

Impact of the Populist Radical Right



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**Wien darf nicht
Istanbul werden.**

FPO WIEN

Er sagt, was Wien denkt





JOHN MACDOUGALL/AFIP/GETTY IMAGES





John Oliver on European far right in 2016 EP elections

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjShnTFpRs4>

Populist radical right

- The “new right” (Ignazi 1992): links to xenophobia and anti-political establishment populism
- Electoral and mobilizing growth
- Increasing challenge in Europe (and the West in general)
- Mostly abiding by the democratic rules (not trying to overturn democracy): **defenders of „true democracy“** (Betz, 1994)
- Terminology: extreme right, radical right, far right, populist radical right, ...

Ideology of PRR parties

- **Ideology:** nativism, populism, authoritarianism (Mudde, 2007)
 - **Nativism:** nationalism and xenophobia
 - **Authoritarianism:** the belief in a strictly ordered society
 - **Populism:** wisdom of a 'little man' - considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite," and which argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people
- Who are "**the people**"?
 - "The heartland", the "common sense" of the people (Taggart (2000) - a place 'in which, in the populist imagination, a virtuous and unified population resides' - a mythical and constructed sub-set of the whole population
- Enemy-building/making: "us"-**"them"** (friend-enemy) dichotomy

Research on extreme right (parties)

- Issues and ideologies
- Reasons (the causes) for electoral gains
- Demand for radical politics
- Consequences
- Responses: How to deal with ER parties and movements

What is in the impact?

- Consequences and responses
- Impact OF PRR parties:
 - How ERP influence the political agenda and policies
 - How ERP influence public opinion
 - Their impacts when in power
- Impact ON PRR parties:
 - How the government or established political parties respond to PRR parties
 - What strategies mainstream parties employ against PRR parties

Impact OF extreme right parties

- *Potential influence:*
 - Political agenda: influence on other political actors
 - “People’s frame of thought” (Rydgren, 2003): increase in racism, xenophobia, intolerance
 - Media discourse
- ***Policy impact***
- ***Party impact***
- ***Social impact***

Policy impact

- Direct impact
 - ERP adopting policies (immigration, minority rights, law and order)
- Local level
 - symbolic policies, cultural policies (e.g. street names)
- Junior coalition partners (often lacking experience)
- Affecting immigration, minority policies
 - FPÖ and LN instrumental in introducing more restrictive immigration policy (Austria and Italy) (Zaslove 2004)
- Either introduction of new agenda, or radicalization of an older agenda

Party impact

- Competing with PRR: adopting arguments, language, rhetoric
- „Contamination“: style of leadership, type of political discourse, relationship between leaders and followers
- Re-politization of some issues (immigration, Europe and the EU)
- Legitimation of the PRR: no need for „copy“, when original is available – increase in support for PRR
 - Bale (2003): „By adopting some of the far right’s themes, it legitimised them and increased both their salience and the seats it brought into an expanded right bloc. Once in office, the centre-right has demonstrated its commitment to getting tough on immigration, crime and welfare abuse, not least to distract from a somewhat surprising turn toward market liberalism.“

Party impact II

- Impact on *use of populism* by other political parties
 - Strongest effect: discourse – populist Zeitgeist – most political parties express some elements of populism
- Has populism become mainstream in WE?
 - Mixed evidence
 - Not supported (Rooduijn, de Lange, van der Brug 2011)
- Populist parties change their own discourse after being successful: Their initial success makes them more moderate

Party impact III

- Impact on ***policy positions of other parties***
- Direct effect of the party competition
- Reacting to same cues from the media and society
- Effect of real-world developments, e.g. refugee crisis
- „Issue ownership“ of the topic
- Contagion effect (Van Spanje, 2010):
 - Opposition parties are more vulnerable to the contagion effect than parties in the government
 - Anti-immigration parties are able to influence policy output in their political systems without entering government

Social impact

- **Public attitudes:**
 - On immigration, integration, minority issues, citizenship laws, or national identity
 - Increase in tolerance of intolerance
 - Affect and interact with the media discourse, through which the PRR seeks to be perceived as effective and legitimate
- Usually not changes in direction of attitudes, but increase in ***salience of that attitude***
- **Violence:** Level of nativist or racist violence - the xenophobic rhetoric often spilling over into violence
- Research: PRR success correlates with ethnic prejudice

Italian elections 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdhQzXHYZ4>

Five star movement: 32.68%

Democratic party: 18.76%

League: 17.35%

Forza Italia: 14.00%

Impact on PRR: responses of established parties

- „Adaptation dilemma“
 - to function fully within a liberal democratic context the PRR must moderate, but to keep its unique position and ensure the loyalty of its hardcore support it must remain radical
- Different legal, political, social contexts leading to different dilemmas – e.g. impact of refugee crisis and radicalization of mainstream political discourse
- **2 poles of reactions:**
 - coalition (the most accommodative)
 - cordon sanitaire (the most adversarial)

Constraining and contesting the ER

- The impact of restrictive policies is mixed
 - Some PRR successful despite (FN, VB), some because of cordon sanitaire
- Ostracism (van Spanje and Weber, 2017):
 - A strategic problem for established actors: Immediate policy impact of PRR can be averted by ostracizing them (i.e. refusing any cooperation), but this strategy may sway public opinion further in their favor

Constraining and contesting the ER II

- Can ***behave as victims***, those trying to help ordinary people despite being „punished“ or „persecuted“ (debate on free speech)
- ***Hate speech prosecution*** (van Spanje and de Vreese, 2013)
 - A common phenomenon (Nick Griffin in Britain, Jean-Marie Le Pen in France)
 - Does hate speech prosecution of politicians affect the electoral support for their party?
 - Dutch voters interviewed before and after the unexpected court decision to prosecute MP Geert Wilders
 - The decision substantially enhanced his party's appeal
- The role of the ERP itself:
 - Issue ownership (PRR as established, credible political actor that owns certain salient issue (e.g. immigration), it is immune to counter-strategies of other political actors (including media, social movements))

How to deal with PRR in government: strategies

- „Militant democracy“: Karl Löwenstein, 1930s, a strong constitutional order, which should ban political parties that do not respect liberal democratic principles
 - Problem with democratic paradox: possibility of a democracy destroying itself in the process of defending itself (populists not against democracy, but at odds with liberal democracy)
- Cappoccia (2013):
 - *Militancy*: implementation of legal measures to limit the civil and political rights of extremist actors
 - *Incorporation*: convert semi-loyal into loyal political actors
 - *Purge*: prosecute the architects and administrators of anti-democratic activities
 - *Education*: strengthen democratic beliefs by, for instance, developing forms of civic education and designing programmes aimed at integrating activists who want to abandon extremist parties

Strategies II (Rummens and Abts 2010)

- “Concentric model of containment”: the employment of a dual strategy whereby actors take an inclusive stance to take into account concerns of extremist voters in devising policies, on the one hand, and where they, on other hand, prepare to adopt an exclusive line in pressuring extremist parties to push out pernicious radical elements from the process of decision-making
- Anti-extremist legislation (banning parties)
- The use of public funding to bind in extremist parties by making it conditional on accepting certain norms
- Isolating extremist forces through principled non-cooperation

Strategies III

- Along two dimensions – 1. between engagement and disengagement, 2. between militancy and accommodation (Downs 2012)
 - 4 strategies:
 - Ban/isolate
 - Co-opt
 - Ignore
 - Collaborate
- Policies “of isolation, ostracism and demonization prove surprisingly ineffective at rolling back or even containing threats to the democratic order from party-based extremism“

Thank you for listening and participating!