From Pariah to Policy-Maker? The Radical Right in Europe, West and East: Between Margin and Mainstream

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

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The Radical Right in Europe, West and East: Between Margin and Mainstream

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ABSTRACT *This article addresses the question of the role of the radical right in the political process and the porosity of borders between it and the mainstream right and puts it in an all-European context. The argument is that next to the behavior of other key actors (parties, elites) national context, especially cultural factors such as predominant national traditions, along with the ideological nature of these parties, matter in determining how far these parties' mainstreaming goes once they leave their political niche. In Western Europe, efforts by conservative parties to co-opt the electoral rise and relative pragmatism of the radical right led to even greater legitimacy for these parties. While these tactics did indeed 'tame' the parties, it came at the cost of a hardened anti-immigrant policy, evidence of the radical right's most direct policy impact. In the East, no 'taming' can be observed—instead of a mainstreaming of the radical right, we observe a radicalization of the mainstream.*

KEY WORDS: radical right, mainstreaming, extremism, policy impact

Some thirty years after the rise of the radical right in Western Europe, and some twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, parties of the radical right are a normal feature of most countries' party systems.[1] The early or premature dismissals of their relevance have been countered by an accumulating body of evidence. While still being 'at the margin' in European party systems, that is, the far right of the political spectrum beyond which there are only small splinter parties, movements and sub-cultural milieus (see Minkenberg, 2003, 2008), many of them have linked up to 'the mainstream' as well. And in a number of states, these parties are or have been part of coalition governments or crucial supporters of minority governments (see de Lange, 2008; Minkenberg, 2001). Regardless of the specific policy effects of such collaboration (see Akkerman, 2012; Bale, 2003; Heinisch, 2003; Mudde, 2011), the very fact of its direct or indirect government participation raises the issue of a certain level of de-radicalization, or 'taming', of the radical right (see Minkenberg, 2001, 2009a). One could make the argument that a move toward the mainstream should not be conflated with a de-radicalization (see Albertazzi, 2009;

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Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2005). Yet, the willingness of the mainstream right to collaborate with the radical right indicates a porosity between the two.

This article puts the question of porosity and the role of the radical right in a broader context. The argument is that next to the behavior of other key actors (parties, elites) national context, especially cultural factors such as predominant national traditions, along with the ideological nature of these parties, matter in determining how far these parties' mainstreaming goes once they leave their political *niche*. Since the focus is not on the particular policy effects such as immigration (which is hardly an issue in Eastern Europe), this will be done on an all-European level, including Western and Eastern Europe.

Terms and Concepts: The Radical Right in Perspective

In the research on the radical right, definitions of right-wing radicalism vary widely and terminology remains contested. A particular aspect concerns the relationship to democracy with some, like Ignazi (2003), arguing that an anti-democratic position is part of their agenda, while others, like Mény and Surel (2000), see the radical (in their reading: populist) right as an expression of a particular version of democracy. Here, whether these groups reject democracy, should not be settled in the definition but left open for empirical scrutiny. Following my earlier modernization-theoretical conceptualization of the radical right, it includes all variants of collective actors (parties, movements, sub-cultural milieus) which emerge in times of accelerated socioeconomic and cultural change and fight such change by radicalizing inclusionary and exclusionary criteria (see Minkenberg, 1998, pp. 29–47, 2008; see also Carter, 2005, pp. 14–20; Kitschelt, 2007, p. 1179). More specifically, right-wing radicalism is defined as a political ideology, the core element of which is a myth of a homogenous nation, a romantic and populist ultra-nationalism which is directed against the concept of liberal and pluralistic democracy and its underlying principles of individualism and universalism. While this definition does not include an explicitly anti-democratic stance, such as the fascist view of the desired political order, it places the radical right at the margin of the political spectrum, at least in the context of liberal democracies. In sociological terms, the radical right may be an 'extremism of the center' (Lipset, 1960, p. 133), or some alliance between working and middle class (Kitschelt, 1995), but here, it is primarily understood in an ideological way and part of the political-programmatic spectrum in distinction to other party families, most of which constitute the 'mainstream'.

In light of the logic of party families, the label 'populist right' (see Albertazzi, 2009; Mény & Surel, 2002) does not add much analytical traction, either, since populism is a rather elusive category. While some, like Margaret Canovan, stress the ideological components such as a political program organized around anti-elitism and an appeal to 'the people' to justify criticism of representative democracy (see Canovan, 1981, pp. 289–294; see also Berlet & Lyons, 2000, pp. 4–13), others see it more as an issue of style than of substance and as of temporary quality. In the words of Paul Taggart (2000: 5; see also Kazin, 1995):

> populism is a reaction against the ideas, institutions and practices of representative politics which celebrates an implicit or explicit heartland as a response to a sense of crisis; however, lacking universal key values, it is chameleonic, taking on attributes of its environment, and, in practice, is episodic.

In fact, many current definitions of the radical right focus on the combination of an anti-elite and anti-representational thrust and the populist style and rhetoric, aimed at mobilizing 'the people' against 'the establishment', 'the system' or 'the State', often adding a particular nationalistic or xenophobic message to the concept and pointing out the contextual factor of a crisis, real or imagined. In this paper, populism does not constitute a political program or party family per se, and as far as it denotes a particular political message and strategic characteristic it should be reserved for those variants of the radical right which in fact blur the line between margin and mainstream.

In this vein, it is useful to distinguish ideological types within the group of radical right parties, especially regarding the issue where to draw the line between the margin and the mainstream, and how and under which circumstances the radical right can move from the former to the latter. Here, the comparative literature offers various approaches, such as Ignazi's (2003) distinction between the classical extreme right and the post-industrialist extreme right, Kitschelt's (1995) typology of fascism, welfare chauvinism, anti-statist populism and new radical right or Carter's (2005: 50f.) five-group typology of neo-Nazi parties, neo-fascist parties, authoritarian xenophobic parties, neo-liberal xenophobic parties and neo-liberal populist parties. Following these authors and my earlier work, I suggest that a fundamental ideological dividing line determines whether today's radical right embraces historical movements, ideologies or regimes of Nazism or fascism, or whether it advocates a more contemporary racist or ethno-centrist nationalism, allowing for a less extreme version of the radical right and introducing non-ethnic elements of exclusionist ultra-nationalism, such as religion. These considerations lead to a fourfold typology. This typology follows the aforementioned modernization-theoretical argument in that the ideological variants can be identified according to the respective concept of nation and the exclusionary criteria applied. The four variants of radical right forces are: (1) autocratic-fascist (usually including racism or xenophobia); (2) racist or ethno-centrist, but not fascist; (3) populist-authoritarian (organized around a strong and charismatic leader and with a diffuse nationalist ideology); and (4) religious-fundamentalist versions (in which nationalism merges with religious rigidity).[2] All four variants have in common a strong quest for internal homogeneity of the nation through the primary 'we-group'—a rejection of difference and pluralization—and a populist anti-establishment political style (see Minkenberg, 1998, chs 1, 7, esp. pp. 236–245; see also Kitschelt, 2007, p. 1179f.)

Based on these distinctions, Table 1 lists the dominant parties of the radical right in selected European countries and classifies them according to their political relevance in terms of their repeatedly successful electoral performance (with 'success' defined here as 5% or more in at least two consecutive national elections and/or direct or indirect participation in a government coalition).

Obviously, this list could be even fuller when including more countries and smaller organizations. A problematic category is undoubtedly that of the 'populist right' which results from the problems with identifying populism as a political program (see earlier). Here, it refers to those parties of the right which operate on the borderline between the radical right and the mainstream right, typically led (or even created or organized) by a charismatic and strong leader and espousing a sufficiently vague program cultivating the primacy of 'the people' usually understood as *ethnos* rather than as *demos*. Parties which are not classified as radical right in the literature but fulfill some of these characteristics such as Berlusconi's Forza Italia in Italy and the Kaczynski brothers' Law and Justice in Poland are put in brackets. They are the usual senior partners of the radical right in coalition governments (see later). Despite these difficulties of categorization, Table 1

Table 1 Parties of the radical right in selected European countries[a] since the 1990s

	Political relevance high	Political relevance limited
Extremist right (fascist-autocratic right, often incl. racism or xenophobia)	MSI/AN (pre '95)(I) SNS (SR)	NPD/DVU (D) NA/NNP/NVU (NL)
	PRM (RO) Ataka (BU)	MSFT (I) BNP (GB) Republicans (CR) Jobbik (H)
Ethnocentrist right (racist or xenophobic right but excluding fascism)	Vlaams Blok/Belang (B)	Centrumdemocraten (NL)
	Front National (F) DF (DK) Lega Nord (I) FPÖ (A) SVP (CH)	Republikaner (D) KPN-SN (PL) MIÉP (H)
Populist right (typically with strong and charismatic leader and diffuse program)	List Pim Fortuyn (NL) PvV (NL)	
	BZÖ (A) MSI/AN (mid-1990s) (I) [FI (I)] Samoobrona (PL) [PiS (PL)] [FIDESZ (H)] HZDS (SR)	
Religious-fundamentalist right (including xenophobia)	LPR (PL)	ZChN (PL) KDNP (H)

Notes: Legend of party abbreviations in Appendix.
Source: Country chapters in Bertelsmann Stiftung (2009).
[a] Austria (A), Belgium (B), Bulgaria (BU), the Czech Republic (CR), France (F), Germany (D), Great Britain (GB), Hungary (H), Italy (I), the Netherlands (NL), Poland (PL), Romania (RO), Slovak Republic (SR), Switzerland (CH).

already suggests that fascist-oriented parties are more successful in Central and Eastern Europe than in the West where their era has ended in the 1960s (see Minkenberg, 2000). This becomes clearer when looking at the electoral trends in individual countries and their contexts, first in Western Europe with its long-time established democracies and the increasing prominence of the immigration issue, then in the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe with their distinct set of cultural and structural characteristics.

The Recent Rise of the Radical Right in Western Europe: Between Renewal and Radicalization

Numerous accounts have pointed out a breakthrough of radical right parties in many Western European countries in the transition from the 1980s to the 1990s. This is immediately visible from an overview of electoral averages in a number of countries in Table 2.

Table 2 Radical right election results (in %) in national parliamentary elections in Western Europe 1980–2009 (average per five years) and European Parliament (EP) 2009

	1980–1984	1985–1989	1990–1994	1995–1999	2000–2004	2000–2009	EP 2009
Austria (A)	5.0	9.7	19.6	24.4	10.0	28.3	17.8
Belgium (B)	1.1	1.7	6.6	10.9	13.8	14.0	10.1
Denmark (DK)	6.4	6.9	6.4	9.8	12.6	13.9	14.8
France (F)	0.4	9.9	12.7	14.9	12.4	4.7	6.3
Germany FRG (D)	0.2	0.6	2.3	3.3	1.0	2.1	1.7
Great Britain (GB)	–	0.6	0.9	–	0.2	0.7	8.3
Italy (I)	6.8	5.9	18.0	25.8	4.3[a]	8.3[a]	10.2[a]
Netherlands	0.8	0.7	2.9	0.6	11.4	5.9	15.3
Norway (N)	4.5	8.4	6.0	15.3	14.7	22.5	–
Sweden (S)	–	–	4.0	–	1.5	3.0	3.3
Switzerland (CH)	3.8	6.3	11.9	18.7	26.6	30.0	–

Notes: The following parties were included: Austria: FPÖ; Belgium: Vlaams Blok, Front National; Denmark: Fremskridtsparti, Dansk Folkeparti; France: Front National, Mouvement National Républicain; Germany: Republikaner, DVU, NPD; Great Britain: British National Party, National Front, Democratic Unionist Party; Italy: Movimento Sociale Italiano, Alleanza Nazionale, Movimento Sociale-Fiamma Tricolore, Lega Nord; Netherlands: Center Party, Centrum Democrats, List Pim Fortuyn, Party of Freedom; Norway: Fremskrittsparti; Sweden: Ny Demokrati, Sverigedemokraterna, Nationaldemokraterna; Switzerland: Schweizer Volkspartei-Union Démocratique du Centre; Autopartei, Schweizer Demokraten, Lega dei Ticinesi.

Source: Minkenberg (2003), Minkenberg & Perrineau (2007) and update.

[a] excluding AN, but including Lega Nord, Movimento Sociale Fiamma Tricolore, Mussolini, Rauti.

On closer inspection, the countries fall into three categories. In seven of them, Austria and Switzerland, Belgium, France and Italy as well as Denmark and Norway, radical right-wing party strength can clearly be considered high by the late 1990s. In Austria, France and Italy, their strength dropped in the following decade due to changes in the nature of the parties (Italy), splits of the parties (Austria) or other parties' reactions (France).

However, with the exception of France, these are the countries in which the radical right has moved ever closer to the center of power and joined or supported and influenced government (see later). The Italian case is the most spectacular: while the ultimate pariah party, the MSI, transformed into a more or less respectable conservative party and hence is not counted anymore as radical right, the Lega Nord assumed an increasingly xenophobic message along with its radical regionalism and yet managed to be a long-time partner in a coalition government, thus being 'in a league of its own' (see Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2005). The opposite was the case in another four, Germany, Great Britain, Sweden and—until recently—the Netherlands, where the radical right stayed more extreme or was hardly visible in party form and remained well below any threshold of entering parliament in a sustainable fashion.

When looking at the cases with the most significant upswing of the radical right in voting support, we notice that it is a new radical right, newly formed or reformed parties: they belong more to the ethno-centrist or populist than the extremist or fascist variant. As argued elsewhere (Minkenberg, 1998, 2000), an ideological and strategic renewal—along with the changing cleavage patterns in party competition and the rise of the immigration issue—has opened the electoral gates for these parties. None of the more successful parties mentioned advocates a return to pre-democratic, dictatorial political orders, all stress their support for—or pay at least lip service to—republican principles and the liberal-democratic constitution: a significant difference to interwar fascism and also to the immediate post-war radical right in western democracies. They do not want to abolish democracy but to redefine it in terms of 'ethnocracy' (Griffin, 1991). Also, the traditional radical right's search for a 'third way' between western capitalism and eastern communism, that is, the rejection of what has been termed 'Vodka-Cola Imperialism', has been replaced largely by a principled but not unrestrained support for the capitalist order.

We can invert the perspective and state, with a look at Germany, Britain and Sweden in Table 2 that where the radical right has remained more traditional, that is, extremist and more or less true to a fascist-autocratic agenda, it has not fared well in elections, at least at the national level (see also Art, 2011). By the same token, these are the countries in Western Europe, where the movement and sub-cultural sector is livelier, where levels of racist or right-wing extremist violence are higher (see Minkenberg, 2003, 2008). This is connected to a second major point: there appears to be a direct link between various organizational manifestations, that is, more right-wing radical mobilization in the electoral arena tends to go along with less mobilization in the ideologically more extreme movement sector. The main point will be that a country's opportunity structures, including institutional and cultural variables as well as the structure of party competition, largely determine the organizational manifestations as well as ideological variations which dominate the radical right sector and hence, influence the parties' relevance for other parties. In other words, a comparative analysis of the radical right's move toward the mainstream, whether it occurs in the process of its de-radicalization or not, needs to take into account the context in which the radical right operates, both in long-term structural and cultural ways and in the immediate context of party competition and electoral politics.

Following these considerations and based on the voting trends shown in Table 2 and organizational data, a map of radical right mobilization can be constructed, including major independent variables in the cultural and structural context (see Minkenberg, 1998, 2003; see also Betz, 1994; Ignazi, 2003; Kitschelt, 1995; Rydgren, 2007). Cultural context is conceptualized in terms of the following criteria: the dominant understanding of national identity, whether in ethnic, cultural or political terms, the share of foreign born population, the level of resistance to multiculturalism, religious traditions according to the predominant confessional patterns and the strength of Islam. Structural variables are configured with regard to the degree of polarization or convergence between the major parties, the level of voting along a value-based, New Politics cleavage, the states' and major parties' response to the radical right and the type of electoral system (for details, see Minkenberg, 2003, 2008). Table 3 presents an overview of these factors.

The summary in Table 3 reveals a rather clear pattern of countries with strong radical right-wing parties and a weak movement sector and those with weak radical right-wing parties and a strong movement sector. For an analysis of this pattern, it is important to evaluate the role of certain contextual factors.

Table 3 suggests a significant role of cultural factors such as conventional religious traditions and the presence of Islam. Four of the five cases in which radical right-wing parties scored high in the 1990s are Catholic countries, or seen from another angle, there are no Catholic countries where the radical right parties score low average results (with democratic 'latecomers' Spain and Portugal being exceptions here). By the end of the 1990s, Protestant Denmark and Norway have joined the group. Moreover, in five of these countries, with Switzerland being the exception, Islam is the second largest religion.

One could argue that the combination of two cultural context factors in particular feeds the resonance and mobilization of the radical right parties: a traditional Catholic or Protestant homogeneity or even monopoly, bearing in mind the particular holistic outlook of Catholic dogma, as opposed to the more individualistic Protestant traditions on the one hand (see Anderson, 2003; Bruce, 2004) and a particularly strong presence of Islam which challenges this homogeneity, on the other. This, however, does not apply to movement mobilization, as Catholic countries exhibit comparatively weak radical right movements or, as far as comparable data are available, racist violence. These seem highest in Protestant countries. From this observation, an inference can be made that the current radical right parties are strong where they couple their ultranationalist or racist message with Islamophobia, especially in countries with a long tradition of Christian mono-confessionalism. Widespread Islamophobia and the rejection of multiculturalism in large parts of Western European publics (see EUMC, 2003, 2006)[3] provides an opening for the radical right to look more 'mainstream' and less extremist, in contrast to earlier racist discourses such as anti-Semitism or biological racism.

On the other hand, the role of structural variables is rather indeterminate. As shown by others (see Kitschelt, 1995, 2007; Mudde, 2007), the electoral system is only marginally relevant for the level of party support, and convergence of the established parties may be more relevant for the breakthrough of radical right-wing parties than for their consolidation (see Schain *et al.*, 2002). But the role of other actors, especially elite and other parties' behavior, and the State tend to be more significant, as a variety of studies suggest (see Koopmans *et al.*, 2005; Rydgren, 2007; van der Brug & Fennema, 2003).

In some cases where control response of other actors has shifted from exclusion to partial collaboration, radical right-wing parties seem to have benefited. However, in

Table 3 Party strength and movement strength of the radical right and context factors in Western Europe (ca. 2000)

	Culture					Structure				Party strength	Actor Movement strength
	1a	1b	1c	1d	1e	2a	2b	2c	2d		
Austria	0.5	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	HIGH	LOW
France	0.5	1	0	1	1	0	0	0.5	0	HIGH	LOW
Italy	0.5	0	0.5	1	0.5	0	1	1	1	HIGH	LOW
Denmark	1	0	0.5	0	1	0.5	1	1	1	HIGH	MEDIUM
Norway	1	0	n.d.	0	1	0.5	0.5	0	1	HIGH	MEDIUM
Switzerland	0	1	n.d.	10	0	0.5	0.5	1	1	HIGH	MEDIUM
Belgium	0	0	1	1	1		1	0	1	HIGH–MED.	MEDIUM
Netherlands	0	1	0	0	0	0.5	1	0	1	LOW	MEDIUM
Germany(West)	0.5	1	1	0.5	0	1	1	0	1	LOW	MEDIUM
Germany (East)	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	LOW	HIGH
United Kingdom	1	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	LOW	HIGH
Sweden	1	1	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	1	LOW	HIGH

Notes: Context Factor 1: Culture
1a nation type: ethno-cultural nation 1, political nation 0
1b share of foreign-born population: 1 high, 0 low
1c level of resistance to multicultural society: 1 above EU level, 0 below EU level
1d predominant religious tradition: Catholic 1, Protestant 0
1e Islam: second largest religion 1, other 0
Context Factor 2: Structure
2a Cleavages: convergence 1, polarization 0
2b cleavages: strong New Politics voting, 1 weak 0
2c political opportunity structures: state and parties' latitude 1, exclusion/repression 0
2d political opportunity structures: PR electoral system 1, majority 0.
Source: Minkenberg (2008).

Austria and briefly in the Netherlands, the radical right has suffered a temporary backlash from full cooperation. In Italy and in Switzerland, on the other hand, the radical right did not suffer significantly from government participation (see later, and Albertazzi, 2009). Also in Denmark, where there was a particular arrangement of cooperation until very recently, that is, support of a minority government by the radical right but no formal coalition, the backlash has been averted. In all these countries, however, the radical right belongs to the category of the populist right, as outlined earlier (Table 1). Tables 2 and 3 also show that a *cordon sanitaire* against the radical right by other parties, as was and is practiced in Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands (until ca. 2000), Sweden and the United Kingdom (see Art, 2011, p. 44; see also Downs, 2001) does not inhibit the establishment of the radical right in the party system. However, as will be shown later, it has severe effects on their linking up to the mainstream. By definition, a *cordon sanitaire* upholds the boundaries between the mainstream and the margin in organizational ways, although it cannot prevent a certain degree of porosity in ideological terms, if mainstream parties co-opt parts of the agenda of the radical right (see Bale, 2003; Minkenberg, 2002a; Schain, 2006).

Central and Eastern Europe: More Mainstream than Margin?

In Central and Eastern Europe, radical right-wing parties are pitting themselves against the new neoliberal order in Eastern Europe as they do against the state socialism that preceded it. Unlike their western counterparts, they are more clearly anti-system in this dual fashion. Yet, this does not mean that they are necessarily more pariah than partner of other parties. And also unlike in the West, they have often captured impressive numbers of votes yet fluctuated more in a party system setting which can be considered much more fluid than that in Western European democracies (see Table 4).[4]

Overall, the radical right is less structured in these countries than in the West, as is true with most political parties (see Minkenberg, 2002b; Ramet, 1999). Its electoral fluctuations, and its tendency to reconstitute itself from one election to the next, make it

Table 4 Radical right election results (in %) in national parliamentary elections in Central and Eastern Europe 1980–2009 (average per five years) and European Parliament (EP) 2009

	1990–1994	1995–1999	2000–2004	2005–2009	EP 2009
Bulgaria (BU)	–	–	–	8.7	12.0
Czech Republic (CR)	6.8[b]	6.0	1.1	–	–
Hungary (H)	0.8	5.5	4.5	1.7	14.8
Poland (PL)	14.1	8.0[a]	18.1	10.4	1.5
Romania (RO)	5.8	9.2	20.9	3.1	8.6
Slovak Republic (SR)	n.d.	n.d.	7.0	11.7	5.5
Slovenia (SV)	n.d.	n.d.	4.4	5.4	2.9

Notes: The following parties are included: Bulgaria: Ataka; Poland: KPN, ZChN, LPR, Samoobrona; Romania: PUNR, PRM; Slovakia: SNS; Slovenia: SNS; Czech Rep.: SPR-RSC; Hungary: MIÉP, Jobbik.

Source: See Table 2, updated.

[a] estimated proportion of ZChN and KPN, which ran on a common ticket with electoral alliance Solidarnosc AWS in 1997 (vote share 33.8%).

[b] Czech National Council.

disconcertingly fluid. This also contributes to the permeable border between radical right movements and radical right parties, and between the radical right and the mainstream right (see also Table 1). In other words, the Central and Eastern European cleavage structures differ markedly from those in western democracies; there is no distinction between Old Politics and New Politics and an absence of the immigration issue. Instead, all cleavages are new (or renewed) and must be seen in the context of the transformation process. If Lipset and Rokkan's 'freezing hypothesis' was already questionable for western party systems in the 1970s and 1980s, then it is even more difficult to apply to Eastern Europe (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). The party systems were short-lived and unstable in the 1920s, and the one-party regimes that followed the war eradicated the feeble cleavage structures that might have existed. Traditional or newly salient cleavages have taken over the role of structuring party competition only in those countries where the most dominant issue, the regime conflict between supporters of the old regime and supporters of the new order, was resolved and democratic consolidation had advanced (see Beichelt, 2001). These cleavages are organized around issues of political, socio-economic and cultural modernization with the respective winners and losers on either side (see Kitschelt *et al.*, 1999).

The distinctive characteristics of recent members of the European Union can be explained by regime changes, and by the region's very specific history, which is layered over the democratic experience. The first layer is a compound—the immediate consequences of the dismantling of the USSR that began in 1989, plus the improvisation that shaped the transition toward democracy and the market economy, and the huge efforts made to enable the former members of the Warsaw Pact to join the EU. This severely tested the social fabric, creating a previously unknown gap between rich and poor, and a marked discrepancy between people's needs and a lack of available capital (including a lack of trust; see Almond *et al.*, 2009, ch. 2).

In all socialist states there have been tendencies of compensating the weak legitimacy of the regime by bringing up national issues, thus seeking to enhance political legitimization via recourse to national traditions. Socialist parties without real efforts to reform their programs to a pro-democratic direction are still enriching their ideologies with nationalist issues. Here, a direct link exists between the 'communist nationalism' (see Ishiyama, 2009) of the socialist period and potentially right-wing radical positions in the post-communist period. Moreover and contrary to many cases of western nation building, most Eastern European nations did not emerge in conjunction with a bourgeois revolution, a strong liberal movement or the establishment of liberal democracy (see Hobsbawm, 1990). Nation building in Western Europe followed mainly a trajectory in which a 'political nation' had emerged and combined with some cultural or ethnic aspects. Almost all of Eastern Europe was subject to multinational empires, that is, the Habsburg, the Russian and the Ottoman empires (Szücs, 1990). Nation building here was always of the *risorgimento* type (Alter, 1985) directed against the existing order and dependent upon its collapse. Apart from Russia, the dominant pattern was the emergence of a national identity without the nation-state, that is, an ethnic nationhood, and the establishment of a nation-state along with democratization after World War I, that is, in the context of the first wave of democratization (Huntington, 1991). Hence, the party systems in the entire region today are characterized by a mainstream, both right and left, that differs from that in Western Europe. Nationalism is not confined to the far right sector of the political spectrum but constitutes part of the mainstream itself. In consequence, there is neither a rationale nor a

practice of a *cordon sanitaire* against the radical right by the mainstream right or even part of the state apparatus (see Minkenberg, 2002b).

Moreover, while in Western Europe, immigrants take the role of scapegoats for resentment; these are not readily available in Central and Eastern Europe. Instead, national minorities and neighboring countries take this position—a context the roots of which are to be found in the particular nation- and state-building process in the region. More specifically, many post-socialist nations can be characterized by a 'triadic' configuration of nations between nation-building processes, the existence of national minorities within the new states and the existence of 'external homelands' (see Brubaker, 1997; also Smith, 2001). The role of 'external homelands' or 'lost territories' signifies one of the key characteristics of the region's nation-building process—and current condition, with particular relevance to the radical right. It is in this arena, where the process of nation building might well override other issues and thus help explain more than other factors the mobilization of right-wing radicalism (Stein, 2000). In countries like Estonia, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and others, constitutional conflicts which threatened the process of democratic consolidation have developed around issues which, in the absence of such minorities, would not have entered the political agenda: the attempts to ban ethnic parties, citizenship and language laws, issues of territorial autonomy and education.

Following these considerations, a conceptualization of the context factors for the Central and Eastern European radical right and its position in the party system cannot apply the logic of the model for Western Europe (see Table 3). It must be adjusted to regional specifics as outlined. Table 5 presents such a model for the region. The overview in Table 5 reveals some patterns while allowing also for striking peculiarities. In general, in cases with more than two facilitating variables the radical right could count on higher levels of electoral support, and vice versa. This was true for the Czech Republic and Hungary on the one hand, where right-wing radical parties played only a minor role, and for Romania on the other, where strong right-wing radical groups coexist with communist-nationalist parties. The Romanian presidential elections of 2000, with the former Ceauşescu ally Iliescu and the fascist-autocratic Tudor taking a large share of the votes, confirmed the trend, but in subsequent elections until EU accession in 2007, it faded (see Frusetta & Glont, 2009). It has been suggested that these parties are 'catching up' with Western European cases (see Bustikova & Kitschelt, 2009). Yet, unlike most Western European cases, these parties' leaders and platforms advocate more backwards-looking ideologies, notably with regard to 'lost territories' and open anti-Semitism or racism (rather than Islamophobia except in Bulgaria) (see Minkenberg, 2002b).

These parties are more extreme than their western counterparts, including their relationship to democracy. They proclaim their nostalgia for the old despotic regimes, and the ethnic and territorial conception of national identity that prevailed under them, following the nation-building struggles before and after World War I (see Hobsbawm, 1990). This sweeping nationalism allows some variation. There is a fascist autocratic right, inspired by the dictatorships of the interwar period, which persists in Russia, Romania and, more recently, Bulgaria, and is linked to the 'national-communists' created by the collapse of the Soviet empire. There is also a more ethnocentric, racist right, which enthusiastically supports territorial revisionism, particularly in Hungary and the Czech Republic (see Minkenberg, 2009b). The desire to redraw frontiers is not unique to Russia, where since the nineteenth century nationalists have dreamed of owning ports in the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. Czech 'Republicans' (SPR-RSV; for this and subsequent abbreviations,

Table 5 Radical right parties' positions and context factors in Central and Eastern Europe

	Historical and cultural conditions			Relevant cleavage variables			Party position (2000s)	
	Nation type (main mode of reference)	Existence of external national homelands	Existence of a national minority (a)	Regime conflict: regime contested by major political forces in 1990s	Socioeconomic transformation costs (b)	Degree of sociocultural transformation (c)	Party strength (d)	Party type (e)
Czech Rep.	Ethnic	No	No	No	High	Very high	LOW	Extremist
Estonia	Ethnic	No	Yes	No	Very high	Very high	LOW	Ethnocentric
Hungary	Ethnic	Yes	Yes	No	High	High	MEDIUM	Extremist
Poland	Culture	No	No	No	High	High	MEDIUM	Racist, Fundamentalist
Slovakia	Ethnic	No	Yes	Yes	High	High	HIGH	Extremist
Bulgaria	Culture	No	Yes	Yes	Very high	Very high	HIGH	Extremist
Romania	Ethnic	Yes	Yes	Yes	High	High	HIGH	Extremist

Notes: (a) A minimum of 3% of the population.
(b) An index based on inequality 93/95 (GINI index), change of inequality (between 1987/1988 and 1993/1995) and change of real GDP (between 1989 and 2000) (EBRD Transition Report, 2000; Milanovic, 1998).
(c) A measure derived from church going statistics and value orientations (see Inglehart, 1998; Pollack *et al.*, 1998).
(d) Party strength is measured by 5% or more of the national vote in at least two elections in the 2000s.
(e) Ideological type according to Table 1.
Source: Beichelt and Minkenberg (2002), updated.

see Appendix for the full name in the local language) demanded that their country should fit the borders of the former Czechoslovakia, within which only a 'homogenous' population would have the right to reside. In Romania, the Greater Romania Party (PRM) promotes inter-war borders as a way of demanding the annexation of Moldova. The desire for change is strongest in Hungary. The Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIÉP) and the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik) both favor revising the Treaty of Trianon and restoring Hungary's Habsburg borders. All these parties adapt the symbols of the fascist movements and regimes of the 1930s, such as Hungary's arrow cross or Romania's Iron Guard (see Bayer, 2009; Minkenberg, 2009b).

In Poland, the phenomenon has been influenced by religious fundamentalism. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Roman Dmowski, the theorist of 'national democracy', was already claiming that only Catholics made good Poles; the Christian-National Union (ZChN) insisted in the 1990s that Catholic dogma must be the foundation of Poland, and that it must defend the interests of all 'ethnic' Poles scattered throughout Eastern Europe. Since then the League of Polish Families (LPR) has taken up the banner, and re-activated the networks of its defunct predecessors (ZChN, the Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland or ROP, and the National Party or SN), and gained the support of Radio Maryja, an ultra-Catholic station that regularly broadcasts traditionalist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic speeches to millions of listeners (see de Lange & Guerra, 2009; Pankowski, 2010).

Overall, if less extreme and more populist and nationalist parties of the right and mainstream-right are added (such as Samoobrona and PiS in Poland, the List LZ-HZFS in Slovakia, and the list TB-LNNK in Latvia), then the picture changes dramatically. With few exceptions such as Estonia and Slovenia, the electoral reservoir for such parties is about 20% of the electorate (see Minkenberg & Perrineau, 2007). This fact points at a larger factor which structures the relationship between the radical and the mainstream right in Central and Eastern Europe: the anti-communist pressures created by 1989 have rehabilitated the concept of the nation-state in Eastern Europe. That is why nationalist and ethnocentric rhetoric is not marginal there, but an axis that structures public and political life, especially in a post-communist context that grants civil society only a minor role. Once the repudiation of elites and popular disenchantment with politicians have been added, it is hardly surprising that Eastern European society increasingly leans to the right. In other words; the radical right in Central and Eastern Europe is more mainstream than marginal, while at the same time being more extreme than that in the West.

The Radical Right in Government: Partners and Policies

In a number of European countries, radical right parties have joined others in coalition governments at the national level. This represents a considerable step in the process of mainstreaming the radical right. Most cases occurred after 2000 which demonstrates that despite the breakthrough in the 1980s of a number of the West European parties (see Table 2), it took almost twenty years until they became accepted as a partner by another party, which in all cases was a party of the right: mainstream, populist or conservative. Table 6 presents an overview of these coalitions based on Table 1 and data from pertinent literature (Akkerman, 2012; Mudde, 2007, p. 280).

These coalitions or informal forms of collaboration (like in Denmark) fly in the face of all characterizations of the radical right as a populist catch-all party. In all cases, they have

Table 6 The radical right in European national governments

Country	Party	Period	Coalition partners
Austria	FPÖ	2000–2005	ÖVP (CD/conservative)
	BZÖ	2005–2006	ÖVP
Denmark	DF[a]	2001–2011	Support for minority government of Venstre (liberal) and Conservative People's Party (cons.)
Italy	LN	1994	FI (neoliberal populist) and AN (radical right)
		2001–2005	FI and AN (conservative), MDC (Christian Dem.)
		2008–2011	People of Freedom (FI, AN and 2 CD parties)
Netherlands	LPR	2002–2003	Christian Democrats and Liberals
	PVV[a]	2010–2012	Christian Democrats and Liberals
Poland	LPR	2005–2006	PiS (ultraconservative and populist)
	Samoobrona	2005–2006	
Romania	PUNR	1994–1996	PDSR (diffuse) and PSM (social populist)
	PRM	1995	PDSR and PSM
Slovakia	SNS	1994–1998	HZDS (populist) and ZRS (communist)
		2006–2010	HZDS and Smer (social democrat)
Switzerland	SVP	2003–?	SPS (socialist), FDP (liberal), CVP (CD)

Note: [a]not part of a coalition but supporting a minority government.
Source: Akkerman (2012), Mudde (2007, p. 280, 2011, p. 14), amended and updated by own research.

aligned themselves with or been invited into a coalition government by the conservative or populist right, although in a few cases in Eastern Europe, left-wing groups joined the coalition as well. In Switzerland, there is no coalition but the need to represent all major parties in the executive in the logic of the proportional system (*Proporz*). In the words of Tim Bale (2003, p. 69; see also Mudde, 2007, p. 280f.): 'the centre-right, by including the far right either as a coalition partner or as a support party, has removed what was essentially an artificial constraint on the size of any right bloc in parliament'. In fact, the efforts by a number of radical right parties to appear 'respectable' has changed their pariah status—although as will be shown, they have not become a conservative or moderate right-wing party in the vein of the Italian MSI/AN. There are cross-country and also cross-regional variations, which are tied to the particular set of context factors outlined earlier in Tables 3 and 5. Hence, a closer look at the patterns in West and East is necessary.

In Western Europe, the ideological type of party matters. All three—or, if Denmark and the Netherlands are included, five—cases of radical right participation in the national government include the ethnocentrist or populist variety (Table 1). Fascist or fundamentalist groups are not invited. The post-fascist MSI/AN, which joined the Berlusconi government in 1994, was already in a process of transformation (see Ignazi, 2003). The lack of a *cordon sanitaire* (which in Belgium has kept the VB away from coalitions) or of a general ostracism (which keeps the radical right out of parliament altogether, like in Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom) may be a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for including the radical right in government. Moreover, as the Austrian case demonstrates, a *cordon sanitaire* is not a structural but a strategic condition: while from 1986 to 1995, the FPÖ was treated as pariah by all other parties, the

mainstream right Austrian People's Party (Österreichische Volkspartei, ÖVP) softened its approach in the legislative period 1995–1999 (see Minkenberg, 2001).

In terms of effect in the policy-making arena, the radical right in power clearly makes a difference in all cases (see Bale, 2003; Minkenberg, 2009a). But it can also have effects when not in government but in a strong parliamentary position (see Bale, 2003; de Lange, 2007; Minkenberg, 2001). This was the case in Austria when the FPÖ was in opposition from 1995 to 1999 but many of its policy proposals were adopted by the governing ÖVP. Generally, the radical right left a mark if it was in parliament *and* if the mainstream right was in power, whether or not in a coalition with the radical right (see Akkerman, 2012). In the language of Giovanni Sartori: the radical right's 'blackmail potential' may be more consequential than its 'coalition potential' (Sartori, 1976, p. 123). Moreover, the radical right's participation in government does not mean a permanent taming and de-radicalization since the radical right continues to abide by 'a belief system that does not share the values of the political order within which it operates' (Sartori, 1976, p. 133; see also Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2005; Minkenberg, 2008) This is even more, and more radically, true in Central and Eastern Europe.

While the interaction of the radical right with mainstream parties and their impact on these and on policy making in Central and Eastern Europe do not diverge much from the Western European cases in their mechanisms, the end result looks more radical. The first cases of government participation of radical right parties occurred in Slovakia and in Romania, in 1994 (see Table 6). While the Romanian coalition government lasted only two years, the Slovak experience ended after a full four year term. Moreover, like in Italy, the SNS returned to government status in 2006 for another full term—in both cases allied to the right-wing populist HZDS of Vladimir Meciar. Meciar's style of government in the 1990s has already been criticized as populist and autocratic (see Thanei, 2002), and the contribution of the SNS to the Government's policies is hard to disentangle. Among the major accomplishments of the first Meciar–Slota coalition were restrictions of self-administration and language use of the Hungarian minority in local affairs and public schools. Moreover, an ethno-national history policy was introduced for the national school curriculum, along with other measures to foster a Slovak sense of identity and to marginalize, if not suppress the Hungarian minority (see Mihailescu, 2008; also above on the SNS and its platform). Jan Slota's SNS returned to the government table in 2006 when the Social Democrat Robert Fico asked both the SNS and Meciar's HZDS to join him in a coalition. Under this coalition, state support for ultranationalist organizations and associations (for example the cultural institute 'Matica slovenská', see above and Table 1) increased. However, the effort to rehabilitate Andrej Hlinka, Slovakia's proto-fascist leader of the interwar era, and elevate him to the status of 'Father of all Slovaks' per parliamentary vote failed in 2007 (see Mayer & Odenahl, 2010, p. 185).

In contrast to Slovakia, the government experience of radical right-wing parties in Poland was rather short-lived. From 2005 until 2007, the League of Polish Families joined the populist Samoobrona and the ultra-conservative Law and Justice (PiS, see above and Table 1) in a coalition government which was united by a strong nationalist and anti-liberal outlook, disregard for civil liberties and the rule of law and a populist style in government (see Kucharcyzk & Wysocka, 2008; Pankowski, 2010). With LPR's leader Roman Giertych as minister of education, the Government pressed for the introduction of a conservative Catholicism as the basis for Polish politics and the state. The school curriculum began to reflect this ultra-nationalism and Catholic fundamentalism,

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introducing 'patriotic education' as a course of study, while the Government banned 'homosexual propaganda' from school grounds in 2007 (see Golebiowska, 2009; see also Zubrzycki, 2006). In foreign affairs, the Government reevaluated Polish–German relations and took a hardened position on their western neighbor which introduced a sense of suspicion and aggressiveness unknown since the fall of the wall. Coupled with the Government's anti-EU rhetoric, this led to a growing isolation of Poland in the EU (see Kucharczyk & Wysocka, 2008, p. 91f.). Overall, while this government lasted less than two years, it can be considered the most right-wing coalition.

The final case of a right-wing shift in government policies in Central and Eastern Europe is Hungary. Here, the radical right parties were neither coalition partners nor supporters of a right-wing minority government. Yet, their very presence and articulation of nationalist issues, in particular their questioning the legitimacy of the Treaty of Trianon and their pan-Hungarian agenda, coupled with their racism and anti-Semitism contributed to the major mainstream right party FIDESZ's continued shift to the right in these issues. As government party from 1998 to 2002, FIDESZ introduced the controversial status law of 2001 which granted access to a 'national citizen certificate' providing health and education benefits to all three million Hungarians living in neighboring countries (Slovenia, Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Ukraine, Romania). This law was meant to heal the effects the Trianon Treaty and also to be a step toward the unity of the Hungarian nation. As such, it was in line with the platform of MIÉP, then an opposition party in Budapest.[5] Moreover, Prime Minister Orbán's FIDESZ and MIÉP cooperated in manipulating the boards of public radio and television in order to grant FIDESZ control of the media (see Mayer & Odenahl, 2010, p. 35; also Uitz, 2008). Victor Orbán and his party are today considered the most prominent right-wing populist party in Central and Eastern Europe which, after the 2010 election, governs the country with a two-thirds majority and has begun a process to rebuild the Hungarian state along its own ideas which are characterized by anti-liberalism and anti-pluarlism as well as strong nationalism. While FIDESZ and the radical right-wing opposition party Jobbik fight each other in the public sphere, their main ideas exhibit a number of similarities in their ethnic nationalism—which may also be attributed to the fact that Orbán and Jobbik leader Gabor Vona started their career together in FIDESZ and differ more in style than in substance (see Mayer & Odenahl, 2010, p. 77; Stipsicz, 2011; Uitz, 2008, p. 64).

Conclusion

The major point of this article is that established political actors have reacted to the growing organizational strength of the radical right scene not only by adopting and legitimizing some of its elements but also, in a number of cases, by forging coalitions (official as well as unofficial ones) with them. This represents a major shift from earlier patterns in which established actors effectively ostracized such positions. The mapping of radical right actors and opinion trends across Europe, West and East, shows some systematic variations in terms of right-wing organizational strength, party and movement mobilization and public openness to immigrants and immigration. A Protestant pattern seems to have developed in which right-wing anti-immigrant parties are not usually a strong political factor, but immigrant-related violence has shaken public opinion. At the same time, these countries are not as thoroughly or formally opposed to immigration and multiculturalism as other parts of Europe. On the other hand, a group of Catholic countries

has developed a pronounced resistance against multiculturalism. Here, radical right-wing parties have had disproportionate success, but right-wing violence remains rather marginal. In both cases, however, political discourse and public policy have been shifted rightward. Finally, the Central and Eastern European group can be identified by the extremism of their radical right's agenda (anti-liberal, anti-democratic, anti-minority and anti-EU) which is only marginally moderated among the major right-wing parties in government, when they were in power (PiS in Poland, FIDESZ in Hungary, HZDS in Slovakia). In the East, there was never a *cordon sanitaire* between the mainstream right and the radical right, hence the boundaries are more fluid. The rehabilitation of nationalism after the breakdown of the Soviet empire has facilitated political programs and their protagonists which make a radical right largely superfluous.

In the West, efforts by conservative parties such those in Denmark or Austria to co-opt the electoral rise and relative pragmatism of the radical right led to even greater legitimacy for these parties. While these tactics did indeed 'tame' the parties, it came at the cost of a hardened anti-immigrant policy, evidence of the radical right's most direct policy impact. However, since comparative research on direct policy impact by the radical right is still in its infancy, these results can only be a modest enlargement of the current research. In the East, no 'taming' can be observed—instead of a mainstreaming of the radical right, we observe a radicalization of the mainstream.

Notes

[1] An earlier version of this paper was presented at the conference, 'The mainstream right in Europe and the populist temptation', Portsmouth, 9 November 2011. The author thanks Aleksandra Moroska-Bonkiewicz and his graduate students in the seminar, 'The radical right in Central and Eastern Europe' at the European University Viadrina for helpful comments.

[2] For countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), one could furthermore distinguish between fascist-autocratic and national-communist ideologies, depending on the radical right's point of reference to interwar fascist or right-wing authoritarian regimes such as Horty's in Hungary or to nationalist communist regimes as they evolved in Ceausescu's Romania (see Beichelt & Minkenberg, 2002; Ishiyama, 2009).

[3] In each of the western EU member states, between 20% and 40% reject multicultural society (see EUMC, 2003, p. 42).

[4] The recent parliamentary election in Poland (October 2011) is a vivid illustration of this fluidity: it is the first time since the breakdown of state socialism, that an incumbent government has been reelected.

[5] The protest coming from Romania and Slovakia was countered by a number of amendments to the law after the 2002 elections and the takeover by a new government.

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Appendix

Party Abbreviations/Translations

AN:	Alleanza Nazionale (National Alliance)
BNP:	British National Party
BZÖ:	Bündnis Zukunft Österreiches (Alliance for the Future of Austria)
DF:	Dansk Folkepartiet (Danish People's Party)
DVU:	Deutsche Volksunion (German People's Union)
FIDESZ:	(Hungarian Civic Union)
FPÖ:	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (Freedom Party of Austria)
HZDS:	Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko (Movement for a Democratic Slovakia)
KDNP:	Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt (Christian Democratic Party)
KPN-SN:	Konfederacja Polski Niepodleglej (Confederation for an Independent Poland)
LPR:	Liga Polskich Rodzin (League of Polish Families)
MIÉP:	Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja (Hungarian Justice and Life Party)
MS-FT:	Movimento Sociale Fiamma Tricolore (Social Movement—Tricolore Flame)
MSI:	Movimento Sociale Italiano (Italian Social Movement)
NA:	Nationale Alliantie (National Alliance)
NNP:	Nieuwe Nationale Partij (New National Party)
NPD:	Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschland (National Democratic Party of Germany)
NVU:	Nederlandse Volksunie (Dutch People's Union)
PiS:	Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Justice)
PRM:	Partidul Romania Mare (Party for Greater Romania)
PvV:	Partij voor de Vrijheid (Party of Freedom)
SNJ:	Slovenská Národná Jednota (Slovak National Union)
SNS:	Slovenská Národná Strana (Slovak National Party)
SPR-RSČ:	Sdružení pro republiku - Republikánska strana Československa (Coalition for Republic - Republican Party of Czechoslovakia, in short: Republicans)
SVP:	Schweizersiche Volkspartei (Swiss People's Party)
VB:	Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest)
ZChN:	Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańsko Narodowe (Christian National Union)