Explaining the electoral performance of radical right parties in Europe (2008-2019): a fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis

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Abstract. Although radical right parties have been extensively examined since their significant breakthrough in the European political arena in the late 80s, not enough attention has been paid to the reasons behind their unequal electoral performance (or in other words, to the cross-national and within-national variations of their success). The aim of this research is to identify the different scenarios of electoral success for radical right parties in ten European countries between 2008 and 2019. Using fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) —a case-oriented technique which allows in-depth comparative examination and which is based on the concepts of equifinality and causal heterogeneity—, we test the role of several causal conditions related to some demand-side and supply-side explanations. Our results reveal four sufficient causal paths that lead to the success of these parties, which confirm that they are able to achieve relevance in quite diverse contexts. The four paths combine both demand-side and supply-side conditions, but the role of the latter is qualitatively and quantitatively more important. In particular, we see how radical right parties can effectively take advantage of favorable political competitive dynamics, even in the absence of *a priori* favorable socio-economic contexts. Overall, our findings run contrary to some mechanistic explanations in the literature and support the idea of conceiving of the radical right parties as a complex, multiform phenomenon which needs to be understood through both theoretical and methodological innovations.
Keywords: radical right; fsQCA; configurational analysis; Western Europe; electoral performance.

[es] Explicando el rendimiento electoral de los partidos de derecha radical en Europa (2008-2019): un análisis cualitativo comparado difuso

Resumen. Si bien los partidos de derecha radical han sido examinados en profundidad desde su irrupción en la arena política europea a finales de la década de 1980, no se ha prestado suficiente atención a las razones que hay detrás de su desigual desempeño electoral (es decir, a la variación de su éxito inter e intrapaíses). El objetivo de esta investigación es identificar los diferentes escenarios de éxito electoral de los partidos de derecha radical en diez países europeos entre 2008 y 2019. A través del Análisis Cualitativo Comparado en su modalidad difusa (fsQCA) —una técnica orientada a los casos que permite una examinación comparativa basada en los conceptos de equifinalidad y heterogeneidad causal—, se testan varias condiciones causales relacionadas con explicaciones de la demanda y de la oferta. Los resultados revelan cuatro pautas causales suficientes que explican el éxito de estos partidos, lo que confirma que estos son capaces de adquirir relevancia en contextos diversos. Las cuatro pautas combinan tanto condiciones de demanda como de oferta, si bien el rol de estas últimas es cualitativa y cuantitativamente más importante. En particular, se observa cómo la derecha radical es capaz de aprovechar dinámicas políticas favorables incluso en ausencia de contextos socioeconómicos favorables *a priori*. En definitiva, estos hallazgos contradicen algunas de las explicaciones mecanicistas existentes en la literatura, y van en la dirección de entender la derecha radical como un fenómeno complejo y multiforme que requiere de innovaciones teóricas y metodológicas.
Palabras clave: derecha radical; fsQCA; análisis configuracional; Europa occidental; rendimiento electoral.

Summary. 1. Introduction. 2. Theoretical Background. 3. Understanding the electoral performance of RRPs from an integrative perspective: theory and hypotheses. 4. Methodology. 5. Empirical Analysis. 6. Conclusions. 7. Bibliography. 8. Appendix.

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1. Introduction

In this article, we focus on radical right parties (RRPs) in Europe, studying their electoral performance during the last decade (2008-2019) in detail. Our aim is to elucidate the following research question: what combinations of factors explain the different levels of electoral support for the RRPs in Europe? With the aid of the fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) approach, we will show that the electoral success of RRPs is a result of the interaction among demand-side and supply-side factors.

Since the late 80s, the far right party family in general and the radical right sub-group in particular[4] have been growing in political and electoral influence in Western Europe leading to considerable interest from the academia and the media. The fascination with regard to the RRPs is demonstrated by the fact that, even though they have a smaller electoral influence than other party families (e.g., social democratic or Christian democratic parties), they paradoxically receive much more academic attention (Mudde, 2016). Despite great efforts, considerable knowledge gaps still exist regarding this party family and some debates about its nature remain open. Concerning its categorisation, an operative minimal definition would be one that distinguishes two main ideological features: nativism (a combination of nationalism and xenophobia) and authoritarianism (the support for a strictly ordered society in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely) (Mudde, 2007: 22-23).

The literature on RRPs has mainly focused on examining those cases of significant electoral success. The scrutiny of the electoral success has been carried out mostly on the basis of the so-called "globalization losers" hypothesis, which states that precarious social groups affected by globalization processes are more likely to support RPPs in turbulent socio-economic times (Rydgren, 2007). Basically, this hypothesis is an adaptation to current circumstances of the explanations used to address political extremism of the interwar period. Notwithstanding the above, numerous studies have shown that this set of explanations cannot adequately explain the unequal electoral performance of RRPs, or in other words, the combination of successes and failures both on temporal and geographical levels (Art, 2011; Mudde, 2007). In this respect, everything points to the need for also considering the supply-side factors in a more systematic way.

Overall, RRPs' electoral performance appears to be a complex phenomenon which requires innovative theoretical and methodological approaches. We draw on the premise that RRPs' electoral performance is not affected by a mechanistic set of factors, but by multiple causes which interact with each other. Thereby, RRPs' electoral success (or failure) can occur within dissimilar configuration of factors. This study aims to identify the different scenarios that characterize RRPs' electoral performance in Europe. Specifically, we focus on the national elections held on ten European countries (Spain, Italy, Greece, Germany, Sweden, France, the Netherlands, Austria, Denmark and Norway) between 2008 and 2019. This temporal frame includes the Great Recession and subsequent years.

Our research seeks to contribute to the study of RRPs through the use of a research approach (fsQCA) which is able to discern the multicausality of social phenomena (Ragin, 2008). Previous studies using this methodology have addressed the electoral performance of broader categories as anti-establishment (Fernández-García and Luengo, 2019; Zulianello, 2019) or populist parties (van Kessel, 2015) using fsQCA. However, with the notable exception of Veugelers and Magnan (2005), no research studies have specifically investigated RRPs using this approach.

The article is structured as follows. First, we present a theoretical review of the literature accounting for the RRPs' electoral performance and suggest some reasons to understand it as a complex, multidimensional phenomenon, which implies accounting for both success and failure and at the same time, for demand and supply factors. On the basis of this theoretical background, several hypotheses are provided. Next, we present the fsQCA method and justify its use for the comparative research on RRPs. Also, we explain the operationalization of the outcome and the causal conditions, as well as the hypothesized impact of each condition. In section four, empirical results are presented, and finally, we conclude by discussing the implications of our findings for the research agenda on RRPs.

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[4]   Regarding the far right party family it is possible to make a distinction between two strands: the radical right and the extreme right. Following Mudde: "The radical right is (nominally) democratic, even if they oppose some fundamental values of liberal democracy, whereas the extreme right is in essence antidemocratic, opposing the fundamental principle of sovereignty of the people" (2007: 31).

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. The electoral performance of RRPs: a brief review of the state of the art

This section will provide an overview of the literature on RRPs' electoral performance. From a critical point of view, we will suggest some possible contributions to the theoretical and empirical knowledge about this phenomenon.

Traditionally, most of the literature about RRPs has been dominated by a general aim: to disentangle the RRPs' electoral success. In a nutshell, the question that fundamentally guided the second wave of scholarship of RRPs —developed since the late 80s to the early 2000s— was basically to understand how RRPs could be successful in modern European liberal democracies (Mudde, 2016). Some voices argued that, after the interwar period, European liberal democracies were immunized against right-wing radicalism. Therefore, the successful presence of RRPs in the political arena could only be interpreted as a consequence of "unusual circumstances". As noted by Mudde, this hegemonic paradigm (whose origin can be found in the work of Scheuch and Klingemann (1967)) conceives of RRPs as "a pathology of contemporary western democracies, which has only limited support under 'normal' circumstances" (2010: 1181). From this point of view, the explanatory key is the broad theoretical concept of crisis. In other words, only in a context marked by economic, political or social crisis could RRPs be successful. Hence, this paradigm shows different versions of crisis-related explanations regarding several modern processes: globalization, post-Fordism, post-industrialism, risk society, etc. (Mudde, 2007). This set of explanations states that the least protected groups whose status and position have worsened as a consequence of modern socioeconomic processes are attracted by the radical right, especially in contexts of crisis (Rydgren, 2007). From this point of view, demand-side variables —which refers to the attitudes, preferences and orientations of voters (Rydgren, 2007: 247)— are the main factors used to explain the electoral performance for RRPs.

Although crisis-related explanations are still hegemonic in the literature, some of its theoretical and empirical faults have been pointed out more recently. Firstly, empirical scrutiny shows that particularly macro-structural economic factors and other demand-side variables (e.g.: political dissatisfaction, socioeconomic pauperisation or nativist orientations) cannot adequately account by themselves for the unequal electoral performance of RRPs (Kitschelt and MacGann, 1995; Mudde, 2007). In other words, crisis-related explanations fail to explain those cases in which RRPs do well in non-turbulent economic, political or social contexts, as well as those in which they perform poorly in contexts of crisis. As Art suggests, "existing theories cannot account for the variation in their success across different regions or countries" (2011: 3). In this respect, it should be noted that beyond their significant successes, the distinctive factor that characterized RRPs is the variability of their electoral performances or, in other words, the combination of successes and failures both on geographical and temporal levels (Acha, 2017). Despite this, the literature has mainly focused on "success", ignoring cases of failure: "Little attention has been paid to the more intriguing twin question of why the extreme right's support is so unstable within many countries over time, and why these parties are so weak in many West European countries" (Arzheimer, 2009: 259). In sum, why these parties have such inconstant and heterogeneous trajectories is probably the least studied issue in this research field.

On the basis of the above, RRPs' presence in European party systems appears to be a more complex phenomenon than what had been previously considered. Hence, it requires a more nuanced, integral and innovative theoretical and empirical approach to be discerned. On the one hand, all points to the need to equally consider the two dimensions of the electoral performance: success and failure. In fact, several studies have pointed out that examining failed cases of RRPs is even more theoretically interesting than only focusing on successful cases (Arzheimer, 2009; Arzheimer and Carter, 2006). Considering only those cases in which RRPs are successful may show a biased reality, "a relatively simple story about the rise of the radical right in which massive structural transformations —primarily postindustrialization, immigration, globalization and European integration— generated a predictable and uniform backlash" (Art, 2011: 5). On the other hand, since demand-side factors cannot explain the variation of RRPs' electoral performance by themselves, supply-side factors must be considered in more detail. Indeed, RRPs are not merely parties at the mercy of structural transformations, but agencies (in terms of the agency theory) which have certain room for manoeuvre and develop competitive relationships with the political environment (Art, 2011).

3. Understanding the electoral performance of RRPs from an integrative perspective: theory and hypotheses

Taking all this into account, we propose a theoretical approach which comprises both demand-side and supply-side conditions in order to empirically assess the electoral performance of RRPs in a more flexible and comprehensive way. Firstly, we suggest several expectations regarding the impact of five causal conditions on the basis of the literature, and then we identify several configurational hypotheses (hypotheses 1 to 5). The

configurational hypotheses show expectations about asymmetric configurations of conditions in terms of sufficiency and necessity. In essence, they are the core of the fsQCA approach.

Our first expectation tackles the so-called "globalization losers" thesis, probably the most widely recognized thesis in the academic literature (even though some of its faults have been pointed out and mixed evidence has emerged). It comprises a set of explanations around the basic idea that RRPs are benefited from crises and economic pauperisation. Thus, the "globalization losers" thesis states that the sectors whose status has worsened as a consequence of capitalist globalization and economic crisis, are to a large extent attracted by RRPs. In particular, in periods of crisis it is more likely that they will punish the mainstream parties and choose alternative options like the RRPs; at the same time, those sectors with lower socioeconomic status would be attracted by the stigmatising discourse of the RRPs against minorities (Rydgren, 2007). From this point of view, it is expected that the worsening of the socioeconomic situation will benefit the RRPs. Or, in other words, that economic crisis favours the electoral performance of the RRPs.

Therefore, our second expectation derives from the broadly shared understanding that nativism constitutes the main pillar of the ideological core of RRPs. Nativism can be defined as "an ideology which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ('the nation') and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state" (Mudde, 2007: 22). Nativism goes further than merely anti-immigrant orientations, resting on an essentialist, monolithic, static nationalism. In this sense, the existence of significant nativist attitudes at the mass-level could be understood as a fertile ground for RRPs' electoral success:

Moving on to supply-side explanations, it is possible to identify the so-called external factors, which refer to the "political opportunity structure". Tarrow defines the political opportunity structure as "consistent, but not necessarily formal or permanent, dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure" (1994: 85). As many RRPs are integrated in the competitive context of liberal democracies, their key competitive landscape is the "electoral opportunity structure". In this sense, numerous studies have pointed out how the strategies of the established parties are crucial for the success (or failure) of RRPs (Carter, 2005; Downes and Loveless, 2018; Meguid, 2005). From this point of view, RRPs' success is not the simple reflection of voter preferences, but it also "depends on the strategic interaction of competing parties in the party system" (Kitschelt and MacGann, 1995: 15). Three different expectations are derived in relation to the "political opportunity structure".

Within the framework of the "political opportunity structure", our third theoretical expectation derives from the seminal work of Kitschelt and MacGann (1995), who raised the well-known convergence thesis. This thesis suggests that RRPs will benefit when mainstream left and mainstream right parties converge on issues on the economic-distributive dimension. In this situation, it is expected that noneconomic or socio-cultural issues —in which RRPs are usually credible— will gain greater importance. Since its original formulation, mixed evidence has been found regarding the convergence thesis: while some studies have found empirical support for it (Abedi, 2002; Carter, 2005), others have refuted its predictions (Norris, 2005). Besides, more refined formulations of the theory have been suggested (Spies and Franzmann, 2011; Veugelers and Magnan, 2005). Nevertheless, we still expect that the programmatic convergence between mainstream centre-left and centre-right parties on economic-redistributive issues electorally favours the RRPs.

Our fourth expectation rests on the literature that highlights the influence of the mainstream parties on the RRPs' electoral fortunes, or in other words, the so-called "party system mechanics". This is defined by Mair as "the interaction of relevant parties with one another in terms of their position on the issues" (Mair, 2000: 30). This implies that the role of established centre-right parties needs to be taken into account, since they are almost always the principal electoral competitors of RRPs. Thus, RRPs base their programmatic strategies mainly around non-economic issues, or what has been defined as the TAN pole of the GALTAN dimension (Green, Alternative and Libertarian vs. Traditionalist, Authoritarian and Nationalist) (Hooghe, Marks and Wilson, 2002). Accordingly, the attempt of centre-right parties to incorporate this agenda would legitimate these issues in the eyes of the electorate and would ultimately benefit the RRPs (Bale, 2003; Meguid, 2005). The following expectation can be derived from these considerations: when the mainstream centre-right parties incorporate radical positions on the GALTAN dimension, the RRPS are benefitted in electoral terms.

A fifth expectation revolves around the increasing attention that niche parties have received from political scientists due to their key role in the recent transformations of European party systems. Although scholars agree about the existence of substantial differences between mainstream and niche parties, there is no consensus on the theoretical characterization of niche parties. Originally, Meguid pointed out three main features of niche parties: the rejection of the traditional class-based orientation of politics, the rise of novel issues which do not coincide with existing lines of political conflict, and their limited issue appeals (2005: 347-348). In a similar way, other definitions stated that niche parties are fundamentally characterized by ideological extremism (Adams *et al.*, 2006) or by the emphasis on non-economic issues (Wagner, 2012).

More recently, significant efforts have been made to develop a minimal definition of niche parties which allows for comparative, systematic empirical research. Thus, Meyer and Miller propose a basic

conceptualization: "A niche party emphasizes policy areas neglected by its competitors" (2015: 261). This minimal definition conceives the "nicheness" as a continuous measure in contrast with previous dichotomous classifications. This implies that "nicheness" is a general characteristic of all parties —not only of certain party families—, since it refers to the degree of programmatic differences between a given party and its competitors (Wagner and Meyer, 2017). Also, this conceptualization has the advantage of being sensitive to time and competition: that is to say, in terms of agency, parties can show different degrees of "nicheness".

Traditionally, RRPs have been considered as a paradigmatic example of niche parties. To summarize, our fifth expectation departs from the premise that the more programmatic distinctiveness the RRPs are able to offer, the better results they will obtain. We therefore expect that high levels of programmatic nicheness favour RRPs' electoral performance.

The above mentioned hypotheses, rather than clearly establishing defined links between the outcome and the conditions (as quantitative research usually does), should be better understood as useful causal conjectures, pointing out the directional expectations for each condition (Ragin, 2008). In essence, these conjectures are one of the main pillars of fsQCA. Building on these basic hypotheses we extract the following configurational hypotheses which are linked to the epistemological nature of fsQCA, and formulate expectations about the interaction of different conditions:

H1: There are different sociopolitical scenarios that lead to the electoral success of the RRPs in Europe.

H2: There are no necessary conditions for the electoral success of the RRPs in Europe.

H3: Supply-side factors lead to the electoral success of the RRPs, even when favourable demand-side factors are absent.

H4: Economic crisis and/or strong nativist attitudes create favourable scenarios for the RRPs but this success will materialize only if advantageous factors at the supply-side level exist.

H5: Supply-side conditions have greater relevance (both qualitative and quantitative) than the demand-side conditions in the different paths that lead to the electoral success of RRPs in Europe.

Although the use of demand-side and supply-side factors is widely accepted in the literature, the added value in our proposal is the combination of both types of factors with a technique which has not been much used in this research field in the past, and which is able to uncover complex causal paths in detail. We are well aware of the fact that some other factors may have an influence on this phenomenon; however, our aim is not to draw a total explanation about the phenomenon of the RRPs in Europe, but to explore the combined impact of certain conditions in their electoral performance.

4. Methodology

We use the so-called fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA), which is a later extension of the original Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) developed by Ragin (1987). The fsQCA approach is based on the fuzzy logic and its main feature is to link certain configurations of causal conditions to an outcome of interest (Ragin, 2008). It is a qualitative-case approach which rests on the epistemological principles of equifinality (that is, how different combinations of factors can lead to the same outcome) and causal asymmetry: in contrast with statistical techniques, fsQCA assumes that the presence and the absence of an outcome require different explanations (Grofman and Schneider, 2009: 666-667). The main advantage of fsQCA is that the outcome and the conditions can be operationalized gradually, so the membership scores vary between 0 (total absence) and 1 (total presence). In this sense, electoral performance can be conceived of, not dichotomously, but as a gradual phenomenon. Furthermore, this approach is well suited for medium size samples (N= 5-50), perfectly serving our purposes.

In this study we focus on the national elections held between 2008 and 2019 in ten European countries (Spain, Italy, Greece, Germany, Sweden, France, The Netherlands, Austria, Denmark and Norway). This conforms a dataset which contains 29 elections which fits perfectly with the recommendation for QCA research design (preferably 5-50 cases) (Medina *et al.*, 2017). As noted by previous research (Fernández-García and Luengo, 2019; van Kessel, 2015), the main advantage of using elections instead of countries is that it allows to capture the temporal diversity within the specific national contexts. This implies that not only cross-case or cross-country comparisons, but also intra-country comparisons are possible.

The aforementioned ten countries have been selected considering two criteria: similarity and difference. Firstly, they all have at least one RRP which owns seats in the national parliament during this period. At the same time, these parties have different electoral trajectories. Secondly, important differences regarding their socio-cultural and political contexts can be noted between Southern Europe (Spain, Italy, Greece), Central Europe (Germany, France, Austria) and Northern Europe (Sweden, Norway, Denmark). In addition, the impact of the Great Recession (2008-2015) was much more severe in the southern countries than the in rest of Europe.

In this sense, we have chosen to analyse both Great Recession and post-Great Recession landscapes, in order to identify possible different repercussions on the phenomenon under study.

According to the traditional structure of fsQCA studies, the following sub-sections present the operationalization of the outcome and the conditions, as summarized in tables 1 and 2.

4.1. Outcome: electoral performance of radical right parties (RR)

The outcome of interest, defined as "electoral performance of radical right parties" (RR), is operationalized by calculating the % of votes of RRPs in the above-mentioned elections. We considered a total of 10 parties (see table A1 in the appendix), whose electoral results have been extracted from ParlGov dataset (Döring and Manow, 2019). These parties have been categorised as part of the same group of parties by the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Polk *et al.*, 2017) and MARPOR dataset (Volkens *et al.*, 2020). It is possible to characterise these parties on the basis of a minimal ideological definition which embraces nativism and authoritarianism. In this sense, as noted by Rydgren (2007), RRPs draw on the idea of ethno-nationalism: the strong defence of an homogeneous nation which is perceived to be threatened.

Regarding the calibration of the data, we set the 8% of electoral support as the crossover point to distinguish electorally successful and unsuccessful RRPs.

In turn, following similar previous applications in the literature (Norris, 2005; Veugelers and Magnan, 2005) and considering the structure of the data, we set the 15% and the 5% of electoral support to be "fully in the set of electoral success" (0.95) and "fully out from the set of electoral success" (0.05), respectively. Following these rules, as shown in table 2, we see for example how the 4.1% of votes obtained by RRP in ITAL2013 (raw data) is transformed into 0.02 by applying a simple rule of three when calibrated, slightly below the 0.05 corresponding to the 5% threshold proposed. Thus, the case of ITAL2013 is an example of RRPs' failure. The same procedure is applied to causals conditions below, as can be seen.

4.2. Causal conditions

In this section we suggest several causal conditions which are expected to play a key role in the outcome, and that were fully discussed in section 2.2. Just as statistical methods, fsQCA is also affected by the inclusion of too many conditions, since it implies an increase of the number of logical reminders and generate too complex combinations, making it impossible to extract feasible interpretations on the basis of theory. For this reason, we decide to include only five conditions, usually considered an optimal number in this type of studies (Fernández-García and Luengo, 2019; Veugelers and Magnan, 2005; Zulianello, 2019).

As previously presented, in our expectations these conditions are divided into two groups: demand-side factors and supply-side factors. Demand-side factors concern attitudes, preferences and orientations of the society and the electorate, whereas supply-side factors focus on political opportunity structure and party organizational features (Rydgren, 2007).

4.2.1. Demand-side conditions

Economic crisis (ECO)

We aim to test our first expectation on the "globalization losers" thesis through the examination of economic crisis (ECO). We use unemployment to construct this condition, since it is considered a good proxy to examine economic hardship (March and Rommerskirchen, 2015)[5]. The data on harmonized unemployment rates are taken from the OECD (2020), for the year of each election in the ten analysed countries. Following Hanley and Sikk (2016), we operationalize the change in harmonised unemployment rate over the two years before the election (see table 2). The maximum threshold corresponding to full membership is set at an increase of unemployment of 3%, whereas the lower threshold is set at a 3% decrease of unemployment rate. Also, the crossover point is set at a near zero decrease of 0.5 %.

Nativism (NATIV)

This condition is operationalised through a combination of data sources: in particular, we use seven questions from the Eurobarometer, the European Social Survey and the European Election Studies in different years

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[5]   We are concerned with the subjective dimension of the economic crisis. In other words, crisis is not only an objective reality, but also a subjective phenomenon which depends on the people's perception. For this reason, we also operationalize this condition using the response category "very bad" for the Eurobarometer question "How would you judge the current situation of the national economy?". The correlation between economic perception and unemployment rate is 0.85, so we opt for maintaining unemployment as proxy for the economic crisis.

(ESS, 2018; European Commission, 2020; EVS, 2008, 2017; Schmitt *et al.*, 2019; Schmitt *et al.,* 2015). These questions relate to evaluations concerning the immigration policy; the impact of immigration for the economy; the feelings that immigration of people from outside the EU evoke; the effect of immigration on the country's welfare system; the question of whether more immigrants from a different ethnic group should be allowed to enter the country; the question of whether immigrants make countries worse or better place to live, and the question of whether immigration undermined or enriched country's cultural life (see A2 in the appendix for details). We select those answers which reflect nativist orientations. Thus, we calibrate each question for each election and country (see calibration rules in table A3 in the appendix). The NATIV final fuzzy set score is calculated for each case, based on the averaged calibration of the seven individual questions.

4.2.2. Supply-side conditions

Ideological convergence between mainstream parties on economic-redistributive issues (CONVERG).

We construct the CONVERG condition using the 2020b MARPOR dataset (Volkens *et al.*, 2020). MARPOR is a well-known dataset widely used in political science research which provides information of issue salience through the human coding of party manifestos. In order to operationalize this causal condition we follow an approach similar to Spies and Franzmann (2011). In any case, we build an economic-redistributive scale using leftist issues on the one hand (market regulation, economic planning, protectionism: positive, Keynesian demand management, controlled economy, nationalisation, Marxist analysis, anti-growth economy, social justice, welfare state expansion, labour groups: positive and education expansion) and rightist issues on the other (free enterprise, incentives, protectionism negative, economic orthodoxy, Welfare state limitation, labour groups: negative and education: limitation). The scale allows to locate the parties' policy supply on a range from -1 (pure rightist position on economic-redistributive dimension) to 1 (pure leftist position on economic-redistributive dimension).

Firstly, we calculate the distance between the mainstream centre-left and centre-right parties on the economic-redistributive scale for each election. Mainstream parties are defined as those which have gained the largest vote share at a given election (selected parties can be consulted in table A1). Then, we calculate the difference of this distance between elections: if the difference is lower compared to the previous election, we assume that a convergence movement has occurred and we code it as '1'. On the contrary, in the case of increasing distances, we understand that a divergence has occurred and we code it as 0. We assume that convergence is not a static, but a dynamic process. Although in their seminal work Kitschelt and McGann (1995) only measured convergence at a particular point of time, we think our measure can better capture the temporal nature of the process and the specificity of each party system. Also, this is in line with the recent advances in the literature on QCA which suggest time should be incorporated in order to develop more fine-grained analyses and to capture the dynamic nature of the social processes (Hino, 2009; Pagliarin and Gerrits, 2020).

Extremist position of mainstream centre-right parties on GALTAN dimension (EXTREM).

Our theoretical review stated that a more extremist position of mainstream centre-right parties on GALTAN dimension will benefit the electoral performance of RRPs. To test it, we operationalize the EXTREM condition using data from 2020b MARPOR dataset (Volkens *et al.*, 2020). Following Arzheimer and Carter (2006), we build a scale of non-economic issues that usually constitute the main themes of RRPs: "internationalism: positive", "national way of life: negative", "traditional morality: negative", "multiculturalism: positive", "underprivileged minority groups", "national way of life: positive", "traditional morality: positive", "law and order", "social harmony" and "multiculturalism: negative". The scores of the scale allow for locating centre-right parties in a left-right *continuum* on non-economic issues (-1: left; +1: right). According to the structure of the data, we set the thresholds at 0.856 (2nd highest value), 0.6 (mean) and 0.234 (2nd lowest value) for the full membership, the crossover point and the full non-membership, respectively.

Nicheness of radical right parties (NICHE).

To operationalize the NICHE condition we use the continuous measure of parties' nicheness proposed by Bischof (2015). This additive nicheness index contains two components: the first measures how much parties differ in their issue emphasis on niche segments to their competitors, while the second shows how narrow their offer on these segments is (Bischof, 2015: 7)[a]. Thus, the higher score of the nicheness index, the more market share advantages a party holds in comparison to its competitors and the narrower its offer (and vice versa). We apply this measure to the 2020b MARPOR dataset (Volkens *et al.*, 2020), which allows for examining issue salience through party manifestos. The nicheness index for each RRPs in each election under study is examined. The crossover point is set at the value of 0.7124, corresponding to the average of the whole party systems. Based on the data at hand, when the nicheness reaches the second higher score (GERM2017: 1.693) the con-

dition is considered as "fully in" (≥ 0.95), whereas the condition will be "fully out" (≤ 0.05) if the nicheness index is less than the second lowest score (ITAL2013: 0.328).

Table 1. Data and operationalization

Theoretical concept	Empirical indicator	Source	Rules of calibration
Electoral performance of RRPs (RR)	Electoral results of RRPs in national elections (% of votes)	ParlGov dataset (Döring and Manow, 2019)	Fully in (0.95): 15% of votes Crossover point (0.5): 8% of votes Fully out (0.05): 5% of votes
Economic crisis (ECO)	Difference between the harmonized unemployment rate for each election year and the two previous years (%)	OECD (2020)	Fully in (0.95): +3% unemployment rate Crossover point (0.5): 0% Fully out (0.05): -3% unemployment rate
Nativism (NATIV)	Nativist attitudes at the mass-level (mean of several items)	Eurobarometer, ESS, EES and EVS	See table A2 in the appendix
Convergence between mainstream parties (CONVERG)	Difference between mainstream centre-left and centre-right on economic-redistributive issues	MARPOR dataset (Volkens *et al.*, 2020)	Fully in (1): less distance on economic-redistributive issues compared to the last election Fully out (0): more distance on economic redistributive issues compared to the last election
Centre-right's position on GALTAN dimension (EXTREM)	Centre-right's position on GALTAN dimension	MARPOR dataset (Volkens *et al.*, 2020)	Fully in (0.95): 0.856 (2nd highest value on GALTAN) Crossover point (0.5): 0.6 (mean on GALTAN) Fully out (0.05): 0.234 (2nd lowest value on GALTAN)
RRPs' programmatic nicheness (NICHE)	Party' dominance within its party system on niche segments and broadness of its offer on these segments	MARPOR dataset (Volkens *et al.*, 2020)	Fully in (0.95): 1.693 (2nd highest value on programmatic nicheness) Crossover point (0.5): 0.7124 (mean on programmatic nichenes) Fully out (0.05): 0.328 (2nd lowest value on programmatic nicheness)

Notes: own elaboration.

Table 2. Raw and calibrated data regarding outcome and conditions

cases	RR		ECO		NATIV	NICHE		CONVERG		EXTREM	
	raw	calibrate	raw	calibrate	calibrate	raw	calibrate	raw	calibrate	raw	calibrate
SPA2015	0.23	0	-4.05	0.01	0.6	0	0.01	-0.172	1	0.298	0.08
SPA2016	0.2	0	-4.8	0.01	0.356	0	0.01	-0.008	1	0.298	0.08
SPA2019_1	10.3	0.73	-3.12	0.04	0.288	0.926	0.65	0.207	0	0.797	0.95
SPA2019_2	15.1	0.95	-3.12	0.04	0.288	1.197	0.79	-0.081	1	0.968	1
ITAL2008	8.3	0.53	-0.08	0.59	0.54	1.398	0.89	-0.834	1	1	1.00
ITAL2013	4.1	0.02	3.78	0.98	0.857	0.328	0.06	0.817	0	0.846	0.97
ITAL2018	17.4	0.98	-1.06	0.34	0.941	0.280	0.05	-0.432	1	0.714	0.84
GREEC2012_1	7	0.27	11.74	1	1	0.982	0.69	-0.174	1	1	1.00
GREEC2012_2	6.9	0.25	11.74	1	1	0.968	0.68	-0.014	1	1	1.00
GREEC2015_1	6.3	0.15	-2.54	0.08	1	1.349	0.87	0.280	0	1	1.00
GREEC2015_2	7	0.27	-2.54	0.08	1	1.349	0.87	-0.034	1	0.826	0.96
GERM2013	4.7	0.04	-0.45	0.29	0.307	2	0.95	-0.103	1	0.461	0.24
GERM2017	12.6	0.88	-1.24	0.92	0.444	1.693	0.95	-0.140	1	0.325	0.10
SWE2010	5.7	0.09	2.4	0.6	0.176	1.004	0.7	0.056	0	0.312	0.09
SWE2014	12.9	0.89	-0.04	0.46	0.192	0.730	0.5	-0.198	1	0.196	0.04
SWE2018	17.5	0.98	-0.63	0.7	0.238	0.389	0.09	0.078	0	0.856	0.98
FRAN2012	13.6	0.92	0.5	0.37	0.807	0.836	0.58	0.150	0	0.355	0.11
FRAN2017	13.2	0.9	-0.93	0.83	0.772	0.638	0.35	0.170	0	0.807	0.91

cases	RR		ECO		NATIV	NICHE		CONVERG		EXTREM	
	raw	calibrate	raw	calibrate	calibrate	raw	calibrate	raw	calibrate	raw	calibrate
NET2010	15.5	0.96	1.34	0.76	0.305	0.817	0.57	0.043	0	0.379	0.14
NET2012	10.1	0.71	0.82		0.32	1.939	0.98	0.119	0	0.494	0.30
NET2017	13.1	0.9	-2.03	0.14	0.298	2	0.98	-0.196	1	0.830	0.97
AUST2008	17.5	0.98	-1.11	0.32	1	0.275	0.05	-0.072	1	0.741	0.89
AUST2013	20.5	1	0.78	0.75	0.575	2	0.98	0.352	0	0.345	0.11
AUST2017	26	1	-0.21	0.56	0.924	0.440	0.13	0.292	0	0.712	0.84
DENM2011	12.3	0.86	1.4	0.84	0.417	1	0.7	-0.145	1	0.624	0.59
DENM2015	21.1	1	-1.1	0.33	0.673	1.558	0.93	0.208	0	1	1.00
NORW2009	22.9	1	0.72	0.74	0.656	1.237	0.83	-0.597	1	0.350	0.11
NORW2013	16.3	0.97	0.35	0.67	0.43	0.579	0.27	-0.023	1	0.397	0.16
NORW2017	15.2	0.96	-0.31	0.54	0.505	0.971	0.68	0.153	0	0.416	0.18

Notes: own elaboration. For details of NATIV condition, see appendix table A2.

5. Empirical Analysis

We used the software fsQCA 3.0 (Ragin and Davey, 2016) for calibrating the raw data (see table 2) and performing the analyses. As usually in fsQCA, the first step is to examine the necessary conditions. According to Ragin: "The analysis of necessary conditions reveals to what extent a condition is necessary for an outcome to occur, although it does not guarantee the occurrence of the outcome" (2009: 109). Our results indicate that no single factor can be considered a necessary condition for the outcome (RR), nor for its negation (~ RR), since all the values are lower than the accepted threshold of 0.9 (see table 3)[6]. This is in line with H2, as we expected that RRPs' electoral performance cannot be accounted by a single necessary cause. In particular, these findings raise doubts about those mechanistic explanations suggesting that RRPs are necessarily successful in scenarios marked by economic crisis or widespread nativist attitudes at mass-level, for example.

Table 3. Analysis of necessary conditions for presence of the outcome (RR)

Condition	Consistency	Coverage
ECO	0.553	0.733
~ECO	0.542	0.717
NATIV	0.608	0.690
~NATIV	0.496	0.788
NICHE	0.631	0.726
~NICHE	0.474	0.738
CONVERG	0.509	0.610
~CONVERG	0.590	0.724
EXTREM	0.598	0.692
~EXTREM	0.465	0.719

Notes: ~ symbolizes set negation.

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[6]   These results can be interpreted as follows: for example, regarding ECO, 55.3% of cases with successful RRPs have experienced economic crisis (consistency: 0.553), while 73.3% of cases that exhibit economic crisis have successful RRPs (coverage 0.733).

5.1. Analysis of Sufficiency

Secondly, we conduct the evaluation of the sufficiency to find possible conditions that by themselves might produce the outcome[7]. For this aim, we develop a "truth table" showing the 18 combinations of conditions relating to the outcome (see table A5 in the appendix). In order to determine which configurations should be classified as leading to the outcome under study, a consistency cut-off of 0.8 is set in line with the standard consensus in the literature (Medina *et al.*, 2017) and comfortably above the minimum of 0.75 usually recommended.

As is generally known, the fsQCA software offers three different solutions —complex, parsimonious and intermediate—, which differ in the way the logical remainders are treated. The logical remainders are defined as those configurations of conditions for which no empirical cases exist. In line with normal practices in fsQCA research, we first examine the so-called complex solution, which only uses the observed cases (where the outcome is empirically present) and has mainly a descriptive and conservative nature. The complex solution indicates five sufficient causal paths (consistency: 0.90; coverage: 0.63) (see table A6).

The use of the intermediate solution has been increasingly considered as a good option in order to guide the analysis (Ragin, 2009: 111). The intermediate solution uses the so-called "easy counterfactuals", which are defined on the basis of the theoretical and substantive knowledge of the phenomenon under study. As stated in the literature review, previous empirical evidence and our initial expectations, we raise positive directional expectations for the five causal conditions (ECO, NATIV, CONVERG, EXTREM and NICHE), so all of them should contribute to the outcome. The intermediate solution (table 4) yields high consistency (0.9) and acceptable coverage (0.65), which implies, on the one hand, that 90% of the cases identified by the solution are effectively positive cases of the outcome and, on the other hand, that our solution is able to explain 65% of all the memberships in the outcome. More interestingly, four paths are identified to the success of RRPs, something clearly connected with the central idea of "equifinality": different combinations of factors may produce the same outcome. More interestingly, the finding of four different causal paths supports the idea we raised in H1: the performance of the European RRPs is characterized by the heterogeneity of scenarios.

Table 4. Intermediate solution for the presence of the outcome (RR)

Paths	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency	Cases
~NATIV*EXTREM	0.313	0.124	0.925	*SWE2018*, SPA2019_1, SPA2019_2, NET2017, DENM2011
~ECO*~NICHE* EXTREM	0.272	0.104	0.970	AUST2008, ITAL2018, FRAN2017, *SWE2018*
ECO*NICHE*~ EXTREM	0.312	0.119	0.843	AUST2013, NORW2009, SWE2010, NET2012, FRAN2012, NET2010, NORW2017, *GERM2013*
ECO*CONVERG*~ EXTREM	0.163	0.026	0.864	NORW2009, NORW2013, SWE2014, *GERM2013*

Notes: consistency: 0.901; coverage: 0.652. Frequency cut-off: 1.00; consistency cut-off: 0.801. Multiple covered cases in italics.

Path 1: no fertile ground for nativism but revolt on the right **(**~NATIV*EXTREM**)**

The first sufficient path suggests that RRPs can achieve electoral success in contexts where mainstream center-right parties hold radical positions on the GALTAN dimension, even when no strong nativist attitudes exist in the population at large. This path explains 31.3% of the positive cases of the outcome (raw coverage: 0.313), covering five cases: two from Southern Europe (SPA2019_1 and SPA2019_2) and three from Northern Europe (SWE2018, NET2017 and DEM2011). All the cases except DENM2011 are situated in the context after the Great Recession. Particularly, this "recipe" reveals that even when no substantial nativist orientations exist at the mass-level (which happens most during good economic times because the "others" have a lower probability of being perceived as a threat), RRPs become relevant thanks to an advantageous opportunity structure. The narrative behind this process can be described as follows: in order to compete with RRPs, some centre-right parties radicalize their stances on non-economic issues related to the so-called GALTAN dimension, contributing to legitimate them in the eyes of the electorate. However, this strategy is not always fruitful since in a more radicalized political arena, many voters prefer the RRPs as they are often new actors without previous negative reputation in office and raise their ideas in a more fashionable and attractive way.

The best typical case of this path is represented by VOX (SPA2019_1 and SPA2019_2): after its electoral breakthrough in 2018 in the Andalusian regional arena, the mainstream centre-right (PP) —and to a lesser degree, Citizens, the centre-liberal party— radicalized their discourse, creating a highly polarized political climate. Despite this, VOX increased its importance in the subsequent elections, primarily at the expense of PP's

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previous supporters. It is remarkable that the new Spanish RRP refers to PP as the "coward right", presenting itself as the true defender of conservative values. This message seems to have been attractive for a sizeable part of the right-wing electorate, which has abandoned the mainstream centre-right despite its attempts to offer a more rightist image. Moreover, regarding the other condition of the path (~NATIV), it should be noted that immigration was not a hot topic in the Spanish society when VOX burst into the scene: instead, the central topics were related to the territorial organization of the State (specially since 2017, when Catalonian secessionist forces promoted an illegal independence referendum). In fact, VOX emphasized above all the Spanish ultra-nationalism, the territorial centralism and the idea of "national unity". The contextual factors related to the territorial issue were the main explanatory keys to the electoral support for VOX at first, as pointed by Ortiz (2019).

In sum, empirical evidence not only contradicts the theoretical expectation pointed out in the theoretical background section, as NATIV is not present in any of the four causal combinations, but it also shows that ~NATIV can positively affect the outcome. Moreover, path 1 supports H3, since it demonstrates that supply-side conditions may be sufficient even in combination with absent favourable demand-side factors.

<u>Path 2: fight on the right without programmatic innovation in economic good times **(~ECO*~NICHE* EXTREM)**</u>

The second path suggests that RRPs are able to capitalize the extremist position of mainstream center-right parties even when they do not show programmatic distinctiveness and the economic context —measured through unemployment— is not particularly negative. This path explains 27.2% of the positive cases of the outcome and covers four elections (AUST2008, ITAL2018, FRAN2017, SWE2018) held after the Great Recession or, in the case of AUST2008, just at the beginning of the crisis, when its effects were not still present. One case (SWE2018) is also explained by path 1, which is overdetermined, meaning that the performance of SD in 2018 can be disentangled by both configurations of conditions.

As in path 1, the extremist position of mainstream-centre right parties appears to play a key role in legitimizing issues traditionally associated with RRPs, from which these benefit. Similarly, the existence of a benign economic climate seems not to be an obstacle for the success of RRPs when there is also a favourable opportunity structure, what comes to support H3. More interestingly, the combination ~NICHE and EXTREM refers to the competitive relationship between RPPs and mainstream centre-right parties. As both party families seem to interact with each other in a dialectical way, it makes sense that when centre-right radicalize its position on the GALTAN dimension, the RRPs lose its programmatic distinctiveness. A clear example of this mechanism is found in France: in the 2012 elections the FN had notable nicheness while LR was not radicalized on the GALTAN dimension; however, later in 2017 the French centre-right radicalized its position leading the FN to lose its distinctiveness[8]. As pointed out in relation to path 1, in this competitive situation many voters ultimately prefer to vote for RRPs, since their radicalism is perceived as more credible and they do not have any bad reputation in office.

Similarly, we identify a chronological pattern regarding the EXTREM condition: while at first the centre-right parties usually maintain a centrist position (SWE2014, FRAN2012, NET2012), they later radicalize their stances (SWE2018, FRAN2017 and NET2017[9]). Nevertheless, both strategies of centre-right parties lead to the success of RRPs in combination with other factors, as can be seen in the four configurations where EXTREM is always present.

<u>Path 3: programmatic innovation in turbulent economic scenarios **(ECO*NICHE*~ EXTREM)**</u>

Path number 3 reveals that RRPs perform well when they are able to offer a distinctive ideological supply in scenarios marked by the adverse economic situation and the centrist position of centre-right parties on non-economic issues. This path covers six cases (AUST2013, NORW2009, NET2012, FRAN2012, NET2010, NORW2017) in which the outcome is present. Two cases in this configuration (SWE2010 and GERM2013)[9] emerge as deviant, since neither SD or AfD were successful in these elections. It should be noted that, as pointed out by Arzheimer (2015), AfD was not yet a typical RRP at that time.

The scenario highlighted by this path is that typically associated with the Great Recession (in fact, with the exception of NORW2017[10], the rest of elections took place within this period) as captured in our operationalization through unemployment rate. More interestingly, the presence of high unemployment is combined with substantial programmatic distinctiveness in line with our initial expectation in H4. Probably, in adverse economic contexts it is easier for RRPs to emphasize their favourite issues and to

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[8]   To understand all this we have to take the following into account: the so-called "de-demonization" process carried out by Marine Le Pen after 2012 elections with the aim of offering a more respectable image to get to the government (moving away from the old explicit xenophobic instances), and the rightist turn of the LR, whose leaders made statements even more extremist that the FN (Mondon, 2014).

[9]   Overdetermination exists regarding NORW2009, as the case is also explained by path 4.

[10]   Indeed, NORW2017 is almost at the limit of this configuration (score: 0.54).

exploit the narrative about ethnic competition, as noted by Rydgren (2007). In other words, when economic pauperization is widely present in society, it is more feasible to conceive of the 'other' as a threat, or to punish mainstream parties. However, in order to electorally channel and promote these drives at the mass-level, something more than potential favorable demand-side factors is needed. Thus, RRPs behave as real agencies: interpreting the context and strategically altering its ideological offer. In this sense, the empirical finding of RRPs showing the NICHE condition or its opposite in different elections supports the idea of nicheness as a dynamic attribute. Accordingly, RRPs seem not to be niche parties *per se* as was theorized by the initial literature (Meguid, 2005), but only in specific circumstances. In addition, as previously discussed in path 3, the presence of ~EXTREM in this configuration is not surprising, considering the dialectical relationship between this condition and NICHE.

Path 4: bad economic times alongside mainstream convergence (ECO*CONVERG*~ EXTREM)

In the fourth sufficient 'recipe', adverse economic situation combined with the convergence of mainstream parties on economic-redistributive issues and the centrist position of centre-right on GALTAN dimension create opportunities for the RRPs. This path reveals a distinct regional pattern, as the three cases are Northern countries and include elections held during the Great Recession (NORW2009, NORW2013 and SWE2014). Once again, the presence of a demand-side factor in combination with at least one favourable supply-side factor leads us to accept the H4. Indeed, as highlighted in path 3, economic hardship contexts are advantageous for those parties that aim to challenge the mainstream status quo. Furthermore, in times of crisis it is more likely that mainstream parties converge on their redistributive stances: actually, the past Great Recession was accompanied by a rightist turn of many social democratic parties, which accepted part of the neoliberal agenda (nevertheless, convergence in the reverse direction is also possible). Following Kitschelt's classical thesis, this process of convergence benefits RRPs as many voters feel there is no alternative in the economic-redistributive dimension, which entails a politization of non-economic issues (those usually emphasized by the RRPs). However, if we focus on the Norwegian cases, we see the Conservative Party (H) is the main responsible of the process of convergence both in 2009 and 2013, clearly turning to the left while the Norwegian Labour Party (DNA) remained in the same position (see table A4 in the appendix). Moreover, this leftist orientation of the centre-right in the economic-redistributive dimension was accompanied by a centrist position on non-economic issues, which no doubt boosted the FrP. In fact, FrP achieved great results and has been part of the coalition government alongside H from 2013 to 2019.

Overall, our results capture the diversity which characterizes RRP's performance in Europe and tend to support our initial expectation described in H1. This group of parties is able to adapt to, and be successful in very different sociopolitical scenarios, as demonstrated by the abovementioned four paths. In addition, the role of the two kind of conditions is quantitative and qualitatively different, as was hypothesized in H5. More precisely, supply factors have greater importance than the demand factors: they contribute to the outcome in every path.

5.2. Unexplained cases

Finally, there is a small group of cases where the outcome is present but which are not covered by any of the four paths: ITAL2008, GERM2017, AUST2017 and DENM2015. These unexplained cases would require detailed post-QCA analyses. Also, there are several cases which are covered only inconsistently: FRAN2012, NORW2017, NET2010 —covered by path 3— and FRAN2017 — covered by path 2—. Although it can be argued that the coverage of the intermediate solution is not high enough (0.65), our main aim is not to achieve a total explanatory model about RRPs' performance, but above all to illustrate the diverse scenarios where these parties can be successful. Finally, SWE2010 emerges as a deviant case, since the score in the solution is >0.5 but the performance of SD was poor. Deviant cases may imply that a causal condition is missing.

6. Conclusions

This article provides a set of explanations for RRPs' electoral performance in Western Europe since 2008 to 2019. Although previous studies have extensively examined the electoral performance of this party family, they have done so mainly through large N designs, focusing only on those situations where they are unequivocally successful or considering almost always the same kind of factors. In this sense, this phenomenon seems to be more complex than previously thought and asks for further methodological innovation. We have attempted to fill this gap by using the fsQCA, a case-oriented approach that allows for in-depth comparative analyses and for testing complex conditional relationships in medium N designs. Our research thus contributes to the existing literature by providing a detailed picture of the scenarios where the RRPs achieve relevance, and by revealing complex causal paths in which several social, political and economic factors work together to explain the outcome under study.

At a substantive level, our empirical analysis has concentrated on five conditions which were expected to play a key role in the electoral performance of RRPs (two demand-side factors and three supply-side factors), and sheds light on some interesting issues. First, our results reveal that no single causal condition can be considered as necessary regarding the success of these parties, alongside with the growing consensus on considering the performance of these parties as a multi-dimensional phenomenon (Art, 2011; Arzheimer and Carter, 2006).

Secondly, our analysis yielded four recipes, which in turn leads us to assume that RRPs are quite capable to achieve success in quite diverse contexts. Hence, its adaptative capacity seems to be noteworthy. If we examine these causal paths in detail, it is striking that both bad and good economic times (ECO and ~ECO) may favour RRPs' success in different scenarios. This runs contrary to much of the literature, which assumes that economic hardship is quasi-mechanically connected to right-wing radicalism. As we mentioned before, the old approaches used for addressing radicalism in the interwar period —now actualized under the umbrella of the "globalization losers" thesis— do not always find empirical support. We also find that the absence of nativism in a given society may also provide a favourable context for the outcome alongside the radical position of centre-right parties, implying that RRPs are able to exploit other issues beyond immigration. Or, even more, the parties themselves may subsequently inoculate the nativism via ideological supply to the population.

On the other hand, a remarkable finding is the greater prominence of the supply-side factors, when compared with those related to the demand-side in the different scenarios. Although the probability of statistical generalization of our findings is limited due to the nature of the fsQCA approach, theoretical generalizations can be made. This has several implications. Particularly, it calls for a more exhaustive and systematic inclusion of supply-side factors in the whole research agenda on RRPs. In the light of our findings, RRRs may be seen as chameleonic and innovative agents which are able to seize the windows of opportunity generated by others parties, as well as to make choices in order to gain influence in the electoral arena. All this calls for a party-centric vision (Goodwin, 2006; Mudde, 2007; Art, 2011; Zulianello, 2019): if we aim to understand the rise of the RRPs, maybe we should focus more on the parties themselves.

To conclude, we have shown different landscapes in which RRPs are successful in Europe. We believe that our findings contribute to the debate about the factors that affect their electoral performance. However, our study does not come without limitations. Particularly, the explorative nature of fsQCA approach implies that we must be cautious when trying to generalize our results to other cases, geographical contexts or time periods. In this sense, the specific processes behind the pathways found should be analyzed in the future through large N quantitative and small N qualitative approaches.

Notes

[a] Niche segments consist on particular combinations of issues which are in the periphery of party systems and represent new conflict lines. For details about the operationalization of niche segments, see Bischof (2015: 5). The first part of Bischof's index is calculated as follows, being x_{ip} the party$_i$'s emphasis on one of the five segments and $\bar{x}_{1}, -_p$ the mean within the party system on one of the segments excluding party$_i$'s. Finally, m_p represents the squared distance of a party from its competitors, standardized across the five niche segments.

$$m_p = \sqrt{\frac{1}{5} \sum_{i=1}^{5} \left(x_{ip} - \bar{x}_{1}, -_p \right)^2}$$

Then, Bischof controls by one party. μ_{-p} represents the mean of all parties' standard deviation in an election excluding party$_i$. Hence, m_p is the market share of a party in comparison to those of all other parties within a party system.

$$\bar{m}_p = m_p - \mu_{-p}$$

The second part of the index, the specialization measure, is calculated as follows, based on Shannon's entropy. See Bischof (2015: 12) for details.

$$s_p = ln \left(\frac{1}{\prod_{i=1}^{5} X_{ip}^{x_{ip}}} \right)$$

Finally, the nicheness index is calculated summing the standardized $\bar{m}_p$ and s_p].

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8. Appendix

Table A1. RRPs and mainstream parties considered in the analyses (2008-2019)

Country	Radical right parties	Centre-left parties	Centre-right parties
Spain	VOX	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE)	Popular Party (PP)
Italy	Northern League (LN)	Democratic Party (PD)	People of Freedom (2008-2013)- Forza Italia (2018) (FI)
Greece	Golden Dawn (GD)	Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	New Democracy (ND)
Germany	Alternative for Germany (AfD)	Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD)	Christian Democratic Union/ Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU)
Sweden	Sweden Democrats (SD)	Social Democrats (SAP)	Moderate Coalition Party (MSP)
France	Front National (FN)	Socialist Party (PS)	Union for a Popular Movement (2007)- The Republicans (2012-2017) (LR)
The Netherlands	Party for Freedom (PVV)	Labour Party (PvdA)	Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA)
Austria	Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ)	Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPO)	Austrian People's Party (OVP)
Denmark	Danish People's Party (DF)	Social Democrats (Sd)	Liberal Party of Denmark (V)
Norway	Progress Party (FrP)	Norwegian Labour Party (DNA)	Conservative Party (H)

Notes: own elaboration based on 2020a MARPOR dataset (Volkens *et al.*, 2020).

Table A2. Wording of the questions of the composed NATIV condition

Question	Variable name	Source	Answer categories	Operationalization
Immigration bad or good for country's economy	immigecon	European Social Survey (2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018)	0 = bad 10 = good	Categories 0 to 3 (%)
Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants	notcultrich	European Social Survey (2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018)	0 = undermined 10 = enriched	Categories 0 to 3 (%)
Immigrants make country worse or better place to live	immigworse	European Social Survey (2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018)	0 = worse 10 = better	Categories 0 to 3 (%)
Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority	notallow	European Social Survey (2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018)	1 = alone many to come and live here 4 = allow none	Category 4 (%)
Orientation towards immigration policy	immigpolic	European Election Studies (2014, 2019)	0 = fully in favour of a restrictive policy on immigration 10 = fully opposed of a restrictive policy on immigration	Categories 0 to 3 (%)
Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you: Immigration of people from outside the EU	immignoEU	Eurobarometer (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019)	1 = Very positive 2 = Fairly Positive 3 = Fairly negative 4 = Very negative	Category 5 (%)
Opinion about immigration and welfare system	welfchauvi	European Values Study (2018, 2017)	1 = Immigrants are a strain on a country's welfare system 10 = Immigrants are not a strain on a country's welfare system	Categories 1 to 4 (%)

Notes: own elaboration based on ESS (2018); European Commission (2020); EVS (2008, 2017); Schmitt, Hobolt, van der Brug, & Popa (2019); Schmitt, Popa, Hobolt, & Teperoglou (2015).

Table A3. Raw and calibrated data of NATIV values

cases	immigecon		notcultrich		immigworse		notallow		immigpolicy		immignoEU		welfchauvi		NATIV (mean)
	raw	calibrate	raw	calibrate	raw	calibrate	raw	calibrate	raw	calibrate	Raw	calibrate	raw	calibrate	
SPA2015	26.4	0.78	16.1	0.39	26.4	0.84	11.4	0.67	43.50	0.97	14.23	0.5	31.1	0.05	0.600
SPA2016	21.5	0.48	13.4	0.23	18.3	0.69	7.2	0.32			8.41	0.06			0.356
SPA2019_1	16.5	0.15	13	0.21	16.7	0.65	7.9	0.38			8.08	0.05			0.288
SPA2019_2	16.5	0.15	13	0.21	16.7	0.65	7.9	0.38			8.08	0.05			0.288
ITAL2008													45.9	0.54	0.540
ITAL2013	27.7	0.83	25.3	0.8	36.4	0.94	14.8	0.86							0.858
ITAL2018	33.1	0.95	34.3	0.95	39.5	0.95	15.9	0.9	43	0.95	23.48	0.95			0.942
GREEC2012_1	58.3	1	57.6	1	63.7	1	41.9	1							1.000
GREEC2012_2	58.3	1	57.6	1	63.7	1	41.9	1							1.000
GREEC2015_1											34.62	1			1.000
GREEC2015_2											34.62	1			1.000
GERM2013	16.9	0.17	13.1	0.22	17.6	0.67	5	0.17							0.308
GERM2017	15.7	0.12	16.5	0.41	20.5	0.74	4.4	0.14			18.82	0.81			0.444
SWE2010	12.8	0.05	6.7	0.05	7.3	0.73	1.4	0.05	23.07	0					0.176
SWE2014	16.9	0.17	6.4	0.04	16.9	0.66	0.5	0.04			8.11	0.05			0.192
SWE2018	16.8	0.16	9.6	0.1	10.6	0.5	8	0.39			7.93	0.04			0.238
FRAN2012	30.2	0.9	26.3	0.82	29.4	0.88	10.8	0.63							0.808
FRAN2017	27.2	0.81	26.1	0.82	22	0.77	10.4	0.6			20	0.86			0.772
NET2010	18.3	0.24	9.4	0.09	14.8	0.61	6.7	0.28							0.305
NET2012	18.4	0.25	9.2	0.09	13.2	0.57	7.8	0.37							0.320
NET2017	17.8	0.21	12.3	0.18	12	0.54	4.1	0.13			13.59	0.43			0.298
AUST2008													67.5	0.98	0.980
AUST2013	27.3	0.81	27.7	0.86	30.5	0.89	12.2	0.73	36.18	0.05	10.01	0.11			0.575
AUST2017	29.5	0.89	32.2	0.93	34.3	0.92	17.4	0.93			23.90	0.95			0.924
DENM2011	22.9	0.58	15	0.32	14	0.59	5.2	0.18							0.418
DENM2015	29.8	0.89	22	0.68	17.3	0.67	6.2	0.24	41.02	0.73	19.42	0.83			0.673
NORW2009	17.1	0.18	18.1	0.51	18.5	0.69	18.5	0.95					61.2	0.95	0.656
NORW2013	12.5	0.04	15	0.32	13.3	0.57	13.3	0.79							0.430
NORW2017	17.8	0.21	18.2	0.52	12.5	0.55	12.5	0.74							0.505

Note: own elaboration. For each case the table shows the raw data and the associate fuzzy set scores relating the seven items. The values in the final NA-TIV column represent the mean of the available fuzzy set scores. In order to calibrate the raw data the second highest, the average after omitting highest and lowest values and the second lowest value have been used for stablishing the full membership, the crossover point and the full nom-membership. Calibration: immigecon: full membership (1) = 52.9 , crossover point (0.5) = 23.71 , full non-membership (0) = 12.8; notcultrich: (1) = 52.8, (0.5) = 18.21, (0) = 6.7 ; immigworse: (1) = 55.2, (0.5) = 24.6, (0) = 10.6 ; notallow: (1) = 29.9, (0.5) = 11.7, (0) = 1.3; immigpolicy: (1) = 43, (0.5) = 36, (0) = 26.1 ; immignoEU: (1) = 34.62, (0.5) = 15.86, (0) = 3.64 ; welfchauvi: (1) = 45.9, (0.5) = 37.46, (0) = 31.1.

Table A4. Position of centre-left and centre-right on economic-redistributive scale and convergence scores

cases	Center-left (1)	Center-right (2)	Difference (1-2)	Difference between elections	Convergence
SPA2011	-0.81237	-0.45619	0.3561769		
SPA2015	-0.82312	-0.63992	0.1832007	-0.1729762	1
SPA2016	-0.81478	-0.63992	0.1748653	-0.0083354	1
SPA2019_1	-0.91847	-0.53566	0.382803	0.2079377	0
SPA2019_2	-0.944671	-0.642875	0.3017954	-0.0810076	1
ITAL2006	-0.72741	0.223784	0.9511918		
ITAL2008	-0.32502	-0.20877	0.1162443	-0.8349475	1
ITAL2013	-0.97675	-0.04346	0.9332906	0.8170463	0
ITAL2018	-0.68852	-0.1875	0.5010284	-0.4322622	1
GREEC2009	-0.84945	-0.44413	0.4053251		
GREEC2012_1	-0.18129	0.050006	0.2312987	-0.1740264	1
GREEC2012_2	-0.16665	0.050006	0.2166517	-0.014647	1
GREEC2015_1	-0.72078	-0.2235	0.4972741	0.2806224	0
GREEC2015_2	-0.44143	0.021277	0.4627113	-0.0345628	1
GERM2009	-0.89768	-0.42578	0.4718987		
GERM2013	-0.78949	-0.42138	0.3681091	-0.1037896	1
GERM2017	-0.85078	-0.62318	0.2276013	-0.1405078	1
SWE2006	-0.8764	-0.50913	0.3672761		
SWE2010	-0.88297	-0.45943	0.4235386	0.0562625	0
SWE2014	-0.91282	-0.68813	0.2246919	-0.1988467	1
SWE2018	-0.8968	-0.59398	0.3028228	0.0781309	0
FRAN2017	-0.85938	-0.63638	0.2229979		
FRAN2012	-0.7143	-0.34066	0.3736393	0.1506414	0
FRAN2017	-1	-0.45631	0.5436898	0.1700505	0
NET2006	-0.74962	-0.6006	0.1490147		
NET2010	-0.69791	-0.50558	0.19233	0.0433153	0
NET2012	-0.77392	-0.46175	0.3121648	0.1198348	0
NET2017	-0.94244	-0.82641	0.1160322	-0.1961326	1
AUST2006	-0.87623	-0.79901	0.0772222		
AUST2008	-0.84795	-0.84313	0.0048218	-0.0724004	1
AUST2013	-0.91366	-0.55648	0.3571785	0.3523567	0
AUST2017	-0.8101	-0.1605	0.6495976	0.2924191	0
DENM2007	-0.91491	-0.42857	0.4863424		
DENM2011	-0.73685	-0.39599	0.3408602	-0.1454822	1
DENM2015	-0.78011	-0.23078	0.5493281	0.2084679	0
NORW2005	-0.84369	-0.04759	0.7960973		
NORW2009	-0.87715	-0.67849	0.1986608	-0.5974365	1
NORW2013	-0.97481	-0.79953	0.1752791	-0.0233817	1
NORW2017	-0.92742	-0.59906	0.3283577	0.1530786	0

Notes: own elaboration using Volkens *et al.* (2020). If the difference between elections is negative it means that both ideological blocs have converged in this dimension.

Table A5. Truth table

UNEMP	NATIV	NICHE	CONVERG	EXTREM	number	RR	cases	raw consist.	PRI consist.	SYM consist
0	0	0	0	1	1	1	SWE2018	1	1	1
0	1	0	0	1	1	1	FRAN2017	1	1	1
0	0	1	0	1	1	1	SPA2019_1	1	1	1
1	0	0	1	0	1	1	NORW2013	0.988561	0.984829	0.984829
1	1	1	0	0	3	1	FRAN2012, AUST2013, NORW2017	0.965356	0.953421	0.953421
0	1	0	1	1	2	1	ITAL2018, AUST20188	0.938176	0.918284	0.918284
0	0	1	1	1	2	1	SPA2019_2, NET2017	0.91673	0.871495	0.871495
1	0	1	1	1	1	1	DENM2011	0.886744	0.773779	0.773779
1	1	1	1	0	1	1	NORW2009	0.877945	0.837157	0.837157
1	0	1	0	0	3	1	SWE2010, NET2010, NET2012	0.813168	0.762315	0.762315
1	0	1	1	0	1	1	GERM2013	0.801136	0.746639	0.746639
0	0	1	1	0	1	0	GERM2017	0.794401	0.730813	0.730813
0	1	1	0	1	2	0	GREEC2015_1, DENM2015	0.780354	0.678284	0.6844
0	1	1	1	1	1	0	GREEC2015_2	0.706724	0.479695	0.526462
1	1	0	0	1	2	0	ITAL2013, AUST2017	0.698253	0.627032	0.627032
1	1	1	1	1	3	0	ITAL2008, GREEC2012_1, GREEC2012_2	0.678332	0.385491	0.387697
0	1	0	1	0	1	0	SPA2015	0.576616	0.4562	0.4562
0	0	0	1	0	1	0	SPA2016	0.546547	0.439413	0.439413

Notes: own elaboration.

Table A6. Conservative solution for the presence of the outcome (RR)

Paths	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency	Cases
UNEMP*NICHE*~EXTREM	0.312	0.144	0.843	AUST2013, NORW2009, SWE2010, NET2012, FRAN2012, NET2010, NORW2017, *GERM2013*
~UNEMP*~NATIV*~CONVERG* EXTREM	0.143	0.051	1	SPA2019_1, SWE2018
UNEMP*~NATIV*CONVERG* ~EXTREM	0.124	0.020	0.829	SWE2014, NORW2013, *GERM2013*
~UNEMP*NATIV~NICHE*EXTREM	0.249	0.112	0.967	AUST2008, ITAL2018, FRAN2017
~NATIV*NICHE*CONVERG*EXTREM	0.150	0.081	0.929	NET2017, SPA2019_2, DENM2011

Notes: consistency: 0.906; coverage: 0.632. Frequency cut-off: 1.00; consistency cut-off: 0.801. Multiple covered cases in italics.

Table A7. Parsimonious solution for the presence of the outcome (RR)

Paths	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency	Cases
UNEMP*~EXTREM	0.368	0.238	0.842	SWE2010, NET2010, AUST2013, NORW2009, FRAN2012, NET2012, NORW2013, SWE2014, NORW2017, GERM2013
~NATIV* EXTREM	0.313	0.124	0.925	*SWE2018,* SPA2019_1, SPA2019_2, NET2017, DENM2011
~UNEMP*~NICHE*~EXTREM	0.272	0.102	0.970	AUST2008, ITAL2018, FRAN2017, *SWE2018*

Notes: consistency: 0.891; coverage: 0.672. Frequency cut-off: 1.00; consistency cut-off: 0.801. Multiple covered cases in italics.

Table A8. Complex solution for the absence of the outcome (~RR)

Paths	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency	Cases
UNEMP*NATIV*NICHE *CONVERG*EXTREM	0.272	0.272	0.795	GREEC2012_1, GREEC2012_2, ITAL2008

Notes: consistency: 0.795; coverage: 0.272. Frequency cut-off: 1.00; consistency cut-off: 0.801.