

Radical Left Parties and the Role of Euroscepticism

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that it has not been submitted for a degree at another university. Large parts of chapter 2 of this thesis have been published in the form of an article in *Party Politics*.

Abstract

Globalization has shifted the political competition landscape in Western Europe. Extensive research has studied the impact of this on the radical right, yet little attention has been paid to the radical left. This dissertation, comprised of three papers, analyses the impact of the increased European integration emphasis on the radical left. My first paper analyses whether there is a beneficial policy position for the radical left on European integration. The chapter finds that there is an electoral benefit to a Eurosceptic position for radical left parties but also shows that this benefit is constrained when a Eurosceptic competitor, i.e. radical right party, enters the party system. My second paper follows from this and examines an alternative approach for the radical left on European integration. While the benefit of a Eurosceptic position can be constrained, blurring the position on European integration can help avoid losing pro-EU voters. The chapter finds that position blurring on EU integration is beneficial when there is electorate polarization but harmful when the electorate is in consensus on EU integration. When there is consensus, radical left parties benefit from a clear position on EU integration. My third paper is co-authored with Royce Carroll and zooms into the findings of the first two chapters by examining the demand side of Euroscepticism. The paper finds that European integration is an important issue for vote choice of the electorate. The results of the chapter show that the more Eurosceptic voters are, the higher their propensity to vote for a radical left party becomes.

These three papers demonstrate how the issue of European integration is in the centre of radical left strategy from a supply and demand side perspective. This thesis contributes to the literature by providing a detailed understanding of the success of small parties beyond their issue ownership.

1. Introduction

In 2008, the global financial crash sparked protests around the world; trust in banks and political institutions, like the European Union, declined rapidly. This earthquake moment politicized many people¹ and fundamentally changed the public's perception of globalisation; now austerity and the 'losers' of globalization were shifting into the focus (Kriesi et al 2008). The global financial crisis of 2008 was famously proclaimed by Joseph Stiglitz as marking "the end of neoliberalism" and by Chavez as "the crisis [that] could be the end of capitalism". Thus, this seemed like the perfect opportunity for the radical left party family (RLPs), who had been advocating against capitalism for over a century, to gain influence (March 2011). However, fast forward a few years, we cannot find radical left parties in governments; on the contrary, radical right parties have entered almost all parliaments (and some governments) in Western Europe. Notable exceptions aside, "the right is winning the [globalization] crisis" and has become a political, ideological and cultural home for those 'left behind' who have felt unrepresented by elites, society and politics in recent years (Marquand 2010; Diez Medrano 2003; Hooghe & Marks 2004).

Though in recent years, research and popular culture have been increasingly fascinated with the rise of radical right parties and the decline of social democracy, a party family that should not be ignored in this context is the radical left party family. A key reason to why the attention on radical left parties has been less extensive thus far is mainly due to their limited and sporadic successes. Although they are not reporting the same overall increases in vote shares as the radical right, or sudden drops in membership, like the mainstream left, radical left parties play a fundamental role in party competition in Western Europe. A common perspective that has

¹ The financial crisis first got me interested in politics at the age of thirteen. As I submit this thesis, I have spent half my life curious of how radical left parties could gain more success. As in all research, this thesis has answered some and asked new questions, which I am hoping to address in future research.

been attributed to the decline of social democracy has been the idea that the voters have stopped voting for centre left parties and that instead, the radical right has become an attractive new home (Kitschelt and McGann 1997; Hutter and Kriesi 2013; Mudde 2016). The aftermath of the financial crisis was tainted with new regulations which, especially in Southern Europe but not exclusively, were seen as harsh, specifically by those who have been conceptualised as “losers of globalisation” (Kriesi et al 2008). This group is understood as people who experience an objective or perceived decrease in their standard of living due to the effects of globalization. People affected by globalization go beyond the traditional class cleavage; they could not find a political home in the social democratic camp, which had been advocating in favour of globalization through the Third Way in the late 1990s and the early 2000s (Chiocchetti 2018). During the 2008 financial crisis, many social democratic parties were in government (Holmes and Roder 2019). The losers of globalisation would traditionally vote for social democratic parties and have now felt abandoned through austerity measures introduced by centre left parties. Though these dissatisfied voters have found an outlet in the radical right, the story does not seem as clear from a spatial perspective. How come the dissatisfied voters did not turn to the radical left? This story is more complex than the left-right economic dimension. On top of an economic dimension in which parties are competing, a cultural dimension has become salient.

Over the past two decades, Western Europe has experienced a substantial rise in the salience of nationalist non-economic issues such as immigration and EU integration. Non-economic issues are shifting to the main stage of elections (Dalton 2002; De Vries 2018; Hooghe et al 2002; Inglehart 1990; Kitschelt 1999; Kriesi et al 2006; Kriesi et al 2008). As cultural issues have become more prominent and salient, parties have been struggling to align themselves with their potential voters. At times, parties and voters find themselves incongruent with their cultural preferences but aligned with their traditional left-right economic positions. The radical left is

experiencing this dilemma. Though they have a clear position on the economic dimension, a lot of uncertainty surrounds the new cultural issues. One of the prominent issues of this cultural dimension is European integration. The goal of this thesis is to understand the significance of European integration for the radical left by examining the demand for and supply of a Eurosceptic left. This thesis takes a look at this through a threefold approach: success of radical left parties when taking a Eurosceptic position, blurring the radical left party position on European integration and the demand of left Euroscepticism.

1.1 What's left of the radical left?

The radical left party family has been understood in different context within the literature. This is partially due to their history and apparent 'death sentence' after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War in 1989. A frequent approach has been to analyse single case studies of RLPs (eg see Bowyer and Vail 2011; Hough et al 2007; Sperber 2010; Vail 2009). These case studies have been very helpful in trying to understand the individual country RLPs and their context. A few scholars also compared several RLPs (see Botella and Ramiro 2003; Bull 1995; Hudson 2012) and only in 2011 the first comparative study was published (March 2011). This has helped to understand the nature of this party family, although March (2011) has strengthened the assumptions that RLPs are incredibly diverse party family and need to be grouped into subgroups. It is important to acknowledge that some RLPs are anti-system parties, and others have a more liberal agenda (March and Rommerskirchen 2015). Although a subsection of this literature pays a lot of attention to the historical-institutional cases in which RLPs have very diverse environments (Backes and Moreau 2008; Hudson 2012), the pan-European alliances and other international networks which RLPs have created in the past decades clearly show that not only can the parties work together and thus, might not be as diverse (or the historical difference does not affect their ability to make policy decisions).

Certainly, RLPs provide several nuances but, crucially, RLPs can be grouped and defined through their strong ideological stance on redistribution and emphasis on economic issues.²

1.2 Fortress or Future – European Integration and the Radical Left

As the salience of on the non-economic dimension is increasing, an important question is where radical left parties stand when it comes to issues regarding nationalism. The literature identifies no clear consensus on whether radical left parties are inherently nationalist or cosmopolitan. Some scholars have argued that fundamentally RLPs are “strongly internationalist” (Beaudonnet and Gomez 2017:321). This is in contrast to the research by Rensmann and Schoeps (2010:125) who argue that ‘anti-imperialist’ leftist parties with traditional communist backgrounds may also be in favour of not only economic but also cultural protectionism. This is echoed even more strongly by Halikiopoulou *et al* (2012:505) who argue that “nationalism is the underlying feature that united the radical right and the radical left, cross-cutting traditional alignments and mobilising support across the political spectrum”. This makes sense from a spatial perspective, as the cultural dimension is cross-cutting to the economic dimension. This, then, provides a good basis for understanding whether being more socially conservative (and thus forming more competition to radical right parties) or being more socially liberal (and thus forming competition to social democratic and green parties) is more beneficial for radical left parties.

One way of looking at nationalism is by examining attitudes on immigration. Immigration has been one of the main issues on which radical right parties have gained momentum. Some RLP supporters have anti-immigration preferences; for instance, O’Malley (2008:971) argues that

² According to Santana and Rama (2018), the globalization cleavage works in favour of RLPs in comparison to their mainstream left counterparts, as the “losers of globalization” support RLPs.

Sinn Féin’s “supporters are more likely to feel that there are already too many immigrants in Ireland”. Despite this, this research does not focus on anti-immigration issues for the radical left. Anti-immigration of the radical right is based on the ideology of protection of national culture and identity, whereas “radical left’s opposition to the opening up of borders is mainly an opposition to economic liberalization” (Kriesi *et al* 2006:928). The Greek SYRIZA still manages to appeal to their anti-immigrant voter base, as their “voters in particular adopted a more pronounced anti-immigration position than their representatives in parliament” (Karyotis, Rüdig and Judge 2014:488).³ Though studying the incongruence between some radical left parties and their voters on immigration is important, we do not find a great diversity in the RLP family on immigration. Usually, RLPs have a pro-immigration policy position, even when their cultural dimension is ambiguous.⁴ The more obvious, and less subtle, nationalism that could be vote maximising for RLPs is more likely to be found in Euroscepticism.

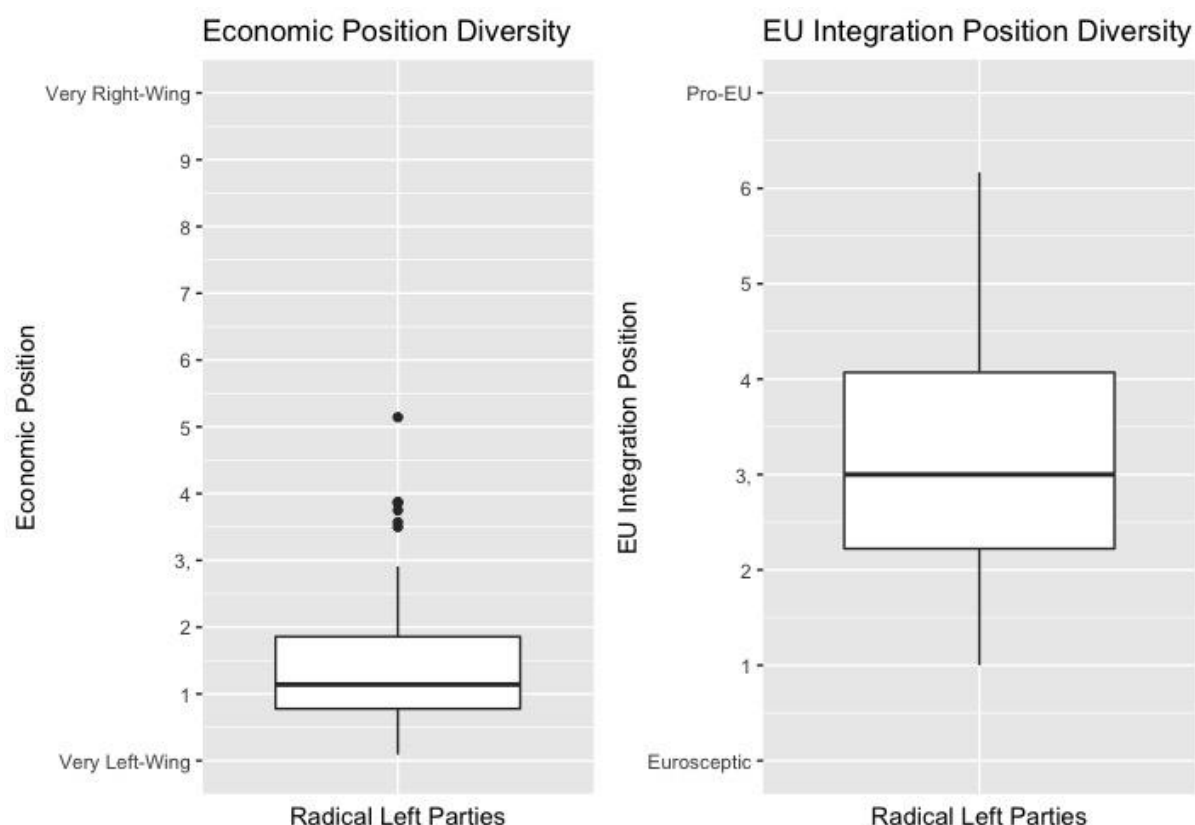
Halikiopoulou *et al* (2012:509) argue that the “key premise of any nationalism is the right of the nation to act as independent, free and sovereign”. They therefore argue that nationalism we find in RLP can translate naturally to Euroscepticism, through ‘civic nationalism’. In opposition to the radical right version of nationalism, which Halikiopoulou *et al* (2012:511) describe as ‘ethnic nationalism’, the RLP version focuses on territory and “equates class with national exploitation”. Thus, nationalism in the radical right and the radical left sense could be seen through opposition to the European Union, even if the mechanism of nationalism works differently. In general, peripheral parties are more likely to mobilize Euroscepticism as a salient issue (Taggart 1998). An example of this was found in the recent decision of the UK to leave the European Union, which was not only advocated by a right-wing campaign but also by a so-

³ The discrepancy between why these voters even choose to vote for SYRIZA in this case can arguably be found in the party and voters’ alignment on the economic left-right dimension, which is more salient in most cases.

⁴ For example, recently Hutter and Kriesi (2021) found that radical left parties position themselves on a pro-immigration stance, like the centre left.

called ‘Lexit’ movement, a left-wing Leave campaign (Guinan and Hanna 2017). Even prior to the formation of ‘Lexit’, it had been suggested that extreme right and left unite in Euroscepticism through an ‘inverted U’ (Hooghe *et al* 2002; Van der Eijk & Franklin 2004; Van Elsas and Van der Brug 2015; Visser *et al* 2014).

As European integration is regarded a multidimensional issue (Boomgaarden *et al* 2011), it has been argued that the Euroscepticism in RLPs does not come from nationalism but anti-capitalism (Hooghe and Marks 2007; Lachat 2014; Walgrave *et al* 2012). For instance, RLP opposition to the EU has been considered ‘soft Euroscepticism’ as it has been interpreted as parties being critical of the EU’s current format rather than in the idea as a whole (Szcznerbiak and Taggart 2008). However, there is some more nuance in opposition to EU integration for RLPs than simply their commitment to anti-capitalism. We know this due to the diversity on this issue within the party family. This diversity can be seen clearly in Figure 1.1 below, especially in comparison to the economic position of radical left parties. This descriptive graph shows that radical left parties are defined by their strong position on redistribution and in comparison, we can see that the party family does not have one distinct ideological position when it comes to European integration. Figure 1.1 thus gives a good indication of how distinct European integration is to the economic dimension.

Figure 1.1. RLP Party Position Diversity.

Note: Economic Position from 0-10, EU integration measured from 0-7. (Chapel Hill Expert Survey)

In the last few decades, the 2008 global financial crisis, refugee crisis and Brexit have all severely influenced how the public perceived the European Union and their own countries acting within it. Political entrepreneurs, like the radical right and left, emphasise the issue of European integration more than mainstream parties (Hobolt and De Vries 2012). This explains the increase in literature on Euroscepticism in recent years (Szczerbiak and Taggart 2017), which has been attributed to simultaneous external and internal shifts in the political landscape. While mainstream parties usually occupy pro-integration space, they do not emphasise the issue (Green-Pedersen 2012; Meijers 2017). This means that mainstream parties, such as social democratic and conservative parties, position themselves in favour of integration policy, as

most of their voters' preferences are along the pro-EU spectrum and it matches with their overall ideology.⁵

While many voters are in favour of EU integration and position themselves on the left scale of the economic continuum, Eurosceptic left-wing voters are often left out of the equation in terms of party supply. This provides an important gap, which has been shown to be prominent on a larger cultural authoritarian dimension (Hillen and Steiner 2020). This means that left-wing positions on the economy and right-wing positions on cultural issues are usually absent from the party system in Western European countries, although there is a significant number of voters that have their voting preferences in this quadrant of a two-dimensional policy spectrum (Lefkofridi, Wagner and Willmann 2014; Hillen and Steiner 2020).

While it is rather difficult as a left-wing party to be persuasive in a culturally right-wing positioning through issues like immigration⁶, opposition to the European Union can be a pathway for the voter base described above. Radical left parties may take a Eurosceptic position but are more likely to frame this Euroscepticism through economic lenses. As the economic dimension is the primary dimension of those parties, a multidimensional issue such as EU integration can be merged onto this dimension to make it more feasible with their other primary dimension position (Elias et al 2015). However, some potential voters of radical left parties are more liberal on the cultural dimension and support European integration. So, simply moving to a more Eurosceptic position may not be the best approach for radical left parties. Therefore, another way to understand a 'best practice' response of radical left parties to the increasing

⁵ The rise of radical right parties has forced other political parties to either emphasise or even shift their policy position on European integration. The increase in electoral success of Eurosceptic parties encouraged mainstream parties to adjust, causing more movement towards anti-EU positions (Meijers 2017). While radical right parties are the more powerful parties to cause such move, Eurosceptic RLPs are able to cause positional adjustment among centre left parties (Meijers 2017). The effect however, is far smaller than with their far right competitors.

⁶ For example, Helbling (2014) shows that radical left frames immigration from a social perspective, thus a culturally right-wing position is less likely to be in accordance with their framing.

interest in non-economic issues, could be through being ambiguous on certain issues. In this thesis, position taking and position blurring on European integration will be analysed through supply side perspective to examine the strategic choices radical left parties can take. The extent to which European integration actually matters for the propensity of voters voting for a radical left party will add to understanding this picture from a demand side perspective.

1.3 Contribution of the thesis

The literature on political parties and European integration is extensive and has been growing ever since the European Union moved from a bureaucratic institution to a contentious issue. The idea of left-wing Euroscepticism has been discussed, though not nearly as elaborately as right-wing Euroscepticism. This thesis takes a demand side and supply side approach to understanding how the recent changes in importance of the non-economic dimension can influence radical left parties and their voters.

The circumstance that brings people to voting for RLPs can be attributed to a lot of socio-economic factors, which RLPs stand in opposition to. March (2008) argues that RLP voters think of themselves as the 'left behind'. As unemployment is an important variable in influencing the support for RLPs (March and Rommerskirchen 2015), the feeling of being left behind can be enhanced through changes in unemployment rate. Yet, just understanding people's preferences on economic issues and their party choice is not enough to understand vote choice and the sporadic success we have witnessed in the radical left party family. This thesis uses the knowledge that we have on potential voters of radical left parties and shifts the focus to non-economic issues, specifically European integration. The thesis is the first to provide insights on position and ambiguity of radical left parties on European integration. Understanding the importance of European integration for the voter base of radical left parties,

is a crucial part of not only understanding vote choice for (or against) radical left parties but also to overall examine party competition from a multidimensional perspective. As non-economic issues gain in prominence in political party competition, we need to understand how different challenger parties⁷ compete in this sphere. This thesis is a first step in examining strategic choices of challenger parties beyond their issue ownership and the economic dimension.

On top of understanding party competition from a multidimensional perspective, this thesis contributes to the demand side literature in understanding the choices voters make based on non-economic issues. As voters are informed by an increasingly complicated political playing field, the preferences of voters beyond the left-right economic dimension contributes to their vote choices. Therefore, using issues such as European integration helps to understand why and how voters have moved from their traditional parties to challenger parties.

Lastly, this thesis is contributing to the radical left party literature by providing new empirical insights into radical left parties from a cross-sectional perspective. Two of the chapters of this thesis examine radical left parties in Western Europe using both data from the European Social Survey and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey. Through using quantitative methods, this research adds to the literature through providing insights into the general dynamics of radical left parties in Western Europe. The fourth chapter uses a single country case in order to thoroughly investigate the multidimensional space in which voters are making electoral choices. Through taking advantage of the Dutch election study between 2006 and 2017, the fourth chapter dives into the important role that the European Union plays for the propensity of voting for radical left party by using Aldrich-McKelvey scaling.

⁷ According to Hobolt and Tilley (2016:972), challenger parties can be defined as seeking “to challenge the mainstream political consensus and do not ordinarily enter government”.

1.4 Chapter Outline

I will give a brief overview of the three substantive main chapters of this dissertation before summarizing the main aims of this thesis.

The second chapter of this thesis is an article that was published in *Party Politics* and analyses whether a Eurosceptic position can be beneficial for radical left parties. The radical left party family is famously very pro-redistribution, and this is the defining feature of the radical left (March 2011). However, an issue where we find less coherence on is European integration. While some radical left parties are of the opinion that the European Union is crucially neo-liberal and harming national labour forces, other radical left parties see the opportunity of free movement of labour as an important extension of solidarity. This chapter asks the research question of whether there is a strategically beneficial position for radical left parties to take on European integration. By using cross-sectional expert and individual level survey data, provided by the Chapel Hill Expert Survey and European Social Survey, this research finds that radical left-wing parties that take more Eurosceptic positions are more likely to gain individuals' vote choice. This is further highlighted when interacting the radical left party's position on European integration with the left-right scale of the individual voters. The interaction effect demonstrates that the further left-wing the voters place themselves, the more likely it is that they will vote for a radical left party when they become more Eurosceptic. This interaction is crucial, as this shows that Euroscepticism will have an effect on the potential voters of radical left parties. This research assumes as the further left an individual places themselves on the unidimensional left-right scale, the more likely it is that they will vote for a radical left party, irrespective of the European Union position of the individual or the party.

Though this sounds very promising for radical left parties, the second part of this chapter takes a look at what happens if a possible Eurosceptic competitor enters the party system. As many radical right parties show their nationalist ideology through Eurosceptic positions, voters will have supply options from both extremes of the left-right scale. So, can radical left parties still benefit from a Eurosceptic position when radical right parties enter the party system? The chapter finds that the benefit of a Eurosceptic radical left party position will be significantly constrained when a radical right party enters the party system. This is an important caveat on the benefits to a Eurosceptic position and also contributes to the study of accommodation to radical right parties. The fourth chapter will analyse this dynamic between radical left and radical right parties in more depth by using the Dutch case, where both radical right and radical left have been represented in national parliament since 2006.

While we learned in the previous chapter that the actual position on European integration of radical left parties' matter, we also saw that when a radical right party entered the party system, the benefit of Euroscepticism is constrained. Thus, using a different strategy might be beneficial for radical left parties to avoid losing their pro-EU voters while gaining some Eurosceptic voters. The third chapter goes beyond policy position and looks at when radical left parties can be ambiguous on their position on European integration and whether this can be helpful at the ballot box. I examine a strategy called position blurring. Position blurring, or positional ambiguity, is defined as parties being unclear or vague about their position on an issue. Due to the diversity of preferences their potential voters have regarding European integration, position blurring could be beneficial. The aim of position blurring is to give the impression that the preferences of voters and positions of parties are closer aligned than they actually are. This research argues that position blurring of European integration can be beneficial for radical left parties but only under the right circumstances. The condition important for blurring to work is electorate polarization. When the electorate is polarized, radical left parties not only have more

incentive to blur but also European integration will be discussed frequently in the media and population.

Similar to the previous chapter, this chapter makes use of the European Social Survey and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey to combine party and voter level data. The findings show that polarization is an important condition to whether or not blurring on European integration can be beneficial to radical left parties. When the electorate is in consensus (meaning that there is low polarization), radical left parties benefit electorally from a clear position on European integration. However, this does not mean that a clear position is always beneficial for radical left parties. When the electorate is polarized, the research finds that a blurred position on European integration will be beneficial to radical left parties. This research shows that position blurring can be a useful tactic, especially in order to gain and keep voters that may have contrary opinions. This research is important beyond the study of radical left parties, as it also fundamentally contributes to the literature on position blurring in adding an important condition, polarization of the electorate, to the study of the success of position blurring.

While the second and third chapters take a deep dive in to the supply side of European integration for radical left parties, we have so far not taken the demand-side into account. The fourth chapter is co-authored with Royce Carroll and examines the policy preferences of voters on European integration. We selected the case of the Netherlands to understand the voters' perspective of radical left parties and how the voters' preferences on European integration affects their propensity to vote for a radical left party. This research takes an in depth look at the multidimensionality of European integration by not only using the voters' self-identified preferences on issues like European integration, immigration, redistribution and left-right, but also through applying Aldrich-McKelvey scaling to the self-identified preferences. As voters might understand issue scales differently from each other, using raw data can affect the

comparability of voters' preferences. Therefore, this chapter uses the Aldrich-McKelvey method to bring the voters' preferences on the same scale to be comparable for a more meaningful output. As mentioned, this is applied to issues related to European integration in order to control possible confounders like immigration. This way, this chapter can uniquely identify the preferences of voters on European integration, while differentiating between cultural and economic Euroscepticism.

We argue and demonstrate empirically that voters' propensity to vote for a radical left party is shaped by their own preferences on Europe. We test this using the Dutch case, as it provides with unique data in order to account for all policy issues and make them comparable across respondents. Further, the Dutch parliament has had a radical right and radical left party in together in parliament since 2006, thus making this a substantially interesting case. The results show that the more Eurosceptic the voters' preferences are, the higher the propensity of voting for a radical left party becomes. We find that this is independent of voters' preferences on redistribution and immigration. Our results also indicate that the Dutch radical left party SP benefits from economic, rather than cultural, Euroscepticism as already suggested in the second chapter. This research is important as it provides a more nuanced picture of potential voters of radical left parties and how important issues beyond redistribution may factor into their decision to vote for a radical left party.

1.5 Conclusion

Peter Krawietz, assistant manager at Liverpool FC, said in an interview “football is like chess, but with dice”.⁸ Political parties have some parallels to football – even when parties are trying to be strategic, voters are often unpredictable. Therefore, even the best strategy meets randomness in reality. This thesis takes a look at how radical left parties can approach the issue of European integration in the most strategic way. The second chapter shows that even when radical left parties take the optimal position on European integration, their benefit is constrained as soon as radical right parties are in the mix. Similarly, in the third chapter radical left parties need to blur in accordance with the level of polarization in the electorate in order to benefit, rather than harm, their probability of being voted for. To fully understand this picture, we need to examine the importance of the European Union for voters when considering voting for a radical left party. This demand-side perspective is in focus in the fourth chapter of this thesis. Through these three chapters, we gain a better understanding into the complex multidimensional space of European integration for radical left parties and why, although some choices could be made that would be strategically beneficial, are not always attainable for the parties.

This thesis examines an important and relatively new issue – European integration. Beyond just understanding the impact of Brussels on domestic politics, the opposition to European integration is often seen as a proxy for a wider globalization or nationalist debate. The literature has analysed this new salient dimension through the issues of European integration but also immigration. When discussing how the salience of these two issues have impacted political competition, the focus is (unsurprisingly) usually on the radical right. As the radical right has issue ownership over these nationalist issues, they are also responsible for emphasising them

⁸ Reference here is the quote by the German footballer Lukas Podolski: “Football is like chess but without the dice”.

and thus, influencing other parties. This thesis shows that this new dimension is influential beyond the radical right and is also a focal point for parties usually only understood through the economic left-right dimension. As the political space is shifting towards being more multidimensional, even parties that have previously not been affected by issues outside of redistribution need to strategize and consider their options for vote maximisation. In the conclusion of this thesis, I will discuss future research pathways and the overall importance of examining at radical left parties empirically and beyond left-right.

2. Euroscepticism as a Radical Left Party Strategy for Success ⁹

The European Union has gained salience as an issue in political debate. Recent literature shows that successful radical right-wing parties are frequently in opposition to European integration. This article looks at how radical left-wing parties' positions on EU integration affect their electoral support. It argues that radical left parties can mobilize voters in their favour through positioning in opposition to EU integration because this allows voters to combine their left-wing economic and anti-EU preferences. Using expert and individual level survey data, this research demonstrates that radical left-wing parties that position themselves against EU integration are more likely to gain individuals' vote choice. This finding is surprising, given that traditionally radical left-wing parties are defined through their economic, rather than their non-economic, positions. This article demonstrates that variation in positioning around non-economic issues such as EU integration can explain differences in voter support across radical left-wing parties.

Keywords: Euroscepticism, Political Parties, Radical Left, Electoral Behaviour

⁹ Large parts of this chapter have been published in the form of an article: Sarah Wagner, 'Euroscepticism as a Radical Left Party Strategy for Success', *Party Politics*, August 2021. doi:[10.1177/13540688211038917](https://doi.org/10.1177/13540688211038917)

2.1 Introduction

Before the 2014 European Elections, the German radical left party Die Linke took up a Eurosceptic position after intra-party disagreement on EU integration (Meisner 2013). However, prior to the 2019 European Elections only a few years later, Die Linke decided to move from their EU-critical stance to a more pro-EU position (Cveljo 2019). This position shift coincided with the Eurosceptic radical right-wing party Alternative für Deutschland gaining momentum. Die Linke is not alone in trying to decide on the best strategy towards EU integration; many radical left wing parties in the past few years have decided to oppose the radical right by adopting a pro-EU position. This research asks: could a Eurosceptic position be more beneficial for radical left parties to gain votes than a pro-EU position?

Non-economic issues have increasingly been gaining attention during elections (Dalton 2002; De Vries 2018; Hooghe et al 2002; Inglehart 1990; Kriesi et al 2008). Voters overall are increasingly polarized on the non-economic dimension (Green-Pedersen and Otjes 2019; Hutter et al 2016). The increased polarization of voters on non-economic issues across many countries is also reflected in a lack of congruence between voters and parties as “on the culture dimension, most parties were found to have more liberal positions than their voters; while on the EU dimension, most parties were found to have more pro-EU positions than their voters” (Costello *et al* 2012:1228). This dissonance can also be found within the potential radical left party (RLP) voter base (Kitschelt and Rehm 2014). Traditionally, RLPs have been defined almost exclusively by their redistributive economic policies (see Bale and Dunphy 2011, Dunphy and Bale 2011; March 2011; March and Rommerskirchen 2015). This paper rejects that premise and instead argues that RLPs are not unidimensional parties. In practice, RLPs do engage with other social and cultural issues, and their positioning on such non-economic issues can be an

important strategy to mobilize voters in their favour. Specifically, this paper shows, both theoretically and empirically, that anti-EU positions are electorally beneficial for RLPs.

This research takes an in-depth look at the mixed success of RLPs in Western Europe by examining the different strategies RLPs take towards EU integration. Throughout the process of dealignment, voters are more likely to be disenfranchised or not represented in their interests by the parties in the party system. One prominent group are voters with left-wing economic preferences but also Eurosceptic tendencies. Such voters are more likely to vote for a RLP if the RLP has an anti-EU position. Though the position a RLP has on the EU is important to their potential voters, it becomes less important the more economically right-wing voters get, as they are less likely to support a RLP due to their economic divergence. Although Euroscepticism seems a good strategy for RLPs in the abstract, the presence of radical right parties (RRPs) in the party system constrains RLP's appeal to voters, in part because voters may weigh their anti-EU preferences more heavily than their redistribution positions. Therefore, even if RLPs move towards a Eurosceptic position, there is little chance this will help them in the long run if a RRP is occupying the "hard Eurosceptic" issue space (see Walgrave, Lefevere, and Tresch 2012).

I test this theory by employing two different datasets: the party-level data from Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) (Bakker *et al* 2014), and the individual-level data from European Social Survey (ESS). The results have several implications; RLPs have the ability to mobilise voters through non-economic issues. However, successful mobilisation depends on the absence of a RRP in the party system. While studies in the past have emphasised the importance of European integration for RLPs (Visser *et al* 2014; March and Rommerskirchen 2015; Ramiro 2016; Beaudonnet and Gomez 2017), this research analyses when Euroscepticism can be beneficial and when it can harm RLPs' success. This article adds to a significant growing literature on how different party families compete in their own ways. Finally, the research is the first to

analyse RLP strategy on a specific issue in depth and therefore highlights the diversity in RLP positions and strategy while also illustrating how party competition effectively influences voter choice on non-economic issues.

2.2 Radical Left Parties

In his seminal work on the RLP family, March (2011) argues that RLPs have been shaped through their institutionalisation causing a diversity within the party family from traditional communists to social populists. Yet, RLPs can be understood as having “enough ideological and policy coherence to justify being conceptualized as a single party family” (March & Rommerskirchen 2015:41). According to March’s (2011:8) definition, RLPs oppose the “socio-economic structure of contemporary capitalism ... [and] advocate alternative economic and power structures involving a major redistribution of resources”.¹⁰ Not only do RLPs emphasize economic issues significantly more than any other party (Rovny 2012; Williams and Ishiyama 2018), but they also adopt more extreme positions than their mainstream counterparts (Wagner, 2012). This paper bases its argument on the assumption that RLPs are not niche parties but can be conceptualised as issue entrepreneurs, and thus, are able to communicate their own policy strategies “to succeed in the political market” (De Vries and Hobolt 2020:4). RLPs are more successful when they choose a more moderate strategy on the economy and more extreme strategy on non-economic issues (Krause 2020). Yet, there has not been any research on the specific issues and directionality which can cause this success.

General sentiments associated with those supporting populist or extreme parties is the “losers of globalization” typology (Kriesi et al 2008). The cleavage between the winners and losers of

¹⁰ See Table A1

globalization shows that while some benefited, others were disadvantaged by the changes that came through globalization. As this “losers of globalization” group has felt threatened by the opening of borders, economically but also culturally, the appeal of populist parties has grown. Supporters of radical parties are usually associated with strong support for reduction in economic inequalities (Visser et al 2014).¹¹ Personal economic deprivation has been credited as one of the main reasons individuals choose to vote for the radical right (Oesch and Rennwald, 2018; Rydgren, 2012; Werts, Scheepers and Lubbers 2013) and the radical left (Gomez, Morales and Ramiro 2016; Ramiro 2016; Rooduijn et al. 2017). Thus, some of the “losers of globalisation” voice their grievances in Euroscepticism, from either an economically critical perspective (for example criticising bailing out of banks during the financial crisis and the Troika programme) or in a culturally critical perspective (through feeling threatened by migration).

2.3 European integration

European integration has moved from a bureaucratic policy field to a highly polarised and salient issue in European party systems. This increase in salience started during the 1990s and has grown since (Hooghe and Marks 2009); in part, this has been due to political entrepreneurs who emphasise the issue of European integration (Hobolt and De Vries 2012). Mainstream parties usually occupy pro-integration space and avoid emphasising the issue (Green-Pedersen 2012; Meijers 2017).¹² More specifically, mainstream left parties typically take economically left-wing pro-EU positions while mainstream right parties often occupy economically right-wing pro-EU positions.

¹¹ Yet, while those with a lower income tend to be more likely to support RLPs; the same does not apply on the aggregate level, meaning when a country is going through economic hardship, radical left success becomes less likely (Visser et al 2014).

¹² Electoral success of Eurosceptic parties encourages mainstream parties to move towards anti-EU positions; Eurosceptic RLPs are able to cause positional adjustment among centre left parties (Meijers 2017).

The literature has shown that EU integration is considered a multidimensional issue (Boomgaarden *et al* 2011); certain aspects of European integration can be understood through a cultural framework; other aspects are better understood through economic lenses (Lerch and Schwellnus 2006; McLaren 2007; Hooghe and Marks 2009). For example, while some Euroscepticism is based in demand for less migration, other Euroscepticism is rooted in the idea that the EU is an “elite and great power domination at the expense of the popular classes” (Halikiopoulou *et al* 2012:512). Right-wing Eurosceptic parties are usually associated with the cultural aspect of EU opposition, while their left-wing alternative traditionally root their scepticism in economics.

This research understands RLPs as vote seeking parties. Vote seeking parties will likely make decisions in order to maximise their vote share. In the context of European integration, RLPs can either take a pro-EU or Eurosceptic position. Research has argued that the far left is fundamentally “strongly internationalist” (Beaudonnet and Gomez 2017:321; March and Mudde 2005; Bornschier 2010) and therefore would not oppose EU integration for nationalist but economic reasons. Eurosceptic RLPs mainly argue that the EU is a capitalist organisation that they fundamentally oppose. They often argue in favour of reform of or even withdrawal from the EU (Hooghe, Marks and Wilson 2002). In the case of Greece, “the KKE position is straightforward as the party carries on its traditional rejection of the EU, completely opposite of the SYRIZA position” (Holmes and Roder 2019:26), which believes that they can be “critical yet constructive” (Holmes and Roder 2019:28) towards the EU. Typically, RLP opposition to the EU has been considered ‘soft Euroscepticism’ as it has been interpreted as parties being critical of the EU’s current format rather than in the idea as a whole (Szczerbiak and Taggart

2008).¹³ The degree of Euroscepticism presented by RLPs considerably depends on institutional, historical and political factors. This translates to great diversity in not just how but also whether they are Eurosceptic. In France, the left was divided on Europe with PS representing a pro-EU position and PCF occupying a Eurosceptic stance (Holmes and Roder 2019). Past research suggests RLPs specifically see electoral success when high Euroscepticism is present in the population (March and Rommerskirchen 2015). It is not yet entirely clear whether RLP voters are Eurosceptic or RLPs thrive in countries with higher levels of Euroscepticism in society (Beaudonnet and Gomez 2017). For example, Visser et al. (2014) found an effect for Eurosceptic voting among far-left voters. Also, Ramiro (2016) further shows that radical left voters tend to have higher Eurosceptic attitudes than other voters.

Hillen and Steiner (2020) have shown that there is a significant number of voters with economic left-wing and culturally right-wing voting preferences that are left out of party representation. This demand for parties that advocate for redistribution policies while also positioning on anti-immigration or Eurosceptic issues is not met in party systems (Hillen and Steiner 2020; van der Brug and van Spanje 2009). This means, that if there is no left-wing party representing their views on the EU or Eurosceptic party that is close to their policy preference on the economy, these voters are likely to be left unsatisfied with their supply choices and often not aligned with any particular party. While there is a rationale to avoid positioning in a Eurosceptic direction for RLPs, as it may result in losing pro-EU left wing voters, an often-overlooked aspect is that voters may also reward a RLP for a Eurosceptic position. Though some voters may have a preference for cultural Euroscepticism, it is not unreasonable to assume that in the absence of such supply, some of them may choose to vote for an economic Eurosceptic party over a pro-EU party.

¹³ This is in opposition to “hard” Euroscepticism, which describes usually RLPs “who object in principle to the idea of any European economic or political integration” (Taggart and Szczesniak 2004:3).

RLPs can benefit from a Eurosceptic position as they therefore supply opposition to other left-wing parties that frequently position themselves in favour of EU integration. RLPs are able to frame this Euroscepticism through economic lenses, as the economic dimension is the primary dimension of those parties, which makes Euroscepticism reputationally feasible (Elias et al 2015). Voters are expected to reward this if they already have left-wing preferences, thus are part of the potential voter base of RLPs, and also have anti-EU policy preferences. Though this is most likely to apply to voters with economic Eurosceptic preferences, the lack in supply may convince some voters with cultural Eurosceptic preferences to vote for a RLP. Due to the underrepresentation of these preferences in the party systems, voters are likely to vote for a party with these policy preferences as they are unlikely to be aligned with another party. Therefore I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1: Among more left-wing voters, RLPs are more likely to gain electoral support when taking a Eurosceptic position.

Since we know that a RRP entering the party system can influence the positions of mainstream parties (Abou-Chadi and Krause 2018), I argue that RRP entering the party system will also affect RLPs. In some cases, RLPs shift their position on EU integration in response to a successful RRP. In the case of Finland, VAS became pro-EU to show opposition to the RRP (Holmes and Roder 2019). However, is this an ideal strategy for vote maximisation? Though not all RRP focus on Euroscepticism, it aligns clearly with the overall ideology of the party family. When RRP enter a party system, their incentive to be Eurosceptic is far higher than the incentive of mainstream parties to be Eurosceptic (Vasilopoulou 2018; Wagner 2012). For mainstream parties, this is due to the high costs usually associated with having a polarizing stand on a technocratic issue (Hix 1999; Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2002; Whitefield and

Rohrschneider 2015). The EU is a frequent and salient issue in manifestos of RRP (Vasilopoulou 2018). Thus, if a RRP enters a party system, it will usually occupy the Eurosceptic policy space. Furthermore, some RRP pursue redistributive policies or blur their position on the economy (Rovny 2013). Therefore, it is unsurprising that some voters have moved from left wing parties to RRP (Jylhä, Rydgren and Strimling 2019), as voters may prioritise their preferences on EU integration over their economic preferences or, through blurring or otherwise, believe that the RRP have left-wing economic positions.

Voters are more likely to vote for parties that they perceive as the most competent (Lachat 2014). This is especially the case if a party is perceived as more competent than other parties on a salient issue. Frequently, if a party owns an issue (such as in the case of the Greens over environmentalism), voters perceive this party to be the most competent on such issue. Though an anti-EU position might not be an issue that RRP own, it is still likely that voters will associate Euroscepticism with the RRP, due to their ownership of nationalism (Vasilopoulou 2011; Gómez-Reino and Llamazares 2013). It is likely that RRP will be seen as so-called “issue entrepreneurs” (De Vries and Hobolt 2012). In this case, voters with left-wing economic preferences will perceive RRP as more competent on Euroscepticism than RLPs.

This research argues that a Eurosceptic position would be vote maximising for RLPs; yet, the presence of a RRP could influence this outcome. With the presence of a RRP, RLPs are facing competition on the Eurosceptic position. While some RRP occupy anti-redistribution positions, many also position left-wing on economic issues. Thus, RRP may not only compose of a highly reputable source for Euroscepticism, due to their ownership of nationalism, but also supply for the aforementioned cultural right wing and economic left-wing gap in the party system. Therefore, instead of rewarding RLPs for filling this supply gap, voters may be convinced by the emphasis placed on Euroscepticism by RRP. Some of the cultural

Eurosceptics that, in absence of another Eurosceptic party, may have been convinced by the economic Euroscepticism from RLPs will likely vote for RRP. From this, this article argues that although a Eurosceptic position of RLPs may be rewarded by voters, the entry of a RRP can constrain these prospects. Therefore,

Hypothesis 2: When a RRP is present in the party system, RLPs are less likely to benefit from a Eurosceptic position.

2.4 Data

This paper uses the party positions from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) (Bakker *et al* 2014). This is merged with the individual-level dataset from the European Social Survey (ESS) (European Social Survey Cumulative File, 2018). The ESS is a cross-national survey that measures attitudes, beliefs and political behaviour every two years since 2001. The ESS makes use of newly selected, cross-sectional samples for their data collection. In this research, the ESS is used to understand the voting behaviour of the electorate. As policy positions need to be estimated and are often considered latent variables, expert's judgement is used as an estimate in this research to understand where the parties are located on the relevant issues.¹⁴ The CHES surveys country experts on questions of the positioning of political parties in their respective countries. Once all experts have submitted their judgement on where the parties are positioned on the issue scales, the average of the expert responses makes up the final estimated party position. The CHES was selected as experts and voters alike will base their information on speeches, media appearances and overall party statements. This is contrary to using manifestos to determine party positions, as they are not widely read by voters.¹⁵ From both datasets, this research only makes use of data from Western European countries, for comparative clarity in

¹⁴ "All tests of spatial models in comparative politics rely on the ability to estimate party positions", as there is no direct way of knowing a party's position (Slapin and Proksch 2008:705).

¹⁵ See appendix for robustness check using manifesto data.

terms of party competition, party legacy and to provide a more stable comparison of the issues concerning the EU. The data cover Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. This is selected due to data availability and the existence of a RLP in the party system¹⁶. I use ESS rounds from 2002 to 2016 and CHES years until 2014. As a result of the focus on this period, there is also a strong implication that voters are less ambiguous towards the EU than they were prior to the 2000s (Duchesne et al. 2013; Hurrelmann et al. 2015).

The pooled cross-sectional data is obtained by combining data from ESS with CHES party position data for RLPs. As the datasets do not match perfectly in years (ESS collects data every two years while CHES roughly every four), the closest years were used to match the datasets, using the earlier years of CHES to match later years of ESS (eg. for the CHES round of 2010, the ESS data of round 6 in 2012 was used).¹⁷ Due to the hierarchical structure of the data (voters, country, years), a multilevel mixed logistic model is applied. As there are multiple years per country, random intercepts for each country and country-election were used.

The dependent variable understands whether an individual voted for a RLP in the previous election using a binary variable. When two or more RLPs were present in the party system, the main relevant party was selected. This was achieved by using the most stable entered RLP to ensure voter's knowledge of the party's existence. In the case of Greece, the party selected was SYRIZA.¹⁸ In the case of Portugal, the data includes BE.¹⁹ This research looks at the demand-side of the success of RLPs on a more micro-level and builds on existing research by March and Rommerskirchen (2015), Hernandez and Kriesi (2016) and Grittersova et al (2016) who

¹⁶ Irish Sinn Fein was not included as it is also commonly identified as a nationalist party.

¹⁷ To account for this discrepancy of the two datasets, I include a control in the appendix.

¹⁸ This is a possible limitation in the case selection as this restricts the data of Greece to ESS rounds 1,2,4 and 5. While in 2010, SYRIZA was not major government party, this is a conservative case selection to avoid data being driven by high election results in subsequent years.

¹⁹ A list of RLPs can be found in the appendix.

use aggregate data. Non-voters are excluded from the analysis as the population of interest is voters.

This research assumes that the effect of Euroscepticism on RLP vote choice will be stronger for the potential voters of RLPs, who are most likely more left-wing voters. Thus, a left-right self-identification variable is included and is also interacted with the main independent variable. The main independent variable is RLPs position on EU integration. CHES takes the averages of the experts' responses, which were used in this research. Though this is treated as continuous, the marginal effects in the results below are displayed as dichotomous for ease of interpretation.

An important control is positions of mainstream parties, in which the main centre-left and centre-right parties of each were selected following Abou-Chadi and Wagner (2020). Their positions were operationalized in the same manner as the independent variable above. The presence of a credible RRP was recorded when their vote share exceeded 3% (Abou-Chadi and Wagner 2020). Robustness checks included using different country-level controls and excluding overly influential cases (eg SYRIZA) from the case selection (Beaudonnet and Gomez 2017; Gomez *et al* 2016; Krause 2020). Dropping these cases shows that they have not driven the results. Further controls include country level measurements like migration rate (net migration using OECD), GDP change per capita and unemployment are used.²⁰

Age, education and social class have also been used as controls in this research. The class coding is based on the category scheme by Oesch (2006), who codes class into eight separate categories. Class is important to control for as some evidence suggests that the electorate of RLPs has predominantly consisted of working-class votes (Moschonas 2002), while other

²⁰ See appendix for elaboration on country level controls (A3 and A4).

research found that recently it has become more difficult for RLPs to stay in touch with the working-class voter base (Knapp 2004). More middle-class voters have recently gained interest in voting for a RLP, in particular public service white collar workers (González 2004). Education is divided into three categories; tertiary; upper secondary and non-tertiary; lower secondary or less. Hakhverdian *et al* (2013:18) finds "people with low or medium levels of educational attainment ... [are] significantly more eurosceptical than highly educated Europeans". Other controls in the results below are individual level sociodemographic variables, where gender is measured using a binary measurement (male, female) and age is measured using a continuous measure.

2.5 Results

Table 2.1 includes a build-up of four models of the multilevel logistic regression results on the effect of RLP positions on European integration on voter choice. In all models, a statistically significant effect indicates that a Eurosceptic position will improve the possibility of an individual choosing to vote for a RLP. This result is robust to adding controls in Model 2. From a party competition perspective, voters have a multidimensional choice. They are usually presented with pro-EU parties (such as the centre-right or social democrats) or Eurosceptic parties (such as the radical right). Past research has shown how a two-dimensional analysis of voters and parties changes the party competition, as "left-authoritarian views are held by many voters across Europe but find no direct correspondence at the party level" (Lefkofridi *et al.* 2014:79; Thomassen 2012). As centre-left parties often find themselves as pro-EU, RLPs can use this space to optimise the votes from the left-authoritarian voters.

Models 3 and 4 control for competition and the coefficient of RLP EU position is statistically significant and higher in comparison to Models 1 and 2. I included the position of the main

centre left party on the EU, the position of the main centre right party on the EU (Model 3) and the existence of a RRP in the party system (Model 4). The reasoning behind including the radical right existence in the competition control is that the radical right would include a party that owns the hard Eurosceptic issue. The centre left could be one of the main competitors of RLPs in a given party system and is therefore essential to control for. The centre-right is included for the purpose of accounting for the voter's options, instead of it having a direct impact on the positioning of RLPs.

For the controls, unsurprisingly voters who identify more to the right are less likely to vote for a RLP. This finding will be further analysed later, in Figure 2.2. Another interesting control is RLP economic position, indicating that a more right-wing economic position is rewarded. This has been shown in the literature, as a more moderate economic position can be helpful for RLPs (Krause 2020). Table 2.1 shows no significant class indicators however education shows significant effects in all models. Although I find some effects in Table 2.1 for younger voters, the coefficient is relatively small and would most likely not hold up to substantial interpretation.

Table 2.1: Regression results on vote choice for RLPs

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
RLP EU Position	-.892* (.498)	-.855* (.512)	-1.224*** (.429)	-1.056*** (.318)
Left Right Self-Identification Scale	-.57*** (.026)	-.565*** (.026)	-.565*** (.03)	-.565*** (.03)
Mainstream Left EU Position			1.504 (1.043)	.349 (.909)
Mainstream Right EU Position			-.361 (.825)	-.947 (.981)
RRP Presence				-2.731 (1.705)
RLP Economic Position	1.796* (.975)	1.773* (.983)	1.862* (1.032)	1.652** (.75)
Migration Rate	-.089 (.164)	-.09 (.176)	-.076 (.152)	-.088 (.106)
Small Business Owners		-.152 (.155)	-.152 (.155)	-.151 (.155)
Technical (semi-)professionals		-.046 (.148)	-.046 (.148)	-.046 (.148)
Production workers		.038 (.212)	.038 (.212)	.038 (.212)
(Associate) Managers		-.081 (.21)	-.081 (.21)	-.081 (.21)
Clerks		-.027 (.163)	-.027 (.163)	-.026 (.163)
Socio-Cultural (semi-) professionals		.189 (.201)	.189 (.201)	.19 (.201)
Service Workers		.024 (.209)	.024 (.209)	.025 (.209)
Education: Upper Sec + Non-Tert.		.377** (.167)	.379** (.167)	.379** (.167)
Education: Tertiary		.465** (.23)	.466** (.23)	.467** (.23)
Age		-.007** (.003)	-.007** (.003)	-.007** (.003)
Gender		.007 (.04)	.007 (.04)	.007 (.04)
Constant	-.347 (1.267)	-0.195 (1.226)	-6.508 (5.416)	5.201 (8.85)
Sd(Country)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	.122 (.495)	.008 (.04)
Sd(Country~Study)	8.371 (5.905)	8.323 (5.872)	8.001 (4.930)	6.867* (3.617)
Obs.	40860	36231	36231	36231

Standard errors are in parenthesis

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Figure 2.1 visualises a decrease in the probability to vote for a RLP when the position of the RLP becomes more pro-EU integration. Figure 2.1 is based on the results in Table 2.1, Model 3 to account for mainstream competition, excluding a control for challenger parties. Challenger parties will be closely examined in Figure 2.3. The histogram on the x-axis of Figure 2.1 shows

the distribution of the European integration position among RLPs. The distribution is relatively diverse and thus this is an important and interesting finding. However, it is important to note that there is a lack in datapoints on the extremes of this scale.

Figure 2.1. Predicted Probability of RLP vote along EU positions (7 meaning in favour of EU integration and 1 fully against EU integration). Based on Table 2.1 Model 3.

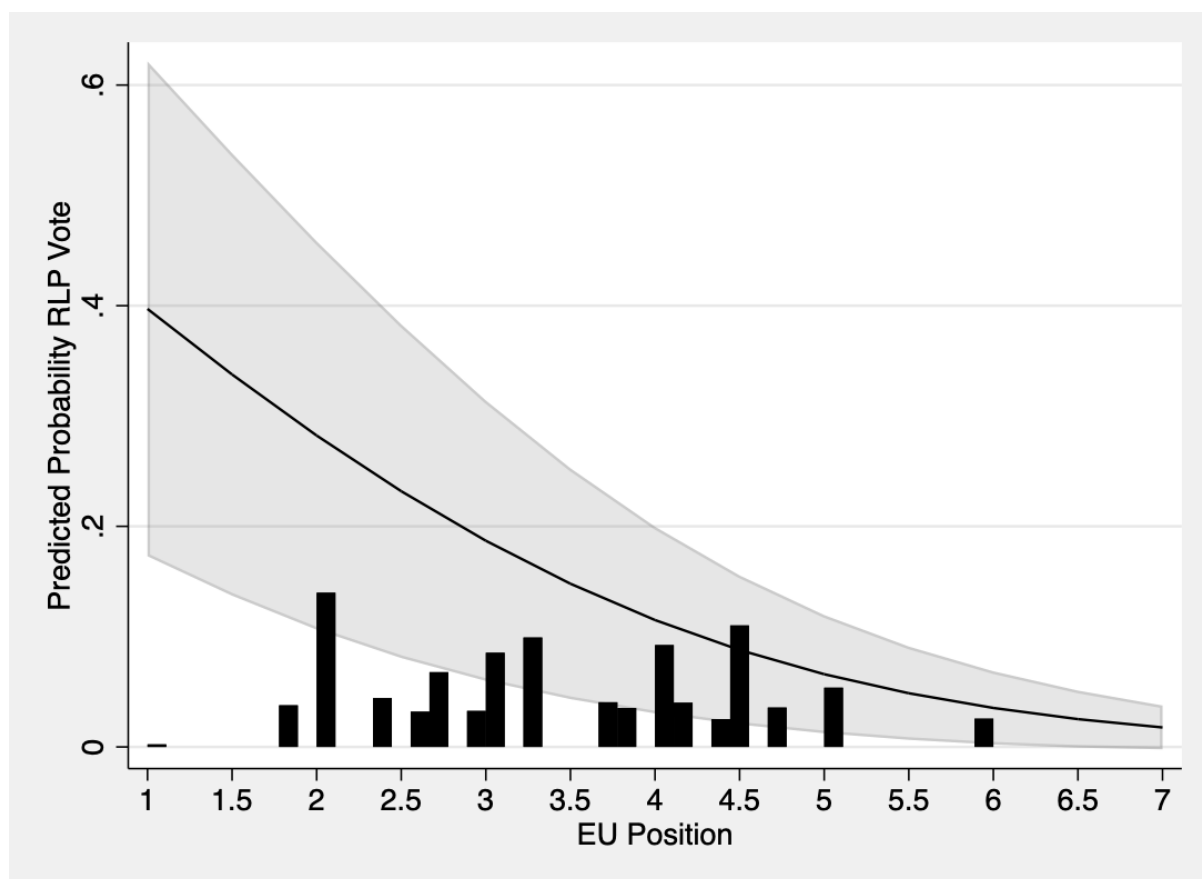


Table 2.1 does not supply enough information to support the hypotheses as we are still unsure whether potential voters, who in this research are assumed to be left-wing voters, are responding to Eurosceptic positions of RLPs. Therefore, it is necessary to interact these variables. Table 2.2 Model 1 shows the two-way interaction between the EU Position of RLPs and left-right self-identification of the voters. Model 2 shows a three-way interaction between the above, EU Position of RLPs and left-right self-identification, and the presence of a RRP in the party system. This research argues that radical right entry into a party system will change the

perception of Euroscepticism and voters may find themselves identifying Euroscepticism with the cultural rather than the economic dimension. In Table 2.2, the coefficient of the effect of RLP EU Position on vote choice increases in both Models from the previous results displayed in Table 2.1. The displayed interactions between the EU positions of RLPs and the left-right self-identification are not statistically significant. It is important to note that when examining this result more closely in Figure 2.2, this interaction is not consistently insignificant. In the relevant parts for this research, among the left-wing voters, the effect is significant. In a similar vein, there are no consistent significant effects for the three-way interaction in Table 2.2 Model 2, however the effect is statistically significant among the most left-wing voters. While the interactions are displayed in Table 2.2 below, interpreting those in this form is unintuitive and therefore, these results will be visualised.

Table 2.2: Regression results with interactions

	(1)	(2)
RLP EU Position	-1.265***	-
	(0.307)	1.334***
Left-Right Self-Identification	-0.571***	(0.302)
	(0.156)	-
RLP EU Position x Left Right Self-Identification	0.002	0.730***
	(0.040)	(0.092)
Radical Right Presence		0.036
		(0.028)
Radical Right Presence x RLP EU Position		-5.376**
		(2.638)
Radical Right Presence x Left Right Self-Identification		0.777
		(0.719)
Radical Right Presence x RLP EU position x Left Right Self-Identification		0.266
		(0.203)
		-0.058
		(0.065)
RLP Economic Position	1.848**	1.563**
	(0.878)	(0.702)
Mainstream Right EU Position	-0.219	-0.821
	(0.813)	(0.987)
Mainstream Left EU Position	1.426	0.353
	(0.980)	(0.902)
Migration Rate	-0.078	-0.096
	(0.129)	(0.106)
Education: Upper Sec + Non-Tert.	0.379**	0.385**
	(0.168)	(0.167)
Education: Tertiary	0.466**	0.473**
	(0.230)	(0.228)
Small Business Owners	-0.152	-0.149
	(0.155)	(0.153)
Technical (semi-)professionals	-0.046	-0.044
	(0.148)	(0.147)
Production workers	0.038	0.039
	(0.211)	(0.210)
(Associate) Managers	-0.081	-0.080
	(0.211)	(0.209)
Clerks	-0.027	-0.022
	(0.162)	(0.162)
Socio-Cultural (semi-) professionals	0.189	0.193
	(0.201)	(0.200)
Service Workers	0.024	0.027
	(0.208)	(0.207)
Age	-0.007**	-0.007**
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Gender	0.007	0.007
	(0.040)	(0.042)
Constant	-6.707	5.683
	(5.297)	(8.544)
Sd(Country)	0.002	0.000
	(0.014)	(0.000)
Sd(Country~Study)	7.836	6.591*
	(4.957)	(3.622)
Obs.	36231	36231

Standard errors are in parenthesis

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Figure 2.2 shows an interaction between left-right self-identification of voters and the position that RLPs choose to take on the EU, from Table 2.2 Model 1. The way the results are presented in Figure 2.2 understand the position on EU integration as dichotomous, meaning that a party is either in favour of EU integration or against EU integration.²¹ The graph depicts a clear advantage to being Eurosceptic for RLPs. This supports H1 as the predicted probability of voting for a RLP is higher with a Eurosceptic position than with a pro-EU position. Although the confidence interval of the Eurosceptic strategy is larger than for the pro-EU strategy (due to data availability), the predicted numbers are still showing a significant gap and relationship. Looking at the self-identification voter interaction with RLP EU position, there is a significant difference in the likelihood of very left-wing voters to vote for a RLP depending on their EU position. The further right-wing the scale goes the more strategies converge. This is exactly as expected as the more right-wing people self-identify, the less likely they are to vote RLP overall. While this is most likely the case, in terms of operationalisation the self-identification variable serves as a proxy, as the exact meaning that voters place on the left-right dimension is ambiguous. This indirect test is also a good way to avoid endogeneity in the results.

²¹ As this is a 7-point scale, this was operationalised by using the second most extreme position on pro-EU and anti-EU. The results are robust to other operationalisations of this dichotomization.

Figure 2.2. Predicted Probability of RLP vote interacted with left-right self-placement controlling for mainstream party position on EU integration. Based on Table 2.2 Model 1.

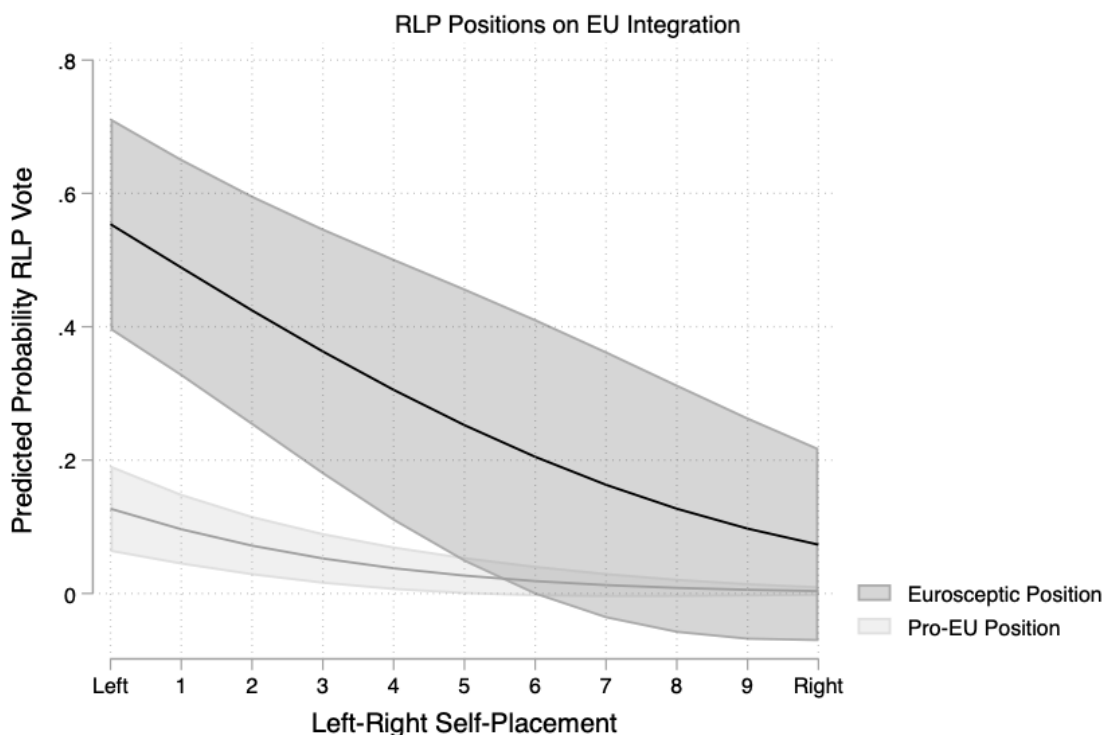
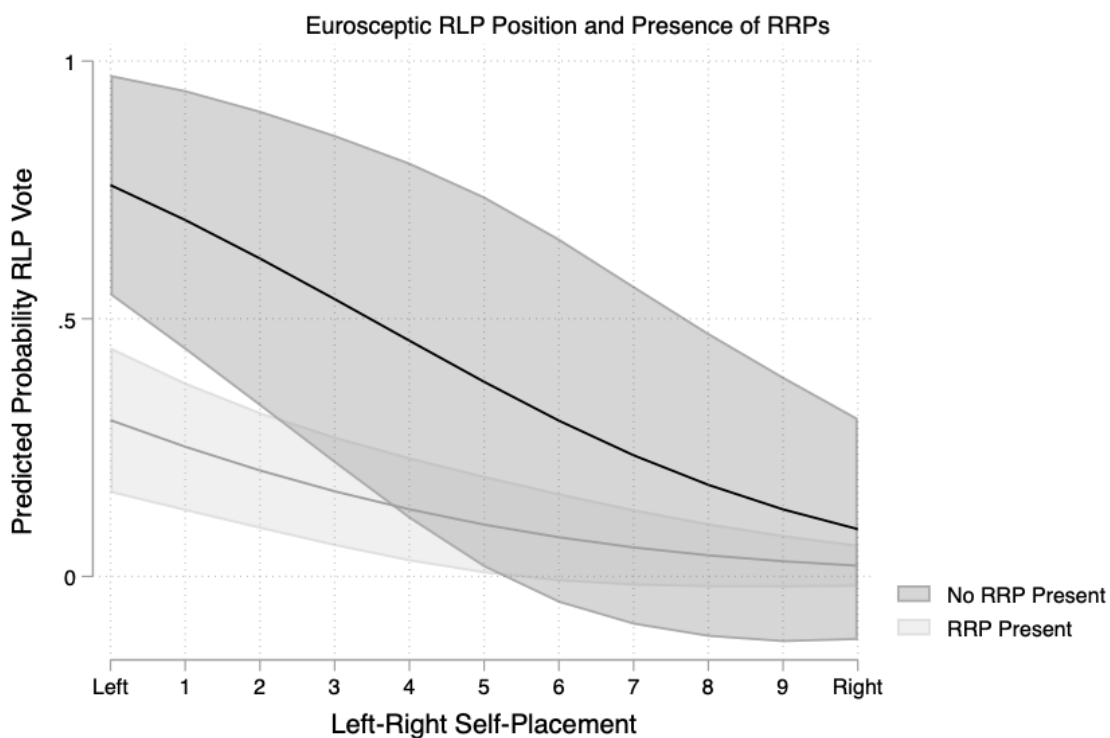


Figure 2.2 above shows that a Eurosceptic position of RLPs is more beneficial in gaining votes from left-wing voters. An alternative interpretation by looking at the slopes is that parties with a pro-EU position are relatively more successful among centre-left voters, whereas ideological extremism is more important for Eurosceptic parties, as they are much more successful among voters with extreme positions. However, looking at the overall probability of voting for a RLP, it is higher for a Eurosceptic position up to left-right identification 5, after which the probability of voting for a RLP, independent of its EU position, is unlikely.

So far, the research has shown that RLPs will be more successful, when choosing a Eurosceptic position. Although the figure above includes the positions on EU integration of mainstream parties, it does not show all the possible competition that RLPs could face on Euroscepticism.

Figure 2.3 below shows a three-way interaction between RLP EU position, left-right self-placement, and the presence of RRP in a party system. For ease of visualisation, the position of RLPs on EU integration has been held constant at a Eurosceptic position. Figure 2.3 supports H2. This interaction shows the predicted probability of voting for a RLP with Eurosceptic position, when there is a RRP present or not. Overall, Figure 2.3 shows that the more left-wing voters self-identify, the more likely they are to vote for a RLP, irrespective of the presence of a RRP. The larger confidence interval in the nonexistence of RRP is due to data availability.

Figure 2.3. Predicted Probability of Eurosceptic RLP vote interacted with left-right self-placement and RRP presence, controlling for mainstream party position on EU integration. Based on Table 2.2 Model 2.



The predicted probability of voting for a Eurosceptic RLP is higher when there is no RRP in the party system.²² This is only the case though when the voter is between 0 and 2 on the left-right self-placement scale. Similarly to Figure 2.2, a convergence in the effect towards the right

²² In line with the theory, pro-EU positions cause no difference on RRP presence (see A5).

end of the self-identification spectrum can be noted, as these voters are less likely to support RLPs irrespective of the factors analysed in this research. Figure 2.3 displays this more clearly than in Figure 2.2, as a Eurosceptic positioning overall appeals to voters who identify between 0-4 on the left-right self-placement scale.

This is overall an important finding. Although it would be beneficial for RLPs to be Eurosceptic, there is a caveat to this finding. In most countries today, RRP are present in the party system. Therefore, the findings in Figure 2.3 are important in order to understand the full picture. This means, that although Figure 2.2 shows that a Eurosceptic position is rewarded by voters, RLPs are not fully in charge of their election results, as this is constrained when a RRP is present in the party system. This constrain may come from the general issue ownership and emphasis of RRP over Euroscepticism, which makes them appear more competent on the issue, or it could simultaneously come from cultural Eurosceptics shifting their vote from RLPs to RRP, due to the nature of their Euroscepticism. This result also shows that the lack of cultural shift is not the reason why RLPs are not as successful as their radical right counterparts.

2.6 Conclusion

As the EU has become a more salient and polarizing issue in Western European party systems, many parties need to carefully consider where they stand on EU integration. Through the rise of RRP, many left parties have been losing voters to the right (Jylhä, Rydgren and Strimling 2019). Whether or not mainstream left parties can gain these voters back through a Eurosceptic or cultural right positioning has been addressed in the discipline (Abou-Chadi & Wagner 2020), however we know very little about the possibility of RLPs changing their position to maximise their votes from the economic left and cultural right. There is a substantial number of voters who are on the authoritarian left spectrum that are not represented by political parties (Hillen and Steiner 2020). In terms of ideology, RLPs are more flexible than their centrist competition

to change their positions on non-economic issues like European integration as shown through the noticeable variance in the existing positions of RLPs in Western Europe; can a Eurosceptic position be useful in order to maximise the votes for RLPs?

The results show that RLPs can benefit from a Eurosceptic position. This on its own is an important finding. RLPs are mostly associated with their clear position on pro-redistribution economic preferences, yet this shows that non-economic positions also matter to their voters. RLPs are better off positioning themselves Eurosceptic than pro-EU– the difference in preferences on this issue becomes clearer the more left-wing voters are. As we can assume that most RLP voters have a left-wing economic preference, this finding is important to show that there is a voter base preference on where RLPs stand on EU integration.

Yet, if a Eurosceptic party family enters a party system, is this finding stable? When RRP enter a party system, they are typically associated with Eurosceptic and nationalist ideology. Thus, even if RLPs are Eurosceptic, when a more credible or extreme Eurosceptic party enters the party system, RLPs benefit from a Eurosceptic position will be constrained. This is an important finding as it clarifies the question of whether RLPs can accommodate to RRP through taking their positions. Some of the reasons for this dynamic may be found might be the ownership of RRP on Euroscepticism or the priorities of voters on cultural Euroscepticism. This means that from a voter's perspective, a voter may have a cultural Eurosceptic preference but will vote for a RLP if they supply an economic Eurosceptic position. With the presence of a cultural Eurosceptic party, this voter will be likely to no longer vote for a Eurosceptic RLP. Overall, this is significant for all parties, not just RLPs, as this study adds to the growing literature of position shifts of challenger parties and shows that non-economic issues are important for voters to decide their electoral choices.

From here, future research should investigate the voter's preferences and party positions on cultural or economic Euroscepticism and how this affects vote choice. Future research should also consider understanding vote choices of non-voters, as those may be more actively mobilised through change in non-economic positions by RLPs. As previously found in the literature, those with authoritarian left-wing preferences are less satisfied with democracy (Hillen and Steiner 2020) and thus, may be less likely to participate in elections. If RLPs fill this demand, does the increase vote maximising come from mobilization of non-voters? This would be a very interesting future research path.

3. Gotta Catch ‘em All – Electoral Success of Position Blurring on European Integration

During the 2008 financial crisis and its aftermath, many voters became frustrated with the European Union. Radical left parties were able to use their anti-capitalist critique to gain votes from both Eurosceptic and pro-EU voters. Since then, how have radical left parties dealt with these very different groups of voters? This research looks at position blurring to understand if radical left parties can keep their diverse voter base by avoiding clarity on their EU integration policy position. To understand whether position blurring can contribute to the success of radical left parties, this research combines party and voter level data from the European Social Survey and Chapel Hill Expert Survey. The findings of this research show that when the electorate is largely in consensus on EU integration, radical left parties are more successful when presenting a clear position on EU integration. However, if the electorate is polarized on this issue, radical left parties can benefit from blurring their position. The broader implication of the findings is that position communication can be a crucial factor in determining voter's choice.

Keywords: Radical Left Parties, Political Parties, Issue Dimensions, European Union

3.1 Introduction

In popular culture, ‘talking like a politician’ usually refers to someone using a lot of words but not saying much at all. In political science research, the term position blurring is used to describe this communication style. Previous research on blurring has shown that it can be an effective way of gaining more votes while not changing a party’s ideological positioning. This so-called broad appeal strategy “aims to broaden the party’s constituency by convincing different groups of voters with diverse ideological preferences that the party would best represent their interests in office” (Somer-Topcu 2015:842). The radical right has been found to blur its positions and to gain electorally from this method (Rovny 2013). This paper shows that not only radical right parties are successful through position blurring but that parties on both extremes can benefit from this. By studying the effects of radical left position blurring, this research fills a gap in the literature through showing that polarization is an essential link to understanding when position blurring harms and when it can benefit extreme parties. We know from previous literature that position blurring can lead to electoral success and is more likely to be used in polarized environments (Somer-Topcu 2015; Rovny 2013; Rovny and Polk 2020; Han 2020). This research shows the electoral benefit of position blurring is conditional on a polarized electorate.

By drawing on data from the European Social Survey (ESS) (NSD 2018) and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) (Bakker et al. 2015), this research finds that in a polarized environment, radical left parties will be more successful if they blur their position on European integration. If the electorate however is in consensus on European integration, radical left parties will be more successful if they signal a clear position; in this case a clear position is rewarded over a blurred position. When the electorate is not polarized but also not in agreement with each other on their policy preference on EU integration, this research cannot find a significant difference

between the strategies of position blurring or position clarity. This means that while position blurring can be an advantageous move for radical left parties, it highly depends on the circumstances within the electorate whether the outcome is positive or negative. Further, this research finds that the electorate is sensitive to the clarity of radical left parties on EU integration and may punish radical left parties if they choose to blur in a homogeneous environment. Hence, this paper contributes to the study of position blurring by theorizing on the opportunity structures that allow for position blurring to become a successful path for parties, in particular radical left parties. Further, this paper contributes to the growing literature on specific campaign strategies of different party families (see for example Bergman 2016, Gidron and Mijs 2019).

The significance of this study relates to understanding how political parties can avoid losing voters when in polarized climates. As polarization is increasing across Western Europe, it is becoming essential for parties to adjust to this climate without having to change their policy positions. This research proposes position blurring as a possible way to avoid alienating polarized voters. I use the case of radical left parties for two main theoretical reasons. Position blurring is unlikely to be a viable strategy for parties that are frequently in office, as they will be held accountable by their voters. Therefore, fringe parties such as radical right and radical left parties are presented with a unique opportunity of position blurring. Most importantly, radical left parties have a diverse voter base on the issue of European integration. As previous research has found only limited benefit from a Eurosceptic position for radical left parties (Wagner 2021), they are incentivised to blur their position to avoid losing voters (Han 2020). This incentive is especially prominent when EU integration is a polarized issue in the electorate (Down and Han 2021). Thus, this study fills the gap of understanding whether position blurring can lead to electoral success and which conditions are necessary for this outcome.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: First, the position blurring for radical left parties (hereon RLPs) is discussed. From this, the research derives at its main hypothesis. Next, I present the research design in which I explain the case selection as well as the operationalization of the dependent and independent variables. In the analysis section, the models will be presented and analysed. Finally, I discuss the findings and mention avenues for further research.

3.2.Theory

3.2.1 Blurring and its benefits

From a spatial theory understanding, the policy positions a party takes is its most important strategic decision (Downs 1957). Voters have preferences on issues, along which parties position themselves. Spatial competition refers to the competition between parties to minimize the distance between their party position and the positions of the voters. The location of voter preferences is influenced among other through salience theory (Budge and Farlie 1983; Budge et al., 1987; Petrocik 1996). The original spatial theory is based on one dimension, however in later adaptations of the theory more multidimensional approaches were added (Chappell and Keech 1986; Enelow and Hinich 1989; McKelvey 1976; Schofield 1993). With party competition adjusting to multidimensionality, party strategy needs to go beyond ideological unidimensional left-right positioning. Multidimensional political spaces now consist of an economic dimension and a cultural dimension. With cross-cutting dimensions to position on, parties have a higher risk of losing voters along one of these dimensions.²³ Therefore, some parties will choose to emphasize one dimension over another or ignore this dimension (Rovny 2013). Through this latter tactic, the opposite of Riker's (1986) idea of shifting focus to issues in which the party will maximise their electoral success, heresthetics, is being enforced.

²³ For example, see Stoetzer and Zittlau (2015) who show that voter preferences on the economic and socio-cultural dimensions are non-separable.

A party having a vague position on an issue is also referred to as position blurring. It can be an effective way of gaining more votes while not changing the ideological positioning (and thus risking losing voters who are closest to the previous positioning). Position blurring evolved as “political competition is not merely a struggle over where a party stands” (Rovny 2012: 272) and as competition takes place through different dimensions (e.g. Hobolt and de Vries 2015). Though position blurring is defined according to Rovny (2013:5) as “vague, contradictory or ambiguous positions” on some issue or topic, it is not identical to shifting a position. Position blurring can “stem from absence of a position on a given issue; from a diversity of positions on the same issue; or from combining positions on related issues in contradictory ways, such as calling for higher spending and lower taxes” (Rovny and Polk 2020:249). Koedam (2021) finds that position blurring can be the result of three distinct strategies, namely avoidance, ambiguity and alteration. Ambiguity is also understood as broad appeal strategy, which “aims to broaden the party’s constituency by convincing different groups of voters with diverse ideological preferences that the party would best represent their interests in office” (Somer-Topcu 2015:842).²⁴ As a result, voters perceive the position of the party as closer to their own preference than it is in reality (Somer-Topcu 2015). Lin and Lehrer (2020) add some conditionality to this finding as they argue that the reduction of distance between the voter and party through position blurring can be reduced or even reversed when the voter perceives the party as internally divided.

A party’s position can arguably become blurred through intra-party heterogeneity or lack of party discipline. Yet, the idea of blurring a party position has also often been associated with party strategy (Somer-Topcu 2015). Though there is no clear consensus in the literature whether

²⁴ It is worth pointing out that there are distinct differences between position blurring, broad appeal strategy and issue diversification (Bergman and Platt 2020) and catch-all strategies (Kirchheimer 1966) due to their purpose and mechanisms (for more see Nasr (2020)).

position blurring is always a strategy, some recent research has shown specific incentives to understand when parties blur. Han (2020) argues that when voters are increasingly polarized, and when an issue is secondary to the party, a party is incentivised to blur the issue. More conditional arguments on whether parties take a blurry or centrist approach are presented by Enggist and Pinggera (2021) arguing that content specific positions on the welfare state also shape whether parties decide to blur or stay clear. Though it is interesting and important to know whether position blurring comes from strategy or lack of party communication, the focus of this research is whether or not position blurring could be electorally beneficial.

A party may blur their position when they need to cater to diverse voter groups. For instance, the radical right has been associated with position blurring on economic issues (Rovny 2013). While their voter base is unified on their policy preference on immigration and nationalism, they can be more diverse when it comes to economic issues. For example, the radical right's position on immigration can appeal to working class voters, who would prefer more pro-redistribution positions, but also to more middle class voters, who have preferences towards less taxation. In this situation, the radical right party can opt to blur their position on the economy, to avoid alienating one group. The AfD is a primary example²⁵ of position blurring as they have shown to blur on the economy (Franzmann 2016) while positioning clearly in terms of European integration. Importantly, while position blurring may be beneficial electorally, not all parties will always blur their positions. Therefore, it is important to understand what some of the possible downsides of position blurring might be that stops parties from applying this 'catch all' approach.

²⁵ Recently, some contrary evidence to the Rovny (2013) and Franzmann (2016) research on radical right parties and the AfD have been presented by Diermeier (2020).

As a dominant proportion of the literature has looked at ambiguity in an American or a unidimensional context, position blurring has been argued to be costly rather than beneficial to parties (Shepsle, 1972; Enelow and Hinich, 1981; Bartels, 1986; Franklin, 1991). For most parties, blurring can be harmful due to two factors (Shepsle 1972; Bartels 1986). Firstly, in unidimensional competition, position blurring is likely electorally dangerous as voters will be unsure if the party represents them or not. Previous examples of position blurring assumed that when a party blurs on one dimension, the other dimension will be unambiguous. If the political space is reduced to one dimension, voters will have little information on the party. Position blurring has been identified as beneficial only when exclusively used on a limited number of issues and not on the dimension as a whole (Rovny 2013). If party systems are more uni- than multi-dimensional, blurring will likely be harmful.²⁶

The biggest risk is that position blurring is understood as party unclarity rather than the party being close to the voter's preferences (Ezrow, Homola and Tavits 2014). This is especially relevant if a voter sees a candidate as an information short cut and then lacks clear information due to their own uncertainty on their position (Koch 2018).²⁷ Furthermore, through entering government, the opportunity of being vague about policy diminishes (Koedam 2021). As parties will be held accountable for the issues they talked about (whether clear or not) when in government, it is far more likely that voters will perceive position blurring as position unclarity by the parties. This will likely cause electoral harm to those parties in following elections. This is one of the reasons why position blurring is unlikely to be adapted by office-seeking parties or parties likely to be in office.

²⁶ This is especially relevant for niche and extreme parties, as they are more likely to compete on one dimension and not multiple dimensions and thus, "blurring positions on other dimensions may be beneficial" (Rovny 2013:6).

²⁷ This could in turn speak to the social psychology literature which discusses that quantity of information and ambiguity of the information manipulates the degree of certainty the person will have (Tajfel, 1969; Vickers et al 1985).

The question of where the difference between voters perceiving position blurring as unclarity or close proximity comes from, may be found in the way an issue is framed within the general electorate. In many countries, we have seen a decline of polarization along the left-right dimension and an increase of polarization on the issue of European integration (Evans 2002). An issue becomes polarized, “when there are at least two different opinions” (De Wilde 2011) and further, when there is increasing distance between positions (Bauer 2019). This has affected parties in government, as “an increase in polarization on European integration by opposition parties may force government parties to take a clear-cut stance on the issue, which could destabilize the government coalition” (de Vries 2010:96). This means, that as indicated earlier, government parties cannot easily use blurring as a strategy to avoid addressing polarizing issues.

However, when parties are not in government, this could be beneficial when the electorate becomes polarized. As shown by Han (2020), electorate polarization can incentivise parties to blur on issues that are secondary to them. When the electorate is polarized, position blurring can address an issue, without sacrificing one pool of voters. When the electorate is homogeneous on an issue, this mixed messaging would more likely be perceived as inconsistency, and by valence measures, most likely incompetence. Yet, we do not know if the findings presented by Han (2020) work in favour of parties. Though Han (2020) showed that the incentive to blur for parties is higher in polarized environments, we do not know if this blurring helps to solve the dilemma parties find themselves in. Can position blurring in polarized environments benefit parties electorally as suggested by Somer-Topcu (2015)?

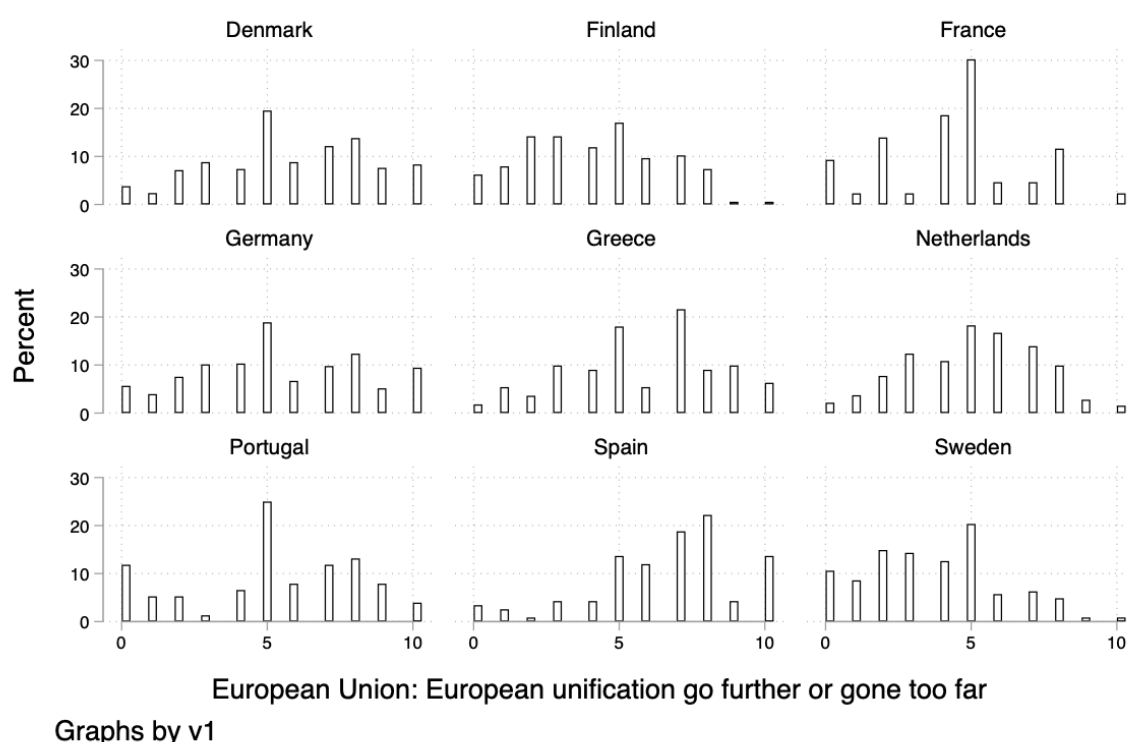
3.2.2. RLPs and Issue diversity on EU integration

Koedam (2021:2) finds that for the study of position blurring the issue of EU integration is a “particularly appropriate domain for testing its theory, as it offers a salient but relatively new political conflict in European politics”. Further, Down and Han (2021) have shown that when it comes to the propensity of voting for the far right, electorate polarization and the behaviour of the far right towards EU integration plays a major role. As EU integration is key to understanding the role of electorate polarization in the vote for an extreme party and also to understand the causes of position blurring, EU integration is an important issue to analyse closely when it comes to the electoral success of position blurring during electorate polarization.

Following Elias *et al* (2015) review of party competition theories, RLP leadership would have four different strategies in a two-dimensional setting which they could employ. They could selectively emphasise their first dimension while ignoring their second dimension, adopt a vague strategy on the second dimension (Rovny 2013), employ a subsuming strategy where parties reframe second dimension issues to their core issues or a two-dimensional approach where they have two distinct positions on each dimension. According to March’s (2011) definition, RLPs oppose the ‘socio-economic structure of contemporary capitalism and its values and practices ... They advocate alternative economic and power structures involving a major redistribution of resources’ (March, 2011: 8). This means that the key issue of radical left parties are left-wing economic policies such as redistribution and taxation of the wealthy. For the radical left, blurring on the economy would not be rational. Their potential voters traditionally align with radical left parties on economic preferences. This also means that there is no real diversity on this issue for potential RLP voters as they are in agreement with RLPs on redistribution.

While the relationship of radical left voters to their position on redistribution and economic policies in general is quite clear cut, not all issues are understood along the economic left-right dimension. European integration has been understood as cross-cutting to the economic left-right dimension. This is especially relevant for the radical left, as voters with left-wing economic preferences may have diverse takes on European integration. For example, European integration can be understood as contributing to a better chance at a welfare state through free movement and open borders in the European Union might. At the same time, left-wing voters may see European integration as contributing to worse working conditions for the “losers of globalisation” (Kriesi et al 2008). Figure 3.1 shows a histogram of frequencies of opinion on the European Union by participants who voted for the radical left in their last national election. From Figure 3.1 we can very clearly see that the majority of answers are in the centre. This is not a surprise, as the question of European unification is rather specific.²⁸ However, the more interesting part is that the answers are mostly not significantly skewed towards one direction. This means that there are no clear tendencies to be more against or more in favour of the European Union among those who have voted for a radical left party.

²⁸ Further, in survey behaviour research shows that the middle answer is most common. However, when comparing these descriptive statistics to answers on the left-right scale, we can see that radical left voters are skewed heavily in the left direction (see appendix). Therefore, this might be also a result of the issue in question.

Figure 3.1. Histogram of frequencies of Support for EU.

Note: 0 indicates that EU unification has gone too far and 10 indicates that it should go further. Figure only includes participants who votes for an RLP in the last election. European Social Survey Data from 2002-2018. Percentage of RLP voters in each country are between 13 and 2 per cent (see appendix).

The distribution of answers visualised in Figure 3.1 means that RLPs on aggregate have a very diverse voter group on the issue of European integration. This, on its own, is unsurprising considering that ideologically speaking, there is no optimal standpoint for a radical left voter on the European Union. As the descriptive data from Figure 3.1 is aggregated across election years, we could be missing some election-specific tendencies. Some parties will have a more pro-EU reputation (such as the Green Left Party in the Netherlands) others will have a very clear Eurosceptic stance (as the Danish party Red-Green Alliance did until the last election). Obviously, for those countries with historically or institutional strong ties to a position on the EU, an incentive to bridge potential voters is less likely to present itself.

European integration has moved away from a niche technocratic topic, to a more salient issue for parties and voters (Franklin and Wlezien, 1997; Van der Eijk and Franklin, 2004). Therefore, frequently voters will not only choose what parties they will vote for based on their proximity between their own preference and the party position on economic issues but also on European integration. As the RLP voting base has a diverse preference on EU integration, radical left parties need to find a way to position themselves on the EU, while also not losing a part of their voters. Though the literature has shown that a Eurosceptic position is beneficial for RLPs, this benefit is constrained significantly when radical right parties enter the party system (Wagner 2021). Thus, simply positioning themselves in favour of the EU, or vice versa, may not be the most vote maximising strategy for radical left parties.

Blurring can create a closer perceived proximity between the policy position of a party and the preference of a voter (Somer-Topcu 2015). This can be useful for parties if a party's potential voter base has diverse or even polarized opinions. If voters are considering voting for an RLP due to their close proximity on redistribution, voters may also look at the congruence between themselves and other issues. As EU integration is a polarized issue in many recent elections, the likelihood of potential voters of RLPs disagreeing with the position of an RLP on EU integration is high due to the diversity of opinions on the EU among the RLP voter base. Han (2020) provides evidence to show that the incentive for parties is highest, when the electorate is polarized. As Somer-Topcu (2015) argued that blurring can benefit parties, this research examines whether the incentive found in Han (2020) is also rewarded. Therefore,

Hypothesis: If RLPs blur their position on EU integration when the electorate is more polarized on EU integration, the likelihood of voting for an RLP will increase.

While this research is focused on extending the finding of blurring being incentivised in polarized electorates, it is also likely that polarization itself has an effect on vote choice. For example, Satori (1976) argues that polarized systems experience more intense political debates. While polarized system differs from general polarization, it is likely that there is a positive relationship between electorate polarization and intense public debate on an issue. For example, Grover et al (2019) find that through increased social media discussions, polarization impacted vote choice in the 2016 US election.

3.3 Method

In the following part, I present the research design of this paper. I will start with describing the logic of the case selection, before discussing the operationalisation of the dependent and independent variables.

3.3.1 Data

In order to test the hypotheses about voting for a RLP, this research makes use of data from the European Social Survey (ESS). More specifically, this research uses multiple rounds of the ESS, between the years 2002 to 2018. On average four rounds were used for each country. The rounds excluded were due to lack of information on the voters' position on European integration, which is one of the key explanatory variables. Not all countries available in the observations in the ESS were included in the sample; ten countries were selected due to the availability of an RLP in the party system. I relied on March (2011) to identify radical left parties. This research makes use of EU countries only, as the main variable of interest is blurring on EU position. Based on this classification, I included the following countries into the analysis: Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Netherlands, Portugal, Finland and Sweden. An exact list on the countries and ESS rounds can be found in the appendix.

3.3.2 Dependent variable

The dependent variable is the reported vote choice of citizens. In order to analyse this, the operationalisation of the dependent variable looks as follows. From the ESS, a binary variable was created classifying whether an individual voted for an RLP in the previous election (1) or not (0). As there are some contexts in which there are multiple RLPs competing in the same election, the main RLP was identified. This has been found to be stable in the robustness checks and more details can be found in the appendix.

3.3.3. Explanatory and control variables

The main explanatory variables in this research are the blurring of RLPs and the polarization of the electorate. Similar to the latent concept of policy positions of political parties, measuring position blurring shows similar difficulties as there are numerous different approaches to blurring (Somer-Topcu 2015). As a result, the following operationalisation of variables like position blurring and electorate polarization have been operationalised according to the standard methods of the literature (Rovny 2013; Somer-Topcu 2015; Han 2020).

In order to operationalise one of the key explanatory variables, position blurring of RLPs, I make use of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) between 1999-2014. The CHES measures position of the party leadership on economic and non-economic issues, such as European integration. It is set up by asking experts in the relevant countries to position the parties on these various issues and then takes the average. This research makes use of expert instead of manifesto or press release data for the following reasons. While both manifesto and press release data are useful sources to understand policy positions of parties, operationalising position blurring would come with noise and inconsistencies. As some parties ignore controversial issues in their manifestos and press releases, the expert data provides the most

reliable data. Further, experts are likely to take into consideration manifestos, speeches and campaigns for their expertise and will provide a more balanced observation of political party behaviour. Moreover, voters are unlikely to be reading party manifestos and therefore, experts' assessments are likely closer to voters' perceptions.

Although the most recent wave of CHES in 2019²⁹ provides a measurement of position blurring of party leadership, by asking experts on their opinions of whether or not parties blur on European integration, the data is very limited by only one year. Therefore, this research is making use of the previous waves of CHES through operationalising position blurring through standard deviation (SD) of expert judgement on party leadership placement, following Rovny (2013) and Han (2020). The advantage of this is that the measure takes advantage of a greater variety of the dataset by providing expert uncertainty. Though the measure comes with some uncertainty in itself, as it does not directly measure position blurring but could also be capturing noise through experts' possible lack of knowledge on the specific parties. Following Rovny (2012), this research checks in Table 3.1 whether smaller parties take advantage of this and are more likely to receive high blurring scores as experts will be less likely to have in-depth knowledge on them by controlling for vote share. Table 3.1 shows that party size in vote shares does not drive their blurring. Figure B1 shows the distribution of the variable. There are no cases of less than 5 experts estimating the position of the party.

Polarization of the electorate, or perceptual disagreement of the electorate, is coded using survey questions asking respondents to locate their policy preferences on European integration.³⁰ The perceptual agreement measure was developed by van der Eijk (2001) and is

²⁹ See appendix for comparison with direct 2019 measurement. The 2019 data cannot replicate the findings in the earlier literature on the radical right and can only partially replicate the theory of this paper on the radical left.

³⁰ The exact question is: "Now thinking about the European Union, some say European unification should go further. Others say it has already gone too far. Using this card, what number on the scale best describes your position?"

used to create a scale with fixed bounds between 0 (indicating polarization) and 1 (indicating complete agreement among the electorate).³¹ The reason this variable is based on the entire electorate in a given country and year are as follows. First, this way we get a more realistic understanding of the perception that the voters overall have on the European integration. While in some countries the issue is highly controversial and divides the voter base, in others this issue is less controversial and there is general agreement among the voters. Therefore, using a variable that can give us an indication of the general trends within a country, we more fully also understand how the issue is most likely talked about in media and where voters get their information from. Secondly, using the overall electorate rather than just an assumption who we think may fall within the RLP base is a more conservative test of the theory. We avoid overemphasising the RLPs voter base by making an assumption that only people who identify as far left will also vote for an RLP. The left-right self-identification scale is however still used as a control in this research using a left-right self-identification variable.

An important control is the actual position of RLPs on EU integration. As shown in Wagner (2021), left-wing voters are more likely to vote for RLPs if they are Eurosceptic. Therefore, the position is important and should be understood independently of the position blurring on European integration. The variable is operationalised using the CHES averages of the experts' responses. Further, the position of RLPs on the economy is also included as their ideology on redistribution is key to their party identity and they have also been found to be more successful with more moderate economic positions (Krause 2020). Another control is also the positions of mainstream parties, in which the main centre-left and centre-right parties of each were selected following Abou-Chadi and Wagner (2020). The presence of a credible RRP was recorded when

³¹ The distribution of the agreement variable is limited. This means that we do not find cases in our data where there is extreme polarization detected. Therefore, on top of using the margins command from Stata, robustness checks simulating data using the CLARIFY method (Tomz, Whittenberg, & King, 2003) were carried out. The results of the robustness checks and simulations can be found in the appendix.

their vote share exceeded 3% (Abou-Chadi and Wagner, 2020). An additional country level control is unemployment as it has been shown to be related to vote choice for RLPs (Ramiro and Gomez 2017).

Age, education and social class have also been used as controls in this research. The class coding is based on the category scheme by Oesch (2006). Class is coded into eight separate categories and is controlled for due to some contradictory evidence on class voting behaviour for RLPs. While the electorate of RLPs has predominantly consisted of working-class votes (Moschonas 2002), other research found that recently it has become more difficult for RLPs to stay in touch with the working-class voter base (Knapp, 2004) and the focus has shifted towards public service while collar workers (González, 2004). As support for European integration has been linked to education background (Hakhverdian et al. 2013), level of education is controlled for using three categories (tertiary; upper secondary and non-tertiary; lower secondary or less). Other controls in the results below are individual-level sociodemographic variables, including a binary gender measurement and a continuous age measurement.

The model in this research is operationalised using linear instead of logistic regressions, in order to make the results more interpretable and to be able to safely include interaction and fixed effects (like nested models) (Beck 2018; Freedman 2008).³² Further, there is ample literature to support using linear instead of logistic regressions for the case of binary variables (Angrist & Pischke 2009; Woolridge 2002). All results can also be found in the appendix using logistic regression models.

³² Further the appendix also includes graphs comparing the logistic and linear results showing the high collinearity between the outcomes.

3.4 Results

Table 3.1 shows that one of the main explanatory variables, blurring of RLPs on EU integration, is not driven by RLPs being smaller parties. Table 3.1 shows where the experts in the CHES surveys of the years 1999, 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2014 were significantly more or less certain about the economic placements and the positions on EU integration of the different party families.

The pattern between the radical right and the radical left is important to note here. As already noted by Down and Han (2021), the incentive of blurring is related to the issue being of primary or secondary nature to the parties. As we can see in Table 3.1, the radical right's primary issue (Euroscepticism) is clear, while the secondary issue (redistribution) is blurred. This is reversed for the radical left, with their primary issue (redistribution) being clear and their secondary issue (EU integration) being blurred. The experts were also significantly less certain about both the mainstream left on EU integration, which follows the Down and Han (2021) findings. The mainstream right does not show any significant results on EU integration. The parallels between extreme parties makes this a very interesting case and the reason why examining the radical left is particular interesting.

Table 3.1: OLS Regression results of Ambiguity of Party Families

	(1) Economic Standard Deviation	(2) EU Standard Deviation
Radical Left	-0.179*** (0.059)	0.092* (0.050)
Mainstream Right	-0.012 (0.060)	-0.079 (0.051)
Mainstream Left	-0.067 (0.072)	-0.119* (0.061)
Radical Right	0.767*** (0.069)	-0.121** (0.059)
Percentage of Votes	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.007*** (0.002)
Constant	1.103*** (0.032)	0.959*** (0.027)
Obs.	563	564
R-squared	0.226	0.104

Standard errors are in parenthesis

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

As suggested by the theory above, RLPs are less likely to blur on redistribution than other party families. The data shows some indication that RLPs blur more than their competitors on EU integration however this is not robust to other operationalisations of position blurring. This is not surprising according to the theory presented above, as RLPs blurring decision is depended on the incentive presented to them through the electorate (Han 2020). It is important to note that although RLPs may be more likely to blur on EU integration, they will not always blur. Thus, position blurring on EU integration is not fundamental to this party family. Rather, they sometimes blur their position on the EU, and this research examines under which conditions this can lead to electoral success.

Following from this, we are now moving to the main analysis of this paper. As the theory above argues, voters will be more likely to support a blurred position on the EU by an RLP if the electorate is polarized on the issue. As European integration is cross-cutting to the main economic left-right dimension, economically left-wing RLP voters will be cut across the salient European integration issue. When there are higher levels of polarization, RLPs will be more

likely to lose voters if they have a clear position on European integration. As voters are likely to position themselves on opposite ends of the dimension, voters incongruent to the position of the RLP will be less likely to vote for them. If the circumstances are not polarized and the electorate is in consensus, this would no longer be the case. In this situation, voters would probably not disagree in high numbers with each other and therefore, a clear position is more likely to gain votes. More specifically, a blurred position is more likely to be punished as this would indicate that the party does not have much competency on the issue.

Table 3.2 uses a linear fixed effects model nested in countries to account for its hierarchical nature. Using clustered standard errors to account for clustering within the country years, this model shows that there is a positive significant relationship between polarization within the electorate and RLPs blurring on the probability of voters deciding to vote for an RLP. As the interaction effect is a little more complex to interpret using the table alone, Figure 3.2 provides a heatmap to understand the overall interaction dynamic and Figure 3.3 is a more precise visualisation of the significance of this dynamic.

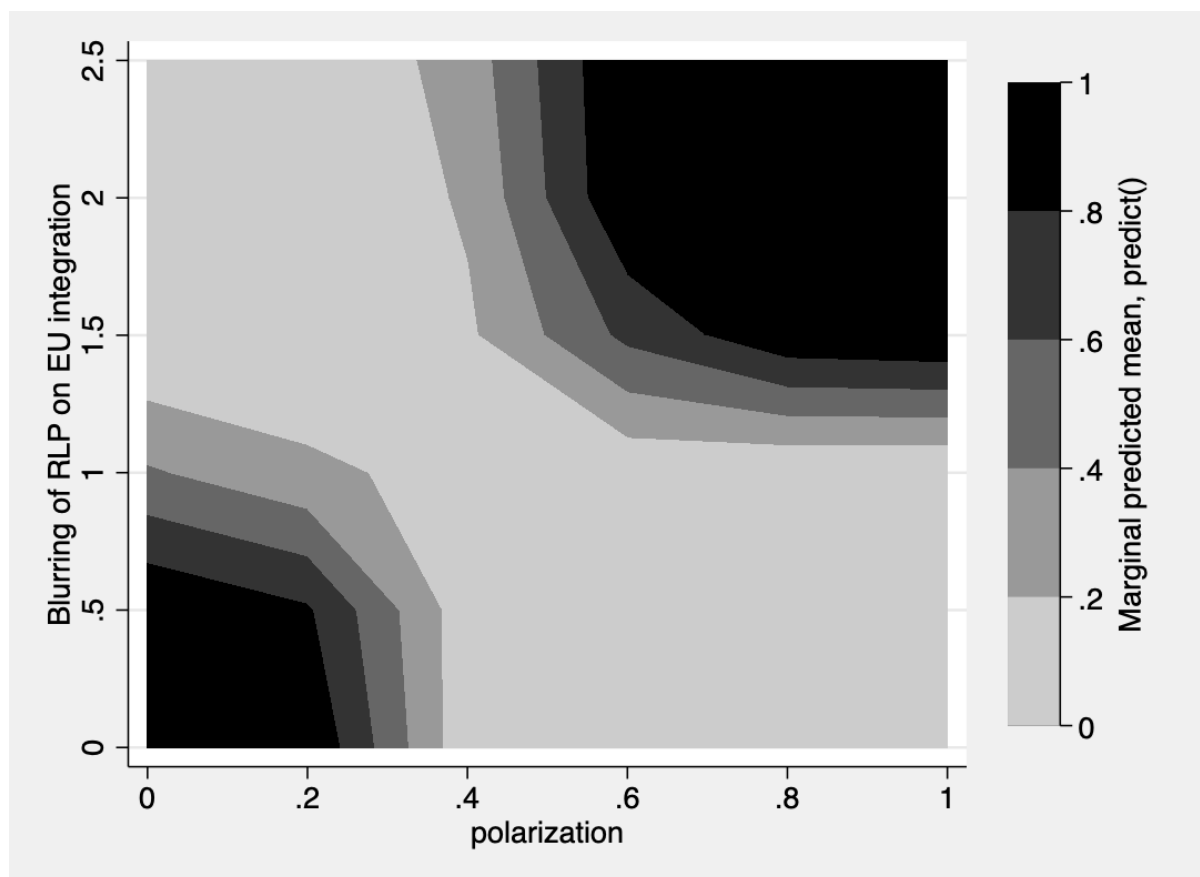
Table 3.2: Fixed Effects Linear Regression with Clustered Standard Errors

	RLP Vote Choice
Polarization	8.593*** (.304)
RLP EU Blur	3.476*** (.137)
Polarization x RLP EU Blur	-9.081*** (.36)
Left Right Self-Identification	-.038*** (.007)
<i>Level 1</i>	
Education: Upper Sec. +Non Tertiary	.008 (.009)
Education: Tertiary	.021 (.011)
Small Business Owners	-.001 (.011)
Technical (semi-)professionals	-.01 (.014)
Production workers	.002 (.015)
(Associate) Managers	-.003 (.018)
Clerks	-.004 (.023)
Socio-Cultural (semi-) professionals	.018 (.017)
Service Workers	.01 (.017)
Age	0*** (0)
Gender	.005** (.002)
<i>Level 2</i>	
RLP EU Position	-.348*** (.012)
Mainstream Left EU Position	1.593*** (.054)
Mainstream Right EU Position	.032*** (.002)
Radical Right Presence	-.255*** (.006)
RLP Economic Position	.537*** (.019)
Unemployment Rate	-.102*** (.003)
Constant	-12.231*** (.45)
Observations	19189
Level 2 Units	7
ICC	.889
R-squared	.137

Standard errors are in parentheses

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Figure 3.2. Interaction between level of polarization among the electorate on EU integration and the degree of blurring by RLPs on EU on the predicted probability of voters choosing to vote for RLP.



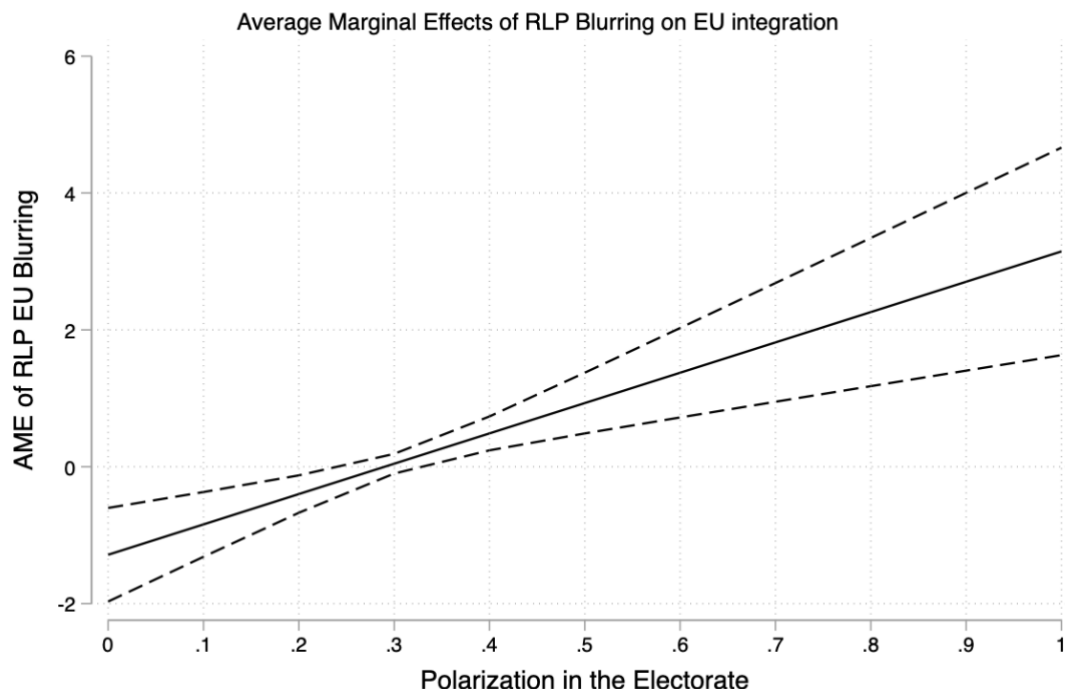
Note: 0 indicates consensus and 1 indicates polarization among electorate on EU integration.

Figure 3.2 shows an interaction effect between polarization of the electorate on EU integration and the blurred position of RLPs on EU integration. Figure 3.2 shows a heatmap indicating darker tones for higher predicted probability of a voter choosing to vote for an RLP and lighter colours for voters not choosing to vote for an RLP. In Figure 3.2, a clear reverse effect is displayed. The less polarized the electorate is, the higher the likelihood of voters choosing an RLP will be if the RLP is clear on its position on EU integration. The opposite effect is demonstrated if the electorate is highly polarized. In this case, RLPs can be successful by blurring their position on EU integration, and therefore communicating a closer perceived proximity. Yet if the electorate is not in agreement, meaning that the opinions on the EU widely

range in different directions, RLPs cannot prevent losing voters by blurring or by providing a clear position. Figure 3.2 is a heatmap and does not provide confidence intervals, however shows clearly that the directionality of the hypotheses holds.

In order to visualise Table 3.2 with confidence intervals, Figure 3.3 shows the average marginal effects RLP blurring on EU integration. This means that a unit increase in blurring of an RLP on EU integration, held constant at a certain level of polarization, will lead to a change in the dependent variable – vote choice of RLP. So, to understand this using one case specifically – if polarization is low (between 0 and 3), we can see that the effect of a one-unit increase in blurring of an RLP on EU integration will lead to a decrease on the probability of a voter choosing to vote for an RLP. If we however look further up the x-axis, when polarization is higher (in this case between 4 and 1) an increase in blurring for an RLP on EU integration will lead to a higher likelihood of a voter choosing to vote for an RLP. This graph shows support for the hypotheses.

Figure 3.3. Interaction between level of polarization among the electorate on EU integration and the degree of blurring by RLPs on EU on the average marginal effect of voters choosing to vote for RLP.



Note: 0 indicates consensus and 1 indicates polarization among electorate on EU integration.

To clarify, the above graph displays the average marginal effects (AME), not predicted probabilities. The AME shows the effect on the probability and therefore displays the average change in probability when position blurring increases by one unit at each point of electorate polarization. The AME computes this for each individual and the average is taken. In the above graph, we can see that the results go beyond 1. This is due to the operationalisation using a linear model. A replication of these results using a logistic regression can be found in the appendix.

3.5 Conclusion

Many parties find themselves in the position where their potential voters are in agreement with them on their main issue but are in disagreement with the party on some other, secondary issue. Usually this should not be a problem for the party, as the issue is in nature secondary. However, what if such an issue becomes more prominent in the general public and elections? In this case, parties need to deal with this issue without running into the risk of losing voters. Indeed, this is a position many RLP leaders find themselves in. Thus, this paper proposes that blurring their position on European integration could be a way to avoid losing voters. However, is blurring a voter “catch all” at all times? The literature has shown that blurring is likely to be risky at the ballot box, as it can lead voters to believing a party is incompetent due to its lack of position on an important issue. Thus, only in very extreme circumstances, such as electorate polarization, does blurring help their dilemma.

Using cross national party and voter level survey data, I find that when the electorate is highly polarized on their policy preferences on EU integration, RLPs can take advantage of position blurring and be rewarded for it at the ballot box. In this case, blurring can help to function as a “catch all” of both, Eurosceptic and pro-EU voters. However, in many contexts EU will not be a polarized issue. In these cases, RLPs could obviously still blur. However, they would be electorally either not rewarded or punished. As Han (2020) shows, in a non-polarized environment, RLPs will also be less incentivised to blur. Therefore, this research shows that when incentivised, blurring is also electorally beneficial. This is an important finding, as we can see that position blurring can yield positive results for the party using it.

Although the blurring strategy literature is extensive (Rovny 2013; Somer-Topcu 2015; Rovny and Polk 2020; Bergman and Flatt 2021) and more recent literature has shown why some parties blur their positions (Han 2020; Koedam 2021), the electoral success of position blurring has yet

to be understood through more careful conditionality. Thus, this research contributes to the literature by focusing on how electoral polarization can determine the success or failure of position blurring at the ballot box. Further, this research contributes to the overall literature on RLPs and their electoral prospects by understanding not their redistribution position but a dimension cross-cutting to their main ideological standpoint. The implication of this research is the significance of single issues like EU integration for issue entrepreneurial parties like the radical left. Furthermore, this research looks at blurring of their position and underlines the significance of multidimensionality and cross-cutting dimensions. The findings of this research can be applied beyond the EU integration issue as it has been shown that position blurring on a particular issue can have overall effects on where voters perceive parties on the left-right dimension (Nasr 2020). Overall, this research shows that being unclear on an issue can, sometimes, be rewarded by the voters.

This research opens some new questions on party strategies. Therefore, following this research, the relationship between position blurring and salience should be examined. As issue salience and polarization do not always go hand in hand (Kriesi et al 2012), examining the impact of salience on the findings would be very useful. A limitation of this research is the lack of data to determine whether position blurring is a strategy or rather happens through miscommunication of the leadership or intra-party dissent. This would help make clear whether parties actually have the ability to implement position blurring as a strategy, similar to position shifts. Future research should investigate this strategy issue in more depth and understand whether position blurring is frequently intra-party heterogeneity or directly comes from the leadership. As the data at hand is rather scarce on the polarization distribution, future research should also use more further research should be done on the relationship between position blurring, polarization and vote choice beyond EU integration.

4. Examining voters' positions on Europe and attitudes towards the radical left

Coauthored with Royce Carroll, University of Essex

Research in the last decade has highlighted the importance of European integration for political competition in Western Europe. Though the literature has shown the significant impact of this issue on the radical right and mainstream parties, little attention has been paid to the implications for the radical left. This research looks at the extent to which European integration can impact the electorate's propensity to vote for a radical left party. Our research design focuses on the radical left party in the Netherlands and makes use of the data available in the Dutch Election Surveys conducted between 2006 and 2017, which provides four distinct policy areas with self and party placements, allowing us to calculate continuous and comparable ideal points for respondents via Aldrich-McKelvey scaling across these areas. The results show that Euroscepticism consistently predicts voters' propensity to support the radical left party Dutch Socialist Party. We find that this effect is independent of a respondents' policy preferences on income redistribution or immigration. Further, these effects have increased across the period under study, which previous research suggests has coincided with a growing focus on European integration. The study shows how a Eurosceptic position in conjunction with a public focus on European integration allows radical left parties to widen their voter base beyond their left-wing economic roots, even in the presence of a successful Eurosceptic right-wing populist party.

Keywords: Political Parties, Electoral Behaviour, European Integration, Multidimensionality

4.1 Introduction

The typical radical left party voter base is understood as voters with left-wing economic preferences. Although arguably the economic left-right dimension still plays an important role in party competition, voters have also recognised other newly salient dimensions and issues. For example, European integration has in the past decades increasingly gained in salience in European elections (Dalton 2018). The increasing politicisation of European integration has also contributed to voters' opinions towards the European Union. Voters have opinions on whether or not their respective countries should get more involved or even remain members of the European Union. This development has been especially noticeable as radical right parties have gained more prominence in Western European party systems. Radical right parties usually occupy extremely Eurosceptic positions; due to the nationalist issue ownership of the radical right, their voters are traditionally in congruence with them on their European positions. Extensive research has been undertaken on the role of Euroscepticism in voting for radical right parties; we in turn know very little about the impact of voters' European integration preferences on the radical left.

This paper focuses on the impact of the European integration issue on voters' attitudes towards the radical left. If radical left parties benefit electorally from holding a Eurosceptic position, the question arises as to whether voters' European views are actually influencing their propensity to vote for a radical left party. This research examines this puzzle using the case of the Netherlands, which provides two major advantages for pursuing this question. First, it supplies multiple years of election survey data to study respondents' positions on multiple issue scales, including party placements. This allows us to both distinguish between economic and cultural ideology from the individual ideological properties governing Eurosceptic attitudes and carefully measure European attitudes in such a manner as to allow a comparable scale. The paper extends previous research on voters' positions on Europe by using a scaling method

designed to account for perceptual bias. By using this method on specific issues like European integration, immigration, redistribution – in addition to left-right – this research is able to more precisely identify how European integration affects support for a radical left party.

In addition, the party system in the Netherlands has since 2006 included both radical right and a Eurosceptic radical left party with parliamentary representation, providing a context that represents typical European party system dynamics in the age of salient party competition upon post-material values and allows us to investigate the potential for a radical left party to benefit from Euroscepticism where a right-wing populist party has succeeded.

We argue and demonstrate empirically that voters' European integration preferences substantially shape their propensity to vote for a radical left party. Our analysis of Dutch individual-level election study data between 2006 and 2017 finds results consistent with the claim that the issue of European integration plays an important part in voters' attitudes towards radical left parties. Specifically, this research shows that the propensity to vote for a radical left party increases with individuals' Eurosceptic views, even when fully taking into account policy positions on redistribution and immigration. Moreover, although radical left parties are characterised primarily by support from those with pro-redistribution positions and are mainly identified by their left-wing economic views, the tendency for increased Eurosceptic views to lead to support the radical left is present across the full range of respondent views on redistribution and immigration.

We provide evidence for this general pattern and establish that it is present in all years under study. However, we also find that the strength of this effect has increased markedly across this period, with the radical left benefiting more substantially in the most recent survey. This pattern corresponds to case literature describing the growing salience of Europe and globalisation during this period.

We present results focusing on the self-reported propensity to vote for the radical left. By examining how likely voters will be to vote for a radical left party in the future, this paper dissects the extent and direction of how Eurosceptic preferences lead to support for radical left parties, even among those with a low probability of voting for them. The advantage of this approach is that we avoid over- or underestimating the effect of Europe due to vote shares fluctuating for reasons irrelevant to the research question. However, we also include a robustness check of the analysis using a binary reported vote choice operationalisation in the appendix, which is consistent with the main results.

This research on the demand side of Euroscepticism and voters' attitudes towards the radical left has important implications for studying electoral behaviour and citizens' representation. By controlling for voters' preferences on immigration and redistribution, we can better isolate the distinct role of the voter position on European integration. This is a challenge due to the multidimensional nature of the European integration issue, but drawing this distinction is especially important in the context of radical left parties, as voters might be more likely to vote for them based on anti-capitalist Euroscepticism or cultural Euroscepticism. Examining a clear European integration position can also be crucial for studying how voters react to other parties, such as the decline in support for pro-European centre-left parties. Overall, the paper adds to the growing literature on the nature of support for radical left parties in Western European countries.

In the remainder of this paper, we proceed as follows. We begin by discussing our assumptions about the structure of the political space and our expectations about the electoral choices of individuals who are likely to support radical left parties. We then discuss how this may be affected by the increased importance of the question on European integration. Next, we detail our methodological approach by discussing the challenge of studying voters' responses on issue scales. We propose a solution for establishing consistency in this measure by estimating party

placements in a common space rescaling for potential bias in perception. The Dutch election surveys provide a means to apply this method due to its inclusion of issue scales on Europe, income redistribution, and immigration for both respondents and party placements from 2006 to 2017. Next, we summarise the party placements and voter distributions on the measure of European integration preferences before then illustrating role of voters' European position on the propensity of voting for the Dutch radical left party SP. We conclude by summarising our results and discussing their implications, and posing questions for further research.

4.2 Theory

An extensive body of literature has examined vote choices of the electorate in their placements of themselves and parties on the unidimensional left-right scale (Jou 2010; Klingemann 1972; Laponce 1970; Sani 1974). Often this is done to understand how congruent voters are to the parties that they choose to vote for (Andeweg 2011; Belchior 2010; 2012; Giger et al. 2012; Golder and Stramski 2010; Mattila and Raunio 2006). According to Inglehart and Klingemann (1976), the left-right self-placement of voters has three key components: partisan identification, social background of the voter and ideological values. Freire (2015) has found that identity is an important part of left-right placement of individuals. Moreover, recent literature has reported that left and right could also be understood as a group identity for voters (Claassen et al. 2015; Devine 2015; Ellis and Stimson 2012; Popp and Rudolph 2011) and the labels of "left" and "right" are symbolic identifiers of those groups (Conover and Feldman 1981; Mason 2018; Vegetti and Sirinic 2019).

When voters are given these left-right scales to determine their own but also parties' placements, they are more likely to accurately associate specific policy positions with the left-right scales for political parties than for their own left-right self-placement (Lesschaeve 2017).

Similar results were found by Lachat (2018), showing that left-wing citizens attribute more weight to redistribution on the left-right scale, while a stronger relationship exists between the left-right scale and sociocultural issues for right-wing voters. Beyond this, salience can change the emphasis on specific issues and influence the left-right scale of voters immensely (Giebler, Meyer and Wagner 2021).³³ This pattern extends to cohorts, as van der Brug and Rekker (2021) found that self-reported left-wing voters from different cohorts may choose to vote for different parties as the emphasis of issues differs amongst those parties.

This ultimately shows that the meaning of left-right changes over time (de Vries, Hakhverdian, and Lancee 2013) and that factors outside of policy positions contribute to this (Giebler, Meyer and Wagner 2021). De Vries, Hakhverdian and Lancee (2013) show that between 1980 and 2006, Dutch voters over time became more heavily reliant on their anti-immigrant attitudes than redistribution preferences when placing their left-right position. Moreover, Otjes (2016) shows that the Dutch left-right dimension shifted towards a European-focused dimension after 2006. Therefore, although it is the most widely available measure of political preferences, the current research question requires measures beyond the left-right dimension to fully analyse how issues impact voting behaviour.

4.2.1. The Multidimensionality of EU Preferences

The issue of European integration has increased in salience over the past decade and has polarised electorates (Marks and Steenbergen 2004). Some scholars have argued that European integration has been incorporated into the left-right dimension (Hix et al. 2006; Kreppel and Tsebelis 1999; Noury and Roland 2002). Though left-leaning parties have tended to subsume their European Union position through economic regulation, and right-leaning parties

³³ This can also have an effect on party strategy, as by blurring or de-emphasizing an issue, voters will partially or completely discount the issue when placing the left-right position of the party (Nasr 2020).

understand their support for the European Union through economic integration (De Vries and Edwards 2009), understanding the issue of European integration through a unidimensional left-right scale often overlooks the complexities of the issue. This becomes especially noticeable when observing the difference in European positions between those parties in the centre and those on the extremes.

For those reasons, the European Union is often considered a multidimensional issue (Hobolt and Brouard 2010; Boomgaarden et al. 2011). This means that support of or opposition to the EU can have several different motivations. The multidimensionality of the European Union issue is sometimes captured through multiple frames, including cultural, economic and other utilitarian frameworks (Hooghe and Marks, 2009; Lerch and Schwellnus, 2006; McLaren, 2007, van Spanje and de Vreese 2014). While it is often difficult to separate the different frames and dimensions from one another, it is essential to contextualise the opposition of voters to the European Union.

Since European integration has been increasing in salience since the 1990s (Hooghe and Marks 2009), the relationship between citizens' perceptions of the European Union and parties' responses have become essential to understanding the voting behaviour of European electorates. In this research, we revisit the important literature on voting behaviour beyond left-right by examining the way in which citizens' attitudes on Europe shape the propensity to vote for a radical left party.

4.2.2. The Supply-Side of the European Integration Debate

The positions of political parties on EU integration shape public opinion (De Vries and Edwards, 2005; Franklin et al. 1994; Gabel and Scheve 2007; Janssen 1991; Ray 2003; Steenbergen and Jones 2002; Steenbergen et al. 2007; Weßels 1995). Thus, understanding the positions of parties on EU integration and analysing the perceived positions of parties on EU integration by the public are both important factors in dissecting the impact of this issue on voting behaviour.

Political parties are traditionally associated with having formed distinct ideologies along an economic left-right dimension. This means that left-wing parties like socialist or centre-left parties are typically found to favour redistribution, while those parties we typically find on the right, like conservative or Christian democratic parties, are associated with free-market ideals (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Though European integration is understood as a multidimensional issue and happening independently of the dominant political conflict (Gabel and Anderson 2002; Hix and Lord 1997), mainstream political parties in Western Europe usually hold pro-European integration positions (Crum 2007). This is especially relevant for social democratic parties but also usually includes centre and centre-right liberal and conservative parties. Notable exceptions³⁴ aside, these party families are traditionally associated with endorsing further integration across a cultural, political, and economic dimension (Crum 2007). Apart from their pro-integration positions, mainstream parties often avoid emphasising their pro-EU positions (Green-Pedersen 2012; Meijers 2017).

Eurosceptic parties have been considered a ‘touchstone of dissent’ (Taggart 1998). Not least because this preference is commonly only found in the extremes of the left-right dimension. As the divide on Europe seems to be between mainstream and extreme parties, literature has

³⁴ The anti-EU position of the UK Conservative Party is an exception to this rule (Hooghe et al 2002; Marks et al 2002; Taggart 1998).

described this as an ‘inverted U-curve’ (Hooghe et al. 2002; Marks and Wilson 2000). This means that while mainstream parties typically support integration, opposition is commonly found on the outside of the political mainstream, in radical right- and left-wing parties (Crum 2007; Hooghe et al. 2002).

Although both radical left- and right-wing parties are associated with opposition to the European Union, their Euroscepticism is not equivalent. As the European Union is a multidimensional issue, the opposition to such is also multi-faceted. Radical left parties are traditionally understood as rejecting the European Union on the basis of its undermining of the national welfare state through capitalist ideals and institutions, while radical right-wing parties are commonly found to oppose the European Union for cultural and migration reasons (Hooghe et al. 2002; Marks and Wilson 2000).

4.2.3. The Demand-Side of European Integration

Though there is a clear understanding of the salience of European integration in general public discourse and among political parties, the impact of EU issues on voting behaviour of the electorate is inconclusive (Carrieri 2021). European integration is an important topic for voters, especially when European integration is frequently in public focus through debates in the media, parties positioning on the issue and general public salience on EU integration; this affects the clarity of the positions of the parties on these issues (Hobolt and Spoon 2012; Hobolt et al. 2009; Van Spanke and de Vreese 2014; De Vries 2010; De Vries et al. 2011; De Vries and Hobolt 2016). EU issue voting is defined as “the process whereby individual preferences over European integration directly influence the voting choices in national elections” (De Vries 2010: 92). Voters have been found to express their views on European integration not only in European Parliament elections, but also in national elections (Evans 1998; Gabel 2000; Schoen

2008). At the centre of the debate has frequently been national membership to the European Union (Tillmann 2004; De Vries and Tillman 2011).

Yet, the literature has identified a lack in translation between preferences of the electorate on European integration and their voting choices (Van der Brug et al. 2007; Van der Eijk and Franklin 1996; Reif and Schmitt 1980; De Vries 2007). Similar to political parties, voters' attitudes towards European integration are not easily conceptualised through the left-right dimension; the more polarised EU issues got, the more distinct the nature of this dimension has become (Van der Eijk and Franklin 2004). This naturally has contributed to some conflict for voters, as parties are likely to not represent them equally well on all these dimensions (Lefkofridi et al. 2014). Thus, voters may have to prioritise one dimension over the other in order to make their vote choice. A prominent example of this is in support for the radical right, where voters have been found to prioritise their sociocultural preferences over their economic preferences (Ivarsflaten 2005). In these cases, when confronted with distinct dimensions, voters may not be able to weigh their preferences and perceived distances between themselves and the parties equally (Lefkofridi et al. 2014).

Voters' Eurosceptic preferences are likely to root these opinions in economic or sociocultural reasons. Some research has suggested that these origins of Euroscepticism are two sides of the same coin and should thus be part of a single explanatory frame, as voters' Euroscepticism is essentially based on a perception of integration threatening their identity – whether this is in a cultural or economic sense (De Vries and Van Kersbergen 2007). In both cases, this economic or sociocultural threat perception is likely to contribute to opposition towards European integration. Scholars have frequently found that economic factors are important indicators for electoral behaviour (for instance see Tilley, Neundorff, and Hobolt 2018), and more recent findings have shown that country- and individual-level income changes affect electoral choices, though to differing degrees (Bechtel and Liesch 2020). Further, Bechtel and Liesch (2020)

show that electoral choices will be sensitive to both gains and losses of personal income. Beyond the socio-cultural factors, scholars have found that voters' Euroscepticism can stem from more specific concerns regarding the European Union (for instance the benefit – or lack thereof – the EU has for their home countries) (Van Spanje & De Vreese 2014). Though fully understanding the origins of voter preferences on European integration is beyond the scope of this paper, research has shown that voter preferences can stem from mass media cues and their agenda setting (McCombs & Shaw 1972; Popkin 1991).

An issue deeply rooted in the sociocultural dimension of opposition to European integration is immigration (Kriesi et al. 2006; 2008). The issue of immigration must therefore be accounted for when trying to understand the connection between European integration and voter preferences, as immigration can be a strong proxy for a nationalistic/cosmopolitan divide on the cultural dimension (Carrieri 2021). Immigration encompasses all those policies related to refugees and immigrants, as well as citizenship, integration and inclusion (Green-Pedersen 2019). Because of the strong link between Euroscepticism and immigration policy preferences, the latter is likely to proxy for sociocultural opposition to the European Union.

Salience of European integration has increased tremendously in the past years. A lot of research has examined the supply-side effects of European integration on political parties and their positions. For example, Wagner (2021) finds that radical left parties benefit electorally from taking a Eurosceptic position instead of a pro-EU position. Given that a radical left party has a Eurosceptic position, an important question remains as to whether the opinion of voters on European integration is actually driving support for the party. While voters that would consider voting for the radical left are likely to have pro-redistribution opinions, an important question is whether European integration influences potential voters. While the salience of European integration could imply that the pool of potential voters may be strictly to those who align with radical left economic and European positions, such appeal may also cut across the economic

dimension and broaden the voter base. We argue that European integration plays a role in voters' decisions sufficient to increase support for the radical left. Beyond this, we argue that voters' positions on the European Union will contribute to their propensity of voting for a radical left party, independently of voters' redistribution and immigration positions. Given that the radical left party takes a Eurosceptic stance, the propensity of voting for a radical left party should increase as voters become more anti-EU integration.

Hypothesis: As voters' preferences become more Eurosceptic, voters' propensity to vote for a radical left party increase.

4.2.4 Case of the Netherlands

The Netherlands is an especially good case to analyse voters' preferences on European integration and its influence on radical left parties. Firstly, as argued in the literature, there is a huge divide in positions on European integration between those parties in the mainstream and those on the margins. Thus, the Netherlands provides a great case since its fragmented multiparty system includes multiple mainstream and extreme party families (Van Ditmars and De Lange 2018). Party competition in the Netherlands is historically structured along a socio-economic dimension, and, since the increase in salience in immigration, a sociocultural dimension (Pellikaan et al. 2018). The Dutch system provides three mainstream parties, which can be found in the Christian democrat (CDA), liberal (VVD) and social democrat party (PvdA) families. The three mainstream parties are established parts of Dutch democracy and have had a stable presence in the party system since World War II (Van Ditmars and De Lange 2018). Some niche parties include the CU, D66, GroenLinks and SGP. The CU and SGP focus on religious and moral values, such as abortion and euthanasia. D66 is a liberal party known for

its vocal pro-European integration views. GroenLinks is a green party, which takes progressive positions on immigration and European integration.

The Netherlands is an example of both a radical left and a radical right party being in parliament simultaneously for multiple elections in a row (Akkerman et al. 2017). Geert Wilders' Party for Freedom (PVV) has been one of the most successful radical right parties in Europe and has a strong ideological foundation in populism and nativism (Akkermann et al. 2017, Bos et al. 2010; Vossen 2010). They first entered parliament in the general election in 2006 with 5.9 per cent of the vote share. They continued to expand their vote share after first entering parliament, with almost tripling their vote share to 15.4 per cent in 2010. The Dutch radical left party SP has been in national parliament since 1994 and is a former communist party. Due to its historical institutionalisation, the SP focuses on its left-wing economic position, but also its anti-elite, anti-establishment position. This anti-elite rhetoric has been especially prominent after the financial crash in 2008 (Van Kessel 2015). Due to its outsider mentality, SP is often considered a 'populist socialist party' (March 2012; March 2007; Voerman 2009).

Between 2006 and 2012, these two extreme parties gained in electoral success (Schumacher and Rooduijn 2013). Due to their long-term presence in the party system, scholars have argued that they are no longer simply perceived as protest parties but have become part of the system, and through their presence in parliament they are less likely to successfully employ an anti-elite discourse (Schumacher and Rooduijn 2013). For example, the SP increased its vote share from 6.3 per cent to 16.6 per cent in 2006 and in 2010 polls even suggested that SP might gain more votes in the election than the PvdA and become the strongest left-wing party in parliament (Schumacher and Rooduin 2013). The SP is also known to have taken a Eurosceptic position, based on economic insecurity arguments. The SP was part of the Dutch referendum campaign

in 2005, arguing that the neoliberal institutionalisation of the European Union is a threat to the Dutch welfare system (Koole and Raap 2005).

4.3 Data and Methods

4.3.1 Addressing differential item functioning in self-placement data

To address how the voters' ideological positions influence political competition and representation, we must disentangle the roles of policy preferences on redistribution, European integration, and immigration. For this, we must measure each voter's position on each of these questions so that these positions are comparable across respondents. A key advantage of studying the case of the Netherlands is that the Dutch Election Study (DES) includes party and self-placement on multiple issues. Surveys conducted since 2006 have been the presence of four distinct party placement exercises that coincide with analogous self-placements. These are rarely conducted in representative samples due to the large number of questions required for each issue. Each of the four surveys conducted since 2006 include the commonly used left-right party and self-placements, but are accompanied by an economic ideology placement question specific to income redistribution, as well as separate placement questions on European integration and attitudes toward immigration. The presence of these party placements with consistent inclusion of the radical left Socialist Party makes this a unique dataset to examine how the demand for Eurosceptic policy intersects with the policy positioning.

One of the substantial problems in predicting political behaviour based on self-placement is the matter of bias in perceived locations. Although there is widespread use of ordinal self-placement scales, particularly for left-right, it is often the case that voters vary in their understanding of the meaning of the scale. First, they may have vastly different notions of the meaning of centre and extreme positions, for example, placing themselves as relatively centrist while defining this in a way as to place most comparators on their right. Second, some may

perceive the ends themselves as having different meanings, for instance perceiving what most observers would see as left-wing views as being labelled by the right side of the scale. In short, voters may lack a common framework for understanding the meaning of ideological positions. This problem can be magnified by the complexity of issues beyond left-right, such as positions on European integration, which can have less of an established structure of semantics used by the general public.

This issue is sometimes addressed with methods such as anchoring vignettes (King and Wand 2004) where artificial prompts are used to provide benchmarks. For existing survey data, it is necessary to make use of the available survey instruments. In the case of political ideology one approach to this that can be applied to many existing surveys is the Aldrich-McKelvey scaling procedure (Aldrich McKelvey 1977, Palfrey and Poole 1987, Armstrong et al. 2020), which makes use of individuals' placements of stimuli on the same scales as their self-placements. Aldrich-McKelvey scaling makes use of the relationship between individual self-placements and placements of common stimuli -- usually, political parties or politicians -- on the same scale to adjust for the perceptual bias that occurs due to one's own positional perspective. Estimating a series of party placements and respondent locations that best reproduce the data while separately accounting for parameters capturing individual bias and reversed perception of the scale results in a bias-adjusted stimuli placement and a corresponding series of respondent ideal points. Using this adjusted scaling output, a 'common space' continuous measurement of each respondent's perception of locations as well as an estimate for the overall perceived location of the stimuli.

4.3.2. Explanatory and Control Variables

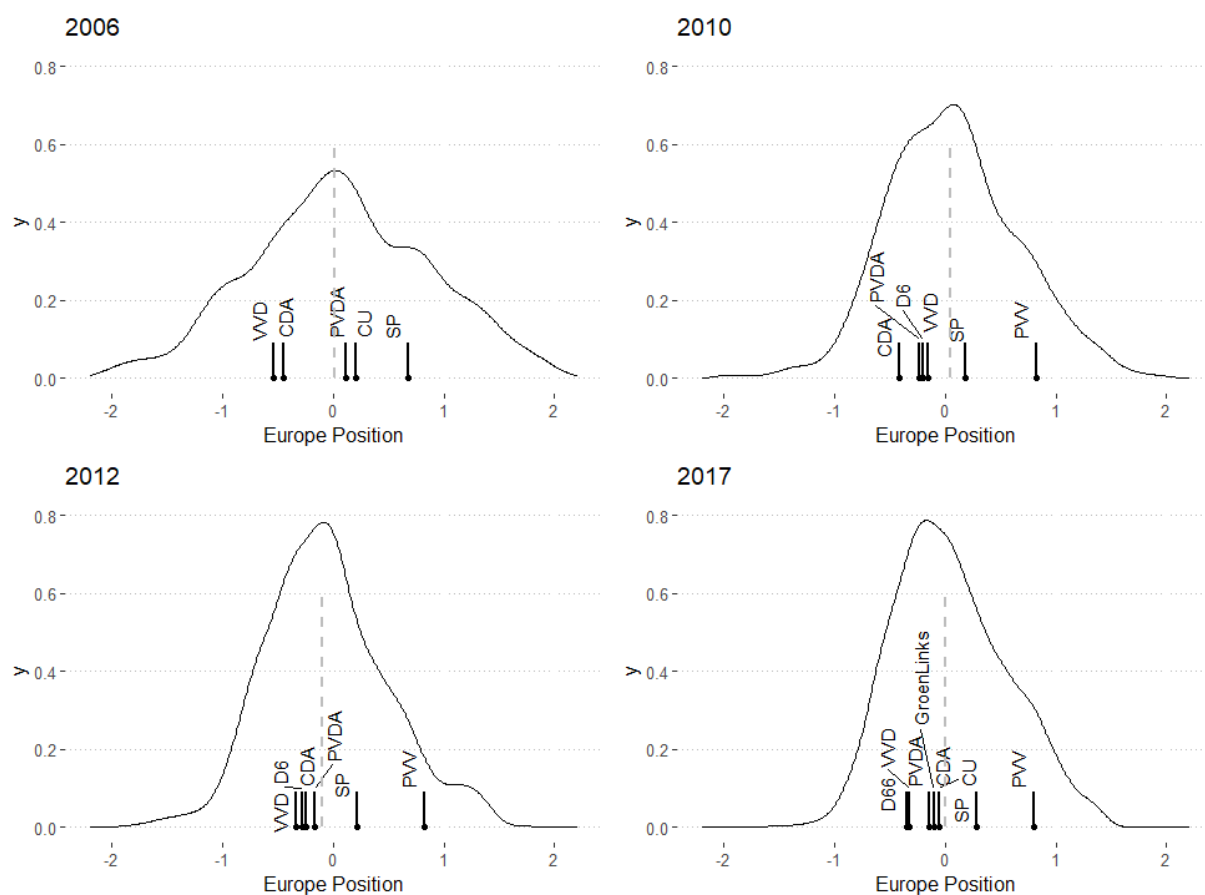
We conducted Aldrich-McKelvey scaling procedure (Poole et al. 2016) for four sets of self and party placements in the DES, Europe, income redistribution, immigration, and left-right.³⁵ For redistribution, SP consistently has a perceived location as the most extreme party on left-wing redistribution policy preferences, as well as left-right position. On openness to immigrants, SP's perceived position is relatively liberal, although notably less so than the main liberal competitors on the left, Green Left and PvdA.

The European Integration position of voters is the main independent variable of this study and is worth describing in some detail. In Figure 4.1, we plot the estimated party placements and respondent ideal points for European integration resulting from the A-M scaling for each survey year available. Note that while the party and respondent stimuli in each year are on a comparable scale, the data from different years are not on a common scale because they are scaled separately. In 2006, the then newly-formed radical right-wing party, PVV, was not available as a party placement item; hence SP's perceived position among the electorate was the most Eurosceptic among the available party stimuli. SP was strongly differentiated in voter perception from the relatively pro-Europe cluster mainstream parties, thus presenting a clear outside alternative as a protest against European integration. The most notable distinction about 2006 is that the SP position on Europe was relatively distant from that of the median voter's Europe position. Since 2010, however, a majority of voters are more Eurosceptic than the average perceived location of the mainstream parties. For the remainder of the years however, the SP's position on Europe is actually closer to the voters median than that of mainstream parties. Thus, while SP's position on redistribution places it as a 'niche' party relative to the

³⁵ The survey questions can be found in the appendix.

electorate, its relative position on Europe is much more representative of the electorate as a whole.³⁶

Figure 4.1: Ideal Points for Europe Policy and Perceived Party Positions in the Netherlands 2006-2017. Pro-EU (-2) to Eurosceptic (2).



4.4 Analysis

In the following we present a series of regressions of the ideological foundations of propensity to vote for SP. Our independent variables are the array of relevant spatial locations of respondents derived from the estimated results described above.

³⁶ As expert surveys do not indicate a change in the SP's relatively Eurosceptic position on Europe during this time, the apparent change in the perceived SP location relative to the electorate is more likely due to change in the distribution respondent preferences, although the current analysis does not allow us to establish this firmly.

The first of these is the ideal point for European Integration (*Europe*), our main explanatory variable discussed in the previous section. We then include several other key independent variables. First the ideal point for Income Redistribution (*Redistribution*), which allows us to capture the strictly economic aspects of leftist ideology that would feed into voting behavior. Second, we include the ideal point for immigration (*Immigration*), which allows us to account for the aspects of preferences related to globalisation that are more strictly tied to immigration, such as the cultural impacts. Third, we also include a model that makes use of the ideal point for the left-right dimension (*Left-Right*). Although this naturally correlates with elements of each of the other preferences, especially *Redistribution*, this allows us to establish the robustness of the effects of respondent position on *Europe*. Finally, we include four control variables widely shown to influence general voting tendencies: age, gender, education and class.³⁷ We include fixed effects for the year of the survey data.

Table 4.1 presents the results of our analysis. In our first model, we include ideal points from each of the three policy dimensions, *Redistribution*, *Immigration*, and *Europe*. As we would expect, a pro-redistribution position is the strongest predictor of voting for SP. However, a more Eurosceptic position on Europe also has a sizable impact on the propensity to vote for SP. That is, SP's ability to appeal to voters grows systematically in proportion to their anti-Europe stance. Meanwhile, a pro-immigration position also predicts a greater interest in the SP as a possible vote. These patterns suggest that the SP appears to benefit mainly from the opposition to the EU that is less tied to the immigration concerns per se. In the second model, we introduce the Left-right ideal point variable. Although this is correlated with other measures, the Europe effect remains in the presence of this variable.

³⁷ Education is measured as highest completed level of education and class is based on the self image social class assessment of the respondents.

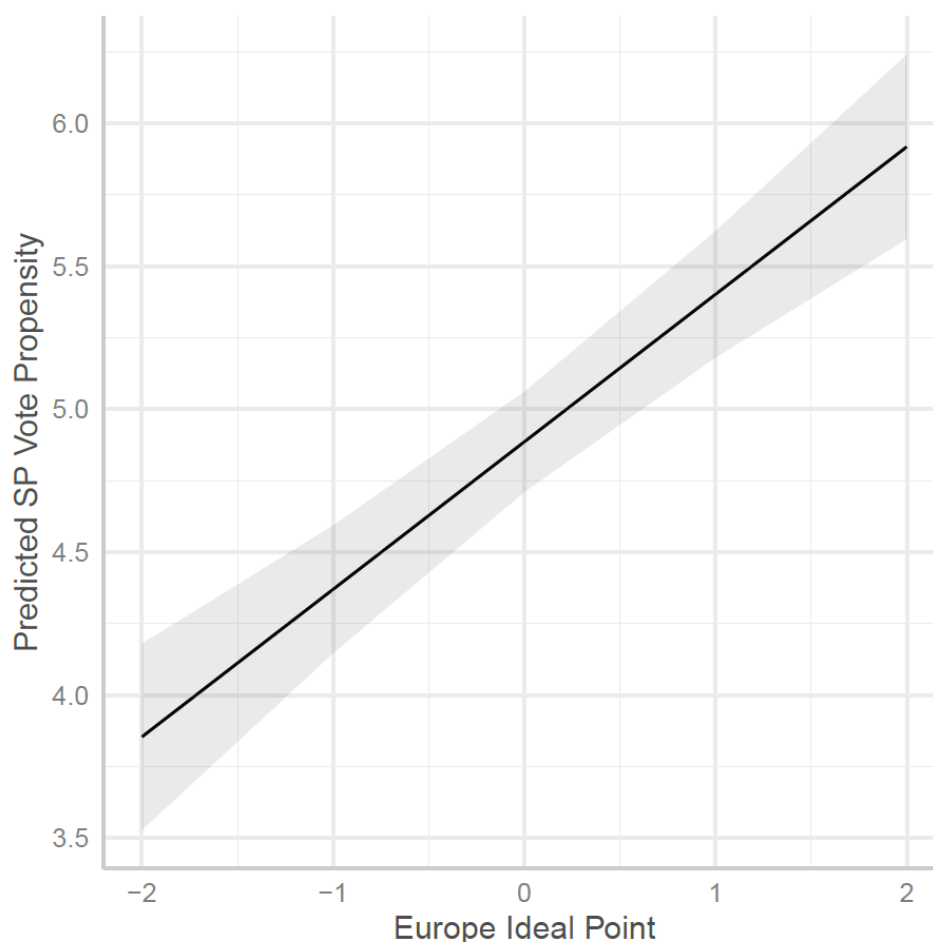
Table 4.1. Determinants of Self-Reported Probability of Voting SP

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
(Intercept)	4.17 *** (0.35)	5.32 *** (0.34)	5.31 *** (0.34)	5.31 *** (0.34)
Ideal Point Redistribution	-2.17 *** (0.09)	-1.17 *** (0.10)	-1.17 *** (0.10)	-1.15 *** (0.10)
Ideal Point Europe	0.44 *** (0.07)	0.52 *** (0.07)	0.54 *** (0.07)	0.25 * (0.11)
Ideal Point Immigration	-0.74 *** (0.07)	-0.35 *** (0.07)	-0.35 *** (0.07)	-0.40 *** (0.08)
Ideal Point Left-Right		-2.46 *** (0.12)	-2.46 *** (0.12)	-2.50 *** (0.12)
Ideal Point Europe x Ideal Point Redistribution			0.11 (0.14)	
Ideal Point Europe x Ideal Point Immigration			0.04 (0.10)	
Ideal Point Europe x Ideal Point Left-Right			-0.52 ** (0.17)	
Age	-0.02 *** (0.00)	-0.03 *** (0.00)	-0.03 *** (0.00)	-0.03 *** (0.00)
Gender	0.28 ** (0.09)	0.09 (0.09)	0.08 (0.09)	0.08 (0.09)
Class	0.36 *** (0.05)	0.29 *** (0.05)	0.29 *** (0.05)	0.29 *** (0.05)
Education	0.00 (0.04)	-0.07 * (0.04)	-0.07 (0.04)	-0.06 (0.04)
Year 2010	0.27 * (0.11)	-0.05 (0.11)	0.00 (0.11)	-0.07 (0.11)
Year 2012	-0.26 (0.13)	-0.48 *** (0.13)	-0.42 ** (0.13)	-0.51 *** (0.13)
Year 2017	-0.12 (0.14)	-0.31 * (0.13)	-0.25 (0.13)	-0.37 ** (0.13)
Ideal Point Europe x Year 2010				0.23 (0.17)
Ideal Point Europe x Year 2012				0.41 * (0.20)
Ideal Point Europe x Year 2017				0.87 *** (0.21)
R ²	0.28	0.37	0.37	0.38
Adj. R ²	0.27	0.37	0.37	0.37
Num. obs.	3486	3264	3264	3264

The subsequent models reported in Table 4.1 are intended to establish the robustness and consistency of the effect of *Europe*. First, in Model 2, we include the *Left Right* position measure, noting that the effect of Europe actually increases slightly with a control for this abstract dimension. In Figure 4.2, we plot the predicted values of SP vote propensity from this

model, which shows that the most Eurosceptic voters are substantially more likely to vote for SP than those with the most pro-Europe position.

Figure 4.2: Effects of Europe Ideal point on Propensity to Vote for SP. Pro-EU (-2) to Eurosceptic (2).



In Model 3, we interact Europe with two of the other positions, *Redistribution* and with *Immigration*.³⁸ The objective here is to determine if the effect of Europe on increasing the SP vote propensity is dependent on one's domestic-economic or international-cultural policy positions. These results of these interactions are shown in Figures 3 and 4, which show that the substantive differences among the slopes for *Europe* are minimal across the range of values for positions with regard to economic and cultural ideology. Although *Redistribution* has an effect

³⁸ For ease of interpretation, we dichotomise the continuous variables in the graphs below using the R package *ggeffects*, where representative values are chosen (for more see Lüdtke 2018).

overall on voting for SP, it does not influence the degree to which the Europe position plays a role in voters' willingness to consider this choice. *Immigration* has a smaller overall effect on voting for SP, but similarly does not condition the effects of *Europe*. These patterns suggest that, though only sufficiently left wing voters have a *high probability* of voting for SP, voters of all ideological stripes *increase* in their willingness to consider SP by a similar margin when their own European integration position is more Eurosceptic. The SP has drawn a nearly equal amount of additional support due to higher voter Euroscepticism across a full range of voter positions in both key domestic economic and international cultural policy issues in European politics.

Figure 4.3: Effects of Europe Ideal point on Propensity to Vote for SP, by redistribution Ideal Point. Pro-EU (-2) to Eurosceptic (2).

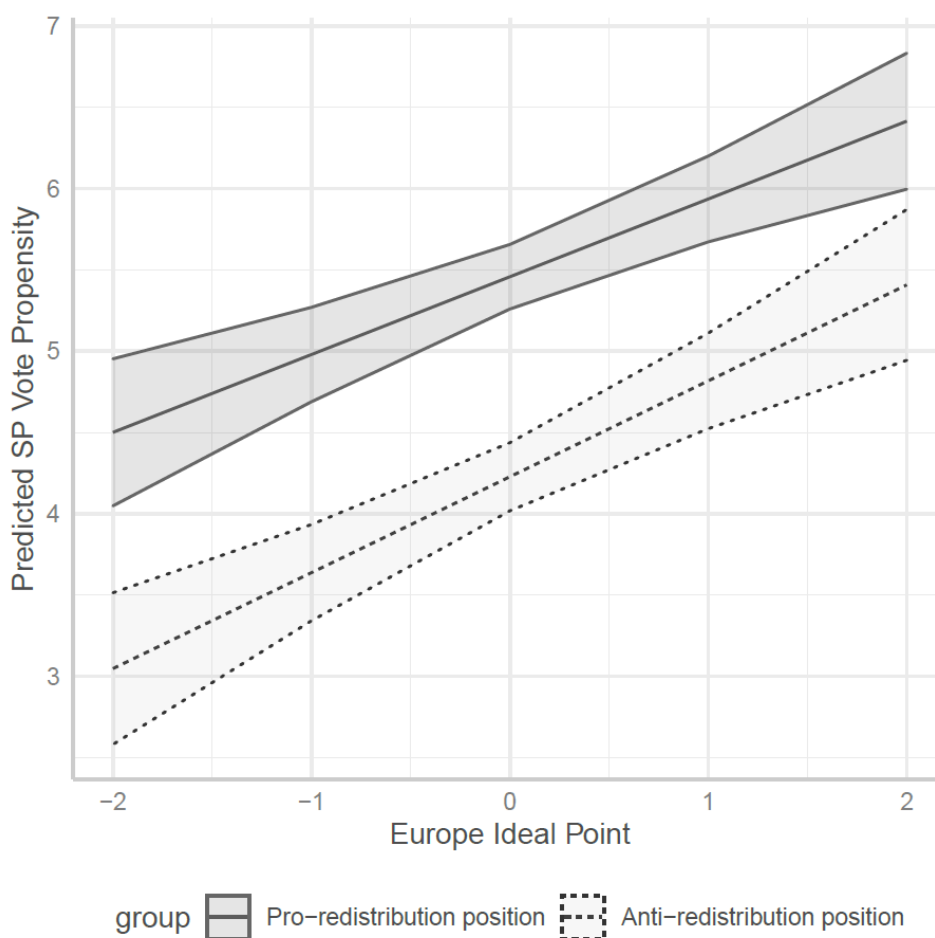
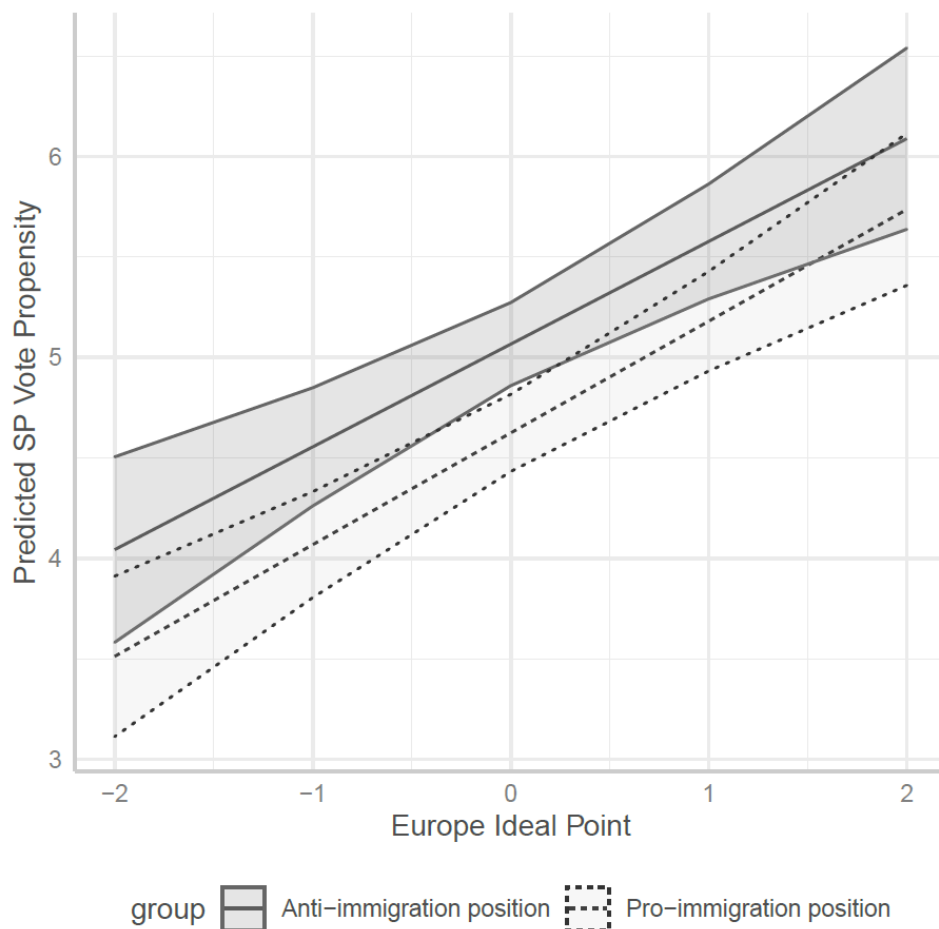
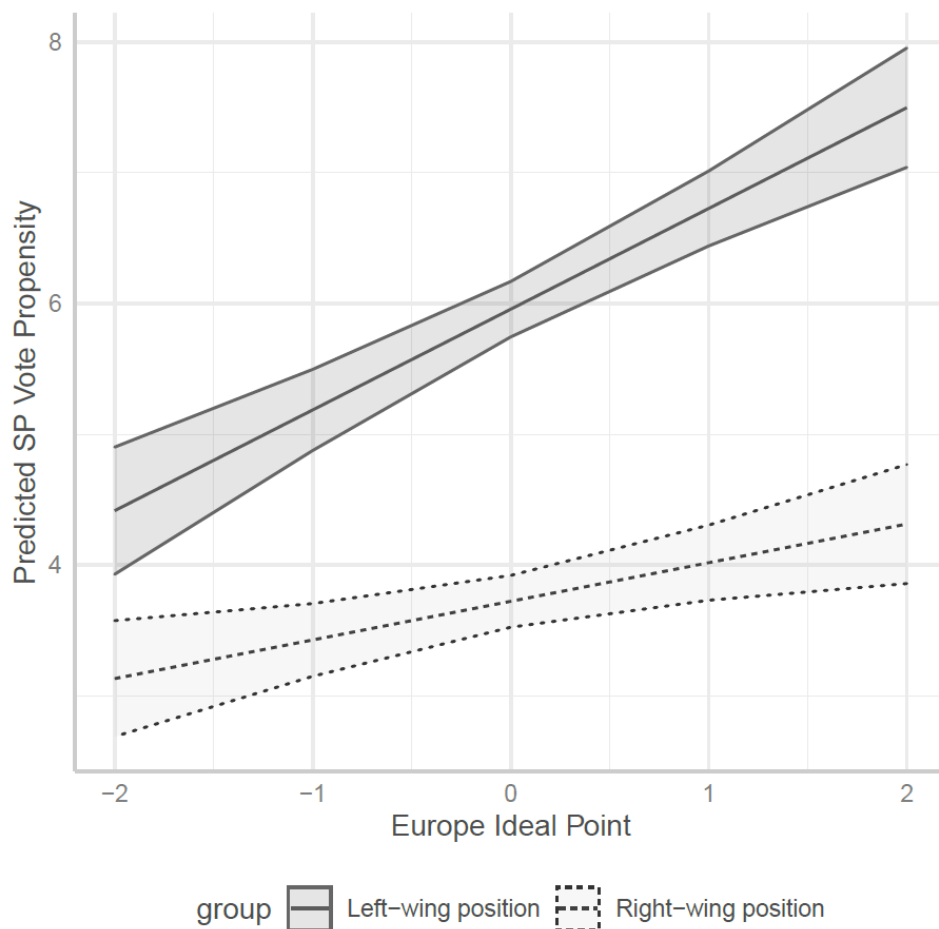


Figure 4.4: Effects of Europe Ideal point on Propensity to Vote for SP, by Immigration Ideal Point. Pro-EU (-2) to Eurosceptic (2).



Finally, in this same model we also include an interaction with *Left-Right*. Here we do find some indication of a conditional effect, shown in Figure 4.5. That is, for those that perceive themselves to be left – holding constant their actual positions on the key policy areas *Redistribution* and *Immigration*– the effect of Europe is far greater in influencing their self reported propensity to vote for SP.

Figure 4.5: Effects of Europe Ideal point on Propensity to Vote for SP, by Left-right Ideal Point. Pro-EU (-2) to Eurosceptic (2).

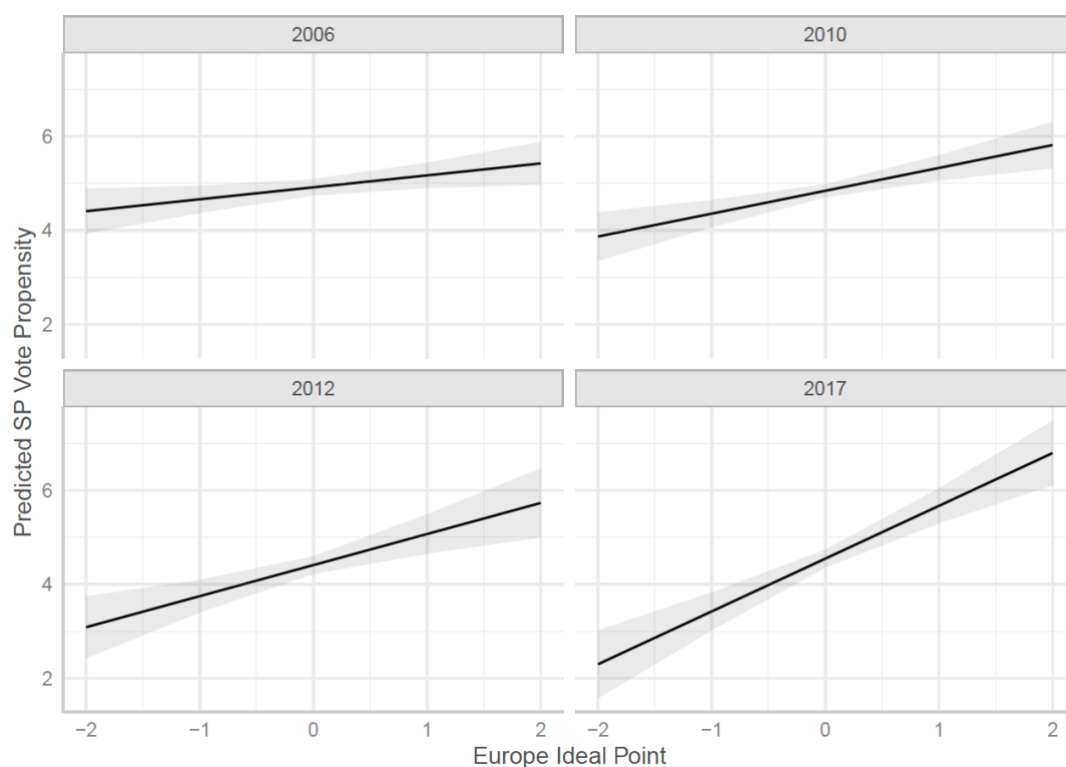


This latter result reinforces the findings of Wagner (2021), in which the positive impact of a Eurosceptic position on radical left party success is conditional on voters' having a more left-wing self placement. In the context of the results presented above for the specific policy of *Redistribution* and *Immigration*, the implication of this result is that only the respondents' explicit right-wing identity provides resistance to the effect of Euroscepticism in supporting the SP, independently of objective policy positions on the key economic and cultural dimensions. This is in line with previous literature that has argued that the abstract notion of left-right is a more prominent group identity variable than an equivalent of an economic issue preference (Inglehart and Klingemann 1976; Claassen et al. 2015; Devine 2015; Freire 2015; Mason 2018), and extends this point even to the issue of cultural dimension represented by immigration preferences. Further, the results show that while a Eurosceptic preference is most relevant for

left-identifying voters, it is not only voters with pro-redistribution preferences that will consider voting SP on the basis of Eurosceptic preferences. This suggests that salience of the EU issue is such that voters will discount their economic preferences to improve congruence on European integration with their party of choice.

Given the potential relevance of changes in salience of the issues underlying European integration preferences, we make use of the multiple years of these data to establish how consistent in a third model we interact *Europe* with each survey year. Estimating separate slopes for the effect of Europe allows us to evaluate the consistency of this effect across the surveys under study. The results of this are presented in Figure 4.6. Here we find a remarkable degree of change and uncover the fact that this pattern has steadily increased since 2006. Although the beneficial effect of Eurosceptic preferences is always present in each year, in 2006 the substantive effect of *Europe* is much weaker than in 2017, with the slope of the effect increasing in 2010 and 2012. In 2017, the marginal impact of European ideal point on support for SP is more than twice that present in 2006.

Figure 4.6: Effects of Europe Ideal point on Propensity to Vote for SP, by year. Pro-EU (-2) to Eurosceptic (2).



This pattern of preferences for radical left to be increasingly influenced by Eurosceptic sentiment is consistent with observations noted in the case literature on the party system in the Netherlands. Otjes (2016) shows that between the years 2006 and 2012, the main dimension of party competition in the Netherlands structurally changed, arguing that “the economic left/right dimension no longer suffices to understand the economic policy positions of political parties” (Otjes 2016:273), with a second dimension related to libertarian and traditionalist values clearly emerging by 2010. Otjes further notes that “in 2010 and 2012, the second dimension was important and changed in nature ... [and] taps into a division between Eurosceptic parties, namely the right-wing populist PVV and the socialist SP and pro-European parties” (Otjes 2016:291). Similarly, De Vries et al. (2013) argues that the correlation between general left-right attitudes and positions on egalitarianism has declined in the Netherlands, while the relation between general left-right positioning and cultural issues has increased.

The results above suggest that this pattern solidified even further by 2017, with the result that Euroscepticism a sizable component of the appeal of SP. Through this increase in salience of European integration for the general electorate, it is unsurprising that we see an increase the substantive effect of *Europe* between 2006 and 2017. Moreover, through the shift of European integration being a defining part of the left-right dimension, we can understand how this will impact a voters' propensity to vote for a radical left party. In more substantial terms, although SP did not see an absolute increase in vote shares in 2017, the results in Figure 4.6 show that the increased attention of the electorate on European integration has a beneficial effect on SP. Further, the case shows that Euroscepticism contributes positively to the success of radical left parties even when a radical right party has successfully positioned as the primary beneficiary of Euroscepticism.

4.5 Discussion

The importance of European integration in national elections has been demonstrated by a large number of studies. It has been shown that European integration is an important issue, especially among those who support the radical right. This study has shown that European integration is an important issue beyond the radical right; it can even influence the propensity to vote for the radical left. By examining the demand side to Euroscepticism, this research aims to further the understanding of European integration voting behaviour and its implications for party competition. Further, by focusing on propensity to vote for SP, this analysis provides a more nuanced understanding of the effect of European integration preferences on potential support for the radical left than we can see observing changes in vote share.

Our findings show that while a pro-redistribution position is the strongest predictor for voting for the radical left party SP, the more Eurosceptic voters become, the higher their propensity to vote for SP will get. This means that the main finding of this research shows that while the economic position is an important factor for voting for a radical left party, it is not the only

issue that matters for the propensity to vote for a radical left party. The European integration preference of voters contributes substantially to the voting behaviour of the electorate. Though the support for the radical right has been primarily associated with cultural Euroscepticism, our results indicate that the support for the radical left is less understood through a cultural European integration dimension. When interacting *Europe* with *Redistribution* and *Immigration*, we find that voters increase their propensity to vote for SP the more Eurosceptic they are. This was not conditioned by preferences on issues like income redistribution or immigration. This is important because even voters who are ideologically further away from radical left ideologies, even opposing income redistribution, will be similarly more likely to vote for a radical left party when the voter is Eurosceptic. This further supports the argument that European integration is an important issue for the radical left. Due to the cross-cutting nature of the issue, radical left parties can increase their potential support amongst voters who previously would otherwise be in opposition to the party.

When moving beyond specific policy preferences on redistribution and immigration, we do see some conditionality on the effect of voter Euroscepticism on support for the radical left. When interacting a *Europe* with the voter's preference on left-right dimension, we find that voters who more strongly relate to the left-wing identity will have a substantially higher probability of voting for a radical left party than those who identify as right-wing. The difference between the left-right interaction and the redistribution interaction can be explained through extensive literature in this area. As left-right goes beyond policy identification (Inglehart and Klingemann 1976) and also serves as a political group identity for many (Claassen et al. 2015; Devine 2015; Freire 2015; Mason 2018) and, we can see it is specifically those who strongly *identify* as right-wing that are least willing to consider the radical left despite congruence on European integration. By contrast, when it comes to specific policy preferences, we find that European integration can cause a significant increase in the propensity to vote for a radical left party. Our

research therefore contributes to understanding the difference between policy preference and political group identity in understanding the voting calculus.

Wagner (2021) shows that when a radical right party enters the party system, the benefit of a Eurosceptic position of a radical left party will be significantly constrained. The case analysed here shows a party system where a radical left and radical right party have been represented in parliament since 2006. Therefore, this case also extends this research to show that there is room for opportunity for the radical left party to benefit from Eurosceptic voters in the context of a successful radical right party.

Our year-by-year findings show that while a more Eurosceptic voter position contributes positively to the propensity to voting for the radical left party, there are some notable changes over time. Generally, we find that over time, the substantive effect of a Eurosceptic preference increases markedly over the years. The more European integration shifted to the main centre of the Dutch spatial competition (Otjes 2016), the more prominent the benefit of Euroscepticism for SP becomes. This should also be put in the context of the change in the perceived party location relative to the electorate, where we find the latter more aligned with the SP position on European integration in the later years. This suggests that European integration provides an increasing potential voter base for radical left parties, even where we do not see them successfully exploiting it.

It is also useful to consider the implications of our findings for the direct competitors of the radical left – namely the social democrats and radical right. The radical left and the social democrats typically have some overlap in potential voters on the income redistribution issue and are therefore in direct competition on that dimension. As previously indicated, the radical right is frequently strongly opposed to European integration and therefore provides direct competition to a radical left party with a Eurosceptic position. In the Dutch case analysed in this research, PVDA (social democrat) and PVV (radical right) are the direct competitors on

two dimensions with SP. For PVDA, this means that while European integration does not seem to be as salient in 2006, the increase in importance and shift towards the left-right dimension from 2010 shows that by 2017, PVDA is losing votes due to the European dimension just as SP is gaining.

Future research should consider examining this phenomenon in a cross-national manner. While survey data is limited in terms of providing a multitude of issue scales for voter preference and party placement, it would be an important next step in this research to understand how this Dutch case compares to other systems. Especially in the context of radical left positions on Europe and radical right presence, this could provide insight into important theoretical and empirical mechanisms behind the potential rise of radical left parties.

5. Conclusion

Radical left parties have been known for their left-wing positions on redistribution. Yet, with political space becoming more multidimensional, new issues have entered political competition. Through the increase of globalization – and in particular the notion of “winners and losers of globalisation” (Kriesi et al 2006; 2008) – a new cosmopolitan/nationalist dimension has become increasingly important to party systems. This dimension is understood to be cross-cutting to the economic left-right dimension. As the nationalism dimension has become more prominent and found vivid support in the radical right, other political parties have had to confront these new issues. Not all parties have clear and unified positions on these new issues since many of those are cross-cutting to the traditional economic left-right dimension. One of the issues in the focal point of the nationalism dimension is European integration. European integration can be understood through various perspectives (economic and cultural) and, for the left, can be perceived as a threat to capitalism but also as an innovative open border project. Therefore, this dissertation examines the importance of European integration for radical left parties. The thesis dissects the role of European integration for radical left parties in three papers, finding an optimal strategy on a policy position, whether they can be successful through avoiding the issue and the preferences of European integration of their voters.

In chapter two, I analyse the positions that radical left parties take on European integration. Radical left parties have an enormous positional diversity on the issue of European integration. Though all parties examined belong to the same party family, I find that some are extremely pro-EU while others are highly Eurosceptic. Part of the reason for this is that European integration can be understood through many different frames, such as cultural or economic. However, even when radical left parties examine European integration through their left-wing economic ideology, they can come to different conclusions. For example, they can argue that the EU is a neoliberal institution while also arguing that free labour or even open borders can

be important left-wing goals. Therefore, as there is such a great diversity in positions in one party family, is there a more beneficial position to become more successful electorally?

In order to see if there is a beneficial strategy on European integration for radical left parties, I combine individual and party level surveys through the European Social Survey and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey. The research design included vote choice for radical left parties as a binary dependent variable and the position of the radical left party on European integration as the independent variable. This independent variable was also interacted with the self-reported left-right position of the voter to take into account the most likely potential voters of radical left parties. For robustness, the same analysis was also successfully carried out using the Comparative Manifestos Project data.

The chapter shows that a Eurosceptic position is beneficial for radical left parties electorally. This effect is strengthened for left-wing voters, as they will be more likely to vote for a Eurosceptic radical left party. As radical left parties are typically mainly voted for by voters who consider themselves left-wing, this shows that a Eurosceptic position will be beneficial to gain support of potential voters. However, in the second part of this chapter I also include radical right parties in the analysis. As radical right parties are likely to be in direct competition on Euroscepticism, it is important to see if the highly increased benefit of a Eurosceptic position for the radical left stays constant when a radical right party enters the party system. The results show that when a radical right party enters the party system, the benefit of a Eurosceptic radical left position is constrained. Therefore, even if radical left parties all became very Eurosceptic, they are likely not going to win back votes that they might have lost to the radical right.

While the second chapter is limited to positional change of the parties, other possible party strategies are important to understanding the success of the radical left. We learned in the

previous chapter that although an anti-EU position may be useful for radical left parties, radical right parties are likely to be in direct competition over those voters. Therefore, the third chapter takes a look at a different approach, position blurring, intended to gain Eurosceptic voters while also keeping pro-EU voters. Position blurring is understood as keeping a party's position vague on an issue and through that giving the impression that the position of the party on the issue is in congruence with the preference of the voter. Through position blurring, the radical left could be able to avoid losing voters through a clear position on European integration.

Similar to the previous chapter, this chapter analyses the electoral success radical left parties could have through the binary dependent variable of voting for a radical left party. The explanatory variable of position blurring of the radical left on European integration is operationalised as the standard deviation of experts positioning of the party on European integration. Though this operationalisation has been frequently used in the position blurring literature (for example, Somer-Topcu 2015; Rovny 2013), it is also a possible limitation due to the noise accompanied with blurring. I show that position blurring has an interactive effect, conditioned by the electorate's polarization on European integration. This chapter not only provides the first study of position blurring of radical left parties but also adds to the literature of position blurring through establishing the conditions that makes position blurring an electorally successful option. By including polarization of the electorate, this study contributes a novel theoretical and empirical mechanism to when position blurring can contribute to electoral success. Previous work lacked consistent findings as to whether position blurring was an electorally beneficial strategy, in part because there was no clear mechanism to why this would lead to success and when voters may perceive blurring as unclarity and thus, harming the parties in their pursuit.

Overall, the third chapter shows that even when there is a high level of polarization in the electorate on European integration, radical left parties do not necessarily have to lose their voters due to their position. When there is high polarization, radical left parties are advised to blur their position, in order not to lose voters on one side of the divide. However, this could easily backfire if parties do not have full information on the polarization of the electorate. In case the electorate is in consensus, they will experience electoral harm if they choose to blur their position on European integration. This could easily be perceived by voters as a party being unclear on their position, which is likely to be associated with incompetence. Therefore, even if this seems like a good strategy, in reality, this might be more difficult to parties to implement without risking losing voters.

In chapter four, we zoomed in on the question of how European integration preferences influence voting for a radical left party by switching attention to the voters themselves. While chapters two and three focused on the different approaches radical left parties can take to take advantage of the growing salience of the issue of European integration, we have yet not looked at the preferences on European integration of the voters and how this may or may not affect their propensity to vote for a radical left party. Generally, it has been assumed that voters solely vote for radical left parties with pro-redistribution income preferences. In chapter two, we saw that people who identify themselves as left-wing are more likely to vote for the radical left. In chapter two the left-right self-identification was used as a proxy for potential radical left voters -- not necessarily equivalent to policy preferences on income redistribution. In chapter four we use multiple issue preference scales to clearly separate these concepts, including income, Europe, and immigration -- as well as left-right preferences -- to determine the importance of European integration in explaining the propensity to vote for the radical left. The goal of this chapter was to understand to what extent the European integration issue matters for voters' views of the radical left.

In order to see whether the preference of voters on European integration matters for the radical left, this research uses the Dutch election survey between 2006 and 2017 as it provides the opportunity to make the preferences between voters comparable through the use of Aldrich-McKelvey scaling. In this way, we are able to better understand European integration as an important issue to voters, while also accounting for other issues, like income and immigration. The results of the chapter show that not only European integration is an important issue for voters and their propensity to vote for radical left parties but also that there is a clear directionality of this effect--growing over time, and independent of other policy preferences yet also conditioned by left-right identity. The more Eurosceptic voters are, the higher their propensity to vote for a radical left party. It is important and interesting to point out that while those with pro-redistribution preferences have a higher overall propensity to vote for the radical left, all voters probability of voting for a radical left party increases with becoming more Eurosceptic. This research shows clearly that even for those parties that are heavily associated with their economic position, new issues like European integration matter. From the voters' perspective, it shows that voters may be able to compromise the incongruence between themselves and the radical left party on their income issue preferences when European integration is an important issue.

The main findings of this thesis contribute to the study of political parties competing on newly salient issues in three distinct ways. The thesis expands the study of radical left parties theoretically and empirically in chapters two and three by adding a cross-national empirical perspective to the field. As the majority of studies on radical left parties have focused on individual cases and used non-quantitative methods, this thesis details an aggregate picture of the radical left family. Furthermore, the primary focus on the literature has involved the economic dimension and only few attempts have been made to expand the study of radical left parties to other dimensions (for example, Krause 2020). By shifting the attention to a newly

salient issue beyond the left-right dimension, this thesis shows that even small challenger parties like the radical left compete in space outside of the left-right dimension. This is especially prominent in the final substantial chapter, which focuses on the demand-side voter perspective. Finally, the third chapter provides a novel theoretical mechanism in including the polarization of the electorate in the successful outcome of position blurring. The chapter furthermore provides empirical evidence for this and is relevant outside of the radical left scope of this thesis.

The broader significance of the research covered in this thesis regards the implications of new salient issues and dimensions. Especially in the context of the decline of social democracy and the rise of the radical right, it is important to assess how newly salient issues along the cosmopolitan-nationalist dimension will affect parties who have so far been competing on the left right dimension. Some scholars have dedicated a lot of energy into understanding whether the votes lost to the radical right can be won back – especially by parties on the centre left (Bale et al 2010; Lefkofridi et al 2014; Oesch and Rennwald 2018; Abou-Chadi and Wagner 2020). This thesis carries some important implications to this question by analysing the results of the radical left moving closer to the radical right on European integration. From the first substantive chapter, we learned that even when the radical left takes a Eurosceptic position, when a radical right party enters the political system, the radical left party will be constrained in the benefit from this position. Thus, policy accommodation is rather difficult for radical left parties. However, when we examine this dynamic closely in chapter four and use the case of the Netherlands, where the radical right and radical left have been represented in parliament in many consecutive elections, we find that radical left parties can still generally benefit from a Eurosceptic position in terms of potential support, even when radical right parties have occupied this space. Though the results from the Netherlands over time may be more specific to the case

itself, the implication remains that radical right parties are not necessarily the only Eurosceptic option for voters.

This dissertation adds to a growing body of research on how the left-right unidimensional scale is shifting in importance and meaning. Through focusing on new dimensions and issues, this research shows that parties need to reorientate their traditional policies and forms of communication. As specific and relatively new issues are becoming more polarized and prominent, the left-right scale is shifting in meaning and is being interpreted outside of an economic understanding like it has been the case for many decades. Therefore, this research contributes to the study of examining political spaces through cross-cutting issues and how this is impacting the electoral outcomes of political parties.

This thesis is an important step in understanding radical left parties in a systematic and cross-sectional way. Nevertheless, there are some major caveats in this study that should be acknowledged, as well as important future research avenues that can be identified. For example, the first two substantial chapters include the idea of party strategy, yet there is little quantitative research that can fully confirm that the parties have certain policy positions or blur their policy positions due to a specific party strategy rather than due to other circumstances (like leadership changes or party dissent). The main goal of chapters two and three was not to understand if a policy position or policy blurring are party strategy; the chapters focused on whether the employment of such is working in their favour. As the chapters have established the relevance and importance of party behaviour towards European integration, future endeavours in this direction should attempt to understand the intra-party mechanism. For this, qualitative data could contribute to understanding intra-party dynamics in more depth so that the claim of a party strategy can be confirmed. On top of this, the third chapter presented a simple model to provide a novel theoretical and empirical mechanism as to when position blurring can be a

successful path. In order to exemplify this mechanism, the chapter only included positions of other parties on European integration and did not account for blurring of other political parties. As the research focuses on radical left parties, relevant direct competitors on this issue are the radical right and the centre left. Previous research has been in consensus about these party families usually approaching European integration from a clear position rather than a blurred position. Nevertheless, future research should take a look at the party system as a whole in order to exclude other possible confounders for the position blurring mechanism in chapter three.

I would like to draw the attention to two further scope limitations of this thesis. The thesis is focused on Western European radical left parties. One reason Eastern European radical left parties were excluded from this thesis is due to the different historical institutionalism of Eastern European radical left parties (Chiocchetti 2018). The main reason the thesis focused on Western European countries was in order to provide stability in the measurement of European integration and its substantive interpretation. Adding a different context to European integration could have been problematic because this of the additional noise added to the measurements. Even within Western Europe, chapter two includes a robustness check in the appendix for a possible North-South difference. The thesis provides significant findings for radical left parties. Although the dissertation is focused on Western Europe, future research in this direction should examine the role of European integration on radical left parties in Eastern Europe. This could be especially interesting in competition with centre left and radical right parties in the party systems in Eastern Europe. While the scope condition on Western Europe limits some direct application of the arguments made in the thesis, this research is an important first step in analysing the role of issues beyond the economic left-right dimension in the success of the radical left, and the core ideas of this thesis can be adapted to extend to the study to other regions.

The final scope limitation I would like to discuss is the primary focus on European integration. While primary aim of this research was understanding a cross-cutting new non-economic dimension in the context of radical left parties, the direct focus is on the issue of European integration. While a general cosmopolitan/nationalist dimension can be understood through an array of issues, most prominently European integration and immigration, focusing on one issue specifically seemed appropriate to capture a more detailed mechanism for the radical left party family. Further, as radical left parties provide great diversity on the issue and theoretical complexity on the issue of European integration, as opposed to immigration, understanding how radical left parties can succeed through a Eurosceptic platform is a challenging yet relevant question. Nonetheless, future research should also dissect the relationship between radical left parties and issues like immigration as culturally right-wing voters are not necessarily unwilling to consider supporting a radical left party on the basis of cross-cutting emerging dimensions (as we learned from the fourth chapter). This is especially important in the context of understanding how radical left parties gain and lose voters from the centre left and the radical right.

A particularly promising avenue for future research is bringing non-voters into the analysis. While the second and third chapter excluded non-voters from the observations, future research should specifically examine the role of Eurosceptic party positions in mobilizing non-voters to vote for radical left party. Similar to the research in chapter four, this research should also include the issue preferences of non-voters on European integration. Furthermore, future research should consider cross-national surveys with self-placement and party-placement on multiple issues. In this thesis, the Dutch case was the most appropriate case with election surveys including self- and party-placements on issues beyond the left-right. Cross-national data would make it possible to compare the Dutch case cross-nationally and gain important insights into European issue voting. Specifically for radical left parties, this would be important

as we could take into consideration different party positions on European integration and how that moderates the propensity of voting for a radical left party.

As I mentioned in a footnote in the introduction, this thesis contributes to understanding the complex topic of political party competition. The insights of this thesis will hopefully contribute to future work on how small parties can compete on non-economic issues and help to grasp the increasingly polarized political landscape better. Further, I hope that this dissertation serves to understand radical left parties in general and the role of their non-economic positions in party systems. Finally, an important takeaway of this thesis that we must not discount radical left parties as not being ‘vote-seeking’ parties, because their pursuits can also be contextualised from a vote maximising perspective.

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Appendix A**Euroscepticism as a Radical Left Party Strategy for Success**

Table A1. List of Radical Left Parties in Western Europe used in this research

RLPs	Full Party Names and Translations	Countries
SF	The Socialist People's Party/ Socialistisk Folkeparti	DENMARK
VAS	Left Alliance // Vasemmistoliitto	FINLAND
PCF	French Communist party // Parti communiste	FRANCE
PDS/ Linke	Die Linke // The Left	GERMANY
SYN/SYRIZA	Coalition of the Left // Synaspismos	GREECE
RC	Communist Refoundation Party // Partito della Rifondazione Comunista	ITALY
SP	Socialist Party // Socialistische Partij	NETHERLANDS
BE	Left Bloc // Bloco de Esquerda	PORTUGAL
IU	United Left // Izquierda Unida	SPAIN
V	Left Party/ Vänsterpartiet	SWEDEN

Country	ESS Rounds	CHES Years
Denmark	1, 3, 4, 6	1999, 2002, 2006, 2010
Germany	1, 3, 5, 7	2002, 2006, 2010
Greece	1, 2, 4, 5	1999, 2002, 2006
Spain	1, 2, 4, 6, 8	1999, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2017
France	1, 4, 6	2002, 2006, 2010
Italy	1, 6	1999, 2010
Netherlands	1, 4, 5, 7	2002, 2006, 2010
Portugal	1, 3, 5, 6, 8	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
Finland	1, 2, 4, 6, 8	1999, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
Sweden	2, 4, 5, 8	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014

Table A2: Regression results with and without RLP economic position

	(1) No Eco Variable	(2) Econ
RLP EU Position	-0.685* (0.369)	-0.856*** (0.309)
RLP Economic Position		0.687 (0.557)
Mainstream Right EU Position	-0.862 (0.938)	-0.821 (0.878)
Centre Left EU Position	-0.001 (0.938)	0.142 (0.867)
Radical Right Party Presence	-3.333* (1.804)	-2.989* (1.777)
Left-Right Self-Identification	-0.559*** (0.033)	-0.558*** (0.033)
GDP Change	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Education: Upper Sec + Non-tert.	0.342* (0.176)	0.341* (0.176)
Education: Tertiary	0.412* (0.248)	0.411* (0.248)
Small Business Owners	-0.108 (0.135)	-0.108 (0.135)
Technical (semi-) professionals	-0.002 (0.136)	-0.002 (0.136)
Production Workers	0.053 (0.208)	0.053 (0.208)
(Associate) Managers	-0.043 (0.196)	-0.043 (0.196)
Clerks	0.013 (0.185)	0.013 (0.185)
Socio-Cultural (semi-)professionals	0.226 (0.213)	0.226 (0.213)
Service Workers	0.092 (0.222)	0.092 (0.222)
Age	-0.006** (0.003)	-0.006** (0.003)
Constant	9.364 (8.262)	7.306 (7.826)
Sd(Country)	0.457 (0.514)	0.250 (0.435)
Sd(Country~Study)	5.229* (2.844)	5.348* (2.954)
Obs.	39053	39053

Standard errors are in parenthesis

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table A3: Regression results with different country level controls

	(1) Migration	(2) GDP Change	(3) GDP Change and Unemployment
RLP EU Position	-1.075*** (0.279)	-0.856*** (0.309)	-0.917*** (0.308)
Migration Rate	-0.084 (0.104)		
GDP Change		-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Unemployment			-0.082 (0.124)
RLP Economic Position	1.633** (0.722)	0.687 (0.557)	0.946 (0.815)
Mainstream Right EU Position	-0.826 (0.985)	-0.821 (0.878)	-0.786 (0.829)
Radical Right Party Presence	-2.603 (1.702)	-2.989* (1.777)	-2.910* (1.678)
Centre Left EU Position	0.344 (0.874)	0.142 (0.867)	0.122 (0.842)
Left-Right Self-Identification	-0.565*** (0.030)	-0.558*** (0.033)	-0.558*** (0.033)
Education: Upper Sec+Non-tert	0.379** (0.167)	0.341* (0.176)	0.342* (0.176)
Education: Tertiary	0.466** (0.230)	0.411* (0.248)	0.412* (0.248)
Small Business Owners	-0.151 (0.155)	-0.108 (0.135)	-0.108 (0.135)
Technical (semi-)professionals	-0.046 (0.147)	-0.002 (0.136)	-0.002 (0.136)
Production Workers	0.037 (0.210)	0.053 (0.208)	0.053 (0.208)
(Associate) Managers	-0.080 (0.212)	-0.043 (0.196)	-0.043 (0.196)
Clerks	-0.024 (0.170)	0.013 (0.185)	0.013 (0.185)
Socio-Cultural (semi-)professionals	0.192 (0.209)	0.226 (0.213)	0.226 (0.213)
Service Workers	0.027 (0.215)	0.092 (0.222)	0.092 (0.222)
Age	-0.007** (0.003)	-0.006** (0.003)	-0.006** (0.003)
Constant	4.545 (8.813)	7.306 (7.826)	7.089 (7.561)
Sd(Country)	0.000 (0.001)	0.250 (0.435)	0.053 (0.185)
Sd(Country~Study)	6.698* (3.530)	5.348* (2.954)	5.536* (2.914)
Obs.	36234	39053	39053

Standard errors are in parenthesis

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table A4. Interaction Regressions with Different Country Level Controls

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
RLP EU Position	-1.231** (.546)	-1.058** (.446)	-1.162** (.57)	-1.379** (.536)
Left-Right Self-Identification	-.542*** (.161)	-.542*** (.161)	-.542*** (.161)	-.571*** (.156)
RLP EU Position x Left Right Self-Identification	-.005 (.041)	-.005 (.041)	-.005 (.041)	.002 (.04)
Migration Rate				-.019 (.136)
Unemployment	-.111 (.167)		-.11 (.169)	-.203 (.189)
GDP Change		0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
RLP Economic Position	2.049* (1.191)	1.568* (.829)	1.856 (1.176)	2.022* (1.193)
Mainstream Left EU Position	1.402 (1.115)	1.331 (1.103)	1.345 (1.129)	1.565 (1.124)
Mainstream Right EU Position	-.534 (.789)	-.516 (.788)	-.505 (.781)	-.35 (.835)
Education: Upper Sec + Non-Tert.	.34* (.175)	.34* (.175)	.34* (.175)	.379** (.168)
Education: Tertiary	.41* (.246)	.41* (.246)	.41* (.246)	.467** (.23)
Small Business Owners	-.109 (.135)	-.109 (.135)	-.109 (.135)	-.152 (.155)
Technical (semi-)professionals	-.002 (.139)	-.003 (.139)	-.002 (.139)	-.046 (.148)
Production workers	.054 (.212)	.054 (.212)	.054 (.212)	.038 (.211)
(Associate) Managers	-.043 (.194)	-.043 (.194)	-.043 (.194)	-.081 (.211)
Clerk	.013 (.177)	.013 (.177)	.013 (.177)	-.027 (.162)
Socio-Cultural (semi-) professionals	.226 (.203)	.226 (.203)	.226 (.203)	.189 (.201)
Service Workers	.093 (.214)	.092 (.214)	.092 (.214)	.024 (.208)
Age	-.006** (.003)	-.006** (.003)	-.006** (.003)	-.007** (.003)
Gender	0 (.04)	0 (.04)	0 (.04)	.007 (.04)
Constant	-5.217 (4.786)	-4.644 (4.885)	-4.744 (5)	-6.126 (5.585)
Sd(Country)])	.179 (.437)	.366 (.597)	.214 (.451)	.004 (.023)
Sd(Country~Study)	7.05 (4.892)	6.867 (5.018)	6.969 (4.862)	7.903 (4.958)
Observations	39050	39050	39050	36231
Pseudo R ²	.Z	.Z	.Z	.Z

Standard errors are in parentheses

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Table A5: Regression results on RLP vote choice

	(1) EU only	(2) GAL-TAN only	(3) EU and GAL-TAN	(4) Immigr. only	(5) Immigr. and EU	(6) GAL-TAN and Immigration	(7) EU, GAL- TAN and Immigr.
RLP EU Position	-0.948** (0.475)		-0.948** (0.459)		-0.739* (0.412)		-0.794 (0.719)
RLP GAL-TAN Position		0.330 (0.378)	0.001 (0.375)			0.393 (0.355)	-0.078 (0.626)
RLP Immigration Position				-0.407 (0.253)	-0.546* (0.308)	-0.725** (0.355)	-0.493 (0.436)
Migration Rate	-0.081 (0.170)	-0.090 (0.177)	-0.081 (0.170)	0.150 (0.248)	0.085 (0.265)	0.119 (0.288)	0.086 (0.261)
RLP Economic Position	1.809* (0.931)	1.221 (0.771)	1.808* (0.930)	1.088 (1.072)	2.044 (1.303)	1.461 (1.219)	2.041 (1.326)
Left-Right Self-Identification	-0.565*** (0.030)	-0.565*** (0.030)	-0.565*** (0.030)	- 0.569*** (0.047)	-0.569*** (0.047)	-0.569*** (0.047)	-0.569*** (0.047)
Small Business Owners	-0.152 (0.155)	-0.152 (0.155)	-0.152 (0.155)	0.201 (0.202)	0.201 (0.202)	0.201 (0.202)	0.201 (0.202)
Technical (semi-)professionals	-0.046 (0.148)	-0.046 (0.148)	-0.046 (0.148)	0.301 (0.212)	0.301 (0.212)	0.301 (0.212)	0.301 (0.212)
Production workers	0.038 (0.212)	0.038 (0.212)	0.038 (0.212)	0.291 (0.301)	0.291 (0.301)	0.291 (0.301)	0.291 (0.301)
(Associate) Managers	-0.081 (0.210)	-0.081 (0.210)	-0.081 (0.210)	0.045 (0.295)	0.045 (0.295)	0.045 (0.295)	0.045 (0.295)
Clerks	-0.027 (0.163)	-0.027 (0.163)	-0.027 (0.163)	0.297 (0.224)	0.297 (0.224)	0.297 (0.224)	0.297 (0.224)
Socio-Cultural (semi-)professionals	0.189 (0.201)	0.189 (0.201)	0.189 (0.201)	0.308 (0.248)	0.307 (0.248)	0.307 (0.248)	0.307 (0.248)
Service Workers	0.024 (0.209)	0.024 (0.209)	0.024 (0.209)	0.258 (0.295)	0.258 (0.295)	0.258 (0.295)	0.258 (0.295)
Education: Upper Sec + Non-tert.	0.377** (0.167)	0.378** (0.167)	0.377** (0.166)	0.439 (0.268)	0.438 (0.268)	0.438 (0.268)	0.438 (0.268)
Education: Tertiary	0.465** (0.230)	0.465** (0.230)	0.465** (0.229)	0.492* (0.276)	0.491* (0.276)	0.491* (0.276)	0.491* (0.276)
Age	-0.007** (0.003)	-0.007** (0.003)	-0.007** (0.003)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.006)
Female	0.007 (0.040)	0.007 (0.040)	0.007 (0.040)	-0.082 (0.079)	-0.082 (0.079)	-0.082 (0.079)	-0.082 (0.079)
Constant	-0.195 (1.226)	-3.473** (1.678)	-0.201 (1.575)	-2.884* (1.542)	-1.106 (1.535)	-3.532** (1.778)	-0.845 (2.761)
Sd(Country)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Sd(Country~Study)	8.323 (5.872)	9.252 (7.158)	8.323 (5.865)	7.149* (3.952)	6.699* (3.420)	7.016* (3.831)	6.689** (3.396)
Obs.	36231	36231	36231	22341	22341	22341	22341

Standard errors are in parenthesis

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table A6: Regression results with non-linear positions

	(1) EU	(2) EU and competition	(3) GAL TAN	(4) GAL TAN and competition
RLP EU Position	-1.573* (0.834)	-2.485** (1.087)		
RLP EU x RLP EU	0.173 (0.139)	0.276* (0.149)		
RLP GAL-TAN			4.393*** (1.643)	3.045** (1.519)
RLP GAL-TAN x RLP GAL-TAN			-0.653** (0.255)	-0.471** (0.239)
Left-Right position RLP, economy	0.517 (0.720)	0.501 (0.729)	-1.041 (0.967)	-0.469 (0.899)
Net Migration	-0.143 (0.109)	-0.177 (0.142)	-0.268* (0.138)	-0.252* (0.151)
Centre Left in Government	-0.041 (0.116)	-0.032 (0.117)	-0.094 (0.091)	-0.066 (0.110)
GDP Change	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)
Mainstream Right EU position	-0.777 (1.027)			
Radical Right Presence	-2.946 (1.982)	-2.076 (1.481)	-3.793* (1.959)	-3.558 (2.205)
Mainstream Left EU position	0.037 (0.887)	0.030 (0.842)	-0.037 (1.060)	0.136 (1.015)
Left Right Self-Placement	-0.537*** (0.030)	-0.537*** (0.030)	-0.538*** (0.030)	-0.538*** (0.030)
Education: Upper Sec. + Non-Tert.	0.281** (0.134)	0.280** (0.134)	0.281** (0.134)	0.280** (0.134)
Education: Tertiary	0.347* (0.200)	0.346* (0.200)	0.347* (0.200)	0.346* (0.200)
Small Business Owners	-0.118 (0.149)	-0.118 (0.150)	-0.117 (0.149)	-0.118 (0.150)
Technical (semi-) professionals	-0.065 (0.158)	-0.065 (0.158)	-0.065 (0.158)	-0.065 (0.158)
Production workers	0.095 (0.197)	0.095 (0.197)	0.096 (0.196)	0.095 (0.196)
(Associate) Managers	-0.042 (0.212)	-0.042 (0.211)	-0.043 (0.212)	-0.042 (0.212)
Clerks	-0.005 (0.176)	-0.005 (0.176)	-0.004 (0.176)	-0.005 (0.176)
Socio-Cultural (semi-) professionals	0.243 (0.218)	0.243 (0.218)	0.243 (0.218)	0.244 (0.218)
Service Workers	0.083 (0.207)	0.082 (0.208)	0.083 (0.207)	0.083 (0.207)
Union Members	0.241*** (0.076)	0.241*** (0.076)	0.240*** (0.076)	0.240*** (0.076)
Rural Residence	-0.034 (0.024)	-0.034 (0.024)	-0.034 (0.024)	-0.034 (0.024)
Age	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.005 (0.003)
Female	0.083*** (0.027)	0.083*** (0.027)	0.083*** (0.027)	0.083*** (0.027)
Frequency of Church Attendance	0.311*** (0.059)	0.311*** (0.059)	0.311*** (0.059)	0.311*** (0.059)
EU Position All		0.547 (0.547)		
Mainstream Right GAL-TAN			1.191* (0.692)	

GAL-TAN Position All				0.943 (1.025)
Constant	6.424 (8.944)	0.961 (5.698)	-10.635* (6.416)	-7.848 (8.379)
Sd(country)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Sd(country-Study)	4.648* (2.719)	4.867 (3.153)	4.036* (2.399)	4.485 (2.819)
Obs.	34242	34242	34242	34242
Pseudo R ²	.z	.z	.z	.z

Standard errors are in parenthesis

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table A7. Regression Results controlling for North-South Regional Differences

	(1) RLP Position x Self ID	(2) Rad Right Presence
RLP EU Position	-1.683** (.664)	-1.815*** (.619)
Left-Right Self-Identification	-.567*** (.155)	-.722*** (.092)
RLP EU Position x Left-Right Self-Identification	.001 (.04)	.033 (.028)
Left-Right position RLP, economy	1.644** (.703)	1.525** (.597)
Mainstream Right EU position	.369 (.444)	-.037 (.563)
Mainstream Left EU position	3.531** (1.485)	2.454 (2.092)
Radical Right Party Present		-3.975 (2.623)
Radical Right Party Present x RLP EU Position		.693 (.592)
Radical Right Party Present x Left-Right Self-Identification		.258 (.202)
Radical Right Party Present x Left-Right Self-Identification x RLP EU Position		-.056 (.065)
North-South	2.908* (1.593)	2.165 (2.058)
Migration Rate	-.02 (.14)	-.047 (.128)
Education: Upper Sec. + Non-Tert.	.378** (.168)	.385** (.167)
Education: Tertiary	.466** (.23)	.472** (.228)
Small Business Owners	-.152 (.155)	-.149 (.153)
Technical (semi-) professionals	-.046 (.149)	-.045 (.147)
Production workers	.037 (.211)	.039 (.21)
(Associate) Managers	-.082 (.211)	-.081 (.21)
Clerks	-.026 (.162)	-.022 (.162)
Socio-Cultural (semi-) professionals	.189 (.201)	.193 (.2)
Service Workers	.024 (.208)	.027 (.207)
Age	-.007** (.003)	-.007** (.003)
Gender	.006 (.04)	.006 (.042)
Constant	-23.507** (9.871)	-12.345 (15.326)
Sd(country)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Sd(country-Study)	4.805** (2.231)	4.516** (1.963)
Observations	36231	36231
Pseudo R ²	.z	.z

Standard errors are in parentheses

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Table A8. Interactions Only

	(1) Position x Self ID	(2) RRP Presence
RLP EU Position	-1.185 (.73)	-1.715** (.738)
Left-Right Self-Identification	-.541*** (.137)	-.702*** (.084)
RLP EU Position x Left-Right Self-Identification	-.007 (.035)	.028 (.025)
Radical Right Party Present		-5.544** (2.522)
Radical Right Party Present x RLP EU Position		.944 (.643)
Radical Right Party Present x Left-Right Self-Identification		.242 (.181)
Radical Right Party Present x Left-Right Self-Identification x RLP EU Position		-.054 (.057)
Constant	2.681 (2.466)	5.94** (2.922)
Sd(country)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Sd(country-Study)	9.305* (4.849)	7.918** (3.412)
Observations	47044	47044
Pseudo R ²	.z	.z

Standard errors are in parentheses

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Table A9. Robustness Check using MARPOR data

Standardized RLP EU Position variables (rescaled to have a mean of zero and a standard deviation of 1)

	(1) MARPOR	(2) CHES
RLP EU Position	-.552*** (.184)	-2.345*** (.569)
Left-Right Self-Identification	-.574*** (.031)	-.567*** (.063)
RLP EU Position x Left Right Self-Identification	.053*** (.018)	.003 (.074)
RLP Economic Position	.006 (.116)	1.848** (.878)
Mainstream Right EU Position	-.411** (.164)	-.219 (.813)
Mainstream Left EU Position	-.669* (.397)	1.426 (.98)
Migration Rate	-.05 (.146)	-.078 (.129)
Education: Upper Sec + Non-Tert.	.464** (.225)	.379** (.168)
Education: Tertiary	.535** (.264)	.466** (.23)
Small Business Owners	-.149 (.153)	-.152 (.155)
Technical (semi-)professionals	-.025 (.142)	-.046 (.148)
Production workers	.02 (.216)	.038 (.211)
(Associate) Managers	-.056 (.197)	-.081 (.211)
Clerk	.028 (.163)	-.027 (.162)
Socio-Cultural (semi-) professionals	.211 (.193)	.189 (.201)
Service Workers	.013 (.212)	.024 (.208)
Gender	-.003 (.04)	.007 (.04)
Age	-.007** (.003)	-.007** (.003)
Constant	1.433 (1.169)	-9.724* (5.532)
Sd(Country))	0 (0)	.002 (.014)
Sd(Country~Study)	6.073 (5.058)	7.836 (4.957)
Observations	37912	36231
Pseudo R ²	.z	.z

*Standard errors are in parentheses**** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Table A10. Cases with radical right parties present

Country	All Years (CHES)	Years (CHES) with radical right parties present
Denmark	1999, 2002, 2006, 2010	1999, 2002, 2006, 2010
Germany	2002, 2006, 2010	n/a
Greece	1999, 2002, 2006	2006
Spain	1999, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2017	n/a
France	2002, 2006, 2010	2002, 2006, 2010
Italy	1999, 2010	1999, 2010
Netherlands	2002, 2006, 2010	2002, 2006, 2010
Portugal	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014	n/a
Finland	1999, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014	2006, 2010, 2014
Sweden	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014	2010, 2014

Table A11. Regressions with ESS Control

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
RLP EU Position	-.932** (.472)	-1.413** (.551)	-1.197*** (.431)	-1.42*** (.397)
Left-Right Self-Identification	-.571*** (.156)	-.572*** (.156)	-.572*** (.156)	-.73*** (.092)
RLP EU Position x Left Right Self-Identification	.002 (.04)	.002 (.04)	.002 (.04)	.036 (.028)
RLP Economic Position	1.665* (.894)	2.161** (1.014)	1.834*** (.652)	1.782*** (.691)
Migration Rate	-.035 (.157)	-.029 (.119)	-.049 (.099)	-.059 (.097)
Education: Upper Sec + Non-Tert.	.377** (.168)	.378** (.168)	.379** (.168)	.385** (.167)
Education: Tertiary	.465** (.23)	.466** (.23)	.467** (.23)	.473** (.228)
Small Business Owners	-.152 (.155)	-.152 (.155)	-.151 (.155)	-.149 (.153)
Technical (semi-)professionals	-.046 (.149)	-.046 (.149)	-.046 (.148)	-.044 (.147)
Production workers	.038 (.211)	.038 (.211)	.038 (.211)	.04 (.21)
(Associate) Managers	-.081 (.211)	-.081 (.211)	-.081 (.211)	-.08 (.209)
Clerk	-.027 (.162)	-.027 (.162)	-.026 (.162)	-.022 (.162)
Socio-Cultural (semi-) professionals	.189 (.201)	.189 (.201)	.19 (.201)	.193 (.2)
Service Workers	.024 (.208)	.024 (.208)	.025 (.208)	.027 (.207)
Age	-.007** (.003)	-.007** (.003)	-.007** (.003)	-.007** (.003)
1.ESS Control	-2.525*** (.851)	-3.12** (1.44)	-2.161** (1.098)	-1.99* (1.148)
3.ESS Control	-1.719** (.805)	-2.281** (1.13)	-1.432 (.897)	-1.448 (.882)
4.ESS Control	-.838 (.854)	-2.445 (1.901)	-1.467 (1.5)	-1.398 (1.554)
Gender	.007 (.04)	.007 (.04)	.007 (.04)	.007 (.042)
Mainstream Right EU Position		-.744 (.904)	-1.117 (.996)	-1.101 (1.038)
Mainstream Left EU Position		1.695 (1.191)	.648 (1.049)	.664 (1.101)
Radical Right Party Present			-2.259 (1.707)	-4.61* (2.407)
Radical Right Party Present x RLP EU Position				.64 (.718)
Radical Right Party Present x Left-Right Self-Identification				.266 (.203)
Radical Right Party Present x Left-Right x RLP EU Position				-.058 (.065)
Constant	1.309 (1.356)	-3.314 (4.594)	5.534 (8.632)	6.381 (8.725)
Sd(Country))	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Sd(Country~Study)	8.022 (6.061)	7.217 (4.512)	6.463* (3.463)	6.426* (3.547)
Observations	36231	36231	36231	36231

Standard errors are in parentheses

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Figure A1. Predicted Probability of RLP vote interacted with left-right self placement controlling for mainstream party position on immigration. Dashes indicate confidence intervals.

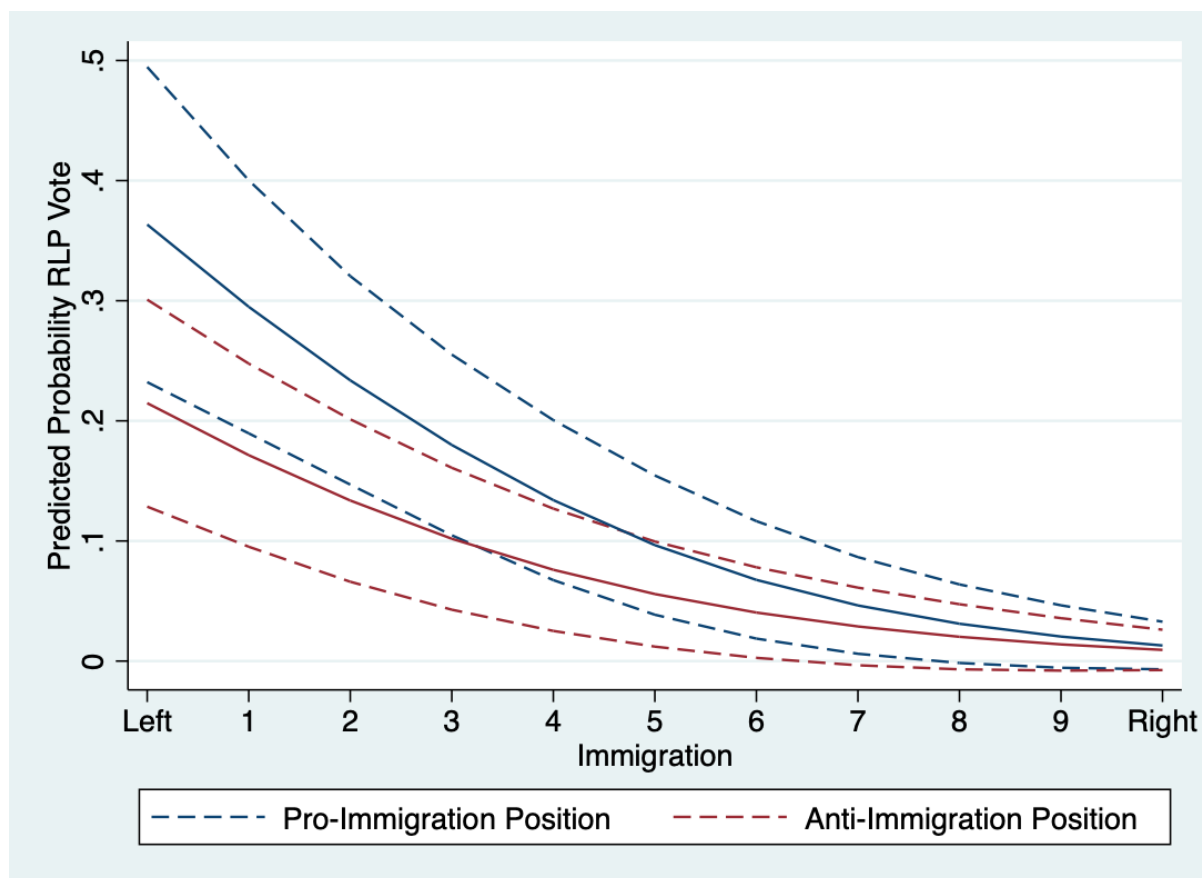


Figure A2. Predicted Probability of RLP vote interacted with left-right self placement and elderly voters (80 year olds) controlling for mainstream party position on EU integration.

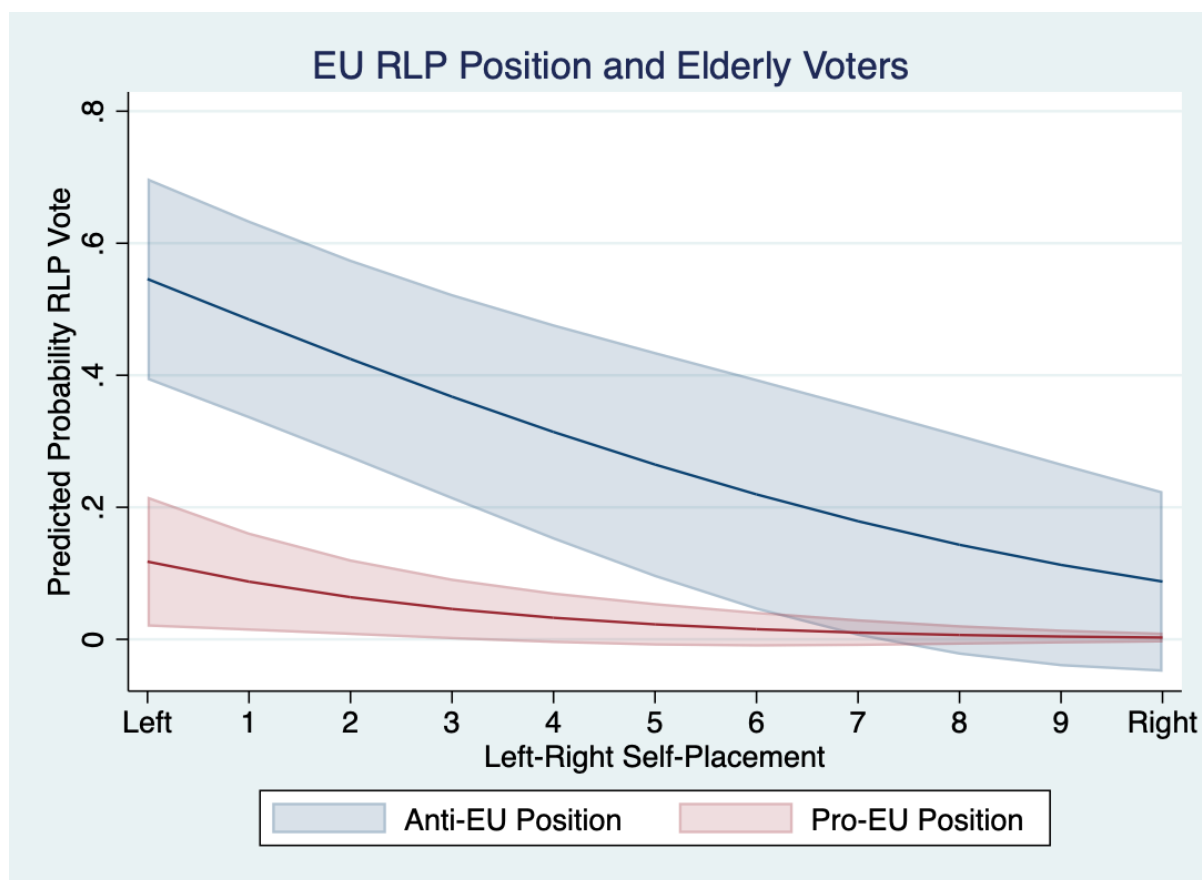


Figure A3. Predicted Probability of RLP vote interacted with left-right self placement and younger voters (20 year olds) controlling for mainstream party position on EU integration.

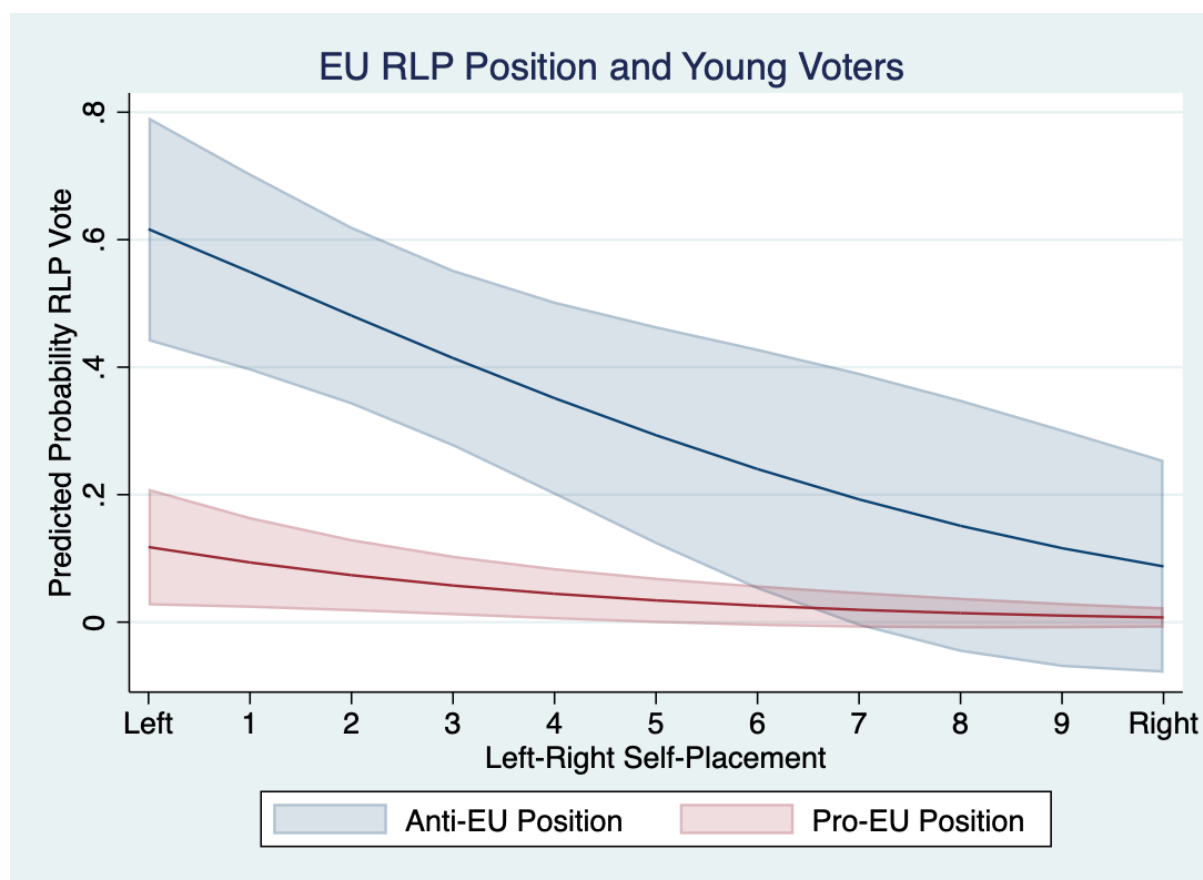


Figure A4. Predicted Probability of RLP vote interacted with left-right self placement and tertiary educated voters controlling for mainstream party position on EU integration.

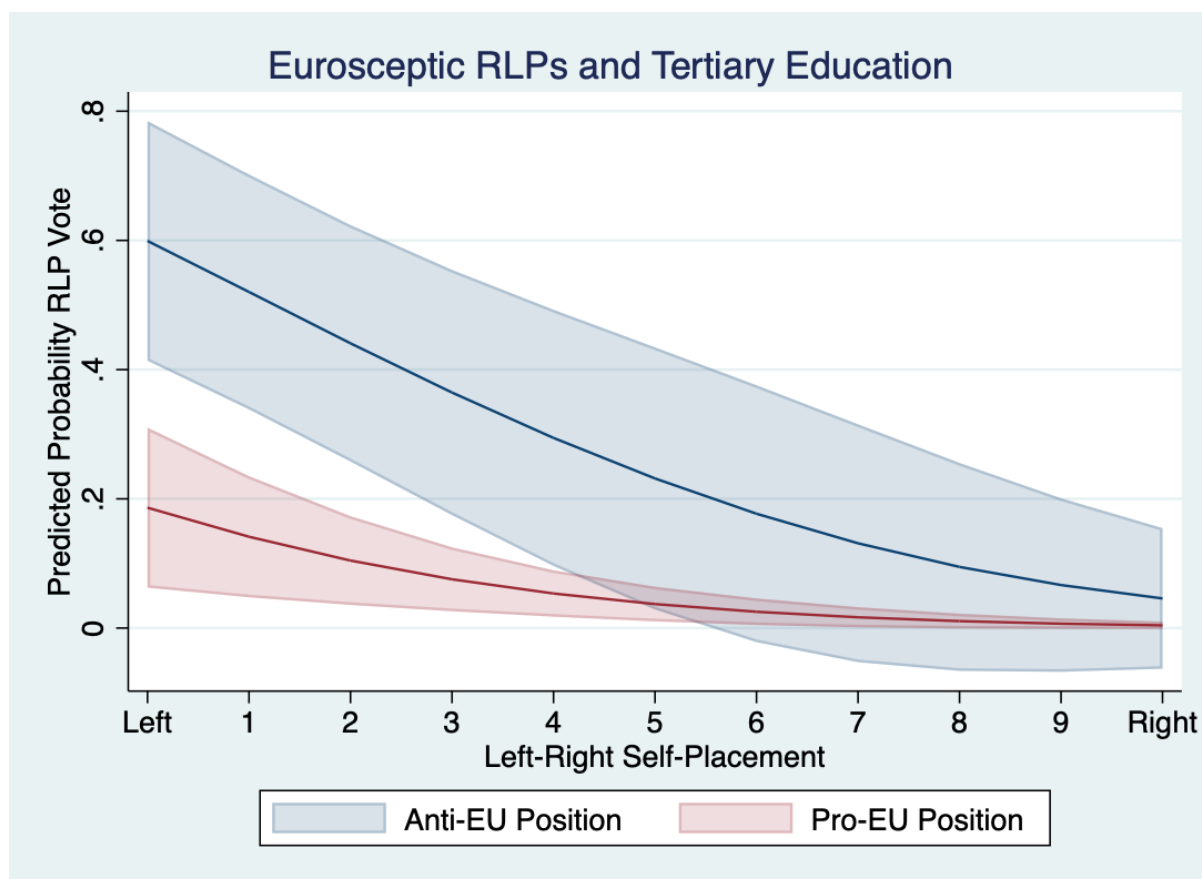


Figure A5. Pro-EU Position and Radical Right Party Entry

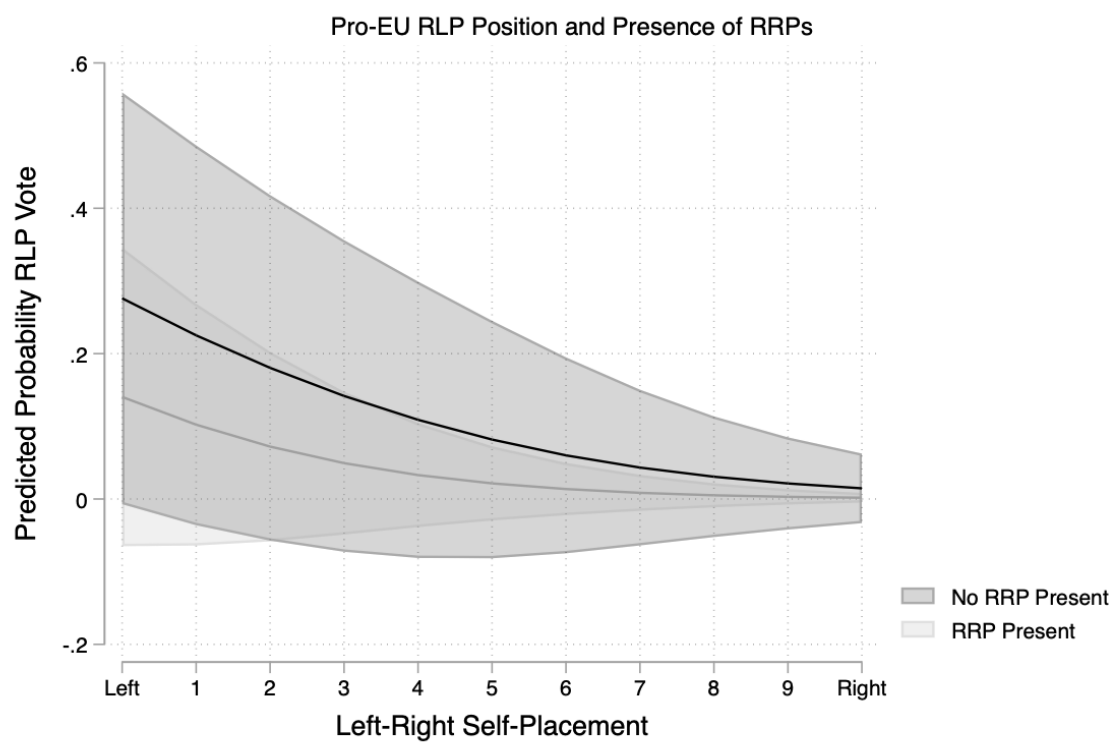
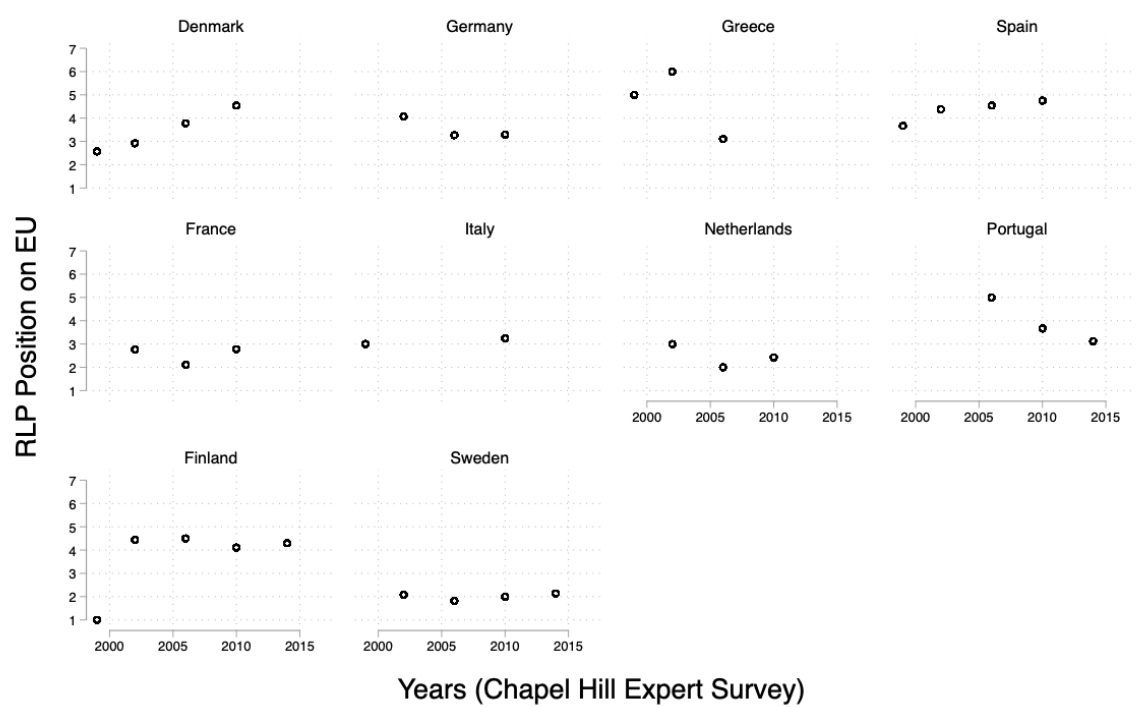
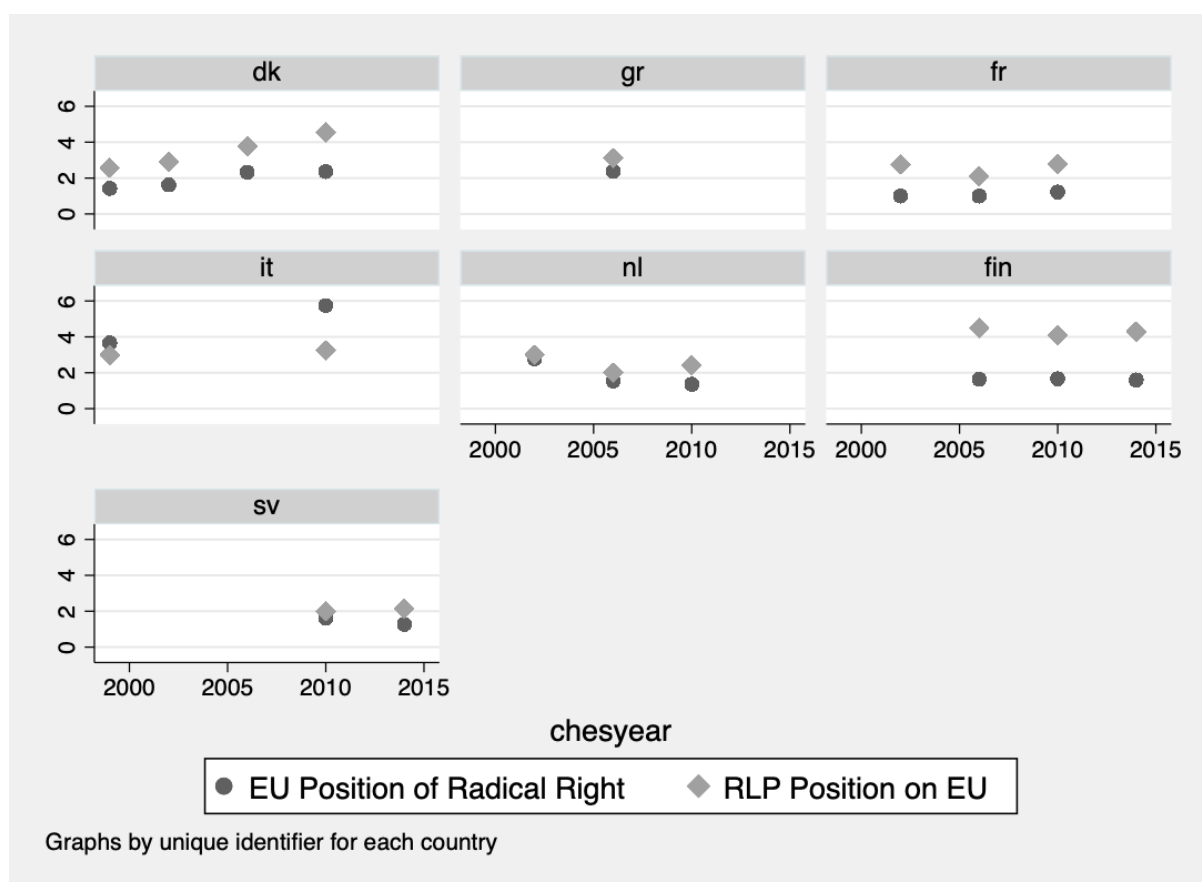


Figure A6. Descriptive Overview of RLP Positions



Graphs by cy

Figure A7. Descriptive Overview of Positions of RLPs and RRP



Appendix B**Gotta Catch 'em All – Position Blurring of Radical Left Parties on European Integration**

Table B1. Descriptive Statistics of RLP voters in each country

voteRLP	Denmark	Finland	France	Germany	Greece	Netherlands	Total
0	4,637 89.60	4,779 94.75	3,972 98.03	6,583 86.62	5,869 96.93	11,474 96.20	57,462 94.35
1	538 10.40	265 5.25	80 1.97	1,017 13.38	186 3.07	453 3.80	3,440 5.65
Total	5,175 100.00	5,044 100.00	4,052 100.00	7,600 100.00	6,055 100.00	11,927 100.00	60,902 100.00

voteRLP	Portugal	Spain	Sweden	Total
0	5,057 96.82	7,013 97.61	8,075 93.48	57,462 94.35
1	166 3.18	172 2.39	563 6.52	3,440 5.65
Total	5,223 100.00	7,185 100.00	8,638 100.00	60,902 100.00

Table B2: Regression results on direct Blurring Questions (CHES 2019)

	(1)	(2)
	Party Blurring on EU Positions	Party Blurring on Economic Positions
Radical Right	-.58 (.659)	1.03* (.528)
Conservative	-.256 (.707)	-.454 (.565)
Liberal	-1.435** (.659)	-1.308** (.528)
Christian Democrats	-.114 (.739)	-.59 (.589)
Socialist	-.609 (.646)	-.691 (.518)
Radical Left	.034 (.646)	-2.078*** (.518)
Greens	-1.033 (.659)	-.542 (.528)
Regionalist	-.946 (.707)	-.815 (.576)
Constant	3.815*** (.523)	3.972*** (.427)
Observations	133	131
R-squared	.085	.33

Standard errors are in parentheses

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Table B3. List of Radical Left Parties in Western Europe used in this research

<i>RLPs</i>	<i>Full Party Names and Translations</i>	<i>Countries</i>
SF	The Socialist People's Party/ Socialistisk Folkeparti	DENMARK
VAS	Left Alliance // Vasemmistoliitto	FINLAND
PCF	French Communist party // Parti communiste	FRANCE
PDS/ Linke	Die Linke // The Left	GERMANY
SYN/SYRIZA	Coalition of the Left // Synaspismos	GREECE
SP	Socialist Party // Socialistische Partij	NETHERLANDS
BE	Left Bloc // Bloco de Esquerda	PORTUGAL
IU	United Left // Izquierda Unida	SPAIN
V	Left Party/ Vänsterpartiet	SWEDEN

<i>Country</i>	<i>ESS Rounds</i>	<i>CHES Years</i>
Denmark	1, 3, 4, 6	1999, 2002, 2006, 2010
Germany	1, 3, 5, 7	2002, 2006, 2010
Greece	1, 2, 4, 5	1999, 2002, 2006
Spain	1, 2, 4, 6, 8	1999, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2017
France	1, 4, 6	2002, 2006, 2010
Netherlands	1, 4, 5, 7	2002, 2006, 2010
Portugal	1, 3, 5, 6, 8	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
Finland	1, 2, 4, 6, 8	1999, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
Sweden	2, 4, 5, 8	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014

Table B4. Logistic and Linear Model Comparisons

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Fitted (Linear)	26,219	.1000981	.0958737	-.2298267	.3887033
Linear Predicted Probab.	26,219	.0964842	.1074522	.0008569	.7217197
Logistic Predicted Probab.	26,219	.0967384	.1149096	.0003738	.7702706

Fitted (Linear)	Linear Pred Probab.	Logistic Pred. Probab
Fitted (Linear).	1.0000	
Linear Pred. Probab.	0.8644	1.0000
Logistic Pred. Probab.	0.8517	0.9940

(obs=26,219)

Table B5: Regression results

	(1) Vote RLP
Agreement	9.784 (6.045)
RLP Blur	3.718 (3.194)
RLP Blur x Agreement	-25.391** (10.827)
Left Right Self ID	-0.549*** (0.032)
RLP EU Position	0.705 (0.460)
GDP Change	-0.000 (0.000)
Constant	-4.809* (2.828)
Sd(country)	0.000 (0.000)
Sd(country-Study)	4.211 (2.784)
Obs.	24956
Pseudo R ²	.z

Standard errors are in parenthesis

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Agreement is coded after the original van Eijk (2001) measure between -1 and 1, where -1 indicates polarization and 1 indicates consensus.

Figure B1. Distribution of blurring of RLPs on EU integration, 0 indicating no blurring and 2.5 being identified as high blurring based on standard deviation from CHES experts position placement of RLPs on EU integration.

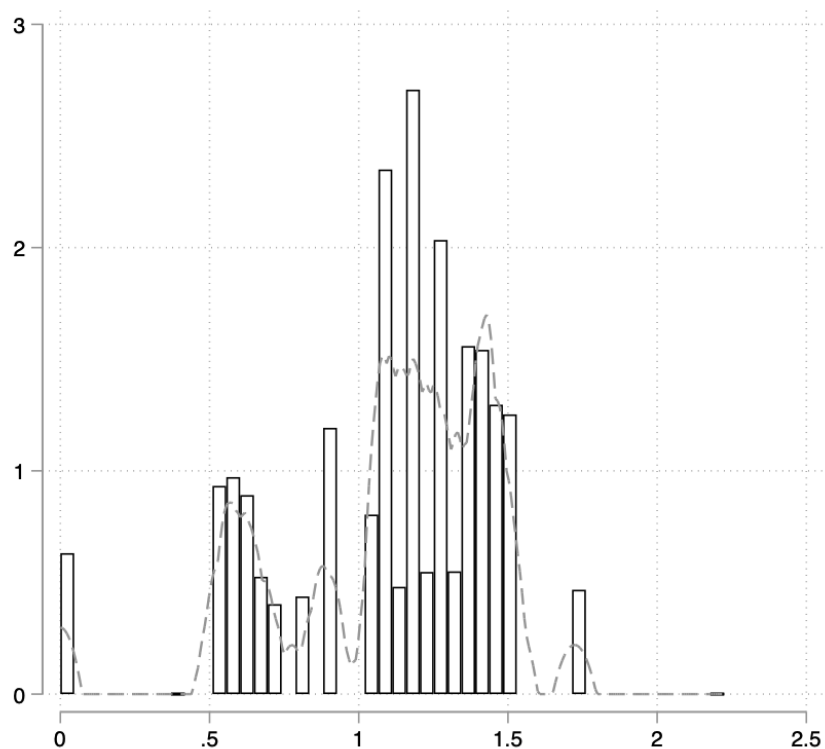
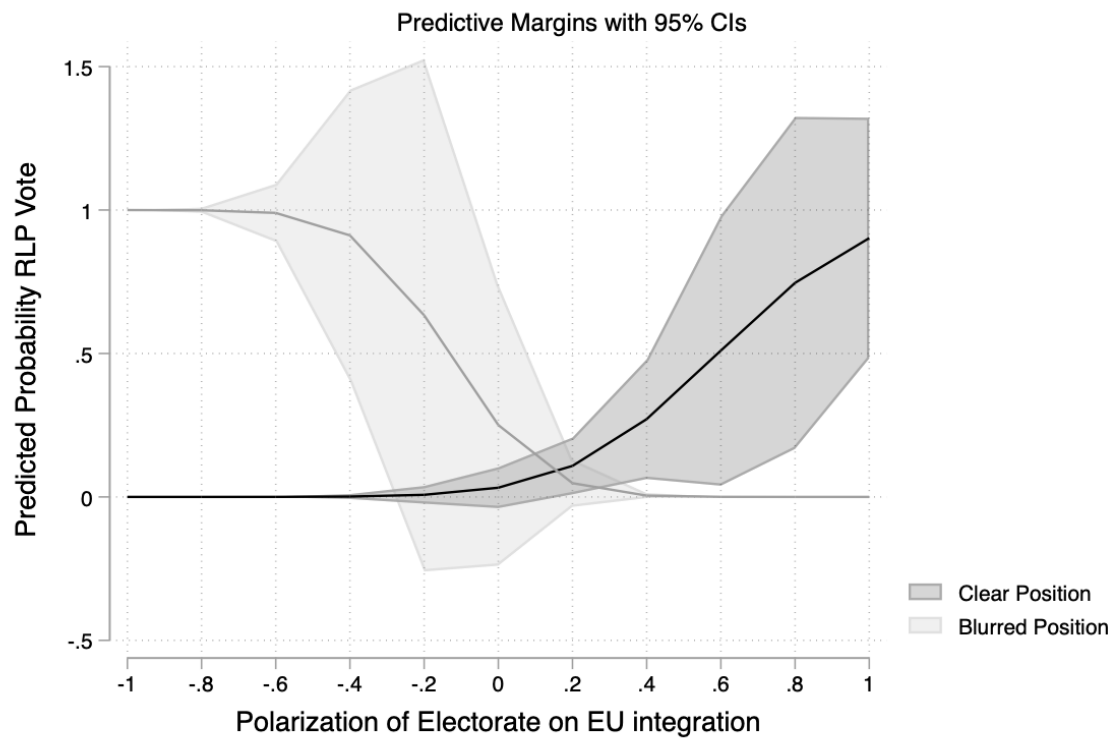
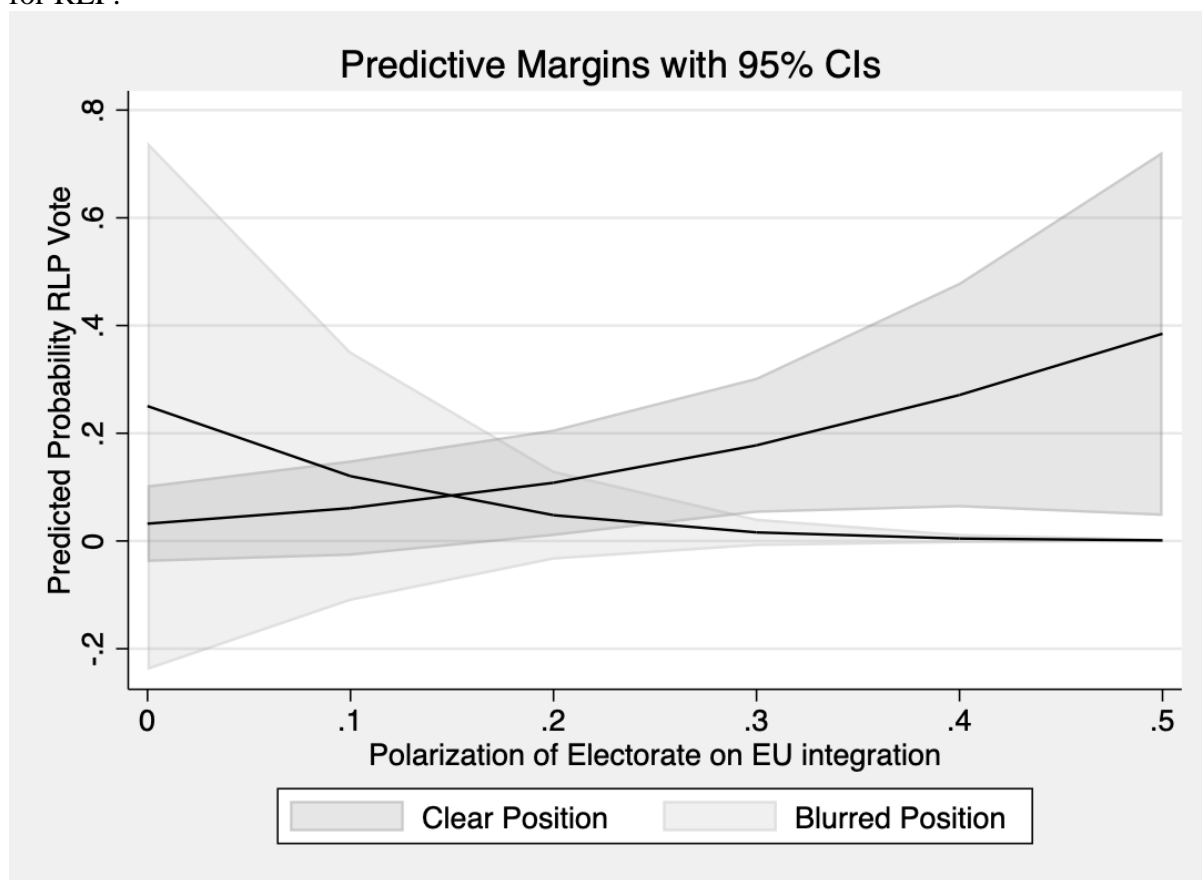


Figure B2. Interaction between level of homogeneity among the electorate on EU integration and blurring of position on EU by RLPs on the predicted probability of voters choosing to vote for RLP.



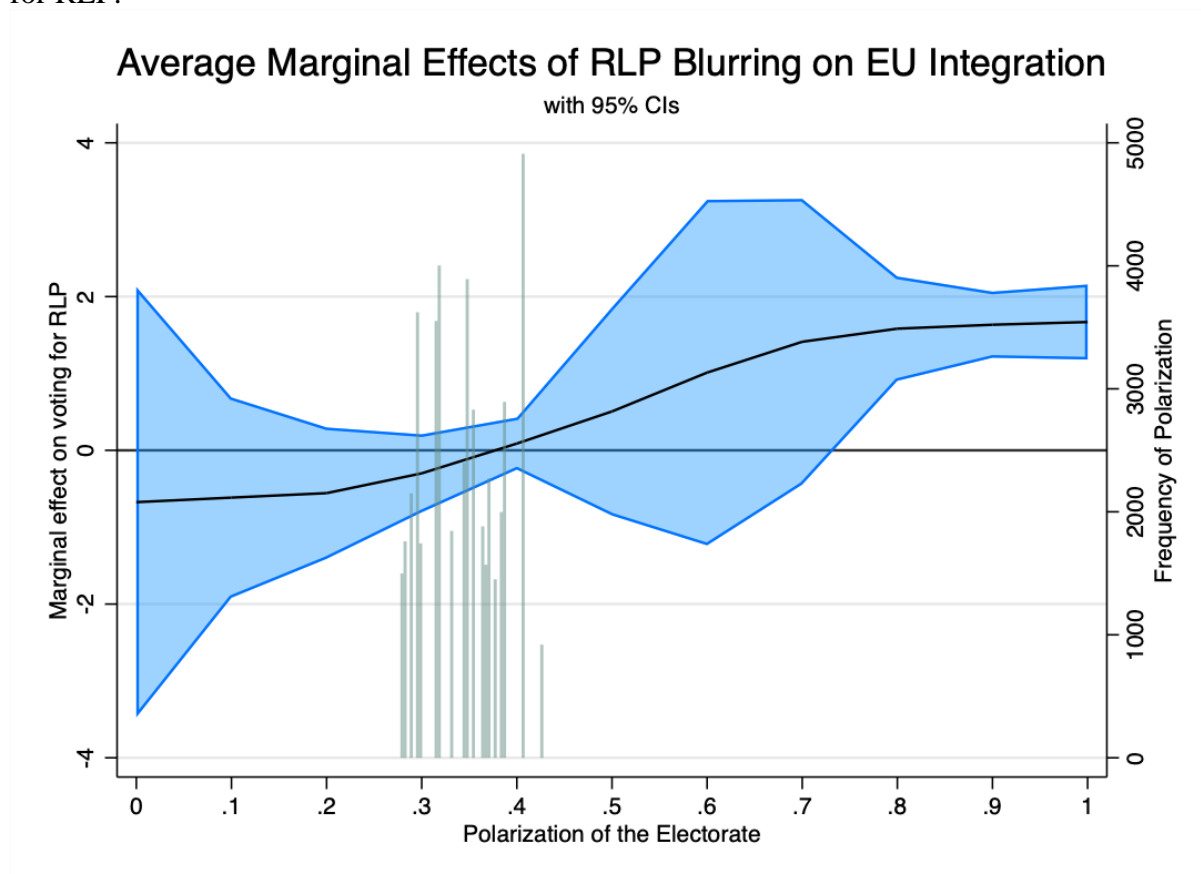
Note: -1 indicates polarization among electorate, 0 indicates no agreement and 1 indicates agreement among electorate on EU integration. Blurring was made into a dichotomous variable for ease of interpretation. See appendix for regression table.

Figure B3. Interaction between level of homogeneity among the electorate on EU integration and blurring of position on EU by RLPs on the predicted probability of voters choosing to vote for RLP.



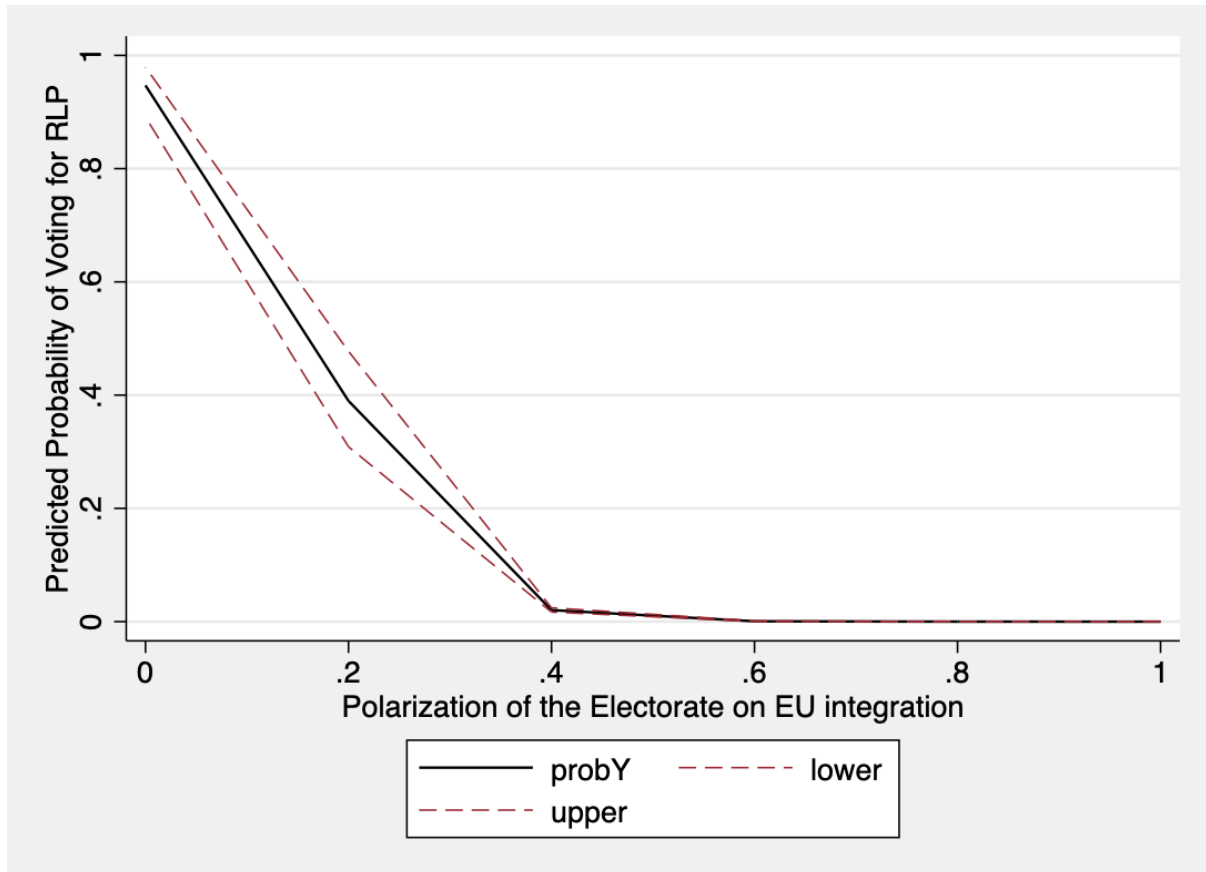
Note: 0 indicates no agreement and 1 indicates agreement among electorate on EU integration. Due to insufficient data, only existent data is visualised. Blurring was made into a dichotomous variable for ease of interpretation. See appendix for regression table.

Figure B4. Interaction between level of homogeneity among the electorate on EU integration and blurring of position on EU by RLPs on the predicted probability of voters choosing to vote for RLP.



Note: 0 indicates no agreement and 1 indicates agreement among electorate on EU integration. Includes histogram of data. This model was operationalised using fixed effects for country and survey year

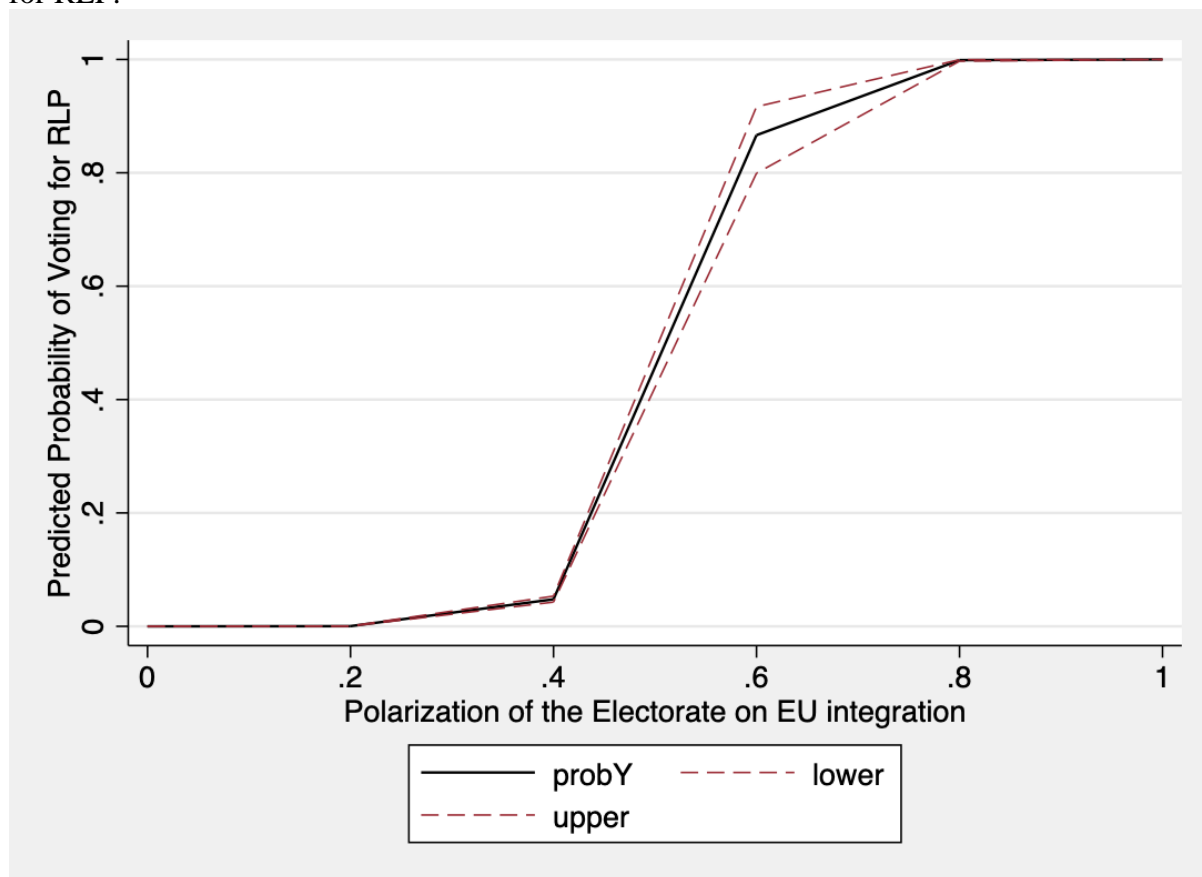
Figure B5. Interaction between level of polarization among the electorate on EU integration and a clear position on EU by RLPs on the predicted probability of voters choosing to vote for RLP.



Note: 0 indicates consensus and 1 indicates polarization among electorate on EU integration.

As the polarization variable shows distinct gaps in distribution, out of sample prediction was used additionally. For the out of sample prediction, a simulation technique was used. While these simulations were run using *Clarify*, this was also performed and stayed consistent using the margins command. From here, though I proceed the analysis making use of simulations, we can at least suggest that the results seem to be consistent to what we found previously. In Figure A6 and A7, the red dotted lines show the confidence intervals.

Figure B6. Interaction between level of polarization among the electorate on EU integration and a blurred position on EU by RLPs on the predicted probability of voters choosing to vote for RLP.



Note: 0 indicates consensus and 1 indicates polarization among electorate on EU integration.

Figure B7. Linear and Logistic Model Comparison

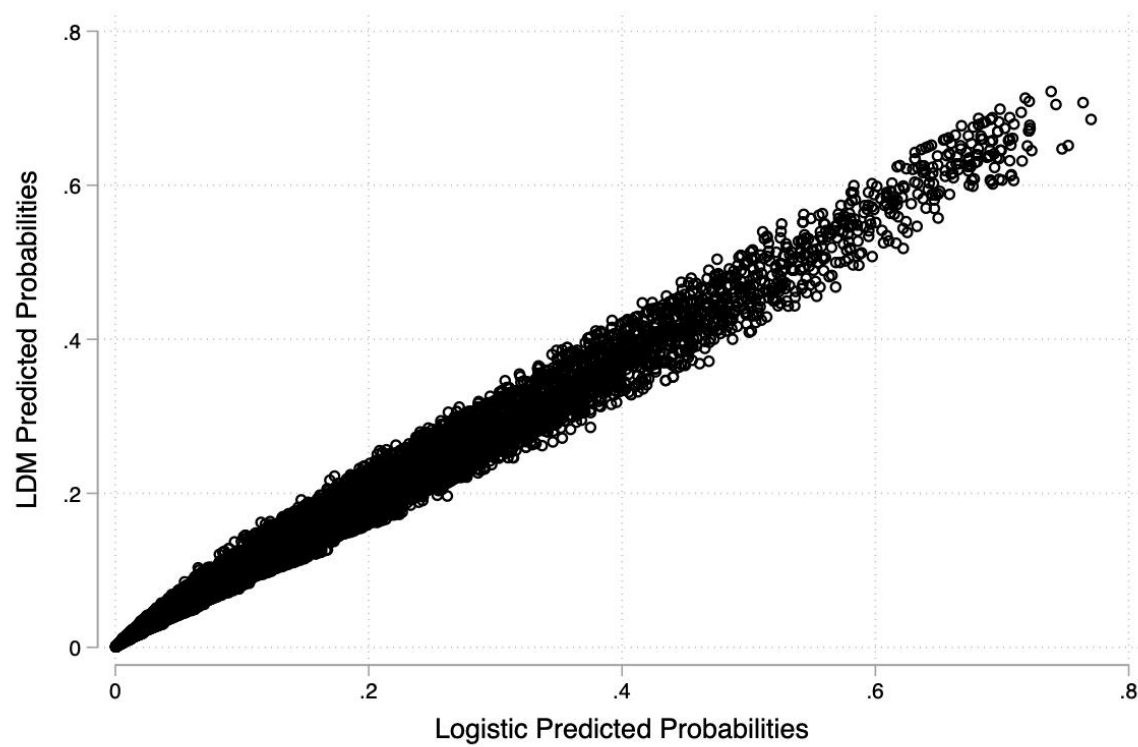


Figure B8. Linear and Logistic Model Comparison

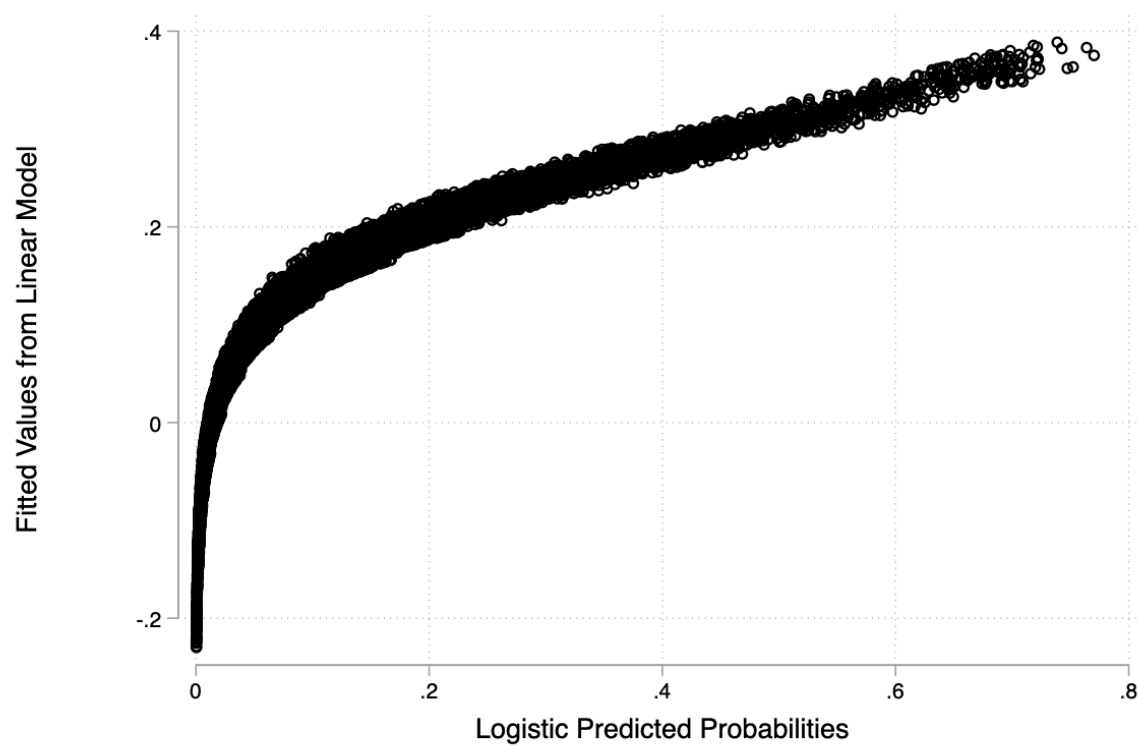


Figure B9. Model using mixed effects logistic regression, using country-level random intercepts.

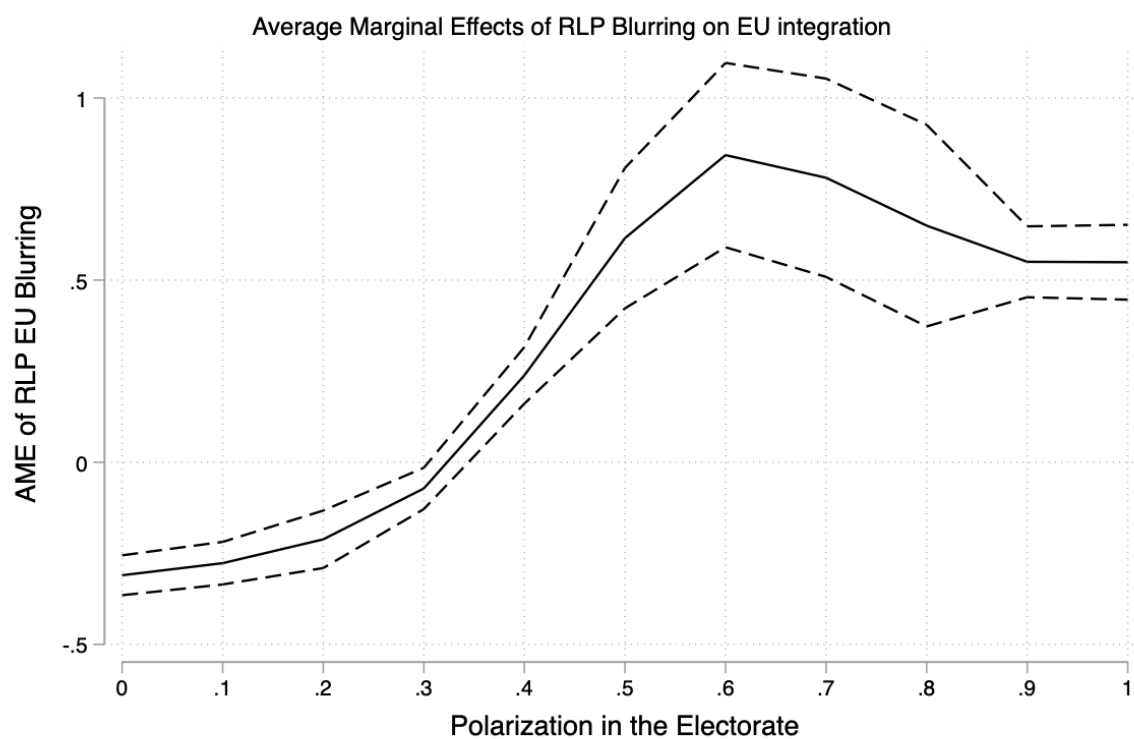


Figure B10. Linear Model using country-level random intercepts.

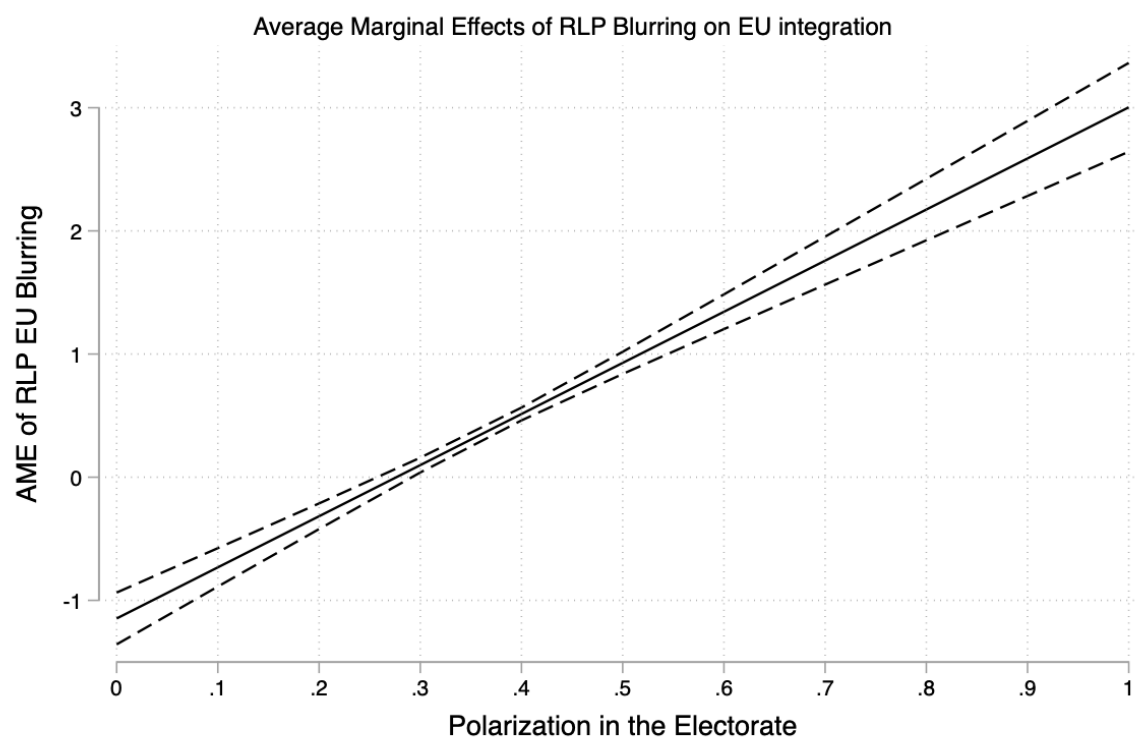
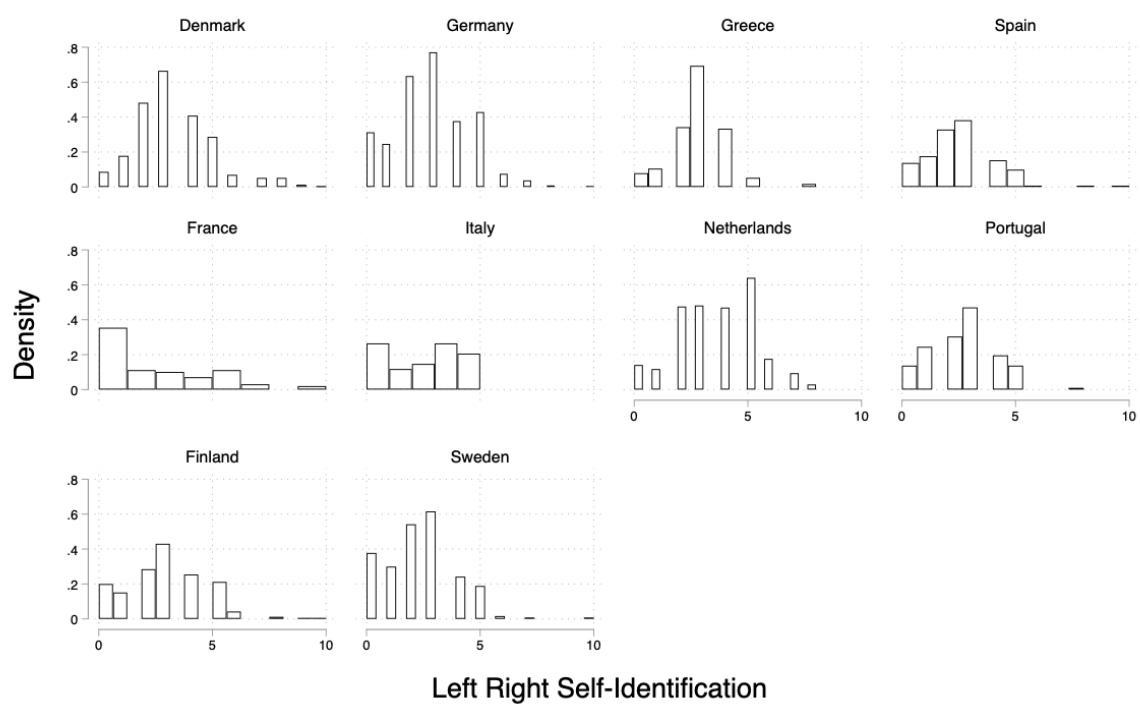


Figure B11. Left-right Self-Identification of RLP voters across countries.



Graphs by cy

Appendix C

Examining voters' positions on Europe and attitudes towards the radical left

Additional regressions using reported voting

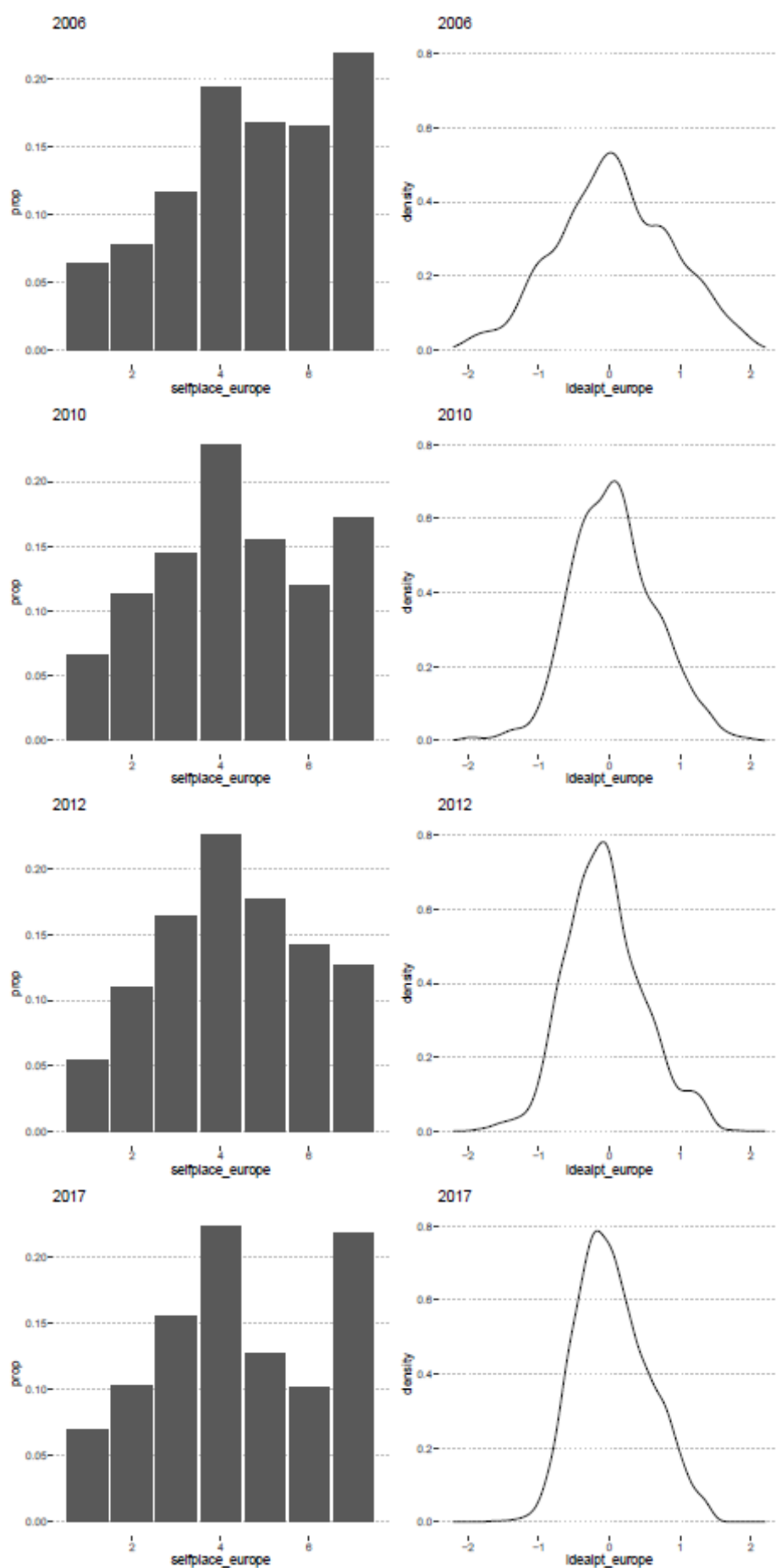
We also examined the actual reported voting for SP as an alternate version of the dependent variable, shown in table C1. As a binary variable, this approach lacks the ability to detect variation in change in attitudes toward voting for SP short of actually doing so. Here we employ a logit model, but otherwise retain the same approach used in the linear models above in Table 4.1. The results reinforce and are in some cases stronger than those in the continuous measure we employ above. In the first model we again find that a more Eurosceptic position on Europe also has a sizable impact on the probability of voting for SP. Notably, the conditionality of the effect of Europe on left-right is even somewhat starker than seen with the continuous measure, owing to the fact that those identifying as right have a much lower baseline probability of voting for the radical left. In addition, change over time is more stark, with an even weaker effect for Europe in 2006.

Table C1. Vote Choice for SP

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
(Intercept)	0.06 (0.04)	0.13 ** (0.04)	0.12 ** (0.04)	0.13 ** (0.04)
Ideal Point Redistribution	-0.11 *** (0.01)	-0.06 *** (0.01)	-0.06 *** (0.01)	-0.06 *** (0.01)
Ideal Point Europe	0.05 *** (0.01)	0.06 *** (0.01)	0.06 *** (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Ideal Point Immigration	-0.03 *** (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 * (0.01)
Ideal Point Left-Right		-0.13 *** (0.01)	-0.13 *** (0.01)	-0.13 *** (0.01)
Ideal Point Europe x Ideal Point Redistribution			-0.01 (0.02)	
Ideal Point Europe x Ideal Point Immigration			-0.02 (0.01)	
Ideal Point Europe x Ideal Point Left-Right			-0.11 *** (0.02)	
Age	-0.00 *** (0.00)	-0.00 *** (0.00)	-0.00 *** (0.00)	-0.00 *** (0.00)
Gender	0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
Class	0.03 *** (0.01)	0.02 *** (0.01)	0.02 *** (0.01)	0.02 *** (0.01)
Education	-0.01 (0.00)	-0.01 * (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.00)
Year 2010	0.04 * (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.03 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Year 2012	0.02 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)
Year 2017	0.05 ** (0.02)	0.04 * (0.02)	0.06 *** (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)
Ideal Point Europe x Year 2010				0.02 (0.02)
Ideal Point Europe x Year 2012				0.05 (0.03)
Ideal Point Europe x Year 2017				0.10 *** (0.02)
R ²	0.09	0.11	0.13	0.12
Adj. R ²	0.09	0.11	0.12	0.11
Num. obs.	3386	3205	3205	3205

Figure C1. Comparison of Raw Self-placements and Scaled Ideal Points on Europe

In the figure below, we compare the rescaled Europe positions to the original self-reported ordinal data. With regard to bias adjustments, a substantial number of ‘extreme’ self-placed Eurosceptics are rescaled via the Aldrich-McKelvey procedure to be closer to the centre of the distribution when taking into account their relative placements of party stimuli on Europe.



Survey Questions

Redistribution:

Some people think that the differences in incomes in our country should be increased. Others think that they should be decreased. Where would you place the following parties and yourself on a line from 1 to 7, where 1 means differences in income should be increased and 7 means that differences in income should be decreased.

Europe:

Some people and parties think that the European unification should go further. Others think that the European unification has already gone too far. How would you place the following parties and yourself on a line from 1 to 7, where 1 means that the European unification should go even further and 7 that the unification has already gone too far?

Immigration:

In the Netherlands some think that foreigners should be able to live in the Netherlands while preserving their own culture. Others think that they should fully adapt to the Dutch culture. Where would you place the following parties and yourself on a line from 1 to 7, where 1 means preservation of own culture for foreigners and 7 means that they should fully adapt?

Left-Right:

In politics people sometimes talk about left and right. Would you please indicate the degree to which you think that a party is left or right?
When you think of your own political beliefs, where would you place yourself on this line?




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Name of Co-Author	Royce Carroll		
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Overall percentage (%)	25		
Signature		Date:	(03/11/21)

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