GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION
AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Government and Opposition, Vol. 47, No. 4, pp. 574–596, 2012
doi:10.1111/j.1477-7053.2012.01375.x

Tjitske Akkerman and *Sarah L. de Lange*

Radical Right Parties in Office: Incumbency Records and the Electoral Cost of Governing[1]

ALTHOUGH THERE IS A CLEAR TREND TOWARDS GREATER ACCEPTANCE of radical right parties, they are still less likely to participate in government coalitions than mainstream parties.[2] Our definition of radical right parties is based on the classification that Cas Mudde provides in his comprehensive study of this party family.[3] Ideologically, these parties are primarily committed to a xenophobic type of nationalism; central to their policy programmes is an 'anti-immigration' position.[4] According to this definition, seven parties have entered government in five countries in Western Europe. In Austria, the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ) assumed office in 2000, while the Dansk Folkeparti (DF) became a support party to a minority government led by the Danish liberals in 2001.[5] In Italy,

[1] This work is part of the research programme 'Newly Governing Parties: Success or Failure?' (dossiernummer 013-115-060), which is financed by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO).

[2] Sarah L. de Lange, 'From Pariah to Power: Explanations for the Government Participation of Radical Right-wing Populist Parties in West European Parliamentary Democracies', disseration, University of Antwerp, 2008.

[3] Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

[4] Meindert Fennema, 'Some Conceptual Issues and Problems in the Comparison of Anti-immigrant Parties in Western Europe', *Party Politics*, 3: 4 (1997), pp. 473–92.

[5] Radical right parties that support minority governments are de facto coalition members, because they are part of 'a more or less permanent coalition that ensures acceptance of all or almost all government proposals' (Abram de Swaan, *Coalition Theories and Cabinet Formations: A Study of Formal Theories of Coalition Formation Applied to Nine European Parliaments after 1918*, Amsterdam, Elsevier, 1973, p. 85). From 2001 to 2005 the Norwegian Fremskrittspartiet (FRP) also supported a minority government, but its position was less formalized than that of its Danish counterpart. This case is therefore not included in this article.

Lega Nord (LN) joined the second Berlusconi cabinet in 2001.[6] A year later the Dutch Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF) was invited to participate in a government coalition led by the Christian Democrats after the radical right party had won a landslide victory in the 2002 elections. The Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP) had been represented in the Swiss Federal Council for many years, but in 2003 the radical wing of the party gained the upper hand in the council when its leader Christoph Blocher was elected to it. Finally, in 2010 the Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV) concluded a *gedoogakkoord* (support agreement) with the Dutch Christian Democrats and Liberals. Five radical right parties (BZÖ, FPÖ, LN, LPF and SVP) have now experienced the electoral effects of being a cabinet member, and one radical right party (DF) has experienced the electoral effects of being a support party.

Our first question is how these six parties fared in the elections following their spell in government. As the results show great variation, our next step is to explore explanations for the differential success of radical right parties. Focusing on actor-related variables, we look at policy achievement, performance and party coherence.

THE POST-INCUMBENCY ELECTORAL RESULTS FOR RADICAL RIGHT PARTIES

Table 1 shows that the electoral results of radical right parties after government participation are mixed. On average the incumbency effect has been negative, but most radical right parties have actually won in post-incumbency elections. Of the seven cases in which radical right parties have assumed office and have faced the electorate again, there are three cases in which these parties have been severely punished by voters. For the FPÖ and the LPF the first elections after their term in office proved disastrous. The FPÖ lost 16.9 per cent of its support in the 2003 elections, while the LPF was abandoned by 11.3 per cent of its voters in the same year. The BZÖ was also punished by

[6] The LN also joined the first Berlusconi cabinet in 1994. However, the party was primarily a regionalist party at the time. The issue of autonomy for northern Italy received more attention than immigration and integration in the electoral programme of the LN in 1994. See Stefano Fella and Carlo Ruzza, 'Changing Political Opportunities and the Re-invention of the Italian Right', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 8: 2 (2006), pp. 179–200.

Table 1
The Electoral Consequences of Being in Office

Country	*Cabinet*	*Composition*	*Period**	*Incumbency effect*	*Change in vote share (% of previous election)*
Austria	Schüssel I	ÖVP, FPÖ	2000–3	–16.9%	–62.0%
	Schüssel I	ÖVP, FPÖ/BZÖ	2003–6	–5.9%	–59.0%
Denmark	Rasmussen I	V, KF, (DF)	2001–5	+0.9%	+7.5%
	Rasmussen II	V, KF, (DF)	2005–7	+0.6%	+4.6%
Italy	Berlusconi II	FI, AN, LN	2001–6	+0.7%	+17.9%
Netherlands	Balkenende I	CDA, LPF, VVD	2002–3	–11.3%	–66.5%
Switzerland	–	FDP, CVP, SP, SVP	2003–7	+1.9%	+7.2%

Note: *Including caretaker period.

its voters in the 2006 elections (-5.9 per cent), but less severely than its predecessor three years earlier. In four cases there is no observable negative electoral effect after incumbency. The DF has made small gains in two post-incumbency elections and the SVP has made small gains after one period in office. The LN did comparatively well with a substantial higher vote share in 2006.[7]

When we compare these results to those of other parties, the radical right parties appear not to have fared badly. They have done better than radical left parties, a group in which no party at all managed to win votes after government participation.[8] The electoral results of radical right parties are comparable to those of green government parties. The greens experienced an average negative incumbency effect in Western Europe, due to the highly negative results of the Belgian greens in 2003, but in the majority of cases the green parties won votes.[9] When we compare the results of radical

[7] A new electoral system introduced in Italy in 2005 makes it difficult to compare the electoral results.

[8] Richard Dunphy and Tim Bale, 'The Radical Left in Coalition Government: Towards a Comparative Measurement of Success and Failure', *Party Politics*, 17: 4 (2011), pp. 488–504.

[9] Wolfgang Rüdig, 'Is Government Good for Greens? Comparing the Electoral Effects of Government Participation in Western and East-Central Europe', *European Journal of Political Research*, 45 (2006), p. 132. Cf. Anwen Elias and Filippo Tronconi, 'From Protest to Power: Autonomist Parties in Government', *Party Politics*, 17: 4 (2011), pp. 505–24.

right parties with those of all governing parties, they do not deviate much. Political parties that join a coalition government tend to suffer a negative electoral incumbency effect, but there is substantial variation across countries and over time.[10]

The radical right family appears to be a normal party family in respect of the risk of electoral loss after incumbency.

EXPLAINING INCUMBENCY EFFECTS

There is considerable variation in electoral effects experienced by radical right parties that have been in government. The next question is therefore how to explain this variation. With a small number of cases and a potentially large number of factors that influence electoral results, our analysis is necessarily explorative. There are generally three types of variables that may explain incumbency effects: contextual variables, institutional contexts and party factors. Contextual factors, such as the state of the economy, have limited value for our cases. These factors do not vary much in the five countries. The state of the economy, for instance, is being considered an important predictor of incumbency effects.[11] Governments are more likely to be positively evaluated and rewarded electorally if economic conditions have improved. Economic variables, however, do not vary much in our cases. The pattern of annual growth rates in the five countries is very similar. Economic growth slowed down in the five countries after 2000, climbed temporarily after 2005 to decline again after 2008. Moreover, in all five countries, employment increased steadily after 2000 to decline again after 2008.[12]

We will focus on the role of parties, because the utility of structural explanations, such as institutional or sociological conditions, is also limited. Structural explanations are not very helpful in explaining

[10] Richard Rose and Thomas T. Mackie, 'Incumbency in Government: Asset or Liability?' in Hans Daalder and Peter Mair (eds), *Western European Party Systems: Continuity and Change*, London, Sage, 1983, pp. 115–37; Joost van Spanje, 'Keeping the Rascals In: Anti-Political-Establishment Parties and their Cost of Governing in Established Democracies', *European Journal of Political Research*, 50: 5 (2011), pp. 605–35.

[11] Rüdig, 'Is Government Good for Greens', pp. 127–45; Han Dorussen and Michaell Taylor (eds), *Economic Voting*, London, Routledge, 2002.

[12] http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=350

short-term electoral effects, such as post-incumbency results. The ways in which parties make use of opportunity structures and the strategies that they develop to adapt to the institutional environment are more important. The most likely candidates to explain the differential electoral success of radical right parties that have been in office are therefore party-related variables, such as the policy achievements of parties, the performance of their ministers and party strategies to maintain internal coherence. These are the three elements that we will assess as part of the incumbency record of radical right parties.

Voters will judge parties on the extent to which they have kept their policy promises.[13] Policy achievement is therefore the first aspect of the incumbency record that will be taken into account. Not all policy promises are equally important to voters. According to Budge and Farlie, voters attach greater importance to some issues than to others.[14] In fact, voters may attribute issue ownership to a party, believing that this party is particularly competent to deal with a specific issue.[15] Given the importance of issue salience in electoral and party behaviour, voters will attribute blame and credit for policy reforms according to parties' issue competence and priorities.[16] More specifically, parties that fail to change relevant legislation may lose their ownership of issues to other parties and therefore be abandoned by voters.[17]

[13] Hanne M. Narud and Henry Valen, 'Coalition Membership and Electoral Performance', in Kaare Strøm, Wolfgang C. Müller and Torbjörn Bergman (eds), *Cabinets and Coalition Bargaining: The Democratic Life Cycle in Western Europe*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 369–402; Morris P. Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1981; Susanne Frölich-Steffen and Lars Rensmann, 'Conditions for Failure and Success of Right-Wing Populist Parties in Public Office in the New European Union', in Pascal Delwit and Philippe Poirier (eds), *Extrême Droite et Pouvoir en Europe*, Brussels, Editions de L'Université de Bruxelles, 2007, pp. 117–39.

[14] Ian Budge and Dennis Farlie, *Voting and Party Competition*, London, Wiley, 1983.

[15] John R. Petrocik, 'Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study', *American Journal of Political Science*, 40 (1996), pp. 825–50.

[16] Christopher Anderson, 'The Dynamics of Public Support for Coalition Governments', *Comparative Political Studies*, 19 (1995), pp. 151–70; Éric Bélanger and Bonnie M. Meguid, 'Issue Salience, Issue Ownership, and Issue-based Vote Choice', *Electoral Studies*, 27: 3 (2008), pp. 477–91; Jane Green and Sara B. Hobolt, 'Owning the Issue Agenda: Party Strategies and Vote Choices in British Elections', *Electoral Studies*, 27: 3 (2008), pp. 460–76.

[17] Petrocik, 'Issue Ownership'.

The policy priorities of radical right parties are mainly in the field of immigration and integration policy. Radical right parties are characterized by their outspoken stances on immigration and integration issues and tend to present these as omnibus issues through which other concerns, such as crime and security, care for the elderly and health care, and European integration, can be funnelled.[18] Immigration and integration are not only key issues in radical right parties' programmes, but they also appear to be the central concerns for the voters for these parties.[19] Negative attitudes towards asylum seekers, legal and illegal immigration and multiculturalism prevail among radical right voters and are the main reasons for voters to support radical right parties.[20] Thus, it can be assumed that radical right parties will be evaluated by voters on the basis of their ability to change immigration and integration legislation.

Radical right parties are supposed to have difficulties influencing immigration and integration policy. They are usually invited to govern by larger Christian democratic, conservative and liberal parties, which makes them junior partners in the government coalitions.[21] Moreover, radical right parties can be situated on the far right end of the left–right continuum, which gives them few coalition

[18] Fennema, 'Some Conceptual Issues'; Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties*.

[19] Elisabeth Ivarsflaten, 'What Unites Right-wing Populists in Western Europe? Re-examining Grievance Models in Seven Successful Cases', *Comparative Political Studies*, 41: 1 (2008), pp. 3–23.

[20] Elisabeth Carter, *Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe: Success or Failure?* Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2005; Wouter van der Brug, Meindert Fennema and Jean Tillie, 'Anti-immigrant Parties in Europe: Ideological or Protest Vote?', *European Journal of Political Research*, 37: 1 (2000), pp. 77–102.

[21] In the 1999 elections the FPÖ had beaten the ÖVP by a small margin. However, the two parties gained an equal number of parliamentary seats and the ÖVP took the lead in the coalition negotiations. The FPÖ was forced to acknowledge the strong bargaining position of the Christian Democrat Party and had to grant it the chancellorship. The Swiss situation is even more complicated, since Switzerland is not a parliamentary democracy. The country is not ruled by a government coalition, but by the Swiss Federal Council, in which no distinction is made between senior and junior coalition members. Thus, even though the SVP emerged as the largest party after the Swiss election of 19 October 2003, it only appoints two of the seven members of the Swiss Federal Council.

alternatives.[22] Therefore, they have a weak bargaining position in coalition negotiations and cabinet meetings and it could thus be expected that radical right parties have difficulties in realizing their policy goals when in office. Several authors studying radical right parties emphasize the challenges that radical right parties face when in office. They believe that their weak bargaining position in combination with their radical profile will make these parties more vulnerable to the general electoral cost of participation in government.[23] However, even when radical right parties are junior partners, they do not necessarily have a weak bargaining position. Radical right parties may be able to walk away from the bargaining table and still thrive electorally or influence policy. If other parties want them in the coalition, they will be more disposed to satisfy the party's demands. Moreover, alternative ways of concluding coalition agreements are available. Logrolling – the quid pro quo principle used in coalition negotiations – for example, can be an attractive option for both mainstream and radical right parties. As the latter are owners of immigration and integration issues it can be attractive for centre right parties to make concessions in exchange for gaining leverage on a broad range of economic issues. Coalition partners may decide to give each other policy latitude regarding central goals rather than having to compromise.[24]

The second aspect of the incumbency record is the performance of ministers. Voters will evaluate the performance of government officials when they judge parties.[25] This holds for mainstream parties as well as for niche ones. According to Rüdig, for instance, the electoral fortunes of green parties cannot be explained simply by

[22] Gordon Smith, 'The Search of Small Parties, Problems of Definition, Classification, and Significance', in Ferdinand Müller-Rommel and Geoffrey Pridham (eds), *Small Parties in Western Europe: Comparative and National Perspectives*, London, Sage, 1991, pp. 23–40.

[23] Nicole Bolleyer, 'The Organizational Costs of Public Office', in Kris Deschouwer (ed.), *New Parties in Government: In Power for the First Time*, London, Routledge, 2008, pp. 17–45.

[24] De Lange, 'From Pariah to Power'.

[25] Carl McCurley and Jeffrey J. Mondak, 'The Influence of Incumbents' Competence and Integrity in U.S. House Elections', *American Journal of Political Science*, 39: 4 (1995), pp. 864–85; Paolo Bellucci, 'Tracing the Cognitive and Affective Roots of "Party Competence": Italy and Britain, 2001', *Electoral Studies*, 25 (2006), pp. 548–69.

their impact on policy; an important factor is also the (perceived) performance of green ministers.[26] A lack of ministerial competence, for example, explains why the Belgian green parties Agalev and Ecolo lost the 2003 elections. For radical right parties in particular, appointing competent ministers and junior ministers is not an easy task. Prior to assuming office, they need to have built a reservoir of candidates for office who are sufficiently qualified to run a ministerial department.[27] However, radical right parties may have difficulty in recruiting competent personnel with experience (e.g. in the public sector), because they mainly attract less-educated supporters and have to deal with stigmatization.[28]

Finally, radical right parties have to choose and develop a strategy with regard to taking responsibility for office. The goal of vote maximization needs to be reconsidered in relation to the goals of office and policy. The choice is important if they are to handle the internal tensions that come with being in office. Radical (left and right) parties are particularly prone to the emergence of internal strife because they have to make policy compromises and shed some of their populist rhetoric when they enter government coalitions.[29] This is likely to create tensions between 'fundis' and 'realos', which can only be resolved effectively if the party is sufficiently institutionalized, and manages to unite different factions by developing a coherent strategy. When radical right parties assume office shortly after their electoral breakthrough and have not had time to build a viable party organization, they may easily become the victims of their own success.[30] However, even when they have

[26] Rüdig, 'Is Government Good for Greens', pp. 127–45.

[27] William T. Bianco, *Trust: Representatives and Constituents*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1994; Reinhard Heinisch, 'Success in Opposition – Failure in Government: Explaining the Performance of Right-wing Populist Parties in Public Office', *West European Politics*, 26: 3 (2003), pp. 91–130.

[28] David Art, *Inside the Radical Right: The Development of Anti-immigrant Parties in Western Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011; Sarah L. de Lange and David Art, 'Fortuyn versus Wilders: An Agency-based Approach to Radical Right Party Building', *West European Politics*, 24: 6 (2011), pp. 1229–49.

[29] Heinisch, 'Success in Opposition'.

[30] Michael Minkenberg, 'The Radical Right in Public Office: Agenda-setting and Policy Effects', *West European Politics*, 24: 4 (2001), pp. 1–21.

had time to build up the party organization, entering government brings the risk of internal strife between party members committed to a radical policy programme and those who give priority to holding office.

Taking these three factors as the main components of radical right parties' incumbency record, it is hypothesized that radical right parties with an overall positive record are less likely to be confronted with the cost of governing than radical right parties that fail to build up a positive record.

MEASURING THE POLICY RECORD OF RADICAL RIGHT PARTIES

In order to assess the first element of the incumbency record – the extent to which radical right parties manage to change immigration and integration policy – an index has been developed that measures legislative changes in this policy field. Comparing policy change across national contexts and over time requires us to abstract the specific policy goals that each radical right party presents in its election programme. Therefore, the index has been derived from the ideological characteristics common to this party family. The elementary assumption upon which the index is built is that the ideological core of these parties is nativism. Radical right parties are anti-immigrant because they regard newcomers as a threat to a homogeneous and superior national culture.[31] They are also authoritarian; their 'law and order' preferences are closely linked to their anti-immigration position. Immigration is associated with crime or terrorism, and radical right parties underline that national security concerns prevail over concerns for the rights of immigrants.

The nativist immigration and integration policy (NIIP) index measures to what extent legislative output has a clear radical right signature. Two fields have been distinguished in which radical right parties seek to affect policies: immigration policy and integration policy.

[31] Tjitske Akkerman, 'Anti-immigration Parties and the Defence of Liberal Values: The Exceptional Case of the List Pim Fortuyn', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 10: 3 (2005), pp. 337–54; Hans-Georg Betz, 'Xenophobia, Identity Politics and Exclusionary Populism in Western Europe', in Leo Panitch and Colin Leys (eds), *Fighting Identities: Race, Religion and Ethno-Nationalism*, London, Merlin, 2003, pp. 193–210; Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties*, pp. 11–32.

The first field is that of immigration policies in a broad sense. Central is citizenship/denizenship legislation, because this is the subfield that has been subject to fundamental changes during the past decades, while it also fundamentally divides left- and right-wing parties. The nativist outlook of radical right parties implies a preference for citizenship based on cultural and ethnic affinity. Such an affinity can be acquired naturally by birth or through the process of cultural assimilation. The radical right will hence be in favour of a 'thick' cultural notion of citizenship. Empirical research affirms this thesis. Radical right parties tend to block the trend in the EU towards a liberalization of citizenship policies.[32] The radical right privileges *jus sanguinis* to guarantee cultural and ethnic affinity. Moreover, the radical right tends to regard dual nationality as a threat to national homogeneity and loyalty.[33] Finally, the radical right tends to promote high barriers to obtaining residence permits and to being naturalized, with the exception of those belonging to the cultural or ethnic 'family'. The right-wing concern for security is, for instance, apparent in demands for a clean criminal record as a condition for a residence permit or naturalization. In sum, in the subfield of citizenship/denizenship policies, positive scores will be given to policies that strengthen *jus sanguinis*, raise barriers to naturalization and residence, and restrict dual nationality.[34] A major part of legislative output can be subsumed under this heading, but in order to be comprehensive, three other subfields have been added to the NIIP index: asylum policies, family reunification and illegality. With respect to asylum legislation, radical right parties endorse highly restrictive asylum procedures, with fewer rights of appeal. Family

[32] Marc M. Howard, 'The Impact of the Far Right on Citizenship Policy in Europe: Explaining Continuity and Change', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36: 5 (2010), p. 747.

[33] That is with the exception of dual nationality for residents who belong to the nation but live abroad. They should not be required to discard their original citizenship status.

[34] Rainer Bauböck, Eva Ersbøll, Kees Groenendijk and Harald Waldrauch (eds), *Acquisition and Loss of Nationality: Policies and Trends in 15 European States*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2006; Pontus Odmalm, 'One Size Fits All? European Citizenship, National Citizenship Policies and Integration Requirements', *Representation*, 43: 1 (2007), pp. 19–34; Maarten Vink, 'Citizenship Attribution in Western Europe: International Framework and Domestic Trends', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36: 5 (2010), pp. 713–34.

reunification legislation is mainly being used as an instrument to reduce immigration by raising the barriers to family reunification. Legislation that deals with illegal immigrants will be strongly motivated by security motivations and deterrence. Making illegal immigration a criminal offence, opposing regularization and minimizing access to basic goods are goals promoted by the radical right with regard to illegal immigrants.

A second field that should be distinguished is integration policy – a term used here in the strict sense of policies that regulate civic and cultural integration. In this respect, radical right parties not only tend to be more restrictive than left-wing parties, but they also value cultural assimilation and loyalty to the nation highly. Civic integration policies can be regarded as instrumental for the civic and cultural integration of immigrants, but they can also be seen as a basis for negative sanctions affecting one's legal status.[35] Language tests as a condition for entry into a country, for instance, can be used to restrict immigration from poor countries.[36] For the NIIP index it is therefore relevant to focus on what Goodman has identified as a prohibitive strategy that combines high hurdles for eligibility with an increased emphasis on assimilation through integration tests.[37] Such policies set relatively high standards for knowledge of language, extend integration requirements to civic orientation, history and culture, and tend to demand oaths of loyalty and commitment to political or cultural values. This assimilationist notion of integration will turn into a prohibitive strategy when the passing of integration tests becomes a precondition for entry, residency or naturalization.[38]

In order to assess the changes implied in new immigration and integration legislation presented by governments in which radical

[35] Sara Goodman Wallace, 'Integration Requirements for Integration's Sake? Identifying, Categorising and Comparing Civic Integration Policies', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36: 5 (2010), pp. 753–72; Christian Joppke and Ewa Morawska (eds), *Toward Assimilation and Citizenship: Immigrants in Liberal Nation-states*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2003.

[36] Rainer Bauböck and Christian Joppke (eds), 'How Liberal Are Citizenship Tests?' *EUI Working Paper RSCAS*, 41, San Domenico di Fiesole, European University Institute, 2010.

[37] Goodman, 'Integration Requirements', p. 765.

[38] Dirk Jacobs and Andrea Rea, 'The End of National Models? Integration Courses and Citizenship Trajectories in Europe', *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 9: 2 (2007), pp. 264–83.

Table 2
Policy Change

Country	*Cabinet*	*Composition*	*Period*	*Months*	*Policy output*	*Output/ months*
Austria	Schüssel I	ÖVP, FPÖ	2000–3	37	+1.50	+0.49
Austria	Schüssel II	ÖVP, BZÖ	2003–6	46	+7.50	+1.96
Denmark	Rasmussen I	V, KF, (DF)	2001–5	39	+13.50	+4.15
Denmark	Rasmussen II	V, KF, (DF)	2005–7	33	+2.00	+0.73
Italy	Berlusconi II, III	FI, AN, LN, UDC, NPSI, (PRI)	2001–6	59	+0.50	+0.10
Netherlands	Balkenende I	CDA, VVD, LPF	2002–3	10	0.00	0.00
Switzerland		FDP, CVP, SP, SVP	2003–7	48	+3.50	+0.88

right parties have participated, varying sources have been used. In addition to legislative sources, a wide range of articles, books and expert reports on legislative changes in Austria, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland have been consulted (see Appendix).

THE POLICY RECORD OF RADICAL RIGHT PARTIES

The first element of radical right parties' incumbency record consists of their ability to bring about policy change. Table 2 demonstrates that there are significant differences in the extent to which radical right parties have managed to influence immigration and integration policies.

It is clear that immigration and integration policies have changed most substantially in Denmark and Austria. The Danish minority cabinet Rasmussen I (2001–5), supported by the DF, stands out as the coalition government that succeeded most in shifting immigration and integration legislation to the right. The Danish coalition was highly productive in this first period, producing various amendments to the Nationality Law. Family reunion was drastically restricted by a '24 years rule', which made settlement in Denmark after marriage with a non-EU partner or a Nordic foreign national only possible if both partners are 24 or older. Also notable were the reduced welfare benefits for immigrant workers. Generally, terms of access to citizenship became tighter. The second Rasmussen cabinet (2005–7) achieved far fewer changes in this field.

After Denmark, immigration and integration policies have changed most substantially in Austria. The Schüssel II cabinet (2003–6), which initially included the FPŐ and later the BZŐ, also

produced several laws with a radical right profile. The Austrian parliament, for instance, accepted a new Asylum Law in October 2003 that, among other things, restricted the appeals process of asylum applicants. It should be noted, however, that this law was eventually declared unconstitutional by the Austrian Constitutional Court. Moreover, naturalization requirements and civic integration demands were raised in the Settlement and Residence Act of 2005. In contrast, the policy output of the first Schüssel cabinet was rather modest.

The SVP with leader Blocher as Minister of Justice in the Swiss Federal Council (2003–7) was moderately successful in putting its stamp on the immigration and integration policy of the Swiss government. The Asylum Law, initiated by Blocher and accepted by referendum in 2006, clearly restricted the rights of asylum applicants and increased coercive measures. The Immigration Law accepted in 2006 was relatively moderate, however. The party also mobilized voters by organizing referendums. The success in terms of policy achievement was mixed. The SVP lost two referendums it had sponsored in 2004. The party opposed other aspects, including the right to appeal against negative outcomes of naturalization requests, but lost the referendum that was required to change the Constitution. On the other hand, the party campaigned successfully for a referendum to reject legislation that eased the requirements for the naturalization of second- and third-generation immigrants.

In the Berlusconi II cabinet (2001–6) the LN had even more difficulties in bringing about policy change in the preferred direction. Policy change – mainly based on the Bossi–Fini Law – could only be partly marked as radical right. The Bossi–Fini Law put a heavier imprisonment penalty on those who breached orders to leave the country and restricted the renewability of residence permits, but the law also brought Europe's largest ever amnesty for immigrant workers *sans papiers*.

Finally, the Dutch cabinet that included the LPF was the least successful with a score of 0. This cabinet lasted only three months and therefore no new legislation had been passed.

In sum, three groups can be distinguished: coalitions that made remarkable policy gains in a radical right direction (with a score higher than 1.00 on the NIIP index), coalitions with moderate results (scores between 0.5 and 1.00) and coalitions with little result

(0.00–0.5 points). The first group consists of the Danish Rasmussen I cabinet (2001–5) and the Austrian Schüssel II cabinet (2003–6). The Swiss cabinet 2003–7 and the Rasmussen II cabinet (2005–7) belong to the middle category. Finally, the cabinets with little or no result are the Italian Berlusconi II/III cabinets (2001–6), the Austrian Schüssel I cabinet (2000–3) and the Dutch Balkenende I cabinet (2002–3).[39] This categorization makes it clear that policy achievement cannot fully explain the variation in post-incumbency results. While the Schüssel II cabinet belongs to the category with high policy achievement, the BZÖ lost more than half of its pre-incumbency votes. The Berlusconi II/III cabinet, on the other hand belongs to the group that did not achieve much with regard to immigration and integration policies, but the LN nevertheless won votes in the 2006 elections.

PARTY PERFORMANCE IN OFFICE AND SELECTION OF CANDIDATES

When parties enter office they have to meet new demands. Two functions in particular will be tested: selection and coordination. Parties have to be able to recruit and select suitable candidates for office. They also have to coordinate the party on the ground and the party in office in order to maintain internal coherence. We will look at the turnover rate of radical right ministers to assess party performance. Resignations by ministers can have various causes, and a high turnover of ministers need not always be a sign of parties having difficulty with selection or coordination. We regard resignations that were due to personal errors, such as private, unprofessional or unethical misconduct or to policy errors by the ministers that had to step down as indications of selection difficulties.[40] Resignations due

[39] For a comparison with the policy records of cabinets that did not include radical right parties, see Tjitske Akkerman, 'The Impact of Radical Right Parties in Government: A Comparative Analysis of Immigration and Integration Policies in Nine Countries (1996–2010)', *West European Politics*, 35: 3 (2012), pp. 511–29.

[40] Elaine Thompson and Greg Tillotsen, 'Caught in the Act: The Smoking Gun View of Ministerial Responsibility', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 58: 1 (1999), pp. 48–57; Samuale Berlinski, Torun Dewan and Keith Dowding, 'The Length of Ministerial Tenure in the United Kingdom, 1945–97', *British Journal of Political Science*, 37 (2007), pp. 245–62.

Table 3
Ministerial Turnover and Organizational Fitness for Office

Country	*Party*	*Ministerial turnover*		*Intra-party conflict**	*Days in office*
		Number of changes	*Number of portfolios*		
Austria	FPÖ	4	6	++	1,120
	FPÖ/BZÖ	2	3	+	1,413
Denmark	DF I			–	1,179
	DF II			–	1,008
Italy	LN II	2	3	–	1,820
Netherlands	LPF	2	4	++	86
Switzerland	SVP	0	0	–	–

Notes: *– = no conflict; + = conflict; ++ = conflict leading to downfall of cabinet.
Turnover rate = number of changes/number of portfolios/days in office.

to internal party conflict are considered signs of coordination problems. Finally, there may be reasons for resignations that do not have much relation with party performance, such as sudden health problems or political appointments.

Ministerial turnover was high for the majority of radical right parties (Table 3). More than half of the ministers of the LPF, FPÖ, FPÖ/BZÖ and LN resigned, and in several cases these resignations caused the downfall of the cabinet.

A closer inspection of the reasons for resignations makes apparent that incompetence played an important role in the resignations of FPÖ and LPF ministers. In the Schüssel I cabinet six FPÖ ministers resigned, resulting in the highest turnover rate of all the radical right government parties. Incompetence, however, played a major role in only three cases. After only 25 days Minister of Justice Krüger resigned, because he was unable to handle the pressure that comes with leading a ministerial department. Eight months later, Minister of Social Security and Generations Sickl was replaced as well, because she had a conflict with Vice-Chancellor Riess-Passer and was perceived by the general public and her staff as incompetent. The departure of Minister of Transport, Innovation and Technology Schmid, however, was due to disagreement with the party leadership over the direction in which transport policies should be changed, and cannot

be regarded as being due to incompetence.[41] In January 2002 his successor, Forstinger, had to resign as well. Her competence was thrown into doubt because of the various policy U-turns she had made. Finally, in September 2002, ministers Riess-Passer and Grasser stepped down, but these resignations were the effect of an internal party crisis regarding strategy. Incompetence played a role in half the cases of ministerial turnover in the FPÖ.

From 2003 to 2007, when the BZÖ replaced the FPÖ in the Schüssel II cabinet, ministerial turnover was also high. Herbert Haupt had to hand over the vice-chancellorship to Hubert Gorbach in 2003. Minister of Justice Dieter Böhmdorfer, previously a confidant of Haider, stepped down after the dramatic loss of four of the five seats after the elections for the European Parliament on 13 June 2004. Minister for Social Security, Generations and Consumer Protection Herbert Haupt followed later. The departure of these two ministers cannot be interpreted in terms of failed competence. In the background of this reshuffle were not only the lost elections, but also an ongoing internal conflict about strategy and a struggle for control over the party.

When the LPF assumed office in 2002, the party experienced many of the same problems as the BZÖ/FPÖ. Only hours after her appointment, junior minister Bijlhout had to resign because she had lied about her involvement in the Surinamese militia after this militia had murdered 15 opponents of the military regime in December 1982. Two LPF ministers, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport Bomhoff and Minister of Economic Affairs Heinsbroek eventually had to resign after having been continually in conflict with each other. When the LPF leaders did not succeed in settling the conflict, the coalition partners decided to break up the coalition and to call new elections. The LPF ministers, who eventually jeopardized the government coalition because of conflicting personal ambitions, both lacked political experience, and their resignations can be regarded as indicators of incompetence.

The performance of the SVP councillors is not quite comparable to that of other radical right ministers. In Switzerland, ministers are elected by the Federal Assembly for a period of four years and can be re-elected after this period. Swiss ministers cannot be impeached or

[41] Fritz Fallend, 'Are Right-wing Populism and Government Incompatible? The Case of the Freedom Party of Austria', *Representation*, 40: 2 (2004), pp. 115–30.

voted out of office, and they therefore rarely resign prematurely. However, it should be noted that SVP Minister of Justice and Police Blocher was severely criticized by journalists and politicians from mainstream parties. This criticism was directed at his unaccommodating conduct towards fellow federal councillors and his refusal to moderate his tone regarding immigrants. As a consequence, he was not re-elected in 2007. Blocher, the fourth councillor to fail to be re-elected since the establishment of the Federal Council in 1848, was succeeded by Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, a more moderate SVP politician. His failure to get re-elected indicates that he did not adequately adapt to his role in office.

The LN managed to avoid the kind of problems that the FPÖ and LPF experienced, because party leader Bossi created an inner circle of devotees that could serve as a reservoir of ministers and deputy ministers prior to assuming office.[42] Bossi's recruitment strategy paid off; the general image is that the LN is a competent and reliable coalition partner. Although the party had to replace several ministers in the Berlusconi II cabinet, it had to do so for reasons that are different to those of the FPÖ or LPF. In 2004 LN leader Bossi had to be replaced as minister of institutional reforms because he had a serious stroke. However, he accepted the same ministerial portfolio in 2008, when the Berlusconi III cabinet assumed office. Two years later his successor, Roberto Calderoli, had to give up his seat in the Berlusconi II cabinet due to his role in 'the cartoon crisis', during which he had worn a T-shirt emblazoned with one of the Muhammad cartoons. Although Calderoli also returned to office in 2008, his resignation in 2006 can be regarded as being due to unprofessional conduct.

The DF cannot easily be compared in this respect. As a support party, the Danish party did not have to pass the test of selecting candidates for office.

In sum, the parties can be divided in three groups with respect to the performance of their ministers. The FPÖ and LPF had the greatest difficulties in recruiting and selecting competent and reliable

[42] Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell, 'The LN in the Second Berlusconi Government: In a League of its Own', *West European Politics*, 28: 5 (2005), pp. 952–72; Jonathan Hopkin and Pietro Ignazi, 'Newly Governing Parties in Italy: Comparing the PDS-DS, Lega Nord and Forza Italia', in Kris Deschouwer (ed.), *New Parties in Government: In Power for the First Time*, Oxford, Routledge, 2008, pp. 45–64.

candidates, the LN and SVP belong to a middle category, while BZÖ ministers resigned for reasons that had little to do with incompetence, and the DF had no problems in this respect.

PARTY PERFORMANCE AND COORDINATION

The incumbency record of parties will also depend on how they will manage to coordinate factions within the party. As the discussion of causes for ministerial turnover made clear, conflicts about party strategy also played an important role. In each of the seven cases under investigation, government participation created tensions within the radical right parties, because political strategies had to be adjusted. However, some radical right parties dealt with these internal tensions in an effective way, while others succumbed to bitter internal strife.

The DF experienced the least tension from its government participation. The absence of organizational problems in the case of the DF is not very surprising, because the party was never part of the cabinet. The party did not have to cope with potential tensions between the party in office and the party on the ground. The DF clearly had a relatively comfortable position, because it could fairly easily follow a strategy of remaining committed to a radical opposition role on the one hand, while claiming policy results on the other. With one foot in and one foot out of government, there was relatively little pressure on the party leadership to choose between a realist and a radical strategy.

More surprising is that the LN managed to survive the Berlusconi II cabinet without any high-profile conflicts or splits. One of the reasons could be that some factions had already left the party at the end of the 1990s.[43] The tensions in the party between grassroots activists and high-ranking party officials, however, only gradually diminished[44] Another reason might be that ministers and junior ministers deliberately presented themselves as fighters and protesters in order to avoid a tug of war between fundis and realos. The party picked its enemies within the multi-party coalition to position itself as an outsider, while retaining close relations with the major coalition

[43] Ibid.

[44] Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell, 'The Lega Nord back in Government', *West European Politics*, 33: 6 (2010), pp. 1318–40.

partner, Forza Italia.[45] LN leader Bossi employed this 'half in, half out' strategy under relatively favourable conditions. The coalition was based on a pre-election coalition 'bloc', which implied that all the parties involved had a relatively high interest in not defecting. The stability of pre-election coalitions is comparatively high.[46] Moreover, the multi-party coalition provided an opportunity to pick enemies and friends among coalition partners. Such an opportunity was absent in the cases of the FPÖ and BZÖ, for instance. As a consequence, the LN did not thrive organizationally, but it did manage to survive its period in office.

The SVP experienced some internal turmoil after it obtained a second seat in the Federal Council, mostly due to the existence of two factions within the party: the first centrist-agrarian and moderate, the second nationalist and radical. The appointment of Christoph Blocher, leader of the nationalist wing of the SVP, to the Federal Council put an end to the domination of the centrist-agrarian wing of the party. However, the tensions between a moderate and a radical wing in the SVP came to the fore after the elections of 2007, when Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf succeeded Blocher in the Federal Council. The SVP was fairly successful in holding on to a vote-maximizing strategy by distancing itself publicly from policy compromises that were electorally costly. The party could and did make use of the space provided by available instruments of direct democracy such as popular initiatives and referendums to retain its confrontational stance. Moreover, federal systems also provide relatively favourable opportunities for a dual strategy of maintaining an opposition role regionally while participating in federal government.[47]

The FPÖ had great difficulties with party coherence. On the ground, the FPÖ continued to act as an opposition party, with Haider as governor in Carinthia openly opposing the government. When he also gave up his coordinating position in the coalition committee in

[45] Daniele Albertazzi, Duncan McDonnell and James L. Newell, 'Di Lotta e di Governo: The Lega Nord and Rifondazione Comunista in Office', *Party Politics*, 17 (2011), pp. 471–87; Daniele Albertazzi, 'Reconciling "Voice" and "Exit": Swiss and Italian Populists in Power', *Politics*, 29: 1 (2009), pp. 1–10.

[46] Benoit Rihoux and Wolfgang Rüdig, 'Analyzing Greens in Power: Setting the Agenda', *European Journal of Political Research*, 45 (2006), p. 18.

[47] Frölich-Steffen and Rensmann, 'Conditions for Failure and Success of Right-wing Populist Parties'.

February 2002, the party leadership became divided between a governing centre led by Vice-Chancellor Riess-Passer and an oppositional centre led by Haider.[48] Eventually, Riess-Passer and her allies (e.g. Finance Minister Grasser) decided to resign, and new elections were called. Intra-party conflict also plagued the FPÖ in the Schüssel II cabinet. Grassroots functionaries grew increasingly alienated from an office-oriented strategy after the party had been severely reduced not only electorally, but also in terms of funding and positions in office. Haider's position had already been weakened and he could only manage to regain control over the party by splitting it up.[49] The FPÖ split in April 2005; the secessionist BZÖ remained in government and rode out the storm. The conflict in the party between the pragmatists in government and their opponents on principle on the ground was not successfully settled by a 'half in, half out' strategy in this case. The wavering course of Haider, changing from siding with the opposition on the ground to taking a mediating role or opting primarily for office, was partly responsible for this failure. However, the choice for a dual strategy was also more risky than it was for the SVP or the LN. The FPÖ did have less space in the coalition to maintain an oppositional role, with only one coalition partner (in contrast to the LN) and a coalition based on policy agreement (in contrast to the SVP).

In comparison to the FPÖ, the LPF was a 'flash in the pan'. It was rushed off its feet by fast electoral success and by the murder of its leader Pim Fortuyn shortly before the parliamentary elections in 2002, and the cabinet in which the party participated lasted only three months. Internal conflicts in the party and the two openly quarrelling LPF ministers made the coalition partners despair.[50] Internal strife reached a climax when, according to the Christian Democrat leader in parliament at the time, an LPF member of

[48] Kurt Richard Luther, 'Governing with Right-wing Populists and Managing the Consequences: Schüssel and the FPÖ', in Günther Bischof and Fritz Plasser (eds), *The Schüssel Era in Austria*, Innsbrück and New Orleans, Innsbrück University Press and University of New Orleans Press, 2009, pp. 79–103.

[49] Kurt Richard Luther, 'Of Goals and Own Goals: A Case Study of Right-wing Populist Strategy for and During Incumbency', *Party Politics*, 17: 4 (2011), pp. 453–70.

[50] Paul Lucardie, 'The Netherlands: Populism versus Pillarization', in Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell (eds), *The Spectre of Western European Democracy*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp. 151–66.

parliament had even pulled out a gun to settle an internal quarrel. This was the final incident that made the coalition partners decide to dissolve the cabinet.[51] In the case of the LPF the lack of leadership and lack of institutionalization were so fundamental that a strategy for coping with government responsibility could hardly be developed. Personal ambitions rather than party strategy were the main causes of various internal conflicts. In this respect the party is hardly comparable to the FPÖ, even though both parties jeopardized cabinet stability with their internal conflicts.

On average, party performance with respect to internal coherence is positive for the DF, the LN and the SVP, whereas that of the BZÖ, the FPÖ and the LPF is negative. Since the former parties exploited the space given to them for an oppositional role successfully, while at the same time remaining responsible cabinet members or support parties, the government coalitions in which they participated turned out to be long-lived. The DF has been a reliable ally of the conservatives and liberals for almost a decade, and the LN participated in the longest-serving Italian cabinet since 1861. The problems that the FPÖ and the LPF experienced while in office had severe repercussions for the stability of the government coalitions in which these parties participated. Because of the high ministerial turnover and the internal strife within the FPÖ and LPF, their coalitions partners felt obliged to call early elections. The Schüssel I cabinet resigned after 1,120 days and the Balkenende I cabinet that assumed office in the Netherlands in 2002 resigned the same year after 86 days in office. It thus seems that the adage, 'the breaker pays' also holds for radical right parties.

CONCLUSION

If one considers their post-incumbency electoral results, on average radical right parties appear to have been evaluated as normal parties by voters. Their results do not deviate from the general pattern of electoral results following incumbency. There is substantial variation

[51] Siep Wynia, 'Bedreigingen Maakten einde aan Balkenende I', *Elsevier*, 12: 4 (2006), at http://www.elsevier.nl/web/Nieuws/Politiek/73772/Bedreigingen-maakten-einde-aan-Balkenende-I.htm.

across the radical right parties, however. Our comparison of the incumbency records of the BZÖ, DF, FPÖ, LN, LPF and SVP shows that policy achievements have a limited role in explaining this variation. Clearly, voters did not automatically attribute policy achievements to the radical right parties, despite their ownership of immigration and integration issues. The legislative output of the Schüssel II cabinet, for instance, marked a noticeable shift to a more restrictive and nativist direction, but due to organizational problems the BZÖ could not credibly claim these results. In coalition governments, weak performance and internal conflicts not only were an obstacle to claiming policy results, but also might discredit parties as officeholders more generally. Three radical right parties performed weakly and could not cope with internal party strife: the FPÖ, BZÖ and LPF. Poor selection of candidates for office, but above all party schisms and cabinet instability are likely reasons why voters punished these parties severely after incumbency.

The radical right parties with a positive policy record that managed more or less to adapt to office organizationally were electorally rewarded. The DF and SVP belong to this category; these parties enjoyed some relative advantages. The DF, a support party to a minority cabinet, did not have to appoint ministers and therefore the performance of its ministers cannot be judged, nor did the party have to deal with tensions between the party in office and the party on the ground. For the SVP, the test of ministers' performance was relatively easy, as Swiss ministers have secure positions and rarely resign prematurely. Internal conflict remained more or less under control and the SVP successfully maintained an opposition role while in office. The LN appears to be a more puzzling case: the party only marginally achieved policy change, but still made electoral gains after its spell in office. The employment of a 'half in, half out' strategy may have been rewarding electorally for the LN. The three parties that gained additional votes after incumbency exploited the relatively favourable conditions for combining an opposition role with responsibility for office. The LN could exploit its position in a multi-party pre-election 'bloc'. The DF could do so thanks to being literally 'half in, half out' as a support party for a minority cabinet. The SVP could make use of popular initiatives and referendums to cultivate a confrontational style and to avoid responsibility for policy compromises. This strategy helped the DF, SVP and LN to retain a radical profile and a confrontational style when in office.

APPENDIX

Codebook Nativist Immigration and Integration Policy Index

Field	*Immigration policy*				*Integration policy*
Subfield	*Citizenship legislation*	*Asylum legislation*	*Illegality legislation*	*Family reunification legislation*	
Measures	• Residence requirements first generation	• Application procedures • Rights to appeal	• Criminal offence • Length of detention • Children's rights	• Age, income or other requirements for spouses	• Language/ integration requirements at entry
	• Clean criminal record requirements • Financial means requirements • Grounds for expulsion		• Regularization, partial or general	• Age of children	• Language/ integration requirements for residence permit or naturalization
	• Barriers for spouses (years of marriage) • Fees		• Access to basic goods		• Level of language test
	• Dual nationality renunciation requirement • Exceptions				• Additional requirements: civic orientation, loyalty oath or ceremony, history and culture
	• *Jus soli* for second or third generation at birth or after birth • Parental residency requirements • Ethnic/cultural affinity as ground for access, residence or naturalization				• Fees • Fines

Notes: Implemented policies in line with the agenda of radical right parties receive positive scores, whereas implemented policies that are not in line with this agenda receive negative scores. Legislative change is accorded scores of 0.5 to 1.0 on the various indicators.

Citizenship policies. An increase of residence requirements will result in +0. 5 (1–2 years) or +1 (>2 years). A stricter clean criminal record will vary from +0.5 to +1.0 depending on the sentence (2 years or more = 0.5) and the sanction (temporary exclusion from naturalization or permanent exclusion). Reductions of requirements, easier procedures etc. will result in a deduction of 0.5 to 1.0 point. The introduction of *jus soli* will result in principle in –1.0, but when this legislative change has marginal impact only 0.5 will be deducted.

Asylum legislation. 0.5 will be added with the introduction of more restrictive procedures, reduction of protection status, reduction of social assistance or more coercive measures such as detentions.

Illegality legislation. Regularization or amnesty will result in a deduction of 0.5 to 1.0 point depending on the scale. Granting or withholding public health services, public education services, shelter etc. will result in adding or deducting 0.5; when children are involved, an extra 0.5 may be added.

Family reunion legislation. The introduction of a minimum age requirement will result in +0.5 (e.g. 21 years), or +1 when the age requirement has been raised substantially (e.g. 24 years).

Civic integration legislation. The introduction of a language competency requirement at an elementary level will result in +0.5. When the required language level is high at introduction, 1 point will be added, or when raised from elementary to high 0.5. For the introduction of a loyalty oath, a cultural knowledge test etc. 0.5 point for each will be added. However, when these tests are introduced at entry level an extra 0.5 point will be added, because would-be immigrants will have more difficulty in passing these tests. (Cf. Sara Goodman Wallace, 'Integration Requirements for Integration's Sake? Identifying, Categorising and Comparing Civic Integration Policies', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36: 5 (2010), pp. 753–72).