

THE MELTING OF THE PARTY SYSTEM?

Voters' re-alignment to populist radical right parties and the consequences for Western European Party Systems

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Abstract

Has the electoral success of Populist Radical Right Parties (PRRPs) changed the Western European party system? Which political background and voting history do voters have that realign to PRRPs and why do they switch to PRRPs? These questions are answered in two steps, using tangible vote switchers from a combined dataset of multiple waves of the Dutch LISS panel dataset. Firstly, a descriptive analysis finds that left-wing voters are equally likely to re-align to PRRP as right-wing voters. Afterwards, a regression analysis finds that a high level of relative deprivation and high level of anti-immigration sentiment increase the respondents' likelihood of re-alignment. However, the effect of the predictors differs per voter group. Based on these results this thesis makes a two-folded argument against Mair's (1997) freezing thesis. Firstly, because voters of economically left-wing and right-wing parties are equally likely to re-align to PRRPs it can be argued that the economic divide Mair argues for does not hold anymore. Secondly, due to the strong predicting effect of anti-immigration sentiments and an increase thereof, it can be argued that the new cultural dimension, on which traditional parties converge in the centre, has gained electoral importance and has not been integrated in the traditional left-right competition.

Preface

After graduating from the University of Twente with a bachelor degree in European Public Administration, I wanted to re-orientate myself into the direction of political science. The pre-master and then master program of political science at the Radboud University was at the same time challenging, inspiring and rewarding. Learning about the consequences and values of liberal democracy, different political systems and political ideologies has been very rewarding and I am grateful for all insights and knowledge I received over these past two years. Although the Covid-19 pandemic has been an extra challenge for the teaching and learning process, I would like to thank everyone in the department of political science for their continuous effort to provide us students with the best possible education.

Writing this master thesis has been a rewarding and fun experience. For someone who never considered doing research before, these past few months have encouraged me in seeking a career in political science research and inspired my ambition of doing a PhD in comparative politics with the focus on voting behaviour. The person that has not only hugely contributed to and encouraged me in my ambitions, but as well supported me during the processes of writing the thesis and throughout the past two years, is my thesis supervisor Dr. Andrej Zaslove. I would like to thank you Andrej for your endless patience when answering all of my many questions. Thank you for your encouragement, your professional, knowledgeable input in our long discussions, and your kind, witty and supportive attitude. It has been a privilege to learn so much from you.

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

Bi-polar and tri-polar party system	the number of ideological poles of party families that can be formed in one party system
PRR	Populist radical right
PRRP	Populist radical right party
PRRPs	Populist radical right parties
LISS	Longitudinal Internet studies for the Social Sciences

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Introduction

Although populism as a concept has been known to politics for many decades (Hawkins, Read, & Pauwels, 2017), populist radical right parties (PRRPs) have gained major electoral successes only since the beginning of the 21st century (Spoon & Klüver, 2019). The most recent example of the Netherlands, where the PRRP bloc of the three parties - Party for Freedom (PVV), Forum for Democracy (FvD) and Yes21 (Ja21) - increased their vote share by 10% (Kiesraad, 2021), shows that PRRPs are able to presumably not only hold their previous voters, but as well attract new voters. The same can be observed in Italy, where the PRRP League (Lega) increased its vote share by 13.3%, which made it the third largest party (Dennison & Geddes, 2021; Politico, 2018). Furthermore, the decade long success of PRRPs in Austria, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland provides evidence against the common argument of politicians and political scientists that the PRRPs are a short-lived home for protest voters and would disappear again (Lorenzini & van Ditmars, 2019; Pellikaan, de Lange, & van der Meer, 2016).

It can be argued that the electoral success of PRRPs has changed not only the vote distribution between parties, but that the re-alignment of voters to PRRPs has transformed the party system of Western European countries. Although new parties have come and gone throughout the last decades in Western Europe, this thesis argues that the success of PRRPs has changed the former bi-polar party system to a tri-polar party system, due to its presumed broad support from former left-wing as well as right-wing voters. The terms bi-polar and tri-polar party system describe in this thesis the number of ideological poles of party families that can be formed in one party system, as discussed by Oesch and Rennwald (2018). A common contention is that Peter Mair's (1997) freezing thesis holds true, with the majority of voters switching only between parties within the same left-wing or right-wing party bloc. However, is it true that voters who voted for a left-wing or right-wing party in the previous election have re-aligned to PRRPs? Can it be argued that this process of re-alignment challenges Mair's (1997) freezing thesis?

Many scholars have published ideas about why voters switch, and which voters would be more prone to switch (e.g. Oesch & Rennwald, 2018). Therefore, political scientists have a good idea about the profile of voters that vote for PRRPs. However, we know less about who the tangible switchers are. Who are the voters that switch from one party to another? This is a relevant question for two reasons: Firstly, it is important to know what kinds of voters abandon non-populist parties to vote for populist parties. Secondly, this says a lot about the changing nature of party systems. To put it more succinctly, it is one thing to identify the profile of PRR voters,

and it is another to identify who actually switches from one party to another. In essence this touches on a fundamental question in party system research: are voters realigning and in what way? This thesis contributes to the academic discussion on party system change by testing existing theoretical expectations, raised by political scientists, about voter re-alignment to PRRPs on tangible vote switchers. Thereby the study advances the academic discussion about re-alignment theories.

To explain the ongoing re-alignment of voters towards the PRRP bloc, it is necessary to test whether these voter profiles hold when tested on tangible vote switchers. Therefore, this study tests voter profiles and vote switching reasons of individuals by analysing respondents' voting behaviour, over multiple election periods using the Dutch LISS panel data. To this end the following research question is asked:

Why do voters re-align their vote to a populist radical right party in Western Europe?

This research question can be divided in two sub-questions.

- 1) Can empirical data confirm that voters switch to populist radical right parties from the non-voter group as well as right-wing and left-wing parties and do these voters differ from each other?
- 2) Why do voters switch towards populist radical right parties?

In the past, academic literature has used diverse conceptualizations of radical right populism. Therefore, this thesis clearly defines populism, using Mudde's (2004) ideational approach. Here radical right populism is defined as an ideology that divides society into three groups with the pure people on the one side, who are good and define their policy preference based on some undefined form of common sense logic. Contrasting to the pure people are firstly the corrupt elite, who does not answer to the people's needs and secondly the non-natives who, based on a different ethnicity, religion or birthplace, pose a threat to the homogeneity of the nation (Mudde, 2007; Mudde, 2017). Based on this definition of radical right populism, the societal relevance of this thesis becomes clear. The polarising and anti-liberal tendency that populism in general and radical right populism in specific has, can be understood as threat to democracy. By characterising non-natives as a threat, whole groups of people are discriminated against. Therefore, by tracing who is more likely to switch to a PRRP and why, these factors can be addressed by other political actors and strengthen liberal democratic attitudes in citizens.

The research question is answered in the following five chapters. The theoretical chapter firstly elaborates on the relevance of this study, by explaining how the success of the PRRPs has transformed the party system from a bi-polar to being tri-polar system. Afterwards in the theoretical chapter it is hypothesised which voters are more prone to switch to the PRRPs and lastly it is hypothesised why the voters re-align to PRRPs. In the methodological chapter, the case selection is justified, theoretical mechanisms are operationalized and the data used are described. Afterwards, the third chapter tests the statistical assumptions of the models and tests the models. The fourth chapter then discusses the results from the analysis and interprets them in regards to the arguments of party system change. Lastly, in the conclusion, the research question is answered, and the results and its implications are reflected upon.

Chapter 1: Theory

The rise and fall of new parties have always caught the attention of political scientists. However, the rise of PRRPs is especially interesting due to the expected impact that the suspected vote re-alignment to the PRRPs has on the Western European party systems. Therefore, the first section of the theoretical chapter presents arguments why a change of the party system can be expected to take place and then draws hypotheses on which voters re-align to PRRPs. In a second step, hypotheses about the reasons for the re-alignment to PRRPs are formulated.

1.1 Change of the Western European party system?

PRRPs are expected to have changed the Western European party system from a bi-polar to a tri-polar system. This means that before of the rise of the PRRPs, the Western European party system was frozen, along the economic division of two poles. The first pole is composed of parties that support economic redistributive policies, called the left-wing pole. The second pole is composed of parties that support economic liberal policies, called the right-wing pole. PRRPs are expected to have changed this bi-polar party system for three reasons. Firstly, PRRP were able to form a new pole due to the traditional parties' failure to integrate the newly salient immigration cleavage in their traditional line of competition (Kriesi, 2012). Secondly, instead of competing with the left-wing and right-wing parties on the traditional economic dimension, PRRPs blur their economic position, which prevents an allocation of the PRRPs on either economic pole (Rovny, 2013; Rovny & Polk, 2020). Thirdly, by blurring their economic position and primarily campaigning on their anti-immigration stance, PRRPs, are expected to be able to generate a broad voter re-alignment from former non-voters, left-wing and right-wing voters.

1.1.1 The freezing thesis

Peter Mair (1997) argues that political scientists are too often too hasty to talk about a change in the party system. Instead, he takes on Rokkan and Lipset's (1967) freezing thesis. He argues that the left and right division of parties has proven flexible enough to incorporate all new cleavages that have risen and fallen over time. His main argument is that although voters may switch to other parties between two consecutive elections, they mostly do so within their party bloc, which means that the re-alignment only takes place in a limited manner, as voters do not change their ideological preference. The main division on which Mair (1997) bases his argumentation is the left and right division. Traditionally the left and right distinction is defined

by an economic conceptualization, which distinguishes how liberal or redistributive parties' and voters' economic ideology is. Following this definition left-wing voters and parties favour a high level of redistributive policies. On the other side of the spectrum, the traditional right-wing voters and parties are liberal and favour free market policies (Ruth, 2018). Consequentially, traditionally, political parties compete in this bipolar political space using the economic dimension to attract voters and differentiate themselves from their opponents. Although when new cleavages like the ecological grievances gained importance in the 1980s and new parties emerged, the traditional left and right wing parties were able to compete on the cleavages along their existing theoretical division. Left-wing parties adopted an ecological protective stance, while right-wing parties campaigned on a more liberal stance. This means that while ecologically protective Green parties gained electoral support, most voters that switched towards this party were from the left-wing party bloc, which means that although voters re-aligned to a new party, they did so within the same bloc (Mair, 1997).

1.1.2 The cultural convergence of traditional parties and their competition with PRRPs

The party competition in this bi-polar political space of left-wing versus right-wing parties, changed arguably with the emergence of the new cultural dimension, encompassing the issue of immigration. The cultural dimension introduces the cosmopolitan and nationalist cleavage, which distinguishes between a position that embraces globalisation and migration, and a position that is sceptical about both developments of increased global cooperation and flexibility and migration (Kriesi, 2012; Kriesi & Hutter, 2019; Hutter, Altiparmakis, & Vidal, 2019). Instead of competing on the cosmopolitan-national divide, Kriesi (2012) presents in his analysis a convergence of the right-wing and left-wing parties in the centre on that cosmopolitan-national divide. On the other side PRRPs clearly differentiate themselves from these traditional parties with a position that moved further towards an anti-immigration, nationalist stance over two decades. This finding however challenges Mair's (1997) freezing thesis. Firstly, it exposes the cultural convergence on the cosmopolitan-nationalist cleavage of the traditional parties, which used to present clearly different policy solutions. Secondly, the new salience of a new cultural cleavage shows that PRRPs do not fit Mair's bi-polar economic left-wing and right-wing division.

As the spatial model of party competition predicts, the traditional parties convergence on the cultural cleavage leads to an open position on the radical, nationalist end, which PRRP can supply (Brandenburg & Johns, 2014; Spies & Franzmann, 2019). PRRPs' ideology fits the

nationalist space, due to their anti-immigration ideology (Akkerman, de Lange, & Rooduijn, 2016).

The change from the bi-polar to the tri-polar party system can furthermore be seen in the economic position blurring of the PRRPs, which prevents a clear integration of PRRPs in a traditionally bi-polar party system. Economic issue blurring can happen in two different ways. Firstly, parties can display position instability, which means that they position themselves in a contradictory and ambiguous way on economic issues. Secondly, parties can blur their economic position by not publicly announcing their economic position. Either form of economic issue blurring, leads to a decreased salience of the economic dimension for the party and avoids an association and branding as liberal or redistributive party (Rovny, 2013; Rovny & Polk, 2020). By blurring their position, PRRPs managed to become electorally successful without a clear economic position, which makes it impossible to allocate them on either the liberal or the redistributive side of the political spectrum. This not only is a clear indication for the emerge of a third pole, but at the same time decreased the salience of the economic competition, because voters are assumed to no longer base their voting decision on their economic preference alone.

Concluding, PRRPs are expected to have changed the Western European party system, by offering voters from different political homes a political alternative. The formation of the new PRRP bloc is expected to challenge Mair's (1997) freezing thesis and change the Western European party system for two reasons. Firstly, when the immigration cleavage became a salient competition dimension, left-wing and right wing parties failed to integrate the cleavage in their existing direction of competition (Kriesi, 2012). Instead, the convergence of left-wing and right-wing parties on the cosmopolitan end of the cleavage enabled PRRPs to fill a void on the nationalist end and contrast themselves to the traditional parties with an anti-immigration ideology (Dolezal & Hutter, 2012; Hansen & Olsen, 2019; Hutter, Altiparmakis, & Vidal, 2019; Lorenzini & van Ditmars, 2019; McDonnell & Werner, 2018; Rooduijn, 2015; Rovny, 2013). Secondly, instead of competing with the left-wing and right-wing parties on the traditional economic dimension, PRRPs blur their economic position, which prevents an allocation of the PRRPs on either side of the economic division (Rovny, 2013; Rovny & Polk, 2020).

1.2 Diverse voter re-alignment

The PRRP's economic issue blurring serves the purpose of increasing its attractiveness for culturally nationalist voters from both former left-wing and right-wing party alignment (Rovny, 2013; Rovny & Polk, 2020). Oesch and Rennwald (2018) argue that there is not significant difference in likelihood when it comes to re-alignment to PRRPs from left-wing or right-wing parties. Furthermore, Jylhä, Rydgren and Strimling (2019) find that tangible Swedish social democratic voters are equally likely to re-align to the Swedish PRRP compared to conservative Swedish vote switchers. However, their finding has to be viewed with caution as they only test data from one election cycle in Sweden and have a small sample size. Therefore, it would be interesting to test Oesch and Rennwald's (2018) voter profile on tangible vote switchers. As PRRPs are assumed to blur their economic position and campaign primarily on anti-immigration policies, they are expected to have attracted voters from both former left-wing as well as former right-wing parties to an equal amount. Therefore, it is interesting to test the following hypothesis:

H1: Voters that voted for a left-wing party in the previous election are as likely to vote for a populist radical right party in the next election, as voters that voted for a right-wing party in the previous election.

However, in the most recent election in the Netherlands in March 2021, most of all vote switchers that re-aligned to PRRPs were former non-voters (Harteveld & van Heck, 2021). Assuming the ability to generalize these findings to other Western European elections, it can therefore be argued that the non-voter group are more likely to re-align to PRRPs in comparison to the other two groups. Therefore the following is hypothesised:

H2: Non-voters are more likely to switch to populist radical right parties than voters that voted for a left-wing or right-wing party in the previous election.

In summary, by blurring their economic position and primarily campaigning on their anti-immigration stance, PRRPs are expected to be able to generate a broad voter re-alignment. While former non-voters are expected to be the most likely to switch to the PRRPs, former left-wing and right-wing voters are expected to switch to PRRPs as well. If former left-wing and right-wing voters would be equally likely to switch to PRRP, it would challenge Mair's (1997) freezing thesis, because it would support the idea that voters with contradictory economic policy preferences can re-align to an ideologically different party.

1.3 Reasons for re-alignment

Since the rise of PRRPs, political scientists have been interested in the voting motivations of PRR voters. They find that PRR voters experience a higher level of relative deprivation and have higher anti-immigration sentiments than voters of other parties which correlates with voting for PRRPs (Hansen & Olsen, 2019; Hawkins, Read, & Pauwels, 2017; Hutter, Altiparmakis, & Vidal, 2019; Lorenzini & van Ditmars, 2019; Oesch & Rennwald, 2018; Rooduijn, 2015; Rovny, 2013). However, it is unclear whether the same factors can predict a voter re-alignment to these PRRPs as well or if they only characterise PRR voters. Therefore, this thesis tests whether relative deprivation and anti-immigration sentiments increase the likelihood to switch to PRRPs on tangible vote switchers.

1.3.1 Relative deprivation

Individuals that vote for PRRPs are more likely to come from a lower income and lower educated class than from a higher income and educational class (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Jylhä, Rydgren, & Strimling, 2019; Oesch & Rennwald, 2018; Rooduijn, 2015). These individuals can be characterised as citizens that lose out, in relative terms. Due to globalisation and modernization processes, trained work in comparison to unskilled work gained in importance as it determines the international competitiveness in the labour market and consequentially one's relative life chances (Betz, 1994; Ivarsflaten, 2005; Jylhä, Rydgren, & Strimling, 2019). For low income individuals, globalisation leads firstly to intensified competition on the labour market, due to immigration, and secondly to the resettlement of companies in countries with more liberal working conditions. Both consequences of globalisation can be assumed to affect lower income individuals' economic situation and lead to the feeling of relative deprivation and economic insecurities (Hawkins, Read, & Pauwels, 2017). PRRPs capitalise this economic threat into a cultural, nationalist frame. They connect people's feeling of relative deprivation to a feeling of nativism and thereby use people's material self-interest against non-natives (Hawkins, Read, & Pauwels, 2017).

As relative deprivation may explain PRR voting, it is to be seen whether it can also explain re-alignment. Voters that feel high levels of relative deprivation may have voted for the left-wing or right wing party in the past, or not voted in the previous election, but can be expected to be likely to re-align to the PRRPs for two reasons. Firstly, PRRPs' nationalist policy argues for a protective stance against migrants. To protect their low skilled jobs that are threatened due to increased competition from low-skilled migration and the re-settlement of companies due to

globalisation, it is in these citizen's rational self-interest to vote for PRRPs. PRRPs' policies suggest a prioritization of native people and products over non-native ones and might convince some voters as a reasonable policy suggestion. PRRPs' thereby provide a rational choice in terms of advancing one's own economic position (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Jylhä, Rydgren, & Strimling, 2019).

Secondly, voters that re-align to PRRPs might feel disappointed by the cosmopolitan policy suggestions of left-wing and right-wing parties (Spoon & Klüver, 2019). Voters that feel deprived, could perceive the left-wing and right-wing parties' cosmopolitan policy stance, as further disadvantaging their economic position, as they suspect more labour market competition due to immigration and a higher threat of companies resettling. PRRPs' unique stance on the cosmopolitan-national cleavage contrasts them to the left-wing and right wing parties' position, which makes them the only voting options for voters that disagree with the cosmopolitan position (Spoon & Klüver, 2019).

In short, voters that experience a higher level of relative deprivation due to a low income of low-skilled jobs, are more likely to re-align to PRRPs than voters with lower levels of relative deprivation for two reasons: Firstly, they are more likely to benefit from a native policy, because they can assume to face less competition from migrants. Secondly, out of economical rational self-interest they are more likely to disagree with the cosmopolitan policies of left-wing and right-wing parties than voters with a low level of relative deprivation, and therefore search for a more nationalist protective party. Therefore, the following hypothesis is tested:

H3a: Individuals with higher levels of relative deprivation, are more likely to switch from a mainstream to a populist radical right party, than individuals with lower levels of relative deprivation.

H3b: Individuals with an increase of relative deprivation between two consecutive elections, are more likely to switch from a mainstream to a populist radical right party, than individuals with no change of their feeling of relative deprivation or decrease thereof.

1.3.2 Anti-immigration sentiments

The most reliant predictor when it comes to PRR voting is the anti-immigration attitude of voters. Scholars find that the higher the level of voters' anti-immigration attitude is the more likely they are to vote for PRRPs (Aardal & Bergh, 2018; Akkerman T. , 2016; Estimite, 2021; Georgiadou, Rori, & Roumanias, 2018; Grzymala-Busse, Kuo, Fukuyama, & McFaul, 2020;

Heinisch & Hauser, 2016; Ivaldi, 2016; Jungar, 2016; Rooduijn & Burgoon, 2018). They provide two different explanations for it. Firstly, scholars argue, that with the developments of globalisation, that led to an increased labour market competition due to migrants, immigrants are perceived increasingly as threat on the labour market. Secondly, scholars argue that with the individualization of society - the loss of labour unions and a class feeling - a loss of identity is perceived by individuals. This feeling of loss of identity is then redirected by PRRPs towards a feeling of national identity, which excludes all non-natives (Hawkins, Read, & Pauwels, 2017). Either way, PRR voters have been found to agree with their parties' main policy position (Rooduijn, 2015) and therefore voters with higher anti-immigration attitudes are expected to be more likely to vote for PRRPs than voters with low anti-immigration attitudes.

As a high level of anti-immigration sentiment may explain PRR voting, it is to be seen whether it can as well explain vote switching. However, voters that hold high anti-immigration attitudes can be expected to be more likely to re-align to PRRPs, than voters that have low levels of anti-immigration sentiments for two reasons. Firstly, voters' anti-immigration sentiment is likely to be satisfied with the PRRPs policies because their main policy goals are connected to the topic of anti-immigration. PRRPs' main selling point is their nativist message that excludes non-natives from the pure people, which means that PRRPs create anti-immigration policies as their main political priorities (Rovny & Polk, 2020). This means that individuals with a high anti-immigration sentiment are expected to identify more strongly with the PRR policy goal than individuals with a low anti-immigration sentiment.

Secondly, PRRPs are the only parties that take the anti-immigration stance. Left-wing and right-wing parties position themselves more towards the cosmopolitan leaning centre of the cultural dimension, which argues for a more progressive welcoming position towards migrants (Brandenburg & Johns, 2014; Spoon & Klüver, 2019). PRRPs' anti-immigration policy position, therefore, makes them the only political option for voters that want to see a change in the policy field of migration. Therefore, it is expected that individuals that have not voted for a PRRP in the past are more likely to re-align to a PRRP, if they hold higher levels of anti-immigration sentiments, than those individuals that hold lower level of anti-immigration sentiments. Therefore, the following hypothesis is tested:

H4a: Individuals with stronger anti-immigrant sentiments are more likely to switch to a populist radical right party than individuals with lower levels of anti-immigrant sentiments.

H4b: Individuals with an increase in anti-immigrant sentiments, between two consecutive elections, are more likely to switch to a populist radical right party than individuals with no change in their anti-immigration sentiments or a decrease thereof.

In summary this means that this thesis tests whether the factors that correlate with voting for a PRRP, can also explain re-aligning to a PRRP. Furthermore, it is tested whether some voter groups are more likely to switch to PRRPs than others in two consecutive elections.

The aim of the analysis is to test existing voter profiles on tangible vote switchers. Depending on the results of the analysis, the output can then be used to challenge or support theoretical arguments against Mair's freezing thesis. The next chapter operationalizes the variables to test these hypotheses.

Table 1: Hypotheses Overview

Hypothesis 1:	Voters that voted for a left-wing party in the previous election are as likely to vote for a populist radical right party in the next election, as voters that voted for a right-wing party in the previous election.
Hypothesis 2:	Non-voters are more likely to switch to populist radical right parties than voters that voted for a left-wing or right-wing party in the previous election.
Hypothesis 3a:	Individuals with higher levels of relative deprivation, are more likely to switch from a mainstream to a populist radical right party, than individuals with lower levels of relative deprivation.
Hypothesis 3b:	Individuals with an increase of relative deprivation between two consecutive elections, are more likely to switch from a mainstream to a populist radical right party, than individuals with no change of their feeling of relative deprivation or decrease thereof.
Hypothesis 4a:	Individuals with stronger anti-immigrant sentiments are more likely to switch to a populist radical right party than individuals with lower levels of anti-immigrant sentiments.
Hypothesis 4b:	Individuals with an increase in anti-immigrant sentiments, between two consecutive elections, are more likely to switch to a populist radical right party than individuals with no change in their anti-immigration sentiments or a decrease thereof.

Chapter 2: Methodology

This chapter first discusses why the Netherlands is a suitable case to test the hypotheses, before the data used to test the hypotheses are described. Then the variables are operationalized. Afterwards, the descriptive statistics of the variables are presented, before this chapter lastly describes the type of analysis conducted.

2.1 Case selection

Instead of conducting a cross sectional comparative analysis of all vote switchers in Western Europe, this thesis conducts a case study. Following Gerring's (2008) definition, an ideal case should be generalisable to other cases, which in this thesis are other Western European party systems. As most countries in Western Europe have a proportional electoral system, (Lijphard, 1999), an ideal case should have a highly proportionate electoral system. Secondly, an ideal case should have a history with modern PRRPs, because all Western European countries, have experienced parliamentary elections with PRRPs. Therefore, to be able to generalize the findings of the Netherlands to the other countries in Western Europe, the case selected should have a minimum of two election cycles in which at least one PRRP ran for election. Lastly, the ideal case should have a volatile party system, because voters in Western Europe seem to be less inclined to stay loyal to the same party (Achterberg, 2006).

The Netherlands fulfils these conditions and can therefore be selected as an ideal case. Firstly, the Netherlands are known for being an open party system with the highest proportionality in Western Europe. With its list proportional representation and no electoral threshold, the transfer from vote to seat is highly proportional (Lijphard, 1999). Secondly, PRRPs have a long tradition in the Netherlands. In 2002 Pim Fortuyn founded the first PRRP Lijst Pim Fortuyn (List Pim Fortuyn). After his assassination, politician Geert Wilders founded the PVV as a new PRRP and filled the ideological void that Fortuyn left (Akkerman T. , 2016). In the 2017 parliamentary election a second PRRP Forum voor Democratie (FvD) entered the second chamber and in 2021 the third PRRP Ja21 joined. Together they managed to reach 25% of all cast votes (Harteveld & van Heck, 2021). Lastly, the Netherlands has a fragmented party system with 17 parties in parliament after the 2021 election. The majority of Dutch voters is not loyal to one party but re-aligns to a different party than that for which they voted in the previous election (Harteveld & van Heck, 2021).

Furthermore, the Dutch Longitudinal Internet studies for the Social Sciences (LISS) offers a large collection of panel data, over a long period of time, which makes it possible to analyse a

change in respondents' anti-immigration sentiment, as well as whether their relative deprivation changed from one election to the next. The LISS started to collect the data from respondents in 2008. This means that due to the long tradition of PRRP in the Netherlands, and the LISS data, it is possible to look at re-alignment of voters from the 2006 election until the 2017 elections. This time span encompasses the four elections of 2006, 2010, 2012 and 2017, which results in three possible re-alignment measures, which increases the likelihood of a high case number.

Concluding, the Netherlands are an ideal case for testing vote switchers to PRRPs. The combination of a highly proportionate electoral system, a long tradition of PRRPs in the Netherlands, and frequent re-alignment of voters allows for the assumption of generalisability of the results to other Western European party systems. Furthermore, the LISS panel dataset makes it possible to trace respondents' voting behaviour over multiple election cycles.

2.2 Data

To measure if a voter's anti-immigration sentiment and feeling of relative deprivation and an increase thereof leads to a re-alignment to PRRPs, it is necessary to measure responses after two consecutive elections. The LISS panel administered by CentERdata conducts several standard waves to link standardised questions on political values and background variables to specialised surveys about different topics. It is therefore one of the few datasets that offers the possibility to trace changes in respondents' attitudes, beliefs and voting behaviour. The respondents were randomly selected from the population register (CentERdata, n.d.).

The core study is divided in eight datasets. For the purpose of this paper, three Core Studies were selected. The *Core Study Politics and Values* (LISS Panel, Politics and Values, n.d.) measures among other things the respondents' political position on issues and their attitude towards foreigners. To measure the respondent's attitude towards foreigners and their voting choice after the election, the first, fourth, sixth and tenth waves were chosen, because they measure the responses closest to the past elections. The *Core Study Economic Situation: Income* (LISS Panel, n.d.) measures among other things the respondents' satisfaction with their financial situation. Here the first, third sixth and tenth wave are selected, for the same reasons of being the closest response measure to the past elections. The *Core Study Background* (LISS Panel, n.d.) measures among other things the respondents' gender, income, completed education and age. Here the dataset from January 2011, July 2013 and March 2018 are selected.

The background characteristics are asked when individuals join the panel, and they are instructed to update the information monthly in case of changes (CentERdata, n.d.).

2.3 Measures

2.3.1 Dependent Variable: Vote switching

Four dependent variables were constructed, namely *Vote Switching Non-voters*, *Vote Switching Right Wing*, *Vote Switching Left Wing* and *Vote Switching total*. Table 2 presents an overview of the parties that are operationalized as right-wing party, left-wing party or PRRP, by using the categorisation of the Manifesto Project (Manifesto Project, n.d.). If the Manifesto Project coded a Dutch party in the year of the election as a liberal, conservative or Christian democratic party, the party is included in the right-wing party group. If the Manifesto Project coded a Dutch party in the year of the election as a socialist, green or social democratic party, the party is included in the left-wing party group. If the Manifesto Project coded the Dutch party in the year of the election as a nationalist party, the party is included as a PRRP.

Table 2: Operationalization Party group

Party group	Party name	Ideological Family	Election Participation
Right Wing	Democraten 66 (D66)	Liberal	2006, 2010, 2012, 2017
Right Wing	Christen-Democratisch Appèl (CDA)	Christen Democratic	2006, 2010, 2012, 2017
Right Wing	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD)	Liberal	2006, 2010, 2012, 2017
Left Wing	GroenLinks (GL)	Green	2006, 2010, 2012, 2017
Left Wing	Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA)	Social Democratic	2006, 2010, 2012, 2017
Left Wing	Socialistische Partij (SP)	Socialist	2006, 2010, 2012, 2017
Populist Radical Right	Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Populist Radical Right	2006, 2010, 2012, 2017
Populist Radical Right	Forum voor Democratie (FvD)	Populist Radical Right	2017

Non-voters

The respondents' answers to the questions "Did you vote in the most recent parliamentary election?" and "For which party did you vote in the parliamentary elections?" were combined for the *Vote Switching Non-voters* variable. If the respondent did not vote in the previous election but voted for a PRRP in the consecutive election, they are coded as 1. The reference category are all other voters included in the dataset. This includes firstly voters that did not vote in the previous election and did not vote for a PRRP in the consecutive election. Secondly, this includes voters that voted previously either for a left-wing or right-wing party, regardless of whether or not they switched to the PRRP.

Right-wing voters

For the *Vote Switching Right Wing* variable the question "For which party did you vote in the parliamentary elections?" is measured after two consecutive elections. If the respondent states that they voted for a right wing party in the previous election and for a PRRP in the consecutive election they are coded as 1 for the *Vote Switching Right Wing* variable. The reference category are all other voters included in the dataset. This includes firstly voters that voted for a right-wing party in the previous election and did not vote for a PRRP in the consecutive election. Secondly, this includes all voters that voted for a left-wing party, regardless of whether or not they switched to the PRRP. Thirdly, this includes all voters that did not vote in the previous election, regardless of whether or not they switched to the PRRP.

Left-wing voters

For the *Vote Switching Left Wing* variable the question "For which party did you vote in the parliamentary elections?" is measured after two consecutive elections. If the respondent states that they voted for a right wing party in the previous election and for a PRRP in the consecutive election they are coded as 1 for the *Vote Switching Left- Wing* variable. The reference category are all other voters included in the dataset. This includes firstly voters that voted for a left-wing party in the previous election and did not vote for a PRRP in the consecutive election. Secondly, this includes all voters that voted for a right-wing party, regardless of whether or not they switched to the PRRP. Thirdly, this includes all voters that did not vote in the previous election, regardless of whether or not they switched to the PRRP.

Vote Switching total

For the last dependent variable *Vote Switching total* the three previous vote switching variables are combined into one variable. If a respondent is coded as 1 in one of the three categories,

they are coded as 1 for the vote switching total variable. This means that everyone that switched to a PRRP, regardless of whether and for who they voted in the previous election are coded as 1. The reference category encompasses all voters that did not vote switch.

2.3.2 Independent Variables

Relative deprivation

Although relative deprivation can be measured in several ways concerning several topics, this study is mainly interested in financial relative deprivation. Therefore, the variable relative deprivation is measured by the item satisfaction with the financial situation. It is measured by the respondent's answer to the question "*How satisfied are you with your financial situation?*" Respondents were asked to rank their satisfaction on a scale from zero to ten, with ten meaning not at all satisfied and zero means entirely satisfied. This means that if respondents scores high on the item, they are experiencing higher relative deprivation than if they score low. Additionally, making use of the panel data structure, the same respondent can be measured on this variable each year, which makes it possible to track the respondents change in satisfaction with the financial situation from one year to the next. Therefore, next to the level of satisfaction, the change in it can be measured as well. The respondent's answer in one election year is subtracted by the respondent's answer given in the previous election year, which results then in the change they experienced.

Anti-immigration sentiment

The variable anti-immigration sentiment is measured by asking the respondent whether they strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or fully disagree with the statement "*There are too many people with foreign origin or descent in the Netherlands.*". Additionally, making use of the panel data structure, it is possible to track the change in respondent's sentiment towards immigration, because the same question is asked in each year. Therefore, next to the level of anti-immigration sentiment, the change in anti-immigration sentiment can be measured as well. The respondent's answer in one election year is then subtracted by the respondent's answer given in the previous election year, which results then in the change they experienced.

2.3.3 Control Variables

Four control variables are chosen to increase the validity of the results. These are gender, year of birth, highest educational level completed and the respondents' imputed monthly net

income. As the model is based on time variant variables, special attention needs to be paid to the point in time at which each variable is measured.

Gender is added to the model, because some scholars have argued that men are more likely to switch to a PRRP than women (Wurthmann, Marschall, Triga, & Manavopoulos, 2020). The variable gender is treated as time constant.

Age is an important factor to control for, because previous authors found contradicting effects of age on voting for a PRRP (Wurthmann, Marschall, Triga, & Manavopoulos, 2020). Due to the fact that the dataset relies on time series data from different years, the age of a person differs per election looked at. To prevent having a time variant variable, the year of birth is taken as control variable.

The third control variable is the level of education, which is coded as low, medium or high depending on the level of education the respondent has completed. Hereby, primary education and VMBO are coded as low level of education, HAVO/VWO and MBO are coded as medium level of education and HBO and WO are coded as high level of education. Respondents that gave a different response or stated that they had not started or finished any education yet were coded as other. This variable is time variant.

The last variable is the respondents' monthly net income. Due to the low response rate of this variable, it is imputed to prevent a large number of missing cases which would then be deleted from the dataset. As the level of income can change over time, the respondent's net monthly income is treated as a time variant variable.

2.4. Descriptive statistics

After excluding respondents who did not participate in all surveys or had an invalid response in one of the variables of interest, the number of cases looked at is 4790. In total 270 respondents are coded as vote switchers. As Table 3 shows, out of the 270 total vote switchers 43.70% switched from a right wing party, 32.59% from a left wing party and 23.70% from the non-voter group. As Table 4 demonstrates, there is an unequal distribution of vote switchers in the election years. While 52.96% of all vote switchers are observed in 2010, only 10.74% of all respondents re-aligned to a PRRP in 2012. In 2017 36.29% of all vote switchers re-aligned to a PRRP.

Table 3: Frequencies of vote switchers per voter group

	Total	Right-wing	Left-wing	Non-voters	N
2010	52.96%	49.15%	65.91%	42.19%	1410
2012	10.74%	12.71%	4.55%	15.63%	1756
2017	36.29%	38.14%	29.54%	42.19%	1624
Pooled N	270	118	88	64	4790

Table 4: Frequencies of vote switchers per election year

	Pooled	2010	2012	2017
Right-Wing	43.70%	40.56%	51.72%	45.92%
Left-Wing	32.59%	40.56%	13.79%	26.53%
Non-voters	23.70%	18.89%	34.48%	27.55%
Total	270	143	29	98
N	5160	1516	1884	1760

As shown in Table 5, 52% of the final sample are male. On average, respondents were born in 1957 and have a completed secondary education as their highest level of education. Furthermore, the average monthly net income of the respondents is 1753 euros. On average respondents state that they are not experiencing a high level of relative deprivation. On a scale from 0 to 10, with 10 being the highest relative deprivation, the average score was a 2.94. The relative deprivation has slightly decreased over the years (-0.07). Furthermore, on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being the most negative attitude towards immigrants, the respondents had on average a neutral attitude towards immigrants (3.24), which slightly decreased from one election to the next (-0.06).

Table 5: Descriptive statistics pooled dataset.

	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	MIN	MAX
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	4790	2.94	1.56	0	9
CHANGE IN RELATIVE DEPRIVATION SENTIMENT	4790	-0.07	1.47	-8	8
ANTI IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	4790	3.24	1.07	1	5
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	4790	-0.06	0.81	-4	4
GENDER	4790	0.52	0.50	0	1
YEAR OF BIRTH	4790	1957.17	14.38	1913	1994
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	4790	2.34	0.54	1	3
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	4790	1753.05	4192.88	0	180895.00
YEAR	4790	2.04	0.795	1	3

Looking at each year separately, each year encompasses a similar amount of data (N2010= 1410, N2012= 1756 and N2017 = 1624). The gender ratio stays almost the same with 51% of male respondents in 2010 and 2012 and 54% of male respondents in 2017. The average completed educational level also remains between 2 and 3 with marginal differences between the different years. Similarly, on average, all respondents were born in 1957. The average income of respondents decreased over the years with a monthly net income of 1805 euros in 2010, 1700 euros in 2012, and 1764 euros in 2017. The relative deprivation, measured on a scale from 0 to 10, stayed relatively low over the years, with a small increase in 2012 to 3.07, and decrease in 2017 to 2.78. Lastly, on average, respondents have a neutral, slightly negative attitude towards immigrants, which barely changed over the years. On a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being the most negative attitude towards immigrants, respondents score on average a 3.26 in 2010, 3.26 in 2012 and 3.13 in 2017. Table A1, Table A2, and Table A3 in the Appendix 1 summarize these descriptive statistics per year.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has firstly argued that the Netherlands is a suitable ideal case to test the hypotheses. Then the data used to test the hypotheses were described and the variables were operationalized. Afterwards, the descriptive statistics of the variables were presented.

The following chapter contains the empirical results of the analysis. First a descriptive analysis that compares the amount of vote switchers are compared between the different voter groups and to the amount of voters that did not switch to a PRRP. This is followed by the analysis of the results of the logistic regression analysis, which tests whether support for the last four hypotheses can be found.

Chapter 3: Results

This chapter answers the six hypotheses in two parts. The first part tests hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2 descriptively. The second part firstly tests the assumptions for the logistic regression analysis and secondly tests whether support for hypothesis 3a, 3b, 4a and 4b can be found for all voters, for former right-wing voters, for former left-wing voters and for former non-voters.

3.1 Descriptive analysis

To test the first and the second hypotheses, the percentage of all vote switchers per voter group is calculated. Out of 1702 respondents that had voted for a left-wing party in the previous election, 5.17% re-aligned to a PRRP in the next election. Out of 1823 respondents that had voted for a right-wing party in the previous election, 6.47% voted for a PRRP in the next election. These findings are summarized in Table A4 in Appendix 1. This means that the difference in vote switching is 1.3%. Therefore, it can be said that these results support the first hypothesis that *voters that voted for a left-wing party in the previous election are as likely to vote for a populist radical right party in the next election, as voters that voted for a right-wing party in the previous election.*

Furthermore, Table A4 in Appendix 1 also shows that out of 253 respondents that did not vote in the previous election, 25.29% switched to a PRRP in the next election. This means that non-voters switched 18.82% more often to PRRP than former right wing voters and 20.12% more often than left-wing voters. Therefore, it can be said that there is support for the second hypothesis that *non-voters are more likely to switch to populist radical right parties than voters that voted for a left-wing or right-wing party in the previous election.*

3.2. Regression analysis

In this section three models per voter group are tested. They test whether support for the last four hypotheses can be found. Hypothesis 3a states that *individuals with higher levels of relative deprivation, are more likely to switch from a mainstream to a populist radical right party, than individuals with lower levels of relative deprivation.* Hypothesis 3b states that *individuals with an increase of relative deprivation, between two consecutive elections, are more likely to switch from a mainstream to a populist radical right party, than individuals with no change of their feeling of relative deprivation or decrease of such.*

Hypothesis 4a states that *individuals with stronger anti-immigrant sentiments are more likely to switch to a populist radical right party than individuals with lower levels of anti-immigrant sentiments*. Hypothesis 4b states that *individuals with an increase in anti-immigrant sentiments, between two consecutive elections, are more likely to switch to a populist radical right party than individuals with no change in their anti-immigration sentiments or a decrease of such*.

3.2.1 Assumption testing

Before conducting the logistic regression analysis, the assumptions for such an analysis are tested. Firstly, a normal distribution of the variables can be assumed and secondly, although some outliers have been detected in the income variable, they are of no concern. Thirdly, as it can be seen in Appendix 2 Table A5 and Table A6, there is no multicollinearity between any predictor variables. Lastly, the test of linearity finds support for a non-linear relationship between firstly the predictor level of relative deprivation and vote switching, and secondly the predictor level of anti-immigration sentiment and vote switching. However, both variables are measured on an ordinary scale and therefore are included in the analysis. Furthermore, including the variables as natural logs (Appendix 4) that the significance of the effect does not change compared to the model that includes the original variables, although the effect size increases.

3.2.2 All voters

The models 1a and 1b test the relationship between the predictor variables for all voters that voted for a left-wing or right-wing party in the previous election or did not vote in the previous election. The results can be seen in Table 6, which presents the effect as odds ratio and in Appendix 3, Table A7, which presents the effect as logged odds. Furthermore, model 1a and 1b are fixed effect models. The effect of the predictors on vote switching in a time variant model is presented in Appendix 5, Table A15 and Table A16.

Table 6: Fixed effect Models: Odds ratios between vote switching to PRRPs and variables of interest for all voters

	MODEL 1A:	MODEL 1B:
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	1.055	
CHANGE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION		0.949
ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	2.350***	
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT		1.131
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	1.692***	1.821***
YEAR OF BIRTH	1.024***	1.026***
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	0.386***	0.297***
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	1.000	1.000
YEAR 2010	0.645***	0.579***
YEAR 2012	4.785***	4.086***
CONSTANT	0.000***	0.000***
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

3.2.2.1 Model 1a

Model 1a tests the two hypotheses 3a, and 4a for all voters. The dependent variable of the model is vote switching, measured for all voters that switched to a PRRP compared to voters that did not switch in the reference category. The independent variables that are tested are firstly the level of perceived relative deprivation and secondly the level of anti-immigration sentiment. To increase external validity of the results, the model controls for the gender, the birth year, the level of education and the level of income of the respondent.

As Table 6 shows, the voters' feeling of relative deprivation, is not a significant predictor for the voters' odds of vote switching to a PRRP, compared to all other voters' odds of not switching, holding all other predictors of the model constant. Therefore, no support for hypothesis 3a is found in model 1a.

Holding all other predictors of the model constant, the voters' level of anti-immigration sentiment is a significant predictor for the voters' odds of vote switching to a PRRP, compared to voters' odds of not switching. Voters' odds of switching to a PRRP increase significantly by 2.4 times (2.350***) for every one unit increase in their anti-immigration sentiment, compared to voters' odds not of switching. Therefore, model 1a finds support for hypothesis 4a.

3.2.2.2 Model 1b

Model 1b tests the two hypotheses 3b, and 4b for all voters. The dependent variable of the model is the vote switching, measured for all voters that switched to a PRRP compared to voters that did not switch in the reference category. The independent variables that are tested are firstly the change in the respondent's level of perceived relative deprivation between two consecutive elections and secondly change in the respondent's level of anti-immigration sentiment between two consecutive elections. To increase external validity of the results, the model controls for the gender, the birth year, the level of education and the level of income of the respondent.

As Table 6 shows, the change in the voters' feeling of relative deprivation, is not a significant predictor for the voters' odds of vote switching to a PRRP, compared to all other voters' odds of not switching, holding all other predictors of the model constant. Therefore, no support for hypothesis 3b is found in model 1b.

As Table 6 shows, the change in the voters' anti-immigration sentiment, is not a significant predictor for the voters' odds of vote switching to a PRRP, compared to all other voters' odds of not switching, holding all other predictors of the model constant. Therefore, no support for hypothesis 4b is found in model 1b.

3.2.3 Former right-wing voters

The model 2a and 2b test the relationship between the predictor variables for voters that voted for a right-wing party in the previous election, compared to all voters' odds of not switching to a PRRP. While this model tests the hypotheses explicitly for former right-wing voters, the reference category encompasses all other voters. The results can be seen in Table 7, which presents the effect as odds ratio and in Appendix 3, Table A8, which presents the effect as logged odds. Furthermore, model 2a and 2b are fixed effect models. The effect of the predictors on vote switching in a time variant model is presented in Appendix 5, Table A17 and Table A18.

Table 7: Fixed effect Models: Odds ratios between vote switching to PRRPs and variables of interest for former right-wing voters

	MODEL 2A:	MODEL 2B:
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	0.899	
CHANGE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION		0.962
ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	2.556***	
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT		1.048
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	1.671*	1.860**
YEAR OF BIRTH	1.024***	1.026***
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	0.458***	0.359***
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	1.000	1.000
YEAR 2010	0.756	0.659*
YEAR 2012	3.723***	3.349***
CONSTANT	0.000***	0.000***
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

3.2.3.1 Model 2a

Model 2a tests the two hypotheses 3a, and 4a for all former right-wing voters compared to all voters. The dependent variable of the model is the vote switching, measured for all former right-wing voters that switched to a PRRP compared to all voters that do not fall into that category. The independent variables that are tested are firstly the level of perceived relative deprivation and secondly the level of anti-immigration sentiment. To increase external validity of the results, the model controls for the gender, the birth year, the level of education and the level of income of the respondent.

As Table 7 shows, the former right-wing voters' feeling of relative deprivation, is not a significant predictor for the former right-wing voters' odds of vote switching to a PRRP, compared to their odds of not switching, holding all other predictors of the model constant. Therefore, no support for hypothesis 3a is found in model 2a.

Holding all other predictors of the model constant, the former right-wing voters' level of anti-immigration sentiment is a significant predictor for the former right-wing voters' odds of vote switching to a PRRP, all voters that do not fall into that category. Former right-wing voters' odds of switching to a PRRP increase significantly by more than 2.5 times (2.556***) for every

one unit increase in their anti-immigration sentiment, compared to all voters' odds of not switching. Therefore, model 2a finds support for hypothesis 4a.

3.2.3.2 Model 2b

Model 2b tests the two hypotheses 3b, and 4b for former right-wing voters. The dependent variable of the model is the vote switching, measured for former right-wing voters that switched to a PRRP compared to all voters that do not fall into that category. The independent variables that are tested are firstly the change in the respondent's level of perceived relative deprivation between two consecutive elections and secondly change in the respondent's level of anti-immigration sentiment between two consecutive elections. To increase external validity of the results, the model controls for the gender, the birth year, the level of education and the level of income of the respondent.

As Table 7 shows, the change in the former right-wing voters' feeling of relative deprivation, is not a significant predictor for their odds of vote switching to a PRRP, compared to their odds of not switching, holding all other predictors of the model constant. Therefore, no support for hypothesis 3b is found in model 2b.

As Table 7 shows, the change in the former right-wing voters' anti-immigration sentiment, is not a significant predictor for their odds of vote switching to a PRRP, compared to their odds of not switching, holding all other predictors of the model constant. Therefore, no support for hypothesis 4b is found in model 2b.

3.2.4 Former left-wing voters

The model 2a and 2b test the relationship between the predictor variables for voters that voted for a left-wing party in the previous election, compared to all voters' odds to not switch to a PRRP. While this model tests the hypotheses explicitly for former left-wing voters, the reference category encompasses all other voters. The results can be seen in Table 8, which presents the effect as odds ratio and in Appendix 3, Table A9, which presents the effect as logged odds. Furthermore, model 3a and 3b are fixed effect models. The effect of the predictors on vote switching in a time variant model is presented in Appendix 5, Table A19 and Table A20.

Table 8: Fixed effect Models: Odds ratios between vote switching to PRRPs and variables of interest for former left-wing voters

	MODEL 3A	MODEL 3B:
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	1.070	
CHANGE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION		0.936
ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	2.207***	
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT		1.265
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	2.147**	2.220**
YEAR OF BIRTH	1.008	1.012
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	0.440**	0.338***
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	1.000*	1.000**
YEAR 2010	0.437***	0.403***
YEAR 2012	8.637***	7.663***
CONSTANT	0.000	0.000
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01,*** p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

3.2.4.1 Model 3a

Model 3a tests the two hypotheses 3a, and 4a for all former left-wing voters compared to all voters. The dependent variable of the model is the vote switching, measured for all former left-wing voters that switched to a PRRP compared to all voters that did not switch. The independent variables that are tested are firstly the level of perceived relative deprivation and secondly the level of anti-immigration sentiment. To increase external validity of the results, the model controls for the gender, the birth year, the level of education and the level of income of the respondent.

As Table 8 shows, the former left-wing voters' feeling of relative deprivation, is not a significant predictor for their odds of vote switching to a PRRP, compared to their odds of not switching, holding all other predictors of the model constant. Therefore, no support for hypothesis 3a is found in model 3a.

Holding all other predictors of the model constant, the former left-wing voters' level of anti-immigration sentiment is a significant predictor for their odds of vote switching to a PRRP, compared to their odds of not switching. Former left-wing voters' odds to switch to a PRRP increase significantly by more than 2 times (2.207***) for every one unit increase in their anti-

immigration sentiment, compared to their odds of not switching. Therefore, model 3a finds support for hypothesis 4a.

3.2.4.2 Model 3b

Model 3b tests the two hypotheses 3b, and 4b for former left-wing voters. The dependent variable of the model is the vote switching, measured for former left-wing voters that switched to a PRRP compared to all voters that did not switch. The independent variables that are tested are firstly the change in the respondent's level of perceived relative deprivation between two consecutive elections and secondly change in the respondent's level of anti-immigration sentiment between two consecutive elections. To increase external validity of the results, the model controls for the gender, the birth year, the level of education and the level of income of the respondent.

As Table 8 shows, the change in the former left-wing voters' feeling of relative deprivation, is not a significant predictor for their odds of vote switching to a PRRP, compared to their odds of not switching, holding all other predictors of the model constant. Therefore, no support for hypothesis 3b is found in model 3b.

As Table 8 shows, the change in the former left-wing voters' anti-immigration sentiment, is not a significant predictor for their odds of vote switching to a PRRP, compared to their odds of not switching, holding all other predictors of the model constant. Therefore, no support for hypothesis 4b is found in model 3b.

3.2.5 Former non-voters

The model 2a and 2b test the relationship between the predictor variables for voters that did not vote in the previous election, compared to all voters' odds to not switch to a PRRP. While this model tests the hypotheses explicitly for former non-voters, the reference category encompasses all other voters. The results can be seen in Table 9, which presents the effect as odds ratio and in Appendix 3, Table A10, which presents the effect as logged odds. Furthermore, model 4a and 4b are fixed effect models. The effect of the predictors on vote switching in a time variant model is presented in Appendix 5, Table A21 and Table A22.

Table 9: Fixed effect Models: Odds ratios between vote switching to PRRPs and variables of interest for former non-voters

	MODEL 4A:	MODEL 4B:
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	1.223**	
CHANGE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION		0.960
ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	1.746***	
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT		1.081
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	1.548	0.589
YEAR OF BIRTH	1.031	1.034***
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	0.409**	0.304***
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	0.999**	0.999**
YEAR 2010	1.070	0.974
YEAR 2012	3.893***	3.398***
CONSTANT	0.000***	0.000***
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

3.2.5.1 Model 4a

Model 4a tests the two hypotheses 3a, and 4a for all former non-voters compared to all voters. The dependent variable of the model is the vote switching, measured for all former non-voters that switched to a PRRP compared to all voters that did not switch. The independent variables that are tested are firstly the level of perceived relative deprivation and secondly the level of anti-immigration sentiment. To increase external validity of the results, the model controls for the gender, the birth year, the level of education and the level of income of the respondent.

As Table 9 shows, the former non-voters' feeling of relative deprivation, is a significant predictor for their odds of vote switching to a PRRP, compared to their odds of not switching, holding all other predictors of the model constant. Former non- voters' odds to switch to a PRRP increase significantly by 22.3% (1.223***) for every one unit increase in their feeling of relative deprivation, compared to their odds of not switching. Therefore, model 4a finds support for hypothesis 3a.

Holding all other predictors of the model constant, the former non-voters' level of anti-immigration sentiment is a significant predictor for their odds of vote switching to a PRRP, compared to their odds to not switch. Former non-voters' odds to switch to a PRRP increase

significantly by 74.6% (1.746***) for every one unit increase in their anti-immigration sentiment, compared to their odds of not switching. Therefore, model 4a finds support for hypothesis 4a.

3.2.5.2 Model 4b

Model 4b tests the two hypotheses 3b, and 4b for former non-voters. The dependent variable of the model is the vote switching, measured for former non-voters that switched to a PRRP compared to all voters that did not switch. The independent variables that are tested are firstly the change in the respondent's level of perceived relative deprivation between two consecutive elections and secondly change in the respondent's level of anti-immigration sentiment between two consecutive elections. To increase external validity of the results, the model controls for the gender, the birth year, the level of education and the level of income of the respondent.

As Table 9 shows, that the change in the former non-voters' feeling of relative deprivation, is not a significant predictor for their odds of vote switching to a PRRP, compared to their odds of not switching, holding all other predictors of the model constant. Therefore, no support for hypothesis 3b is found in model 4b.

As Table 9 shows, the change in the former non-voters' anti-immigration sentiment, is not a significant predictor for their odds of vote switching to a PRRP, compared to their odds of not switching, holding all other predictors of the model constant. Therefore, no support for hypothesis 4b is found in model 4b.

3.3 Conclusion

In short, firstly, a descriptive analysis of the percentage of former left-wing voters, former right-wing voters and former non-voters that switched to a PRRP compared to those that did not switch, finds support for the first hypothesis that states that *voters that voted for a left-wing party in the previous election are as likely to vote for a populist radical right party in the next election, as voters that voted for a right-wing party in the previous election.*

Secondly, the descriptive analysis also finds support for the second hypothesis that *non-voters are more likely to switch to populist radical right parties than voters that voted for a left-wing or right-wing party in the previous election.*

Thirdly, it can be said that while no support for hypotheses 3b and 4b can be found, the support for hypotheses 3a and 4a depends on the voter group. A summary can be seen in Table 10.

Table 10: Overview support for Hypotheses

	MODEL 1: ALL VOTERS	MODEL 2: RIGHT-WING VOTERS	MODEL 3: LEFT-WING VOTERS	MODEL 4: NON-VOTERS
HYPOTHESIS 3A:	Not supported	Not supported	Not supported	Supported
HYPOTHESIS 3B:	Not supported	Not supported	Not supported	Not Supported
HYPOTHESIS 4A:	Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported
HYPOTHESIS 4B	Not supported	Not supported	Not Supported	Not Supported

Hypothesis 3a that states that *individuals with higher levels of relative deprivation, are more likely to switch from a mainstream to a populist radical right party, than individuals with lower levels of relative deprivation*, is only supported by model 4. Hypothesis 3b, that states that *individuals with an increase of relative deprivation between two consecutive elections, are more likely to switch from a mainstream to a populist radical right party, than individuals with no change of their feeling of relative deprivation or decrease of such*, is not supported by any model. Hypothesis 4a, that states that *individuals with stronger anti-immigrant sentiments are more likely to switch to a populist radical right party than individuals with lower levels of anti-immigrant sentiments*, is supported by all four models. Hypothesis 4b that states that *Individuals with an increase in anti-immigrant sentiments, between two consecutive elections, are more likely to switch to a populist radical right party than individuals with no change in their anti-immigration sentiments or a decrease of such*, is not supported by any model. In the next chapter these results are interpreted in a discussion.

Chapter 4: Discussion

This chapter analyses the results of the previous chapter. In a second step, this chapter also interprets the results in regards to the arguments against Mair's (1997) freezing thesis and in support of a party system change in Western Europe from a bi-polar party system to a tri-polar party system.

The first part argues for a party system change by pointing to the diverse re-alignment of the different voter groups, with diverse economic preferences, which challenges two arguments of Mair's (1997) freezing thesis. Firstly, Mair (1997) argues that political competition happens primarily along the economic division of parties. He argues that all parties can be allocated either in a liberal right-wing party bloc or a left-wing party bloc that campaigns for redistributive economic policies. Secondly Mair (1997) argues that, if voters switch to a different party, they switch to a different party within their economic bloc and not across the economic division.

The second part argues for a party system change by pointing to the significance of the new cultural dimension for voters' odds of switching to PRRPs, which challenges a third argument of Mair's freezing thesis. Mair (1997) argues that although new grievances and cleavages might emerge, left-wing and right-wing parties incorporate these grievances in their economic line of division. The second part of the discussion uses firstly the strong effect of the anti-immigration sentiment for all voters, regardless of their former voting choice and presumably economic policy preference, to support the argument of the new cultural dimension (Kriesi, 2012). Secondly it argues that the economic grievance of relative deprivation does not increase either former left-wing or right-wing voters likelihood to switch to PRRPs, if they have a prior economic preference, which points to PRRPs' economic issue blurring (Rovny & Polk, 2020). Both the emerging of the new cultural dimension and the economic issue blurring challenge Mair's idea of the ability of left-wing and right-wing parties to incorporate all grievances in their economic division.

4.1 Diverse voter re-alignment

As the descriptive analysis has demonstrated, the difference between the amount of former-left wing and right-wing people that switched to PRRP is of only 1.3%. Voters, regardless of whether they voted for a left wing or right wing party in the previous election, are almost equally likely to re-align to a PRRP. In comparison, 25.29% of the voters that did not vote in the previous election voted for a PRRP in the next election. This means that allegedly, next to

the voters that PRRPs keep from one election to the next or trade within the PRRP bloc, the majority of voters that switches to PRRP did not vote in the previous election. This result is also reflected in the most recent parliamentary election in the Netherlands (Harteveld & van Heck, 2021). In short this means that former voters of both left-wing and right-wing parties switch to PRRPs to the same degree, while non-voters form the biggest group of new PRR voters.

What do these results mean in regards to the argument of the Western European party system change? Two crucial aspects of Mair's (1997) argument for the freezing thesis are firstly that there are two salient economic poles in the party systems and secondly, that if voters switch to a different party, they switch within their economic bloc. However, it is not possible to allocate PRRPs to one of the two economic poles, due to their economic issue blurring (Rovny & Polk, 2020; Rovny, 2013). If PRRPs would clearly offer an either liberal or redistributive economic position to voters, we could expect either right-wing voters or left-wing voters to be more likely to switch, because they agree with the PRRPs economic position.

Instead, the analysis of tangible vote switchers finds that former left-wing and former right-wing voters are equally likely to switch to a PRRP. The re-alignment of ideologically opposing voter groups to the same party indicate that the economic salience of the division of the voter groups has lost its attraction that binds voters to the economic blocs. Following Oesch and Rennwald (2018), this thesis supports the argument of the emergence of the new pole. Arguably, PRRPs form a new pole, in the party system that cannot be fixated on the economic dimension.

This means that the results of this thesis challenge Mair's arguments that firstly, all parties can be allocated along the economic dimension and that voters only switch within their own economic bloc, because tangible left-wing and right-wing voters switched equally to PRRPs.

4.2 The significance of the cultural dimension

4.2.1 Anti-immigration sentiments

Regardless of the voter's behaviour in the previous election, the voters' odds of vote switching increase strongly if their anti-immigration sentiment is high. All four models find a strong effect of the anti-immigration predictor. However, the size of the effect differs between the voters. In general voters' odds to switch to a PRRP increased 2.3 times when their anti-immigration sentiment increased by one. However, a high anti-immigration sentiment has the strongest effect for former right-wing voters, whose odds increase by 2.5 times for every one

unit increase in the anti-immigration sentiment. The effect is 85% stronger for former right-wing voters than the effect for former non-voters. Furthermore, the effect of a high anti-immigration sentiment was 35% lower for former left-wing voters than for former right-wing voters. This means that a high anti-immigration sentiment has a stronger effect on voters' odds to switch to a PRRP, when they voted for a right-wing party in the previous elections, than if they voted for a left-wing party in the previous election. Anti-immigration sentiment has the weakest effect for former non-voters.

What do these results mean with regards to the argument of the Western European party system change? One important aspect of Mair's (1997) freezing thesis is the argument that Western European party systems can integrate newly emerging cleavages into the economic divide. However, Kriesi (2012) argues that the emergence of a migration cleavage was not integrated in the traditional economic division of parties. Instead, a new cultural dimension was formed on which the left-wing and right-wing parties occupy the centre progressive space and PRRP were able to occupy the nationalist end of the dimension.

Looking at the tangible vote switchers of the analysis, this argument can be supported by two findings. Firstly it is supported by the strong support all four models find for the effect of a high anti-immigration sentiment for vote switching. Voters were more likely to switch if they had a high anti-immigration sentiment. This finding supports Rooduijn's (2015) findings that PRR voters in general agree with the PRRPs' anti-immigration policy position. Although this thesis does not test whether the topic salience of immigration leads to voters' electoral decision, it demonstrates that voters are more likely to switch to a PRRP if they have a high anti-immigration sentiment. Therefore, the conclusion that can be derived from these results is that voters' immigration sentiment plays an important role when they decide whether or not to switch to a PRRP.

Secondly, arguably, PRRPs position on the cultural dimension is in contrast to the left-wing and right-wing parties, that ideologically converge on this dimension around the centre (Kriesi, 2012). The results of this thesis show a strong effect of a high anti-immigration sentiment on voters' odds of switching for both former left-wing as well as right-wing voters. The odds of switching to a PRRP for voters' that have allegedly economically different preferences, are increased significantly and strongly by an increase in the voters' anti-immigration sentiment. This supports the argument that left-wing and right-wing parties have not managed to integrate the immigration cleavage in their political competition along the economic dimension, because

otherwise one former voter group should be more likely to switch than the other. Instead, both economic party blocs supposedly support a similar immigration policy, which repels voters from both left-wing and right-wing parties who then switch to PRRPs.

Both findings that PRRP's position on migration has a strong attraction on voters and that left-wing and right-wing parties allegedly converged on the issue of migration support the argument against Mair's freezing thesis, that argues that the left-wing parties and right-wing parties integrate new cleavages along their economic division.

4.2.2 Relative Deprivation

While the level of voters' anti-immigration sentiment is a strong predictor for voters' odds of switching to PRRPs, the effect of the level of relative deprivation on these odds is weaker. A high level of perceived relative deprivation has only a significant effect on the odds of vote switching for former non-voters. However, the level of relative deprivation and has no significant effect of former right-wing voters' or former left wing voters' odds of switching to a PRRP.

I have argued relative deprivation might increase former left-wing and right-wing voters' odds to switch to a PRRP, because these voters might feel disadvantaged by the left-wing and right-wing parties cosmopolitan approach towards globalisation that can have economic disadvantages for their voters, due to increased competition on the labour market by migrants. This argument cannot be supported with these findings, because former left-wing and former right-wing's odds of switching to a PRRP do not increase with an increase in relative deprivation or a change thereof. However, former non-voters' odds are significantly increased by 33.6% for every one unit increase in relative deprivation.

What do these results mean with regards to the argument of the Western European party system change? One crucial aspect of Mair's (1997) freezing thesis is his argument that political competition happens primarily along the economic division of parties. He argues that all parties can be allocated either in a liberal right-wing party bloc or a left-wing party bloc that campaigns for redistributive economic policies (Mair, 1997). However, Rovny (2013) argues that PRRPs cannot be allocated to either side of the economic political spectrum, because they blur their economic position.

Looking at the tangible vote switchers, this thesis finds support for the economic position blurring argument and thereby challenges Mair's (1997) freezing thesis. Neither left-wing nor

right-wing voters are more likely to switch to PRRPs if they have a high feeling of relative deprivation. This indicates that PRRPs are not more attractive for either left-wing or right-wing voters that feel relatively deprived and supposedly disappointed in their parties economic policy. If PRRP could be allocated to either the liberal or the redistributive end of the economic policy spectrum, one could expect either of both voter groups to be more likely to switch. As this is not the case, PRRPs arguably do not fit the economic division of parties and form a new economically neutral pole in the party system.

It has been argued that PRRPs use a nativist frame to capitalize on economic grievances (Rovny & Polk, 2020). Arguably, it is in the voters' own rational interest to protect and ideally improve their economic situation. PRRP campaign for the protection of citizens from the effect of globalisation, by decreasing immigration. In contrast to former left-wing and former right-wing voters, former non-voters arguably do not have a strong pre-defined economic policy preference. However, in the previous election, the non-voters' perceived relative deprivation and the left-wing and right-wing parties response to it, has not motivated the individuals to vote. Arguably, instead of offering these individuals an economic policy option that is similar to right-wing and left-wing parties, PRRPs frame the economic grievances as a cultural issue, by arguing for an economic threat due to globalisation and the competition on the labour market due to migration. Therefore, it can be argued that non-voters that experience high levels of relative deprivation are more likely to switch to PRRP than voters with low levels of relative deprivation. However, to further strengthen this argument the effect of the interaction of immigration sentiment and relative deprivation on voters' odds of vote switching should be tested as well as the salience of topics for vote switchers.

In other words, while left-wing and right-wing voters arguably switch to PRRPs regardless of their economic grievances, non-voters switch to PRRPs partly due to their economic grievances. This supports the argumentation that PRRPs do not attract voters based on their economic policy offer, but due to connecting economic grievances to the threat of immigration. Therefore, it can be argued that PRRPs do not fit in the economic division of competition and instead from a new economically neutral pole that attracts voters based on cultural issues.

4.3 Conclusion

Although this study has demonstrated that a high level of perceived relative deprivation and a high anti-immigration sentiment significantly increases the odds of voters to re-aligning to

PRRPs, it also shows the importance to differentiate between vote switchers based on their previous voting decision.

While former left-wing and right-wing voters are equally likely to switch to a PRRP, non-voters are the most likely to switch. A high anti-immigration sentiment strongly increases voters' odds of vote switching for all voters, regardless of whether and for whom they voted in the previous election. However, a high level of relative deprivation only increases the odds of vote switching for former non-voters. These findings support the argument of party system change for four reasons.

Firstly, former left-wing as well as right-wing voters are equally likely to switch to a PRRP. The re-alignment of economically opposing voter groups to the same party indicate that the economic salience of the division of the voter groups has lost its attraction that binds voters to the economic blocs. This challenges Mair's (1997) argument that if voters switch, they switch within the same bloc, because PRRPs cannot be allocated to one side of the economic spectrum (Rovny, 2013; Rovny & Polk, 2020) and experience the same amount of electoral support from both economic sides of the spectrum.

Secondly, the strong effect of a high anti-immigration sentiment on the odds of vote switching can be observed for both left-wing as well as right-wing voters, which challenges Mair's (1997) argument that left-wing and right-wing parties integrate new cleavages in their economic line of competition. Instead, it supports Kriesi's (2012) argument of the formation of a new cultural dimension.

Thirdly, the fact that left-wing and right-wing voters were not significantly more likely to switch to a PRRP if they have a high level of relative deprivation, suggests that these voters do not switch to PRRP because of economic grievances. This supports the argument of party system change, because it supports Rovny's (2013) idea of economic issue blurring that argues that PRRPs cannot be allocated a position on the economic dimension.

Fourthly, former non-voters who arguably do not have a predefined economic preference are more likely to vote for a PRRP if they have a high feeling of relative deprivation. Supposedly, PRRPs' nativist argument of the economic threat of migration, converts a former economic grievance into a cultural one, which then increases the non-voters likelihood to switch to a PRRP. Left-wing and right-wing parties represent progressive cosmopolitan policy solutions on the issue of migration. Therefore, arguably, PRRPs' cultural framing of economic

grievances attracts more former non-voters that experience relative deprivation than former left-wing and right-wing voters. This is an argument for party system change because it arguably demonstrates that PRRPs attract voters with their cultural position more than with their economic policy suggestions.

Although no hypothesis was made for socio-demographic factors, the analysis has shown that level of education, gender and year of birth are significant predictors, but that their significance and effect size vary between the three voter groups. The level of education has the strongest and most persistent effect on the likelihood of vote switching to a PRRP. An increase of one level of their education decreases the voters' odds of switching to a PRRP by 50 % to 60%, depending on their electoral choice in the previous election. Furthermore, in general for all voters combined, men are more likely to switch to a PRRP than women. The same is true for former left-voters while gender has no significant effect on vote switching for former right-wing voters and former non-voters. Furthermore, in general, younger people are more likely to switch to PRRPs than older people, except for former left-wing voters. The level of income has a significant but small effect on the odds of vote switching, but only for former left-wing and non-voters.

The last chapter of this thesis summarizes the findings and answers the research question. The generalisability and limitation of the thesis are also discussed and suggestions for further research are presented.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In this chapter the thesis and its results are summarized, and the research question is answered. Furthermore, it discusses the limitation of the thesis and to what extent the findings can be generalized to other countries. Lastly, suggestions for further research are presented.

This study has answered the research question: *Why do voters re-align their vote to a populist radical right party in Western Europe?* This question has been divided into two sub-questions:

- 1) Can empirical data confirm that voters switch to populist radical right parties from the non-voter group as well as right-wing and left-wing parties and do these voters differ from each other?
- 2) Why do voters switch towards populist radical right parties?

To answer the first sub-question, this thesis confirms the first and second hypotheses. The first hypothesis argues that *voters that voted for a left-wing party in the previous election are as likely to vote for a populist radical right party in the next election, as voters that voted for a right-wing party in the previous election.* The second hypothesis argues that *non-voters are more likely to switch to populist radical right parties than voters that voted for a left-wing or right-wing party in the previous election.* The first sub-question can be answered by stating that empirical data can confirm that voters switch to PRRPs from left-wing and right wing party as well as from the non-voter group. While left-wing and right-wing voters are almost equally likely to re-align to PRRPs, non-voters are the most likely to switch to PRRPs. However, these vote switchers differ from each other, depending on whether and for whom they voted in the previous election. An analysis of the different voter sub-groups has shown that a high anti-immigration sentiment has the strongest effect on vote-switching for former right-wing voters, while it is the weakest for former non-voters. Former non-voters are the only voter group who's odds of switching to a PRRP increase with a high level of relative deprivation.

To answer the second sub-question this study tested the third and forth hypotheses. The third hypothesis expects firstly that *individuals with higher levels of relative deprivation, are more likely to switch from a mainstream to a populist radical right party, than individuals with lower levels of relative deprivation* and secondly that *individuals with an increase of relative deprivation between two consecutive elections, are more likely to switch from a mainstream to a populist radical right party, than individuals with no change of their feeling of relative deprivation or decrease of such.* The fourth hypothesis expects firstly that *individuals with*

stronger anti-immigrant sentiments are more likely to switch to a populist radical right party than individuals with lower levels of anti-immigrant sentiments and secondly that *individuals with an increase in anti-immigrant sentiments, between two consecutive elections, are more likely to switch to a populist radical right party than individuals with no change in their anti-immigration sentiments or a decrease of such*. While a high level of anti-immigration sentiment increases the odds of vote switching for all voters, regardless of their electoral decision in the previous election, a high level of relative deprivation only increases the odds of switching for former non-voters. A change in the voters' anti-immigration sentiment and feeling of relative deprivation are not significant predictors for the voters' odds of switching to a PRRP.

In summary, this thesis answers the research question by stating the likelihood and the reasons why voters re-align to PRRPs in Western Europe differ depending on the electoral decision voters made in the previous election. Former non-voters are the most likely to switch to PRRPs and their odds of switching increase the most if they have a anti-immigration sentiment. However former non-voters odds of switching increase as well if they have a high feeling of relative deprivation. Former left-wing and right-wing voters are almost equally likely to switch to a PRRP, but the effect of a high anti-immigration sentiment on their odds of switching is stronger for former right-wing voters than for former left-wing voters. The feeling of relative deprivation does not increase former left-wing or right-wing voters' odds of switching to a PRRP. This study demonstrates the importance of the use of panel data when studying vote switching. By tracing the same individual's attitudes and sentiments, as well as their voting decision, individuals' changes in attitudes and the corresponding effect on their voting behaviour can be analysed.

This thesis furthermore argues that voters' re-alignment to PRRPs not only increases the electoral success of these parties but has also changed the party system. I argued that the electoral success of PRRPs has transformed the bi-polar party system to a tri-polar party system, because PRRPs use the new cultural cleavage on immigration, which traditional parties fail to incorporate in their traditional economic divide (Kriesi & Hutter, 2019), and campaign on anti-immigration standpoints, while blurring their economic position (Rovny, 2013; Rovny & Polk, 2020). Based on these arguments that are supported by the analysis of tangible vote switchers this thesis challenges Mair's (1997) freezing thesis.

Although the Netherlands has been selected as an ideal case, it can be expected that these findings are generalisable in other Western European countries with similar conditions of a

proportionate electoral system, a history with modern PRRPs and a volatile party system. PRRP have celebrated electoral success all over Western Europe, while anti-immigration sentiments and a feeling of relative deprivation have risen. Furthermore, voters seem to re-align to the Western European PRRPs from across the political spectrum (SORA & ISA, 2019; Politico, 2018). However, to confirm this expected generalisability of the results a cross sectional comparative analysis of other Western European party system change is necessary.

Lastly, although this thesis has contributed to our understanding of re-alignment to PRRPs and arguably the party system change in Western Europe by analysing tangible vote switchers there are three particular shortcomings that should be tested in future studies. One important aspect that would strengthen the arguments for party system change is the new importance of the cultural dimension. Therefore, future studies examining the re-alignment to PRRPs should look at the salience of topics that motivated voters to switch to the PRRPs. The results of such an analysis would provide additional support or challenge to Mair's (1997) freezing thesis, because it could analyse which dimension is more salient for voters that switch in general and for voters that switch to PRRPs specifically. Secondly, it would be interesting to analyse whether a hypothesised convergence of traditional parties on the cultural dimension is perceived by voters and whether it motivates them to vote for a PRRP, because the PRRP represents the only alternative option on the cultural dimension. Lastly, Hartveld and van Heck (2021) demonstrate that in the most recent parliamentary election in the Netherlands, the majority of left-wing voters switched to the liberal right-wing party D66 (2021). A future study could test whether the party system has become more volatile in general, by examining tangible vote switchers over time and testing whether or not they have increasingly re-aligned more often between the left-wing and right-wing party bloc.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Descriptive Tables

Table A1: Descriptive statistics 2010 dataset.

	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	MIN	MAX
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	1410	2.95	1.51	0	9
CHANGE IN RELATIVE DEPRIVATION SENTIMENT	1410	-0.156	1.43	-8	7
ANTI IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	1410	3.34	1.06	1	5
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	1410	0.06	0.83	-4	4
GENDER	1410	0.51	0.50	0	1
YEAR OF BIRTH	1410	1957.21	13.66	1913	1989
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	1410	2.33	0.54	1	3
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	1410	1805.08	5839.49	0	180765

Table A2: Descriptive statistics 2012 dataset.

	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	MIN	MAX
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	1756	3.07	1.61	0	9
CHANGE IN RELATIVE DEPRIVATION SENTIMENT	1756	0.05	1.49	-8	8
ANTI IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	1756	3.26	1.06	1	5
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	1756	-0.08	0.77	-4	4
GENDER	1756	0.51	0.50	0	1
YEAR OF BIRTH	1756	1957.30	14.70	1922	1992
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	1756	2.33	0.54	1	3
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	1756	1700.87	4418.19	0	180895

Table A3: Descriptive statistics 2017 dataset.

	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	MIN	MAX
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	1624	2.78	1.54	0	9
CHANGE IN RELATIVE DEPRIVATION SENTIMENT	1624	-0.26	1.47	-8	7
ANTI IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	1624	3.13	1.08	1	5
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	1624	-0.13	0.82	-4	4
GENDER	1624	0.54	0.50	0	1
YEAR OF BIRTH	1624	1956.99	14.64	1923	1994
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	1624	2.35	0.55	1	3
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	1624	1764.30	1075.81	0	10500

Table A4: Percentage of vote switching per voter group

	FORMER RIGHT- WING VOTERS	FORMER LEFT- WING VOTERS	FORMER NON- VOTERS
VOTE SWITCHING PERCENTAGE	6.47%	5.17%	25.29%
NON-VOTE SWITCHING PERCENTAGE	93.53%	94.83%	74.71%
TOTAL N	1823	1702	253

Appendix 2: Assumption testing for Logistic Regression

Table A5: VIF Scores Independent variables

	TOLERANCE	VIF
LEVEL OF RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	0.723	1.383
CHANGE IN RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	0.762	1.312
LEVEL OF ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	0.787	1.270
CHANGE OF ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	0.846	1.182
GENDER	0.979	1.021
BIRTH YEAR	0.924	1.083
EDUCATION	0.857	1.167
INCOME	0.781	1.280
DUMMY YEAR 2010	0.777	1.188
DUMMY YEAR 2012	0.980	1.020

Table A6: Correlation between independent and control variables

	REL DEP	CHAN RELDEP	ANTI IM	CHAN ANTI IM	GENDER	YEAR OF BIRTH	INCOME	YEAR 2010	YEAR 2012	YEAR 2017
Rel Dep	1									
ChanRel Dep	0.467***	1								
Anti Im	0.129***	-0.005	1							
Chan Anti Im	0.21	-0.008	0.376***	1						
Gender	-0.011	-0.002	0.015	0.010	1					
Year of Birth	0.107***	-0.025	-0.003	-0.007	-0.063***	1				
Education	-0.156***	-0.003	0.245***	-0.014	0.078***	0.195***	1			
Income	-0.080***	-0.019	-0.046***	0.015	0.088***	-0.033*	0.075	1		
Year 2010	0.005	0.026	0.061***	0.093***	-0.012	0.002	-0.008	0.008	1	
Year 2012	0.064***	0.065***	0.015	-0.021	-0.009	0.007	-0.008	-0.009	-0.491***	1
Year 2017	-0.070***	-0.070***	-0.074***	-0.068***	0.021	-0.009	0.016	0.002	-0.463***	-0.545***

Appendix 3: Fixed effect models: Logged Odds

Table A7: Fixed Effect Models: Logged Odds of switching to PRRPs for variables of interest for all voters.

	MODEL 1A:	MODEL 1B:
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	0.053	
CHANGE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION		-0.052
ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	0.854***	
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT		0.123
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	0.526***	0.599***
YEAR OF BIRTH	0.023***	0.026***
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	0.386***	-1.213***
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	0.001	0.001
YEAR 2010	-0.438**	-0.547***
YEAR 2012	1.566***	-1.408***
CONSTANT	50.686***	-51.478***
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

Table A8: Fixed Effect Models: Logged Odds of switching to PRRPs for variables of interest for former right-wing voters.

	MODEL 2A:	MODEL 2B:
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	-0.106	
CHANGE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION		-0.039
ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	0.939***	
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT		0.047
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	0.513*	0.620**
YEAR OF BIRTH	0.024***	0.025***
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	-0.781***	-1.025***
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	0.001	0.001
YEAR 2010	-0.280	-0.417*
YEAR 2012	1.315***	1.209***
CONSTANT	-53.358***	-52.211***
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

Table A9: Fixed Effect Models: Logged Odds of switching to PRRPs for variables of interest for former left-wing voters.

	MODEL 3A	MODEL 3B:
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	0.067	
CHANGE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION		-0.066
ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	0.792***	
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT		0.235
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	0.764**	0.798**
YEAR OF BIRTH	0.008	0.012
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	-0.820***	-1.084***
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	0.001*	0.001**
YEAR 2010	-0.828***	-0.908***
YEAR 2012	2.156***	2.036***
CONSTANT	-22.604	-25.715
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

Table A10: Fixed Effect Models: Logged Odds of switching to PRRPs for variables of interest for former non-voters.

	MODEL 4A:	MODEL 4B:
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	0.201**	
CHANGE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION		-0.041
ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	0.557***	
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT		0.078
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	0.437	0.530
YEAR OF BIRTH	0.030***	0.033***
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	-0.895**	-1.190***
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	-0.001**	-0.001**
YEAR 2010	0.068	-0.027
YEAR 2012	1.359***	1.223***
CONSTANT	-65.130***	-67.267***
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

Appendix 4: Fixed effect models with natural log for relative deprivation and anti-immigration sentiment

Table A11: Fixed effect Models: Odds ratios for vote switching to PRRPs and Natural log of relative deprivation

	MODEL 1C	MODEL 2C	MODEL 3C	MODEL 4C:
NLOG RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	1.134	0.786	1.159	1.839*
ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	2.362***	2.566***	2.215***	1.754***
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	1.717***	1.695**	2.234**	1.579
YEAR OF BIRTH	1.024***	1.025***	1.008	1.031***
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	0.379***	0.461***	0.431***	0.404**
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	1.000	1.000	1.000*	0.999**
YEAR 2010	1.538**	1.320	2.289***	0.922
YEAR 2012	0.212***	0.270***	0.120***	0.256***
CONSTANT	0.001***	0.001***	0.001	-63.020***
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

Table A12: Fixed effect Models: Logged Odds between vote switching to PRRPs and Natural log of relative deprivation

	MODEL 1C ALL VOTERS	MODEL 2C RIGHT WING VOTERS	MODEL 3C LEFT WING VOTERS	MODEL 4C: NON- VOTERS
NLOG RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	0.126	-0.241	0.147	0.609*
ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	0.859***	0.942***	0.795**	0.562***
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	0.540***	0.527**	0.804**	0.457
YEAR OF BIRTH	0.024***	0.025***	0.008	0.030***
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	-0.969***	-0.774***	-0.841***	-0.907**
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	0.001	0.001	0.001*	-0.001**
YEAR 2010	0.430**	0.278	0.828***	0.081
YEAR 2012	-1.553***	-1.310***	-2.119***	1.361***
CONSTANT	-50.368	-53.403	-20.936	-63.020***
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

Table A13: Fixed effect Models: Odds ratios for vote switching to PRRPs and Natural log of Anti-Immigration Sentiment

	MODEL 1D	MODEL 2D	MODEL 3D	MODEL 4D
NLOG ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	16.263***	27.078***	12.785***	5.378***
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	1.057	0.900	1.073	1.228**
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	1.714***	1.693**	2.161**	1.563
YEAR OF BIRTH	1.024***	1.024***	1.009	1.031***
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	0.385***	0.459***	0.436***	0.404**
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	1.000	1.000	1.000*	0.999**
YEAR 2010	1.551**	1.323	2.294***	0.938
YEAR 2012	0.212***	0.270***	0.117***	0.258***
CONSTANT	0.001***	0.001***	0.001	0.001***
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

Table A14: Fixed effect Models: Logged Odds between vote switching to PRRPs and Natural log of anti-immigration sentiment

	MODEL 1D	MODEL 2D	MODEL 3D	MODEL 4D
NLOG ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	2.789***	3.299***	2.548***	1.682***
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	0.055	-0.106	0.070	0.205**
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	0.539***	0.527**	0.771**	0.446
YEAR OF BIRTH	0.023***	0.024***	0.008	0.031***
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	-0.955***	-0.779***	-0.831***	-0.907
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	0.001	0.001	0.001*	-0.001**
YEAR 2010	0.439**	0.280	0.830***	-0.064
YEAR 2012	-1.551***	-1.311***	-2.148***	-1.354***
CONSTANT	-50.151***	-53.220***	-22.080	-64.318***
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

Appendix 5: Models with time variation

Table A15: Logged Odds between vote switching to PRRPs for variables of interest for all voters.

	MODEL 1E:	MODEL 1F:
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	0.034	
CHANGE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION		-0.066
ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	0.838***	
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT		0.149*
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	-0.473**	-0.564***
YEAR OF BIRTH	0.022***	0.024***
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	-0.907***	-1.166***
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	0.001	0.001
CONSTANT	46.239***	-46.818***
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

Table A16: Odds ratios for vote switching to PRRPs for variables of interest for all voters.

	MODEL 1E:	MODEL 1F:
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	1.034	
CHANGE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION		0.936
ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	2.311***	
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT		1.161*
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	0.623**	0.569***
YEAR OF BIRTH	1.022***	1.024***
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	0.404***	0.312***
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	1.000	1.000
CONSTANT	0.001***	0.001***
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

Table A17: Logged Odds between vote switching to PRRPs for variables of interest for former right-wing voters.

	MODEL 2E:	MODEL 2F:
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	-0.118	
CHANGE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION		-0.055
ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	0.937***	
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT		0.071
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	-0.503*	-0.608**
YEAR OF BIRTH	0.023***	0.024***
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	-0.749***	-1.004***
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	0.001	0.001
CONSTANT	-49.586***	-48.676
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

Table A18: Odds ratios for vote switching to PRRPs for variables of interest for former right-wing voters.

	MODEL 2E:	MODEL 2F:
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	0.888	
CHANGE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION		0.946
ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	2.553***	
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT		1.074
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	0.605*	0.544**
YEAR OF BIRTH	1.023***	1.025***
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	0.473***	0.366***
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	1.000	1.000
CONSTANT	0.001***	0.001***
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

Table A19: Logged Odds between vote switching to PRRPs for variables of interest for former left-wing voters.

	MODEL 3E:	MODEL 3F:
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	0.044	
CHANGE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION		-0.072
ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	0.793***	
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT		0.269*
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	-0.695**	-0.757**
YEAR OF BIRTH	0.008	0.011
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	-0.769**	-1.030***
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	0.001*	0.001**
CONSTANT	-20.370	-22.470
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

Table A20: Odds ratios for vote switching to PRRPs for variables of interest for former left-wing voters.

	MODEL 3E:	MODEL 3F:
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	1.044	
CHANGE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION		0.931
ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	2.210***	
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT		1.309*
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	0.499**	0.469**
YEAR OF BIRTH	1.008	1.011
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	-0.463**	0.357***
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	1.000*	1.000**
CONSTANT	0.001	0.001
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

Table A21: Logged Odds between vote switching to PRRPs for variables of interest for former non-voters.

	MODEL 4E:	MODEL 4F:
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	0.188**	
CHANGE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION		-0.063
ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	0.542***	
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT		0.071
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	-0.396	-0.502
YEAR OF BIRTH	0.029***	0.032***
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	-0.901**	-1.186***
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	-0.001*	-0.001**
CONSTANT	-60.575***	-62.968***
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

Table A22: Odds ratios for vote switching to PRRPs for variables of interest for former non-voters.

	MODEL 4E:	MODEL 4F:
RELATIVE DEPRIVATION	1.207**	
CHANGE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION		0.939
ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT	1.720***	
CHANGE ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT		1.073
MALE (REF=FEMALE)	0.673	0.605
YEAR OF BIRTH	1.029***	1.032***
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	0.406**	0.305***
PERSONAL MONTHLY NET INCOME	0.999*	0.999**
CONSTANT	0.001***	0.001***
OBSERVATIONS	4790	4790

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, p<0.001; coefficients represent regression estimates for the OLS models

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