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This article examines the single-issue party thesis for the specific case of contemporary extreme right parties (ERPs) and the immigration issue. I define the single-issue party as (1) having an electorate with no particular social structure; (2) being supported predominantly on the basis of one single issue; (3) lacking an ideological programme; and (4) addressing only one all-encompassing issue. On the basis of a comprehensive analysis of electoral studies and party literature the single-issue party thesis is rejected on all counts. At best, immigration has been a catalyst for most ERPs in certain periods of time. Their ideology and broader programme will keep ERPs in the political arena for some time to come, even in the unlikely event that immigration would cease to be an important political issue.

The 1980s have brought forth the rise of two new party families within west European party systems, that of the ‘left-libertarian’ or Green parties, since the early-1980s, and that of the ‘extreme right’ parties (ERPs) since the mid-1980s. The reading of the causes of these developments have sparked considerable debate and confusion within the ever growing community of students of political parties. While some argue that the parties have arisen as a result of the salience of a new libertarian-authoritarian cleavage, others interpret their sudden upsurge as proof of the increased importance of issue voting. Among the latter, the Green and extreme right parties are often seen as ‘single-issue parties’. While the environment is claimed to be the sole issue of the Green parties, various commentators in the media and scholarly community have linked the ERPs to the immigration issue. According to Christopher T. Husbands, immigration is even ‘their raison d’être’.

This article will examine the claim that the contemporary ERPs are single-issue parties with the immigration issue as their sole basis of existence. First, I will clearly define the still rather illusive concept of the single-issue party. On the basis of this definition, four related theses are identified, which together constitute the crux of the single-issue party thesis.

Second, these four theses will be tested for the relationship between ERPs and the immigration issue. Third, the question whether the extreme right is a single-issue phenomenon is answered, and the broader question of the importance of the issue of immigration to the (earlier and future) development of the contemporary ERPs is discussed.

THE SINGLE-ISSUE PARTY

Throughout the (latter part of the) twentieth century, various parties and even party families have been described as ‘single-issue parties’. Originally, agrarian parties were the most usual suspects. Later, anti-tax parties, like the ‘Anders Lange’s Party for a Strong Reduction of Taxes, Social Contributions, and Public Intervention’ in Norway, and the various Green parties were targeted. More recently, ERPs have been the most common inhabitants of the term. Some authors have adopted terms like ‘racist parties’ or even ‘anti-immigration parties’ to stress their single-issue status.

According to some scholars, the single-issue party is a contradiction in terms, as it defies the essence of the political party, the aggregation of a multitude of political demands and issues. They prefer the term ‘single-issue movement’ or even pressure or interest group. But even scholars who accept the single-issue party, generally working with a minimal definition of the political party, describe it primarily in negative terms. At best, a kind of ‘watchdog-role’ is ascribed to it: that is, the (functional) essence of the single-issue party is to notice and put on the political agenda a specific issue that is of importance to parts of the electorate but is at that time (consciously or unconsciously) ignored by the established parties. However, it is believed (and often desired) that the single-issue party will disappear once the issue is aggregated into the wider list of issues of the established parties.

This view is also clearly underlying one of the few definitions of the single-issue party that has been provided to date:

Characteristically, the single-issue movement galvanises support from different political camps on the basis of a single, all-encompassing issue, and, predictably, disappears once the issue has been articulated and aggregated into the political agenda.

However, this description focuses exclusively on the demand-side of the single-issue party, that is, on its electoral basis. The supply-side is at least of equal importance: a single-issue party has a political programme that centres on just one political issue. Taking into account both the demand (1–2) and the supply (3–4) side leads us to four related theses, which together constitute the single-issue party thesis:

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The single-issue party has an electorate with no particular social structure.

The single-issue party is supported predominantly on the basis of one single issue.

The single-issue party does not present an ideological programme.

The single-issue party addresses only one "all-encompassing issue" in its literature.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The idea that the electorate of a single-issue party has no specific social structure is mainly grounded in the famous Lipset and Rokkan thesis, linking (traditional) electoral behaviour and the character of the party system to the cleavage structure of a country. In contrast to parties representing one end of a cleavage, the single-issue party attracts an electorate that is "drawing support from across established political and social cleavages." More recently, the idea has also been taken up by Herbert Kitschelt, who argues that electoral behaviour results by and large from the occupational sector of the voter. According to Kitschelt, the electorate of single-issue parties has "little social structuration (…) whether measured in terms of market position, organisational affiliation, or age and education."  

Empirical studies show that the electorate of (most) ERPs actually do have some specific characteristics. Of these, the significance of age is most often noted. Various studies show that the number of young voters is disproportionally high among the electorates of most ERPs. However, the picture is not conclusive: for example, while young voters are over-represented in the case of both the Norwegian Fremmuskritspartiet (FPr) and the Swedish Ny Demokrati (ND), this is not so for the Danish Fremskridspartiet (FPd). Moreover, there seems an intervening (if not overriding) variable: gender. ERPs are, first and foremost, Männerparteien (male parties). All ERPs attract more male than female voters, and this applies also to the over-represented group of young voters. However, while parties like the German Republikaner (REP) have almost two male voters for every female voter (64-36), in the case of the Italian Lega Nord (LN) the difference is minimal (51-49). Moreover, the significance of gender for extreme right voting is rejected in some studies, claiming that (the combination with) other variables are more important.

Of the other variables, class and occupational sector have received particular attention. Regarding the latter, the lack of support from people employed in the public sector has been noted by various authors. In their first electoral successes most ERPs relied to a large extent on the self-employed, manual workers, and salaried white collar employees. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, as Hans-Georg Betz noted, ERPs 'went through a process of proletarization', which led to disproportionate numbers of low educated, male, blue-collar workers within their electorates. In 1995 the French Front National (FN) had even become 'France's First Workers' Party'. A final specific characteristic, mentioned by several authors, is religious affiliation. Various studies show that the electorates of (most) ERPs entail a disproportionately high number of people with no religious affiliation.

Though the evidence from the different parties and periods is not always pointing in the same direction, there seems sufficient evidence for the conclusion that the electorates of ERPs do have a specific social structure. In most cases young, male, blue-collar voters with no religious affiliation are over-represented.

ANTI-IMMIGRANT ATTITUDE

The thesis that ERPs are primarily, if not exclusively, voted for on the basis of their (negative) stand on immigration/immigrants has often been supported, as well as rejected, on the basis of aggregate data. Various studies have related the number of immigrants in different local communities, cities, regions or states with the electoral success of ERPs in these areas. Mixed results have been reported, though there seems to exist consensus regarding the absence of a clear cut relation between the number of immigrants and the electoral success of ERPs in a certain territorial unit. Slightly better, if still not conclusive, (cor)relations are reported between the level of electoral support for ERPs and the increase in the numbers of immigrants in a certain territory.

This notwithstanding, these analyses can at best point to an environment within which people vote more or less for ERPs. The famous trap of 'ecological fallacy' prevents the explanation of individual (voting) behaviour on the basis of aggregate data. Hence, support or rejection of the thesis can only be detracted from individual data dealing with the attitudes of voters. The single-issue party thesis is empirically supported when not only a (large) majority of the voters of ERPs are hostile to immigration/immigrants, but also this attitude is the main reason for them to vote for the ERPs. In short, the (large) majority of voters of ERPs must motivate their party support on the basis of their anti-immigrant attitude.

Many studies have shown that a large portion of the electorate of ERPs are hostile to immigrants and/or immigration. In various cases this even
amounts to a substantial majority of the extreme right electorate. Moreover, several studies show that within this section of the electorate immigration is considered more important than within the whole electorate. Nevertheless, all this does not necessarily mean that the majority also actually motivated their vote for the extreme right by their stand on the immigration issue. In the few studies that actually address this question in a straightforward manner, immigration often emerges as the main issue, but not for the (large) majority. For example, in the 1984 European and the 1986 parliamentary elections respectively 39 and 46 per cent of the FN-electorate mentioned immigration as the major issue in their voting choice. In the 1995 parliamentary elections in Belgium 'only' one third of the voters of the Vlaams Blok (VB) motivated their choice by the immigration issue; just ahead of protest and anti-party sentiment (30 per cent) and nationalist/pro-Flemish arguments (20 per cent). The 1991 breakthrough of the Swedish 'flash party' ND was also linked to the increased salience of the immigration issue; yet, though immigration was the most common motivation, a mere 19 per cent of all ND-voters mentioned it.

Only in studies in which various issues could be listed by each respondent were the scores higher. For example, in the 1995 Austrian parliamentary elections almost 50 per cent of the voters of the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ) mentioned the immigration issue as a reason for their choice. In the 1995 French presidential elections 54 per cent of the FN-electorate named immigration as one of the two issues influencing their party choice. In the case of the VB the numbers were even higher; some two-thirds of its voters mentioned immigration as a reason underlying their party choice. However, in these studies also other issues could be mentioned by a majority of the voters. Indeed, almost 80 per cent of the FPÖ voters mentioned 'anti-politics' as a reason for their 1995 choice, while 58 per cent of the FN voters named 'unemployment' as a reason for their support for Le Pen in the 1995 presidential elections.

ONE ELECTORATE?

Electoral studies at best provide partial support for the demand-side of the single-issue thesis. Immigration is a very important issue for the electorate of ERPs, and even more so than in the case of other (even right-wing) parties. But it is not the only issue, or rather it is not the only issue for all extreme right voters. ERPs are also supported on the basis of other issues, most notably security/crime, social welfare, and anti-party/politics sentiments.

One explanation for this internal differentiation is that 'the' electorate of ERPs does not exist. Just as for example, social democratic parties cater to different groups of voters. For example, Nonna Mayer distinguishes four types of FN-voters on the basis of their previous voting behaviour, which also hold clearly different attitudes on key issues. Hans-Gerd Jaschke divides the (not too substantial) REP-electorate even into six different groups: adapted neo-Nazis, disappointed Wende-voters, small entrepreneurs whose status is threatened, alienated petty bourgeois, authoritarian young workers, and victims of the two-thirds society.

A more basic distinction of the extreme right electorate is linked directly to one of the key debates within the field: whether ERPs are voted for on the basis of support or protest. Rather than being a matter of either-or, the electorate of ERPs is constituted of both extreme right/xenophobic supporters and diffuse anti-party protesters. However, these are not static groups, as successful ERPs are able to turn diffuse protesters into extreme right supporters. The extremely high number of loyal voters is some indication of the success of parties like the FN and VB in converting (part of) their electorate.

IDEOLOGY

The supply-side of the single-issue party thesis includes the idea that ERPs are not ideological parties, or in Weberian terms Weltanschauungsparteien, that is, that they do not have an (elaborated) ideology. The link between the (extreme) right and ideology has traditionally been questioned by scholars, arguing that the right is to be defined primarily as a reaction to left-wing ideology rather than as an independent ideology. Some scholars therefore speak of right-wing extremism as an 'anti-ideology' or 'non-ideology'. This might also be the reason for the almost complete lack of empirical studies of the ideology of ERPs, particularly from a comparative perspective.

However, a recent cross-national comparative study of the ideology of ERPs does clearly show that they do have party ideologies. Moreover, the extreme right party family has an 'ideological core', which includes various inter-linked ideological features that are shared by all ERPs. The nucleus of the extreme right ideology is nationalism, the belief that the state (the political unit) and the nation (the cultural unit) should be congruent. ERPs are first and foremost nationalist, though they can be divided into state and ethnic nationalist ERPs.

All ERPs strive for the (re)creation of a mono-cultural or 'pure' nation-state. This is to be realised by a process of internal homogenisation, which includes at least an active state policy of repatriation. For state nationalists,
assimilation of non-nationals is also a valid option. They hold the state as the prime basis of human organisation and solidarity. Everyone who is either born (and raised) within the state borders or who lives within the state and wants to naturalise is considered to be part of the nation. Their main goal is a nation that is culturally homogeneous, not necessarily ethnically.

Traditionally, state nationalism has been particularly strong within Latin cultures, from Jacobin France to Fascist Italy. One can still find it predominantly in ERPs within this region, most notably the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI), though the Dutch Centrumpartij '86 (CP '86) also fits the sub-type. As a true reservoir of the French extreme right, the FN combines both strong state nationalist and ethnic nationalist visions. For ethnic nationalist ERPs, repatriation is theoretically the only option, though parties like the VB and the Dutch Centrumpartij '86 (CP '86) do accept assimilation of members of ‘related nations’. They define the nation (or ethnic community) on the basis of ethnic criteria, mainly through blood ties. Within this view, the nation precedes the state, which is considered merely as the nation’s political arm. In addition to internal homogenisation, ethnic nationalists generally also strive for external exclusiveness, that is, the inclusion of all members (and territory) of the nation within the nation-state borders.

Clearly related to the nationalist nucleus is the second feature, xenophobia. This feature is particularly prominent in party propaganda, both party papers and election pamphlets, rather than in the more ‘ideological’ literature such as election and party programmes. Xenophobia literally means fear of ‘aliens’ or anything ‘alien’ and is also in practice not only directed at ‘foreigners’, that is, people who come (or whose parents came) from other countries. True, virtually all ERPs are fearful of an ‘invasion of foreigners’, whom they associate with all kind of plagues (unemployment, crime, loss of values, traditions etc.). However, their xenophobia is not limited to foreigners only; anything alien to their way of life and values is feared. One traditional threat is homosexuality, which seems particularly salient among ERPs in Catholic countries. Homosexuality is considered a disease, as well as a sign of the decadence that ‘left-wing permissiveness’ has brought to the fore. However, like the fear of foreigners, it is also clearly linked to the nationalist ideal. Homosexuality is considered a threat to the nation, as it undermines the traditional family, the nucleus of the nation, and does not provide for offspring and, hence, for the survival of the nation.

The economic programme of ERPs has received disproportionate attention, particularly among party politics scholars. In fact, the most elaborated theory of the rise of ERPs, by Herbert Kitschelt, is based primarily on whether or not ERPs adopt the ‘winning formula’ of ‘economically rightist, free-marketeteering as well as politically and culturally authoritarian positions’. This is peculiar for two reasons: (1) for ERPs, economy is at best a secondary issue and (2) they have a welfare chauvinist economic programme.

Although various ERPs initially used strong neo-liberal rhetoric, mainly as part of their anti-party sentiments, their programme itself was and is in full accordance with their nationalism. As the nation-(state) is the most important unit, also the economy is meant to serve the nation, rather than the other way around. Therefore, national businesses and workers should be protected against foreign competitors. In breach with the neo-liberal adagium, the economic nationalism of ERPs includes state subsidies, protectionist measures, and in some cases even job creation by the state. Moreover, ERPs are generally positive towards welfare state provisions, most notably pensions and social care, though they want to limit these to ‘the own people’ only. As far as tax cuts and privatisations are concerned, ERPs generally target specific state activities; notably those that benefit the established parties or ethnic minorities.

Obviously, this contradicts Kitschelt’s ‘winning formula’ thesis. Even his ‘prototype NRR’, the FN, has increasingly thrown off its neo-liberal rhetoric and now openly admits to its ‘economic protectionist’ programme. According to Kitschelt, ‘the potential target groups for welfare chauvinist appeals are (...) quite limited’. Yet, despite the increasingly open welfare chauvinist position of ERPs like the FN, the VB and, though to a somewhat lesser extent, the FPÖ, these parties are among the electorally most successful within the extreme right party family.

Returning back to the extreme right ideological core, the fourth and last feature that is shared by all ERPs is the belief in law and order. Within this view, the state should maintain a strict legal system and should enforce these rules actively and rigorously. All parties support the elaboration of the law enforcement community (in terms of personnel, equipment, and competences), more sober conditions in prisons, and overall higher sentences. In some cases, such as the CP ’86 or the FN, they even call for the reintroduction (and enforcement) of the death penalty.

For all ERPs the belief in law and order includes a moral dimension as well, though this is not always a core feature of the party ideology (e.g. the CD). Parties like the VB and the REP stress the necessity of order and hierarchy in social (community) life and vehemently oppose what they see as the degenerate effects of permissiveness: homosexuality, abortion, drugs, pornography, and sometimes even divorce. Though law and order (and the broader authoritarianism) can be linked to nationalism, and is often explicitly defended with nationalist arguments by the parties, the link seems not necessary. Moreover, nationalism is but one argument to defend law and
order, and traditionally conservative (and religious) arguments are also frequently used.

**ONE SINGLE ISSUE**

The fact that ERPs are ideological parties does not, by definition, prevent them from addressing only one single issue in their propaganda. And, given the core features of nationalism and xenophobia, the issue of immigration seems particularly fit for extreme right propaganda. However, in so far as there have been single-issue parties in terms of solely addressing the immigration issue, parties like the Kieler Liste für Ausländerbegrenzung (Kiel List to Limit Foreign Immigration) in Germany or the Ausländer-Halt-Bewegung (Foreigner Stop Movement) in Austria probably came closest. As the names indicate, their programme was first and foremost directed at limiting/stopping immigration. However, these parties were no more than front organisations for broader, ideological ERPs; on top of that, they were only active for a short period of time (the early 1980s), at a local level, and without much electoral success.

As far as the other ERPs are concerned, immigration has at best been the main issue of some parties in certain periods of time. For example, both the VB and the FN were founded in the 1970s, in a period in which immigration was hardly an issue in the public debate or even within the extreme right. Both parties devoted just one sentence to the issue in their first programmes and initially favoured exclusively traditionally right-wing (FN) and Flemish nationalist (VB) issues. Particularly at the local level, the issue of immigration was increasingly utilised in campaigns, and when this was perceived as successful, in the mid-1980s, the issue was promoted to the centre of the whole party propaganda. During this period, the electoral campaigns and successes of ERPs had effects well beyond their (local) borders: the xenophobic propaganda of the VB, for example, was strongly influenced by that of the FN and the Dutch Centrumpartij (CP).

Still, it was particularly during the late 1980s and early 1990s that the immigration issue was dominating the extreme right propaganda. In fact, in 1991–93 immigration was high on the public and political agenda in virtually all West European countries; from Germany (asylum crisis) to Italy (Albanians in Bari), from Austria (Haider’s ‘Austria First’ referendum) to Denmark. But there were noted differences in the way ERPs acted during this sudden salience of the immigration issue. Like most political actors, the extreme right tries to follow (and to some degree influence) ‘issue attention cycles’, and this led some ERPs to (temporarily) change their focus to the more or less new issue of immigration (e.g. FPÖ and LN), while others just increased their already substantial xenophobic propaganda (e.g. VB and FN) – some, however, remained passive on the whole issue (notably MSI).

After the ‘asylum crisis’ of the early 1990s, in large part the result of the fall of the Berlin Wall, most West European countries tightened their asylum laws. Though various governments used the threat of electoral success of ERPs as legitimisation for their tougher policy, there does not seem to exist a strong relation between support for ERPs (either in opinion polls or elections) and the tightening of immigration laws in a country; for example, countries without any strong ERPs, like Ireland and the UK, also introduced stricter asylum laws. The new laws did have the effect that immigration virtually disappeared from the political and public agenda in the following years. Various ERPs reacted to this development by moving back or on to other issues. In the case of the FPÖ, for example, the failed ‘Austria First’ referendum meant a return to traditional anti-party sentiments as the main propaganda issue, though immigration remained prominent in some local campaigns (most notably in Vienna).

Empirical analysis of the party literature, however, shows that although immigration has generally been a main issue for most ERPs, often it has not been the single most important issue. In the case of the Deutsche Volksunion (DVU), for instance, patriotism has always been the main issue in its (leader’s) vast propaganda apparatus, while the VB has consistently devoted most of its attention to the issue of Flemish independence. In virtually all ERPs, attention to the issue of immigration has further been very much on a par with attention to the (inter-linked) issue of security. This is not that surprising, as law and order is one of the key features of their ideology. Survey research shows that this issue has come across well among their electorate; for example, in France 40 per cent of the FN-electorate believed in Le Pen’s capacity to enforce law and order, while ‘crime’ is one of the four ‘unique issues’ of the VB.

ERPs have linked ‘security’ also to socio-economic issues, such as unemployment and welfare provisions. This has been particularly the case since the early 1990s, when many ERP-leaders reacted to the proletarisation of their electorate and consequently increased the party’s social profile. Various ERPs have by now almost completely given up on their earlier neo-liberal rhetoric, trying to fully exploit their potential among blue-collar workers. Parties like the FN and VB even started organising May Day Celebrations, honouring their ‘own’ workers, to the great anger and embarrassment of Communist and social democratic organisations.

All these issues are linked to ‘the politics of resentment’, that is the criticism of political parties. It is particularly this ‘issue’ that unites all ERPs even ‘border cases’ such as the Italian LN and the Scandinavian parties. Rather than rejecting the political party per se, contemporary ERPs produce a constant stream of populist anti-party sentiments.
is directed at all established parties, opposition and government. Though not crossing the line with complete rejection of all other parties, the critique does go far beyond the normal political debate on ideas and policies. It is not so much that the established/other parties hold different ideas which is criticised, but rather the ‘fact’ that they have no ideas at all, and that they are only interested in political power and financial gain. Terms like ‘political mafia’ and ‘political banditry’ are used to point to the corruptness and (secret) co-operation of the established parties.

In various cases, ERPs argue also that the established parties are part of an ‘old regime’, out of touch with the population and with current issues, yet desperate to keep power and thereby obstructing the development into a ‘new era’. Not surprisingly, this is particularly strong among ERPs in countries where the political system is increasingly characterised by corruption and stalemate (such as Austria, Italy and, to a lesser extent, Belgium).

ERPS AND THE IMMIGRATION ISSUE: AN ASSESSMENT

The foregoing analysis clearly shows that the single-issue party thesis does not hold for ERPs and the immigration issue. Contrary to the demand-side of the thesis, the electorate of (most) ERPs does have a specific social structure and is not only motivated by the immigration issue. In addition, Peter Pulzer’s observation with regard to the British National Front is valid also for the other ERPs: ‘Its image is therefore that of a single-issue party, although its belief system is (...) multifaceted.’ ERPs have a clear (and distinct) ideological core and address various issues, which contradicts the supply-side of the thesis.

All this does not mean that the immigration issue has not been of particular importance to contemporary ERPs. Rather, immigration has not been their sole issue, and not even their most important issue. What Bart Maddens has noted for the voters, applies to some extent to the parties as well.

Voters do not get excited about the issue because of the immigrant problem as such, but because the issue works as a catalyst for a more encompassing uneasiness about recent social and economic changes in Western Europe.24

The issue of immigration has functioned as a major catalyst of electoral success of ERPs in Western Europe.25 It enabled the parties to link their ideological core of xenophobic nationalism to the increasing ‘uneasiness’ and even resentment among parts of the electorate. This has been particularly true for the period from the late 1980s till the mid-1990s.

Moreover, the electoral successes of the French FN of 1983–84, and especially their general interpretation in the European media as ‘racist protest’, influenced many other ERPs to focus their attention increasingly on the immigration issue (e.g. REP, VB).

However, immigration has not been the only ‘catalyst issue’ of ERPs, nor has it been a catalyst issue for all ERPs. In the (admittedly exceptional) case of Italy, immigration has never played an important role, on either the demand or the supply side, for the MSI (and its ‘successor’ the Alleanza Nazionale). Moreover, some ERPs have made their entry on the political scene on the basis of other (virtually unrelated) issues such as the Scandinavian Progress Parties on the tax issue or the VB on Flemish independence and got only their ‘second breath’ through the immigration issue.

In recent years most ERPs have moved beyond, rather than away from, the immigration issue. Nowadays, other issues, such as anti-politics, the welfare state, and law and order, are more or less disconnected from the immigration issue, and parties like the Austrian FPÖ focus once again primarily on anti-politics. But even ‘hardcore’ nationalist and xenophobic parties like the FN and VB increasingly address other issues related directly to anti-party sentiment and security, most notably socio-economic policy and crime. In most (West) European countries these issues rank high on the public agenda and are increasingly entering the political agenda.

Moreover, given the centrality of nationalism in their ideology, ERPs are particularly well suited to occupy the ‘fundamental opposition’ side of the EU issue, which is destined to increase in political salience in the coming years.26 In combination with the disaffection with politics and the established parties, which is increasing rapidly within (western) Europe, this provides fertile ground for ERPs. Election studies have already shown that disaffected voters are ‘a natural reserve’ of the extreme right. Therefore, like it or not, ERPs are here to stay, at least for the coming decade, even in the unlikely event that immigration would cease to be an important political issue.

NOTES

1 I would like to thank Hans-Georg Betz, Roger Eatwell, Petr Kopecky, Peter Mair and the editors of West European Politics for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article.

1 I will not get into the discussion over the correct terminology; see Cas Mudde, ‘The War of Words: Defining the Extreme Right Party Family’, *West European Politics* 19/2 (April 1996) pp.225–48. I use the term ‘extreme right’ here in a generic sense, encompassing all parties labelled generally as such or as ‘racist’, ‘anti-immigrant’, ‘radical right-wing’, ‘fascist’ or ‘new-national, radical right-wing populist’. However, the section on ideology, in particular,
is based on the ‘core’ ERPs, probably excluding ‘border cases’ such as the Scandinavian Progress Parties and the Italian Lega Nord.


16. Ibid. pp.148–50; Kitschelt (note 2). However, certain jobs, within the public sector did prove particularly prone to right-wing extremism, most notably those within the security field (police and armed forces).


18. Betz (note 2) p.161. Interestingly, the electorate of the Dutch extreme right, though always remaining very small, developed into the opposite direction, making some (very modest)

36. An, unfortunately not well-known, exception is Anni Gardberg, Against the Stranger, the Gangster and the Establishment: A Comparative Study of the Ideologies of the Swedish Ny Demokrati, the German Republikaner, the French Front National, and the Belgian Vlaams Blok (Helsinki: UP 1993).

37. Cas Mudde, The Extreme Right Party Family: An Ideological Approach (U. of Leiden 1998). The study is based on a qualitative textual analysis of party platforms and papers of five ERPs in three West European countries: VB in Belgium, REP and DVU in Germany, CD and CP'86 in the Netherlands.

38. Kitschelt (note 2) pp. viii–xiii. One can also find similar views in two other main theoretical works on the contemporary extreme right, i.e. Betz (note 2) and Piero Ignazi, 'The Silent Counter-Revolution. Hypotheses on the Emergence of Extreme Right-Wing Parties in Europe', European Journal of Political Research 22/1 (July 1992) pp.3–34. One of the reasons for this might be their inclusion of, and focus on, contested 'border cases' of the extreme right party family, such as the Scandinavian Progress Parties. At least initially, these parties mainly stressed opposition to (high) taxes, the elaborated welfare state, and permissiveness (e.g. drugs, pornography). This combination of economic liberalism and cultural conservatism, however, fits the (Anglo-Saxon) term 'neo-conservatism' better than the term extreme (or radical) right. See Mudde (note 37) p.273.


40. Kitschelt (note 2) p.23.

41. Respectively of the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD) and the Nationaldemokratische Partei (NDP).


43. Though this is vehemently denied by VB-leaders, see Filip Dewinter and Karim van Overmeire. Eén tegen allen. Opkomst van het Vlaams Blok (Antwerp: Ty 1993) p.122.


47. The DVU as a party does not publish that much literature. However, its organisation is almost identical to the broader DVU movement, which includes various weeklies (Deutsche National-Zeitung and Deutsche Wochen-Zeitung) that are mainly concerned with issues involving national history and national pride. See Astrid Lange, Was die Rechte lesen. Fünfzig rechtsextreme Zeitschriften. Ziele, Inhalte, Taktik (Munich: Beck 1993) pp.73–4, 77–8; Mudde (note 37) Ch.3.


49. Respectively, Shield (note 19) p.25; Swyngedouw (note 25).