Right-wing extremism is a phenomenon that can be found throughout Europe. All democratic societies are threatened by racist, anti-pluralistic and authoritarian ideas. Even though the so-called “radical right” differs in character and ideology in the various European countries it strives to restrict civic and human rights as well as to change the constitutional structures that are based on the principles of democracy and liberty. Individual European countries deal with this challenge differently. The various policy approaches found in these countries are a good source for developing improved practices for fighting right-wing extremism in Germany and worldwide.

With this publication the Bertelsmann Stiftung presents an overview of the radical right in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland. It also includes the most successful strategies against right-wing extremism found in these countries. The main focus of this publication is the actions pursued by the governments, political parties and actors of the civil society. Judicial provisions are highlighted as well as the implementation of laws, special action programs, the effectiveness of prosecution of right-wing crimes, cooperation of parties, institutional responsibilities, cooperation of authorities with NGOs and civil commitment against right-wing extremism.
Strategies for Combating Right-Wing Extremism in Europe
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The Canadian city of Toronto has a striking motto: “Diversity Is Our Strength.” This attitude is indicative of the way communities with a long history of immigration view diversity. Yet the motto is anything but common; in fact, it is remarkable. Due to the rapid changes that have accompanied large movements of people across borders in our lifetime, many countries with substantial levels of immigration are experiencing significant social tensions. Integration is not easy or automatic; it is a gradual process that requires financial and social investments, which tend to produce long-term returns that are not immediately tangible. In his essay “E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the 21st Century,” American social scientist Robert D. Putnam presents important research showing how large-scale increases in diversity within communities can initially have a negative impact on social cohesion. According to Putnam, when large numbers of people enter a community to settle within it, a new sense of community has to be generated in order for that immigration to have a positive long-term impact upon the society. A new social climate has to be established in which newcomers are not seen as a social threat and are, instead, given a fair chance to become full members of the society they have joined. Achieving a new climate is arduous—even for countries that have promoted the social inclusion of newcomers over a relatively long period.

Europe has a long history of emigration to the New World and other parts of the globe, and it was only in recent decades that it became a continent of integration. The accompanying transformation in the collective consciousness of Europeans has not yet fully taken hold across the old Continent. On the contrary, in many parts of Europe, a backlash has been seen against globalization, social change and, especially, immigration. In many European countries, social forces have emerged that seek to mobilize the population to oppose immigration and the kind of profound social changes it entails. This sentiment is often exploited by far-right populists who are hostile to diversity and promote the myth of a homogeneous society as the only possible basis for social harmony and cohesion. Far-right populist political movements propagate this myth, as do right-wing extremists and the radical right. Under the cloak of right-wing populist movements, anti-Semitism, racism and fascism are re-emerging and growing stronger to the point that they pose a real threat to pluralistic democracies in Europe.

Europe must address and oppose the threat of right-wing extremism. If it does
not, issues such as diversity and immigration will polarize European societies and will, indeed, weaken their social cohesion. The Bertelsmann Stiftung wants to make a contribution to combating right-wing extremism in Europe. It has been working to oppose right-wing extremism since the beginning of the 1990s, when it initiated a number of projects promoting democracy, tolerance and solidarity. The Foundation’s activities were a response to increased rates of violence against foreigners in Germany following the country’s reunification. The Foundation implemented so-called “Betzavta” training programs, which originated in Israel, were modified in the United States and have been further developed by trainers for use in schools and as part of extracurricular activities. These programs have proven very effective at promoting tolerance and improving social cohesion among participants, who further disseminate their learning within their communities. Additionally, the Foundation’s project entitled “Strategies for Combating Right-Wing Extremism in Germany” explored the role of the media, schools and early-childhood care in mobilizing democratic societies against right-wing extremism. This project ended in 2006 and has been followed by the Foundation’s current project, which is called “Strategies for Combating Right-Wing Extremism in Europe.” With this new project, we have broadened our focus beyond Germany to include the whole of Europe. The Foundation’s current project addresses key questions, such as: What is the situation concerning right-wing extremism like in other European countries? What strategies can European governments learn from the policies of their neighbors to combat right-wing extremism? What strategies are particularly effective, and which of these may be transferable to the German context?

I would like to thank Ulrich Kober and Orkan Kösemen from the Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Democracy and Integration Program, who worked closely with Britta Schellenberg from the Center for Applied Policy Research (affiliated with the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich) in producing this book. I would also like to thank all the authors for their high level of expertise and the important contribution that each of them has made.

“Diversity Is Our Strength”—European countries would be well-advised to learn from Toronto’s understanding of social cohesion. In order to achieve this, European societies and policymakers must devise effective strategies for combating the threat the far right poses to democracy in pluralistic societies. If they are to succeed, these strategies must be courageous and resolute.
In October 2008, a major public controversy erupted in the German city of Cologne over plans to build a large new mosque. In fact, the dispute grew so fierce that the arguments about it have reverberated throughout Europe. Plans by the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB), a mosque association, to build a highly visible new mosque on the site of an older one met with strong resistance from various quarters and sparked intense public debate. The issue became further inflamed when a German radical right-wing party called Pro Köln (Pro Cologne) sought to consolidate the scattered groups opposed to the building of the new mosque.

The result was the formation of an alliance, or front, that united several disparate groups with varying objections to the plans. Some groups argued that the building was too big and would not fit into the city’s skyline, which is dominated by the Dom, the city’s famous Gothic-style Roman Catholic cathedral. Others, including a prominent Jewish intellectual, opposed the plans for the mosque on grounds of principle, asserting that Islam was a religion of intolerance. Not surprisingly, Germany’s established anti-immigrant groups also joined the Pro Köln front.

Pro Köln then used its representation on Cologne’s city council to stir up the row into a Europe-wide controversy. It invited prominent far-right figures from all over Europe, including representatives from Belgium’s Vlaams Belang, France’s Front National and the Austrian Freedom Party to join in an anti-Islam demonstration in central Cologne. Counter-demonstrations were organized against the planned rally of the far-right groups, and the mayor of Cologne joined forces with the mainstream political parties, trade unions, churches and other organizations to block the gathering of rightists. Likewise, many of Cologne’s taxi drivers showed their opposition to the far right’s rally by refusing to drive demonstrators into the center of town, and anti-racist activists, including many young people, blocked the roads leading to the venue. Finally, the local police announced a ban on the right-wing rally to prevent violent clashes from breaking out between supporters of the opposing sides.

The story of Pro Köln’s anti-mosque demonstration tells us a lot about the current situation of right-wing extremism in Europe and about how it can be successfully fought. It is a very complex and primarily nationalist phenomenon, yet it is a growing force across Europe. Radical right-wing movements are fuelled by broader
anxieties and the profound social change that has occurred in nearly all European countries. In recent decades, Europe has seen economic changes exacerbating social tensions, cultural changes shattering old norms and ideologies, demographic changes and increased immigration.

Scapegoat ideologies flourish in times of rapid change and social insecurity. Immigrants—particularly those with Muslim backgrounds—have frequently become targets of latent xenophobia in European societies. Likewise, right-wing extremists who champion myths of national homogeneity seek to take advantage of growing anxieties. They often unite with other right-wing populists on the radical right, and the resulting far-right movements have become a threat to all liberal European societies.

The growing self-confidence of various far-right groups at the European level is demonstrated by their efforts to join forces in the European Parliament. The first pan-European meeting of far-right political groups, which was initiated by the Austrian Freedom Party, took place in November 2005. Then, in January 2007, right-wing extremist parties in the European Parliament formed a faction called Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty. This new parliamentary group was made up of Belgium’s Vlaams Belang, France’s Front National, the Austrian Freedom Party, an independent MEP from Great Britain, Italy’s Social Alternative party (led by Alessandra Mussolini, granddaughter of the fascist dictator), and the Tricolor Flame Social Movement. In addition, two parties from Eastern Europe—Bulgaria’s National Union Attack and Romania’s Greater Romania Party—became members of the faction.

However, less than a year later, in November 2007, this rightist alliance in the European Parliament was disbanded owing to ideological contradictions within its own ranks. The Italian neo-fascists insulted the Romanian members by calling Romanians congenitally criminal, which led the Romanian MEPs to quit the parliamentary group. However, with the next European election scheduled for June 2009, it is likely that the far-right will once again try to create a pan-European extreme right-wing faction in the European Parliament.

Some may argue that the danger right-wing extremism poses to European democracies is still negligible. However, if the radical right gains momentum as part of a backlash against the forces of modernization and globalization, Europe should not underestimate the continued threat it represents. Further modernization and globalization will certainly be an integral part of the future of the old Continent. As a result, it is necessary to carefully analyze and monitor the various far-right movements in Europe and within its member states. European societies and democracies must engage in a sustained dialogue on how to effectively combat right-wing extremism. As the European community becomes more unified, sharing knowledge about existing strategies for combating far-right radicalism is increasingly important. This volume can be a contribution to creating long-term dialogue for addressing the challenges of right-wing extremism.

The first part of this volume sets out a conceptual framework for understanding the current landscape of the political far right in Europe. Michael Minkenberg, one
of the leading comparative thinkers on this issue, proposes a broad concept of the radical right based on a modernization-theoretical argument according to which right-wing extremism is interpreted as a radical attempt to fight social change and modernization. As a political ideology, it is characterized by the myth of a homogenous nation as well as a romantic and populist ultranationalism that is directed against the concept of liberal, pluralistic democracy and its underlying principles of individualism and universalism.

The second part of this volume contains an analysis of right-wing extremism in 11 European countries. These countries were selected to provide the reader with a comparison of right-wing extremism in countries with diverse political systems and immigration policies. Austria, Germany and Switzerland are “consensus democracies” with many political checks and balances as well as restrictive immigration policies. Belgium and the Netherlands are in the same category of consensus democracies, but they pursue different immigration policies. In contrast, the study also examines Great Britain and France, both of which have majoritarian political systems. Still, these two countries differ markedly in their immigration policies: Whereas Great Britain’s are considered moderate, France’s are seen as open. Denmark, Italy and Sweden have “mixed democratic systems” in which the executive is restricted to a certain degree by political or institutional factors. Nevertheless, each of the three employs a different immigration policy. Denmark’s is considered restrictive, Italy’s moderate, and Sweden’s open. Altogether, this 11-country analysis provides the reader with diverse country cases in which both immigration regulations and the number of political actors influencing parliamentary decisions vary. Both factors have an impact on how right-wing extremism is addressed by mainstream politics and society.

The 11 country reports follow a single template, which facilitates a comparative study. The authors of each report analyze the radical right in terms of their history, actors, main traits, socio-political environment and perspectives. The reports focus on how the selected countries are combating right-wing radicalism at the national level. Thus, the evaluation of strategies to combat the radical right addresses, first, the legal order and law enforcement, second, the political actors and institutions, and, third, civil society. Each of these three sections contains a review of good practice and a strategic outlook. The third part of this volume summarizes its findings regarding policy trends and strategies for combating right-wing radicalism.

Although this volume examines how these strategies have worked at the national level, we hope that it might serve as a stimulus for designing strategies against right-wing extremism at the European level. The spread of extremist and xenophobic attitudes and the proliferation of radical right-wing political movements are challenges confronting all of Europe. The European Union must respond in a concerted way to right-wing extremism because European challenges call for European responses. It is not enough to merely protect minorities or fight xenophobia and racism. What is at stake here is democratic values across Europe and the vitality of its pluralist democracies.
The city of Cologne has shown that it understands the true nature of the challenge from the radical right by standing up to the far right in October 2008. Cologne has successfully responded to right-wing extremism. EU member states and the European community should do the same.
The Radical Right in Europe: Challenges for Comparative Research

Michael Minkenberg

Introduction: Terms and concepts in the research on the radical right

In the research on the radical right, definitions of right-wing radicalism (or extremism, for those who prefer this term) vary widely and the terminology remains contested. As early as the mid-1990s, Cas Mudde reported that there were 26 approaches to a definition in the literature on the radical right, including at least 58 different criteria (Mudde 1996: 229). Most of the terminological debate centers on labeling the family of radical-right parties. For comparative-analytical as well as political-strategic purposes, the concept of radical right should include parties and non-party formations before a decision is made on which formation should be studied (or both, as is suggested here). Also, the question of whether these groups reject democracy should not be settled in the definition but left open for empirical scrutiny. For these and other reasons, it seems preferable to use the broader and more inclusive term “radical” instead of “extreme” (cf. Minkenberg 1998: chap. 1; idem 2000; Kitschelt 2007: 1178; Norris 2005).

One way to overcome the shopping-list quality of many definitions is to tie them to the theoretical concepts of social change that underlie most analyses of the radical right. The logic of modernization theories provides some conceptually grounded criteria for comparative purposes that can be applied to Western democracies and new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. Generally, modernization can be understood as a growing autonomy of the individual—that is, status mobility and role flexibility—and an ongoing functional differentiation of society—that is, segmentation and growing autonomy of societal subsystems (cf. Rucht 1994).

In this light, right-wing radicalism can be defined as the radical effort to undo or fight such social change by radicalizing inclusionary and exclusionary criteria (cf. Minkenberg 1998: 29–47; idem 2000; Carter 2005: 14–20; Kitschelt 2007: 1179). The counter-concept to social differentiation is the nationally defined community; and the counter-concept to individualization is the return to an individual’s traditional roles and status in such a community. The overemphasis on or radicalization of images of social homogeneity characterizes radical right-wing thinking. In other words, right-wing radicalism is defined as a political ideology, the core element of which is a myth of a homogenous nation, a romantic and populist ultranationalism that is directed against the concept of liberal and pluralistic democracy as well as its underlying principles of individualism and universalism.

This approach is positioned against: (1) those who prefer the term “fascism”
(e.g., Griffin 1991), which is rather closely linked to particular historical experiences
and references; (2) those who prefer the term “right-wing populism” (e.g., Decker
2000), which is rather vague and, since it denotes more of a political style than a
political message, covers a wide range of political groupings, including some main-
stream parties and politicians; and (3) those who belong to the school of extremism
theory (very prominent in German circles, especially those close to Verfassungs-
schutz; e.g., Backes and Jesse 2005), which defines the radical right according to
constitutional criteria and is quite state-centered. Indeed, the school borrows its
definitional criteria from state authorities and focuses on parties, groups and indi-
viduals outside the democratic arena, that is, the political establishment. But the
social and political location of right-wing radicalism is in parties and other organiza-
tions as well as in the media and in currents and milieus of the general population.

For a comparative analysis of the radical right covering Western and Eastern
Europe as well as for the development and evaluation of strategies to combat it,
some fundamental distinctions along ideological and organizational lines should be
observed. Regarding ideological distinctions, the comparative literature offers two
basic approaches: the “one world” approach and the “many worlds” approach.
Among the former are the works of those who postulate one generic phenomenon,
such as, for example, Lipset’s (1963) extremism of the center, Griffin’s (1991) fas-
cism, Betz’s (1994) right-wing populism and Mudde’s (2007) populist radical right.
The other camp has embedded ideological distinctions in the concept itself, such
as, for example, Ignazi’s (2003) distinction between the classic extreme right and
the post-industrialist extreme right, Kitschelt’s (1995) typology of fascism, welfare
chauvinism, anti-statist populism and new radical right, and Carter’s (2005: 50ff.)
five-group typology of neo-Nazi parties, neo-fascist parties, authoritarian xenophobic
parties, neoliberal xenophobic parties and neoliberal populist parties.

Here, I want to suggest that we follow a reasoning that: (1) posits a fundamental
ideological dividing line that determines whether today’s radical right embraces
historical movements, ideologies or regimes of Nazism or fascism, or whether it
advocates a more contemporary racist or ethnocentrist nationalism; (2) allows for a
more populist and less extreme version of the radical right; and (3) introduces the
element of religion-based exclusionism. Following these considerations, a fourfold
typology is proposed. This typology combines various aspects of the other ideologi-
cal typologies in the literature and follows the aforementioned modernization-theo-
retical argument in that the ideological variants can be identified according to the
concept of nation and the exclusionary criteria can be applied. The four variants of
radical-right forces are: (1) autocratic-fascist; (2) racist or ethnocentrist; (3) populist-
authoritarian; and (4) religious-fundamentalist.¹ All four variants have in common

¹ For Central and Eastern European countries, one could also distinguish between fascist-
autocratic and national-communist ideologies, depending on the radical right’s point of
reference to interwar fascist or right-wing authoritarian regimes or to nationalist-commu-
nist regimes. For the present analysis, they are subsumed under the fascist-authoritarian
category (cf. Minkenberg and Beichelt 2001).
a strong quest for the internal homogeneity of the nation through the primary “we
group”—that is, a rejection of difference and pluralization—and a populist, anti-
establishment political style (cf. Minkenberg 1998: chaps. 1, 7, esp. 236–245; Kitt-
schelt 2007: 1179f.)

Regarding structural distinctions, most comparative research on the radial right
focuses on political parties. But that perspective misses something. Therefore, start-
ing from the concept of party or movement “families” (Beyme 1984; Rucht 1994),
it is important to ask under what conditions the radical right manifests itself in
the form of a movement rather than in the form of a party and to what extent other
organizational forms of the radical right support or constrain the particular organi-
ization’s mobilization efforts (cf. Minkenberg 1998: chap. 8; Rydgren 2007).

The organizational variants are distinguished according to their approach to insti-
tutional political power and public resonance. There are: (1) parties and electoral
campaign organizations that participate in elections and try to win public office; (2)
social movement organizations that also try to mobilize public support but, instead
of running for office, identify with a larger social movement (e.g., a network of
networks with a distinct collective identity) and offer interpretative frameworks for
particular problems (cf. Tarrow 1994: 135f.; Rucht 1994: 177); and (3), finally, small-
er groups and sociocultural milieus that operate relatively independently from par-
ties and larger social movements and do not exhibit formal organizational struc-
tures. This last group can, however, also be characterized as networks with links to
other organizations and a collective identity that tends to be more extreme than that
of the parties or social movement organizations (which can be manifested, for exam-
ple, through higher levels of violence). They represent the “micro-mobilization po-
tential” of the radical right (cf. Bergmann 1994; Stöss 2000).

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of the parties or social movement organizations (which can be manifested, for exam-
ple, through higher levels of violence). They represent the “micro-mobilization po-
tential” of the radical right (cf. Bergmann 1994; Stöss 2000).

A final distinction should be introduced by identifying those groups belonging
to the radical right that try to influence public debate and the minds of people
rather than mobilize groups or voting behavior. These groups—which can be think
tanks, intellectual circles or political entrepreneurs—are labeled the “New Right” in
the literature and include: France’s Nouvelle Droite groups Club de l’Horloge and, especially, GRECE; Germany’s Neue Rechte, which is inspired by its French counterpart but also by the Conservative Revolution in the Weimar Republic; and Italy’s Nuova Destra. The ideas of these groups are disseminated largely in journals (such as France’s éléments and Germany’s Junge Freiheit and críticón), in workshops for multipliers (e.g., teachers and journalists) and, increasingly, on the Internet.

This New Right builds a bridge (or hinge) between established and traditional conservatism and the organizations of the radical right (cf. Gessenharter 1994). It is characterized by its effort to create a counter-discourse to the “ideas of 1968.” It more or less successfully appropriates the strategies and issues of its political opponents, especially the New Left and new social movements (cf. Minkenberg 1998: 159f.). This process of “issue framing” aims to bring about a culture war of the right—a “Kulturkampf von rechts” or “gramcisme de droite”—with the goal of filling the terms of public debate with the right-wing meaning of a homogenous nation and a strong state as well as discrimination against all things “foreign.” The New Right has gained ideological relevance by contributing a programmatic renewal to the radical-right discourse in the concept of “ethnopluralism,” which distinguishes New Right thinking from old-fashioned ideas of biological racism and white supremacy. Moreover, the traditional radical right’s search for a “third way” between Western capitalism and Eastern communism—that is, the rejection of what has been termed “vodka-cola imperialism”—has been largely replaced by a principled but not unrestrained support for the capitalist order (cf. Minkenberg 2000).

Patterns of variation and contextual factors

The general picture of the European situation must include the relative strength of the radical right and its major manifestations, parties and movements as well as their contextual factors. On the basis of trends in national election results and organizational data, a European map of radical-right mobilization can be constructed that includes major independent variables in the cultural and structural context for the cases discussed in this volume’s country reports.

Although there is no agreement in the comparative literature on how best to study the radical right, there is some convergence in the identification of the most relevant cultural and structural context factors that the following remarks build on (cf. Kitschelt 1995, 2007; Minkenberg 1998, 2003a; Ignazi 2003; Carter 2005; Rydgren 2007; Mudde 2007). Difficulties of measurement and in the availability of relevant data arise because there have been no comprehensive and systematic comparative studies of the non-party sector of the radical right in Europe.

As a starting point, the electoral fortunes of the radical right in the countries covered in the following reports are summarized in Table 1.

The trends in electoral strength lead to several important insights. First, voting support increased markedly between the 1980s and the 1990s. Second, the countries
Table 1: The election results (in %) for radical-right parties in national parliamentary elections (1980–2004, base on five-year averages) and the 2004 elections for the European Parliament (EP) in selected European countries

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<tr>
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<td>18.0</td>
<td>25.8</td>
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<td>0.9</td>
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Note: The following parties were included: Austria: Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ); Belgium: Vlaams Belang/Blok (VB), Belgian National Front (FN); Denmark: Danish Progress Party (UF), Danish People’s Party (DF); France: Front National (FN), National Republican Movement (MNR); Germany: Republicans (REP), German People’s Union (DVU), National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD); Great Britain: British National Party (BNP), National Front (NF); Hungary: Party of Hungarian Truth/Justice and Life (MIEP), Hungarian National Freedom Party (MNS); Italy: Italian Social Movement/National Alliance (MSI/AN), Lega Nord (LN); Netherlands: Center Party (CP), Center Democrats (CD), List Pim Fortuyn (LPF); Sweden: Sweden Democrats (SD), National Democracy (ND); Switzerland: Automobile Party (APS), Swiss Democrats (SD), Swiss People’s Party (SVP), Ticino League. * Excluding AN, but including Lega Nord, Mussolini, Rauti, MS-FT. Sources: Minkenberg 2003a; Minkenberg and Perrineau 2007; Veugelers and Magnan 2005.

fall into two categories. In four of them (Austria, Belgium, Denmark and France), right-wing party strength can clearly be considered to have been strong and consolidated in the 1990s. This is also true for Italy and Norway (cf. Minkenberg 2003a). The opposite was the case in Germany, Sweden, Great Britain and the Netherlands (with the rise of the Dutch List Pim Fortuyn in 2002 being a flash phenomenon; see below). The democratic “newcomers” Spain and Portugal may be added here as well (cf. ibid.; the classification by Veugelers and Magnan 2005, with data for 1982–1995; and Carter 2005: 4–5, with data for 1979–2003). Finally, in some countries, support for parties of the radical right slumped after 2000 and, especially, after the 2004 European elections. This was most notable in Austria, where the participation of the Freedom Party in government evidently led to widespread disillusionment among the voters, but also in Italy, where the Alleanza Nazionale was reinvented under Fini’s leadership as a nationalist and conservative party (cf. Ignazi 2003;
Tarchi 2003). In smaller countries, such as Denmark and Belgium, the radical right continued to attract growing support in the new millennium.

Explanatory models for these variations usually include various demand-side and supply-side factors as well as the relevant political opportunity structures. Prominent supply-side factors include the type of electoral system, the structure of party competition and the radical-right parties’ ideology, organization and leadership. The demand side typically includes trends in public opinion or shifts in voter preferences (cf. Carter 2005; Kitschelt 2007; Mudde 2007; Rydgren 2007). Here, however, the focus is not only on the parties of the radical right, but also on other formations and their relationship to these parties. Hence, a slightly different set of factors is identified that encompasses the factors noted above in addition to the cultural context for the mobilization of the radical right—including demographic, immigration-related and religious characteristics—as they are often deemed to have specific effects on the mobilization (cf. Betz 1994; Carter 2005).

A country’s political culture must also be considered as a general factor or cultural context for the radical right. In a comprehensive sense, political culture is the “subjective dimension” of politics; it gives meaning to political action by connecting symbols and political meanings. Fundamentally, the effects of political culture can be inferred in the form and content of politics. This means that political culture comprises, on the one hand, the style of politics and the conflict pattern with respect to political norms in the sense of Almond and Verba (1963) and, on the other hand, underlying values and beliefs of legitimacy of political action.

Two central aspects demonstrating the effect of political culture are important for comparative investigations of the mobilization conditions of the radical right: (1) the political space in which the radical right can operate as well as the ideological and strategic options arising from it; and (2) the political language or speech of a society and the framing of problems stemming from it, in particular with questions pertaining to the nation as a whole (cf. Minkenberg 2003a). With regard to the latter, nation type or national identity is a major cultural frame of reference for the radical right as it is defined here. For the group of countries under consideration—and following the vast literature on national identity and nationalism (cf., e.g., Brubaker 1992)—one can distinguish, on the one hand, between a political nation type (e.g., those in Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands) and, on the other hand, between an ethnocultural nation type (e.g., those in Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Hungary).

A related set of factors concerns the inflow and presence of immigrants into these countries and the impact this has on nationhood and nationalism. For our purposes, both the share of the foreign-born population and the net migration flows are indicative. Table 2 presents data from EU statistical sources.

From these data, it is clear that there are significant differences in the countries included here when it comes to the size and proportion the foreign-born population is of the entire population (numbers here include EU nationals), with Austria topping the list in total numbers, followed by Germany and Sweden. By contrast,
Table 2: Population data in selected European democracies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population in January 2005 (in thousands)</th>
<th>Size of foreign-born population in 2005 (in thousands)</th>
<th>Foreign-born population as % of total population</th>
<th>Net migration rate per 1,000 persons</th>
<th>Number of asylum applications, 1989–1998 (in thousands); in parenthesis: rate as % of population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU-25</td>
<td>459,488</td>
<td>39,790</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>n. d. (1.6 for EU-11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>8,207</td>
<td>1,234</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>131 (1.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>10,446</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>153 (1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>5,411</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>71 (1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>60,561</td>
<td>6,471</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>327 (0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>82,501</td>
<td>10,144</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1906 (2.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>10,098</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>17 (0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>58,462</td>
<td>2,519</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>54 (0.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>16,306</td>
<td>1,638</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
<td>296 (1.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>9,011</td>
<td>1,117</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>265 (2.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>7,415</td>
<td>1,660</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>n. d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>60,035</td>
<td>5,408</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>315 (0.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Münz 2006; Mudde 2007: 212.

Germany joins the Netherlands and Denmark with a low level of net migration, whereas Austria, Italy and Switzerland are clearly above the average EU level. Similar variations exist with regard to the rate of asylum applications. In this case, Germany and Sweden top the list, while Italy and Hungary are at the bottom. In both instances—that is, the share of foreigners and the rate of asylum applications—the relationship between these rates and the electoral support for the radical right is unclear (see Table 1).

In addition to immigration patterns, religious patterns have been identified as cultural constraints or opportunities for right-wing radical mobilization. On the one hand, part of the literature often refers to the constraining effect Catholicism had on the appeal of interwar fascism in European populations while—at least in the case of Germany—Protestant milieus were seen as more receptive (cf., e.g., Lipset 1963; Falter 1991). On the other hand, it has been argued that, during the interwar period, Catholic countries were more susceptible to fascist promises, with Germany
being a notable exception (cf. Bruce 2003). Either way, the radical right’s use of cultural codes of “otherness” can be tied to the nexus between nation-building or national identity and the dominant religious traditions, and these interconnections should be tested for their implications for ideological and organizational variants of the radical right in each country. The role of religion acquires additional relevance through recent trends of religious pluralization and fragmentation, which can also feed into the radical right’s framing of “us” versus “them.” Table 3 shows the dominant religious traditions in selected European countries as well as some significant trends in cultural pluralism.

Table 3: Trends in religious composition (ca. 2000) and pluralism in selected European democracies (ca. 1980–2000) (in percent); average jump in pluralism value for EU-10 plus Switzerland (minus Hungary): 0.15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Catholics</th>
<th>Protestants</th>
<th>Orthodox</th>
<th>Jews</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Other/None</th>
<th>Pluralism Index, ca. 1980</th>
<th>Pluralism Index, ca. 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As in most Western democracies today, Islam is the third- or even second-largest religious community (Minkenberg 2007: 898f.). All Western European countries in our sample belong to this group. In historically homogenous Belgium, France and Denmark, Islam is the second-largest religion today; and, in Austria, Muslims are on the verge of overtaking Protestants. Not surprisingly, Islam is almost invisible in Hungary. Moreover, from around 1980 until around 2000, religious pluralism
increased in all European democracies (except Sweden). In countries with a longer history of immigration and/or biconfessionalism (e.g., the Netherlands, Britain, Switzerland and Germany), religious pluralism has increased from an already high level. In the other western European countries—all of which are traditionally Catholic, except Denmark—the jump started from a much lower level and has been particularly pronounced.

Against this backdrop (and this is another contextual dimension), Europeans have shown widespread, although not majoritarian, intolerance for immigrants and minorities and resistance to immigration and a multicultural society. Although with significant variations, numerous public-opinion surveys document a stable level of anti-immigrant sentiments throughout the European Union. For example, a 2000 Eurobarometer survey showed substantial cultural intolerance—or xenophobia—across EU member states (cf. EUMC 2001). In Greece as well as, to a lesser extent, in Belgium, Denmark, France and Germany, levels of intolerance clearly exceeded the EU average. Austria and the United Kingdom were close to the EU average, while Sweden and Finland were below it. However, despite some congruence in the cases of Belgium, France and Denmark, underlying attitudes of intolerance are not associated with voting for right-wing or far-right parties, (ibid.: 20–23; Table 1, above; Minkenberg 1998: ch. 5; Norris 2005: 180). Likewise, a survey by the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia covering the period 1997–2003 (see Figure 1) shows that resistance to a multicultural society lies at or above the EU mean in Greece, Belgium, (eastern and western) Germany, Austria and Italy. Spain, Portugal, Ireland, the Netherlands and Great Britain, on the other hand, are below average in resistance to multiculturalism. With the exception of Germany and France, resistance to a multicultural society is strongest in Catholic societies in which Islam is also strong. This is particularly surprising in France given the fact that that country’s elites have opposed multiculturalism and the major parties have attempted to co-opt the radical right.

A final set of contextual factors includes those that are labeled structural or supply-side variables in the literature (cf. Carter 2005; Minkenberg 1998; Mudde 2007; Rydgren 2007). Political opportunity structures can be understood generally as “consistent, but not necessarily formal or permanent, dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure” (Tarrow 1994: 85). Among these formal institutions, the role of authority—in particular, the role of the state—and the strategies of established elites and parties must be counted. The nature of access to the political system stands at the center of consideration, along with formal institutions, such as universal suffrage and other rules, the forms of political participation and the possibility of running for public office. Generally, a decisive role is conceded to electoral laws governing the formation of new parties with respect to the development of party systems as well as to the chances of establishing and prospects for the success of movements (Kriesi et al. 1995: 29–30).

However, the discussion of the significance of electoral laws has made it clear
that the effects of the electoral system open up opportunities for new—and, in this case, radical right-wing—parties in an indeterminate way and that they often do so only in cooperation with other factors, such as political culture, major cleavages and elite behavior (cf. Beyme 1984: 325–330; Kitschelt 1995; Carter 2005). For this reason, attention should also be paid to specific aspects of institutional structures, such as the state in its entirety, the structure of party competition and major trends of convergence or polarization, as well as to the degree to which parties are open or closed to responding to demands from outside the system (cf. Tarrow 1994: 92; Rucht 1994: 308–309).

Table 4 provides an overview of the structural features of the 11 countries that are seen as particularly relevant in the literature. In the domain of the electoral system, only two of the western European countries employ a majoritarian (i.e., “first past the post”) system and, in France, it is a qualified version with the two-round winner-takes-all formula. Repressive state and party strategies toward the radical right can be found mostly in Germany, the Netherlands (only until the late 1990s) and Sweden, but Germany stands out as the most “militant democracy.” Trends of convergence (for this, cf. Kitschelt 1995; Carter 2005) between the major parties are mostly found in Austria and Belgium and, to a lesser extent, in the Netherlands and Switzerland. These are also the countries, along with Germany,
Table 4: Elements in political opportunity structures in selected European democracies in the 1980s and 1990s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Electoral system</th>
<th>State and party strategies toward the radical right</th>
<th>Trend in major party competition</th>
<th>New Politics cleavage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>proportional</td>
<td>latitude</td>
<td>convergence</td>
<td>strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>proportional</td>
<td>repression</td>
<td>convergence</td>
<td>strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>proportional</td>
<td>latitude</td>
<td>(polarization)</td>
<td>strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>majoritarian</td>
<td>(latitude)</td>
<td>polarization</td>
<td>weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>proportional</td>
<td>repression</td>
<td>convergence</td>
<td>strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>proportional</td>
<td>latitude</td>
<td>polarization</td>
<td>weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>proportional</td>
<td>latitude</td>
<td>polarization</td>
<td>strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>proportional</td>
<td>repression</td>
<td>(polarization)</td>
<td>strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>proportional</td>
<td>repression</td>
<td>(polarization)</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>proportional</td>
<td>latitude</td>
<td>convergence</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>majoritarian</td>
<td>repression</td>
<td>polarization</td>
<td>weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


that are characterized by a consociational or consensus type of democracy in which compromise and the inclusion of many actors are the hallmark of decision-making (cf. Lijphart 1999). Finally, a new post-industrial or post-materialist cleavage (i.e., “New Politics”) can be identified in several countries, especially those with an above-average share of post-materialists as well as strong Green parties and new social movements (cf. Dalton 2006: 88). On the other hand, this cleavage is virtually absent in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe.

Comparison and conclusion

How do these cultural and structural patterns inform the patterns of radical-right party and movement strength? Table 5 summarizes the findings discussed earlier and indicates that some countries have strong radical right-wing parties and a weak movement sector, while others have weak radical right-wing parties and a strong movement sector (cf. also Minkenberg 2003a; Koopmans et al. 2005). Certain contextual factors, such as conventional religious traditions and the presence of Islam, seem to have a bearing on this pattern. Four of the six cases in which radical right-wing parties scored high in the 1990s are Catholic countries; or, seen from another
Table 5: Party strength and movement strength of the radical right and context factors in selected European democracies (ca. 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a</td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>1c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>0.5 1 0.5 1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>0.5 1 0 1 1</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>0.5 0 0.5 1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>1 0 0.5 0 1</td>
<td>1 0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>0 1 n.d. 1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>0 0 0 1 1 1 1 0 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>1 0 n.d. 1 0 0 0 1 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>0 0 1 0 0 0 0.5</td>
<td>1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Germany</td>
<td>0.5 1 1 0.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Germany</td>
<td>1 0 1 0 1 0 0</td>
<td>1 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1 0.5</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1 1 0 0 0.5</td>
<td>0.5 0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Context Factors
Factor 1: Culture
1a: nation type—ethnocultural nation 1, political nation 0
1b: share of foreign-born population—high 1, low 0
1c: level of resistance to multicultural society—above EU level 1, below EU level 0
1d: predominant religious tradition—Catholic 1, Protestant 0
1e: Islam—second-largest religion 1, other 0

Factor 2: Structure
2a: cleavages—convergence 1, polarization 0
2b: cleavages—strong New Politics voting 1, weak 0
2c: political opportunity structures—state and parties’ latitude 1, exclusion/repression 0
2d: political opportunity structures—PR electoral system 1, majority 0

Sources: see Tables 2–4 and Figure 1; cf. individual country chapters in Minkenberg 2008.

angle, in no Catholic country do radical-right parties score below-average results. Other than Norway, by the end of the 1990s, Denmark was the only Protestant country to have joined the group, and Switzerland joined as a religiously mixed country. Moreover, in all countries where Islam is the second-largest religion, the radical-right parties garner strong support.

One might argue that the combination of a homogenous Catholic or Protestant tradition and the prominence of Islam increases the resonance and mobilization of
the radical-right parties. The Catholic tradition has been characterized by religious homogeneity or even monopoly, while Catholic dogma has a holistic outlook, as opposed to the more individualistic Protestant traditions (cf. Bruce 2003). A particularly strong Islamic presence may challenge this homogeneity more than it would Protestant or more pluralistic traditions. In fact, in the early 1980s, no strong radical-right parties emerged in countries with a relatively high level of pluralism except in Switzerland.

At the same time, however, this clearly does not apply to movement mobilization. Indeed, Catholic countries exhibit comparatively weak radical-right movements or—as far as available comparable data shows—racist violence. These seem highest in Protestant countries. In the domain of cultural factors, the role of national identity, the proportion of the foreign-born population and resistance to multiculturalism appear less significant than religion. For example, party strength is high regardless of whether the proportion of foreigners is moderate or high (cf. also Mudde 2007: 212–224).

Structural variables seem to have, at best, weak effects in this classification. Our overview confirms the finding of others that the type of electoral system seems only marginally relevant (cf. Kitschelt 1995; Carter 2005: 157). The convergence of established parties can claim more explanatory power (Carter 2005: 211), but it may be more relevant for the breakthrough of radical right-wing parties than for their consolidation (cf. Kitschelt 2007; Schain et al. 2002). The role of other state and political actors appears to be more significant. Where these actors have shifted from excluding the radical right to partially collaborating with them, radical right-wing parties seem to have benefited (cf. Minkenberg 2009). Where established parties have brought the radical right into government, however, as was the case in Austria and (briefly) in the Netherlands, the radical right has suffered. On the other hand, when established parties and the state have taken a rigid stand against the radical right, radical right-wing parties have not flourished. Instead, the movement sector has developed—even in the face of the state’s repertoire of repression.

All this reinforces the insight that the organizational strength of the radical-right parties (along with their degree of fragmentation and level of violence) and the success of their electoral mobilizations seem conditioned less by popular demand and more by the responses of their political environment, particularly the established parties and the state. This type of analysis, however, is still in its infancy. More data—and especially comparable data—are needed, especially when examining (successful) ways of dealing with the varieties of the radical right in Europe.
Bibliography

Koopmans, Ruud, Paul Statham, Marco Guigni and Florence Passy. Contested Citi-


Executive summary

The radical right in Austria has some specific qualities: As a result of the role Austria has played in the rise and the rule of the NSDAP in Europe, the Austrian far right has always to be observed regarding its connection with the Nazi past. As the Austria government and the Austrian legal system—partly responding to international expectation and pressure—singles out Nazism as a kind of “defining other” of Austria’s democracy, the legal and official attitude in Austria is strongly and consistently against the Nazi variety of the far right.

This does not mean that neo-Nazi groups and activities don’t exist in Austria. But it does imply that this hard-core phenomenon of the radical right is comparatively isolated and weak: The résumé of Austria’s fight against the radical right as far as it can be identified as rooted more or less openly in Nazism can be called rather good.

But the field in which Austria’s radical right should be observed, analyzed and fought is not so much the hard-core neo-Nazi elements. It is a rather broad gray zone between legitimate democratic attitudes and activities and antidemocratic elements who—especially not in their own perception—may not be called extremist; they have negative stereotypes of Jews and Africans, display emotional aggressiveness against migrants, and show a tendency to play down some of the specific qualities of Nazism—beyond the usually broadly condemned crimes against humanity.

In the political arena, this is expressed especially by the tradition of the pan-German camp, now organized in two parties—the FPÖ (Freedom Party of Austria) and the BZÖ (Alliance for Austria’s Future): The former is considered to be more radical; the later is seen as being more interested in being respected by the Austrian mainstream. Different from other European countries like Belgium and France, there is not an effective “cordon sanitaire” between the political center (represented by the moderate right ÖVP—Austrian People’s Party and the moderate left SPÖ—Social Democratic Party of Austria). And different from Germany, FPÖ and BZÖ cannot be considered to be pure neo-Nazi parties. For that reason, the Austrian legal instruments (like the “Prohibition Status,” directed against the renewal of Nazism) cannot be used against those parties that are combining legitimate populism and radical-right elements.

The absence of a “cordon sanitaire” concept leads to an acceptance of possible
alliances between the center and the far-right parties—as can be seen in the two coalition governments between SPÖ and FPÖ (1983–1986) and ÖVP and FPÖ (and BZÖ) (2000–2006). For that reason, the government institutions are rather keen to observe and report hard-core neo-Nazi activities, and Austrian’s Criminal Law provides for harsh penalties for certain offenses, such as Holocaust denial. But the government institutions are not really able to take care of the gray zone—because certain elements of the gray zone have become intermingled with the government. This is a result of alliances, but also the consequence of electoral strategies which—in doubt—do not hesitate to pander to specific (e.g., anti-immigrant) prejudices.

The consistent legal doctrine of defining Austria’s democracy as a kind of antithesis to Nazism is the reason why all data—provided by the Austrian government and by Austrian NGOs—demonstrate a rather weak hard-core right wing. But the data—especially those collected by NGOs—also demonstrate the significance of certain radical-right attitudes and acts in the gray zone.

For that reason, the consequence is not so much the cry for new laws and new police activities. The consequence is the demand for educational strategies in the broadest sense—for schools and for other socialization actors. If the weak point in Austria’s strategy against the radical right is the acceptance of certain prejudices and sentiments linked at least indirectly to the far right, whose hard-core elements are systematically persecuted by the Austrian government, these prejudices and sentiments must become less acceptable. They should be excluded consistently from being accepted by the political mainstream—and, therefore, the “populist” incentive to pander to these prejudices and sentiments has to end. But it will not end as long as electoral designs of maximizing votes tell the political actors another story.

Structure of the radical right

History

The radical right in Austria has to be seen in direct connection with the history of the 20th century’s first half and with particular roots going back into the 19th century. In the 1920s and 1930s, two different variations of antidemocratic traditions were competing for the pole position within the right-wing milieu in Austria. Both can be called—with different meaning and different weight—radical right:

– The antiparliamentary faction within the mainstream center-right party, the Christian Social Party. This party, articulating the interests of the Catholic-conservative “camp,” was the political arm of what has been called “Political Catholicism.” In a country with an overwhelming Catholic population, this “camp” and its party could speak for about 40 percent of the electorate between 1918, when the Austrian republic was founded, and 1933/34, when it ended in spiralling toward civil war.
- The Austrian Nazi movement (the Austrian NSDAP), offspring of the extreme anti-Semitic and pan-German movement established by Georg von Schönerer at the end of the 19th century, favored the full integration of Austria into Germany after the Nazi party took over Germany in 1933. Differently from the right-wing tendencies within the Catholic-conservative camp, this brand of right wing extremism did not even claim to stand for a new variety of democracy. Although, in 1930, it was still a rather small movement, the Austrian NSDAP grew fast, especially after the beginning of Hitler's rule in Germany. As there were no free elections in Austria after 1933, the strength of this movement cannot be easily quantified. But due to the attractiveness the party had beginning in 1933 at the cost of the Catholic-conservative and the socialist camp, it can be estimated that the Austrian Nazi party had the sympathy of at least one-third of the population in 1938.

The first variety has been responsible for the establishment of the semi-fascist authoritarian regime, which—backed by Mussolini's Italy and the Catholic Church—ruled Austria between 1934 and 1938. This tradition can be called "radical right" insofar as—despite an important democratic tradition of a significant part of the Catholic-conservative camp—it was responsible for destroying democracy and following fascist tendencies, as was the case in many especially Central-Eastern European countries.

The second variety was responsible for cooperating with the German Nazi government against Austria's independence, for instigating Austria's occupation and for the active participation of Austrians in World War II as well as in the Holocaust. After 1945, the at least potentially radical-right tendencies within the Catholic-conservative camp were reined in by the democratic role the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), the successor of the Christian Social Party that articulated the interests of the Catholic-conservative camp, was able to play in the Second Republic of Austria. The ÖVP, in cooperation with the social-democratic SPÖ, defined the position of the newly established democratic Republic of Austria. Since this republic portrayed itself—in correspondence with the Allies' Moscow Declaration of 1943—as Nazi Germany's victim, and since—for understandable reasons—the tradition of the Nazi party was seen from the experience of an aggressive war and the Holocaust, radical-right tendencies in Austria became more or less synonymous with Nazi tendencies—whether in the form of explicit neo-Nazism or in the indirect form of the continuation of qualities specifically linked to Nazism, such as outspoken anti-Semitic or other "racial" prejudices.

For that reason, the nationalistic element—part of the Austrian radical-right as it is of any other radical-right group in Europe—is not Austrian-oriented but, rather, German-oriented. Although it is not necessarily (at least not any longer) against Austria's independence, the most intense part of the Austrian radical right follows the concept of a German, and not an Austrian, nationalism. As pan-Germanism in Austria defines Austria as a German state and the Austrians part of the German