

Review Article

Daniel Stockemer, Tobias Lentz and Danielle Mayer:* **Individual Predictors of the Radical Right-Wing Vote in Europe: A Meta-Analysis of Articles in Peer-Reviewed Journals (1995–2016)**

In this article, we summarize the individual demand-level factors explaining the radical right-wing vote in European countries. To do so, we first review 46 quantitative peer-reviewed articles featuring the individual vote choice in favour of a radical right-wing party as the dependent variable. To identify relevant articles, we use Kai Arzheimer's bibliography on the radical right and employ the following inclusion criterion: the articles must be written in English, they must use the individual vote for a radical right-wing party as the dependent variable, they must use a quantitative methodology and they must include some type of regression analysis. Using this strategy, we conduct a meta-analysis of 329 relevant models and find that over 20 individual variables are tested. Because many variables such as attitudes towards immigration, employment, age, education and gender only show moderate success rates in attempting to explain an individual's propensity to vote for the radical right, we complement the review of quantitative studies with an analysis of 14 qualitative publications. The review of these qualitative works shows that the processes through which somebody becomes a voter, supporter or activist of the radical right are often more complex than the commonly used surveys can portray them. Frequently, feelings of relative economic deprivation and dissatisfaction with the political regime trigger an awakening that makes individuals seek engagement. However, the processes behind this awakening are complex and can only be partially captured by quantitative studies.

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Since the 1990s, there has been a rise in the number of populist radical right-wing parties in European countries and in the electoral

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success of those parties. It is therefore not surprising that there has also been a rise in scholarly interest in the factors that explain why the radical right is successful in some parts of Europe, but not in others. The literature on the electoral success of populist right-wing parties in Europe is predominantly divided into two main areas of research. The first approach commonly used to study the performance of radical right-wing parties during elections focuses primarily on the presence of structural factors. The factors used in these types of analyses comprise macro-level indicators such as immigration rates, the proportion of the population that is unemployed or a country's electoral system type (e.g. Dinas and van Spanje 2011; Golder 2003). The second type of analysis mainly focuses on individual factors that may influence a citizen's decision to support or vote for a radical right-wing party (e.g. Andersen and Zimdars 2003; Arzheimer and Carter 2009; Bakker et al. 2016). Studies in this realm discuss micro-level indicators such as a person's socio-demographic background and attitudes. This article focuses on the latter type of factors – individual factors.

We aim to comprehensively review the existing demand-side literature, both quantitative and qualitative, of the radical right-wing vote and ask three research questions: (1) What indicators are most frequently used in quantitative studies to explain the individual vote for a radical right-wing party? (2) Within the quantitative literature, what individual indicators demonstrate the most consistent findings in influencing an individual's choice to vote for or to prefer a radical right-wing party? (3) What additional insights pertaining to the determinants of the radical right-wing vote can the qualitative literature bring to the table? We follow a two-step research process. First, to create our sample of articles for the quantitative part of the meta-analysis, we employ Kai Arzheimer's¹ extensive bibliography on the far right in Europe and search for all articles written in English from peer-reviewed journals that use any type of regression analysis and that focus on a single or several European countries.² The dependent variable must be either voting for a radical right-wing party or a radical right-wing party must be an individual's preferred party. Although Arzheimer's bibliography does not include all peer-reviewed articles written on individual factors related to voting for the far right, we believe that it gives us a good overview regarding the state of quantitative research on individual predictors of the radical right-wing vote.

To retrieve relevant qualitative studies, we adjust our inclusion criteria. Because Arzheimer's database only includes one qualitative demand-side study (i.e. Mulinari and Neergaard 2014), we must expand our search strategy. To do so, we use Google Scholar and search for keywords such as 'vote', 'demand', 'qualitative', 'radical right', 'extreme right' and 'far right' as well as for the names of the most well-known European radical right-wing parties.³ Our inclusion criteria are analogous to the quantitative part; that is, we use all articles written in English from peer-reviewed journals that focus on individual voters, supporters or members of radical right-wing parties in a single or several European countries.

Our quantitative results display rather inconclusive findings: many predictors of the radical right-wing vote, including education levels or immigration attitudes, do not show any consistent influence in determining an individual's propensity to vote for the radical right. The qualitative part somewhat explains these inconclusive results. Rather than displaying one type of individual (e.g. a man with low education in a perilous blue-collar job), the qualitative review reveals that the support base of the radical right is diverse. There are multiple roads towards embracing radical right-wing parties – in particular, voting for the radical right can frequently stem from feelings of relative deprivation and perceptions of disconnect from the political system. In addition to the realization that something has gone fundamentally wrong in the way politics is conducted, casting a ballot for a right-wing fringe party also involves a political awakening of the individual, a conscious political act in favour of a non-mainstream party.

Our article is structured in four parts. We begin by presenting our sample of quantitative studies and our research strategy. We then systematically analyse the individual factors which are most frequently used in these quantitative studies to explain the radical right-wing vote. We then switch the analysis to the qualitative literature and highlight the additional insights these in-depth case studies can provide. Finally we summarize our findings and discuss some possibilities for further research.

QUANTITATIVE STUDIES ON THE RADICAL RIGHT

In total, we identify 46 quantitative articles published between 1995 and 2016. They include 329 relevant models, which form the sample

Table 1
Year of Publication of Articles Used in this Meta-Analysis

<i>Time period</i>	<i>Number of articles</i>
1995–2000	2
2001–5	6
2006–10	8
2011–15	22
2016	8

for our study. Several considerations about our sample are in order. Firstly, the literature on individual factors that lead to radical right-wing voting has been growing since the 1990s (see Table 1) Secondly, the articles in our study sample vary significantly in geographic scope. Some articles focus solely on one country; for example, Julian Aichholzer et al.'s (2014) research focus is on Austria, whereas Robert Andersen and Anna Zimdars (2003) only include Germans in their study sample. Others incorporate a large sample of European countries (e.g. Hartevelde et al. 2015; Lucassen and Lubbers 2012; Spies 2013).

Thirdly, there is large variation in the type of regression models and number of regression models presented in the articles to test the influence of relevant individual-level factors on radical right-wing support, ranging from one to over a dozen models (e.g. Coffé and Voorpostel 2010; De Koster et al. 2014; Dunn 2015). Fourthly, and most importantly for the purposes of this study, there is considerable variety in the indicators used to explain the radical right-wing vote (e.g. Beirich and Woods 2000; Billiet 1995). It is the goal of the first part of this article to present the most prevalent factors explaining and predicting the individual right-wing vote choice.

Our research strategy for the quantitative studies is an analysis of an analysis: that is, we analyse each model within our 46 studies (Smets and van Ham 2013). In more detail, we put each variable in each model into three categories. (1) Positive significant (labelled success); that is, the variable's influence confirms the theoretical assumptions and is statistically significantly related to the dependent variable, the individual propensity to support a radical right-wing party. (2) Non-significant; that is, the independent variable under consideration does not show any statistically significant influence with the dependent variable. (3) Failure; that is, the variable is significantly related to the dependent variable, but in the opposite

way to the expected direction (Geys 2006: 640). In a second step, we tally the total in each category and provide a summary table which gives an overview of a variable's influence on the radical right-wing vote in Europe (Light and Smith 1971: 433).

The first interesting finding of our meta-analysis is that the dependent variable is operationalized in a multitude of different ways. Some articles focus on an individual's actual self-reported vote for a radical right-wing party (e.g. Billiet 1995; De Koster et al. 2014; Immerzeel et al. 2015; Kestilä-Kekkonen and Söderlund 2014), other articles look at an individual's propensity to vote for the far right (e.g. Baur et al. 2016; Berning and Ziller 2016; Harteveld et al. 2015), while a third group looks at party preference – that is, a radical right-wing party is somebody's favourite party (e.g. Aichholzer et al. 2014; Dunn 2015; Lucassen and Lubbers 2012). The individual predictors of radical right-wing support or independent variables, which could influence the radical right-wing vote and which we show below, are also operationalized in various ways.

THE INDIVIDUAL PREDICTORS OF THE RADICAL RIGHT-WING VOTE

Attitudes towards Immigration and Racial Minorities

By far, the variables that existing studies use the most frequently are attitudes towards immigration and racial attitudes. Our sample includes 470 instances with proxies related to attitudes towards immigration or racial minorities (see Table 2).⁴ The exact operationalization of these indicators is diverse, ranging from not having any immigrant friends (e.g. Rydgren 2008) to general opposition to immigration (e.g. McGann and Kitschelt 2005), to more radical views such as believing that immigrants bring down wages (e.g. Oesch 2008) or having racial prejudices (e.g. Veugelers 2005).

Due to the predominance of anti-immigration views in radical right-wing party platforms, it is not surprising that sentiments against immigrants are the most frequently employed predictor to explain why some individuals opt for a radical right-wing party, while others do not (e.g. Aichholzer et al. 2014; Baur et al. 2016; Blinder et al. 2013). Yet, the empirical link between anti-immigrant attitudes and support for the radical right is less strong than expected. In our data, we observe that in roughly half the instances the coefficients related

Table 2
*Summary of the Effects of Immigration Attitudes on Support
 for Radical Right-Wing Parties*

	<i>No. of studies</i>	<i>No. of variables</i>	<i>Success</i>	<i>Failure</i>	<i>No link</i>	<i>Success rate</i>
Immigration attitudes	36	470	239	17	214	0.51

to attitudes towards immigration are not statistically significant in the expected direction. In fact, the success rate of variables related to attitudes towards immigration is only 51 per cent.

We can only speculate why this empirical link is not stronger. Maybe the lack of a ‘clearer’ empirical relationship between anti-immigrant sentiment and the radical right-wing vote share is due to an empirical shortcut. The literature often uses the explanatory shorthand linking anti-immigration sentiment, racism and xenophobia, without looking at the strength of these anti-immigrant sentiments. This heuristic device is problematic because of the literature’s tendency to incorporate both moderate and extreme views towards immigration and racial minorities. In other words, someone who does not support immigration is not necessarily xenophobic or racist (Rydgren 2008: 738).

Employment

The second variable is different types of employment. We have regrouped this variable into four groups: blue collar, unemployed, farmer/self-employed and white collar. It was very difficult to cluster the employment categories, because the categories used in individual studies are non-exclusive. For example, in some studies worker is the only employment category (see Berning and Ziller 2016). Even if this variable is then positively and statistically significantly related to the radical right vote, we can only deduce that workers are significantly more likely to vote compared with any other professional category including self-employed, white-collar workers, pensioners and the unemployed. We cannot make any further empirical claims. In other studies (e.g. Beirich and Woods 2000), the authors distinguish between more categories. In Table 3, we report the four most frequently employed proxies for employment, even if they might have some conceptual overlap in some studies.

Table 3*Summary of the Effects of Employment on Support for Radical Right-Wing Parties*

	<i>No. of studies</i>	<i>No. of variables</i>	<i>Success</i>	<i>Failure</i>	<i>No link</i>	<i>Success rate</i>
Blue collar	32	173	62	3	108	0.36
Unemployed	17	84	23	5	56	0.27
Self-employed/ farmer	25	156	55	0	101	0.35
White collar	28	243	45	32	166	0.19

Our first employment proxy, manual labour jobs, includes all manual jobs, and jobs in the low-salary sector. In theory, there are many reasons why radical right-wing parties should be more appealing to members of the working class. For example, the working class is more likely to rely on social services, and to suffer from wage dumping and outsourcing. When services and government support are needed, members of the working class might also be more likely to protect these services from outsiders in order to benefit their own ethnic community (Andersen and Zimdars 2003: 4; Beirich and Woods 2000). However, our meta-analysis (see Table 3) demonstrates that having a blue-collar job does not generally trigger a higher propensity to vote for the radical right.

Our second category, unemployed, includes all individuals who were either unemployed at the time the survey was conducted, or who had been unemployed within the last five years at the time the survey was conducted. Theoretically, we can assume that the most economically vulnerable are the most likely to be convinced by the simplistic rhetoric of the radical right, which often includes propositions to fight globalization, to be more protectionist and to eliminate foreign competition (Oesch and Rennwald 2010; Spies 2013). Yet, the empirical evidence does not follow the theoretical reasoning. In less than 30 per cent of the cases does experience with unemployment trigger a higher vote share for the radical right. The reason for this lower than expected association might be that the radical right – other than scapegoating foreigners and other segments of the population – does not have any propitious measures to fight unemployment. Equally importantly, the radical right sees itself as the defender of hard-working individuals, and supposedly defends their interests and not necessarily the interests of the undeserving poor (Aichholzer et al. 2014).

The third category, self-employed/farmer, includes all individuals in these two branches. Small businesses and the agricultural sector might suffer from outsourcing, cheap labour and low-priced agricultural products that come into Europe from the US, China or Africa (Iversflaten 2005). The radical right, with its nationalist and protectionist rhetoric, might appeal to these individuals. Yet, the empirical evidence again finds no solid support for this statement. Again, roughly only one out of three cases shows the expected relationship.

Similar to anti-immigrant attitudes, we can only speculate from this quantitative review why somebody's employment status plays such a small role in explaining a citizen's propensity to vote for the radical right. One reason might be that radical right-wing parties have no uniform economic programme. While some European radical right-wing parties such as the Front National in France have a decidedly socialist platform that propagates increases in wages for low-income jobs, more social support, protectionist policies and a preferential treatment in jobs and welfare for nationals, others such as the United Kingdom Independence Party or the Swiss People's Party have some decidedly neoliberal economic agendas (Stockemer 2017). It is thus possible that radical right-wing parties attract individuals with varying economic preferences in different countries.

Age

Age is another constant in models explaining and predicting an individual's propensity to vote for the radical right. While theoretically it is not entirely clear whether either young or old individuals should be more likely to vote for a radical right-wing party, we follow the more recent research and hypothesize that younger individuals are more likely to support the radical right because of high youth unemployment, the harsh competition young citizens face when graduating from school or university and the fact that young adults have frequently not yet developed stable political ideologies (e.g. Ford et al. 2011). In the models, we check whether the category young is significantly and positively related to some increased success for the radical right, or in the case of a continuous operationalization of age if the indicator has a negative and statistically significant relationship.⁵

When looking at the summary in Table 4, we can see that age has less of an influence than we originally anticipated. Only 29 per cent

Table 4
Summary of the Effects of Age on Support for Radical Right-Wing Parties

	<i>No. of studies</i>	<i>No. of variables</i>	<i>Success</i>	<i>Failure</i>	<i>No link</i>	<i>Success rate</i>
Age (under 35)	42	325	87	31	179	0.29

Note. Twenty-eight variables are not compatible with our categories (i.e. either some dummy or categorical variable for youth or a continuous operationalization) and are therefore excluded from our calculation of the number of successes, failures and of no links. The success rate is therefore calculated from the 297 variables used.

of cases used in this meta-analysis showed a significant relationship between youth and voting for a far-right party. While this success rate is three times higher than the voting propensity of the elderly, the relationship between age and radical right-wing support nevertheless remains inconclusive and is probably complex and situational. This caveat applies even more when we consider that age might interact with other possibly important predictors of the far right-wing vote such as religion or traditional values (Arzheimer and Carter 2009: 998).

Education

Educational attainment is another very commonly used predictor of the radical right-wing vote (Table 5). There is some rather strong consensus in the literature that individuals with lower levels of education are more likely to prefer radical right-wing parties (e.g. Andersen and Zimdars 2003; Harteveld et al. 2015; Kestilä-Kekkonen and Söderlund 2014). Often described as the losers of modernization, individuals with low education are the primary target of the radical right; these individuals are possibly also the least able to cope with the multicultural and globalized world of the twenty-first century. However, our results, again, do not show strong support for our theoretical assumption. There is only a 33 per cent success rate. Andersen and Zimdars (2003: 6) suggest one possibility to explain why the influence of education on support for the radical right is less strong than expected. According to the authors, there is growing unemployment and job insecurity for highly educated young adults in many parts of Europe. These highly educated losers of modernization might also end up supporting the radical

Table 5*Summary of the Effects of Low Education on Support for Radical Right-Wing Parties*

	<i>No. of studies</i>	<i>No. of variables</i>	<i>Success</i>	<i>Failure</i>	<i>No link</i>	<i>Success rate</i>
Education (low)	41	271	90	49	132	0.33

Table 6*Summary of the Effects of Gender on Support for Radical Right-Wing Parties*

	<i>No. of studies</i>	<i>No. of variables</i>	<i>Success</i>	<i>Failure</i>	<i>No link</i>	<i>Success rate</i>
Gender (male)	41	224	123	7	94	0.55

right because of some general dissatisfaction with the system around them.

Gender

Gender is the final variable, which is a standard in models measuring an individual's propensity to support a radical right-wing party (Table 6). Theoretically, there are several reasons why women might find radical right-wing parties less appealing than men. Some of the radical right parties in Europe have an anti-feminist message, these parties are frequently dominated by men (Givens 2004: 30), and men are traditionally more conservative than women (Harteveld et al. 2015: 107). Corroborating these theoretical expectations, there is some support for a male bias in such support in our meta-analysis (e.g. Bélanger and Aarts 2006; Berning and Ziller 2016; Immerzeel et al. 2015). In fact, 55 per cent of all models show the expected positive link between men and the likelihood of voting for a far-right party. This is the highest 'success rate' of all variables.

Other Predictors

There is a multitude of other predictors for the radical right-wing vote. For example, variables such as Euroscepticism (e.g. Ford et al. 2011, 2012; Ivarsflaten 2005; Werts et al. 2013), marital status (e.g. Givens 2004; Immerzeel et al. 2015; Werts et al. 2013), religious affiliation (e.g. Baur et al. 2016; Immerzeel et al. 2015) and housing

situation (i.e. ownership versus renting) (e.g. Biggs and Knauss 2012; Fitzgerald and Lawrence 2011; Ford and Goodwin 2010) are sometimes used to predict voting for the far right. All of these variables appear in less than 30 per cent of the models and have success rates lower than 50 per cent.

However, some other variables, while only used in a few studies, display some promising results. For example, nationalism is only included in seven models, but shows a positive and statistically significant relationship every time. Political discontent, which is tested 63 times, shows a success rate of 71 per cent, with people who feel higher levels of political discontent being more likely to vote for the far right. Other variables used in fewer than five articles to explain the radical right-wing vote are: the parents' preferred political parties (e.g. Ford et al. 2011, 2012), economic attitudes (e.g. Cutts and Goodwin 2014; Ford and Goodwin 2010; Ford et al. 2011) and participation in the community (e.g. Rydgren 2008, 2009). These variables, though, are too rarely used to show clear-cut and generalizable results.

The Results of the Individual Determinants of Radical Right-Wing Support: A Synopsis

After analysing the results of over 20 years of quantitative research regarding the individual predictors of the radical right-wing vote, we can observe that many of the variables that are repeatedly used to explain and predict an individual's propensity to vote for the radical right do not have as high a success rate as the literature would make us believe they should. In fact, attitudes towards immigration, employment, age, education and gender only behave as expected in half or less than half of the cases.

Hence, the core finding that sticks out from the quantitative meta-analysis is that there is no core model of support for the radical right. This allows for the tentative conclusion that there might be more than one trajectory to becoming a radical right-wing supporter. In addition to the influence of mainly hard factors, an individual's propensity to support the radical right might also depend on cognitive dissonances or perceptions that are rather difficult to measure in a quantitative realm. To determine the degree to which this is the case, we complement our quantitative meta-analysis with an in-depth analysis of 14 qualitative articles focusing on the demand side of

support for radical right-wing parties (for a summary table of each article, please see the Appendix).

IN-DEPTH CASE STUDIES ON THE SUPPORT OF THE RADICAL RIGHT: WHAT CAN THE QUALITATIVE LITERATURE ADD?

Our inclusive Google Scholar search for the qualitative peer-reviewed articles leads to the inclusion of 14 articles, all employing semi-structured qualitative interviews with possible or self-reported radical right-wing supporters. The articles cover the following six countries: the United Kingdom, France, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium and Hungary, and were all published between 2005 and 2017. As the in-depth discussion below illustrates, these qualitative studies complement the dominant quantitative research in several ways. They also highlight that the current surveys (i.e. the European Election Study or the European Social Survey), which we normally use to study the radical right-wing vote, are suboptimal tools for tapping into all the nuance in citizens' decisions to support a party like the Front National or the Swiss People's Party.

When it comes to the inclusion of explanatory variables, quantitative studies settle on a core set of variables in regression models, which include perceptions such as (anti-)immigration attitudes as well as socio-demographics such as age, gender and education. While concurring that these variables can be important predictors of an individual's propensity to support the radical right, the 14 qualitative studies covered here highlight that the use of these variables might be too reductionist to tap into all variations in the support base of the radical right. In fact, the majority of the qualitative studies we review highlight that there are various types of activists (e.g. Linden and Klandermans 2007; Stockemer 2014, Lantos and Kende 2015). As an example of this diversity of radical right-wing activists, Annette Linden and Bert Klandermans (2007) identify four prototypes of supporters based on the individual life histories of approximately 40 Dutch activists. The *Revolutionary* joins political movements out of an ideological basis, as she wants to actively engage and shape policies with like-minded people. *Wanderers* are looking for ideological identification and a political home. By then, they have usually traversed different organizations within the political spectrum. Opposed to these two types, the *Convert* is not as much driven by ideology, she is

rather looking for a way to combat perceived injustice and to express her anger alongside others who feel likewise. Lastly, *Compliants* join and stay in political movements to maintain relationships with close friends or relatives who are an active part of these organizations.

If there are different types of activists, it is only logical to assume that various types of individuals who feel drawn to the slogans, goals and rhetoric of the radical right have undergone different forms of political socialization. For example, the qualitative literature highlights that regardless of their gender, age or education, *Ideologues* or *Revolutionaries* have deep-rooted convictions which have often been passed on from parents to children during childhood socialization or through socialization by peers during young adulthood (Lantos and Kende 2015; Stockemer 2014). The quantitative research does not capture this group of activists as it very rarely asks whether individuals' parents were already supporters of the radical right, nor do major surveys tackle the question of youth socialization.

For sure, these *Ideologues* or core believers make up a significant portion of the members of the radical right. However, when it comes to voters, most citizens casting their ballot for the radical right would probably fit the categories of *Wanderers*, and even more so *Converts*. In support of this point, several qualitative articles highlight that these citizens do not have entrenched beliefs or ideologies stemming from childhood or adolescence (Goodwin 2010; Kemmers et al. 2016). Rather they develop their affinity for the ideas of the radical right through immediate or slow-moving 'political awakenings'. In other words, citizens gain the realization that something in society is going terribly wrong; this can occur by experiencing acute economic decline (De Weerd and De Witte 2005), perceived unjust competition from foreigners, from the perception that immigrants milk the system (Rhodes 2009), as well as from witnessing the frailties of the social and political elites (Manning and Holmes 2013).

Stressing socioeconomic conditions as a potential driving factor for radical right-wing voting, Yves De Weerd and Hans De Witte (2005) interview Flemish workers. They find that the anti-immigration message echoes for workers who blame immigrants for exploiting social security systems and who show their frustration with immigrants' unwillingness to adapt culturally. However, locals' attitudes towards immigrants seem to be conditional on their economic contribution: many study participants claim that they have absolutely no problem with immigrants who work, pay taxes and contribute to

social security (De Weerdts and De Witte 2005: 193). Therefore, the assumption that supporters of the radical right solely blame foreigners for their perceived or real hardship might be too reductionist (Rhodes 2011: 109).

On the contrary, voters and members of the radical right sometimes also reject 'scruffy' whites (i.e. citizens profiting from unjust funding and resource allocation). In fact, it seems from James Rhodes' (2010) study featuring supporters of the British National Party (BNP) that, in particular, respondents living in more affluent wards mention a distinction between 'respectable whites' who work and earn their living and 'scruffy whites' who, according to the participants, exploit social security just like the immigrants do. In fact, in Rhodes' (2012: 687) study, many voters of the BNP classify the non-respectable whites according to the geographic area they inhabit, which Rhodes (2012: 687), following Loïc Wacquant (2008), calls 'territorial stigmatization'. Being able to make an economic contribution therefore is an important theme for BNP voters (cf. De Weerdts and De Witte 2005). Lazy beneficiaries, whatever their origin, are not the type of people with whom British supporters of the radical right want to identify (Rhodes 2011: 112). This implies that it is frequently not the unemployed and socially deprived citizen who votes for radical right-wing parties, but the self-proclaimed hard-working man who sees his standard of living decreasing while others profit without doing anything for it (see also Rhodes 2012).

Again, it is very difficult for the existing surveys to capture this nuance. Standard surveys normally ask questions of the following type: Do you think immigration is good or bad for the country? Or do you think that immigration is good for the economy? These questions, which respondents normally have to answer on a zero to ten scale, do not capture the nuance in radical right-wing supporters' opinions about immigration. The same applies to questions that try to distinguish job categories. From a qualitative research perspective, it seems less pertinent if somebody is a blue-collar worker or self-employed. What matters appears to be a feeling of threat, whether real or perceived, of economic deprivation. In surveys, the question about whether somebody thinks that her economic condition is improving or deteriorating in the upcoming year could help answer this question. However, this question is not used very much in quantitative studies evaluating the success of radical right-wing parties.

The final factor identified by qualitative research that makes *Converts* and also *Wanderers* attuned to the rhetoric of the radical right is a complete disconnect from the political system – a disconnect that goes beyond dissatisfaction with the main parties. For example, interviewees in the studies reviewed claim that state governments do next to nothing to provide those who self-identify as hard-working individuals with real help. Regardless of the studies covered, many interviewees claim that politicians in their administrative bubble seem to have lost track of the needs of the ordinary population (Manning and Holmes 2013). To underline this point, some of the interviewees refer to ‘the world of politics and everyday life as largely separate spheres’ (Manning and Holmes 2013: 489). In fact, many interviewees trace their scepticism about the political system and the politicians back to doubts they have had for years. Those considerations do not support the picture of political removal and social apathy often linked to politically discontented radical right-wing voters. Rather, channelling their dissatisfaction through engagement in support of a radical right-wing party seems rather like ‘a path out of political apathy’ in the context of ‘the system’s unresponsiveness to their claims’ (Kemmers et al. 2016: 769). Scandals regarding politicians’ misbehaviour becoming public confirm the view of dissatisfied citizens that wealthy social elites ‘did not acknowledge or understand their privilege’ (Manning and Holmes 2013: 487). In such a situation, many of the previously disconnected individuals feel as if supporting a party such as the Front National or the Dutch Freedom Party is leading them to a point where electoral activity is meaningful again (Kemmers 2017: 5).

Once more, the qualitative case studies analysed here highlight that quantitative research cannot capture all variation behind the finding that dissatisfaction with the system and the politicians who represent it can increase somebody’s likelihood to vote for the radical right. The qualitative literature highlights that it is not dissatisfaction per se. Rather, dissatisfied or disconnected citizens must realize that there is an alternative; an alternative they can trust and vote for.⁶ Looking for this alternative is a political act. Hence, dissatisfaction with the system might be a necessary but not sufficient reason to support the radical right. Supporting a fringe party involves a conscious political effort; a political awakening and mindful decision to engage politically again. Unfortunately, quantitative surveys as they are conducted right now cannot capture this trajectory of

members and voters towards their new permanent or temporary political home.

QUO VADIS RADICAL RIGHT-WING SUPPORT?

The typical radical right-wing supporter is often described as the ‘average Joe’, as somebody who has encountered economic problems in the past and who often does not know how to make ends meet. He has low earnings and little-to-no education (Rhodes 2009). The quantitative studies we analysed highlight that this image is simplistic.⁷ In fact, the review of 46 quantitative research articles only partially supports this picture. For example, we find that men are only more likely to support the radical right in half of the cases, and education and employment play less of a role than theory suggests. The same applies to anti-immigration attitudes.

The review of 14 qualitative studies provides some much-needed nuance and additional insight. Firstly, our review illustrates that supporters of the radical right are a heterogeneous group composed of people with different socioeconomic and educational backgrounds.⁸ Secondly, we find that the questions used to tap into supporters’ perceptions posed in quantitative research are sometimes too reductionist. To highlight this point, radical right-wing supporters are wary of immigrants and foreigners, but they often have the same feeling about fellow citizens who do not work or who receive what they consider to be unjustified benefits. In addition, it appears true that most radical right-wing supporters are certainly dissatisfied with the political system and feel alienated from it. Yet, the qualitative literature tells us that mere dissatisfaction is not enough to lead to a vote for the radical right. Rather voting for the radical right involves a deliberate political act to find a new political base. (New) radical right-wing supporters have to find a party they can identify with and vote for. In addition, our qualitative discussion highlights that it is less the case that certain types of groups, such as workers, farmers or the self-employed are drawn to the radical right, but the radical right seems to be appealing to individuals who feel economically and/or socially deprived regardless of their professional status.

What are the repercussions of these findings for future research? We think that there are two points to take away from this study. Firstly, we should be careful in using existing surveys such as the

World Value Survey, the European Social Survey or the European Election Studies to study radical right-wing voters. These surveys are broad social or electoral surveys. They have not been conceived to predominantly study the support of the radical right, and do not ask important questions about the political socialization of the respondent during childhood and adulthood, about the interaction between anti-immigrant attitudes and attitudes towards other non-deserving segments of the population, or about the processes that make dissatisfied individuals politically engaged again, albeit with the radical right. One way to resolve this dilemma would be to draw up a survey designed to tap into the motivational factors and cognitive processes that entice somebody to vote for a party at the far right of the political spectrum. However, such an endeavour is cumbersome and expensive to conduct across several European countries.

Even if such a survey existed, it would probably not resolve all inconsistencies in the results. For sure, radical right-wing parties are normally conservative, nationalistic, Eurosceptic and above all anti-immigration. Yet, they nevertheless differ quite widely in their economic programmes. They range from socialistic to free market. In addition, the conditions on the ground in Europe differ tremendously. The parties might be successful in a country with high immigration (e.g. Switzerland) or low immigration (e.g. Norway), high unemployment (e.g. France) or low unemployment (e.g. Denmark).⁹ Given these differences in structural conditions, party backgrounds and party positions, it is only logical that the electorate of one party is unlikely to mimic the electorate of another party. Therefore, future research could possibly cluster radical right-wing parties according to countries, party positions or electoral success to detect commonalities and differences in the individual predictors of the radical right-wing vote. Concrete questions for future analyses that directly arise from this meta-analysis could be: Under what conditions are men more likely to vote for the radical right than women? Is there an association between the economic position of a radical right-wing party and increased success by workers and manual labourers? How do the economic and social situations in a country condition the individual determinants of the radical right-wing vote? Are the trajectories towards supporting a radical right-wing party similar or different from one party to another? While we have probably posed more questions than we have provided answers, we nevertheless maintain that this meta-analysis provides a good and

critical overview of the current scholarship on the radical right-wing vote in Europe.

NOTES

- ¹ Available at www.kai-arzheimer.com/extreme-right-western-europe-bibliography.
- ² Throughout the text we use radical right and far right interchangeably.
- ³ We searched for the following party names both in English and in the respective national language: National Front, British National Party, UK Independence Party, Danish People's Party, Finns Party/True Finns, Sweden Democrats, Swiss People's Party, Freedom Party of Austria, Alternative for Germany, National Democratic Party of Germany, Flemish Bloc/Interest, Pim Fortuyn List, Party for Freedom, Golden Dawn, Northern League, Brothers of Italy, League of Polish Families, Law and Justice, and Movement for a Better Hungary.
- ⁴ There are more variables than models, because some models in some studies include several types of anti-immigrant attitude.
- ⁵ The age variable is either clustered in various age categories or employed as a continuous variable.
- ⁶ The repoliticization of previous disengaged citizens also puts a normative question on the table; that is, is it a good thing that previously apathetic citizens participate again in the conventional political arena, even if they vote for a party that, at least in part, wants to abolish/alter the democratic and pluralistic order?
- ⁷ There is an additional caveat with survey research. In most cases and for most countries, there is under-reporting of radical right-wing support. This under-reporting sometimes encapsulates 50 per cent or more of the voters. Hence, it is likely that those individuals who affirm in surveys that they cast their ballot for a radical right-wing party might not constitute a representative sample of the support base of the radical right (see Lucassen and Lubbers 2012).
- ⁸ For example, Lantos and Kende (2015) explicitly show for the Hungarian case that Jobbik's support base also consists of young and educated activists, and not only of deprived individuals, the so-called losers of modernization.
- ⁹ Two country examples where the radical right is most successful in Europe, Switzerland and France, highlight these differences. As a country, Switzerland is more traditional, more agriculture-based and per capita has fewer manual workers than France. In contrast, France has not only eight times the population of Switzerland, but also more than double the unemployment rate of Switzerland. Also, the two radical right-wing parties in the two states have completely different backgrounds: the Swiss People's Party was formed from a conglomerate of farmers' parties and only became more radical in the 1990s when charismatic leader Christoph Blocher took over the party (Stockemer 2012). In contrast, the Front National formed as a very radical party that later softened its image and became left-wing economically. The Swiss People's Party still has a rather free market stance, whereas the Front National has a decidedly socialist one.

APPENDIX

Table A1 *Summary of the 14 Qualitative Case Studies*

<i>Author</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Interviewees</i>	<i>Countries covered</i>	<i>Main findings</i>
Yves De Weerdts and Hans De Witte	2005	42 Flemish workers in declining economic branches	Belgium	Growing economic decline fosters radical right receptiveness as non-natives are perceived as exploiting scarce public resources
Matthew Goodwin	2010	24 British National Party (BNP) activists	England	BNP members are predominantly older white working-class males who fear that their way of life is threatened by minority ethnic groups; they either support the party because of ideological commitment or political discontent
Mary Holmes and Nathan Manning	2013	12 low-wage workers in districts with high electoral support for the radical right	England	Interviewees perceive remoteness of the governing elites and mainstream parties from the 'ordinary' people's everyday lives, incomprehension why immigrants are seemingly advantaged when locals do not know how to make ends meet
Roy Kemmers	2017	8 Party for Freedom (PVV) voters and 10 deliberate non-voters	The Netherlands	PVV is seen as the only political party that notices the people's concerns, PVV voters feel that their electoral activity is meaningful again, which helps them to overcome their political discontent

Table A1 (Continued)

<i>Author</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Interviewees</i>	<i>Countries covered</i>	<i>Main findings</i>
Roy Kemmers, Jeroen van der Waal and Stef Aupers	2016	8 Party for Freedom (PVV) voters and 10 deliberate non-voters	The Netherlands	Respondents' anti-establishment attitudes are reinforced by undergoing a process where political discontent is introduced by key events or actors and is then validated and consolidated, gradually changing the way mainstream politics is experienced
Nóra Lantos and Anna Kende	2015	4 activists of the radical right Jobbik party and 4 activists of the green-liberal LMP	Hungary	Young well-educated activists of the radical right share some characteristics with liberal peers, but what distinguishes them is their willingness to enforce extreme measures to change unsatisfying political conditions
Annette Linden and Bert Klandermands	2007	Activists of different radical right organizations	The Netherlands	Introduces types of radical right supporters: Revolutionaries and Wanderers want to actively shape politics with like-minded people or are looking for a political home respectively. Converts and Compliers are not so much ideology-driven, they want to change conditions perceived as unjust or try to express solidarity radical right-wing activists
Nathan Manning and Mary Holmes	2013	12 low-wage workers in districts with high electoral support for the radical right	England	Experiencing personal economic hardship or seeing friends and relatives struggle increases suspicion towards wealthy social elites. Political scandals becoming public confirm the view that the establishment's political agents do not care for their fellow countrymen, but first and foremost for themselves

Table A1 (Continued)

<i>Author</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Interviewees</i>	<i>Countries covered</i>	<i>Main findings</i>
Diana Mulinari and Anders Neergaard	2014	20 female Swedish politicians who belong to the Sweden Democrats	Sweden	Privileging compatriots who are defined by their white 'Swedishness' is rooted in the firm belief that it is best for everybody to live with one's own people, which results in the claim that immigrants should leave the country for their own good ('caring racism')
James Rhodes	2009	34 inhabitants of an economically declining area, 16 of them self-stated BNP voters + 1 former BNP councillor and 1 former party candidate	England	Context matters: socioeconomic deprivation, a poor state of local democracy and the inability of mainstream politics to combat these conditions create a breeding ground for radical right-wing parties like the BNP
James Rhodes	2010	34 inhabitants of an economically declining area, 16 of them self-stated BNP voters + 1 former BNP councillor and 1 former party candidate	England	The existence of a 'racial bias' (elites advantage ethnic minorities) is not solely coined by radical right parties; political actors like Margaret Thatcher have fuelled public apprehension that political correctness and liberalism have gone too far, making more extreme views socially acceptable

Table A1 (Continued)

<i>Author</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Interviewees</i>	<i>Countries covered</i>	<i>Main findings</i>
James Rhodes	2011	34 inhabitants of an economically declining area, 16 of them self-stated BNP voters + 1 former BNP councillor and 1 former party candidate	England	BNP supporters distinguish between hard-working whites who contribute and 'scruffy' whites who are seen to exploit public funding – such beneficiaries are perceived as undeserving of social benefits just like foreigners
James Rhodes	2012	34 inhabitants of an economically declining area, 16 of them self-stated BNP voters + 1 former BNP councillor and 1 former party candidate	England	Exclusionary thoughts and behaviour are often directed towards geographic areas whose inhabitants are treated homogeneously, living in a particular ward stigmatizes one as being culturally different or an undeserving beneficiary
Daniel Stockemer	2014	44 Front National (FN) members	France	Activists come from various social and political backgrounds but share mutual values and goals, their high political motivation is nurtured by the perception that the FN is the only place where they can exchange and express their views without being discriminated or marked as racists

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