

# Competition on the radical right – explanations of radical right voting in the Netherlands in 2021

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The radical right has established itself as a party family to stay. It must have been around the time that professor Verkuyten made his first steps in academia, that Jean-Marie Le Pen, father of the current party leader Marine Le Pen, founded the *Front National* more than 40 years ago in France to become one of the first successful radical right-wing parties in Europe. Ever since its foundation, the party has focused on the defence of the French national identity – although it has never clearly demarcated what it refers to in the party program. Professor Verkuyten (e.g. 2004) did lay bare how the concept of identity can be understood and how it plays a central role in the understanding of intergroup relations and exclusion of perceived outgroups, something that will be addressed in this chapter as well, providing empirical evidence for voting for the radical right.

The *Front National* has gone through a transition eventually changing its name into *Rassemblement National* (RN), with which Marine Le Pen tried to reinvent the party taking out its most radical positions, but with that also leaving space on the more radical side of the political spectrum that is recently filled by Éric Zemmour. Nonetheless also today, the RN is considered to belong to the radical right party family, with its key ideological focus that is defined by its nativism. The party remains focused on a fundamental nationalist agenda that has characterized the radical right party family, with an exclusionary ideology on elements that threaten the nation (Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2007). Most often, the central foci in radical right parties' programs are the perceived threats to the

nation stemming from immigration. Their nationalist agenda is mainly directed towards establishing an ethnically homogeneous nation. Ethnic nationalism is therefore considered a core feature in the ideology of the radical right (Rydgren, 2007; Bonikowski, 2017; Bar-on, 2018).

Getting for the second time into the final round of the Presidential elections in 2022, it was a unicum for the radical right that more than 40% voted for a radical right party in a European country. Le Pen is in the media often labelled 'extreme right', where other parties are labelled more often as 'radical right' or 'far right'. But with the rise of a competitor on the radical right in France, Zemmour, who takes a more radical position on topics of migration than Le Pen, has taken over the label of being the extreme right in France. This seems to contribute to Le Pen's goal to reframe her party in order to provide it with a less radical image. Research does, however, still show that restrictive immigration attitudes keep being the main explanation of the vote for the party (De Sio & Paparo, 2018).

The recent competition over voters on the radical right in France mirrors the situation in the Netherlands, where different parties emerged that bid for voters mainly with a focus on the protection of national identity and the linked immigrant-critical or outright anti-immigrant perspective. The Party for Freedom (PVV), from Geert Wilders, represented in Dutch parliament since 2006, received competition from Forum for Democracy (FvD). Both serve a nationalist agenda and focus on threats to a homogeneous nation. A split in FvD, because members perceived the party to radicalize, created the party JA21, which is also immigrant-critical, although little is known about whether their voters differ in that respect from PVV and FvD voters.

In the rich literature on radical right voting, one of the first questions was 'who votes for the radical right and why?' (Mudde, 2013). It did not address that much yet the supply side of politics: the extent to which parties differ in what they offer and what characteristics the parties take with them, which constitutes a second wave of research. In a third wave of studies, the attention was drawn to the consequences of radical right-wing party success, for instance on other parties' stances on immigration (Muis & Immerzeel, 2017). Not only is it relevant to answer the first question again for the situation in 2021, with the competition of various radical right parties, an answer to first question may also establish what differences exist between electorates of parties within the party family. In this chapter, I empirically answer the question to what extent the voters for radical right parties differ in their socio-economic profile with respect to level of education, social class and income from voters for other parties (Lubbers et al., 2002) and how the voters for the different radical right parties vary amongst each other in this profile. To answer the *why* question, I turn to the central theories that have found support

to explain radical right voting. I hereby focus on ethnic nationalism, referring to the importance of national ancestry as a marker of national membership, from which negative attitudes towards immigrants would follow (Lucassen & Lubbers, 2012). Also patriotic attitudes have been considered a relevant motive for people to vote for the radical right, since radical right parties focus on the importance of having pride in the nation. However, the discussion here is whether voters for the radical right indeed have pride in the nation as it is today, or would like to have pride again in that nation that they feel has changed given the multicultural societies they have turned into and that radical parties blame current European societies for (Meuleman & Lubbers, 2013). Finally, radical right-parties would attract voters because they take a populist, anti-elitist position, representing the common people (Akkerman et al., 2017). A populist position can come along with every ideology. However, radical right-parties, having opposed established politics, from liberals to social-democrats, have turned out to be a vehicle also because of their anti-immigration position, to mobilize on protest against the elite that often formed a block to refrain from criticizing migration (Goodwin, 2011).

In much of the literature on understanding radical right-wing voting, voters for the radical right have been compared to all other voters (often including non-voters as well) (Lucassen & Lubbers, 2012) or to radical left-wing voters in particular (Halikiopoulou et al., 2012; Rooduijn et al., 2017). This ignores the idea that some of the explanations of radical right voting would not hold for specific contrasts, that are relevant in multi-party systems. That religious people are less likely to vote for the radical right may not signal anything specific about the electorate of radical right parties, but that is mainly a side-effect of religious people voting for religious parties instead; the underrepresentation of religious voters also holds for voting left-wing parties. Comparing radical right to left-wing voters then shows that religiosity has no effect on that contrast. Situating this study in the multiparty context of the Netherlands, I will provide evidence for which of the explanations holds for the contrast with the radical right to the liberal VVD, the Christian-democratic CDA, the social-Christian CU, the Christian-orthodox SGP, the progressive centre-left (D66, PvdA, GL), the socialist SP and voters for the Party for the Animals, and then find out what different explanations exist in the vote between the three parties competing on the radical right (PVV, FvD and JA21).

## Theories

One of the recurring theoretical perspectives on radical right-voting is that of “the losers of globalization” perspective (Betz, 1994), which states that people who would not profit directly from globalization would come to oppose it, of which

anti-immigration stances would be one of the core expressions (Rydgren, 2007). The nation as a known and safe entity with which people can identify would come under pressure due to internationalization, characterized by increased international trade, liberalization of world markets, increased mobility and internationalization of politics. This would have created a backlash among people who would have fewer capital to exploit in an expanding worldwide economy and who lose state protection, due to cuts in welfare provisions that were deemed necessary to stimulate international economic expansion (Betz & Johnson, 2004). People with lower levels of education, from manual working classes and people on lower incomes would be more likely to vote for anti-globalization, nationalist radical right parties. Indeed, this is found over and over again, with a particular strong cleavage in education (Ivarsflaten & Stubager, 2012). For income, this has been supported less often, putting some doubt on whether it was actually an economic motivation for people to vote for the radical right. Indeed, research has focused on whether the explanation of radical right voting has an economic dimension after all, or is merely cultural (Lucassen & Lubbers, 2012; Vlandas & Halikiopoulou, 2019). In this tradition, the cultural explanation is related to the strong anti-migration attitudes effects on radical right voting (Oesch & Rennwald, 2018), that explain differences between lower and higher educated, and lower and higher social classes. Here it is suggested that voters do not face an economic threat from globalization with its consequential increase in migration, but a cultural one, since the cultural homogeneity of a nation would be under threat. More and more people with other daily customs and traditions would come to live in a country, which would lead to a collision of the ways of life between people already living in a country who define their way of life as being the national way of life (Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2009) and newcomers. Since lower educated people and lower social classes would have experienced the direct impact of immigration the strongest, given their shared socio-economic position with a large share of immigrants, they would be more likely to turn to parties that aim to reduce migration and insist on assimilation (Lubbers et al., 2002). Given the consistent findings in the literature on the role of assimilationist attitudes, anti-migration attitudes, and migration and ethnic threat attitudes (although not often carefully disentangled in the studies), these migration-related attitudes have become a defining feature of radical right parties (Rydgren, 2007). If their electorates do not score high(er) on these issues, it is doubted whether the parties belong to the radical right.

In the Netherlands, it has been discussed whether the new radical right party FvD forms a new sort of radical right party, since it would have attracted also people with a higher level of education, from higher social classes and with higher incomes than the more established PVV (e.g. Damhuis, 2020). Although research

found effects of these features on voting for the radical right, it still means that a share of the higher educated and higher social classes voted for the radical right. The PVV being known as a party to attract merely lower educated voters, voters with a higher level of education would, based on that fact alone, be likely to dissociate with the PVV. A new party, like FvD (and later JA21), that targeted a broader group of voters, could have been more attractive to higher educated and people from higher social classes. I do expect that higher educated and higher social classes are less likely to vote for the radical right than for other parties and that this holds stronger for the PVV than for FvD and JA21. As for the attitudinal motives to vote for the radical right, assimilationist attitudes will predict voting for the radical right, but there are no clear conditions of why it would have a stronger effect on voting for any of the three radical right parties. Perceptions of economic and cultural migration threat are expected to affect radical right voting as well, with a stronger effect of cultural than economic migrant threat in line with earlier studies (Lucassen & Lubbers, 2012). As for the role of economic migration threat, I expect this to be a more important explanation for voting PVV as compared to FvD and JA21, whereas cultural threats may differentiate the voters for the radical right parties from voters for other parties, but discriminate less so between the radical right electorates.

A related, but addressed as separate explanation of radical right voting, is ethnic nationalism. This refers to a conception of belonging to the nation based on ethnicity. It is considered as the core defined ideological feature of the radical right (Bar-On, 2018). Programs in the European radical right party family do vary however in what they define as national and what is needed for belonging to the nation (Miller & Ali, 2014). Some of the more radical or extreme parties create a division based on ancestry and blood relations: only people who have (grand)parents being a national would qualify to become a national citizen. In other programs, the focus is more on sharing national customs and traditions. Although it is not often defined in the programs what those national customs and traditions are, by targeting defined outgroups in the campaigns, there is a suggestion on what groups exhibit customs and traditions that is considered not to belong to the nation. In most of the radical right-wing party programs, expressions of Muslim religiosity, for example, are suggested not to belong to the nation. But also stereotypical practices of other groups (e.g. East-European immigrants in West-Europe, African immigrants in Europe) are defined as non-national. It is also relevant to mention here that the radical right is not the only party family with its focus on customs and traditions as prerequisite for becoming a national citizen. Most European countries have developed integration programs that include knowledge on these kind of customs and traditions as a prerequisite for naturalization (Joppke, 2007). These integration

programs still focus strongest on the importance of learning a national language in order to become a national citizen. The majority of political parties in Europe demand from immigrants that they have some proficiency in the language of the country of destination, and radical right parties are no exception to that.

Radical right parties have been defined by their ethnic nationalism specifically, but also in the broader sense by their nationalism. The parties would insist on the re-evaluation of the nation and to make the nation great again. This would imply that the voters of the radical right would not have pride in the nation today, but mainly in an earlier version of the nation, when it figured on the world stage in one way or another and had economic grandeur. The better version of the nation is also defined in terms of supposed homogeneity that is thought to have been present more so in the past than in the present. National nostalgia would therefore be an important predictor of radical right voting (Betz & Johnson, 2004; Smeekes et al., 2021; Lubbers & Smeekes, 2022). However, with its strong use of national symbols (most radical right parties use the national colours in their campaigning), also people who have pride in the nation today (are patriotic), or see the country as superior to other countries (are chauvinistic), are likely to be attracted by the radical right party family. This duality of the role of pride in the nation may have been a reason that empirical studies have often found relatively weak associations between patriotism, chauvinism and radical right voting (Lubbers & Coenders, 2017). Given that the new party JA21 seems to refer less to pride in the past, it is expected that national pride and chauvinism will affect voting for JA21, but not the voting for PVV and FvD.

Finally, theories on political protest have been successfully applied to radical right voting (Akkerman et al., 2017). The initial discussion in the radical right literature on whether people voted for these parties out of ideological reasons or only out of political protest (Lubbers et al., 2002), has shifted towards a refinement of the ideological reasons for why people vote for the parties (Mudde, 2007). Support for an ethnic nationalist ideology has been framed to stem from a threat to people's interest. Hardly having experience with government responsibilities, the radical right parties form for many voters a legitimate vehicle to express discontent with political parties and politicians responsible for making policies. The political protest from radical right parties stretches further than merely discontent with implemented policies. It is the idea that parties and politicians in power do not represent the interests of the population. Here it is referred to the 'common man', the 'pure people', although it is not defined who belongs to those people. I expect populism, which includes measures of political cynicism, affects voting for the radical right and equally so for the three radical right parties in the Netherlands.

## Data and methods

The Dutch Parliamentary Election Study is a survey collected around the parliamentary elections of 2021 (Jacobs et al., 2021). This dataset is administered by the Dutch Elections Research Foundation, which is a collaboration from political and social science departments from Dutch universities, Statistics Netherlands and the Netherlands Institute for Social Research. In the month before the elections of 2021 a national representative sample was invited to participate in an online survey. In the month after the elections, the respondents that participated in the pre-election survey were invited again to fill out a questionnaire (Sipma et al., 2021). Since I mostly test here explanations of voting behaviour, I make use of the post-elections sample ( $N=4,001$ ). This sample is weighted such that it is representative to the outcomes of 2021 elections.

### *Measurements*

Respondents were asked what party they had voted in the parliamentary elections. Non-voters are left out from the analyses here. I differentiate between radical right-voters (PVV, FvD and JA21), Liberal right-wing (VVD) voters, Christian Democratic (CDA) voters, Social Christian (CU) voters, Fundamentalist Christian (SGP) voters, Progressive centre-left-wing voters (D66, PvdA and GreenLeft), Socialist or radical left-wing (SP) voters and the Party for the Animal voters. To test for differences between radical right voters, I differentiate between PVV, FvD and JA21 voters.

Education was measured in highest level of education attained, differentiating in University (wo), Tertiary higher vocational (hbo), General higher secondary (havo/vwo), Tertiary intermediate vocational (mbo) and Lower education (vmbo-t/k, mavo and primary). Social class was measured by subjective self-identification of class, distinguishing between manual workers' class, higher manual workers' class, middle class, higher middle class and higher class. Respondents could indicate their level of monthly-based net household income, which have been recode into five categories of lower (<€1,501), low-medium (€1,500-2,500), medium (€2,500-3,500), medium-high (€3,500-5,500) and high income (>€5,500).

To measure respondents' insistence on immigrant assimilation, they were asked to indicate whether they support preservation of own culture for foreigners and or that they should fully adapt, on a seven-point scale. Economic migrant threat was measured with the single item: 'Immigrants are generally good for the Dutch economy', on a five-point Likert-scale, which is recoded such that a higher value implies stronger perception of economic threat. Cultural threat was measured on a five-point Likert scale, with the wording 'Dutch culture is threatened by immigrants'.

To test the role of ethnic nationalism, respondents were asked to indicate how important they think 'Dutch ancestry' is for being a real Dutchmen. To address other criteria for nationhood, respondents indicated whether it is important 'to follow Dutch norms and traditions' and 'to be able to speak the Dutch language'. Answer categories ran from 1 '*very important*' to 4 '*not important at all*', which were reversed such that a higher score means thinking the criteria to be more important.

Patriotism was measured by the single measure 'I am proud to be Dutch' and chauvinism with the single measure 'There is no better country than the Netherlands'. Both were measured on a five-point Likert scale, in which a higher score indicated stronger agreement.

Populism is the only scale included here, and consists of the mean of seven items, with a Cronbach's alpha of .72, with items such as 'Politicians do not care about people like me', 'People, not politicians should make our most important policy decisions' and 'Politicians should be guided by the will of the people'.

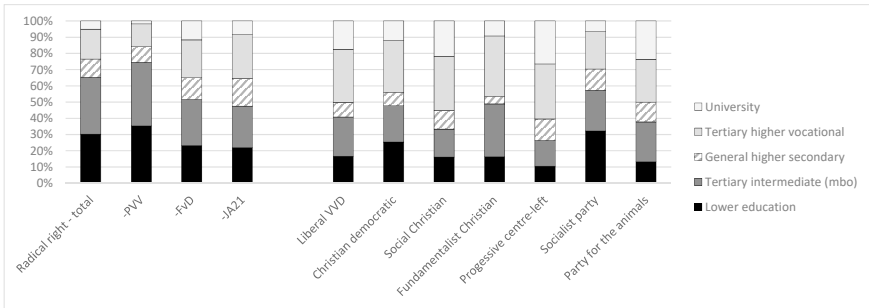
### *Analyses*

Descriptive analyses will show to what extent the electorates of the different parties vary in their education level, social class composition and level of income. Subsequently, I describe what the differences are between the electorates in their assimilationist attitudes and perceptions of economic and cultural threat, their conceptions of nationhood, patriotism and chauvinism. Multinomial logistic regressions have been performed to test what explanations affect the likelihood to vote for one of the alternatives versus the radical right, and subsequently, how these affect the differences within voting for one of the three parties within the radical right. All the analyses are weighted by a weight included in the dataset, that weights to the voting population in terms of gender, age and country of origin as well as by the election outcomes of 2021.

### **Descriptive results**

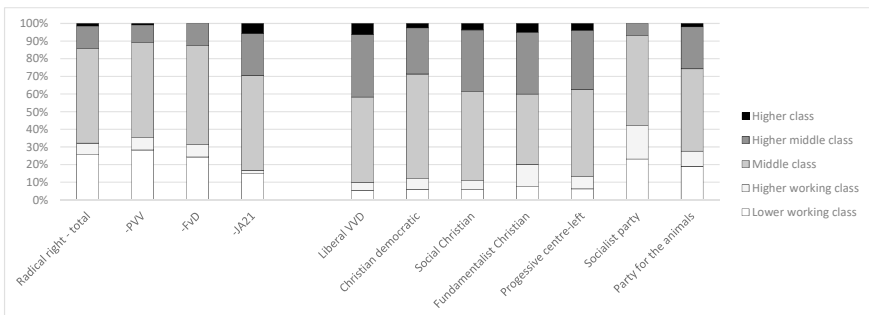
In 2021, the educational gradient in voting for the radical right is replicated (Figure 1). However, the electorate of the socialist party does not differ from the radical right's electorate in level of education. I do find evidence that the electorate of FvD and JA21 is less characterized by lower education than that of the PVV (Figure 1). However, also for FvD and JA21, the share with a low and medium education is larger than for the liberal VVD, the Christian Union, the progressive left and the party for the animals.





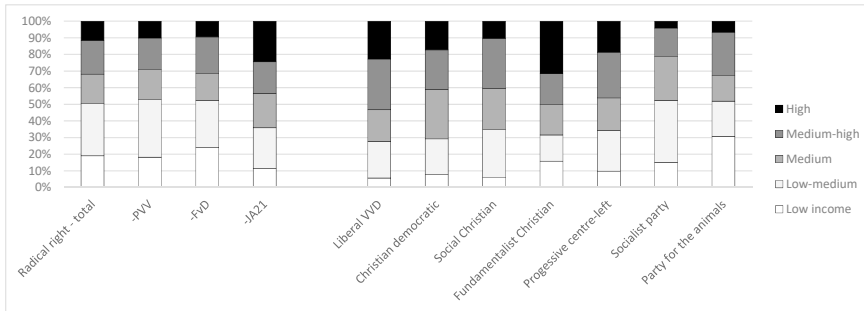
**Figure 1:** Educational level by party electorates (Source: DPES 2021).

The picture is somewhat similar with respect to social class. The share of the electorate that identifies as (higher) working class is substantial only among the voters for the radical right and socialist party (Figure 2). Different from the findings on education, here I find that lower social classes are better represented among the electorates of both the PVV and FvD and less so among JA21's electorate (Figure 2).



**Figure 2:** Subjective social class by party electorate (Source: DPES 2021).

The share of voters with a low income is largest within the electorate of the socialist party, followed by both the radical right and the party for the animals (Figure 3). Just as with social class, the electorate of the PVV and FvD do not differ from one another, whereas for JA21 there is a higher share of richer people voting for the party (Figure 3).



**Figure 3:** Household income by party electorate (Source: DPES 2021).

Voters for the radical right are more in favour of assimilationism than any other electorate (Table 1). The differences between the radical right electorates, with the FvD voters scoring somewhat lower on assimilation, are not significant (tested in bivariate regression analysis). Also the attitude that immigration is not good for the economy is supported the strongest by the radical right electorate and other than expected, the differences between the radical right party electorates is negligible. This is different with respect to the perception of cultural threat. Again, each of the radical right electorates scores higher than any of the other electorates, but the FvD-electorate scores significantly lower than that of the PVV-electorate. And the FvD-electorate does not score significantly higher than the SGP-electorate.

**Table 1:** Differences between electorates in attitude on assimilation, whether immigration is not good for the economy and whether immigration harms culture

	Pro-assimilation (1-7)	Immigration is not good for the economy (1-5)	Immigration harms culture (1-5)
Radical right	5.63	3.44	4.04
PVV	5.74	3.47	4.21
FvD	5.42	3.41	3.78
JA21	5.58	3.40	3.92
VVD	4.63	2.87	3.22
CDA	4.49	2.79	3.24
CU	4.21	2.67	2.75
SGP	5.04	3.05	3.63
Progressive centre-left	3.63	2.45	2.30
SP	4.16	2.77	3.01
PvdD	3.61	2.46	2.34

Source: DPES 2021.

The SGP-electorate also takes a special position when criteria for nationhood are evaluated (Table 2). Ethnic nationalism, the idea that Dutch ancestry is a relevant criterium for being Dutch, is supported strongest among this electorate, although the difference with the radical right, that scores somewhat lower, is not significant. Also the differences with the CDA, CU and VDD-electorate are not significant. Dutch customs and traditions as criterion to be truly Dutch is supported strongest by the radical right PVV voters and JA21 voters, together with SGP-voters. Voters for FvD score a bit lower, and are more in line with VVD and CU-voters here. Language as an important criterium for being Dutch is supported more broadly. Radical right voters score highest (3.70), but score significantly higher only as compared to centre-left progressive party voters (3.28) and party for the animal voters (3.19). Radical right voters are among the lowest in their patriotism and chauvinism; only party for the animal voters score noticeably lower.

**Table 2:** Attitudes to criteria for nationhood, patriotism and chauvinism

	Dutch ancestry as criterion (ethnic nationalism) (1-4)	Dutch customs and traditions as criterion (1-4)	Dutch language as criterion (1-4)	Patriotism (1-5)	Chauvinism (1-5)
Radical right	2.55	3.39	3.70	3.69	3.02
PVV	2.63	3.50	3.69	3.71	3.14
FvD	2.39	3.18	3.68	3.52	2.71
JA21	2.56	3.36	3.77	3.90	3.05
VVD	2.25	3.07	3.59	4.07	3.44
CDA	2.38	3.05	3.50	4.14	3.57
CU	2.17	2.82	3.49	4.01	3.16
SGP	2.76	3.20	3.67	3.93	3.32
Progressive centre-left	1.81	2.55	3.28	3.81	3.15
SP	2.06	2.84	3.43	3.77	3.14
PvdD	1.89	2.36	3.19	3.28	2.90

Source: DPES 2021.

### Explanatory results

To understand which of the socio-economic indicators and motives are most decisive for voting radical right, multiple multinomial logistic regressions are performed. First, the likelihood to vote for one of the non-radical party families versus a vote for the radical right is estimated. Second, the likelihood to vote for the relatively new FvD or JA21 versus PVV is estimated in a multinomial logistic regression.

Social class seems to be the stronger discriminator between voting for the liberals and conservative right versus the radical right (Table 3), with the higher the social class the more likely to vote for all of these options as compared to the radical right. Also in the contrast between the progressive centre-left and the radical right this association is found. Here, however, the effect of education outperforms the social class effect: the higher the level of education, the more likely to vote for the progressive centre-left as compared to a vote for the radical right. A similar interpretation holds for the role of education in the contrast between a vote for the party of the animals and the radical right. The role of income is limited to the contrast between a vote for the liberal right and the radical right, with an increasing likelihood to vote the liberal right versus the radical right with higher levels of income. The party of the animals is opted less for with increasing levels of income as compared to the radical right, possibly indicating the higher share of students voting for this former party. None of the socio-economic indicators affects the contrast between the socialist party and the radical right, implying that the socio-economic profile of the radical right and socialist party, or radical left, are very similar, replicating findings from earlier studies (Rooduijn et al., 2017; Visser et al., 2017).

Table 3b includes the attitudinal explanations of the vote for different parties versus the radical right. If the immigration-related issues are combined in one single scale of 'unfavourable attitudes to migration', a multiple multinomial-regression analysis shows that the migration-attitudes are most decisive in predicting radical right support. However, in the model presented here, with the different dimensions of the immigrant related attitudes (assimilationist attitude, economic ethnic threat and cultural ethnic threat), it is the populism scale that has the strongest effect, showing that populism decreases the vote for each party alternative as compared to a vote for the radical right. This effect is the strongest in the comparison between the governing party VVD-vote and the vote for the radical right and the smallest in the comparison between a radical left SP-vote and a vote for the radical right.

Assimilationist attitudes, perceived economic migrant threat and perceived cultural threat also decrease the likelihood to vote for most of the alternative party options as compared to the radical right, but it does not reach significance in the contrast between the state-reformed SGP and the radical right (possibly due to the relatively small number of voters for the SGP). Perceived cultural threats are the most decisive in the prediction of the likelihood to vote radical right when compared to vote the left-wing parties, whereas assimilationist attitudes and perceived economic threats are more decisive in the prediction of the likelihood to vote radical right when compared to vote for the right-wing parties. In these

**Table 3a:** Multinomial regression analysis of voting for party alternatives versus voting for the radical right

	VVD	CDA	CU	SGP	Prog. Left	SP	PvdD
Education	0.121 *	0.054	0.396 ***	0.110 ***	0.504	0.127 ***	0.544 ***
Social class	0.749 ***	0.539 ***	0.556 **	0.771 **	0.389 **	-0.139 ***	0.048
Income	0.179 **	0.132 **	-0.017	0.105	0.012	-0.153	-0.307 **

Source: DPES 2021; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ .

**Table 3b:** Multinomial regression analysis of voting for party alternatives versus voting for the radical right

	VVD	CDA	CU	SGP	Prog. Left	SP	PvdD
Education	0.023	0.023	0.278 *	0.130 *	0.288	-0.046 ***	0.194
Social class	0.517 ***	0.350 *	0.358 *	0.651 *	0.157	-0.180	0.232
Income	0.047	0.004	-0.134	0.119	-0.072	-0.204	-0.304 *
Assimilationism	-0.225 ***	-0.314 ***	-0.223 *	-0.172 *	-0.403	-0.318 ***	-0.491 **
Economic immigration threat	-0.327 **	-0.488 ***	-0.522 *	-0.452 *	-0.657	-0.376 *	-0.503 *
Cultural imm. threat	-0.302 **	-0.281 *	-0.802 ***	-0.370 ***	-0.843	-0.513 ***	-0.887 ***
Patriotism	0.198 **	0.260	0.542 *	0.187	0.079	0.070	-0.415 *
Chauvinism	0.344 *	0.499 ***	-0.037	0.094	0.220	0.173	0.088
Imp: Dutch ancestry	0.269 *	0.394 **	0.551 **	0.888 **	0.196	-0.017	0.046
Imp: Dutch customs	-0.239	-0.459 *	-0.795 **	-0.119 **	-0.592	-0.602 **	-0.580 *
Imp: language	-0.285	-0.304	-0.368	0.631	-0.706	-0.546 ***	-0.420 ***
Populism	-2.465 ***	-1.715 ***	-1.515 ***	-1.828 ***	-1.967 ***	-0.499 ***	-1.440 ***

Source: DPES 2021; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ .

analyses, where is controlled for the assimilationist attitude and perceptions of threat, it turns out that an ethnic perception of nationhood increases a vote for VVD, CDA and CU as compared to a vote for the radical right, which is in contrast to the expectations. Also patriotism and chauvinism *increase* voting VVD and CDA as compared to a vote for the radical right. It is the importance attached to Dutch customs and traditions to become Dutch that is relevant for the vote for the radical right. Compared to left-wing voters, also the attached importance to Dutch language as criterion for being truly Dutch is more prominent among the radical right voters.

Table 4 provides evidence on the differences within the radical right electorate and informs us on the hypotheses on the competition within the radical right. In the analyses here, the PVV serves as reference category. A higher level of education increases the likelihood to vote for FvD and for JA21 as compared to a vote for PVV. Interestingly, this effect remains when controlling for the attitudes. In particular for FvD voting as compared to PVV voting, the perception of a cultural threat plays a role: the stronger the cultural threat perception, the less likely to vote for FvD and the more likely to vote PVV. This plays a smaller role in the contrast between JA21 and PVV; the effect of perceived cultural ethnic threat is marginally significant at  $p < .10$ . The only other effect that is significant is that of populism. Populism increases the likelihood to vote FvD as compared to voting PVV, but it reduced the likelihood to vote JA21 as compared to voting PVV.

**Table 4:** Multinomial regression analysis of voting for radical right FvD and JA21 versus PVV

	Model 1 FvD		Model 2 FvD		Model 1 JA21		Model 2 JA21	
Education	0.524	***	0.588	***	0.326	*	0.370	*
Social class	-0.225		-0.256		0.275		0.137	
Income	0.010		0.102		0.235	~	0.180	
Assimilation			0.066				-0.038	
Economic immigration threat			-0.184				0.159	
Cultural immigration threat			-0.641	***			-0.406	~
Patriotism			0.080				0.254	
Chauvinism			-0.294				-0.204	
Imp: Dutch ancestry			-0.143				0.050	
Imp: Dutch customs and traditions			-0.203				-0.070	
Imp: Dutch language			0.206				-0.289	
Populism			0.984	***			-0.870	*

Source: DPES 2021; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; ~  $p < .10$ .

## Discussion and conclusions

In an ever changing political landscape it has become evident that the radical right party family will not soon disappear. For decades now, the parties have found representation and its share is increasing as a party family in the European Parliament. In some countries, the rise of the radical right has led to competition within the party family. Little is known yet how this competition leads to mobilization of different parts of the electorate. If so, it may have the potential to increase the overall share in the electorate that votes for the party family.

In this chapter I focused on the Dutch case, where since 2021 three radical right parties that mainly target immigration issues are represented in Dutch parliament: PVV, FvD and JA21. Taken together, the voters of these radical right parties differ from the electorate of alternative parties with respect to their lower level of education and an overrepresentation of manual workers, except when compared to the socialist party (SP), with which they share their socio-economic profile. The electorates of the radical right have stronger immigrant assimilationist stances, stronger perceptions of economic and cultural migration threats, stronger attached relevance to customs and traditions for Dutch nationhood and express higher levels of populism, reassuring earlier findings that have described these electorates throughout Europe in the last decades.

A puzzling and interesting finding is that ethnic nationalism did not increase a vote for the radical-right. Moreover, patriotism and chauvinism were just like ethnic nationalism decreasing the likelihood to vote radical right as compared to right-wing liberal and conservative voting. Together with the relative importance attached to Dutch customs and traditions for criteria to become Dutch, the assimilationist stance and perceptions of cultural threat, it shows that radical right voters do not have a positive association with Dutch society today. Although it may seem that their national identity is defined mainly by what they do not appreciate, it suggests the role of a framed historical identity as key driver of the success of radical right parties, as shown in the work by Smeekes and Verkuyten (2015).

This contribution paid special interest in what differences exist between the voters for the three radical right parties that are represented in Dutch parliament. Education turned out to be a marker between the three radical right parties – although education decreases the vote for each of these parties as compared to all other voters, it does much less so for the vote on the FvD and JA21. Whereas the PVV seems to have become a non-credible option for higher educated voters, this seems to be less the case for FvD and JA21. A focus on the role of network conformity seems promising here to get an understanding how norms on voting for parties within groups of lower or higher educated in the network stimulate or

restrain the voting. This may also provide a better understanding of how populism spreads. Populism turned out to be more important for voting FvD than for PVV and least for JA21. Whereas the electorates of the three parties share stances on assimilation and economic threat, cultural threat was expressed less so by FvD and JA21 voters than among PVV voters, showing that competition between the parties makes different voter groups to be drawn to this party family. Overall, however, it shows that an assimilationist position and perceptions of economic migrant threat are shared within the different radical right electorates.

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