

These the past years, the radical right have become important players when analysing citizens' political participation. As there are several possibilities for citizens to take part in the political process - the decisive challenge is to clarify which activities are included in the concept. Following @verba1995voice, most researchers define it as an "activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action - either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies" [@brady1995beyond, p. 38]. Political participation helps governments to recognize what needs and attitudes people across the country have. These are typically acquired through several methods such as voting, campaigning or political debating guaranteeing that citizens input possibilities [@blais2010political].

As most representative democracies are built upon electoral processes, voting in elections is the most common practice of citizen political engagement. Elections are considered an important source of legitimisation as representatives only receive citizens' support if these are satisfied with the outcomes of the system [@easton1965systems, @buhl06]. Electoral outcomes define who operates government activities and who makes public policies. Citizens ability to vote different representatives at the next election is an ultimate instrument of power. Indeed, such competitive nature within the political system strengthens debates on government, policies and potential policy-makers between citizens and elites [@blais2010political]. Eventually, citizens vote for the party with which they agree the most.

Early studies indicate that while most elaborated parties are known for their wide-ranging agenda on several political issues, most right-wing parties are characterised as alliances solely focussing on immigration attitudes [@husbands1988dynamics; @eatwell1998dynamics]. Further studies indicate that broader ideological aspects are more important when explaining right-wing voting [@van2000anti; @husbands2013racial]. Moreover, positions of parties and voters on policy issues are mainly defined by left-right ideology [@van2000anti].

Indeed

Since several scholars stressed the importance of the mediating role of socio-political attitudes (e.g. Kitschelt, 1995; Van der Brug et al., 2000), we connect the 'who' and 'why' question of radical right-wing voting. The question of why lower social strata and disintegrated categories are more likely to vote for a radical right-wing party is explained by four clusters of socio-political attitudes: anti-immigrant attitudes, favourable in-group attitudes, authoritarian attitudes and political dissatisfaction (e.g. Billiet and De Witte, 1995; Mudde, 2007). To these explanations we propose to add euro-scepticism, to properly test its additional effect. We first briefly discuss the classic explanations, after which we elaborate on the role of euro-scepticism on radical right-wing voting.

## Individual-level Explanations

### Political Trust & External Efficacy

These past 10 years, the enhancing trend of voting for right-wing parties was often studied in connection to the Great Recession. Worsened economic conditions across most European countries as well as an extreme political crisis resulted and left their marks [@bosco2012electoral]. In response, supranational institutions pressured national governments to implement severe methods in order to face the sovereign debt crisis. Such developments quickly lead to the perception that political elites are more eager to please external demands than those of their own citizens [@armingeon2014democracy]. Indeed, recent events have shown that a large number of citizens are hesitant to encourage European integration. Several parties express euro-criticism and successfully mobilize national identity considerations against the European Union [@de2009taking; @hooghe2005calculation; @lubbers2008regarding]. These parties see the EU as a threat to the sovereignty of the nation state [@mudde2007populist].

Simultaneously political trust towards parties and politicians has been declining, especially in Eastern and Southern Europe [@torcal2014decline]. Citizens have started to distrust the political processes, are not convinced by the system of representative democracy and are turning more and more to populist parties [@serani2016]. While the political system is characterised as working against the common good, established

parties and single elites are often accused of being incompetent, ignorant and selfish [taggart2000populism]. Populists not only despise the political system itself, but also the economic, media and cultural elite. These are often described as one corrupt group neglecting citizens' attitudes and wishes towards political policies [abedi2004anti; mudde2017populism]. Anti-elitism is therefore one of the most obvious traits of right-wing parties and nurtures the increase of right-wing voters [meny2002constitutive].

Next to trust in parties correlating to the satisfaction with the democratic process and democracy itself, dalton2005public investigate its impact on electoral behaviour. Drawn from 'reward-punishment'-theories, further researchers find that voters judge parties and vote accordingly (fiorina2002parties; dalton2005public; dassonneville2012electoral). They use their democratic rights to punish established parties by voting right-wing. The 'political disaffection'-theory highlights institutional disaffection. Next to institutional confidence, external political efficacy is the main determinant of institutional disaffection [dassonneville2012electoral]. When citizens believe that their efforts such as voting and debating can impact politics, they are more likely to participate. External efficacy is defined through one's certainty in the responsiveness and openness of government authorities and institutions [easton1965systems]. Citizens with low levels in political trust and external efficacy feel neglected by the political sphere, are more volatile in their party preferences as well as vote choices and are therefore interested in changing the players of the political arena by voting for an anti-system party [dassonneville2012electoral]. We expect these citizens to be more drawn to right-wing parties which prioritise the lack of transparency and commitment towards the nation.

**Hypothesis 1: Citizens with low levels of political trust are more likely to vote for a right-wing party.**

## Economic Deprivation

In order to determine the success of right-wing parties, several studies have highlighted the analysis of economic conditions. Often, the macro variable unemployment is used in order to analyse economic deprivation. However, since positive [jackman1996conditions] as well as negative effects [jesuit2004immigration] are found, the true impact of unemployment remains uncertain. Next to unemployment, further studies analyse the impact of micro variables such as education, religiosity and age. They illustrate how voters from lower social classes as well as voters with lower social strata experience more disintegration than others and therefore are more likely to vote for a right-wing party. It turns out that young, non-religious citizens with poorer education have a higher likelihood to vote for right-wing parties [lubbers2002extreme]. Research based on the ethnic competition theory shows that "[...] ethnic groups sharing similar economic interests are in competition for scarce resources, which induces perceived ethnic threat and intergroup antagonistic attitudes" [coffe2007fertile, p. 185]. A great amount of ethnic groups are located in low labour sectors. Within such sectors, the unemployment rate tends to be higher and the frustration with one's social strata increases. As these citizens are more likely to come across scarcity, poverty and social exclusion, they turn to political authorities who emphasize the power of traditional norms. Citizens from lower classes are therefore less satisfied with their socio-economic position, perceive more ethnic threat and consequently turn to parties which promise policies of exclusion [lubbers2002extreme; coffe2007fertile].

**Hypothesis 2: Citizens who feel economic deprivation in their socio-economic position are more likely to vote for a right-wing party.**

Similar to the competition for scarce resources, the fear of cultural resource loss is identified as determinant for anti-immigrant attitudes. The associated hostility to minorities is claimed to have a greater impact on right-wing voting than economic deprivation. They feel directly threatened by ethnic minorities (norris2005radical; gijssberts2010). Indeed, empirical results show that concerns about group identity can outweigh poor economic conditions [sniderman2004predisposing]. Latest immigrant and asylum rates show that the number of foreigners outside the EU searching for sanctuary has risen drastically these past years and several European countries were not prepared for such cultural changes. This quickly led to controversial integration policies such as the ban of wearing religious symbols in schools. The media in turn emphasised the negative consequences of these policies [coffe2007fertile]. Right-wing parties then saw their opportunity to attract voters by blaming the government for failed integration and started to claim that foreigners are associated

to a wide range of social issues. Eventhough not all voters with concerns on immigration rate vote for right-wing parties, most right-wing voters have anti-immigration attitudes and want more restrictive policies [sniderman2004predisposing; coffe2007fertile]. In conclusion, we expect voters with cultural anti-immigrant attitudes to be more likely to vote for a radical right-wing party. We draw this back to two attributes: 1. these voters experience more cultural ethnic threat, and 2. their wishes towards immigration and asylum policies are ignored by other parties.

**Hypothesis 3: Citizens who perceive cultural ethnic treats, hold a more hostile attitudes towards minorties and are therefore more likely to vote for a right-wing party.**

Next to our main hypotheses we follow previous research by integrate political interest, income, gender, religiosity and self-assessment on the political left-right scale.

## Contextual Factors

Little research has been done on the impact of both individual- and country-level characteristics on the sucess of right-wing parties. -mehr intro- Our first approach to explain extreme right-wing voting from a macro-perspective is the observation of political factors. In existing comparative electoral participation research, most studies on participation include politico-institutional determinants [haskell2018direct]. However, we propose that such determinants have received little attention so far when testing sucess of right-wing parties.

In the age of populism, polls illustrate that a great amount of citizens are not satisfied with the concepts of checks and balances as well as federalism as they tend to limit parties in their action. Consequently, governments are too distant from and unresponsive to the concerns of the people and therefore undemocratic. In order to be closer to citizens, populists suggest more direct-base participation such as initiatives and referenda [haskell2018direct]. In order to overcome the distance between voters and the political establishment, barber2003strong suggest to implement more community-based actions. Moreover, the use of national referendum and representative citizen assemblies providing policy advice to elected officials are claimed to be effective innovations against perceptions of isolation [dahl1989democracy; phillips1996arrogant; fishkin1997voice].

Indeed, empirical results show that direct democratic institutions are becoming more popular, especially when debating about the most important public issues. As populists argue that representative institutions ignore the will of ordinary citizens, their answer to political distance is very straightforward: citizens should vote whenever possible [haskell2018direct]. Citizens who perceive political distance from the establishment demand more direct democratic institutions. Thereby, the government, parliament and parties hand over segments of competence to voters who recognise that they are “[...]in a position to decide authoritatively on important issues, independently and without recourse to members of parliament” [buhlmann2006individual, p.20]. Drawn from this previous research, we come to the conclusion that citizens from countries with greater amounts of direct democratic institutions should perceive less political distance than others and should therefore be less likely to vote for a right-wing party.

**Hypothesis 4: In countries with with greater amounts of direct democratic institutions, citizens are less likely to vote for a right-wing party.**

As previously discussed, perceived economic and cultural ethnic threats play an important role when analysing right-wing voting. One may not only expect conflict to be more severe in regions with high levels of unemployment, but also in regions where the level of immigration is high. For example on the labour market, migrants and refugees are perceived as unfair competition. Often, rising refugee rates and the sole presence of these foreigners supported with addtional state services are stressed. Since extreme right parties take advantage of these feelings of competition, the presence of immigrants may facilitate their electoral growth. A small number of studies support the fact that foreigners’ presence translates into electoral successes for extreme right.

**Hypothesis 5: In countries with higher rates of refugee population citizens are more likely to vote for a radical right-wing party.**

Following @werts2013euro, we also take the effect of modernization into account. Modernization is claimed to reflect disintegration. A well-functioning economic system nurtures positive attitudes towards the political system, conveys citizens' perception of effective participation and encourages political interest. Previous research shows that the engagement in social institutions is declining, more and more voters are deserted from social support systems and are therefore more likely to be socially isolated and vote for right-wing parties which promise to represent them.

**Hypothesis 6: In countries with higher levels of modernization citizens are more likely to vote for a radical right-wing party.**