

During the past 15 years, a growing number of established Western-style democracies has witnessed the rise of right-wing movements and parties whose rhetoric and political objectives have posed a serious challenge to the postwar political consensus and the established political parties. To be sure, right-wing movements and parties are nothing new in advanced Western democracies. In particular, Western Europe has witnessed several "waves" of right-wing mobilization in the postwar period. Among the most notable examples were the rapid rise of the Poujadist movement in France in the late 1950s; the emergence of the National Democratic Party (NPD) in Germany in the late 1960s; and the surge in support for the neo-fascist Social Movement (MSI) in Italy in the early 1970s (von Beyme 1988). None of these instances of right-wing mobilization, however, proved enduring. The Poujadists disappeared almost as quickly as they had appeared; the NPD lost most of its supporters soon after 1969; and even the MSI was unable to prevent the steady erosion of its electoral support in the late 1970s and 1980s.

Given the right's rather unimpressive record of electoral success in the postwar period, the recent revival of right-wing parties in Western democracies is quite astounding. What distinguishes the recent wave of right-wing mobilization from earlier ones is, first, the extent to which various right-wing parties and movements have successfully established themselves within roughly the same time span in a substantial number of Western democracies; second, the extent to which they have managed to influence the political discourse on a range of significant sociocultural and sociopolitical issues; and third, the extent to which they have succeeded in gaining significant political offices and positions.

Today we are witnessing the emergence of a new politics of the right, promoted by a new type of right-wing political party. The most successful of these parties has relinquished much of the ideological legacy of the traditional fascist and extremist right in exchange for a versatile, issue-oriented

political strategy that combines verbal radicalism and symbolic politics with the tools of contemporary political marketing to disseminate their ideas among the electorate. Often led by charismatic figures who are at least as comfortable in press conferences and TV talk shows as they are among their supporters, the new parties of the right are among the most prominent representatives of a new political entrepreneurialism (von Beyme 1996).

This book provides a comprehensive account of the new politics of the right in established Western-style democracies. The emphasis is almost completely on right-wing political parties (the exception is the United States). Besides chapters on Western Europe and the United States, the book includes chapters on Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and India. The individual chapters generally follow a common structure, which allows for comparisons across and between the different cases. This includes a discussion of the origins and development of each party or movement; organizational structure and leadership; strategy and political program; electoral support and sociostructural basis; and relationships with other political parties.

The case studies discuss both successful and unsuccessful parties and movements. We expect a comparison between the two groups to yield important insights and lessons both with respect to a wide range of issues such as party formation, the vulnerability of new parties, and the obstacles faced by right-wing parties, and to differences between countries with respect to right-wing support.

The surge of right-wing parties and movements in the 1980s and 1990s in established Western-style democracies raises a number of important questions. First, what distinguishes the new parties and movements of the right from other, particularly conservative and similar center-right parties, setting them apart as a distinct party family? Second, what explains their simultaneous emergence and success in the 1980s and 1990s? Most of the authors of the subsequent chapters do not address these questions directly, but assume a general familiarity with the most important theoretical propositions that have been advanced in the current debate about the rise of the right. It might therefore be useful to review some of these arguments and put forward our own view, thus providing a loose conceptual framework for the more narrowly defined individual case studies.

Radical Right-Wing Populism

Much of the recent discussion about the upsurge in support for right-wing parties and movements in Western Europe and elsewhere subsumes the new political actors under the notions of neofascism, right-wing extremism, or the far right (see, for example, Hainsworth 1992; Ignazi 1994;

Cheles, Ferguson and Vaughan 1995). This interpretation has the advantage of putting the contemporary right in historical context, but raises a number of definitional questions.

A working definition of right-wing extremism has to limit itself to a minimum of core criteria that are valid for all established democracies. Such a restrictive definition of right-wing extremism would include at a minimum the following two core traits: the fundamental rejection of the democratic rules of the game, of individual liberty, and of the principle of individual equality and equal rights for all members of the political community, and their replacement by an authoritarian system in which rights are based on ascribed characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, or religion; and the acceptance, if not propagation, of violence as a necessary means to achieve political goals both at home and in foreign policy.

None of the right-wing parties and movements discussed in this book closely fit the criteria included in this definition of right-wing extremism. To be sure, most of these parties and movements have attracted right-wing extremists, and most of them include more or less influential factions voicing extremist views. There is also no doubt that a significant number of their supporters display right-wing extremist tendencies. Nor can it be denied that many contemporary right-wing parties and movements resort to a strategy of verbal extremism. The question is, however, whether these slogans genuinely reflect these parties' political positions or whether they are merely part of their effort to mobilize party militants and hard-core supporters or to respond to the exigencies of the postmodern political arena where all parties have to "resort to *symbolic politics* and spectacular issues" in order to maximize their support at the polls, strengthen their "power position in coalition bargaining," and garner financial support (von Beyme 1996, p. 156; italics in the original).

Generally, contemporary right-wing parties and movements have been rather careful to stress their commitment to representative democracy and the constitutional order. If not out of conviction then out of expediency, they have tended to abandon much of the ideological baggage that might sound too extremist. This development came about with good reason: Parties that have transgressed the boundaries of permissible and acceptable political discourse soon found themselves penalized in public opinion, at the polls, or in parliament.

This suggests that the notion of right-wing extremism—or worse, neofascism—is hardly apt to capture the nature of the contemporary right in established Western democracies. Instead, we propose that what unites these parties and movements is programmatic radicalism and populist appeal. From this perspective, right-wing parties and movements are part of a new wave of radical right-wing populism, which has been gaining ground in

most advanced Western democracies during the past few years (Betz 1994; Taggart 1995).

Unlike established center-right parties, most new parties and movements of the right propagate a radical transformation of the socioeconomic and sociocultural status quo. This means above all an attack on the postwar political settlement and what has come to be known as the social-democratic consensus. Among the most important targets have been the social welfare state and multicultural society, with country-specific issues also featuring prominently on the contemporary right's political agenda.

The second feature that distinguishes the contemporary radical right from other movements and parties is its populist appeal. Like fascism or right-wing extremism, populism has been notoriously difficult to define. Again, as in the case of right-wing extremism, it seems useful to concentrate on core attributes and traits which distinguish populism from other contemporary "isms" (Ionescu and Gellner 1969; Kazin 1995). Generally populism can be defined as a structure of argumentation, a political style and strategy, and an ideology. The core elements of the populist structure of argumentation is a pronounced faith in the common sense of the ordinary people; the belief that simple solutions exist for the most complex problems of the modern world; and the belief that the common people, despite possessing moral superiority and innate wisdom, have been denied the opportunity to make themselves heard. Core elements of the populist strategy are the claim to speak for the unarticulated opinions, demands, and sentiments of the ordinary people; and the mobilization of resentment against a set of clearly defined enemies. Finally, core elements of populist ideology are a strong producer ethic which attributes social worth on the basis of individual effort and an individual's productive contribution to the community; an equally strong repudiation of the existing socioeconomic and sociopolitical system as serving the special interests of the few instead of the universal concerns of the many; and a pronounced claim to genuine democracy and egalitarianism based on the belief in a fundamental harmony of interests.

Perhaps the most distinct feature of the new populism of the 1980s and 1990s is the degree to which radical right-wing parties and movements have adopted a political strategy that relies primarily on the mobilization of resentment (Betz 1993). As the subsequent chapters demonstrate, the most prominent targets of this campaign have been the established political parties, the "political class," immigrants, refugees, and, to a lesser degree, the resident foreign population. Beyond that, the list of additional targets varies according to the country and particular circumstances: aborigines in Australia, Muslims in India, the francophone minority in Canada; the Walloons in the Flemish part of Belgium; southerners in northern Italy.

Unlike classical fascism or the postwar right, the majority of contemporary radical right-wing parties and movements tend to support free-market economics and the capitalist system. Underlying much of the radical right's neoliberal program is a pronounced productivist and entrepreneurial ethos based on a strong belief in the value of enterprise and individual initiative and effort. Central to this ethos is the celebration of small- and medium-sized enterprises, which are seen to play a potentially major role in the economic future and well-being of advanced Western societies, particularly if they are put in a position financially and technologically to compete effectively in the emerging global marketplace.

The contemporary radical right directs its hostility first against the political class and the administrative bureaucracy and their control over fiscal policy, and second against the growing number of social groups relying on claims to social rights to gain access to public funding. The result is an ideological construct based on the image of a society which pits the productive majority of taxpayers against a minority of politicians, bureaucrats, and their clients, which consumes the fruits of the majority's labor.

Given this line of argumentation, it is hardly surprising that some of the most successful radical right-wing parties and movements have come out strongly in favor of substantially lower taxes, the abolition of subsidies to industry and agriculture, substantial cuts in selective areas of public-sector spending, and large-scale privatization. For the same reason, the radical right, in the name of what it considers genuine equality, has generally called for the abolition of affirmative action programs and other programs designed to protect minorities. Following the same logic, contemporary radical right-wing parties and movements claim to be the only bona fide promoters of the people's aspirations and of a genuine citizens' democracy. As a first step toward true democracy, many of them propagate the use of plebiscites and referenda as an important corrective to participatory democracy. The objective of all of these demands and proposals is to radically reduce the scope of the state and thus to deprive the established political parties and political class of power resources.

With growing concern in many countries over the acceleration of global competition, some radical right-wing parties have adopted the rhetoric of "economic nationalism" in the latest attempt to appeal to public anxieties (Capling 1997). Economic nationalism provides a new target of resentment—international bankers and currency traders, "footloose capital" and transnational corporations, and, in the Western European case, the Brussels (EU) bureaucracy. In order to neutralize this new threat to national sovereignty, a growing number of radical right-wing populist parties advocate protectionist measures and the reregulation of international financial markets.

By far the most important targets of contemporary right-wing radical populist resentment have been immigrants. Immigration has proven to be an "ideal" issue for radical right-wing mobilization because it offers a wide range of points of attack. In Western Europe and the United States, which have seen a growing influx of relatively poor immigrants and refugees seeking work and a better future, the newcomers have variously been charged with taking away jobs from native workers, driving down wages, and exploiting the welfare system. In Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, which have attracted an increasing number of rich and successful immigrants from Asia, the newcomers have been accused of inflating the real estate market and threatening the country's economic independence. And with the largest contingents of immigrants to Western Europe and North America coming from non-Western, developing countries, the newcomers have been increasingly seen as a threat to the cultural heritage and identity of the host countries.

The radical right has been quick to exploit the nativist tendencies that immigration has evoked in the public during the past decade or so. Proposals to contain or completely curtail the influx of immigrants and refugees figure prominently in the political programs and manifestos of virtually all radical right-wing populist parties. They are particularly effective when they are combined with economic nationalist rhetoric.

Radical Right-Wing Populism and Structural Change

The rapid rise and dramatic gains of radical right-wing populist parties and movements is one of the most significant political developments of the past few years. Their ability to firmly establish themselves in a substantial number of democracies with widely differing political cultures, institutional structures, and electoral systems calls for a cross-national explanation (while taking into account the significance of country-specific developments as contributing factors).

The history of both left- and right-wing populist mobilization in North America and Western Europe suggests that these are "movements of crisis" whose emergence is closely tied to major social dislocations (Kriesi 1995, p. 23). As Everett Ladd has pointed out, the rise of American populism in the last century occurred at a time when rural and agricultural America was giving way to an urban and industrial society and "Jeffersonian America was fast fading."¹ In a similar vein, National Socialism in Germany in the 1920s and Poujadism in France in the 1950s emerged at points of time when the rural population was under intense economic and financial pressure. All of these movements owed their success at least in part to their claim to preserve and protect traditional society from the onslaught of rapid socioeconomic change.

It is hardly a coincidence that radical right-wing populist parties and movements have gained significant political ground during the past 15 years. For the past two decades, the advanced industrial societies have been confronted with a crisis of the postwar socioeconomic model which had been characterized by dynamic economic growth, rapidly growing affluence, and an unprecedented level of material security. In a reversal of previous trends, starting in the mid-1970s, there was a marked decline in productivity. At the same time, real income started to fall in the United States and began to stagnate in Western Europe, and the gap between the rich and the poor started to widen. Most important, full employment, arguably the most significant achievement of the postwar period, gave way to mass unemployment, reaching levels not seen since the economic depression of the interwar period.

Most observers agree that the economic crisis of the 1970s marked the beginning of a secular transformation of the global economy. In the advanced industrial societies, it marked the beginning of a shift away from industrial mass production to flexible manufacturing, from labor-intensive production to capital-intensive "lean" production, and, more generally, from an industry-centered to a service-oriented economy, which relies to a large extent on processed information. In the technologically advanced economies of North America, Western Europe, and the Pacific, these developments have led to a dramatic devaluation of those groups in the labor force that formed the core of the postwar economic model: primarily un- and semi-skilled workers, some skilled workers, and lower-level management. Disposing of little transferable human capital, and often finding it hard to adapt to changing circumstances, these groups figure prominently among the "losers of modernization."

The result of the transition from the postwar system of "organized capitalism" to a system of individualized capitalism has been growing uncertainty and social dislocation. In response, virtually all advanced Western societies have experienced a dramatic increase in anxieties, insecurity, and pessimism about the future. There is widespread fear that the relative material security that characterized the "golden years" of postwar capitalism has given way to a new era of "precarious prosperity."²

Among the most important effects of this climate of insecurity has been a pronounced decline in public faith in the established parties, politicians, and the political process in general. Among the reasons for this loss in faith has been the growing powerlessness of political parties and governments in the face of mounting economic problems, rising unemployment, and the growing income gap between various social strata. Political resentment appears to be particularly pronounced in those cases, such as in France or Australia, where subsequent governments have followed a politics of austerity

without being able to fundamentally reverse mass unemployment, growing income inequality, and the resulting social dislocations.

A final major reason can be found in the political scandals and cases of widespread political corruption that have come to light during the past few years in virtually all Western democracies. These revelations have contributed significantly to the rise in public cynicism with respect to politics. To be sure, some measure of political corruption has always existed in Western democracies. However, in the past, corruption was largely tolerated or ignored, as long as political parties and politicians delivered and everyone had a chance to benefit from the system. With the political class apparently no longer in a position to solve major societal problems, the public mood has shifted.

The success of the radical populist right thus reflects to a large extent the psychological strain associated with uncertainties produced by large-scale socioeconomic and sociostructural change. We would expect this insecurity to be most pronounced among those groups that have the most to lose from structural transformation or that are least prepared to adjust to new circumstances and are therefore most likely to be anxious with respect to their personal and professional future: blue-collar workers, employees doing routine jobs, or young persons lacking formal educational credentials. It is among these groups that we would expect the radical populist right to be most successful. The subsequent chapters lend ample support for this contention.

They suggest that the success of contemporary radical right-wing populism in economically advanced Western societies is largely the result of a profound and largely psychological crisis of the "popular classes" which, with their hard work and determination, were the backbone of the postwar recovery, mass affluence, and the social welfare state. The impact of a fundamental transformation of the global economy, rapid technological change, the challenge of overseas competition, and the rise of a global information society on advanced capitalist societies has given rise to anxieties and fears as well as resentment. In a political climate of declining faith in the established political parties and growing political disaffection, the radical populist right has found ample opportunities to promote an alternative politics of resentment. Numerous studies have shown that it is particularly the popular classes that, given their generally rather modest level of education, are most prone to have negative feelings toward foreigners or believe charges of widespread political corruption (Le Gall 1996, pp. 198–201). At the same time, because the popular classes rely most directly on a traditional work ethic, they are most likely to be attracted by the productivist and market-oriented rhetoric of contemporary right-wing populism.

Structural change has created a political climate conducive to right-wing populist mobilization. However, for political parties and movements to ex-

exploit this climate, they need to have more than a few slogans or a catchy party name. As the subsequent chapters demonstrate, one of the most important determinants of success is party organization. The most successful radical right-wing populist parties are led by charismatic figures capable of setting the political and programmatic direction. In addition, most parties display a highly centralized organizational structure, with decisions being made at the top by a relatively circumscribed circle of party activists and transmitted to the bottom. With this organization, radical right-wing populist parties form an alternative to the bureaucratized structure of the traditional "catch-all" parties and the loose organizational structure of the more recent "framework parties" (e.g., Green and left-libertarian parties). Charismatic leadership and tight party organization allow these parties to respond quickly and without much internal debate to new issues or shifts in their constituencies and exploit new political opportunities. As a result, they have been able to change ideological course (e.g., from support for free trade to protectionism), discard previously important issues (e.g., immigration), or change the emphasis of their programs (e.g., from economic liberalism to immigration). On the other hand, radical right-wing populist parties, more than most other electorally significant parties, depend for their success on the appeal, determination, political longevity, and individual staying power of their leading figures. As a number of our cases demonstrate, this can be a serious liability.

This last point suggests that the likelihood that a radical right-wing populist party will successfully establish itself in a Western-style democracy depends on more than a propitious political climate. Much depends also on leadership and internal organization, in addition to political culture, institutional arrangements, and, last but not least, the response of the established parties to the populist challenge.

Notes

1. Everett Carl Ladd, "'Populist' Label is Being Used Promiscuously," *The Sun* (Baltimore), March 19, 1995, p. 8F.
2. Stefan Willeke and Andreas Fink, "Abschied vom Wohlstand," *Die Zeit*, June 7, 1996, p. 6.

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ONE

The French National Front

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In France, as in most Western democracies, the main political change of the 1980s was the emergence of a radical right. For more than ten years, the Front national (FN) of Jean-Marie Le Pen gained at least 10 percent of the valid vote in every national election, with peaks of over 15 percent in the 1995 presidential and 1997 parliamentary elections.

Two factors have played a decisive part in the revival of the extreme right in postwar France. The first was the question of decolonization in Algeria. The agreements of Evian in 1962, which granted independence to the former French colony, put an end to seven years of war. They were opposed by an unprecedented wave of criminal activities by the Organisation armée secrète (OAS). Independence led to the exodus of one million French settlers and 150,000 "harkis," enlisted as auxiliaries in the French army against their countrymen. Widespread, anti-Arab feelings stem from this period. The second factor was the election of a socialist president, François Mitterrand, in 1981, and the hopes, fears, and disappointments that his administration aroused. Initially, the left's victory provoked intense political polarization, which radicalized part of the right-wing electorate. The left's sharp turn to more orthodox social and economic policies in 1983, which marked the end of "l'état de grâce," disappointed part of its constituency and enlarged the potential electorate of the Lepenist party far beyond its traditional boundaries. It was at this point that French opinion became fully aware of the seriousness of the recession, its international dimension, and the inability of both left- and right-wing governments to cope with it. Only then did the ideas of the Front national find buyers on the electoral market and immigrants become the scapegoats for the country's ills. The rapid turnover of right- and left-wing governments and two periods of "cohabitation" between a socialist president and a right-wing prime minister