# Anti-immigrant parties in Europe: Ideological or protest vote?

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**Abstract.** In this article we address the question whether or not the votes for anti-immigrant parties can be considered as protest votes. We define protest votes by the *motives* underlying electoral choices, building on earlier research done by Tillie (1995) and Van der Eijk & Franklin (1996). That research showed that ideological proximity and party size are the best predictors of party preference. On this basis we designed a typology of motives for party choice and how these motives would manifest themselves empirically. Analyzing the 1994 elections for the European Parliament for seven political systems we show that anti-immigrant parties attract no more protest votes than other parties do, with only one exception: the Dutch Centrumdemocraten. Voting for anti-immigrant parties is largely motivated by ideological and pragmatic considerations, just like voting for other parties. In addition, (negative) attitudes towards immigrants have a stronger effect on preferences for anti-immigrant parties than on preference for other parties. Social cleavages and attitudes towards European unification are of minor importance as determinants of preferences for anti-immigrant parties. The overall conclusion is that a rational choice model of electoral behavior has strong explanatory power for party preferences in general, but also for the support for anti-immigrant parties in particular.

## Introduction

In most West-European party systems, anti-immigrant parties seem to be a permanent political phenomenon. Electoral research which focuses on this phenomenon quite often implicitly assumes that their voters have *party specific* reasons to vote for them (Mayer & Perrineau 1995; Martin 1996; Eisinga et al. 1998; Lubbers & Scheepers 1998). These studies concentrate on the electoral support of anti-immigrant parties only. Their voters are shown to be ethnocentric, authoritarian, socially isolated, and appear to have a cynical view on politics. Anti-immigrant parties are therefore often treated as one issue parties or protest parties. The conclusion that their voters are protest voters is based on the theoretical assumption that these voters have specific, cynical, attitudes towards politics. From these attitudes it is concluded that the anti-immigrant vote can be considered a protest vote, without considering the motives to cast such a vote. We will argue in this paper that protest voting must be conceptualized in terms of the motives underlying electoral choices and not on characteristics of the parties. Also, we question the way various

studies analyze the motives for voting for anti-immigrant parties, namely by focusing on anti-immigrant parties only (e.g. Kitschelt 1995; Lubbers & Scheepers 1998). Even though this type of electoral research is based on very sophisticated methods, it focuses on the choice for one party in isolation, which implicitly suggests that the choice for these parties can be studied independently from the preference for other parties. We consider this to be a wrong starting point, because choices for one party over other parties depend necessarily on the distribution of preferences for all parties in a party system. Our approach is recognized as a valid one by Kitschelt who emphasizes that a study of the extreme Right should not boil down "differences and similarities of extreme-rightist electorates to a few highlights without examining the competitive space in which the extreme Right is situated and the political relations between mainline moderate conservatives, social democrats, and left libertarians" (Kitschelt 1995: 48).

Rather than assuming specific motives to vote for an anti-immigrant party we should start from the assumption that there are *no* party specific reasons to vote for an anti-immigrant party, that voters consider such a party a 'normal party' and judge its attractiveness by the same criteria used to evaluate other political parties. In other words, rather than assuming *a priori* that anti-immigrant parties are special parties in the eyes of the voters, we will assess to what extent this is the case. We will do so in two steps. First we estimate to what extent voters prefer anti-immigrant parties for the same reasons as they prefer other parties. Only after that can we assess to what extent preferences for anti-immigrant parties are party specific rather than the result of a general evaluation of all political parties in the electoral system.

Therefore we will analyze the preference for anti-immigrant parties as part of a process of party choice that takes into consideration all the parties in the political system. We will do so for seven political systems in Western Europe: Denmark, Flanders, France, Italy, The Netherlands, Wallonia and West-Germany. In each of these political systems there is an anti-immigrant party that is stigmatized by the political establishment. Because of this they are potentially attractive for voters who wish to cast protest votes, as we will argue below. These parties are respectively Fremskridtspartiet, Vlaams Blok, Front National (Wallonia), Lega Nord, Centrumdemocraten, Front National (France) and Republikaner.[1] All of these parties are considered outcasts in their own political system and are often referred to as extreme right parties. Even though most – but not all – of these parties consider themselves to be right-wing (Fennema 1997), their ideological differences are considerable, ranging from radically neoliberal (Fremskridtspartiet) to a position like that of the Front National which may be called 'anti-globalization' (see Betz 1994; Kitschelt 1995; Fennema & Pollmann 1998). Since each of these parties at-

tempt to exploit anti-immigrant sentiments, we prefer the term anti-immigrant parties. Despite the fact that the Italian Alleanza Nationale is a direct descendant from the neofascist MSI, it is not included in the group of seven anti-immigrant parties, for two reasons. First of all, since 1993–1994 the Alleanza Nationale no longer made a racist appeal to the Italian electorate, so that it cannot unequivocally be considered an anti-immigrant party. Secondly, in contrast to the other seven parties, the AN is not stigmatized by the political elite of their country, and hence, the AN is not attractive to anyone who would wish to cast a protest vote (e.g. Griffin 1996; Eatwell 1998).[2]

The central question of this paper is whether motives to vote for anti-immigrant parties are different from motives to vote for other parties. Voters' motivation is assumed to be rational, that is goal oriented. Thus our analysis is based on a rational choice perspective, in which even a protest vote is taken to be a purposive action. In this sense, this paper can be read as an empirical test of a rational choice model with respect to the anti-immigrant vote. The reason for our explicit choice for a rational choice perspective is twofold. First, in the Western European countries we study here rational choice models have more power than competing models (such as social structural or socio-psychological models) for explaining party choice, at least in the last two decades (Franklin, Mackie & Valen 1992). Since we wish to assess to what extent voting for anti-immigrant parties is different than voting for other parties, our choice for a rational choice approach seems rather straightforward. However, we will also include variables which stem from a social structural perspective on voting behavior in our analyses (refer to Section 2). Secondly, a rational choice perspective is a fruitful approach to distinguish between various motives for party choices. We will show that a rational choice perspective enables us to distinguish protest voting from other types of electoral decisions. In Section 1 we will define four types of electoral choices: *pragmatic* voting, *idealistic* voting, *clientelist* voting and *protest* voting. Section 2 presents an empirical analysis of party preference in seven European political systems in which the central question of this paper is tested. Section 3 discusses the most important conclusions.

## 1. Idealistic, pragmatic, clientelist and protest voting

### 1.1. *The power of ideology and the attractiveness of power*

From the perspective that voters behave rationally (i.e., goal oriented), the first and most obvious motive for electoral choices that can be distinguished theoretically is a voter's wish to affect public policies. To the extent that voters wish to influence policies by means of voting, they tend to vote for the party

with which they agree most on issues deemed important. Some students of anti-immigrant parties have argued that their electorate is largely concerned with one single issue: immigration, and that votes for anti-immigrant parties should be interpreted as racist votes (Husbands 1983, 1988; Van Donselaar & Van Praag 1983). However, more recent studies have demonstrated that, even though voters for these parties tend to hold hostile attitudes towards foreigners, broader ideological concerns are more important determinants of votes for those parties (Kitschelt 1995; Tillie & Fennema 1998).

It has been shown empirically that positions of voters as well as parties on a variety of different issues are largely structured by left/right ideology in the seven countries that we study here (e.g. Van der Eijk & Niemöller 1983; Fuchs & Klingemann 1990; Klingemann, Hofferbert & Budge 1994; Van der Brug 1997) – reason enough why the left/right dimension is sometimes referred to as a 'super-issue' (Inglehart 1984). However, Kitschelt's (1995) analyses suggest that a multi-dimensional space is needed for most countries to describe attitudes of voters on a large variety of different issues. In most countries the first dimension in particular – left-libertarian versus right-authoritarian – turns out to be strongly correlated with ideological left-right orientations. Since Kitschelt's study shows also that a right-authoritarian position is the strongest predictor of right-wing extremist votes, this underscores the fact that left/right positions largely summarize those policy preferences which affect party choice. In this article we can therefore generally estimate the extent of policy voting by the effect of left/right ideology on party choice, although we have to take attitudes towards immigrants into account as well.[3]

Although a voter who wishes to affect public policies will tend to vote for a party with which (s)he agrees, (s)he will not necessarily vote for the party with which (s)he agrees most. If one agrees most with the party that has little potential to influence the policy making process, one could decide to choose for a more powerful party that is ideologically not the nearest. By voting for a party that is located at a sub-optimal position given the choice of parties, one may still expect to optimize one's utility in terms of policy outcomes. It is perfectly rational for voters therefore to choose not only on the basis of ideological agreement (or proximity in spatial terms), but also to take each party's relative power into account. Given the way parliamentary democracies function, party size is a fairly good proxy measure of parliamentary power. We may thus follow a distinction proposed by Tillie (1995a: 118) between *idealistic* and *pragmatic* voters. Idealistic voters vote for the party that is ideologically nearest, while pragmatic voters vote for a larger party that is not closest, but with which they still agree to a large extent. In a bodily metaphor it is sometimes said that idealistic voters vote with their heart, while pragmatic voters vote with their head (Reif & Schmitt 1980; Marsh &

Franklin 1996). One different type of voter may also be distinguished: voters who vote for a party because they expect this party to give them individual rewards rather than collective rewards in terms of public policies they prefer. Since larger parties have the most to offer, these *clientelist* voters are *mainly* concerned with party size and hardly with ideology.

Although little research exists in which proportions of idealistic, pragmatic and clientelist voters are estimated, various empirical studies have shown that left/right ideology and party size are the strongest determinants of party choice in the seven countries studied in this paper (Oppenhuis 1995; Van der Eijk & Franklin 1996; Van der Eijk, Franklin & Van der Brug 1999).[4] The accumulated knowledge from these studies thus shows that combinations of idealistic and pragmatic voting predominate electoral processes in these countries. In this study, as well as in the ones here listed, we will *not* attempt to estimate the relative sizes of the groups of different types of voters. Rather, we will attempt to estimate the effect of left/right ideology and party size on party choice *sui generis*, and we will therefore speak of relative degrees of idealistic, pragmatic and clientelist *voting*, rather than of *voters*.

To the best of our knowledge, little comparative research exists on the extent to which voting for anti-immigrant parties can be characterized as either idealistic, pragmatic or clientelist. Tillie and Fennema (1998) showed that, as far as the Netherlands is concerned, left-right placement and party size are the most important variables that determine party preference. This relationship has been established for all parties, including the anti-immigrant party Centrumdemocraten. A study by Marsh & Wickham (1996) focusing on votes for five parties they label 'radical right wing' (Vlaams Blok, Fremskridtspartiet, Republikaner, the French Front Nationale, and Alleanza Nationale, five parties which, except for the latter, are all included in this article), shows that agreement on a number of issues are the best predictors of these votes. Various social-structural explanations for the support of these parties do not hold. However, due to the nature of their research design, their study does not allow for an estimation of the extent to which party size affects party preference, nor does it allow for a comparison between the motivations underlying votes for anti-immigrant parties and other parties. The same applies to those parts of the study of Kitschelt (1995) that pertain to motivations that underlie voters' choices. These analyses focus solely on party preference for each of the extreme right wing party, and thus do not allow for systematic comparisons with the motivations that underlie preferences for other parties.

## 1.2. *Protest voting*

There have been many polemics in public debate, as well as in the scientific literature as to whether the voters for anti-immigrant parties have cast a racist

vote or rather a protest vote (Van Donselaar & Van Praag 1983; Stouthuysen 1993; Fennema 1997). Although there is no consensus on the theoretical meaning of the concept of a 'racist vote' the term has at least been operationalized in a clear direction: most questions in election studies that are posed to measure racist attitudes refer to strong feelings of xenophobia. Only in Belgium was the concept of racism operationalized in a way distinct from that of xenophobia (Billiet & De Witte 1995). Unfortunately, students of right-wing extremism so far have neither given much serious thought to the theoretical elaboration nor to the operationalization of the concept of a 'protest vote'. In order to have any conceptual meaning, the protest vote should be defined by determinants of party preference and not by characteristics of the party itself. We find the definition 'a protest voter is a voter who votes for a protest party' unacceptable, because it begs the question. Protest voters want to show their discontent to the political elite by voting for a party that is an outcast in the political arena. The motive for their electoral choices is the party's perceived opposition to the political regime. Therefore, a protest voter is a rational voter whose objective is to demonstrate rejection of all other parties.

How do voters come to perceive parties as inimical to the political regime, i.e., as 'protest parties'? Such perceptions may stem from the party propaganda itself. The far left Socialist Party in the Netherlands campaigned in 1998 under the slogan 'Vote Against', which was clearly an attempt to mobilize protest voters. Alternatively, a party may be seen as a protest party not because it explicitly claims to be one, but because all other parties collectively reject it. For some reason such parties have a 'spoiled identity' (Van Donselaar 1991). This is exactly what has happened with the anti-immigrant parties (Fennema 1997: 478), but has also happened with communist parties. Since anti-immigrant parties are to a large extent stigmatized by the political elites of their respective countries, they have obtained the label 'protest parties', even though their leaders themselves may not perceive their respective party in such terms. To call anti-immigrant parties 'racist' or even 'fascist' strongly contributes to give them a spoiled identity. Also, the mainstream parties may collectively refuse to collaborate with anti-immigrant parties. In France, the Gaullist RPR and liberal conservative UDF were badly damaged in 1998 by an internal dispute over the value of alliances with the Front National as a means of defeating left-wing parties. The leaders of the mainstream parties formed a '*front républicain*' to fight the Front National. But sometimes also legal means are employed. In Germany, for example, a party that is labelled extremist by the *Verfassungsschutz* is likely to be prohibited. In the Netherlands the extreme right CP '86 has been convicted as a 'criminal organization' and in 1998 was disbanded by the Amsterdam Court of Justice. Such efforts are not always successful. It may even be that the joint effort of other parties

to stigmatise the 'extreme right' has a perverse effect in that it attracts voters who vote for the party to scare the political elite. The seven parties that we study in this paper have two things in common: (1) they have attempted to mobilize votes on the basis of anti-immigrant sentiments, and (2) they are stigmatized by the mainstream political parties.

Voters who would want to use their ballots to scare the elite, to protest against the mainstream political parties, in short to cast a protest vote, could thus decide to vote for any of these seven parties. It is difficult, however, to measure such negative motives directly. Quite often this is done by referring to the parties from which the 'protest party' attracts its voters. If the alleged protest party attracts its voters from all big parties equally, this is assumed to be a sign of protest voting. (e.g. Mayer & Moreau 1995; Frankfurter Rundschau 17/8/1998; Holsteyn & Mudde 1998). This argument is based on the assumption that for protest voters ideology does not matter. Although we agree with this assumption, we feel that analyses of the outcomes of electoral processes do not warrant any conclusions about the motives of voters that underlie their behavior. How then should we draw causal inferences about the motives of protest voters? Compared to ideological and pragmatic voters, protest voters cast their vote *not* to affect public policies, but rather to express disenchantment with the political system or with the political elite. We therefore prefer to follow the suggestion made by Van der Eijk et. al. (1996) to define the protest voter as one who casts a vote for a party that does *not* maximize one's party utility in terms of ideological proximity nor in terms of party size (refer also to Fennema 1997). In other words, the protest voter is neither an idealist nor a pragmatist. (S)he does not vote for a party that is ideologically near, nor does (s)he seems to be attracted by a powerful party. Is the protest voter therefore an irrational voter in utilitarian terms? No. We consider the protest voter as a rational voter who votes 'with the boot' as Van der Eijk et al. (1996) have aptly phrased it.

In the absence of direct indicators of protest voting, our conceptualization of protest voting is necessarily based on circumstantial evidence. The consequence of this is that some conceivable results may not be interpretable without ambiguity. If votes for anti-immigrant parties are largely protest votes, we *must* find a weaker effect of ideology and party size than for the other parties. However, in case we do find such a weaker effect, other explanations may conceivably exist. But one conceivable finding is without ambiguity: the case in which the effect of ideology and party size is equally strong for the electoral attractiveness of anti-immigrant parties as it is for the other parties. In that case, votes for these parties cannot be considered protest votes.

*Table 1*. Types of party preference based on ideology and power as independent variables

| | | Power (party size) | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Weak influence | Strong positive influence |
| Policy agreement (left/right and/or issues) | Weak influence | (Potential) protest votes | Pragmatic/clientelist votes |
| | Strong influence | Idealist votes | Pragmatic/idealist votes |

To sum up, to the extent that voting for anti-immigrant parties can be characterized as protest voting, party size, ideological proximity and other determinants of voting behavior, will have less effect on choices for these parties than on choices for other parties in the systems. If we restrict ourselves to the two determinants of party preference that have so far been found to be the best predictors of party choice and we combine these two variables according to their preponderance in the determination of party preference we find the typology as depicted in Table 1.

This argument can be generalized. In operational terms protest votes can be defined, first, in relation to the most important determinants of (general) party preference and, secondly, to parties which are rejected by the whole political elite. If the main determinants would, for example, be religion and class, the protest vote would relate to the situation where religion and class do not determine the vote for a 'disqualified' party.

Having outlined the concept of protest, clientelist, idealist and pragmatic voting, we can now assess whether votes for anti-immigrant parties in Europe can be classified in each of these four types of individual voting behavior.

## 2. Empirical results

### 2.1. *Design of the study*

In order to study the extent to which voting for anti-immigrant parties is of a different character than voting for other parties, we require data that provide a basis for comparing the effects of different factors on voters' choices for *each* of the parties involved. This implies that we not only need information about voters' choices for parties, but also that the data should contain sufficient variation in types of parties of different ideological colors (anti-immigrant parties as well as various other types). Elections for the European Parliament provide a unique opportunity to study these matters because several parties participate which are considered to be anti-immigrant parties. Since these

parties are to a large extent stigmatized by the political elites of their respective countries, they have obtained the label 'protest parties', even though their leaders themselves may not perceive their respective party in such terms. The present study makes use of the European Elections Study 1994, which is a survey that was held concurrently in twelve member states of the European Union at the time of the 1994 Elections for the European Parliament.

A complicating factor for studying the motivations of citizens underlying their party choice – particularly in multi-party systems – is that party choice is an ipsative dichotomous variable. This generates a practical and a substantive problem. The practical problem for anyone studying votes for anti-immigrant parties is that these parties attract votes from only minor proportions of any European population (and thus from any sample that is representative for these populations). Consequently, estimates of the effects of different variables on decisions to vote for any of these parties are highly unreliable.

The substantive problem generated by the character of the variable party choice is that it does not reflect in any detail differences between the parties one did not vote for, whereas we wish to assess whether citizens evaluate all parties on the basis of the same criteria. For instance, if a theory holds that religiosity affects voting behavior, we expect that someone's religious attachments affect his or her evaluation of all parties, not just the one (s)he voted for. When only taking into account the party one voted for, and not the electoral attractiveness of those parties one did not vote for, the relative weights of factors that affect party choices cannot be estimated in a valid way. Instead of analyzing actual party choice, the dependent variable of this study is therefore the electoral attractiveness of parties. This variable is operationalized in the EES 1994 by asking respondents for almost all parties 'how probable it is that you will ever vote for this party in general elections', a variable which measures the *current* electoral attractiveness of parties.[5] Tillie (1995a) tested the properties of this survey item thoroughly and concludes that valid inferences can be drawn about the determinants of party choice by analyzing the determinants of party preference, while causal misattributions may occur when only analyzing actual party choice (see also Van der Eijk & Franklin 1996). The superiority of a probabilistic measure of party choice (as opposed to a deterministic question form) was recently demonstrated in the North American context as well (Burden 1997).

In the EES 1994 the 'probability of future vote question' was asked for the seven parties, from seven different political systems, which were discussed in the introduction. Because we wish to assess whether voters evaluate these seven parties by the same criteria as other parties, our study concentrates on the electoral attractiveness of all parties (49 in total) in the seven political sys-
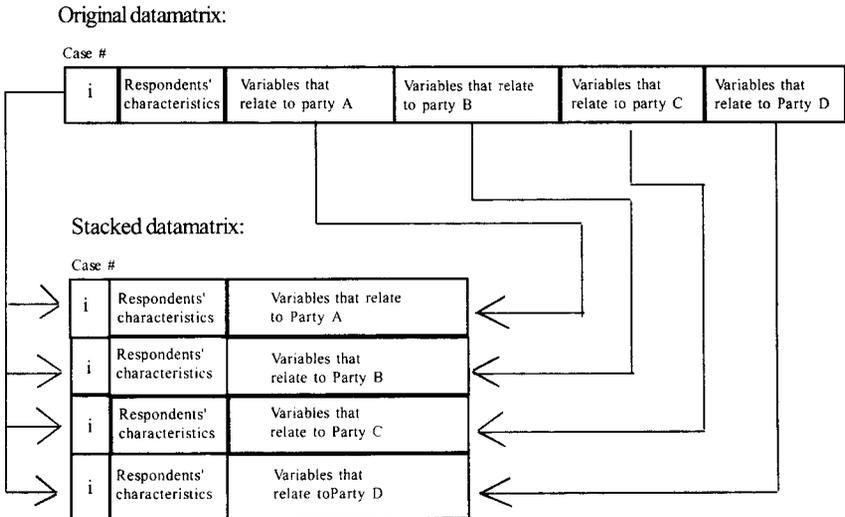
*Figure 1*. Transformation of original datamatrix into a stacked datamatrix.

tems these parties come from. Although we arrive in this way at a possibility
to analyze the electoral attractiveness of each party in turn, this does not yet
allow us to compare between the factors that determine the attractiveness of
different types of parties. We would have to perform 49 different analyses –
one for each of the parties – while lacking a good criterion to evaluate differ-
ences between these. Consequently, we would not be able to assess inter-party
level differences in the determinants of their electoral attractiveness.

A valid way to simultaneously analyze individual and inter-party level
variations in party preferences can be realized by arranging the data in the so-
called 'stacked' form that is illustrated by Figure 1 (see also Stimson 1985;
Tillie 1995a; Oppenhuis 1995; Van der Eijk & Franklin 1996).

In this stacked data matrix each respondent is represented by as many
'cases' as there are parties for which (s)he was asked to indicate the prob-
ability of a future vote. The stacked matrix, combining party preferences for
the 49 parties from seven political systems has a total of 40.611 observation
units.[6] This matrix allows us to apply multiple regression to explain parties'
electoral attractiveness. By adding characteristics of the political systems and
the parties as variables in the stacked data matrix, such characteristics can be
included as variables in these regression analyses. In order to assess whether
voting for anti-immigrant parties involves a different kind of decision than
voting for other parties, we will estimate interaction terms for anti-immigrant
party on the one hand, and a large set of independent variables on the other.
Before getting into this, let us discuss which independent variables are in the

equation to predict parties' electoral attractiveness, and how these are treated in the stacked matrix.

The first predictor of party preference is the subjectively perceived distance between a voter and the respective party in the data matrix on a left-right continuum. Idealistic voting implies that the closer a party is to someone's own position in terms of left-right, the more attractive this party will be for the person in question. The questionnaire contained a battery of items in which respondents were asked to indicate their own position as well as that of each political party on a 10-point scale of which the extremes were labeled left and right. From these responses perceived left-right distances were computed. The stronger the effect of perceived left-right distance on electoral attractiveness, the stronger the extent of idealistic voting.

In addition to ideological agreement with a party, someone's likelihood to vote for a party will also increase when (s)he agrees with its stands on some concrete issues. The European Elections Study 1994 contained three position issues for which respondents' positions and their perceptions of party positions were measured: national borders, national currencies, and an unemployment program.[7] These items thus yield three predictors of party preference, i.e., the perceived distances on these three position issues between the respondent and the respective party in the data matrix.

The ideologies of most of the parties we are concerned with in this paper are either nationalistic, or anti-immigrant, or both. In view of this, two attitude dimensions were included in the analysis that reflect important elements of these ideologies: attitudes towards immigrants and EU-approval. These attitude dimensions were measured with batteries of statements and respondents were asked for each of these whether they agreed or disagreed to it.[8] Because party positions on European integration and on immigration were not measured, an alternative procedure had to be adopted to estimate the contribution of these attitudes to party preference. As a proxy-measure of closeness to a party, we assessed empirically how well these attitudes predicted preferences for each of the parties. So for both attitude scales separately, and for each of the parties in turn, series of bivariate regressions were performed. The predicted values of these regressions (y-hats) were saved and inserted in the stacked data matrix as new predictors of party preference. These predicted values are simply linear transformations of the original variable and may therefore be used again as predictors of party preference. The new variable is comparable over countries and parties.[9]

In addition to their substantive policy concerns, citizens may also choose parties because they consider these to represent their specific social groups. Social class and religious denomination were until the late 1960s good predictors of party choice. Although these factors lost most of their predictive

capacities, they do still affect electoral choices in all Western European countries (Franklin et al. 1992; Oppenhuis 1995; Van der Eijk & Franklin 1996).[10] To estimate the effect of these variables on party preference, the same procedure was applied as for attitudes to immigrants and for EU-approval: they consist of predicted values of separate bivariate regressions per party.

Finally, two variables were included, one at the party level and one at the system level, which have been shown to affect individual voting behavior. The first variable is party size, which represents a strategic consideration that voters may take into account: when two parties are about equally attractive on all relevant accounts, voters tend to vote for the largest one because it stands a better chance of achieving its policy goals. We called this type of voting 'pragmatic'. To the extent that votes for anti-immigrant parties are protest votes, the electoral attractiveness of these parties will be determined less by party size and left-right distance than the electoral attractiveness of other parties.

The second variable is an interaction of left-right distance on the one hand and perceptual agreement about left/right positions of parties on the other. Van der Eijk and Franklin (1996) showed that left/right distance had a stronger effect on party preference when voters were more certain about left/right positions of parties.

In a number of subsequent steps we will assess to what extent voting for anti-immigrant parties is determined by particular considerations that exert less (or no) effect on decisions about whether to vote for other parties. First, we will start with an estimation of the regression model on the stacked matrix that includes all parties. Also, we will do the same for the subgroup of parties selected as anti-immigrant parties, for each of these parties separately, and for the 42 other parties. These analyses will allow only for an *ad oculum* comparison of differences in the effect parameters. As a final step we will therefore explore whether significant interaction effects between each of the anti-immigrant parties on the one hand and various predictors of party preference on the other, should be included in the model that was estimated for the total of 49 parties. Such interaction effects, were they to exist, would be indicative of *party specific* considerations of voters.

## 2.2. *Results*

Table 2 presents the results of three regression analyses: the model estimated for all 49 parties, for the 7 anti-immigrant parties, and for the 42 other parties.[11] In the analyses of all parties a dummy variable was included for anti-immigrant parties, which would capture possible differences in the level of electoral attractiveness of these parties (compared to the other ones), after controlling for the effects of the other independent variables. This turned out

to be the only parameter in the equation that does not deviate significantly from zero. In other words, voters do not value these parties more or less than all others, even though party leaders from other parties are often trying to stigmatize them. If the message of the political elites – that these parties are not part of a group of decent democratic parties, and that decent people should disapprove of them – had been successful, voters would support these parties less than they would normally do given their policy preferences and social characteristics. Since the label 'protest parties' apparently does not harm them, this elite strategy does not seem to be very successful.

Which factors determine the electoral attractiveness of parties in general, regardless of their ideological colors? In these seven countries, the most important consideration for voters when evaluating parties is which position each of them occupies in terms of left/right. This finding reconfirms those of a large number of studies showing that across various European systems the behavior of parties and voters alike is structured largely by left-right, which until the early 1990s remains to be the dominant ideological dimension (e.g. Fuchs & Klingemann 1990; Klingemann, Hofferbert & Budge 1994; Oppenhuis 1995; Van der Eijk & Franklin 1996; Van der Brug 1998, 1999; Hix 1999). The fact that left/right also structures largely voters' evaluations

*Table 2*. Regressions explaining party preference, estimated for different groups of parties

|  | All 49 parties | 7 anti-immigrant parties | 42 other parties |
|---|---|---|---|
| Left-right distance | −0.34 (beta) | −0.31 | −0.34 |
| National currencies | −0.06 | −0.03 ns | −0.07 |
| Employment | −0.05 | −0.03 ns | −0.06 |
| National borders | −0.03 | −0.05 ns | −0.03 |
| EU-approval | 0.05 | 0.06 ns | 0.06 |
| Attitudes to immigrants | 0.08 | 0.19 | 0.08 |
| Social class | 0.11 | 0.09 | 0.10 |
| Income | 0.03 | 0.02 ns | 0.03 |
| Religion | 0.14 | 0.08 | 0.14 |
| Education | 0.04 | −0.00 ns | 0.03 |
| Party size | 0.25 | 0.13 | 0.28 |
| Interaction LR and system agreement | −0.05 | −0.01 ns | −0.05 |
| Dummy anti-immigrant party | 0.02 ns | – | – |
| $R^2$ | 0.34 | 0.26 | 0.35 |

of anti-immigrant parties is less uncontested, however. It suggests that ideo-
logical voting occurs in the same degrees in votes for anti-immigrant parties
as it does in votes for other parties. Also, this finding concurs with a thesis
proposed by Tillie & Fennema (1998) that preferences for the Dutch CD,
one of the parties included in the analyses here, are structured by the same
latent dimension that structures preferences for other parties as well: left-right
ideological position.

The variable with the second strongest effect on party preference is party
size.[12] Voters who wish to influence policy making take into account the
strategic consideration that a large party has a better chance than a smaller
one to realize its policy goals. The fact that this effect appears smaller for
anti-immigrant parties may be due to the fact that there is less variation
in party size in this subset of parties. This probably accounts for the lower
proportions of explained variance in party preferences. We will check for this
in a subsequent series of analyses.

The positive beta for party size in the analyses of the anti-immigrant
parties shows that, after controlling for policy positions and social charac-
teristics, voters consider a larger anti-immigrant party more attractive than a
smaller one. In the introduction of this paper we argued that such an effect of
party size is indicative of *pragmatic* voting. If votes for these parties were pre-
dominantly protest votes, cast to express discontent with the official parties,
neither the size of a party nor its ideological position would be factors that
would increase its electoral attractiveness. The fact that the anti-immigrant
parties are considered more attractive once they are larger and once they
are ideologically closer, shows that votes for these parties are generally not
protest votes.

The most striking difference between the factors that account for votes for
anti-immigrant parties as opposed to votes for other parties is the effect of
attitudes to immigrants. This is apparently an aspect of party political conflict
that is largely not captured by left/right ideology, and that makes these parties
distinct from others. As most of the parties involved have made immigration a
central theme on which they attempt to mobilize support, this does not come
as a surprise.

The other variables that reflect policy content (the three European issues,
and EU-approval) have a very limited effect on party preference, both for anti-
immigrant parties as well as for others. The same applies to the variables that
reflect voters social-structural characteristics. These bear very little influence
on voting behavior (see also Franklin et al. 1992).

So far we treated the anti-immigrant parties as one uniform group. How-
ever, the group of anti-immigrant parties consists of a rather heterogeneous
collection of separatist parties (such as Lega Nord, Vlaams Blok), anti-statist

*Table 3*. Regressions explaining party preference, estimated for 7 anti-immigrant parties separately

|  | VB Flanders | FN Wallonia | FP Denmark | Republ. W. Germany | LN Italy | FN France | CD Netherlands |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| L/R distance | −0.30 (beta) | −0.37 | −0.33 | −0.35 | −0.29 | −0.36 | −0.16 |
| Nat. currencies | 0.03 ns | −0.25 | −0.03 ns | 0.06 ns | −0.14 | −0.06 ns | 0.01 ns |
| Employment | −0.02 ns | 0.16 ns | 0.01 ns | −0.04 ns | −0.07 ns | −0.08 | −0.01 ns |
| National borders | −0.05 ns | −0.09 ns | −0.08 | −0.15 | 0.00 ns | −0.05 ns | 0.01 ns |
| EU-approval | 0.01 ns | −0.00 | −0.03 ns | 0.06 ns | 0.05 ns | 0.13 | 0.05 ns |
| Attitudes to immigrants | 0.18 | 0.16 ns | 0.28 | 0.09 | 0.15 | 0.17 | 0.16 |
| Social class | 0.05 ns | 0.21 | 0.06 ns | 0.12 | 0.06 ns | 0.07 ns | 0.13 ns |
| Income | 0.06 ns | −0.02 ns | 0.08 | 0.05 ns | 0.05 ns | −0.02 ns | 0.02 ns |
| Religion | 0.21 | 0.08 ns | 0.10 | 0.03 ns | 0.05 ns | −0.02 | 0.12 |
| Education | 0.03 ns | −0.04 ns | −0.03 | 0.00 ns | −0.01 ns | 0.01 ns | 0.00 ns |
| $R^2$ | 0.24 | 0.37 | 0.27 | 0.27 | 0.20 | 0.34 | 0.10 |

parties (such as Fremskridtspartiet), and statist parties (such as the Republikaner, the CD, and the FN). To assess the extent to which the general picture we just derived for the whole group applies also to its individual members, we estimated the model also for each of these anti-immigrant parties. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 3.

The analyses presented in Table 3 show first of all that the patterns that we observed so far are quite robust across all these extreme right wing parties. Left-right distances as perceived by voters are the best predictors of the electoral attractiveness of each of these parties. Also, voters' attitudes to immigrants have an important effect on how attractive they find each of these parties. Other factors only exert little effect on the votes for these parties, or in case they do, these reflect social divisions in a particular political system (such as the importance of religion in Flanders and of social class in Wallonia).

Although this general picture applies to all seven parties, there are some important differences. The first one is the low degree of explained variance for the Italian Lega Nord and in particular the Dutch Centrumdemocraten (CD), both due to (relatively) weak effects of left/right distances. An obvious explanation for the fact that left/right has relatively little effect on people's likelihood to vote for Lega Nord is that its separatist ideology does not translate easily in left/right terms. For the Dutch CD things are less obvi-

ous. Unfolding analyses showed that in the Netherlands party preferences are strongly structured by one single dimension – which reflects left/right perfectly – and that the CD is located at the extreme right of this dimension (Tillie 1995a, 1995b). A possible explanation for the weak effect of left/right distance could be that very little perceptual agreement exists among voters about the left/right position of the CD. About two third of the voters perceive it at the extreme right, one third perceives it as extremely left-wing. Even though the CD presents itself explicitly as a center party, as evidenced by its name, only a very small minority of the voters perceives the CD at the center of a left/right dimension (Van der Brug 1997). When voters receive highly contradictory messages about the left/right position of a party, it becomes less likely that its left/right position has a strong effect on its electoral support.

The comparisons between electoral preferences for various anti-immigrant parties and other parties were so far made on an *ad oculum* basis. The way we designed our analyses, with a stacked data matrix in which electoral preferences are studied for all parties simultaneously, provides the opportunity to study such differences more systematically. If some variable has a different effect for any of the anti-immigrant parties than for all other parties, the regression model should contain an interaction term between the respective party on the one hand and this variable on the other.

To assess whether interaction terms should be added to the model, the following procedure was employed. First, we estimated the model presented in Table 2 for all 49 parties and saved its residuals. Then we estimated the same model again for the entire group of anti-immigrant parties, as well as for each of them separately, with the residuals as the new dependent variable. These residuals are the part of the variation not explained by the general model (i.e., estimated for the whole group of 49 parties). If the independent variables had a different effect on the electoral attractiveness of the anti-immigrant parties than on other parties, they should be correlated with the residuals of the overall regressions. If significant effects are observed in the party specific regressions (with the residuals of the overall analysis as the dependent variable), this would suggest that interaction terms should be specified. This method thus allows us to detect whether left-right, the three issues, and party size exert different effects on the electoral attractiveness of the anti-immigrant parties than on the electoral attractiveness of the 49 parties as a whole.[13] Table 4 presents the significant parameters of these regressions.

The analyses presented in the first column of Table 4 (for the seven anti-immigrant parties) yield three significant parameters. Left/right distance yields a positive beta. The regressions were estimated on the residuals of the overall regression presented in Table 2. For an interpretation of the meaning of the parameters one should therefore not only look at Table 4, but also at

*Table 4*.  Significant effects in regressions on the residuals of the overall analysis

|  | All 7 anti-immigrant parties | VB Flanders | FN Wallonia | FP Denmark | Republ. W. Germany | LN Italy | FN France | CD Netherlands |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| L/R distance | 0.13 (beta) | | | | | 0.17 | 0.13 | 0.41 |
| Nat. currencies | 0.06 | | | 0.10 | 0.17 | | | 0.11 |
| Employment | 0.05 | | 0.28 | | | | | 0.09 |
| National borders | | | | | −0.10 | | | |
| Party size | 0.02 ns | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Interaction LR and system agreement | 0.07 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |

the original effects presented in the first column of Table 2. The overall effect from left-right distance on electoral attractiveness is a negative one (Table 2): the larger the ideological distance the less attractive a party is. The positive effect for the anti-immigrant parties of left/right distance on the residuals of the overall analysis means that the (originally negative) effect of left-right distance is weaker for anti-immigrant parties than for the others.

When we inspect the analyses for each party separately, these differences between anti-immigrant parties and other ones turn out to be predominantly due to the Dutch CD. Except for the CD, ideological voting is as much present in the electoral support of anti-immigrant parties as it is in the support of other parties. So, from the seven anti-immigrant parties in our analyses, the Dutch CD is the only one that attracts a substantial proportion of protest votes.

An important finding is the effect parameter for party size. In previous analyses positive effects of party size on electoral attractiveness of parties were observed. The fact that a positive (albeit not statistically significant) interaction effect was found for party size, shows that anti-immigrant parties benefit at least as much from being relatively large than the more respected parties. Voting for anti-immigrant parties thus turns out to be motivated largely by the same considerations that motivate choices for other parties: in these seven countries it is mostly a combination of pragmatic and idealistic voting.

The analyses presented in Table 4 were set up explicitly to focus on differences in the determinants of electoral support for different (types of) parties. Although some differences were found, the most important finding – which

was largely forecast by the previous analyses presented in Tables 1 and 2 – is that the motives of people to vote for anti-immigrant parties are highly similar to the motives to vote for any other parties. Although ideology is a somewhat less important determinant of the electoral attractiveness of anti-immigrant parties than of other parties, it is the single best predictor of electoral support for these parties as well. The effect of party size is the same for respected parties as for these alleged 'protest parties'. Our general conclusion is therefore that most votes for anti-immigrant parties are not protest votes, but either pragmatic, or ideological, or both.

## 3.  Conclusion and discussion

Because European elections are generally considered to be second order ones, they provide an appropriate opportunity for voters who wish to cast a protest vote to actually do so (Van der Eijk, Franklin & Marsh 1996). Even in these European elections, however, no evidence was found that voters for anti-immigrant parties are motivated by feelings of protest or alienation, more so than the voters for other parties. This is in strong contradiction with main thrust of many election studies on the extreme right that tend to emphasize the protest character of the extreme right vote. It is, however, in line with some in depth research on the Front National militants and supporters (Ivaldi 1996). Indeed, the strongest determinants of voting for anti-immigrant parties are a combination of ideological (left/right) proximity and (antagonistic) attitudes towards immigrants. The only exception here is the Dutch *Centrumdemocraten*. Although ideological proximity and attitudes towards immigrants are the strongest determinants of voting for this party as well, the effect of ideology is substantially weaker than for parties in general. So, only in the case of the Centrumdemocraten was empirical evidence found that its support stems partially from protest votes. This finding appears even more plausible in the light of the results of the 1998 general election in which the Centrumdemocraten lost all seats in parliament. In years of rapid economic growth parties that depend for their electoral fortune on voters that 'vote with the boot' are likely to lose their support.

This brings us to our second conclusion: after ideological proximity it is the voters' negative attitude towards immigrants that predicts a preference for anti-immigrant parties, which confirms findings presented elsewhere (e.g. Marsh & Wickham 1996). The label 'anti-immigrant parties' proved well chosen, even for those parties, like the Lega Nord or the Vlaams Blok, that claim to have a more central – separatist – issue on their political agenda. Yet it should be noted that voters' attitudes towards immigrants also predict preferences for other parties – albeit to a lesser extent. Most European voters

prefer a political party that has a policy position to their liking. It may well be, however, that the immigration issue will at a certain point in time be fully integrated in ideological dimensions that structure the behavior of parties and voters. This will depend largely upon the actions of other, more mainstream, right-wing conservative parties. To the extent that these parties mobilize support around this issue, anti-immigrant parties lose their 'unique selling point'. This could be an additional explanation for the fact that the Centrum-democraten (CD) lost all seats in parliament in the 1998 elections: the more moderate mainstream VVD picked up the issue of immigration.[14] Pragmatic voters who wish to cast an anti-immigrant vote may in such cases decide to vote for the larger mainstream party than for the more radical 'outcasts', which have a lesser chance of implementing their preferred policies.

A third conclusion relates to the impact of party size on party preference. The effect of party size is not significantly less in the case of anti-immigrant parties than it is for the 42 other parties under investigation (see Table 4). Voters tend to have a stronger preference for bigger anti-immigrant parties. This is not in line with the claim of the leaders of the Vlaams Blok and the French Front National who, in interviews conducted with them by Fennema & Pollmann (1998), insisted that most of their supporters are 'idealists'. Our analyses show that the supporters of anti-immigrant parties are as pragmatic as voters of other parties. They vote on the basis of ideological agreement and when anti-immigrant parties become larger and therefore more powerful they become more attractive. These three findings taken together lead us to conclude that a rational choice model of electoral behavior is very well suited to explain the support for anti-immigrant parties (see for a similar conclusion based on a survey of voting studies, Eatwell 1998). Our findings are also in line with those presented by Marsh & Wickham (1996), Kitschelt (1995) and Tillie & Fennema (1998), who found that policy preferences exert much stronger effects on preferences for anti-immigrant parties than social characteristics.[15]

Of the socio-structural characteristics only religious affiliation and social class has an effect on preference for anti-immigrant parties, although in both cases this effect is somewhat less than for the other parties. This supports the conclusion from previous electoral research on anti-immigrant parties which consistently found a relation between social class as well as religious affil-iation and electoral support for anti-immigrant parties (Eisinga et al. 1998; Lubbers & Scheepers 1998). Family income and level of education exert no significant effects on party preference, neither for all 49 parties under study nor for the 7 anti-immigrant parties in particular. Although certain social groups are more likely to vote for anti-immigrant parties than others (even if we control for policy preferences), the effects are weak. This finding is in

contradiction with the results from electoral studies on anti-immigrant parties that focus almost exclusively on social structures (e.g. Lubbers & Scheepers 1998). The obvious explanation is that these studies fail to take the most important determinants of party choice into account: ideology and political power.

Contrary to the general consensus among political commentators and electoral specialists, the attitude towards the European Union seems to have little impact on the preference for anti-immigrant parties. This is particularly surprising because the leaders of the anti-immigrant parties generally show a strong dislike for the institutions of the European Union (see Fennema & Pollmann 1998). Our findings suggest that the breakthrough of the Front National and the Republikaner at the European elections in 1984 and 1989 respectively was not due to the anti-Europe campaign of these parties. Even the issue of the national currencies does not seem to have influenced the preference for anti-immigrant parties. Only the Lega Nord and the Walloon Front National seems to have profited from a negative attitude towards the Euro-currency. Rather, the breakthrough seems due to the fact that the elections for the European parliament are so called second order elections in which pragmatic voting is less frequent than in first order elections (Van der Eijk & Franklin 1996).

The old cleavage model used to explain voting behavior finds little support in our analysis. Whether the new cleavage model as presented by Minkenberg (1992), Ignazi & Ysmal (1992) and Betz (1994) has any predictive power for explaining the support for anti-immigrant parties remains to be seen. For this allegedly new cleavage between post-materialist and materialist values few reliable and valid indicators have been developed so far. The theory of symbolic or psychological interests as tested by Eisinga, Scheepers, Lubbers and others, also needs further study. Here we would like to refer to an earlier paper of Tillie & Fennema (1998) who have argued that an interaction effect of feelings of social isolation and ethnic nationalism explained part of the preference for anti-immigrant parties in the Netherlands. This elaboration of the theory of psychological interest deserves further testing.

Finally we like to mention the importance of multilevel analysis as proposed by Lubbers & Scheepers (1998) to investigate the influence of contextual variables, such as the proportion of migrants in the region and unemployment rates on support for extreme right parties. They did find a significant influence of the amount of migrants in the region upon the electoral support for the Republikaner party. Martin (1996), likewise, found a significant influence of the proportion of migrants in the region upon the electoral support for the French Front National. Knigge (1998) also found, on the basis of aggregate data, that rising levels of migration affect the support for extreme right-wing parties. However, further analysis is needed here, because these

studies are either not conducted at the individual level, so that they do not warrant conclusions about individual motives of voters, or they fail to include the strongest predictors of party choice in their models.

The relevant literature suggests that other contextual variables should also be accounted for. Especially the organization of civil society might have a crucial impact on electoral support for anti-immigrant parties. It has been suggested that such was the case for the electoral breakthrough of the NSDAP in prewar Germany. For one thing, because the vote for the National Socialists varied inversely with the size of the community (Hamilton 1982: 37). The big cities, where the 'lonely crowd' is supposed to hang out, provided less electoral support for the NSDAP than did the smaller cities. It were particularly the voters in traditional rural areas who massively turned to the NSDAP. Hamilton also showed that Protestant voters in the countryside had a far greater propensity to turn to the NSDAP that Catholic voters, who remained more faithful to the conservative *Zentrumpartei*. The shift to the NSDAP seems to have taken place at the community-level rather than at the level of the individual voter. In some very small communities a 100 percent support for the National Socialists was found. Hamilton suggests that it is not so much the objective social isolation of individuals, but rather the sudden loss of protective political relations that turned entire communities towards fascism. Especially those voters who felt let down by the traditional parties they had supported were attracted to the NSDAP. A similar observation has been made by Roger Eatwell (1998) concerning the electoral breakthrough of the Poujadist movement in postwar France. This movement barely managed to make inroads in the well organized communist constituencies in the countryside.

If this interpretation is correct, community leaders rather than isolated individuals are the ones who decide the fate of the traditional parties and lead voters to new parties. It may well be that feelings of social isolation do not stem from social atomization, but rather from a disruption of the traditional relations between certain communities and the political power structure. Martin (1996) has stressed the fact that Le Pen voters are found in traditional communities that have lost their lines of communication with the political elites. This explanation is often formulated the other way around. There is a lot of complaint that the political elite 'has lost contact with civil society'. Thus the success of new parties heavily depends on the sudden decline of traditional parties, as the Italian example makes abundantly clear.

The data employed in this study do not contain the information needed to test the effects of various local and regional contextual characteristics on party choice. We feel that future research should focus on the effects of these

contextual variables along with (or in interaction with) other determinants of party choice: ideology and power.

## Acknowledgments

## Notes

1. In the data used in this study two separate samples were drawn in Germany for regions that are part of formerly West- and East-Germany. The East German sample does not include a question for the Republikaner, so that we will only use the 'West German' sample here. For obvious reasons Flanders and Wallonia will be treated as two separate political systems.

2. The analyses presented in this paper were also conducted with inclusion of the AN. These analyses yield the same substantive results.

3. If, however, we are wrong in assuming that left/right is an important predictor of voting for anti-immigrant parties – for instance because these parties are competing along a different ideological dimension than the other parties in each party system – the effect of left-right distance on party choice will turn out weaker in our analyses for anti-immigrant parties than for other parties.

4. To some readers the result that party size is a strong predictor of party preference may look like a trivial conclusion in the sense that large parties naturally attract more voters than small parties. This is not the case, however. These studies show that party size is a strong predictor of party preference *sui generis*. Many people prefer political power over ideological affinity. In that respect nothing succeeds like success. Many voters are political pragmatists rather than political idealists (refer also to Tillie (1995a) for a discussion on the interpretation of the effect of party size on party preference).

5. If the question would have referred to the next election, voters who were certain which party they would vote for, would respond that the likelihood of voting for all other parties was extremely small, even for those they considered very attractive. The term 'ever' was therefore included to ensure that these items tap parties' current electoral attractiveness. For each party these questions yield a variable ranging from 1 (not at all probable) to 10 (very probable).

6. To estimate the parameters of the regression models, units of analyses are weighted. Two different kinds of weights were applied. As a result of the first weight factor, respondents in each system are weighted in such a way that their party choice in the European Elections 1994 reflect exactly the actual election results. This weight factor will be used in regressions that pertain to separate political parties or that involve a selection of the 49 parties included in this study. The second weight factor, uses the first one, but multiplies them with a (different) constant for each system, so that the seven systems in the stacked matrix contain 1,000 units of analysis each (yielding a total of 7,000). This weight will be used for the analyses in which all 49 parties from the 7 different political systems are analyzed simultaneously.

7. The national currency item was phrased as follows: 'Should OUR COUNTRY keep its LOCAL CURRENCY and make it more independent from the other European currencies, or should we aim at one common European currency?'. For the item about the unemployment program, the following question was asked: 'Should the European Union (European Community) launch a massive employment program, or should it rather concentrate on the completion of the Single Market?'. The item about national borders was: 'Should the European Union (European Community) continue to remove national borders and let people move freely between the countries, or should we re-introduce tighter border controls in order be better able to effectively fight crime in OUR COUNTRY?

   All three items have longer introductions. In each case people were asked to indicate their own position as well as that of the most important parties with 10-point scales of which only the extremes were labeled.

8. The unidimensionality of these attitude scales were tested with MSP, a program for Mokken scaling (Mokken 1971), which is a stochastic version of the better known Guttman scale. Both variables – EU-approval and attitudes to immigrants – were measured with 8 items, that form moderately strong to strong unidimensional scales in all 7 countries.

9. The actual variable which is added to the stacked matrix is not the y-hat, but the deviation of the y-hats from their mean for each party. For an elaborate discussion of this procedure, see Van der Eijk & Franklin (1996, chapter 20).

10. Class is measured with two separate variables: income and subjective social class. Religion is a composite variable of religious denomination and church attendance.

11. Initially models were estimated with 11 more independent variables, reflecting the importance of each of 11 valence issues. To this avail we also employed the y-hat procedure. Adding these 11 variables to the model increases its explained variance with only one percent. For parsimonious reasons it was therefore decided to leave these variables out of the model.

12. These findings reconfirm those reported elsewhere that left-right distance is a stronger predictor of party choice than party size (Van der Eijk & Franklin 1996; Van der Eijk, Franklin & Van der Brug 1999). However, other studies showed that in the context of the Dutch national election, party size is more important than left-right (Tillie 1995a; Van der Eijk 1995). Such a difference may naturally be caused by distributional differences stemming from the fact that the Netherlands has relatively many small parties. An alternative, and substantively more interesting explanation is that elections for the European Parliament are second order elections and elections for the National parliament are first order elections (Reif & Schmitt 1980). In first order elections voters are more likely to vote for a party that is not closest in ideological terms, but which is a large party and which therefore stands a better chance of achieving policy goals. In second order elections this strategic consideration does not apply in the same degrees as in first order elections, so that party size is less important (see also Van der Eijk, Franklin & Marsh 1996). Future research should test which of these explanations is valid.

13. The method does not allow us to estimate interaction effects for EU-approval, attitudes to immigrants, social class, income, religion, and education. The reason is that their effects were originally estimated with a procedure in which predicted values of bivariate regressions per party were used as the new independent variables (the procedure is discussed in Section 2.1). This procedure provides a valid way to estimate the strength of each of the independent variables, but at the same time rules out the possibility to estimate interaction effects. As the topic of this paper focuses primarily on the effect of party size and left-

right distance (two variables that were not transformed) we do not consider this to be a problem here.

14. A similar development could be said to have taken place in the UK in the 1980s, when the National Front lost most of its support to the Conservative Party after the latter embraced the issue of immigration.

15. The emphasis Kitschelt puts on the significance of social class is not in line with his own results, nor is it compatible with our findings.

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