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Radical-Right and Neo-Fascist Political Parties in Western Europe

Roger Karapin

Hans-Georg Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1994.

Paul Hainsworth, ed., *The Extreme Right in Europe and the USA*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1992.

Herbert Kitschelt, in collaboration with Andrew J. McGann, *The Radical Right in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1995.

Peter H. Merkl and Leonard Weinberg, eds., *Encounters with the Contemporary Radical Right*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1993.

Once thought to represent a set of cleavages established in the 1920s, West European party systems recently have undergone important changes.¹ Beginning in the 1970s, left-libertarian ecological parties captured small but significant shares of the vote in many countries and helped to define a new dimension of conflict in many party systems. More recently, far right-wing parties have gained dramatically, taking votes from established parties and pressing their issues onto political agendas. Today the most successful of these parties are the *Front National* in France and the Freedom Party in Austria, but Denmark, Norway, Italy, Belgium, Germany, and Sweden have also seen important challenges by far-right parties. Despite important differences among them, these parties' positions put them on what is commonly understood as the far right of the political spectrum. Much more than established parties, they favor law and order, tax cuts, and limits on immigration and oppose policies favored by social democratic parties (social equality, economic regulation) and by left-libertarian and ecological parties (a multicultural society, women's equality, environmental protection).

By the late 1980s far-right parties were gaining rapidly in many countries by attacking immigration and drawing voters from both the center-right and center-left parties. Their nationalistic or ethnocentric aspects have come into high relief at a time when efforts at increasing European integration are proceeding apace. They raise two questions. First, how extreme are these parties' goals? That is, to what extent do they accept the main features of the postwar order in western Europe (liberal democratic politics, capitalist market economies, the post-1945 national borders); to what extent do they advocate or intend fundamental changes in them; and to what extent are they antisystem, or even "fascist"? Second, why have many far-right parties recently gained at the polls, while others have failed?

Single case studies help to answer these questions. They typically characterize single, national far-right parties, describe their development, and offer an explanation of their recent success. These studies offer four different views of the parties' goals and the reasons for their growth.

The first view focuses on immigration.³ Immigration in western Europe increased in the late 1980s and early 1990s, especially from the former Yugoslavia, eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union. According to the immigration thesis, the social effects of immigration, along with high levels of economic insecurity, benefitted far-right parties, which opposed immigration because of its supposed connections with unemployment and crime. In this view, far-right parties are single issue parties that represent popular xenophobia.

The second explanation rests on political alienation.³ Many voters' general dissatisfaction with how established parties have responded to important issues, such as economic growth, unemployment, corruption, crime, drugs, and immigration, has led them to distrust all established parties and politicians. The resulting potential for protest voting has been exploited by the far right, aided by its antiestablishment message and lack of governing experience. The electoral prospects of far-right parties depend inversely on the credibility of established parties and political systems and do not necessarily signal a deeper movement by voters toward far-right positions on substantive issues.

The third approach, which is most common in the popular press as well as among some academic authors, holds that the far-right parties reflect a resurgence, in somewhat new forms, of interwar fascist movements.⁴ According to the neo-fascist thesis, successful far-right parties today have organizational or personnel connections to pre-1945 Fascists or Nazis, adopt programs that are similar to fascism, and are attempting to resurrect or create fascist regimes. Hence they use quasi-fascist appeals to play upon current resentment, such as immigration and unemployment, and try especially to mobilize petty bourgeois support.

To make this argument intelligible requires the defining of "fascism." The debate over the concept of fascism has shown that important differences exist among supposedly fascist parties and that no definitive set of characteristics will be equally

valid in all cases.⁵ For example, the extreme racism of the German National Socialists and the commitment to corporatism of the Italian Fascists are not general features of all fascist parties, although they may distinguish two subtypes.⁶ Nonetheless, several features are shared by these two important cases, as well as many others, and they are adequate to define a group of fascist parties distinct from other families of political parties in twentieth century western Europe. Therefore, I define fascist parties as those parties whose goals focus on national unity against internal and external enemies, on empire or national expansion, on an authoritarian state, and on a highly state-regulated economy which could be either capitalist or socialist. In this conception, fascist parties are also distinguished by their methods of organizing and action, which center on charismatic leadership, mass organizations, close alliances with paramilitary organizations, and violence against political opponents.⁷ Hence “neo-fascist parties” are those which, in the postwar period, have substantially fascist goals and organizing methods.

The fourth view sees far-right parties as a reaction against the ecological, left-libertarian parties and issues that became stronger in the 1980s.⁸ Far-right parties are part of a backlash against the postmaterialist, left-libertarian demands associated with citizen mobilization in the 1970s and 1980s (for example, feminism, gay rights, environmentalism, multiculturalism, citizen participation) and with left-wing ecological parties, which in turn arose because of postindustrial changes in occupational structures and values. Hence the far-right parties mobilize voters on the same issues as the left-libertarians by taking opposing positions.

Scholars recently have completed several cross-national comparative studies of the far right, providing a good opportunity to assess these four approaches and focus attention on some aspects which have been neglected.⁹ Two of these studies are anthologies. *The Extreme Right in Europe and the USA*, edited by Paul Hainsworth, and *Encounters with the Contemporary Radical Right*, edited by Peter H. Merkl and Leonard Weinberg, are useful references on the nature of postwar, far-right parties in a broad range of countries. They are largely descriptive in intent and format, although individual chapters often suggest explanations of the success or failure of particular parties and the introductions to both books provide generalizations. Both of these books survey a number of European countries, focusing on the most successful far-right parties in each and also including cases of electorally unsuccessful parties.

In contrast, *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe*, by Hans-Georg Betz, and *The Radical Right in Western Europe*, by Herbert Kitschelt with Anthony J. McGann, offer general theories of the recent rise of far-right parties backed with evidence from a variety of country studies, although Kitschelt's book relies more heavily on several cross-national data sets. Although they differ in detail and emphasis, Betz and Kitschelt provide similar and complementary theories of the rise of far-right parties. They reject the neo-fascist explanation, draw on the immigration and

alienation theses with qualifications, and focus on political responses to social changes. These books make significant conceptual and theoretical contributions that will probably serve as reference points for the next decade of research on far-right parties.

Taken together, these works lead to two main conclusions about far-right parties. First, their success is inversely related to their proximity to neo-fascist groups or parties. Western Europe has experienced, not an upsurge in neo-fascism, but rather the growth of a new kind, or new kinds, of radical right-wing parties. Second, the causes behind new far-right parties can be found in the responses of both established and challenging political parties to social and political-economic changes that have altered the conditions of electoral competition.¹⁰ These causes include the breakdown of traditional cleavages and the rise of issue voting, the crisis of the welfare state, the perceived failure of established parties to resolve major problems such as unemployment, corruption, crime, and immigration, increased political alienation, the appeals made by the far-right parties, and the failure of the mainstream parties to adapt.

A New, Democratic Radical Right, or a Revival of Old Right-Wing Extremism?

What distinguishes the goals of far-right parties? Three of these books (all but *Encounters*) agree that they are characterized by nationalism on immigration issues and neoliberalism on economics. However, these works also have important disagreements and sometimes define the phenomenon too broadly. By defining far-right parties in western Europe as a single phenomenon, including neo-fascist parties or factions together with parties that accept democracy, markets, and existing national borders, the two anthologies do not address systematically the relation between these parties and the established system. Indeed, they may contribute to the common tendency to see all far-right parties as part of a revival of the fascist movement.¹¹

In his introduction to *Encounters*, Weinberg characterizes these parties as “radical right,” but the case studies are more heterogeneous than the concept suggests (a problem shared by Hainsworth’s *The Extreme Right*). Several cases do not fit the concept at all. A key part of Weinberg’s definition is “radical.” He means parties that use “dirty tricks” or violence rather than play by the rules of the democratic game, that are unwilling to compromise on their goals, and that harbor “a desire to shut down the democratic enterprise.”¹² However, of the significant contemporary West European parties included in *Encounters*, only one is antidemocratic (the British National Front), while one accepts democracy (the French *Front National*) and the

other two are borderline cases. For example, the *Front National* calls for stronger authority but does not oppose the Fifth Republic; Safran, in accord with other authors, concludes that this party supports neoliberal economic policies “within the existing political system,” along with the strengthening of existing social hierarchies such as traditional families.¹³ By contrast, the National Front in Britain is a far-right party which clearly did not accept the liberal democratic order. While this party’s public face emphasized immigration problems, and compulsory repatriation of non-whites was its main plank, the inner core of the party favored a National Socialist dictatorship like Hitler’s Third Reich. Indeed, the National Front’s leaders John Tyndall and Martin Webster broke from the British National Party in the 1960s because, although they supported Nazism, they advocated “a covert approach, stressing British roots” in order to gain popular support.¹⁴

Assessing other far-right parties on the question of democracy is more complex, perhaps nowhere more than in Germany. Ekkart Zimmermann and Thomas Saalfeld analyze three German cases, including antidemocratic parties such as the Socialist Reich Party of the early 1950s and the National Democratic Party, whose support peaked in the late 1960s at 5–10 percent of the vote in many states and just under 5 percent at the national level. These parties were composed mainly of former Nazi party members and advocated important parts of the Nazi program, including (in the case of the Reich Party) the centralization of power in a national leader and a corporate parliament. Determining positions on democracy is made difficult by the fact that parties that overtly oppose parliamentary democracy are likely to be banned by the German constitutional court, a fate which befell the Socialist Reich Party and was evaded by the National Democratic Party only through the lip service it gave to the Basic Law. Therefore, party positions concerning the Nazi regime and Nazi organizations are probably the best evidence of German far-right parties’ orientations toward democracy. By this standard, the Republicans, the third party analyzed by Zimmermann and Saalfeld, are on the borderline between rejection and acceptance of democracy. The Republicans’ relatively moderate wing, which was led until the early 1990s by the former Waffen SS officer Franz Schönhuber, presented the Republicans as a prosystem party and opposed ties to parties with many neo-Nazis, but at the same time the Republicans sought to rehabilitate the Nazi regime’s image and to reopen questions about eastern territory lost in World War II.¹⁵

The Italian Social Movement (since the early 1990s renamed the National Alliance) is another borderline case. It is the successor to Mussolini’s Fascist Party but has undergone divisive conflicts between prosystem and antisystem factions and increasingly has supported democracy.¹⁶ The Italian Social Movement supported the Christian Democratic government against Communism in the 1950s, formally decided to accept democracy in 1969, and vacillated between fundamental opposition to and support of the mainstream parties in the 1980s to buttress the Socialists against the Communist Party.¹⁷ At the same time, the presence of many neo-fascists

and persistence of fascist ideological traditions in the Italian Social Movement make it difficult to consider the party prosystem.

Radical-Right versus Neo-Fascist Parties The diversity of far-right parties raises the question of their relation to fascism, which can best be answered by distinguishing the far-right parties of contemporary western Europe according to two ideal-types. First, neo-fascist parties have fascist programs, methods, and organizational ties, as defined earlier. Second, radical right-wing parties call for stronger authority while accepting liberal representative democracy, oppose immigration and immigrants while accepting existing national borders, and embrace market economics to a much great extent than parties of government.¹⁸

It is true that much about the radical-right parties—their nationalist criticism of ethnic minorities, populist attacks on the political class, and advocacy of stronger authority—resembles the appeals of fascist parties. But the differences between the radical-right and fascist parties are even greater than their similarities. The radical right's nationalism is focused narrowly on issues related to immigrants and usually does not include border issues, except for regionalist parties like the Northern League and Flemish Bloc, which advocate fragmenting rather than expanding their nations. Their authoritarianism is mild, calling for modifying existing democratic systems through centralization and stronger leadership rather than fundamental constitutional change. Furthermore, in the clearest departure from fascist parties, their economic programs are in most cases strongly neoliberal, attacking the welfare state and favoring individual economic freedom. Finally, the far-right parties are organized as "framework parties," with very strong leaders (Le Pen, Haider, Bossi, Schönhuber) and centralized organizations, but minimal member participation and a nearly exclusive focus on electoral campaigns.

Since both neo-fascist and radical-right parties have focused on immigration and related issues in recent years, they have often been conflated. Moreover, there are also mixed or borderline cases. But as Kitschelt and Betz both argue, the radical-right parties represent a new and distinct synthesis of right-wing ideas and practices. This combination of appeals is exceptional and important not only because it is novel in postwar western Europe, but also because it has the potential to build a cross-class alliance between entrepreneurs and workers. This potential, of course, brings to mind similar efforts of interwar fascist parties, but the resemblance does not by itself obviate the distinctive nature of the radical right.

Types of Radical-Right Parties While radical-right parties are distinct from neo-fascist and mainstream conservative parties, there are also important differences among them. For example, some advocate regional interests (the Northern League, the Flemish Bloc), though most are nationalist. Some are not strongly xenophobic (the Northern League), while others are not especially neoliberal (the Republicans).

To address this problem, Kitschelt has created a typology of three ideal-types which is useful in understanding differences in the parties' social bases and success as well as their programmatic appeals: new radical-right, populist antistatist, and welfare-chauvinist parties.¹⁹

These ideal-types differ on two basic dimensions: neoliberalism and xenophobia combined with authoritarianism. "Authoritarian" in this context means favoring stronger authority for political and social institutions, though not necessarily opposing competitive party democracy. I will use it interchangeably with "socially conservative" and "law and order." The new radical-right parties, which according to Kitschelt are found in France, Denmark, Norway, and perhaps Belgium, are neoliberal on economics and socially conservative and xenophobic on political and cultural issues. Thus, they form an antipode to the left-libertarian ecological parties, which promote a multicultural society, individual self-expression and citizen participation, and social solidarity through government regulation and redistribution. By contrast, populist antistatist parties, found in Austria and Northern Italy, are economically neoliberal but not very xenophobic or socially conservative. Finally, welfare-chauvinist parties, for example, in Germany, are socially conservative, culturally xenophobic, and strongly nationalist (hence the term "chauvinist") but defend welfare programs rather than advocate neoliberalism.

The method by which this typology was constructed and tested results in some drawbacks as well as advantages. It is derived mainly from factor analyses using the 1990 World Values Survey, which asked voters twenty issue questions, making it a uniform data source for all advanced industrial countries. The answers are taken as indicators of the parties' appeals to voters; hence, unlike the other works reviewed here, Kitschelt treats the far-right parties primarily as parties in the electorate rather than party organizations or groups of leaders. This method helps to make the link from party to voters, but it tends to leave the content of party programs and ideology and the intentions of leaders and activists unexplored. Further, reliance on the World Values Survey limits the analysis to the issue areas tapped by the questions included in the survey, to voters' attitudes on set questions rather than the salience of the issues to them, and to a snapshot of conditions in 1990 rather than over a longer period.

For Kitschelt, as for many of the radical-right parties in western Europe, the French *Front National* is an exemplary case, not only because of its dramatic electoral success but also because of its virulent combination of political appeals. Indeed, the *Front National* embraced neoliberalism by 1981, calling for lower taxes, less state intervention, and a major reduction in the state bureaucracy, and the party's antiimmigrant positions and racism became prominent in the early 1980s. In its policy on European integration, where market economics and nationalism are generally in conflict, the *Front National* compromises by accepting the European Union but demanding "a Europe of the nations" on a federal basis rather than through supra-

national authorities.²⁰ Although it accepts the political system of the Fifth Republic, it tends toward socially conservative positions, opposing abortion and feminism (though it favors family allowances and a maternal wage) and favoring a strong state, including the death penalty. Authoritarianism and social conservatism in the new radical-right parties complement free market economics; both the traditional family and the market should encourage individuals to work hard and subordinate their personal desires. Self-employed people and blue collar workers are represented disproportionately in the *Front National*'s electorate, as are men and people with less education, all groups that are relatively neoliberal or xenophobic or both.²¹

It is not clear, however, if parties other than the *Front National*, such as the Danish and Norwegian Progress Parties, fit the new radical-right type. Kitschelt's multivariate analysis of support for the Danish Progress Party shows that market liberalism and authoritarianism are both significant, although racism is the strongest factor, and that no traces of libertarianism can be found. The Danish Progress Party's voters tended to respect authority and reject participation in demonstrations, women's rights, and postmaterialist values, though not to a greater extent than Conservative voters.²² Yet in constructing the neoliberalism factor there were no questions on social spending.²³

Others find that the Danish Progress Party and its voters on balance supported the welfare state.²⁴ Although the Danish Progress Party proposed tax cuts, they were intended for the lower, not upper, strata; in parliament, it helped to pass government budgets maintaining social programs that favored lower income groups while reducing their tax burdens in 1989 and 1990.²⁵ Support for social spending seems relatively firm in Denmark, even among radical-right voters who prefer less state and more market competition in other areas. On other issues, too, the Danish Progress Party does not seem to fit the new radical-right type. Eurobarometer data show that its voters also accept democracy and value liberty no less than the supporters of other parties, and much more than far-right voters in France, Germany, and Italy.²⁶ Thus, if data other than the World Value Survey are considered, the degree to which the Danish Progress Party could be characterized as neoliberal and/or socially conservative is open to question.

Although law and order and xenophobic positions have been important to radical right parties, not all rely on them. The Italian Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party break from the new radical-right model in important respects and can be classified as populist antistatist parties. While, as Betz stresses, all radical-right parties are populist in the sense of attacking the political class, the Austrian and northern Italian far-right parties rely largely on populist appeals such as opposing state bureaucracy. The Northern League's program and voters emphasize anticorruption and proefficiency measures and call for privatization of state enterprises; the party benefits mainly from a negative coalition against the established parties and their practices of public sector patronage. Populist antistatist parties are not strongly

socially conservative and do not strongly or consistently oppose left-libertarian positions. Thus, while xenophobia has been crucial to many other radical right-wing parties, and recently has become more important to the Austrian Freedom Party, the Northern League used the issue only until about 1992 and then mainly as part of attacks on national political elites. The Northern League's reliance on broad anti-statist appeals attracts a broad electorate in which no occupational groups are strongly overrepresented.²⁷

Welfare-chauvinist parties are somewhat closer to neo-fascist parties. The Republicans in Germany are the only obvious major example. Welfare-chauvinist parties make socially conservative and racist appeals to voters but depart from other radical-right parties in defending the welfare state; immigrants, of course, are to be excluded from welfare state protection. Their combination of appeals makes them more similar to neo-fascist parties than to other radical-right parties. But are welfare-chauvinist parties neo-fascist? The Republicans occupy a gray area between radical and neo-fascist parties, although any assessments of proximity to neo-fascism are difficult and apt to be controversial. Their activists are divided between radical and pro-Nazi wings, resulting in compromises and contradictions within and between the parties' programs and activists' speeches. Their nationalism verges on being anti-system, since they want Germany restored to the borders of 1937, and restoration presumably would breach international treaties and provoke war. Like more overtly neo-Nazi parties in Germany, the Republicans subtly attempt to defend the Nazi regime, for example, by using National Socialist terms such as *deutsches Volk* and *Lebensraum*. However, they take a compromise position on European integration similar to that of the *Front National*. The republicans have also verged on opposition to the present democratic system; their 1987 program attacked pluralism and called for subordination of group interests to the national interest, for example, by restricting labor unions and putting the mass media under the control of new public authorities. In the early 1990s their racism and antisemitism, especially in campaign speeches and advertising, were obvious enough—for example, referring to the main Jewish interest group in Germany as “the fifth occupying power”—to trigger nationwide surveillance by the Germany's Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution.²⁸

Explaining Far-Right Party Success

While far-right parties have gained dramatically in many West European countries since the 1980s, there have been important differences in their levels of success (see Table 1). The most successful have been the *Front National* in France and the Freedom Party in Austria, which averaged 11–16 percent in national parliamentary elections from 1980 to 1995. Next come a group of relatively successful parties that

have won 6–9 percent of the national vote. This group clearly includes parties in Italy, Denmark, and Norway. The third group of marginally successful parties has averaged 2–4 percent of the vote and includes cases that are difficult to classify. The

Table 1 Electoral Support for Far-Right Parties in National Level Parliamentary Elections in Western Europe, 1980–1995³⁰

Country	Party	Average support 1980-95	Peak support post-1970	Year of peak	First year at 5%
<u>MOST SUCCESSFUL:</u>					
Austria	Freedom Party	16.1%	21.9%	1995	1986
France	Front National	10.7	12.7	1993	1986
<u>RELATIVELY SUCCESSFUL:</u>					
Italy	Northern League	8.6	8.7	1992	1992
Norway	Progress Party	6.8	13.0	1989	1973 & 1989
Denmark	Progress Party	6.5	9.0	1988	1973 & 1988
Italy	Italian Social Movement/ National Alliance	5.9	6.8 & 13.5	1983 & 1994	1953
<u>MARGINALLY SUCCESSFUL:</u>					
Sweden	New Democracy	4.0	6.7	1991	1991
Switzerland	Automobilists' Party	3.9	5.1	1991	1991
Belgium	Flemish Bloc	3.8	7.8	1995	1991
Germany	Republicans	2.0	2.1	1990	---
<u>UNSUCCESSFUL:</u>					
Netherlands	Center Party/ Center Democrats	1.0	2.5	1984	---
Britain	National Front	< 1.0	0.6	1979	---

All results are popular vote shares in those national parliamentary elections which were contested by the party through December 1995; presidential and European Parliamentary elections are excluded. Average figures for the Italian Social Movement and the Center Party cover only 1980-92.

Swiss Automobilists Party, an antienvironmental party, and the Flemish Bloc struggled in the mid 1980s and averaged only 4 percent from 1980 to 1995, but they may have moved into the relatively successful group with their stronger showings (5–8 percent) in the early 1990s. The Swedish New Democracy has campaigned only since 1991 and has been erratic. Similarly, the Republicans in Germany peaked at 7.1 percent in the 1989 European elections, then struggled around 2 percent in national elections in 1990 and 1994, yet scored high and stable results (9–11 percent) in the populous region of Baden-Württemberg in the 1990s. Finally, far-right parties in Britain and the Netherlands have been unsuccessful; the British National Front and the Dutch Center Democrats have averaged less than 1 percent of the national vote. All of the successful parties gained their first significant levels of support during the 1980s or 1990s, except the Italian Social Movement, which was strong in the 1950s, and the two Progress Parties, which arose in the early 1970s, declined in the late 1970s and early 1980s, then resurged in the late 1980s.²⁹

Why have radical-right parties gained at the polls since the early 1980s? Why have they been more successful in some countries than in others? Besides the four hypotheses mentioned earlier, Betz and Kitschelt proposed additional explanations. First, increased international economic competition and the crisis of the welfare state have made left-right issues salient and neoliberal positions attractive, especially for workers and employees in the private sector and for self-employed people.³¹ Moreover, changes in occupational structures and communications during the transition from industrial to postindustrial society have undermined traditional political cleavages and increased voters' general disaffection from established parties.³² Second, where mainstream parties have converged on economic issues, far-right parties have had opportunities to recruit voters through strongly neoliberal positions.³³ Third, far-right parties must optimize their appeals if they are to take advantage of the opportunities that mainstream parties afford them. Since they draw on diverse, cross-class social bases, they require equally diverse appeals, usually neoliberalism plus nationalism and authoritarianism.³⁴ Parties that fail to adopt neoliberal positions because of their ideological commitments or organizational connections with neo-fascists will sacrifice votes. Fourth, the optimal mix of appeals for each radical-right party depends on its political context. When partyocracies, which Kitschelt defines as "the fusion of state, party, and economic elites in politico-economic networks characterized by patronage, clientelism, and corruption," fall into crisis, challenging parties do best if they send a diffuse antiestablishment, rather than authoritarian or xenophobic message.³⁵

The Crisis of the Welfare State The welfare state thesis receives support not only because of the importance of neoliberal appeals and the timing of the far right's recent success, but also from cross-national correlations. Where there is no large welfare state, there has been no major backlash against the welfare state, and thus no

potential demand for neoliberalism to the right of the center-right parties. For example, in countries where economies are not postindustrial and large welfare states do not exist, such as Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Ireland, radical-right parties have not been successful.³⁶ In multivariate regressions, Swank and Betz also find that per capita GDP are predictors of far-right voting success.³⁷ Similarly, Taggart has found moderate correlations between far-right party voting and indicators of welfare state decommodification.³⁸

The Political Construction of Immigration Issues Immigration is linked to far-right parties' success, though indirectly. Hence two qualifications of the immigration thesis are necessary. First, radical-right parties did not begin to succeed in the 1980s until they discovered that concerns about immigration could benefit them at the polls. The immigration issue did not become important because of ethnic diversity or immigrant influxes; rather, it arose and benefitted far-right parties only if they could dominate the construction of the issue. Far-right parties seized on this issue much earlier (1983) in France than in other countries with similar immigration problems, such as Germany. Second, immigration and other issues appealing to xenophobia are only part of a larger package of policies in which neoliberal economic policies are typically key ingredients. Indeed, overreliance on the immigration issue and neglect of other issues, especially neoliberalism, have hampered far-right parties in Britain and Germany.

Immigration to western Europe increased sharply during the mid 1980s. It came initially from Asia and Africa, then from eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union after the collapse of Communism led to economic crisis and civil conflict in several countries. Betz argues that this immigration, against a background of rapid social change and economic insecurity, increased xenophobia, and xenophobes, in turn, became strong supporters of the far right.³⁹

The first of these links is supported by opinion surveys. In 1989–91 the number of respondents agreeing with the statement that there were “too many foreigners” in their country increased sharply in most West European countries, from about 40 to about 60 percent.⁴⁰ Moreover, the shares of non-EU populations correlate highly with levels of xenophobia across West European countries.⁴¹ But the link between xenophobia and far-right party success is much less clear. There is little correlation between voting for the far right and either popular xenophobia or immigrant shares.⁴² For example, far-right parties have done better in some countries with low shares of foreign-born population (Italy, Austria, Denmark, Norway) than in some countries with relatively more foreigners (Germany, Britain). In part, where xenophobia is high, overreliance on immigration issues is not a reliable basis for building a far-right party, as seen by the case of the Republicans. On issues of immigration and competition for housing and jobs, and only on these issues, the Republicans' voters had more confidence in their party than in other parties in 1989, showing the party's

heavy reliance on these issues.⁴³ Moreover, the Republicans' voters are distinguished from Christian Democratic voters mainly in their responses to questions concerning their acceptance of a neighbor of a different race or nationality and the priority of members of their own nationality in the labor market. The Republicans, like their predecessors on the far right in Germany, gained dramatically when they enjoyed something like a monopoly on these issues. But they were vulnerable to changes in the salience of immigration issues and the other parties' credibility on them. After its upsurge in 1989 (which occurred only several months before the Berlin Wall was breached), Chancellor Kohl's leadership of German reunification left the Republicans unable to regain the offensive, even though the party had strongly promoted reunification in the mid 1980s. The Republicans rose again in state elections in 1992, during a crisis concerning Germany's relatively liberal right to asylum, but declined once more in the 1994 national elections, after the major parties adopted a constitutional amendment to restrict the right to asylum in 1993.

Fascist Legacies and Far-Right Party Strategies The neo-fascist explanation of the far-right parties' success can be almost completely rejected. There is widespread agreement that radical parties have been much stronger and dynamic than parties that are closer to fascist legacies.⁴⁴ Parties with neo-fascist elements (the Republicans, the National Front, and the Italian Social Movement) are relatively unsuccessful electorally; the Republicans failed to get over 2 percent nationally after 1989, and the National Front won a negligible vote share after 1979. Conversely, the greatest successes of far-right parties, in France and Austria since the 1980s and in Denmark and Norway in the 1970s, were linked to strong neoliberal elements in their parties' programs and appeals to voters. The main exception is the Italian Social Movement, but this party declined during the 1980s and gained in 1994 only because the center-right and center-left parties collapsed in the wake of massive scandals and prosecutions of party leaders for corruption.

Indeed, organizational and ideological continuities with fascist parties have inhibited the success of far-right parties. The Republicans could not take neoliberal positions because, as Kitschelt argues, Germany's small but virulent network of neo-Nazi sects and clubs interfered with vote maximization. Whenever a far-right party has gained votes in postwar Germany, neo-Nazi militants have been attracted to it, not least because of the strong chances of gaining local offices in the decentralized governmental system. The new activists pull the party toward neo-fascist positions and spoil its reputation among prospective voters. This process befell the briefly successful National Democrats in the 1960s and also the Republicans after its striking gains in 1989.⁴⁵ As militants joined, power struggles ensued, and party leaders could not keep the party on a radical rather than neo-fascist course. Neo-Nazi militants at first supported Franz Schönhuber's takeover of the Republicans' leadership in 1985, soon after he published the memoirs of his experiences as an SS officer, but later

Schönhuber was cast in the role of trying to hold together moderate and neo-Nazi factions. Evicted as the Republicans' leader by neo-fascists in 1990, he returned to his old position later that year but was ousted again in 1994.⁴⁶ The Republicans' intraparty conflicts clearly hurt the party at the polls, and the specter of neo-Nazism within its ranks has limited its potential support.

Similarly, the Italian Social Movement's explicit links to fascism have made it difficult for the party to gain far-right, neoliberal voters. Even though voters responded to its use of neoliberal appeals in 1990, its electoral strength remained stagnant. Apparently, the Italian Social Movement's neo-fascist reputation made it difficult for the party to credibly assert neoliberal positions.⁴⁷

While neo-fascism is reliably linked with electoral failure, there is at least one exception which suggests that the potential for antisystem and even neo-fascist parties depends on the salience of nationalist issues in West European countries. The Flemish Bloc in Belgium makes regionalist, xenophobic, anti-welfare-state, and antigay and antiabortion appeals.⁴⁸ In these ways, it fits the new radical-right type. However, it also has important connections to the neo-fascist right in Flanders, which originated in groups that collaborated enthusiastically with the Nazi occupation forces during World War II. When the neo-fascist paramilitary group Flemish Order of Militants, which had strong international contacts with neo-Nazis, was banned in 1983, some of its members went to the Flemish Bloc, where they may have helped move the party toward antiimmigrant positions.⁴⁹ The Flemish Bloc has made overt appeals to neo-Nazis by calling for an unconditional amnesty for Nazi collaborators, and its leader has expressed nostalgia for the Nazi occupation.⁵⁰

Furthermore, many of the Flemish Bloc's nationalist statements verge on antisystem positions. In the 1990s its main campaign positions have been extremely nationalist: an independent Flemish state with its capital in Brussels, the slogan "our own people first," and the deportation of immigrants. It also calls for recovering lost Flemish territory and bringing together all Flemish people in one independent state. Yet the importance of extreme nationalist issues to the party's recent gains is difficult to assess. Its voters are attracted mainly by its antiimmigrant message, which is prominent in its campaign literature; 66 percent of its voters said that the immigration issue was the main reason they voted for the Flemish Bloc.⁵¹

Despite the Flemish Bloc's neo-fascist ties and pro-welfare-state positions, it does not fit the pattern of marginal success which most scholars predict for such parties. It is at least a relatively successful far-right party. After struggling in the 1980s, it won about 6 percent of the national vote in 1991 and 1994, with 10–12 percent of the vote in the Flanders region.

What might account for the Flemish Bloc's greater success, compared with the Republicans? The economic crisis has been unusually long and severe in Belgium; the country's linguistic divisions have remained major sources of potential conflict; and political elites tried to accommodate these divisions through constitutional

reforms in the 1980s that actually gave new resources to Flemish nationalists.⁵² These factors suggest an unsettling conclusion: if mainstream parties allow nationalist issues to become polarized enough, antisystem and even neo-fascist parties might do much better at the polls than they have in most West European countries in the postwar period.

Political Alienation Clearly, increased political alienation is not the entire explanation of far-right success. Far-right parties make more specific campaign appeals and attract voters with more distinct ideological profiles—neoliberal, socially conservative and xenophobic, or both—than would be expected if they were purely protest parties. But does political alienation play a role in far-right voting? Voters who say they are dissatisfied with politics are more likely than other voters to endorse far-right parties.⁵³ Yet this strong association between distrust and far-right voting leaves open the question of causation. Since the parties put out a “distrust” message, voters may have chosen to vote for the far right for other reasons (for example, neoliberalism, racism) and then answered questions about political trust in ways that conformed to the parties’ positions.

However, evidence at the cross-national level also suggests that increased alienation has played a role. Various measures of general political alienation—disbelief that politicians are interested in citizens’ opinions, disbelief that politicians care about people, distrust in parliament, dissatisfaction with democracy, declines in party membership, weakening party identifications, and falling voting turnout—show that some countries have experienced major increases in alienation since 1975 while others have not. France and Sweden experienced clear declines in political trust by 1990, while Germany and Italy experienced sharp crises in the early 1990s.⁵⁴ In contrast, political confidence did not clearly decline in Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Britain, and the Netherlands from 1975 at least through 1990. The first group of countries, with strongly increasing political alienation, averaged much higher levels of far-right voting than the second group.⁵⁵ Moreover, most of the anomalies are easily explained. Political alienation rose yet the far right was weak in Germany because the Republicans did not capitalize by adopting neoliberal positions. Far-right voting increased in Denmark and Norway despite mostly stable levels of political alienation in the 1980s, but in both cases political alienation had risen sharply to high levels in the early 1970s, when it was associated with a major increase in voting for the Progress parties.

Mainstream Party Strategies and Crises in Partyocracies Political alienation is also related to the degree of convergence between the major left- and right-wing parties of government on economic issues.⁵⁶ This conclusion accords with one of Kitschelt’s main arguments: that convergence among the major conservative and left-wing parties is necessary before a far-right party can use a radical neoliberal

agenda to attract many voters. Indeed, there is a strong correlation between mainstream party convergence and far-right party success.⁵⁷ Where mainstream parties have advanced neoliberal policies, for example, in Britain and the Netherlands, the far right has done poorly.

The *Front National* has been particularly adept at exploiting the mainstream parties' convergence and loss of credibility, initially by using secondary, low-stakes elections to gain media attention. In the mid 1970s the conservative government of Giscard d'Estaing moved to the center, as did the Socialist Party in 1983 soon after it finally became the party of government. Moreover, in the 1980s the center-right was increasingly fragmented, and its neoliberal wing was led by Jacques Chirac, who was identified with the statist policies of the Gaullist party. Hence the mainstream parties lacked credibility on neoliberal economic issues, and the *Front National* was able to step into a gap. A strong result for the *Front National* in the first round of the Dreux municipal elections in 1983 was followed by a successful electoral pact with the center-right parties for the second round and then a national debate among conservatives about whether to ally with the radical antiimmigrant party. This debate boosted the popularity of the *Front National*, even though the established parties usually did not join forces with it. The *Front National's* vote took off in the 1984 European parliamentary elections and the 1986 assembly elections.

Kitschelt also illuminates far-right voting resulting from political alienation and mainstream party convergence in countries that have been governed by "partyocracies." As education levels have risen, middle class, white collar voters have demanded political participation and transparent government. Their demands, together with the extraordinary degree of left-right convergence among mainstream parties in Austria and Italy and the collapse of Communism in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, have led to a crisis of confidence in these partyocracies. In such cases, far-right parties can attract a broad cross-section of voters with appeals to antistatist attitudes. Hence the far right does better if it tones down its xenophobic and authoritarian messages, which tend to alienate centrist voters.

For example, the Northern League did quite well at the polls without relying much on antiimmigrant appeals because it benefitted from widespread attacks on the Italian patronage system in the 1980s. Its success in regional elections in 1989 gained it much publicity, which, though largely negative, linked it to its main issue of opposing corruption.⁵⁸ Poised for success, the Northern League experimented with a mix of issues. Initially it used xenophobia, targeted at southern Italian migrants, as a way of criticizing the political establishment. After the 1991 elections it began to drop its xenophobic appeals but continued its success.⁵⁹

Anti-left-libertarianism The final thesis of single case studies—that the far right is a backlash against left-libertarian parties—has received little attention. Yet this thesis is supported in several ways. It is consistent with the argument that the new

right-authoritarian parties help to define an axis of political conflict between themselves and left-libertarians.⁶⁰ Moreover, there is a strong cross-national correlation between left-libertarian and radical-right parties. Further, in all cases except France and Finland the ecological parties preceded the radical right. The outlier cases or the long lag between the emergence of left-libertarian and radical-right parties can be explained by the strongly neoliberal positions of mainstream parties (Sweden, the Netherlands) or the integrative capacities of left-center parties (France).⁶¹

The relation of right-wing nationalism and authoritarianism to left-libertarianism deserves more study. In the cases where both movements are strong or weak, do the two movements tend to develop in parallel simply because they are shaped by the same party systems, welfare states, and postindustrial occupational structures? Or have the far-right parties reacted directly to the left-libertarian parties and political agenda, as Minkenberg suggests?⁶² Do the ecological and radical-right parties address similar issues in each country? Does the radical right directly attack the left-libertarian parties or movements, or does it instead attack the mainstream parties for making policy concessions to the libertarian left?

Conclusions

Radical-right parties are likely to remain political factors into the next century. Continued economic insecurity in a context where foreign residents are a fixture and women's rights and environmental protection have influential advocates will likely perpetuate resentment and the search for scapegoats. Should the perceived failures of the political establishment continue to accumulate, disaffection from all political parties will remain at high levels or even rise, providing opportunities for all kinds of outsider parties. Most far-right parties do not depend on the immigration issue and hence can not be permanently undercut by the maneuvering of mainstream parties on it. Even if their current issues fade or are captured by the established parties, the continued presence of left-libertarian groups, parties, and issues in most West European countries might provide new targets to vilify. As long as most voters are moderate, the mainstream parties will have strong incentives to remain centrist and leave fringe voters to the far right.

Yet the continued success of far-right parties is not inevitable, since favorable structural conditions are necessary but not sufficient for their success. Political interactions between the far-right parties and the established parties, and even between factions within the far right, influence their prospects, at times decisively. Where they benefit from a current revulsion against partyocracies, as in Italy, they may not survive the political establishments against which they rebel. Where they ride the immigration issue, they risk being repeatedly outmaneuvered by the mainstream parties. Where fascist parties were strong in the interwar period, they risk being

swamped today by neo-fascist activists who interfere with vote-maximization. And if they continue to be successful and gain an aura of respectability, they may be invited to join in governing, which would rob them of their apparent innocence and might require skilful leadership to avoid destructive conflicts between neoliberal and authoritarian representatives of their diverse electoral bases. Since they operate in democratic societies, the far-right parties have a degree of internal democracy, which together with diverse activist bases can result in sharp internal conflicts when a party, like the British National Front, is unsuccessful or when its successes create spoils in the form of party finances and public offices, as with the German Republicans.⁶³

In general, the nature of contemporary electorates seems to dictate that far-right parties' electorally optimal position lies between the center-right parties and anti-system positions. But this pattern suggests potential dangers for democracy, too. Parties like the *Front National*, Republicans, and Flemish Bloc, even if they are "merely" radical, seek policy changes which go some distance—how far has not been adequately and dispassionately studied—toward extreme nationalist and authoritarian agendas. If overall background political conditions should change dramatically, for example, through economic crisis or regional war, the far right could become a much more effective conduit for the transmission of antisystem ideas and political forces into the political mainstream. Hence especially the borderline cases such as the Flemish Bloc call for further analysis of the nature of far-right parties and the causes of their success. To understand better their nature, further research should employ sharp conceptual tools and a variety of approaches to focus on the extent to which these parties accept or reject democracy, market capitalism, and the existing state system. A greater variety of indicators and data sources would also help in assessing the parties' likely trajectories, especially where activists' commitments diverge from the appeals to which voters are responding. The party as an organization of activists as well as the party in the electorate need to be examined, and the two need to be related to each other.

Finally, the works reviewed here suggest that the process of issue definition, for example, regarding immigration and citizenship policies, should be investigated dynamically. Since large numbers of foreigners will certainly remain in western Europe, far-right parties will have chances to raise and benefit from issues related to them. The interactions among parties and voters and between factions within far-right and mainstream right parties, could be analyzed. What does it take for a party to gain credibility as the organization most trusted to solve a public problem or, inversely, to discredit the governing parties on an issue? Do timing and tactics affect whether a far-right party or a mainstream party wins this contest? How is credibility, or distrust, reproduced, and for how long? Does it make much of a difference for public policy if mainstream parties succeed in coopting such issues (as in Britain and Germany) instead of playing catch-up (as in France)? Can countermobilization by

proimmigrant groups and multicultural policies by government inhibit and not just spur xenophobic voting? These questions, along with the conceptual and methodological tools suggested here, might be profitably applied especially to cases, like the Republicans, Flemish Bloc, and Italian National Alliance, where parties that stand closer to neo-fascism have had some success, in order to explore the current limits of far right-wing politics in western Europe.

NOTES

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1. Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments," in Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments* (New York: Free Press, 1967), pp. 1–64.

2. For example, see Christopher Husbands, "The Other Face of 1992: The Extreme-Right Explosion in Western Europe," *Parliamentary Affairs*, 45 (July 1992), 267–84; Peter Fysh and Jim Wolfreys, "Le Pen, the National Front and the Extreme Right in France," *Parliamentary Affairs*, 45 (July 1992), esp. 313; Paul Furlong, "The Extreme Right in Italy: Old Orders and Dangerous Novelties," *Parliamentary Affairs*, 45 (July 1992), esp. 355; David Arter, "Black Faces in the Blond Crowd: Populist Racialism in Scandinavia," *Parliamentary Affairs*, 45 (July 1992) 357–72; Gerrit Voerman and Paul Lucardie, "The Extreme Right in the Netherlands: The Centrists and Their Radical Rivals," *European Journal of Political Research*, 22 (July 1992) esp. 48, 51; Piero Ignazi, "The Silent Counter-Revolution: Hypotheses on the Emergence of Extreme Right-Wing Parties in Europe," *European Journal of Political Research*, 22 (July 1992), 3–34.

3. See Dieter Roth, "Volksparteien in Crisis? The Electoral Success of the Extreme Right in Context—The Case of Baden-Württemberg," *German Politics*, 2 (April 1993), esp. 3, 12–14; Bettina Westle and Oskar Niedermayer, "Contemporary Right-Wing Extremism in West Germany," *European Journal of Political Research*, 22 (July 1992), esp. 95–97; Geoffrey K. Roberts, "Right-Wing Radicalism in the New Germany," *Parliamentary Affairs*, 45 (July 1992), 327–44; John Fitzmaurice, "The Extreme Right in Belgium: Recent Developments," *Parliamentary Affairs*, 45 (July 1992), 300–8; Nona Mayer and Pascal Perrineau, "Why Do They Vote for Le Pen?," *European Journal of Political Research*, 22 (July 1992), 123–41; Carlo E. Ruzza and Oliver Schmidtke, "Roots of Success of the Lega Lombarda: Mobilisation Dynamics and Media," *West European Politics*, 16 (April 1993), 1–23; Ignazi, "The Silent Counter-Revolution."

4. See Erwin K. Scheuch and Hans D. Klingemann, "Theories des Rechtsradikalismus in westlichen Industriegesellschaften," *Hamburger Jahrbuch für Wirtschafts- und Gesellschaftspolitik* (Tübingen: J. B. C. Mohr/Paul Siebeck, 1967), pp. 11–29; Geoffrey Harris, *The Dark Side of Europe: The Extreme Right Today* (Savage: Barnes and Noble Books, 1990), pp. 11–12, 15, 16; Jaroslav Kreja, "Neo-fascism—West and East," in Luciano Cheles, Ronnie Ferguson, and Michalina Vaughan, eds., *The Far Right in Western and Eastern Europe*, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1995), esp. pp. 6–8; and Voerman and Lucardie, esp. p. 51. Westle and Niedermayer, pp. 93–95, explain the far-right parties in terms of the links between their activists or voters and movements like National Socialism without directly invoking a concept like neo-fascism.

5. See Stanley Payne, *Fascism: Comparison and Definition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980); Juan Linz, "Some Notes toward a Comparative Study of Fascism in Sociological Historical Perspective," in Walter Laqueur, ed., *Fascism: A Reader's Guide* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976); and

Roger Eatwell, "Towards a New Model of Generic Fascism," *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 4 (1992), 161–94.

6. Payne, pp. 196–200.

7. This definition is adapted from Payne, pp. 6–14, and F. L. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 230–36.

8. For example, see Michael Minkenberg, "The New Right in Germany," *European Journal of Political Research*, 22 (July 1992), esp. 56, 58, 60; Ignazi, "The Silent Counter-Revolution"; Michael Minkenberg, "The New Right in Comparative Perspective: The USA and Germany," Western Societies Program, Cornell University, Occasional Paper No. 32, 1993, esp. pp. 2–3; and Michael Minkenberg, "The New Right in Western Democracies: France and Germany in Comparative Perspective," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York, September 1994, esp. pp. 2–3.

9. Other, more limited cross-national studies are also available. See Ignazi, "The Silent Counter-revolution"; Scheuch and Klingemann; Minkenberg, "The New Right in Germany" and "The New Right in Comparative Perspective"; and Paul A. Taggart, *The New Populism and the New Politics: New Protest Parties in Sweden in Comparative Perspective* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996). Other cross-national works do not offer much in the way of explanations. See Klaus von Beyme, "Right-Wing Extremism in Post-War Europe," *West European Politics*, 11 (April 1988), 1–18; Paul Taggart, "New Populist Parties in Western Europe," *West European Politics*, 18 (January 1995), 35–51.

10. In combining social changes and the political responses of elites into integrated theories, Betz and Kitschelt follow the general path taken by theorists of earlier far right-wing parties, such as Scheuch and Klingemann.

11. Works that conflate the radical right with neo-fascism include Glyn Ford, *Fascist Europe: The Rise of Racism and Xenophobia* (London: Pluto Press, 1992); Harris, *The Dark Side*; Cheles, Ferguson, and Vaughan, eds., esp. chs. 12, 16; and Husbands, "The Other Face of 1992."

12. Leonard Weinberg, "Introduction," Peter H. Merkl and Leonard Weinberg, eds., *Encounters with the Contemporary Radical Right* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), p. 5.

13. William Safran, "The National Front in France," in Merkl and Weinberg, eds., pp. 21–22.

14. Roger Eatwell, "Why Has the Extreme Right Failed in Britain?," in Paul Hainsworth, ed., *The Extreme Right in Europe and the USA* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), p. 177.

15. Ekkart Zimmermann and Thomas Saalfeld, "The Three Waves of West German Right-Wing Extremism," in Merkl and Weinberg, eds., p. 55; Hans-Georg Betz, "The Two Faces of Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe," *Review of Politics* (Fall 1993), 680.

16. Piero Ignazi, "The Changing Profile of the Italian Social Movement," in Merkl and Weinberg, eds., pp. 75–92.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 79, 82, 84.

18. Ignazi, "The Silent Counter-Revolution," and Kitschelt make a similar distinction.

19. For a somewhat similar distinction between national populist and neoliberal populist parties, see Betz, "The Two Faces."

20. Jonathan Marcus, *The National Front and French Politics* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), p. 119.

21. Hans-Georg Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), pp. 98–99, 156; Herbert Kitschelt, *The Radical Right in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), pp. 77, 113.

22. Kitschelt, pp. 65, 74, 140, 146, 150, 155.

23. Questions dealt with state ownership, income equality, and competition.

24. The relevant responses were worded as "the social reforms in our country should be maintained at least at the present level" and "social cuts have gone too far." Jorgen Goul Andersen, "Denmark: The Progress Party—Populist Neo-Liberalism and Welfare State Chauvinism," in Hainsworth, ed., p. 200.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 197, 200.
26. The wording of the questions were “liberty valued more than equality” and “democracy is the best political system under any circumstances.” The numbers of far-right voters responding, however, were small (seventy-seven in Denmark), as also in the World Values Survey. Kitschelt, p. 137.
27. Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism*, p. 160; Kitschelt, p. 191.
28. Thomas Saalfeld, “The Politics of National-Populism,” *German Politics*, 2 (August 1993), 177–99.
29. The Austrian Freedom Party had success before the 1980s but did not become a far-right party until 1984–85.
30. Data for 1980–94 from Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism*, p. 3; additional data for Britain from Eatwell, “Why Has the Extreme Right Failed in Britain?,” p. 180; for the Netherlands from Christopher Husbands, “The Netherlands,” in Hainsworth, ed., pp. 104–5; for Italy from Stephen Hellman, “Italy,” in Mark Kesselman and Joel Krieger, eds., *European Politics in Transition* (Lexington: D. C. Heath, 1992), p. 355; additional data for 1994–95 from the annual data yearbook edition of the *European Journal of Political Research*; average figures for the Italian Social Movement and the Center Party from Kitschelt, p. 52.
31. Betz, *Radical Right-wing Populism*, p. 109; Kitschelt, pp. 5–6.
32. Kitschelt, pp. 27–35.
33. Kitschelt, pp. 16–17, 53–54.
34. Kitschelt, ch. 1; Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism*, ch. 4.
35. Kitschelt, p. 161.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 52–53.
37. Duane Swank and Hans-Georg Betz, “Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe: The Impact of Structural Change, Political Institutions, and Economic Performance on Party Electoral Fortunes in 16 Nations,” paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, August–September 1995.
38. Taggart, *New Populism and the New Politics*, pp. 53, 58.
39. Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism*, p. 104.
40. See Manfred Kuechler, “Germans and ‘Others’: Racism, Xenophobia, or ‘Legitimate Conservatism’?,” *German Politics*, 3 (April 1994), 64.
41. For example, see Jens Alber, “Toward Explaining Anti-Foreigner Violence in Germany,” Working Paper no. 53, Harvard Center for European Studies, 1994, Graphs 1–5.
42. Kitschelt, pp. 60, 62.
43. Zimmermann and Saalfeld, p. 72.
44. In addition to Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism*, and Kitschelt, see Ignazi, “The Silent Counter-Revolution”; Taggart, “New Populist Parties in Western Europe.”
45. Kitschelt, pp. 210–11, 217–18.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 217.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
48. Christopher Husbands, “The Extreme Right in Postwar France,” in Hainsworth, eds., pp. 29–50.
49. Patrick Hossay, “‘Our People First’: Understanding the Resonance of the Vlaams Blok’s Xenophobic Program,” paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association, Newark, November 1995, p. 21; Christopher Husbands, “Belgium,” in Hainsworth, ed., p. 132; Ford, *Fascist Europe*, pp. 9–10.
50. Hossay, p. 14.
51. Betz, “The Two Faces,” p. 680; Husbands, “Belgium,” p. 137; Hossay, p. 27.
52. Hossay, p. 11.
53. Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism*, pp. 42–59.

54. I classified countries based on data in Hans-Dieter Klingemann and Dieter Fuchs, *Citizens and the State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 42, 106–7, 139, 273–76, 304, 351; and Betz, *Radical Right-wing Populism*, pp. 42–59. Using the seven indicators mentioned in the text, I considered a country to have clearly rising alienation if more than one indicator, at least one of which concerned political distrust or dissatisfaction (the first four items), was clearly rising from 1975 to 1993.

55. The average level of far-right voting from 1980 to 1995 was 9.5 percent for the five countries with strongly increasing political alienation but only 3.8 percent for the other countries; the average peak in far-right voting support in each country was 13.1 percent for the first group but only 6.6 percent for the second group. For this analysis, I added Austria to the first group based on the available measures.

56. In the first group the average left-right distance was 12.89, as rated by experts; in the second group, it was 18.95; the maximum possible distance was 38.00. Data from Kitschelt, p. 54 (own calculations).

57. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

59. Betz, *Radical Right-wing Populism*, pp. 122–23.

60. Kitschelt, ch. 2; Minkenberg, “The New Right in Comparative Perspective,” pp. 25, 51–57.

61. Kitschelt, pp. 57–58.

62. Minkenberg, “The New Right in Western Democracies,” p. 2.

63. On infighting in the Republicans, see Norbert Lepszy and Hans-Joachim Veen, “Rechtsradikale in der parlamentarischen Praxis,” *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen* (May 1994), 203–16.

Studies the new West European parties of the radical populist right, arguing that, in distancing themselves from the reactionary politics of the traditional extremist right. During the past several years, society and politics in Western Europe have entered a period of extraordinary turbulence and dramatic change. Alarming levels of mass unemployment, waves of violent skin-head and neo-nazi attacks against socially vulnerable groups, and widespread public disaffection with the political system are symptoms of severe crisis in the post-war Western European settlement. Radical populist right parties have benefitted more from this crisis than any other political group. Although nationalist parties have thrived across Europe in recent years, only a few – Golden Dawn in Greece and the National Democratic Party in Germany, to name two – embrace neo-fascist views. Some, like Jobbik in Hungary, are extremist in their right-wing views but stop short of outright fascism. Mr. Svec is joining a political field where a party with an established neo-fascist leader, Marian Kotleba, demonstrated surprising strength in last year's parliamentary elections, winning 14 seats in the 150-member chamber. Pre-election polls showed his party getting less than 3 percent of the vote, but his result – 8 percent – was built on strong support from young people and other first-time voters. More recent polls show his support nearing 13 percent.

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