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Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe

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Book DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511492037

Online ISBN: 9780511492037

Hardback ISBN: 9780521850810

Paperback ISBN: 9780521616324

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Chapter DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511492037.002

Cambridge University Press

1 Constructing a conceptual framework

> The belittlement of definitions is wrong on three counts. First, since definitions declare the intended meaning of words, they ensure that we do not misunderstand each other. Second, words are also, in our research, our data containers. Therefore, if our data containers are loosely defined our facts will be misgathered. Third, to define is first of all to assign limits, to delimit. (Sartori 2004: 786)

1.1 Introduction

Several recent studies on the topic of our concern have started by paraphrasing the famous opening sentence of Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto*: "A specter is haunting Europe, it's the specter of . . . ," followed by the author's term of preference (e.g. Jungwirth 2002b; Papadopoulos 2000). The author will then simply assume that the preferred term accurately labels the "specter," that the term itself has a singular and comprehensible meaning, and that readers are in agreement with the categorization of the various manifestations of that "specter."

In fact, during the last few decades commentators worldwide have concurred in their assessment of the similarities and dangers of European political parties as seemingly diverse as Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front national (National Front, FN), Pia Kjærsgaard's Danske Folkeparti (Danish People's Party, DFP), or Vladimir Zhirinovsky's Liberal'no-demokraticheskoi partii Rossii (Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, LDPR). But seldom did they manage to agree on terminology. Both in the media and in the scholarly community an unprecedented plethora of different terms has been put forward since the early 1980s.

Without claiming to be exhaustive, titles of (comparative) books and articles in various languages on the topic include terms like *extreme right* (e.g. Schain *et al.* 2002a; Perrineau 2001; Hainsworth 2000a; Ignazi 1994; Pfahl-Traughber 1993; Stouthuysen 1993), *far right* (e.g. Jungerstam-Mulders 2003; Roxburgh 2002; Marcus 2000; Cheles *et al.* 1995), *radical right* (e.g. Ramet 1999a; Minkenberg 1998; Kitschelt &

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McGann 1995; Merkl & Weinberg 1993), *right* (e.g. Betz & Immerfall 1998; Hockenos 1993), *radical right-wing populism* (e.g. Zaslove 2004a; Betz 1994), *right-wing populism* (e.g. Eismann 2002; Decker 2000; Pfahl-Traughber 1994), *national populism* (e.g. Backes 1991; Taguieff 1984), *new populism* (e.g. Lloyd 2003; Taggart 1995), *neopopulism* (Betz & Immerfall 1998), *exclusionary populism* (e.g. Betz 2001), *xenophobic populism* (e.g. DeAngelis 2003), *populist nationalism* (e.g. Blokker 2005), *ethno-nationalism* (e.g. Rydgren 2004a), *anti-immigrant* (e.g. Gibson 2002; Fennema 1997), *nativism* (e.g. Fetzer 2000), *racism* (e.g. MacMaster 2001; Husbands 1988; Elbers & Fennema 1993), *racist extremism* (e.g. Mudde 2005a), *fascism* (e.g. Ford 1992; Laqueur 1996), *neofascism* (e.g. Fenner & Weitz 2004; Karapin 1998; Cheles *et al.* 1991), *postfascism* (e.g. Mellón 2002), *reactionary tribalism* (e.g. Antonio 2000), *integralism* (e.g. Holmes 2000), and *antipartyism* (e.g. Bélanger 2004).

This terminological chaos is not the result of fundamental differences of opinion over the correct definition; rather, it is largely the consequence of a lack of clear definitions. Few authors define their topic by offering a clear and unambiguous definition and showing that the parties in question also meet this definition (see Kolovos 2003; Mudde 1995b). Instead, they often do not provide a definition at all, and use different (undefined) terminology interchangeably. In fact, it is not exceptional to see one author use three or more different terms to describe the same party or group of parties in one article, if not on a single page.

In recent years, a number of scholars have started to devote more serious attention to the question of terminology. Rather than simply choose one term to describe the phenomenon they are studying, or wield several that capture the phenomenon more fully but with a significant sacrifice in precision, they provide an elaborate discussion of the pros and cons of different terms before presenting the one they prefer (e.g. Betz & Johnson 2004; Backes 2003a; Ignazi 2003). Some authors also point to the existence of different subgroups within the larger political family of "the extreme right" (see also Carter 2005; Camus 2003; Kitschelt & McGann 1995). This positive development notwithstanding, the increased academic attention devoted to definitions and terminology has not brought us any closer to a consensus. While some single-case studies might not need more than a specific working definition to get started, studies that are comparative either in place or time, particularly of the scope applied here, require clear definitions that can travel beyond a specific locale or temporal context.

Therefore, the first matters of concern in this book are definition and terminology. These tasks are not as straightforward as it might seem, which partially explains their neglect in the literature. The

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complexity of rectifying our terms will become clear through the following discussion.

1.2 How to start? The challenge of circularity

In defining what is still most often called the "extreme right" party family, one is faced with the problem of circularity: we have to decide on the basis of which *post facto* criteria we should use to define the various parties, while we need *a priori* criteria to select the parties that we want to define. In other words, whether we select as representatives of the party family in question the Dutch Lijst Pim Fortuyn (List Pim Fortuyn, LPF) and the Norwegian Fremmskrittpartiet (Progress Party, FRP) or the Italian Movimento Sociale–Fiamma Tricolore (Social Movement–Tricolor Flame, MS-FT) and the German Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (National Democratic Party of Germany, NPD) will have a profound effect on the ideological core that we will find, and thus on the terminology we will employ.

One solution to the problem of circularity is to adopt the Wittgensteinian concept of "family resemblance" (cf. Collier & Mahon 1993); i.e. none of the parties are exactly the same, but each family member will have some features in common with all other members. Schematically, one could picture this as a collection of concentric circles, but one in which no section is part of all circles. In other words, no ideological feature is shared by all parties.

While the Wittgensteinian concept of family resemblance might afford great flexibility, it will render theoretizing with respect to the success and failure of this group of parties extremely difficult, if not impossible. For instance, the sharp increase in immigration might explain the success of parties that share an anti-immigrant or xenophobic streak, but how does it relate to the one or more family members who do not share that particular ideological feature?

A second approach is based on Max Weber's famous ideal typical model; i.e. the family is defined on the basis of an "ideal type," which no family member resembles fully, but all will look like in one way or another (e.g. Kitschelt & McGann 1995). The problem is fairly similar to the one described above. First of all, it is unclear how much resemblance is required to be included in the family, an ambiguity compounded by the overlap between ideal types. Second, when it is unclear which parties share which features of the ideal type, theoretizing for the whole party family becomes problematic.

A third method is quite similar to that of the ideal type, but defines the whole family on the basis of an existing party, a kind of *primus inter pares*

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or prototype – one party that exemplifies the whole family. The problem, obviously, is how (i.e. on the basis of which criteria) to select the *pater familias*? For example, Piero Ignazi (1992) argues that the Italian Movimento Sociale Italiano (Italian Social Movement, MSI) has functioned as the defining party for the whole party family, while others see the French FN in this role (e.g. Rydgren 2005b; Backes 1996; Kitschelt & McGann 1995).[1] None of the authors provides empirical evidence for his or her claim, however.[2] In other words, one has first to define the core (ideology) of the FN and then find out whether this core is shared by the other family members. If this is the case, one can try to define the whole party family on the basis of that core (ideology) of the FN.

The last two approaches are related and can be seen as opposite strategies. They are similar in the fact that they do not share the weaknesses of the earlier three approaches. Most importantly, they work with classical rather than radial categories (e.g. Mahoney 2004; Collier & Mahon 1993), which is far less problematic in terms of theorizing on the basis of the concept. Consequently, the conceptualization used in this study will be based upon these two approaches.

The fourth approach is to define the group on the basis of the "lowest common denominator," i.e. on the basis of the (few) features that *all* individual members have in common. This would lead to a so-called "minimum definition" (cf. Eatwell 1996), which delineates the bare core of the ideologies of the individual parties, but at the same time the full core of the whole party family. Obviously, this is the most difficult approach, because ideally one would need to study the ideologies of *all* (alleged) members of the party family. Alternatively, one could use a "most dissimilar system design" (Przeworksi & Teune 1970), i.e. look for similarities among a selection of party family members from backgrounds as dissimilar as possible.[3]

The fifth, and last, approach is the direct opposite of the previous one in that it looks for the "greatest common denominator" and employs a "most similar system design" (Przeworksi & Teune 1970), i.e. similarities among a selection of party family members from backgrounds as similar as possible. The aim is to find a "maximum definition," i.e. the greatest

[1] In later publications Ignazi has qualified his earlier statement, arguing that the MSI is the defining party of the subgroup of "traditional" extreme right parties and the FN "the prototype of postindustrial extreme right parties" (1997: 57).

[2] The only partial attempt has come from Jens Rydgren (2005b), who has argued that the FN has provided the "extreme right" in Western Europe with a "new master frame" to overcome their previous phase of marginalization as a consequence of the legacy of the Second World War.

[3] Implicitly, this was done in a recent study analyzing parties from Belgium, Italy, New Zealand, and Switzerland (Betz & Johnson 2004).

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possible number of similarities within (part of) the family (see Mudde 2000a).

In the following sections I will develop both a minimum and a maximum definition for the party family under study.[4] Obviously, the two cannot be used interchangeably; the choice between a minimum and a maximum definition has severe consequences for the inclusion and exclusion of individual parties. Consequently, the two have to be seen as different if overlapping party families, with the "maximum" group being a subgroup of the "minimum" group.

1.3 The minimal definition

The construction of a minimum definition depends to a large extent on how broadly applicable, or in other words how "minimum," the definition needs to be. Should it be able to accommodate all political parties that have *at some time* been linked to this party family, including the Slovak Hnutie za demokratickě Slovensko (Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, HZDS) or the Portuguese Partido do Centro Democrático Social (Social Democratic Center Party)? Or should the definition be more exclusive, yet still able to include all those parties that are *generally* considered to be part of the group, such as the French FN and the Hungarian Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja (Hungarian Justice and Life Party, MIÉP)? It makes sense to base the minimum definition on the second approach. In other words, the aim of the minimum definition is to describe the core features of the ideologies of all parties that are generally included in the party family.

In his influential work on political ideologies, Michael Freeden (1996) has argued that every ideology has core and peripheral concepts. Following up on this insight, Terence Ball has elaborated:

> A *core* concept is one that is both central to, and constitutive of, a particular ideology and therefore of the ideological community to which it gives inspiration and identity. For example, the concept of 'class' (and of course 'class struggle') is a key or core concept in Marxism, as 'gender' is in feminism, and 'liberty' (or 'individual liberty') is in liberalism, and so on through the list of leading ideologies. (1999: 391–2)

Core concepts can also be seen as "individually shaped coathangers on which additional concepts may be draped" (Freeden 1997: 5).

[4] This is not the same as the recently developed "min-max strategy" (Gerring & Barresi 2003), which develops minimum and maximum definitions for the same term, whereas here different terms are used for the two definitions, to prevent conceptual stretching.

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If one looks at the primary literature of the various political parties generally associated with this party family, as well as the various studies of their ideologies, the core concept is undoubtedly the "nation." This concept also certainly functions as a "coathanger" for most other ideological features. Consequently, the minimum definition of the party family should be based on the key concept, the nation. The first ideological feature to address, then, is nationalism.

1.3.1 Nationalism

Hundreds of books and articles have been written about the concept of nationalism. While there is some truth in the critique that the contemporary studies are more numerous but less innovative than the earlier literature, particularly compared to the classics of the pre-1960s (e.g. Deutsch 1953; Kohn 1944; Hayes 1931), many important contributions have been made since the earlier "Golden Age" of nationalism studies. Most notably, under the influence of grand scholars like Ernest Gellner (1983) and Eric Hobsbawm (1990), nationalism was redefined as a political doctrine rather than an attitude.

It is also in this tradition that nationalism will be defined here, that is, as a political doctrine that strives for the congruence of the cultural and the political unit, i.e. the nation and the state, respectively. In other words, the core goal of the nationalist is to achieve a monocultural state. As Koen Koch (1991) has elaborated, a key process for achieving this is internal homogenization, which ensures that the state includes only people from one's "own" nation. Internal homogenization can be achieved by (a combination of) various strategies, including separatism, assimilation, expulsion, and ultimately genocide.

Koch also distinguishes the process of external exclusiveness, which aims to bring all members of the nation within the territory of the state. In a moderate form, this can be achieved by population transfer, i.e. by moving extraterritorial nationals (back) inside of the state boundaries. A more radical interpretation considers a certain territory as belonging to the nation, whether inhabited by nationals or not, and wants to enforce external exclusiveness by means of territorial expansion (irredentism). While irredentism might be supported at the theoretical level, it is not considered a primary and realistic goal by all contemporary nationalists (see also 6.2.1).

To use the term "nationalism" in a nonqualified way is virtually meaningless these days. Conceptual stretching has made nationalism an almost omnipresent concept with a plethora of subtypes. Indeed, some authors even talk of "nationalist multiculturalism" (Nimni 1999) or "multicultural nationalism" (Maddens & Vanden Berghe 2003). Among the most

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widely used distinctions is that between *ethnic* (alternatively: "cultural" or "racial") nationalism, on the one hand, and *state* (alternatively: "civic," "territorial," or "political") nationalism, on the other (e.g. Greenfeld 2001; Spencer & Wolman 1998).[5]

While nationalism may not be universal (Gellner 1997), it has been the founding ideology of the global division of territory into (so-called) nation-states since the late eighteenth century. Indeed, state nationalism is so pervasive in the founding ideologies of many countries (e.g. France) and even supranational organizations (e.g. the United Nations) that it fails to distinguish clearly between different party families (cf. Billig 1995).[6] That said, limiting the maximum definition to just ethnic nationalism might overcome the problematic delineation of boundaries, but only at the cost of creating new problems of exclusiveness.

As Andreas Wimmer (2002) has shown convincingly in a recent comparative study, nationalism always includes political/civic and cultural/ethnic aspects. In other words, in practice nationalism always includes a combination of (elements of) ethnic and state nationalism. We will therefore interpret nationalism in a holistic way in this study, i.e. including both civic and ethnic elements. Within this interpretation the combination of nationalism with internal homogenization and external exclusiveness also makes far more sense. Moreover, if the distinction between state and ethnic nationalism is exchanged for a definition of nationalism that includes elements of both, but does not require either one in full, the classification of several political parties will no longer prove so problematic.

While this (re-)definition of nationalism will solve many problems involved in distinguishing the parties we are interested in here from other parties, it might still be too broad. Most notably, it will not be able to make a distinction between "moderate" nationalists, notably so-called liberal nationalists,[7] and the "radical" nationalists with whom we are concerned. In this respect, the term nativism provides the answer.

[5] Obviously, there are other distinctions as well, such as that between "Risorgimento" and "integral" nationalism (e.g. Alter 1989), but they are less dominant in the nationalism literature and, more importantly, in the discussions about the parties that concern us here.

[6] One could argue that other party families, ranging from secular conservatives to social democrats, also subscribe to basic state nationalist ideological tenets.

[7] I have serious reservations regarding the term liberal nationalism, which seems a *contradictio in terminis* as liberalism is essentially an individualist ideology, yet nationalism is fundamentally collectivist. However, I feel unqualified to argue this position convincingly, and do not believe it is vital for the primary arguments advanced here. Consequently, in this study liberal nationalism will simply be accepted as a legitimate subtype of nationalism (on liberal nationalism, see most notably Tamir 1983; for an empirical critique, see Abizadeh 2004).

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1.3.2 Nativism

The term nativism is mainly current in the American literature, and has so far been applied only scantily in studies on the European party family in question (see Betz 2003a; Veughelers & Chiarini 2002; Fetzer 2000). The concept of nativism is used in various academic disciplines, including anthropology, education, history, linguistics, philosophy, and psychology, though not always in an identical manner.

In anthropology, nativism has been applied to social movements that proclaim "the return to power of the natives of a colonized area and the resurgence of native culture, along with the decline of the colonizers. The term has also been used to refer to a widespread attitude in a society of a rejection of alien persons or culture" (www.encyclopedia.com). While anthropologists reserve nativism for nonindustrial cultures (e.g. Wallace 1969), historians have applied the term also to Western contexts (most notably US American). Some have employed it in a manner consistent with its use in anthropology; contemporary European authors use the term "anti-immigrant" (e.g. Gibson 2002; Fennema 1997) to describe "anti-alien" movements (e.g. Bennett 1990).

In *Strangers in the Land*, the famous study of American nativism (1860–1925), John Higham rejects "reducing nativism to little more than a general ethnocentric habit of mind" (1955: 3). Instead, he argues that nativism is "a certain kind of nationalism," leading him to the following conclusion:

> Nativism, therefore, should be defined as intense opposition to an internal minority on the ground of its foreign (i.e., 'un-American') connections. Specific nativistic antagonisms may, and do, vary widely in response to the changing character of minority irritants and the shifting conditions of the day; but through each separate hostility runs the connecting, energizing force of modern nationalism. While drawing on much broader cultural antipathies and ethnocentric judgments, nativism translates them into a zeal to destroy the enemies of a distinctively American way of life. (Higham 1955: 4)

According to Walter Benn Michaels, "as nationalism turns into nativism . . . it becomes also a kind of pluralism. From the standpoint of the 'native,' this must involve the repudiation of any attempt to blur differences" (1995: 69). Moreover, he argues, "[i]n pluralism one prefers one's own race not because it is superior but because it is one's own" (Michaels 1995: 67). In other words, "the essence of nativism is its preference for the native exclusively on the grounds of its being native" (Michaels 1995: 14). This interpretation of pluralism (at least within nativism) is remarkably similar to the "ethnopluralist" argument of Alain De Benoist and the *nouvelle droite*, i.e. nations/cultures are "equal but different" (e.g. De Benoist 1985; cf. Betz 2003a).

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If the anthropological and the historical definitions are combined, and stripped of their particular spatial and temporal features (cf. Friedman 1967), a generic definition can be constructed, which closely resembles the combination of xenophobia and nationalism. In this interpretation, nativism is defined here as *an ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ("the nation") and that nonnative elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state*. The basis for defining (non) "nativeness" can be diverse, e.g. ethnic, racial or religious, but will always have a cultural component (cf. Bennett 1990; Friedman 1967; Higham 1955).

Obviously, the determination of native(ness) is subjective, i.e. "imagined," like that of the nation (Anderson 1983). Hence, it will often be contested. For example, both WASPs (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants) and various "Indian" tribes claim to be the true "native Americans," the latter having currently won the symbolic yet important battle over the right to bear the name. Similarly, both Arab Palestinians and Jewish Israelis claim to be the true native people of the territory of the current state of Israel.

In this interpretation, the term nativism clearly constitutes the core of the ideology of the larger party family. Moreover, as a minimum definition, it is far more suitable than alternative terms like nationalist, antiimmigrant, or racist. In comparison to the broad term nationalism, nativism has the advantage of excluding liberal forms of nationalism. Furthermore, while nativism could include racist arguments, it can also be nonracist (including and excluding on the basis of culture or even religion). And, finally, while acknowledging the tremendous importance of xenophobia and opposition to immigration to the parties in question (e.g. Betz 1994; Von Beyme 1988), nativism does not reduce the parties to mere single-issue parties, such as the term antiimmigrant does (see Mudde 1999).

This is particularly important if the concept is to "travel" to the Eastern part of the European continent. In postcommunist Europe mass immigration has so far remained a fairly marginal concern, yet xenophobia and nationalism have played an important role in various parts of the region. The term nativism, as defined above, is able to accommodate the xenophobic nationalist reactions to (so-called) indigenous minorities from parts of the majority populations (e.g. "Estonian Estonians" versus "Russian Estonians" or "Slavic Slovaks" versus "Hungarian Slovaks"); as well as those from minority members to either the majority population or other minorities (e.g. "Hungarian Slovaks" against "Slavic Slovaks" or against "Gypsies").

Though the term nativism is a more accurate and inclusive alternative to the terms most commonly employed in the literature, it is not

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entirely free from liability. Most notably, the term's currency has largely been limited to the English language, specifically the American and Australian literature. Indeed, it has no equivalents in other major languages. However, this is not a compelling reason to reject the term.

1.4 A maximum definition

In an earlier work, I employed a similar system design to conduct qualitative content analysis of the internally and externally oriented party literature of five parties in three countries: the Vlaams Blok (Flemish Block, VB) in the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium (i.e. Flanders); the Deutsche Volksunion (German People's Union, DVU) and Die Republikaner (The Republicans, REP) in Germany; and the Centrumdemocraten (Center Democrats, CD) and the Centrumpartij '86 (Center Party '86, CP'86) in the Netherlands (Mudde 2000a).

The three countries clearly differ in many respects, but within even the limited larger context of Western Europe they constitute a fairly homogeneous group. They are all highly developed welfare states, which share, admittedly in different ways, a "Germanic" culture. Furthermore, they are each home to a variety of parties alleged to share an ideological core, generally identified as "extreme right," that differ, *inter alia*, in terms of the extremity of those ideological features (for a full clarification of the selection criteria, see Mudde 2000a: 17–18).

The study established the key ideological features of the individual parties (see table 1.1) as well as the four core ideological features that the five parties have in common (i.e. nationalism, xenophobia, welfare chauvinism, and law and order). In an effort to find a suitable designation for this ideological combination, I came to the following unsatisfying conclusion:

> It seems therefore most useful to stick with the term 'extreme right'. Though the ideological core falls only just within the definition of right-wing extremism, and the term provides some semantical confusion, alternative labels do not justify the rejection of what is still the most generally used term to describe this particular party family. (Mudde 2000a: 180)

Since then, inspired by the skepticism of my students and the critical and encouraging critiques from various colleagues, I have come to the conclusion that my earlier findings have to be revised on at least two accounts.

First, some definitions of the concepts used in the original study turned out to be either inaccurate or too confusing. As argued above, the rigid distinction between state and ethnic nationalism has both empirical and theoretical problems (cf. Rensmann 2003: 108–11). Additionally, the

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Table 1.1 *Summary table of ideological features per party* (C = core; p = present, not core; i = indication, not explicit)*

FEATURE	REP	DVU	VB	CD	CP'86
NATIONALISM	C	C	C	C	C
Internal homogenization	C	C	C	C	C
External exclusiveness	i	i	C		C
Ethnic nationalism	i	i	C		C
State nationalism				C	
EXCLUSIONISM					
Ethnopluralism		i	C		C
Anti-Semitism	p	C			C
XENOPHOBIA	C	C	C	C	C
STRONG STATE					
Law and order	C	C	C	C	C
Militarism		i			
WELFARE CHAUVINISM	C	C	C	C	C
TRADITIONAL ETHICS	C	p	C	p	p
REVISIONISM	C	C	C		i

Note: * I have left out idiosyncratic core features, like chauvinism (DVU) and ecologism (CP'86).
Source: Mudde (2000a: 170)

conceptualization of the strong state as an ideological feature is complicated by its traditional association with militarism. While militarism has become relatively obsolete, updating the concept by eliminating it leaves only the very general feature of law and order, which, though relevant, does not capture the essence of the parties' emphasis on hierarchical authority. Finally, populism was defined as a political style, in line with much of the literature within the field of extreme right parties at that time (see Mudde 2000a: 13). Since the study was based on the central concept of the party family, defined exclusively through the criterion of ideology (see Mudde 2000a: 2–5; also Mair & Mudde 1998), populism was disregarded in the content analysis. In retrospect this was an unfortunate decision, based largely on my too limited knowledge of the broader literature of populism at the time.

The third and last problem with the earlier approach deals with the (lack of) internal hierarchy of the ideological features. All four features of the maximal definition were taken to be of equal importance. However, if the ideological core is also analyzed using the "causal chain approach" (Mudde 2000a: 23–4), it becomes clear that welfare chauvinism is less important than the other ideological features. In fact, economics is a topic

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of secondary importance to these parties (see chapter 5), and welfare chauvinism can be understood as a nativist vision of the economy.

In light of these revisions, the maximum definition should be revised into a combination of three core ideological features: nativism, authoritarianism, and populism. Before continuing with the quest for the correct term to label this combination, a short discussion of the three features of the revised ideological core is necessary.

The key ideological feature of the parties in question is *nativism*, as defined above, i.e. as an ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ("the nation") and that nonnative elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state.[8] The nativist dimension includes a combination of nationalism and xenophobia, two of the key features from the earlier study.

The second feature, authoritarianism, is defined very differently in various fields of study. In research on democracy and democratization the term "authoritarian" refers to nondemocratic regimes, often distinguished from the even more restrictive totalitarian regimes (e.g. Linz 1993). However, in this study authoritarianism is defined in line with the dominant tradition in social psychology and the Frankfurter Schule. The concept is informed by the operationalization of "The Authoritarian Personality" of Theodor Adorno and his collaborators, who interpret authoritarianism loosely as "a general disposition to glorify, to be subservient to and remain uncritical toward authoritative figures of the ingroup and to take an attitude of punishing outgroup figures in the name of some moral authority" (Adorno *et al.* 1969: 228).

Whereas Adorno and his colleagues conflate authoritarianism with various other attitudes and ideological features, including anti-Semitism and ethnocentrism (e.g. Kirscht & Dillehay 1967; Christie & Jahoda 1954), Bob Altemeyer has disentangled the various elements and bases his definition of "right-wing authoritarianism" on a combination of three features of the famous F-scale: authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, and conventionalism (1981: 147–8). According to him

> The right-wing authoritarian believes authorities should be trusted to a relatively great extent, and that they are owed obedience and respect . . . Criticism of authority is viewed as divisive and destructive, motivated by sinister goals and a desire to cause trouble. (1981: 151)

> Right-wing authoritarians are predisposed to control the behavior of others through punishment. (1981: 153)

[8] The ideological predominance of nativism can also be found among the parties' members (e.g. Klandermans & Mayer 2005) and voters (e.g. Lubbers 2001).

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Altemeyer speaks of "right-wing" authoritarianism because his operationalization refers to "established" authorities (1981: 152). There is no reason to limit the concept of authoritarianism in this way, however, particularly if it is defined in an ideological rather than an attitudinal sense. Thus, authoritarianism is defined here as the belief in a strictly ordered society, in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely. In this interpretation, authoritarianism includes law and order and "punitive conventional moralism" (Smith 1967: vi). It does not necessarily mean an antidemocratic attitude, but neither does it preclude one. In addition, the authoritarian's submission to authority, established or not, is "not absolute, automatic, nor blind" (Altemeyer 1981: 152). In other words, while authoritarians will be more inclined to accept (established) authority than nonauthoritarians, they can and will rebel under certain circumstances.

The third and final core feature is *populism*, which is here defined as an ideological feature, and not merely as a political style. Accordingly, populism is understood as a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite," and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people (Mudde 2004: 543; also Jagers 2006). Populist ideology reveres the "common sense" of the people, or of "the heartland" (Taggart 2000). In the populist democracy, nothing is more important than the "general will" of the people, not even human rights or constitutional guarantees (see, in more detail, chapter 6).

1.5 Towards a conceptual framework

Having satisfied the quest for definitions, it is now time to find the best term to describe the maximum definition. Given the terminological confusion within the field, this is not an easy task. There is no consensus to follow, let alone a conceptual framework that relates the different terms to each other. To help find an answer to the question of terminology, I have constructed a ladder of abstraction (Sartori 1970) of the "family" of nativist ideologies on the basis of a large variety of international secondary sources. Obviously, this conceptual framework is based more on *my interpretation* of the literature than on the exact definitions of individual authors.

The basis of the conceptual framework is the ideological feature of the minimum definition, i.e. nativism. We hope to find the best-suited term by ascending the ladder, i.e. moving step by step upwards from nativism to, ultimately, the extreme right – which is defined here as a combination of nativism, authoritarianism, and antidemocracy (see table 1.2).

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Table 1.2 *Ladder of abstraction of nativist ideologies*

Ideology	Key additional feature
Extreme right	
	Anti-democracy
Radical right	
	Authoritarianism
Nativism	
	Xenophobia
Nationalism	

This conceptual framework, however, is limited by its inability to accommodate populism. While some authors have included populism as part of their definitions of subsets of the extreme right, notably fascism and National Socialism (e.g. Griffin 1991; Linz 1976), they tended to interpret populism more loosely than it is construed in this study; i.e. identifying it in the basis of the party's support (i.e. cross-class) and organizational structure (i.e. direct leader–masses link and mass mobilization). If populism were to be included at a lower level of the ladder, e.g. between nativism and radical right, this would mean that the radical right (and all types above it) cannot be elitist, as this is the antithesis of populism (Mudde 2004). This contrasts with much of the literature, which stresses the centrality of elitism in many nativist ideologies, including fascism and National Socialism (cf. Gregor 2000; Payne 1995; De Felice 1977).

In light of this conceptual framework then, the maximum definition best fits the term radical right, albeit a specific subtype, i.e. a populist version of the radical right. Most logically, this leads to the adoption of the term "radical right populism" or "populist radical right." However, before settling the question of terminology we first have to solve two potential problems regarding both terms: clarity and semantics.

The term "radical" in contemporary usage is often associated with "the right" but it originated at the other end of the political spectrum. Traditionally, the term radical was used for the supporters of the French Revolution, i.e. the "left" (Schwartz 1993; also Ignazi 2003), and, particularly within the Latin languages, it is still used with respect to left-wing groups, such as the French Parti radical de gauche (Radical Left Party) and the Dutch Politieke Partij Radikalen (Political Party Radicals), or by progressive liberal groups, such as the French Parti radical (Radical Party) and the Partido radicale italiano (Italian Radical Party).[9]

[9] Simon Hix and Christopher Lord distinguish between two main streams within the liberal political family, of which the "*Radical Liberals* emphasize social and political freedoms" (1997: 32).

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Hans-Georg Betz and Carol Johnson have argued that "[r]adical right-wing parties are [thus] radical both with respect to the language they employ in confronting their political opponents and the political project they promote and defend" (2004: 312). This comes close to Ignazi's (2003) recognition of the "antisystem" dimension of these groups, a key criterion in his definition of the *extreme* right. The problem with both definitions is that they are (too) relativist. What is considered to be "radical" depends to a large extent on the political culture of the country: the same language or project can be deemed radical in one country, yet mainstream or moderate in another. And what is antisystem obviously depends on, well, the system.

Therefore, in this study radical is defined as opposition to some key features of liberal democracy, most notably political pluralism and the constitutional protection of minorities (Mudde 2006a, 2005c). Obviously, this definition renders the term most useful within a liberal democratic context; but it does not preclude its use in other political systems. However, since the term "radical" does refer to many different ideologies and movements it requires additional designation to indicate the direction of radicalization.

The concept of the "right" (or "right-wing") is hardly less problematic. Within political philosophy, "'[t]he Right' in its most general sense denotes a philosophy that was hostile to the politics of modernity, with its ideas of emancipation and rationality" (Schwarzmantel 1998: 112; also Eatwell 1989). Some authors also define the contemporary radical right in terms of a radical opposition to (post)modernization (e.g. Minkenberg 1998). However, opposition to modernity does not feature (prominently) in the ideologies of many of the contemporary parties. In fact, as various scholars have argued, the quintessential extreme right, i.e. Italian Fascism and German National Socialism, was not unequivocally antimodern either (e.g. Sternhell 1996; Griffin 1991; Gregor 1974). Rather, one could argue that the radical right strives for an "alternative modernity" (Griffin 1999a: 301).

Within most empirical political scientific studies, the right is defined first and foremost on the basis of the socioeconomic dimension. Here, the right believes in the self-regulating power of the market and thus favors a government *laissez faire* attitude towards it, while the left distrusts the market and wants the state to play an important role within the economy (e.g. Schwartz 1993). There are two reasons why this definition of the right does not make much sense here. First, economics is not a core feature of the party family's ideology. Second, many of the parties in question are not right-wing in this sense, as they support a (chauvinist) welfare state and protectionist policies (see further in chapter 5).

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Norberto Bobbio (1994) provides an alternative distinction between left and right based on the key feature of (the propensity to) egalitarianism that better illuminates the difference between the parties in question and the traditional right. Following Bobbio, the key distinction in this study will be based on the attitude toward (in)equality: the left considers the key inequalities between people artificial and wants to overcome them by active state involvement, whereas the right believes the main inequalities between people to be natural and outside the purview of the state.[10] As Gill Seidel argues, "right-wing discourse is a discourse of order grounded in nature" (1988b: 11).

Thus, while concepts that include confusing and contested terms such as radical and right are not ideal, they can be used if clear definitions are provided. Here, the term *radical* is defined as opposition to fundamental values of liberal democracy, while *right* is defined as the belief in a natural order with inequalities. Consequently, the combination of ideological features of the maximum definition can best be labeled as either populist radical right or radical right populism. The choice is not completely arbitrary, however.

The reason the term *populist radical right* is preferred here over radical right populism is not the all-too-common urge to be original, given that the former term is quite rare (e.g. Filc & Lebel 2005) compared to the relatively common latter term (e.g. Evans 2005; Rydgren 2005a; Betz 1994). Rather, the prime rationale is of a semantic nature. In "radical right populism" the primary term is populism, while "radical right" functions merely to describe the ideological emphasis of this specific form of populism. Populist radical right, on the other hand, refers to a populist form of the radical right. Given that nativism, not populism, is the ultimate core feature of the ideology of this party family, radical right should be the primary term in the concept. Henceforth, this study will focus on populist radical right parties, i.e. political parties with a core ideology that is a combination of nativism, authoritarianism, and populism.

1.6 Delineating the borders

If the concept of the populist radical right is to be of any use in the study of party families, it must be able to delineate a unique family of political parties. In other words, while these parties should share the core of ideological features defined above, members from other party families

[10] This is more a personal interpretation and summary than a literal quotation of Bobbio's arguments, who defines the two more strictly and relatively, i.e. on the basis of their relative propensity towards egalitarianism.

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should not. This does not seem to present a problem for the larger party families of the center-right (i.e. Christian democrats and liberals) and the left (i.e. communists, Greens, social democrats). But in the case of some other (smaller) party families, particularly among the right, certain ideological features will overlap. Consequently, it is important to clearly delineate the borders between the populist radical right and other party families.

1.6.1 Conservatives

Although the conservatives belong to one of the oldest party families in Europe, their character and distinctiveness is much in dispute. Whereas most scholars include a separate conservative family in their list of party families (e.g. Gallagher *et al.* 2005; Lane & Ersson 1999; Von Beyme 1985), some group them together with other parties. Indeed, most scholarly contributions on conservative parties are published in edited volumes that also include Christian democratic parties (e.g. Delwit 2003; Layton-Henry 1982a; Veen 1983); though some feature "moderate" (Morgan & Silvestri 1982) or "center-right" parties (e.g. Wilson 1998).

The term conservative is a notoriously difficult concept to define. It has both an absolute and a relative meaning, which are often conflated. In its relative meaning, conservative denotes an attitude to *conserve* the status quo, in contrast to the progressive favoring of change, and reactionary preference for a return to the past. Obviously, relativist concepts are highly problematic in comparative studies, whether they are spatial or temporal. What is conservative in one country or at one time, could be progressive or reactionary in another country or at another time. Consequently, an absolute definition is preferable.

In its absolute meaning, conservative refers to a certain ideology, although its specific character is again highly contested. In the literature on political parties, rather than political philosophy, conservatism is most often defined on the basis of the following features: authoritarianism, traditionalism, religiosity, and nationalism (e.g. Layton-Henry 1982b: 1). With this definition the boundaries between conservative and (populist) radical right parties are hard to establish. However, nationalism in this conceptualization of conservatism tends to refer specifically to loyalty to the nation, which is fundamentally different from the way nationalism is understood in this study, and might better be referred to as patriotism.

In the 1980s two of the major conservative parties in the West, the British Conservative Party and the US Republican Party, changed their core ideology significantly. Whereas conservatives had traditionally been only moderate supporters of the free market, fearing the moral

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perversions of capitalism (e.g. materialism, socialism), Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan combined social conservatism with strident neoliberalism (in rhetoric rather than practice). This new conservative consensus went by various names in the literature, including "new right," "neoconservative" and "conservative liberal" (e.g. Raniolo 2000; Girvin 1988).

Interestingly, neoconservatism and the populist radical right have been linked by many of the leading scholars in the field. Most extremely, the combination of social conservatism and neoliberal economics is identical to the definition of "the winning formula" that Herbert Kitschelt and Anthony McGann (1995: vii) provide in their influential comparative study of "the radical right." It also strongly resembles definitions employed by authors who stress the neoliberal character of populist radical right parties (notably Betz 1994). Finally, Ignazi (1992) has largely collapsed the two together in his "silent counter-revolution" argument.

Fundamentally, however, the two groups are quite far apart. First and foremost, nativism is *not* a core ideological feature of neoconservatives, although they do tend to be strong defenders of national state interests, which also largely explains their propensity towards isolationism and Euroskepticism. Second, the socioeconomic agenda is secondary to populist radical right parties, and most of them do not hold neoliberal views. Third, traditional ethical and religious values are not a defining feature of the populist radical right party family, although they are at the core of the ideologies of *some* parties.

1.6.2 Nationalists and (Ethno)Regionalists

One of the borders between party families that has led to some confusion, for example with respect to the classification of the LN and VB, is that between populist radical right parties and (ethno)regionalist parties. The latter party family goes under many names: autonomist, regionalist, ethnoregionalist, regional nationalist, moderate nationalist, and nationalist (see in De Winter & Türsan 1998). Before establishing the borders between this diffuse party family and the populist radical right, we first have to address the relationship between nationalism and regionalism.

In an ideological typology, it does not make sense to distinguish between nationalists on the basis of the existing state borders. Consequently, regionalism should not be used for parties that strive for separatism to fulfill their nationalist aspirations of a monocultural nation-state. According to Michael Keating and John Loughlin, regionalism is related to views and movements that demand "greater control over the affairs

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of the regional territory by the people residing in that territory, usually by means of the installation of a regional government" (1997: 5). Thus, regionalism is best limited to groups that call for more autonomy of a region within a larger state structure. So defined, there is also a clear distinction between nationalists (including populist radical rightists) and regionalists: first, regionalists accept a multinational state and, second, their call for autonomy is not necessarily culturally defined.

If we exclude regionalism from the core feature of this party family, does it still make sense to distinguish between the populist radical right party family and a separate nationalist party family? As argued above, not all nationalists are also populist radical right; some will not be authoritarian, others not populist. In short, while all populist radical right parties are nationalist, only subsets of the nationalist parties are populist radical right. The populist radical right is thus a subfamily of a broader nationalist party family.

1.6.3 Populists

In some lists of party families, a distinction is made between general "populist" or "protest" parties and particular "right-wing extremist" or "fascist" parties. For example, Klaus Von Beyme (1985) distinguishes between a "protest" and a "fascist" party family, while Jan-Erik Lane and Svante Ersson (1999) separate "discontent (populist)" from "ultra-right" parties. To a certain extent, the party family of the populist radical right is positioned in between the two. Not surprisingly, various parties that are classified as populist radical right here tend to be placed in either one or the other group in other studies. Thus, a short discussion is necessary to clarify the positioning of the populist radical right party family in terms of these two categories, and to explain some possibly contested classifications.

The first family has been caught in many different nets: alternative (Delwit 2001), antipolitical establishment (Abedi 2004; Schedler 1996), protest (Von Beyme 1985), discontent (Lane & Ersson 1999), or unorthodox (Pop-Elechus 2003). Despite the different terms, definitions and classifications, the main criterion for these party families is a core anti-establishment position. Using such a broad criterion might be useful for some studies (e.g. Abedi 2004, 2002), but it is too narrow a basis for defining a separate party family; also it reduces these parties to single-issue movements. The term "populism," however, if defined in a clear and distinct manner, does have enough leverage to discriminate among party families. Three groups of parties deserve our attention here: right-wing populists, neoliberal populists, and social populists.

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Starting with the last, which is the easiest to distinguish from the family of the populist radical right, social populists combine socialism and populism as their core ideological features (see March & Mudde 2005). Clearly the similarities with the populist radical right are in the shared radicalism, notably populism. However, the differences are even more important, as the social populists are essentially egalitarian and thus left-wing. Moreover, they will not have a nativist ideological core, even if some individual parties at times clearly espouse such ideas (see 2.4.1).

The term right-wing populism is one of the most popular within the field, particularly within the German literature (e.g. Decker 2004; Eismann 2002; Pfahl-Traughber 1994). As defined here, the term denotes nonegalitarian populism, and is too imprecise to define one particular party family. However, it can be used as an umbrella term for different subgroups of parties, most often referred to as neoliberal populism and national populism. As the party family of the national populists roughly overlaps with the one termed populist radical right here, this discussion will be limited to the neoliberal populists.

Betz has distinguished between "neoliberal" (or "libertarian") and "national" (or "authoritarian") populists on the basis of the "relative weight" of liberalism and nationalism in their party ideology, implying that the two constitute the (ideal typical) poles of one dimension (1994: 108; also 1993a: 680). I both agree and disagree. While the main difference between the two is the centrality of neoliberalism and nationalism (or better: nativism), respectively, the two do not constitute the poles of one dimension. In other words, they are at least as different as they are similar. They share one core feature (populism), but their other core ideological element(s) differ(s). In essence, neoliberal populism is defined by a core ideology of neoliberalism (primarily in terms of economy) and populism. In contrast to the populist radical right, the ideological feature of nativism is either not present or not central to the neoliberal populist party family, while the same applies to neoliberalism for the populist radical right.

1.7 Conclusion

Before discussing the various aspects involved in classifying individual political parties, most notably how to categorize populist radical right parties, we needed to reformulate the way the term populist radical right relates to the other key terms used in the field. The ladder of abstraction, presented above, constitutes the basis of this discussion.

First and foremost, the populist radical right is a specific form of nationalism. Therefore, while all populist radical rightists are nationalists, not all

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nationalists are populist radical rightists. Most importantly, nonxenophobic nationalists are excluded, which includes many of the historic liberal nationalist movements of nineteenth-century Western Europe (e.g. Alter 1989; Anderson 1983). Secondly, elitist nationalists are excluded, which includes many of the authoritarian nationalist movements of the twentieth century, including the pre-fascists in France (e.g. Sternhell 1978; Nolte 1965) and the intellectuals of the German *Konservative Revolution* (e.g. Wiegandt 1995).

Second, the populist radical right is not merely a moderate form of the extreme right, including fascism and National Socialism and its various 'neo'-forms. There are fundamental differences between the two. Most importantly, the radical right is (nominally) democratic, even if they oppose some fundamental values of *liberal* democracy (see chapter 6), whereas the extreme right is *in essence* antidemocratic, opposing the fundamental principle of sovereignty of the people (e.g. Mudde 2006a, 2005c).

Third, the populist radical right is a special form of the broader radical right, which also includes nonpopulist ideas and movements. It makes sense to see the populist radical right as the temporary dominant form of the radical right, as a radical right reflection of the contemporary populist *Zeitgeist* (Mudde 2004). However, while populism might be a defining feature of the radical right of the current era, this does not mean the radical right always has to be populist. Even today nonpopulist or even elitist radical right movements exist, though they are far less prevalent and relevant than their populist brethren.

In this book populist radical right parties in contemporary Europe are the prime unit of analysis. However, reference to other nativist, nationalist, populist, and nonpopulist radical right parties will occasionally be made as well, at times to show the differences, occasionally to point out the similarities. But before this can be done, we must classify individual parties according to the various categories. This will be the topic of the next chapter.

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