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# **TESTING THEORIES OF EXTREME RIGHT-WING VOTING IN FRANCE AND FLANDERS**

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**Astrid Depickere\***

Several countries in Western Europe are currently witnessing a revival of right-wing extremism. The most obvious indicator for this is the success of extreme right-wing parties in both regional and national elections in countries such as France, Austria and Belgium. These electoral successes are not new, nor are they particular to the 1990s. Extreme right-wing parties have managed to achieve successful results in past elections, such as the Poujadist movement in France, the MSI in Italy, the Scandinavian Progress Parties and the German NPD.<sup>1</sup> However, most of these upheavals did not last very long and were not perceived as a real threat to the working of democracy. These arguments are no longer valid for the trends we are observing nowadays. What is new about the current tendency is the continuity and steady growth of the extreme right parties' electoral successes. More and more extreme right-wing political parties have managed to acquire a space on the political spectrum and thereby profile themselves as legitimate parties in the political arena.

This continuing success of extreme right-wing parties, taking place simultaneously in several West European countries, clearly demands a cross-national explanation.<sup>2</sup> Several authors have attempted to bring together national contributions into a cross-national comparison of right-wing extremism. However most of this literature remains largely descriptive and does not satisfy the conditions of an explanatory approach. Several common problems inherent to comparative research manifest themselves in the existing literature on extreme right in a cross national perspective. These problems include a bias in case selection, a lack of equivalence of data and

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<sup>1</sup> P. STOUTHUYSEN, *Extreem-Rechts in Na-oorlogs Europa*, Brussel: VUB Press Brussel, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> H. BETZ and S. IMMERSALL, *The New Politics of the Right: Neo-Populist Parties and Movements in Established Democracies*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.

measures being used, a lack of variation on the dependent variable, a lack of validity of the concepts under measurement, etc. As a consequence, theory on the explanatory factors of the success of extreme right-wing behaviour is mainly inductive because it lacks a rigorous empirical testing.

The work of Herbert Kitschelt in his book *The Radical Right in Western Europe* has long served as the main reference in the field of study of extreme right-wing parties in a comparative perspective.<sup>3</sup> Kitschelt intends to propose an explanatory framework on the emergence and electoral success of radical right-wing movements and parties. This work presents a challenging analysis of the factors underlying the success of extreme right-wing parties in Western European party systems. Through an analysis of both the offer and demand side of the electoral market, he attempts to outline the framework within which extreme right-wing political entrepreneurs operate. Nevertheless, despite the merits of this contribution, several criticisms have been put forward, both in terms of content and empirical analysis. One of the main substantive criticisms of Kitschelt's book is focused on his hypothesis that the 'winning formula' for extreme right-wing parties is a combination of economic market liberal and right authoritarian dispositions. This critique will be addressed in further detail in this article and it will be tested to what extent Kitschelt's hypothesis holds for the cases of France and Flanders.

We currently observe a renewed interest into this comparative perspective, where attempts are made to assess the comparability of measures and compare extreme right-wing voting determinants in a more direct way,<sup>4</sup> although the path is still long and limitations due to a lack of comparable data remain. Comparative research on extreme right-wing voting behaviour has to rely almost uniquely on secondary data, whether they come from single country surveys like national election studies or cross-cultural survey research projects like the Eurobarometer or the World Values Study.

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<sup>3</sup> H. KITSCHOLT, *The Radical Right in Western Europe: a Comparative Analysis*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan press, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> M. LUBBERS, *Exclusionistic Electorates. Extreme Right-wing Voting in Western Europe*, ICS dissertation series, 2001; J. EVANS, K. ARZHEIMER, G. BALDINI, T. BJORKLUND, E. CARTER, S. FISHER, and G. IVALDI, "Comparative Mapping of Extreme Right Electoral Dynamics: an Overview of EREPS ('Extreme Right Electorates and Party Success')", *European Political Science (EPS)*, vol. 1, n° 1, 2001, pp. 42-53; J. EVANS, "Les bases sociales et psychologiques du passage gauche-extrême droite. Exception française ou mutation européenne ?", pp. 73-102 in P. PERRINEAU (ed.), *Les Croisés de la Société Fermée*, Paris: L'Aube, 2001; G. IVALDI, "L'analyse comparée des soutiens électoraux du national-populisme en Europe occidentale. Apports et limites des grands programmes d'enquêtes transnationales (1990-1998)", pp. 53-72 in P. PERRINEAU (ed.), *Les Croisés de la Société Fermée*, Paris: L'Aube, 2001.

This article is an attempt to carry out a comparative analysis of voting determinants for extreme right-wing parties in two countries on the basis of data gathered by the European Values Study 1999. We will focus on the extreme right-wing electorates in France and Flanders.<sup>5</sup> The *Vlaams Blok* (VB) in Flanders and the *Front National* (FN) in France<sup>6</sup> are both considered to be prototypes of the new extreme right-wing parties.<sup>7</sup> Swyngedouw and Ivaldi compared their core ideological beliefs and concluded that the ideological differences between the two are very small.<sup>8</sup> For both cases, a considerable amount of research exists on voting determinants in an intra-country fashion.<sup>9</sup> However, a systematic analysis of socio-demographic and attitudinal variables for the two cases simultaneously is lacking. We will pay considerable attention in this article to the methodology of cross cultural comparisons of both socio-demographic and attitudinal variables.

Before discussing the methodology we used, we briefly discuss the theoretical propositions which will be tested in this article. The aim of the article is twofold. On the one hand it intends to test some of the common

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<sup>5</sup> In electoral research, Flanders is generally considered as an entity or case in its own right. Since Wallonia and Flanders have different party structures, it does not make sense to analyse the two regions as a single case.

<sup>6</sup> In 1999, the old *Front National* has undergone a split. The *Mouvement National Républicain* of Bruno Mégret detached itself from Jean-Marie Le Pen's *Front National*. As a result, both parties suffered considerable losses in the European Parliament elections of 1999 and the sum of their shares of the vote remained far below the FN's success in the legislative elections of 1997 (15,4%). According to Swyngedouw and Ivaldi, the dispute between the two was not a fight about ideology. We therefore consider them as both belonging to the same group of new extreme right-wing parties and will perform our analysis on the two parties together. Cf. M. SWYNGEDOUW and G. IVALDI, "The Extreme-right Utopia in Belgium and France. The Ideology of the Flemish *Vlaams Blok* and the French *Front National*", *West European Politics*, vol. 24, n° 3, 2001, pp. 1-22.

<sup>7</sup> P. IGNAZI, "The Silent Counter-revolution: Hypotheses on the Emergence of Extreme Right-wing Parties in Europe", *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 22, n° 1, 1992, pp. 3-34.

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*

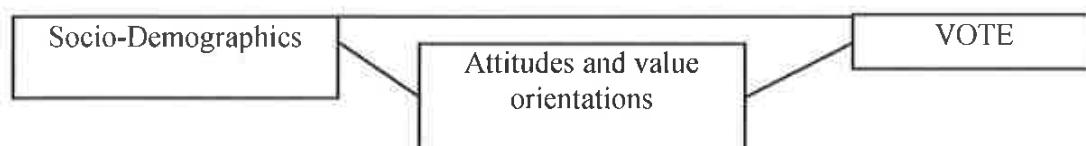
<sup>9</sup> For Flanders e.g. J. BILLIET and H. DE WITTE, "Wie stemde in 1999 voor het *Vlaams Blok* en waarom?", *Tijdschrift voor de Sociologie*, vol. 32, n° 1, 2001, pp. 5-36; J. BILLIET, M. SWYNGEDOUW, A. DEPICKERE, and E. MEERSSEMAN, *Structurele determinanten van het stemgedrag en culturele kenmerken van de kiezerskorpsen in Vlaanderen*, Leuven: ISPO-Bulletin 2001/41, 2001; J. BILLIET, *Structurele determinanten van het stemgedrag en culturele kenmerken van de kiezerskorpsen in Vlaanderen*, Leuven: ISPO-Bulletin 1998/29, 1998; for France e.g. N. MAYER, *Ces Français qui votent FN*, Paris: Flammarion, 1999; N. MAYER and P. PERRINEAU, *Le Front National à découvert*, Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 1996; P. PERRINEAU, *Le symptôme Le Pen : radiographie des électeurs du Front national*, Paris: Fayard, 1997; N. MAYER, "Du vote lepéniste au vote frontiste", *Revue française de science politique*, vol. 47, n° 3-4, 1997, pp. 438-453.

hypotheses with respect to extreme right-wing voting determinants. On the other – and this is the main purpose of the article – it intends to focus on differences between the French and Flemish electorates.

## **THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS**

The model explaining voting behaviour that underlies the analysis in this article attaches an important role to socio-demographic determinants and attitudinal dispositions. The first group of determinants is supposed to be causally prior to the second group. Effects of socio-demographics like age, gender or education can have a direct effect on the vote and they can indirectly affect voting behaviour through the effect they have on attitudes. This model is based upon the sociological model of voting behaviour, which has been extended to incorporate attitude dispositions in the model.<sup>10</sup> The model assumes a direct as well as an indirect effect (mediated by attitudes) of socio-demographics on the vote. The effect of attitudes should be examined, after having controlled for the effect of socio-demographics because the latter are causally prior to the first. Figure 1 displays this causal relationship as a path diagram.

**Figure 1. Path diagram of socio-demographic and attitudinal determinants of the vote.**



Immerfall summarises the social and electoral base of the extreme right by stating that ‘the median voter of [in his terminology] neo populist parties can be characterised as a younger male, with no college education, working in a blue-collar job in the private sector and living in an urban environment’. Although Immerfall also states that this is a crude overgeneralization, it does reflect the main results of analyses of the profiles of different West-European extreme right electorates.<sup>11</sup> The empirical

<sup>10</sup> See *e.g.* MAYER 1999, *op. cit.*, M. SWYNGEDOUW and R. BEERTEN, “De 'bevoren' invloed van sociaal-demografische kenmerken en attitudes op het stemgedrag in Vlaanderen”, pp. 13-26 in M. SWYNGEDOUW, J. BILLIET, A. CARTON, and R. BEERTEN (eds), *De (on)Redelijke Kiezer. Onderzoek Naar De Politieke Opvattingen Van Vlamingen: Verkiezingen Van 21 Mei 1995*, Leuven: Acco, 1998; BILLIET *et al.*, 2001, *op. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> BETZ and IMMERFALL (eds), 1998, *op.cit.* This volume consists of a good collection of national contribution from authors of different countries having an extreme right-wing party. Unfortunately, it does not pay much attention to a cross-national comparison.

finding that certain groups are more likely to vote for an extreme right-wing party than others is at the heart of several theoretical models trying to explain why people vote for an extreme right-wing party, like the theory of economic interests, the theory of psychological interests, social deprivation theory.<sup>12</sup>

Socio-demographic background variables can exert a direct effect on the vote or they can play through the effect they have on attitudinal dispositions. These general attitudes can, in their turn, determine the position of a voter on more concrete issues. The clustering of certain value orientations is often referred to as a cleavage or an ideological orientation. According to Kitschelt,<sup>13</sup> historically-contingent structural, economic and social changes in European societies have redefined the old Left/Right cleavages that used to be the main structuring mechanism of voting behaviour.

The social structure and economy of advanced capitalism have given salience to a competitive dimension of politics with two aspects: economically leftist (redistributive) and politically as well as culturally libertarian (participatory and individualist) positions at one extreme and economically rightist, free-marketsteering as well as politically and culturally authoritarian positions at the other.<sup>14</sup> This bidimensional divide has replaced the traditional Left/Right cleavage structure as put forward by Lipset and Rokkan in the years 1960.<sup>15</sup> Figure 2 shows how the addition of a new divide between libertarianism and authoritarianism has altered the voters' value orientations space from a unidimensional to a bidimensional space, represented respectively by ellipses 1 and 2.

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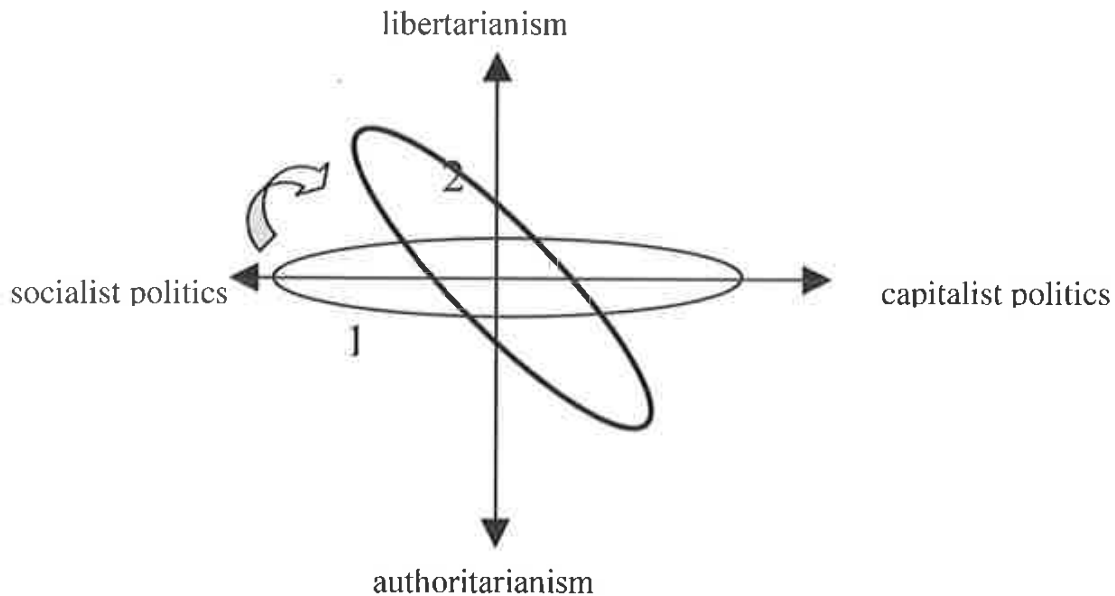
<sup>12</sup> See M. LUBBERS, P. SCHEEPERS, and J. BILLIET, "Multilevel Modelling of Vlaams Blok Voting: Individual and Contextual Characteristics of the Vlaams Blok Vote", *Acta Politica*, vol. 35, n°4, 2000, pp. 363-398; LUBBERS, 2001, *op. cit.*

<sup>13</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> S. LIPSET and S. ROKKAN, "Cleavage structures, party systems, and voter alignments: An introduction.", pp. 1-64 in S. LIPSET and S. ROKKAN (eds), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, New York: Free Press, 1967.

**Figure 2. The competitive space for political parties in Western Europe end of 1980s (Kitschelt, 1995, p. 15)**



Several authors have found empirical evidence for a similar distinction between two dimensions in the ideological space in Western European countries.<sup>16</sup> On the basis of longitudinal analysis in the Netherlands, Middendorp found that two relatively stable dimensions appeared: one labelled socio-economic left/right and one labelled socio-cultural libertarianism/authoritarianism.<sup>17</sup> Heath *et al.* (1993, 1999) found evidence for similar dimensions in Great-Britain<sup>18</sup> and similar results were found in Flanders.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See A. HEATH, G. EVANS and J. MARTIN, "The measurement of core beliefs and values: the development of balanced socialist/*laissez-faire* and libertarian/authoritarian scales", *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 24, n° 1, 1993, pp. 115-158; A. HEATH, B. TAYLOR, L. BROOK and A. PARK, "British National Sentiment", *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 29, n°1, 1999, pp. 155-175; C. MIDDENDORP, *Ideology in Dutch politics. The Democratic System Reconsidered 1970-1985*, Assen: Van Gorcum, 1991; M. SWYNGEDOUW, "Nieuwe breuklijnen in de Vlaamse politiek? De politieke ruimte van de 18- tot 65-jarige Vlaamse kiezer na de verkiezingen", pp. 85-112 in M. SWYNGEDOUW, J. BILLIET, A. CARTON and R. BEERTEN (eds), *Kiezen is verliezen. Onderzoek naar de politieke opvattingen van Vlamingen*, Leuven: Acco, 1993.

<sup>17</sup> P. SCHEEPERS, P. ESTER and H. de WITTE, "Understanding Ideological Trends in Dutch Society: Middendorp's Contributions", in H. de WITTE and P. SCHEEPERS (eds), *Ideology in the Low Countries. Trends, Models and Lacunae*, Assen: Van Gorcum, 1999.

<sup>18</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> J. BILLIET and M. SWYNGEDOUW, "De keuze tussen groen en extreem rechts in Vlaanderen. Sporen van een nieuwe breuklijn", *Res Publica*, vol. 37, n° 2, 1995, pp. 247-262.

While these authors do not specifically address the association between these two dimensions, it is one of the main arguments of Kitschelt's theory explaining the success of extreme right-wing parties in Western Europe. What Kitschelt states is that the economic and cultural-political dimensions which structure voting behaviour are so closely related that they can be reduced to one single continuum of economic leftism/cultural and political libertarianism on the one extreme and economic rightism/cultural and political authoritarianism on the other. However, Kitschelt did not find evidence for this argument himself and therefore mentions a second best result which is still in line with his theory, being that there are separate economic and cultural-political dimensions, but that the mean positions of each party's voters on the two dimensions are strongly associated with each other, at least for all the major parties and especially for the extreme right-wing party. *The association between the two competitive dimensions of economic left/right on the one hand and cultural-political libertarianism/authoritarianism on the other is one of the hypotheses which will be tested in this article.*

Whereas this part of Kitschelt's theory deals with voting behaviour in general, he then translates this into hypotheses regarding the success of extreme right-wing parties. According to Kitschelt, the success of extreme right-wing parties is contingent upon the strategic choices of the moderate conservative parties as well as the ability of the extreme-rightist leaders to find the electorally successful 'winning formula' to appeal to a significant voter constituency. This implies first of all that conditions for extreme right-wing parties become favourable when moderately left and right parties tend to converge towards the median voter, thereby opening up a space for the more radical right authoritarian voters who will search for a new political alternative. Secondly, whether or not such a new political alternative becomes successful depends on the strategic appeal of right-wing political entrepreneurs themselves. Only if they choose economic free market appeals and combine these with authoritarian and ethnocentric and even racist messages will they attract a broad audience. Extreme right-wing voters are therefore expected to be located at one extreme of a dominant dimension of competition ranging from left-libertarian to right-authoritarian views. The culturally and political authoritarian slogans appeal to the blue-collar and lower white-collar, lower educated and younger electorate, whereas the free market rhetoric additionally attracts certain segments of small independent businesspeople.

*Therefore, a second hypothesis which will be tested in this article is whether the extreme right-wing voters do express significantly more authoritarian and market-liberal attitudes than other parties' voters.*

When doing research on extreme right-wing parties, it is of vital importance to make this distinction between the positions of the parties and their elites on the one hand and those of the voters on the other. The most we can say is that, if we observe an association between authoritarian and market-liberal attitudes, then we would have found support for Kitschelt's hypothesis that voters have been attracted by the extreme right-wing's winning formula. The reverse causal statement, namely that voters attitudes are tracers of party's appeals, is an assumption which, in our opinion, is not justified.

Note that, strictly speaking, we can not make any inferences about whether or not parties indeed hang on to this position, simply on the basis of the positions of their voters. Consequently, suppose that we do not find extreme right-wing voters to express significantly more authoritarian and market-liberal attitudes – thereby having falsified Kitschelt's hypothesis – then this can imply two possible explanations: either Kitschelt's winning formula is incorrect and parties do not hang on to these values (authoritarianism and economic liberalism) or voters are not attracted by them. Strictly speaking, our analysis will only be able to confirm or falsify the original hypothesis and not make any inferences about these two alternative ones.

This winning formula hypothesis can analytically be subtracted into two parts, corresponding to the two dimensions of Kitschelt's winning formula. As far as the authoritarian and ethnocentrist part of the winning formula is concerned, research has repeatedly shown that the extreme right-wing electorate clearly distinguishes itself from the mean voter in adhering significantly more to authoritarian and ethnocentrist attitudes. However, less agreement exists as to the economic free market appeal of extreme right-wing parties. According to Immerfall the economic utopia of extreme right-wing parties is not unfettered capitalism but a petit bourgeoisie type capitalism.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> S. IMMERFALL, "Conclusion: the Neo-Populist Agenda", pp. 249-262 in H. Betz and S. Immerfall (eds), *The New Politics of the Right: Neo-Populist Parties and Movements in Established Democracies*, New-York: St Martin's Press, 1998.

It is a form of specific economic nationalism resenting any threat to national sovereignty and therefore accepting certain protectionist measures.<sup>21</sup>

## **COMPARATIVE RESEARCH: DATA, CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS**

Conducting comparative research offers many challenges but implies many difficulties as well. In order to be able to compare data, it should first be assessed whether a comparison of the data is justified. This is not a straightforward issue, not even for data that have been gathered within a cross-cultural survey project, like the European Values Study, from which data will be used in this article. Even if data are gathered on the basis of a common questionnaire, the data collection can still be differently influenced by methodological differences effects and measurement error, which have many sources. The data have been gathered by different research institutions, the translation of the master questionnaire can be different, similar indicators can have different meanings in different contexts, socio-background variables might be measured in a different manner, *etc.* It is therefore inevitable that data will to a certain extent be influenced by these methodological differences and that the measures being used will never be entirely identical.

In what follows, we have devoted considerable attention to an examination of the comparability of the measures used in our analysis. This is very often neglected in comparative research, leading to invalid inferences because they are based on biased measures. When we discuss the equivalence of measures, we do not so much mean the similarities of the measures, but rather their functional equivalence. This means that we will be more interested in structural relationships among variables rather than comparing absolute values of certain concepts between the two countries.

In this article, data from the European Values Study 1999 are used. The French dataset contains 1,615 observations from a sample of French citizens of age 18 and older. For Belgium, only the Flemish sample is used. Since there are no national parties in Belgium and we are only discussing the Flemish spectrum of political parties, it makes no sense to perform the

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<sup>21</sup> H. BETZ, "Introduction", pp. 1-11 in H. Betz and S. Immerfall (eds), *The New Politics of the Right: Neo-Populist Parties and Movements in Established Democracies*, New-York: St Martin's Press, 1998.

analyses on the whole Belgian dataset. As a consequence, the sample size for Flanders is rather small, consisting of only 821 respondents. This small sample size problem becomes even more serious given the large number of missing values on one of the crucial variables in our analysis, being the vote intention. For France this amounts to 19%, while in Flanders 14% of the vote variable is missing. Because of these small sample sizes, it will be relatively more difficult to find significant effects.

This brings us to a second limitation of using secondary data which have not specifically been gathered for research on what will be the main dependent variable for this article, *i.e.* voting behaviour. As the data collection took place during the same time period in all countries, it did not make much sense to ask respondents about their vote in the last elections in their country. Instead, respondents were asked what party they would vote for if elections were held at the time of data collection.<sup>22</sup> The crucial dependent variable will therefore be vote intention and more specifically the intention to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* in Flanders or the Front National or the *Mouvement National Républicain* vote in France. However, in order to explain the preference for a vote for these parties, we cannot ignore the rest of the political spectrum. Using a dichotomy denoting whether or not the respondent would vote extreme right-wing would be bad practice since many significant effects risk to be cancelled out when a large range of parties is merged into one category. This is why we will use multinomial logit models, a technique that handles a categorical dependent variable with more than two categories.

Finally, another limitation might lie in the representativeness of the data. Data were gathered on the basis of quota sampling and the methodological annexe of the French data reports small deviations from the population's distribution on age and marital status. We did not use weights since these were not available for both datasets. Yet this possible lack of representativeness should not be exaggerated as we are using techniques which intend to look at structural relationships between variables rather than comparing groups in terms of absolute figures.

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<sup>22</sup> European Elections were held in 1999 in the 15 EU member countries, but the number of countries participating in the EVS is much larger than the number of members of the European Union.

## **SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DETERMINANTS OF EXTREME RIGHT-WING VOTING**

### **Comparability of measures**

The measures we have used in this part of the model did not pose any serious problems in terms of comparability. Age and gender are obviously sufficiently comparable within the two countries and so is church practice. This was less so for the education and professional status variables. France and Flanders have quite different educational systems and it is difficult to come up with a comparable measure. The original classifications of 8 categories in France and Flanders, which were quite different, had to be reduced into a smaller coding scheme which was comparable for the two countries. We decided to distinguish no more than 3 different categories, somehow easing the job of finding a comparable scheme. When recoding the original classifications of the two countries, we did not only consider the equivalence of the degrees in the two countries, but also the sizes of the groups with a different level of education. We wanted to come up with a scheme that reflects the shares of the lowest, middle and highest educated people within a particular country.<sup>23</sup>

A more problematic variable was occupational status, which is, not only in cross-cultural research, extremely difficult to measure as it is open to many sources of bias (from the interviewer or those who do the coding of the variable). In cross-cultural research there is the additional problem that the status of a particular profession can vary considerably between countries. We constructed a variable with 6 categories, based on the employment status (whether a respondent was employed, self-employed, unemployed or not active) and the 2 digit ISCO classification. Our final class scheme contained the following categories: (1) managers and professionals (2) white-collar workers (3) blue-collar workers (4) self-employed (5) others not active and (6) unemployed.

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<sup>23</sup> *E.g.* the category with a '*baccalauréat*' as the highest degree does not exist in Flanders. We decided to assign those respondents to the category of higher education rather than to the middle category. This resulted in categories for France and Flanders which were more equal in size than if this group had been assign to the middle category.

### **The effect of socio-demographics on the intention to vote for an extreme right-wing party.**

Recalling the causal diagram in figure 1, the model below is aimed at measuring the total effect (direct + indirect) of socio-demographic variables on the vote intention. Since these background variables are causally prior to attitudinal variables, it would not make sense to include the attitudes in the model when focussing on the effect of socio-demographics. In a next step, when we will be more specifically interested in the effect of the attitudes (controlled for background variables), we will deal with this second part of the causal model.

Our results are based on a multinomial logit model with vote intention as the dependent variable and gender, education, church practice and age as independent variables. We have tested the effect of the occupational status on the vote intention as well. For Flanders there was no effect at all from occupation on vote intention for any of the seven parties. In France, there was an effect for some parties, but it did not appear to be significant for the extreme right-wing parties. This is unlike what Billiet *et al.* reported for Flanders<sup>24</sup> nor what Mayer reported for France.<sup>25</sup> The lack of effect in the EVS dataset can (partly) be explained by the small sample sizes, especially in Flanders. Apart from sample size, it might also be due to the rather poor quality of the occupational status variable. Because of the lack of significant effects on the extreme right-wing vote intention, we omitted the occupational variable from the model in both countries and retained the model with gender, education, church practice and age.

Table 1 contains the Log-likelihood statistics for the effects of these four variables as well as the fit of the models as a whole. Both models fit very well and all effects are significant at a level of .01 or smaller. Dividing the test statistic by the number of degrees of freedom gives an indication of the strength of the effect. Note that this model deals with the effect on voting behaviour with all parties included. More interesting are the results of table 2, which displays the logistic parameters associated with the different categories of the explanatory variables (column 'log par'), for the

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<sup>24</sup> BILLIET *et al.*, 2001, *op. cit.*

<sup>25</sup> MAYER, 1997 and 1999, *op. cit.*

extreme right-wing parties in both countries.<sup>26</sup> These parameters express the extent to which the effect of a certain category of the independent variable differs from the mean effect of all categories of the independent variable together. A parameter larger than one indicates an overrepresentation of respondents in this category, whereas a value below one indicates an underrepresentation. Another way of interpreting this is to transform these parameters as if they were frequencies. This is similar to simple bivariate frequencies, but there is an important difference. Since the frequencies of a particular variable are computed while controlling for all other independent variables in the model, they should be interpreted as 'net frequencies'. Table 2 contains these net frequencies, as well as the difference between this percentage and the mean percentage for the extreme right-wing party (reported in the first line of the table).

**Table 1. Fit statistics of multinomial model with the effect of socio-demographic variables on the vote intention.**

Variable	Flanders				France			
	L <sup>2</sup>	DF	Pr	L <sup>2</sup> /df	L <sup>2</sup>	DF	Pr	L <sup>2</sup> /df
<i>Intercept</i>	40,49	7	<,0001		302,75	7	<,0001	
gender	21,41	7	0,0032	3,06	18,85	7	0,0087	2,69
education	44,71	14	<,0001	3,19	45,35	14	<,0001	3,24
church practice	85,34	21	<,0001	4,06	93,9	21	<,0001	4,47
age	48,33	28	0,0099	1,73	64,88	28	<,0001	2,32
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	597,22	595	0,4667		744,33	763	0,2659	

<sup>26</sup> Most statistical software (like SAS, Stata, SPSS) uses dummy coding in order to test the effect of categorical variables on a dependent categorical variable. As a result, effects are expressed as deviations from a reference category and multiplicative parameters have a rather complicated interpretation. This is why we ran the model with a software (BMDP) that uses 'effect coding', which expresses an effect as a deviation from the lower order effects (*i.e.* the overall effect if only first-order effects are included in the model). The disadvantage of this approach is that we can no longer get information on the significance of differences between parties or differences between categories of the independent variables. Because we are working in a comparative perspective and not within countries, it is more interesting to compare how effects differ from the mean value within a country. As a consequence, significance levels are only reported with respect to differences from mean values and not differences among the categories of a independent variable themselves.

**Table 2. Effects of the different categories of socio-demographic variables on the vote intention for VB & FN/MNR (fitted in a multinomial logit model using effect coding).**

	VB (N=83)			FN / MNR (N=57)		
	log par	%	diff from mean %	log par	%	diff from mean %
<b>mean</b>		11,76			4,4	
<b>gender</b>						
men	0,996	11,49	-0,27	1,374*	5,7	1,3
women	1,004	12,02	0,26	0,728*	3,1	-1,3
<b>education</b>						
lower	1,857**	17	5,2	1,889**	6,3	1,9
middle	1,457(*)	15,2	3,4	1,652*	5,6	1,2
higher	0,369**	3,5	-8,3	0,321**	0,9	-3,4
<b>church practice</b>						
regularly practising	0,461**	4,7	-7,1	0,654	2,7	-1,7
occasionally practising	1,233	14,3	2,5	1,291	5,5	1,1
non-practising, first gen.	1,152	14,4	2,6	0,98	3,9	-0,5
non-practising, higher gen.	1,527 (*)	18,5	6,7	1,208	4,8	0,4
<b>age</b>						
-25	0,757	8,4	-3,4	1,807(*)	7,2	2,9
25-39	1,114	12,7	0,9	0,785	3,3	-1,1
40-54	0,761	9,8	-2	1,031	4,5	0,1
55-69	1,354	14,5	2,7	1,23	5,5	1,1
70+	1,151	12,4	0,6	0,556	2,1	-2,3

((\*)= significance on a .1 level; \*=.05; \*\*=.01)

The typical picture of the modal extreme right-wing voter being a younger male, lower educated worker is not entirely confirmed with our data and we found a few striking differences between the two countries. The most important difference exists with respect to gender. Electoral research in Belgium has repeatedly shown no effect of gender on a vote for the *Vlaams Blok* and the EVS data confirm these results. French Election Surveys, on the contrary, always showed a rather masculine vote for the FN and again this is confirmed by our analysis.

With respect to education, the effects are similar in both countries and they are in the expected direction. It is generally accepted that extreme right-wing voters have a lower level of education. The findings show a positive effect on the extreme right-wing preference for the lower and middle educational categories and a negative effect for the highest educational category.

Church practice is known to be an important indication of a *Vlaams Blok* vote<sup>27</sup> and the same appears from the EVS data. The regularly practising Catholics are much less inclined to vote for an extreme right-wing party in Flanders than they are in France. In France, the effect of religion on the intention to vote for the FN/MNR is not significant. Comparing this with results based on French Elections Surveys is not straightforward as literature on this usually contains the bivariate frequencies, without controlling for other variables. Regularly practising Catholics seem to be underrepresented in the FN/MNR electorate for most past elections, but it is rather difficult to judge since the results are only descriptive and do not report significance statistics.<sup>28</sup> The fact that the regularly practising Catholics are significantly underrepresented in the *Vlaams Blok* electorate, but not in the FN/MNR electorate could (partly) be explained by the fact that Flanders has a large Christian Democratic Party in its political spectrum whereas France does not.<sup>29</sup> The strong positive effect of the category 'regular churchgoer' for this party brings along a negative effect of this category for most of the other parties. We do not find a similar tendency in France.

Looking at the effect of age, there are again some remarkable differences between the French and the Flemish extreme right-wing electorates. Age does not seem to exert any significant effect on a preference for the *Vlaams Blok* on the basis of the EVS data. It is likely that 1999 represents a change from former elections as Flemish Election Surveys have shown a strong positive effect of belonging to the youngest age category in 1991 and 1995, but no longer in 1999.<sup>30</sup> Instead, the eldest age category (+65) seemed to have been more likely to vote extreme right. Our data do not report any significant differences from the average over all age categories, but this does not mean that some categories could not significantly differ from each other, like *e.g.* the youngest age category and the category 55-70.

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<sup>27</sup> See BILLIET *et al.*, 2001, *op. cit.* and BILLIET, 1998, *op. cit.*

<sup>28</sup> MAYER, 1997, *op. cit.*

<sup>29</sup> This example illustrates that when comparing differences between the FN/MNR voters and VB voters should not only be interpreted in terms of characteristics of the extreme right-wing parties themselves, but also in terms of the other parties in the political spectrum of a country. Voting behaviour deals with preferences and the choice will inevitably depend upon the other options available to the voter. In other words, the vote for a particular party is not independent of the availability of other parties offered.

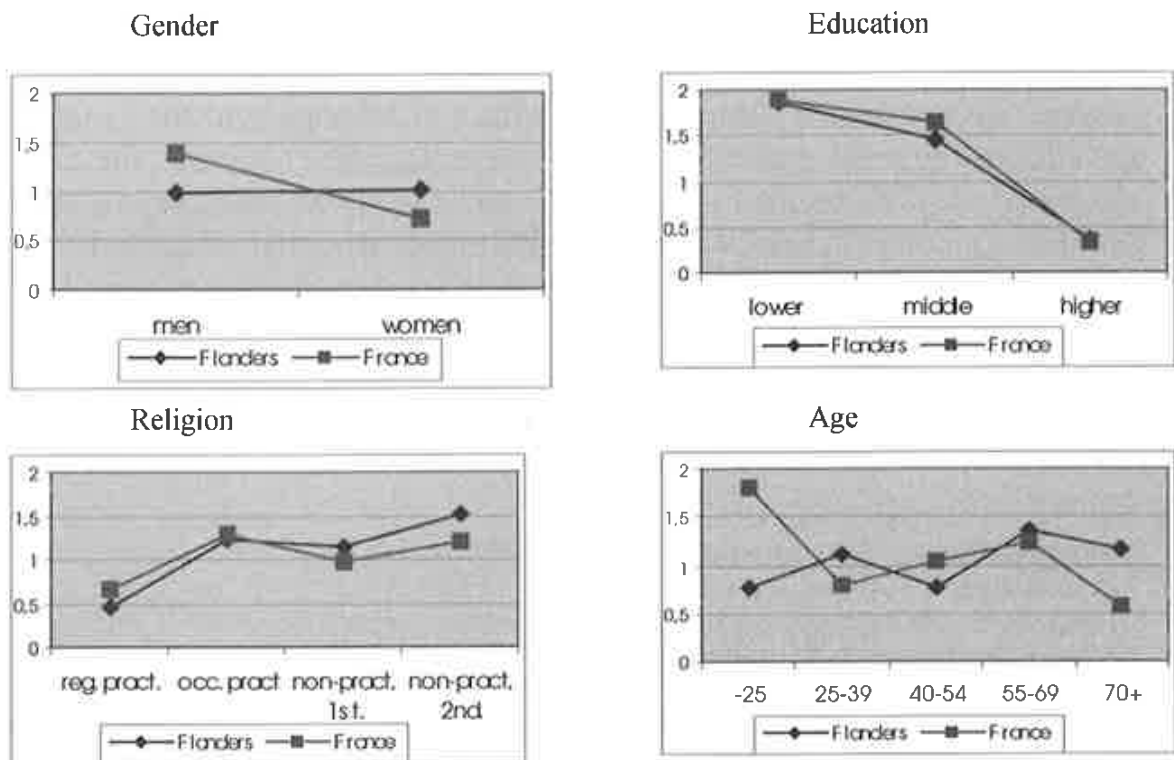
<sup>30</sup> BILLIET 1998, *op. cit.* and BILLIET *et al.*, 2001, *op. cit.*

The relatively high parameter (although not significant) for this last category is in accordance with data from the 1999 general election study and so is the non-significant effect for the youngest age category.

The effects of age on the French extreme right-wing vote intention give an entirely different picture. The EVS data show a significant and positive effect of the youngest age category for an extreme right-wing preference and a (close to significant) negative effect for the oldest age category. These effects are in opposing directions compared to the Flemish extreme right-wing electorate.<sup>31</sup> Taking a look at analyses on the basis of French elections surveys suggest similar evidence, although the effects are not very strong and might not be significant.

The graphs in figure 3 give an overview of differences between the two countries. The more divergent the lines in the figures, the more the effects of socio-demographics differ in the two countries. It becomes clear that the two electorates differ considerably as far as gender and age are concerned, but not as far as education and church practice are concerned.

**Figure 3. Graphical display of differences in socio-demographic determinants of an extreme right-wing vote in Flanders and France (logistic parameters).**



<sup>31</sup> MAYER, 1997, *op. cit.*

## IN SEARCH OF A RIGHT-AUTHORITARIAN AND LEFT-LIBERTARIAN DIVIDE IN VOTERS' PREFERENCE SPACE

### Testing for measurement invariance of attitude constructs

The dataset of the European Values Study contains many indicators intended to measure a large series of attitude constructs. We have selected a number of items which are supposed to cover the attitude constructs underlying the competitive dimensions of economic left *versus* right and socio-cultural libertarianism versus authoritarianism.

If we want to compare attitude constructs in different countries, we need to be sure that the indicators we use measure the same construct. In other words, the cross-national invariance of our measurement instruments needs to be tested. Measurement invariance refers to "whether or not, under different conditions of observing and studying phenomena, measurement operations yield measures of the same attribute".<sup>32</sup> If this step is neglected, we can not distinguish between true differences between the countries or measurement bias. Measurement invariance can be obtained at different levels and this has implications with respect to the comparability of different characteristics of the measurement instrument. Multigroup structural equation modelling allows for a test of the equivalence of a measurement instrument over countries.

Steenkamp and Baumgartner<sup>33</sup> discuss the following levels of invariance. *Configural invariance* between countries is obtained if it can be shown that items of a measurement instrument reflect the same structure in different countries. This condition holds when the same configuration of salient and non salient factor loadings exists across the different countries. Factor loadings of items can differ across countries. A stronger test of invariance, called *metric invariance*, is obtained when factor loadings across countries can be set equal. If metric invariance holds then difference scores on an item can be meaningfully compared across countries, and these observed item differences are indicative of similar cross-national differences in the underlying construct. As a result, the underlying concept

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<sup>32</sup> J. HORN and J. McARDLE, "A practical and theoretical guide to measurement invariance in aging research", *Experimental Aging Research*, vol. 18 (Fall-Winter), 1992, pp. 117-144; and see p. 117 in J-B. STEENKAMP and H. BAUMGARTNER, "Assessing Measurement Invariance in Cross-National Consumer Research", *Journal of consumer research*, vol. 25, 1998, pp. 78-90.

<sup>33</sup> *Op. cit.*

is supposed to have equal metrics or scale intervals in the two countries. Structural relationships between latent constructs are now fully comparable across countries. However, this does not imply that the origin of the scale underlying the latent factor is the same across countries and that mean comparisons of attitude constructs can be done across countries. In order to be sure that differences in the means of the observed items are due to differences in the means of the underlying constructs and not to, *e.g.*, a different response behaviour, a higher level of invariance, *scalar invariance*, should hold.<sup>34</sup>

We have tested for all three levels of invariance for a model containing six different attitude constructs:

*'Feeling threatened by immigrants'* was measured with four items asking a respondent whether s/he has objections against neighbours of a different race, whether s/he feels priority should be given to Belgians/French on the labour market, to what extent the respondent is concerned with living conditions of immigrants and whether s/he would be prepared to do something to improve conditions of immigrants.

*'Authoritarianism'* was a rather problematic scale. The EVS does not contain a battery of items specifically meant to measure authoritarianism. However, at different places in the questionnaire, items occurred which can be considered to measure the theoretical construct authoritarianism, as defined by Adorno.<sup>35</sup> We retained four items, with which we obtained a measurement model with a sufficient level of invariance in the two countries. Items deal with having greater respect for authority, with whether the respondent thinks it is important to teach children obedience, with whether maintaining law and order is an important goal for a country and with whether democracy is bad at maintaining law and order.

The scale *'traditional vision on gender roles'* was measured with three items dealing with whether or not a pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works, whether the true nature of women is a home and children and whether being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay.

The concept *'Unwillingness to do anything about environmental pollution'*, or shortly denoted as *'environmentalism'*, measures the willingness to make financial contributions for environmental pollution and

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<sup>34</sup> In terms of structural equation modelling, this comes down to adding the constraint of equal item intercepts.

<sup>35</sup> T. ADORNO, E. FRENKEL-BRUNSWIK, D.J. LEVINSON and R.N. SANFORD, *The Authoritarian Personality*, New York: Harper, 1950.

the willingness to pay more taxes in exchange of prevention of environmental pollution and whether the government should reduce environmental pollution, without extra costs.<sup>36</sup>

'*Ethical conservatism*' was measured by the extent to which the respondent disapproves of abortion, divorce and euthanasia.

The '*economic left/right*' scale consists of items measuring whether the state or the individuals should take responsibility for providing for themselves, whether competition is good or harmful and whether the state should control firms more effectively.

Configural invariance could easily be obtained over the two countries, even for a larger set of items than those described just above. However, meaningful comparisons between the two countries required at least metric invariance. The original model with more extended sets of items had to be adapted which implied that some items were dropped because they functioned differently in the two countries.

In a next stage, we have also assessed the scalar invariance of our measures. A reasonable fitting model could be obtained, but we preferred to work with the less constrained and better fitting model assuming only metric invariance. Since the intention is not to compare the mean values of attitude constructs across countries, but only to look at structural relationships between the attitude constructs, socio-demographics and voting behaviour, metric invariance was considered a sufficient level of invariance.

Using Lisrel 8.5 software, we found a good fitting model with six independent attitude constructs. The fit of this model is reported in table 5.<sup>37</sup> On the basis of factor score regression coefficients, we obtained an estimate of the score of these latent attitude constructs, which we used as variables in subsequent analyses.

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<sup>36</sup> This last item is an ambiguous item. Yet from the confirmatory factor analytic model, it appeared to measure the underlying construct sufficiently. Because the factor loading was quite low, the corresponding factor score regression coefficient was low as well and therefore the weight of this item in determining the latent construct was quite small.

<sup>37</sup> We used Weighted Least Squares estimation, which is considered appropriate for ordinal variables and which is based on Polychoric Correlations and an estimate of its Asymptotic Covariance Matrix (K. JORESKOG and D. SORBOM, *LISREL 7: a Guide to the Program and Applications*, Chicago: SSI, 1989). These matrices were computed using the PRELIS 2.5 program implemented in the LISREL software.

### **The effect of attitude dispositions on the intention to vote for the extreme right.**

In order to evaluate the effects of the different attitude constructs on the vote intention in both countries, we again fitted a multinomial logit model containing both background variables and attitude constructs. Recall the causal model, where we assumed that part of the effect of socio-demographic variables is indirect, through attitudes. Therefore, if we want to get an accurate view on the net effect of attitudes, we need to control for the effect of background variables.

The effects of the scales of environmentalism and gender roles appeared to be non-significant in Flanders. In France, a non-significant effect was found for the environmentalism, gender roles and ethics scales. Non-significant effects were dropped and the models were re-estimated and resulted in the fit statistics displayed in table 3. These are the fit statistics describing the global effects of the different variables on the vote intention with all categories of the vote included in the model.

If we want information about the effects of the attitude dispositions on an extreme right-wing party preference, we need to look at the significance of the additive logistic parameters, given in table 4. The parameters reflect the average increase or decrease of the (log) odds to (intend to) vote for a particular party rather than the extreme right-wing party, given an increase of one standard deviation on an attitude scale. These should be interpreted as the significant net effects of attitudes on the (intention to) vote for a particular party compared to a vote for an extreme right-wing party.<sup>38</sup>

We should be cautious when interpreting these effects, especially for variables which are strongly correlated. Due to multicollinearity, the effect of the strongest attitude can considerably reduce the effect of a variable with which it is correlated. It can reduce it to the extent that the relationship is no longer significant or that it changes direction. A solution to this problem of multicollinearity would have been to omit a variable which appears to be highly correlated to another variable. We chose not to do this because we are specifically interested in the net effects of each of the

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<sup>38</sup> Because we are dealing with both metric as well as categorical independent variables, we now used the *catmod* procedure in SAS. This procedure uses dummy coding for the dependent variable, which is why effects are expressed in comparison to a reference category.

attitude constructs on the vote intention. However, we are aware of the fact that multicollinearity might occur and will take this into account when interpreting the results.

**Table 3. Fit statistics of multinomial model with the effect of attitude constructs on the vote intention, controlled for background variables.**

Variable	Flanders				France			
	L <sup>2</sup>	DF	Pr	L <sup>2</sup> /df	L <sup>2</sup>	DF	Pr	L <sup>2</sup> /df
Intercept	41.09	7	<.0001		300.99	7	<.0001	
gender	19.74	7	0.0062	2.82	21.03	7	0.0037	3.00
education	30.97	14	0.0056	2.21	31.42	14	0.0048	2.24
church practice	59.25	21	<.0001	2.82	69.70	21	<.0001	3.32
age	44.64	28	0.0240	1.59	56.00	28	0.0013	2
ethnocentrism	14.94	7	0.0367	2.13	55.89	7	<.0001	7.98
authoritarianism	14.50	7	0.0429	2.07	24.75	7	0.0008	3.54
economic left/right	18.40	7	0.0103	2.63	49.05	7	<.0001	7.01
gender roles					-			
ethical conservatism	14.47	7	0.0434	2.07	-			
environmentalism	-				-			
Likelihood Ratio	2331.4	5E3	1.0000		4237.3	9E3	1.0000	

We observe some remarkable differences between the two countries as far as the significance of certain attitudes is concerned. Dividing the log-likelihood statistic by the number of degrees of freedom for a particular variable gives an idea of the explanatory power of that particular variable. Although the values of this measure are not comparable over the two countries due to differences in sample size, they do show that in France, the attitude dispositions have more importance over socio-demographics than they do in Flanders. The effects of ethnocentrism and economic left/right clearly stand out in France, whereas they do less so in Flanders. Recall that these fit statistics deal with party preference with all main parties included and not only the extreme right-wing parties versus all others. The relatively low significance of ethnocentrism and authoritarianism in Flanders might be due to the strong correlation between these two constructs. When omitting one of these scales in the model, the significance of the remaining scale increased considerably.

The logistic parameters in table 4 report a significant effect of ethnocentrism for the extreme right-wing parties compared to all parties except the VU/ID in Flanders and compared to all parties in France. In France, the effects are remarkably stronger, although multicollinearity

might explain this difference. Another difference is found for authoritarianism: in Flanders, the odds for a preference for the VB compared to a preference for *Agalev*, SP or VU/ID increase significantly as respondents express a more authoritarian attitude. In France, the reverse effect is found when the FN/MNR is compared to the UDF, DL-RPR and the non-voters. The odds of a preference for these last two categories rather than the FN/MNR increases as respondents become more authoritarian. Recall that this concerns the net effect, once ethnocentrism, which appeared to be a much stronger variable, is controlled for. This is another occasion where multicollinearity might be present.

The economic left/right scale does not appear to be of any significant importance in distinguishing the *Vlaams Blok* voters from any of the other parties in Flanders. The significance of the overall effect must therefore be due to differences between other pairs of parties, for which the parameters are not reported since we only look at the comparison with the VB. In France having an economic right attitude increases the odds of a preference for the UDF and DL/RPR rather than an extreme right-wing vote. Finally, an effect was found for ethical conservatism in Flanders. It appeared to discriminate *Agalev*, CVP and VU/ID from the *Vlaams Blok*, in a way that having an ethical conservative attitude increases the odds of a VB vote. This is not what would be expected on the basis of the rather conservative party program of the *Vlaams Blok*.

**Table 4. Additive logistic parameters for a model with attitude constructs controlled for background variables (VB & FN/MNR as reference category)**

	Flanders					
	Aga VB	CVP VB	VLD VB	SP VB	VU/ID VB	blanc/inv. VB
ethnocentrism	-0.97***	-0.68**	-0.53*	-0.57*	-0.30	-0.71*
economic left/right	-0.23	0.07	0.24	-0.29	-0.18	-0.21
ethical conservatism	0.50*	0.63**	0.14	0.10	0.68*	0.21
authoritarianism	-0.89*	-0.44	-0.18	-0.79*	-0.85*	-0.13
	France					
	extr.ga/PC FN/MNR	PS FN/MNR	verts/ecol. FN/MNR	UDF FN/MNR	DL/RPR FN/MNR	abst. FN/MNR
ethnocentrism	-2.51***	-2.39***	-2.32***	-2.38***	-2.12***	-2.41***
economic left/right	-0.29	0.07	-0.09	0.43*	0.52**	0.09
authoritarianism	0.24	0.48	0.51	0.83**	0.85**	0.91**

(\* = significance on a .05 level; \*\* = .01; \*\*\* = .001)

### **Economic left/right versus authoritarianism/libertarianism**

In this last part we have tested Kitschelt's hypothesis with respect to the existence of two competitive dimensions in voters' preferences space. In order to test whether the attitude constructs ethnocentrism, authoritarianism, gender roles and ethics form the cultural political dimension as discussed above, we tried to fit a second order factor to these (first order) latent attitude constructs, as is done in figure 4, and compared the fit with the model assuming six single unidimensional attitude constructs.

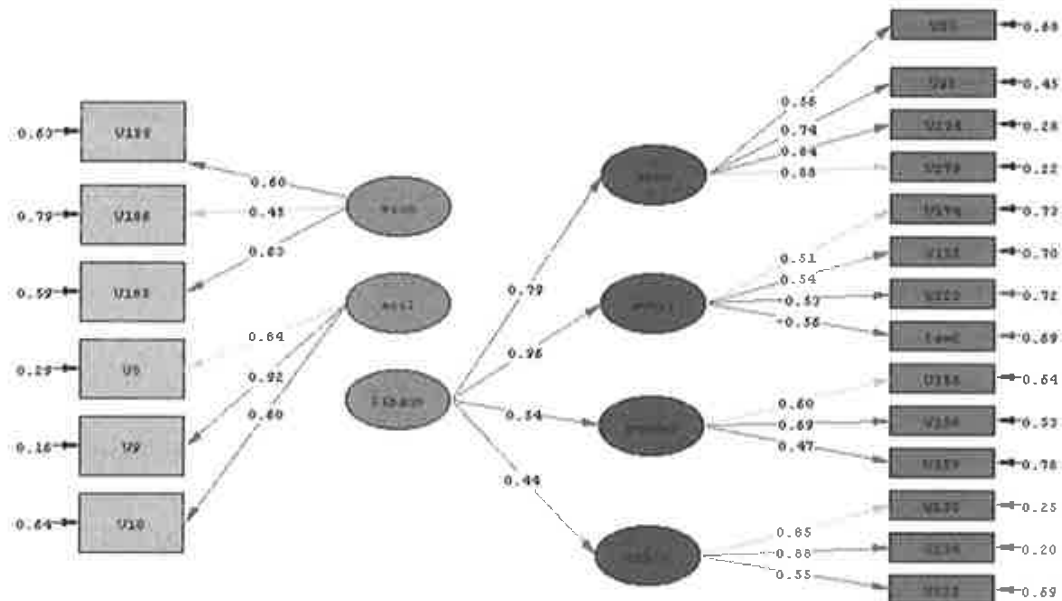
Table 5 depicts the fit of these two models, which can be evaluated on the basis of different criteria. All criteria point in the same direction. The RMSEA and ECVI index with the lowest values depict the preferable model, which is the model with six independent constructs. Another way to compare models, given that they are nested, is to compare whether changes in the Chi-square value of two models are significant given the change in the number of degrees of freedom. As the difference in Chi-square of 299.5 is quite large for 20 degrees of freedom, the model without second order factors comes out as the better model. So from a strictly confirmatory factor analytic approach, we should conclude that the libertarianism-authoritarianism construct is basically multidimensional.

**Table 5. Fit statistics of a model with and without second order factor**

<b>Model</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>	<b>ECVI</b>
1) 1 second order factor (etno gender ethic autor)	1100.25	346	0.045 (0.042 ; 0.048)	0.59
2) 6 independent constructs	870.71	326	0.040 (0.036 ; 0.043)	0.50
<b>Test of diff. in Chi-square</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p-value</b>	
model 1 - model 2	299.54	20	<.0001	

There is however another way of evaluating this. Although the model with six first order factors is the better fitting model, the second order factor model, still has an acceptable fit with an RMSEA value of .045 and a p-value of close fit of 1. Hence it make sense to consider the four scales ethnocentrism, authoritarianism, gender roles and ethics as being determined by the same underlying construct, although this construct is not entirely unidimensional in factor analytic terms. Because of its theoretical relevance and for the purposes of testing the hypothesis of the association between the economic left/right dimension and the socio-cultural libertarianism/authoritarianism dimension, we will retain this second order factor. This association will be evaluated on the basis of correlation coefficients and mean party positions.

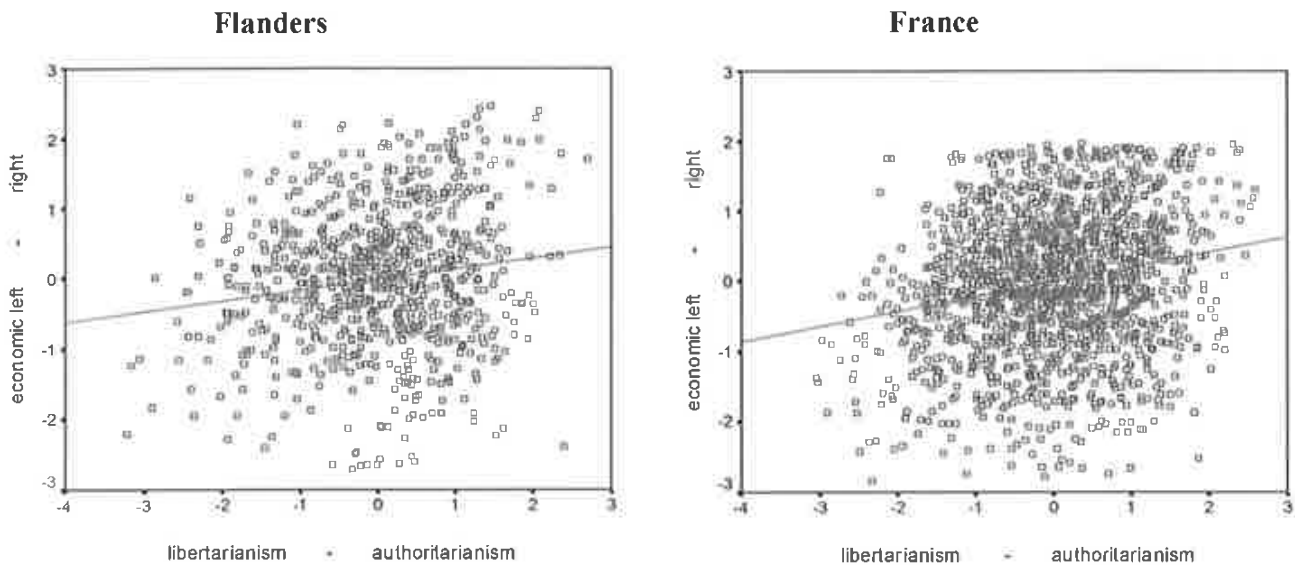
Figure 4. Lisrel model with second order factor



Chi-Square=1100.25, df=346, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.045

A first test of the existence of a general bidimensional association between the economic left and libertarian attitudes on the one hand and the economic right and authoritarian attitudes on the other is given by a scatterplot displaying the association between these two dimensions. We have fitted a regression line which points out the direction of the association. In both countries, the lines are close to horizontal, suggesting a low correlation between the two latent dimensions. Recalling Kitschelt's hypothesis of the association between the economic dimension and the socio-political dimension, we could say that the two dimensions exist rather independently of each other in both Flanders and France. Although the relationship between the two dimensions is in the expected direction and economic right attitudes tend to be slightly more associated with authoritarian attitudes, it remains rather weak.

**Figure 5. Scatterplots of economic left/right versus authoritarianism/libertarianism**



We can also look at this relationship within the different groups of voters and see whether Kitschelt's hypothesis holds for most of the parties and for the extreme right-wing parties in particular. In table 6 both the within group correlation coefficients are displayed as well as the mean values of the different parties on the two dimensions. In order to obtain this mean value, we computed factor scores using the factor score regression coefficients from the factor analytic model as displayed in figure 4. Next, we standardised the factor scores (within countries) in order to obtain values which were centred at the overall country means. A negative value therefore expresses a value lower than the average in a particular country whereas a positive value corresponds with a value higher than the country average.

**Table 6. correlations between the economic and cultural political dimensions and mean values of the different electorates on the two dimensions.**

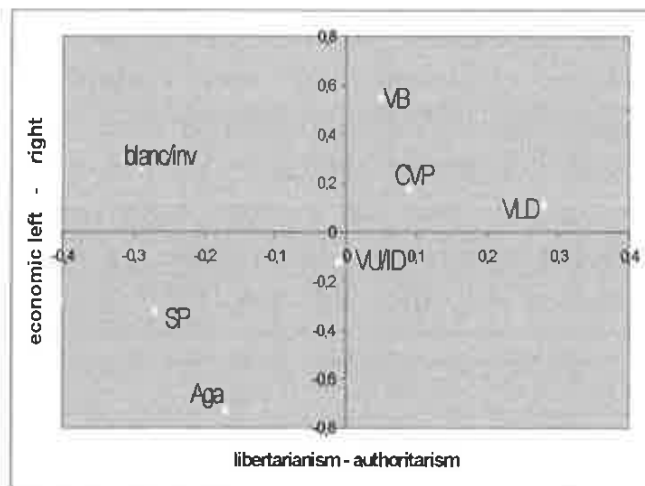
Flanders								Overall
Aga	CVP	VLD	SP	VU-ID	VB	bl/ong		
<b>Correlations</b>	0.40***	0.14	0.06	0.04	-0.17	0.18	-0.01	0.15**
<b>Means</b>								
econ left/right	-0.17	0.09	0.28	-0.27	-0.01	0.05	-0.29	0
libert. / author.	-0.73	0.18	0.11	-0.32	-0.12	0.55	0.27	0
France								Overall
extr.ga/P	PS	verts/eco	UDF	DL/RPR	FN/MNR	abst.		
<b>Correlations</b>	0.31**	0.13*	0.25***	0.13	0.10	0.41**	0.14*	0.21**
<b>Means</b>								
econ left/right	-0.49	-0.07	-0.22	0.30	0.44	0.02	-0.08	0
libert. / author.	-0.61	-0.20	-0.47	0.15	0.34	0.74	0.08	0

(\* = significance on a .05 level; \*\* = .01; \*\*\* = .001)

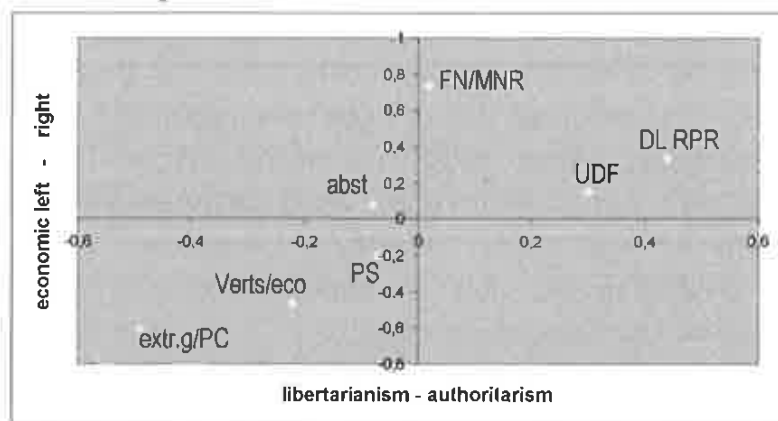
In Flanders, the correlation between the two dimensions is too small to be significant in all but one group of voters. Only those who vote for the Green party clearly combine a libertarian attitude with economic left values. The VB voters combine a highly authoritarian attitude with both economic left as well as economic right values. In France the correlation is significant for the extreme left, the socialist, the green parties and the extreme right-wing parties. This last finding is interesting with respect to Kitschelt's hypothesis and tends to confirm his hypothesis that the extreme right combines an authoritarian message with market liberalism.

Whereas the correlations give a summary of the association between the two poles, irrespective of the magnitude or direction of the factors, the mean values give a better picture of the position of the adherents of the different parties on the two dimensions. These values are reported in table 6 and presented in a bidimensional plot with economic left/right on the X axis and libertarianism/authoritarianism on the Y axis (figure 6 for Flanders and figure 7 for France).

**Figure 6. Plot of mean values of the Flemish electorates on the economic and cultural political dimensions.**



**Figure 7. Plot of mean values of the French electorates on the economic and cultural political dimensions.**



In summary, with respect to Kitschelt's general hypothesis on the association between the economic and cultural political dimension, we can conclude that we did not find convincing evidence for it in either country. The overall correlations are low in both countries and non-significant for most parties in Flanders. The French case comes closer to what Kitschelt predicts, but not for some of the main parties like the UDF and RPR. The mean positions of the different electorates reflect a similar pattern. In Flanders, some parties are more outspoken on a certain dimension, while they come close to the average on the other dimension. Only few parties are situated on the so-called poles of left-libertarianism and right-authoritarianism. In France, more parties are situated on the left-libertarianism versus right-authoritarianism line, giving more support for Kitschelt's general hypothesis.

Kitschelt's more specific hypothesis about this association between authoritarianism and economic right consisting of the 'winning formula' for extreme right-wing parties does not hold if we look at the plot of mean values. The plot of mean values shows that all three parties have an outspoken position on the libertarianism/authoritarianism axis, but come close to the average of zero on the economic left/right axis. As opposed to Kitschelt's second hypothesis, we observed that extreme right-wing voters are not attracted by market-liberal preferences, irrespective of whether or not these attitudes are promoted by the extreme right-wing parties themselves.

## CONCLUSION

This article was an attempt to carry out a systematic analysis of extreme right-wing voting determinants in France and Flanders. We believe the article has illustrated the need for more comparable data on voting determinants. Whereas national elections studies are the most valuable source of data to examine this kind of questions, they have the disadvantage of being less comparable. The alternative is to use cross nationally collected survey data, like the European values study used in this article. However, the pay-off is that these data were collected for different purposes and are consequently less suited for the study of voting behaviour. We more specifically experienced difficulties due to small sample sizes, large numbers of missing data on the dependent variable of vote intention and a rather poor quality of items to measure the attitude dispositions we were interested in.

Nevertheless, we have been able to show that there are some remarkable differences between the socio-demographic determinants underlying the extreme right-wing party preferences in France and Flanders. Most notable is the gender effect on the FN/MNR preference, which was not present for the VB preference. Secondly, the FN seems to continue to attract younger voters, whereas in Flanders the youngest age group is no longer the group which is most attracted to the *Vlaams Blok*. The increased support for the *Vlaams Blok* between 1995 and 1999 most likely comes from the older age categories.

Furthermore, we have tried to find equivalent measurement models for a number of attitude dispositions and examined whether we could detect two competitive dimensions of economic left versus right and cultural

political authoritarianism versus libertarianism. We were particularly interested in the association between these two dimensions, as a test of one of the main arguments of Herbert Kitschelt's theory on the extreme right-wing's 'winning formula'. Unlike what Kitschelt's theory suggested, we did not find a strong association between these two dimensions. For both cases, the association was weak, although it was slightly stronger in France than in Flanders and it appeared to be significant for a larger number of parties in France than in Flanders. The results suggested that on average the adherents of some parties are clearly outspoken on the economic left/right dimension but close to neutral on the libertarianism/authoritarianism dimension, while for other parties, it is the other way round.

Although not very persuasive, the French case does tend to give more support to Kitschelt's theory about the existence of two competitive dimensions in the overall space of party preferences. The same goes for the more specific hypothesis about extreme right-wing parties combining a free market liberalism with authoritarianism. The association between the two dimensions was weak, but significant for those favouring the FN/MNR, but not for those favouring the VB.