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Challenging lockdown or not?

The mediated effects of anti-lockdown attitudes on the voting behaviour of voters of populist radical right parties

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Abstract

What happens when populist radical right parties (PRRPs) adopt an anti-lockdown stance? PRRPs in Western Europe, which in ideology are mostly comparable, have been divided on the issue of COVID-19. The answer does not follow automatically from their economic, cultural or anti-elitist positions, which all seem to advocate for a different strategy. In some countries, such as the Netherlands, two PRRPs have each taken a different approach: one became an anti-lockdown party, the other did not. In this study the effects of becoming an anti-lockdown party on their voter base, who either vote for economic, cultural or anti-elitist reasons, have been examined using a mediation analysis on existing panel data. This study concludes that voters, who mostly vote because they agree with the PRRPs cultural right-wing positions, might be dissuaded to vote for a PRRP that has become an anti-lockdown party. However, anti-lockdown attitudes most strongly positively affect voting for an anti-lockdown party on their own and appear to tap into a new voter base. Future research is needed in order to corroborate this finding.

Introduction

Since the onset of COVID-19, several populist radical right parties (PRRPs) in Europe have shifted their focus dramatically towards challenging lockdown measures implemented by the government. They became *anti-lockdown parties*. An important topic in the discussion of how the pandemic should be handled was whether containment measures, such as lockdowns, which impede on people's civil rights and have negative repercussions on people's socioeconomic rights, were a justified measure for the government to curb the spread of COVID-19 (Radavoi & Quirico, 2022, 73-74; van Basshuysen & White, 2021, 405-407).

However, although PRRPs in Europe agree on most topics related to conservatism, immigration and anti-elitist attitudes, there was disparity regarding anti-lockdown views. As a result not every PRRP became an anti-lockdown party (Wondreys & Mudde, 2022, 97-98). Not every PRRP found the same answer to the pandemic, because the anti-lockdown stance did not immediately emerge from their viewpoints. In addition, their voter base may have varying views on lockdown measures. How do voter bases of populist radical right parties (PRRPs) evolve when they distinguish themselves from other PRRPs as anti-lockdown parties?

In this research the case of the PRRPs in the Netherlands will be studied using existing panel data and conducting a mediation analysis. Applying this method the effects of certain political attitudes, namely right-wing economic, cultural and anti-elitist attitudes on voting for a PRRP, mediated by anti-lockdown attitudes, will be examined. Specifically, the development of the voter base of the parties Forum for Democracy (FvD), which became an anti-lockdown party, and the Party for Freedom (PVV), which is ambivalent towards lockdown measures, will be analysed and compared. Not only are these PRRPs representative for PRRPs in other Western European countries, but the Dutch context brings an ideal circumstance to compare PRRPs which have each taken a different route regarding their

position on lockdown measures (Mols & Jetten, 2020, 1-2).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an influence on political parties as well as voters. Some studies focus on how parties respond to COVID-19 (Klein, 2020; Çilingir, 2021), whereas other research examines how political ideology influences peoples opinion on how COVID-19 needs to be dealt with (Barbieri & Bonini, 2021; Taylor & Asmundson, 2021). Yet, no research involves itself with the effects on voter bases of PRRPs that object to COVID-19 measures. Studying these effects may exhibit how PRRPs respond to exogenic shocks. Unlike an economic crash or a migration crisis, a medical crisis does not fit the usual ideology and terminology of PRRPs (Hobolt & Tilley, 2016, 971). This makes it harder to predict how PRRPs responding to lockdown measures affects their voter base.

This relationship between PRRPs adopting an anti-lockdown stance and how their voter base has changed will be determined through a mediation analysis. Before COVID-19 reasons people voted for PRRPs were their right-wing cultural or anti-elitist views, and only to a lesser degree their right-wing economic views (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2016, 409; Otjes, 2021, 131). These different reasons for voting for PRRPs might have a different interconnection to their stances on lockdowns. Stances on anti-lockdown measure therefore mediates between the economic, cultural and anti-elitist attitudes of voters and voters voting for an anti-lockdown PRRP or not. To test this relationship, the same analysis will be conducted on voters of PVV, where we will expect little influence, since this party did not become an anti-lockdown party. This research bases itself on data of the LISS panel.

Theory

Anti-lockdown party

Parties that oppose certain measures put in place by the government to curb the spread of COVID-19 that restrict the lives of people, such as social distancing, curfews and the forced closing of shops are anti-lockdown parties. Some already established parties adopted this position. However new, mostly single-issue parties, also emerged to focus on the anti-lockdown stance (Rovny, et al., 2022, 1-2).

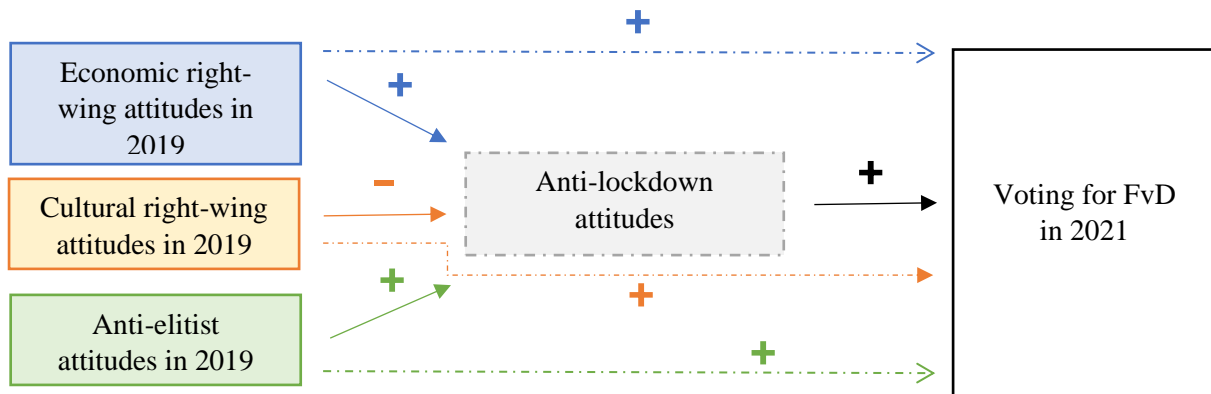
Since the start of the COVID-19 epidemic in Europe, certain PRRPs shifted their focus to challenge the COVID-19 regulation measures taken by governing parties. In previous crises in Europe, such as the Syrian refugee crisis or the Economic Crisis of 2008, PRRPs and other populist parties were able to increase their support (Çilingir, 2021, 805). Crises can be, and often have been, catalysts of the rise of populist parties (Mudde, 2021, 583).

The anti-lockdown position seems to be popular with a specific group of voters. In Italy, citizens that live in provinces where the majority vote PRRPs, there is are lower compliance rates in regards to social distancing and lockdown measures than in other Italian provinces (Barbieri & Bonini, 2021, 483). However, according to research on the way Trump managed the COVID-19 situation in the United States, by not imposing any measures, has repelled many citizens from voting Republican again (Neblo & Wallace, 2021, 1527), and has diminished Trump's chances of being re-elected. Right-wing voters seem to be divided on the topic of lockdowns.

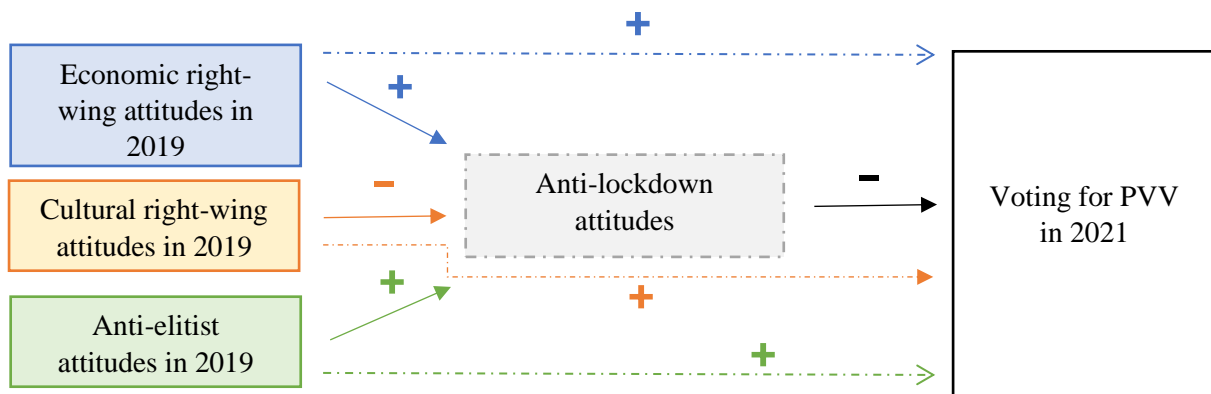
Being against covid containment measures is considered to be a wedge issue, because it does not fit the left-right political spectrum divide and there is dissent within parties themselves and coalitions about this topic (Van de Wardt, De Vries & Hobolt, 2014, 990). Certain wedge issues, such as opposing further European integration, fit a "inverted U-curve" relationship, where parties on both the far-right as well as the far-left share this position (Van

de Wardt, De Vries & Hobolt, 2014, 990). This could also be the case for the anti-lockdown position. Adopting this stance could result in the anti-lockdown PRRPs, such as the FvD, gaining access to a new electorate that, for example, identify as far-left.

The relationship is as follows for FvD:



The relationship is as follows for PVV:



Economic attitudes

Research by Rovny, et al. (2022) finds that there is a strong link between whether a party is economically right-wing and whether it advocates against lockdown measures, where right-wing parties mostly support an open economy without restrictions. Left-wing parties, on the other hand, are more likely to be proponents of lockdown measures than right-wing parties, even if it could hurt the economy in the short term. Rovny et al. (2022, 6-77) also find that the

likelihood of a right-wing party opposing lockdown measures is reduced when the right-wing party is in government.

There is also a clear distinction between populist left-wing and populist right-wing parties. In the trade-off between health versus the economy, left-wing and centrist populist parties mostly prioritized health over the economy. Contrastingly, populist right-wing parties oppose lockdown measures, stating the desire to protect the economy and small businesses in particular. Right-wing voters tend to agree with these stances and as a result separate themselves from other populist voters (Mazzoleni & Ivaldi, 2022, 12-13). Voters with economic right-wing stances are therefore likely to oppose lockdown measures.

This research therefore tests the hypothesis *right-wing economic reasons*, which reads: people with right-wing economic views, are more likely to oppose lockdown measures than people with left-wing economic views, which in turn is related to higher levels of voting for an anti-lockdown party.

Cultural attitudes

Although the positions of parties with right-wing economic views seem clear cut in research – economic right-wing attitudes mostly correspond to the desire not decrease differences in income –, this is not the case for a cultural right-wing ideology. The cultural ideology of PRRPs includes more than just conservatism; Hooghe, et al. (2002) incorporate the traditional, authoritarian and nationalist cultural views of PRRPs in the term ‘TAN’ values (Hooghe, et al., 2002). According to Busemeyer, Rathgeb and Sahm (2022, 82-83) these values are better defined as the “desire for order, conformity and homogeneity, and the belief that these social norms should be ensured by state force if necessary”. Furthermore, Klein (2020, 34) argues that lockdown measures match the authoritarian tendency of PRRPs, which often promote the idea of a strong leader. This suggests that people who vote for PRRPs for

their viewpoints on the cultural axis, could be more in favour of lockdown measures.

However, research also suggests that supporters of cultural right-wing ideology oppose government intervention more. “Freedom” is considered to be an important objective. Government intervention on the pandemic, such as making facemask wearing mandatory, has especially received backlash from people who hold a cultural right-wing position (Taylor & Asmundson, 2021, 8-9). Parties on the cultural right are also less likely to base their arguments on science, which limits the perceived necessity of these measures (Rovny, et al., 2022, 7). It could therefore fit PRRPs stances to oppose lockdown measures with cultural right-wing arguments as well.

But, research by Rovny, et al. (2022) argues that parties that foster a “left-wing cultural ideology”, which includes green, alternative and libertarian viewpoints, are more opposed to lockdown measures than parties that embody TAN values. This indicates that the desire for order and conformity could make lockdown measures more acceptable to those that vote for PRRPs for their TAN ideology. However, this effect is a lot weaker than the effect of a party’s economic ideology, Rovny, et al. state (2022, 6-7).

Another reason for people who support a cultural right-wing ideology to possibly agree with lockdown measures is that they tend to believe the world is dangerous. According to research by Murray and Schaller (2012, 186), the threat of infectious disease leads to more conformity and since people with cultural right-wing attitudes feel more easily threatened, their conformity increases. Yet, they also are more likely to perceive COVID-19 as less alarming. However, this opinion could be the result of a contradictory political response and media coverage of the disease and right-wing politicians, such as Trump, minimizing its severity (Kim & Im, 2021, 594).

Therefore in this research the hypothesis *right-wing cultural reasons* is also tested, which involves the following: people with right-wing cultural views are less likely to oppose

lockdown measures than people with left-wing cultural views, which in turn is related to lower levels of voting for an anti-lockdown party.

Anti-elitist attitudes

Many anti-lockdown PRRPs blamed supranational institutions, such as the European Union and the World Health Organisation for the COVID-19 crisis, which fits an anti-elitist approach (Falkenbach & Greer, 2021, 578-579). But, does anti-elitism correspond to voting for a PRRP?

According to research of Van der Brug (2003) anti-elitist views explain people voting for the LPF, which was the first successful PRRP in the Netherlands, only slightly. Instead, the reversed effect of people already being attracted to the message of the LPF becoming more anti-elitist was much stronger. This tempers the idea that upholding anti-elitist views increases the chances of voting for a PRRP. However, this research focuses on the reasons of people voting LPF in 2002, which was just after the political leader of the LPF was assassinated. This context could have increased feelings of powerlessness among those that supported the LPF and could have influenced the results of this research (Van der Brug, 2003, 101-103).

Research on anti-lockdown views in Great-Britain shows that those who have populist and anti-elitist views, such as considering the EU to be a threat to British independence, are less supportive of lockdown measures (Collignon, Makropoulos & Rüdiger, 2021, 118). Similarly, people in Sicily who trust in institutional organisations are less opposed to lockdown measures (Di Marco, Hichy & Sciacca, 2021, 1). The anti-elitist approach is therefore positively related to opposing lockdown measures.

The last hypothesis in this research is therefore the hypothesis *anti-elitist reasons*, which presumes the following: people with anti-elitist views are more likely to oppose

lockdown measures than people without anti-elitist views, which in turn is related to higher levels of voting for an anti-lockdown party.

Control variables

Religiosity

Religious people have protested against COVID-19 restriction measures, because of the rhetoric of determinism, which permeates certain protestant schools. Highly religious people are also influenced by their religious organization in what they vote and could more loyal to their religious party (Torgler, Stadelmann & Portmann, 2020, 465). Being religious therefore is associated with opposing lockdowns, which could lead them to support an anti-lockdown party. However, their loyalty towards their religious party could prevent them from actually voting for a PRRP. Subsequently, whether a voter is religious is positively related to opposing lockdown measures, but simultaneously negatively related to them voting for a PRRP.

Therefore, this control variable needs to be included.

Euroscepticism

Populist parties employ Euroscepticism using an anti-elitist rhetoric, where the European Union is portrayed to be an undemocratic elitist project that threatens national sovereignty and does not benefit the common citizen (Otjes & Louwense, 2015, 63-76). However, since anti-elitism can also be aimed at the national elites, it is a different concept (Pirro, Taggart & van Kessel, 2018). The PVV and the FvD show this distinction in their programmes as well, where the PVV is anti-elitist, but not Eurosceptic perse, and the FvD is very much Eurosceptic (Otjes, 2021, 152-154). Therefore it is necessary to control for Euroscepticism.

Case selection

PRRPs, the COVID-19 pandemic and anti-lockdown parties

Populist radical right parties belong to one of the two newly developed party families that was able to be successful in European parliaments, with the other being the Greens. Mudde (2007) argues that PRRPs all share at least the following characteristics: they uphold a specific form of nationalism, which is both xenophobic and anti-elitist. Secondly, they are populist. Thirdly, they are authoritarian. Lastly, PRRPs oppose the pluralism and limitations to sovereignty of liberal democracy (Mudde, 2007, 25-31).

But not every PRRP had a similar view on the COVID-19 restriction measures of governing parties. Responses by PRRPs were often contradictory by simultaneously challenging the government for not governing the crisis and protecting citizens enough as well as claiming they took away people's liberties and hurt the economy by closing down businesses. The COVID-19 pandemic in the case of Austria, France, Germany and Italy did not lead to an increase in support for PRRPs and most of them lost supporters (Çilingir, 2021, 818-821). Interestingly, although PRRPs had varied responses in the first wave, more have started to oppose COVID-19 restriction measures in the second wave (Mudde, 2021, 591-592).

Evidently, not every PRRP became an anti-lockdown party. In addition to existing parties challenging restriction measures, the current pandemic has also led to an emergence of new political parties that solely focus on opposing these measures. Unlike the PRRP anti-lockdown parties, these new anti-lockdown parties are currently single-issue parties. As was the case for UKIP, single-issue parties attract members that join for the exclusive goal of that party, but can have other opinions on other political subjects. Therefore, single-issue parties, although goal driven, are more often unstable and have volatile party programme's (Usherwood, 2008, 261-263).

Country	PRRP pro/ambivalent lockdown	PRRP anti-lockdown	New anti-lockdown party
Austria	-	- Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ)	- People Freedom Fundamental Rights (MFG)
Belgium	- Flemish Interest (VB) - New Flemish Alliance (N-VA) - National Front (FN)	-	-
Cyprus	- National Popular Front (ELAM)	-	-
Denmark	- Danish People's Party (DF)	- New Right (NB)	-
Finland	- Finns Party (PS)	-	-
France	- National Rally (RN) - France Arise (DLF)	-	-
Germany	-	- Alternative for Germany (AfD)	- dieBasis
Greece	- Greek Solution (EL)	-	-
Iceland	-	-	-
Ireland	-	-	-
Italy	-	- Lega Nord (LN)	-
Luxembourg	-	-	-
Malta	-	-	-
Netherlands	- Party for Freedom (PVV)	- Forum for Democracy (FvD)	-
Norway	-	-	-
Portugal	-	- Enough! (CH)	-
Spain	-	- VOX	-
Sweden	- Sweden Democrats (SD)	-	-
Switzerland	-	-	-
United Kingdom	-	- UKIP	- Reform UK

Note: A table with all PRRPs per country and whether they are considered to be an anti-lockdown party. This list was based on both the "1999-2019 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) trend file", to find out which parties are branded as PRRPs, as well as the "Special Edition Chapel Hill Expert Survey of 2020", which was taken at the start of the pandemic in June 2020, to discover the lockdown stances of the parties. Regarding lockdown stances, parties were rated from 0 to 10, where 0 corresponds to them prioritizing keeping the economy open and 10 with prioritizing containing the virus. As a cut-off point the score of 4,5 was chosen. This was the exact score of the Danish "New Right".¹

¹ At the start of the pandemic this party supported measures to curb the spread of COVID-19, but eventually openly advocated against lockdown measures. This switch might have resulted in a higher score, since this survey was conducted at the start of the pandemic. This party exemplifies how the responses of most PRRP anti-lockdown parties have developed. In addition the average score was 6,9 and the median was 7,3. The score of 4,5 does not yet fall within the first quartile in a boxplot and is thus a relatively low score.

The table shows the great disparity between PRRPs in western Europe, where some have adopted the anti-lockdown stance and others have not.

Dutch PRRPs as a case study

The popularity and characteristics of both the FvD and the PVV are representative for most other PRRPs in Western European countries (Mols & Jetten, 2020, 1-2). The fact that the FvD became an anti-lockdown party, whereas the PVV reacted ambivalent to the COVID-19 restriction measures, makes the Netherlands an important case to study. Furthermore, it creates the opportunity to compare the changes in the electorate of the FvD, which became an anti-lockdown party, to the changes the PVV, which did not become an anti-lockdown party, experienced.

Similar to the Netherlands, Denmark also has two PRRPs of only one became an anti-lockdown party. However, the LISS dataset only involves Dutch voters. The Danish National Election Study (DNES) is a similar dataset, which involves Danish voters, but it only includes data up to 2019 and is therefore not a sufficient dataset in regards to the subject of anti-lockdown parties.² Since the LISS dataset is extensive, is conducted yearly and includes the three variables – attitudes, lockdown stance and voting behaviour – necessary to conduct this research, it is a crucial dataset to use to study the effects of COVID-19 on the electorate of PRRPs.

How comparable are FvD and PVV?

Although both parties are considered to be PRRPs, there are differences between the FvD and the PVV. According to Otjes (2021) both of these parties have each found their own niche and

² DNES, <https://www.valgprojektet.dk/> .

a distinct electorate. He concludes that the electorate of the FvD tends to support economic right-wing viewpoints to a higher degree than the electorate of the PVV, but it does not highlight their economic viewpoints more than the PVV does. Economic issues are not more salient in the case of FvD (Otjes, 2021, 138-139). In general, the PVV attracts more working class voters, who are more likely to be left-leaning regarding the economic axis (Otjes, 2021, 131).

However, regarding the cultural axis, voters of the FvD are more left leaning than voters of the PVV (Otjes, 2021, 152-154). Contrastingly, although the manifesto of FvD is more liberal than that of PVV, the party leader of FvD, Thierry Baudet, has mostly shared moral right-wing messages to his audience (Otjes, 2021, 138-139).

Another difference between the electorates is that voters of the PVV oppose immigration more, whereas voters of FvD are more Eurosceptic in 2019 (Otjes, 2021, 151). This could indicate that FvD could be more anti-elitist compared to PVV, but the PVV might display more cultural right wing attitudes.

Methods

Mediation analysis

The data analysis follows the attitudes of voters on the economic, cultural and elitism axis from 2019 (Politics and Values wave 11) and are used to predict their stance on lockdown measures in 2021 (Effects of the outbreak of COVID-19 part 6) and in turn predict whether they will vote FvD (Politics and Values wave 13)³. By using the variables from the 2019 questionnaire and link them to the opinions on lockdown measures and voting behaviour present in the 2021 questionnaire, it becomes possible to see how anti-lockdown attitudes influence the electorate of the FvD. The electorate of the PVV, on the other hand, should not have strong opinions on lockdown measures and lockdown measures should therefore not affect the PVV electorate.

The respondents of the LISS panel study were shown either a version of the “Politics and Values – wave 13” questionnaire where they could indicate which party they would vote for that year or distinct version where they could indicate how likely it was they would vote for a specific party. Since both a binary ordinal variable as well as a ratio variable can be used in a mediation analysis, but combining them would result in the loss of information, both have been included in the analysis separately as Model 1, using a binary ordered voting variable, and Model 2, using a ratio voting variable.

The mediation analysis has been performed using the Lavaan package in R, because using Lavaan the direct effects and the mediation paths are included in one model, which makes the interpretation of the model more clear (Otjes, Stroebe & Postmes, 2020, 516-517). Because the responses of respondents in 2019 were matched to the responses in 2021, non-

³ The panel was shown two separate questionnaires. One group was shown question “cv21m308”, which was “For what party would you vote today?”, which was renamed to “party_vote”, whereas the other group was asked “How likely is it that you vote for [party]?”, which they could in answer in percentages, which were questions “cv21m245” to “cv21m262”, where the question about FvD was renamed to “fvd_vote2” and the question about PVV was renamed to “pvv_vote2”.

response within one topic – for example economic attitudes – would result in it being impossible to calculate the relationship. Therefore, respondents with missing values have been deleted from the dataset. In both models only 241 respondents had to be deleted.

The same mediation analysis has been executed for Voting for PVV in 2021. As was discussed in the case selection chapter, this PRRP treated lockdown measures with ambivalence. The expectation is that the relationship between the economic, cultural and anti-elitist attitudes and voting PVV should be not affected by anti-lockdown attitudes.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of variables before standardization using the binary ordered voting variable

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Economic right wing attitudes	2.11	0.98	1	5
Cultural right wing attitudes	21.85	4.92	7	35
Anti-elitist attitudes	5.00	1.17	3	6
Voting FvD	0.01	0.11	0	1
Voting PVV	0.08	0.26	0	1
Anti-lockdown attitudes	18.88	4.39	6	30
Religiosity	2.05	1.06	1	4
Euroscepticism	3.41	1.19	1	5

Note: N = 1666

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of variables before standardization using the ratio voting variable

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Economic right wing attitudes	2.15	0.94	1	5
Cultural right wing attitudes	21.70	4.87	7	35
Anti-elitist attitudes	5.03	1.16	3	6
Voting FvD	1.98	10.61	0	100
Voting PVV	7.48	22.16	0	100
Anti-lockdown attitudes	18.90	4.47	6	30
Religiosity	2.03	1.05	1	4
Euroscepticism	3.41	1.18	1	5

Note: N = 1634

Economic right

As a way to measure voters' economic attitudes, I use the question whether people believe that differences in income should increase or decrease. People with an economic right-wing ideology agree with more economic inequality, whereas people with a left-wing ideology disagree with economic inequality.⁴

⁴ Panel members could pick a number from 1 to 5, where a lower number meant someone believed differences in income should increase and a higher number meant someone believed differences in income should decrease. The lower the number, the more economically right-wing the ideology was of the panel member. Since this research focuses on right-wing attitudes instead of left-wing attitudes, this variable has been rescaled to a higher number corresponding with a more economic right-wing ideology. The name of this question in the dataset is "cv19k103" and has been renamed to "ec_right".

Cultural right

Cultural right-wing attitudes involve the desire for homogeneity and nationalistic tendencies. In order to compute cultural right wing attitudes, questions regarding immigration and integration from the LISS panel have been used. In total there were 7 questions that indicate cultural right-wing attitudes: “Immigrants should adapt to Dutch culture”, “There are too many people of foreign origin or descent in the Netherlands”, “It does not help a neighbourhood if many people of foreign origin or descent move in”, “It should be made harder to obtain asylum in the Netherlands”, “It is bad if society consists of people from different cultures”, “Legally residing foreigners should not be entitled to the same social security as Dutch citizens”, “Some sectors of the economy can continue to function without people of foreign origin or descent working there”⁵. The Cronbach’s alpha of these questions was 0.83, which is good.

Anti-elitist

The anti-elitist rhetoric practiced by PRRPs conveys that mainstream political leaders do not understand the needs and characteristics of and care about the common people. In addition to this distance between the ordinary citizen and the governing politicians, these politicians are also often corrupt according to anti-elitist thinking. Furthermore, opposing (Polk, et al., 2017, 2).

I use three questions “Parliamentarians do not care about the opinions of people like me”, “Political parties are only interested in my vote and not in my opinion” and “People like

⁵ The possible answers range from 1 to 5, where a lower number corresponds to people disagreeing and a higher number corresponds to people agreeing with the question. A higher number therefore indicates the respondent being less in favour of immigration and more in favour of immigrants assimilating instead of keeping their own culture. The names of the questions in the dataset are: “cv19k104”, “cv19k120”, “cv19k123”. Other questions that were also included, but needed to reverse coded were: “cv19k118”, “cv19k116”, “cv19k119” and “cv19k122”. Combined these variables have been renamed to “cul_right”.

me have no influence at all on government policy”.⁶ The Cronbach’s alpha of these questions corresponds to 0.77, which indicates the internal consistency of these questions is acceptable and that all of these questions indicate anti-elitist views. These will then be recoded into one variable called “anti-elitist attitudes”, where a higher value indicates more anti-elitism.

Anti-lockdown

Whether voters support lockdown measures or not is at the centre of the mediation analysis. A mediation analysis is necessary since the stances on lockdown measures is what has caused a shift in the electorate of the FvD. To measure the anti-lockdown views of the respondents the following questions have been computed to “anti-lockdown stance”.

I use six items to measure anti-lockdown stance “No visitors are allowed in nursing homes and retirement homes”, “Anyone 70 years of age and older or with a medical condition must stay at home, except for basic errands or urgent medical care”, “Anyone who does not work in a crucial profession (e.g. people who work in healthcare, public transport, the food chain) must stay at home, except to do groceries or because urgent medical care is needed”, “A curfew must be imposed”, “Secondary schools and secondary education (including MBO, HBO and universities) must be closed” and “Daycare, out-of-school care, and all schools and universities must be closed”.⁷ The Cronbach’s alpha of these questions is 0.78, which corresponds to an acceptable amount of internal consistency of these questions and indicates that all of these questions measure anti-lockdown views.

⁶ Respondents could only answer true or not true, with true corresponding to 1 and not true corresponding to 2. These have been reverse coded to have a higher number corresponding to “true”. The names of the questions in the dataset are: “cv19k047”, “cv19k048” and “cv19k049”.

⁷ The respondents could answer these questions with a number ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 corresponding to strongly disagreeing and 5 to strongly agreeing. The names of the questions in the dataset are: “qs20a039”, “qs20a040”, “qs20a041”, “qs20a042”, “qs20a043” and “qs20a044”. These answers have been reverse coded to a higher value corresponding to more anti-lockdown views.

Control variables

Religiosity and Euroscepticism needed to be included as control variables. The values for these were respectively recovered from the “Religion and ethnicity wave 12” questionnaire and the “Politics and Values – wave 11” questionnaire. Because each respondent from the panel has a unique and identifiable number the data from these questionnaires could be merged into one dataset.

For religiosity I use the question “To what extent would you describe yourself as a religious person?”.⁸ As mentioned in the theory chapter, the more religious someone is, the more likely they will oppose lockdown measures. However, they are still less likely to vote FvD, since they are often loyal to a religious party. Therefore, this question, that only takes into account how religious someone sees himself and not what religion this is, is sufficient as a controlling variable.

For Euroscepticism I use the question “Some people and political parties feel that European unification should go a step further [...] Where would you place yourself on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means that European unification should go further and 0 means that it has already gone too far?”.⁹

Data collection

In order to find how constituencies of PRRPs change when they become anti-lockdown parties, the economic, cultural and anti-elitist attitudes of people who vote for these parties needed to be examined over the years before and after a PRRP switched to become an anti-lockdown party. The data of the LISS panel includes the data of almost 7500 panel members,

⁸ This variable ranges from 1 to 4, with a lower value corresponding to higher religiousness. This has been recoded to a higher value corresponding to higher religiousness. The name of this variable is: “cr191162” and has been renamed to “religious”.

⁹ The name of this question in the dataset is: “cv19k105” and has been renamed to “eur_scep”.

who fill out multiple questionnaires on the same topics consistently.

To examine the relationship between economic, cultural and anti-elitist attitudes on lockdown attitudes and in turn how this affects their voting behaviour, the “Politics and Values” questionnaire of 2019 (wave 11) and 2021 (wave 13) was used and matched to the answers of the “Effects of the outbreak of COVID-19 part 6” questionnaire. Of these members almost 6000 filled out the questionnaires on Politics and Values in 2019 and 2021 and almost 7000 filled out the Effects of the outbreak of COVID-19 questionnaire.

Results

Anti-lockdown attitudes

Because there is one mediator that influences the outcome of the mediated relationships of political attitudes and voting behaviour, the relationship between the mediator, anti-lockdown attitudes, and the dependent variables of either voting FvD or voting PVV, will be discussed first.

There is a significant and substantive positive relationship between opposing lockdown measures and voting FvD, with an estimation of .21 ($SE = .072, p = .003$) in the case of Model 1 and .155 ($SE = .024, p = .000$) in the case of Model 2. This result fits expectations, since FvD made opposing lockdown measures an important goal of their campaign in 2020 and 2021.

Regarding voting PVV, the relationship with anti-lockdown attitudes differs per model. Using Model 1 there is a slight positive, albeit not significant, relationship between anti-lockdown attitudes and voting PVV with an estimation of .049 ($SE = .034, p = .146$). Using Model 2 there is a slight negative significant relationship with an estimation of $-.04$ ($SE = .023, p = .078$). This difference could be explained by the fact that the PVV remained ambivalent regarding lockdown measures. Therefore both people opposing as well as supporting lockdown measures could vote PVV.

Economic right wing attitudes have a slight insignificant negative relationship with anti-lockdown attitudes in both models (*Model 1* = $-.004, SE = 0.025, p = .865$; *Model 2* = $-.025, SE = .025, p = .326$). Cultural right wing attitudes have a slight negative relationship with anti-lockdown attitudes, which is insignificant in the case of Model 1 ($= -.031, SE = .025, p = .23$) and is significant in the case of Model 2 ($= -.051, SE = .027, p = .057$). Anti-elitist attitudes have slight insignificant negative relationship with anti-lockdown attitudes in both models (*Model 1* = $-.005, SE = .026, p = .853$; *Model 2* = $-.038, SE = .026, p = .154$).

Lastly, the control variable “religiosity” has a slight negative relationship with anti-lockdown measures, which is significant in the case of Model 1 ($= -.058, SE = .024, p = .015$), but insignificant in the case of Model 2 ($= -.001, SE = .025, p = .965$). Including the variable “euroscepticism” in the mediation effects, harmed the fit measures of both of the models.

Table 1. A mediation Analysis of the Relationship Between Political Attitudes and Voting Behaviour for FvD using a binary ordered voting variable.

Independent	Dependent	Model 1
Economic right wing attitudes	Voting FvD	-0.026 (0.099)
Cultural right wing attitudes	Voting FvD	0.117 (0.151)
Anti-elitist attitudes	Voting FvD	0.166 (0.142)
Religious	Voting FvD	-0.192** (0.080)
Euroscepticism	Voting FvD	0.154* (0.093)
Anti-lockdown attitudes	Voting FvD	0.210*** (0.072)
Economic right wing attitudes	Anti-lockdown attitudes	-0.004 (0.025)
Cultural right wing attitudes	Anti-lockdown attitudes	-0.031 (0.025)
Anti-elitist attitudes	Anti-lockdown attitudes	-0.005 (0.026)
Religious	Anti-lockdown attitudes	-0.058** (0.024)
Economic right wing attitudes -> Anti-lockdown attitudes -> Voting FvD		-0.001 (0.005)
Cultural right wing attitudes -> Anti-lockdown attitudes -> Voting FvD		-0.006 (0.006)
Anti-elitist attitudes -> Anti-lockdown attitudes -> Voting FvD		-0.001 (0.006)
Total 1		-0.027 (0.099)
Total 2		0.111 (0.150)
Total 3		0.165 (0.149)
CFI		1.000
TLI		1.005
SRMR		0.006
RMSEA		0.000

Note: N = 1666. Regressions coefficients (with standard errors). CFI = Confirmatory Fit Index; TLI = Tucker Lewis Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table 2. A mediation Analysis of the Relationship Between Political Attitudes and Voting Behaviour for FvD using ratio voting variable.

Independent	Dependent	Model 2
Economic right wing attitudes	Voting FvD	-0.040 (0.025)
Cultural right wing attitudes	Voting FvD	0.111*** (0.029)
Anti-elitist attitudes	Voting FvD	0.012 (0.026)
Religious	Voting FvD	-0.056** (0.024)
Euroscepticism	Voting FvD	0.085*** (0.028)
Anti-lockdown attitudes	Voting FvD	0.155*** (0.024)
Economic right wing attitudes	Anti-lockdown attitudes	-0.025 (0.025)
Cultural right wing attitudes	Anti-lockdown attitudes	-0.051* (0.027)
Anti-elitist attitudes	Anti-lockdown attitudes	-0.038 (0.026)
Religious	Anti-lockdown attitudes	-0.001 (0.025)
Economic right wing attitudes -> Anti-lockdown attitudes -> Voting FvD		-0.004 (0.004)
Cultural right wing attitudes -> Anti-lockdown attitudes -> Voting FvD		-0.008* (0.004)
Anti-elitist attitudes -> Anti-lockdown attitudes -> Voting FvD		-0.006 (0.004)
Total 1		-0.044* (0.025)
Total 2		0.103*** (0.029)
Total 3		0.006 (0.027)
CFI		1.000
TLI		1.003
SRMR		0.006
RMSEA		0.000

Note: N = 1634. Regressions coefficients (with standard errors). CFI = Confirmatory Fit Index; TLI = Tucker Lewis Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation.

***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1

Table 3. A mediation Analysis of the Relationship Between Political Attitudes and Voting Behaviour for PVV using a binary ordered voting variable.

Independent	Dependent	Model 1
Economic right wing attitudes	Voting PVV	-0.156*** (0.042)
Cultural right wing attitudes	Voting PVV	0.098*** (0.009)
Anti-elitist attitudes	Voting PVV	0.163*** (0.054)
Religious	Voting PVV	-0.087* (0.045)
Euroscepticism	Voting PVV	0.125*** (0.046)
Anti-lockdown attitudes	Voting PVV	0.049 (0.034)
Economic right wing attitudes	Anti-lockdown attitudes	-0.004 (0.025)
Cultural right wing attitudes	Anti-lockdown attitudes	-0.006 (0.005)
Anti-elitist attitudes	Anti-lockdown attitudes	-0.005 (0.026)
Religious	Anti-lockdown attitudes	-0.058** (0.024)
Economic right wing attitudes -> Anti-lockdown attitudes -> Voting PVV		-0.000 (0.001)
Cultural right wing attitudes -> Anti-lockdown attitudes -> Voting PVV		-0.000 (0.000)
Anti-elitist attitudes -> Anti-lockdown attitudes -> Voting PVV		-0.000 (0.001)
Total 1		-0.157*** (0.042)
Total 2		0.098*** (0.009)
Total 3		0.163*** (0.054)
CFI		1.000
TLI		1.002
SRMR		0.006
RMSEA		0.000

Note: N = 1666. Regressions coefficients (with standard errors). CFI = Confirmatory Fit Index; TLI = Tucker Lewis Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation.

***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1

Table 4. A mediation Analysis of the Relationship Between Political Attitudes and Voting Behaviour for PVV using ratio voting variable.

Independent	Dependent	Model 2
Economic right wing attitudes	Voting PVV	-0.034 (0.023)
Cultural right wing attitudes	Voting PVV	0.293*** (0.027)
Anti-elitist attitudes	Voting PVV	0.045* (0.025)
Religious	Voting PVV	-0.094*** (0.023)
Euroscepticism	Voting PVV	0.111*** (0.026)
Anti-lockdown attitudes	Voting PVV	-0.040* (0.023)
Economic right wing attitudes	Anti-lockdown attitudes	-0.025 (0.025)
Cultural right wing attitudes	Anti-lockdown attitudes	-0.051* (0.027)
Anti-elitist attitudes	Anti-lockdown attitudes	-0.038 (0.026)
Religious	Anti-lockdown attitudes	-0.001 (0.025)
Economic right wing attitudes -> Anti-lockdown attitudes -> Voting PVV		0.001 (0.001)
Cultural right wing attitudes -> Anti-lockdown attitudes -> Voting PVV		0.002 (0.002)
Anti-elitist attitudes -> Anti-lockdown attitudes -> Voting PVV		0.002 (0.001)
Total 1		-0.033 (0.023)
Total 2		0.295*** (0.027)
Total 3		0.047* (0.025)
CFI		1.000
TLI		1.002
SRMR		0.006
RMSEA		0.000

Note: N = 1634. Regressions coefficients (with standard errors). CFI = Confirmatory Fit Index; TLI = Tucker Lewis Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation.

***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1

Economic attitudes

The direct effect of economic right wing attitudes with voting FvD is surprisingly a slightly negative, but not significant, one with an estimation of $-.026$ ($SE = .099$, $p = .793$) using a binary ordered voting variable (Table 1) and an estimation of $-.040$ ($SE = .025$, $p = .103$) using a ratio voting variable (Table 2). However, as the research by Otjes (2021) indicated, although the FvD supports economic right wing views, their position on the economic axis is not highlighted by this party. People who vote FvD do so mostly for different reasons than their economic views, which explains why voting FvD would not correspond to greater economic right wing attitudes, as voting for the Dutch liberal party, VVD, would¹⁰.

The mediation path of economic right wing attitudes and voting FvD via anti-lockdown attitudes is slightly negative and insignificant using the binary ordered voting variable (*ab1 Model 1 FvD* = $-.001$, $SE = .005$, $p = .865$). The total effect of economic right wing attitudes and voting FvD via anti-lockdown attitudes, including the direct effect, is also negative, not substantive and insignificant (*Total 1 Model 1 FvD* = $-.027$, $SE = .099$, $p = .787$). Of this total relationship, $(\frac{-.001}{-.027}) = 3.704\%$ is mediated by anti-lockdown attitudes. Using the ratio voting variable the path of economic right wing attitudes and voting FvD mediated by anti-lockdown attitudes is slightly negative and insignificant (*ab1 Model 2 FvD* = $-.004$, $SE = .004$, $p = .331$). The total effect, including the direct effect, is also negative, but it is significant (*Total 1 Model 2 FvD* = $-.044$, $SE = .025$, $p = .078$). Of this complete relationship, $\frac{-.004}{-.044} = 9,091\%$ is mediated by anti-lockdown attitudes.

The direct effect of economic right wing attitudes with voting PVV is negative and significant with an estimation of $-.156$ ($SE = .042$, $p = .000$) using a binary ordered voting variable (Table 3) and is insignificant with an estimation of $-.034$ ($SE = .023$, $p = .145$) using

¹⁰ The mediation has been tested on voting for VVD, where economic right wing attitudes and voting VVD had a significant, substantive positive relationship.

a ratio voting variable (Table 4). The fact that one of these results is quite negative is not surprising, since the PVV focuses mostly on attracting working class citizens, who are more likely to be left leaning in regards to economic issues (Otjes, 2021, 131).

The relationship of economic right wing attitudes and voting PVV through anti-lockdown attitudes is almost non-existent using the binary ordered voting variable (*ab1 Model 1 PVV* = $-.001$, $SE = .001$, $p = .865$). The total effect, which includes the direct effect, is negative and significant (*Total 1 Model 1 PVV* = $-.157$, $SE = .042$, $p = .000$). This relationship is mediated for .1%, ($\frac{-0.0002}{-0.157}$), by anti-lockdown attitudes. Using the ratio variable the mediation path is slightly positive, but insignificant (*ab1 Model 2 PVV* = $.001$, $SE = .001$, $p = .391$). The relationship that includes the direct effect is also not significant and negative (*Total 1 Model 2* = $-.033$, $SE = .023$, $p = .157$). The mediated path explains -3.03%, ($\frac{0.001}{-0.033}$), of the total effect.

Unlike what was expected, it appears economic right wing views are slightly negatively associated with anti-lockdown attitudes. However, since these effects were small and not significant, the relationship might be limited to such an extent, that it might not exist at all. Since economic right wing attitudes also had only a slight negative relationship with voting FvD it results in an exaggerated percentage supposedly mediated by anti-lockdown views, even if this mediated relationship might not be large. Although anti-lockdown views are positively linked to voting FvD, it does not seem to mediate in the relationship between economic attitudes and voting FvD. In the case of the PVV, it is clear the mediator does not influence the relationship between economic attitudes and voting behaviour for that party. This is in accordance with expectations, since this party remained ambivalent in regards to lockdown measures.

On the basis of analysing these results the *right-wing economic reasons* hypothesis is rejected: people with right-wing economic views, are not more likely to oppose lockdown

measures than people with left-wing economic views and are not more likely to vote for an anti-lockdown party.

Cultural attitudes

As expected, cultural right-wing attitudes are positively, albeit insignificantly, related to voting FvD with an estimation of .117 ($SE = .151, p = .437$) using the binary ordered voting variable of Model 1 (Table 1) and have a significant relationship with an estimation of .111 ($SE = .029, p = .000$) using the ratio voting variable of Model 2 (Table 2).

The mediated path of cultural right wing attitudes and voting FvD via anti-lockdown attitudes is slightly negative and insignificant using Model 1 ($= -.006, SE = .006, p = .268$). The total effect of Model 1 is positive and insignificant ($Total\ 2\ Model\ 1\ FvD = 0.111, SE = .15, p = .452$). Of the total effect -5.405% , ($\frac{-0.006}{0.111}$), follows the mediated path. Using Model 2 the relationship between cultural right wing attitudes and voting FvD mediated by anti-lockdown attitudes is negative and significant ($ab2\ Model\ 2\ FvD = -0.008, SE = .004, p = .069$). The total effect including the direct effect has a positive significant path ($Total\ 2\ Model\ 2\ FvD = .103, SE = .029, p = .000$). In the complete model, -7.767% , ($\frac{-0.008}{0.103}$), follows the mediated path via anti-lockdown attitudes.

Cultural right wing attitudes and voting PVV have a substantive positive and significant relationship with an estimation of .482 ($SE = .044, p = .000$) both in the case of Model 1 (Table 3) as well as Model 2 ($= .293, SE = .027, p = .000$). It falls within the line of expectation that voters of PVV score higher on cultural right wing attitudes than FvD voters (Otjes, 2021, 152-154).

The path of cultural right-wing attitudes and voting PVV via anti-lockdown attitudes using the binary ordered voting variable is slightly negative, but not significant ($ab2\ Model\ 1$

$PVV = -.001, SE = .002, p = .357$). The total relationship, however, is notably positive and significant (*Total 2 Model 1* $PVV = .481, SE = .044, p = .000$). The percentage of the total effect that follows the path through the mediator is only $-.208\%$, ($\frac{-0.001}{0.481}$). Model 2 shows an insignificant effect through the mediated path of $.002$ ($SE = .002, p = .197$). The total relationship is positive and significant (*Total 2 Model 2* $PVV = .295, SE = .027, p = .000$). Of this complete model only $.678\%$, ($\frac{0.002}{0.295}$), is mediated by anti-lockdown attitudes. Anti-lockdown attitudes do not seem to mediate in the relationship between cultural attitudes and voting PVV.

As supported by previous research, cultural right-wing attitudes were positively associated with voting both FvD as well as PVV. In line with what was expected, cultural right-wing attitudes appear to be negatively related to anti-lockdown attitudes. The mediation path of cultural attitudes and voting FvD is larger than that of economical attitudes and is also significant using the ratio voting variable, but it is still small. But, since the direct effect does not distort the calculation of the substance of the mediation path - because it is large enough and, being significant, this result is very unlikely to be caused by chance -, anti-lockdown attitudes appear to moderately negatively mediate between cultural views and voting FvD. Previous voters of FvD in 2019, who hold a cultural right-wing ideology, might have been less likely to do so in 2021, because of its anti-lockdown stance. Regarding voting PVV, analogous to the mediated relationship of economic right-wing attitudes, the relationship of cultural right-wing attitudes and voting for PVV mediated by anti-lockdown attitudes is barely affected by the mediator.

The *right-wing cultural reasons* hypothesis is therefore supported: people with right-wing cultural views are less likely to oppose lockdown measures than people with left-wing cultural views, which in turn is related to lower levels of voting for an anti-lockdown party.

Anti-elitist attitudes

The direct relationship of anti-elitist attitudes and voting FvD using the binary voting variable has a positive but insignificant relationship (*Model 1 FvD* = .166, *SE* = .142, *p* = .243). When using the ratio voting variable, there is a slight positive and insignificant direct relationship between anti-elitist attitudes and voting FvD (*Model 2 FvD* = .012, *SE* = .026, *p* = .64).

The mediated path in Model 1 of anti-elitist attitudes and voting FvD through anti-lockdown attitudes shows a slight negative and insignificant relationship (*ab3 Model 1 FvD* = -.001, *SE* = .006, *p* = .853). The total effect has an estimation of .165 (*SE* = .142, *p* = .245). Of this total model, -.061% , ($\frac{-0.001}{0.165}$), is mediated by anti-lockdown attitudes. Using Model 2, the mediation path has an estimation of -.006 and is not significant (*SE* = .004, *p* = .164). The total effect has an estimation of .006 and is also not significant (*SE* = .027, *p* = .807). Calculating ($\frac{-0.006}{0.006}$), the mediated path accounts for -100% of the total effect. This incredible percentage is mostly due to the direct effect of anti-elitist attitudes and voting FvD being severely limited in regards to Model 2.

Regarding voting PVV, the direct effect in both models has a positive and significant effect , with estimation of .163 (*SE* = .054, *p* = .003) using Model 1 and an estimation of .045 (*SE* = .025, *p* = .069) using Model 2. This is in accordance with what we would expect.

The mediation path in Model 1 for voting PVV has an estimation of -.000 (*SE* = .001, *p* = .855). The total effect is .163 and is significant (*SE* = .054, *p* = .003). The mediator, does not mediate this relationship, ($\frac{-0.000}{0.163}$), when using the binary voting variable. Using the ratio voting variable the mediation path has an estimation of .002 and is not significant (*SE* = .001, *p* = .268). The total effect is also positive and, unlike the mediation, is significant (*Total 3 Model 1 PVV* = .047, *SE* = .025, *p* = .06). The percentage in this relationship that follows the path through the mediator is 4.255% , ($\frac{0.002}{0.047}$).

Opposite to what was expected, anti-elitist attitudes seem to be slightly negatively affiliated with anti-lockdown attitudes. However, in neither of the models, this was a significant relationship. Although anti-elitist attitudes are positively related to both voting for FvD as well as for PVV, its relationship is only significant in regards to voting PVV. In addition, there is a great distinction between the relationship of anti-elitist attitudes and voting FvD as well as voting PVV regarding Model 1 and Model 2. Since the relationships in the case of FvD are not significant, it might be completely due to chance. Regarding the PVV, both relationships are significant, although the weaker relationship of Model 2 is less significant. There is nothing that accounts for this.

In Model 1 the mediator does not influence the total relationship between anti-elitist attitudes and voting FvD, whereas in Model 2, although the percentage of the mediated effect is tremendous, it has been severely influenced by the fact that the total effect is small. Regarding anti-elitist views and voting PVV, while mediated by anti-elitist attitudes, in Model 1 there is no influence at all and in Model 2 there is a slight positive influence of the mediator on voting PVV.

The *anti-elitist reasons* hypothesis is therefore rejected: people with anti-elitist views are not more likely to oppose lockdown measures than people without anti-elitist views and are not more likely to vote for an anti-lockdown party.

Discussion

This research aimed to answer how the anti-lockdown strategy of PRRPs could influence people's voting behaviour. Three separate reasons for voting for a PRRP were specified in order to find the specific effects on certain types of PRRP voters. Of these hypotheses, only the *right-wing cultural reasons* hypothesis was supported. When a PRRP starts to challenge lockdown measures, it could alienate a segment of their voter base, which mostly supports their views on the cultural axis.

However, *right-wing economic reasons* hypothesis was rejected likely partly due to the fact that the economical axis is not given a lot of importance by both FvD as well as PVV. Because of this there were mostly small, insignificant negative relationships between this variable and voting FvD and PVV, with the exception of voting PVV using the binary voting variable, which was a significant and larger negative relationship.

In addition, the *anti-elitist reasons* hypothesis was mostly rejected, because the relationship between anti-elitist attitudes and voting either FvD as well as PVV gave conflicting results. In the case of the binary ordered voting variable, it correlated much more strongly than when using the ratio variable. In order to conclude if this hypothesis has merit, more research is needed.

The findings in this study show that anti-lockdown attitudes were positively and significantly associated with voting FvD and not with voting PVV. Anti-lockdown attitudes as a mediator have barely affected any relationship in regards to voting PVV. It shows how the voter base of PVV is divided on this issue. The PVV does not seem to have any reason to challenge lockdown measures if it wants to keep this same voter base.

Still, even though the *right-wing cultural reasons* hypothesis is corroborated, the relationship between anti-lockdown attitudes and voting FvD was much stronger of itself. Additionally, this relationship was significant and moderately positive. Compared to the other

reasons for voting FvD, it was one of the most substantive reasons for voting FvD.

Wholly, the relationship between anti-lockdown attitudes and voting FvD and other reasons to vote FvD, seem to exist mostly separately. Anti-lockdown views might have therefore tapped into a new niche of voters, because it does not seem to fit an already existing aspect of PRRPs or anywhere on the right-left political spectrum. Instead of mediating in economic, cultural or anti-elitist views, it appears to have formed a new ideological axis.

In order to confirm this, we need more research. Since anti-lockdown attitudes might be a new political axis and not enough research has been conducted on this topic, using a qualitative research could be preferable over quantitative research. A qualitative method, such as semi-structured interviews, gives the researcher the advantage of being able to dive deeper into this specific subject with several respondents and modify the questions if needed, to be able to confirm whether this forms a new and distinct political issue or whether it corresponds to already existing attitudes (Bryman, 2012, 470).

Conclusion

All things considered, this study concludes that becoming an anti-lockdown party, lowers the likelihood of PRRP voters with right-wing cultural views to vote for them again. However, anti-lockdown attitudes have a moderate positive relationship with voting for a PRRP that has become an anti-lockdown party. This indicates that anti-lockdown attitudes might have become a new political issue, as anti-immigration attitudes and environmental attitudes have done before, and might attract a new niche of voters. However, more research is needed to be able to determine if this is the case.

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