

A NEW WINNING FORMULA?

The Programmatic Appeal of the Radical Right

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ABSTRACT

In an updated version of his well-known work on the radical right, Kitschelt attributes the persistent success of this type of party to a new winning formula. Where the radical right first campaigned on a neo-liberal and authoritarian programme, it now presents a more centrist economic position. The article tests this idea through a reconstruction of the positions of the French Front National, the Flemish Vlaams Blok and the Dutch Lijst Pim Fortuyn, and establishes that some, but not all, radical right parties make use of the new winning formula. Moreover, innovative analysis of the positions of radical right parties in West European party systems reveals that Kitschelt's theory needs to be improved on several points, most notably when it comes to the definition of concepts and the operationalization of dimensions.

KEY WORDS ■ authoritarianism ■ France ■ Kitschelt ■ libertarianism ■ Low Countries ■ populism ■ radical right

Introduction

The third wave of radical right parties that emerged in Western Europe during the 1980s and 1990s has generated renewed scholarly attention for the study of this party family.¹ In comparative designs and case studies political scientists have attempted to explain why this type of party has been relatively successful. Much attention has been given to the electoral appeal of the radical right, that is, to the composition of its electorate and the particular appeal of its message to this group of voters (e.g. Betz, 1994; Perrineau, 2001). Recently, studies have also focused on the structural factors that have enabled the breakthrough of the radical right (e.g. Ignazi, 2003; Jackman and Volpert, 1996; Jungerstam-Mulders, 2003).

One of the most comprehensive studies so far is Herbert Kitschelt's *The Radical Right in Western Europe: a Comparative Analysis* (1995), written in collaboration with Anthony J. McGann. This book has been widely recognized as an important contribution to the literature on the radical right; thus, Cas Mudde (1999: 188) suggests that it offers 'the most elaborate theory' of the rise of radical right parties. At the same time, it has provoked critical reactions. Several authors have refuted some of the main ideas presented by Kitschelt, like that of his winning formula (a combination of neoliberal and authoritarian appeals) that is said to make the radical right so successful (Eatwell, 2003; Mudde, 1999).

In a recent study written for the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Kitschelt (2004) responds to his critics and asserts that although the applicability of his theoretical framework is not confined to a specific time period, his analysis of the electoral success of the radical right is. The radical right made use of its winning formula in the 1980s, because it was only effective given the configuration of parties in West European party systems in this period. Since the 1990s new political developments have altered the configuration of West European party systems and therefore also the appeal of radical right parties, who now campaign on a more centrist economic programme, still combined with authoritarianism.

Although Kitschelt's initial analysis has received considerable attention, and has been tested empirically (Abedi, 2002; Ivarsflaten, 2005; Veugelers, 2001), his follow-up study has been ignored so far. My article sets out to address this by testing whether the radical right does indeed have a new economic appeal. In three West European countries (France, Belgium and The Netherlands), the political programme of the radical right is analysed and compared with that of the other parties in the party system. On the basis of this comparative analysis, the validity of Kitschelt's new predictions concerning the radical right is determined.

Success of the Radical Right in Western Europe

In a number of books and articles, Kitschelt studies West European party systems with 'analytical schemes' that share a theoretical core (2004: 1). These schemes consist of an assessment of two elements: the demand for and the supply by political parties. Kitschelt therefore attempts to make a double analysis of the success of various party families in Western Europe. On the basis of the changes that have occurred in the West European electorates (the demand side) and party systems (the supply side), he constructs a theory that can account for the rise of left-libertarian parties (1988), the changes in the social-democratic party family (1994) and the rise of the radical right (1995) during the 1970s and 1980s. The sociological changes that have taken place in Western Europe are linked to the structural changes that have transformed the West European party systems. Thus, Kitschelt

uncovers the political opportunity structures that have been (un)favourable to the various party families.

The value of Kitschelt's theory, the core of which is identical in all the studies mentioned above, lies in his belief that parties are more than mere reflections of mass-level sentiments. The fortunes and behaviour of a political party are dependent not only on the presence or absence of an electorate close to its party position, but also on the strategic interactions of political parties in the competitive system (Kitschelt, 1995: 14). The focus of my article is on this second element, more specifically on the strategic interaction of existing parties with radical right parties among West European party systems. I analyse the programmatic appeal of radical right parties, how this appeal is related to that of other parties in the party system, and whether this appeal matches Kitschelt's (2004) analysis.

Kitschelt's Theoretical Core

The point of departure for Kitschelt's theory is the two-dimensionality of the competitive space in post-industrial West European societies. The axes of this two-dimensional space are formed by the socialist–capitalist dimension and the libertarian–authoritarian dimension (see Figures 1 and 2). The opposition between socialist and capitalist politics reflects questions that are concerned with the allocation of resources ('the nature of the outcomes'), whereas the opposition between libertarian and authoritarian politics reflects questions that are related to the process that brings about collective outcomes – 'the quality of the process' (Kitschelt, 1994: 10).

Kitschelt locates both voters and political parties within this two-dimensional competitive space. The distribution of the electorate within the space is dependent upon the attitudes of the voters. According to Kitschelt, these attitudes are strongly related to voters' 'market situation', that is, to their 'skills and capabilities, their social ties, and their location in a particular economic sector' (1995: 5). The overall distribution of voters in the competitive space is therefore largely dependent on the occupational structure of a country.² Since the occupational structures of West European countries have been ever-changing in recent decades, attitudinal distributions in the competitive space have been dynamic rather than static.

Kitschelt assumes that political parties follow a vote-maximizing logic, i.e. they position themselves in a distinct part of the competitive space (at least in multiparty systems). When the voter distribution in the competitive space changes, parties reposition to maintain their vote-share. However, they have to make trade-offs and decide which constituencies they want to please most. This can lead to voids in the competitive space, areas in which there are a considerable number of voters, but no existing parties to meet their political preferences. This creates a political opportunity for new political parties that may enter the competitive space to serve these neglected constituencies and hence become electorally successful.

Old and New Predictions

On the basis of this theoretical framework, Kitschelt assessed the configuration of parties in West European party systems. During the 1980s, the competitive space was essentially one-dimensional, he argued. Although voters and parties took positions on both the socialist–capitalist and libertarian–authoritarian dimensions, their distribution was largely confined to the socialist–libertarian and capitalist–authoritarian quadrants (see Figure 1). According to Kitschelt, the period 1980–90 was characterized by strong centripetal tendencies. Both social-democratic and Christian-democratic

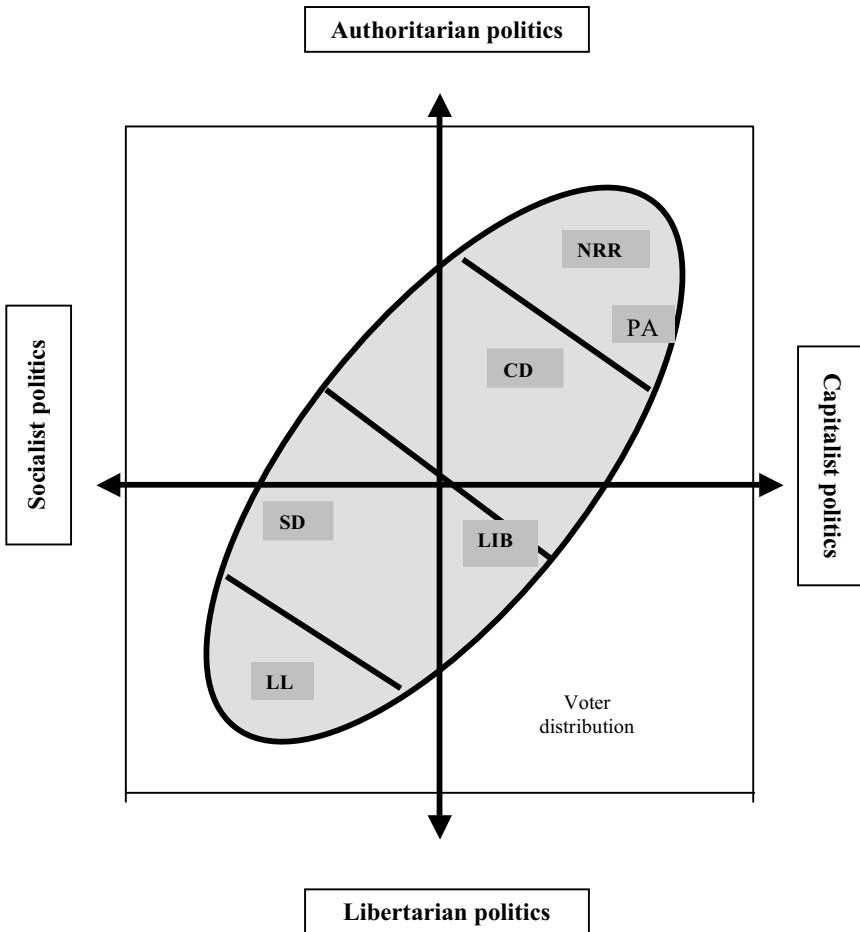


Figure 1. Party positions in competitive space in the 1970s and 1980s (CD: Christian-Democratic Party. LIB: Liberal Party. LL: Left-Libertarian Party. PA: Populist Anti-Statist Party. NRR: New Radical Right Party. SD: Social-Democratic Party)

parties moved to the centre of the competitive space to preserve their electoral strongholds and to enhance their chances of getting into government. This opened up competitive space for new political parties at the extremes. In the socialist-libertarian quadrant, left-libertarian (most notably green parties) appealed to dissatisfied social-democratic voters. The New Radical Right (NRR) did the same to former Christian-democratic voters in the capitalist-authoritarian quadrant (Kitschelt, 1995).

In the 1990s, we see a rotation of the voter distribution in reaction to which the political parties adjusted their policy positions. They now spread over all four quadrants of the political space, making the political competition truly

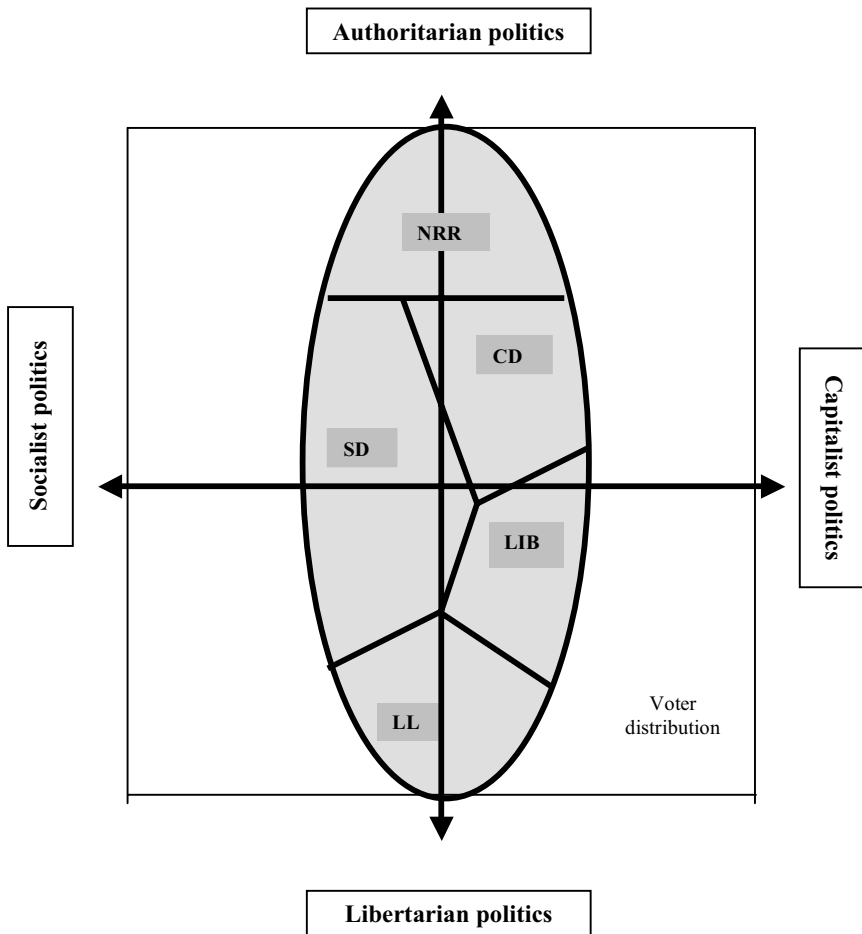


Figure 2. Party positions in competitive space in the 1990s and the new millennium (CD: Christian-Democratic Party. LIB: Liberal Party.

LL: Left-Libertarian Party. NRR: New Radical Right Party.

SD: Social-Democratic Party)

two-dimensional (see Figure 2) (Kitschelt, 2004). This does not mean that the parties became evenly distributed over the two dimensions. Rotation of the voter distribution led all parties to converge around the centre of the socialist–capitalist dimension, whereas the parties remained spread out over the full length of the libertarian–authoritarian dimension. The most drastic changes in party positions were those of left-libertarian and NRR parties. Both moved to the centre of the socialist–capitalist dimension, the first from an outspoken socialist position and the second from an outspoken neo-liberal position. Their respective positions on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension have not been influenced by the rotation of the voter distribution. The positions of social-democratic, Christian-democratic or conservative and liberal parties have remained more or less the same, notwithstanding changes in the composition of their electorates.

The Radical Right

Kitschelt defines the NRR on the basis of two features, its constituency and its ideological appeal (McGann and Kitschelt, 2005: 149). In the 1980s, the ideological appeal of the NRR consisted of a winning formula that combined a pro-market position on the socialist–capitalist dimension and an authoritarian position on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension. This combination was not unique, but the position of the NRR was more neoliberal and more authoritarian than that of established right-wing parties that had moved to the centre of the competitive space under the influence of centripetal tendencies (Kitschelt, 1995: 19–21). The winning formula of the NRR attracted a broad constituency of small-business owners, routine white-collar workers, blue-collar workers and inactives (McGann and Kitschelt, 2005: 149).

In the course of the 1990s, established NRR parties modified their ideological appeal and moved to a more centrist (albeit still right-wing) economic position. This change was inspired by the simultaneous decline in voters with capitalist–authoritarian preferences and increase in working-class voters with socialist–authoritarian attitudes. To expand its vote-share, the NRR had to meet the preferences of the latter group without neglecting those of the first group. Hence, it gradually moved to a more centrist position on the socialist–capitalist dimension, while maintaining its fierce authoritarianism. From there it would be able to appeal to those who had previously voted for the Social Democrats, but were in search of a more authoritarian party. However, the new position of the NRR does make it hard to satisfy its two constituencies, i.e. the socialist-authoritarians and the capitalist-authoritarians (Kitschelt, 2004: 10).

The fact that NRR parties that emerged during the 1980s evolved ideologically during the 1990s does not mean that the original kind of NRR has disappeared off the political scene. According to Kitschelt, there are countries where the NRR has emerged only recently and has done so in its original form (e.g. Switzerland) (McGann and Kitschelt, 2005). It remains unclear

in Kitschelt's work whether this is a result and/or a symptom of a structure of party competition that has not yet been reshaped and whether the NRR always has to emerge in its original form before it can evolve ideologically (of course, the two questions are closely related).

In his initial study of the radical right, Kitschelt stated that under special conditions a variant of the NRR, the Populist Anti-statist party, can emerge in West European party systems. The position of the Populist Anti-statist party in the competitive space is more flexible than that of the NRR. It can range from a neoliberal and authoritarian to a 'more neutral, if not slightly libertarian, appeal' (Kitschelt, 1995: 21). However, the position of the Populist Anti-statist party remains more radical than that of the established right in order to take advantage of the centripetal forces in the party system (Kitschelt, 1995: 15). Moreover, the Populist Anti-statist party would only be successful in countries where the established parties converged to the centre *and* where the political economy is based on a strong clientelist/paternalist relationship between the political elite and the electorate (Kitschelt, 1995: 21–2). It is in opposition to the latter aspect that the Populist Anti-statist party defines itself primarily. Subsequently, this type of party focuses on its opposition to the other parties rather than on its own programmatic position.

Kitschelt's description of the programme (or absence of a programme) of the Populist Anti-statist party has some unintended repercussions for the location of this party in the competitive space. Since the space depicts party positions on only two dimensions, namely socialist–capitalist and libertarian–authoritarian, it is impossible to incorporate pro- or anti-establishment politics in the model. The Populist Anti-statist party therefore can only be positioned on issues that are secondary to the party. A second problem arising from Kitschelt's description of the Populist Anti-statist party concerns the distinction between that party and the NRR. Kitschelt's description of the Populist Anti-statist party implies that the NRR is neither populist nor anti-establishment, because these characteristics can be found exclusively in the programme and rhetoric of the Populist Anti-statist party. However, the parties that Kitschelt considers as representatives of the NRR also have populist elements in their programmes and employ a fierce anti-establishment rhetoric. Put more strongly, populism is one of the defining characteristics of the radical right (e.g. Betz, 2004; Taggart, 1995).

Methodology, Operationalization and Case Selection

In order to test whether the radical right has taken a new, more economically centrist, position in West European party systems in the new millennium, one needs to measure the ideological positions of actual parties, radical right and other, in Kitschelt's two-dimensional competitive space. Two important decisions need to be made if such a space is to be constructed.

First, one needs to choose a method that allows the measurement of party positions in this competitive space and, second, one needs to select the cases that can be used to construct one or more competitive spaces.

Methodology

To measure party positions, two groups of techniques are available. On the one hand, there are techniques by which the perception of voters (by means of a mass survey or of experts) is used to determine party positions. On the other hand, there are techniques by which party positions are measured directly through the use of sources that reflect party positions, such as manifestos (Mair, 2001). Since Kitschelt states that parties are more than simple reflections of mass-level sentiments, it seems apt to pursue the second strategy.³

The most widely used technique for measuring party positions on the basis of manifestos is that of the Manifesto Research Group (MRG). However, the MRG technique is not the most appropriate for testing Kitschelt's model. To code manifestos, the MRG has chosen a saliency (or valence) approach, assuming that 'parties argue with each other by emphasizing different policy priorities rather than by directly confronting each other on the same issues' (Budge and Bara, 2001: 6–7). In other words, the MRG believes that issues are salient in nature, i.e. parties pay attention to some issues and neglect others, regardless of their positions on these issues. Thus, the MRG measures how often parties mention certain issues in their manifestos rather than the positions they take on these issues.

Kitschelt does not use a saliency approach, but a confrontational approach. The theoretical assumption of a confrontational approach is that 'issues are generally confrontational and not valence in nature, i.e. parties take up a range of explicit positions on each issue, ranging from fully pro to fully con, without inherent constraints' (Budge, 2001: 86). Kitschelt believes that parties take opposing positions on a range of questions: for example, libertarians favour an inclusive and universalistic conception of citizenship, whereas authoritarians support an exclusive and particularistic conception of citizenship.

In an attempt to avoid the problem of using a saliency approach to test a confrontational model, a new confrontational technique for analysing party manifestos is used to test Kitschelt's model. This innovative method, developed by Huib Pellikaan (e.g. Pellikaan et al., 2003), aims to measure party positions on dimensions consisting of issues that are conflictual in nature, i.e. questions on which parties are expected to take pro and contra positions.

To measure party positions with this confrontational approach, a three-step procedure must be followed. First, the researcher has to specify the number and the content of the dimensions on which s/he would like to position the parties. Dimensions can be relevant on a number of grounds.

In this article, the dimensions that make up the spatial model are determined by Kitschelt's theory. They are the socialist–capitalist dimension and the libertarian–authoritarian dimension.

Second, issues have to be selected that are representative of these dimensions. The number of issues used to operationalize each dimension is not fixed. The researcher can select as many issues as deemed necessary, the only requirement being that the selection has to be large enough to allow differentiation between the parties in a party system. For example, when five issues are selected for operationalizing a dimension, an 11-point scale is created which can easily fit the parties of a multiparty system. The more issues that are selected, the better one can differentiate between parties that are ideologically close to each other. It is possible to select an unequal number of issues on the different dimensions. The scores on the dimensions can then still be compared, if necessary after standardization.

Third, on the basis of the statements in its manifesto, a party is assigned a score on all selected issues. The party receives a positive score (+), a neutral score (0) or a negative score (–) depending on the position it takes on an issue in relation to the dimension it pertains to. The scores of all issues pertaining to a given dimension are then aggregated to establish the party's position on that dimension. High inter-coder reliability can be achieved through the use of multiple readers to score the manifestos.

There are various ways of processing the data obtained with this technique into a visual representation of the political space. Here, the space is constructed by placing the x-axis (the socialist–capitalist dimension) and the y-axis (the libertarian–authoritarian dimension) orthogonally, as in Kitschelt's model. The scores of all parties on the two axes can then be plotted on the graph, thus visualizing the party positions in Kitschelt's competitive space.⁴

An important advantage of this specific technique is that it is general enough to allow for comparative research and at the same time sensitive enough to take the specific political context in a country into account. It can measure local space by the selection of new issues for every election in every country, but the scores on these issues can still be aggregated and compared to scores of parties in other countries or in different elections, because they are representative of a more general dimension. However, the technique can also be used with identical issues across countries or across time, as will be demonstrated.

Operationalization

To replicate Kitschelt's model, a number of issues have to be selected that are indicative of the socialist–capitalist and libertarian–authoritarian dimensions. The opposition on the former dimension is between statements favouring the 'political redistribution of economic resources', on the one hand, and statements favouring the 'market allocation' of resources, on the other (Kitschelt, 1995: 1). Seven issues were selected that are central to this

opposition in all West European countries: ‘privatization’ (X1), ‘the public sector’ (X2), ‘the welfare and social security system’ (X3), ‘the labour market’ (X4), ‘taxation’ (X5), ‘the budget and financial deficit’ (X6) and ‘trade and enterprise policies’ (X7). In previous research, similar issues have been shown to form a robust scale for economic policy preferences (e.g. Pellikaan et al., 2003). When statements in a manifesto predominantly indicate that a party is in favour of state intervention on one of these issues, this party receives a score of -1 on that specific issue. When statements in a manifesto predominantly indicate that a party is in favour of more market influence on one of the selected issues, this party receives a score of $+1$. When the overall statement is unclear or ambiguous, that party receives a score of 0 . Parties that do not express any policy preferences also receive a score of 0 on that specific issue.⁵ The scores of each party on the seven selected issues are aggregated to determine the party positions on the socialist–capitalist dimension.

Operationalization of the libertarian–authoritarian dimension is more complex, as the dimension encompasses several political questions. From Kitschelt’s description of this dimension we retain three constituent elements: (1) citizenship and ethnocultural relations, (2) individual freedom and (3) collective decision modes.⁶ In order to capture the complete essence of the libertarian–authoritarian dimension, all three elements have to be represented by the selected issues. It is also important for all elements to have the same weight in the composition of the libertarian–authoritarian dimension. This can be achieved by selecting an equal number of issues for every question that is part of this dimension. In this study, every question is represented by two issues.

Citizenship and ethnocultural relations are measured by the issues ‘immigration’ (Y1) and ‘integration of cultural minorities’ (Y2). These issues reflect whether a party has an inclusive or exclusive view of society. Statements indicating support for an inclusive and universalistic society received a score of -1 , whereas statements indicating support for an exclusive and particularistic society received a score of $+1$. To measure individual freedom, the issues ‘diversity of lifestyles’ (Y3) and ‘ethical legislation’ (Y4) are selected. These issues represent the extent to which parties want the government to interfere in the private domain. Statements indicating support for individual freedom received a score of -1 , whereas statements indicating support for a moral government received a score of $+1$. Collective decision-making procedures are measured by the issues ‘direct representation’ (Y5) and ‘participation in the decision-making process’ (Y6). Statements in support of more direct representation and more participation in the decision-making process received a score of -1 . Statements indicating support for appointed representation and hierarchical decision-making procedures received a score of $+1$. All statements on issues of the libertarian–authoritarian dimension that were unclear or ambiguous received a score of 0 . Parties that refrained from expressing any policy preferences on a certain issue also received a score of 0 on that specific issue.

Case Selection

I have selected three cases to test Kitschelt's model: the French Front National (FN), the Flemish Vlaams Blok⁷ and the Dutch Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF).⁸ In this selection, we follow Kitschelt's broad interpretation of the radical right party family. In his own research, Kitschelt includes parties as diverse as the French FN, the Scandinavian Progress parties, the Austrian Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ), the Italian Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI), the German Republikaner (Kitschelt, 1995) and the Swiss Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP) (McGann and Kitschelt, 2005). I have chosen the FN, Vlaams Blok and LPF from the radical right party family partly for pragmatic reasons, most importantly the availability of party programmes in languages with which I am familiar. Moreover, the three countries in which these radical right parties are situated have had parliamentary elections (France in 2002, Belgium in 2003 and The Netherlands in 2002 and 2003)⁹ that were separated by only a few months. All three elections were dominated by similar issues, and this facilitates comparison of the three competitive spaces constructed to test Kitschelt's predictions.

The Radical Right in France, Belgium and The Netherlands

In 2002–2003 the national elections held in France, Belgium and The Netherlands shared an important feature: in all three elections the radical right parties under investigation here played important roles. In France, all eyes were on the FN, because its leader Jean-Marie le Pen surprisingly made it to the second round of the presidential elections held in May 2002. In Belgium, the established parties feared the eleventh consecutive 'black Sunday', i.e. the eleventh election in which the Vlaams Blok would increase its vote-share. In The Netherlands, the rise of Pim Fortuyn and his assassination not only dominated the 2002 election, his party, the LPF, also left a mark on the provisional election in 2003. The campaigns preceding the elections revolved around similar issues. In France, questions regarding security/law and order were predominant in the election campaign. However, immigration and integration were also important, though framed as part of the security debate (Cole, 2002). Security and immigration (especially the question of voting rights for immigrants) also featured as important themes in the Flemish campaign. Moreover, during the campaign the Flemish mainstream parties focused heavily on the appropriateness and efficiency of the *cordon sanitaire* around the Vlaams Blok (Fitzmaurice, 2004). In The Netherlands, the campaign revolved around immigration and integration, and more specifically around the place of Islam in Western societies (Van Praag, 2003). Essentially, the campaigns in France, Flanders and The Netherlands were dominated by issues 'owned' by the radical right.

In the following sections I analyse and compare the positions of the French, Flemish and Dutch radical right with those of Kitschelt's NRR (both old and new) and the Populist Anti-statist party. For a proper analysis we need to put the positions of the radical right parties into context and therefore also determine the positions of the other parties in the party system. The parties whose manifestos were analysed and the party families they belong to are presented in Table 1. The scores of the parties on all issues are given in Appendix A.

Before commencing the analysis, expectations about the positioning and categorization of the radical right parties need to be stated clearly. Owing to the varying conditions under which Kitschelt's ideal-types are likely to occur, I am obliged to formulate more than one expectation for each radical right party. Both the FN and the Vlaams Blok are radical right parties of the original group, i.e. they had their first successes in the course of the 1980s. I would thus expect them to have evolved into the weaker version of the NRR by now, assuming that the structure of competition in the French and Flemish party systems has changed as well. If this assumption does not (yet) hold, however, I would expect the FN and Vlaams Blok to maintain the original winning formula of neoliberalism and authoritarianism. In the Flemish case, there is also a third possibility. Vlaams Blok could opt to be a Populist Anti-statist party, given that Belgium is one of the three West European countries with a particularly high level of clientelism (Veugelers, 2001). LPF is a radical right party that emerged only recently. Following Kitschelt, I believe that it is therefore most likely to make use of the original winning formula and be of the early NRR type.

France

The position of the FN roughly resembles that of the 'new' NRR (see Figure 3). The FN combines a centrist economic position with an (moderate) authoritarian position (position coordinates [1,3]). The centrist economic position is in accordance with Kitschelt's (2004) model, but the authoritarian position is too moderate to match Kitschelt's predictions for a NRR party accurately.

The latter position is the result of the FN's populist stance on the questions of collective decision modes. The party is in favour of a more participatory democracy, but this position is not based on a libertarian heritage. Rather, it is a programmatic consequence of the populism that is one of the cornerstones of the FN ideology. In other words, the FN's stance on the issue 'participation in the decision-making process' is mistakenly interpreted in Kitschelt's model as libertarian, and therefore incorrectly moderates the FN's overall authoritarian position – the party takes authoritarian stances on the issues of 'immigration', 'integration of cultural minorities', 'diversity of lifestyles' and 'ethical legislation'.

Table 1. Political parties and party families in France, Flanders and The Netherlands

<i>France</i>	<i>Flanders</i>			<i>The Netherlands</i>		
Front National (FN) ¹	Radical right	Anders Gaan Leven (Agalev)	Green	Christen Democratisch Appel (CDA)	Christen Democratisch	Christian-democratic
Parti Communiste Français (PCF)	Communist	Christen Democratisch en Vlaams (CD&V)	Christian-democratic	ChristenUnie (CU)	Orthodox-Christian	Orthodox-Christian
Parti Socialiste (PS)	Socialist	Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie (N-VA)	Other	Democraten66 (D66)	Liberal	Liberal
Union pour la Démocratie Française (UDF)	Liberal	Sociaal Progressief alternatief (SP.a)	Social-democratic	GroenLinks (GL)	Green	Green
Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP)	Conservative (Gaullist)	Spirit	Other	Leefbaar Nederland (LN)	Other	Other
Les Verts (Greens)	Green	Vlaams Blok	Radical right	Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF)	Radical right	Radical right
		Vlaams Liberalen en Democraten (VLD)	Liberal	Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA)	Social-democratic	Social-democratic
				Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP)	Orthodox-Christian	Orthodox-Christian
				Socialistische Partij (SP)	Socialist	Socialist
			§	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD)	Liberal	Liberal

¹ Party name and party acronym. In the text, the most commonly known of the two is used.

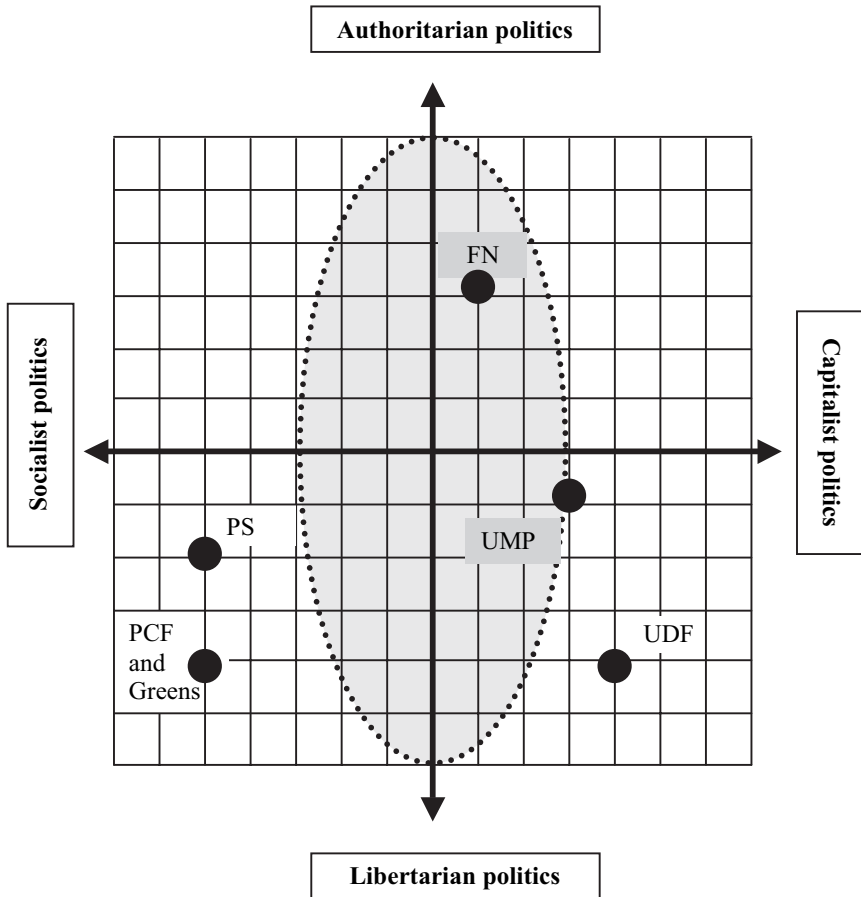


Figure 3. Political space in France, 2002 (Reliability scores – socialist–capitalist dimension: $\alpha = 0.88$; libertarian–authoritarian dimension: $\alpha = 0.86$)

Flanders

The position of Vlaams Blok is similar to that of the FN (Figure 4); hence, Vlaams Blok can also be characterized as an evolved NRR party. The party combines a centrist economic position with a moderate authoritarian position (1,2). As in the case of the FN, however, the authoritarianism of Vlaams Blok is toned down by its populist stance on issues of collective decision modes. This also explains why Vlaams Blok is located so close to the Christian Democrats (CD&V [0,2]) and the New Flemish Alliance (N-VA [1,1]). These parties appear to share almost the same overall ideological position as Vlaams Blok, but they take a libertarian stance on the issue of ‘integration of cultural minorities’ and an authoritarian stance on the issues of ‘direct representation’ and ‘participation in the decision-making process’,

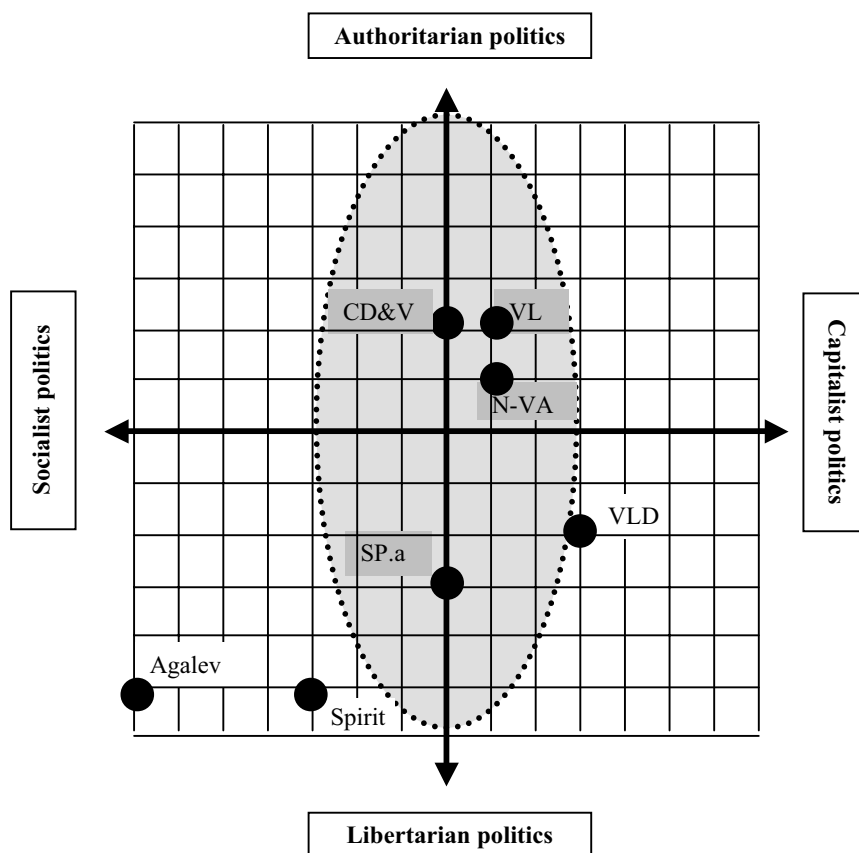


Figure 4. Political space in Flanders, 2003 (Reliability scores – socialist–capitalist dimension: $\alpha = 0.73$; libertarian–authoritarian dimension: $\alpha = 0.70$)

whereas Vlaams Blok has the inverse profile, i.e. an authoritarian stance on ‘immigration’ and ‘integration of cultural minorities’ (as well as on ‘diversity of lifestyles’ and ‘ethical legislation’), and a position that is (apparently) libertarian on ‘direct representation’ and ‘participation in the decision-making process’. In fact, as in the case of the FN, Vlaams Blok’s ‘libertarian’ position on these questions is more appropriately characterized as populist, and therefore tends to ‘disguise’ the party’s authoritarianism. If we were to take the issues of collective decision modes out of the analysis, Vlaams Blok would receive a score of +4 on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension, whereas CD&V and N–VA would fall back to scores of 0 and –1 (all on a scale of –4 to +4). This reveals a clear difference between Vlaams Blok and the mainstream right.

Although the FN and Vlaams Blok are both representative of the new version of NRR parties, it is interesting to note that the party systems in

which they are situated have not (yet) completed the transition to a two-dimensional structure of competition. It seems that these radical right parties have moved to the centre of the socialist–capitalist dimension, changing the structure of competition in the upper half of the competitive space (i.e. the competition between the NRR and the moderate right). However, the same cannot be said of left-libertarian parties that maintain their original place in the socialist–libertarian quadrant of the political space. Thus, if the structure of competition in West European party systems has indeed changed, this seems more to be a consequence of the changing position of the radical right than anything else.

The Netherlands

The LPF is located at the border of the capitalist–authoritarian and capitalist–libertarian quadrant (5,0) (see Figure 5). Clearly, the position of the LPF does not match Kitschelt’s predicted position for a party of the NRR type. It is not the most extreme position in the capitalist–authoritarian quadrant; worse still, it is not even unambiguously capitalist–authoritarian in orientation. The position of the LPF is difficult to interpret in the light of Kitschelt’s theory, especially because the configuration of the Dutch party system resembles neither Kitschelt’s original model for the 1980s nor his new model for the 1990s or the new millennium. Polarization in the Dutch party system was extremely high by 2002/2003, which made the position of the LPF seem relatively moderate.

However, if we ignore the overall configuration of Dutch parties and focus solely on the position of the LPF, it becomes clear that this party has almost all the features of a Populist Anti-statist party. The position of the LPF is neoliberal, a primary feature of the Populist Anti-statist party, though it may be a little less outspoken than Kitschelt assumed. The LPF has a position on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension that is not unambiguously authoritarian or libertarian, which fits Kitschelt’s claim that the Populist Anti-statist party can have ‘a more neutral, if not slightly libertarian, appeal’ (1995: 21). The programme and rhetoric of the LPF are also fiercely anti-establishment (Jones, 2002; Lucardie and Voerman, 2002). Kitschelt claimed that this was a crucial element of the Populist Anti-statist party, even though his two-dimensional competitive space does not take account of this. If the LPF is a Populist Anti-statist party, however, this would contradict Kitschelt’s prediction that this type of party only emerges in political systems characterized by strong clientelistic relationships between the political elite and the electorate. To discuss this matter in more depth, I make a general assessment of the programmatic appeal of the NRR and the Populist Anti-statist party in the next section.

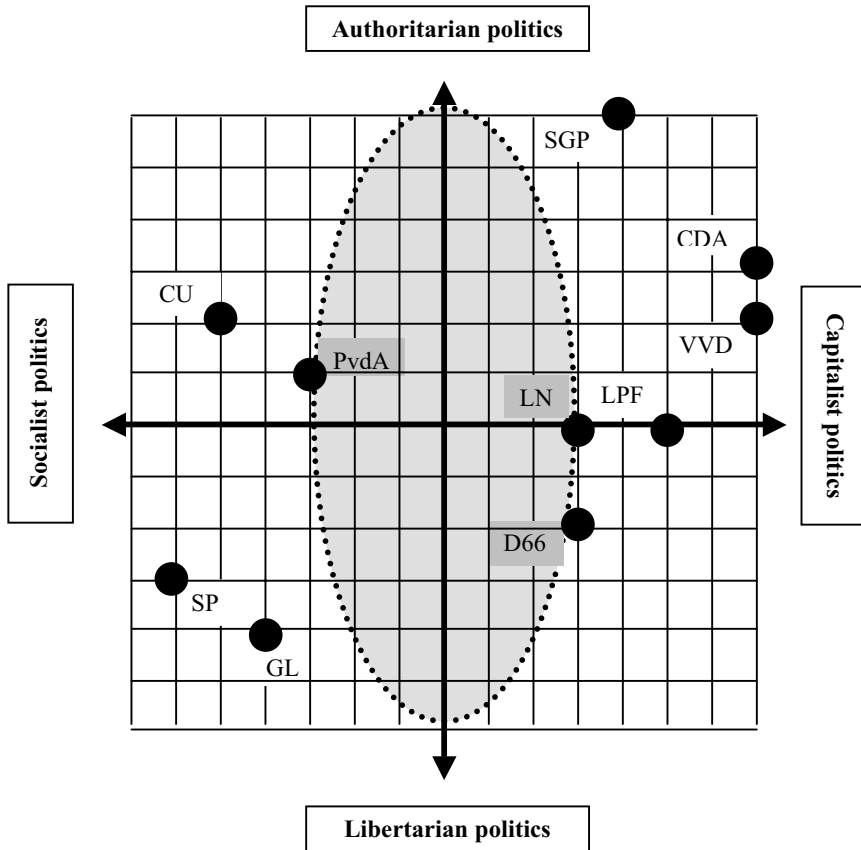


Figure 5. Political space in The Netherlands, 2002/03 (Reliability scores – socialist–capitalist dimension: $\alpha = 0.88$; libertarian–authoritarian dimension: $\alpha = 0.75$)

Assessing the Programmatic Appeal of the Radical Right in West European Party Systems

The party positions of the French FN and the Flemish Vlaams Blok correspond closely with that of Kitschelt's new NRR, but only when the question of collective decision modes is taken out of the analysis. The position of the LPF seems to have more in common with that of the Populist Anti-statist party, which according to Kitschelt is a subtype of the NRR. These findings allow us to make some observations with regard to Kitschelt's analysis of the radical right in the new millennium, the distinction between the NRR and the Populist Anti-statist party, and some of the premises of the theory.

Kitschelt predicted that in the new millennium the radical right would abandon its neoliberal appeal for a more centrist economic position. Our

findings are largely consistent with this claim. The FN and Vlaams Blok have indeed taken a position in the competitive space that is economically centrist in orientation. However, the original position of these parties cannot be identified and therefore I cannot directly corroborate Kitschelt's claim that the programmatic appeal of NRR parties has changed from neoliberalism to economic centrism. Bastow (1998) argues that this is indeed the case for the FN. However, the literature on Vlaams Blok suggests that the party started out with a programme in which 'solidarism' was the key word (Spruyt, 1995). References to this have been reduced over time and the party now relies on an economic programme of welfare chauvinism and protectionism. Some authors have claimed that this blend has long been vital to the ideology of the radical right (Eatwell, 2000; Mudde, 2000). In any case, it is surely true that welfare chauvinism and protectionism form a qualitatively different appeal from neoliberalism, with its emphasis on free markets and *laissez-faire*.

Concerning the distinction that Kitschelt makes between the NRR and the Populist Anti-statist party, I can be brief. Although the analytical distinction is useful, the conditions that Kitschelt specified under which the NRR would be of the Populist Anti-statist subtype (a centripetal tendency in the party system and a political system characterized by strong client-patron relations) are not confirmed. In Belgium, a country that fulfils the conditions for the emergence of a Populist Anti-statist party, the radical right is of the NRR type and not of the Populist Anti-statist subtype. By contrast, in The Netherlands, a country that does not fulfil the conditions for the emergence of a Populist Anti-statist party, the radical right shares a number of characteristics with this type of party. This shows that the presence of strong client-patron relations in a country is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the emergence of a Populist Anti-statist party (although it may be that they can help a Populist Anti-statist party on its road to electoral success).

An important point should be made in regard to the premises of Kitschelt's theory on the radical right. In the empirical account given above, we have seen that measurement of authoritarianism can be distorted if Kitschelt's guidelines are followed. The problem arises from the inclusion of collective decision modes in the content of this dimension. Kitschelt theorized that this question would distinguish between libertarians who favoured more participatory democracy and authoritarians who favoured hierarchical decision-making. However, the FN, Vlaams Blok and the LPF are all in favour of more participatory collective decision-making procedures, and thus seem to have a libertarian orientation towards this question if we stick to Kitschelt's model. This is an inaccurate interpretation of the facts. The NRR and Populist Anti-statist parties alike have adopted demands for more participatory democracy as a tool against the political elite, whom they accuse of having lost contact with popular opinion and of lacking popular legitimacy. Radical right parties present forms of participatory democracy, such as the

referendum and popular initiative, as a solution to the unresponsiveness of the current political system (e.g. Betz, 2004; Bowler et al., 2003).

Essentially, Kitschelt's libertarian–authoritarian dimension cannot capture the difference between these populist calls for more participatory democracy and a genuinely libertarian programme that supports direct democracy from a perspective of equality and liberty in which personal autonomy and voluntary and equal participation are key values (Kitschelt, 1994: 9–12).¹⁰ It is evident that the question of collective decision-making procedures does not enable us to differentiate between libertarian and authoritarian parties, and should therefore be dropped in favour of social-cultural questions of immigration, integration, morality and law and order.

Conclusion

The rise of radical right parties in Western Europe has been an important political phenomenon since the 1980s. Although established parties have progressively adopted tougher stances on questions of immigration and integration, radical right parties remain present in the West European party systems. In countries such as Austria and Italy the radical right is no longer an outsider and has become part of the political establishment.

A first step in understanding the radical right as a political phenomenon is to explain its emergence. A second step is to document and explain its persistence. In an update of his earlier work, Herbert Kitschelt does just that. He analyses the changing programmatic appeal of the radical right and puts this into perspective by linking it to broader changes in West European party systems. According to Kitschelt, the radical right has adopted a more centrist stance on economic questions in reaction to the changing political preferences of voters in post-industrial societies. This article set out to investigate whether the radical right has indeed changed its position.

On the basis of three cases, the French FN, the Flemish Vlaams Blok and the Dutch LPF, it is clear that established radical right parties take a fairly centrist position on economic questions in the new millennium. The authoritarianism that characterized the radical right in the 1980s and 1990s remains present. I found that only the LPF disconfirmed this pattern, but this party is relatively new and functions in a different competitive setting from the other two radical right parties. I am inclined to conclude that the LPF resembles the Populist Anti-statist party more than the NRR.

However, Kitschelt's theory is not flawless. The distinction he makes between the NRR and Populist Anti-statist parties needs serious revision. Main problems concern the definition and position of the Populist Anti-statist party, the conditions for its emergence and its relation to the party system in general, and the radical right in particular. I agree with Kitschelt that, within the context of his model, a Populist Anti-statist type of party can occur that, like the radical right, is located in the capitalist–authoritarian

quadrant. However, his definition requires amendment on one point. Populist Anti-statist parties are not necessarily more radical than mainstream right-wing parties on all issues and dimensions. A Populist Anti-statist party could very well oppose mainstream right-wing parties on only one or two political issues (e.g. immigration) and have a moderate profile on other political issues. As far as the conditions for the emergence of Populist Anti-statist parties are concerned, clientelism is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for their emergence.

In regard to the distinction between Populist Anti-statist parties and the NRR, I would argue that the differences between the two are more substantial than Kitschelt's model indicates. For example, nationalism is dominant in the programmes of NRR parties, yet absent in that of Populist Anti-statist parties. An important similarity between Populist Anti-statist and NRR parties lies in their populism, in this study exemplified by the positive stance that radical right parties take on questions of collective decision modes. However, in Kitschelt's theory this populism could easily be mistaken for libertarianism, implying the need for revision of the theory. The question of collective decision modes in the libertarian–authoritarian dimension obscures the true authoritarianism of radical right parties and should therefore be excluded from consideration.

Appendix A. Party Scores

	<i>Socialist–capitalist dimension</i>							<i>Total</i>
	<i>X1</i>	<i>X2</i>	<i>X3</i>	<i>X4</i>	<i>X5</i>	<i>X6</i>	<i>X7</i>	
FRANCE								
FN	–	+	+	–	+	+	–	+1
PCF	–	–	–	–	–	0	0	–5
PS	0	–	–	–	–	–	0	–5
UDF	0	+	0	+	+	0	+	+4
UMP	0	+	0	+	+	0	0	+3
Verts	0	–	–	–	–	0	–	–5
FLANDERS								
AGALEV	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–7
CD&V	–	–	–	+	0	+	+	0
N-VA	0	–	0	+	0	0	+	+1
SP.a	0	–	0	+	–	0	+	0
SPirit	0	0	–	–	–	0	0	–3
VLAAMS BLOK	0	0	–	0	+	+	0	+1
VLD	0	–	0	+	+	+	+	+3

Appendix A. Party Scores (*Continued*)

	<i>Socialist-capitalist dimension</i>							<i>Total</i>
	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	
THE NETHERLANDS								
CDA	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+7
CU	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-5
D66	0	+	0	0	+	+	0	+3
GL	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-4
LN	-	+	+	+	0	+	0	+3
LPF	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+5
PvdA	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-3
SGP	0	+	+	+	+	-	+	+4
SP	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	+6
VVD	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+7
<i>Libertarian-authoritarian dimension</i>								
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	<i>Total</i>	
FRANCE								
FN	+	+	+	+	0	-	+3	
PCF	0	-	-	0	-	-	-4	
PS	0	0	0	0	-	-	-2	
UDF	0	-	-	0	-	-	-4	
UMP	0	0	0	0	0	-	-1	
Verts	-	0	-	0	-	-	-4	
FLANDERS								
AGALEV	-	-	-	0	-	-	-5	
CD&V	0	-	0	+	+	+	+2	
N-VA	0	-	0	0	+	+	+1	
SP.a	0	-	-	0	0	-	-3	
SPirit	-	-	-	0	-	-	-5	
VLAAMS BLOK	+	+	+	+	-	-	+2	
VLD	+	0	-	0	-	-	-2	
THE NETHERLANDS								
CDA	+	+	0	0	+	0	+3	
CU	-	+	+	+	+	-	+2	
D66	0	+	-	0	-	-	-2	
GL	-	-	0	0	-	-	-4	
LN	+	+	0	0	-	-	0	
LPF	+	+	0	0	-	-	0	
PvdA	+	+	0	0	-	0	+1	
SGP	+	+	+	+	+	+	+6	
SP	0	-	0	0	-	-	-3	
VVD	+	+	0	0	0	0	+2	

Notes

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- 1 The debate on the appropriate terminology for describing this party family is still ongoing. The label used here – radical right – has been chosen because it is all-inclusive. It encompasses all parties that are treated in this article, i.e. parties that are more radical than the established right.
- 2 Other factors that influence the distribution of voters over the competitive space are the sociological profile (age, education and gender) and the type of welfare regime of a country (Kitschelt, 2004).
- 3 Kitschelt himself seems to violate this claim, because he assesses the empirical validity of his original and updated theory solely on the basis of survey data (i.e. ideological dispositions of radical right electorates) (Kitschelt, 1995; McGann and Kitschelt, 2005).
- 4 Various statistical techniques are available that allow for a more complex analysis of scores on multiple dimensions. However, these techniques have serious drawbacks when positioning a small number of parties on a small number of issues. The main problem is that they artificially place parties to create a spatial representation with only two or three dimensions (an optimal solution). Thus, the ideological distances between parties are sometimes exaggerated, or on the contrary reduced, by the statistical programme to make all parties fit in its optimal solution. This can lead to inaccurate observations and analyses of party positions (see Elkind and De Lange, 2002).
- 5 For example, in the programme of the VVD (Dutch liberal party) the following statement regarding privatization can be found: ‘The contracting out and hiving off of public tasks and services that can be carried out more effectively by the private sector must be taken up when possible and desirable. Research into the possibilities in, for example, health care, education, agriculture, network sectors, research infrastructure, elements of the prison system, etc. should be accelerated’ (VVD, 2003: 740). On the basis of this statement, the VVD receives a score of +1 on the issue ‘privatization’. In the programme of the PCF (French communist party), the statement regarding privatization reads: ‘To resist the liberal assault, we have to guarantee and conquer new public services, modern and effective, of which the control should be democratized, and oriented exclusively to the satisfaction of its users. Only public services can warrant the equality of access and the same quality of services for all. [. . .] And first, stop all privatizations, like that of the EDF or the SNCF’ (PCF, 2002: 2). On the basis of this statement, the PCF receives a score of –1 on the issue ‘privatization’.
- 6 Kitschelt gives the following description of the opposition between libertarian and authoritarian: ‘The former emphasizes the individual autonomy of citizens to govern their life styles, the tolerance and respect for socio-cultural difference, be they related to gender or cultural beliefs and practices, and on the right of autonomous individuals to participate in all collectively binding political decisions. The authoritarian counterview envisions the conduct of social life as governed by compliance with collectively shared, uniform norms and regulatory principles

- of ‘decency’ that endorses cultural homogeneity, a particular form of family organization and its corresponding sexual code, justified by a dominant religious belief system and enforced by a higher social, moral and political authority to which individuals are expected to show deference’ (Kitschelt, 2004: 2).
- 7 The Belgian political system consists of separate areas of competition for Flemish, Walloon and Brussels parties. This study focuses exclusively on the Flemish Vlaams Blok and the Flemish party system.
 - 8 Although the LPF is sometimes labelled a flash party, we object to the use of this label, because the LPF still commanded a considerable number of seats in the Dutch parliament after the 2003 elections, particularly given the fragmentation of the Dutch party system.
 - 9 The Dutch parliamentary elections took place in May 2002 and then again in January 2003, after the fall of the first Balkenende government. All national parties competed in both elections with the same manifestos, some supplemented by an epilogue, and the party positions of 2002 and 2003 can therefore be seen as one (as far as the competitive space is concerned).
 - 10 More generally, scholars have found it difficult to interpret issues of participatory democracy in the light of existing theoretical frameworks. For example, Lijphart struggled to situate the referendum in his theory of majoritarian and consensus democracies (1984).

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