Part III

Explanations

9 Demand-side: in search of the perfect breeding ground

> There is widespread agreement in the literature that the upsurge of radical right-wing activities has to be seen in the context of a combination of global and domestic structural change . . . There is less agreement, however, on the exact link between right-wing mobilisation and sociostructural change.
>
> (Betz 1999: 301)

9.1 Introduction

Given the explosion of literature on populist radical right parties in the past two decades, it comes as no surprise that explanations for their success abound. Nearly every author on the subject provides some reason for the electoral success of the party family in contemporary Europe, however implicitly or generally it may be presented. Most scholars' understanding of the phenomenon has been highly influenced by classic theoretical work in the social sciences, especially that concerning (historical) nationalism and fascism. Interestingly, only very little attention has been paid to the electoral failure of populist radical right parties, even though these cases are (far) more numerous (De Lange & Mudde 2005).

In addition to the pure theoretical work, which remains fairly general and underdeveloped, the bulk of articles in refereed academic journals dealing with the topic have involved empirical tests of various aspects of these theories. Overall, the conclusions largely contradict each other, which furthers both the debate and the stream of publications. The most important source of disagreement is the difference in research designs and data used in the studies: often (micro) individual behavior is explained on the basis of (macro) state-level variables (and vice versa), leading to the well-known ecological fallacy. And even when these factors are used as "context variables," they do not correspond to the theoretical argument (i.e. national-level data to explain local contexts).

While it is impossible to present a complete overview of the literature on explanations of the electoral failure/success of populist radical right parties, Roger Eatwell's "Ten theories of the extreme right" (2003)

is one of the best comprehensive overviews and will be partly followed here. Like Eatwell, I will differentiate between demand-side and supply-side variables and distinguish between macro-, meso-, and micro-level explanations in the discussion of the literature. In addition, the important distinction between electoral breakthrough and persistence will be addressed (Coffé 2004); these are two related but distinct processes that cannot always be explained by the same combination of variables. The key aim of this part of the book is to assess critically the theoretical and empirical basis of the various explanations posited in the literature on the two regions of contemporary Europe. However, I will also introduce some new data and variables that I believe help explain the electoral failure and success of populist radical right parties in general.

This first chapter focuses exclusively on the demand-side of populist radical right politics, i.e. the search for the perfect breeding ground for these parties in the literature. However, the demand-side is only one aspect of (party) politics: a demand for populist radical right politics does not necessarily result in its emergence and success at the party system level. The supply-side translates demand into practical party politics. Two aspects of the supply-side will be distinguished in subsequent chapters; that external to populist radical right parties (chapter 10) and that internal to them (chapter 11). Obviously, the demand-side and the two dimensions of the supply-side cannot be distinguished so neatly in practice; they partly overlap and influence each other.

9.2   Macro-level explanations

Nearly all demand-side theories of party politics in general, and populist radical right party politics in particular, are situated at the macro-level. They point to broad economic, historical, social processes that take place at the national, supranational and sometimes even global level. Most theories are far from original; their provenance is generally either from studies of previous forms of nationalism (including fascism) or analysis of mainstream electoral politics (cf. Husbands 2002). Their strength is that they can potentially explain similar developments in very different settings. Their main weakness is that they normally cannot account for different developments in very similar settings.

9.2.1   Modernization(s)

In accounts of the electoral and political successes of populist radical right politics in contemporary Europe the term "modernization" is never far away. According to almost all prominent studies the rise of the populist

radical right party family is directly and explicitly linked to "process(es) of modernization." In short, the parties are seen as opponents of modernization that attract the so-called *Modernisierungsverlierer* (losers of modernization) (e.g. Decker 2004; Minkenberg 1998; Betz 1994). In this respect, scholars stay within the mainstream of historical nationalism studies, which has explained the development of European nationalism since the end of the eighteenth century by the effects of modernization (see, most notably, Gellner 1983). Moreover, the arguments are reminiscent of Seymour Martin Lipset's theory of "status voting" to explain the "radical right," initially advanced in the 1950s (e.g. Lipset 1969, 1955).

In the contemporary setting, the modernization thesis has been elaborated in various forms and has been linked to many different developments and processes: globalization, risk society, post-Fordist economy, postindustrial society, and many more (e.g. Swank & Betz 2003; Loch & Heitmeyer 2001; Holmes 2000; Minkenberg 1998; Beck 1992). In the literature on Eastern Europe the modernization thesis is mostly linked to the (double or triple) transition from state socialism to capitalist democracy (e.g. Anastasakis 2002; Beichelt & Minkenberg 2002; Minkenberg 2002b; Linz & Stepan 1996). Irrespective of the specific form of modernization, all theses have serious theoretical and empirical problems.

Theoretically, they tend to remain vague about the exact effects of modernization, particularly at the micro-level. How does the macro-level process of globalization exactly lead to the micro-level action of voting for a populist radical right party? Some authors try to connect the macro- and micro-levels by linking the process of modernization to the famous cleavage theory of Lipset and Rokkan (1967), arguing that it has either created a new cleavage or gave new meaning to the main old cleavage (e.g. Kriesi *et al.* 2005b; Minkenberg 2000; Kitschelt & McGann 1995; Kriesi 1995; Betz 1994). Still, even here the translation of macro-level processes to micro-level behavior remains either vague or dependent upon significant actions at the meso-level, and the supply-side, most notably from political parties (cf. Sartori 1990).

The globalization thesis is particularly weak in terms of empirical evidence (e.g. Rosamond 2002; Keohane & Nye Jr. 2000; Amin 1997). First of all, whether or not globalization is something new is hotly debated. Second, even among authors who believe that contemporary globalization is indeed unprecedented, at least in its intensity and scope, no consensus exists with regard to exactly when it started. Third, the global nature of the process to which the thesis attributes causality limits its traction in explaining national differences. One could argue that different countries are influenced in different ways and to different degrees by the process depending on their relative position in the world economy, but this mainly

distinguishes central and peripheral countries, i.e. "First" and "Third" World (e.g. Wallerstein 2004), leaving the substantial variation within (Western) Europe unexplained.

The postindustrial and postmodern theses are also fraught with theoretical and empirical problems (e.g. Wendt 2003). Nonetheless they do seem to provide at least some potential for intra-European differentiation. Most notably, Kitschelt and McGann (1995) use the postindustrialism thesis to exclude the South European countries (Greece, Portugal, and Spain), which all have very weak populist radical right parties. However, they have been criticized for their operationalization of postindustrialism by John Veugelers (2001), who does not find a strong correlation between the defined combination of open economy and welfare provisions at the state level. Yet, he does find a strong relationship between economic openness and a country's demand for populist radical right politics (see also Veugelers & Magnan 2005; Swank & Betz 2003). The question is whether this relationship also holds for the postcommunist region, where societies are (far) less "postmodern" and economies (far) less "postindustrial."

In the literature on Eastern Europe, while there is no doubt that the transformation process has yielded significant "shocks" to its societies, undoubtedly more intense and varied than those generated by the "silent (counter-)revolution" in the West, the exact relationship to populist radical right voting is not always clear. Moreover, although various transformational paths can be discerned within the group of postcommunist countries (e.g. Kopecký & Mudde 2000; Von Beyme 1999), they were all subject to a largely similar process, yet few experienced (continued) electoral success among populist radical right parties (e.g. Mudde 2005b, 2000b; Von Beyme 1996).

So far, the various modernization theories have mainly been tested by proxies: the voting behavior of groups deductively identified as (potential) losers of modernization has been evaluated for evidence of disproportional support for the populist radical right among these groups relative to the larger society. The findings of the various studies are highly contradictory. Much (cross-national) empirical research suggests that the core electorates of populist radical right parties are indeed "modernization losers" (e.g. Robotin 2002; Fetzer 2000; Kriesi 1999; Betz 1994). However, some (single country) studies have found both losers and winners of modernization among the populist radical right electorates (e.g. Gyárfášová 2002; Irvine & Grdešič 1998).[1] Most important, however,

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[1] Interestingly, some studies find a gender effect with regard to the modernization theory (see also chapter 4). However, while some contend that the theory is better suited to explain the voting behavior of women (e.g. Havelková 2002), others consider it more appropriate for men (e.g. Amesberger & Halbmayr 2002c).

is the fact that even if most voters of populist radical right parties are actually "modernization losers," defined either objectively or subjectively (cf. Minkenberg 2000), only a small minority of the "immense army" (Thieme 2005: 354) of losers of modernization vote for a populist radical right party.

Modernization theories (in whatever form or shape) seem correct intuitively but are too general and too vague to be considered useful explanations of recent populist radical right party successes. There is no doubt that these processes do lead to important societal changes, which in turn have political effects. Nonetheless, "modernization – industrialization and all its concomitant changes – will go on giving rise to differential political and cultural mobilization" (Nairn 1995: 95). Why this mobilization is populist radical right in certain countries and periods, and liberal nationalist or even nonnationalist in others, has to be explained by other theories.

9.2.2   Crises

Emphasis on the vital role of "crisis" is a constant in studies of both historical and contemporary nativism and populism (e.g. Taggart 2000; Weyland 1999), including studies on populist radical right parties. Hanspeter Kriesi has even referred to them as "movements of crisis" (1995: 23). So far, the term "crisis" has proven of limited use analytically because, although intuitively it may be easy to comprehend, it proves quite difficult to specify. Most authors do not even bother to try to articulate what constitutes a crisis, they simply state that a certain process has led to one, assuming that both the meaning of the term and the existence of the crisis are self-evident. Others define the term so broadly that virtually every period can be interpreted through the lens of crisis. Finally, a number of authors seem to determine the existence of a crisis largely on the basis of the success of populist actors, which makes the relationship tautological.

The definitional and operationalizational deficiencies in the crisis literature should not lead to an *a priori* rejection of the whole research in this field. In fact, in many instances the empirical research itself is quite sound, focusing on statistically significant correlations between various economic and political independent variables and the dependent variable of populist radical right party electoral success. The key problem in this literature is the relationship between these variables and the overarching concept of crisis. So, rather than evaluating the economic and political crisis theses as such, this section will assess the relevance of the empirical work done in this field to the further understanding of the electoral success of populist radical right parties.

Ever since the rise of historical fascism, radical right successes have been explained by reference to economic crises (e.g. Zimmermann 2003;

Bayer 2002; Zimmermann & Saalfeld 1993; Stöss 1991). Empirically, most studies have tried to test the economic-crisis-thesis by looking for correlations between electoral success of populist radical right parties and levels of unemployment, at the national or regional level. The conclusions are, as ever, contradictory: few find (strong) positive correlations (e.g. Thieme 2005; Kreidl & Vlachová 1999; Jackman & Volpert 1996), most (weak) negative correlations (e.g. Arzheimer & Carter 2006; Jesuit & Mahler 2004; Pop-Elechus 2003; Wendt 2003; Lubbers 2001; Knigge 1998), and some no significant or contradictory correlations (e.g. Givens 2005, 2002; Chapin 1997).[2] Additionally, there are studies that find a mediated effect through the level of state welfare provisions (Swank & Betz 2003) or immigration (Jesuit & Mahler 2004; Golder 2003).

The finding that populist radical right parties fare less well in countries with a higher level of unemployment is not as puzzling as it might seem at first. In times of higher unemployment, socioeconomic issues will normally have greater salience in the political debate. This profits those political parties that have established "ownership" over issues like employment and socioeconomic policies (see chapter 10). As populist radical right parties are seldom considered particularly competent in this area, and rather profit from issues like crime and immigration (see below), the rise in salience of socioeconomic issues decreases their electoral appeal. This might be partly softened when high levels of unemployment are combined with high levels of immigration (Golder 2003), as this increases the possibility of combining the two issues, which can at least partly benefit those populist radical right parties that have established ownership over the immigration issue.

Béla Greskovits (1998, 1995) rejects the simple economic-crisis-equates-populist-success-thesis on the basis of the Latin American experience. Instead, he argues that populist episodes usually begin immediately after a deep economic crisis.[3] This would explain why Eastern Europe was not overtaken by populist politics in the first period of postcommunism. And if he is correct in his analysis of the structural similarities between (early) postcommunist Eastern Europe and postpopulist Latin America, "[t]he age of demagogic economic populism in Eastern Europe may still be on the horizon" (Greskovits 1995: 106). However, in this model the future success in Eastern Europe would be of a "neopopulist" nature (Weyland 1999; Knight 1998), in our terms neoliberal populism,

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[2] Some of the contradictory results might be explained by differences in data and methods used in the studies.

[3] Lipset already argued that "status insecurities and status aspirations [i.e. the sources of radical right success, CM] are most likely to appear as sources of frustration, independent of economic problems, in periods of prolonged prosperity" (1955: 188).

rather than populist radical right. As the economies of the more advanced democracies in Central Eastern Europe have only recently overcome their initial postcommunist downfall (Szelenyi 2006), the coming decades will prove Greskovits right or wrong.

As Andreas Schedler noted, "[i]n the field of political science it has become commonplace to affirm that we live in times of political crisis" (1997: 2). Almost every period has its own alleged political crisis, be it the "end of ideology" of the 1950s and 1960s (e.g. LaPalombara 1966; Bell 1960), which incidentally resurfaces every so many years, the (conventional) participation crisis of the 1970s (e.g. Inglehart 1977), or the party crisis of the 1980s (e.g. Daalder 1992; Kuechler & Dalton 1990). In most cases, the arguments for the existence of a political crisis lacked both theoretical clarity and empirical substance.

In the 1990s surveys showed record low levels of political trust in European democracies almost across the board (e.g. Norris 2002; Pharr & Putnam 2000). While for most Western European democracies this indicates a (significant) drop in trust, in Eastern Europe the levels have never been particularly high, but are nevertheless decreasing. Whether these figures indicate that Europe is in political crisis today, at least in terms of "specific support" (e.g. Dahl 2000), is difficult to decide without clear definitions. The even more obvious problem is that we are not, whatever newspapers and antifascists claim, experiencing a Europe-wide populist radical right wave of electoral success. True, the 1990s have been the most successful postwar period of populist radical right parties (e.g. Wilcox *et al.* 2003a), but they have been successful in only a minority of European countries.

As part of the political crisis thesis, authors have studied the correlation between political dissatisfaction and the electoral support of populist radical right parties at the national level. As is so often the case with macro-level analyses, the results go in different directions: some find a significant positive relationship (e.g. Knigge 1998), others do not (e.g. Norris 2005). While most countries with successful populist radical right parties have experienced growing levels of political dissatisfaction, there are important exceptions. For example, Denmark saw a growing level of political *trust*, from 40 percent in 1991 to 65 percent in 2001, one of the highest in Europe, at the same time that the DFP made significant gains in electoral support (Andersen 2002: 14).

While most research on Western Europe links political crisis to specific support for democracy, i.e. the practice of democracy, given that "general support" for democracy, i.e. for the ideal ("democracy is the best political system"), has been both constant and very high (e.g. Dahl 2000). This is not the case in all parts of Eastern Europe, and some literature on

Table 9.1 *Democratic support and electoral success of populist radical right parties in Eastern Europe*

| Country | Support for democracy and its alternatives | | Electoral success populist radical right |
	Democratic support	Antidemocratic support	
Czech Rep	74	11	medium
Albania	**73**	**18**	low
Estonia	*68*	**17**	low
Slovenia	64	16	medium
Hungary	**63**	**24**	medium
Poland	**62**	14	medium
Slovakia	*61*	16	high
Romania	*60*	27	high
Bulgaria	52	37	low
Russia	**48**	**43**	high

Source: Averages calculated on the basis of Pickel & Jacobs (2001: 6).

this region relates the concept of political crisis to the levels of general support for democracy. Table 9.1 provides an overview of the average national support for democratic and antidemocratic ideas per country in a selection of Eastern European countries. With the exception of Russia, the populations of all postcommunist new democracies clearly support democratic ideas much more than antidemocratic ones.

The Eastern European countries are categorized into three groups on the basis of the average electoral success of populist radical right parties in national parliamentary elections in the period 1990–2005.[4] The first group includes countries with successful parties, gaining an average of over 5 percent of the national vote in the parliamentary elections of the postcommunist period (i.e. Romania, Russia, and Slovakia). The second group contains countries with moderately successful parties, averaging between 2 percent and 5 percent of the national vote over the whole period (i.e. the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia). The third group includes countries with unsuccessful parties, scoring an average of less than 2 percent (i.e. Albania, Bulgaria, and Estonia).

Some signs of a relationship between democratic support and electoral success for populist radical right parties are visible: five out of the

[4] Because of their unique character, i.e. an electoral battle between the former communist party and an umbrella party of opposition groups (e.g. Pop-Elechus 2003), the "founding elections" (i.e. the first postcommunist elections) are excluded.

ten countries fit the hypothesized inverse relationship (Albania, Hungary, Poland, Russia, and Slovenia), while three others come close (Estonia, Romania, and Slovakia). Only the Czech Republic and Bulgaria really go against the expected relationship. With regard to support for antidemocratic alternatives and electoral success of populist radical right parties the relationship is less straightforward. Only four countries more or less fit the hypothesized positive relationship (i.e. Albania, Estonia, Hungary, and Russia).

But even if a causal relationship does exist, and it is in the alleged direction (cf. Van der Brug 2003; Thijssen 2001), the theoretical argumentation remains weak. While the argument makes sense at the micro-level, i.e. people express their dissatisfaction by voting for the protest parties *par excellence* (see 9.6), it is far less compelling at the macro-level. Why would people in countries in political crisis vote for populist radical right parties?

More recently, the political crisis thesis has been operationalized in terms of the level of "cartelization." In their now famous article on the "cartel party," Richard Katz and Peter Mair (1995) argue that party competition has developed from strict government opposition to cartel-outsiders. According to them and others, this process of cartelization goes a long way in explaining the increased levels of political resentment and the success of populist (radical right) parties (e.g. Blyth & Katz 2005; Blyth 2003; Taggart 1996). So far, most studies have addressed mainly whether the cartel party and the process of cartelization exist, rather than whether it stimulates electoral success of populist (radical right) parties (e.g. Detterbeck 2005; Poguntke 2002; Helms 2001). Some of the few studies that discuss the link between cartel politics and populist radical right parties in Europe simply confirm their dual occurrence (Bottom 2004; Müller 2002). In the comparative studies that do address the relationship between cartelization and electoral success of the populist radical right within Europe, the cartel party thesis is found to be "of limited value" in its strict interpretation (Helms 1997: 49; also Jungerstam-Mulders 2003). Similarly, outside of Europe, Murray Goot (2006) has found no support for the thesis with regard to the rise of the Australian ONP.

The political crisis thesis is sometimes also studied through the more general phenomena of clientelism and corruption, although not all authors connect the phenomena explicitly. Kitschelt in particular, has included clientelism and corruption in his analyses of radical right support (e.g. Kitschelt 2002; Kitschelt & McGann 1995). His contention is that, in combination with other variables (e.g. postindustrialism and convergence of the main parties), a patronage-based party system and

political economy will encourage medium support for right-authoritarian parties and strong support for populist antistatist parties (Kitschelt & McGann 1995: fig. 1.2; also Helms 1997). The thesis is confirmed empirically in a different study of several exclusively West European cases (Veugelers & Magnan 2005).

Other authors have linked political crisis to particular political systems, i.e. consociational or consensual systems (e.g. Papadopoulos 2005; Dehousse 2002; Evans & Ivaldi 2002; Andeweg 2001; Kriesi 1995). They argue that these systems have been more prone to populist resurgence because of their lack of party alternation or choice between clear political alternatives (i.e. left and right). At first sight, this seems to be supported by the data: Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, and Switzerland are broadly considered to be the prime representatives of the consensual system (e.g. Lijphart 1984), and all have been linked to large populist electoral success. However, even if consensual systems in crisis do produce populist reactions, they do not necessarily produce populist *radical right* reactions (e.g. LPF in the Netherlands).

Moreover, if we take a look at the European countries where populist radical right parties have been most successful since 1990 – Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, France, Italy, Romania, Russia, Serbia, and Slovakia – a link to one specific political system is not readily discernible (also Lijphart 2001). In addition, we should be careful to distinguish between the causes of political crisis in different regions, most notably the East and West. As Radoslaw Markowski has argued, "Western dissatisfaction with democracy and populist/radicalist trends are ontologically different phenomena (at least partly) from the manifestations of similarly dubbed processes in [the] East-Central part of the continent" (2002: 28). Most importantly, while the political systems are well established in most West European countries, they are fairly new phenomena in the East. Consequently, frustrations in the East may be less the result of actual material conditions than of unmet expectations (Učeň 2002).

9.2.3   Ethnic backlash

A third theoretical school of macro-level explanations comes from an intellectual tradition fairly similar to that of the modernization thesis, most notably history and nationalism studies. It sees populist radical right parties first and foremost as a defensive response of the majority population to a perceived "ethnic" threat (e.g. Wendt 2003; Veugelers & Chiarini 2002). In short, the main perceived threat is from (non-European) immigrants in the Western part of the continent and (domestic) ethnic minorities in the East (see chapter 3).

The horrific nativist violence in parts of the Balkans (e.g. former Yugoslavia) and the Soviet Union (e.g. Chechnya), and to a lesser extent the (largely) nonviolent separations of the Baltic states and Slovakia, gave new favor to the age-old "myth of global ethnic conflict" (Bowen 1996), so persuasive in academic circles since at least the end of the Second World War. In its most basic form, this myth states that ethnic diversity hampers democracy and leads to (ethnic) conflict, either violent or nonviolent. It is prevalent not only in nationalism or nonwestern studies, but also in much classic comparative political science (see, for example, Almond 1956).

The ethnic-backlash-thesis is quite pervasive in the academic literature on Eastern Europe. Particularly in the first years of postcommunism, scholars would argue that ethnic nationalism had always been the "dominant political force" in Eastern Europe (Bogdanor 1995: 84) and that it was thus only logical that "once again nationalism is the *sine qua non* for political success in Eastern Europe" (Fischer-Galati 1993: 12). In this view, the totalitarianism of the communist regimes had created an "unnatural" situation, an historical abbreviation, by "putting a lid" on the natural nationalism.[5] Postcommunist politics in Eastern Europe would inevitably be dominated by nationalism, given the historical legacies and the continuing ethnic diversity.

The thesis has been dominant with regard to Western Europe as well, yet in a less theoretical and more implicit form. While only few authors use the theoretical insights of ethnic politics from nonwestern studies explicitly (e.g. Wendt 2003), much of the literature sees West European populist radical right parties first and foremost as a majority response to the perceived threat of mass immigration (e.g. Husbands 2001; Fennema 1997; Von Beyme 1988). While historical determinism might be less dominant in this literature, the underlying assumptions are the same as those of "the myth of global ethnic conflict."

Empirical research produces highly contradictory results, depending on choices of datasets, indicators, units of analysis, etc. With regard to Western Europe, some authors find a clear positive correlation between the number of foreign-born citizens and the electoral success of a populist radical right party in a country (e.g. Golder 2003), while others do not (e.g. Wendt 2003). Similarly, some studies show a significant positive correlation with the number of new immigrants (e.g. Swank & Betz

[5] Some authors have even claimed that (most of) the communist regimes were essentially nationalist, thereby following Eastern European tradition. For example, the famous Polish dissident Adam Michnik stated that "[n]ationalism is the last word of Communism" (1991: 565). For a powerful critique of the nationalist determinism literature, see William W. Hagen's insightful essay "The Balkans' lethal nationalisms" (1999; also Bowen 1996).

Table 9.2 *Number of asylum applications and electoral success of populist radical right parties per country, 1989–1998*

Country	Asylum applications	Populist radical right
Germany	1,905,800	medium
France	**327,350**	**high**
United Kingdom	314,630	low
Netherlands	296,140	low
Sweden	264,650	low
Belgium	**152,720**	**high**
Austria	**131,290**	**high**
Spain	79,230	low
Denmark	71,160	high
Italy	54,410	high
Norway	48,390	low
Greece	26,080	low
Czech Republic	17,720	moderate
Hungary	17,080	moderate
Finland	**15,340**	**low**
Poland	**12,370**	**low**
Ireland	**10,630**	**low**
Portugal	**5,350**	**low**
Romania	3,260	high
Luxemburg	2,790	moderate
Slovakia	2,270	high
Bulgaria	**2,080**	**low**
Slovenia	610	moderate

Source: UNHCR (1998: 85).

2003; Lubbers 2001; Knigge 1998) or asylum seekers (e.g. Wendt 2003; Lubbers 2001) at the national level, but others find a negative (cor)relation or none at all (e.g. Dülmer & Klein 2005; Jesuit & Mahler 2004; Kriesi 1995).

Few pan-European analyses are so far available (though see Norris 2005). A quick look at the relationship between the number of asylum applications and the electoral success of populist radical right parties in a broad range of Eastern and Western European countries in the period 1989–98 suggests that there is no clear relationship (see table 9.2). Countries are again classified into three groups: high electoral success of the populist radical right (5 percent or more), moderate success (between 2 percent and 5 percent), and low success (under 2 percent). Only eight of the twenty-three cases fit the expected positive relationship.

One problem with using these rough data is that they do not account for the huge differences between countries. Obviously, 100,000 asylum

Table 9.3 *Number of refugees per 1,000 inhabitants and electoral success of populist radical right parties per country, 1999–2003*

Country	Refugees per 1,000 inhabitants	Electoral success of the populist radical right
Serbia & Montenegro	**39**	**high**
Sweden	16	low
Denmark	**13**	**high**
Germany	11	medium
Norway	11	low
Bosnia-Herzegovina	**9**	**high**
Netherlands	9	low
Switzerland	**8**	**high**
Austria	4	high
Croatia	**4**	**medium**
United Kingdom	4	low
Finland	2	low
France	2	high
Luxemburg	2	low
Belgium	1	high
Hungary	**1**	**medium**
Ireland	1	low
Slovenia	1	low
Bulgaria	**0**	**low**
Czech Republic	**0**	**low**
Estonia	**0**	**low**
Greece	**0**	**low**
Italy	0	high
Latvia	**0**	**low**
Lithuania	**0**	**low**
Poland	0	high
Portugal	**0**	**low**
Romania	0	high
Russia	0	high
Slovakia	0	high
Spain	**0**	**low**

Source: 2003 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook

seekers would have a more noted effect upon the population if the country itself had, say, 300,000 inhabitants rather than 30,000,000. Consequently, the following indicator is very useful, as it relates the number of refugees to that of the inhabitants of the host country. This time the period is 1999–2003, but again no clear relationship with the electoral success of the populist radical right can be observed (see table 9.3).

Fourteen of the thirty-one countries (45 percent) fit the hypothesized positive relationship; the same percentage applies to countries with

Table 9.4 *Ethnic diversity and electoral success of populist radical right parties in Eastern Europe, 1990–2005*

| Country | Majority–minority groups | | Electoral success populist radical right |
	Percent own ethnic[6]	National threat	
Latvia	52	yes	low
Estonia	62	yes	low
Serbia	**66**	**yes**	high
Ukraine	73	yes	low
Croatia	78	**yes**	high
Lithuania	80	**no**	low
Russia	83	no	high
Bulgaria	85	yes	low
Slovakia	87	**yes**	high
Romania	89	**yes**	high
Slovenia	91	no	moderate
Hungary	92	no	moderate
Czech Rep	94	no	moderate
Poland	98	no	moderate

successful parties. However, regarding the latter, there is a difference between countries in the West (50 percent) and in the East (40 percent). Moreover, the two Eastern European countries that do fit the hypothesis, Serbia and Montenegro, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, are very distinct cases, having experienced civil war during this period. Therefore, the fact that the success of the populist radical right parties in the three "normal" postcommunist countries is not explained by the relative number of refugees warns against putting too much value on this variable, at least in the Eastern European context.

The most obvious explanation for this is that mass immigration (including refugees) is not (yet) an important social phenomenon in the postcommunist states of Eastern Europe. Here, it makes more sense to study the ethnic backlash thesis by focusing on the majority mobilization against large groups of (domestic) ethnic minorities, mostly ethnic nationals of former "occupying" states and Roma (see also chapter 3). However, once more the data do not show a strong relationship (see table 9.4).

As can be seen from the second column of table 9.4, there is no apparent relationship between the size of the minority population (measured inversely through the size of the majority population) and the level of

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[6] These figures are taken from: *Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States* (London: Europa, 1992), 1st edn. The figures come from very different sources and times, but the assumption is that the percentages have not changed dramatically over the last decade(s).

electoral success of the populist radical right. In fact, only one case (Serbia) fully fits the expected inverse relationship. This would not even change if we were to include the variable of state continuity, contrary to the finding in other, more impressionistic, studies (e.g. Von Beyme 1996).

But the size of the majority population does not necessarily show whether there is one or more powerful ethnic minority against which the "threatened" majority might feel it has to protect itself. Hence, I have also constructed a "national threat" indicator, measuring whether the country in question has a significant minority of a former "occupier" within its state borders. Whether the minority is significant does not merely depend on its numbers, but also on its demographic concentration and political organization. Again, no clear relationship can be found. Only five of fourteen countries (36 percent) fit the hypothesis.[7] However, four of the five countries (80 percent) with a successful populist radical party also include a "threatening" minority group. Given that this accounts for only half of the countries with a "national threat," this variable is at best a necessary but not a sufficient condition.

Quite inconclusive results are found with regard to the relationship between the electoral results of the populist radical right and the level of ethnic polarization in a country. Ethnic polarization is operationalized as "the difference between the positions taken by members of the ethnic majority and members of the ethnic minorities on issues concerning minority rights" (Evans & Need 2002: 659). The countries are divided into three categories: low (differences of less than 0.5), moderate (between 0.5 and 1), and high (more than 1). Of the three countries with a high level of ethnic polarization, two have unsuccessful populist radical right parties (Estonia and Latvia). Only Slovakia (high, high) and Ukraine (low, low) perfectly match the hypothesized relationship (see table 9.5).

This is not to say that no relationship exists between any of these variables and ethnic politics or nativism more generally. Indeed, in most of the countries with unsuccessful populist radical right parties strong ethnic and nativist rhetoric can be observed within the mainstream parties, most notably in the early postcommunist years in the Balkans and Baltics (see chapter 2) and more recently in Hungary (FIDESZ-MPS). In fact, this might be one of the reasons why populist radical right parties have not been successful in these countries, as will be elaborated in the next chapter.

In conclusion, despite its prominence in the literature, implicitly on the West and more explicitly on the East, the ethnic-backlash-thesis lacks

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[7] Admittedly, the "moderate" category is difficult to fit, given that the "national threat" category is binary, but one would rather expect a threat than no threat.

Table 9.5 *Ethnic polarization and electoral success of populist radical right parties in Eastern Europe, 1990–2005*

Country	Level of ethnic polarization	Populist radical right success
Estonia	high	low
Latvia	high	low
Slovakia	**high**	**high**
Bulgaria	moderate	low
Lithuania	moderate	low
Romania	Moderate	high
Czech Rep	low	moderate
Hungary	low	moderate
Poland	low	moderate
Russia	low	high
Ukraine	**low**	**low**

Source: Evans & Need (2002: 662)

convincing empirical evidence. Populist radical right parties have had significant electoral victories in highly homogeneous countries (like the Czech Republic, Italy, or Poland) and failed in highly heterogeneous countries (like the Baltic states or Luxembourg). Furthermore, it rests on some questionable theoretical assumptions, most notably the equation of ethnic diversity with ethnic conflict. In the form of the immigration thesis, predominant in the literature on Western Europe, the situation is not much better. While mass immigration certainly played a role in the electoral breakthrough of some parties, often as a catalyst (Mudde 1999), it largely fails to explain the often huge temporal and regional differences in electoral support within single countries.

9.2.4   Authoritarian legacy

One of the most influential theories on historical fascism is linked to the famous thesis of the "authoritarian personality" (Adorno *et al.* 1969). Inspired by Freudian theory, various authors have argued that people with a particular personality are susceptible to the radical right and that this personality is the result of an authoritarian upbringing (e.g. Reich 1970). While the theory has been mostly applied at the micro-level, some studies on new democracies have lifted it to the macro-level, arguing that Europe's new democracies are particularly vulnerable to populist radical right parties because of the authoritarian upbringing under the former regime.

While the authoritarian legacy thesis has been applied only marginally to the new democracies in Southern Europe, possibly as a consequence of the striking lack of populist radical right success, the literature on post-communist Europe is full of these references (e.g. Tismaneanu 1998; Braun 1997). A good example is the following conclusion of Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, in her attempt to explain grassroots nationalism in post-communist Europe: "The complex of attitudes related to communist socialization, labeled residual communism, has the strongest influence in determining nationalism" (2004: 71–2). Some even go so far as to speak of a "double authoritarian legacy," referring to both the pre-war right-wing authoritarian ("fascist") and the postwar left-wing authoritarian ("communist") regimes (e.g. Anastasakis 2000). The obvious problem with this general thesis is that it cannot account for the striking absence of populist radical right success in most of the postcommunist world or for the intra-regional differences (Mudde 2002a).

9.3   Meso-level explanations

The meso-level is the most neglected level of political analysis, and studies on populist radical right parties are no exception to this general rule (e.g. Coffé 2004; Eatwell 2003). It is also the most difficult to delineate; it covers roughly everything between the macro- and micro-levels. According to Roger Eatwell, "[t]he meso [level] is concerned with local organizations to which individuals belong, or through which they gain knowledge and norms, such as the family, school, or party" (2000: 350).

Very little research has been done into the workings of the meso-level. Regarding the role of the school, most surveys show that there is a significant inverse relationship between the level of education and populist radical right voting. However, the argumentation is not so much that certain types of schools teach their pupils populist radical right attitudes, but rather that all schooling decreases these attitudes, and the more schooling an individual gets, the more populist radical right attitudes are replaced by "democratic" or "tolerant" values.

There is little doubt about the crucial importance of the family in the socialization of human beings, but because of well-known difficulties involved in researching this process, not that much is known on the topic. In the 1950s and 1960s Adorno's theory of the authoritarian personality was a popular explanation of historical fascism. He argued that people who had been brought up by an authoritarian father were predisposed to authoritarian attitudes, which were believed to be the support base of "fascism." While the authoritarian personality has largely survived as a personality type, the Freudian theory explaining its construction has

been discredited on both theoretical and empirical grounds (e.g. Martin 2001; Stone *et al.* 1993).

A related theory states that populist radical rightists come from populist radical right families. A recent comparative study indeed found that many activists of populist radical right groups were raised in such families (Klandermans & Mayer 2005). However, these findings are very difficult to extrapolate to party electorates, as we know that members and voters hold very different values and have very diverse backgrounds (e.g. May 1973). Moreover, the theory can hardly explain the recent dramatic rise in populist radical right support – except by arguing that in the 1960s populist radical right families gave birth to far more children than other families – let alone account for short-term fluctuations in this support.

The relatively few studies that have focused upon the meso-level, if one can truly include these, have mostly tested macro-level theories at the subnational level. In many cases, the analysis was done at the regional level, which is often more resemblant of the macro- than the meso-level, for example in the case of the German states (e.g. Givens 2002; Karapin 2002; Lubbers 2001; Chapin 1997) and French regions (e.g. Minkenberg & Schain 2003; Givens 2002), several of which are larger than many EU member states. But there have also been studies at the local level of electoral districts (Dülmer & Klein 2005; De Neve 2001), municipalities (Coffé *et al.* 2006; Bjørklund & Andersen 2002), and even at the sublocal level of city boroughs and districts (e.g. Thijssen & De Lange 2005; Swyngedouw 1992; Witte 1991). As with the macro-level studies discussed above, the conclusions diverge seriously, depending on the data, indicators, and units of analysis used.

Although initial empirical results at the meso-level seem to provide the same confusion as studies at the macro-level, there are important reasons to devote more attention to this level. As the meso-level is closer to the individual, the link between "social context" and individual behavior, so weak in most macro-level analyses, can be more convincingly rendered (e.g. Johnson *et al.* 2002). This is particularly true the lower the level of analysis; i.e. it is more plausible that the attitudes of the family or even the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the neighborhood in which a person lives have an impact on her/his (voting) behavior than do the general characteristics of the (large) city or region in which s/he lives.

Consequently, much more empirical work should be done at the meso-level applying more diverse research methods (including multisited ethnography; see Holmes 2000). Moreover, this research should focus on the supply-side of politics too, including the history of a specific area, the role of the local media and opinion-makers, and the activities of the local

populist radical right party (e.g. Eatwell 2000). Some initial, relatively impressionistic observations from studies in several English towns and city districts definitely provide inspiration for more fundamental research, despite the high cost and considerable difficulty involved (e.g. Eatwell 2004; Copsey 1996).

9.4 Micro-level explanations

While most explanations are developed at the macro-level, many empirical tests are carried out at the micro-level. The vast majority of articles on populist radical right politics published in international refereed journals try to explain why people vote for populist radical right parties. Often unhindered by the problematic theoretical linkage between macro-level explanations and micro-level actions, they look for correlations between individual attitudes and voting behavior. This section will critically assess the insights of these studies, focusing on two main sets of micro-level explanations: populist radical right attitudes and insecurity.

9.4.1 Populist radical right attitudes

The most self-evident explanation of the electoral success of populist radical right parties is that many people hold populist radical right views. In this approach, populist radical right parties are like other ("normal") parties, in the sense that they are voted for by supporters rather than protesters (see also 9.6). Despite the overwhelming logic of this argumentation, only a few studies have actually tested it empirically. Moreover, those that did have used some highly questionable proxies, rooted in the spatial interpretation of the party family so prevalent in quantitative studies.

The most common empirical test of the "support thesis" has been through a literal spatial interpretation of the "extreme right," i.e. the most right-ward position on the (in)famous left–right scale. There are obvious advantages to this method: left–right scales are part of every election study in the world and, particularly in Western Europe, almost all respondents are able to place themselves on them (Klingemann 1995). Various scholars have found that respondents who place themselves on the extreme right end of the scale are (far) more likely to vote for "extreme right" parties (e.g. Betz 1994; Bauer & Niedermayer 1990; Schumann & Falter 1988). While there are some differences in the cut-off points used in these studies, the results seem convincing. Indeed, even in multivariate analyses "extreme right ideology" proves to be the most important variable in explaining the electoral failure and success of populist radical right

parties (e.g. Van der Brug *et al.* 2005, 2000; Van der Brug & Fennema 2003).

Despite the overwhelming empirical evidence, the relevance of these findings has to be questioned on more fundamental grounds. Putting aside the issue of endogeneity, even if there is a relationship between voting for populist radical right parties and left–right self-placement, we cannot assume (1) ideology is the most important factor in voting for a populist radical right party, let alone that (2) a populist radical right ideology is. First of all, these studies simply find a correlation and not causation; i.e. they do not find that these people have voted for populist radical right parties *because of* their ideology (or in this case, left–right self-placement). Second, the meaning of the left–right scale is quite vague and differs significantly between and even within countries (e.g. Ignazi 2003; Fuchs & Klingemann 1990). The predominant understanding of the scale, insofar as there is any consensus with regard to its meaning, is in traditional socioeconomic terms (Downs 1957). However, under this construal populist radical right parties are not positioned at the extreme right end of the scale (see chapter 5).

More accurate are the few studies that have operationalized the "extreme right" ideology on the basis of the relevant literature by constructing a scale, in the tradition of the famous F-scale (Adorno *et al.* 1969). Unfortunately, studies that operationalize the populist radical right ideology as a syndrome are extremely rare and their relevance is weakened by the small numbers of voters of populist radical right parties in their data sets (e.g. Meijerink *et al.* 1998; De Witte *et al.* 1994). Interestingly, the findings are not always in line with the general expectations: (1) the majority of supporters of populist radical right parties are not "extreme right," while (2) the majority of "extreme right" people vote for mainstream political parties (e.g. Eith 2003; Billiet & De Witte 1995).

Most empirical research studies the different features of the populist radical right ideology in isolation. According to the consensus in the literature on Western European parties, the main reason for their support is a nativist position on the immigration issue. John Veugelers and Roberto Chiarini, after pointing to the various disagreements within the field, assert "[o]ne point is beyond debate, however: far-right parties of Western Europe stand out in terms of their preoccupation with immigration and their marked intolerance toward racial and ethnic minorities" (2002: 83). Indeed, some authors even treat populist radical right parties (*de facto*) as single-issue parties; hence the term "anti-immigration parties" (e.g. Gibson 2002; Fennema 1997).

Many studies have substantiated the claim that the electorates of these parties are only distinguishable from those of the other parties in their

political system with regard to their negative attitude towards immigration (e.g. Norris 2005; Mayer 2002; Van der Brug *et al.* 2000; Billiet & de Witte 1995; Betz 1994). These findings are corroborated in Eastern Europe, where the electorates of populist radical right parties tend to stand out in terms of nativist attitudes towards ethnic minorities, although the differences with some other parties (e.g. HZDS in Slovakia or PDSR in Romania) are not always significant (e.g. Pop-Elechus 2003; Robotin 2002; Ramet 1999a). The importance of nativist attitudes to the electorates of populist radical right parties has also been reported outside of Europe (e.g. Denmark & Bowler 2002; Gibson *et al.* 2002). In short, most electoral studies show that within the electorates of populist radical right parties more people are nativist (*quantity*) and they are more nativist (*quality*) than within the electorates of other parties.

Similar results have been reported in studies on authoritarianism, which is often the second most important attitudinal variable in explaining populist radical right voting, after nativism (e.g. Mayer 2005; Lubbers 2001; Minkenberg 2000). And in one of the few cross-national studies of the postcommunist region, Mungiu-Pippidi even found that "authoritarianism proves more powerful [than nationalism] in explaining the vote for radical nationalists" (2004: 64). Additionally, various studies have pointed to the importance of "law and order issues" for the electorates of populist radical right parties (e.g. Bjørklund & Andersen 2002).

The third and last core feature of the populist radical right, populism, has so far been little operationalized in empirical studies at the mass level. Many studies simply limit populism to antiestablishment sentiments and then assume that the populism of populist radical right parties is attractive to people who hold negative attitudes toward the political system (political resentment). Indeed, many studies do find that (Western) European populist radical right parties are particularly supported by people with strong antiestablishment sentiments, or that their electorates stand out from those of other parties in terms of their antiestablishment sentiments (e.g. Norris 2005; Fieschi & Heywood 2004; Ignazi 2003; Lubbers 2001; Betz 1994). Similar findings have been reported for non-European democracies, for example in Australia and New Zealand (e.g. Denmark & Bowler 2002).

In this respect, populist radical right parties do not only have to compete with other "protest" parties, like the radical left or neoliberal populists, but also with abstention (obviously, this is less the case in countries with compulsory voting, like Belgium, Greece, and Luxembourg). Many studies show that within the group of people with high levels of antiestablishment sentiments and other types of political resentment roughly

two options exist: exit (abstention) or voice (vote for a populist radical right party or another "protest party"). Little research has been done into the variables that affect this choice, if only because nonvoters are very difficult to catch in survey research. However, Elisabeth Gidengil and her colleagues found that "[a]ntipartyism is more likely to result in an 'antiparty' vote than in abstention. Those who are more involved and more informed are especially likely to work for change within the system" (2001: 491). This also lends some support to the thesis that political efficacy benefits the populist radical right (e.g. Eatwell 2003, 1998; see also chapter 4). However, it does not explain why these voters would prefer a populist radical right party over another "protest party."

In conclusion, empirical research provides ample evidence for the argument that populist radical right attitudes are widespread within the electorates of populist radical right parties. However, several qualifications have to be made regarding this more general statement. First, most of the core features of the populist radical right ideology are measured by proxies, i.e. very rough indicators of these very complex concepts, which in some cases are highly questionable (notably populism). Second, the populist radical right ideology is a *combination* of three features (authoritarianism, nativism, and populism), yet in almost all empirical research the features are studied in separation. Third, populist radical right attitudes might be more prevalent and intense within the electorates of populist radical right parties, but they are very widespread within the electorates as a whole. As a consequence, the relationship between populist radical right attitudes and the support for populist radical right parties is far from perfect.

An even more fundamental problem with most of these studies is their failure to show that these people have voted for populist radical right parties *because of* their populist radical right attitudes (Mudde 1999). In fact, the few studies that do look into voter motivation produce far less convincing results. For example, even though "the immigration issue" (as a proxy of nativism) is the key motivation for people supporting the Belgian VB, only a minority of 33 percent support the party *because of* this reason. Similarly, only 14 percent of these voters mention "political resentment" (as a proxy of populism) as their prime motivation (e.g. Swyngedouw 2001: 236). Together, these two proxies for part of the populist radical right ideology still account for only a minority (47 percent) of VB voters. Similarly, in the 1980s the largest group within the FN electorate voted for that party because of the immigration issue, but they accounted for only 39 percent of overall support in 1984 and 46 percent in 1986 (Mitra 1988: 51–2). The other issues that were mentioned could not easily be linked to populist radical right attitudes.

9.4.2 Insecurity

"The preoccupations of the populist electorate can be encapsulated in one word: insecurity" (Dehousse 2002: 4). According to many authors, populist radical right parties are first and foremost supported by insecure people (e.g. Christofferson 2003). The theoretical argument goes along the following lines: as a consequence of the macro-level developments discussed above (i.e. globalization, mass immigration, economic and political crisis), large groups of the population have become insecure about various aspects of their life: identity, job, life as a whole. They seek salvation in the "simple messages" of the populist radical right, which promises a clear identity and protection against the changing world.

Micro-level survey research in various European countries also substantiates that supporters of populist radical right parties feel more insecure about the future. Some French studies even show that "insecurity" is a major motivation for people to vote for the populist radical right. In the first round of the French presidential elections of 2002, it was the most frequently mentioned motivation for 74 percent of the Le Pen voters and 68 percent of the Mégret voters (Perrineau 2002: 9). However, in (earlier) studies that allowed respondents to choose only one motivation, just 18 percent of the FN voters named insecurity as the main reason for their choice (Mitra 1988: 52). Unfortunately, in most studies the type of insecurity is not specified and the sentiments can thus refer to a broad spectrum of motivations (e.g. cultural, economic, financial, personal, political) – even though the most common meaning of the term seems to relate it to crime.

One of the few research projects that clearly distinguishes among different forms of insecurity is the EU-sponsored "Socio-Economic Change, Individual Reactions and the Appeal of the Extreme Right" (SIREN). To the astonishment of the researchers, the analyses show that "[j]ob insecurity and deprivation temper ERPA [extreme right party affinity], while a more comfortable situation seems to strengthen ERPA" (De Weerdt *et al.* 2004: 81). This seems to provide some support for the related thesis of welfare chauvinism, or in the terms of Lipset (1955: 191) "prosperity-born bitterness," i.e. that populist radical right parties are supported by people who want to hold on to what they have in the face of the perceived threats of globalization (i.e. mass immigration and the postindustrial society).

The security thesis is also, often implicitly, linked to the theoretical argument that the populist radical right is essentially a materialist "counter-revolution" against the economic insecurities produced by globalization and modernization (e.g. Bjørklund & Andersen 2002;

Minkenberg 2000).[8] Most often this is part of the larger modernization thesis and tested at the macro-level (see above). If applied to the micro-level, the search is for a correlation between "losers of modernization" and voting for populist radical right parties. While some studies find such correlations, with regard to either objective or subjective losers of modernization (e.g. Mayer 2002; Robotin 2002), no research has shown that (1) the electorate of populist radical right parties holds welfare chauvinist attitudes, *and* (2) that these attitudes are central in their party choice.

As far as micro-level analyses are concerned, results do not seem to provide strong evidence for the thesis that economic insecurity plays a dominant role in the motivation of voters of the populist radical right (see also 5.3). Some studies do indicate that welfare chauvinist attitudes are more widespread among the electorate of populist radical right parties than in society as a whole, but they do not show that these attitudes are the prime motivator for the party choice (e.g. Plasser & Ulram n.d.). These findings are collaborated by studies on non-European populist radical right parties (e.g. Denmark & Bowler 2002; Goot & Watson 2001).

Christopher Wendt has tested the insecurity thesis at the macro-level for Western Europe, correlating the national electoral success of populist radical right parties with national crime rates per 100,000 inhabitants. He finds that "crime rates do rather poorly in every period, though there is a positive relationship" (Wendt 2003: 38). A similar conclusion is reached with regard to Eastern Europe (Pop-Elechus 2003). However, Kreidl and Vlachová (1999) find a clear significant positive relationship between crime rate and voting for a populist radical right party at the regional level in the Czech Republic, whereas Coffé and her collaborators find no significant correlation at the municipal level in Flanders (Coffé *et al.* 2007).

At the micro-level the results are not much better. While the importance of "law and order issues" is often noted in (electoral) studies on populist radical right parties, "crime" seems to play only a marginal role in motivating people actually to vote for a populist radical right party. True, these issues have a high priority among the electorates of these parties. However, they often come second or even third in finally deciding which party to vote for (after xenophobia and political resentment; e.g. Betz 1994). For example, "crime" was mentioned by just 4.8 percent of the VB electorate as the prime motivation for their vote (Swyngedouw 2001: 236).

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[8] This differs from Ignazi's meaning, who clearly sees the silent counter-revolution as, first and foremost, a postmaterialist phenomenon, just like the silent revolution (e.g. Ignazi 1992; Inglehart 1977).

9.5   One electorate or many?

One of the fundamental problems of most empirical studies on the electoral support of populist radical right parties is the underlying assumption of one homogeneous electorate. In other words, the hunt is on for *the* populist radical right voter, even though empirical studies of the electorates of populist radical right parties have shown that *he* does not exist. True, the electorates of these parties have been converging over the past decades, most notably as a consequence of proletarianization (Betz 1994), but important variations remain between parties and countries. In fact, if one looks at the stereotypical voter of a populist radical right party, as described in the literature – a young, male blue-collar worker (e.g. Arzheimer & Carter 2006; Evans & Ivaldi 2002) – *he* constitutes only a minority of the whole electorate of the populist radical right party family in Europe.

In fact, the electorates of populist radical right parties in Europe are heterogeneous, just like those of other political parties. Logically, they become even more diverse the more successful a party becomes. Already in 1984, French researchers had distinguished five subgroups within the FN electorate: xenophobes, traditional Right, Catholic Fundamentalists, Young Workers, and Prodigal Sons of the Left (in Mitra 1998: 58–60). In recent analyses, Nonna Mayer distinguishes four subgroups on the basis of their previous electoral behavior (1998: 16–17). The four subelectorates show substantial differences in terms of sociodemographic characteristics and attitudes. One can even distinguish two (part) opposites, i.e. left-wing *lepénistes* versus right-wing *lepénistes* and supporters versus *ninistes* (see also 9.6). In Austria, researchers distinguish between at least two "sociopolitical types" within the electorate of the FPÖ: "welfare state chauvinists" and right-wingers disillusioned by the system (*Systemverdrossene Rechte*) (Plasser & Ulram n.d.: 5).

The existence of subgroups within the populist radical right electorates is relevant because of their (potential) effects on empirical research into the causes of electoral success. Most electoral studies employ methods that look for linear relationships. However, if various subgroups are present within the electorates, of which some share opposing values on the same variable, the analysis will find no (significant) correlation for that variable. Take, for example, the variable age, one of the most widely used demographical variables in electoral studies. Several populist radical right parties are supported disproportionally by both the youngest and the oldest cohorts of the general electorate (e.g. Arzheimer & Carter 2006). As a consequence, the variable age might not turn out to be significant in electoral analyses of these parties, even though it clearly plays a role.

While some of these problems, such as the effect of heteroscedasticity described above, could be overcome by advanced statistical methods, the analysis of subelectorates unfortunately presents new and less easily surmounted problems, most notably the fact that the small number of voters for populist radical right parties in election studies often does not allow for further differentiation (e.g. Evans *et al.* 2001).

9.6   Protest vs. support

One of the main debates in the field is whether the vote for populist radical right parties is essentially an expression of *support* or *protest* (e.g. Perrineau 2002; Schumann 2001; Shafir 2001; Williams 1999; Van Holsteyn 1990). Particularly in the media the interpretation changes regularly, depending on the "mood of the people." For example, whereas voters of the Dutch CP were mainly denounced as "racists" in the early 1980s, voters of the almost identical CD in the early 1990s were described as "protesters" who had a legitimate grievance, even if they expressed it through the wrong channel (Mudde & Van Holsteyn 2000). In academia the characterizations tend to be more stable, but different schools exist, one stressing the predominance of "xenophobia" (i.e. support) and the other of "political resentment" (i.e. protest), to use the two most prominent explanations of electoral success of populist radical right parties (Betz 1994).

As is often the case, empirical studies produce highly contradictory results, largely due to the striking differences in operationalizations. For instance, in the most influential studies on this point (Van der Brug & Fennema 2003; Van der Brug *et al.* 2000) the concept of protest vote is not operationalized directly, but as the residue unexplained by the other variables (for a critique, see Bergh 2004; Thijssen 2001). And even these most ardent believers of the support thesis had to qualify their original position by distinguishing between "two separate groups" of populist radical right parties, one voted for more on the basis of support, and the other (also) on the basis of protest (Van der Brug & Fennema 2003).

A more accurate operationalization of "the protest vote" starts from the understanding that: (1) two actors are central in the definition of any voter, the individual and the party; and (2) there are two general ways to define the protest voter, depending on which of the two actors is considered central. The first defines the protest vote on the basis of the party, i.e. a protest voter is an individual who votes for a "protest party." Here, the motivations of the party are definitive; what exactly defines a protest party is another issue of dispute, however (e.g. Fennema 1997). The second defines on the basis of the voter, i.e. a protest voter is an individual who uses her/his vote to express protest (e.g. Bergh 2004;

Decker 2004: 188–95). In the latter the ideology of the party is secondary and the choice for a party is, at least in part, instrumental.

I agree with those who argue that protest voting should be defined primarily on the basis of the voter, "since they are the ones who are protesting" (Bergh 2004: 376). After all, most protest parties also have an ideology that is supported by at least some part of their electorates. On the basis of a voter-centered definition one could further distinguish between different types of protest vote(r)s. For example, on the basis of the "object of protest," Johannes Bergh (2004) differentiates between "system protest," directed against the political system as such, and "elite protest," aimed specifically at political elite(s).

The relationship between the protest voter and the party voted for can be quite varied. In the most general sense, the party is simply a means to an end, i.e. a whip to punish one or more established parties. Won-Taek Kang (2004: 84) refers to an "exit-with-voice" option, i.e. protest voters leave their traditional party (exit) but rather than not voting at all (exit in Hirschman's terms) they vote for another party (voice). In this interpretation, the party is not chosen for its program or its policy potential, but for the pain it causes the established parties. Obviously, pariah parties, as most populist radical right parties are, will profit in particular from these voters. Some parties have understood this very well and address these voters directly. A leaflet of the German DVU stated: "For every DVU representative who gets into the regional parliament of Brandenburg, one of the others gets the chop. This way the voting ballot [*Stimmzettel*] becomes a thinking ballot [*Denkzettel*]. Only right-wing protest really hews in" (in Stöss 2005: 143).

The protest voter can choose a party that, at least on some issues, supports his/her preferred policies in order to indicate these preferences to the established parties. Here the difference between protest and support votes becomes more difficult to establish. Conceptually, it would make sense to define this distinction on the basis of the *relationship* between the voter and the party that receives the vote: the "support voter" trusts the party for whom s/he votes to govern and implement its policy agenda, whereas the "protest voter" primarily sees the voted party as a vehicle to punish other (established) parties or push them in the right direction. This could also explain the finding that in certain party systems moderate voters prefer extreme parties; i.e. expecting a watered-down policy as a consequence of coalition formation, "voters often compensate for this watering-down by supporting parties whose positions differ from (or are often more extreme than) their own" (Kedar 2005: 185).

Empirical analyses have measured protest voting either by negation or by proxy. In the former, a protest vote is the same as the absence of a

support vote, i.e. an ideological vote (notably Van der Brug *et al.* 2000; Van der Brug & Fennema 2003). However, this would count a protest vote with the aim of policy balancing as a support vote. Not surprising then that these studies tend to confirm the support vote thesis, although some also acknowledge that some populist radical right parties might be voted for mainly on the basis of protest. Most studies measure the protest vote by proxy, i.e. they do not so much study the motivations of the voters but their attitudes. If voters are negative about the political system or the political elitest, they are presumed to express "system protest" and "elite protest" respectively (see also 9.4.1).

According to electoral research, "[t]he supporters and/or voters for extreme right parties are by far the most alienated vis-à-vis the democratic institutions and their functioning" (Ignazi 2003: 213). Almost half of the electorate of the two populist radical right candidates in the 2002 French presidential elections, Le Pen and Mégret, were "*ninists*" (neither right, nor left). "*Ninists* essentially vote against all existing parties, out of protest and despair, and beat all the records on our indicators of political distrust" (Mayer 2005: 9). In Austria, between 39 percent and 66 percent of the FPÖ electorate in the 1990s named the desire to "send a message" as one of its major motivations and saw the FPÖ as a "new broom" to dust out Austrian politics (Ignazi 2003: 119).

Both types of studies are limited by a conceptualization of protest that precludes the empirical possibility of overlap between a support vote and a protest vote. However, someone with populist radical right attitudes can vote for a populist radical right party both because he shares the ideology (i.e. support) and because he rejects mainstream politics (protest). Which of the two prevails can only be determined by establishing the position of the voter with respect to the party of choice.

Some data clearly show that the vote for a populist radical right party was first and foremost a vote *against* the other (established) parties, rather than *for* the populist radical right party. This was the case, for example, in the early stages of the FN: in the presidential elections of the late 1980s a majority of Le Pen voters did not want him to become president (Bell 2000). Similarly, in 1983, 23 percent of CP voters did *not* want that party to participate in government, while in 1993 this group represented 34 percent of CD voters (Mudde & Van Holsteyn 2000: 157). In the Greek parliamentary elections of 2004, just 17 percent of the LAOS supporters said they had voted for "the best choice" and 8 percent for "the least bad choice"; a stunning 75 percent said they had expressed a "protest vote."[9]

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[9] The data are from a V-PRC poll and unfortunately do not include the operationalization of the category "protest vote" (personal communication by Ioannis Kolovos).

Yet there are also (indirect) indicators of the predominance of the support vote. In this respect, it is important to point out the extremely high levels of voter loyalty among the electorates of successful populist radical right parties. For example, 79 percent of the people who had voted for the Romanian PRM in the 1996 parliamentary elections did so again in 2000 (Shafir 2001: 100). The Austrian FPÖ had between 77 percent and 81 percent loyal voters in the period 1986–1999 (www.sora.at). Other studies report similarly high percentages, roughly between 75 percent and 90 percent, for the Belgian VB, the Danish DFP, and the French FN (Evans & Ivaldi 2002: 76). Obviously, successful parties will have higher percentages of loyal voters than unsuccessful parties,[10] but percentages of (over) 80 percent loyalty clearly point in the direction of at least partial "support" rather than merely undirected "protest."

Populist radical right parties will most likely have both groups of voters within their electorates. While smaller parties will have predominantly support voters, particularly in low-intensity elections, larger parties will have a more diverse electorate, including large groups of protesters. Moreover, many individual voters will occupy both positions, i.e. sharing populist radical right attitudes but also protesting against the established parties (e.g. Eith 2003; Shafir 2001; Van Donselaar & Van Praag 1983). Importantly, the groups are not static and most protest voters will either develop into support voters (loyalty) or change parties (exit). In essence, the key to the electoral persistence of populist radical right parties is their ability to transform protest voters into support voters (e.g. Schmidt 2003; Betz 2002b; De Witte 1998). The high percentages of loyal voters within the electorates of parties like the FN and VB show that the more successful parties have indeed managed to do exactly that. It is particularly in this respect that the internal supply-side becomes important (see chapter 11).

9.7   Conclusion

Electoral studies have focused primarily on the demand-side of populist radical right party politics, i.e. determining the most fertile breeding ground for populist radical right parties. In this respect, it is (self-)evident that mass social changes like the "silent revolution" (Inglehart 1977) and

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[10] Interestingly, even unsuccessful populist radical right parties can achieve relatively high levels of voter loyalty. Despite the fact that the Czech SPR-RSČ saw its electorate almost halved in the 1998 parliamentary elections, still 50 percent of its 1996 electorate had again voted for the party (Vlachová 2001: 485). With regard to party identification, the distribution of 1996 SPR-RSČ voters was not much different from the other Czech parties, except in the categories "very strong" and "very weak," which were both comparatively high (Vlachová 2001: 487).

the development of multicultural societies (at least in Western Europe) play a role, as do Hans-Georg Betz's famous two motives, xenophobia and political resentment. However, how macro-level factors exactly influence micro-level behavior remains largely undertheorized.

Even if we can establish a clearer theoretical argumentation specifying how macro-level processes like globalization create micro-level attitudes like nativism and populism, much remains to be explained. Most of the macro-level processes affect European countries in roughly similar ways. Not surprisingly then, most European countries – particularly when considered as the East and West region – have a fairly similar demand-side, i.e. quite similar levels of theoretically relevant attitudes (most notably xenophobia and political resentment). Hence, the macro-level explanations cannot account for the striking differences in populist radical right electoral success between countries with fairly similar breeding grounds.

Europe-wide semi-permanent processes and systems like globalization, modernization, and multicultural society by and large ensure the continuous generation of nativist, authoritarian, and populist sentiments. This means that the populist radical right party family will continue to operate in a favorable breeding ground for years to come. As the recent years have already made abundantly clear, this does not necessarily mean that these parties will also (continue to) gain electoral victories in all European countries.

In other words, the demand-side might explain why and which people constitute the *potential* electorate of populist radical right parties, but they do not (necessarily) explain why and who actually *votes* for these parties. As Renaud Dehousse (2002: 4) has stated with some exaggeration, "the protest vote is only the *tip* of the iceberg." According to one study, populist radical right parties in Western Europe (1989–99) mobilized between 13 percent (CD in 1999) and 70 percent (FPÖ in 1999) of their electoral potential, with most parties achieving the support of less than half of their potential voters (Van der Brug *et al.* 2005: 547). While the operationalization of "potential voters" was very broad in this particular study,[11] the general conclusion seems valid: populist radical right parties, like all political parties, are able to mobilize only a part of the group of people that consider voting for them.

Demand-side theories are not able to explain this poor level of mobilization, i.e. the metaphorical tip of the iceberg. In other words, a fertile breeding ground is a *necessary* but not a *sufficient* condition (Van der Brug *et al.* 2005). Macro-level theories can explain the existence of

[11] On the ten-point scale they used to probe into the potentiality of respondents to vote for a party, the authors selected a rather low cut-off point of 6 (rather than, say, 8).

certain micro-level attitudes, which in turn create the breeding ground for (populist radical right) parties. It is the meso-level, however, that can explain why some attitudes become more important in voter motivation than others. The supply-side of populist radical right party politics is crucial to understanding meso-level processes; thus, it will be the focus of the next two chapters.

10 External supply-side: political opportunity structures

> While the extremist parties pick up the good vocabulary from the main-stream parties and keep the old bad grammar, the mainstream parties do just the opposite, keeping the good grammar but picking up the bad vocabulary in an attempt to be more successful. But such tactics will only create more confusion.　(PER 2002: 30)

10.1　Introduction

The last few years have seen a growing number of studies showing the importance of supply-side factors in the success and failure of populist radical right parties (e.g. Carter 2005; Givens 2005; Norris 2005; Van der Brug *et al.* 2005; Betz 2004; Decker 2004). Success will be interpreted here primarily in electoral terms, in line with most of the academic literature on populist radical right parties. However, special attention will be paid to the distinction between electoral *breakthrough* and *persistence*, which are clearly related, but do not always have the same explanations (Coffé 2004; Schain *et al.* 2002b). Moreover, electoral success does not equal political success; in fact, it is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition (see further chapter 12).

The discussion of supply-side factors proceeds with the fairly straightforward distinction between internal and external factors. The next chapter will address the major internal factors, i.e. those directly related to the populist radical right parties themselves. This chapter focuses on external factors, i.e. those not *inherent to* the populist radical right parties. In aggregate external factors constitute the so-called political opportunity structure, the overarching concept in this chapter.

The concept of the political opportunity structure (POS) derives from the literature on new social movements and has only recently been applied to the study of the populist radical right (e.g. Rydgren 2005b; Decker 2004; Jungerstam-Mulders 2003; Minkenberg 1998; Kitschelt & McGann 1995). Political opportunity structures are defined as "consistent, but not necessarily formal or permanent, dimensions of the political

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environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure" (Tarrow 1994: 85). As the meta-variable of political opportunity structure touches upon many different (sub)variables, the following discussion will be structured by distinguishing among three partly overlapping contexts: the institutional, the political, and the cultural. Since the media play an important and highly complex role in the success and failure of populist radical right parties, and influence each of these contexts, they will be discussed in a separate section.

10.2 The institutional context

A fertile breeding ground at the mass level is important to populist radical right parties, but it is only one factor in their success or the lack thereof. Indeed, "populist politics is defined not only by idiosyncratic issue orientations, but also by structural constraints, such as those of the electoral system and the partisan alternatives it affords" (Denemark and Bowler 2002: 64). In recent years a number of studies have focused on the effects of the institutional framework on the electoral success and failure of populist radical right parties (e.g. Arzheimer & Carter 2006; Carter 2005; Norris 2005; Lubbers 2001). The hypothesis is that "different political systems provide different opportunities and limitations for Far Right parties to succeed in the electoral arena" (Jungerstam-Mulders 2003: 29).

The *electoral system* has been identified as an important hindrance to populist radical right parties (and other new or small parties). This has been particularly strong in studies on countries that use some form of plurality system, most notably the first-past-the-post system of the United Kingdom (e.g. Eatwell 2000; Copsey 1996), However, as the NF demonstrated in the late 1970s and the BNP affirmed in recent local elections, (incidental) successes at the local level are definitely possible (Mudde 2002b) despite the tendency of the plurality system to conspire against these parties at the national level. Moreover, both the Greens and the UK Independence Party (UKIP) have proven that even in the nationwide European elections seats can be won by nationally irrelevant parties.[1]

The other major example of a plurality system, the two-tier majority system, has also been regarded as an important institutional hurdle for the populist radical right (on France, see Hainsworth 2004; Schmidt 2003).

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[1] I'm using the term "relevant" in the Sartorian sense here, i.e. parliamentary political parties that have either coalition or blackmail potential (Sartori 1976).

These systems lead to run-offs between two candidates, which are most problematic for polarizing candidates, as has been clearly demonstrated in the run-offs in presidential elections in France (Le Pen in 2002), Romania (Tudor in 2000), and Slovakia (Mečiar in 2000 and 2004). However, these systems also produce bargaining opportunities for third parties, leading to significant electoral and political benefits, as the FN has experienced over the past decades.

Most European electoral systems, however, are proportional systems, or mixed systems with a dominant proportional character (e.g. Gallagher *et al.* 2005). Nonetheless, between these various proportional electoral systems there is a significant range of proportionality. As so often, empirical studies come to very different findings about the effects of these systems on the electoral support of populist radical right parties. Both univariate (e.g. Carter 2004, 2002) and multivariate (e.g. Carter 2005; Norris 2005; Van der Brug *et al.* 2005; Jesuit & Mahler 2004) analyses have found that the effect of the level of proportionality of the electoral system is not significant. But other multivariate analyses did find a significant effect of the disproportionality of the electoral system; however, some found a positive (Arzheimer & Carter 2006; Swank & Betz 2003), and others a negative effect on the electoral success of populist radical right parties (Veugelers & Magnan 2005; Golder 2003; Jackman & Volpert 1996). In short, the evidence indicates that electoral systems have some effect on the electoral opportunity structure of political parties, but help little in explaining the differences in electoral success between different countries, parties, periods, and regions.

Although the direct effect of the electoral system on the success of populist radical right parties is still an issue of academic debate, many key political actors have perceived it as being very important. Consequently, electoral successes are regularly followed by calls for changes in the electoral system. Russian President Boris Yeltsin, for example, reacted to the surprise victory of the LDPR in the 1993 parliamentary elections with an (unsuccessful) attempt to seriously reduce the number of party-list seats in favor of single-member districts (White 1997).[2] In other countries elites have called for the introduction of an electoral threshold (usually of 4–5 percent), pointing to the alleged success of such institutional hurdles in keeping populist radical right parties out of the federal and most regional parliaments in Germany (e.g. Van Donselaar 1995). In Germany, on the other hand, some mainstream politicians argued for

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[2] In the 1995 parliamentary elections, the LDPR won 11.2 percent of the votes (and 50 seats) in the proportional election of the party lists, yet only 0.4 percent of the vote (and 1 seat) in the single member districts (White 1997: 112).

the adoption of the British first-past-the-post system after the electoral success of the REP in West Berlin in 1989. And in the UK, the Electoral Reform Society recommended a move to proportional representation in reaction to the local successes of the BNP in Burnley (Deacon *et al.* 2004).

In some countries anxious calls for reform are actually met by the political will to effect them. In a variety of cases the electoral system has been altered to weaken the populist radical right, with adjustments ranging from small detailed amendments to full-fledged system changes. In the Netherlands, for example, the number of signatories to contest districts was increased from 190 to 570 nationwide. This seemingly minor change limited the CD to contesting only seventeen of the nineteen electoral districts in the 1998 parliamentary elections, resulting in its failure to pass the very low threshold of 0.67 percent to maintain its presence in the Dutch parliament (Van Donselaar 2000: 37–9).

Obviously, the electoral system can also be changed to strengthen the populist radical right. In fact, when in power populist radical right parties have consistently attempted to manipulate the electoral system, most notably by gerrymandering, i.e. adjusting the district borders to create more favorable electoral results. In Croatia, for example, the HDZ redistricted the capital city, Zagreb, a stronghold of the opposition (Ottaway 2003). In Slovakia, on the other hand, the third Mečiar government was unsuccessful in its attempt to redraw the district boundaries to undermine the (particularly Hungarian-speaking) opposition. In this case the initiative came from the HZDS, but enjoyed the full support of the SNS.

France is a rare case in which a nonallied political party consciously changed the electoral system in favor of the populist radical right. In a modern version of Machiavellian politics, and in line with a long French tradition of using the electoral system for one's own party interests (Knapp 1987), socialist President François Mitterand replaced the plurality system with a proportional one for the 1986 parliamentary elections, in an (only partly successful) effort to bolster the FN and thereby weaken the mainstream right (i.e. RPR and UDF). The RPR and UDF were similarly instrumental in their decision to change the regional electoral system in 1998 in an effort to weaken the FN.

In addition to the electoral system, other aspects of the *political system* have been considered relevant for the success of populist radical right parties as well. Frank Decker (2004) argues that federalism protects the federal level from "right-wing populist" success. His argument implicitly affirms the second-order election thesis (Reif & Schmitt 1980); people vote for radical parties in secondary elections, in this case regional elections. In a similar indirect way, Michael Minkenberg argues that the

French FN profited from the centralist French political system, which supports the "construction of an effective organization" (1998: 308) that again leads to electoral success. In sharp contrast, others have argued that federalism actually benefits radical parties, including populist radical right parties and Greens, as it provides them with the opportunity to start small and work their way up (e.g. Jungerstam-Mulders 2003; Müller-Rommel 1998).

Some scholars have linked electoral success to the structure of political cooperation in a country. For example, Decker (2000: 238) argues that corporatist structures have supported rather than hindered the rise of right-wing populist parties, because of the exclusion of new political actors at the expense of the privileged partners (i.e. the established parties). Similarly, various authors have argued that consociational political systems have facilitated populist radical right parties, because of their lack of transparency and party political alternation, leading to dissatisfaction and protest voting (e.g. Dehousse 2002; Kitschelt 2002; Andeweg 2001).

On the basis of an (admittedly provisional) empirical comparative analysis, the data do not provide clear answers (see also 9.2.2; Papadopoulos 2002). While there are federal systems with unsuccessful right-wing populist parties (including those termed populist radical right here), such as Germany and (with some stretching) Spain, there are others with some of the most successful parties, notably Austria, Belgium, and Switzerland. And while there are unitary states with successful populist radical right parties, including France and Romania, there are many more with unsuccessful parties, notably most postcommunist states and the United Kingdom (at least until devolution). Similarly, there are corporatist and consensual political systems that have seen substantial electoral successes of the populist radical right (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Denmark), and those that have not (e.g. the Netherlands, Sweden). If anything, these political systems seem to facilitate antiestablishment parties in general, rather than the populist radical right in particular.

A case can be made for the argument that (all) populist parties profit from the inherent tension of liberal democracy (e.g. Mény & Surel 2002b; Canovan 1999). Liberal democracy is based upon different, in part contradictory logics: democratic majoritarian rule versus liberal protection of minorities, rule of the people versus constitutional limitation. Populism provides a simple and attractive alternative to the complexities and contradictions of liberal democracies by choosing unequivocally for unmitigated majority rule. While this argument makes sense, it contributes little to understanding why certain types of populist parties are successful (e.g. neoliberal, radical right, social), or why populist radical right parties are

more successful in certain countries and periods despite shared liberal democratic features.[3]

In conclusion, the institutional framework of a country is "rather a symptom than the true reason for [strengths and] weaknesses in mobilization" (Decker 2003a: 226). Political and electoral systems do not so much determine whether political parties have electoral success; they provide them with electoral and political opportunities. As such, they are important building blocks of the larger political opportunity structures within which populist radical right parties function. Whether or not these parties successfully exploit the potential of the institutional framework in which they operate depends to a large extent upon what other political actors do.

10.3 The political context

As populist radical right parties are first and foremost political parties, their key context is the competitive political arena of party politics. Like all other parties, they function within one or more party systems. The interaction between a populist radical right party and other political parties, especially the established ones, as well as the dynamics among parties within the system, to a large extent create or foreclose opportunities for populist radical right parties. The impact of the structured interaction of parties within the electoral arena has been referred to as the "electoral opportunity structure" (Van der Brug *et al.* 2005: 546ff.), which is shaped by various factors.

First of all, for populist radical right parties to gain electoral success there has to be space for new parties in the party system (e.g. Rydgren 2005b; Veugelers 1997; Linz 1976). If voters are fully loyal to their party, new parties will only appeal to new voters, i.e. people who for reason of status or inclination did not vote in the last elections. Even though most populist radical right parties do particularly well among first-time voters, as well as among previous nonvoters (e.g. Kreidl & Vlachová 1999; Ignazi 1996; Betz 1993a), they represent only a small subset of the electorate. Still, the statement that "loyalty to a political party makes citizens less susceptible to being swayed by demagogic leaders and extremist movements" (Dalton & Wattenberg 2002: 6) does not explain much, and is even tautological if the "political party" is defined as mainstream (i.e. nonextremist).

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[3] The same holds for the highly plausible argument that the complex and opaque system of representative democracy of the EU increases the support for populists (e.g. Taggart 2004).

There is clear evidence that electoral volatility has increased significantly in Western Europe, particularly since the 1990s. One of the results of this development has been the rise of various new parties, including spectacular electoral successes by "flash parties" like the FPd and LPF (Gallagher *et al.* 2005; Mair 1997). In postcommunist countries electoral volatility has been extremely high from the beginning due to lack of party identification and indistinct party profiles along with a host of other reasons (e.g. Sikk 2005; Tóka 1997). This has led to landslide victories and earthquake losses. Importantly, quite often volatility is nearly as attributable to the behavior of political parties as it is to that of voters (e.g. Shabad & Slomczynski 2004; Mudde 2002c). For example, in the 2001 parliamentary elections in Poland, only 16 percent of the people who voted for the Polish right-wing AWS in 1997 remained loyal to the party. However, many of the other 84 percent voted for former AWS MPs contesting under new parties, notably PiS and LPR (Millard 2003: 80–2).

Over the past decades European parties have been confronted with various new developments (e.g. postindustrialism, mass immigration) and issues (e.g. environment, multicultural society). It has been argued that new parties could largely emerge because the old parties did not take up some of these new issues that parts of the electorate considered important; i.e. the environment in the case of the Green parties and immigration in the case of the populist radical right (e.g. Kriesi 1995; Betz 1994). This led to voters supporting the programs of new political parties out of anger and frustration with the established parties ignoring these new issues (see 9.6).

The positioning of the main established parties on key old issues (i.e. left–right divide) is also said to have a significant effect on the electoral opportunities of other parties, i.e. creating or closing political space for new competitors, including those of the populist radical right. However, how this plays out exactly has led to some controversy, which is summarized here as the Ignazi–Kitschelt–Ignazi debate. On one hand, the view that ideological convergence between the main (center-)right and (center-)left parties favors populist radical right parties garners broad support within the literature. This thesis, most elegantly presented by Kitschelt and McGann (1995), dates back to studies of the German NPD in the 1960s, when that party was believed to have profited heavily from the *Große Koalition* (Great Coalition) that governed Germany between 1966 and 1969 (cf. Stöss 2000; Backes & Jesse 1993).

One of the few dissenting voices is Piero Ignazi (1992), who argued in his seminal *EJPR* article that polarization was one of the key reasons for the "silent counter-revolution" of the 1990s. In his view, the

populist radical right profited from the success of neoconservatives.[4] In his later work Ignazi responded to the challenge of Kitschelt and others by elaborating the relationship between polarization and convergence as a two-step process: first, some mainstream right-wing parties in Western Europe moved to the right in the late 1970s and early 1980s (polarization) and then they regained a more centrist position after the mid 1980s (convergence) (Ignazi 2003: ch. 12). According to the new Ignazi, populist radical right parties have benefited from convergence only when it has come *after* polarization.

Most empirical evidence seems to support the simple convergence thesis (e.g. Carter 2005; Abedi 2004; Kitschelt & McGann 1995), although there have been countervailing findings (e.g. Norris 2005). Kitschelt and McGann's analysis has been seriously criticized by John Veugelers (2001), however, who demonstrates that "a more appropriate, dynamic measure of convergence" yields far less convincing support for the convergence thesis (see also Veugelers & Magnan 2005). And Michael Minkenberg (2001) has argued that convergence is more relevant for electoral breakthrough than for the persistence of populist radical right parties.

While most authors agree with the convergence thesis, particularly with regard to Western Europe, they disagree somewhat on *which* party (or parties) favors the electoral success of populist radical right parties as they converge. Some argue that it is not so much the convergence of all mainstream parties, but rather the centrist position of the largest mainstream right-wing competitor that is crucial (Van der Brug *et al.* 2005; for critique, Norris 2005). Elisabeth Carter (2005) presents evidence that, ideally, it is a combination of the two. Other commentators focus primarily on the role of the main left-wing party in the system, i.e. the social democratic party, arguing that populist radical right parties have occupied "the terrain evacuated by the Left" (e.g. Žižek 2000: 38; also Van den Brink 2005; Betz 2003a; Cuperus 2003; Thompson 2000).

The situation in Eastern Europe is far less researched, and remains difficult to fit into either of the two theories, as postcommunist politics has been characterized by polarization rather than convergence. Even where coalition governments are well established, most party systems have been stable only with respect to a sharp division between two blocks of major parties, despite changing party formations. This dynamic was strongest in the early postcommunist years, when electoral competition was almost exclusively structured on the basis of an anticommunist vs. communist divide, in which only few populist radical right parties gained

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[4] Ignazi's argument is similar to Lipset's (1955: 185) analysis of the situation in the US in the 1950s.

parliamentary representation in the region. Indeed, in various East Euro-
pean countries the polarization kept populist radical right individuals and
organizations from contesting elections independently for many years
(e.g. Mudde 2005b). To a certain extent this can be seen as inverse sup-
port for the convergence thesis, in the sense that it shows that polarization
is bad for the populist radical right.

The Hungarian parliamentary elections of 2002 are a more recent
example of the negative effect of polarization on the populist radical right.
The intense struggle between the socialist-liberal block (MSzDP/SzDSz)
and the national-conservative camp (FIDESz-MPS/MDF) left little space
for the populist radical right MIÉP. Not only did the nationalist and
populist campaign of Victor Orbán and his FIDESz-MPS prevent MIÉP
from picking up disappointed nationalist voters,[5] the polarization lifted
the turnout to a postcommunist high. Consequently, the 245,326 votes
that MIÉP gained in the first round of the 2002 elections amounted to
just 4.4 percent, while its 248,901 votes of 1998 had been the equivalent
of 5.5 percent (e.g. Fowler 2003).

Surely, if the new Ignazi is right, there is still hope for MIÉP. After
all, he hypothesizes that populist radical right parties will win once the
polarization decreases. The 2001 parliamentary elections in Poland might
provide some hope for the Hungarian populist radical right too. For over
a decade Polish postcommunist politics had been dominated by the anti-
communist vs. communist division between the various post-Solidarity
formations, on the one hand, and the various communist successor for-
mations, on the other. The 2001 parliamentary elections were heralded
as the first postcommunist electoral contest not dominated by this polar-
ization and among the winners were various populist parties, including
Samoobrona and the LPR. This trend continued in the 2005 parliamen-
tary election, in which both parties largely consolidated their positions.

Clearly, Ignazi's polarization–convergence thesis needs more robust
empirical testing, for which the postcommunist countries might provide
fertile ground in the coming years. That convergence between the main
(center-)right and (center-)left parties favors the populist radical right
seems fairly convincing. However, at least two important qualifications
need to be made.

Firstly, convergence favors radical parties more generally, rather than
only the populist radical right. True, communist parties in the 1960s
and Greens in the (early) 1980s may have profited disproportionately
from the convergence of the main center-left party, i.e. the socialist or
social democratic party in their party system. But currently neoliberal

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[5] One commentator even argued that Orban had "'out-Csurkaed' Csurka" (Shafir 2002a).

and, possibly to a slightly lesser extent, social populist parties also profit from both sides of the convergence. Consequently, this thesis can also be substantiated on the basis of research on parties like the Dutch LPF or the Scandinavian Progress Parties (e.g. Pennings & Keman 2003; Kitschelt & McGann 1995).

Secondly, under certain conditions populist radical right parties can also profit from polarization. This holds true, most notably, when they are part of one of the (two) main blocks of competition. This was the case for the LN, in the 1994 Italian parliamentary elections, and the SNS in the 1994 and 1998 Slovak parliamentary elections. Notably, in the highly polarized elections of 1998, the SNS was the only party of the third Mečiar government actually to gain votes. Interestingly, in run-offs for presidential elections the positive effect of polarlization seems very limited, as populist radical right candidates gain only marginally more votes in the second-round run-off than in the multicandidate first round (see also 10.2).

The issue that has raised most debate within the literature is the effect of "copying" by mainstream parties (e.g. Schain *et al.* 2002b; Minkenberg 1998). One could dub this the Chirac–Thatcher debate. Many commentators have accused particularly mainstream right-wing parties of copying the policies and rhetoric of populist radical right parties in an effort to limit electoral losses or even gain electoral successes. However, the effects of this strategy are variable and in some cases copy-catting may favor the populist radical right. Some authors contend that the copy-cat actions of the mainstream (right-wing) parties have "legitimized" (the themes of) the populist radical right and thereby increased their electoral success (e.g. Arzheimer & Carter 2006). This is argued most forcefully with regard to the French case (and Chirac), and has led to Le Pen's famous dictum that the voters prefer the original over the copy (e.g. Hainsworth 2000b). However, where the populist radical right has remained unsuccessful, commentators attribute their failure to the "successful" copy-cat actions of the mainstream parties. The mentioned case of the latter is Margaret Thatcher and the British NF at the end of the 1970s (e.g. Kitschelt & McGann 1995; Elbers & Fennema 1993), but the VVD and CD in the Netherlands (e.g. Bale 2003; Husbands 1996; Fennema 1995) and the FIDESz-MPS and MIÉP in Hungary (e.g. Shafir 2002b) are also well-cited examples.

At first sight, there seems to be a contradiction; it is either the one or the other. However, both could be true, if an essential intervening variable is included: *issue ownership* (Petrocik 1996: 826; also Budge & Farlie 1983). When a populist radical right party is able to persuade voters that it is better suited to "handle" an issue than the other parties, the increased

salience of that issue will profit the populist radical right party (Bélanger & Meguid 2005; Meguid 2005; Mudde 1999). For example, as early as 1986 half of the Viennese believed that the FPÖ was the most competent party on the immigration issue. Consequently, the ÖVP campaign around the slogan "Vienna to the Viennese" mainly strengthened the party that was considered to be the most competent in this field, i.e. the FPÖ (Ahlemeyer 2006; Müller 2002). Where one party has not established ownership with respect to an issue, other parties can run away with the topic.

Issue ownership is also one of the main reasons for the striking weakness of populist radical right parties in most postcommunist countries (e.g. Mudde 2002a). In this region, all political parties are still very young and volatile, and few have been able to establish ownership over any issue. Consequently, while in Eastern Europe, in the words of Michael Shafir, "the vocabulary of extreme nationalism has been made acceptable after having been absorbed by mainstream parties" (in Naegele 2002), populist radical right parties have hardly been able to profit.

It is important to note that these parties have not only been marginalized by the copy-cat actions of *right-wing* competitors. Different studies have pointed to the role of the communist PCF and the socialist PS in France or of the (local) Labour Party in the United Kingdom (e.g. Rydgren 2004a; Eatwell 2000). In the Czech Republic, the left wing has been the main competitor for the populist radical right. In the 1998 parliamentary elections, the social democratic ČSSD managed "to attract former republican supporters by radicalizing its appeal and alleging that liberal-conservative rule has ruined the country" (Marada 1998: 58). Empirical research showed that 41.4 percent of people intending to vote SPR-RSČ in 1996 had a (radical) left-wing party as their second choice (Vlachová 2001: 491), while this group had grown to 65.5 percent in 1998 (Kreidl & Vlachová 1999: 19).

More generally, the populist radical right in Eastern Europe has serious competition in the struggle for the alleged "modernization losers" from social populists, mostly little- or unreformed communist parties that have transformed themselves from the voice of the working class into the *vox populi* (e.g. March & Mudde 2005; Mudde 2002a). Viola Neu has captured this process in the Eastern part of Germany very perceptively: "The PDS tries to present itself as the voice of all those who feel second class people, who have lost orientation because of the enormous changes, and look back nostalgically at the secure relations in the former GDR" (2003: 268). Various electoral studies have shown that populist radical right parties and social populist parties have fairly similar electorates, both in terms of attitudinal and sociodemographic characteristics (e.g. Shafir 2001; Clark 1995).

To conclude the discussion of issue positioning of party competitors of populist radical right parties, the most important effect of the behavior of the mainstream parties is often on the *salience* of the issue: increasing confrontation over an issue, without finding a solution, augments the salience of an issue (Ahlemeyer 2006; Bélanger & Meguid 2005). This can profit *either* a populist radical right party, if it has established ownership of that issue, *or* another (radical or mainstream) party, if it has not. Given the many examples of successful adoption of "populist radical right" themes by mainstream parties (e.g. Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands), the conclusion that "the populist accentuating of so-called right-wing [sic!] themes by established parties so far has almost always benefited the right-wing extremists" (Eith 2003: 261) seems a politicized misrepresentation of recent political developments within European party politics.

In addition to the positioning of the other parties on certain issues, their behavior towards the populist radical right parties may also play an important role in explaining the (lack of) success of the populist radical right. Terri Givens has argued that a populist radical right party "will have difficulty attracting voters and winning seats in electoral systems that encourage strategic voting and/or strategic coordination by the mainstream parties" (Givens & Luedtke 2005: 150). While not completely convinced by her institutionalist argumentation, I agree that electoral systems provide political actors with opportunities to open or close the party system to new contenders. However, Givens' theoretical assertion that this elite behavior also significantly influences mass behavior, by increasing the number of strategic voters, is based on some highly questionable rational choice assumptions, most notably that of the "game of complete information" (Givens 2005: 92, 96).

Empirical research into the electoral effects of mainstream party strategies towards populist radical right parties is still in its infancy. Givens' analysis has the disadvantage that the hypotheses put forward are all highly specific to the cases selected. A very preliminary cross-national study of seven West European countries, based on a fairly rough expert study, found that whether or not a populist radical right party is ostracized by mainstream parties, through a so-called *cordon sanitaire*, seems to have little effect on its electoral support (Van der Brug & Van Spanje 2004). However, it does also suggest that if there is an effect, it will probably be limited to the electoral breakthrough stage.

10.4 Cultural context

The third and last context of the political opportunity structure of populist radical right parties is the cultural. While the concept of "political

culture" is notoriously difficult to use in empirical research (cf. Welch 1993), there is little doubt that countries differ with respect to national and political mores and values. Consequently, some cultures may be more conducive to the populist radical right than others (e.g. Art 2006; Minkenberg 2001; Helms 1997). The question, however, is what makes one culture "damp" populist radical right party success, and others "aggravate" it (Wendt 2003).

In this respect, much has been written about the alleged importance of *nouvelle droite* (new right) intellectuals in the rise of populist radical right parties (e.g. Spektorowski 2000; Minkenberg 1998). These self-proclaimed "neo-Gramscians of the Right" believe that a political victory can only come *after* a cultural victory, and therefore aim to establish a new right cultural hegemony (see De Benoist 1985). The influence of these groups is sometimes made out to be of stunning proportions, as authors will claim that populist radical right parties merely pick the fruits of the "cultural revolution" instigated by the new right. Obviously, this claim is hugely overstated, if only because few European countries have a functioning *nouvelle droite* subculture. Moreover, much of the new right ideology, with the notable exception of the features of "ethnopluralism" and "national preference" within the FN and those it influenced, remains marginal within both the general public and most populist radical right parties.[6]

The case of a favorable intellectual environment seems more convincing in various Eastern European countries, such as Croatia, Romania, and Serbia, where public intellectuals espouse more or less openly nativist and revisionist theses that are largely similar to the views held by the local populist radical right. In this respect, "intellectuals" who were educated under and worked for the former communist regimes play a particularly dubious role (e.g. Shafir 2002a; Markotich 2000; Sekelj 1998). Not all of these intellectuals are close to populist radical right parties, however, and given the broader use of these theses in (some) East European countries, the populist radical right often cannot really profit from this ideologically favorable cultural environment.

However, as a favorable intellectual climate might help explain success in some countries, a hostile environment is an equally important factor in explaining the failure of populist radical right parties in others. In many European countries these parties have to operate in an environment

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[6] Possibly the only somewhat relevant exception is the French MNR, the FN-split of Bruno Mégret, which is almost exclusively led by prominent members of the former *nouvelle droite* faction of the FN (see Adler 2001). Before the split, this group also played an important role within the FN (1989–1999), although without dominating it.

where "being tarred with the extremist brush" (Eatwell 2000: 364) means instant political death. In Western Europe, stigmatization is one of the main obstacles to the electoral and political success of populist radical right parties in countries like Germany and the Netherlands (see Klandermans & Mayer 2005; Decker 2003a; Van Donselaar 2003; Schikhof 1998), not surprisingly countries where the Second World War and the Holocaust have been the key point of reference for the distinction between good and evil in the postwar period (Van Donselaar 1991).

Nonna Mayer's observation that the populist radical right is particularly successful in West European countries and regions that had official administrative collaboration with Nazi Germany during the Second World War is particular interesting in this respect (Coffé 2004: 146–7). At first sight, the relationship between a fascist past and the electoral success of populist radical right parties seems quite convincing: eighteen of the thirty-two (56 percent) European countries included in table 10.1 fit the hypothesis.

But this leaves the question of how exactly the two relate theoretically. Given that populist radical right parties are not simply the successors to the historical fascist parties, the relationship can be at best indirect. David Art (2006) has argued that the way national elites deal with the Nazi past has a profound effect on the electoral success of the postwar (populist) radical right. I would suggest that this effect is, to a large extent, mediated through strong nativist subcultures – countries in which the elites take a revisionist approach to their Nazi past have provided a favorable environment for the development of a strong nativist subculture after the war, bridging the political extreme and mainstream. As will be argued below, these subcultures have a facilitating effect upon both the discursive and organizational opportunities of the populist radical right, sometimes giving way to a virtuous circle.

It is important to emphasize that by subcultures we do not so much refer to "crack-pot extremist groups" (Lipset 1955: 196), i.e. extreme right or neo-Nazi subcultures (e.g. Mudde 2005b; Minkenberg 2003), but rather to the broader nationalist ones. In countries and regions like Austria, Croatia, France, or Slovakia, large nationalist subcultures exist outside of the realm of the dominant populist radical right party, which directly feed important facilities and competent personnel into the local party (e.g. Hossay 2002; Mudde & Van Holsteyn 2000; Koopmans 1998).

An extreme example of crucial subcultural support for a (new) populist radical right party can be found in Poland. The LPR was founded only a few months before the 2001 parliamentary elections, as a hotchpotch of former members and delegates of mainstream and (populist) radical right

Table 10.1 *Fascist past and populist radical right electoral success (1990–2005) by country**

Country	Fascist past	Populist radical right success
Albania	**no**	**low**
Austria	**yes**	**high**
Belgium	no	high
Bulgaria	yes	low
Croatia	**yes**	**high**
Czech Republic	no	moderate
Denmark	no	high
Estonia	**no**	**low**
Finland	**no**	**low**
France	**yes**	**high**
Germany	yes	moderate
Greece	**no**	**low**
Hungary	yes	moderate
Ireland	**no**	**low**
Italy	**yes**	**high**
Latvia	**no**	**low**
Lithuania	**no**	**low**
Luxemburg	**no**	**low**
Netherlands	**no**	**low**
Norway	**no**	**low**
Poland	no	moderate
Portugal	yes	low
Romania	**yes**	**high**
Russia	no	high
Serbia	no	high
Slovakia	**yes**	**high**
Slovenia	no	moderate
Spain	yes	low
Sweden	no	low
Switzerland	no	high
Ukraine	**no**	**low**
United Kingdom	**no**	**low**

Note: *The variable "fascist past" indicates whether the country had an indigenous "fascist" regime that was either part of or aligned to the German–Italian Axis during the Second World War.

parties (see Millard 2003). Notwithstanding its novelty, the party gained over one million votes (7.9 percent) in the election. Rather than the result of a remarkable electoral campaign, or the attraction of a charismatic leader, the success was the result of the impressive mobilization potential of the orthodox Catholic-nationalist subculture around Radio Maria

and its powerful director, Father Tadeusz Rydzyk. They command a vast network of local organizations, including the so-called *Rodina* (Family) of Radio Maria, the satellite television channel Trwam (I Insist), and various publications such as the daily *Nasz Dziennik* (Our Newspaper). It even runs its own college, the Wyższa Szkoła Kultury Społecznej i Medialnej (College for National and Media Culture) in Toruń, where journalists and political scientists are educated (see Kostrzębski 2005; Pankowski & Kornak 2005; Strobel 2001).

Some authors have argued that active antiracist movements have been instrumental in hindering the electoral success of populist radical right parties (e.g. Copsey 1996). Although empirical evidence is scarce, at best it provides only weak support for this thesis (e.g. Husbands 2001; C. Lloyd 1998).[7] In some cases antiracist mass demonstrations directly follow populist radical right electoral successes, but if a party does face electoral defeat in subsequent elections there are many other (more) plausible factors to consider before concluding that there is any relationship between the protests and the party's losses. There could also be a relationship between the level of stigmatization and the effectiveness of antiracist mobilization. In countries like the Czech Republic and the Netherlands relatively low levels of antiracist mobilization might be (somewhat) more effective than comparatively higher levels of similar mobilization in, say, France or Hungary (cf. Veugelers & Chiarini 2002; Szôcs 1998).

The detrimental effects of cultural stigmatization on the electoral success of populist radical right parties are both direct and indirect. Obviously, fewer people are inclined to vote for a stigmatized party; even if its pariah status increases the party's protest credentials among a small hardcore of antiestablishment voters. At least of equal importance, however, is the effect of stigmatization on the party organization, which is essential for the persistence of electoral success (see 11.4). Here the effect works in two ways, leading to a vicious circle: (1) an aspiring populist radical right party that does not have overt links to extreme right groups will nevertheless hardly attract mainstream or successful people, who have a lot to lose from the damning stigma; (2) at the same time, the party will be very attractive to right-wing extremists, who see an opportunity to lose their even greater stigma. Consequently, marginally successful parties like the CP and the REP were *unterwandert* (flooded) by activists from the extreme right NVU and NPD, respectively, during the 1980s (Mudde 2000a). In

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[7] The most famous "success story" is the struggle of the Anti-Nazi League (ANL) against the NF in Great Britain. Even NF deputy leader Martin Webster claimed that the activities of the ANL played a key part in the party's demise at the end of the 1970s. However, the ANL collapsed in early 1979, a few months before the NF stood its largest number of candidates in any parliamentary election (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_National_Front).

fact, this migration from the extreme right has even been a problem for neoliberal populist parties like the German Schill-Partei and, to a lesser extent, the Dutch LPF (see Decker 2003a; Kreutzberger 2003).

In sharp contrast, a favorable political culture can have significant advantages for the development of the populist radical right. In countries where nativist issues are at the core of the political agenda, various subcultural organizations function as bridges between the political mainstream and the populist radical right (Mudde & Van Holsteyn 2000; De Witte 1998). These organizations will strengthen the populist radical right parties in a variety of ways. They will (1) heighten the salience of the nativist issue in domestic politics; (2) facilitate contacts between mainstream and populist radical right politicians, possibly leading to electoral and other cooperation; and (3) function as recruiting bases for competent new personnel for the parties. Altogether, they lead to a virtuous circle that promotes a positive image of the populist radical right and further decreases the already limited stigmatization of the populist radical right. These processes can be observed in almost every country and region where the populist radical right has been particularly successful over extended periods: Austria, Belgium, France, Romania, and Slovakia.

However, a favorable political culture also presents a danger to populist radical right parties: they risk redundancy. To a certain extent, this was the case in many Eastern European countries in the first years of postcommunism. Most of the populist radical right themes were taken up by mainstream parties, which implemented them in a more or less moderate form in their policies. Consequently, little electoral space was left for the "real" populist radical right. At the same time, in some cases there truly was little need for a separate populist radical right party, as the ruling party/parties executed most of their program. This was the case in Estonia and Latvia in the early 1990s (see 6.2.2), while in Croatia, in part as a consequence of the continuing war, the ruling HDZ became a populist radical right party (see 12.2.1).

10.5   The media: friend *and* foe

The role of the media in the success and failure of populist radical right parties has received little serious attention in social scientific studies (but see Walgrave & De Swert 2004; Mazzoleni *et al.* 2003; Goot 1999; Statham 1996). This is remarkable, given how much power is ascribed to the media in most discussions on politics in general, and on the populist radical right in particular. Many commentators have linked the success of these parties directly to the alleged nativist and populist campaigns of parts of the media, especially tabloids and commercial television (e.g.

Decker 2004; Bergsdorf 2000; Deutchman & Ellison 1999). In fact, some have suggested a relationship of mutual dependence: "Haider needed the media and they needed him" (Ritterband 2003: 28).

Interestingly, within the populist radical right the opposite view on the role of the media holds sway. Particularly within the smaller parties leaders and followers alike will blame the media for their lack of success. The late John Tyndall, leader of various populist radical right and extreme right organizations in the United Kingdom (including the BNP and NF), expressed the unequal struggle between his party press and the established media in the following terms: "In the propaganda war we were like an army equipped with bows and arrows facing an adversary using heavy artillery, bombers, missiles and all the other accoutrements of modern fire-power" (in Copsey 1996: 123).

There is little doubt that sections of the media, particularly tabloids and commercial television, discuss issues and use discourses very similar to those of the populist radical right (e.g. Norris 2000). Consequently, they are setting a public agenda highly favorable to populist radical right parties, which raise similar issues and present solutions in line with those offered or suggested in these media (e.g. Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden 2005; Walgrave & De Swert 2004). But the link between the agenda-setting of tabloids and commercial television and the electoral success of populist radical right parties is far from straightforward. There are many countries in Europe where the media express particularly populist radical right sentiments, yet these parties are quite marginal in electoral and political terms (e.g. the UK and much of Eastern Europe). There are two explanations, one external to the media and one internal to it.

The external explanation for the lack of a clear relationship between media agenda-setting and populist radical right party success is linked to the concept of issue ownership, as discussed above (see also Walgrave & De Swert 2004). As the media are at least as much a reflection of the public agenda as the setters of it, countries with highly nativist, authoritarian, and populist media will most probably have a relatively populist radical right mainstream. Consequently, it can be very difficult for populist radical right parties to differentiate themselves from the established parties and to profit fully from the media discourse.

The internal explanation has to do with the logic of most of these media: "while the media might at times pander to racial stereotyping, in general they are hostile to the extreme right" (Eatwell 2003: 60). This can best be illustrated by the case of Germany, home to the influential *Bild Zeitung*, the prototype of the (Continental) European tabloids. Many commentators in and outside of academia have pointed to the populist

radical right discourse employed by this popular newspaper (e.g. Eatwell 2000; Jäger 1993; Quinkert & Jäger 1991). But the same *Bild Zeitung* has often been highly critical of the populist radical right parties in Germany (e.g. Art 2006: 165–6). The same is true for the commercial television channel RTL, which combines sensationalist reporting in line with populist radical right propaganda with explicit anti(populist) radical right campaigns.

There are important exceptions to this general rule, of course. One famous example of a tabloid that not only supported the issues of the populist radical right, but also its main political actor, was the Austrian *Neue Kronen Zeitung* during much of the 1990s. This tabloid, which reaches a daily audience of some 43 percent of the Austrian population, not only pushed the issues of the FPÖ, it also presented the party as the political voice of common sense on these issues (e.g. Ahlemeyer 2006; Art 2006; Plasser & Ulram 2003). The tabloid's broad coverage and positive profile of the FPÖ helped the party to establish ownership over issues like immigration and *Politikverdrossenheit* (political dissatisfaction), on the one hand, and raised the importance of those issues for the broader public, on the other. Not surprisingly the (huge) readership of *Die Krone* had a "stronger empathy" with the FPÖ than the rest of the Austrian population (Plasser & Ulram 2003: 35).

In Poland an even deeper symbiotic relationship used to exist between the populist radical right and the Catholic fundamentalist Radio Maryja (Maria) and its extensive media network.[8] As one commentator noted: "At least twenty parliamentarians in the previous Parliament [1997–2001, CM] owed their seats to Radio Maria, which makes it the only radio station with parliamentary representation! In some cases, candidates endorsed by Radio Maria got more votes than those at the head of the party list" (PER 2002: 9; also Millard 1999: 120). This reference is to populist radical right candidates on mainstream lists, most notably the Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność (Solidarity Electoral Coalition, AWS), but in the 2001 parliamentary elections Radio Maria was also essential in getting the newly founded and until then largely inactive and unknown LPR elected to the Sejm.[9]

In some cases, populist radical right parties have benefited from media favoritism through their alliance with another political actor. This has been the case most notably with the AN and the LN and the Berlusconi

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[8] An even more singular case is the German DVU, the "phantom party" that is built upon the readership of the nativist media empire of entrepreneur-politician Gerhard Frey (see Mudde 2000a: chapter 3).

[9] Electoral studies showed a large overlap between the electorate of the LPR and the heartland of the orthodox Catholic subculture (see Millard 2003).

media empire in Italy (Biorcio 2003; Statham 1996). Similar situations have occurred in Eastern Europe with regard to the SNS and Mečiar in Slovakia and during certain periods with the SRS and Milošević in Serbia (see Bieber 2005; Pribićević 1999). There is no doubt that positive media attention has created a favorable setting for these parties, but it has likely been of greater consequence to their electoral breakthrough than to their electoral persistence.

However, in many more cases significant parts of the media are *un*sympathetic to the populist radical right. This is the case particularly with the so-called "elite media" (e.g. Schellenberg 2005; Mazzoleni 2003; Stewart *et al.* 2003), which are also attacked by populist actors: either directly, as active agents of the establishment, or indirectly, as passive defenders of elite culture (see also 3.2.1). In many cases, the elite media is actually involved (actively or passively) in the struggle against populist radical right challengers, as more or less passive "transmission belts" of political elites and as active defenders of elite culture against the "populist menace." Obviously, this situation is very different in countries where populist radical right parties are part of the establishment in general and the government in particular.

Even if (parts of) the media are not openly sympathetic towards the populist radical right, they can still provide them with a highly favorable forum. This is particularly true when a populist radical right party has a mediagenic or charismatic leader (see 11.3.1) who can work the media better than her/his political rivals. Research on the 1993 parliamentary elections in Russia showed that supporters of the highly successful LDPR mentioned the impact of the coverage of the electoral campaign twice as often as the electorate as a whole (Tolz 2003: 264). In Romania, PRM leader Tudor performed the best of all candidates in the television debates before the first round of the presidential elections of 2000, shifting the opinions of a considerable portion of the electorate (Shafir 2001: 105). The media drew immediate lessons from this, however, and "exercised a virtual ban on Tudor" until the second round of the elections (Popescu 2003: 330). Jean-Marie Le Pen has met with a similar tactics by the media in France (e.g. Birenbaum & Villa 2003).

It is important to note that all kind of populists (or more broadly: political outsiders) can profit from (exaggerated) media attention. This is a consequence of the "media logic" that dominates most media in contemporary Europe, leading to a type of reporting that is sometimes termed "media populism" (e.g. Mazzoleni 2003). This logic, which is particularly dominant in (commercial) television and the tabloid media, shares at least three traits with party populism: personalization, emotionalization, and an antiestablishment attitude (e.g. Decker 2004; Plasser & Ulram

2003). Not surprisingly the most extreme cases of media–party fusion have involved owners of commercial television, i.e. the Italian neoliberal populist FI of Silvio Berlusconi (e.g. Grassi & Rensmann 2005; Statham 1996) and the Slovak "centrist-populist" ANO of Pavel Rusko, co-owner of the country's main commercial television channel Markíza Televizia (see Učeň 2004).

However, if media control is rarely as complete as it is in Berlusconi's Italy or, to a lesser extent, Tuđman's Croatia (see Basom 1996), politicians of all persuasions must remain vigilant with respect to the media: the media giveth, and the media taketh away. Hamburg's *Richter Gnadenlos* (Judge Merciless) Ronald B. Schill of the neoliberal populist PRO learnt this the hard way. While his meteoric rise was largely due to a favorable press, his equally sudden downfall was precipitated by the negative reporting of largely the same media (see Hartleb 2004; Klein & Ohr 2002).

Notwithstanding these examples, there is much debate about whether the normative bias of the coverage has much effect on the success of the populist radical right. While one could logically assert that *positive* media coverage favors the populist radical right, common political wisdom says that *any* publicity is good publicity. In fact, this position is particularly popular among populist radical right politicians (the late Hans Janmaat used it as a mantra). Given that potential voters of populist radical right parties tend to be most suspicious of elites, including the media, the argument that even (highly) negative coverage in the media will bring these parties electoral success, because of the rise in their profile and the salience of their issues (e.g. Wendt 2003), makes perfect sense. As one supporter of Australian populist rightist Pauline Hanson told a journalist, "[y]ou people in the media don't get it: the more you criticize her, the more we rally for her" (in Goot 1999: 217).

Unfortunately, it is very hard to test empirically the exact influence of "the media" on the electoral success of the populist radical right. First of all, there is virtually no country where populist radical right parties are truly ignored, i.e. where they are deprived of what Margaret Thatcher has called the "oxygen of publicity" (Goot 1999). This is even true for countries where the media claim to follow a strategy of "silencing to death" (*doodzwijgen*), like Belgium (Wallonia) and the Netherlands (e.g Coffé 2004; De Witte 1997). Similarly, there are few countries with unsuccessful populist radical right parties that receive a relatively high level of media attention.[10] In most cases high media attention goes hand in hand

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[10] A notable exception is Germany, where in 2000–01 public television devoted an average of no less than thirty minutes a day to "the extreme right" (Schellenberg 2005: 41).

with strong populist radical right parties and is often at least as much the result of the parties' successes as (merely) the cause. After all, even if the media would like to downplay the importance of the parties, which might still be a possibility when they are electorally and politically insignificant, it becomes virtually impossible once they are the major opposition party or even a part of the (national) government. This also suggests that the effect of the media will be most pronounced in the phase of electoral breakthrough.

In short, it is a truism to state that "media action is ineluctably embroiled in the emergence of neopopulist movements" (Mazzoleni 2003: 6). In today's world, "the media" have an effect upon virtually everything public and political, although less than usually claimed (Newton 2006), and there is no reason to assume that the populist radical right would be an exception to this general rule. The real question is: *what* effect? Or, in moral terms, is the media a friend or foe of the populist radical right (e.g. Mazzoleni 2004)? A general answer would have to be that "the media," as a heterogeneous sphere of institutions, is *both* friend *and* foe of populist radical right parties. There are periods in which significant media actors are explicit or implicit friends, such as the *Neue Kronen Zeitung* in the 1990s, and there are others when they are explicit or implicit foes, like *De Morgen* in Belgium.[11] In most periods, however, they are both at the same time, pushing the (salience of) key issues of the populist radical right while simultaneously denouncing the parties themselves. Whether or not the parties benefit depends to a large extent on the interaction between the populist radical right and other political parties in the country; for example, can populist radical right parties establish issue ownership? Do they have media-genic leaders (and the others not or less)?, etc.

10.6   Conclusion

Political opportunity structures are facilitating rather than determining factors in the success and failure of populist radical right parties. They explain not so much why parties will gain support from voters, but rather why this support does or does not lead to electoral breakthrough and persistence. Overall, it seems fair to argue that the political opportunity structure plays a more important role in the electoral breakthrough stage; particularly with respect to political and cultural factors.

[11] Most longitudinal studies of the relationship between the media and populist radical right parties distinguish between various periods in which very different (dominant) relationships between the two exist (e.g. Mazzoleni *et al.* 2003).

In the electoral breakthrough phase the political opportunity structure entails a mix of institutional, political, and cultural factors. At the institutional level, the electoral system plays a limited role; plurality systems will hinder electoral breakthrough. However, very few European countries have (pure) plurality electoral systems, therefore this variable does not account for much variance. At the political level, convergence between the major established parties facilitates electoral breakthrough. Whether this convergence must follow a period of polarization remains to be answered in cross-national and cross-temporal empirical research. At the cultural level the detrimental effects of stigmatization (explaining failure) and the facilitating effects of a broad nativist subculture (explaining success) are particularly important. A fascist past might favor the development of linkages between nativist subcultures and mainstream politics. Finally, the media can encourage (or obstruct) electoral breakthrough by influencing which issues gain salience, and providing positive (including neutral) reporting on populist radical right actors can help them gain electoral breakthrough.

In the electoral persistence phase, some of these factors lose much of their importance (see Jungerstam-Mulders 2003). Moreover, although political opportunity structures are relatively stable, they can and do change over time: both in *content* and in *impact*. Most importantly, once a populist radical right party achieves electoral breakthrough, it can have a significant effect on the content of the political opportunity structure, changing it in a more favorable direction. The cultural level remains very important, because of its influence on the populist radical right party itself, which becomes one of the prime factors in its future success (or the lack thereof), as will be developed in the next chapter.

This is most important with respect to the role of the media. While positive media coverage is important to achieve electoral breakthrough, in the persistence phase the role of the media declines in two ways: (1) parties will be involved in creating their own image and will thus become less reliant upon positive coverage by the media, which will indeed lead to a situation in which any attention is good attention (particularly when they have established issue ownership); (2) the media will have less space to determine whether or not to report on these parties, as electoral breakthrough makes them newsworthy.

At the moment, the situation in Eastern Europe is still somewhat different from that in most West European countries. The differentiation between the mainstream and radical parties is less clear, partly because of the radical rhetoric of some mainstream parties, partly because of the high level of elite volatility, i.e. the still high number of "new" parties of "old" elites in each election. Consequently, it is more difficult for

populist radical right parties to present themselves as the only alternative to the "antinational corrupt elite." In addition, many party systems are still polarized between two party blocks, thereby decreasing the chances for nonaligned populist radical right parties. This applies to a somewhat lesser extent to the Southern European countries of the second wave of democratization.

However, without wanting to argue that the East will necessarily become identical to the West, there are good reasons to suggest that the differences will continue to decrease. First, a higher level of stabilization of the various party systems is inevitable, as recent developments in various countries indicate (e.g. Bakke & Sitter 2005; Toole 2000).[12] This will lead to a clearer and more consistent identification of the "established parties" in the various countries. Second, party politics in Western Europe has become more fluid and less predictable since the end of the Cold War. Consequently, the two regions grow closer together, not just because the East replicates the "Western model," but also because the West increasingly shows some "Eastern" features.

It is important to note that many aspects of a favorable political opportunity structure are conducive to populist or outside parties more generally. Political opportunity structures alone cannot explain why the populist radical right rather than, for example, neoliberal or social populist parties profit from openings within it. Understanding its impact on the populist radical right in particular requires consideration of demand-side variables, on the one hand, and internal supply-side factors, i.e. the populist radical right party itself, on the other. It is to the latter that we now turn in our final explanatory chapter.

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[12] It might be true that this stability shows itself differently outside of Western Europe, i.e. more at the mass than at the elite level (cf. Birch 2001), but the hypothesized results will be largely the same, if possibly a bit slower and more moderate.

11 Internal supply-side: the populist radical right party

> [S]uccessful parties recognize both the opportunities and constraints offered by the prevailing political environment and design their actions accordingly.
>
> (Berman 1997: 118)

11.1 Introduction

Irrespective of how favorable the breeding ground and the political opportunity structure might be to new political parties, they merely present political actors with a series of possibilities. In the end, it is still up to the populist radical right parties to profit from them. In line with scholarship on political parties in general, populist radical right parties should no longer be seen simply as "hapless victims of their economic or demographic environments, but as . . . the active shapers of their own fates" (Berman 1997: 102; also Sartori 1990). In other words, the party itself should be included as a major factor in explaining its electoral success and failure.

The strategies of contemporary populist radical right parties are part of almost every account of the party family. Nearly every scholar points to the importance of the "modern image" of populist radical right parties. Indeed, image production by these parties has generated some marvelously creative terminology, including "Haiderization" to designate the process (Marcus 2000: 36) and "designer fascism" in reference to the final product (Wolin 1998). This process of "restyling" is often believed to be only superficial, involving mainly the selection of physically attractive representatives, such as former beauty queens and (young) men in tailor-made suits, rather than a genuine transformation of the ideology and style of the parties.

However, in addition to the likely appeal of these purely decorative aspects, more fundamental elements (can) decide whether a populist radical right party will gain and sustain electoral support. Among the most important internal factors are party ideology, leadership, and

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organization. While these are occasionally mentioned in the literature, their conceptual and theoretical elaboration has remained meager.[1] In this chapter the literature on these three important aspects of populist radical right parties will be critically assessed with the aim of developing a clearer picture of the various factors that influence the electoral success and failure of populist radical right parties, and the theoretical linkages between them.

11.2   Ideology

Party ideology is the most frequently mentioned internal supply-side factor in the literature. Many authors attribute the success of populist radical right parties largely to their relatively moderate ideology, although there is debate about whether the moderation is real or strategic. Various scholars even see a dichotomy within the larger party family: on the one hand, the "old" or "extreme" parties are unsuccessful *because of* their ideological extremity or oldness, and, on the other hand, the "new" or "moderate" parties are successful *because of* the moderation or newness of their ideology (e.g. Cole 2005; Taggart 1995; Ignazi 1992). Paul Hainsworth has summarized this argument as follows: "Indeed, the contemporary extreme right has been more successful electorally in Western Europe when it has been able to mark its distance from past extremist forms, such as Nazism and fascism, and appear as a populist response to current anxieties" (2000b: 1).

A more elaborate framework has been provided by Kitschelt and McGann, who distinguish between four different ideological strands within the "radical right" political family: fascist, welfare chauvinist, new radical right, and populist antistatist (1995: 19ff.). Parties achieve different levels of electoral success in part due to demand-side and external supply-side factors, in part because of their ideological strand, with the "winning formula" of the new radical right being the most significant. In essence, their argument largely resembles that summarized by Hainsworth: ideological links to the historical extreme right lead to electoral failure.

Not surprisingly, there is no consensus on the exact content of the "winning formula." While Kitschelt and McGann define it as "extreme

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[1] In one of the few and most comprehensive empirical cross-national studies of populist radical right party politics to include supply-side factors, internal party factors are not included in the model that is tested, although interesting suggestions are made in the final discussion of the article (see Van der Brug *et al.* 2005). The expert studies of Marcel Lubbers (2001; Lubbers *et al.* 2002; also Norris 2005) did include them, but both the conceptualization and the operationalization are highly questionable.

and economically rightists, free-marketeering as well as politically and culturally authoritarian positions" (1995: vii), Betz sees it rather as a combination of "differentialist nativism and comprehensive protectionism" (2003a: 207). Overall, most authors are a lot closer to the latter interpretation (e.g. Decker 2004; Taggart 1995). Yet, in empirical research this broadly accepted theory does not prove very robust.

Obviously, Kitschelt and McGann claim to have tested their theoretical model successfully on the basis of a wealth of empirical data. However, whereas their thesis might be correct for the new radical right, their winning formula more aptly defines neoconservatism than the populist radical right. The model might explain the successes of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, or possibly even the Danish conservative liberal Venstre (which oddly enough means "Left") and the Dutch VVD in the 1990s, but it cannot explain the success of *most* populist radical right parties during these periods. In more recent work, the authors amended aspects of their theory, though leaving the main claims intact (McGann & Kitschelt 2005; Kitschelt 2004). Their new position is somewhat closer to the operationalizations of the populist radical right more commonly found in the literature, but it leaves many important aspects unspecified (most notably their antiestablishment position; see De Lange 2007a).

Less contentious definitions by other authors have been employed in various studies that claim to provide evidence in support of the thesis that "new" or "moderate" populist radical right parties are far more successful than their "old" or "extreme" sister parties (e.g. Cole 2005; Ignazi 2003, 1992). However, the established overlap between the success and ideology of populist radical right parties is not so much the result of the strength of the theory, as of the weakness of the party classifications. Few authors provide convincing arguments for why parties are put into particular categories. Indeed, when the ideologies of the parties in question are studied in more detail, some important miscategorizations appear (Mudde 2000a; also chapter 2), significantly weakening the strength and applicability of the theory.

First and foremost, most authors group together what in our terms should be distinguished as radical and extreme right parties. There is no doubt that extreme right parties, i.e. parties that are antidemocratic and nonegalitarian, are electorally and politically unsuccessful in contemporary Europe (see also Carter 2005). However, even within the group of political parties that are labeled populist radical right here, authors distinguish between different subgroups and include some important misclassifications. For example, the Belgian VB clearly fits the "old" or "extreme" subgroup, in the definitions of Ignazi (1992) or Taggart (1995), while it would fit the "welfare chauvinist" category in the scheme of Kitschelt and

McGann (1995). In any case, it should be unsuccessful according to all three authors (Mudde 2000a). A similar argument could be developed for the Italian MSI/AN, before its full transformation into a conservative party. Although Eastern Europe is not part of the analysis of these authors, the same would apply to at least the Croatian HSP, the Romanian PRM and the Slovak SNS (e.g. Mudde 2000b). At the same time, various parties that fit the "new" or "moderate" category have clearly not been successful in electoral terms – e.g. the Dutch CD, the French MNR, or the German REP.

Obviously, this is not to say that ideological extremity is irrelevant to electoral success. However, like all potential explanatory factors, it has to be considered within the broader political context. It would make sense to argue that ideological extremity (including links to the historical extreme right) is particularly damaging to the populist radical right in countries with an unreceptive political culture. In countries where the period of the Second World War is interpreted in less absolute terms (at least within certain subcultures) – like Austria, Belgium (Flanders), Croatia, Italy, Romania, or Slovakia – the stain of extremity is less damaging. Nonetheless, even in these cases a more modern and moderate ideology and image is advantageous to populist radical right parties. However, it is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for electoral success.

What might be more important than the ideology itself is the presentation of that ideology through party propaganda. While the party image is transmitted largely through the mainstream media, and therefore outside of the control of the party, extensive professional propaganda campaigns can be very effective in generating electoral success. Indeed, well-organized parties like the FN and VB are broadly perceived as highly effective in their propaganda campaigns. However, the most striking example of this is the German DVU, a "phantom party" that gained some impressive regional successes purely on the basis of mail order campaigns (e.g. Backes & Mudde 2000).

Interestingly, many populist radical right parties have some of the best party websites in their countries. While websites currently still mainly preach to the converted (e.g. Norris 2003), the growing popularity of the internet will inevitably increase their prominence in years to come (e.g. Römmele 2003). Websites are particularly important for new and so far unsuccessful parties that for a variety of reasons (e.g. lack of money and personnel, political opposition) are unable to engage in traditional propaganda campaigns. Because websites are inexpensive to construct and maintain as well as difficult to censor, less relevant and organized populist radical right parties are able to get their message across to at least some part of the population even under a boycott by the established media (see 10.5).

Overall, it seems plausible that the (independent) media are primarily important for new (populist radical right) parties in achieving electoral breakthrough, while party propaganda plays a role chiefly during the phase of electoral persistence. By achieving electoral breakthrough, the parties pass the threshold of recognition, which means that their propaganda will no longer only reach the converted. In this phase well-developed party propaganda does not only attract the attention of outsiders with similar attitudes, it can also help transform (first-time party) voters into loyal party supporters.

11.3   Leadership

Various authors have stressed the importance of leadership to the (lack of) electoral and political success of populist radical right parties (e.g. Husbands 1998; Minkenberg 1998). Increased centralization of power and personalization of leadership have been noted for contemporary political parties in general (e.g. Panebianco 1988; Kirchheimer 1966), yet these processes are believed to be even more extremely pronounced in the case of the populist radical right party family. Several authors refer to "charismatic leaders" (e.g. Carter 2005; Zaslove 2004b; Eatwell 2003) and the "leadership principle" (Gunther & Diamond 2003), or even "*Führer*" and "*Führerparteien*" (e.g. Decker 2004; Gunther & Diamond 2003; Scharsach & Kurt 2000; Rizman 1999; Pfahl-Traughber 1994), clearly linking the contemporary populist radical right parties to the extreme right parties of the prewar period.

However, at least two very different types of leadership are important within political parties; I'll refer to them here, somewhat simplistically, as external and internal. These two orientations of party leadership roughly correspond to two key functions of political parties, i.e. the electoral and the institutional. Some leaders might be successful externally, and bring electoral success to the party, but fail miserably internally, and harm the party institutionally (for example, by frustrating qualified members or the building of a strong organization). Most of the literature has focused on external leadership, typified by the prime leader, whose role has been at times grossly overstated. Internal or institutional leadership of (other) key figures within populist radical right parties has been largely ignored or underestimated.

11.3.1   *External leadership: the enigma of charisma*

If one follows the insights from electoral research, it would make sense to assume that leaders play a particularly important role within the

(populist) radical right. Anthony King has hypothesized that "the impact of leaders' personalities and other personal characteristics will be greatest when voters' emotional ties to parties are at their weakest" and "when voters can discern few other grounds – whether grounds of performance or of policy" (2002: 41–2), both of which seem to be the case with regard to most populist radical right parties.

The literature on populism in general stresses the importance of charismatic leaders (e.g. Weyland 2001; Papadopoulos 2000; Taggart 2000). Similarly, in the works on the contemporary populist radical right, electoral success is very often related to the alleged charismatic qualities of the party leader (e.g. Probst 2003; Immerfall 1998). Consequently, the literature is filled with phrases such as "l'effet Le Pen" (Plenel & Rollat 1984), the "Haider Phenomenon" (Sully 1997), or the "Schirinowski-Effekt" (Eichwede 1994). Electoral studies do provide (some) support for the argument that leaders are *at certain times* very important to the electoral successes of populist radical right parties. For example, Ian McAllister and his collaborators have demonstrated that Vladimir Zhirinovsky was "a major factor in support for the Liberal Democrats" in the 1995 Duma elections (1997: 120).[2] Similar convincing evidence has been provided in support of the importance of Jean-Marie Le Pen or Jörg Haider (e.g. Mayer 2002; Plasser & Ulram 1995).

Still, the importance of charismatic party leaders should not be overstated. There are various (moderately) successful populist radical right parties that have not always been led by "charismatic" personalities: for example, István Cszurka (MIÉP), Daniel Féret (FNb), Roman Giertych (LPR), or Pia Kjærsgaard (DFP) can hardly be described as charismatic leaders according to any definition. In addition, there are unsuccessful parties with leaders who are broadly regarded as charismatic; the most prominent example was Franz Schönhuber (REP).

However, even leaders like Le Pen and Haider, whose charisma is not even contested by their opponents, seem to have been less important in the persistence of party support than is generally assumed. While they were crucial in getting many people *into* the party electorate in the late 1980s and early 1990s, their role declined in the following years (e.g. Ignazi 2003; Plasser & Ulram 1995). Nonna Mayer (1997) has described this process as a development "du vote Lepéniste au vote Frontiste" (from the Le Pen vote to the National Front vote). Thus, it seems that

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[2] It should be noted, however, that party leaders play a more important role in the less institutionalized party politics of postcommunist Europe than in the fairly stable party politics of the Western world. For example, in the 1995 Duma elections "leader evaluation" (i.e. a positive evaluation of the party leader) was a major factor for all political parties (McAllister *et al.* 1997).

external (charismatic) leadership is more important in the breakthrough phase, while party organization is imperative in the phase of electoral persistence.

This could also point to a broader process of socialization that voters of successful populist radical right parties go through: while charismatic *leaders* are important in bringing in new voters, through what Eatwell (2006, 2005) refers to as "centripetal charisma," the (well-structured) *party* socializes them into true party supporters (see also below). This process seems reminiscent of what Weber (1987) has described as the routinization of charisma.

Another important qualification to be made is that charismatic leaders are almost always polarizing personalities, to a large extent "because the symbolic logic of charisma hangs upon binary coding and salvation narratives" (Smith 2000: 103). In other words, you either like them, or you hate them. While many commentators have focused exclusively on the former, the importance of the latter should not be underestimated. Le Pen has been an important reason for people to vote for the FN, but he also seems to have been a compelling reason not to do so. In various surveys large groups of the French electorate considered Le Pen "a handicap" for the development of the FN. In March 1998, not surprisingly around the time of growing opposition of the group-Mégret within the FN, no less than 59 percent of the French electorate considered Le Pen a handicap to the party while only 29 percent did not (Mayer 2002: 177; also Minkenberg & Schain 2003: 177).

The key problem with the variable "charismatic leader" is the vagueness of the term. Some authors even speak of "the inherent tautological nature of the concept of charisma" (Van der Brug *et al.* 2005: 542). However, operationalizing charisma as electoral success is not an inherent conceptual problem, but an extrinsic practical one. Moreover, it shows that many scholars in the field do not use the concept in the Weberian sense, which is relative, but in an absolute sense. Charisma does not refer to an essentialist set of personal characteristics of a leader. What makes a leader charismatic depends more on the followers than on the leader (e.g. Weber 1987 [1919]); i.e. the key is the "charismatic bond" between the two (Eatwell 2006: 142). Robert Tucker has summarized this position succinctly: "To *be* a charismatic leader is essentially to be *perceived* as such" (1968: 737). This does not render the concept useless in empirical research (cf. Smith 2000; Van Dooren 1994), but it necessarily invokes another notoriously hazardous concept in defining charisma, that of political culture (cf. Eatwell 2005).

Charismatic leadership is advantageous to political parties. But how advantageous it will be depends upon the political culture and the

political system. For example, strong and dominant leaders, charismatic or not, will profit more from majoritarian and personalized institutional systems, most notably where presidents or prime ministers are directly elected by the people, than from political systems that are consensual and where the institution of the political party itself (still) plays an important role. A good example is France, where the institutional condition is strengthened by the political culture of personal leadership based on the towering symbol of the Fifth Republic, former president Charles de Gaulle (e.g. Schmidt 2003).

11.3.2   Internal (practical) leadership

External leadership, of which charismatic leadership is one (extreme) form, is just one side of the coin of successful leadership. Equally vital to the party, and its political success, is internal leadership. After all, political parties are not just electoral vehicles that contest elections, even though this is their most important feature (e.g. Sartori 1976), they are also organizations that recruit and socialize political personnel, design and run electoral campaigns, and ultimately (try to) influence public policy.

According to common wisdom in the literature on political parties, charismatic leadership and party institutionalization seldom go hand in hand (e.g. Harmel & Svåsand 1993; Panebianco 1988). Among the reasons mentioned for the improbability of charismatic parties becoming institutionalized, Angelo Panebianco mentions that the leader often deliberately tries to block the process, that charisma cannot be objectified, and that the organization is forced to fold at its leader's political eclipse (1988: 147). In other words, a successful external leader, who brings the party electoral victory, is normally a bad internal leader, who weakens the organization and thereby undermines the political success of the party (e.g. Probst 2003). This is clearly the message of this disgruntled ex-MP of the Italian LN: "Lega is Bossi and Bossi is Lega, the last Leninist-Stalinist party. To survive within Lega, if Bossi is in the tenth floor, you must stop at the fifth. If you arrive at the ninth floor, you will end up down in the cellar. He will never allow the growth of intermediate cadres and a ruling class" (in Gomez-Reino 2001: 15).

The process of party institutionalization is divided into three different phases, which each require a different form of leadership (Pedahzur & Brichta 2002; Harmel and Svåsand 1993). In the first phase, the prime objective of the party is *identification*, i.e. getting the party message across, which is best achieved by a charismatic leader, who is both a creator and a preacher. In the second phase, the emphasis is on *organization* of the party, which requires a more practical leader who can effectively

build the party infrastructure. Finally, in the third stage, *stabilization*, the leader should be a stabilizer of both the organization and the electoral success of the party. While most authors would contend that charismatic leaders become a liability to the party after the first stage, recent research provides evidence that "charismatic parties" can become institutionalized (Pedahzur & Brichta 2002).

Although there is disagreement in the literature about the exact combination of features, and the likelihood of their occurrence, there is a general assumption that party leadership is the affair of one person, particularly in the case of charismatic leadership. However, as the cases of the FN and VB clearly demonstrate, charismatic leaders can combine different skills; Filip Dewinter is both a preacher and an organizer. Moreover, charismatic leaders can work with more practical leaders, even if this leads to tensions. The creator and preacher Jean-Marie Le Pen and the organizer Bruno Mégret, or preacher-organizer Dewinter with the stabilizers Gerolf Annemans and Frank Vanhecke are examples of such complementarity.

11.4   Organization

While it might be an overstatement to speak of a "general consensus" in the field (Carter 2005: 64), many recent studies note the crucial importance of party organization for the electoral success of populist radical right parties (e.g. Betz 1998). While agreeing with the general point that party organization is a key variable in explaining the highly diverse levels of electoral success of the populist radical right, I would argue that it is more important in explaining its *persistence* than its breakthrough (cf. Coffé 2004). A strong party organization enhances party cohesion and leadership stability, without which other parties will not take the populist radical right party seriously and voters will not continue to support it (Betz 2002b).

Much literature on the populist radical right links party organization to electoral success, arguing that a well-developed party infrastructure is critical to electoral successes. Empirical evidence for this thesis is often limited to anecdotal references to a handful of successful or unsuccessful parties. Unfortunately, the few authors who have used this variable in systematic empirical research remain vague about the operationalization of party institutionalization, relying either on "expert studies" (e.g. Norris 2005; Lubbers 2001) or on insights from case studies (e.g. Carter 2005) that are limited in their generalizability. Very little empirical information is available on the internal life and structure of populist radical right parties, thus it is highly problematic to speak of "experts" in this respect (with possibly a handful of notable exceptions).

11.4.1   Cause or consequence?

A variety of examples prove that incidental electoral success can be achieved without any organizational backup. In June 1993 the Russian LDPR was "little more than a group of fifty individuals with affiliates in only a few dozen cities," yet half a year later the party won 22.9 percent of the vote in the parliamentary elections (Clark 1995: 771). Slightly less dramatically, the DVU gained 12.9 percent in the 2002 regional elections in Saxony-Anhalt, a postwar record for the German (populist) radical right, despite counting hardly more than thirty members in that state (Backes & Mudde 2000). In the 2005 Bulgarian parliamentary elections, the electoral coalition Nacionalen sayuz Ataka (National Union Attack, NSA) gained almost 9 percent of the vote despite being a mere two months in existence;[3] the LPR had already established the potential of new contenders through its success in the Polish parliamentary elections of 2001.

However, electoral success can hardly be *sustained* without a functioning party organization. A well-functioning organization is essential to a party's translation of its electoral success into political influence, as incompetent personnel, disorganized behavior, and internal splits undermine its bargaining power. The examples of the effects of organizational pathology are manifold, including the Dutch CD in many local councils, the German DVU in virtually all regional parliaments, the Bulgarian Ataka in the national parliament, or the German REP in the European Parliament (e.g. Hoffmann & Lepszy 1998; Van Riel & Van Holsteyn 1998; Butterwege *et al.* 1997; Schmidt 1997).

The relationship between a dysfunctional party organization and political failure seems, at first sight, the chicken or egg question: does a bad party organization bring political failure or does political failure prevent a party from establishing a good organization? While continuing electoral defeat will definitely weaken the opportunities for building a well-organized political party, many populist radical right parties have imploded only *after* their electoral breakthrough. For example, the German REP got into a leadership battle after its biggest electoral successes in 1989, the Dutch CD always saw party splits following electoral success, and the Czech SPR-RSČ was doing fine in the polls before it

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[3] The NSA is a coalition of five radical right groupuscules: the Protection Union of Patriotic Forces, the Warriors of the Reserve, the Fatherland National Movement for Salvation, the Bulgarian National Patriotic Party, and the Zora Political Circle (*Radio Bulgaria* 30/06/2005; on some of these groups, see Ivanov & Ilieva 2005). After various internal struggles, the bulk of the parliamentary faction went on as Partija Ataka (Party Attack, Ataka).

imploded in 1998. Even the most famous party split, i.e. that of the French FN in 1998–99, happened at the zenith of the party's success; in the words of one observer, "never had the FN been more influential than it was immediately prior to the crisis" (Adler 2001: 35).

To a large extent then, most badly organized populist radical right parties were the victim of their own success. They were unable to cope with the pressure conferred by their substantial electoral victory without a well-structured party organization. Lacking the capacity to fill positions on the basis of objective (or at least broadly accepted) criteria and with competent personnel, for example, most party leaders appointed personal cronies to lucrative positions, causing great frustration among rivals and long-standing party activists.

The organizational weakness of some parties can also be seen in their inability to contest the same districts over sustained periods of time. In one of the few comprehensive studies, Lisa Harrison concludes that "we rarely see the same *Gemeinden* and even Länder being contested in consecutive elections, primarily due to the organizational difficulties which have plagued far right parties in Germany" (1997: 147). Comparable situations have been noted with respect to unsuccessful populist radical right parties in other countries. For example, the British BNP contested only fourteen of the same districts in the 2001 and 1997 parliamentary elections, losing votes in all but one (Mudde 2002b). The Belgian FNb has shown a similar inability to build upon its success (Delwit 2007).

Finally, organizational weakness can have disastrous effects on governing parties. There is a growing debate in the literature on the alleged inability of the populist radical right to govern (e.g. Delwit & Poirier 2007; Fröhlich-Steffen & Rensmann 2005a). Pointing to various recent examples, including the Austrian FPÖ and the Italian LN, some authors go as far as arguing that populist (radical right) parties are intrinsically incapable of governing. The alleged incapacity is linked to their leadership structure, which supposedly prevents the construction of a strong party organization. Whether intrinsic or not, organizational weakness has caused most populist radical right parties problems in office, which were in turn punished by the voters in the following elections. Christopher T. Husbands has referred to this as the "'shooting-themselves-in-the-foot' theme" (2001: 24).[4]

[4] Populist radical right parties have not been the only parties to suffer from the combination of weak party organization and quick electoral success. Neoliberal populist parties like the Danish FPd, the Dutch LPF, and the German PRO or Schill Party (e.g. Decker 2003a) are extreme examples of this phenomenon – although in all cases events involving the charismatic leader also played a role (prison, murder and scandal, respectively).

Interestingly, in some cases party splits did not so much diminish the number of populist radical right votes, at least initially, but simply divided them among different parties. For example, both in France, in the 1999 European elections, and in Slovakia, in the 2002 parliamentary elections, the total vote for the original party and its split was not much less than that for the original party in the previous elections. The relatively constant level of support notwithstanding, in both cases the political influence of the populist radical right party family seriously decreased: in Slovakia neither of the two parties (PSNS and SNS) returned to parliament, whereas in France the populist radical right delegation in the European Parliament was more than halved, decreasing from eleven MEPs in 1994 to five in 1999 (all FN).

11.4.2   Internal organization

While the process of party failure is fairly easy to trace, if only because examples are abundant, party success is notably more difficult to study. First of all, electoral persistence is rare within Europe. Second, what constitutes a well-organized (populist radical right) political party? Various authors have linked populist radical right parties to a specific type of party organization; some have even defined these parties in part upon that basis (e.g. Fröhlich-Steffen & Rensmann 2005b; Decker 2004; Taggart 1995). Generally speaking, these scholars note that the parties have a minimalist organization, i.e. simple structures and few members, which is structured hierarchically and completely dominated by a charismatic leader. However, as they often link the populist radical right party's organizational model to their ideology, this would presuppose that all populist radical right parties have the same organizational structure. In this way, it cannot explain cross-national or cross-temporal variation.

The internal life of political parties is an endless frustration to party scholars; it is extremely difficult to study. Most organizations prefer to keep their important decision-making processes out of the public eye or else cloak them in official democratic procedures. Populist radical right parties, given their general suspicion of academics and journalists, are even more inclined toward circumspection, fearing that the information they provide will not only be used for strictly academic purposes (not always without reason). Consequently, it is frequently impossible to get reliable information on even the most basic characteristics of a party.

Take the issue of party membership. As far as numbers are available, they are either based on information provided by the parties themselves or on wild speculation. In the case of the (former) Czech SPR-RSČ, some authors just repeated the party's official number of 55,000

members (e.g. Jenne 1998; Turnovec 1997), which according to virtually all experts was highly inflated, whereas others took educated guesses of a few thousand (e.g. Segert 2005a; Havelková 2002). In the Netherlands, Hans Janmaat maintained for years that the membership of the CD was growing rapidly, at the same time claiming a consistent 3,000 members for several years in a row. However, according to various experts, even that number was highly inflated. The real number was estimated to be between 1,500 and 1,000, of whom at most some 100 were active (see in Mudde & Van Holsteyn 2000: 149). In a flagrant inflation of membership, the party paper of the Italian LN claimed 200,000 members in March 1992, 40,000 in June, and again 200,000 in November that year. However, even according to its own account the party had at best some 90,000 "members" in 1993 (Gomez-Reino 2001: 9–10).

It seems safe to assume that, on average, populist radical right parties have relatively few members and at best a moderately elaborated party organization, compared to the older, established parties. Indeed, this is true for most relatively new political parties (e.g. Tamas 2002; Mair & Van Biezen 2001). Some authors argue that populist radical rightists prefer to construct *Bewegungsparteien* (movement parties) around charismatic leaders (e.g. Gunther & Diamond 2003), which is said to be in line with their alleged antiparty ideology (e.g. Geden 2005; Mény & Surel 2002a). At the organization level, however, most parties remained at best very small movements. And despite their lack of elaborate organizational structures, they have strict internal hierarchies and demand a high level of internal discipline of their members (see also below).

The FN is one of the few contemporary examples of a populist radical right party that had some degree of success in following the old model of the mass party.[5] From the beginning, it has been a collection of different "tendencies" (Veugelers & Chiarini 2002: 99), ranging from *nouvelle droite* (new right) think tanks like the Club de l'Horloge to "national solidarists" of the Mouvement Solidariste, and orthodox Catholics of the Chrétienté-Solidarité (Christian Solidarity). While all factions have their own leaders and suborganizations, they are all integrated in the FN through the towering presence of party leader Jean-Marie Le Pen. Before the split in 1999, the FN had between 70,000 and 80,000 members, organized in 100 party federations throughout France and its overseas territories (Declair 1999: 159). The party still

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[5] The FN was probably more influenced by the organization model of the Italian MSI than by the historical mass party models of the Catholic and socialist parties (Ignazi 1998). The Italian LN also tried to create a mass party, but failed (see Gomez-Reino 2001). For an overview of its many *associazioni* (associations), see www.leganord.org/c_1_associazioni_paginasezione.htm (read 25/07/2005).

consists of a wide range of sub- and front-organizations, the so-called "sous-société national-frontiste" (Birnbaum 1992: 219), including various interest groups, which provide it with roots into French society that stretch well beyond the party membership (e.g. Bastow 1998; Ivaldi 1998; Fromm & Kernbach 1994: 180–95).

The use of front-organizations, a strategy most associated with Trotskyist groups, is used more broadly within the populist radical right. Also in this respect the Belgian VB is the most loyal copy-cat of the FN. The party has founded various single-issue front-organizations in recent times, none officially part of the VB itself: these include the Actiecomité tegen het stemrecht voor vreemdelingen (Action Committee against the Right to Vote for Aliens), Leefbaar Antwerpen (Livable Antwerp), and the Comité "Nee tegen Turkije" (Committee "No to Turkey"). Christoph Blocher, the leader of the Swiss SVP, has founded the AUNS to mobilize for referendums, most notably on foreign policy issues (see Hennecke 2003).

Practically all successful populist radical right parties can count upon the support of a strong and successful youth organization, such as the French Front National de la Jeunesse (FNJ), the Austrian Ring Freiheitlicher Jugend (Circle of Freedomite Youth, RFJ), or the Belgian Vlaams Belang Jongeren (Flemish Interest Youth, VBJ). The Polish Mlodziez Wszechpolska (All-Polish Youth), the youth-wing of the LPR, is even the strongest youth organization of all political parties in Poland (Kostrzębski 2005). These youth organizations tend to be more radical than the mother party, which sometimes leads to embarrassing liaisons with extreme right groups or individuals, and they tend to be very active both nationally and internationally. More importantly, they bring new and young people into the broader movement, socialize them into its culture, educate them in both ideological and practical terms, and then promote them to the mother party. To a large extent, they are the lifeblood of the party, which ensures the organization's survival beyond its historic founding leaders.

While it is difficult to provide a concise description of a strong party organization, recent developments seem to indicate that two aspects increase the chance of electoral persistence and even political survival: a grass-roots basis and local *Hochbürge* (strongholds). Virtually all successful populist radical right parties have strong links to the grass-roots and have based their organizational elaboration and electoral success on one or more local and regional strongholds; for example, Antwerp for the VB, Carinthia for the FPÖ, Cluj for the PRM, the southern region of PACA for the FN, and cities like Žilina for the Slovak SNS. In the case of electoral defeats and even party splits, such local and regional strongholds provide much needed sources of finance and patronage as

well as bases from which the party can start rebuilding its electorate and organization.

11.4.3   Internal democracy

According to some authors, populist radical right parties are organized upon the Marxist-Leninist principle of "democratic centralism" (e.g. Minkenberg 1998; Mudde 1995a). Unfortunately, very little empirical research is available, but the few studies that do exist mostly confirm a strong authoritarian and centralist party structure (e.g. Segert 2005a: 193–4; DeClair 1999), if with some qualifications (e.g. Deschouwer 2001; Gomez-Reino 2001). On the basis of the 1998 party statute of the Italian LN, Anna Cento Bull and Mark Gilbert (2001: 121–4) paint a picture of a highly centralized party under the strict leadership of Umberto Bossi, which structurally resembles the (former) communist PCI. With regard to the VB, different authors have shown that both formally and informally it is the least internally democratic of all major Flemish political parties (e.g. Jagers 2002; Deschouwer 2001).

Some populist radical right parties do not even try to create a democratic façade. Motivated by both practical and ideological considerations, they simply create a minimalist structure around the party leader(ship), limiting the lower echelons to an advisory capacity. For example, whereas the LDPR initially had some nominally democratic internal elections and procedures,[6] these were suspended in 1994, and all major party positions have since been filled through personal appointment by party leader Zhirinovsky (Shenfield 2001: 98–100). Tellingly, Evgenii Mikhailov, the former LDPR governor of the *oblast* (region) Pskov, said about the role of Zhirinovsky: "[He] does not interfere in operational questions. But I get his approval for any decision concerning the most important policy directions" (in Slider 1999: 756).[7]

Even where populist radical right parties do have relatively democratic statutes, which some countries require as a precondition for official registration (e.g. Germany; see Venice Commission 1999), the practice within the parties is not so democratic and transparent. While the populist radical right is certainly not unique in this respect (e.g. Michels 1925), their undemocratic tendencies stand out among party families, with the

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[6] Both in terms of ideology and party organization, the program and statute of the initial party, then still named Liberal Democratic Party of the Soviet Union, were perfectly democratic (see LDPSU 1990).

[7] In 1993 the party also officially adopted the subtitle "The Party of Zhirinovsky," while its newspapers are known as "Zhirinovsky's Truth" and "Zhirinovsky's Falcon" (Service 1998: 182).

notable exception of Marxist-Leninist parties. There are at least two reasons for this: (1) the limited number of individuals active within the party (leadership), which creates significant personal overlap between functions and institutions; (2) the importance of patronage to the leader(ship), strengthened by the fact that many leading members either had mediocre careers before becoming professional politicians, or have no way back into their old careers because of stigmatization through their engagement within the populist radical right. This has led to a particularly high number of family relations between leading party members within populist radical right parties (e.g. Gomez-Reino 2001; DeClair 1999).

In some cases, party leaders run "their" political party as a small family business; or, according to their opponents, a political fiefdom. After having been kicked out of the CP, Janmaat made sure that this could not happen again in "his" new party. Together with his partner and later wife Wil Schuurman he dominated the CD at all levels. The only time the party had more than one MP, Janmaat was joined by Schuurman and Wim Elshout; the latter was jokingly described as the "adopted son" within the party. Additionally, the party office was housed in one of Janmaat's private properties, rented out according to competitive market prices, while Schuurman's son was the only official employee. The colonization of the Czech SPR-RSČ by party leader Sládek was even more extreme; his stepdaughter and mistress were MPs, while his wife worked for the party. According to some disgruntled former party members all state financing for the party went "exclusively to Sladek," who used the money, among other things, to build a very luxurious house in the country (*CTK* 21/06/1998; also Penc & Urban 1998).

Nonetheless, it would be incorrect to regard all populist radical right parties as *Führerparteien* or one-*man* parties. First of all, history shows that these alleged *Führer* are not always so crucial to or almighty within the party. For example, only two years after one scholar had proclaimed "[w]ithin the SNS, Slota's position as leader is unquestioned" (Fried 1997: 101), he was ousted as party leader. A similar fate befell Franz Schönhuber, often portrayed as the *Führer* of the German REP. Second, many populist radical right parties are far more than mere vehicles of the leader. In fact, among the more successful cases one finds some parties with several strong leadership figures (e.g. SRS and VB). And, third, some parties do not even have one strong leader.

11.4.4   Practical leadership

Why do some populist radical right parties have strong organizations while others do not? This is not an easy question to answer. Without

any doubt, the person of the leader plays an important role. After having been thrown out of the CP, Janmaat frustrated all attempts of would-be leaders within his CD. Similarly, the erratic behavior and problematic personality of Sládek goes a long way toward explaining the organizational weakness of the Czech SPR-RSČ. In sharp contrast, the lack of personal ego of founding leader Karel Dillen enabled him to bring various ambitious young leaders into the party as part of the Operatie Verjonging (Operation Rejuvenation), which has been vital to the elaboration and professionalization of the party organization of the VB (Mudde 1995a; Dewinter & Van Overmeire 1993).

Obviously, organizational talent and practical leadership are also vital to this process. Filip Dewinter has an almost unique combination of external and internal leadership qualities: he is both a charismatic leader, ranking among the top Belgian politicians in terms of preferential votes, and a talented practical leader, as he demonstrated by founding the thriving VBJ and by building and elaborating the organization of the VB. In the shadow of Le Pen, Bruno Mégret's skillful internal leadership has been instrumental in developing the FN from a loose confederation of distinct groups into a well-organized political party.

In this respect, Eatwell's distinction between "centripetal charisma" and "coterie charisma" is important to note. Most studies focus exclusively on the former, i.e. "the ability of leaders to attract a broad swathe of support by becoming the personalization of politics" (2004: 2). However, charisma can also play a role internally, i.e. "the leader's appeal to an inner core" (Eatwell 2004: 2). This coterie charisma can keep a party with strong subdivisions together, as is the case with Le Pen in the FN. But it can also be crucial in activating and disciplining the membership. Importantly, while some leaders are charismatic both externally and internally (like Dewinter or Le Pen), others enjoy only coterie charisma (like Csurka and Dillen).

Well-developed sections within the party, particularly if headed by coterie charismatic leaders, can even instill some form of "subparty identification." Klandermans and Mayer found that "inside the larger organizations like the AN, the VB, or the FN there is [sic] a whole lot of subgroups that might be more important as a source of identification than the organization as a whole" (2005: 273). If managed well, the possibility of subparty identities allows for the accommodation of different subgroups within a party. However, it can also promote and strengthen internal struggles, thereby leading to weaker party loyalties than exist within smaller and more homogeneous parties.

11.4.5 Fractionalism

Finally, we could also ask the opposite question: why do populist radical right parties split? This is a question that only a few people have explicitly addressed. According to the former leader of the BNP and NF, the late John Tyndall, populist radical right parties split simply because it is "human nature" (in Holmes 2000: 152). In a more academic account, Michael Minkenberg (1998: 369) argued that the French FN split was the logical result of its electoral growth, i.e. of its success. A similar argument can be made regarding splits in the Dutch CP (and later CD) or the German REP. However, in the cases of the Czech SPR-RSČ and Slovak SNS personal differences seem more significant than organizational overload.

Jonathan Marcus has called factionalism "a perennial problem" for the populist radical right (2000: 35). Whether the populist radical right is indeed more prone to internal splits than other party families is debatable. Factionalism is not specific to populist radical right parties, or nonmainstream parties more generally: virtually all political parties experience factionalism and splits, particularly in the early stages of their institutionalization (cf. Pedersen 1982). Moreover, other nonmainstream party families have been at least as notorious for their infighting, most notably Trotskyists and Maoists (e.g. March & Mudde 2005; Alexander 2001; Newman 1994). One could argue that radical parties in general face internal pressures between *Fundis* (fundamentalists/ideologues) and *Realos* (realists/pragmatists).

Irrespective of whether factionalism is indeed more common among populist radical right parties than among established parties, there is no doubt that the effects have been particularly detrimental to populist radical right parties. The reasons are practical rather than ideological: populist radical right parties are usually younger organizations and (thus) less institutionalized than established parties, rendering them more dependent upon one or a few individuals (cf. Tamas 2002). The recent cases of the Austrian FPÖ-BZÖ and the French FN-MNR splits tend to support the institutionalization thesis: both relatively old and well-organized parties seem to (have) overcome their splits without disappearing into political oblivion.

11.5 Internationalization

Most electoral studies of party politics work with the implicit assumption that political parties compete in a more or less closed national political

system. However, in these globalizing times no country is immune to developments outside of its borders. Consequently, developments with respect to a populist radical right party in one (European) country can have significant effects on the opportunities for populist radical right parties in other (European) countries.

Martin Schain and his collaborators (2002b: 16–17) have argued that the internationalization of populist radical right party success can occur in at least three ways: (1) assistance and support from populist right parties to like-minded parties across borders; (2) one (or more) populist radical right party providing a model for success to others; and (3) a successful party in country A can make the populist radical right program more acceptable in country B. So far, little research is available on any of these three points, so the following discussion should be regarded as highly provisional.[8]

The importance of foreign assistance and support for radical parties has been most significant with regard to the communist parties during the Cold War. In fact, it can be argued that many of these parties would have suffered a fate similar to most populist radical right parties, i.e. fractionalization and marginalization, had it not been for the substantial support of the Soviet Union. Similarly, many center-right and -left parties in Southern Europe and Latin America, and more recently in Eastern Europe, have profited greatly from the support of Western European parties, most notably the two main German party foundations, the Christian democratic Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and the social democratic Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

While numerous stories are told about assistance and support from populist radical right parties to like-minded parties abroad, there is very little evidence to substantiate them (see also chapter 7). Moreover, various compelling arguments caution against ascribing much importance to this factor: (1) the absence of their own "Soviet Union," i.e. a (strong) state that considers itself the political center of the populist radical right ideology;[9] (2) the problematic relationship between many European populist radical right parties (see chapter 7); and (3) the generally poor

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[8] In the only study (I know) to have empirically tested the internationalization thesis at the level of support for populist radical right parties in five West European countries (Austria, Belgium/Flanders, France, Germany, and the Netherlands), Husbands (1996: 107–8) finds some evidence of "mutual influence" between Flanders and the Netherlands and between East and West Germany.

[9] There is some evidence that Saddam Hussein's Iraq has provided financial support to European populist radical right parties, but in this case the contacts seem to have been only with already successful parties like the FN, FPÖ, and LDPR (e.g. Hunter 1998a, 1998b).

infrastructure of even the more successful populist radical right parties, particularly compared to the established parties in their own countries.

More convincing is the argument that successful populist radical right parties have provided models for new and unsuccessful parties. In this respect, the French FN does function as the prototype of part of the Western European party family (Rydgren 2005b, Kitschelt & McGann 1995); even though the FN itself took its inspiration initially from the Italian MSI (Ignazi 1992). However, while some populist radical right parties that were influenced by the FN have been successful (notably the VB in Belgium), others have not (see the various FN initiatives in Spain or the BNP in the United Kingdom). In Eastern Europe the German REP functioned initially as a role model for aspiring populist radical right parties, with equally mixed results; while the Czech SPR-RSČ made significant strides in the early 1990s, the Hungarian and Ukrainian "Republicans" never developed beyond embryo parties (*Der Republikaner* 12/1991).

Finally, the success of a populist radical right party in one country can lead to the acceptance of parts of the populist radical right program in other countries. This acceptability can be both at the mass and the elite level. It is highly plausible that the success of a party like the FN has increased the salience of populist radical right issues in other countries, most notably in Wallonia, the French-speaking part of Belgium (e.g. Coffé 2004). However, it can also weaken local parties, particularly when the link with successful populist radical right parties abroad increases the stigmatization at home; this might have been the case with relatively moderate parties like the Dutch CD and the German REP, which were often equated with more (openly) radical parties like the FN and VB.

11.6   Conclusion

Few theoretical frameworks include internal supply-side factors, i.e. aspects of the populist radical right itself. Like so much research on political parties, the success or failure of populist radical right parties is primarily explained by external factors and the parties themselves are regarded as "hapless victims" (Berman 1997: 102) of the demand-side and the external supply-side. While there might be some truth to this with regard to the first phase of electoral breakthrough, populist radical right parties play a crucial role in shaping their own fate at the stage of electoral persistence. The internal supply-side is even the most important variable in explaining the many examples of electoral failure *after* electoral breakthrough.

The literature highlights three factors: a "moderate" ideology, a "charismatic" leader, and a "well-structured" organization. While party

ideology can explain some of the difference in electoral breakthrough between extreme and radical right parties, it cannot account for electoral persistence or for the divergent electoral successes within the populist radical right party family. Similarly, while charismatic leadership, leaving aside the problems of operationalization, plays a role in the breakthrough phase, its importance decreases significantly during the phase of electoral persistence. This leaves three key variables to explain the crucial process of electoral persistence: party organization (including local implantation), party propaganda, and internal (practical) leadership.

One way in which populist radical right parties can increase their chances of electoral persistence is by attractive and professional propaganda campaigns. As soon as the party has achieved electoral breakthrough, its propaganda will reach a far broader audience than before, in part through the independent media. This means that the party no longer only preaches to the converted, but can reach out to its potential electorate as well. Moreover, it can play an important role in creating a new support base. Still, the direct effect of party propaganda should not be overstated; while parties like the FN and VB clearly excel in their propaganda, as even many opponents will acknowledge, they will only reach a part of their (potential) supporters through it. Most effects will be indirect, mediated through the independent media.

Undoubtedly the most important factor to decide whether or not a party fails or succeeds in persisting electorally is party organization and local implantation. In this regard, leadership is crucial. The most successful populist radical right parties have both skillful external and internal leaders, working in unity towards the same goal. For a long time this has been the ultimate strength of the French FN, where "the charisma of Le Pen was combined with the administrative competence of Mégret" (Adler 2001: 48). A similar situation exists within the VB, where party chairman and practical leader Frank Vanhecke complements charismatic leader Filip Dewinter, while Gerolf Annemans performs both tasks for a smaller subset of members and voters.

12 Assessing impact: populist radical right parties vs. European democracies

> Minor parties that succeeded in passing the threshold of representation, even though they are electorally weak, function in various ways . . . They challenge either the ideological and symbolic aspects of the system or its rules of the game . . . Because of the ways they bypass obstacles, they are also initiators of new patterns of political competition. As such, they are relevant to the political system and to its understanding.
>
> (Herzog 1987: 326)

> On the surface nothing trembled, no walls collapsed, even the windows remained intact, but the earth moved in the depths.
>
> (Epstein 1996: 20)

12.1 Introduction

Both inside and outside of the academic community, scores of claims are made about the political impact of the populist radical right party family on European democracies. According to various commentators populist radical right parties "poison the political atmosphere" (PER 2002: 11). While much speculation abounds about the alleged impact of populist radical right parties on European democracies, few commentators have addressed the other side of the coin, i.e. the impact of European democracies on populist radical right parties.

This chapter discusses the crucial issue of political *impact*, largely on the basis of the insights of the few academic studies on the topic published so far. The focus is on the impact both *of* populist radical right parties on European democracies and of European democracies *on* populist radical right parties. Despite the increased political importance of populist radical right parties, if anything in terms of coalition potential, the study of its political impact is still in its infancy and much of the following will inevitably remain speculative.

12.2   From electoral to political relevance: the impact *of*

According to Jens Rydgren (2003: 60), "the presence of a xenophobic RRP [Radical Right Populist] party may cause an increase in racism and xenophobia because (1) it has an influence on people's frame of thought; and (2) because it has an influence on other political actors." Indeed, there seems to be a broad consensus on the significant impact of populist radical right parties on certain policy terrains, most notably immigration (e.g. Schain 2006; Tschiyembé 2001; Minkenberg & Schain 2003; Husbands 1996). Some authors have even argued that the parties are responsible for the outbursts of racist violence in their countries (e.g. Marcus 2000; Van Donselaar 1993).

One of the main reasons for these bold assertions is probably the almost complete lack of (comparative) research on the impact of populist radical right parties on contemporary European democracies (Goodwin 2005). Only very recently have scholars started to study the impact of the populist radical right on different policy areas (notably Schain *et al.* 2002a). This section can provide only a provisional discussion of the insights from these first few studies on the impact of populist radical right parties on European democracies. It will try to assess the existing empirical evidence for some of the key assertions regarding the impact of the populist radical right and set out some paths for further research in this highly important and topical field of study. To structure the discussion, the section is divided into three subsections: policy impact, party impact, and social impact. This division is mainly of heuristic value given that the various fields of impact influence each other.

12.2.1   Policy impact

Particularly since the 1990s it has become widely accepted that the populist radical right weighs heavily on certain policy fields in European countries. In fact, many commentators see the recent "*verrechtsing*" (right-wing turn), which they believe can be observed in European politics, as proof of the mainstream parties' attempts to compete with the populist radical right (e.g. Bale 2003; Heinisch 2003; Minkenberg 2001). But not only political opponents and scholars have argued this; various populist radical rightist leaders believe so as well. Quite bitterly, Miroslav Sládek, then leader of the SPR-RSČ, complained to a German journalist in 1997:

The big parties have plundered everything. The referendum on EU membership, which was proposed by us. Our answers to immigration and foreigners. The problem of the Sudeten Germans. When I demanded five years ago that the

Benes decrees should be anchored solidly into Czech law, people still wanted to imprison me. (*Die Zeit* 25/2002)

Here we will discuss only the direct policy impact of the populist radical right party family; the more tricky issue of indirect policy impact will be addressed in the section on party impact.

For many populist radical right parties the local level provides the first and only experience of government participation. Moreover, whereas national government is mostly coalition politics, in which the populist radical right is usually only a junior partner, at the local level they can be the dominant or even the only party in government. Consequently, many parties will try to use local government as a showcase for the nation. In the words of Vojislav Šešelj, leader of the Serbian SRS and then chairman of the municipality of Zemun, a suburb of Belgrade: "For us Radicals, Zemun is conceived as a demonstration. Through the example of Zemun, we shall show what Radical government in the whole of Serbia would be like" (in Čolović 2002: 237).

Overall, it is impossible to distinguish one particular form of populist radical right local rule in Europe. Even the FN ruled relatively differently in the four municipalities that it controlled in the late 1990s (e.g. Davies 1999: ch. 4). However, one of the few points standing out among virtually all cases of populist radical right rule at the local level is the emphasis on symbolic measures. As the parties rapidly notice that local power is highly limited, particularly with regard to the nativist policies at the core of their program, and that they get little support from higher levels, they refocus much of their efforts on cultural policies and symbolic politics. Among the most important are the renaming of streets, the increase of national symbols in the cities, and the redistribution of local subsidies. In all cases the change is away from "alien" and "antinational" (e.g. left-wing and minority) individuals and organizations and towards "national" or "patriotic" actors.

There have been only a few instances where a populist radical right party had a chance to really implement its policies (see table 12.1). In fact, the only pure example of populist radical right government at the national level has been the HDZ one-party government under the presidency of Franjo Tuđjman, which ruled Croatia in the 1990s. As such, it does not provide a particularly pretty picture: a fierce hegemonic nativist discourse, irredentist wars and ethnic cleansing campaigns, authoritarian rule (democratically legitimized in relatively free elections), populist attacks on opponents (including human rights NGOs), and perverse levels of corruption (e.g. Ottaway 2003: ch. 5; Malešević 2002: ch. 5; Pusić 1998). However, the Croatian case is highly specific, as the country was

Table 12.1 *Populist radical right parties in European national government since 1980*

Country	Party	Period(s)	Coalition partners (party ideology)
Austria	FPÖ	2000–02	ÖVP (Christian democratic)
		2002–05	ÖVP
	BZÖ	2005–	ÖVP
Croatia	HDZ	1990–2000	
Estonia	ERSP	1992–95	Isamaa (conservative)
Italy	LN	1994	FI (neoliberal populist) & AN (radical right)
		2001–05	FI & AN (conservative) & MDC (Christian democratic)
Poland	LPR	2006–	PiS (conservative) & Samoobrona (social populist)
Romania	PUNR	1994–96	PDSR (diffuse) & PSM (social populist)
	PRM	1995	
Serbia	SRS	1998–2000	SPS (social populist) & JUL (communist)
Slovakia	SNS	1994–98	HZDS (diffuse) & ZRS (communist)
		2006–	Smer (social populist) & HZDS

at war for most of that period, and many of the most negative aspects of the regime were at least in part a reaction to largely similar actions and attacks by Milošević's Yugoslavia/Serbia.

In most cases Eastern European populist radical right parties were junior partners in the national coalition government. The senior partner of the government would generally be large and ideologically diffuse movement parties of the transition phase, which tended to include strong nationalists and former communists (sometimes the same people). Given that the populist radical right parties were lacking both experience and power, their role in the governments was usually fairly limited. Moreover, the specific impact of the populist radical right party is not always easy to discern, if only because (more) influential populist radical rightists operated within the senior coalition party.

Generally speaking, populist radical right parties held weaker ministries and their leader would stay outside of the government altogether. Their wishes were often ignored by the leading party, and at times they were used as excuses for less popular policies (either in the country or abroad). Overall, it seems that their direct influence on government policies has remained fairly limited, which quite often also led to disappointment and withdrawal from the coalition. Their main "success" was the temporary delaying of pro-minority legislation and a pro-Western foreign policy, rather than fully defeating it, and even in these cases radical forces within the senior partner played at least an equally important role (e.g. Kelley 2004; Simon 2004; Melvin 2000).

In some cases the senior party forced its coalition partners to sign an agreement prior to entering the government in which the populist radical right parties by and large agreed not to try and implement certain aspects of their program. For example, upon entering the government in January 1995, the two populist radical right parties PRM and PUNR, together with their coalition partners PDSR and PSM, had to sign a protocol that "forbids any manifestation of racism, antisemitism, extremism and totalitarianism" (Shafir 1996: 91). Similarly, a precondition for the inclusion of the FPÖ into the Austrian government in 2000 was the signing of the declaration "Responsibility for Austria – A Future in the Heart of Europe," which started with the following statement: "The Federal Government reaffirms its unswerving adherence to the spiritual and moral values which are the common heritage of the peoples of Europe and the true source of individual freedom, political liberty and the rule of law, principles which form the basis of all genuine democracy" (Schüssel & Haider 2000).

In both cases, the senior partners bowed to substantial pressures from foreign countries, mainly the EU and US, but the effects were significant. In Romania, the PDSR used the alleged breach of the protocol as its official reason to oust the PRM from the government (Shafir 1996), whereas in Austria adherence to the coalition agreement became a main cause for the self-defeating struggle within the FPÖ leadership.

The few scholarly studies of populist radical right parties in government in Western Europe stress their impact on immigration policies. Andrej Zaslove (2004a), for example, has argued that the FPÖ and LN have been "instrumental" in introducing more restrictive immigration policy in Austria and Italy. Other authors have come to similar conclusions (e.g. Fallend 2004; Colombo & Sciortino 2003; Heinisch 2003; Minkenberg 2001). However, while there is little doubt that, when in power, populist radical right parties have played a crucial role in tightening the immigration policy, it can be debated whether the end result would have been much different if they had stayed in opposition. After all, various earlier amendments to the immigration policy, in the same direction, had been made under previous governments, such as the Austrian SPÖ–ÖVP coalition (e.g. Bale 2003).

Moreover, preliminary findings show that European immigration policies are increasingly converging, not least because of cooperation within the European Union (e.g. Givens & Luedtke 2005, 2004). One can seriously question the role of populist radical right parties in this whole process, given the weak position of the party family in European politics (see also chapter 7). Moreover, much of the pressure towards an EU-wide immigration policy has come from the Spanish former Prime Minister José María Aznar and his British colleague

Tony Blair, both from countries with no credible populist radical right contender.

A similar argument can be made with regard to the effect of populist radical right parties on law and order policies. There is no doubt that successful electoral campaigns of the populist radical right, in which law and order issues always feature prominently, have often been followed by a toughening of the positions and policies of the established parties (not only of the right-wing). The original "Black Sunday" of 1991, for example, was followed by the introduction of the so-called *Veiligheidscontracten* (safety contracts), which clearly were in line with the VB's tough discourse and policy demands on crime and security (De Decker *et al.* 2005). But a toughening of law and order policies could be observed in many European countries in the past two decades, including those without a strong populist radical right party (e.g. the Netherlands and the United Kingdom).

The (international) electoral successes of populist radical right parties have not always led to policy shifts in their preferred direction. In fact, in many cases at least some policies were introduced that went directly against their wishes. Good examples are progressive social policies (e.g. in housing and urban development) that explicitly included immigrants, the support for multicultural activities and organizations, and the toughening of antiracist and antirevisionist legislation. For instance, the same "Black Sunday" that brought the established parties to introduce the safety contracts also inspired them to install a Royal Commissioner on Immigration Policies, who became one of the most outspoken defenders of the multicultural society in Belgium and the fiercest opponent of the VB (De Decker *et al.* 2005).

In conclusion, it seems that Frank Decker's observations on right-wing populists in power are also valid for the subcategory of the populist radical right: they are in general more influential (a) at the subnational levels than at the national level and (b) with regard to cultural themes rather than social, economic, and foreign policies (Decker 2004: 269–70). Moreover, as Lothar Höbelt has argued with regard to Haider, the policy impact of the populist radical right in general has been "that of a catalyst rather than that of an original contribution" (2003: 220). In other words, they have not so much set a new agenda, but rather pushed through and radicalized an older (largely national conservative) agenda – in line with the pathological normalcy thesis.

12.2.2   Party impact

The importance of the populist radical right in contemporary European politics is probably through their impact on other parties (which includes

indirect policy impact) far more than through direct policy impact. Populist radical right parties are said to have "contaminated" various aspects of the established parties in their party systems, such as their style of leadership, their type of political discourse, and the relationship between leaders and followers within established parties (Bale 2003; Mény & Surel 2002b: 19). Put shortly and simply, the other political parties are believed to have copied the charismatic style of leadership, the populist discourse, and the direct relation between leader and followers from the successful populist radical right parties in an attempt to keep or regain their electorate.

Studies point to contemporary developments in European party politics to substantiate their point. However, even if these different aspects can be found in most established parties in Europe, and this point itself is debatable, it does not directly follow that this is a *reaction* to the success of the populist radical right. In fact, both established and populist radical right parties are the product of earlier developments within party politics. To some extent, populist radical right parties are radical versions of the catch-all party type, defined by its small organization, central role of the leader(ship), and "catch-all" discourse (Krouwel 1999; Kirchheimer 1966). Additionally, they have reacted similarly to the rising influence of the mass media, and most notably (commercial) television, which has led to a more prominent role for party leaders and a more direct relationship between leaders and voters in all political parties (e.g. Katz & Mair 1995).

The strongest effect is claimed at the level of discourse (e.g. Decker 2003b; Bayer 2002), but even here the relationship is far from straightforward. We are currently experiencing a populist *Zeitgeist* in Europe (Mudde 2004), in which most political parties express some elements of populism in their discourse (e.g. Jagers 2006). However, this is true in countries with strong populist radical right parties, but also in those with no or weak parties. For example, within Europe populist discourse is particularly strong in Eastern Europe and the UK (e.g. Mair 2002; Mudde 2001), areas where populist radical right parties are not particularly successful in elections.

Somewhat related to the populism thesis is the argument that the populist radical right has repoliticized some countries, either by introducing new issues on the political agenda (e.g. immigration) or by breaking the party political consensus on old issues (e.g. crime). This process has also been observed with respect to the neoliberal populist LPF, which according to some authors transformed the Netherlands from a depoliticized into a centrifugal democracy (Pellikaan *et al.* 2003). Additional research will have to test whether this thesis holds true for other consociational democracies as well, notably Austria, Belgium and Switzerland, where the main populist challenge has come from the radical right.

Similarly, there is a widely held belief that populist radical right parties have had a significant impact on the policy positions of other parties (e.g. Schain 2006; Meguid 2005). So far, little empirical proof has been provided to substantiate this assertion. While a toughening of position in the fields of crime and immigration can be noted in many European countries, it is doubtful whether this is a direct effect of the competition of the populist radical right. In fact, both might react to the same cues from the media and society. Clearly, the situation in countries like Spain and the UK shows that the development is not limited to countries with successful populist radical right parties. Still, these countries might respond to the successes of populist radical right parties in other countries, notably the FN in France, by trying to pre-empt a similar development at home. At the same time, this could also be used as a convenient excuse to push through preferred policies which are known to be unpopular among the own support base.

Obviously, as elections are zero-sum games the rise of the populist radical right has also had electoral effects. This is not just the case with successful parties like the Belgian VB or the Romanian PRM, which have (at times) taken more than 20 percent of the electorate away from the other parties, but even with some fairly tiny parties. In the 2005 British parliamentary elections, for example, the populist radical right Veritas and the Euroreject UKIP are believed to have affected the outcome of twenty-seven seats (North 2005). The only victim of the participation of the two outsider parties was their most important right-wing rival, the Conservative Party, at least when one assumes that these voters were first and foremost inspired by Euroskepticism. Similarly, scholars have noted that the FN has played "an influential role in the left's return to power" (Hainsworth 2000b: 22).

While center-right parties will have suffered electorally from the rise of populist radical right parties, although not necessarily more than their left-wing rivals, some authors argue that they have profited politically (e.g. Bale 2003; Heinisch 2003). However, this is only the case where the center-right has accepted the populist radical right as a (potential) coalition partner, thereby squaring the competitive position *vis-à-vis* the center-left parties, which had their coalition options increased by the rise of the Greens in the 1980s. But in parties where a *cordon sanitaire* has survived, notably in Belgium, the rise of the populist radical right has mainly strengthened the coalition position of the left, notably social democrats and Greens, which are now needed in every coalition. Moreover, the thesis mainly holds for Western Europe, as the postcommunist East tended towards so-called "red–brown" coalitions (Ishiyama 1998) between populist radical left and populist radical right parties.

Referring most notably to recent developments in Austria, Reinhard Heinisch (2003: 125) has argued that "conservative parties tend to be the main beneficiaries from the political fallout" following populist radical right government participation. This thesis seems to be supported also with regard to neoliberal populist parties like the Dutch LPF and the German Schill Party. However, current studies do not yet clarify whether conservative parties gain back the voters they lost earlier to the populist radical right (or neoliberal populists), or whether they actually gain new voters.

It might be the case that populist radical right parties (and neoliberal populist parties) function as halfway houses between the center-left and center-right. In other words, while voters might not change from a social democratic party to a conservative or Christian democratic party directly, they might do it indirectly, by voting once or twice for a populist party. Panel studies would be needed to research this complex process.

12.2.3   Social impact

Many scholars would agree with Seymour Martin Lipset's observation that "radical right agitation has facilitated the growth of practices which threaten to undermine the social fabric of democratic politics" (1955: 176). But while this statement makes both intuitive and theoretical sense, very little empirical evidence has been presented to substantiate it. In most cases the observations are presented as so self-evident that further proof is deemed superfluous.

One of the most heatedly contested issues has been the impact of the electoral success of the populist radical right on the level of nativist violence in a country. Many authors argue that "the xenophobic rhetoric [of populist radical right parties is] often spilling over into violence" (Marcus 2000: 40). One of the few studies providing some empirical support for this relationship is a pilot study of the situation in Switzerland in the period 1984–93 (in Altermatt & Kriesi 1995). In other parts of Europe there also seems to exist a very slight positive correlation (cf. Mudde 2005b; Eatwell 2000; Björgo & Witte 1993b), which is not the same as causation!

In contrast, some scholars believe that successful populist radical right parties actually channel the frustrations of would-be perpetrators of nativist violence (e.g. Minkenberg 2003; Wilensky 1998). In the most comprehensive study of racist and extreme right violence in Western Europe to date, Ruud Koopmans concludes that "[i]n general, strong extreme right parties serve to limit the potential for extreme right and racist violence" (1996: 211). Analysis of the comparative data of the

European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC 2005), particularly relating to the number of racially motivated murders and threats, confirms that the relationship between the levels of racist violence and populist radical right electoral success is inverse, if significant at all (see also in Backes 2003b: 364–5).

However, as all scholars in the field admit, serious comparative studies are at this stage impossible, given the huge inconsistencies in data collection between European countries. This problem is also acknowledged by the EUMC, which states in its annual report: "In general, the enormous difference across the 25 EU Member States in numbers of recorded incidents of racist violence and crime tells us as much about the inadequacy and inconsistency of data collection as it does about the actual extent of racist violence and crimes in the EU" (EUMC 2005: 15).

This problem can be somewhat undercut by using data from the same country but in different regions or at different times. However, these analyses seem to point in the same direction. For example, within Germany an inverse relationship between the levels of antiforeigner violence and populist radical right voting can be found at the state level (e.g. Karapin 2002). And in the seven EU member states that have reliable data on the numbers of racist crimes and incidents, though only over the short period of 2001–03, the only significant increase is reported in Ireland (+88.4 percent), a country which never had a significant populist radical right party (EUMC 2005). In contrast, the two countries with the strongest such parties, Austria and Denmark, belong to those with the largest *de*crease (−17.4 percent and −55.2 percent, respectively). Interestingly, in Austria the FPÖ was part of the coalition government during that period, while in Denmark the DFP was a vital supporter of the minority government.

In an overview article on antiforeigner violence, Peter Merkl concludes that "it would be difficult to overlook the vast preponderance of the unorganized, unpolitical, and less political outrages against asylum-seekers and other visible foreigners" (1995: 114). In fact, most national studies on nativist violence find that only a minority of (arrested) perpetrators are members of nativist organizations (e.g. Björgo & Witte 1993a). Moreover, the perpetrators who are organized tend to engage overwhelmingly in small neo-Nazi groups rather than populist radical right parties. And even when official members of these parties are involved, they are very often passive members rather than activists, let alone leaders. Obviously, there are individual exceptions (e.g. BNP and CD), but in general the *direct* involvement of populist radical right parties in nativist violence remains very limited.

It has also become widely accepted that electoral and political successes of populist radical right parties increase the tolerance for intolerance (e.g.

Schain *et al.* 2002b). Empirical evidence for this belief is hard to come by, although some studies do point in this direction (e.g. Westin 2003). A comparative study of seven West European countries found that electoral success of populist radical right parties does correlate with ethnic prejudice within countries, but has fairly limited "impact" on other authoritarian values (Andersen & Evans 2004). Other studies find an increase in tolerance towards immigrants (e.g. Bjørklund & Andersen 2002). However, it might be more logical to assume that populist radical right electoral success not so much changes the attitudes of people as increases the salience of that attitude. It also seems plausible to argue this with relation to the alleged "cueing effects" of populist radical right parties regarding (exclusive) national identity and European integration (e.g. Netjes & Edwards 2005).

Another effect of electoral success of the populist radical right might be the increased mobilization of its opponents. There seems to be a clear relationship between highly published radical right events and antiradical right mobilization. Most mass mobilizations are direct reactions to either extreme right violence or populist radical right electoral success. Some studies even suggest that electoral successes of populist radical right parties "provoke a backlash among those with liberal attitudes" (Andersen & Evans 2004: 24; also Kitschelt & McGann 1995). The question is then which will be larger and more long-lasting. That this is highly dependent upon the strength of the populist radical right party can be shown by two recent examples: while the mass mobilization after the BNP's election victory in Tower Hamlets largely ended the party's chances in the area, the impact of the "republican front" against Le Pen in the second round of the 2002 presidential elections seems to have been more modest and temporary.

12.3   Democracy strikes back: impact *on*

Obviously, the relationship between European democracies and populist radical right parties is not one-directional. European democracies also have an impact on radical right parties. This section will not discuss the various concepts of "defending democracy" in detail, nor the highly important and interesting work that has recently been conducted in this field (e.g. Capoccia 2005; Eatwell & Mudde 2004; Pedahzur 2003; Van Donselaar 2003, 1995). Instead, the emphasis is on the impact that democratic reactions have had on the populist radical right parties and on the internal changes this impact has given rise to.

We hereby start from the assumption that there is an inherent tension between the populist radical right and liberal democracy (see chapter 6),

which will confront all populist radical right parties with an "adaptation dilemma" (Van Donselaar 1995); i.e. to function fully within a liberal democratic context the populist radical right party must moderate, but to keep its unique position and ensure the loyalty of its hardcore support it has to remain radical (also Dézé 2004; Heinisch 2003). However, different legal, political, and social contexts will lead to dissimilar impacts and dilemmas.

12.3.1   *Coalition vs.* cordon sanitaire

Given that European democracies are essentially party democracies, the most important responses are those by mainstream political parties. In fact, in his study of defending democracy in the interwar period, Giovanni Capoccia (2005) concludes that the behavior of party elites is the vital variable in explaining democratic survival. While the survival of the democratic system is no longer at stake, some of the key values underlying the system of liberal democracy are challenged. Consequently, much of the debate on how "the democratic parties" should respond to the populist radical right party challenge is still voiced in terms of defending democracy.

Until 1980 cooperation with radical right parties was almost universally rejected in Europe. There were few short-term exceptions, most notably with respect to the MSI in Italy (e.g. Dézé 2004). Particularly since the early 1990s the situation has changed significantly, leading to a wide diversity of approaches between and within European countries. At the two poles are coalition as the most accommodative, on the one hand, and a *cordon sanitaire* as the most adversarial, on the other (e.g. De Lange 2007b). Much more analysis is needed to be able to ascertain why some mainstream parties decide upon an accommodative approach and others on an adversarial one. Moreover, little is known about the impact of those strategies on the populist radical right parties (on the electoral effects, see Van der Brug & Van Spanje 2004).

As far as the issue is discussed, it is in terms of the best approach "to deal with" populist radical right parties, which has spurred debate inside and outside of academia. While many self-professed "democrats" tended to reject any cooperation ("collaboration") before, some have changed their opinion in the light of the dismal performance of populist parties in government (i.e. internal splits and subsequent electoral defeat) – though this applies mainly to neoliberal populist parties like the Schill Party and the LPF, it also pertains to the FPÖ and, to a lesser extent, the LN (cf. Delwit & Poirrier 2007; Fröhlich-Steffen & Rensmann 2005a). Moreover, they

will point to parties like the FN and VB, which achieve long-term electoral successes despite a *cordon sanitaire*.

In fact, one could argue that populist radical right parties achieve these successes in part *because of* the cordon. The cordon not only helps these parties to keep the *Fundis* and *Realos* together, as the exclusion by the mainstream parties takes away the incentive to moderate, but it also helps the populist radical right parties to focus themselves fully on a vote-maximizing strategy. Unlike mainstream parties, which have to keep in mind possible coalition talks after the election campaign, pariah parties like the Belgian VB need not concern themselves with these kind of tactical considerations. Moreover, they can pursue the ideal vote-maximizing campaign of "overpromising" (Papadopoulos 2000: 6), uninhibited by concerns of how everything should be implemented. In other words, "[t]he extreme right can campaign continuously and does so. Meantime, the others govern or keep themselves ready to do so" (Deschouwer 2001: 84).

But political cooperation at the level of formal coalition addresses only one aspect of political relations between populist radical right and mainstream parties. Various authors have contended that most mainstream parties will exclude the populist radical right parties and include "their" issues and solutions in an attempt to defeat the outsiders.

> The most effective strategy . . . appears to be a combination of cooptation, confrontation and marginalization. Established political parties seize on the themes of right-wing populist parties (cooptation) while simultaneously denouncing them as enemies of the system (confrontation) and refusing to cooperate with them, or even speak with them, at any political level (marginalization). (Art 2006: 8)

However, this is almost exactly what has been happening in Flanders since 1991, and in France since the late 1990s. Still, in both cases the populist radical right has not diminished in strength; in France not even despite the painful party split.

The problem is that this model (again) ignores the role of the populist radical right party itself. As argued in chapter 10, with regard to the Thatcher–Chirac debate, whether this strategy weakens or strengthens the populist radical right party depends to a large extent on the variable of issue ownership. Once a populist radical right party has established itself as a credible political actor that owns certain salient issues (e.g. crime and immigration), it is largely immune to counter-strategies of other political actors (including the media and social movements).

Similarly, the impact of the strategy of the established parties is largely mitigated by the populist radical right party itself. Both coalitions and cordons can lead to internal cohesion and strife. Much depends on the level

of institutionalization of the populist radical right. Less institutionalized parties will falter under both a cordon (e.g. CD and REP) and a coalition (e.g. LPF and Schill Party). However, more institutionalized parties can thrive under both a cordon (e.g. VB) and a coalition (e.g. SNS), or at the very least survive the latter (e.g. FPÖ and LN). Like nearly all measures of defending democracy, these strategies are most successful, in terms of breaking or transforming the populist radical right party, when applied in the early phase of party institutionalization. Once a populist radical right party becomes institutionalized, its role in determining its own future increases.

12.3.2   Socialization into liberal democracy?

Based on the experiences with the socialist parties in the early twentieth century, and some communist parties in the postwar period, scholars have come to believe that "in the long run, revolutionary parties lose their original impetus and accommodate themselves to the regimes they have been unable to overthrow" (Sartori 1976: 140). Although populist radical right parties are not revolutionary in the true sense, i.e. changing the democratic system by violence, they do claim to want to overthrow "the regime," i.e. the dominant actors and values in their contemporary liberal democracies.

Husbands has argued that "[s]uccess tends to moderate," but also that "it is a historical fact that most examples of such metamorphoses [from antisystem party to system party, CM] are reactions to persistent failure, not to growth and success" (1996: 113). Systematic research into the development of political parties leads to the view that moderation "is not the automatic response to electoral defeat . . . Normally, when moderation is observed, it is due to the fact that the party tempers its ideological rigidity through organizational reforms or leadership renovation" (Sánchez-Cuenca 2004: 325).

However, while correlation is one thing, causality is another. Does success lead to moderation or moderation to success? The answer is probably both: there are examples of populist radical right parties that moderated after (initial) electoral success (e.g. VB) and of those that gained success after moderation (notably Tudor and Le Pen in the presidential elections of 2000 and 2002, respectively). However, there are at least as many examples of parties that did not moderate after (initial) electoral success (e.g. FN, recent NPD, SNS) – some even radicalized in certain respects (e.g. LN, PRM) – or that did not gain electoral victories

12.4   Conclusion

Despite more than twenty-five years of the third wave of populist radical right party politics, sporting unprecedented electoral and political successes (including several coalitions involving members of the party family), the academic study of the impact of populist radical right parties on European democracies and vice versa has hardly started. With a few notable exceptions (particularly Schain *et al.* 2002a), studies of populist radical right parties often claim significant impact upon policies (immigration) and society (violence), but provide very little empirical evidence for those claims.

Most such claims do not seem to hold up against serious empirical and theoretical scrutiny. While many of the noted changes in policies could be observed, particularly in the fields of immigration and law and order, the link to populist radical right influence seems weak at best. Most developments can be observed Europe-wide, not only in countries with a strong populist radical right party (whether in government or not). The same applies to the asserted changes in party behavior and organization; rather than the mainstream parties following the populist radical right, it seems more plausible that both are reacting to the same societal developments (notably the rise of (commercial) media power).

With regard to the alleged societal impact, the claim that electoral success of populist radical right parties leads to nativist violence cannot be substantiated. Indeed, an inverse relationship seems more plausible, although the lack of reliable cross-national data so far prevents any strong conclusion. What can be substantiated by empirical data, however, is that the direct involvement of populist radical right parties in nativist violence is very small. Finally, while more research is needed to assess whether electoral success of populist radical right parties has an impact on mass attitudes and, if so, what type of impact, it seems reasonable to assume that the effect will be more pronounced on the salience rather than the content of those attitudes.

The impact of European democracies on populist radical right parties has been even less addressed in the literature. Recent years have seen an increased academic and political debate on the effect of the behavior of the mainstream parties, i.e. coalition or cordon, in part resulting from some spectacular failures of populist parties in government. However, the impact of both coalition and cordon is strongly mediated through the populist radical right party itself, particularly through its level of party institutionalization. More institutionalized parties can be strengthened by both coalition and cordon, while less institutionalized parties can be weakened by both.

Finally, little is known about the impact of European democracies on the internal life of populist radical right parties. As we know from the socialist parties of the early and late twentieth century, as well as some contemporary former radical right parties (e.g. HDZ, MSI/AN, SPO), political parties can and do change their ideology. Under which conditions they moderate, rather than stabilize or radicalize, is a question still waiting for an answer. At first glance there doesn't seem to be a straightforward relationship with electoral or political success.

13   Conclusions

> The enemy is the gramophone mind, whether or not one agrees with
> the record that is being played at the moment.   (Orwell 1996: 63)

13.1   Introduction

Coming to the end of this book makes me realize primarily how many
important and interesting topics within the field of populist radical right
studies still need further exploration. This study can at best open consid-
eration of a few issues and begin to answer some of the many questions
the subject provokes.

In this final chapter, I want to look both back and forward. This book
addresses three aspects of the study of populist radical right parties: iden-
tifications, issues, and explanations. On the basis of a pan-European
approach I have collected, integrated, and revised insights from exist-
ing studies and combined them with new findings from original research.
The next sections present some of the main findings of this study and
sketch posssible avenues for further research.

The key message of this book is reiterated throughout this conclud-
ing chapter: the populist radical right parties themselves must be put at
the center of research on the phenomenon. Populist radical right parties
are not just dependent variables, passively molded by structural factors,
but they also constitute independent variables, actively shaping part of
their own destiny. This point is too often ignored in the sociological and
economical deterministic studies in political science.

13.2   From conceptualization to classification

While many scholars still devote little or no attention to definitional mat-
ters, there is increasing debate about the best term and definition for
these parties. This study introduces the term populist radical right to
describe their core ideology: nativism, authoritarianism, and populism.

Obviously, neither the term nor the definition will convince many of my colleagues, who will adhere to the nomenclature of their earlier work. But this was not the objective of the first chapter. Rather, it sought to expose and overcome the key problems involved in defining the topic at hand: notably, circularity, the relationships with other political ideologies, and the semantics of terminology.

Classification, the topic of the second chapter, is even more critical to advancing scholarly understanding of this phenomenon. While various authors do devote some attention to the conceptualization of the populist radical right, very few give similar consideration to the classification of the parties. This study provides a first and provisional attempt at classifying the most relevant European populist radical right parties. It has already led to some highly remarkable results: various usual suspects were excluded from the populist radical right family (e.g. FRP, LPF, NPD, Samoobrona), while some unsuspected cases were included in the family (e.g. DUP, HDZ). It also showed that there are many problems involved in classifying political parties, populist radical right or otherwise: markedly, internal division and ideological change. This is not a sign of weakness of the conceptual categories, but a consequence of the complexity and dynamism of political phenomena.

Much more work will have to be done to come to a more accurate and comprehensive classification of all populist radical right parties. This can only be accomplished by original research, as so many European parties remain understudied (e.g. De Lange & Mudde 2005). In addition, classifications should be based upon systematic academic analyses of party literature. Too often (new) parties are simply classified on the basis of "common wisdom" supported by a smattering of highly selective quotes. It is also important to remember that not every new political actor that criticizes the political mainstream is populist and not every novel party that criticizes (past) immigration policies or that is Islamophobic is radical right.

This study has distinguished between different families of populist parties, of which the populist radical right and the neoliberal populist are the most notable. Together, they are part of the category of right-wing populism. However, given the different intellectual traditions underlying the ideologies of the two party families, it does not make much sense to use this overly broad category in the study of party families. Moreover, the distinction between the two groups, which makes sense in an ideological sense, probes the interesting question of the different electoral successes of the two party families. With the notable exception of Italy, no European party system has both successful populist radical right and neoliberal populist parties (Mudde 2006). Are the populist radical

right and the neoliberal populist parties functional equivalents, similar to Christian democrats and conservatives? Which factors explain the ascendance of one party over the other? I suggest that the explanation is mainly to be found on the supply-side, particularly in political culture, i.e. the centrality of nativism and the (related) level of stigmatization of the populist radical right.

13.3   From received wisdom to original research

One of the key problems in the field of populist radical right studies is the lack of original research. Despite the plethora of publications that have appeared over the past twenty-five years, the field is still full of "received wisdom" that (so far) has not been tested scientifically. The reason is quite simple: only a very few researchers actually study populist radical right parties themselves. The vast majority of the literature is based almost exclusively upon secondary "analysis" of often highly debatable sources, be they nonacademic studies of populist radical right parties or large cross-national data sets with concomitant methodological and operationalizational problems.

This study has shown the limited accuracy of some commonly held "truths." On the basis of a cross-national analysis of the party literature we found no proof for the popular thesis that populist radical right parties are essentially neoliberal in ideology. Conversely, the party family has a nativist economic program, which is secondary to both the parties and its voters. Similarly, the belief that the populist radical right party family consists only of *Männerparteien* (male parties) was seriously revised. While the thesis is supported for the electorates of most parties, particularly at the leadership level the party family compares favorably with mainstream parties in terms of female representation. Moreover, the feminist bias in much research overstates the significance of the underrepresentation of women within populist radical right parties by comparing it only to the percentages in the population or in left-wing parties. It also provided incorrect and highly normative explanations. Rather than resulting from some innate positive characteristics of women, or (by negation) negative features of men, the disproportionately low level of support for populist radical right parties among women is best explained by their lower level of political efficacy. Finally, contrary to the received wisdom that nativists are isolationists uninterested in international cooperation, the study demonstrated that the populist radical right does combine nativist ambitions with support for European cooperation. While faced with even larger obstacles than other party families, the absence of a populist radical right transnational federation has less to do with ideology (i.e. competing

nationalisms) than with practicalities (e.g. conflicting egos, lack of insti-
tutional stability, stigmatization).

This book has addressed only some of the issues that can help us to
better understand the populist radical right phenomenon, including its
electoral and political failures and successes. Moreover, the analysis has
necessarily been limited to only some of the party literature, given the lack
of substantive academic studies of the ideology of most populist radical
right parties.

Among the issues that remain to be addressed is the relationship
between religion and populist radical right parties, a topic that has
received only scant attention in the literature so far despite the impor-
tance ascribed to it in some explanations of success (e.g. Mayer 2002;
Billiet 1995; Falter 1994). While religion has always been important for
many parties in Eastern Europe, regional differences with respect to reli-
gion appear to be less salient in the wake of 9/11, which strengthened the
emphasis on Christianity within populist radical right parties in the West
(e.g. FN, FPÖ, VB).

13.4   From "normal pathology" to "pathological normalcy"

Like the research on nationalism and fascism, studies of the contemporary
populist radical right have been based upon the thesis of "normal pathol-
ogy" (Scheuch & Klingemann 1967), in which the populist radical right
is seen as a pathology common to all (liberal) democracies. Under nor-
mal circumstances the level of support will be marginal (some 5 percent),
but in times of "crisis" – linked to socioeconomic and sociodemographic
developments like modernization, economic crisis, mass immigration –
it can increase significantly (e.g. Taggart 2002; Minkenberg 1998). This
means that the populist radical right is considered to be an anomaly of
(liberal) democracies and the key puzzle is at the demand-side, i.e. why
do people hold populist radical right attitudes?

The normal-pathology-thesis is not supported by empirical evidence.
First of all, surveys show large support for populist radical right attitudes,
extending well beyond the levels of a small pathological marginalized
minority. Second, "[m]uch of the discourse of radical right-wing parties
represents nothing more than a radicalized version of mainstream posi-
tions promoted and defended by the established parties" (Betz 2003b:
88; also Minkenberg 2001: 5). Nativism is a radical interpretation of the
idea of the nation-state, the founding principle of many Western coun-
tries and recognized as such by the United Nations. Authoritarianism is
a core feature of mainstream ideologies (e.g. conservatism) and religions
(notably Catholic and Orthodox Christianity), although not always to

the same degree. And populism builds to a large extent on the democratic promise so central to European politics (e.g. Mény & Surel 2002b; Canovan 1999).

Consequently, it makes much more sense to consider the populist radical right essentially as a "pathological normalcy," i.e. a radicalized version of mainstream ideas, and not as a "normal pathology," unconnected to the mainstream and requiring explanation from completely different (demand-side) theories. If the populist radical right is indeed understood as a pathological normalcy, it follows that (1) a relatively high level of demand for populist radical right politics is available in all (Western) liberal democracies,[1] and (2) the main puzzle is no longer why people hold populist radical right values, but why they are (not) voting for populist radical right parties. The answer is to be found mainly on the supply-side: shifting from the external supply-side during the phase of electoral breakthrough to the internal supply-side in the phase of electoral persistence.

13.5 From the demand-side to the supply-side

All politics is about the relationship between demand and supply, and the populist radical right is no exception to this general rule. Most research on the topic has focused almost exclusively on the demand-side, i.e. the search for and explanation of the most fertile breeding ground of the populist radical right. While in itself valuable, there are two empirical arguments against this approach: (1) the cross-national, cross-regional, and cross-temporal variations in breeding grounds can account for only a small degree of the substantial electoral differences between populist radical right parties (e.g. Carter 2005; Givens 2005; Norris 2005); (2) in all countries these parties mobilize only a (small) part of their potential supporters, i.e. the breeding ground is (more) fertile everywhere (e.g. Van der Brug *et al.* 2005).

Critical study of the literature in the field teaches us that the perfect breeding ground for populist radical right parties is one in which there are widespread insecurities and resentments related to the three core features of the populist radical right ideology: nativism, authoritarianism, and populism. Nativism feeds upon the feeling of endangered or threatened ethnic or national identity, linked most notably to (perceptions of) the process of European integration, mass immigration, and the mechanics of "multiculturalism." Authoritarianism attracts people who are worried

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[1] The pathological normalcy thesis certainly holds true for the broader European and Western contexts. Given the hegemony of Western views on democracy and the nation-state, however, I would argue that the thesis has near-universal validity.

about crime and the wavering of traditional values, while populism speaks to dissatisfaction with political representation as well as the increased sense of individual's efficacy.

Obviously, these fears and insecurities are available at all times and in all societies, both inside and outside of Europe. However, most of the time only *some* fears are present within *certain* subgroups. In recent decades large groups of Europeans have come to share a *combination* of these frustrations and insecurities. The populist radical right parties are unique in their integration of all these sentiments. As a consequence they are more favourably positioned to capture this discontent among a growing number of Europeans than other nationalists (who deal primarily with national identity issues), populists (who mainly speak to political resentment), and conservatives (who primarily address authoritarianism).

To be sure, the breeding ground of the populist radical right is undoubtedly linked to processes like modernization in general and globalization in particular. However, these processes are so broad and vague that they are of little use in empirical research. Modernization, like globalization, is a continuous process, and as such is hard to measure in a given temporal context. Similarly, populist radical right parties probably profit from oppositions to multicultural and postindustrial societies, but what these terms mean exactly and how these variables relate causally remains vague.

Admittedly, the populist radical right is unlikely to find fertile breeding ground in countries that are (perceived as) monocultural, crimeless, and without political problems, but neither do such places exist. This is not to say that there is no relationship between objective facts (e.g. numbers of immigrants) and subjective feelings (e.g. xenophobia), but rather to problematize their relevance for the electoral success of populist radical right parties. Simply said, every European country has a (relatively) fertile breeding ground for the populist radical right, yet only in some countries do these parties also flourish in elections. The answer to that puzzle is not to be found in the demand-side, but in the supply-side.

Few authors have provided a theoretical model of electoral success of populist radical right parties that includes both demand-side and (internal and external) supply-side factors. Most theories are either monocausal, often referring to very broad and vague macro-level processes such as globalization or postindustrialization, or multicausal, but still exclusively based upon macro- and micro-level demand-side variables. Then there are some shopping list theories, which simply present a staggering number of demand- and supply-side variables without clearly indicating how they influence the success of populist radical right parties or each other.

Two relatively parsimonious integrated theories deserve more detailed attention. The first was developed by Herbert Kitschelt and further

elaborated upon in his work with Anthony McGann (Kischelt & McGann 1995). One of its key strengths is that the theory tries to address both the successes and failures of different subtypes of "new radical right" parties. In short, it combines demand- (postindustrial society), external supply- (mainstream party convergence), and internal supply-side variables (ideological offer of the radical right) to account for the differences in electoral success of the new radical right in Western Europe. Despite the major importance of this theory, it has several major drawbacks. Most notably, the theory is relatively vague (Veugelers 2001), misclassifies the major parties (e.g. De Lange 2007a), is mostly applicable to only a small subset of European democracies (excluding the East and South), and has questionable underlying assumptions (essentially class voting; see Knutsen 2005).

Less well-known, but possibly even more promising, is the "legitimacy, efficacy and trust (LET) hypothesis" of Roger Eatwell (2003, 2000, 1998). According to this hypothesis, "extreme right voting is likely to stem from a combination of three (partly related) perceptions. These are growing extremist *Legitimacy* + rising personal *Efficacy* + declining system *Trust*" (Eatwell 2003: 68). Obviously, there are some problematic sides to this theory too, most notably the dynamic terminology, which explains the *act* of voting by three (aggregate and individual) *processes*. In addition, one can question why the variable of "system trust" is operationalized at the aggregate rather than the individual level. Still, the theory has the advantage of combining the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels as well as the demand and (external and internal) supply-sides.

Both theories still basically work from the normal-pathology assumption. Here, the populist radical right is seen as a pathological normalcy, and their parties as *purifiers*, referring to "an ideology that has been betrayed or diluted by established parties," rather than *prophets*, "which articulate a new ideology" (Lucardie 2000: 175). For purifiers, the supply-side of politics is far more important than the demand-side, as they essentially refer to mainstream values, although in a radicalized manner. Whereas prophetic parties have to articulate or construct new political divisions, purifiers have to establish themselves on either old issues or new issues related to old political divisions. While this also means that the issues of purifiers have potential salience, it is important for populist radical right parties to ensure that "their" issues gain or hold a high salience.

Various factors can influence the increase in issue salience. Obviously, objective facts are in some way related to the politicization of issues. For example, the attacks of 9/11 pushed terrorism to the top of the public agenda. However, the way the issue enters public discourse is not

an objective given, but is influenced by a variety of political and social actors, most notably political parties and the media. Parties and the media largely, though not solely, decide how an issue is framed and thus to which attitudes and values an issue is related. It is through the process of "framing" and "selecting" of issues that certain policies become salient, and others do not (e.g. Schain *et al.* 2002b; Minkenberg 2001).

Certain issues are clearly favorable to populist radical right parties as they are easily linked to their core features: e.g. corruption and political failure (populism), crime and terrorism (authoritarianism), multicultural society and immigration (nativism). When these issues gain salience, populist radical right parties stand a chance of increasing their electoral relevance, in contrast to situations in which socioeconomic issues dominate the electoral campaign. The main variable that decides whether populist radical right or other parties will profit from the salience of issues like crime or corruption is *issue ownership*. If one of the other parties has already established ownership over these issues, that party will benefit from their increased salience. However, if the issue is perceived as being ignored or ineptly handled by the established parties, at least in the eyes of voters who consider the issue important, there is an opportunity for the populist radical right to gain support.

In this respect, the theories of convergence (e.g. Kitschelt & McGann 1995) and cartelization (Katz & Mair 1995) are of particular importance. A combination of both can possibly explain why the new democracies of both the second (Greece, Portugal, and Spain) and third wave (postcommunist countries) do have relatively unsuccessful populist radical right parties at this moment. Most democratizing countries have polarized party systems in the first decades; during transition between the old and new elites, and during consolidation between different new elites. In this period the population will perceive party competition as a fairly radical choice between very different options, with clear winners and losers. Moreover, particularly in the postcommunist world, parties were initially mere vehicles of small groups of elites, which changed allegiances and names regularly (e.g. Lewis 2000; Kopecký 1995), providing the impression of a continuous offer of new alternatives.

In time, the polarization of the new democracies will slowly but steadily develop into "normal" opposition, probably developing into ideological converging between the two parties (blocs) later on, while strict alternation of power is increasingly softened by power-sharing agreements and mild forms of cartelization. Consequently, chances for the nonaligned populist radical right will increase significantly (e.g. Von Beyme 1996).

Interestingly, polarization seems to have very different effects on the electoral and political success of populist radical right parties. While the

electoral position of populist radical right parties is weakened by polarization, their political position can be strengthened. If the two center (or main) parties are polarized, they will have fewer coalition options. In most cases this leads to blocks of parties in which the populist radical right can play a role. In Western Europe these blocks have normally followed the usual left–right divide, while in Eastern Europe the division seems more related to a relatively vague antipro-Western division.

During the phase of *electoral breakthrough*, the populist radical right party does not play a particularly important role as an independent variable. Having a charismatic leader, professional propaganda, and a strong party organization will all help, but are not necessary to achieve electoral breakthrough. Similarly, (positive) media attention will be a plus, but does not have to be excessive. As long as the right group of people know that the party exists, which can be achieved largely by the party's own propaganda, it can mobilize enough voters to gain initial electoral success, normally measured in terms of gaining enough support to enter parliament. The populist radical right party does not even have to establish issue ownership yet. It can garner support simply by being seen as a party that acknowledges the importance of the issue, or that holds a certain underrepresented view on the issue.

There are a few intervening variables that influence the significance of the impact of initial electoral success. A favorable institutional framework, for example, will mean that a relatively small degree of electoral support can already lead to electoral breakthrough. A highly proportional electoral system ensures that even small parties can achieve parliamentary representation, while a federal system helps parties with a highly localized support basis. Moreover, generous and egalitarian state financing rules create opportunities for all new parties, whereas strict and tough legal requirements for electoral participation provide extra hurdles (e.g. Norris 2005). It should be remembered, however, that these factors do not so much influence the electoral support, but rather determine how this support is translated into parliamentary representation and political impact.

Once a populist radical right party has achieved electoral breakthrough, a largely different set of factors decides upon the question of *electoral persistence*. The focus shifts from the external to the internal supply-side: in other words, the importance of the political opportunity structure decreases, while the populist radical right party itself becomes the crucial independent variable. The party now becomes *a* major factor in its own success and often *the* major factor in its own failure.

It has to be able to break out of the ghetto of its hardcore support and speak to new voters who are less convinced of the party's message. But

it has to do this without losing its old hardcore voters (and members). Once new soft supporters are brought into the party electorate, partly as protest voters, they must be transformed into loyal party supporters. To achieve this, the populist radical right has to become a legitimate political actor (Eatwell 1998) that establishes ownership over "its" issues, at least in the eyes of a sizeable part of the country's electorate.

In this process, three internal supply-side variables are vital: organization, personnel, and propaganda. A party has to be well organized to build upon its breakthrough. It has to be able to extend its coverage in terms of both electoral districts contested and subgroups of the electorate addressed. To do this, the party needs at least some competent personnel, and particularly a practical leader with organizational skills. Also, to attract larger groups of the electorate, a charismatic or at least media-genic leader is important as he or she can make use of the increased media attention that inevitably follows electoral breakthrough. Similarly, with more external focus, the party no longer mainly addresses the converted, who were looking for the party themselves, but has to convince a wider audience that it has an important role to play in the political arena; either directly, through its own policies, or indirectly, by pushing the other parties in the desired direction. For this, professional propaganda is of crucial importance.

Again, certain intervening variables exist during the phase of electoral persistence that influence the party's ability to establish itself as a credible political actor. Most important in this respect is the political culture of a country, most notably the role of nationalism within it. In countries where nationalism is regarded with great suspicion and easily linked to the period of the Second World War, populist radical right parties run the risk of "being tarred by the extremist brush" (Eatwell 2000: 364; Art 2006). As a consequence of this stigmatization, the party will have great difficulties finding competent people to become active in the party, yet attract many true extremists, further strengthening the stigmatization. In sharp contrast, in countries where nationalism is part of mainstream political culture, and a thriving nationalist subculture exists, populist radical right parties will find it much easier to attract competent people and to build bridges to the mainstream.

While campaigns by the media and political opponents can surely have an effect on the electoral success of populist radical right parties, their impact will be strongly mediated by the political culture. In other words, where stigmatization is strong, they will be influential and will further reduce the chances for the populist radical right to establish itself. However, in countries with a favorable political culture, antiracist and media campaigns will be far less effective, given that part of the establishment

(including the media) defends similar policies and values. Here, the main problem of the populist radical right is finding the political space to establish itself as a distinct and independent actor; a problem more generally faced in the new democracies of the East than in the established democracies in the West.

This highly complex interaction of internal and external supply-side factors should be studied largely through the application of completely different research designs than those used in most current explanatory studies of populist radical right electoral success. Cross-national studies based upon secondary data sets, either at the aggregate or individual level, can catch only part of the demand-side of the equation. While expert studies seem to provide a reliable source of data for cross-national studies of the supply-side, we should be extremely careful about accepting the validity of these data sets. Most importantly, does it really make sense to ask five or more "experts" about a highly complex topic that we have virtually no publications on? If we want to use expert studies, they should be more than mere peer surveys – not every political scientist from country *x* is also an expert on specific aspects of populist radical right politics in that country.

In addition to gathering new data and using innovative methodologies, future research will also have to focus more attention on the meso-level. It is particularly at this level that the relationship between macro-level theories and micro-level attitudes can be studied. It is here that the role of the supply-side, and particularly the connections between the various supply-side factors, can be researched in all their complexities. Studies at the meso-level also have the advantage of generating far more cases, enhancing the possibilities for advanced statistical analysis and for controlling for various variables (primarily institutional).

13.6   Last words

Over the past decades the field of populist radical right parties has proved particularly popular and productive. Within the ECPR Standing Group on Extremism & Democracy currently some one-third of the over six hundred members are working primarily or secondarily on the topic. And unlike so many other fields of the social sciences, the study of the populist radical right is not dominated by one academic or national tradition. In fact, English, French, and German (language) publications very much compete at the same high level, with the Germans producing almost half of all publications in the field (cf. De Lange & Mudde 2005).

Despite the huge intellectual capital and the deeply felt commitment of the many scholars in the field, academic research on populist radical

right parties has largely stabilized since influential scholars like Hans-Georg Betz, Piero Ignazi, and Herbert Kitschelt integrated insights from classic party politics into the field in the early 1990s. One of the main hindrances towards further progress is the lack of originality in terms of approaches, cases, data, and methods. If this book has at least triggered some interest in exploring new venues and breaking out of the more comfortable studies of the usual suspects on the basis of the usual data sets, it has achieved its main aim.