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Original Article

Why lower educated people are more likely to cast their vote for radical right parties: Testing alternative explanations in The Netherlands

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Abstract We address the relationship between educational attainment and radical right voting (i.e., voting for the PVV) in the Netherlands. We tested whether lower educated people are overrepresented among the electorate of the PVV – as often found in earlier research – and considered underlying explanations for this relationship. Using data derived from the Religion in Dutch Society (SOCON, 2011/2012) survey, we were able to empirically test a set of innovative mediators (e.g., interethnic contact, euroscepticism, associational involvement and social trust) simultaneously next to theoretically well-established mediators (e.g., perceived ethnic threat, nationalistic attitudes and authoritarianism). Our results indicated that lower educated people are more likely to cast their vote for the PVV than higher educated people, due to their level of perceived ethnic threat, anti-Muslim attitudes and authoritarianism. Using bootstrapping, only ethnic threat perceptions turned out to significantly mediate the relationship between educational attainment and radical right voting, ruling out many other explanations. Our findings underline the importance of precluding spurious influences when addressing radical right voting and show that radical right parties' emphasis on the economic and cultural threats that immigrants would pose for Western societies seems to bear fruit in terms of mobilizing lower educated people, at least among the Dutch electorate.

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Introduction

The proposition that education, next to social class, is an important predictor of political preferences and voting behaviour was already introduced by Lipset back in 1960 (Lipset, 1981 [1960]). As many Western countries faced rising levels of support for radical right parties during recent decades (Kitschelt, 2007; Rydgren, 2007), scholars became increasingly interested in the question whether education also influences people's likelihood to vote for political parties at the extreme right end of the political spectrum (e.g., Betz, 1993; Lubbers *et al.*, 2002; Norris, 2005; Ivarsflaten and Stubager, 2013). Generally, results indicate that lower educated people are consistently overrepresented among the electorate of radical right parties in Europe (e.g., Lubbers *et al.*, 2002; Kessler and Freeman, 2005; Ford and Goodwin, 2010; Werts *et al.*, 2012; Ivarsflaten and Stubager, 2013). However, some studies failed to find a significant relationship between educational attainment and radical right voting (e.g., Norris, 2005), or showed that in particular the mid-school stratum is most likely to vote for radical right parties (Evans, 2005; Arzheimer and Carter, 2006; see also Rydgren, 2007).¹

In this study, we will address the relationship between natives' educational attainment and radical right voting in the Netherlands. Radical right parties are considered to share important characteristics such as nativism, authoritarianism and populism (Mudde, 2007), focusing on anti-immigrant issues as their core message (Rydgren, 2007). In the Netherlands, the Partij voor de Vrijheid (Party for Freedom; PVV) has been denoted as a radical right party in several expert surveys (2006 Chapel Hill Expert Survey; Expert Judgement Survey of European Political Parties 2010), and support for this party has been studied repeatedly in previous research on radical right voting (e.g., Werts *et al.*, 2012; Van der Waal *et al.*, 2013; Van Gent *et al.*, 2014; Stockemer, 2015).² The PVV has an ethnocentric agenda favouring a tough immigration policy as well as assimilation (see 2006 Chapel Hill Expert Survey) and is – according to the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance – in particular, vocal in “[...] resorting to racist and xenophobic discourse, targeting above all Muslim communities” (ECRI, 2008, p. 35). In the last two general elections of 2010 and 2012, the PVV attracted 15 and 10 per cent of the votes, respectively.

We start with the question whether lower educated natives are, indeed, more likely to vote for the radical right (i.e., PVV), as found by many, but not all, previous studies. More important, however, is the question *why* people's level of educational attainment would predict their likelihood to vote for the PVV. Phrased more formally: which are the decisive explanatory mechanisms that mediate the relationship between educational attainment and voting for the radical right in the Netherlands in recent times?



Only a limited number of explanatory mechanisms for the relationship between educational attainment and radical right voting has been put to an empirical test so far, if earlier studies addressed underlying explanations at all. Therefore, we will focus on a wide variety of explanations for the relationship, explicating underlying theoretical explanations more elaborately and we simultaneously consider previous consistent empirical patterns. These explanations share rather consistently that they focus on political stances, e.g., anti-immigration or eurosceptic stances, ranking high on the political agenda of radical right parties as well as being supported by lowly educated people, or they focus on lack of societal connectedness (e.g., in terms of associational involvement or contact with ethnic minorities) that could reduce these political stances.

We will consider explanations proposed more recently and innovatively, e.g., on interethnic contact (e.g., Rydgren, 2008), associational involvement (e.g., Rydgren, 2009), social trust (cf. Norris, 2005) and euroscepticism (e.g., Werts *et al.*, 2012), next to previously established explanations, e.g., perceptions of ethnic threat (e.g., Norris, 2005), nationalism (e.g., Lubbers and Scheepers, 2000), or authoritarianism (e.g., Mayer and Perrineau, 1992). Using recent high quality data from the Religion in Dutch Society survey (Eisinga *et al.*, 2012), we are – unlike earlier research – able to take into account these different explanations simultaneously. This allows us to conduct a more strict, systematic and rigorous test of the driving factors behind the relationship between education and radical right voting, ruling out possibilities of spurious influences and eventually assessing crucial determinants.

Theories and Hypotheses

Before we will consider underlying explanations for the relationship between educational attainment and voting for the PVV, we will first formulate a hypothesis on the direct relationship between educational attainment and radical right voting. As argued above, results from previous research generally show that lower educated people are overrepresented among the electorate of radical right parties in the Netherlands as well as other European countries (e.g., Werts *et al.*, 2012; Ivarsflaten and Stubager, 2013). In line with these empirical findings we formulate our first (starting) hypothesis which reads: *(H1) Lower educated people are more likely to vote for the PVV than higher educated people.*³

Intergroup contact theory

A recent line of explanation for the relationship between education and radical right voting is related to out-group derogation and can be derived from intergroup



contact theory (Allport, 1979 [1954]; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2011). The influence of interethnic contact on radical right voting has been repeatedly proposed (e.g., Biggs and Knauss, 2012; Van der Paauw and Flache, 2012; Van der Waal *et al.*, 2013). However, only in two studies so far has this relationship been put to an empirical test (Rydgren, 2008; Green *et al.*, 2016). According to contact theory, having positive interethnic contact effectively reduces out-group derogation, due to increased levels of knowledge, empathy and perspective taking as well as reduced anxiety (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2011). People with less interethnic contact and consequently higher levels of out-group derogation, might be more likely to vote for radical right parties, persistently claiming to serve interests of native people with anti-immigration stances. Green *et al.*, (2016) revealed a negative influence of interethnic contact on radical right voting in Switzerland, however, Rydgren (2008) found mixed evidence across six European countries. Since previous research shows that lower educated natives are less likely to have interethnic friendships (e.g., Schlueter and Wagner, 2008; Savelkoul *et al.*, 2015), this might explain why they are overrepresented among radical right voters: they are more likely to support strong anti-immigrant stances (e.g., Hello *et al.*, 2002). Hence, we expect that: *(H2a) Lower educated people have less interethnic contact than higher educated people and (H2b) having interethnic contact is negatively related with the likelihood to vote for the PVV.*

Social integration and schools of democracy

A second line of explanation can be traced back to the work of Putnam and Tocquevillian theories of social capital. The core proposition is that involvement in voluntary organizations (e.g., sports clubs, social clubs, humanitarian organizations), which are far removed from the political sphere, as yet promote cooperative behaviour, interpersonal trust and social tolerance (Putnam, 1993, 2000; Norris, 2005; Van der Meer and Van Ingen, 2009). As voluntary associations are considered to be places where civic and social skills are learned, they are often described as ‘schools of democracy’. Only a few studies have tested this influence empirically, showing that people who are involved in voluntary organizations have less sympathy for radical right parties (e.g., Billiet and De Witte, 2001; Coffé, 2002; however, see also Rydgren, 2009). Norris (2005) was particularly interested in the influence of social trust in this respect. Based on data of eight European countries, she found that people with higher levels of social trust are less likely to cast their vote for a radical right party. Vice versa, earlier studies have shown that lower educated people are generally less likely to be involved in voluntary organizations, hence, lacking exposure to these schools of democracy and displaying lower levels of social trust as compared to higher educated people (e.g., Putnam, 1995; Wilson, 2000; Rothstein and Stolle, 2008). Therefore, we

hypothesize that: *(H3a) Lower educated people are less likely to be involved in voluntary organizations and (H4a) have less social trust than higher educated people. In addition, (H3b) involvement in voluntary organizations, as well as (H4b) social trust are negatively related with the likelihood to vote for the PVV.*

Euroscepticism

Many radical right parties in Europe have a critical stance towards the European Union, as political and cultural European integration conflicts with their core ideology that European national cultures have the right to protect their cultural identity (Rydgren, 2007). Supranational identities, such as the European Union, are considered a threat to national identity, particularly by radical right parties. The EU, and Brussels as its symbolic capital, is therefore strongly distrusted in the radical right's rhetoric, as it is expected to take over national sovereignty (Werts *et al.*, 2012). In recent years, scholars showed that radical right parties are successful in attracting votes among the eurosceptic electorate (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Van der Brug *et al.*, 2005; Werts *et al.*, 2012). As lower educated people turn out to be more eurosceptic (e.g., Lubbers and Scheepers, 2007; Hakhverdian *et al.*, 2013), this might offer a different explanation for the relationship between educational attainment and radical right voting. In sum, we expect that: *(H5a) Lower educated people are more eurosceptic than higher educated people and (H5b) higher levels of euroscepticism are positively related with the likelihood to vote for the PVV.*

Ethnic competition theory

Other, more established explanations can be derived from realistic group conflict theory (Coser, 1956; Blalock, 1967; Bobo, 1999) and ethnic competition theory (Scheepers *et al.*, 2002; Coenders *et al.*, 2004), related to competition between ethnic out-groups and one's ethnic in-group. According to this line of reasoning, natives compete with ethnic minorities with regard to scarce resources (e.g., jobs or affordable housing) and conflicting values. The presence of ethnic minorities is expected to trigger perceptions of ethnic threat among natives – particularly among deprived people among the ethnic majority group in similar social positions as ethnic minorities – which, in turn, increase levels of out-group derogation (Scheepers *et al.*, 2002; Coenders *et al.*, 2004). As radical right parties generally have a strong anti-immigrant stance (in particular with regard to immigrants from Muslim countries) (e.g., Zaslove, 2004; Rydgren, 2007), they can effectively mobilize these deprived voters who perceive ethnic competition and/or hold negative attitudes toward ethnic minorities and Muslims in particular. Earlier research has repeatedly shown indeed that perceptions of ethnic threat as well as negative attitudes towards ethnic



minorities are strong predictors of radical right voting (e.g., Norris, 2005; Werts *et al*, 2012) which are particularly strongly present among lowly educated people (e.g., Hello *et al*, 2002; Schneider, 2008). Summarizing, we hypothesize that: (H6a) *Lower educated people perceive more ethnic threat and (H7a) display higher levels of anti-Muslim attitudes than higher educated people. Moreover, higher levels of (H6b) ethnic threat perceptions as well as (H7b) anti-Muslim attitudes are positively related with the likelihood to vote for the PVV.*

Perceptions of ethnic threat not only trigger out-group derogation, but also drive nationalistic attitudes (Scheepers *et al*, 2002; Coenders *et al*, 2004). According to Rydgren (2007, p. 242), radical right parties “[...] share an emphasis on ethno-nationalism” having programs “[...] directed toward strengthening the nation by making it more ethnically homogeneous and by returning to traditional values”. For several Western European countries, evidence was found for a positive relationship between nationalistic attitudes and voting for radical right parties (e.g., Lubbers and Scheepers, 2000; Lubbers *et al*, 2000). As earlier studies also showed that lower educated people hold more nationalistic attitudes than higher educated people (Hjerm, 2001; Coenders and Scheepers, 2003), this offers another alternative explanation for the negative relationship between educational attainment and voting for the radical right. Therefore, we expect that: (H8a) *Lower educated people display higher levels of nationalistic attitudes than higher educated people and (H8b) higher levels of nationalistic attitudes are positively related with the likelihood to vote for the PVV.*

Psychological interests

The classic explanation we cannot neglect for the overrepresentation of lower educated people among the electorate of radical right parties, is based on Adorno and colleagues’ monumental study of the Authoritarian Personality (Adorno *et al*, 1950). This explanation boils down to the idea that the socio-economic position of the lower strata, i.e., those with low educational credits, is characterized by poverty and deprivation, which, in turn, fosters frustration and anxiety. To deal with this, lower strata are likely to submit themselves to strong authorities and conventional norms and values (Scheepers *et al*, 1990), i.e., support authoritarianism. As radical right parties emphasize the role of the strong leader as well as traditional norms, they are able to serve these psychological needs (Mudde, 2007). Empirical evidence for the relationship between authoritarian attitudes and radical right voting is mixed. Whereas some studies found support for the positive influence of authoritarianism (e.g., Mayer and Perrineau, 1992; Lubbers and Scheepers, 2000), more recent and rigorous studies did not (e.g., Werts *et al*, 2012). As yet, we formulate the following hypothesis: (H9a) *Lower educated people are more in favour of authoritarian attitudes than higher educated people and (H9b) having authoritarian attitudes is positively related with the likelihood to vote for the PVV.*



Relative deprivation and losers of modernization thesis

Another alternative explanation for a negative relationship between educational attainment and voting for the radical right can be found in theoretical notions of relative deprivation jointly with the losers of modernization thesis (e.g., Betz, 1994; Norris, 2005; Rydgren, 2007). According to this line of reasoning, lower educated people are considered to lack necessary skills like cultural capital, individual entrepreneurship and flexibility to be able to cope with the rapidly changing socio-economic and sociocultural structure of advanced Western European democracies. This translates into higher chances to get stuck in full or partial unemployment. As a consequence, lower educated people run the risk of forming a new underclass of ‘losers of modernization’ and becoming “[...] superfluous and useless for society” (Betz, 1994, p. 32), which might be reflected in uncertain present economic situations as well as uncertainty about future economic prospects. This links with relative deprivation theory (Runciman, 1966; Gurr, 1970; Meyer, 2004), which focuses on feelings of relative deprivation and frustration arising from uncertain present and future economic prospects. Disappointing comparisons with one’s own past or with social reference groups can induce such feelings of relative deprivation (Runciman, 1966; Gurr, 1970). According to Rydgren (2007, p. 248) “the ethnonationalistically defined, homogeneous community and the virtue of traditional roles stressed by the new radical right constitute appealing counterweights for people who do not feel at home in a modernizing society”. Earlier research often considered relative deprivation in terms of declining economic situations or fear of economic decline in the future (Rydgren, 2007), i.e., similarly to theoretical notions on losers of modernization. Based on these theoretical notions, we expect that particularly lower educated people are likely to face relative economic deprivation, which explains why they are more likely to vote for the radical right. Hence, we propose that: *(H10a) Lower educated people are more likely to face relative deprivation than higher educated people, and (H10b) relative deprivation is positively related with the likelihood to vote for the PVV.*

Protest vote

The final explanation we consider for the negative relationship between educational attainment and radical right voting is based on the idea that radical right parties gain from political protest. According to this line of reasoning, voting for radical right parties is driven by political dissatisfaction or distrust rather than being attracted by the anti-immigrant stances of these parties (Kitschelt, 1995; Mudde, 2007). Although political distrust might not be the single reason to vote for the radical right, earlier studies showed that it does influence people’s likelihood of voting for such parties (e.g., Ivarsflaten, 2005; Werts *et al.*, 2012). As previous



research has shown that lower educated people generally display lower levels of trust in politics (e.g., Cole, 1973; Schoon *et al.*, 2010), this might be another explanation for the relationship between educational attainment and radical right voting. Summarizing, we expect that: *(H11a) Lower educated people display lower levels of political trust than higher educated people and (H11b) political trust is negatively related with the likelihood to vote for the PVV.*

Interrelatedness explanations

The theoretical model explaining why lower educated people are overrepresented among the electorate of radical right parties might be (even) more complex than discussed so far, as several mechanisms themselves might be interrelated as well. According to ethnic competition theory and several studies in the field (e.g., Coenders *et al.*, 2004; Pettigrew *et al.*, 2010) perceptions of ethnic threat induce both out-group derogation as well as nationalistic attitudes. Moreover, we know from earlier studies that interethnic contact is negatively related with ethnic threat perceptions and out-group derogation (e.g., Pettigrew and Tropp, 2011; Pettigrew *et al.*, 2010). Also other explanations might be related: according to the idea of ‘schools of democracy’, associational involvement is linked to tolerance and social trust (e.g., Putnam, 2000; Norris, 2005), whereas relative deprivation might trigger authoritarian attitudes (cf. Scheepers *et al.*, 1990). Given the cross-sectional nature of our data, it is, unfortunately, impossible to take into account and further disentangle the (causal) orders of these theoretical mechanisms. Considering our alternative (and sometimes related) explanations simultaneously enables us, however, to conduct a more strict test, revealing the most crucial mechanisms. We will come back to this in our discussion section.

Data and Measurements

We used data from the Religion in Dutch Society (SOCON, 2011/2012; Eisinga *et al.*, 2012) survey, which offers the unique possibility to consider a large number of underlying explanations for the relationship between educational attainment and radical right voting in the Netherlands. The target population of this survey are Dutch citizens aged between 18 and 70. A two-step random sample was applied. First, a random sample of addresses was drawn from the full registry of postal codes. Next, at the address, a so-called ‘last birthday rule’ was applied to select the respondent who would be invited to take part in this survey. The fieldwork was conducted between September 2011 and February 2012 by an external fieldwork organization under the direction of Radboud University Nijmegen.⁴ We only



included native Dutch respondents (86.1 per cent) which resulted in a dataset with 856 respondents. Unless stated differently, respondents with missing values on one or more variables were excluded (9.6 per cent), resulting in a working sample of 774 respondents.

Support for the PVV

To measure radical right voting in the Netherlands, we used an item of the respondents' intended voting behaviour: 'Which party would you vote for if parliamentary elections were held today?'. As only respondents aged 18 years and over are included in the survey, all respondents are legally allowed to cast their vote in parliamentary elections. The answer categories consist of the ten largest political parties represented in the Dutch parliament as well as the option 'another party'. Respondents who answered 'I don't know' (9 per cent) and 'no answer' (.4 per cent) were excluded from the analyses. Respondents who answered that they would not vote, were included in the reference category, as were respondents who indicated to vote for another party than the PVV.⁵ In total, 8.4 per cent of the respondents in our working sample indicated that they would vote for the PVV.⁶ This is slightly lower as compared to the parliamentary elections in 2012 in which 10.1 per cent voted for the PVV. Note, however, that respondents who do not know what party they would vote for are excluded, while it is likely that some of these respondents eventually vote for the PVV as well.

Educational attainment

To measure educational attainment, respondents were asked about the highest level of education they had completed after elementary school. For reasons of parsimony, we included a continuous measure of educational attainment based on the number of years necessary to complete the different levels of education. Our measure ranges from 6 (primary education) to 21 (PhD or doctorate) years. For a meaningful interpretation of the intercept we subtracted the minimum number of years (6). Additionally, we considered the possibility of a non-linear relationship between educational attainment and radical right voting (cf. Evans, 2005; Rydgren, 2007), including a squared term of the years of education. Alternatively, we used a dummified measure of education, distinguishing 'low' (primary or lower secondary education), 'medium' (upper or post secondary, non-tertiary education) and 'high' (first or second stage of tertiary education) levels of education.



Explanatory mechanisms

To test our explanatory hypotheses on the relationship between educational attainment and voting for the PVV, we used a set of theoretically derived mediators. We selected items which are valid measurements of our mediators and conducted several exploratory as well as confirmatory factor analyses in order to reduce the number of factors and compose reliable scales of our explanatory mechanisms. Using an iterative approach, we excluded items with low communalities ($<.20$) as well as double loadings (with factor loadings $> |.40|$ and Δ factor loadings $<.20$). In our final factor solution (see Table A1, Appendix) all items clearly load on single factors as we expected. However, eventually we had to exclude three single items tapping into authoritarianism, social trust as well as political trust, respectively as these items did not clearly refer to one single factor. We will come back to this when discussing the operationalization of our explanatory variables in detail below. We constructed Likert scales which were all highly correlated with our factor scores ($r > .96$). For all explanatory mechanisms we applied mean substitution for respondents with missing values.⁷

We used three Likert items to tap into *euroscpticism* (see Table A1, Appendix), for instance, “The European Union is a threat to Dutch culture” and “The Netherlands should resign its membership from the European Union”. All five-point scales were anchored between ‘do not agree at all’ and ‘agree entirely’.⁸ We calculated the mean score for respondents with valid answers on at least two items (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .77$).

Perceived ethnic threat is measured using seven Likert items as shown in Table A1, Appendix, for instance, “I sometimes worry that my neighbourhood will decline due to the arrival of ethnic minorities” and “The coming of ethnic minorities to the Netherlands is a threat to our own culture”. Our final scale is based on mean scores for respondents with valid answers on at least four items (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .84$).

Anti-Muslim attitudes is measured by five items (see Table A1, Appendix), for instance, “Muslims easily resort to violence to solve their problems” and “Muslim husbands dominate their wives”. For respondents with valid answers on at least three items, mean scores were calculated (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .80$).

We used two items tapping into the respondents’ level of *nationalistic attitudes*: “I am proud to be a Dutchman” and “Every Dutchman ought to pay honour to our national symbols like the national flag and the national anthem”. Our final scale is based on the mean score for respondents with at least one valid answer on both items (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .58$).

The results of our factor analyses (Table A1, Appendix) indicated that our measures of relative deprivation refer to two dimensions, i.e., *present relative deprivation* and *future economic decline*. The respondents’ *present relative deprivation* is measured using three items, for instance, “I am having difficulties

buying necessary things from my salary” and “I am very unsatisfied with my present income”. We calculated the mean score for respondents with valid answers on at least two items (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .66$).

In addition, we also considered whether respondents expect to face *future economic decline*, using three Likert items (see Table A1, Appendix), for instance, “I think I will be able to afford less coming years” and “I think I will have to adjust my present lifestyle in coming years”. For respondents with valid answers on at least two items, mean scores were calculated (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .84$).

For our remaining three attitudinal explanatory variables, our (single item) measures did not clearly load on a single factor. Hence, we constructed scales based on single items and tested whether these variables are strongly correlated with the other attitudinal variables, which is not the case (see Table A2, Appendix). The respondents’ level of *social trust* was measured by the following item: “I think most people are honest and trustworthy”.

Our measure of *political trust* refers to trust in Dutch politics and is measured by the following item: “Please tell me on a score from 0 to 10 how much you trust the Dutch parliament”. A higher score refers to more political trust.

We used the following Likert item to tap into the respondents’ *authoritarian attitudes*: “What we need are less laws and less institutions, and more courageous, indefatigable, and devoted leaders, in whom the people can put their faith”.

Also, we considered two behavioural explanatory mechanisms, which are not included in the factor analyses mentioned earlier. Our measure of *interethnic contact* is based on three dichotomous items asking respondents whether they have one or more friends from (i) Turkish, (ii) Moroccan or (iii) Surinamese/Antillean descent. Respondents who indicated to have friends belonging to at least one of these minority groups were coded as having interethnic contact. Note, that this measure refers to contact with non-Western minorities, which is most likely to influence radical right voting.⁹

Associational involvement was measured by asking respondents of how many associations (e.g., sports clubs, voluntary organizations, or a band or choir) they are a member. As only a small percentage (6.3 per cent) of the respondents was involved in more than three organizations, we decided to combine these respondents with those who stated to be involved in three different organizations (8.2 per cent). Respondents with missing values on this item (9.5 per cent) were treated as being not involved in any kind of organization.¹⁰

Control variables

We controlled for several known predictors of radical right voting and our explanatory mechanisms. We included age measured in years. For a meaningful interpretation of the intercept we subtracted the minimum age (18). Gender is



included with males as reference category. Religiosity is measured by the frequency of the respondents' church attendance, distinguishing 'never or hardly ever' (reference category), 'less than once a month' and 'once a month or more'. Marital status is included with the categories 'not married' (reference category), 'married' and 'divorced/widowed'.¹¹ We also considered the occupational status of respondents. For employed respondents, we used the ISEI score to distinguish three categories: 'occupational status low' ($ISEI < 35$), 'occupational status medium' ($35 \leq ISEI < 60$) and 'occupational status high' ($60 < ISEI$; reference category). For respondents with missing information on their occupational status or respondents without paid employment (e.g., students, homemakers, pensioners or unemployed) we included an additional category ('occupational status other'). Finally, the respondents' region is included as this partly taps into the level of urbanization of the living environment as well as the presence of ethnic minorities in the respondents' surrounding. The following categories are distinguished: 'north' (reference), 'west', 'east', 'south' as well as two additional categories for 'large cities' and 'suburban district'. For descriptive statistics of our (in)dependent variables, mediators and controls, we refer to Table A3 (Appendix).

Analyses

We tested our hypotheses in multiple steps. First, we conducted a logistic regression analysis to test our first hypothesis on the relationship between educational attainment and radical right voting (Table 1), considering both linear relationships as well as deviations from linearity. Next, we considered the relationship between educational attainment and all mediators subsequently and separately (Table 1). This reflects the first part of hypotheses 2–11, denoted as (a). We conducted several OLS regression analyses, except for the relationship between education and our dichotomous measure of interethnic contact, for which we applied logistic regression analyses.

Subsequently, we considered the influence of our mediating variables on the likelihood to vote for the PVV (Table 2), reflecting the second part of hypotheses 2–11, denoted as (b). We conducted several logistic regression analyses taking into account our mediating variables separately (Models 2–12), as well as simultaneously (Model 13). These steps provide a first indication of whether the influence of educational attainment on radical right voting is (partly) explained by our mediators. As a final step, we used Preacher and Hayes' *indirect* macro (Preacher and Hayes, 2008) to test whether the indirect relationships between educational attainment and radical right voting via our mediators are significant. Using bootstrapping, this macro calculates indirect effects and gives an indication of the significance of these effects.

Table 1: Influence educational attainment on radical right voting and mediators (N = 774)

	Radical right voting		Interethnic contact		Associational involvement		Social trust		Euroskepticism		Perceived ethnic threat	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Intercept	-1.520	1.242	-.163	.462	-.337	.218	1.837	.172***	1.910	.146***	2.038	.150***
Educational attainment (years)	-.268	.066***	-.002	.034	.108	.016***	.068	.013***	-.068	.011***	-.069	.011***
	Anti-Muslim attitudes		Nationalistic attitudes		Authoritarian attitudes		Present relative deprivation		Future economic decline		Political trust	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Intercept	2.754	.138***	2.773	.162***	2.428	.223***	1.610	.169***	2.233	.203***	4.747	.321***
Educational attainment (years)	-.064	.010***	-.030	.012*	-.090	.016***	-.066	.012***	-.050	.015***	.120	.024***

Source: *Religion in Dutch Society (SOCON, 2011/2012)*.

OLS regression analyses, except for radical right voting and intergroup contact (logistic regression analyses). All models are controlled for age, gender, religiosity, marital status, occupational status and region (see Table A4, Appendix).

*** Significant $p < .001$; ** Significant $p < .01$; * Significant $p < .05$; ~ significant $p < .10$.



Table 2: Influence of educational attainment and mediators on radical right voting (N = 774)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Intercept	-1.520	1.242	-1.173	1.269	-1.648	1.243	-.924	1.264
Educational attainment (years)	-.268	.066***	-.279	.067***	-.234	.067***	-.237	.067***
Interethnic contact			-.489	.329				
Associational involvement					-.305	.164~		
Social trust							-.371	.156*
Eurocepticism								
Perceived ethnic threat								
Anti-Muslim attitudes								
Nationalistic attitudes								
Authoritarian attitudes								
Present relative deprivation								
Future economic decline								
Political trust								
Nägelkerke R ²	.201		.207		.211		.216	
	Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model 8	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Intercept	-2.284	1.300~	-4.651	1.385***	-5.427	1.431***	2.570	1.336~
Educational attainment (years)	-.244	.067***	-.185	.72*	-.196	.069***	-.270	.066***
Interethnic contact								
Associational involvement								
Social trust								
Eurocepticism	.393	.187*						
Perceived ethnic threat			1.395	.218***				
Anti-Muslim attitudes					1.354	.244***		
Nationalistic attitudes							.415	.191*



Table 2: (Continued)

	Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model 8			
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE		
Authoritarian attitudes										
Present relative deprivation										
Future economic decline										
Political trust										
Nagelkerke R ²	.213		.327		.294		.215			
	Model 9		Model 10		Model 11		Model 12		Model 13	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Intercept	-3.009	1.311*	-2.045	1.278	-2.156	1.297~	-1.111	1.296	-6.579	1.648***
Educational attainment (years)	-.232	.067***	-.249	.066***	-.254	.066***	-.253	.067***	-.127	.076~
Interethnic contact										
Social trust										
Eurocepticism										
Perceived ethnic threat										
Anti-Muslim attitudes										
Nationalistic attitudes										
Authoritarian attitudes	.566	.156***	.305	.167~	.249	.151~				
Present relative deprivation										
Future economic decline										
Political trust										
Nagelkerke R ²	.241		.210		.208		-.092	.083	.365	

Source: Religion in Dutch Society (SOCON, 2011/2012).

All models are controlled for age, gender, religiosity, marital status, occupational status and region (results available upon request).

*** Significant $p < .001$; ** significant $p < .01$; * significant $p < .05$; ~ significant $p < .10$.



Results

We start with the influence of educational attainment on the odds of radical right voting. The results of our logistic regression analysis (Table 1) show that people with a higher level of educational attainment (in years) are less likely to vote for the PVV ($b = -.268$; $\text{Exp}(b) = .766$). This is in line with our expectation that lower educated people are overrepresented among the electorate of the PVV (*hypothesis 1*).

As some earlier studies (e.g., Evans, 2005; Rydgren, 2007) pointed at the possibility of a non-linear relationship between educational attainment and radical right voting, we additionally included a squared term of educational attainment in years, while we used a dummified measure of educational attainment in a separate analysis (results available upon request). In both cases we found no support for a non-linear nature of this relationship.¹² This means that an important prerequisite for testing our explanatory hypotheses is in place, as all hypotheses predict a negative relationship between educational attainment and voting for the PVV.

To test our explanatory hypotheses, we first considered the relationships between our independent variable (educational attainment) and all mediators separately (Table 1). We started with interethnic contact which we expected to play a role as proposed by intergroup contact theory (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2011). Contradictory to our expectations, the odds to have friends from non-Western decent turned out not to be influenced by people's level of educational attainment (*hypothesis 2a*). We reached similar conclusions using an alternative measure of frequency of interethnic contact (results available upon request).

Next, we considered the role of associational involvement and social trust. In line with our expectations (*hypotheses 3a* and *4a*) higher educated people are more involved in voluntary associations ($b = .108$) and have more social trust ($b = .068$). We likewise found support for our hypothesis on euroscepticism (*hypothesis 5a*), as higher educated people turned out to be less eurosceptic ($b = -.068$).

Also most of our more established explanations are related with educational attainment as we expected. Higher educated people perceive less ethnic threat ($b = -.069$; *hypothesis 6a*), display lower levels of anti-Muslim attitudes ($b = -.064$; *hypothesis 7a*) and hold less nationalistic attitudes ($b = -.030$; *hypothesis 8a*). Moreover, higher educated natives turned out to be less in favour of authoritarian attitudes ($b = -.090$) as compared to lower educated people, supporting *hypothesis 9a*. We also tested the influence of relative deprivation. As we expected (*hypothesis 10a*), people with more formal education display less relative deprivation in their current situation ($b = -.066$) and expect fewer economic decline in the future ($b = -.050$). Finally, also political trust was influenced by educational attainment as we hypothesized, as higher educated people have more political trust ($b = .120$; *hypothesis 11a*).



Our results indicate that people's level of educational attainment is related to our mediators in the expected direction for all explanatory mechanisms, except for interethnic contact. This means that, at this point, we can rule out interethnic contact as an explanation for the negative relationship between educational attainment and voting for the PVV.

In a second step, we tested whether our explanatory mechanisms influence people's odds to vote for the PVV (Table 2). We started with our model without our mediators (Table 2, Model 1), which corresponds with the first model in Table 1. Next, we included our mediators one by one (Table 2, Models 2–12). Contradictory to our expectations, having friends belonging to a non-Western ethnic minority group does not influence people's odds to cast their vote for the PVV. Although the effect is in the expected direction, it does not reach significance which means that we have to refute *hypothesis 2b*. Note, that we reached similar conclusions if we used our measure of contact frequency (results available upon request). Interethnic contact (i.e., a lack thereof) can, thus, not be an explanation for the overrepresentation of lower educated people among the electorate of the PVV, as people's level of educational attainment does not influence their likelihood to have interethnic contact and having such contact is unrelated with radical right voting.

The influences of associational involvement (*hypothesis 3b*) and social trust (*hypothesis 4b*) are in the expected direction: the more people are involved in voluntary organizations ($b = -.305$; $\text{Exp}(b) = .737$) and the higher their level of social trust ($b = -.371$; $\text{Exp}(b) = .690$) the less likely they are to vote for the PVV. Also euroscepticism seems to be a relevant determinant of radical right voting (Table 2, Model 5). People who are more eurosceptic, are more likely to vote for the PVV ($b = .393$; $\text{Exp}(b) = 1.481$; *hypothesis 5b*). In addition, we found that higher levels of perceived ethnic threat ($b = 1.395$; $\text{Exp}(b) = 4.035$; *hypothesis 6b*), anti-Muslim attitudes ($b = 1.354$; $\text{Exp}(b) = 3.873$; *hypothesis 7b*) and nationalistic attitudes ($b = .415$; $\text{Exp}(b) = 1.514$; *hypothesis 8b*) increase people's likelihood to vote for the PVV.

Next, we considered the influence of authoritarianism (Table 2, Model 9). As we expected (*hypothesis 9b*) people who are more in favour of authoritarian attitudes have a higher odds to vote for the PVV ($b = .566$; $\text{Exp}(b) = 1.761$). Also the influence of people's relative deprivation (Table 2, Models 10 and 11) is in line with our expectation (*hypothesis 10b*): people who face more deprivation in their current situation ($b = .305$; $\text{Exp}(b) = 1.357$) or expect their economic situation to decline in the future ($b = .249$; $\text{Exp}(b) = 1.283$) are more likely to vote for the PVV. Note, however, that both effects are only marginally significant. Political trust cannot explain the overrepresentation of lower educated people among the electorate of the PVV: the influence of political trust (Table 2, Model 12) is in the expected direction, though, does not reach the boundary of significance. Hence, we have to reject *hypothesis 11b*. Although most explanatory mechanisms turn out to be related with radical right voting in the expected direction, at this point we can



rule out interethnic contact and political trust as explanations for the negative relationship between educational attainment and radical right voting.

Next, we included all (significant) mediators simultaneously in our model (Table 2, Model 13) to conduct a stricter test and rule out any possible spurious relationships. Indeed, several influences of our mediators found earlier, seem to be spurious and are no longer significant, once we take into account our alternative explanations. As shown in Model 13, only three explanatory mechanisms turned out to explain radical right voting: people with higher levels of ethnic threat perceptions ($b = .965$; $\text{Exp}(b) = 2.625$), anti-Muslim attitudes ($b = .648$; $\text{Exp}(b) = 1.912$) and authoritarian attitudes ($b = .329$; $\text{Exp}(b) = 1.390$) are more likely to vote for the PVV. Of our large set of theoretically derived explanations for the negative relationship between educational attainment and radical right voting, only three explanatory mechanisms seem to be relevant. At first sight, perceived ethnic threat appears to be the most important factor, as this effect is highly significant. Note, that the influence of educational attainment ($b = -.127$; $\text{Exp}(b) = .881$) on radical right voting decreases and is only marginally significant ($p < .10$), once we take into account our explanatory mechanisms (compare Model 1 and Model 13).¹³

Finally, we applied Preacher and Hayes' *indirect* macro (Preacher and Hayes, 2008) to test whether the indirect relationships between educational attainment and radical right voting via our mediators are significant. Based on bootstrapping, only the indirect effect of educational attainment via perceptions of ethnic threat on radical right voting turned out to be significant (results available upon request). This underlines our earlier conclusion about the importance of ethnic threat perceptions, based on the final model in Table 2.¹⁴

Conclusions and Discussion

The importance of education, next to social class, for determining people's political preferences and voting behaviour has been emphasized already by Lipset in the 1960s (Lipset, 1981 [1960]). In this study, we addressed the relationship between educational attainment and voting for radical right parties; a party family that has gained much success during the past decades in many Western European countries (Kitschelt, 2007; Rydgren, 2007). We focused on the Netherlands and were interested in the influence of education on voting for the Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV), which is considered a radical right party with a strong anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim stance (e.g., ECRI, 2008; Hooghe *et al.*, 2010).

Generally, research shows that lower educated people are overrepresented among the electorate of radical right parties (e.g., Kessler and Freeman, 2005; Ivarsflaten and Stubager, 2013), although others pointed at a curvilinear



relationship (e.g., Evans, 2005; Arzheimer and Carter, 2006) or did not find a relationship at all (Norris, 2005). In line with the vast majority of European studies (e.g., Ford and Goodwin, 2010; Ivarsflaten and Stubager, 2013) as well as earlier findings in the Netherlands (Van Gent *et al.*, 2014), our results showed that the more years of formal education people have, the lower their odds to vote for the PVV. We did not find support for a curvilinear relationship.

In this study, we were particularly interested in *explaining* the relationship between educational attainment and radical right voting. Based on previous theoretical explanations and consistent empirical findings, we selected a large set of explanatory mechanisms to gain more insight in *why* lower educated people would be more likely to vote for radical right parties. Unlike many earlier studies, we were able to consider a large set of explanatory mechanisms *simultaneously*. This enabled us to conduct a more systematic and strict test of these underlying explanations, i.e., mediators, ruling out spurious relationships and eventually assessing crucial determinants of radical right voting.

Our findings underline the importance of this design. Considering the influence of our explanatory mechanisms separately, many relationships were in line with our expectations: lower educated people turned out to be, for instance, more eurosceptic (cf. Hakhverdian *et al.*, 2013), which was positively related with voting for the PVV (cf. Ivarsflaten, 2005). Moreover, lower educated people were less involved in voluntary organizations (cf. Putnam, 1995; Wilson, 2000) and held lower levels of social trust (cf. Rothstein and Stolle, 2008), which, in turn, was negatively related with radical right voting (cf. Billiet and De Witte, 2001; Coffé, 2002; Norris, 2005). Once we considered our explanatory mechanisms simultaneously, however, these influences turned out to be spurious and no longer reached significance.

Ruling out such spurious relationships, three mechanisms turned out to be important to explain the relationship between educational attainment and voting for the PVV: authoritarian attitudes, perceptions of ethnic threat and anti-Muslim attitudes. Apparently, these political stances are more important than explanations focusing on a lack of societal connectedness (in terms of associational involvement and interethnic contact). The first explanation referring to authoritarian attitudes is based on the idea that the socio-economic position of the lower strata is characterized by poverty and deprivation which induces frustration and anxiety (Adorno *et al.*, 1950). Consequently, lower educated people are likely to submit themselves to strong authorities and conventional norms and values. These psychological needs are served by radical right parties which emphasize traditional norms and a strong leader (Mudde, 2007). Our results clearly show that lower educated natives are more in favour of authoritarian attitudes (cf. Adorno *et al.*, 1950; Gabennesch, 1972), which, in turn, is positively related with radical right voting (cf. Mayer and Perrineau, 1992; Lubbers and Scheepers, 2000). However, additional analyses using bootstrapping did not lend support for an *indirect* effect of educational attainment on voting for the PVV via authoritarian attitudes.



Both other explanatory mechanisms are derived from realistic group conflict theory (Coser, 1956; Blalock, 1967; Bobo, 1999) and ethnic competition theory (Scheepers *et al.*, 2002; Coenders *et al.*, 2004) and neatly link with the profile of the radical right party family. Radical right parties generally “[...] share an emphasis on ethno-nationalism” and focus on “[...] strengthening the nation by making it more ethnically homogeneous” (Rydgren, 2007, p. 242). The PVV has an ethnocentric agenda and resorts to a racist and xenophobic discourse, targeting particularly Muslim communities (ECRI, 2008). In line with our expectations, lower educated people turned out to perceive more ethnic threat and hold more negative attitudes toward Muslims, driving them to vote for the PVV. In particular perceptions of ethnic threat seem to be important, as additional analyses based on bootstrapping revealed that the relationship between educational attainment and radical right voting is *only* mediated by this mechanism.

Given the PVV’s focus on anti-immigrant issues as their core message, it is remarkable that interethnic contact did not play a role. So far, empirical evidence for the role of interethnic contact is scarce. Whereas Green *et al.* (2016) found support for the influence of interethnic contact on radical right voting in Switzerland, Rydgren (2008) found no support in four out of six European countries (including The Netherlands). Using a more strict measurement of interethnic contact referring to *non-Western* minorities, our results are in line with Rydgren’s outcome for the Netherlands. Future research could use a cross-national perspective to further disentangle whether and why the impact of interethnic contact varies across countries, improving our understanding of the mechanisms behind. Additionally, focusing on interethnic contact in different domains (e.g., in the neighbourhood or at the workplace) and with different minority groups (e.g., immigrants from Eastern Europe) might provide fruitful alleys for future research.

Finally, there are some limitations to this study which should be acknowledged. First, as discussed before, our theoretical model explaining why lower educated people are overrepresented among the electorate of radical right parties is probably more complex than presented in this study as several mechanisms themselves might be interrelated as well. Given the cross-sectional nature of our data, we were unable to further disentangle the interrelatedness and causal orders of these theoretical mechanisms. Taking into account our large set of explanations simultaneously, we were, however, able to conduct a strict test revealing the most crucial mechanisms explaining why lower educated people are more in favour of the radical right. Future research should, preferably using longitudinal panel data, address the causal orders of these mechanisms more profoundly.

Second, future research could further explore alternative explanations for the negative relationship between educational attainment and radical right voting. Although we uniquely tested a large set of explanations simultaneously, other explanations, like attachment to traditions, subjective perceptions of crime or crime policy preferences (e.g., Dinas and Van Spanje, 2011; Werts *et al.*, 2012), could also



be examined. Apart from having access to (preferably multi-item) measures of such explanatory mechanisms, these mediators have to be related to both educational attainment *and* radical right voting in such a way that they can account for a negative relationship. Although the selection of mediators in this study was guided by these principles, we cannot rule out the possibility of even more alternative explanations. Nevertheless, given our strict test of mediators, we are quite confident that perceived ethnic threat is one of the central (if not the most important) explanations for the overrepresentation of lower educated people among the electorate of the PVV.

To conclude, this study underlines the importance of considering alternative explanations for the relationship between education and radical right voting simultaneously, in order to preclude spurious relationships. Our results show that the overrepresentation of lower educated people among the electorate of the PVV is mainly driven by perceptions of ethnic threat, ruling out many other theoretically well-established explanations. As such, the PVV's emphasis on the economic and cultural threats the immigrants would pose to the Dutch society, seems to bear fruit in terms of mobilizing lower educated people among the Dutch electorate.

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Notes

- 1 Kitschelt (2007) argued that not finding a relationship between educational attainment and radical right voting might be the consequence of taking into account measures of occupational status, indirectly tracking educational attainment. Ivarsflaten and Stubager (2013) showed, however, that education has an effect on radical right voting even if one considers the influence of occupational class.
- 2 For more information on both expert surveys, see Hooghe *et al* (2010) and Immerzeel *et al* (2011).
- 3 As some scholars pointed at a curvilinear relationship, arguing that in particular the mid-school stratum is most likely to vote for radical right parties (Evans, 2005; Arzheimer and Carter, 2006; Rydgren, 2007), we will additionally test whether this also holds for the Netherlands.



- 4 The overall response rate is 54.6 per cent which is in line with similar Dutch surveys. Although deviations from representativeness were relatively small, men, people living in strongly urbanized areas as well as the youngest and oldest age groups were slightly underrepresented (see Eisinga *et al.*, 2012). As we are interested, however, in relationships between educational attainment, explanatory mechanisms and radical right voting, this is not problematic.
- 5 If we exclude respondents who stated not to vote if general elections were held (4.9 per cent), we reach substantially similar findings (results are available upon request).
- 6 If we exclude respondents who indicated that they would not vote, this percentage slightly increases (8.9 per cent).
- 7 The percentage of respondents with missing values on our explanatory mechanisms ranges from .2 per cent for social trust to 12.9 per cent for our scale of euroscepticism. Robustness analyses, excluding these respondents, yield substantially similar conclusions (results available upon request).
- 8 Unless stated differently, this holds for all other items used to construct our mediating variables.
- 9 Using an alternative measure of interethnic contact, based on three items referring to the frequency of neighbourhood contact with (i) Turks, (ii) Moroccans or (iii) Surinamese/Antilleans, we reach similar conclusions (results available upon request).
- 10 Excluding respondents with missing values or using a dichotomous measure of associational involvement leads to substantially similar findings (results available upon request).
- 11 Respondents with missing values on this item (.7 per cent) were included in the reference category.
- 12 As the direct effect of education on radical right voting might be partly mediated by the respondents' occupational status (Kitschelt, 2007), we additionally excluded our measure of occupational status and considered whether the influence of educational attainment differs and becomes non-linear. We reach, however, similar conclusions as compared to our full model including the respondents' occupational status (results available upon request).
- 13 Caution should be exercised when comparing parameter estimates across non-linear regression models with different independent variables, as including different variables might influence the level of unobserved heterogeneity and consequently the scale of the dependent variable (Mood, 2010). However, as a reduction of the level of unobserved heterogeneity leads to larger effect terms, we can rule out that a downward change of the effect term (e.g., of educational attainment) is caused by a change of scale. One should bear in mind, though, that the shrinkage of the coefficient might have been even larger if there was no change of scale.
- 14 Our scale of perceived ethnic threat is measured more reliably as compared to some other explanatory mechanisms based on single items rather than multiple items. As multi-item scales are more reliable, they suffer less from measurement error which should result in greater effect sizes. Therefore, we tested whether our eventual finding is caused by a more reliable measurement of our threat scale. We conducted additional analyses (results available upon request) using only the first item of our threat scale (see Table A1, Appendix), loading most strongly on the factor tapping into ethnic threat perceptions. In that case, we reach substantially similar conclusions as presented in Tables 1 and 2. Using Preacher and Hayes' *indirect* macro (Preacher and Hayes, 2008), the indirect effects of educational attainment via anti-Muslim attitudes and authoritarian attitudes become significant as well.

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Appendix

Table A1: Confirmatory factor analyses with oblique rotation ($N = 774$)

	<i>Factor</i>					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Decline of neighbourhood due to ethnic minorities	.801	.068	.089	-.010	-.050	-.023
Minorities get turn before Dutch people	.470	-.048	-.150	.046	.106	.086
Dutch people fired because of minorities	.546	-.017	-.116	-.016	.019	.121
Minorities are threat to our own culture	.624	.041	-.074	.130	.099	-.106
Education for ethnic children at expense of Dutch children	.652	-.029	-.049	-.014	.069	-.066
Presence minorities increases criminality neighbourhood	.586	-.008	.023	.025	.035	.072
Muslims easily resort to violence	.221	.035	-.055	.012	.557	-.022
Muslim husbands dominate their wives	.002	-.020	-.024	.086	.622	.090
Muslims raise their children in authoritarian way	-.032	-.011	-.014	-.028	.558	.088
Muslims lock themselves out of Dutch society	.169	.024	.018	-.023	.648	-.059
Most Muslims have no respect for homosexuals	-.034	.034	.000	.036	.604	-.065
Be able to afford less coming years	-.066	.901	-.010	-.008	.082	-.079
Adjusting present lifestyle coming years	.003	.680	-.038	.028	-.056	.134
Worries about decline of financial prospects	.080	.737	.035	-.015	-.001	.045
Difficulties to buy necessary things from salary	.067	.241	-.120	.058	-.040	.521
Very unsatisfied with present social standing	.010	.038	-.003	-.079	.050	.474
Very unsatisfied with present income	.003	-.016	.033	.059	.013	.716
Netherlands have much to gain from EU membership (reversed coding)	-.003	-.045	-.646	-.061	.009	.017
EU posts a threat against the Dutch culture	.044	.047	-.755	.080	-.004	-.070
Netherlands should cancel EU membership	-.020	.024	-.792	-.011	.008	.029
Proud to be Dutch	-.034	-.025	.022	.672	.075	.032
Dutchman should honour national symbols	.053	.024	-.009	.747	-.048	-.029

Source: Religion in Dutch Society (SOCON, 2011/2012).



Table A2: Correlation matrix attitudinal explanatory variables (N = 774)

	Social trust	Eurocepticism	Perceived ethnic threat	Anti-Muslim attitudes	Nationalistic attitudes	Authoritarian attitudes	Present relative deprivation	Future economic decline	Political trust
Social trust	1.000								
Eurocepticism	-.254***	1.000							
Perceived ethnic threat	-.225***	.353***	1.000						
Anti-Muslim attitudes	-.219***	.280***	.618***	1.000					
Nationalistic attitudes	.049	.035	.253***	.215***	1.000				
Authoritarian attitudes	-.085*	.204***	.314***	.294***	.230***	1.000			
Present relative deprivation	-.179***	.180***	.218***	.246***	.027	.144***	1.000		
Future economic decline	-.079*	.135***	.225***	.211***	.082*	.138***	.438***	1.000	
Political trust	.191***	-.354***	-.123**	-.126**	.178***	-.095**	-.205***	-.237***	1.000

Source: Religion in Dutch Society (SOCON, 2011/2012).

*** Significant $p < .001$; ** significant $p < .01$; * significant $p < .05$.

**Table A3:** Descriptive statistics (N = 774)

	<i>Range</i>	<i>Mean/per cent</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
<i>Dependent variable</i>			
Radical right voting (voting for the PVV)	0/1	8.40 per cent	
<i>Independent variable</i>			
Educational attainment (years) (6 = 0)	0–15	6.45	2.85
<i>Mediating variables</i>			
Interethnic contact	0/1	31.65 per cent	
Associational involvement (# org.)	0–3	1.03	1.11
Social trust	0–4	2.41	0.78
Eurocepticism	0–4	1.52	0.74
Perceived ethnic threat	0–4	1.82	0.75
Anti-Muslim attitudes	0–4	2.44	0.69
Nationalistic attitudes	0–4	2.82	0.79
Authoritarian attitudes	0–4	2.48	1.12
Present relative deprivation	0–4	1.24	0.84
Future economic decline	0–4	2.16	0.99
Political trust	0–10	5.63	1.58
<i>Controls</i>			
Age (18 = 0)	0–52	28.12	13.10
<i>Gender</i>			
Male (ref.)	0/1	43.93 per cent	
Female	0/1	56.07 per cent	
<i>Religiosity—church att. never/hardly ever (ref.)</i>			
Religiosity—church att. sometimes	0/1	26.10 per cent	
Religiosity—church att. once a month or more	0/1	17.83 per cent	
<i>Marital status—not married (ref.)</i>			
Marital status—married	0/1	57.49 per cent	
Marital status—divorced/widowed	0/1	13.31 per cent	
<i>Occupational status high (ref.)</i>			
Occupational status low	0/1	37.34 per cent	
Occupational status mid	0/1	18.73 per cent	
Occupational status other (unemployed/students etc.)	0/1	29.59 per cent	
<i>Region north (ref.)</i>			
Region large cities	0/1	5.30 per cent	
Region west	0/1	25.06 per cent	
Region east	0/1	15.25 per cent	
Region south	0/1	27.00 per cent	
Region suburban district	0/1	3.10 per cent	

Source: *Religion in Dutch Society (SOCON, 2011/2012)*.



Table A4: Influence educational attainment and control variables on radical right voting and mediators (N = 774)

	Radical right voting		Interethnic contact		Associational involvement		Social trust		Eurocepticism		Perceived ethnic threat	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Intercept	-1.520	1.242	-.163	.462	-.337	.218	1.837	.172***	1.910	.146***	2.038	.150***
Educational attainment (years)	-.268	.066***	-.002	.034	.108	.016***	.068	.013***	-.068	.011***	-.069	.011***
Age	-.035	.014*	-.005	.008	.012	.003***	.006	.003*	-.006	.002**	-.002	.002
Female (male = ref.)	-.065	.284	-.103	.165	-.101	.076	-.019	.060	.146	.051**	-.100	.052~
Church attendance never/hardly ever (ref.)												
Church attendance—sometimes	-.294	.328	-.137	.192	.189	.090*	.143	.071*	.033	.060	.100	.062
Church attendance—once a month or more	-2.701	1.029**	-.749	.246**	.655	.104***	.085	.082	-.073	.070	.018	.071
Not married (ref.)												
Married	.232	.393	-.088	.214	.046	.098	.128	.077~	.066	.066	.137	.067*
Divorced/widowed	-.067	.558	.650	.289*	-.330	.138*	-.119	.109	.101	.093	.075	.095
Occupational status high (ref.)												
Occupational status low	1.805	1.088~	-.465	.329	.201	.153	-.114	.121	.255	.103*	.293	.105**
Occupational status mid	1.993	1.041~	-.525	.243*	.211	.114~	-.012	.090	.119	.077	.190	.079*
Occupational status other (unemployed/ students etc.)	1.715	1.077	-.208	.271	.158	.129	-.089	.101	.256	.086**	.305	.088***
Region north (ref.)												
Region large cities	-.027	.647	.714	.362*	-.013	.181	-.006	.142	-.164	.121	.079	.124
Region west	-.311	.438	.370	.224~	.109	.106	-.025	.084	-.074	.072	.048	.073
Region east	-.035	.443	-.788	.303	.216	.122~	.018	.096	.007	.082	.039	.084
Region south	.202	.378	-.163	.228	.081	.106	-.035	.083	-.144	.071*	.010	.072
Region suburban district	.165	.831	1.108	.456*	-.026	.225	-.368	.178*	.135	.151	.196	.155



Table A4: (Continued)

	Anti-Muslim attitudes		Nationalistic attitudes		Authoritarian attitudes		Present relative deprivation		Future economic decline		Political trust	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Intercept	2.754	.138***	2.773	.162***	2.428	.223***	1.610	.169***	2.233	.203***	4.747	.321***
Educational attainment (years)	-.064	.010***	-.030	.012*	-.090	.016***	-.066	.012***	-.050	.015***	.120	.024***
Age	.000	.002	.002	.003	.012	.004***	-.002	.003	.006	.003	.000	.005
Female (male = ref.)	-.121	.048*	-.128	.057*	-.043	.078	.000	.059	.183	.071*	-.384	.112***
Church attendance never/hardly ever (ref.)	.121	.057*	.254	.067***	.209	.092*	.064	.070	.100	.083	.144	.132
Church attendance—sometimes	.007	.066	.414	.077***	.169	.106	-.006	.081	-.085	.097	.435	.153***
Church attendance—once a month or more												
Not married (ref.)												
Married	.016	.062	-.003	.073	.026	.101	-.152	.076*	-.148	.091	.155	.145
Divorced/widowed	.046	.088	.035	.103	-.082	.142	.010	.107	.107	.129	.106	.204
Occupational status high (ref.)												
Occupational status low	.211	.097*	.131	.114	.339	.157*	.125	.119	.016	.143	-.212	.226
Occupational status mid	.102	.073	.117	.085	.327	.117***	.095	.089	.024	.107	-.040	.169
Occupational status other (unemployed/ students etc.)	.163	.082*	.071	.096	.277	.132*	.306	.100**	.118	.120	-.211	.189
Region north (ref.)												
Region large cities	-.142	.114	.119	.134	.141	.185	-.009	.140	-.249	.168	.556	.266*
Region west	-.028	.068	.096	.079	-.056	.109	-.027	.083	-.019	.099	.336	.157*
Region east	.038	.077	.001	.091	.032	.125	.203	.095*	.107	.113	.261	.179
Region south	-.045	.067	-.043	.079	-.070	.108	.034	.082	-.020	.098	.249	.155
Region suburban district	.145	.143	.174	.168	.041	.231	-.138	.175	-.143	.210	.122	.332

Source: *Religion in Dutch Society (SOCON, 2011/2012)*.

OLS regression analyses, except for radical right voting and intergroup contact (logistic regression analyses).

*** Significant $p < .001$; ** significant $p < .01$; * significant $p < .05$; ~ significant $p < .10$.