

Inside the Radical Right: The Development of Anti-Immigrant Parties in Western Europe

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Abbreviations

AN	National Alliance (Italy) <i>Alleanza Nazionale</i>
BNP	British National Party
BZÖ	Alliance for the Future of Austria/ <i>Bündnis Zukunft Österreich</i>
CD	Center Democrats (The Netherlands)/ <i>Centrumdemocraten</i>
DF	Danish People's Party/ <i>Danske Folkeparti</i>
FN	National Front (France)/ <i>Front National</i>
FNb	National Front (Belgium)/ <i>Front National</i>
FPÖ	Austrian Freedom Party/ <i>Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs</i>
FrP	Progress Party (Norway)/ <i>Fremskrittpartiet</i>
FRPd	Danish Progress Party/ <i>Fremskridtspartiet</i>
LN	Northern League (Italy)/ <i>Lega Nord</i>
LPF	List Pim Fortuyn (The Netherlands)/ <i>Lijst Pim Fortuyn</i>
MSI	Italian Social Movement/ <i>Movimento Sociale Italiano</i>
ND	New Democracy (Sweden)/ <i>Ny Demokrati</i>
NF	National Front (UK)
NPD	National Democratic Party of Germany/ <i>Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands</i>
PVV	Freedom Party (The Netherlands)/ <i>Partij Voor de Vrijheid</i>
REP	The Republicans (Germany)/ <i>Die Republikaner</i>
SD	Sweden Democrats (Sweden)/ <i>Sverigedemokraterna</i>
SVP	Swiss People's Party/ <i>Schweizerische Volkspartei</i>
VB	Flemish Bloc/Flemish Interest (Belgium)/ <i>Vlaams Blok/Vlaams Belang</i>
VdU	League of Independents (Austria)/ <i>Verband der Unabhängigen</i>

Chapter One: Introduction

In March of 1984, a foreign correspondent for the *Washington Post* tracked down Pierre Poujade, the stationary salesman who had led a political revolt of French shopkeepers three decades earlier. Poujade's movement, the *Union de Défense Commerçants et Artisans* (Union for the Defense of Tradesmen and Artisans, UDCA), did not survive beyond a single parliamentary term in the French National Assembly and serves as a classic example of a "flash party." But the ideology of Poujadism—the defense of small business interests and traditional values from the forces of modernization—appeared to be making a comeback in the form of Jean-Marie Le Pen's *Front National* (National Front, FN). Le Pen had first entered parliament as a 28 year-old deputy of the UDCA, and although he was now well into his sixth decade, Poujade still spoke of him like a protégé. "A handsome kid with a fine gift of gab," was his estimation of the FN's leader. Le Pen was attracting national attention after his party, with the cooperation of two mainstream conservative parties, won several council seats in the town of Dreux. This led to a series of television appearances and increased visibility, and by the time of the interview with Poujade the FN was polling between 10 and 15 percent for the upcoming elections to the European Parliament. Yet Poujade nevertheless foresaw a bleak future for Le Pen: "Take my word for it: by 1988, he will be down to 1 or 2 percent of the vote."¹

Poujade's prediction may have been colored by his own meteoric rise and fall, but the overwhelming majority of commentators at the time also viewed the FN's success as

¹ *The Washington Post*, March 18, 1984.

ephemeral. Most were unwilling to believe that the party represented anything more than a hodge-podge of political cranks who had momentarily ridden a wave of protest. When Le Pen and the other elected FN parliamentarians took their seats in the European Parliament in July of 1984, an article in *The Guardian* described them as the “Strasbourg Cuckoos” and argued that French voters would soon toss them out.² This basic view persisted four years later, even after Le Pen had captured 14 percent of the vote in the 1988 presidential election. “So far,” the *Economist* reminded its readers, “Europe’s post-Hitler experience has been that far-right parties wane almost as quickly as they wax.” There was thus no reason to believe that Le Pen would not become the next Poujade.

The tone, however, had changed markedly by the early 1990s. Not only had the FN consolidated its electoral position and established a national organization, but other parties that railed against immigration and the political establishment had also begun to do surprisingly well across Western Europe. Journalists started to juxtapose travel-book descriptions of small European states against this new wave of xenophobia. “The gentle face of Belgium, affectionately teased as the home of beer, chips and Tintin, had turned ugly overnight,” reports one after the Vlaams Blok’s breakthrough in the 1991 municipal elections in Antwerp.³ “The photograph shows three young, handsome Austrians with windblown hair and open collars, laughing at the camera as they pose for a picture high in the Alps,” writes another of an Austrian Freedom Party poster in 1990.⁴

By the turn of the twenty first century, it had become clear that many of these parties, which I will refer to as radical right, were here to stay. They had participated in national governments in Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, supported

² *The Guardian*, July 26, 1984.

³ *The Independent*, November 26, 1991.

⁴ *The New York Times*, October 7, 1990.

minority governments in Denmark and Norway, and won representation in state parliaments and local councils across Europe. Several have approached 30 percent of the vote in national elections. The French National Front never reached the latter mark, but Jean-Marie Le Pen's entrance into the second round of the 2002 presidential election, despite any meaningful chance of winning the contest, marked the culmination of his political career.

Poujade obviously failed to predict that the rise of the Front National, and of other parties like it, would reshape European party systems. But looking back, one can also find examples of observers who mistakenly extrapolated increasing electoral returns from what would prove to be transitory breakthroughs. Many scholars of German politics, for example, believed in the early 1990s that the radical right Republicans (*Republikaner*, REPs) would become a permanent fixture in the party landscape. They have, to an extent, but based on their underwhelming electoral performance since then (0.6% in the last federal election), the party can hardly be considered a meaningful presence. When New Democracy (*Ny Demokrati*, ND) became the third largest party in the Swedish parliament (*Riksdag*) in 1991, many argued that Sweden was simply following in the steps of Denmark and Norway, where anti-tax parties had converted themselves into radical right ones several years earlier. But New Democracy imploded after its electoral breakthrough, and by 2000 the party was defunct. The attention lavished on parties like the Front National, the Vlaams Belang (formerly the Vlaams Blok), and the Austrian Freedom Party have obscured the inability of other radical right parties to ever capture more than a couple of percentage points in national elections or even to survive after a particularly

impressive electoral showing. The development of the radical right in Western Europe over the last quarter century has thus been a story of failure as well as success.

That scholars and pundits were unable to predict with any accuracy in the 1980s, and even in the 1990s, the future trajectories of radical right parties is not surprising. European states underwent a more or less common set of structural changes—the most important being an increase in ethnic heterogeneity—over this time period. And while these states and societies were different in important ways, they did possess enough in common for reasonable people to believe that they would respond to these changes similarly, and that the success of a radical right party in one presaged consistent victories elsewhere. That this did not occur is puzzling. And when one looks more closely at the trajectories of radical right parties in particular sets of cases, it becomes clear that existing theories—which I review briefly below—cannot account for the variation. For example, although they possess the same electoral rules, the radical right is strong in Flanders but weak in Wallonia, even though the latter region of Belgium has been in a permanent economic crisis, a factor often associated with the success of the radical right. Or take the three Scandinavian countries, which use similar electoral systems and whose basic commonalities often make them the subject of structured-focused comparison. It is far from obvious why the radical right has failed in Sweden, which has nearly twice the percentage of foreign-born as neighboring Norway and Denmark, where the radical right has succeeded.

The goal of this book is to explain this variation. Although there are many ways of conceiving of success and failure, I use electoral persistence as my dependent variable and define success as receiving more than 5% of the vote in three successive national

parliamentary elections.⁵ This means that I am not concerned with explaining how radical right parties achieve their initial electoral breakthrough.⁶ The reasons behind these breakthroughs, however defined, have been so varied that they are probably better viewed as contingent events rather than the result of similar processes.⁷ Since every party I examine in this book has experienced some form of electoral breakthrough, I take this event as my starting point rather than my outcome of interest. Electoral persistence also does not overlap perfectly with other possible measures of success, such as representation in parliament, government participation, or influence on mainstream parties.⁸ Yet since electorally persistent parties also tend to succeed on these other dimensions, it makes sense to focus on this variable rather than on something else. Moreover, looking at persistence (or lack thereof) allows us to analyze the trajectories of radical right parties over the last quarter century and not become caught up with any particular election result. While we are thus unable to fully account for the occasionally wild swings in their electoral support, taking the long view brings into sharp relief those forces that have created strong radical right parties in some countries and weak ones in others. The case

⁵ The election results for radical right parties since 1980 can be found in appendix A. The reader will see that changing the 5% barrier by a couple of points in either direction, or looking at two national elections rather than three, does not lead to different codings.

⁶ There is no common definition in the literature of what constitutes an electoral breakthrough. For some scholars, such as Mudde (2007: 301), it means winning enough votes to enter parliament. My view is that this is too restrictive a definition, as it would exclude cases such as the municipal elections in Dreux in 1983 that most scholars would agree represented a “breakthrough” for the Front National. I would therefore define a breakthrough as an election in which a party receives enough votes to attract the attention of the media and other political parties.

⁷ For example, the Republikaner owed their breakthrough in the West Berlin elections of 1989 to a xenophobic television commercial that the local media seized upon and amplified. The Front National’s success in the town of Dreux in 1983 can be attributed largely to the efforts of Jean-Marie Stirbois and his wife Marie-France, who had campaigned there for five years. The German DVU won nearly 13 percent in state elections in Sachsen-Anhalt in 1998 through an unprecedented mass-mailing of propaganda material. The BNP won local representation in 2002 in towns that had recently experienced ethnic riots.

⁸ For example, the French Front National has persisted electorally despite being effectively denied representation in the National Assembly. The Vlaams Belang is one of the largest parties in Flanders but has been shut out from government at every political level. Alternatively, the List Pim Fortuyn did not persist electorally but certainly reshaped the public debate over immigration and integration.

selection is explained toward the end of this chapter, but the cases themselves are summarized in the table below.

Table 1.1: *Successful and Unsuccessful Radical Right Parties*

<u>Party</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ)	Austria	Success
Belgian National Front (FNb)	Belgium (Wallonia)	Failure
British National Party (BNP)	Great Britain	Failure
Center Democrats (CD)	Netherlands	Failure
Danish People's Party (DF)	Denmark	Success
German National Party (NPD)	Germany	Failure
German People's Union (DVU)	Germany	Failure
List Pim Fortuyn (LPF)	Netherlands	Failure
National Alliance (AN)	Italy	Success
National Front (FN)	France	Success
New Democracy (ND)	Sweden	Failure
Northern League (LN)	Italy	Success
Progress Party (FrP)	Norway	Success
Republicans (REPS)	Germany	Failure
Sweden Democrats (SD)	Sweden	Failure
Swiss People's Party (SVP)	Switzerland	Success
Vlaams Belang (VB)	Belgium (Flanders)	Success

This book breaks with much of the literature on the radical right by taking a careful look at the parties themselves. Once we begin to look inside them, dramatic differences emerge between successful and unsuccessful cases. To put it bluntly, failed radical right parties have adhered to the so-called Pogo principle: “We have met the enemy, and it is us.” Bitter factionalism, incompetence, criminal activity, organizational chaos and a host of other internal pathologies have led to party implosion, oftentimes at the very moment that these parties had registered a large electoral gain. The radical right parties that persisted have not been entirely immune from these types of problems. Yet they have not only managed to weather them, but have also developed organizational capacities that rival, or even surpass, those of mainstream parties.

The question, of course, is what accounts for these differences? This book claims that the internal life of radical right parties—and indeed political parties in general—is shaped by the nature of its activists. While we know a great deal about radical right voters, we know extremely little about those people whose commitment to radical right politics goes far beyond casting a ballot every couple of years. With a few notable exceptions, scholars have treated the individuals who work on behalf of radical right parties as either homogenous fanatics or the docile followers of a powerful, and oftentimes charismatic, leader. Yet radical right activists hold different ideas about immigration and parliamentary democracy. They have different visions of the party and different levels of commitment to it. They come with different levels of education and political experience. Through a combination of comparative historical analysis, ethnographic research, and an analysis of an original data set of radical right candidates for office, this book demonstrates how the types of activists a party attracts ultimately determines its success or failure. Most importantly, it offers an explanation for *why* radical right parties attracted the types of activists they did.

But before outlining this argument in more detail, surveying alternative explanations, and explaining the research design and methodology, it is necessary to consider the real-world importance of radical right parties. This is something that scholars studying the radical right have not often paused to consider, in part because there have always been enough politicians and commentators warning that its rise prefigured a return to the politics of the interwar period or, somewhat less hysterically, that it threatened to undermine the quality of European democracy. The fourteen member states of the European Union appeared to endorse the latter view when they placed sanctions on

Austria after a radical right party (the Austrian Freedom Party, FPÖ) joined a coalition government in February 2000. But after six months of refusing to appear in photos with their Austrian counterparts, EU politicians dispatched a crew of three “wise-men” to determine whether minorities were suffering under the new government. They were not, the report concluded, and nor was the FPÖ dismantling Austrian democracy. Radical right parties that have been parts of governments elsewhere in Europe, or who have propped up minority governments in Denmark and Norway, have not behaved much differently. Moreover, since radical right parties have been denied the reins of government in places where they are electorally strong, like France and Flanders, it is reasonable to ask whether and how they matter.

Yet the fact that radical right parties are not threatening to overturn liberal democracy does not mean that they are not important, nor that their differential success across Europe will not produce lasting consequences. Indeed, they have been both the products and agents of some of the most fundamental changes in European politics over the last several decades. Most strikingly, immigration has turned nation states that were formerly homogenous into ones with large minority populations, and the rise of the radical right would have been inconceivable without this basic social transformation. At the same time, the radical right is profoundly influencing how European states and societies negotiate the issues that immigration has introduced. Even when they are not in power, radical right parties have set the agenda on issues such as asylum, immigration quotas, integration requirements, and citizenship laws (Williams 2006; Howard forthcoming). Mainstream parties seeking to co-opt the radical right have instituted policies that they otherwise might not have. And in the cases where they have exercised

power at the national level—such as Austria, Denmark, and Italy-- radical right parties have largely succeeded in making immigration policies more restrictive (Van Spanje, forthcoming). Since these policies will shape the nature and pace of immigration over the coming decades, it is likely that variation in radical right success will produce enduring differences in the ethnic composition of European societies.

In addition to policy changes, the radical right influences the ongoing public debates in European states about immigration, integration, and national identity. Politicians facing strong radical right parties have often tried to co-opt them by integrating elements of their discourse. Jacques Chirac's references in the 1980s to the "smells" emanating from immigrant households was in part a response to Le Pen, as was Nicolas Sarkozy's tough talk on law and order and preserving national identity in the 2007 presidential election. Pim Fortuyn's attacks on Islam provoked an intense public debate in the Netherlands about the compatibility between it and Dutch political culture that continues to this day.

The growth of the radical right, along with the libertarian left (or the Greens), also marked a historic transition in European party systems that had been "frozen" since before the Second World War (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). The ties that had inextricably bound certain social groups to specific political parties loosened for many reasons: postindustrialization and the growth of the service sector eroded the power of unions and, by extension, the link between workers and Social Democratic parties; secularization cut into the base of Christian Democratic parties; new forms of mass media (particularly television) rendered voters less dependant on all types of political parties for information while simultaneously promoting more candidate-centered political campaigns. The

radical right has been a beneficiary of this electoral de-alignment, and has at the same time accelerated it. By providing parties on the right with another coalition partner, the radical right has led to the bipolarization of party systems (Bale 2003; Mair 2008). In so doing, it has helped to alter patterns of policy-making in European countries. The growth of the Austrian Freedom Party was aided by Austria's specific form of consociationalism, but has also undermined it. The politics of consensus in Denmark, and to a lesser extent in the Netherlands, has not been able to coexist with the presence of large radical right parties. Switzerland's "Magic Formula," under which four parties form a national coalition government, was first altered, and later broken, by the Swiss People's Party.

Finally, the radical right also clearly matters for the course of European Integration. Although their positions toward the European Union have shifted over time, most of these parties have become deeply skeptical of the integration process. In France, the FN played an important role in helping to defeat the referendum on the EU constitution in 2005. One can imagine radical right parties mounting similar campaigns if, and when, EU member states call on their citizens to vote on future issues. Some scholars have even argued that the rise of the radical right is a by-product of European Integration itself (Berezin 2009).

Defining the Radical Right

The term "radical right" requires an immediate definition, particularly since scholars have used a number of designations—extreme right, right-wing populist, far right, to name a few—to refer to the same basic party family. In this book, I use "far

right” as an umbrella term for any political party, voluntary association, or extraparliamentary movement that differentiates itself from the mainstream right. The term is problematic for a number of reasons, but given its wide usage it is a convenient way of referring to political movements across time and space. “Radical right” refers to a specific type of far right party that began to emerge in the late 1970s. This term too is potentially misleading since parties that have carried the adjective “radical” include left-liberal parties in 19th century France and Italy, as well as anti-communist conservative movements in the postwar United States. However, since there has been a convergence around the term in the literature, I will use it rather than inventing another.

My definition draws from Betz (1994) and Mudde (2007) who both identify an ideological core of this party family.⁹ For Betz, these parties are right because they reject individual and social equality, oppose the integration of marginalized groups, and make xenophobic appeals. Neo-liberalism is the economic dimension of this ideology, while nativism forms its cultural component. For reasons that will become clear later, culture has trumped economics as the signature feature of the radical right. A minority of these parties adhere to a biological form of racism, which holds that some ethnic groups are genetically superior to others. The majority tend more toward ethnopluralism, which does not posit a racial hierarchy but holds that the mixing of ethnic groups creates insurmountable problems. But they all see ethnic differences as basic, immutable and impervious to political projects that seek to change them. From this follows their demand that immigration be dramatically reduced or even reversed through deportation, which has led some scholars to describe these parties simply as anti-immigrant (Van der Brug,

⁹ The two authors use different terms, however: right-wing populist (Betz) and radical right-wing populist (Mudde).

Fennema and Tillie: 2005). The subtitle of this book recognizes the centrality of this idea to radical right parties. Yet it is also important to note that radical right parties also seek to defend the nation from forces besides immigration, such as globalization and European Integration.

The above features are clearly not confined to radical right parties: mainstream conservative parties, and even some social democratic ones, have made nationalist and xenophobic appeals. To further distinguish them, we need to focus on their “radical” nature. There is clearly a discursive component here: radical right parties use language that mainstream parties would normally shy away from. But there is a deeper critique of liberal democracy in this radicalism as well. Although they regularly pledge their allegiance to the democratic system, in some cases to avoid being banned by state authorities, they are clearly at odds with its liberal features, such as pluralism, the protection of minorities from the will of the majority, and checks on executive authority (Mudde 2007).

Although both Mudde and Betz view populism as a defining feature of this party family, I choose not to limit my definition in this way, for three reasons. First, since radical right parties have been part of national coalitions or supported minority governments in six different European states (Austria, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and Switzerland), it has become increasingly difficult for them to claim that they are not part of the governing elite, as populists normally do.¹⁰ Second, while it is true that most radical right parties divide their societies into the “people,” who are wise, authentic, and honest, and the elite who are intellectual, degenerate, and corrupt, this

¹⁰ It is true that some of these parties have adopted strategies for appearing to be outsiders while in—or close to—government. See Albertazzi and McDonnell 2005.

bifurcation of society constitutes an explicit critique of parliamentary democracy and is therefore already implied in the “radical” nature of these parties. Third, there are some radical right parties that do not make populist appeals because they view themselves as members of an elite group.

Defining radical right broadly means that I will be treating parties like the Norwegian Progress Party (FrP) and the British Nationalist Party (BNP) as different manifestations of the same basic phenomenon. This may strike specialists as odd. After all, the FrP has arguably downplayed nativism and stressed neo-liberalism, while the BNP is biologically racist and anti-capitalist. Yet in order to understand why the radical right has succeeded in some places and not in others, we need to explain why these parties have taken different forms in different contexts. By adopting a broad definition, and allowing for a high degree of internal variation within it, we are able to address this question, one to which there is no shortage of possible answers. Fortunately, there has been a progression in the field as some initially plausible hypotheses that did not withstand empirical tests were subsequently rejected by most specialists. To clear space for my own explanation, it is important to first review these alternatives.

Demand Factors: Necessary but not Sufficient

The initial wave of literature on the radical right tried to explain why parties that “mobilize resentment” (Betz 1994) emerged at around the same time in some of the world’s wealthiest and best-governed democracies. Most of these studies argued that societal changes were responsible for the regeneration of the postwar far right. Some

authors claimed that post-industrialization had created a reservoir of “modernization losers” who suffered from the status anxieties that Lipset saw as crucial to the rise of fascist parties (Lipset 1958). Others argued that the rise of post-materialist values (Inglehart 1977) had provoked a backlash, or “silent counterrevolution” (Ignazi 1992), among those who disagreed with the ideology of the New Left. The massive increase in immigrant populations and asylum seekers contributed to both these trends; immigrants increased feelings of insecurity among the so-called modernization losers and made the core issues of the radical right more politically salient.

With these macrosocial changes in mind, scholars then turned to the microlevel to identify the characteristics of the radical right electorate. As a result of these studies, we now know a great deal about the "median" radical right voter. *He* (there is a large gender gap, Givens 2004; Arzheimer and Carter 2006) possesses some education but not an advanced degree (Lubbers 2002; Arzheimer and Carter 2006), is employed in either a low-skilled or semi-skilled industry in the private sector (Evans 2005), and has negative attitudes toward foreigners and a low degree of trust in the political system (Norris 2005).

What this literature failed to do, however, was to create any scholarly consensus about the relationship between socio-structural variables and cross-national variation in the radical right's electoral performance. For example, while some scholars discovered a positive relationship between unemployment and votes for the radical right (Jackman and Volpert 1996), others found that correlation to be negative (Lubbers et al. 2002; Knigge 1998; Arzheimer and Carter 2006). Similarly, while several scholars identified a positive correlation between high levels of immigration and support for radical right parties

(Knigge 1998; Gibson 2002; Lubbers et. al. 2000), others discovered no relationship whatsoever (Kitschelt 1995; Norris 2005).

Although these disputes were in part the product of different research designs and coding of cases, the more recent literature on the radical right has largely rejected the proposition that “demand side” variables—meaning the factors that shape the electorate’s demand for radical right parties—provide sufficient explanations for cross-national variation. According to van der Brug et. al (2005: 563), “sociostructural developments within the European Union are so similar in all member states that those developments cannot explain the enormous differences in aggregate support for anti-immigrant parties.” Mudde (2007), Norris (2005), Givens (2005), and Carter (2005) reach a similar conclusion. Thus while demand side factors—particularly immigration—appear necessary for the rise of the radical right, they are certainly not sufficient for electoral success. Although most authors have used statistical techniques to demonstrate the insufficiency of demand-side explanations, even a brief survey of the cases suggests that there are simply too many outliers—given the small number of cases—to make demand-side explanations compelling. For example, if immigration is fundamentally important, how can we explain the lack of a successful radical right party, over the long term, in high immigration countries like Germany, the Netherlands, or Sweden? If unemployment is crucial, then why have these same countries not produced durable radical right parties given that each suffered from long periods of high unemployment over the last several decades? And why have radical right parties succeeded in states where unemployment has been quite low since the early 1980s, such as Austria, Norway, and Switzerland?

Rather than varying from country to country, it thus appears that there is a persistent demand among voters for radical right parties across Europe, both in states in which they have achieved success and in those where they have not. For a generation of Europeans, and for many scholars of European politics, the appeal of parties that mobilize nationalist, xenophobic, and populist sentiment may appear surprising. But there are a number of reasons for rejecting the view that individual preferences for radical right politics are puzzling at all. First, both common sense and scholarly research tells us that there are a certain number of individuals in any society that possess authoritarian attitudes (Stenner 2005). Although reasonable people can disagree over whether they constitute five or fifteen percent of the population, and whether their numbers might be slightly higher in some European states as opposed to others, the important point is that there are enough of them to make a party that expresses their attitudes viable.

Second, public opinion polls consistently reveal high levels of racism and xenophobia across Europe. A *Eurobarometer* poll released at the end of the EU's "European Year Against Racism" in 1997 found that the public relations campaign had likely been in vain: 65% of Europeans agreed with the statement that "our country has reached our limits; if there were to be more people belonging to these minority groups we would have problems."¹¹ Nearly one third of Europeans described themselves as "quite racist" or "very racist," and one in five believed that all non-EU immigrants (including legal immigrants) should be sent back to their country of origin.¹² A *Eurobarometer* survey in 2000 recorded no change in views on deportation, but also found that more than 50% of Europeans agreed with the statements that minority groups "abuse the system of

¹¹ *Eurobarometer* 47.1 (1997)

¹² *Eurobarometer* 47.1 (1997); Since the EU didn't conduct a similar study before the campaign began, it is difficult to measure its effects.

social welfare”; “are a reason for unemployment”; and “are more involved in criminality than average.”¹³ Although there is some variation in mass attitudes toward immigrants between European states, it is clear that a significant percentage of Europeans tend to support positions on immigration that are close to those of the radical right. One reaches the same basic conclusion when evaluating the results of several questions from the European Social Survey (ESS) of 2002, the only wave thusfar to ask questions about immigration.¹⁴

Third, is it at all puzzling that the losers of post-modernization or globalization may foster resentment toward the political establishment? In times of rapid change, would we not expect that political parties that lambaste the elite and offer simple solutions for complex problems would emerge as the representatives of the common man? While populism is a concept that defies easy definition, it is a timeless element of democratic politics, and waves of populist mobilization have occurred in the United States, Latin America, and now Europe. Moreover, as mass party organizations have disappeared and partisan loyalties have attenuated, is it any wonder that voters are attracted to the boisterous, and oftentimes entertaining, radical right leaders that routinely outperform their rivals in what have become permanent, media dominated, election campaigns? Finally, the rise of cartel parties that collude with each other, and the state, to ensure their own survival (Katz and Mair 1995) has not been lost on European voters, and it is unsurprising that they may be attracted to new parties that promise to break up such cozy arrangements.

¹³ *Eurobarometer 53* (2000).

¹⁴ See Rydgren (2008) for a cross-national analysis of the relevant ESS questions.

Indeed, it is the first three decades of the postwar period, rather than the previous three, that are anachronistic in that far right parties were, with several notable exceptions, marginal players.¹⁵ The “thirty glorious years,” as the French refer to the period from the end of the war to the 1970s, was a historical epoch whose defining economic and political features are unlikely to be reproduced. A period of rapid economic growth, a dramatic increase in living standards across social classes, an expansion of the welfare state, and the insulation of national economies from international economic forces are each exceptional events; their concurrence is historically unique. Far right parties have been a feature of party systems since the beginning of mass politics: there is no reason to believe that they will not continue to be in the future.

Once we shift our perspective and assume that radical right parties *should* win a sizable share of the vote in West European states, it is their failure to do so that becomes the interesting question. There are clearly a number of other factors besides voter demand that influence the success and failure of the radical right. These have been termed “supply-side” explanations, and come in several different forms.

It's Not the Institutions

Many scholars have turned to electoral institutions to explain cross-national variation in the radical right's success (Jackman and Volpert 1996; Golder 2003). The basic idea is that systems with high effective thresholds make it difficult for small parties to win seats and votes. The clearest difference is obviously between majoritarian systems with single member districts (SMD) and systems that use proportional representation

¹⁵ Hossay and Zolberg (2002: 304) make a similar point.

(PR). Not surprisingly, if one defines seats won by radical right parties as the dependent variable, majoritarian systems have a straightforward mechanical effect (Norris, 2005). For example, despite consistently winning around 10% of the vote, the French National Front has only won a couple of seats in the National Assembly since 1988. France's two-round majoritarian system allows other parties to coordinate in the second round to prevent FN candidates from winning seats. However, France's majoritarian system has clearly not prevented the FN from winning a significant percentage of votes. In fact, several studies find that there is no statistically significant relationship between the type of electoral system (SMD or PR) and voteshare for the radical right (Norris 2005; Carter 2005; Van der Brug et. al. 2005).

Comparisons between different PR systems also do not confirm the conventional wisdom that systems with greater disproportionality scores decrease votes for the radical right (Carter 2002). Using the cases of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, and Norway in their analysis, Arzheimer and Carter find that the chances of voting for the extreme right actually *increase* as the disproportionality of the electoral system increases (2006). Excluding France, and thus including only PR systems, did not change the results. To explain this counterintuitive finding, the authors suggest that either radical right voters are not aware of the consequences of electoral systems or do not care about them.

Finally, it bears emphasizing that political actors can change electoral institutions. There are certainly cases in which politicians have altered the rules of the game and produced the desired effect on radical right parties. The most famous example of this occurred in 1986 when France's Socialist President François Mitterrand, seeking to

strengthen the National Front (FN) and thereby damage his conservative competitors, changed the electoral system from two-round majoritarianism to PR. While it is unclear whether this increased the FN's voteshare, it certainly increased their seats, and thereby their presence and legitimacy in the French political system (Schain 1987). A less well-known example of institutional tweaking occurred in the Netherlands when the government raised the number of signatures required to contest districts from 190 to 570. In contrast to the French case, this change was designed to weaken the radical right. The new rules did prevent the Center Democrats (CD) from running in two electoral districts and pushed their voteshare below the 0.67 threshold required for representation in parliament (Van Donselaar 2000: 37-9). In these and other cases, institutional changes reflected the broader strategies of political actors toward the radical right.

It's not the Winning Formula

Rejecting institutional and demand-side explanations, Kitschelt (1995) focused on the policies of radical right parties to explain what looked like emerging patterns of success and failure in the early 1990s. Specifically, Kitschelt argued that electoral success was the result of radical right parties following a "winning formula" that combined xenophobia with economic liberalism. This created a cross-class constituency of blue-collar workers, who were anti-immigrant, and certain white-collar workers, who wanted less state intervention in the economy. Only by mobilizing both groups, Kitschelt argued, could radical right parties be successful. Although it gained wide currency in the field, one problem with this theory soon became apparent as most radical right parties

jettisoned their neo-liberal elements in favor of welfare chauvinism (Lubbers 2001; Mudde 2000). It is also questionable whether economics was ever central to these parties' programs, and whether neoliberalism was just one of multiple economic programs—in addition to protectionism and welfare chauvinism—that radical right parties promised to maximize their votes (Mudde 2007).

One could still claim that this neoliberal rhetoric, even if it was less salient than Kitschelt implies, was enough to win the votes of a constituency that favored less state intervention. One group that fits this profile is small business owners, and there is in fact an abundance of empirical evidence showing that this group, along with blue-collar workers, is overrepresented in the radical right electorate. The strong support of blue-collar workers for a party that, according to Kitschelt, supports neo-liberal policies is curious. To explain this unlikely coalition, scholars have argued that workers have become either less connected to (Kitschelt 1994) or disillusioned with (Betz 1998) the Left and their economic views have shifted toward neoliberalism. This economic realignment thesis contends that the economic preferences of workers and small business owners have become aligned in recent years, and this explains the success of radical right parties.

Ivarsflaten (2005) tests this argument on the two cases, Denmark and France, that realignment theorists claim best fit their theory. She finds no support for the economic realignment hypothesis at all. Instead, what unites small business owners and blue collar workers are not economic preferences but agreement on issues regarding law and order and immigration. Since members of both groups tend to not be highly educated, and since education correlates quite strongly with positive attitudes toward immigration, it is

similar educational attainment rather than economic alignment that has created this “unlikely coalition.” In more recent work, Ivarsflaten (2007) finds that the only set of grievances that all successful radical right parties mobilize is those over immigration. In sum, differences in economic policy do not appear to explain patterns of success and failure.

It's not (only) the Ideology

One of the merits of Kitschelt's argument is that it considered radical right parties as masters of their own fate. In his view, some parties offered policies that were attractive to a relatively broad section of the electorate, while others were committed to ideological positions that only appealed to a narrow slice of it. Ignazi (1992) too distinguishes between an Old Right, whose primary reference point is either Italian Fascism or German Nazism, and a New Right, which does not carry such baggage. Given that the former has been electorally insignificant (Golder 2003; Carter 2005), perhaps ideology—or policy positioning—explains cross-national patterns of success and failure.

I will not challenge the view that biologically racist and/or anti-democratic parties perform poorly in elections, and in this sense ideology does matter. Yet this argument is incomplete, as it does not explain *why* these parties stick with such positions when they are clearly election losers, and why they do not adopt the “master frame” of ethnopluralism and anti-establishment populism that has been successful in other cases and has been diffused across Western Europe (Rydgren 2005). Kitschelt (1995) is correct in noting that both history and the preferences of party members prevent parties of the

Old Right from adopting a more “winning” ideology. Put another way, party ideology is a reflection of other underlying variables that we need to explore.

What about ideological differences among the “New Right” wing of the radical right? Following Carter (2005), one can divide these parties in two types: authoritarian xenophobic parties and neo-liberal xenophobic parties. The major difference is that the former subtype seeks more state intervention in the economy and stronger powers for the executive, while the latter calls for less state intervention and tighter links between individuals and their parliamentary institutions. The chart below divides the radical right parties covered in this book according to Carter’s subtypes.¹⁶

Table 1.2: “New” Radical Right Party Types

<u>Authoritarian Xenophobic Parties</u>	<u>Neo-liberal Xenophobic Parties</u>
Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ)	Danish People’s Party (DF)
Center Democrats (CD)	Northern League (LN)
Belgian National Front (FNb)	List Pim Fortuyn (LPF)
National Front (FN)	New Democracy (ND)
Republicans (REPS)	Progress Party (FrP)
Vlaams Blok/Belang (VB)	Sweden Democrats (SD)
	Swiss People’s Party (SVP)

The table makes clear that both subtypes contain both successful and unsuccessful (in boldface) parties, suggesting that ideology cannot explain differences in electoral performance, at least over the longer term. Furthermore, two of the unsuccessful parties clearly imitated the policy positions of their successful counterparts, to no avail. The Belgian Front National not only took the name and symbols of the French original, but its slogans and policies as well. Several members of the Sweden Democrats confided in

¹⁶ Carter does not include the SVP and LPF in her chart. These additions are justified in the case studies.

interviews that they had modeled their party manifesto on that of the Danish People's Party.

The Argument in Brief

In sum, it is still an open question why radical right parties succeed or fail. To answer it, this book looks inside them. Specifically, it focuses on those people who do not just vote for radical right parties, but work actively on their behalf. This group includes everyone from party leaders, to elected representatives in local councils, to ordinary members whose level of involvement exceeds paying their yearly dues. Since there is no precise term for members of this group, I use the umbrella definition of “activist” to distinguish them from voters.

As the review of demand-side explanations suggested, there is little variation in the median voter of successful and unsuccessful radical right parties. Yet the differences among activists in the two types of parties are enormous, as some impressions from my field work in Austria and Germany illustrate. In 2000, the editor-in-chief of the left-liberal weekly *Falter*, Armin Turnher, coined a new term for some members of the FPÖ that combined the German *Faschisten* (fascists) with the Austrian-German *fesch* (good-looking): the *Feschisten*. The thirty-one year old FPÖ Finance Minister Karl-Heinz Grasser, always dressed to the nines, was the unofficial leader of this new breed of Freedom Party politician. A number of highly educated, ambitious, and capable people had entered the party since Haider had come to power in 1986. Members of the older cohort remained as well, but these were generally respectable people in their

communities. During my interviews—which were always quite easy to arrange by phone and email—I came across a few odd characters. By and large, however, Freedom Party politicians struck me as individuals who quite easily could have become Social Democrats or Christian Democrats. If they held overtly racist opinions, they were sophisticated enough to not reveal them to me.

In Germany, locating members of the Republikaner (REP) party proved quite a challenge. Their office in Berlin was only open on Tuesday mornings, and no one ever seemed to pick up the phone. After several weeks of trying, I finally coaxed the telephone number of the head of the Berlin Republikaner organization out of the party's only (unpaid) staff member. When I visited the REP leader at his home, he spent most of the time defending the Waffen-SS. He was good enough to personally put me in touch with several other party members, explaining that efforts to reach them on my own were doomed because they were highly distrustful of anyone who wanted to talk with them. It quickly became apparent why. Several interviews lasted three hours or more, most of which were devoted to anti-Semitic and anti-Mason conspiracy theories. Racial slurs were tossed around with abandon. That I might not share these opinions never seemed to occur to my interviewees, and I had the distinct feeling that they were suffering from intense loneliness. When the head of the Bavarian wing of the Republikaner told me later that the party attracted only those “who had nothing else to lose,” I knew exactly what he was talking about.

As these two anecdotes suggest, there are major differences in the personnel of radical right parties. This is not to deny that parties are heterogeneous, nor that one could find seemingly moderate and competent members of the REP, and extremist members of

the FPÖ, if one looked hard enough. Yet this book will demonstrate that the activists of successful radical right parties tend to look a lot like those from the FPÖ, and that the anecdote about the REPs captures an essential feature of failed radical right parties. On the basis of their attitudes and motivations, I develop a tripartite typology of radical right activists: *moderates*, *extremists*, and *opportunists*. I show, first theoretically and later empirically, how different distributions of these activists matter for party development. I also demonstrate how some parties are able to attract highly educated and experienced activists, while other parties mostly recruit activists with low socioeconomic status, little to no political experience, and “nothing else to lose.”

Both the size and nature of the activist core strongly influence the party’s ability to harness voter demand and to persist electorally. The following chapter draws on the literature linking party organization to voting behavior to isolate these general causal mechanisms. I show theoretically how five features of parties—size, cohesion, competence, legitimacy, and ideological flexibility—affect their electoral performance. Given the number of parties and elections this book covers, it was impossible to always demonstrate these links empirically: doing so would have required another book. Fortunately, other scholars have already done much of this work. For example, we have already seen that radical right parties that are not ideologically flexible and that cling to fascist ideas have done very poorly at the polls. It also appears that party organization, a concept that includes my features of size, cohesion, and competence, is strongly correlated with electoral performance.¹⁷ In her cross-national analysis, Elisabeth Carter found that party organization accounts for nearly one-half of the variance in the voteshare

¹⁷ A number of scholars, such as Betz (1998), Norris (2005), Mudde (2007), Ellinas (2007) and Kitschelt (2007) have called attention to the importance of radical right party organization. Yet Carter’s is the only cross-national quantitative study of the topic.

of radical right parties over the last two decades (Carter 2005).¹⁸ In addition, the results of expert surveys, in which respondents rated the strength of organization from 0 (lowest) to 10 (highest), reveal a high correlation between levels of party organization and electoral success.¹⁹ The means for 2000 (overall mean 5.9) and 2004 (overall mean 6.2) are reported below. In general, the successful radical right parties are better organized than the average party, while the unsuccessful ones (in bold) are worse organized.

Table 1.3: Expert Survey of Party Organization

<u>Party</u>	<u>Mean (2000)</u>	<u>Mean (2004)</u>
AN	7.6	7.4
BNP	3.8	4.0
DF	5.5	8.5
DVU	2.7	3.3
FN	7.4	7.2
FNb	2.7	1.6
FPÖ	6.4	2.5
FrP	5.3	7.4
LN	5.5	6.2
REP	2.1	3.6
SD	4.3	3.4
SVP	6.8	8.6
VB	7.9	8.7

Source: Lubbers (2001) and Van Spanje, Mair, van der Brug, and van der Eijk (2004).

Thus while electoral persistence is the ultimate dependent variable, this is a book about the internal life of radical right parties rather than electoral behavior. Its goal is not only to demonstrate how different distributions of activists affect party development, but to account for these differences in the first place. I argue that there are two master

¹⁸ Carter codes organizational strength on the basis of the secondary literature.

¹⁹ In Chapte Two, I will argue that causation does not run in the opposite direction.

variables that explain variation in radical right personnel: both are necessary for electoral persistence, and neither alone is sufficient.

The first is *the nature of the preexisting resources for radical right party building*. This variable captures historical legacies, and requires us to examine the far right landscape in Western European countries from the postwar period to the 1970s. The second is *the reaction, and particularly the initial reaction, of other political parties and civil society to the appearance of radical right parties*. It concerns the political opportunity structure, and more specifically the incentive structure shaping activist recruitment, and demands a fine-grained analysis of the interaction between the radical right and other political and social actors since the early 1980s. Putting the two variables together, my explanation is similar to that of Doug McAdam's (1982) for the rise of the civil rights movement in the United States. For McAdam, social movements require both their own "indigenous resources" and a degree of cooperation from other political and social actors to succeed.²⁰ Given that radical right parties often emerge from social movements, and given that they often view themselves as challengers to the existing order, it is both useful and appropriate to apply this broad framework from social movement theory to them.

Historical legacies provided the indigenous resources, or the means, for radical right party building. This is a fundamental point that most of the literature on the radical

²⁰ McAdam also notes the importance of broad socioeconomic processes and cognitive liberation for the emergence of social movements in his political process model. In my explanation, immigration constitutes the primary socioeconomic change. Cognitive liberation does not have a functional equivalent, although the rising political salience of immigration is similar to it. I am grateful to Erik Bleich for pointing out the similarities between my explanation and McAdam's.

right has overlooked.²¹ Indeed, when they first appeared, most scholars were quick to point out that radical right parties did not represent a revival of interwar fascism. Although this was an important public service in the context of magazines juxtaposing pictures of Jörg Haider and Adolf Hitler on their covers, the rejection of misplaced comparisons has produced a strangely ahistorical view of radical right parties. While these parties were the product of socio-structural changes that only became apparent in the late 1970s and 1980s, it is wrong to assume that all of them emerged from thin air. Some did, to be sure, such as the List Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands and New Democracy in Sweden. Yet these “flash” parties, largely because they were required to build organizations *de novo*, quickly disappeared from the party landscape.

Most other radical right parties tried to build on a preexisting foundation—a foundation that could be either helpful or destructive. Helpful foundations came in two varieties. The first was another type of political party that radical right entrepreneurs transformed from within. The second was a strong nationalist subculture that was not confined to a small number of fascist nostalgics. Every single successful radical right party in West Europe was built using one of these two types of indigenous resources. Destructive foundations also took two different forms. The first, which was unique to Germany, was a large extremist subculture that handicapped efforts to build a modern radical right party. The second, which prevailed in several countries in West Europe, was a tiny and balkanized extremist subculture that nonetheless managed to derail radical right party building in spite of its small size. Thus history mattered, but not because a

²¹ Kitschelt (1995) refers explicitly to the legacies of history in several case studies, a point that is often lost in the reduction of his study to the “winning-formula” thesis. Mudde (2007) also mentions the importance of nationalist subcultures.

strong fascist heritage translated into a strong radical right party. The story, as we shall see, was more complex.

At some point, the initial reservoir of activists was more or less exhausted, and parties needed to attract new people in order to survive. Their ability to do this depended on the interaction between mainstream actors and the radical right, another factor that most of the literature on the radical right has overlooked.²² These reactions differed dramatically across both time and space. When parties erected so-called cordons sanitaires (agreements not to cooperate with them) against them and groups in civil society made life for their members difficult, radical right parties had great difficulty attracting both the number and type of people necessary to build a viable party. In fact, these reactions created an incentive structure whereby only activists who were either extremist or who had nothing else to lose were willing to bear the costs of membership. When potential radical right activists faced neither political marginalization nor social stigmatization, however, parties were able to recruit the type of people they needed.

The initial reaction to a radical right electoral breakthrough was more important—at least for the internal development of the party—than subsequent ones. For example, when cordons sanitaires were constructed from the moment a radical right party became visible, they were very effective. However, when parties decided to institute a cordon sanitaire after a radical right party had already become strong, as in Flanders and France, they did little to enervate it. Moreover, it was entirely possible for a cordon sanitaire to exist alongside a social environment in which radical right activists were treated as normal and legitimate members of society.

²² Although still under-researched, there have been several studies that explore the effects of the cordon-sanitaire and the interaction between mainstream parties and radical right challengers. See, for example, Kestel and Godmer 2004; Meguid 2005; Van Spanje and Van der Brug, 2007.

To summarize: a combination of historical legacies and the costs and benefits of radical right activism determined both the number and nature of radical right activists. Depending on the distribution of activists within them, radical right parties were either able to transform voter demand into sustained electoral success, or were either completely unable to harness this demand or unable to sustain it over the longer run. Successful radical right parties were thus not the automatic products of socioeconomic change, favorable electoral institutions, or any other set of factors that can be easily disaggregated from the particular histories and political cultures in which they operated. Getting “inside the radical right” requires us to look closely at these historical legacies and incentive structures in search of common patterns.

Concepts, Cases, and Sources of Evidence

I use this argument to explain the development of radical right parties in twelve different polities in Western Europe: Austria, Denmark, Flanders, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and Wallonia. I have restricted my cases to West European states that share the following characteristics: 1) the percentage of the immigrant population in them has averaged over 2% between 1990 and 2002; 2) they have been democratic since 1945; 3) they have a population over 1 million. Restricting the cases to those with “significant” immigration is necessary since an anti-immigrant platform is a defining feature of radical right parties. Immigration is thus a necessary condition for radical right success, although it is clearly not a sufficient condition. Setting the threshold of significant immigration at a 2% average between 1990

and 2002 excludes those states—Finland, Ireland, Spain, and Portugal—that are generally perceived to have experienced little immigration over this time period. While it is true that immigration has been increasing in all of these states, it is too soon to analyze the success or failure of radical right parties in them. I have also excluded the European microstates on the grounds that they are not inherently comparable with larger states. Finally, I have excluded Greece because it, along with Spain and Portugal, has only enjoyed uninterrupted democracy for about three decades. Although these are certainly consolidated democracies today, they were not during the period when radical right parties emerged in the advanced industrial democracies of Northern and Western Europe. I have also added a case by splitting Belgium into two separate ones: Flanders and Wallonia. This is necessary because Belgium lacks a national party system and parties compete exclusively in one region or the other, aside from the complex situation in Brussels.

This book does not consider cases from Central and Eastern Europe, even though radical right parties have emerged as major players there over the last two decades (Mudde 2007; Mudde 2005; Lewis 2001; Ramet 1999). The primary reason for this omission is that the fluidity of party systems in the region makes it difficult to compare them with those in the West. In addition, parties in general are far less organized in the CEEC's, rendering it difficult to apply any explanation that privileges organizational attributes to that context. Moreover, although Mudde is correct in noting that their nativism places them in the radical right party family (2007), they do not share the anti-immigrant positions that have been the defining feature of their counterparts in the West. Thus while it is possible that the explanation I develop in this book can help explain

variation in the strength of radical right parties in the CEEC's, these cases lie outside the bounds of this study.

Although national context is central to my argument, it is the party rather than the country that is the unit of analysis. There is a broad consensus about most of the parties that scholars place in the radical right family. There are some borderline cases, however, that raise questions about comparing apples and oranges. Most of these fall under the category of what Carter (2005) terms neoliberal xenophobic parties and Mudde (2007) calls neoliberal populist parties.²³ The debate, as the difference in terms reveal, is whether such parties hold strong enough anti-immigrant positions to qualify for membership in the radical right party family.

The results of an expert survey demonstrate that Carter's view is the dominant one.²⁴ Experts were asked in 2004 to rank the immigration positions of political parties on a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 being the least restrictive and 10 being the most restrictive. This study replicated the question Lubbers posed in his 2001 expert survey, and the results are reported below:

Table 1.4: Expert Survey of Party Positions in Immigration

Party	Mean (2000)	Mean (2004)
AN	7.9	7.8
BNP	9.9	9.7
DF	9.7	9.4
DVU	9.8	9.8
FN	9.6	10.0
FNb	9.8	9.8
FPÖ	9.1	9.6

²³ See Table 1.2.

²⁴ The survey is titled "Party Politics in Contemporary Western Europe: An Expert Survey replicating Marks and Steenbergen (1999) and Lubbers (2001)" and was conducted by Joost van Spanje, Peter Mair, Wouter van der Brug, and Cees van der Eijk. I thank Joost van Spanje for providing me with the data.

FrP	9.2	8.4
LN	9.0	9.5
REP	9.4	9.6
SD	9.7	9.8
SVP	9.1	8.9
VB	9.8	9.9

Source: Lubbers (2001) and Van Spanje, Mair, van der Brug, and van der Eijk (2004).

Although these surveys unfortunately do not cover all the parties in this book, they make clear that the various types of neoliberal parties have a strong nativist streak, given that the means of all political parties in 2000 and 2004 were 5.42 and 5.44, respectively. Only the AN in Italy was significantly less restrictive than other parties, but this was because it had migrated from a radical right family to a mainstream conservative one several years before.

The data for this book comes primarily from three sources. First, it draws on 140 interviews that I conducted with radical right activists across Western Europe. Like the very few scholars who have spoken extensively with activists (Ivaldi 1996; Klandermans and Mayer 2005; Goodwin 2007), I found no support for the common perception that radical right parties deny access. Given the dearth of information on the internal lives of many radical right parties, the interviews were absolutely critical for constructing case studies of their development. Potential biases and validity questions, of course, are inherent in political interviewing. Randomness was simply not feasible, particularly in cases such as Wallonia in which the hard core of the Belgian Front National consisted of a dozen or so individuals and tracking them down was a major undertaking. Randomness was also not desirable when I wanted to learn about specific events in the party's history from the participants themselves.

Second, I compiled an original data set of radical right candidates for office, which I supplemented with data on radical right activists from other sources, to construct a social profile of radical right parties. To make comparisons across cases, I used the International Standard Classification of Occupations, 1988 (ISCO-88) to code professions. While these data do not allow us to distinguish activists on the basis of ideology or prior political experience, they do demonstrate that radical right activists differ along at least one important dimension.

Third, this book draws on individual case studies of radical right parties. I use this secondary literature for cases in which it is particularly rich, such as the French Front National or the Italian Lega Nord, and for cases in which I could no longer interview the participants, such as the Dutch Center Party and the German NPD of the 1960s. In addition, I also conducted several dozen interviews with specialists on the radical right. This group included scholars, but also journalists who have covered these parties in their respective countries for years. The secondary literature and my interviews with specialists serve as an additional check on the reliability of my other data.

Roadmap

This introductory chapter has introduced the central puzzle, critiqued existing solutions to it, and outlined the research design. Chapter Two develops the theoretical argument, while the rest of the book consists of case studies. Rather than adopting a country-by-country approach, which would require awkwardly grouping very different radical right parties---such as the Dutch Center Democrats and the List Pim Fortuyn---together, I structure the cases around different combinations of the two master variables

of historical legacies (means) and reactions to the radical right (opportunity). Chapter 3 deals with parties that possessed neither means nor opportunity: the Belgian National Front, the Dutch Center Democrats, the Sweden Democrats and the British National Party. These parties drew on small, extremist networks to construct their parties and faced highly repressive social and political environments. The analysis of these failures sets the stage for Chapter 4, which demonstrates how the combination of large nationalist subcultures and a permissive environment (at least initially) led to the success of the Vlaams Belang, Austrian Freedom Party, and French National Front. Chapter Five examines radical right parties that had no connection to previous far right organizations and that were not marginalized. The difference was whether they had a means in the form of a preexisting political party, as was the case with the Danish People's Party, the Norwegian Progress Party, and the Swiss People's Party, or lacked any indigenous resources and tried to build a party from scratch, like the List Pim Fortuyn and New Democracy. Chapter Six analyzes the two cases—Germany and Italy-- where the residue of indigenous fascist movements in the postwar period was much stronger than in other countries. It demonstrates how repression, both immediately after the war and when radical right parties appeared in the 1980s, produced extremist, balkanized, and generally incompetent parties in West Germany, while a more permissive environment has allowed the radical right to gain a foothold in the East. The Italian case documents changes in the opportunity structure over time, and how those changes affected the fortunes of the MSI, the AN, and the Lega Nord. The book concludes by placing the contemporary radical right in the broader context of extremist political movements, and suggests how the arguments and methods adopted here can be applied to a wider range of cases.

