979). As explained by Casal Bértoa, Deegan-Krause and Haughton (2017, p. 143), this formula can be simplified as the sum of the absolute value of the vote change of all parties divided by two. However, alongside the classic index of ‘electoral volatility’³—which is thought to measure change in the electoral arena—we adapt this index also for the other two arenas. For the latter, rather than considering the change of votes, we examine change in the parties’ seat shares across two terms of the Chamber of Deputies (‘parliamentary volatility’) and the percentage change between one cabinet and the next in the number of ministers occupied by exponents from a given party (‘government volatility’).

The second index is designed to measure the relevance of new parties in the three arenas. Put simply, ‘electoral innovation’ is the sum of vote share attained by all the new parties. Similarly, the ‘parliamentary innovation’ is given by the total percentage of seats obtained by new parties in a given election.⁴ ‘Governmental innovation’, in turn, corresponds to the percentage of ministers (the prime minister included) filled by new parties.

These three indexes force us to define what we consider to be a new party. The theme of ‘newness’ of party is widely debated in literature (Emanuele and Chiaramonte 2016). Harmel and Robertson (1985) maintain a very inclusive definition, treating any new list name as sufficient for defining the party as a truly new entity. Other, more restrictive, definitions for the labelling of parties as ‘new’ require the presence at least of a merger (Birch 2003; Powell and Tucker 2014; Bolleyer 2013) or a split amongst existing parties (Mainwaring, Gervasoni, and España-Najera 2016; Hug 2001; Tavits 2006; Zons 2015; Barnea and Rahat 2011). Again, others require other criteria being matched, as the existence of a ‘start-up organization’ (Bartolini and Mair 1990; Chiaramonte and Ema-

3 For electoral volatility, our analysis is based solely on votes cast for the election for the Chamber of the Deputies.

4 We also calculate these two indicators considering only the Chamber of Deputies.

nuele 2017) or new personnel (Sikk 2005; Marinova 2015). In this work, we combine some of the existing approaches. First, similarly to Emanuele and Chiamonte (2016), we define as new parties those that for the first time got more than 1 per cent of votes in an election. For example, Lega Nord had already run in the 1987 general election, but took fewer than 1% of the votes. Therefore, we label it as a new party only in 1992, when it reached 8%. Second, we do not label as new those parties that have simply adopted a new name while retaining the same politicians and platform. Third, in case of a merger, we do not consider these actors as new parties if they retained the old leaders, ideologies and structures.⁵ Fourth, in case of splits, we only label the smallest offshoot(s) of the original party as a new one.⁶

Measuring volatility and innovation in the three arenas

Our analysis starts from the electoral and parliamentary arenas. In fact, as Pedersen (1979, p. 2) has noted:

even if elections are far from always being decisive events, they are still the best available vantage point for a study of change, because change will either be a result of elections, or elections will register any change which may occur in the party system.

Table 4.1 shows the evolution of the Italian party system in terms of electoral and parliamentary volatility, both for parties and blocs (coalitions).

5 Therefore, the Partito Democratico in 2007 and the Popolo della Libertà in 2008 are not considered new parties.

6 For this reason, in the case of the end of the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI), we only consider Rifondazione Comunista (PRC) as a new party, as it was smaller than the Partito Democratico della Sinistra (PDS). The Partito Popolare Italiano (PPI) also stands out as notable, as one faction was allowed to retain the name and the other one was allowed to keep the logo. Therefore, neither the latter, institutionalized as the Cristiano Democratici Uniti (CDU) neither the former are labelled as new parties.

Table 14.1. Party and bloc electoral and parliamentary volatility, 1948–2018

| Electoral cycle (T1–T2) | Electoral volatility | Parliamentary volatility | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Party volatility at T2 | Bloc volatility at T2 | Party volatility at T2 | Bloc volatility at T2 |
| 1948–1953 | 12.4% | n/a | 14.0% | n/a |
| 1953–1958 | 6.5% | n/a | 6.6% | n/a |
| 1958–1963 | 7.7% | n/a | 8.0% | n/a |
| 1963–1968 | 7.6% | n/a | 6.8% | n/a |
| 1968–1972 | 5.9% | n/a | 6.8% | n/a |
| 1972–1976 | 9.5% | n/a | 8.9% | n/a |
| 1976–1979 | 5.5% | n/a | 6.0% | n/a |
| 1979–1983 | 8.5% | n/a | 8.4% | n/a |
| 1983–1987 | 8.1% | n/a | 7.4% | n/a |
| 1987–1992 | 18.7% | n/a | 18.5% | n/a |
| 1992–1994 | 40.9% | n/a | 46.0% | n/a |
| 1994–1996 | 15.8% | 22.6% | 21.7% | 26.4% |
| 1996–2001 | 22.8% | 7.7% | 23.1% | 11.4% |
| 2001–2006 | 8.9% | 5.4% | 13.8% | 14.4% |
| 2006–2008 | 16.9% | 13.2% | 24.5% | 16.2% |
| 2008–2013 | 40.3% | 32.5% | 44.8% | 35.2% |
| 2013–2018 | 29.7% | 19.9% | 42.9% | 42.9% |

Source: Authors' own elaboration

The result of the heavily controversial⁷ 1953 election gave birth to a political balance that would last for roughly four decades. The DC was at the core of a centrist coalition (with the Partito Liberale, PLI, the Partito Social Democratico, PSDI, and the Partito Repubblicano, PRI) opposed

7 The controversy arose on account of the super bonus of two-thirds of seats granted to the winning coalition scoring at least 50% of the votes. This was introduced by the incumbent, DC-led government prior to the elections. In the event, the centrist bloc scored 55,038 votes below the necessary threshold, so the normal proportional allocation of seats applied. The provision was subsequently repealed in 1954.

by a strong left-wing opposition (with the Partito Comunista, PCI, in a stronger position than the Partito Socialista, PSI) and a weaker right-wing opposition (the Partito Nazionale Monarchico, PNM, and the Movimento Sociale Italiano, MSI). This core basic structure of the party system remained very stable until 1992. After the 1953 election, electoral volatility reached 12.4%, due to the strong recovery of the left-wing parties, but it never again reached 10% before the restructuring of the party system that took place after 1994. The electoral fluxes were characterized by steady growth of the PCI until 1976, erosion of votes for the DC (until 1983) and the PSI (until 1976), and the steady dissolving of the monarchists' party. Already in 1967 Giorgio Galli could coin the term 'imperfect bipartitism' to describe the DC–PCI dynamic, even if the gap was still as high as 13%. Indeed, only in 1983 did the distance between the two reached a minimum: 32.9% vs 29.9.

As Table 4.2 indicates, during the first 20 years new parties had a very limited impact. From the 1970s and into the 1980s, however, the first signs of instability in the party system emerged, with several new parties appearing. But the first real symptom of a crisis, anticipating the 1992–93 collapse, was seen in the 1992 election. For the first time innovation exceeded 10%, reaching 16.1%. The three new parties—La Rete (1.86%), PRC⁸ (5.62%) and the Lega Nord (LN, 8.65%)—together took 16.1% of votes. Of these three new parties the success of the latter sent alarm bells through the political system, as many commentators noted (Biorcio 1997). In fact, the LN launched a populist critique against the traditional 'system of parties' and explicitly placed itself outside of the classic left–right divide, which had characterized the Italian party system until that point. In conclusion, it was the first time that a new party outside of the political mainstream, other than the marginalized MSI and the already dissolved monarchists, had scored so well in an Italian election since 1946.

8 When the PCI transformed into the PDS most of the leadership joined the new party, which kept within its new electoral symbol the ancient PCI logo (Ignazi 1992). In contrast, the PRC was led by a minor faction of the former leadership and the electoral symbol, although it kept the classical hammer and sickle in a prominent position, was completely different from that of the PCI (Bertolino 2004). Therefore, the PDS can be considered as the PCI 'in a new fashion', while only the PRC can be considered as a new party.

Table 14.2. Electoral and parliamentary innovation, 1948–2018

| Election | Electoral innovation | | | Parliamentary innovation | | | |
|----------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| | Number of new parties | New parties overall vote | Political parties | Number of new parties | N seats assigned to new parties | % seats assigned to new parties | Political parties |
| 1953 | 0 | 0.0% | | 0 | 0 | 0.0% | |
| 1958 | 1 | 2.6% | Partito Monarchico Popolare, PMP (2.63%) | 1 | 14 | 2.4% | Partito Monarchico Popolare, PMP (14) |
| 1963 | 0 | 0.0% | | 0 | 0 | 0.0% | |
| 1968 | 1 | 4.5% | Partito Socialista di Unità Proletaria (4.45%) | 1 | 23 | 3.7% | Partito Socialista di Unità Proletaria, PSIUP (23) |
| 1972 | 0 | 0.0% | | 0 | 0 | 0.0% | |
| 1976 | 2 | 2.6% | Partito Radicale (1.07%), Democrazia Proletaria (1.52%) | 2 | 10 | 1.6% | Partito Radicale (4) and Democrazia Proletaria (6) |
| 1979 | 1 | 1.4% | Partito di Unità Proletaria per il Comunismo, PDUP (1.37%) | 1 | 6 | 1.0% | Partito di Unità Proletaria per il Comunismo (6) |
| 1983 | 1 | 1.4% | Partito Nazionale dei Pensionati (1.36%) | 0 | 0 | 0.0% | |
| 1987 | 1 | 2.5% | Lista Verdi (2.51%) | 1 | 13 | 2.1% | Lista Verdi (13) |
| 1992 | 3 | 16.1% | Rifondazione Comunista (5.62%), Movimento per la Demorazia—La Rete (1.86%), and Lega Nord (8.65%) | 3 | 102 | 16.2% | Rifondazione Comunista (35), Movimento per la Demorazia—La Rete (12), Lega Nord (55) |
| 1994 | 3 | 26.9% | Forza Italia (21.01%), Alleanza Democratica (1.18%), Patto Segni (4.68%) | 3 | 163 | 25.9% | Forza Italia (132), Alleanza Democratica (18), Patto Segni (13) |
| 1996 | 1 | 4.3% | Rinnovamento Italiano (4.34%) | 1 | 26 | 4.1% | Rinnovamento Italiano (26) |
| 2001 | 3 | 8.0% | Italia dei Valori (3.89%), Democrazia Europea (2.39%), Partito dei Comunisti Italiani (1.67%) | 1 | 10 | 1.6% | Partito dei Comunisti Italiani (10) |
| 2006 | 1 | 1.4% | Popolari UDEUR (1.40%) | 1 | 3 | 0.5% | Popolari UDEUR (3) |
| 2008 | 2 | 3.6% | La Destra—Fiamma Tricolore (2.43%), Movimento per l'Autonomia (1.13%) | 1 | 8 | 1.3% | Movimento per l'Autonomia (8) |
| 2013 | 5 | 40.1% | Sinistra Ecologia Libertà (3.20%), Fratelli d'Italia (1.96%), Scelta Civica (8.30%), Movimento Cinque Stelle (25.56%), Fare per Fermare il Declino (1.12%) | 4 | 163 | 26.4% | Sinistra Ecologia Libertà (37), Fratelli d'Italia (9), Scelta Civica (38), Movimento Cinque Stelle (109) |
| 2018 | 3 | 7.1% | Più Europa (2.56%), Liberi e Uguali (3.39%), Potere al Popolo (1.10%) | 2 | 16 | 2.6% | Più Europa (2), Liberi e Uguali (14) |

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The 1992 legislature was very short lived. The 'Mani Pulite' ('clean hands') judicial investigation and the approval of the mixed-majoritarian electoral system (Mattarellum) resulted in a complete reorganization of the Italian party system. Electoral volatility skyrocketed to 40.9% and three new parties entered the scene. Two of the new parties were very small: Alleanza Democratica (1.2%) and Patto Segni (4.7%). But the third—Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia—made an instant splash, imme-

diately becoming the biggest party in the system, taking 21% of votes. In total, the three new parties took 26.9% of the vote, a level never reached by new parties before. These changes induced many to speak of the emergence of a so-called ‘Second Republic,’ even if all other constitutional aspects of Italian democracy bar the electoral system continued in the same framework as per the previous 40 years.

The system seemed to settle into a relative stability in the period. In the four elections between 1996 and 2008, volatility only once reached 22.8% (in 2001) and in 2006 was down to the levels seen in the 1950s and 1960s (8.6%). However, this period was characterized by the birth of other new parties: *Rinnovamento Italiano* in 1996, *Italia dei Valori*, *Democrazia Europea* and the *Partito dei Comunisti Italiani* in 2001, the *UDEUR* in 2006, and finally *la Destra* and the *Movimento per l’Autonomia* in 2008. However, the overall shares of votes obtained by these new parties was much lower than witnessed by the three new entrants in the 1992–1994 period. These indicators appeared to confirm that the party system, at least in the electoral arena, had found a new level after the changes of 1994. This seemed validated also by the fact that almost the total of the votes was concentrated in only two coalitions in 2006 and that the votes received by the two biggest parties in 2008, the *PDL* and the *PD*, reached 70.5%, the second highest score after the 73.1% score recorded in 1976.

The fragility of this apparent new equilibrium, however, was demonstrated clearly in the 2013 election. The ‘electoral earthquake’ reflected both high volatility (40.3%, the same score recorded in 1994) and a large number of new entrants—five in fact. These were: *Fare per Fermare il Declino* (1.1%), *Fratelli d’Italia* (1.96%), *Sinistra, Ecologia e Libertà* (3.20%), the self-defined ‘third pole’ *Scelta Civica* (8.3%) and the effective third force of that election, and biggest party overall, the *M5S* (25.6%). Overall, 40.2% of votes went to parties that had not even existed prior to the previous election five years earlier. From an electoral point of view, other new parties entered the scene in 2018, *+Europa*, *Liberi e Uguali* and *Potere al Popolo*, but their vote share in total did not exceed more than 7 per cent. In contrast, volatility skyrocketed—reaching the third-highest level on record—indicating that the new electoral landscape after the 2013 general elections was as unstable as the post-1953 and post-1992 ones has been.

Concerning the evolution of the format and dynamics of the parliamentary arena in comparison with those of the electoral arena, it is note-

worthy that ‘institutional factors may also be responsible for creating different conditions of competition in the two arenas’ (Bardi and Mair 2008, pp. 157–8). The electoral system is one of the most important aspects that shape the differences and similarities between party systems. As for the format of the party systems in the two arenas, it is easy to understand that the proportional formula imposed a strong similarity between the two. The elections of 1953 and 1992 recorded the highest electoral volatility and were subsequently the ones with the greatest parliamentary volatility. The same happened for party innovation, which was almost non-existing in both the arenas until 1992.

As for the dynamics of competition, the analysis is more complex. The proportional system produced ‘polarized pluralism’ (Sartori 1966) in the electoral arena, characterized by centrifugal competition. However, parties that during the elections proposed different policy solutions and seemed to represent incompatible *Weltanschauungen* were able to negotiate and find agreements in the parliamentary arena. Even if the period 1948–1992 was characterized by the stability of the ruling coalition, this did not prevent the formation of a consensual climate on many general issues, at least amongst the parties of the ‘Constitutional Arch’ (i.e. the mainstream), which saw some commentators define the Italian party system as ‘bargained pluralism’ (Hine 1993). Sartori and Hine’s definitions seem to be at odds, but that contradiction is only apparent: as the Italian party system was polarized in the electoral arena and consensual in the parliamentary one. Obviously, the main reason is that the electoral arena has never been really competitive. The DC constantly occupied the centre of the system having two incompatible oppositions on the left and the right. The inclusive strategy of this ‘centrism’—with PSLI, the PLI and the PRI in the ruling coalition—always characterized the DC’s behaviour. The consequence was a continuous enlargement of the governing coalition, which passed from the centrist formula of the 1950s, to a centre–left one in the 1960s and 1970s and then to a ‘pentapartito’ format in the 1980s.

The consensual imperative of the parliamentary arena is not only exemplified by the progressive expansion of the governmental coalition but was also characterized by other two processes. The first was the recurrence of the ‘external support’ from parties formally located at the opposition, the monarchists and the neo-fascists in the 1950s and the communists in the 1970s. The second, and more frequent, was the sharing of

public offices and state resources amongst parties. This process, which touched many sectors of society—from the management of the national health service to the distribution of the top-level positions in state institutions, and from the introduction of public funding for political parties (Pizzimenti and Ignazi 2011) to the ‘occupation’ of the municipalized companies—was completely in line with the conceptualization of the ‘cartel party’ system (Katz and Mair 1995; Bardi 2006).

Things changed abruptly in 1994, when the approval of the new mixed–majoritarian electoral system and the judicial investigations into the ruling parties provoked a dramatic impact on the format and dynamics of the party system in the two arenas. The new electoral law facilitated the structuring of the electoral supply into three different blocs and new parties (Forza Italia overall) emerged. From that time on, two tendencies can be measured. The first is the divergence between electoral and parliamentary volatilities, with the latter constantly higher. This effect is clearly due to the distortive effect of the new mixed–majoritarian system. The *Mattarellum* (which adopted the first-past-the-post formula for three-quarters of the seats) assured higher volatility in the parliamentary arena: 46% vs 40% in 1994, 21% vs 15% in 1996, 23% vs 22% in 2001 (see Tables 4.1 and 4.3). These gaps were almost of the same degree in the three elections run with the *Porcellum* system (which granted 340 seats to the coalition or list with the highest number of votes): parliamentary volatility was 13% vs 8% of the electoral arena in 2006, 24% vs 16% in 2008, and 44% vs 40% in 2013. The second process was the great parliamentary strength of the centre–left and centre–right, always able to occupy more than 90% of the seats, with peaks in 2001 when only 11 seats were left to third parties and in 2006 when the two coalitions occupied the entire Chamber of Deputies. In 2008, this tendency toward bipolarity seemed to lead even to a bipartization of the system.

This tendency came to a complete halt in 2013. The change was immediately observed concerning electoral supply: three coalitions running in the elections (centre–right, centre–left and centre) and at least three alone-standing lists with the hope of winning seats (*M5S*, *Fare per Femmare il Declino*, and *Rivoluzione Civile*). Also in this case, high volatility in the electoral arena is reflected in a higher volatility in the parliamentary one (44% to 40%), but the party innovation was not as strong: electoral innovation was 40% but it was only 26% in the parliamentary arena. This happened because the PD, an existing party, secured the bonus,

leaving fewer seats to the new parties. For the 2018 election, the recently introduced ‘mixed’ electoral formula (the Rosatellum) continued to produce significant disproportional effects. Volatility in the parliamentary arena was also high in this election (42%) and higher than in the electoral one. This demonstrates that the 2013 election was far from shaping a new stable party system in the parliamentary arena. On the contrary, the innovation caused by successful new parties was very limited: only 2.6% of seats was conquered by new lists (see Table 4.2).

Moving on to the analysis of the governmental arena, we see that volatility and innovation show interesting results. Table 3 presents the scores of governmental volatility for the 65 governments of the Italian Republican period, together with additional information on the government (party of the prime minister, cabinet size and share of ministers between technocratic or independent ministers, new parties and established parties). Figure 4.1 shows graphically the trend of governmental volatility, and Table 4.4 presents detailed information on governmental innovation.

Table 4.3. Governmental composition and volatility, 1953–2018

| Year | Legisla- ture | Govern- ment | Party of Prime Minister | Cabinet size | Techno- cratic & independent ministers | Ministers from new parties | Minis- ters from existing parties | Govern- mental volatility |
|------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|---|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| 1953 | 2 | Pella | DC | 19 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 0% |
| 1954 | 2 | Fanfani I | DC | 19 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 0% |
| 1954 | 2 | Scelba | DC | 21 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 28.6% |
| 1955 | 2 | Segni I | DC | 21 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 0% |
| 1957 | 2 | Zoli | DC | 21 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 28.6% |
| 1958 | 3 | Fanfani II | DC | 22 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 18.2% |
| 1959 | 3 | Segni II | DC | 24 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 18.2% |
| 1960 | 3 | Tambroni | DC | 23 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 0% |
| 1960 | 3 | Fanfani III | DC | 23 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 0% |
| 1962 | 3 | Fanfani IV | DC | 24 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 12.5% |
| 1963 | 4 | Leone I | DC | 20 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 12.5% |
| 1963 | 4 | Moro I | DC | 24 | 0% | 16.7% | 83.3% | 37.5% |
| 1964 | 4 | Moro II | DC | 24 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 4.2% |
| 1966 | 4 | Moro III | DC | 23 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 8.0% |
| 1968 | 5 | Leone II | DC | 22 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 34.8% |
| 1968 | 5 | Rumor I | DC | 25 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 16.0% |

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|---------------|--------------|----|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1969 | 5 | Rumor II | DC | 23 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 16.0% |
| 1970 | 5 | Rumor III | DC | 26 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 34.6% |
| 1970 | 5 | Colombo | DC | 26 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 3.8% |
| 1972 | 5 | Andreotti I | DC | 25 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 38.5% |
| 1972 | 6 | Andreotti II | DC | 27 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 29.6% |
| 1973 | 6 | Rumor IV | DC | 29 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 27.6% |
| 1974 | 6 | Rumor V | DC | 26 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 6.9% |
| 1974 | 6 | Moro IV | DC | 25 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 38.5% |
| 1976 | 6 | Moro V | DC | 22 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 20% |
| 1976 | 7 | Andreotti III | DC | 21 | 4.8% | 0% | 95.2% | 4.8% |
| 1978 | 7 | Andreotti IV | DC | 22 | 4.5% | 0% | 95.5% | 0.2% |
| 1979 | 7 | Andreotti V | DC | 22 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 22.7% |
| 1979 | 8 | Cossiga I | DC | 25 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 16.0% |
| 1980 | 8 | Cossiga II | DC | 27 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 44.4% |
| 1980 | 8 | Forlani | DC | 27 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 11.1% |
| 1981 | 8 | Spadolini | PRI | 28 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 5.3% |
| 1982 | 8 | Spadolini II | PRI | 28 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 0% |
| 1982 | 8 | Fanfani V | DC | 28 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 10.7% |
| 1983 | 9 | Craxi I | PSI | 29 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 12.1% |
| 1986 | 9 | Craxi II | PSI | 29 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 0% |
| 1987 | 9 | Fanfani VI | DC | 26 | 23.1% | 0% | 76.9% | 48.3% |
| 1987 | 10 | Goria | DC | 30 | 3.3% | 0% | 96.7% | 46.7% |
| 1988 | 10 | De Mita | DC | 31 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 4.0% |
| 1989 | 10 | Andreotti VI | DC | 31 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 3.2% |
| 1991 | 10 | Andreotti VII | DC | 32 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 10.1% |
| 1992 | 11 | Amato I | PSI | 26 | 7.7% | 0% | 92.3% | 10.6% |
| 1993 | 11 | Ciampi | Technocratic | 28 | 32.1% | 14.3% | 53.6% | 38.7% |
| 1994 | 12 | Berlusconi I | FI | 26 | 7.7% | 76.9% | 15.4% | 76.9% |

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|-------------------|-------------------|----|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1995 | 12 | Dini | Techno- cratic | 25 | 100% | 0% | 0% | 92.3% |
| 1996 | 13 | Prodi I | Ulivo / Indep. | 24 | 20.8% | 12.5% | 66.7% | 79.2% |
| 1998 | 13 | D'Alema I | DS | 26 | 11.5% | 7.7% | 80.8% | 33.3% |
| 1999 | 13 | D'Alema II | DS | 27 | 7.4% | 7.4% | 85.2% | 16.2% |
| 2000 | 13 | Amato II | Techno- cratic | 25 | 12.0% | 0% | 88.0% | 13.8% |
| 2001 | 14 | Berlusconi II | FI | 24 | 12.5% | 0% | 87.5% | 79.7% |
| 2005 | 14 | Berlusconi III | FI | 25 | 4.0% | 0% | 96.0% | 19.0% |
| 2006 | 15 | Prodi II | Ulivo / Indep. | 27 | 14.8% | 11.1% | 74.1% | 82.1% |
| 2008 | 16 | Berlusconi IV | PDL | 25 | 4.0% | 0% | 96.0% | 94.1% |
| 2011 | 16 | Monti | Techno- cratic | 20 | 100% | 0% | 0% | 96.0% |
| 2013 | 17 | Letta | PD | 22 | 13.6% | 4.5% | 81.8% | 86.4% |
| 2014 | 17 | Renzi | PD | 17 | 11.8% | 0% | 88.2% | 19.3% |
| 2016 | 17 | Gentiloni | PD | 19 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 19.5% |
| 2018 | 18 | Conte | Inde- pendent | 19 | 31.6% | 42.1% | 26.3% | 100% |

Source: authors' own elaboration

First of all, it is worth noting that until 1994 total volatility (the change in ministers representing different parties) was constantly below 50%: the majority of ministers always came from the DC. Volatility was due to the change of quotas between the parties in the governing coalition: four parties of the 'centrist' formula (other than the DC, also PLI, PSDI and PRI) between 1948 and 1963, and four during the 'centre-left' experience (with the PSI replacing the PLI in the governmental coalition), and the five in the 'pentapartito' period (DC, PSI, PLI, PSDI and PRI) between 1981 and 1993. Volatility in the governmental arena did not reflect electoral or parliamentary volatilities nor the transition from one governmental formula to another, but rather the relationships between parliamentary parties. The transition phases were characterized by 'monochrome' DC-led or centrist executives with the external support (without direct ministerial participation) of parties officially in the opposition. This was the

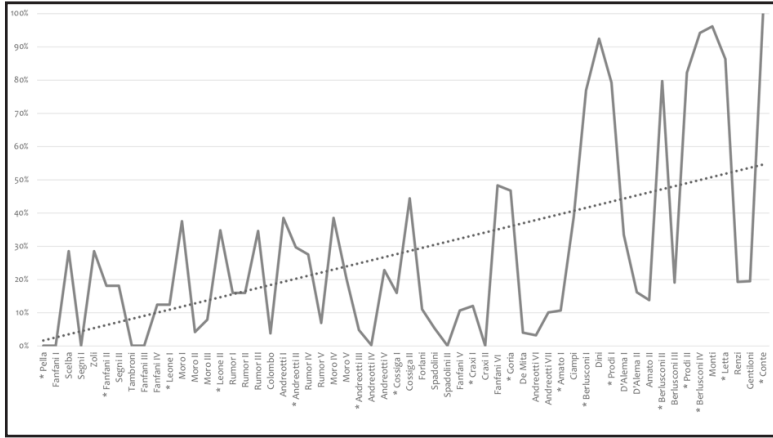
case when the MSI and the monarchists supported the Tambroni executive in 1960, when the socialists supported the Fanfani IV executive in 1962 and the communists supported the Andreotti III executive in 1976. These experiments were clear attempts to enlarge the governmental coalition at a later stage. This happened with the entry of the PSI in the first 'centre-left' cabinet in 1963, which is also the only case of innovation that happened in the governmental arena before 1993. Note as well that from 1948 until 1981, every Italian prime minister was a Christian Democrat. This informal rule was broken in 1981, when the Republican Giovanni Spadolini became prime minister and again in 1983, when it was the time for the Socialist leader Bettino Craxi (Ignazi 1997).

In 1992, following Mani Pulite, it became necessary to form a new executive, led by a non-politician and supported by the largest possible coalition. For that reason, in the Ciampi cabinet there were significant changes. For the first time two new parties, the PDS and the Greens, obtained ministerial offices: four ministers out of 28 belonged to new parties. However, this historical event had no practical consequences, because already the day after the government had sworn in, 4 May 1993, the PDS and the Greens withdrew their ministers from the cabinet, as a form of protest because the Chamber of Deputies voted against the opening of a judicial investigation of Bettino Craxi.

The watershed elections of 1994 show striking results for both indicators. For the first time, volatility reached values higher than 50%. For governmental innovation, it was even more pronounced and reached the highest peak ever (76.9%), because the three main parties forming the governing coalition had never been in power before (FI, LN and AN). Volatility was very high also in 1995, as this was a non-partisan government vis à vis the almost complete absence of technocratic ministers of the previous cabinet (McDonnell and Valbruzzi 2014). As Figure 4.1 shows, volatility keeps growing during the late 1990s–early 2010s period, consistent with the alternation of power between centre-left and centre-right. If we ignore the intra-legislature government reshufflings,⁹ volatility grew continuously over this whole period (Prodi I: 79.9%; Berlusconi I: 79.67%; 2006: Prodi II: 82.1%; Berlusconi II: 94.1%) until Letta in 2013, when it again fell below 90% (86.2%).

9 For the technocrat-led governments Dini and Monti, formed after political governments, volatility is higher than 50%.

Figure 14.1. Governmental volatility, 1948–2018



Note: governments indicated with an asterisk are formed after a general election, at the beginning of a new legislature. Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The 2018 Conte government—the first such case in Republican history—shows total volatility (100%). In fact, through the past every executive had at least some ministers belonging to parties that had been in office in the previous cabinet.¹⁰ Today, there is a total rupture with the past. If volatility is extraordinarily high, innovation is relatively low, as the yellow–green cabinet has a number of technocratic ministers, and the ‘nationalized’ Lega had already been in power in 1994, 2001 and 2008. Therefore, only the eight ministers from the M5S count for the measure of governmental innovation.

Table 4.4. Governmental innovation, 1953–2018

| Year | Government | Party of Prime Minister | Ministers from new parties |
|------|------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1953 | Pella | DC | |
| 1954 | Fanfani I | DC | |
| 1954 | Scelba | DC | |
| 1955 | Segni I | DC | |

10 Most notably, politicians from centrist parties, a legacy of the long run of DC-centred cabinets.

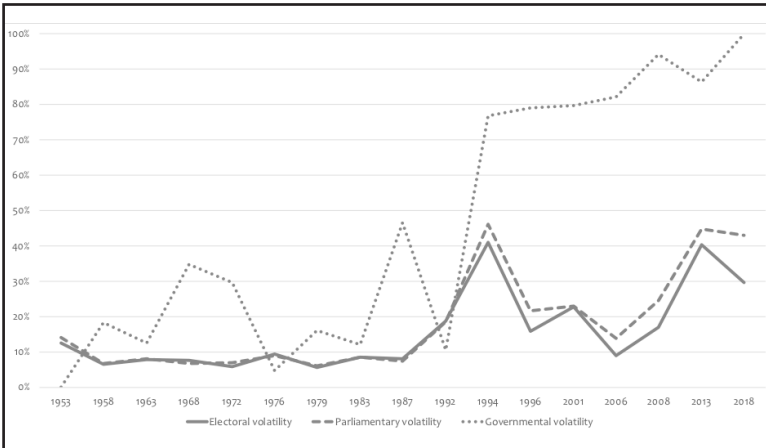
| | | | |
|------|---------------|-----|--|
| 1957 | Zoli | DC | |
| 1958 | Fanfani II | DC | |
| 1959 | Segni II | DC | |
| 1960 | Tambroni | DC | |
| 1960 | Fanfani III | DC | |
| 1962 | Fanfani IV | DC | |
| 1963 | Leone I | DC | |
| 1963 | Moro I | DC | 4 Antonio Giolitti, Giovanni Pieraccini, Giacomo Mancini, Achille Corona (PSI) |
| 1964 | Moro II | DC | |
| 1966 | Moro III | DC | |
| 1968 | Leone II | DC | |
| 1968 | Rumor I | DC | |
| 1969 | Rumor II | DC | |
| 1970 | Rumor III | DC | |
| 1970 | Colombo | DC | |
| 1972 | Andreotti I | DC | |
| 1972 | Andreotti II | DC | |
| 1973 | Rumor IV | DC | |
| 1974 | Rumor V | DC | |
| 1974 | Moro IV | DC | |
| 1976 | Moro V | DC | |
| 1976 | Andreotti III | DC | |
| 1978 | Andreotti IV | DC | |
| 1979 | Andreotti V | DC | |
| 1979 | Cossiga I | DC | |
| 1980 | Cossiga II | DC | |
| 1980 | Forlani | DC | |
| 1981 | Spadolini | PRI | |
| 1982 | Spadolini II | PRI | |
| 1982 | Fanfani V | DC | |
| 1983 | Craxi I | PSI | |

| | | | | |
|------|----------------|----------------|----|--|
| 1986 | Craxi II | PSI | | |
| 1987 | Fanfani VI | DC | | |
| 1987 | Goria | DC | | |
| 1988 | De Mita | DC | | |
| 1989 | Andreotti VI | DC | | |
| 1991 | Andreotti VII | DC | | |
| 1992 | Amato I | PSI | | |
| 1993 | Ciampi | Technocratic | 4 | Francesco Rutelli (Verdi), Vincenzo Visco, Luigi Berlinguer, Augusto Barbera (PDS) |
| 1994 | Berlusconi I | FI | 20 | Ministers from Forza Italia, Lega Nord, Alleanza Nazionale. |
| 1995 | Dini | Technocratic | | |
| 1996 | Prodi I | Ulivo / Indep. | 3 | Lamberto Dini, Augusto Fantozzi, Tiziano Treu (Rinnovamento Italiano) |
| 1998 | D'Alema I | DS | 2 | Oliviero Diliberto, Katia Belillo (PdCI) |
| 1999 | D'Alema II | DS | 2 | Agazio Loiero, Salvatore Cardinale (UDEUR) |
| 2000 | Amato II | Technocratic | | |
| 2001 | Berlusconi II | FI | | |
| 2005 | Berlusconi III | FI | | |
| 2006 | Prodi II | Ulivo / Indep. | 3 | Antonio di Pietro (IdV), Paolo Ferrero (PRC), Emma Bonino (RI) |
| 2008 | Berlusconi IV | PDL | | |
| 2011 | Monti | Technocratic | | |
| 2013 | Letta | PD | 1 | Enzo Moavero Milanesi (SC) |
| 2014 | Renzi | PD | | |
| 2016 | Gentiloni | PD | | |
| 2018 | Conte | Independent | 8 | Ministers from M5S |

Source: authors' own elaboration

So far, we have analysed the innovation and volatility of the Italian party system separately for the three functional arenas. However, a number of insights comes from comparing these two characteristics in the three arenas together. As shown by Figure 4.2, there is a clear-cut division in the three arenas between the pre- and post-1994 periods. In the long period between 1953 and 1993, electoral and parliamentary volatility never exceeded 10%, and consistent with what one would expect in a pure proportional system, these two indicators produced virtually identical scores. Governmental volatility, on the other hand, has a more undulating trend, showing high peaks and low troughs, but never reaching 50%.

Figure 4.2. Party system volatility in the three arenas, 1953–2018

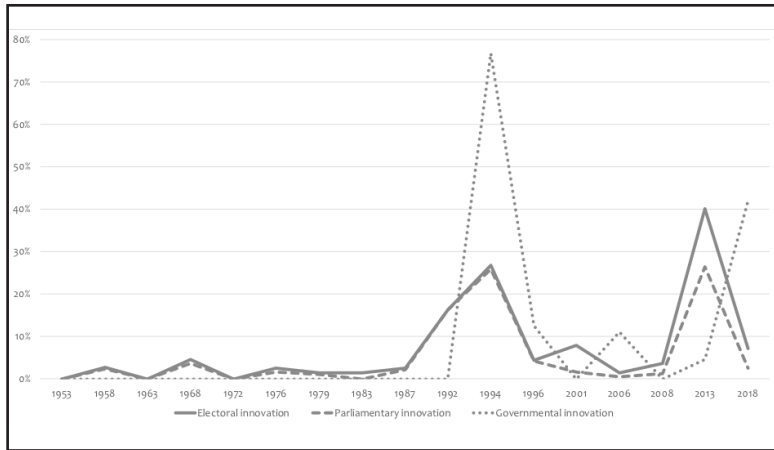


Note: only governments formed after new elections are considered. Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The election of 1992 showed some preliminary signs of disruption. Both electoral and parliamentary volatility showed—at that time—the highest value since 1953, close to 20%, while governmental volatility was still low. After 1994 then, electoral and parliamentary volatility show a much different and wavier pattern—they reached peaks of over 40%, but also shrank back to levels close to 10% (in 2006). Yet again, the biggest pre- and post-1994 difference lies in governmental volatility—in the first period, never above 50% and then consistently over 75% in the second. It is also worth noting how, under the mixed proportional-majoritarian systems (Mattarellum and Rosatellum) and the majority bonus proportional system (Porcellum), the results of electoral and parliamentary vol-

atility have tended to diverge much more than under the previous proportional system. The current Rosatellum, in particular, is the electoral system that so far has led to the biggest discrepancy between the two volatilities: around 13%.¹¹ This is another element of novelty of the election of 2018, a moment of substantial halt in respect to the previous setting not only for the already mentioned full governmental volatility.

Figure 4.3. Party system innovation in the three arenas, 1953–2018



Note: only governments formed after new elections are considered. Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Additional insights come from the comparative analysis of innovation in the three arenas. Here, more than volatility, we can appreciate how 1994 and the two-stage process across 2013–2018 were indeed moments of epochal change in the Italian party system. If we exclude these occasions, the index of innovation in all the three arenas never exceeds 12%. In 1994, the result of new parties amongst the electorate and in the parliament (notably FI), led to a government where 77% of ministers belonged to new parties. Between 1996 and 2008, the years of bipolarism, these indexes returned to moderate levels. In 2013, the indexes of electoral and parliamentary innovation mark the first stage of the political ‘earthquake’ (Chiaromonte and Emanuele 2014). Mainly because of the exploits of

11 In 2018, the parliamentary volatility scores is about 29% while the electoral volatility scores around 42%.

the populist M5S,¹² electoral innovation in 2013 was, in fact, the highest in the entire period of Italian Republican history (40%)—indeed, much higher than in the next-most volatile case, in 1994 (25%). However, due to the bonus attributed under the Porcellum electoral law—which favoured the winning centre–left coalition—parliamentary innovation was limited to about 25%, approximately the same score as recorded in 1994. If these effects, then, were not perceived in the governmental arena, with the formation of the continuity-oriented Letta cabinet characterized by extremely low governmental innovation, they would concern this arena as well five years later, when the ‘aftershock’ laid waste to the electoral landscape. Despite the Lega having already been in power, and the surprisingly high number of technocratic ministers, the Conte government is, indeed, the second most innovative government since 1953. Therefore, if 1994 was a single moment of transition from one-party system to another, in the 2010s the passage occurred in bursts with the new system taking five years to fully take shape.

Conclusions

This study has analysed the nature of the shift in the the Italian party system after the 2018 election. The impression of a significant change is widespread and the present chapter has sought to assess empirically the degree of this change. Thanks to the historical analysis of the indexes of party volatility and innovation in the electoral, parliamentary and governmental arenas, we have indicated that the party system in all three arenas was considerably stable in the period 1953–1992. The seismic sensors of the Italian party system went haywire in 1994, when both indicators skyrocketed at the same moment across all three arenas. Something different happened at the 2018 general elections. In fact, on this occasion, the volatility index reached new maximal levels only in the governmental arena, as volatility in the other two arenas is lower in 2018 than was the case in 2013. Most importantly, the innovation index of the 2018 election, very high for the governmental arena, is relatively low for the electoral and the parliamentary ones. For this indicator too, the crucial moment of change has been the 2013 election.

12 But not only the M5S. We saw in 2013 the highest number of new parties emerge (five in total). In addition to M5S, Sinistra, Ecologia e Libertà, Fratelli d'Italia, Scelta Civica and Fare per Fermare il Declino each took at least 1% of the votes at this election.

Therefore, at least two differences can be registered between the two reshaping events of the Italian party system. The first is that the 1990s shift was instant, at the 1994 election, whereby the alliances of political parties (the forging of the electoral blocs) and the modification of the electoral system, rather than the voting behaviour of citizens, had an impact on the transformation of the party system in all three functional arenas. In contrast, the change of 2013 was mostly a consequence of the voters' strategies—since the electoral formula and the electoral alliances did not change. The change in voting behaviour, however, was enough to modify the electoral and the parliamentary faces of the Italian party system. But the variation in the governmental arena happened only with the 'aftershock' in 2018, when a new change in voters' behaviour—but not of alliance strategy—ran in parallel with the introduction of a new electoral formula. Thus, we must conclude that a party system transition that was instant in 1994 has taken two elections (five years) to pan out fully in the present moment. For the first transformation of the party system, a single transition event was sufficient. For the second, two different occasions were necessary. However, we do not know yet if this could be interpreted as the passage toward a new, 'Third Republic,' as has already been posited by some commentators. After all, it is still questionable whether the 1993 events truly embodied a transition in the Republic itself, from 'first' to 'second' rather than a transition in the Republic's party system (which is more certain). In any case, only after the next election—if volatility and innovation in the three arenas reduces substantially—will we be able to affirm that the Italian Republic has acquired a new party system. Such a system would then be fully consolidated in all the three different functional arenas, and we could safely call it the 'third party system' of the Italian Republic, if not a 'Third Republic'.

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CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

LAUNCH CONFERENCE “2017: EUROPE’S BUMPER YEAR OF ELECTIONS”

8-9 March 2018, Theatre, Badia Fiesolana

INTRODUCTION

Europe’s wave of key 2017 elections kicked off with the Netherlands’ general election in March, when citizens cast their votes for the members of the Dutch parliament. France followed, with its first round of the presidential election in April, and the second round in May. In September, Germany voted for its Chancellor. Austrian, Romanian and UK citizens also went to the polls during this turbulent year. This conference alternates between a series of country-specific and thematic election panels, devoted to specific elements that characterised the political and electoral scenario of 2017. A roundtable, focusing on the outlook for the 2019 European elections, concludes this two-day launch conference of the newly established [European Governance and Politics Programme](#) (EGPP).

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

8 March

- 08.45 - 9.00 Welcome coffee
- 09.00 - 9.15 Introduction
Renaud Dehousse | European University Institute
Brigid Laffan | European University Institute
- 09.15 - 11.00 Panel I – Electoral competition, Euroscepticism and Populism
 Chair and discussant: **Liesbet Hooghe** | University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Catherine de Vries | University of Essex
Hanspeter Kriesi & Swen Hutter | European University Institute
Argyrios Altiparmakis | European University Institute
- 11.00 - 11.30 Coffee break
- 11.30 - 13.00 Panel II – French Elections
 Chair and discussant: **Yves Mény** | Sant'Anna School for Advanced Studies
Martial Foucault | Science Po Paris
Romain Lachat | Science Po Paris
Elie Michel | University of Neuchâtel
- 13.00 - 14.00 Lunch
- 14.00 - 16.00 Panel III – German Elections and Government Formation
 Chair and discussant: **Thomas Poguntke** | Heinrich-Heine University of Düsseldorf
Edgar Grande | Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich
Marc Debus | University of Mannheim
Julia Schulte-Cloos | European University Institute
Ferdinand Müller-Rommel | Leuphana University of Lüneburg
- 16.00 - 16.30 Coffee Break

- 16.30 - 18.00 Panel IV – Political Developments and Emerging Party Trends in Europe
Chair and discussant: **Hanspeter Kriesi** | European University Institute
Liesbet Hooghe & Gary Marks | University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Thomas Poguntke | Heinrich-Heine University of Düsseldorf
- 18.00 - 19.15 Cocktail
- 19.15 - 19.30 The outcome of Italian 2018 elections
Stefano Bartolini | European University Institute
- 19.15 - 21.00 Dinner
- 9 March**
- 09.00 - 10.30 Panel V – Austrian and Romanian Elections
Chair and discussant: **Rainer Bauböck** | European University Institute
Wolfgang C. Müller | University of Vienna
Manès Weisskircher | TU Dresden and European University Institute
Endre Borbath | European University Institute
- 10.30 - 11.00 Coffee break
- 11.00 - 12.00 Panel VI – UK Elections
Chair and discussant: **Tim Oliver** | European University Institute
James Dennison | European University Institute
Richard Rose | University of Strathclyde and European University Institute
- 12.00 - 13.00 Panel VII – Dutch Elections
Chair and discussant: **Catherine de Vries** | University of Essex
Mathilde van Ditmars | Leiden University
Joost van Spanje | University of Amsterdam
- 13.00 - 14.00 Lunch

- 14.00 - 15.30 Roundtable – Towards the 2019 European Elections
Moderator: **Brigid Laffan** | European University Institute
Brian Synnott | European Commission
Stephen Clark | European Parliament
Ryan Heath | Politico
Lorenzo Cicchi | European University Institute
- 15.30 - 16.15 Conclusions and next steps

This book contains a selection of papers
presented at the conference
“**2017: Europe’s Bumper Year of Elections**”,
which was held at the EUI in Florence, Italy, on 8-9 March 2018.

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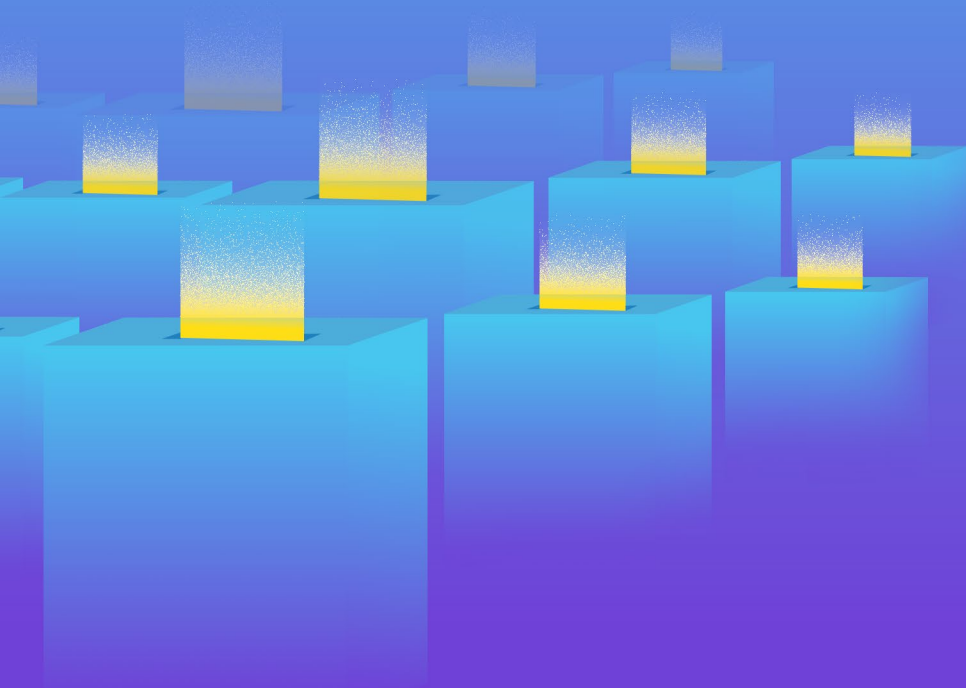
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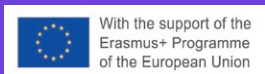
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