

The New Politics of Prejudice

Comparative Perspectives on Extreme Right Parties in European Democracies

Lars Rensmann

Political Science/European Studies, Yale Center for International and Area Studies, Yale University

Piero Ignazi, *Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)

Cas Mudde, *The Ideology of the Extreme Right* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003)

Martin Schain, Aristide Zolberg, and Patrick Hossay, eds., *Shadows over Europe: The Development and Impact of the Extreme Right in Western Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002)

The resurgence of extreme right parties gained its first sudden and dramatic momentum when the *Front National* (FN), led by Jean-Marie LePen, scored 11.2 percent in the 1984 European elections. This took many by surprise, including political and social scientists, most of whom at the time had expected rightist extremism to dissipate altogether. Indeed, until the mid-1980s, the organized extreme right remained completely marginalized in Europe, enjoyed little political support, and performed poorly in elections, with the noted exception of the sustained, albeit small-scale presence of the neofascist *Movimento Sociale Italiana* (MSI), which was mostly viewed as just another peculiarity of postwar Italian politics. Even more surprisingly, however, LePen's breakthrough reflected not just a single incident but rather a more general watershed: a lasting upsurge of the extreme right all over Europe that reached its first peak with some dramatic electoral gains in the early 1990s, accompanied by a wave of anti-immigrant violence. Since then, several political parties have

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failed to generate much support, like the Dutch *Centrumdemocraten* (CD), or have stagnated. But overall, the revived and newly emerging variants of the extreme right did not suffer the much anticipated “periodical decline.”¹ They endured and even doubled their electoral turnout over the last two decades. Therefore it has become difficult to dismiss them as ephemeral and isolated.²

Several recent developments highlight and substantiate the thesis that the extreme right has reestablished itself as a significant political actor in several western European democracies. In April 2002, LePen received an unprecedented 16.9 percent and attained second position in the first ballot of the French presidential elections, causing a state of shock in French society. Since unification, a violent xenophobic youth culture and an extreme right movement with neo-Nazi edges have taken hold and spread in Germany, especially in the states of the former GDR; temporarily, they established so-called nationally liberated zones in which they try to seize power and authority by means of sustained violence, and they are supported by occasional regional electoral successes. In Belgium (in particular, Flanders), the increasingly racist *Vlaams Blok* has gained both electoral support and organizational power. Foremost, despite heavy losses in recent elections, the self-declared “postfascist” *Alleanza Nazionale* (AN, the former MSI) and the xenophobic *Lega Nord* are once more participating in Italy’s government, and right-wing extremist Jörg Haider’s *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (FPÖ) has been ruling in Austria as a junior partner of the conservative *Österreichische Volks-Partei* (ÖVP) since 1999. Thus, extreme and radical populist right parties are far from being a short-lived, transitory, and temporary protest phenomenon that is temporarily endorsed by alienated voters lacking identifiable beliefs; they have largely consolidated their positions in the electoral landscape and beyond. Although in many cases, extreme right actors remain somewhat at the fringe of the political system, they have often succeeded in stabilizing or broadening their constituencies, turning new voters into loyal voters, creating militant extremist milieus and generating nationalist, anti-immigrant movements across Europe.

Along with this development, new research on the extreme right and its growing political resonance has not only proliferated but also conceptually advanced in recent years.³ Since the groundbreaking

comparative studies by Herbert Kitschelt and Hans-Georg Betz on the new western European radical right,⁴ research designs have increasingly shifted from single-country approaches to a systematic cross-national perspective,⁵ though sometimes in an all-too-sweeping search for general trends. Be that as it may, today researchers recognize that the renaissance of right-wing extremism has become a more or less Europe-wide phenomenon,⁶ and they often integrate a multifaceted set of factors to explain extremism's successes and failures. Earlier work concentrated heavily, and at times one-sidedly, on aspects of socioeconomic deprivation or adolescent unemployment, neglecting the role of new cultural cleavages, political processes and discourses, ideology, and other variables of mobilization in postindustrial society.

Still, the political nature of the extreme right, which varies from nation to nation, and the heterogeneous origins for its success remain a controversial subject of research. Some scholars believe that most current variants of the European extreme right have moved beyond the political agenda of the conventional neofascist right by drastically changing the ideological format and mobilization strategies, and by addressing new value cleavages and issues, such as immigration, cultural identity, and democratic representation. Political success, then, is seen as particularly dependent on the extreme right's own strategic moves to facilitate new political issues that respond to failures of established parties. Other scholars argue that it is, in turn, general shifts in political discourses and climates—and interactions between mainstream and extremist politics—that have enhanced the opportunity structures of the extreme right. This argument focuses on the formation of anti-immigrant policies and national-populist resentments articulated by established democratic parties and within public spheres across Europe. While some see the deradicalization of established parties as a crucial precondition of the extremist upsurge,⁷ others suggest that a general polarization and radicalization of the political arena has opened the space for a revival of the extreme right.

Several recent publications explore these competing models and methods for understanding the new ideological features of contemporary European extreme right parties and mobilizations, as well as the shifting conditions and opportunity structures for their success.

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Strikingly, however, they all endorse a general shift in work on the extreme right towards a focus on political ideology and discursive or political processing. And they all conceptualize the present extreme right parties as different from fascist parties, understanding their success more or less as, in Kitschelt's words, "inversely proportional to their proximity to neofascist patterns."⁸ Moreover, all of these recent studies are comparative in orientation and provide general theoretical hypotheses, but they also intend to address particular contexts and variations.

I. The "Counter-revolution" of a New Post-material Extreme Right?

Piero Ignazi, arguably *the* leading expert on the MSI/AN, figures among the pioneers of researchers who have analyzed the new politics of the extreme right. In his 2003 book, *Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe*, Ignazi offers an integrative, qualitative study in which he seeks to substantiate his well-known (and quite influential) thesis that the new extreme right benefits from new cultural cleavages, value-based party dealignments in the electorate of postindustrial societies, and newly evolving issues, to which the extreme right successfully responds by reinventing or transforming itself. In particular, according to Ignazi, the new extreme right politically signifies, articulates and successfully mobilizes a formerly silent counter-revolution of a return to authoritarian-nationalist and conventional moral values, directed against culturally pluralized, postmaterial libertarian values, individualized lifestyles, and postindustrial sociocultural modernization.

His book covers extensive ground in many respects. Ignazi does not use case studies but rather analyzes the development and situation of the extreme right in all of western Europe, from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean countries. A somewhat lengthy first chapter on varieties of the right and the validity of the left-right dichotomy is followed by a section conceptualizing the ideological essence of the extreme right. Here Ignazi discusses the criteria for his classifications and in particular the distinction between the old extreme right characterized by nostalgia and neofascism and the new postindustrial variety. As we shall see, this distinction proves crucial for his approach.

After an amazing empirical tour through Europe's extreme right political landscape, Ignazi presents his comparative reflections and fascinating, inclusive general theory of the contemporary extreme right. Before that, he provides nine separate, rich, and concise empirical sections that reconstruct the internal processes and political interactions of the specific extreme right parties, situating them in their particular political/national environments. Drawing from party history and platforms, reactions by other parties, quantitative studies on voter attitudes and electoral results, Ignazi eloquently develops differently structured qualitative narratives. In itself, these detailed empirical examinations display great sensitivity to empirical processes, variations, and national particularities. Comparative conclusions or broad generalizations are mostly avoided, so that each chapter also serves as an up-to-date analysis of extreme right parties in western European democracies.

For Ignazi, the French FN represents the prototype of new, postmaterial variants of the extreme right (which in Ignazi's concept also include the German *Republikaner* (REP), the Austrian FPÖ, the post-fascist AN, the Dutch CD, and others, while the *Vlaams Blok* is seen as a borderline case). This is not only due to the FN's early breakthrough in 1984. Ignazi traces the various wings and traditions of party modernization and factors that enabled the party to ascend. The FN soon profited from a general mistrust toward party politics, succeeded in politicizing new issues such as insecurity and immigration, and became the "key reference for 'law and order' and anti-immigrant demands." (95) Compared to other typical new or "post-conventional" extreme right parties, like the German REP, however, Ignazi's classification as "prototypical postmaterial" can be called into question, especially if one considers LePen's continuous use of quite "traditional," overt racist prejudice and even Holocaust denial.

In the case of Italy, Ignazi carefully reconstructs the long postwar road of the MSI/AN towards its renewal in the late 1990s. He emphasizes the exceptional Italian political environment, in which the legacy of fascism and the civil war and the conflict between historical fascism/antifascism had a lasting, polarizing impact on political culture. In this political context, the self-declared fascist MSI could survive with a considerable constituency, albeit at the fringe of an antifascist republic. In the 1990s, the discourse on fascism changed,

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and the conditions became more favorable for the MSI in light of government scandals and the collapse of established parties. However, as Ignazi shows, until the 1995 Congress in which the party changed its name to attract broader constituencies, its political culture and even official ideology remained nostalgically fascist. By the mid-1990s, party leader Gianfranco Fini tried to modernize the party without losing its traditional basis. But in 1998, still only 0.3 percent of the mid-level elite of the now postfascist AN considered the Italian government during the time of fascism to have been a “brutal dictatorship”; 61.1 percent claimed that “apart from some questionable decisions, it was a good regime.” (46) But since the unprecedented (and unrepeated) 15.7 percent in the 1996 elections and particularly after an electoral backlash one year later, Gianfranco Fini forced a further image change and turned towards new issues and more moderate positions, moving the party away from rightist extremism and fascist nostalgia. This process has been reinforced by the crucial role of the AN in the Berlusconi administration. Today, Ignazi states, the AN is “fully legitimate in the political arena” and now enjoy consistent, solid electoral support (12.0 percent in the 2001 election). Still, as Ignazi writes, while “on authoritarian issues the party cadres show an evolution toward conservative-democratic positions [...], they are quite prone to nostalgia and, to a certain extent, xenophobia.” (50)

In case of the *Lega Nord*, newly founded in 1991, we find an inverse development: under the uncontested leadership of Umberto Bossi, the *Lega* established itself in the political landscape with a completely novel populist-regionalist and antistatist agenda. The party was originally politically centrist and in the mid-1990s temporarily even a member of the Euroliberals. As a new party movement that primarily mobilized the Italian north “against Rome,” the *Lega* benefited from *Tangentopoli*, the revelations of large-scale political corruption that led to the collapse of the postwar political regime, and from growing dissatisfaction with the Italian “partitocrazia.” Be that as it may, upon losing ground to Berlusconi’s new populist party movement, the center-right *Forza Italia*, Bossi and his *Lega* moved towards the extreme right. Since the mid-1990s, Bossi has pushed a vulgar racist discourse and endorsed openly separatist positions for the creation of the imaginary northern state of “Padania” based upon

an invented cultural narrative of northern supremacy. Ignazi oddly hesitates to call the *Lega* extremist, mostly because of its original centrist ties. But in his epilogue, written in 2002, he finally does concede that the party should be included in the extreme right because it espouses “the most radical anti-immigrant, anti-EU, and anti-liberal positions in the Italian political debate.” (223) This turn to right-wing extremism, however, did not halt but rather accelerated the rapid electoral decline of the *Lega Nord*. In the 2001 national election, which Ignazi does not consider, the party’s support dropped from 10.1 percent in 1996 to 3.9 percent.⁹

While no similarly consistent electoral party successes have taken place in Germany, both an organized and informal extreme right has reemerged in the wake of the regional success of the new *Republikaner* party in West Berlin in 1989. It is represented by two parties: the older of the two, the radical, anticapitalist, anti-Semitic *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (NPD), which had short-lived electoral successes in the 1960s and now concentrates on street-level mobilization and leans towards violent neo-Nazism, and the radical *Deutsche Volks-Union* (DVU), which gained surprising electoral successes and recently surpassed the more moderate REPs. Ignazi demonstrates how a neoconservative nationalist discourse, based upon a German, *völkisch* version of ethnicity and directed against immigration, westernization, and individualization unfolded in the 1980s. This “reframing of the national question on the basis of ethnic homogeneity and compliance with the past reflected the feelings of a large proportion of German public opinion.” (75) As Ignazi convincingly points out, the revival of the German extreme right resulted in part from the “politicization of German ethnocentrism by the major parties elites” and their discourse against immigrants and asylum-seekers; the enduring presence of authoritarian, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic attitudes well beyond the extreme right electorate; and a general *Politikverdrossenheit* (disaffection with politics). Yet Ignazi underestimates the role of rising neonationalism in the postunification period of the 1990s, and the specific role of the postauthoritarian culture in the former GDR for the formation of an extreme right grassroots movement and milieu. However, with few exceptions, such as the DVU’s 12.9 percent in the regional election of Saxony-Anhalt in 1998, extreme right parties have not performed well in elections.

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In contrast, the Austrian FPÖ (which returned to right-wing extremism since Haider became head of the party in 1986) has achieved outstanding successes, hitting an electoral peak in the 1999 national election of 26.9 percent that paved the way for the party's entrance into the national government. Certainly, the anger against the "partocracy" (the established parties with which Germans, to the contrary, still somewhat strongly identify) added to this success, as Ignazi emphasizes. But more importantly, surveys show that Haider expresses a previously unrepresented but considerable cultural mood of ethnic-national pride, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism. In Austria, a country that had always portrayed itself as Nazism's first victim, the Nazi legacy, anti-Semitism, racism, and notions of *Volksge-meinschaft* have never been worked through or addressed publicly (much less so than in Germany) until the Waldheim affair of 1988. Haider is a mouthpiece of these conserved and reinforced resentments, albeit with a smart and fresh yuppie image.

But Ignazi also recounts the stories of country-specific failures from which we can also learn about the conditions of successful extreme right mobilizations. The extreme right never took hold in Great Britain and has also failed so far in some postauthoritarian, recently democratized Mediterranean nation-states, such as Greece, Portugal, and Spain. The British National Party (BNP, the political heir to the fascist, racist, anti-Semitic National Front of the 1970s that temporarily gained some noticeable electoral support) today remains virtually the only relevant extreme right party in Britain. With the exception of a few local and regional elections in the 1990s, the BNP, which portrays itself as somewhat more "democratic" than its European counterparts, although it never really surpassed its original proto-Nazi mould, has always performed poorly. Ignazi credits inner factionalism and lack of party renewal, the successful Tory strategies to raise and suffocate the immigration issue, and the strong liberal-democratic and civic political culture in Britain for the failure of the extreme right, which "never benefited from full political legitimacy" (185).

In case of the Mediterranean countries, Ignazi argues convincingly that the long and still relatively fresh legacy of authoritarian regimes has "a counter-effect on the development of nostalgic political organizations." (196) Their constituencies were largely absorbed

by new right-wing but prosystem conservative parties. Despite waves of political dissatisfaction in the mid-1990s, the mass public has been distanced from authoritarian and fascist parties due to largely successful sociocultural changes and equally successful democratic institutions. In addition, the extreme right failed to provide political articulation for the populist antisystem protest that emerged during the mid-1980s.

However, the diagnosed counter-revolution in attitudes, Ignazi concludes on the basis of these studies, is presently reflected in a form of new politics of a “post-material extreme right” composed of a mixture of “modernizing inputs and traditional reminiscences” (34). The new extreme right genuinely responds, Ignazi argues, to identity crises produced by modern individualization processes and to the postconventional value change in western postindustrial societies mentioned above, most pointedly represented by the new political agendas of social movements and left-libertarian or green parties.¹⁰ Corresponding with the decline of cleavages based on socioeconomics or traditional class alignments, the new cultural cleavage—or a “*value-based* conflict axis of conflict centered on ‘quality of life’ issues rather than acquisitive ones” (201)—has produced different, even opposite, increasingly nonmaterial concerns, such as questions of cultural and national identity, individualization, and collective affiliation. These conflicting concerns and the change in value priorities could erode ties between organized interests and political parties and lead to higher electoral volatility, opening the way for political dealignments and potential realignments. These shifts are fostered, or often induced, by other general, interwoven political and sociocultural transformation processes in postindustrial societies, which many scholars have previously identified (i.e., economic, cultural, and communicative globalization; new immigration and the decline of the nation-state, exemplified in the European Union and supranational “deterritorialized politics”¹¹ at large; rapid postindustrialization in a largely service-sector economy that changes class relations; and finally a broadening crisis of democratic representation alongside a crisis of postwar social integration models that were embodied in the seemingly outmoded welfare state).

Ignazi recognizes these general circumstances and their important role in creating new cultural cleavages and fueling the new politics

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of a postmaterial right. He even views the latter as a by-product of the postindustrial constellation and a service-sector society that enhances new value allocations (shifts that have also affected the postmaterial left). However, he also emphasizes the specific political processes that have created more favorable political opportunity structures for the extreme right which then transferred the “silent counter-revolution” to the political arena. Ignazi suggests that the dealignment caused by these processes not only mobilized an alienated, previously unaccounted for segment of the electorate, but also helped radicalize the political discourse and polarize the party system. Most prominently, this polarization is reflected in a neoconservative move to the right along the new cleavages, that is, against postconventional morals and pluralized identities. The right-wing radicalization of the political climate increasingly legitimized new extreme right or nationalist views and actors. However, Ignazi argues, the established parties then proved unable to address satisfactorily the newly erupting nonmaterial political concerns and issues or to stop a growing crisis of system legitimacy and increasing dissatisfaction among some constituencies. Although established neoconservative actors primarily introduced issues such as ethnic-based themes (agendas of national identity, opposition to immigration, and “cultural” and “moral renewal”) into the 1980s political discourse, and therefore provided legitimacy for them, conservative parties were unable to fully transform those themes into actual policies. They especially toned down whenever they gained governmental power. In contrast to Kitschelt and McGann’s prominent thesis that a general deradicalization or moderation of established conservative parties induces voters to abandon their parties, thus creating an electoral opening for new right-authoritarian political actors, Ignazi claims that “what really counts is the oscillation by the conservative parties, first radicalizing then deradicalizing.” (204) He stresses that mainstream parties moved to the right and politicized new issues before extreme right parties rose. However, extreme right parties were more likely to ascend when conservative parties, in turn, regained a more centrist position.

Ignazi also notes several other crucial variables, such as the relevance of different institutional and electoral settings; for example, multiparty and proportional electoral systems favor new extreme

right parties. But for Ignazi, the primary set of factors relates to the structural development of new value-based cleavages, dealigned constituencies, and especially the particular ideological, political, and discursive processes involved: the development of “radicalization and polarization, together with the politicization of new, salient, and misconceived issues, [which] seem to be at the heart of the dynamic that fostered the rise of extreme right parties.” (212) Be that as it may, he situates this political (system polarization and radicalizations) and cultural process (the rising national neoconservatism of elites, media, and parties) mostly in the 1980s as the crucial precondition for the ascendancy and breakthrough of the extreme right that assembled radicalized voters dissatisfied with mainstream conservatism.

A secondary set of factors helps explain the persistence and further development of the extreme right in the 1990s and onwards, Ignazi suggests—namely, a growing crisis of confidence in the democratic system partially induced by scandals, corruption, and a widespread alienation from politics. The indicators are the Europe-wide decline in established party identification and sharply increasing voter volatility in this period, expressed through strong dissatisfaction and an eagerness to fundamentally question the legitimacy of democratic rules, parties, and politicians. This, Ignazi argues, perfectly plays into the antisystem or antiestablishment positions that are as constitutive for the extreme right as their ideological orientations. An overall transformation in the sociodemographic profile of right-extremist voters has thus taken place in the course of the last decade that, ironically, also brings the “social question” (and class cleavages) back into the game: today, most European extreme right parties have become “workers parties” whose constituencies—overrepresented by young males and drawing primarily from a “new urban underclass,”¹² in the words of Hans-Gerd Jaschke—are shaped by xenophobic, authoritarian value-sets and cultural cleavages. This constituency is also particularly “mobilized by feelings of alienation towards the political system and of dissatisfaction towards the socio-economic dynamics of post-modernization and globalization, which they do not control and from which they feel excluded.” (217f)

Nevertheless, while Ignazi regards these new conditions as crucial for the understanding of the extreme right’s recent success in Europe, he believes they represent only one side of the coin. The other side is

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the effective political and ideological modernization of the extreme right itself, and its ability to utilize these favorable circumstances. In order to gain support from a dealigned, underrepresented constituency mobilized by a specific new set of right-extremist issues, Ignazi shows that the extreme right largely reshaped and adapted their offer to meet that demand. Newly evolving or reinvented post-material types of extreme right parties have departed from neofascist ideology and nostalgia in order to address the needs generated by the new cultural setting of postindustrialism that are not satisfied by traditional parties. Ignazi states that this group of parties has proved ideologically innovative and more responsive to new issues or antisystem affects related to a growing uneasiness with a pluralized and globalizing society. Offering a counterpart to postmaterial libertarianism and fostered by “new right thinking,” their mobilization themes focus on xenophobic resentments, out-group hostility, and “exclusionary anti-immigrant politics in a non-biological form” (26). This new prejudiced exclusionism is related to revived nationalist identity politics, which contend that ethnically homogeneous “organic communities” (*ethnos*) provide for moral communal bonding and the true essence of democracy. In turn, western liberalism and individualism, “American political-cultural hegemony,” universalistic-egalitarian values and multicultural change are fiercely rejected. According to Ignazi, these new culturalized issues are also oddly interwoven with effective mobilizations of antiestablishment resentments and authoritarian calls to “reestablish law and order.”

However, Ignazi’s two general criteria for defining the extreme right extreme position on the left-right continuum and an antipluralist (“anti-systemness”) are too formal; the crucial, constitutive ideological core values that the extreme right represents are not part of his definition. More importantly, his criteria for distinguishing between old-style fascist parties and postmaterial, new extreme right parties (i.e., attachment to a coherent neofascist ideology and nostalgia versus value and issue politics and distance to neofascist ideology) are vague in that they describe tendencies. They are also questionable because Ignazi suggests the new extreme right does not have an underlying ideology and is primarily characterized by a delegitimizing pattern with regard to the political system, through a series of issues, values, and attitudes.

His periodization of shifting themes and conditions from the 1980s to the 1990s, that is, from “cultural” to “social” issues, is not fully sound, either. Of course it is correct that the constituencies of the new extreme right are increasingly proletarian, and many parties have addressed social issues recently. But this does not reverse, as Ignazi finally insinuates, the constituency’s and the party’s primacy of value-based, ideological cleavages over diffuse dissatisfaction with the system or a socioeconomic opposition to globalization. The conflict over the distribution of resources remains replaced by conflict over allocation of values. Most successful extreme right election campaigns still primarily mobilize voters around issues of xenophobia and nationalism. Moreover, there was no decline in nationalist and xenophobic cultural discourses, which were endorsed by established democratic parties in the course of the 1990s, as other studies display (see below). It is crucial that, in the case of extreme right mobilizations and constituencies, the cultural cleavages, that is, national and xenophobic mobilizations, have not been replaced but rather intermingle with and structure the interpretation of an individual’s dissatisfaction with a “failing” liberal democracy and of rising socioeconomic fears. Therefore the latter—problems of democracy and social distribution issues—are interpreted through the lens of an authoritarian, ethnic-nationalist and xenophobic cultural value-set and worldview. As Ignazi mentions himself with regard to the German case, “the *perceptions* are much more important than the conditions themselves in forging [...] the extreme right world-view.” (80) This worldview fundamentally discriminates against “others,” whom are blamed for the social problems that increasingly hit home. In fact, as Kitschelt points out,¹³ there is no necessary contradiction between an ethnic-national welfare chauvinism opposing globalization and radicalized social-Darwinistic attacks on allegedly undeserving “welfare parasites.” Furthermore, despite an increase of workers among the ranks of the extreme right, the constituency is still diverse; in fact, successful parties must also appeal to segments of a self-employed petite bourgeoisie, which they mostly do.¹⁴

These remarks notwithstanding, Ignazi presents an authoritative work on the subject. A must-read for anyone interested in Europe’s contemporary extreme right,¹⁵ this study provides the most comprehensive survey currently available of the extreme right’s recent

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development in western Europe. It also offers a challenging interpretative model for understanding the new extreme right's road to success.

II. Ideologies of the European Extreme Right

In his study *The Ideology of the Extreme Right*, Cas Mudde offers a different conceptual framework and analytic approach. Mudde does not seek to cover as much ground as Ignazi or to develop a general interpretative schema. In contrast to Ignazi's all-encompassing, theoretically inspired, ambitious integrative approach, Mudde limits his focus methodologically to an in-depth qualitative study of party literature and programs. He concentrates on the parties' histories and, foremost, their ideologies. His textual ideological approach aims "at understanding rather than explanation" (22). Thus he is not concerned with the extreme right's interactions with other parties or with changing constituencies and new political opportunity structures. Furthermore, he only draws from extreme right parties in three neighboring central European countries: Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands, which he analyses separately in three main chapters that deal with the ideologies of five extreme right parties (REP, DVU, *Vlaams Blok*, and the Dutch CD, and the neo-Nazi *Centrumpartij'86*, which has been banned since 1998). These chapters are framed by a general conceptual chapter on the "extreme right party family" and a conclusion that provides comparative evaluations regarding the general ideological features of (new) extreme right parties (in Mudde's approach, the "new" parties under scrutiny are simply categorized as such because they were founded after 1980, belonging to the "third wave" of postwar right-wing extremism).

Mudde convincingly defends Klaus von Beyme's concept that the most important criterion for party family typologies "is to be found on the ideological level: that of the *familles spirituelles*." (2) Nevertheless, the systematic study of party ideology has been a stepchild of political research. Mudde insists that an underlying, common set of ideological traits constitutes the extreme right party family (like all party families), and this functions as their fundamental normative basis. Thus, according to him, right-wing extremism can only be defined along ideological criteria and contents. It does not express a

“right-wing form of extremist thinking, as the extremism-theoretical school argues” (179). “Extremism” as a concept provides little guidance, since what is declared as extremist in one context can be moderate or centrist in another.

For good reasons, Mudde also explicitly opposes Ignazi’s more advanced, but still somewhat vague, definition of right-wing extremism, which is based upon two merely formal, nonideological criteria: the spatial criterion of its extreme placement on the political spectrum and the attitudinal-systemic criterion of “anti-systemness.” A third criterion employed by Ignazi justifies the distinction between old and new parties according to the presence (or absence) of a coherent, neofascist ideology. Mudde argues that “not many of the new or post-industrial extreme right parties will escape this criterion when applied rigorously.” (15) Unlike Ignazi, Mudde avoids the problematic division between a closed ideology (neofascist) and values (post-material), but defines ideology in a general, inclusive way as “a party’s body of normative(-related) ideas about the nature of man and society as well as the organization and purposes of society.” (19)

Through this study Mudde seeks to validate empirically three propositions about extreme right parties: that they (1) share a distinct, constitutive “common ideological core” that (2) includes a combination of features generally defined as right-wing extremist, and (3) that “two subgroups can be distinguished on the basis of ideological extremity” (16). Considering this, Mudde’s study is perhaps more fundamental in its scope than Ignazi’s book.

Mudde’s detailed and systematic empirical analysis of party ideologies shows that four converging features exist that form a common ideological core that can be defined as right-wing extremist (though objections to the label itself can be raised): “all five parties share an ideological core which is built around the nucleus of *nationalism*. [...] The state should implement a policy of *internal homogenization* to create a mono-cultural society which at least includes the repatriation of (some) foreigners. In addition, *xenophobia* determines the world view in which everything ‘abnormal’ (or better: that which is perceived as deviating from their own nation and conventions) is seen as negative and threatening.” (177) This xenophobia includes both “internal enemies” and “external enemies,” from immigrants to supranational organizations and/or Jews. Thirdly, Mudde also finds

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that all parties he examines share some sort of socioeconomic welfare chauvinism. A fourth ideological feature that, according to Mudde, can be included in the ideological core of the extreme right party family is a belief in law and order, and in the notion that “human life is only possible in a well-ordered community” (173) that must be protected from evil outside forces (this dimension I would preferably cast as political authoritarianism). The final two core features, however, are also based on the core values and underlying arguments of the first two, that is, nationalism and xenophobia.

These findings are not very surprising, but despite the relatively narrow comparison of only five parties, they provide an overall empirically valid and plausible conceptualization of the common features and integrative ideological principles of the contemporary European extreme right that is very useful for further research on this party family. In general, the results also correspond with the distinctively overrepresented nationalist, xenophobic, and authoritarian “key attitudes” of extreme right voters across Europe.¹⁶

The categorization of “two subgroups based on ideological extremity” that Mudde finally suggests is more promising than Ignazi’s subdivisions. Instead of Ignazi’s somewhat problematic criterion of affinity to neofascist ideology, Mudde incorporates the more common—and more appropriate—distinction between radical and moderate/populist or modernized variants of those same basic ideological features that are shared by all right-wing extremists. In addition, against a widely shared assumption (which Ignazi seems to adopt), Mudde proves that the notion that “moderate extreme right parties are electorally most successful is not sustained.” The *Vlaams Blok*, the most successful in electoral terms, is also the most radical in ideological terms. However, Mudde also bases his differentiation between moderate and radical parties on a new distinction “between the *ethnic* and *state nationalist* parties” (181). The fact that only the *Centrumdemocraten*, a largely irrelevant “dying party” (127), is viewed as “state nationalist” and “moderate,” while “the two German parties cannot be categorized” (182) indicates that this approach is dysfunctional. However, while I endorse Ignazi’s general theoretical outline of a postmaterial right, I argue with Mudde that Ignazi’s criterion to distinguish between old, conventional and new, modernized forms also proves insufficient (“absence” or “lack” of fascist

ideology), as is the criterion of electoral success. Instead, new and revived postmaterial parties, such as AN, REP or FPÖ, can be viewed as belonging to a special subgroup because they employ populist strategies, styles, and makeovers and incorporate new issues; their ability to link radical and more moderate positions may appeal to different constituencies. We can therefore speak of the variant of a neopopulist extreme right.

Not all ideological traits that Mudde validates or dismisses are equally convincing in light of the abundant material that he himself provides. For example, Mudde realizes that both German parties he considers, the *REP* and *DVU*, employ ethnic-nationalist rhetoric by using Nazi terms such as the *Volksgemeinschaft*. This term clearly addresses an ethnic notion of community based upon blood ties and along ethnic criteria. But because the party literature does not describe “the specific relationship between state and nation” (171) and “never elaborates on the meaning of the concept” (67), Mudde does not see ethnic nationalism as a core ideology of these parties. He only finds “indications” of it. As Michael Minkenberg shows in his studies, however, the specifically ethnic national identity narrative and the idea of an “ethnocratic” regime represents a crucial aspect of any radical right mobilization.¹⁷ Adapting to the democratic system and developing new political strategies, this narrative is sometimes expressed in more subtle forms or even disguised in superficial assimilation demands towards immigrants. Be that as it may, in case of the *DVU*’s and *REP*’s emphasis on a *Volksgemeinschaft*, the ethnic exclusionist appeal is not even subtle, but rather overt and self-evident to anyone familiar with German and the history of the term. In a similar fashion, Mudde tends to underestimate the role of conspiracy theories and, linked to that, of modern anti-Semitism because these ideological features are often less explicitly formulated. Although he concedes that anti-Semitism is often expressed “backstage,” he only interprets it as a central ideology of the “national revolutionary,” criminal, openly paranoid (and now banned) *Centrumpartij*’86, whose central enemy soon became an imagined (“Jewish) one-world government”. Mudde finds anti-Semitism also “present” in the *DVU* and *REP* but appears reluctant to qualify it as a core ideology. While he recognizes that the *Vlaams Blok* promotes a “revisionist view” (114) on history and apology for

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collaboration with Nazism, he contends that no anti-Semitism exists here and thus misses the anti-Jewish undertones present in such revisionism.¹⁸

In my view, these empirical and interpretative problems are due to a two-fold methodological limitation of Mudde's overall solid study. First of all, he examines party ideology not only on the basis of election programs and brochures, which often only present a shallow and moderate "front-stage" image of a party. In order to explore the "institutionalized" party ideology and the principal arguments that lie behind individual policy demands, he also provides a substantiated, holistic interpretation of programs of principle (if available) and, in particular, papers intended for party members. Unfortunately, though, he stops short of other sources, such as discussions within the party, comments by spokespersons, pamphlets of party members, unofficial documents, and dominant attitudes of supporters, all of which remain outside his analysis. Though not quite as representative as the first two sources, this material points to the latent party ideology. Mudde dismisses this approach, although it might reveal more about the totality of the ideology of an extreme right party, which often must adjust to a democratic environment. In addition, his interpretations of the empirical material are very balanced, sober, and intriguing, but because of his strict interest in the "official" representative party ideology, he renounces new methods such as critical discourse and communication analysis, which aim at grasping the full picture by exploring codes and symbolic orders. Therefore he fails to deconstruct the subtleties, allusions, and innuendo involved in ideology production and political communication processes.

Finally, Mudde proves that most of the examined parties are stable in their ideological orientation and "did not change their election programmes extensively in context or style." (165) This presents an implicit challenge to the second weakness of Ignazi's analysis—namely, the claim that the postmaterial extreme right parties strongly shifted their focus to social issues in the 1990s, addressing an increasingly proletarian constituency. But in turn, Mudde's view of the political ideology may be too fixed. As we shall see below, it is important to situate ideological views in political-cultural and discursive contexts: political processes and interaction effects with established parties and mainstream political discourse can play an

important role in reshaping and resignifying the extreme right, fostering a political radicalization or deradicalization.

Nonetheless, Mudde's differentiated, well-structured, and systematic work offers insights into the constitutive ideological nature and processing of the current extreme right. It is also an exceptionally lucid academic book and will surely serve as a model for future research on extreme right party ideology for some time to come.

III. The Extreme Right, Political Processes, and the Politics of Immigration

The volume of essays edited by Martin Schain, Aristide Zolberg, and Patrick Hossay approaches the subject from yet another angle. As indicated by the title, *Shadows over Europe: The Development and Impact of the Extreme Right in Western Europe*, the (interactive) development, political context, and impact of the extreme right on European politics, and thus the interrelations between the new extreme right and the mainstream, are under special consideration. The editors (and many contributors) situate the ascendancy of extreme right parties in broader political and discursive formation processes, claiming that "each of these parties has been formed by the dynamics of its own political system." (6) However, this book converges with Ignazi's and Mudde's monographs insofar as it also represents part of the paradigm shift from a primarily socioeconomic to a political, discursive, and ideological focus in work on right-wing extremism.

In an introductory as well as conceptual outline, the editors emphasize like Ignazi that socioeconomic and sociocultural transformations may be necessary conditions, but they do not sufficiently account for the actual rise of the right. The comparative interest here focuses on the political specificity of each case, employing a "politically centered" and "process-oriented approach" that stresses the political context and "the formative influence of politics as a relatively autonomous and causal variable in accounting for the variations noted." (5) The outcome of this development, far from uniform, depends upon the political context, process and party performance; and there are additional cases "in which the rise of such parties has been very much contained." (16) New extreme right par-

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ties are therefore viewed as active agents of sociopolitical change, and in turn the impact of their successes on the broader political system has influenced their own development. These parties share, in Mudde's words, "similar core ideologies" that "appeal to an exclusionary national identity through populism" (8) and mobilize resentments against specific ethnic scapegoats. The parties benefit from large transformations throughout Europe that provide resources for political mobilization, "but the way that these resources are defined and developed relates to the political process." (11) Furthermore, the editors suggest that extreme right parties only endure if there are declining mobilization capacities of the established party system. Thus it is highly variable if they succeed, if they move the entire party system to the right, or if they just polarize the political culture around issues of collective identity, immigration, and citizenship issues.

According to the editors, these issues are central to the rise of the extreme right and its impact. However, their success does not relate to increasing actual immigration; instead, "support for the radical right is often strong in areas with virtually no immigration." (11) Therefore, spreading xenophobic attitudes and new politics of anti-immigration represent "not only a cause but also a consequence of the radical right's success." (12) Although this is true, it is arguable that the radical right is exclusively responsible for having constructed hostile perceptions of the "alien," as the editors suggest, and that consternation over immigrants follows the emergence of the radical right and its xenophobic agitation. As many authors in the book demonstrate, preexisting attitudes and dispositions and general anti-immigrant political discourses/policies interact with and even enhance the rise of the extreme right. Thus, established political parties not only often co-opt the issues from the political agenda of the extreme right but also have their own share in the new politics of prejudice, as Ignazi has pointed out.

Although the book combines various, at times competing, perspectives, the contributions all share a clear-cut focus along the lines of the editor's framework. This framework concentrates on political processes and interactions, specific national contexts involved, and the general influence of the extreme right especially on the party system and the politics of immigration. Accordingly, the book consists of three main sections that deal with definition and ideology, electoral politics, and the impact of the extreme right.

While the quality of the essays varies, several essays make genuine contributions to the field (because of space constraints, only some will be addressed here). Christopher Husbands, one of the early pioneers of comparative work on the extreme right, shows in his fascinating critical review of major contemporary theories on extreme right and racist politics in the postindustrial or “late modern” age that these theories would benefit from closer examinations of earlier work on authoritarian and extreme right reactions to modernity. Indeed, contemporary theorizing often “mirrors earlier postwar theoretical approaches” (58). Husbands critique might be too sweeping and does not give enough credit to new specific conditions, but it delivers an important theoretical self-reflection for future work. In a comparative article on current “nativist politics” and diverging traditions of “antifascism” in France and Italy, John Veugelers and Roberto Chiarini provide an impressive chapter on the politics of xenophobia and its role in political cultures and dynamics that is consistent with the analytical framework of the introduction. Although many similar social and attitudinal conditions exist in both countries (e.g., new immigration, widespread nativist sentiments, potential support by a considerable proportion of self-designated racists, episodes of racist violence), Veugelers and Chiarini argue that political-cultural and systemic differences, as well as different party agency, can lead to diverging political outcomes. The authors document that because of the still-resounding effects of the antifascist consensus in Italian party politics, the AN has moved from an antisystem, openly racist agitation against *extracomunitari* to a more moderate, prosystem immigration policy to avoid the “high cost” of “exclusion from inter-party alliances” (100). To the contrary, France provided a “richer environment for the institutionalization of right-wing extremism” (95), and the FN has been rewarded for its nativism.

However, the argument is not fully convincing, as the Italian case exemplifies. Consider, for example, that the *Lega Nord* remains in the government today as a coalition partner, although, as Hans-Georg Betz examines in his research essay, the party has a secessionist and xenophobic profile (which indeed moves the party to the outer fringes). It should be mentioned that the Berlusconi government tolerates this new racism and itself promotes a new, soft nationalism (*italianità*). In contrast to the *Lega*, however, the Austrian FPÖ

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“moderated both its image and program from the mid-1990s” (75), gained further ground in electoral politics, and entered government as a strong force, as Betz shows. The last election, though, demonstrated that this integration strategy proved not so beneficial for the party after all.

I also found Roger Karapin’s essay very challenging because he gives generous empirical evidence that “the key ingredient for state-level far-right success in Germany has been the construction of immigration-related issues through high levels of publicity on them in state elections. Sometimes it has generated that publicity itself, but more often it has benefited from the mainstream parties’ decisions to publicly advocate restrictive immigration policies.” (213) Michael Minkenberg’s article provides similar insights into the interaction effects of the extreme right with the mainstream in the context of changing political and particularly “discursive opportunity structures”¹⁹ in the 1980s and 1990s, as exemplified in France and Germany.²⁰ Developing a “process model of the new radical right” in line with his previous work, Minkenberg emphasizes the dynamic character of the rise of the extreme right, which successfully responds to the new value-based axis of “new politics” and concomitant “restructuring of the political spectrum” and which largely depends on the specific norms and constraints of each political culture that “determines the resonance of the new radical right’s agenda” (266). The dominant notion of the German *Kulturnation*, Minkenberg argues, “which especially among the CDU/CSU also includes elements of a *völkisch* idea of German identity, limited the chances of the new radical right to develop a powerful counterdiscourse on national identity without appearing too extreme.” (267)

In a concluding chapter, Aristide Zolberg and Patrick Hossay offer an intriguing assessment of the general situation and impact of the extreme right in European democracies. They argue convincingly that “the course toward the future for this new right will not come from the destruction of democracy under an authoritarian fist, but from the use of democracy to enact policies toward distasteful and illiberal ends.” (305)

The “calculated ambiguity” of the extreme right’s newest generation “seems likely to bring them greater success.” (307) These new parties adopt a newly gentrified, charismatic face, as well as new

public relations techniques, and a more nuanced rhetoric blending racism with innuendo in a way that confers upon them a veneer of respectability. Moreover, they frequently interact with xenophobic campaigns launched by mainstream parties that cannot merely be reduced to co-opting policy responses to a (marginalized) extreme right. As Hossay and Zolberg point out, for example “the CDU adopted the broadly circulated slogans *Mehr Ausbildung statt mehr Einwanderung* (More immigration rather than immigrants) and *Kinder statt Inder* (Children, not Indians).” (310) Consequently, when “the established parties fall back on xenophobic policies in an effort to provide an ersatz for meaningful proposals, they themselves sow the seeds of future extreme-right weeds.” (313)

The volume also provides a decent overview on country profiles of the extreme right in all of western Europe and an excellent, up-to-date forty-five page-bibliography, which altogether make the book not only a genuine contribution to the field but also a very useful resource for further research.

IV. The New Politics of Prejudice and the Future of Europe's Extreme Right

Though applying diverging approaches and at times competing frameworks, these recent studies complement each other in many ways, mutually enhancing our understanding of right-wing extremism in Europe. All the books generally represent a further advanced paradigm shift from social deprivation theories to multifaceted, ideology- and process-oriented approaches that are also sensitive to national variations.

Their combined efforts show that the success of extreme right parties depends largely on a set of factors. These include internal aspects, such as party leadership and the ability to reframe themes responsive to new issues and cleavages, and external conditions, such as national political culture, the development of public/political discourse, institutional arrangements, and the response of established democratic parties. While recognizing that the sociopsychological uncertainties produced by sociocultural and sociostructural changes in the postindustrial era provide a favorable environment

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for extreme right mobilizations, the new studies considered here particularly readdress long-neglected issues of political ideology or values, and specific, politically processed discourses that may support or the new politics of prejudice. This does not mean that social conditions and cleavages no longer matter, especially in light of growing blue-collar constituencies. But the studies make the crucial distinction that socioeconomic deprivation and political powerlessness, while perhaps enhancing, do not inevitably lead to or motivate right-wing extremism. In the case of extreme right parties, voters, and sympathizers, we find that the very perception of political and social distribution issues is primarily shaped by authoritarian dispositions and ethnocentric cultural values or discriminations.

In addition, these important new studies indicate how the extent to which theoretical comparative conceptualizations depend on, and in fact benefit from, an empirical analysis that first of all closely examines national cases in their political, historical, and cultural settings. In spite of the Europeanization of institutions and the rise of postconventional norms and attitudes among considerable segments of the electorate, national political cultures and nation-states clearly still matter. And the allegiance to a national or regional community is exactly what the extreme right in Europe has, often successfully, tried to mobilize and radicalize.

However, there are several aspects and factors that might be much less novel about the new extreme right than most authors suggest. Without any doubt, one finds very distinct features of the postindustrial constellation and specific political processes that are favorable to new forms of right-wing extremism. Thus the extreme right can be interpreted as an offspring of a value-based counterrevolution and postindustrial society in general. But we also find similar historical waves and conditions of extreme right successes in past periods, in which extreme right parties also functioned as catalysts articulating comprehensive stereotypical worldviews in reaction to modernization processes.

By employing conspiracy theories and projecting the contradictions of modern society onto a personified abstract enemy, the extreme right has always tried to explain a complex and changing world, in which many people feel powerless and marginalized, by appealing to forms of social paranoia. Right-wing extremism has

consistently responded to modern sociopsychological insecurities and authoritarian desires by providing the seemingly safe haven of an authoritarian, ethnic-nationalist community. Such particularistic, ethnic-nationalist, and xenophobic political mobilizations against universalistic-individualistic values, political democratization, and sociocultural modernization are common to all traditions and varieties in the history of the extreme right. Those efforts seem particularly successful in times of rapid sociocultural transformation, which exists today, but which also resembles previous forms of dramatic modernization. They often do not articulate “new” resentments, but newly mobilize and legitimize conserved political-cultural prejudices that have always been shared by considerable segments of the electorate. Neither is it really novel that the constituencies of the extreme right disproportionately draw support from blue-collar workers, the lower middle classes, and self-employed small entrepreneurs, as they do today.

Although many modernized extreme right actors employ new issues and more successful communication strategies that renounce the old fascist symbolism while adapting to a commercialized political market or a liberal-democratic environment, authoritarian, nationalist, xenophobic, and/or anti-Semitic ideologies still survive at the core of the extreme right, as Mudde successfully demonstrates.²¹ But Mudde’s distinction between ethnic and state nationalism does not seem a useful dividing line between present-day subgroups. Rather than a change of values or fundamental ideological orientations, the successful and genuine feature of the new, post-material extreme right is the ability to utilize new issues and foremost new political strategies and populist styles. Incorporating a fresh image makeover, new or reinvented parties such as the FPÖ or REP are distinct in the way they revive conventional nationalist themes and employ “antiparty” modes of politics, oscillating between different levels of antisystem and antiestablishment positions, extremism and moderation, overt racial prejudice and the proclaimed “truly democratic” defense of the interests of the “ordinary man.” Instead of simply opposing the democratic system and media, this neopopulist extreme right makes extensive use of them while voicing disenchantment with the “established parties” or “partocracy.” Thus these new mobilizations are especially characterized by

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their “calculated ambiguity” (Hossay/Zolberg)²² and their double-bind orientation: the attempt to build bridges between new, more moderate constituencies and conventional neofascist milieus rather than cutting the ties to any of its edges.

Furthermore, the new studies share some additional deficits. Some questions and issues remain unaddressed that might alter future comparative work on the extreme right. First of all, informal extreme right milieus and sociopolitical movements have developed and stabilized across Europe. They are crucial not only for any political mobilization effort of extreme right parties today but also for nurturing the antidemocratic resentments of future generations of voters and activists. Those movements are also very important because they intermingle with a fashionable new right-wing extremist and racist youth culture, which is particularly strong in eastern Germany and eastern Europe; yet these milieus, movements, and youth cultures that constitute a new type of grass-roots right-wing extremism are hardly discussed in conventional political science. The generally high percentage of young voters, exemplified in the 1998 state election in Saxony-Anhalt, when the extreme right DVU scored the best result among young adults under the age of 30 after running a campaign based on extreme racist beliefs,²³ might present a special challenge for European democracies in the future.

Even more striking is the absence of eastern European parties in these comparative works.²⁴ This clearly represents a deficit, especially when compared with studies published in recent years.²⁵ A comparative analysis of present-day right-wing extremism in western democracies should not avoid making at least some references to the simultaneous ascendancy of the extreme right in the post-Communist world. The analysis of eastern European post-Communist nationalism is particularly interesting in light of advanced theories on the extreme right that are predominantly based on the specific empirical conditions in western postindustrial societies—conditions that only partly apply to eastern Europe. However, to engage in the specific factors and dynamics involved in eastern Europe and to evaluate similarities and differences on both sides of the former iron curtain might also further illuminate our understanding of the extreme right in western Europe.

Finally, the role of conspiracy theories, anti-Americanism, and anti-Semitism in extreme right-wing world views is underrepre-

sented in the studies discussed here. This is partially due to the fact that most of them were completed before September 11, 2001, but the appeal to ethnic-nationalist identity based on hatred of America and western liberalism had already been a distinct feature of the influential intellectual “New Right” and extreme right parties. This prejudice reaches back to fascist or Nazi ideology. However, the more dramatic revival of anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism in the last three years substantially affects the future of extreme right parties—and possibly our theoretical conceptualizations of them. Many parties and movements have now shifted their focus from anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, and anti-European campaigns to anti-Americanism, anti-globalization, and anti-Semitism. For example, Kärnten’s *Landeshauptmann* (head of an Austrian state/region) Jörg Haider (FPÖ) visited Saddam Hussein in Iraq and endorsed his anti-Semitic views on Israel and America—just like some Austrian left-wing “anti-imperialist” groups before him.²⁶ The German NPD’s new endorsement of political Islamism as an anti-Jewish vanguard, sided by an admiration for Al Qaeda’s determination, and of “the two million Muslims that live in Germany” because they allegedly support the “key struggle” against Jews and America, has led to internal splits within the extremely xenophobic party. In general, anti-Americanism is now at the top of the agenda of extreme right parties all over Europe, from *Lega Nord* to *Front National*. This shift not only has the potential to reshape the essence of contemporary European extreme right mobilizations, but it also induces a surprising realignment: as the extreme right increasingly adopts leftist political methods of grassroots mobilization and “anti-imperialist” or “anti-Zionist” themes, segments of the “anti-imperialist” radical left turn increasingly anti-Semitic, anti-American, and ethnic-nationalist.²⁷ This convergence and partial alliance corresponds with resurging public resentments against America and Israel in Europe, which have once more increased since the debate on the war in Iraq.²⁸ In this newly polarized political climate, extreme right parties enter a new ideological competition with established parties and will try to exploit a general new trend of prejudice.

It is unclear how extreme right parties will eventually position themselves in this process; if they will be able to further radicalize a new cultural discourse that is also facilitated in mainstream media

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and politics; and if, in the long run, the xenophobic (and especially anti-Muslim) or anti-European campaigns could possibly be outweighed by a radicalized European anti-Americanism and resurgent anti-Semitism. Furthermore, it remains to be seen whether or not a joint European extreme right (in form of transnational federations) will be revived in light of the increasing importance of the European Union, and what political focus will be central in upcoming mobilizations. With the present changes in the European political landscape and discourse in mind, it also remains to be seen whether the postindustrial extreme right and the new politics of prejudice will not only pose a challenge but a serious peril to European liberal democracies.

Notes

1. Simon Epstein, *Extreme Right Electoral Upsurges in Western Europe: The 1984-1995 Wave as Compared with Previous Ones* (Jerusalem, 1996), 21.
2. Paul Hainsworth, "The Extreme Right," in *The Politics of the Extreme Right: From the Margins to the Mainstream*, Paul Hainsworth, ed. (London, 2000).
3. Early attempts to understand—and in fact to downplay—right-wing extremism, which dominated academic discourse until the early 1990s, were often driven by wishful thinking and apparently failed to grasp the extent and nature of the phenomenon: neither representing merely a problem of some disoriented or frustrated adolescents, nor just a temporary disturbance on the progressing road to political and social modernization, there is no indication that the extreme right will quickly vanish. Some researches, however, insist that it is a largely "overestimated phenomenon"; see Uwe Backes, "Einleitung," in *Rechtsextreme Ideologien in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Uwe Backes, ed. (Cologne, 2003), 8.
4. Herbert Kitschelt and Anthony McGann, *The Radical Right in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis* (Ann Arbor, 1995); Hans-Georg Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe* (New York, 1994). Betz categorizes the new right parties in the framework of radical right populism. Kitschelt and McGann have provided the most ambitious study up to now. They see a combination of new political and cultural antiliberal, authoritarian-nationalist orientations opposing sociocultural modernization or multiculturalization, on one hand, and market-liberal socioeconomic orientations on the other, as the "winning formula" of a new radical right (respectively radical right-wing populism). It attracts both young, insecure and authoritarian-nationalist blue-collar workers as well as an antistatist, promarket petite bourgeois clientele. These increasingly disenfranchised constituencies, their views, and their new ethnic-culturally shaped issues, it is

- argued, were decreasingly represented by moderate or “deradicalized,” largely politically converging established parties. In more recent work, Kitschelt concedes that the extreme market neoliberalism has increasingly softened and has been increasingly replaced by a combination of neoliberal attacks on the welfare state and chauvinist protectionism in radical right-wing mobilizations across Europe; accordingly, radical right parties increasingly benefit from former social-democratic voters; see Herbert Kitschelt, “Politische Konfliktlinien in westlichen Demokratien: Ethnisch-kulturelle und wirtschaftliche Verteilungskonflikte,” *Schattenseiten der Globalisierung*, Dietmar Loch and Wilhelm Heitmeyer, eds. (Frankfurt, 2001), 436.
5. To be sure, particular national political cultures need to be taken into account and individually reconstructed in order to understand the specific underlying dynamics involved to avoid all too sweeping generalizations. National political cultures and systems provide quite *diverging* political opportunity structures for a rising radical right. We find nationally different electoral fortunes, voter potentials, political strategies and campaign issues, reactions by established party competitors that need to be identified and explained. A comparative approach should not level these differences but illuminate those specificities.
 6. See recently Lee McGowan, *The Radical Right in Germany: 1870 to the Present* (London, 2003); Harvey Simmons, *The French National Front: The Extremist Challenge to Democracy* (Boulder, 1996). There are exceptions to the rule, namely Greece, Spain, Portugal, and Great Britain.
 7. Herbert Kitschelt and Anthony McGann, *The Radical Right in Western Europe*, op.cit.
 8. *Ibid.*, 277.
 9. Elections to the Italian Parliament, Chamber of Deputies Election Results, Rome 2001.
 10. This thesis is most pointedly put forward by Michael Minkenberg. Similar to Ignazi, Minkenberg also conceptualizes the rise of a “new radical right” in the context of a new, polarized cultural conflict axis. According to Minkenberg, *new politics* express on both sides of the political spectrum a new, postindustrial constellation of polarized cultural conflict, which has largely substituted the previously crucial paradigm of social distribution and class cleavages. Enhanced by an ideologically radicalized conservatism that is unable to go all the way, on one hand, and postmodern cultural change and new issue politics on the other hand, Minkenberg suggests that the new radical right employs a renewed “ethnocratic” xenophobic counter-discourse against postmaterial, antiauthoritarian modernization processes represented by the New Left. In contrast to Ignazi, Minkenberg calls this rightward reaction “materialist.” As intriguing as the general argument is (and most researchers have adopted versions of it today in one way or another), it is unclear to me what is “materialist” about the right-wing pole of the new, value-based axis. Because it is value-based, as all extreme rightist “idealism” in the past, it represents rather nonmaterial cultural politics of ethnic nationalism. Instead, the new radical right pole should be called *conventionalist* or, in Ignazi’s term, *postmaterial*; see Michael Minkenberg, “Context and Consequence: The Impact of the New Radical Right in France and Germany,” *German Politics and Society* 16 (1998): 1-23.
 11. Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* (Princeton, 2002).

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12. See Hans-Gerd Jaschke, "Die rechtsextremen Parteien nach der Bundestagswahl 1998: Stehen sie sich selbst im Wege?," in *Die Parteien nach der Bundestagswahl 1998*, Oskar Niedermayer, ed. (Opladen, 1999), 141-57.
13. Herbert Kitschelt, "Politische Konfliktlinien in westlichen Demokratien," 436.
14. One may argue that the extreme right in Europe broke down with the collapse of fascism (discredited not only by the revived democratic systems but also by its inability to succeed) and the successful postwar integration model of the welfare state but has now simply recovered from that increasingly distant history of failure. By making some image changes, the extreme right can now successfully frame quite conventional nationalist, authoritarian, antiegalitarian and simultaneously social-darwinistic answers to a new level of sociocultural modernization intertwined with the end of welfare integration and social stability. In this process it might have just regained its former authoritarian, antidemocratic constituency.
15. Unfortunately, the vast majority of German words Ignazi uses are misspelled.
16. Lauri Karvonen, "The New Extreme Right-Wingers in Western Europe: Attitudes, World Views and Social Characteristics," in *The Revival of Right-Wing Extremism in the Nineties*, Peter H. Merkl and Leonard Weinberg, eds. (London, 1997).
17. See footnote 10 and recently Michael Minkenberg, "The Renewal of the Radical Right between Modernity and Anti-Modernity," *Government and Opposition* 35 (2000).
18. Mudde insinuates that especially in Germany charges of antisemitism are often oversensitive accusations due to a "climate in which almost any criticism of Israel or Jewish organizations and representatives have led to suspicions of (at least latent) anti-Semitism, especially when the critique comes from alleged right-wing extremists." (45) In this rare case of contextualization, Mudde does not only misperceive the shifting political climate in Germany, as highlighted by the antisemitic tones of the Walsler debate and Möllemann's campaign for the *FDP* in the 2002 general elections. He also neglects the codes, stereotypes, and antisemitic images employed by extreme right party leaders like Frey or Schönhuber when they present revisionist historical narratives or make collective judgements about "good Jews," "bad Jews," the "zealot Galinski," and Israel. In such cases, Mudde's tools for ideology analysis prove insufficient.
19. See Ruud Koopmans and Hanspeter Kriesi, "Citizenship, National Identity and the Mobilisation of the Extreme Right: A Comparison of France, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland," (Berlin, 1997).
20. A good example of concrete interaction dynamics between public resentments, mainstream parties, and right-wing extremism we find in Germany. In the early 1990s most democratic parties and public actors in Germany were inclined to view immigration as the main cause of right-wing extremism and violence against foreigners, despite the fact that xenophobia and prejudice against constructed "aliens" is highest in areas where only few or no foreigners live. This was an "explanation" exclusively presented by the extreme right in previous decades; it became a widely shared belief that immigration, not xenophobic projections, led to violent pogroms against foreigners in cities like Mannheim, Hoyerswerda, and Rostock—forms of collective violence endorsed by considerable segments of the general population. Here, established political parties programmatically converged interacted with the extreme right. By amending and restrict-

- ing the constitutional asylum rights in the Basic Law as a consequence of this debate, the established parties could be viewed as half-hearted, weak followers of the extreme vanguard; see Hajo Funke, *Paranoia und Politik: Rechtsextremismus in der Berliner Republik* (Berlin, 2002).
21. Ignazi also concedes that the new parties often just “reframed” and modernized central neofascist issues centered on ethnocentrism, prejudice, and political authoritarianism in a novel, less ideologically loaded way.
 22. On the “ambiguous” rise of populist politics see *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*, Yves Mény and Yves Surel, eds. (Basingstoke, 2002); *The New Politics of the Right: Neo-Populist Parties and Movements in Established Democracies*, Hans-Georg Betz and Stefan Immerfall, eds. (New York, 1998).
 23. Hajo Funke and Lars Rensmann, “Kinder der Einheit: Die soziale Dynamik des Rechtsextremismus,” *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik* (2000).
 24. Mudde, however, does conceptualize a new form of extreme right parties and populist “antiparties” in Eastern Europe and elsewhere; see Cas Mudde, “Extreme Right Parties in Eastern Europe,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 34 (2000); Mudde, “In the name of the Peasantry, the Proletariat, and the People: Populisms in Eastern Europe,” in *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*, op.cit.
 25. For excellent overviews on right-wing extremism in Eastern Europe in comparative perspective see *The Extreme Right: Freedom and Security at Risk*, Aurel Braun and Stephen Scheinberg, eds. (Boulder, 1997); *The Revival of Right-Wing Extremism in the Nineties*, Peter H. Merkl and Leonard Weinberg, eds., op.cit.
 26. See Ulrich Weizierl, “Der Papst und ich,” *Die Welt*, 20 March 2003.
 27. For a first account that attempts to reassess this dynamic in Germany see Lars Rensmann, *Demokratie und Judenbild: Antisemitismus in der politischen Kultur der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Wiesbaden, 2004), 241-333.
 28. See Elliot Neaman, “The War that Took Place in Germany: Intellectuals and September 11,” *German Politics and Society* 20 (2002). Several books that promote antisemitic and anti-American conspiracy theories on 9/11 are bestsellers in France and Germany. A new Gallup poll ordered by the European Commission shows that today Europeans think that the small country of Israel is the biggest threat to world piece (59 percent believe so), followed by America, North Korea, and Iraq (53 percent); see Thomas Fuller, “European poll calls Israel a big threat to world piece,” *New York Times*, 31 October 2003.