

The dynamics of social change in Radical Right-wing Populist party support

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Since the initial rise of Radical Right-wing populist parties (RRPs) in the mid-1980s, analyses have tried to identify the core social and attitudinal elements to these parties' electorates and changes therein. Many have emphasised the convergence towards a common RRP type in Western Europe, away from the parties' differing roots. Moreover, regional differences between these parties, in particular between the Scandinavian Radical Right and the Continental Extreme Right has informed much of the literature on these cases. This paper looks at evidence of such shifts in RRP electorates, concentrating on their social profile. It finds that, whilst there are indeed shifts in the party electorates across time, these do not correspond entirely to the perception of a convergence of RRP types, and indeed that, on key social indicators such as education and class, the dynamics do not correspond to those commonly held in the comparative literature.

INTRODUCTION

Identifying Radical Right-wing Party (RRP) electorates has proved one of the more intractable problems in psephology. Since the appearance of the ‘third wave’ of these European parties in the 1980s – a wave which has proved more long-lived than any of the previous manifestations of parties which can loosely be categorised as Radical or Extreme Right – the electoral and social profiles of these parties have changed significantly, both in terms of the across-time comparability within countries and the comparability between countries.

In particular, previous research has highlighted the role of political entrepreneurship amongst these parties, in their quest to secure greater electoral support than their extremist roots allowed by exploiting widespread dynamics of social structural change. The move away from the petty bourgeois and in some cases liberal professional appeal of these parties, characteristic of the anti-tax and small government ideological appeal of RRPs in the 1980s, towards a lower status and disenchanted routine non-manual and blue-collar occupational strata has given these parties a cross-class profile. Changes in age and religious profiles of RPP electorates have also been noted, with voters becoming younger and – in countries where this is relevant – less religiously active.

Whilst such a shift has been noted for all successful RRPs in Europe, other research has emphasised the differences *between* RRPs, not only in trying – somewhat unsuccessfully – to find a common essence to the RRP party family, but also in

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ascertaining which parties should be included in this family. Most notably, the Scandinavian parties – the Norwegian and Danish Progress parties – have been held up as significantly different to the continental FN, VB and FPÖ, for instance.

In this paper, then, we test two simple yet potentially revealing hypotheses which as yet have not, to our knowledge, been tested rigorously empirically, and certainly not simultaneously. Firstly, to what extent has there been a convergence in RRP electorates over time, in particular as regards their social profile? Given their disparate roots, initial electoral marginality and subsequent success in reaction to social and political phenomena common to Western Europe, we might expect RRP to manifest a closing of their social profiles across time. Secondly, to what extent is the common distinction between the Scandinavian Progress / People's parties and other RRPs borne out in reality, again in terms of social profile? Whilst the most striking difference between these parties has been at the level of their ideologies, and specifically the variation in the levels of authoritarian elements, an analysis of underlying social differences is important from a political sociological perspective.

HISTORICAL ROOTS

The divergent historical bases to RRPs are well rehearsed in the literature (von Beyme, 1988; Hainsworth, 2000) but it is worth reminding ourselves of the level of disparity between these parties in their emergence and subsequent implantation in the 1980s. One of the initial problems in categorising RRPs or finding a common RRP root has been precisely this disparity. Whilst all parties generally represented to some degree a reactionary opposition to the political *status quo* of their nation, and in doing

Andersen and Liz Carter for advice and comments, and Matthew Hughes for the use of a computer which could cope with the size of the dataset.

so positioned themselves – or perhaps more accurately, were positioned – on the Right flank of the political spectrum, the very diversity in this reactionary label itself led to little possibility of drawing out an RPP ‘essence’.¹ We highlight some elements of commonalty below:

Anti-tax movement	Scandinavian Progress Parties; French FN (Poujadist inheritance); liberal wing of Austrian FPÖ
Separatism	Austrian VdU (early FPÖ faction); Belgian VB; Northern League
Fascist heritage	Italian MSI (AN); French FN; German NPD / DVU

Looking at these three elements – which are by no means exhaustive, but provide some dimensions of overlap amongst the parties – a number of things are clear. Firstly, the reactionary element demonstrates a desire to return to a *status quo ante* perceived as superior to the current state of affairs – in the case of anti-tax and associated small government, this is linked to the common neo-liberal wish for a return to nature insofar as social constructs such as the State are cut back; for separatism, a territorial redefinition delimiting a pre-national ethnic or linguistic group (albeit in the Austrian case, within the pan-German edifice); and for fascism, simply a superior type of regime. But it is evident that such a desire is motivated as much by ideological bias as by historical realism.

Secondly, from an electoral perspective, such defining elements are of little worth, whatever their ideological force. Given the post-war context of affluence and relative social stability, and memories of the effects of previous reactionary movements, such parties could rely on the support of few beyond the intellectual malcontents and outsiders in search of an alternative to a regime which suited the mass but not the

¹ In analyses drawing on the populist label, the lack of commonalty beyond reaction to the political

minority. Indeed, amongst those movements which enjoyed early success relative to their appearance – the Scandinavian anti-tax movements of the 1970s which subsequently became the Progress Parties – the social group which provided ‘mass’ support at the electoral level was precisely the independent minority stratum of European societies – the self-employed. To enjoy broader success, however, requires an ‘entrepreneurial’ expansion of electoral base (Betz, 1994; Minkenberg, 1998).

Thus, the move from electoral outcasts to successful political entrepreneurs implies an accompanying evolution in the social profile of RRP electorates, in order to expand their support base. Such an evolution is clear in previous work on RRPs. For instance, Ignazi and Ysmal distinguished between old RRPs such as the Italian MSI/AN and British National Party, which maintained clear linkages with the fascist parties of the inter-war period, and new RRPs, such as the Austrian FPÖ, the Belgian VB and French FN which mobilise disenchanted sections of the electorate in a protest vote (Ignazi and Ysmal, 1992). More specifically, Kitschelt emphasised the ‘winning formula’ which at the social level implied appealing to both blue-collar workers (with xenophobic and racist policies) and small business (with economic liberal policies) (1995: viii). Contemporary comparative analyses implicitly assume that that these parties can be reasonably grouped in one category when accounting for their varying success according to institutional social contexts (Jackman and Volpert, 1996; Lubbers et al, 2002; Golder, 2003).²

If such hypotheses are correct, then we would expect to see two phenomena in terms of social dynamics. Firstly, we would expect there to be divergent social bases to RRP

context of the country in question is often emphasised (Canovan, 1999).

support according to country and type of RPP. Secondly, we would expect there to be convergence of the social profile of the electorates across time. We consider these hypothesised changes in more detail below.

CHANGE IN RRP SOCIAL BASES ACROSS TIME

Given the constraints imposed upon the analysis by the dataset (see following section), we are only able to consider four elements to RRP electorates' social profile: age, gender, education and class. However, with perhaps the exception of religion in Catholic countries, these are the four key social indicators which have been linked to the profile of RRP support in Western Europe.

Gender

With very few exceptions, RRP support is a predominantly male activity, though the predominance varies quite considerably according to activity (e.g., voting versus party membership) and country. For instance, Denmark saw a markedly greater balance between men and women in the Progress Party's electorate (Svåsand, 1998: 86). Kitschelt argues that '[w]omen's socialization predisposes them toward more communicative and symbol-producing occupations' (1995: 7), a hypothesis which would push women away from RRP.³ As a mirror image of this, others argue that men are more receptive to the aggressive and 'pragmatist' ideologies which characterise RRP. In terms of convergence, no-one to our knowledge has argued that this gender imbalance has shifted significantly across time.

² Although some analyses do still distinguish between party types, e.g. van der Brug and Fennema (2003).

Age

During the 1990s, the age profile of Radical Right voters has seen an increasing shift towards younger cohorts (Betz and Immerfall, 1998: 19ff). Whilst the probability of voting for RRP has been seen as higher for younger voters – though the extent to which this was a function of early vote fluctuations amongst nonpartisan voters is unclear – and all age cohorts are now more likely to vote for RRPs simply by dint of the higher overall support for these parties, the relative chance has risen more steeply amongst the lower cohorts. However, this trend has been bucked in two key instances – in France in 2002, one factor in the success of Jean-Marie Le Pen was precisely the mobilisation of older rural cohorts, previously an under-represented group in the FN and its presidential candidate's electorate. Secondly, in the recent Swiss elections of 2003, the Swiss Democrats (SD) managed to mobilise support amongst older voters on an anti-immigrant platform.⁴

Education

As the key predictor of cognitive mobilisation, open-mindedness and an obstacle to authoritarian attitudes (Janowitz and Marvick, 1953; Inglehart, 1977) higher education has been seen as lowering the chance of RRP support. University education exposes people to a more diverse range of people, ways of life and ideas, and consequently they are more likely to be open-minded and liberal. However, despite its intuitive appeal, such a simple relationship is not universally accepted. Weil (1985) has argued that levels of liberalization vary according to the length of time democratic institutions have been in place and the level of religious heterogeneity. Jackman

³ Given the argument that Scandinavian RRPs should in fact be classified as right-libertarian, as we consider later, this would account for the greater gender balance in Denmark. However, Svåsand also notes that in Norway, the FrP electorate is precisely biased towards men.

(1978) famously argued that higher education only leads to greater tolerance in terms of an abstract principle, not on specific policies.

Equally, in terms of RRP vote, low education has not always characterised these parties' electorates – in the 1980s, the French FN electorate was one of the most educated amongst French parties (Evans, 2000). Similarly, in 1994 one in five FPÖ voters had a *Gymnasium* qualification or higher (Riedlsperger, 1998: 35). Lastly, Betz has argued that we should look to the middle educational groups, characteristic of technical education in particular where a higher sense of threat from immigrant populations is seen, for the strongest RRP support (Betz, 2001). Overall, however, the 'modernisation loser' hypothesis suggests that RRPs have expanded their support increasingly in the lowest education stratum, and thus we would expect to see a drop in education level across time.

Class

Successful RRPs have generally been seen as mobilising increasingly cross-class electorates. From the early years of petty bourgeois support of second-wave 'Poujadist' anti-tax movements, such as the Scandinavian Progress Parties and to a lesser extent the French FN, new RRPs have mobilised disenchanted sections of the working class as well as trying to hold onto their economically motivated neo-liberal support.

Such a process linking racist and xenophobic support with lower strata ties in with Lipset's working-class authoritarian thesis (1959), a pattern which has been noted as

⁴ The SD is a controversial member of the RRP group. Its increasingly anti-immigrant and anti-moderate party stance seems to warrant its inclusion at this point in time.

pertaining specifically to blue-collar workers (and the petty bourgeoisie) but not to white-collar employees (Andersen and Evans, 2004: 17). On this basis, we would expect to see increasingly disproportionate support amongst blue-collar workers and the self-employed across time.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SCANDINAVIAN AND CONTINENTAL RIGHT-WING RADICALISM

Whilst the ‘war of words’ (Mudde, 1996) has occupied virtually every monograph on RRP in their quest for a satisfactory typology of these parties, one of the most marked differences has been many authors’ refusal to classify the Scandinavian RRP within the same ideological family as other ‘Extreme’ Right parties in Western Europe.⁵ Firstly, as we have already noted in the previous sections, the historical roots of these parties lie in neo-liberal economic thought, and in particular anti-tax and small state concerns. This heritage places the parties as close to the ‘New Right’ wave of the 1980s as to the Extreme Right wave of the same period, to the extent that the two are separable. Similarly, the predominant social democratic regimes in these countries have socialised voters into rejecting the radical extremism of Extreme Right parties (Kitschelt, 1995: 158).

Secondly, the party programmes betray elements of libertarianism on which are ill-suited to the Extreme Right party family (Harmel and Gibson, 1995). For instance, the Norwegian FrP has mobilised support on its opposition to censorship and demands for reduction in state tax on alcohol.⁶ Thirdly, historically, the emphasis on the

⁵ Given the numerous classifications and typologies of RRP, virtually any categorisation of RRP could be justified theoretically. For instance, another approach might be to separate the neo-fascist parties of Italy and Germany from the New Radical Right elsewhere. However, we feel that for the current analysis, the regional separation is as valid as any other.

⁶ This policy clearly combines an economically liberal stance with a libertarian social stance, particularly in a country with temperance as a salient political issue for some parties and voters.

immigration issue has been low, given the lack of significant immigrant influxes until the mid-1980s. However, since the increased levels of immigration, these parties have mobilised increasingly on the basis of xenophobia and anti-immigrant policies, thus moving them towards the other Extreme Right parties in Europe (Andersen and Bjørklund, 2000). Indeed, the same authors have noted this tendency, based upon 'welfare chauvinism' since the late 1980s (Andersen and Bjørklund, 1990).

Given the decline of social democratic hegemony in Scandinavia, the socio-economic shifts in these countries' context vis-à-vis Europe, rising immigration, globalization, *inter alia*, and the concomitant change in ideology, it would seem sensible to suggest that there may be also be a convergence between these parties in terms of the social profile of their support, with similar 'losing' strata in Norwegian and Danish society turning to more radical alternatives.

One final consideration should be given to separating these two parties from the other European countries. Given a similar liberal background in the 1970s and early 1980s, under the leadership of Norbert Steger, why are we not including the Austrian Freedom Party as a distinct (although evidently not Scandinavian) type? Firstly, the party may have experienced a liberalisation in this period, but the roots of the party lie in the pan-German nationalism of the 'League of Independents' (*Verband der Unabhängigen*, VdU), a party far closer to the Extreme Right than the Scandinavian anti-tax movements. Secondly, even during this period, the authoritarian right stream remained in the party, and particularly active in Carinthia, the region from where Jörg Haider, the party's future leader, came. Thirdly, the year Haider took over – 1986 – and set the Freedom Party on its current undoubtedly right-authoritarian line

corresponds to the first Austrian data-point in our analysis. Consequently, whilst we feel that a comparison of similarities between the Austrian and Scandinavian cases is of interest, in the broad analysis of this paper, we would see it fitting more comfortably in the Continental bloc.

HYPOTHESES

On the basis of the above discussion, we test the following hypotheses:

H1a RRP electorates are more male.

H1b This effect will remain constant across time.

H2a RRP electorates are characterised by younger strata of voters.

H2b This effect will be stronger in the post-1995 period.

H3a RRP electorates are less well educated.

H3b This effect will be stronger in the post-1995 period.

H4a RRP electorates are cross-class, with over-representation of the working class and self-employed strata.

H4b This effect will be stronger in the post-1995 period.

H5a Age, education and class distinctions will differ between Scandinavian and Continental RRPs. There will be no gender difference.

H5b Norwegian and Danish RRPs will contrast more strongly with continental RRPs pre-1995 than post-1995.

DATA AND METHOD⁷

The data we employ in the analysis is a subset of the EREPS⁸ pooled sociodemographic dataset which provides a series of comparable sociodemographic indicators drawn from pooled national electoral survey institute data in the countries and years below.

Austria	1986, 1990, 1994, 1995, 1999
Belgium	1991, 1995, 1999
Denmark	1975, 1977, 1984, 1987, 1990, 1994, 1998*
France	1988, 1995, 1997, 2002
Germany (West)	1990, 1994, 1998
Italy	1990, 1992, 1994, 1996
Norway	1985, 1989, 1993, 1997, 2001

* Danish data from 1973 and 1981 were excluded due to missing variables. East Germany was excluded for reasons of comparability.

Dependent variable

Austria	Freedom Party (FPÖ)
Belgium	Vlaams Blok (VB) / Front National (FNb)
Denmark	Progress Party (FrPd) / People's Party (PP)
France	Front National (FNf)
Germany (West)	Deutsche Volkunion (DVU); Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD); Republikaner (REP)
Italy	Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI) / Alleanza Nazionale (AN); Movimento Sociale Fiamma Tricolore (MSFT)
Norway	Progress Party (FrPn)

In the original EREPS dataset, the party variable 'most recent vote in legislative election' is coded in ten categories, including the major party families, abstention and blank / spoiled ballots and don't knows. To simplify the analysis, we have simply

⁷ All data analysis carried out using R. Fitted probability plots generated using the 'effects' package by John Fox.

collapsed all categories other than RPP into one ‘other’ reference, to contrast with the RRP category of interest. Consequently we employ a binomial logit model in the analysis. The parties included under RRP are detailed above.

Independent variables

The four sociodemographic variables were coded as follows. Age has been collapsed into three categories – 34 and under (reference), 35 to 64, and 65 and over.⁹ Gender is coded 1 for male. Education is coded into four categories – no education / primary education (reference), mid-school, secondary school and university degree. Finally, class was coded into a four-category variable – professional / managerial, routine non-manual, self-employed and working class. An unclassified reference category was also included.¹⁰ All missing cases have been excluded, leaving an analytical sample size of 88,844.

To test for convergence across time, we include a time-dummy, ‘year’, coded 1 for any election taking place in 1995 or later. The choice of this threshold is admittedly somewhat arbitrary, but was chosen above, for instance, a different cut-off for each country for two reasons. Firstly, from the existing literature, 1995 coincides with the year when the ‘ideal-type’ RRP (Kitschelt, 1995: 91ff), the French FN, manifested a clear shift to the cross-class electorate which characterises the apparent convergence of RPPs in Europe. Secondly, we cannot claim that there is an exact point at which all parties shifted towards the converged model, even in terms of elections within their

⁸ Information on the EREPS research group (“Extreme Right Electorates and Party Success”) is available at <http://www.politik.uni-mainz.de/ereps/>

⁹ A six-category variable could have been retained had Denmark been excluded from the analysis.

¹⁰ Due to missing categories in the different countries’ occupation codings, potentially interesting distinct categorisations, such as separating managers from professionals, have had to be omitted. Similarly, occupational status could not be included to look at unemployment effects.

own system. Instead, we are simply interested in whether a broad trend can be discerned. Similarly, we have constructed a dummy, 'type', which is coded 1 for Scandinavian countries (i.e. Norwegian Progress Party and Danish Progress / People's Party) with all other Continental countries coded 0, in order to look at potential differences between the social profile of these two types, and changes in this across time.

To this end, we test four models: (1) main effects of social variables with individual country dummies; (2) main effects of social variables plus two-way interactions with (a) year and (b) type; (3) main effects of social variables, two-way interactions and three-way interactions between year, type and social variables. Models 2a and 2b will allow us to see the extent to which social profiles across all parties changed across time, as well as differences between Scandinavian and other RRP in social profile. Model 3 will subsequently allow us to check for the hypothesised convergence between Scandinavian and other RRP across time.

ANALYSIS

We begin by looking at main effects of social variables, controlling for country (Model 1). As expected, RRP electorates are significantly more male, younger and over-represented amongst the three non-university educational strata. However, in keeping with other research, it is the mid-school stratum which has the strongest support for RRP, contrasting positively with the no education / primary education reference (Andersen and Evans, 2004). This potentially supports the hypothesis that it is those with a technical education who are more likely to vote for RRP, rather than

those with no education (Betz, 2001).¹¹ For class, professional and managers are less likely to support RRPs, whereas the self-employed and blue-collar support is more likely, although the blue-collar effect is weaker than that of the self-employed. To this extent, hypotheses H1a, 2a, 3a and 4a are all supported. Looking at the country dummies, however, we should note that social variables do not account for all cross-national variation, with significant differences between all countries and the Austrian reference category.¹²

Moving to Models 2a and 2b, we look now at the two-way interactions between year and RRP type, respectively, and the social profile of our sample. Given the difficulty in interpreting main effects and interaction effects in such models, we follow Fox's advice to plot fitted values of the predictors of interest, absorbing the lower-order relatives into the higher-order term (Fox, 2003: 4). We provide the fitted probability plots of the significant interaction terms in both models, where the predictors of interest are allowed to vary and all other variables in the model are set to their mean.¹³ Fitted probability plots work most effectively with continuous predictors, however we feel that for the factors employed for the social variables, such plots can still help decipher otherwise complicated interactions, as long as too much store is not set by visual 'trends', particularly for the class variable.

¹¹ A model with a technical education coding – no education, mid- and secondary technical education; mid- and secondary classical education; university – could only be run on Belgium, France and Italy, due to missing variables. However, in these three countries, the technical education coding showed the effect of a technical education to be stronger than that of a classical education.

¹² Given constraints of space, we do not look at possible country*social profile interactions, although these are undoubtedly of interest.

¹³ Some authors suggest that setting categorical variables to their mean has no intuitive value, and hence it is more helpful to generate fitted probabilities using 'common profiles', e.g. looking at how age category effects probability of voting RRP for a male working class voter with no education. Given our interest in broad trends, however, we have chosen the mean setting for the sake of simplicity.

In Model 2a, which looks at interactions with the 1995 cut-point, it is clear that there is no change in the gender profile between the two time-periods. This confirms hypothesis H1b. However, there are significant interaction terms on all three of the other social characteristics. Looking first at age*year (Figure 1), it is evident that in the 1995 time-period, there is a greater probability of voting for RRP amongst all three age categories. However, the pattern of relative probabilities shifts – pre-1995, the most likely group to vote RRP is the oldest group, countering the common preconception of the youngest stratum being the most prevalent; however, from 1995 onwards, it is the under-35 group which is the most likely to vote RRP. Looking at the change in probability across time, the over-65s see a much smaller relative increase than either of the other two age-groups. This finding partially confirms hypotheses H2a and H2b – the RRP vote does get younger across time, however, the oldest stratum was more likely to vote RRP, *ceteris paribus*, before 1995.

Turning to education (Figure 2), we see the finding from Model 1 confirmed for both time periods, namely that the most highly educated group are the least likely to vote for RRP, but that it is the mid-school group, rather than the least educated, who are the most likely to do so. Again, there is an absolute rise in the probability of all educational strata to vote RRP, but the overall pattern remains similar – a small relative decrease in the likelihood of those with secondary education voting RRP is the main shift here. Hypotheses H3a and H3b are thus borne out, to the extent that the higher educated strata are indeed less likely to vote RRP, and this relative tendency increases between the two time-periods, although the absolute probability rises. However, the effect is evidently not monotonic, as some authors have suggested.

Lastly in this model, we consider the effects of class across time (Figure 3). We should first dispense with the largest across-time shift in the unclassified category – given the heterogeneous profile of this category, it is difficult to say what this represents. Looking at the other four categories, however, a number of things emerge. Firstly, the managerial / professional classes followed by the routine non-manual class are the least likely to vote RRP. Prior to 1995, however, the difference between the routine non-manual, self-employed and working class was minimal. Across all RRPs in Europe, then, there was no distinctive class profile as predicted in hypothesis H4a. By 1995, the self-employed group increases relatively, but the working-class remains similar to the routine non-manual. This does not conform to the self-employed / working-class dyad noted elsewhere. Clearly this may be due to RRP type differences, to which we now turn.

Looking at Model 2b, which as we may recall, contrasts Scandinavian RRPs with their Continental counterparts, again we see significant interactions for age, education and class but not for gender. This at least partially confirms hypothesis H5a, although we should recall that the gender differences between the Danish and Norwegian cases may confound a gender effect, which might be seen if Denmark was contrasted alone.¹⁴ Considering age (Figure 4), there are clearly differences in the age profiles of the two types of party. The Continental type finds strongest support amongst the youngest and the oldest age strata, whereas the Scandinavian type is more equally represented amongst the first two strata, but less likely to be found in the over 65s. Considering the scale, however, we should note that the difference between the two

¹⁴ Running a binomial logit model contrasting Danish and Norwegian RRP voters, there was no significant gender effect.

types for this oldest cohort is less than 3% probability. Thus the differences, whilst there, are slight in terms of the actual RRP voting propensities of the two types.

Recalling the non-monotonic education effect in the previous two models, the same pattern emerges in both RRP types (Figure 5), but it is noticeable that the difference between no / primary education and mid-school are greater in the Continental type than in the Scandinavian type. The Scandinavian type shows lower probability of RRP vote amongst the more educated strata, however. Looking lastly at class effects (Figure 6), we see perhaps the most exacerbated differences between the two types. Again, the gap in unclassified respondents is essentially uninterpretable given the nature of this category. The professional / managerial group is the least likely to vote RRP in both types, but a large disparity exists between countries in the routine non-manual sector: the Continental type sees far greater probability of support amongst this group than its Scandinavian counterpart. Much smaller disparities exist between the two in the self-employed and working-class categories, although in the Scandinavian case, the former is more likely than the latter to vote RRP, as opposed to the essentially identical chance in the Continental type. The routine non-manual finding fits the Scandinavian profile of public sector white-collar workers within social democracies not supporting RRP. Similarly, the latter finding recalls the private-sector, Poujadist inheritance of the Norwegian and Danish cases.

Lastly, we consider Model 3. Here, given the lack of significance of gender in the two-way interaction models, it is not surprising to see that there is no three-way effect either. More interestingly, having been significant in both two-way models, the class

interaction misses significance by some degree. Consequently, we examine this plot despite its non-significance to try to understand its relevance to our hypotheses.

Looking firstly at the age profiles of RRP support (Figure 7), it is immediately evident that the two Continental and Scandinavian types show different across-time trends. In the former, the oldest cohort remains constant in its probability of voting RRP, with large relative increases amongst the younger cohorts. This closely mirrors the two-way interaction pattern in Model 2a. In Scandinavia, however, despite an absolute increase in probability of RRP vote across time, the pattern remains essentially stable, and with a greater balance between the three age cohorts. Comparing the shape of the two graphs, it is clear that the relative 1995 positions are closer between the two types than in the pre-1995 period, and thus it seems reasonable to talk in this sense of convergence. Given the stability of the Scandinavian case, however, it is the Continental case which converges on the Scandinavian monotonic pattern, rather than vice versa.

Similarly for education, a shift towards convergence is noticeable (Figure 8). Recall that in Model 2a, we found that the mid-school and secondary strata manifested greater probability of voting for RRPs, and in Model 2b, that this was more exacerbated in Continental than Scandinavian countries. It is evident that this hides a potentially important interaction, namely that in the pre-1995 period, the Scandinavian none / primary education stratum actually manifests the highest probability of RRP vote (although the difference is slight) with a monotonic decrease in likelihood the higher the education. By 1995, however, Scandinavia has assumed the 'inverted-U' of its Continental counterpart, the key difference being the latter's

higher probability amongst mid-school voters. In this case, then, the convergence appears to be more towards the Continental type.

Finally, we turn to class (Figure 9). Recall that this interaction term in the model is insignificant. Given the previous model findings, it is not surprising to see the massive shifts in ‘unclassified’ voters. Concentrating on the four class strata, however, whether there is greater similarity between the two types across time is unclear. Given the nominal nature of the class categories, we should be careful not to place too much store in ‘trends’. However, it is evident that the relative probabilities for the Continental and Scandinavian types pre-1995 are very different – relative equality for routine non-manual, self-employed and workers in the former, disproportionate representation for the self-employed in the latter.¹⁵ Post-1995, however, whilst there is a slight rebalancing of the professional / managerial and routine non-manual classes, the pattern remains similar in Scandinavia, whereas the Continental type shows a disproportionate increase in the self-employed category. Whilst there are similarities in the importance of workers and the self-employed, then, the role of the routine non-manual class consistently separates the two types.

In other words, unlike the age and education variables, the class differences remain distinct and in fact, the three-way interaction provides little more information than we had already derived from the two-way interaction. Indeed, looking at the Akaike

¹⁵ We are conscious that this apparently contradicts our previous findings regarding authoritarian attitudes amongst European electorates in a similar period (Andersen and Evans, 2004). However, this may instead demonstrate the complexity of causal link between social profile, authoritarian attitudes and RRP vote.

Information Criterion (AIC)¹⁶, it is noticeable that the fit for Model 3 is only slightly better than for Model 2a.¹⁷ Overall, then, whilst the three-way interaction model does reveal some differences between the two types across time, these should not be exaggerated. In particular, whilst changes in profile of RRP electorates have occurred across time, and there has been some convergence of the Continental and Scandinavian types, the differences between the two, especially as regards class, remain notable.

CONCLUSION

Given the saliency of the contemporary RRP phenomenon, it is perhaps unsurprising that researchers have attempted to classify these parties in a single group. In a reaction to what many regard as an inherently pernicious and anti-democratic dynamic within contemporary post-industrial societies, a catch-all classification which allows clarity of identification, if not of definition, is natural. Furthermore, it would be wrong to conclude that such a classification is entirely arbitrary. As the models above have shown, there exist key changes in the social profile of RRP voters across time and across countries which suggest convergence – younger cohorts with lower (but not lowest) education levels.

In contrasting the two types, the convergence in age groups seems reasonable for a number of reasons: the attraction of ‘newer’ parties for voters with lower or non-existent party loyalties; and, in the type contrasts, a decline in Scandinavian social democratic socialisation as an obstacle to RRP support. To this extent, there is

¹⁶ AIC is a measure of fit for unnested models calculated as $-2 \log\text{-likelihood}$ of the model plus twice the number of parameters (Fox, 2002: 162). The smaller the value, the better the fit. Consequently, including more parameters in the model penalises its goodness-of-fit.

certainly comparability, and increasingly so across time. Moreover, there is also comparability in disproportionate representation of the self-employed and blue-collar classes, although there is little evidence that this has changed noticeably across time. In this respect, perhaps the 1995 cut-off is too late to distinguish between changes which may have occurred earlier.

However, there are still key divergences which fit the historical contexts of the countries in question. In particular, the routine non-manual class differs substantially between the two RRP types. Given the social democratic context of the Scandinavian countries, it is perhaps unsurprising that individuals in lower paid white-collar employment are less likely to decamp to RRP than their Continental counterparts who are both less socialised against radical political behaviour and benefit less from state welfare provision. Clearly, further research is needed into the role of public and private sector employment in this respect, but it seems safe to assume that the public-sector effect is likely to be stronger in blocking RRP support.

Looking at these shifts in social profiles also contributes to dispelling the myth that somehow RRPs represent something entirely new, based upon salient issues, political entrepreneurship and with no commonality with previous models of voting. Social bases still play a fundamental role in explaining changes in party support across time, even in 'extreme' or 'radical' cases such as RRPs. Evidently, the underlying social bases do not necessarily correspond to previous cleavage structures, for example – the combination of self-employed and blue-collar workers is novel, at least in the post-industrial revolution period. However, a cross-class support based upon alternative cleavages – for instance, an identity cleavage – is certainly not a rejection of

¹⁷ The best AIC fit for the main effects only model is evidently due to the inclusion of the country dummies.

sociological explanations *in toto*. Indeed, precisely the dynamics in social profile suggests such a phenomenon is occurring. Of course, this analysis cannot address the presence of an identity cleavage, given the data limitations, and such a development needs additional proof.

Similarly, the binomial categorisation is undoubtedly an over-simplification which itself suggests seeing RRPs as something ‘different’ from all other parties, and indeed all other electoral behaviour. Again, this is a demand of the data – whilst multinomial models contrasting RRP electorates with Left, Moderate Right and abstainers, for instance, would be a far better model specification and potentially more revealing,¹⁸ such two- and three-way interaction models would be dense and confusing to say the least. However, the patterns of change which we have discerned in this paper suggest that, rather than existing as an isolated phenomenon – a quirk of post-industrial political systems – the processes which have generated and consolidated RRP support are ones which fit more closely traditional sociological explanations of cleavage development and change than might otherwise be suggested.

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¹⁸ See Andersen and Evans (2003) on this, for example.

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MODELS

All models are binomial logit with a dependent variable coded 1 for RRP vote.

MODEL 1	B	s.e.	p
Intercept	-1.95	.05	.000
Gender			
Men	0.49	.03	.000
Age			
Up to 34	--	--	--
35-64	-0.17	.03	.000
65 and above	-0.22	.04	.000
Education			
None / primary	--	--	--
Mid-school	0.15	.04	.000
Secondary	0.07	.04	.100
University	-0.42	.05	.000
Class			
Unclassified	--	--	--
Professional / managerial	-0.12	.05	.014
Routine non-manual	-0.02	.04	.541
Self-employed	0.19	.05	.000
Workers	0.10	.04	.013
Country			
Austria	--	--	--
Belgium	-0.60	.05	.000
Denmark	-0.93	.05	.000
France	-0.49	.04	.000
Germany	-2.54	.08	.000
Italy	-0.73	.05	.000
Norway	-0.61	.04	.000
N	88,444		
χ^2	2773 (16df), p <.000		
AIC	45,243		

MODEL 2A	B	s.e.	p
Intercept	-3.44	.07	.000
Gender			
Men	0.49	.04	.000
Age			
Up to 34	--	--	--
35-64	-0.12	.05	.010
65 and above	0.17	.07	.012
Education			
None / primary	--	--	--
Mid-school	0.37	.05	.000
Secondary	0.30	.06	.000
University	-0.22	.08	.008
Class			
Unclassified	--	--	--
Professional / managerial	<-.00	.08	.950
Routine non-manual	0.28	.07	.000
Self-employed	0.32	.08	.000
Workers	0.34	.07	.000
Year	1.19	.10	.000
Interactions			
Men*Year	0.01	.06	.810
35-64*Year	-0.13	.06	.036
65 and above*Year	-0.52	.09	.000
Mid-school*Year	-0.11	.07	.001
Secondary*Year	-0.26	.08	.001
University*Year	-0.28	.10	.006
Professional / managerial*Year	-0.23	.10	.016
Routine non-manual*Year	-0.31	.08	.000
Self-employed*Year	-0.16	.10	.101
Workers*Year	-0.35	.08	.000
N	88,444		
χ^2	1636 (21df), p <.000		
AIC	46,390		

MODEL 2B	B	s.e.	p
Intercept	-3.33	.06	.000
Gender			
Men	0.46	.03	.000
Age			
Up to 34	--	--	--
35-64	-0.19	.04	.000
65 and above	0.07	.05	.183
Education			
None / primary	--	--	--
Mid-school	0.54	.04	.000
Secondary	0.51	.05	.000
University	0.06	.06	.331
Class			
Unclassified	--	--	--
Professional / managerial	0.07	.06	.269
Routine non-manual	0.50	.06	.000
Self-employed	0.57	.06	.000
Workers	0.57	.06	.000
Type	0.72	.10	.000
Interactions			
Men*Type	0.05	.06	.330
35-64*Type	0.20	.06	.001
65 and above*Type	-0.26	.09	.003
Mid-school*Type	-0.33	.08	.003
Secondary*Type	-0.29	.08	.000
University*Type	-0.37	.10	.000
Professional / managerial*Type	-0.62	.10	.000
Routine non-manual*Type	-1.01	.09	.000
Self-employed*Type	-0.70	.10	.000
Workers*Type	-0.75	.08	.000
N	88,444		
χ^2	1114 (21df), p <.000		
AIC	46,912		

MODEL 3	B	s.e.	p
Intercept	-3.92	.10	.000
Gender			
Men	0.48	.05	.000
Age			
Up to 34	--	--	--
35-64	-0.11	.06	.063
65 and above	0.46	.08	.000
Education			
None / primary	--	--	--
Mid-school	0.59	.06	.000
Secondary	0.60	.08	.000
University	0.12	.11	.260
Class			
Unclassified	--	--	--
Professional / managerial			
	0.22	.10	.024
Routine non-manual	0.63	.09	.000
Self-employed	0.56	.11	.000
Workers	0.68	.09	.000
Year	1.52	.13	.000
Type	1.28	.15	.000
Two-way interactions			
Year*Type	-1.16	.20	.000
<i>Social interactions</i>		<i>[not reported]</i>	
Three-way interactions			
Men*Type*Year	0.08	.12	.515
35-64*Type*Year	0.39	.13	.003
65 and above*Type*Year	1.27	.19	.000
Mid-school*Type*Year	0.57	.16	.000
Secondary*Type*Year	0.77	.17	.000
University*Type*Year	0.91	.22	.000
Professional / managerial*Type*Year	-0.07	.22	.743
Routine non- manual*Type*Year	0.20	.19	.296
Self-employed*Type*Year	0.09	.22	.680
Workers*Type*Year	0.27	.17	.118
N	88,444		
χ^2	1835 (43df), p<.000		
AIC	46,235		

EFFECTS PLOTS

Figure 1 Age by year effect plot

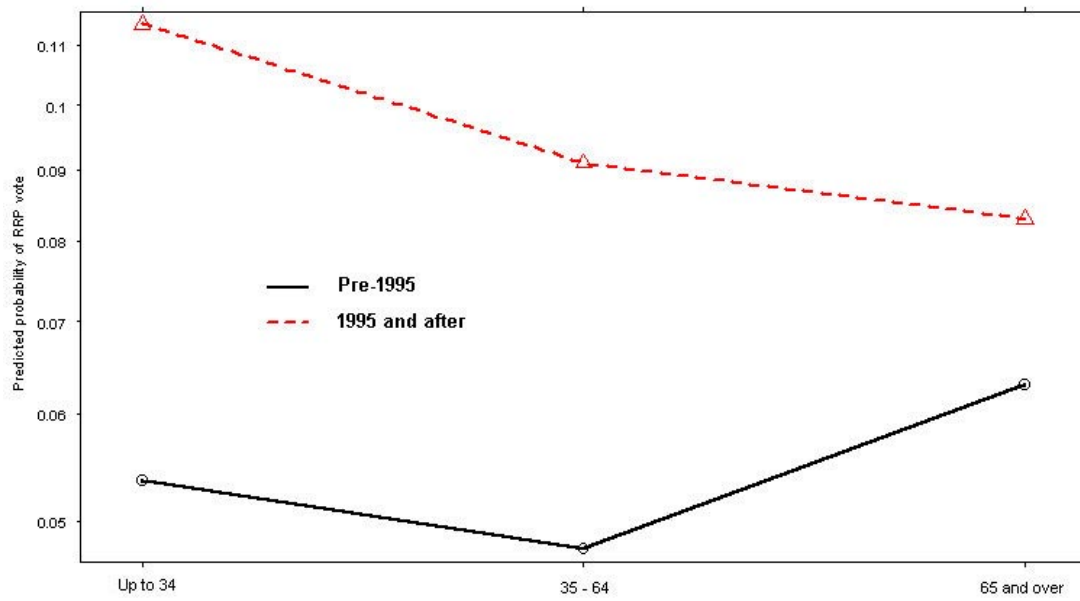


Figure 2 Education by year effect plot

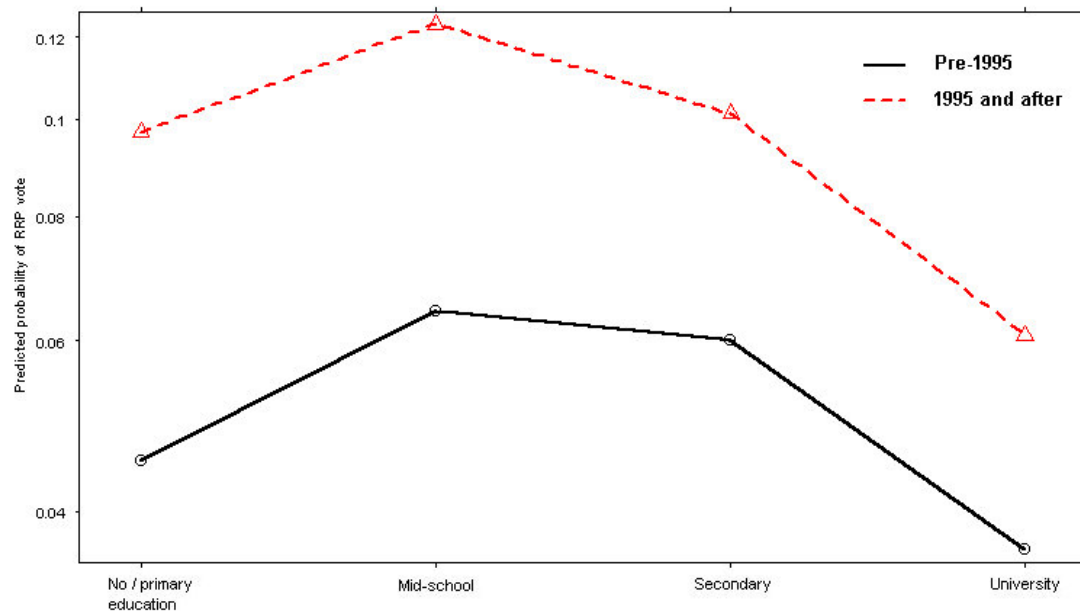


Figure 3 Class by year effect plot

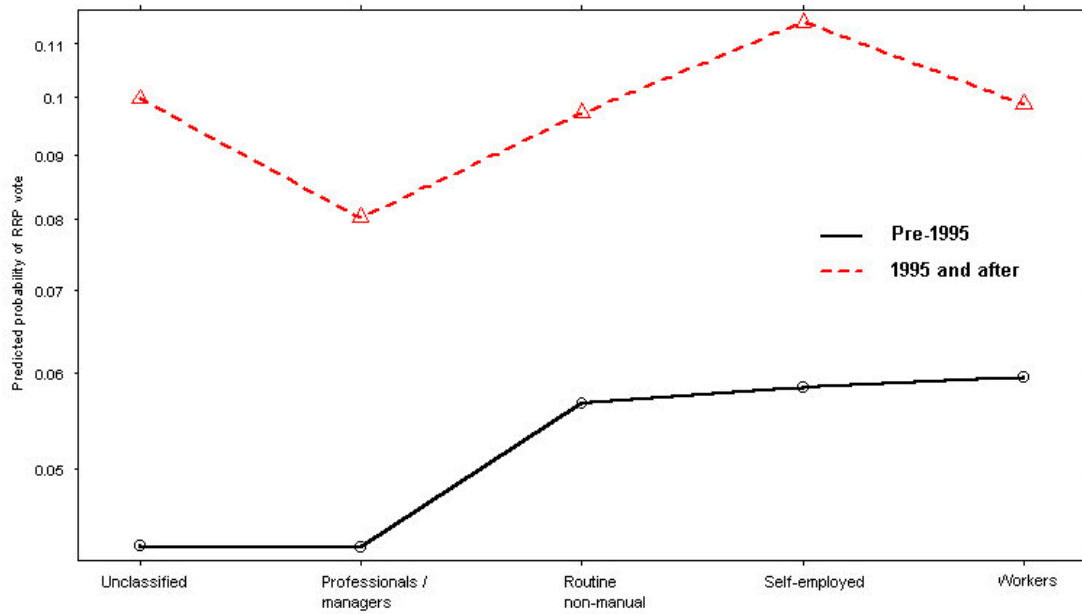


Figure 4 Age by RRP type effect plot

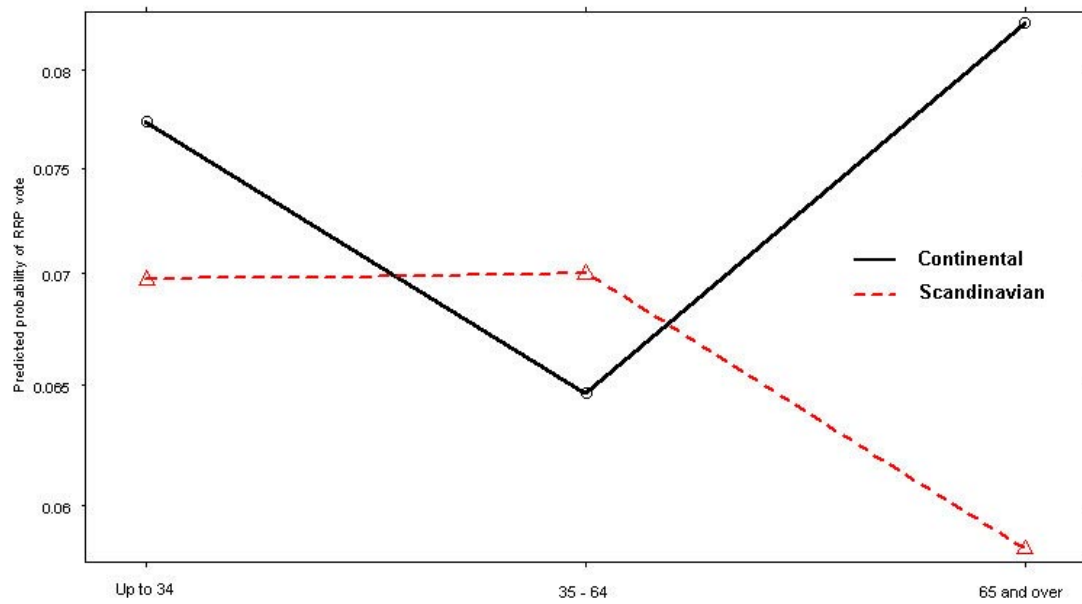


Figure 5 Education by RRP type effect plot

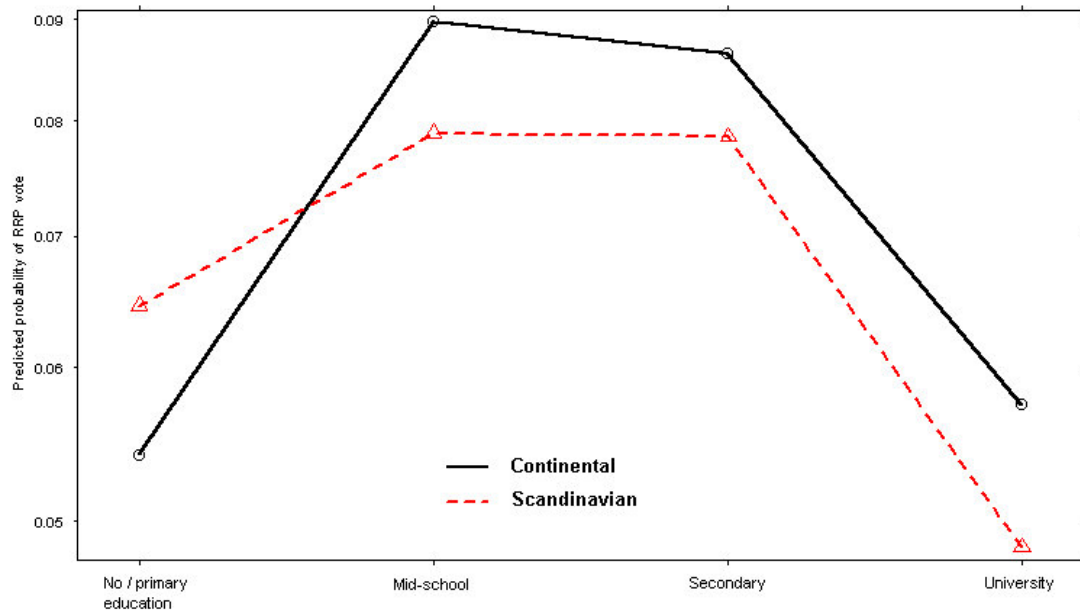


Figure 6 Class by RRP type effect plot

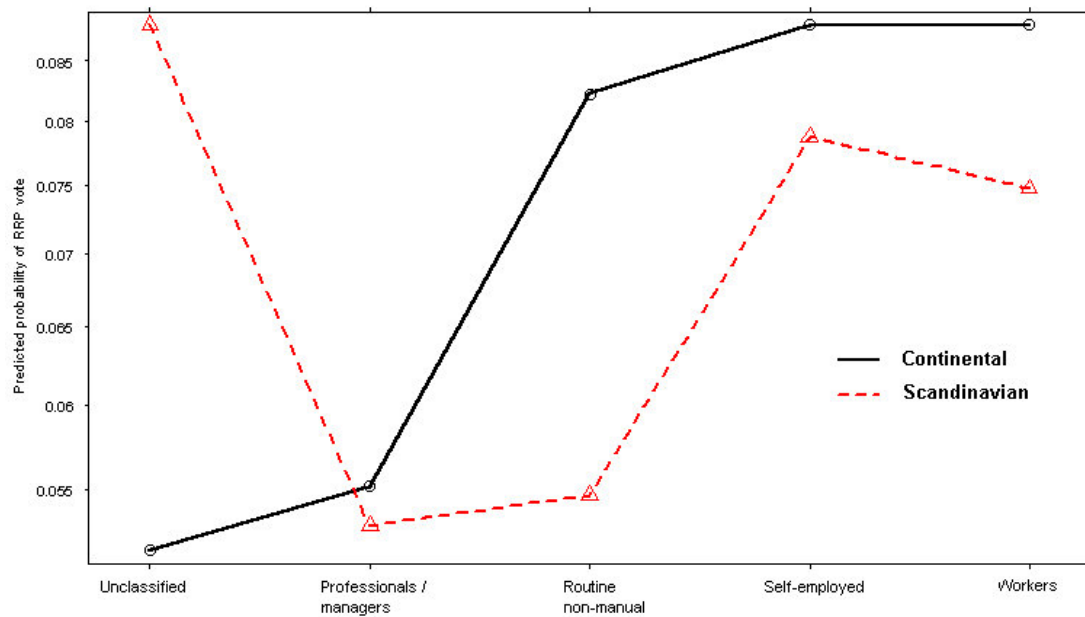


Figure 7 Age by year by RRP type effect plot

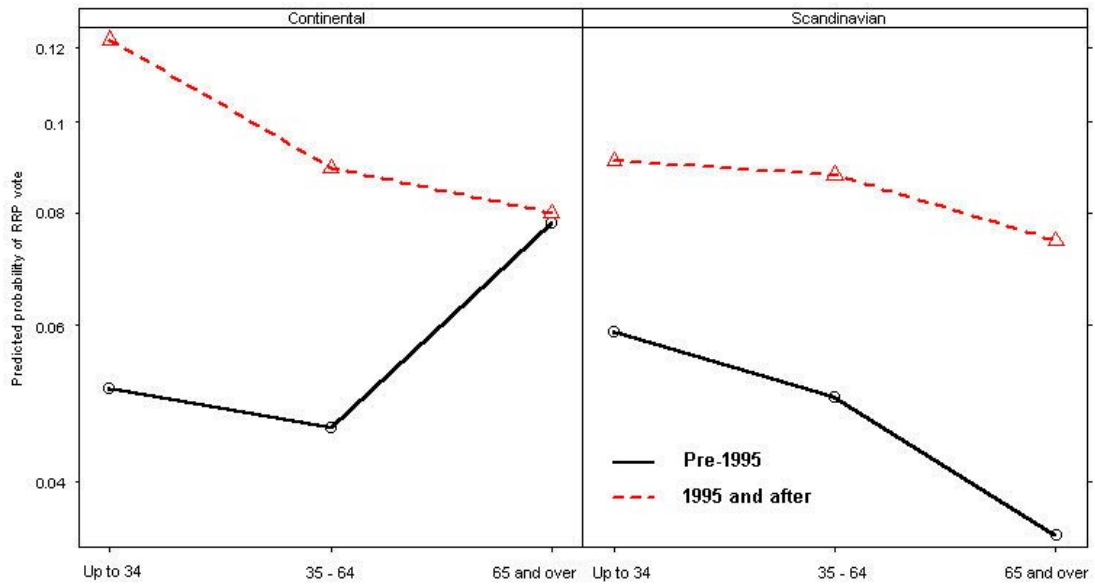


Figure 8 Education by year by RRP type effect plot

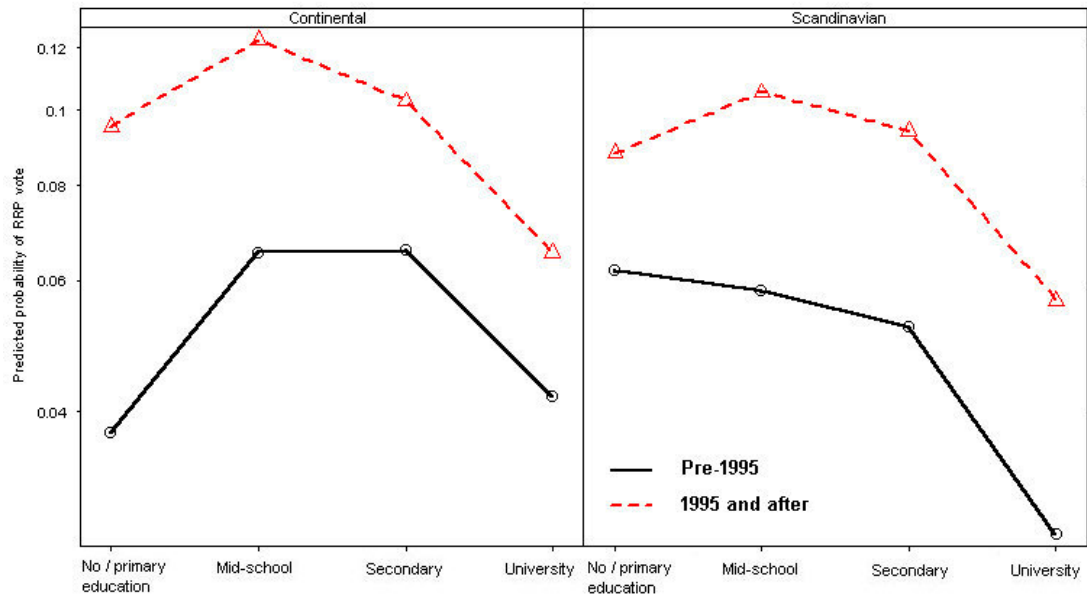


Figure 9 Class by year by RRP type effect plot

