

# **The Study of Populist Radical Right Parties: Towards a Fourth Wave**

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# **The Study of Populist Radical Right Parties: Towards a Fourth Wave**

*Cas Mudde*

## **Abstract**

Since the start of the third wave of populist radical right politics in postwar Europe in the early 1980s, more articles and books have been written on far right parties than on all other party families combined. What are the main insights about the populist radical right that these hundreds of articles and books have provided us and what should future studies of the populist radical right parties focus on? This article critically assesses the progress made in recent research by focusing on four key aspects: scope, data and method, causes, and consequences. The main argument is that, although the scope of scholarship has finally moved beyond the usual suspects, meaning that more issues and parties are studied today, theoretical innovation, particularly with regard to explanations of the electoral success of populist radical right parties, has been marginal since early 1990s. Moreover, studies of party effects remain limited in number and scope, focusing mainly on immigration policies. Today, we need research which more explicitly acknowledges and theorizes the diversity within the far right party family, and goes beyond the paradigm of the outsider-challenger party.

Keywords: far right, populism, parties, Europe, new research agenda



## Introduction

The populist radical right is by far the best-studied party family within political science.<sup>1</sup> Since the start of the third wave of populist radical right politics in postwar Europe in the early 1980s, more articles and books have been written on far right parties than on all other party families combined (see figure 1). As the “insatiable demand” (Bale 2012) continues to be met with a near infinite supply of studies, it is high time for a critical review of the recent scholarship. What are the main insights about the populist radical right that these hundreds of articles and books have provided us and what should future studies of the populist radical right parties focus on? The key focus of this review essay is on comparative studies of populist radical right *parties* in Europe, in particular English language books published in the previous five years (i.e. 2010-2015).

After a short overview of the three waves of scholarship on populist radical right parties, I will critically assess the progress made in recent research by focusing on four key aspects: scope, data and method, causes, and consequences. My main argument is that, although the scope of scholarship has finally moved beyond the usual suspects, meaning that more issues and parties are studied today, theoretical innovation, particularly with regard to explanations of the electoral success of populist radical right parties, has been marginal since the start of the second wave. Moreover, studies of party effects remain limited in number and scope, focusing mainly on immigration policies. I will finish this review article with a call for a fourth wave, which more explicitly acknowledges and theorizes the diversity within the far right party family, and goes beyond the paradigm of the outsider-challenger party.

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<sup>1</sup> Obviously, there is no consensus on the correct definition or term in the literature. I have been using the term “populist radical right” for a core ideology that combines nativism, authoritarianism, and populism. Most studies discussed focus largely on the same parties and ideological core, even if they use different terms and definitions. Some parties are excluded from my own studies of populist radical right parties, because they are “extreme right” (e.g. Golden Dawn in Greece) or neo-liberal populist (e.g. Progress Party in Norway), but will be included here under the general banner, as there is simply not enough space in a review essay to do justice to all minor and major differences of classification and categorization in the field. For a more elaborate discussion of my conceptual framework, see Mudde (2007), chapters 1 and 2.

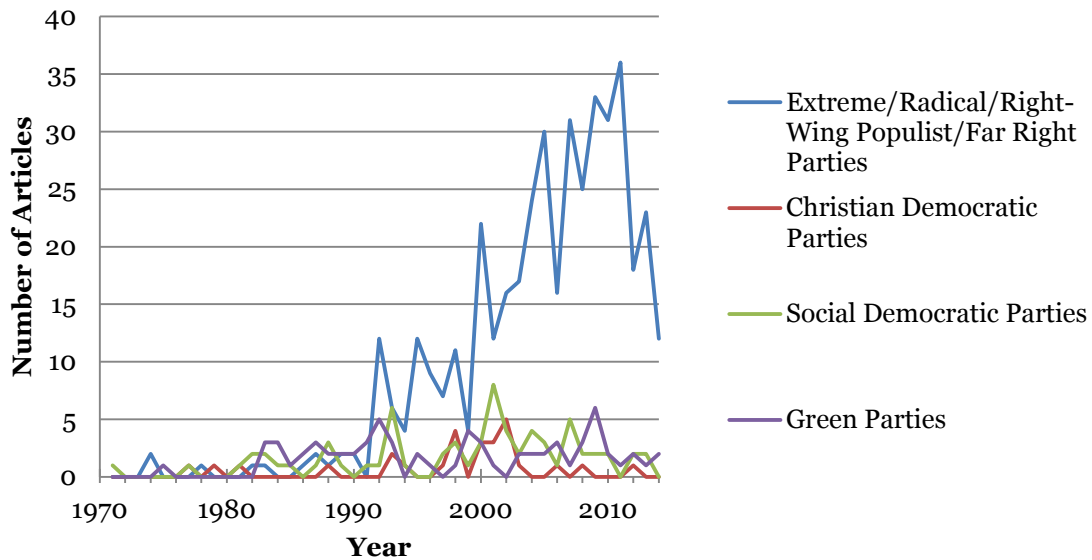


Figure 1: Articles on four party families over time

### Three Waves of Scholarship of Populist Radical Right Parties

Just as Klaus von Beyme (1988) famously distinguished between three chronologically and ideologically different waves of right-wing extremism in postwar Europe, we can differentiate between three academically distinct waves of scholarship of far right parties since 1945. The first wave lasted roughly from 1945 till 1980, was mostly historical and descriptive, and focused on the historical continuity between the pre-war and post-war periods. The vast majority of the (relatively few) scholars were historians, experts of historical fascism, who studied the postwar populist radical right under the headings of “extreme right” and “neo-fascism.” The bulk of this, still rather limited, scholarship was published in other languages than English (e.g. Eisenberg 1967; Del Boca and Giovana 1969), most notably German and French.

The second wave of studies (roughly 1980-2000) saw an infusion of social science literature, in particular various forms of modernization theories (e.g. Betz 1994; Kitschelt and McGann 1995). While it only took off at the start of the third wave of the “extreme right” in Europe, in the late 1980s, the scholarship was



strongly influenced by American studies of the “radical right” of the 1960s (e.g. Bell 1964; Lipset and Raab 1970). In line with the influential “normal pathology” thesis (Scheuch and Klingemann 1967), scholars tried to understand why populist radical right parties could be successful in modern democracies. Focusing on a small subset of parties in Western Europe – the usual suspects – scholars almost exclusively studied the demand-side of far right politics, treating the far right party as the dependent variable. This gave rise to an abundance of electoral studies on the basis of mostly limited and often problematic secondary data.

The third wave took off at the turn of the century, as scholars started to focus increasingly on the supply-side of populist radical right politics and to bring the party back into the equation (e.g. Art 2011). Moreover, scholars no longer only tried to explain their electoral success, but started to investigate their effects as well (e.g. Williams 2006), changing the populist radical right party from merely a dependent variable into (also) an independent variable. By now the field had become part of mainstream political science and had come to dominate the broader research on party families. Under a broad plethora of terms, though increasingly including some combination of “right” and “populism,” scholarship of populist radical right parties now trumps that of all other party families together, despite the fact that they are still minor parties in most European party systems.

### **Recent Scholarship in the Third Wave**

#### *Scope: Moving Slowly Beyond the Usual Suspects*

Not unlike other topics in comparative politics, the study of populist radical right parties is primarily focused on the big states of Western Europe. Consequently, we have more studies of the largely irrelevant populist radical right parties in Germany and the United Kingdom than of their very successful brethren in Denmark, Sweden, and Switzerland. After having been virtually ignored for the first ten years, several new books on populist radical right parties in Central and



Eastern Europe have finally been published in the past five years. Moreover, the new books engage directly with the dominant literature on Western Europe, without ignoring the specific regional context of post-communist Europe.

Both Andrea Pirro's *The Populist Radical Right in Central and Eastern Europe* (2015) and Bartek Pytlas's *Radical Right Parties in Central and Eastern Europe* (2016) originated as doctoral dissertations and focus on the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik) and the Slovak National Party (SNS), two of the few successful populist radical right parties in Central and Eastern Europe. The two scholars analyze their specific ideologies and the causes and consequences of their success, with Pirro also including Attack in Bulgaria and Pytlas the League of Polish Families (LPR) in Poland. Věra Stojarová extends the scope even further, applying the framework of Mudde (2007) to the first systematic study of *Far Right Parties in the Balkans* (2013). Finally, Michael Minkenberg (2015), the most influential scholar of the populist radical right in Central and Eastern Europe, edited the volume *Transforming the Transformation? The East European Radical Right in the Political Process*, which includes chapters on the whole region by many of his current and former students.

At the beginning of the century Minkenberg (2002: 361) wrote: "Studying the radical right in transformation countries in Central and Eastern Europe not only resembles shooting at a moving target but also shooting with clouded vision." While the new scholarship has removed many of the clouds, the target remains moving and often moving fast. Individual parties go from prominence to insignificance within short periods of time. This is best illustrated by the case of the LPR in Poland, which transformed from a governmental party into an extra-parliamentary party within a matter of years.

The bulk of scholarship is not just focused on the usual suspects in terms of parties, but also in terms of issues. Whether studies focus on an analysis of party ideology or the causes and consequences of party success, most remain fixated on a narrow range of issues, most notably immigration, ethnic minorities, and European integration. Among the few more innovative studies are the PhD



thesis of Matthijs Rooduijn (2013), who provides a critical assessment of the “populist Zeitgeist” thesis (Mudde 2004), and *Saving the People*, the edited volume by Nadia Marzouki, Duncan McDonnell and Olivier Roy (2016), which analyzes how the populist right has mobilized (Christian) religion for its own end. Both are the first to comparatively and comprehensively analyze two of the key ideological features of populist radical right parties, Islamophobia and populism.

Despite the fact that populist radical right parties have always been struggling with a large gender gap, having roughly two male for every female voter, while having several high-profile female leader (from Pauline Hanson in Australia and Pia Kjærsgard in Denmark to Marine Le Pen in France), scholarship on the role of women in populist radical right politics has remained scarce (one of the first was Givens 2004). In recent years it has finally received more attention, most notably in a special issue of *Patterns of Prejudice* (Spierings et al. 2015). In addition to studies of the gender gap in the electorates of populist radical right parties (see also Immerzeel et al. 2015; Mayer 2015), articles focus on gender positions in their policies and female leadership (see also Shields 2013). The forthcoming edited volume *Gender and the Far Right in Europe* (Köttig et al. 2017) extends this research even further by bringing together feminist scholarship on a broad variety of groups and issues (including non-parties).

#### *Data and Methods: Secondary and Quantitative*

In the first two waves of scholarship the vast majority of studies employed qualitative methods and was based on at least some original data, although many were merely descriptive and lacked a clear research design. With the rise of the number of electorally relevant populist radical right parties, and the mainstreaming of the topic within political science, the number of studies exclusively employing quantitative methods and using only secondary data has increased sharply, particularly among those published in prominent political





science journals – obviously reflecting broader trends within the discipline. An ever-growing group of scholars of populist radical right parties barely studies the parties themselves, focusing instead exclusively on their (potential) voters, and excluding the behavior and character of the parties from their, economically and sociologically deterministic, theoretical models.

Even authors that do include the populist radical right parties themselves in their theoretical framework, often rely almost exclusively on secondary data from the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) or the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES). Both datasets are very useful for large cross-national research, in which political parties are one of the (independent) variables of interest, but have more limited value for narrower studies in which specific parties are the main focus. The CMP (now MARPOR) dataset consists exclusively of election manifestos and focuses on policy priorities, while the CHES data set is better seen as a peer survey than an expert study, as it surveys a number of country specialists, who are not necessarily experts on every single issue or party.

Qualitative methods like elite interviews and participant observation are rarely used, despite their particular value for innovative research and the increasing openness to academic research of (some) populist radical right parties. How fruitful these, admittedly more labor- and resource-intensive, methods can be, is shown in two of the most important recent contributions to the literature. In *Inside the Radical Right* David Art (2011) goes inside “anti-immigrant parties” and analyzes the attitudes, skills, and experiences of their activists. His study provides, for the first time, empirical evidence for the thesis that the quality of activists and leaders is an important factor in the (lack of) success of populist radical right parties. Similarly, for the new book *Populists in Power*, Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell (2015) have done extensive fieldwork within right-wing populist parties in Italy and Switzerland, including interviews with members and representatives. The book seriously challenges some received wisdom on the competence of, and internal support for, populist parties in power.



*Causes: Still Losers of Modernization?*

The growth in the scope of the study of the populist radical right has been accompanied by little theoretical innovation since the early 1990s (or, really, the 1960s). The predominant theoretical framework is still the modernization thesis, mostly framed in terms of globalization in studies of Western Europe (e.g. Berezin 2009) and transformation for those of Eastern Europe (e.g. Minkenberg 2015). This is in part because much of the prominent scholarship consists of large-N quantitative studies, which are informed by hypotheses rather than theories.

One of the few innovative studies in this respect is the new edited volume by Hanspeter Kriesi and Takis Pappas (2015), which is the first to systematically addresses, as the title summarizes, *European Populism in the Shadow of the Great Recession*. Despite the fact that (economic) “crisis” is central to virtually every theoretical account of far right politics, from historical fascism to the contemporary radical right (see Mudde 2016), the current economic crisis has been largely ignored in recent studies on the populist radical right. Although the volume by Kriesi and Pappas focuses on populism in general, i.e. including left-wing populist parties like Coalition of the Radical Left (Syriza) in Greece and Podemos in Spain, the vast majority of parties are part of the broader populist right. The book highlights the complexity of the relationship between economic crisis and populist (radical right) success and will hopefully inform many future studies.

Most progress has been made with regard to the study of supply-side factors in explaining the success of populist radical right parties, although few studies truly integrate the factors into a broader theoretical framework. Of particular note are two studies on Central and Eastern Europe. As mentioned before, Pytlas (2016) investigated the interaction of populist radical right parties and mainstream parties, focusing specifically on the effect of the co-optation of



populist radical right issues, while Lenka Bustikova (2014) adapted Ignazi's famous "silent counter-revolution" (1992) to the post-communist region, showing that the rise and fall of populist radical right parties is partly shaped by the politics of minority accommodation. Both studies show that the two regions can be studied within one broader theoretical framework as long as scholars remain open to national and regional specificities to get the full picture.

### *Consequences: Immigration, Immigration, and Immigration*

Studies of the consequences of the rise of populist radical right parties, i.e. their *impact*, have only really taken off during the third wave. Many studies investigate the received wisdom on the topic, broadly expressed in political and public debates, namely that the rise of populist radical right parties has created a so-called *Rechtsruck* (right-turn) in European politics, most notably with regard to the issue of immigration. Although these studies have increased as the political power of far right parties has grown, they remain relatively limited in both numbers and scope.

Theoretically, populist radical right parties can impact European democracies in many different ways. Previous scholarship distinguished, among others, between different types of effects, such as direct versus indirect effects (Schain 2006) and agenda-setting versus policy effects (Minkenberg 2001). Moreover, they can affect different actors, such as publics, parties, policies, and politics (Mudde 2013). Finally, far right parties can have an impact on different issues, such as European integration, immigration, law and order, and liberal democracy.

The bulk of impact studies focuses on immigration policies in Western Europe, an important but quite limited topic. The most comprehensive and detailed study to date was published recently by João Carvalho, in his *Impact of Extreme Right Parties on Immigration Policy* (2014), who combined the literatures on populist radical right parties and immigration studies to develop an



original theoretical framework, which he tested in a comparative case study of Britain, France, and Italy. It significantly modifies the “right turn” thesis, highlighting the complex structure-agency relationships that shape the populist radical right parties’ impact on mainstream parties, public attitudes, and immigration policy. These conclusions are consistent with several other recent studies (e.g. Van Spanje 2010; Akkerman 2015; Han 2015), which emphasize that populist radical right parties tend to be relatively unsuccessful in government and mainly push the agenda of mainstream parties on some, for them secondary, issues (i.e. immigration and integration).

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

While much progress has been made since the original historical studies of “neo-fascism,” particularly since seminal scholars like Hans-Georg Betz, Piero Ignazi, and Herbert Kitschelt infused the field with insights from the political parties literature in the 1990s, more recent studies have often reinvented the wheel, missing some of the most important transformations within the far right. New scholarship should go beyond the comfort zone of detached quantitative electoral studies of the same problematic data sources (e.g. Eurobarometer, World Values Survey) and descriptive qualitative historical studies of the same parties (e.g. British National Party, Front National).

The scope of parties that are studied has grown significantly, but we still know very little about the ideology, leaders, members, and organizations of several important parties that are often used in large-N cross-national studies, such as the Danish People’s Party (DF), The Finns (PS), the Progress Party (FrP) in Norway, and even the Swiss People’s Party (SVP). Despite significant progress in the scholarship of far right parties in Central and Eastern Europe, most parties remain understudied, including relatively new parties like the Conservative People’s Party of Estonia (EKRE) and the Patriotic Front (Bulgaria) as well as (former) governing parties like the National Alliance (NA) in Latvia.



Similarly, and related, the data that inform many, particularly quantitative, studies have barely improved in the last decade. Most scholars work almost exclusively with secondary data, having had no influence on the questions that are included in major surveys like the Eurobarometer and European Social Survey (ESS). Some new data are being created in surveys, particularly on populism, but are often limited in terms of generalizability, as they are conducted nationally and online. Dutch scholars have been particularly prolific in this respect, but have so far been largely unable to expand their data beyond the Netherlands (e.g. Bos et al. 2013; Muis and Scholte 2013; Akkerman et al. 2014). To develop new insights into the parties themselves, however, we will need to generate new data on the basis of more time- and resource-intensive methods, such as interviews, participant observation, and qualitative content analysis. This will require both significant funding and cross-national collaboration.

Obviously, the search for new data should be guided by (the development of new) theory. And it is here that the field has been particularly stagnant. Too much research is still working within a vague modernization framework, in which hypotheses have replaced theoretical assertions. We need to diversify our theoretical frameworks, and make them more clear and concrete, developing micro-foundations and empirically testing assumptions and connections. We must move beyond the dominant focus on the two issues of immigration and European integration, and reflect the broader range of issues the populist radical right parties present to the voters. This includes socio-economic issues, such as the many issues related to their welfare chauvinism (e.g. de Koster et al. 2013; Norocel 2016), as well as socio-cultural issues, including corruption and security (e.g. Berezin 2009; Bustikova 2015).

In addition to several understudied political issues, there are several important topics that deserve more attention, most notably gender, media, and religion, on which some recent studies have broken important ground. It is clear that many populist radical right parties are aware of the continuing gender gap in their support and are actively trying to attract female supporters. Moreover, the



populist radical right is the only party family in Europe that is truly dominated by a female leader, Marine Le Pen, despite the fact that she is among a minority of female populist radical right party leaders.

The topic of religion is closely related to Islam and Islamophobia (e.g. Zúquete 2008), but goes beyond the mere political struggle over a profitable political issue. Many populist radical right parties, particularly in Western Europe, were initially secular, considering religion more a cultural issue – hence, Scandinavian parties considered Lutheranism as part of their national culture, as South European parties did with Catholicism. Some parties were even explicitly atheist, like the PVV and Geert Wilders, or anti-clerical, like the FPÖ. At least rhetorically the struggle against “Global Islam” has made populist radical right parties emphasize the “Christian” or “Judeo-Christian” values of Europe and their individual nation, but has it also fundamentally changed their position of the role of religion in society?

The role of “the” media is still very much understudied, even though important first studies have been published (e.g. Mazzoleni et al. 2003; Ellinas 2010) and populism, in both its left and right form, is fast becoming a hot topic in the field of political communication (e.g. Aalberg et al. 2017). We know that the relationship between the media and populist radical right parties is complex, particularly with regard to the popular press (i.e. tabloids and private television). The discourse of the two is often quite similar, but only few popular media outlets openly support populist radical right parties (see Art 2006). While explicit support is not required for agenda-setting, the often open hostility between the popular media and populist radical right parties certainly challenges some received wisdom about their relationship.

A related aspect that deserves much more scholarly attention is the portrayal of populist radical right parties in the media, particularly in those outlets that their potential supporters use. Assuming that most voters get their information about (populist radical right) parties exclusively from the media, rather than from the parties themselves, the media portrayal could give us a



better insight into why people vote for them (for such an approach, see Kriesi et al. 2008). Finally, it will be interesting to know more about how leaders of these parties are portrayed, i.e. as competent or irrational, and, particularly with the omnipresence of Marine Le Pen, whether there are important gender differences in the media portrayal. It could be hypothesized that where mainstream female politicians are weakened by the gendered media representation, which portrays them as more moderate and soft (see Campus 2007), female populist radical right politicians could actually profit from it, becoming more acceptable to the political mainstream.

More challenging, but even more important, is increased research on the inner life of the parties. Despite the abundance of studies on populist radical right parties, we know very little about their leadership and organization or about the socialization of their members and voters (e.g. Heinisch and Mazzoleni 2017). It is striking how little we know about the leaders of populist radical right parties, particularly given that they are often treated as *Führerparteien* (leader parties) and that “charismatic leadership” is one of the few “internal supply” factors regularly mentioned as a reason for their electoral success. This notwithstanding, most leaders have never been studied, or even interviewed, by academics, and only few scholars have addressed the issue of “charisma” in an academic manner (see Eatwell 2002; McDonnell 2015). Similarly, despite some research into the membership of populist radical right parties (e.g. Klandermans and Mayer 2006; Art 2011; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2015), we still know little about why people join, how they are socialized into members, and how the party picks and trains its cadres.<sup>2</sup>

The biggest gains in the third wave of scholarship are undoubtedly made in the study of the impact of populist radical right parties. As discussed before, there has been a significant increase in such studies, focusing almost exclusively on the impact on policies (of other parties) on the issues of immigration and

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<sup>2</sup> Anders Ravik Jupskås (2015) has looked at the socialization aspect of cadres and members in the FrP, which, while not a populist radical right party per se, shows many similarities.



integration. More research is needed to study the impact on other issues, including socio-economic issues (e.g. redistributive policies) and socio-cultural issues (e.g. crime, corruption). Up until now scholarship has largely ignored the foreign policy positions of populist radical right parties (but see Liang 2007). Recent developments, like Brexit and the refugee crisis, have made it clear that this cannot continue, as far right parties are increasingly affecting foreign policy, and not just the process of European integration (e.g. Balfour et al. 2016).

Finally, we need much more systematic (qualitative) research of the impact on the political system, such as liberal democratic institutions (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012; Albertazzi and Mueller 2013) and party systems (e.g. Mudde 2014; Pellikaan et al. 2016; Wolinetz and Zaslove 2017), as well as quantitative research of the impact on attitudes of the population (e.g. Dunn and Singh 2011). Finally, we need to devote more attention to the impact of electoral and political successes on the behavior and character of populist radical right parties themselves (e.g. Akkerman and de Lange 2012; Akkerman and Rooduijn 2015).

### **Towards a Fourth Wave of Scholarship**

For most of the postwar period the study of populist radical right parties has been held back by the limited relevance of the phenomenon. Despite huge academic and non-academic interest, only few European countries had political parties that were relatively successful and broadly considered to be populist radical right. Popular support between 5 and 10 percent would be considered as electoral success, while parliamentary representation (however small) was often deemed a political success. At least until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century this meant that there were only a handful of successful populist radical right parties in Europe. Consequently, most surveys had relatively few of their voters in their dataset; a fact further strengthened by the (then stronger) effects of social desirability. The ongoing transformation of European party politics has changed this situation and





has created a growing number of successful populist radical right parties (see Akkerman et al. 2016).

One of the dangers of this proliferation of (alleged) populist radical right parties is conceptual stretching (Sartori 1970), either by loosening the meaning of (populist) radical right or by including parties that do not really meet the definition. Establishing boundaries between populist radical right parties and mainstream right-wing parties has been significantly complicated by the rise of populist radical right *politics* in Europe, i.e. nativist, authoritarian, and populist discourses and policies from mostly mainstream parties. For example, as a consequence of the political debates around the Eurozone crisis and refugee crisis in 2015, it is almost impossible to use Euroscepticism and opposition to immigration as ideological features/policy positions that set populist radical right parties apart from mainstream (right-wing) parties. And if scholars insist on including West European borderline parties such as the FrP and UKIP, than how can they exclude much more radical East Central European parties like Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Alliance in Hungary and Law and Justice (PiS) in Poland (see Mudde 2016)?

The proliferation of (alleged) populist radical right parties has made this group of parties larger and more heterogeneous. First and foremost, there are substantial differences in terms of *ideology*. In the broad approach, used in particular by many quantitative scholars, populist radical right parties include the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn in Greece as well as neoliberal populists like the FrP and UKIP and everything in between. Second, there are important differences in *origins*; some populist radical right parties are radicalized mainstream parties (like FPÖ and SVP) while others are moderated extremist parties (like Sweden Democrats). Third, the parties differ in terms of *longevity and stability*: National Front (FN) was founded almost 45 years ago and has been a relatively stable feature of French politics since the mid-1980s, Dutch List Pim Fortuyn (LPR) and the LPR were mere flash parties, while Alternative for Germany (AfD) and Dawn of Direct Democracy (now Dawn-National Coalition) in the Czech Republic are



less than a decade old. Fourth, there is a significant variety in terms of *organization*, from the one-member PVV of Geert Wilders, through modern cadre parties like the Sweden Democrats (SD) and DF, to more traditional mass parties like the FN and FPÖ.

I believe that the best way to study this broader group of parties is by adopting a pluralistic approach, which is more sensitive to the many differences within the group of far right parties, both cross-nationally and cross-temporary. One way to do this is by using the concept of *functional equivalence* in a theoretically creative and multi-faceted way. Just like Christian democratic parties and conservative parties have long performed similar functions within West European party systems, i.e. being the main competitor of the center-left Social Democratic party, extreme right parties like Golden Dawn as well as neo-liberal populist parties like LPF and FrP perform similar functions within contemporary party systems. Depending on the specific question the researcher is interested in, the group of “functional equivalent” parties will change, sometimes also including other parties – such as conservative parties like the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU), radical left parties like the Greek Syriza, and more idiosyncratic anti-establishment parties like Italy’s Five Star Movement (M5S).

Most importantly, however, we need a paradigmatic shift, in which populist radical right parties are no longer seen as new outsider-challenger parties, but *also* as institutionalized and integrated members of the political system. Many of the parties are decades old, have survived their founder-leader, and are completely *Koalitionsfähig*, at least to certain mainstream parties (e.g. DF, Fidesz, LN, SVP). *These* parties are to be studied from the perspective of established political parties, not as “challenger” or ‘niche’ parties. It is only by embracing a plurality of perspectives and theories, and by comparing *within* the group of far right parties, that we can truly further our field of study.



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