Chapter 12: Austria, France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland: Old and new winning formulas of the radical populist right

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Introduction

Austria, France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland are the countries that typify the importance of the integration-demarcation cleavage in structuring political conflict and party systems. These four countries have had a strong radical populist right (RPR) for decades. These parties appeared in the national political landscape already in the 1980s, following processes of globalization. As argued in the introduction, continuity prevails in these countries – that is the cultural political conflict opposing 'winners' and 'losers' of globalization remains central in structuring these national party systems. However, our analyses show changes in the importance given to economic issues and a shift in the RPR economic positions. In France and the Netherlands, during the Great Recession, the RPR adopted more left-leaning positions.

In these four countries, the RPR had already left an important mark on the party systems long before the economic crisis. The RPR increased the importance of immigration issues (Kriesi et al. 2008), forced the mainstream right to adopt some of their nativist positions (Akkerman 2015), and shed doubts on supranational institutions or corrupted elites (Kriesi and Pappas 2015). Yet, the economic crisis calls into question the electoral strategy that RPR parties adopt when campaigning in times of crises. The success stories of RPR parties in transforming the politicalpaces of Austria, France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland built on a combination of neo-liberal economic positions and nationalism with regards to immigration issues and European integration (Kitschelt and McGann 1995).

During the stagnation years of the early 1990s, some of these parties already moved towards more economic protectionism (Lange 2007). Since the RPR reinforced their working class electorate (Oesch 2008), the Great Recession confronted these parties with a further challenge regarding their position taking on economic issues.

The countries of North Western Europe belong to the creditor countries in the economic crisis. The crisis struck the countries under study in this chapter in a different way than the debtor countries, nonethless the crisis was high on the political agenda. The question regarding the policy to pursue during this time of economic hardship was often central to the election campaigns. In France, Sarkozy's government adopted austerity measures, which constituted a hotly debated issue in the 2012 elections. Not only the socialists opposed these measures, but the FN also attacked them as measures imposed by supranational institutions harming French workers. In the Netherlands, the issue of the Greek bailout – a typical creditor country issue – was constantly addressed in relation to domestic interests, leading to a discourse of not wanting to help another country in light of national economic problems that were to be solved as well. This type of discourse was especially – although not exclusively – put forward by the radical populist right party of Geert Wilders (PVV).

In what follows, we analyze the strategic moves of the radical populist right in times of economic crisis in these four Western European countries. Although these countries were among the least hit by the economic and political crisis, we show that the mainstream governmental parties' widespread support for austerity measures contributed to the adoption of new positions on the economic left-right axis by two of the radical populist right parties that we study, the National Front (FN) in France and the Freedom Party (PVV) in the Netherlands. Our analyses show that in Switzerland the RPR sticks to the winning formula (Kitschelt and McGann 1995) – maintaining culturally authoritarian and economical-

ly liberal positions, while in France and in the Netherlands, the RPRs embrace a new winning formula (Lange 2007), combining culturally authoritarian positions with economically protective positions. Austria is an ambiguous case with an earlier move toward a more leftist economic agenda corresponding to the RPR first turn away from economic liberalism in the 1990s. This chapter discusses the literature on welfare chauvinism or welfare populism (de Koster, Achterberg and van der Waal 2013; Lefkofridi and Michel 2014; Schumacher and Kersbergen 2016) and advances explanations for the RPR's adoption of more centrist or even leftist economic positions in relation to the economic crisis, the convergence of mainstream parties on austerity measures, and the governmental position of the RPR.

In this chapter we proceed as follows. First, we briefly describe the structure of party competition, the key actors, and most important dimensions of conflict before the economic crisis in Austria, France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, showing that they are characterized by the presence of a strong radical populist right party that precedes the outbreak of the economic crisis. Then, we discuss the extent to which the RPR turn toward economic protectionism and welfare chauvinism. In the empirical part of the study we focus on the RPR's economic positions. To begin, we briefly describe the course of the campaigns and their outcomes, as well as the overall politicization over specific issues. Next, we deal with the RPR strategy on economic and cultural issues by analyzing changes in the salience of these issues. Since RPR parties are known for not campaigning extensively on their economic positions (Rovny 2013), we investigate to what extent they pay more attention to economic issues during the crisis. We also investigate changes in the positions they take on economic issues over time, to see whether they move towards the left on this dimension, as we expect that the economic crisis moderates their economic liberalism. Lastly, we compare the overall party structure before and after the crisis. We observe whether RPR parties are moving away from the economic right of the political

space towards the centre, to counter the proposed austerity measures of the mainstream right parties. In fact, depending on the behavior of the other parties during the crisis, RPR parties might strategically decide not to change their position.

Structure of party competition and the emergence of the radical populist right

Austria, the Netherlands, and Switzerland are multi-party systems that have been marked by a high level of stability during the post-war period, characterized by grand coalitions and elite bargaining (Kriesi and Trechsel 2008; Williams 2013). By contrast, France experienced more volatile days characterized by party system changes (Bornschier and Lachat 2009). Switzerland and the Netherlands both have strongly fragmented party systems with a large number of parties, but their tradition of consensus secured long-term stability nonetheless. France and Austria on the other hand, have been bi-polar for a long period (Bornschier and Lachat 2009, Williams 2013), and have both transformed into more pluralistic party systems, following the successful emergence of respectively the FN in France (Bornschier 2008), the Greens and FPÖ in Austria (Müller and Fallend 2004), during the 1980s and 1990s.

The party system transformations of all four countries under study here were related to the transformation of the cultural dimension of the political conflict. Some right-wing political parties re-interpreted the cultural axis in terms of new lines of conflict, mostly related to immigration, multiculturalism, and European integration or law and order (Bornschier 2008; Bornschier and Lachat 2009; Dolezal 2008). The rise of the radical right parties was often of key influence in this respect (Kriesi and Trechsel 2008; Lachat 2008). The Netherlands was the last country in this group of four to undergo these changes: the political space was not transformed until the early 2000s, whereas from the 1980s onwards

the RPR had successfully challenged the mainstream parties in Austria, France, and Switzerland by reshaping the space of competition.

As advanced by Kitschelt (2007), the radical right parties emerged in many European countries to fill a void that was left by the convergence of mainstream parties on economic policies and the absence of parties mobilizing on cultural conservatism or opposition to immigration. Thus, the convergence of mainstream parties (Mair 2013) and the absence of parties addressing issues close to the 'losers' of globalization (Kriesi et al. 2012; Kriesi et al. 2008) opened a political opportunity for the emergence of these radical right populist parties (Arzheimer and Carter 2006; Van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie 2005).

Since these developments, all four party systems are characterized by political competition over socioeconomic, social-cultural, and European issues. In all countries, the mainstream parties from the left and right are not only challenged by the anti-establishment RPR party (respectively FPÖ, FN, PVV, and SVP), but also by the Green parties, and, in France and the Netherlands, by a populist party from the radical left (respectively Front de Gauche and SP).

The new winning formula: A story of welfare protectionism

The RPR established their electoral success based on the winning formula identified by Kitschelt in the 1990s. It is well-known that the RPR attract voters who are culturally, but not necessarily economically aggrieved and who hold negative views about elites (Ivarsflaten 2008). Nonetheless, the electorate of the RPR has been characterized as working class citizens who are afraid of the dire consequences of globalization for their economic well-being. Among others, Kriesi et al. (2008) refer to them as the "losers of globalization". Indeed, blue-collar workers and small business owners support RPR more

than other social groups (Ivarsflaten 2005). They share culturally conservative views but hold opposed economic preferences. Hence, the RPR need to reconcile antithetic economic views in order to please different components of their electorate. In order to do so, they maintain blurred economic positions, avoiding to take strong economic stances or expressing contradictory clues (Rovny 2013). Yet, in times of widespread economic hardship and with the mainstream parties converging on austerity measures, the RPRs may have changed their economic policy positions.

Some authors argue that the RPR adopted a welfare chauvinist policy stance in their latest party manifestos and in their appeals to the electorate (Betz 2015; Ivaldi 2013; Koster, Achterberg and Waal 2013; Van Kessel 2015). In the 1990s, their success was due to their sociocultural positions on immigration, but now, it is claimed they rely on "exclusive solidarity": a combination of left-wing socioeconomic protectionism and right-wing nativism (Lefkofridi and Michel 2014). Welfare chauvinism emerges because RPR parties are anti-establishment and they take issue positions that diverge from the mainstream parties (Schumacher and Kersbergen 2016). When the mainstream parties converge on anti-austerity measures and start cutting in the welfare state, the RPR take up the defence of the welfare state. Yet, they do so in a way that corresponds to their political ideology and their main issue of political competition, namely anti-immigration. This leads to the adoption of welfare nativism that is the promotion of the welfare state for deserving citizens and not for the immigrants who are said to steal jobs and benefit from the generosity of the state.

In the light of this literature, we expect that the RPRs studied here shifted to the left on the economic left-right axis, becoming less economically liberal and more pro-welfare, while maintaining their strong anti-immigration stance. However, we consider the extent to which these new issues prevail during their electoral campaign as an empirical question, as

their anti-immigration stance might be more dominant in their public campaigns and in the media's reporting about them. Furthermore, we anticipate cross-country variations. In particular, we expect that governing parties – as is the case for the SVP in Switzerland – are less likely to adopt this strategy. In fact, they cannot distinguish themselves from the mainstream parties by doing so because they have already taken part in some drastic cuts in social spending (Afonso 2015; Afonso and Papadopoulos 2015). Quite to the contrary, in France and in the Netherlands, we expect to see the FN and the PVV embrace this new electoral strategy and to adopt different economic issue positions, allowing them to reinforce their electorate by building on economic grievances. The situation of the FPÖ and BZÖ in Austria is more ambiguous. They have been in government at some point but were not part of the last pre-crisis government. Therefore, we do not formulate expectations regarding this case.

Electoral campaigns during the crisis: setting the stage

In this first part of our empirical analysis, we shortly describe the electoral campaigns that have taken place during the crisis and we discuss changes in the politicization of the four issue categories in times of crisis. We start with France and the Netherlands since they are the cases where we expect most change. Then, we turn to Switzerland where we anticipate business as usual and, lastly, Austria the more open case. The electoral results of the main competitors are presented in Table 12-1.

Table 12.1

For France, we analyze the campaign leading to the first round of the presidential election in April 2012, during the Euro crisis. This election opposed the incumbent Nicolas Sarkozy of the center right (UMP) and the socialist François Hollande (PS). Both made it to the second round of the election, which Hollande won by a margin of only 3.3 per cent. In the first round of the campaign, Marine Le Pen (Front National), Jean-Luc Mélenchon (Front de Gauche), François Bayrou (Mouvement Démocrate), and Eva Joly (Greens) were the most visible contenders of the two main candidates. Le Pen achieved the best ever result for the FN with 17.9 per cent of the vote, whereas Mélenchon and Bayrou remained below expectations.

For the Netherlands, we investigate two crisis campaigns for the parliamentary elections of 2010 and 2012. Both electoral campaigns took place during the Euro crisis, so economic issues were high on the agenda. The outcome of the 2010 elections was a milestone for several parties: the VVD became the largest party for the first time in history (PvdA coming close second), and the PVV became third. In 2012, horse race reporting towards the end of the campaign reflected the very close results for PvdA and VVD, the latter becoming the largest party by a small margin. The PVV again became the third party.

For Switzerland, we also have two crisis campaigns: 2011 and 2015, again both took place during the Euro crisis. However, since Switzerland is not an EU member, it is less directly affected by the Euro crisis and, more generally, the country faced very limited economic difficulties during the whole crisis period. In both years, we analyze the campaign for the election of the National Council and Council of States (respectively, the Swiss Lower and Upper House). The results of the 2011 election are characterized by the first interruption in the long-term growth of the SVP. The 2015 election was won by the SVP which managed to strengthen, once again, its electoral basis. Following this electoral success built on the anti-immigration theme (Bernhard 2016), the SVP re-gained a second

seat in the government. The other winner of the election was the PLR-FDP which appeared as the most competent party on economic issues and which was able to renew its electoral basis (Lutz 2016).

For Austria, we have a single crisis campaign the one for the parliamentary elections that took place in September 2013. Again this electoral campaign took place during the Euro crisis. In this campaign, the two main competing parties, SPÖ and ÖVP, had been in a coalition government. Their competitors were the populist radical right FPÖ, the Greens, and a new party, Team Stronach. The two mainstream parties had to face the worst electoral results since 1945. The FPÖ and the Greens gained some votes, and Team Stronach made it above the electoral threshold. The BZÖ, the second populist right party, lost its parliamentary representation after having faced difficulties ever since the death of party leader Jörg Haider in 2008.

[Figure 12.1]

When comparing the level of politicization (salience × polarization) before and during the Euro crisis across different issue categories, we observe limited systematic change in the four countries under study (see Figure 12.1). In all four countries, there is a certain increase in politicization of economic issues since the outbreak of the economic crisis, albeit with differing trends across countries. Thus, the four countries analyzed in this chapter reflect a broader diversity observed across North Western countries. While in the UK economic issues are more politicized during the crisis, this is only marginally the case in Germany (see chapter 13). In Ireland, during the crisis, economic issues remain the most salient issue although they are slightly more conflictual with the growing importance of

Sinn Fein and the radical left defending anti-austerity stances (chapter 14). The four countries that we analyze here are more idiosyncratic with regard to the prevalence of culture issues. In all countries except for Austria, politicization increases on the first category of cultural issues, which includes immigration. Political issues and the second category of cultural issues are in all countries of minor importance, and show little change over time. In the other North Western countries, the cultural issues are more politicized during the crisis only in the UK. In Germany, these issues gained salience and were more conflictual prior to the crisis, while in Ireland they are marginal compared to economic issues. We discuss the results for each of the four countries analyzed in this chapter in more detail in the subsequent paragraphs.

In France, a drop in politicization across all issue categories in 2007 is followed by an increase in politicization over all issue categories in the 2012 elections, especially economic and cultural issues. The levels of politicization are lower than in the other countries under study here. The 2012 presidential campaign appeared as a plebiscite against Sarkozy, who suffered from a very low popularity (Hewlett 2012a; Hewlett 2012b; Kuhn and Murray 2013). Hollande campaigned against some of the policies (enhanced retirement age) promoted by Sarkozy, as well as against the Franco-German coalition leading Europe on the path of austerity. Hollande made few pledges, of which two were predominant, one economic and one cultural: taxing the super-rich and introducing gay marriage. Marine Le Pen of the FN successfully challenged the mainstream candidates in her election campaign. She not only focused on her anti-immigration stances, but also on the protection of the French economy and employment. In line with these campaign issues, we observe the largest level of politicization on economic and cultural issues.

In the Netherlands, economic issues and cultural issues of the first category prevail as well, but show more long-term trends. After the outbreak of the Euro crisis, politicization

over economic issues increases, but shows a flat line afterwards. In the 2010 campaign, the key divide in the economic policy proposals were between the right prioritizing the restoration of state finances and high budget cuts, and the left advocating economic recovery and lower budget cuts. Although the issues put forward in the next election campaign in 2012 were very similar to the previous ones, a striking feature here was the willingness of most of the parties (excluding the PVV and, to a lesser extent, the SP) to search for a common solution for the economic crisis (Van Holsteyn, 2014). Therefore, the austerity measures were central to the 2012 campaign, but showed small differences between parties (except for PVV). This explains why we do not observe an increase in politicization on economic issues between 2010 and 2012. Next to economic and financial issues, the multicultural society was high on the agenda as Wilders (PVV) kept successfully introducing it into the debate. The other parties did not ignore his attempts and responded to Wilders' challenges (Van Holsteyn, 2011). Indeed, Figure 12.1 shows that cultural issues of the first category have become increasingly politicized. These developments result in almost equal levels of politicization over these cultural and economic issues in the 2012 campaign.

In Switzerland, we observe only a small increase in politicization of economic issues since the outbreak of the crisis. During the 2011 campaign, each party focused on its traditional issue: PS-SP advocating a more equal society; the Greens campaigning against nuclear energy; the CVP striving for traditional families; the FDP for less bureaucracy; and the SVP against immigration and agreements with the EU (Lutz 2012). In 2015, the campaign did not bring about major political debates. The SVP tried hard to appear as a party with a friendly face using a video and a mascot (Bernhard 2016). The focus on the economic situation of the country, which was deteriorating in relation to the strong Swiss currency, did not survive for long in the public debate. With the arrival of refugees fleeing

Syria, the debate in Europe exploded regarding the asylum crisis. It hit Switzerland during the election campaign. Indeed, we observe a steady increase in politicization of the first category of cultural issues, indicating the increased importance of immigration issues over time in the Swiss political debate, which leads to this issue being more politicized than economic issues, even during the economic crisis.

Lastly, Austria is the country in which we observe the largest increase in the politicization of economic issues, and the only case in which this is the mostly politicized issue. Indeed, the electoral campaign focused mostly on economic issues, and on some corruption scandals about illegal party financing and other offenses. Some of the cases dated back to the early 2000s and involved not only members of the current governing parties, but also of the FPÖ and the BZÖ (Dolezal and Zeglovits 2014: 644f.). This limited the possibility of the RPR to polarize the debate on these political issues and to campaign against the establishment, as RPR often do.

Debating the economy or immigration: Issue salience for RPR parties in the crisis

Next, we turn to the salience of specific issues for the radical right parties to investigate to what extent these parties put more emphasis on their economic positions during times of crisis, or not. In Figure 12.2, we observe that the picture is very similar across the four countries. Most strikingly, the salience of economic issues is rather stable during the crisis for the four RPR parties. On the contrary, the salience of cultural issues goes up in all four countries. The increase in salience is steady and follows a trend that started prior to the crisis. The economic crisis thus did not accelerate or halt this tendency, which keeps a steady pace. We observe the strongest rise in the Netherlands, which might be related to the newness of the PVV and its growing visibility in the press.

[Figure 12.2]

In Figure 12.2, we also look more specifically at the issues of welfare state and immigration. The patterns follow those of economic and cultural issues. We observe that in the four countries, over time the RPR increasingly discusses immigration. Welfare does not follow a distinct pattern. The trend for this issue is similar to that identified for all economic issues taken together. During the crisis, welfare is as little discussed as it was previously. Contrary to what many have observed in party manifestos or public debates (Betz 2015; de Koster, Achterberg and van der Waal 2013; Ivaldi 2013; Lefkofridi and Michel 2014; Schumacher and Kersbergen 2016), we do not observe a growing importance given to economic issues and neither to specific welfare issues in the electoral campaigns in the press. It appears that the increase in welfare chauvinism of some RPR parties might not be much reflected in the media, as welfare is little discussed in relation to the RPR. Analyzing the statements regarding the FN and the PVV in the press, we find that issues related to immigration only figure much more prominently than issues related to the economy in general or to welfare in particular. This trend is constant over time and the crisis did not change it.

Changing strategy: Adopting new positions on economic issues in times of crisis

Next, we turn to the RPR's issue positions. This analysis allows us to see whether the RPR that emerged already in the 1980s and 1990s adopted new positions on economic and welfare issues during the Great Recession. Furthermore, we assess the extent to which the RPR

combine the issues of economic protectionism or welfare with anti-immigration or nativist stances.

[Figure 12.3]

In Figure 12.3, we present the position taking of the RPR on issues regarding economic liberalism and welfare. We observe divergent stories across the four countries, and across the two issues. In Austria and Switzerland, the RPR pre- and post-crisis resent positions on economic liberalism remain largely the same. In the Netherlands, we observe a small move towards economic liberalism, whereas in France there is a large move of the FN towards economic protectionism. The move of the FN is mainly related to its support for the protection of French employment. The PVV's move towards economic liberalism is due to the party's emphasis on decreasing government spending, lowering taxes, and cutting subsidies for "leftist hobbies", in Wilders' words.

When looking at specific welfare positions, in France and the Netherlands we indeed observe the move toward welfare protectionism as described in the literature about the RPR (Betz 2015; de Koster, Achterberg and van der Waal 2013; Ivaldi 2013; Lefkofridi and Michel 2014; Schumacher and Kersbergen 2016). In France, the FN makes a drastic move toward welfare protectionism, comparable with the move towards economic protectionism. It moves from a central position to an almost full embrace of welfare protectionism. The tendency to move toward welfare protectionism also appears in the issue position of the PVV, albeit a small change. In contrast, the Swiss SVP slightly moves toward a more liberal position regarding welfare. The party sticks to the winning formula of the 1990s and early 2000s by remaining strong on the anti-immigration issues, and it does not move

toward welfare protectionism on the economic front. Finally, the Austrian FPÖ also moves toward welfare liberalism, coming from a welfare protectionist stance. This relatively large move portrays a shift back to its original position.

In short, we most importantly find evidence that the FN and the PVV adopted welfare protectionism in their electoral campaigns, which is in line with their party manifestos. In order to investigate whether a welfare *chauvinist* rhetoric appeared in the campaign, we have analyzed to what extent the reports in the media on these parties' positions on economic issues were related to nativism and immigration.[1] The results indicate that the welfare chauvinism of these parties was neither portrayed as such in the media in France nor in the Netherlands. The distinction between the media's report of the economic stances of these parties on the one hand, and how they are put forward in their party manifestos on the other hand, is very large. Thus, in spite of their welfare *protectionism*, we find little evidence of welfare *chauvinism*. We observe that only a minority of the issues raised during the electoral campaign associate welfare protectionism and anti-immigration positions. Nor does the combination of economic protectionism and nativism appear during the electoral campaign, at least not when it comes to how the RPR campaign is reported in the media. This is most likely due to the fact that the media report on the issues which are high on the agenda in the election campaign. In the crisis period, the economic positions of the FN and the PVV that were portrayed in the newspapers often concerned the Greek bailout, the increasing health care costs, the retirement age (PVV) or unemployment and the protection of French employment (FN). In France, the FN received relatively little attention in the newspapers in general. Although this is not the case for the PVV, the

[1] The method was as follows: as there were no specific codes indicating welfare chauvinism, we investigated the co-concurrence of welfare and immigration/nationalist issues in the same articles. Only a handful of articles per country showed such combinations. Therefore, we analyzed all articles in which the economic and welfare positions of respectively the FN and the PVV were reported. We also read the party manifestos for all crisis campaigns.

party's positions regarding immigration and Islam remained disconnected from its economic positions.

In sum, the welfare nativist positions of these parties as found in their manifestos and previously discussed in the RPR literature (Betz 2015; de Koster, Achterberg and van der Waal 2013; Ivaldi 2013; Lefkofridi and Michel 2014; Schumacher and Kersbergen 2016) are not portrayed as such in the media during the electoral campaign. The main reason for this difference is that the media mostly portrays the positions of the competing parties in relation to each other, on the most salient issues in the campaign. Therefore, hardly any evidence for welfare *chauvinism* of RPR is reported in the media, while we do clearly observe a shift toward welfare *protectionism.*

Economic protectionism and the new spatial distribution of political parties

In this last empirical section, we summarize the issue positions of the RPR by looking at their positions in the national political space before and after the crisis. We observe two divergent paths. First, the occupation of the lower left-hand quadrant in the party space in France and in the Netherlands, implies the 'new winning formula' (Kitschelt 2004; De Lange 2007) in which anti-immigration stances are combined with economic protectionism. Second, we also observe the maintenance of the classic winning formula in Switzerland, in which economic liberalism and culturally authoritarian positions are combined by the RPR. Austria is a more ambiguous case, the RPR appear in the winning formula quadrant during the crisis elections, yet it had previously occupied the welfare protectionism quadrant.

We start with France to illustrate the RPR adoption of pro-welfare positions on the economic axis. In figure 12.4, we see that in 2007 the National Front is located in the lower

right-hand quadrant – the one constituting the 'old' winning formula (Kitschelt and McGann 1995), while in 2012 it appears in the lower left-hand quadrant. This quadrant was vacant in the early 2000s, no single party in France occupied that space. In the party space of the 2012 electoral campaign, we observe that the FN occupies that lower left –hand quadrant – remaining very close to anti-immigration but appearing closer to welfare. This shift reflects the change in the FN economic issue position observed above. In the French case, the mainstream right appears in a more central position on the cultural axis in 2007, while it is positioned closer to the anti-immigration position of the FN in 2012. Although some argued that Sarkozy won the 2007 election by capturing the FN vote (Marthaler 2008), the pre-crisis elections party space does not show that the UMP is closer to anti-immigration. In 2007, the UMP is located exactly in the middle of the axis. In the post-crisis election, the UMP does appear closer to anti-immigration. It is important to note here that the 'Affaire Merah' disrupted the electoral campaign and brought multiculturalism issues to the front.

In The Netherlands (Figure 12.4b), the move of the RPR is similar. In the early 2000s, we see that the PVV stands in the lower right-hand quadrant – in line with the classic winning formula. In the party space during the Euro crisis (observed during the election campaigns of 2010 and 2012), we observe the PVV's shift towards the lower left-hand quadrant, as identified in the literature (Koster, Achterberg and Waal 2013; Van Kessel 2015). The RPR is now, just like in France, the sole occupier of this quadrant in the party space. The party is located very closely to immigration and has almost equal distances to economic liberalism and welfare protectionism, reflecting the sometimes ambiguous position of this party on economic issues (which we observed earlier in Figure 12.3). Interestingly, the mainstream right (CDA and VVD) is positioned relatively closely to anti-immigration, already in the 2000s. This might have accentuated the PVV's adoption

of welfare protectionism as a strategic move to distinguish itself more from the other rightist parties.

[Figure 12.4 a & b]

Moving to Switzerland, in Figure 12.4c, we illustrate the clearest case of a RPR party that sticks to the winning formula in times of crisis. In the Swiss case, when confronting the pre- and the post-crisis party spaces, we observe that the SVP is positioned closely to anti-immigration and economic liberalism. During the economic crisis (election campaign of 2011 and 2015), the SVP remains in its original location in the party space, which allowed it to become the largest party in the country (McGann and Kitschelt 2005). The Swiss RPR did not change its winning formula and did not embrace new economic issue positions (Bernhard, Kriesi and Weber 2015). Most other parties also have not changed their position in the party space, with the exception of the Christian Democrats (CVP) moving closer to economic liberalism in the crisis period. This leads them to be very closely positioned to the FDP, occupying the upper right-hand quadrant together, while leaving the lower right quadrant to the sole occupation by the SVP.

We conclude with Austria, presented in Figure 12.4d, the more ambiguous case with regard to the RPR post-crisis adoption of pro-welfare positions. In the Austrian case, the FPÖ occupied a position much closer to welfare in the pre-crisis elections than they do in the crisis one. In fact, in the post-crisis period they are located close to anti-immigration and they are aligned with economic liberalism. Similarly, the BZÖ was slightly closer to welfare in the pre-crisis elections and appears close to economic liberalism in the crisis. This corresponds to the RPR's earlier adoption of more nuanced views on welfare. In the

1990s, some of the RPR parties moderated their economic positions, becoming more centrist. De Lange (2007) maintains that the winning formula explained the RPR issue positions only in the 1980s. She relates this shift to the growing number of voters among the working class who share the socialist authoritarian preferences and the declining number of capitalist authoritarian voters. However, the puzzle appears in relation to the fact that they continue to embrace economic liberalism in the crisis.

[Figure 12.4 c & d]

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have analyzed four Western European countries with a limited impact of the crisis and a durable presence of radical populist right parties. We focused on the fate of the RPR during the Euro crisis, zooming in on the adoption of welfare protectionism in order to capture a change in their economic positioning. We find that only two of the RPR parties – the FN in France and the PVV in the Netherlands – adopted this political strategy during the Euro crisis. For these parties, we observe a shift towards pro-welfare positions and a sole occupation of the lower left-hand quadrant in the party space. However, in the other two countries under study we did not observe such changes. In Switzerland, the SVP remains closely connected to its earlier anti-immigration and economic liberalism issue positions. Lastly, in Austria we observe a move back towards this position corresponding to the winning formula identified by Kitschelt and McGann (1995). In fact, in the early 2000s the FPÖ and to some extent the BZÖ appeared closer to welfare than to economic liberalism. Yet, they did not maintain this new winning formula during the crisis (Lange 2007).

While previous literature has referred to the shift of the radical right in France and the Netherlands towards welfare *chauvinism* (Lefkofridi and Michel 2014, Schumacher and Van Kersbergen 2016), which is clearly apparent in the manifestos of the PVV and the FN, in the media this positioning is not reported. Our analyses show that in France and in the Netherlands, the RPR adopted more pro-welfare positions, however we find no evidence of a welfare chauvinist rhetoric during the campaign, as reported in the media. In France the FN combines the shift to welfare protectionism with a move towards economic protectionism. While the Dutch PVV embraces welfare protectionism, it also continues to take economic liberal stances. Yet, we find that both parties seldom combine welfare protectionism and anti-immigration or nativist stances. If they do, this is not reported in the press as broadly as suggested by the changes observed when analyzing their party manifestos and other electoral material.

Furthermore, in the other two countries, the picture differs importantly. In Switzerland, the RPR did not embrace economic or welfare protectionism. It remains strongly committed to its anti-immigration program and it maintains an economically liberal program. Thus, the SVP sticks to the winning formula. Lastly, in Austria the RPR changed strategy earlier, adopting more welfare protectionist views prior to the crisis and returning to more liberal positions during the crisis. In these two latter countries, the RPR have existed much longer than they have in France and the Netherlands, which could be related to the differences we observe in the parties' strategy in terms of their change in party positions. The FN and PVV are in that sense of a different generation of RPR, and their leaders are in fact maintaining close relations.

Broadening the scope of our comparison, we observe that these four countries remain distinct from other North Western countries analyzed in this volume. In Germany and the UK, the RPR gained some electoral success during the crisis. Yet, when observing their

position in the structure of party competition we note that both the AFD (in Germany) and UKIP (in the UK) are close to immigration but equally distant from economic protectionism (welfare) and economic liberalism. It may be related to the strategy of blurring the lines on their economic positions (Rovny 2013). But it clearly shows no correspondence with the old winning formula (occupying the lower right quadrant of anti-immigration and economic liberalism) or the new one (anti-immigration and welfare chauvinism). Ireland is even more remote from the four countries analyzed in this chapter since it did not have a radical populist right party prior to the crisis and none emerged in the wake of economic turmoil. The four countries that we studied here remain typical examples of party systems with strong radical populist right parties. As such, these parties give importance to the integration-demarcation political divide in these national party systems and this cleavage remains highly structuring during the economic crisis. Yet these countries and their national party systems do not correspond to other North Western trends discussed in this volume.

Nevertheless, as RPR parties gain visibility, electoral strength, and even access to government across European countries, it is important to consider the issues on which the more established RPR parties campaign. This informs us about democratic debate and the next turn that the democratic crisis might take in other countries. We do not know yet where citizens' dissatisfaction might lead us when they elect RPR and these parties take office alone or jointly. In the Swiss case, the RPR are critical in cutting in the welfare state (Afonso 2015). However, in other countries where they present themselves as the saviours of the welfare state for national citizens only, we do not know what they would do once in power. So we can only consider their promises: to close borders, to leave the euro, to re-establish national sovereignty, and now – in some countries – also to protect the welfare state.

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Table 12.1 Election results and party system features in Austria, France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland (vote share in percentages)

Austria	**2008**	**2013**	**Netherlands**	**2006**	**2010**	**2012**
SPÖ	29.3	26.8	VVD	14.7	20.5	26.6
ÖVP	26	24	PvdA	21.2	19.6	24.8
FPÖ	17.5	20.5	PVV	5.9	15.5	10.1
Greens	10.4	12.4	SP	16.6	9.8	9.7
Team Stronach		5.7	CDA	26.5	13.6	8.5
BZÖ	10.7	3.5				
Turnout	78.8	74.9		80.4	74.7	74.3
Volatility	18.3	15.7		20.2	23.6	15.9
Effective no. parties	4.8	5.2		5.8	7	5.9

France	**2007**	**2012**	**Switzerland**	**2007**	**2011**	**2015**
	1st/2nd round	**1st/2nd round**				
PS	25.9 / 46.9	28.6 / 51.6	SVP	28.9	26.6	29.4
UMP	31.2 / 53.1	27.2 / 48.4	SP	19.5	18.7	18.8
FN	10.4	17.9	FDP	15.8	15.1	16.4
FG		11.1	CVP	14.5	12.3	11.7
UDF	18.6		Greens	9.6	8.4	7.1
Turnout	83.8 / 84.0	79.5 / 80.4		48.9	48.6	48.4
Volatility	10.4	17.9		7	8.2	4
Effective no. parties				5.6	6.4	5.8

Volatility scores (total volatility) from Emanuele (2015), effective number of parties from Döring and Manow (2016)

Figure 12.1 Politicization by issue category and country

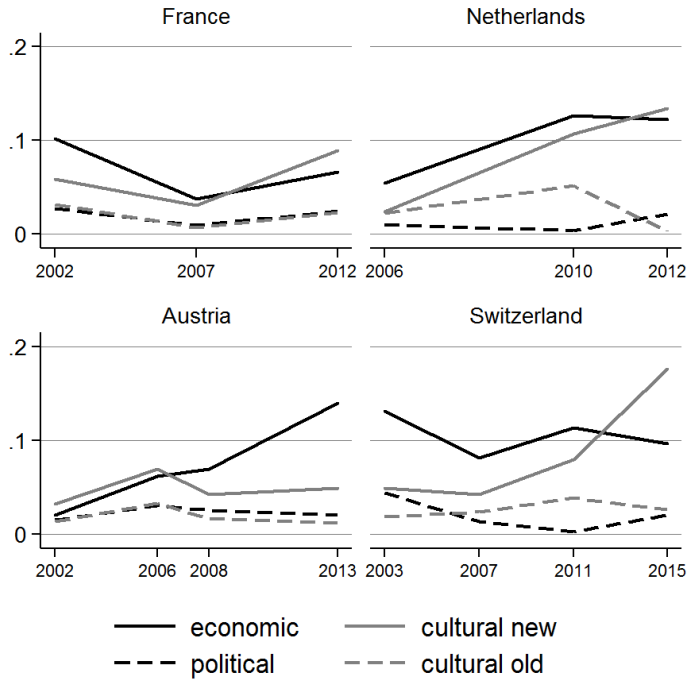


Figure 12.2: Salience of economic and cultural issues for RPR

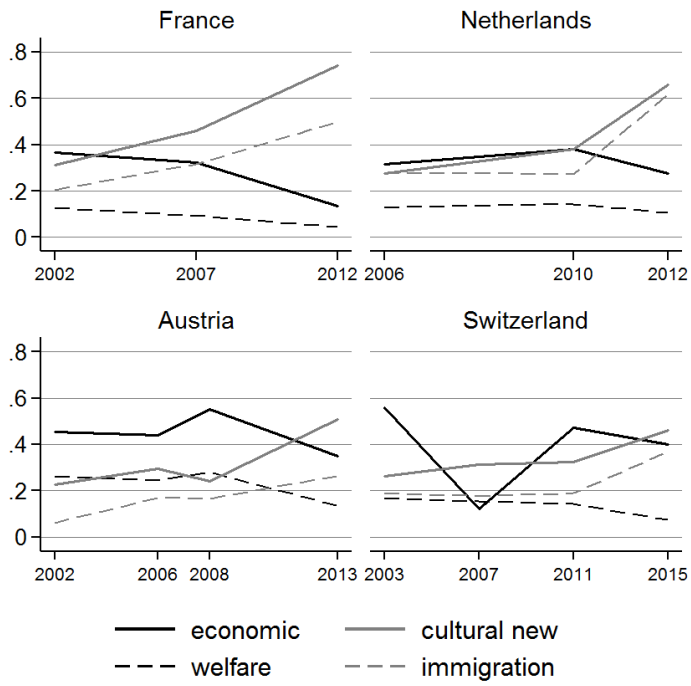
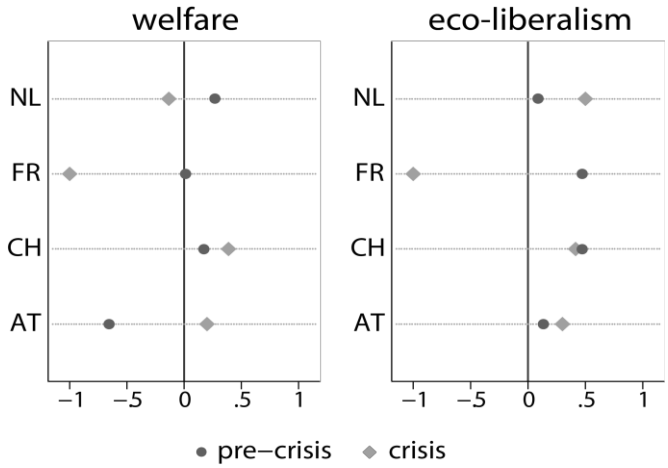


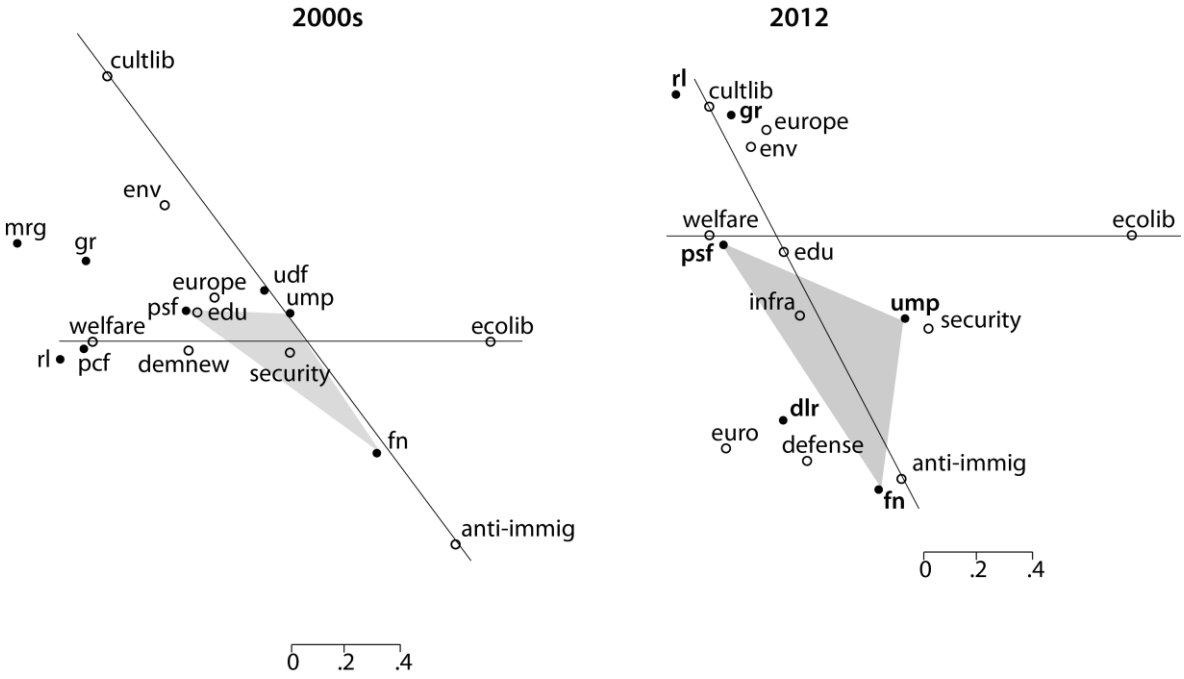
Figure 12.3: Positions of RPR towards welfare and economic liberalism



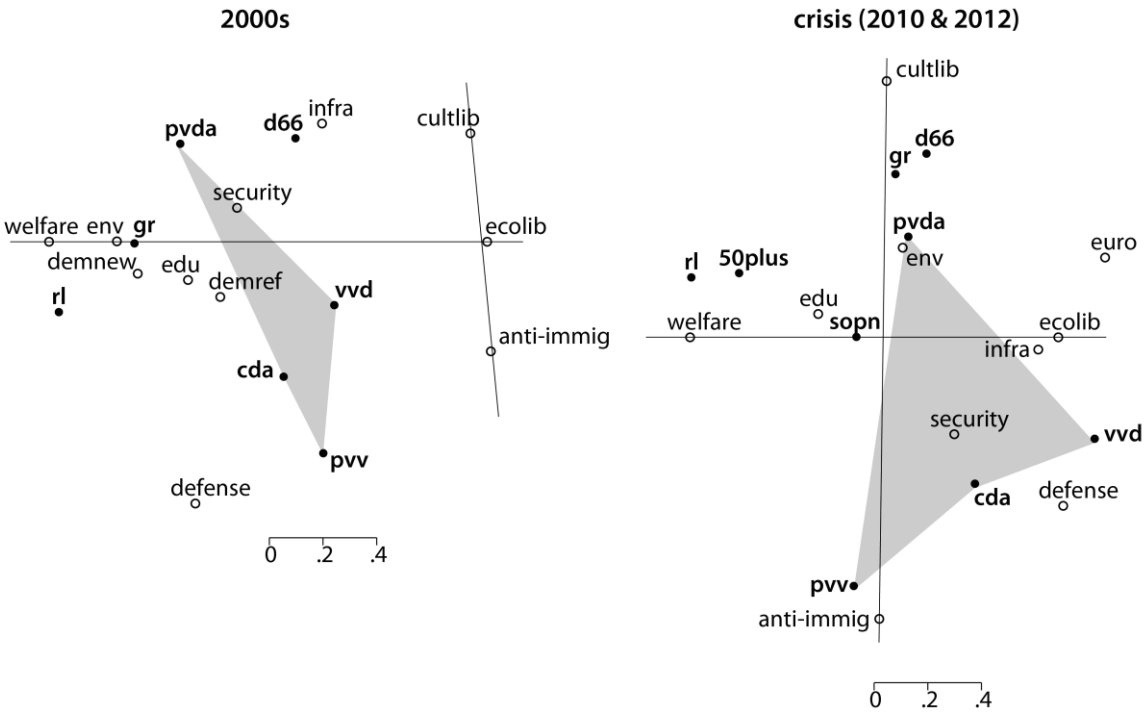
Positive scores correspond with liberal (right-wing) positions regarding welfare and economic liberalism; negative scores correspond with protectionist (left-wing) positions.

Figure 12.4: The structure of the political space: pre-crisis and crisis

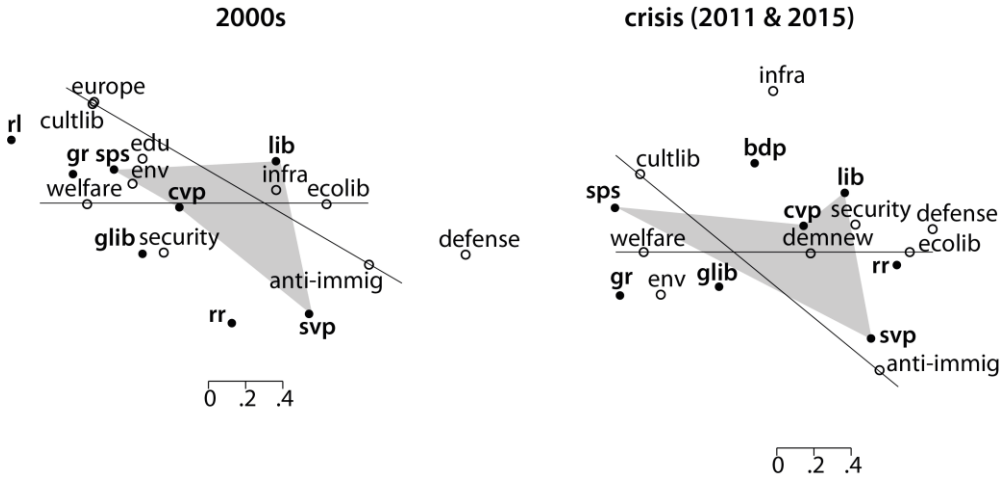
a) France



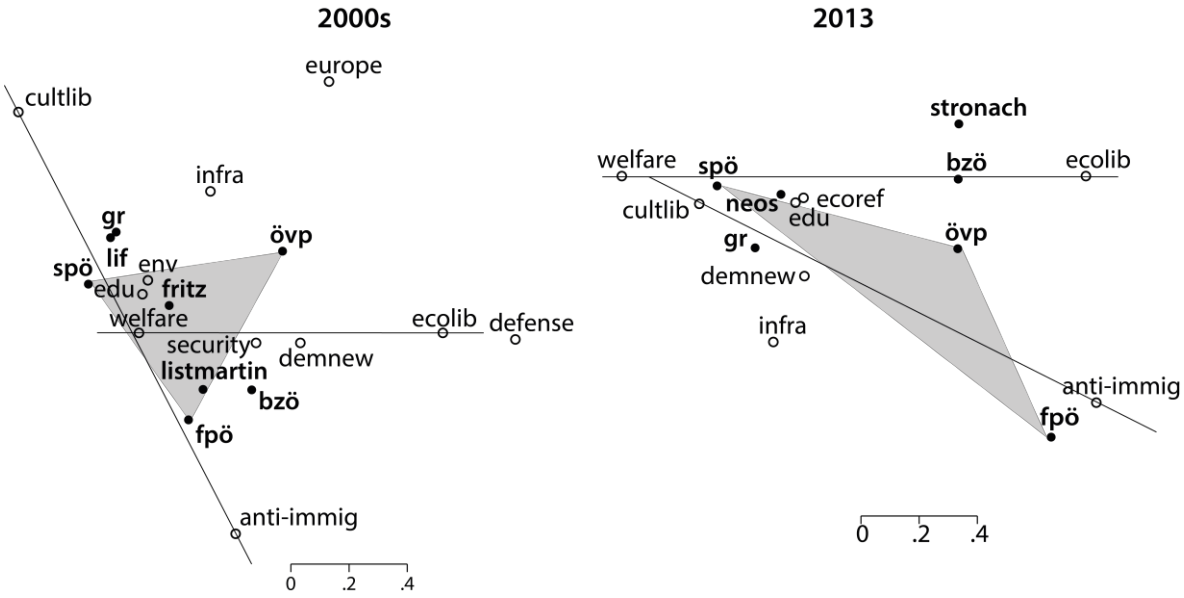
b) The Netherlands



c) Switzerland



d) Austria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europe
cultlib
infra
gr
övp
lif
env
spö
edu
fritz
welfare
ecolib
defense
security
demnew
listmartin
bzö
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