EUROPE – NO, THANKS?

STUDY ON THE RISE OF RIGHT-WING AND NATIONAL POPULIST PARTIES IN EUROPE

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Print | ID: 53323-1402-1006

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SUMMARY

Right-wing and national populist parties have managed to establish themselves as relevant political players throughout virtually the whole of Europe.

This rise of right-wing and national populists has come at the expense of all traditional parties.

The current strength of right-wing and national populist parties is a result of them supplementing their 'core themes' of xenophobia and critique of the elites with a simple mobilising message, namely 'no to this Europe'.

Right-wing and national populist parties are influencing established parties in Europe, their positions are having an effect on other parties, and their presence is bringing about lasting change in the party-political landscape in many European countries. Furthermore, the harsh demands of right-wing and national populists are putting pressure on national and European policy in a host of states.

None of the strategies adopted so far by the mainstream parties in their dealings with right-wing and national populists—strict demarcation, partial approximation, toleration for minority governments and cooperation within coalitions—has proved to be a panacea.

Five conditions are crucial to the formation and growth of right-wing and national populist parties:

1. a critical mass of disillusioned floating voters,
2. immigration and criticism of Europe as decisive issues in public debates,
3. the openness of key parts of the media to extremely condensed and highly simplified representations of the EU and immigration issues,
4. the institutional conditions of the electoral system being conducive to success for new parties, and
5. the existence of a charismatic leader and/or 'political entrepreneurs'.

The results of the study yield the following recommended strategies for mainstream parties in Europe to combat right-wing and national populist tendencies:

- Complex political issues should always be explained in a credible and understandable way.
- The benefits of European integration for citizens should be communicated clearly and comprehensibly.
- The myths created by the empty political slogans of right-wing and national populist parties should be debunked by directly addressing the issues concerned.
- Social exclusion should be combated effectively.
- A consistent approach must be taken to fighting crime, with a focus on protecting the victims.
- The legislation in force regarding the regulation of immigration and integration should be applied and enforced consistently.
- Successes in terms of euro stabilisation and the value of the required reforms should be clearly highlighted.

1. INTRODUCTION

'[Europe] is of interest because I fight it with all my strength'. 'The EU ... is a gigantic undemocratic ... monster'. 'Anybody wanting to lead Europe ... into the future ... must ultimately go back down the road towards national currencies'. 'Whenever the EU is involved, you get problems'.[1] All these quotations are from politicians who are currently enjoying a renewed upturn in popularity in Europe: French National Front (*Front National*, FN) leader Marine Le Pen, who at the most recent presidential elections won close to 20% of the vote and a few weeks later took her party back into the National Assembly after an absence of nearly 20 years; Geert Wilders, whose Party for Freedom (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*, PVV), in spite of its defeat in the parliamentary elections in May 2012, is now leading the opinion polls in the Netherlands; the leader of the Freedom Party of Austria (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*, FPÖ) Heinz-Christian Strache, who was hailed as the true winner of the National Council elections in late September 2013, when he restored the FPÖ to almost its former strength; and Timo Soini, whose party The (True) Finns (*Perussuomalaiset*, PS)[2] quadrupled its score to just below 20% in the most recent parliamentary elections by taking a Eurosceptic line.

In other countries too—such as Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Slovakia, Italy, Greece and the United Kingdom—critics of Europe, and in particular of the EU, are finding an audience. In Norway—a country at the heart of Europe despite not being an EU Member State—the right-wing populist Progress

Party (*Fremskrittspartiet*, FrP) entered government following elections in the late summer of 2013. A striking number of these parties, although not all, were originally anti-immigrant, xenophobic and anti-Islam, or, in short, right-wing populist. To this core policy base they have tacked on Eurosceptic and EU-sceptic positions—and become highly successful in the process.

The EU is obviously a powerful bogeyman. At the most recent European Parliament elections in 2009, the anti-European United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) won close to 17% of the vote in the UK, making it the second biggest party, ahead of the Labour Party. At the local elections in May 2013, UKIP made considerable gains, taking almost 150 of the local council seats that were being contested. Geert Wilders, who forced fresh elections in the Netherlands by his refusal to accept the cuts dictated by Brussels, said in a televised debate with incumbent Prime Minister Mark Rutte: 'Obama had the slogan "Yes, we can"; yours, Mr Rutte, is "Yes, we pay"' (YouTube.com 2012).

Nowhere does the 'vertical' dimension of right-wing populism, for example the demarcation between 'us', the 'ordinary, honest, "little" people', and 'them up there', the 'distant establishment', come to the fore so clearly as in discussions about the EU and its procedures and institutions. Geert Wilders, for example, labelled the salaries received by European Commissioners, whose monthly income he put at €27,000 (YouTube.com 2012), as 'perverse profiteering', while the slogan 'Paid enough', referring to the EU, the European Stabilty Mechanism and crisis-hit euro countries, has proven a very catchy one for Heinz-Christian Strache and his FPÖ.

While Euroscepticism is not a new phenomenon, the scale and success of the opponents of the EU are striking, with right-wing and national populist parties leading the way. With Europe, or more precisely the European Union and its institutions, they have found a new way of mobilising people and have reoriented the focus of their rhetoric accordingly. Xenophobia and Islamophobia on the one hand, and criticism of elites on the other, have been joined by a new, equally loathed enemy, namely Europe (see, for example, Lynch et al. 2012).

What implications does the success of right-wing populists have for further European integration? Can simplistic criticism of Europe and straightforward broad-brush 'responses' such as 'Paid enough' and 'Out

of the euro' win elections—especially European Parliament elections, in which voters tend to experiment more than in national parliamentary elections?

These and other questions form the focus of this brochure. It is based on a larger-scale study conducted by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in conjunction with the Centre for European Studies (CES) into right-wing and national populism in Europe (Grabow and Hartleb 2013a). As well as an introduction to the topic, a comparison of right-wing and national populism in Western and Eastern Europe, and a description of the cross-border cooperation between right-wing populist parties, this work took a closer look at the situation in 12 European countries. One finding of the study was that prejudices about the European institutions—now being skilfully exploited by right-wing populist parties, which used to concentrate almost exclusively on xenophobia—are falling on fertile ground. To their familiar anti-immigration and xenophobic positions, European right-wing populists have very successfully added Eurosceptic and anti-European rhetoric. They criticise the decision-making processes of the political elites, portrayed as light years away from the lives of 'ordinary people', as well as the contents of the decisions taken. In particular, the bailouts given to the beleaguered national economies of southern Europe have provided welcome fodder for the arguments of right-wing populists. As long as this problem persists and as long as the EU is perceived as a 'spaceship of elites' floating in the ether or as a 'bureaucratic monster', the right-wing populists will continue to find sufficient ammunition for their Eurosceptic and even anti-European propaganda.

Another of the study's findings was that the Eurosceptics' demands radiate out to the mainstream parties and influence their positions. Without Nigel Farage's UKIP, David Cameron would probably not have had to pledge a referendum on the UK remaining in the European Union; without The (True) Finns, the National Coalition Party (*Kansallinen Kokoomus r.p.*, KOK.) would presumably not be so nervous about further bailouts for crisis-hit eurozone neighbours; and without Geert Wilders' PVV there might still be a strong Christian Democratic party in the Netherlands.

This paper concludes with some ideas about how Christian Democratic and conservative parties in particular can respond to these right-wing populist challengers, with a view to halting or reversing their growth. First though, we take a look at the current situation of right-wing populists in Europe and then set out the key characteristics, mobilising issues and mobilisation strategies, and the conditions underlying the formation of right-wing populist parties.

1| *Le Pen in Euronews (2011); Wilders (2013); Strache in Pressestunde (2013); Soini in Raunio (2012 and 2013). Timo Soini used this election campaign slogan on more than one occasion—first in 2006 and then—with greater success—in 2009.*

2| *The party changed its English name from 'the True Finns' to 'The Finns' in August 2011 in order to demonstrate an even closer bond with 'ordinary people'. Indeed, the translation of its Finnish name Perussuomalaiset means exactly this, that is, the 'ordinary Finns' (Raunio 2012, 4).*

2. RIGHT-WING AND NATIONAL POPULIST PARTIES IN EUROPE

After an initial flare in the 1970s, right-wing populist parties flourished between the mid-1980s and the 1990s, growing not only in number but also in size and influence. Thus, in Austria, Belgium, France, Italy, Switzerland, Norway and—despite some ups and downs of the Danish Progress Party (*Fremskridtspartiet*) until it was replaced by the more successful Danish People's Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*) in 1995—in Denmark, too, right-wing populist parties entered national parliaments or increased the number of parliamentary seats they held. This success was based on refreshed and radicalised propaganda that particularly emphasised the issues of immigration and 'foreign infiltration', and combined them with claims that immigrants were abusing the welfare state or posed a threat to the cultural identity of the country in question (Taggart 2000, 95; see also Scharenberg 2005).

Moreover, right-wing populists attacked the established democratic parties, whom they accused of being self-centred and remote from the lives of 'ordinary citizens', and claimed that the political establishment only operated in cosy, insular circles. It is no wonder that right-wing populist parties emerged mainly in countries with a consensus-based political system (Lijphart 1999), since it was precisely this consensus among the elite that the populists were criticising. What all these parties had in common in the first instance was their critical attitude towards immigration (Hartleb

2004; Scharenberg 2005; Bornschier 2011), which gave them a reputation as anti-immigration parties, although some of them, like the Northern League (*Lega Nord*, LN) in Italy and the Flemish Interest (*Vlaams Belang*, VB) in Belgium, also used separatism as a sub-form of exclusionary mobilisation ('us against them').

Table 1 Countries with relevant[1] right-wing populist parties and their electoral results since the mid-1990s

Country	Party/parties (with founding year)	Electoral results, in per cent of votes cast (year of election in brackets)						Best result*
Austria	Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ, 1956)	21.9 ('95)	26.9 ('99)	10 ('02)	11 ('06)	17.5 ('08)	20.6 ('13)	J (2000–05)
	Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ, 2005)	-	-	-	4.1	10.7	-	J (2005–07)
Belgium	Flemish Interest** (VB, 2004)	7.8 ('95)	9.9 ('99)	…	11.6 ('03)	12 ('07)	7.7 ('10)	
Denmark	Progress Party (FRP, 1973)	6.4 ('94)	-	-	-	-	-	
	Danish People's Party (DF, 1995)	-	7.4 ('98)	12 ('01)	13 ('05)	13.9 ('07)	12.3 ('11)	T (2001–11)
Finland	The Finns*** (PS, 1995)	1.3 ('95)	1.0 ('99)	…	1.6 ('03)	4.1 ('07)	19 ('11)	
France	National Front (FN, 1972)	12.4 ('93)	14.9 ('97)	11.3 ('02)	…	4.3 ('07)	13.9 ('12)	Second round of presidential election (2002)
Italy	Northern League (LN, 1989)	8.4 ('94)	10.1 ('96)	3.9 ('01)	4.6 ('06)	8.4 ('08)	4.1 ('13)	J (2000–11)
Lithuania	Order and Justice (TT, 2002)	-	-	-	-	12.7 ('08)	7.3 ('12)	J (since 2012)
The Netherlands	List Pim Fortuyn (LPF, 2002)	-	17 ('02)	5.7 ('03)	-	-	-	
	Party for Freedom (PVV, 2004)	-	-	-	5.9 ('06)	15.5 ('10)	10.1 ('12)	T
Norway	Progress Party (FrP, 1973)	6.3 ('93)	15.3 ('97)	14.6 ('01)	22.1 ('05)	22.9 ('09)	16.3 ('13)	J (since 2013)

Country	Party/parties (with founding year)	Electoral results, in per cent of votes cast (year of election in brackets)						Best result*
Poland	Law and Justice (PiS, 2001)	-	-	9.5 ('01)	27 ('05)	32.1 ('07)	29.9 ('11)	S (2006–10)
Slovakia	Slovak National Party (SNS, 1990)	5.4 ('94)	9.1 ('98)	- ('02)	11.7 ('06)	5.1 ('10)	4.6 ('12)	
Sweden	Sweden Democrats (SD, 1988)	-	-	-	-	-	5.7 ('10)	
Switzerland	Switzerland People's Party (SVP, 1991)	14.9 ('95)	22.5 ('99)	…	26.6 ('03)	29 ('07)	26.6 ('11)	G, two seats (2003–08)
United Kingdom	United Kingdom Indepependance Party (UKIP, 1993)	-	-	-	-	-	-	Won 6.2% of the vote in the 2013 local elections held in England and Wales

Source: Authors' own compilation based on Nordsieck (2013) and Grabow and Hartleb (2013b, 14–15).
Notes:
- no seats in the national parliament or non-existent at that time
* beyond simple parliamentary representation
J = junior partner in a coalition government
S = senior partner in a coalition government, party of the prime minister
T = tolerated a minority government
G = participation in government
** 1981–2003: Flemish Bloc (VB)
*** until 1995 the Finnish Rural Party (SMP)

Right-wing populist parties enjoyed another heyday around the year 2000. In 2003, the Swiss People's Party (*Schweizerische Volkspartei*, SVP) became the strongest party in Switzerland, securing a second seat in the Federal Council, while in Austria three years earlier the FPÖ, as the second largest party, had already become the junior partner of the Austrian People's Party (*Österreichische Volkspartei*, ÖVP) in a coalition government. List Pim Fortuyn (*Lijst Pim Fortuyn*, LPF) came from nowhere in 2002 to win 17% of the vote in the Netherlands; and in the same year, the leader of the French FN, Jean-Marie Le Pen, made it into the second round of the presidential elections. At about this time, a large number of right-wing or national populist parties—some of them very short-lived—came onto the scene in the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, for example in Slovakia, Poland and Lithuania. These constant advances by right-wing populist parties led Dutch political scientist Carl Mudde to coin the term 'populist Zeitgeist' (Mudde 2004).

Right-wing populist parties have now established themselves almost everywhere in Europe as relevant political players (see Table 1) who exercise significant influence both in their respective countries and at the European level. They have also recalibrated their propaganda, which previously focused mainly on xenophobia, to include Euroscepticism—and with considerable success: criticism of EU decision-making processes in general, and of further European integration in particular; an open aversion to further financial transfers for crisis-shaken economies; and prejudice against 'too much power in Brussels' have brought the populists substantial electoral support.

2.1 DEFINITION AND CHARACTER OF RIGHT-WING POPULISM

Populism generally refers to a specific technique or style of political mobilisation, characterised by a dichotomy between, on the one hand, a party leader and the 'ordinary people', whose problems that leader purports to know and to understand and, on the other hand, the 'distant political establishment' which the populists accuse of forgetting or ignoring the everyday problems of the people (see, for example, Decker 2006, 12). Defined in this way, populist parties are primarily an expression of a formerly latent protest against grievances of any kind, such as repeated claims of mounting inequality in society, participatory deficits, the poor performance of political institutions or the relevant political players, and these players' supposed lack of knowledge about daily life. These grievances are identified, articulated and, in some cases, construed by populists and represented in a way that enables them to portray themselves as the advocate of the 'man on the street', fighting against the political establishment. They tend to provide very easy answers to complicated problems, such as 'get the criminal foreigners out'. Cas Mudde (2004, 542) refers to this type of politics as 'the politics of the *Stammtisch* (the pub)' or a communication style that is directed at the 'gut feelings' of the people (see also, Hartleb 2004, 58).

However, since this style of politics is a feature of both left-wing and right-wing populism, Hans-Georg Betz (2001) and Karin Priester (2012, 3) have suggested using the notions of *inclusion* and *exclusion* to distinguish these two kinds of populism. Taking this approach, left-wing populism is predominantly inclusionary. As well as its critique of capitalism or 'neo-liberalism' and anarchic demands for, for example, an uncondi-

tional basic income, higher taxes for the wealthy and the nationalisation of banks and key industries, left-wing populists express particular concern about the lot of the 'socially underprivileged', whom they wish to include in society through a huge redistribution of wealth and involving them directly in political and economic decision-making. Left-wing populist economic standpoints are clearly protectionist and place emphasis on state interventionism in economic planning and production. Like other populist movements, however, left-wing populists are also sceptical of European integration and the institutions of the European Union, which are seen as primarily serving the interests of capitalists and the financial markets. Although left-wing populism is often driven by charismatic leaders, especially outside Europe, it can be labelled as 'populism from or for below' (Hartleb 2004, 59).

Right-wing populism, in contrast, is exclusionary. It makes a distinction between 'us', that is, the ordinary law-abiding people of the 'heartland' or mother country, and 'them' (both the political establishment and foreigners—especially (Muslim) immigrants, asylum seekers and ethnic minorities) (Betz 1998, 4; see also Taguieff 2012). Defined in this way, right-wing populism has two dichotomous exclusionary dimensions: a *vertical* one that is directed against the 'distant' establishment and a *horizontal* one that is directed against cultural outsiders, foreigners and immigrants (see, for example, Frölich-Steffen and Rensmann 2005, 7; Bauer 2010, 7). Such groups are used by right-wing populists as the bogeymen they need to whip up either latent prejudices or real concerns among their potential followers. For instance, (Muslim) immigrants, asylum seekers and ethnic minorities are accused of undermining the country's cultural identity and of being 'social parasites' who are exploiting the welfare state without the slightest intention of taking care of themselves or of integrating into the 'host society'. According to right-wing populists, the national economy should principally serve the country in question and welfare state benefits should be reserved primarily for hard-working native citizens who, according to the populists, are left out in the cold by the failed immigration policies of persistently politically correct governments (Mudde 2007, 125, 130–3).

This kind of populism is called 'populism from above' (Hartleb 2004, 59) because of the important role played by political 'lone fighters' or political entrepreneurs in this regard. Right-wing populists see themselves as advocates of national and ethnic interests, as seen, for example, in the

concept of the 'préférence nationale' from the French FN and similar rhetoric from the VB in Belgium. They mobilise support by clearly differentiating the 'natives' from other population groups, nationalities and cultures. Those who do not fit into the host society and/or who are unwilling to integrate into it and to comply with its rules will be excluded or deported. The result is more or less open racism and xenophobia, which in Western Europe is primarily directed against immigrants and Muslims, while in Eastern Europe it is Jews and Roma who are the prime targets of right-wing populist propaganda.

Because of the strong emphasis on the nation and nationalism, there is widespread consensus in the literature on defining these political forces as both right-wing and national populist (for example, Bayer 2002; Betz 2002; Decker 2006; Frölich-Steffen 2008). However, in contrast to far-right or extreme-right parties, right-wing and national populist parties do not have paramilitary structures, nor, as a rule, do they make use of brutal groups of thugs, although in some cases the parties do have links with neo-Fascist groups, for example in the cases of the Sweden Democrats and the FPÖ (Pelinka 2005, 96–7). Unlike far- or extreme-right parties, right-wing populists operate within a democratic, parliamentary framework, although the boundaries are fluid and not always clear-cut (Scharenberg 2005, 572; Decker 2006, 16; Hartleb 2004, 111–17). This is especially true for the FN, which was regarded by most observers as an extreme-right party, at least until Jean-Marie Le Pen handed the reins over to his daughter Marine.

The communication style of right-wing populists involves, among other things, constantly shifting the boundaries of what is acceptable by deliberately breaking taboos. 'I say what you think' was one of Jörg Haider's slogans, which demonstrated both his advocacy of 'ordinary' people's thinking and his readiness to flout conventions and steadily lower barriers by continually whipping up prejudices and unease in relation to the supposed infiltration of Austrian culture and the Austrian welfare state (Helms 1997; Betz 2002; McGann and Kitschelt 2005).

Given the similarity of their bogeymen to those of extreme-right parties and their obvious proximity to those parties in terms of their style of political mobilisation and communication, it becomes clear why the parties being studied here are called *right-wing* populist parties. This is mainly due to their propaganda being directed against foreigners, especially (Muslim) immigrants, and cultural or religious minorities.

When it comes to Europe, until recently a distinction was made between extreme-right and populist parties on the basis of their 'level of rejection' (see, for example, Taggart and Szczerbiak 2008; Hartleb 2012a; 2012b). Extreme-right parties, with their outright rejection of European integration and both its underlying principles, such as freedom, pluralism, democracy and parliamentarism, and the institutions of the European Union, were considered 'hard' Euro-critics. In contrast, right-wing populist parties were regarded as 'soft' Euro-critics. While they skilfully toyed with the boundaries of democracy and pushed at the limits, they did not fundamentally call into question the principles underlying European integration; they criticised the methods used rather than European integration itself.

This old distinction is now out of date. A number of those who were previously 'soft' Eurosceptics have developed into hard-core anti-Europeans. The quotation from Marine Le Pen cited in the Introduction ('[Europe] is of interest because I fight it with all my strength') is an example of this. However, other right-wing populists too, such as Nigel Farage, Heinz-Christian Strache and the Northern League's Roberto Maroni, are quite openly demanding their countries' withdrawal from the EU, generally by means of the very populist-seeming method of a referendum. Especially since the massive financial transfers, opposition to Europe and its immense costs has become a mantra for all right-wing populist parties.

In his widely discussed definition, Cas Mudde labelled populism as an ideology that is based on a differentiation between the 'honest, ordinary people' and the 'distant elites' (Mudde 2004, 542). In contrast to Mudde and others (for example, Decker 2004, 31; Bauer 2010, 7), we define right-wing populism solely as an exclusionary and discriminating mobilisation strategy used only to exploit and really stir up people's prejudices or concerns in order to gain public attention and win votes (for another approach see, for example, Backes and Jesse 1998, 24). Although Mudde and other scholars treat right-wing populism as a 'thin ideology', we argue that it is simply too pliable and insufficiently future-oriented to be considered an ideology.

Right-wing populists are 'nay-sayers' (Betz 2001, 398). They reject (further) immigration, pluralism, the cultural variety of modern societies and European integration. For complex questions they offer simple mobilising 'answers', with slogans such as 'Your pension or immigration? You

choose!' and 'Home, not Islam'. When entrusted with political responsibil-
ity, as, for example, in Austria between 2000 and 2002, right-wing popu-
lists have been found wanting due to the complexity of practical politics.
Nevertheless, this should not tempt democratic parties to underestimate
them, since their popularity is an indicator of social and political aberra-
tions that are a breeding ground for both populists and extremists.
Moreover, now that populists from the left and the right have made
significant inroads into the traditional left-wing and conservative elector-
ates, they must be seen as serious competitors. Before we discuss the
reasons for the formation and growth of right-wing populist parties, we
will summarise their major characteristics in the following table.

Table 2 Characteristics of right-wing populist parties

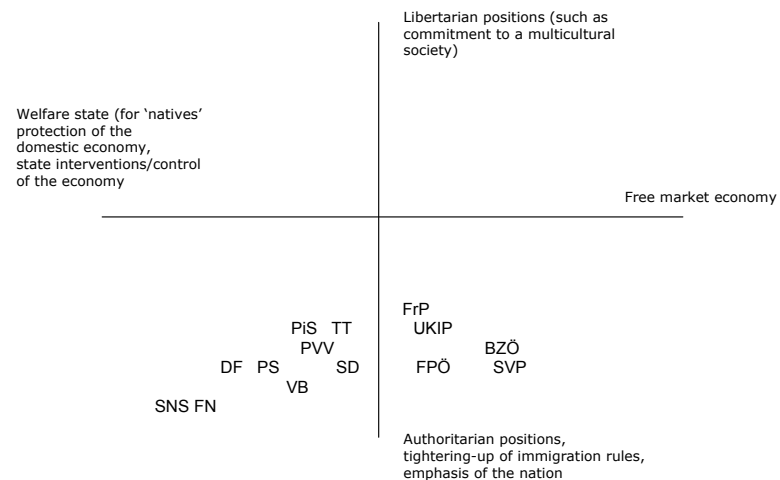|	
Bogeymen	(i) (Muslim) immigrants, asylum seekers, ethnic/religious minorities (ii) Political, economic and cultural elites (iii) EU procedures, structures and bureaucrats
'Therapy'	(i) Stop immigration, apply stricter immigration laws and welfare state benefits, deport immigrants who have a criminal record or who are unwilling to integrate (ii) Break up the the 'elite cartel' (iii) Stop further EU integration and further financial transfers
Basic political orientation	Xenophobic, anti-immigration, anti-establishment, and anti-elitist
Communication style, including campaigning	Alarmist, vociferous, exclusionary, wildly oversimplied, taboo-breaking, deliberately misleading and opaque, subtle, opportunistic, confrontational ('us against them'), negative campaigning
Internal party organisation	Led by or tailored to one leadership figure with whom the public identifies (political entrepreneur), top-down decision making

Describing the right-wing populist parties' political and cultural profile as
primarily anti-immigration and anti-establishment and also increasingly
anti-euro and anti-European is more straightforward than outlining their
economic standpoints. Here the traditional categories used for mapping
parties on a left–right spectrum barely apply, especially in the Central
and Eastern European transition countries, where right-wing populism is

directed, on the one hand, against the political, economic and cultural
elites and their supposed failures and, on the other, against ongoing
European integration, which is seen as foreign control and interference
in—or even a threat to—these countries' hard-earned sovereignty.

Although some of the parties on the right fringe of the political spectrum
were previously liberal parties that represented the interests of business
owners, craftsmen and the self-employed, especially farmers, today
right-wing populist parties represent a colourful mix of socio-economic
demands. These range from continuing liberal positions on fiscal policy
(such as tax cuts for hard-working 'ordinary' people) to welfare chauvin-
ism (welfare state benefits only for hard-working 'natives') right through
to demands for the protection of domestic goods, producers and jobs
from international competition. In many cases, this protectionism is
accompanied by a generous helping of nationalism, as demonstrated by
demands for nationalisations of banks or key industries, or for the aboli-
tion of financial transfers for crisis-hit fellow EU Member States and
eurozone members. It is not uncommon for right-wing populists to repli-
cate some of the standpoints that are otherwise a trademark of the left:
criticism of globalisation and capitalism, anti-Americanism and criticism
of Israel.[2] In other policy areas, such as the environment, energy, foreign
policy and development cooperation, they are either indifferent or even
have no opinions of their own (Chryssogelos 2011).

In spite of the lack of clarity regarding their standpoints, in this study
we have tried to map the right-wing populist parties as precisely as
possible in the political space (see figure 1, p. 20). That all the right-
wing and national populist parties are located below the horizontal axis
comes as no surprise of course. As mentioned above, they are averse
to libertarian values and the commitment to a multicultural society.
Unlike in their economic positions, the parties are very similar to each
other in their socio-political views, although even here some differences
can be seen. In the authors' view, the most 'liberal' right-wing populist
party in terms of socio-political issues is the Norwegian Progress Party,
while the French FN and the Slovak National Party (*Slovenská Národná
Strana,* SNS) are the most authoritarian of the right-wing populist
parties.

Figure 1 Right-wing populists in the political space

Source: Representation based on Grabow and Hartleb (2013b, 22) and Lynch et al. (2012, 740–4).

In contrast, on the economic axis, the SVP, the Alliance for the Future of Austria (*Bündnis Zukunft Österreich*, BZÖ) and the FPÖ, which at the same time is able to reach far into the left-wing camp, are the most liberal of the right-wing populists. Indeed, all the right-wing populists from the Alpine region still clearly exhibit the legacy of their early days as parties close to business, representing the interests of the self-employed, farmers and craftsmen, but have become increasingly radicalised over time (Scharenberg 2005, 572–3). In contrast, the FN and the SNS have the most protectionist and welfare-chauvinist positions among the right-wing populists, with the other right-wing populist parties all falling somewhere in between when it comes to economic issues.

2.2 CONDITIONS UNDERLYING THE FORMATION OF RIGHT-WING POPULIST PARTIES

If we want to identify the conditions underlying the formation of right-wing populist parties, we must consider at least five explanatory factors: first, social change; second, the behaviour of the established parties, especially with regard to immigration and EU matters; third, the specific institutional conditions in the respective countries; fourth, the democratic

parties' level of awareness of radical propaganda, in which the role of the media is of particular importance; and finally, personal factors such as the existence or non-existence of charismatic and unscrupulous politicians.[3] These factors have to come together in the right way to create the conditions in which right-wing populist parties can emerge and flourish (see, for example, Minkenberg 1998; Mudde 2007, 231).

2.2.1 Economic progress and social change

Most scholars (for example, Decker 2004, 25) see populist parties as an expression of dissatisfaction and protest among the 'victims' or 'losers' of economic progress and social change. Such victims are basically those who were laid off or simply replaced in the process of economic change and rationalisation, or who were exposed to cheaper competition, for example from an unskilled immigrant doing the same job for a fraction of the cost. However, potential voters for protest parties do not necessarily have to be personally affected to feel threatened by either economic progress or social change, or both. Usually the fear of a deterioration in their standard of living, income and social status as a result of these developments is enough.

However, the core support for right-wing populist parties has been identified by electoral research as being found among voters who report a feeling of insecurity: '[L]arge groups of the population have become insecure about various aspects of their life: identity, job, life as a whole. They seek salvation in the "simple messages" of the populist radical right, which promises a clear identity and protection against the changing world' (Mudde 2007, 223).

Voter studies have also revealed that—at aggregate level—the core vote of right-wing populist parties is principally made up of unemployed and/or poorly educated and low-skilled male blue-collar workers under the age of 40 and members of the lower middle class. Although these studies (for example, Mayer 1998, 19; Riedlsperger 1998, 35; Svåsand 1998, 85–6) cannot explain individual voters' behaviour, they do show that these groups are particularly easy to mobilise with anti-immigration rhetoric—especially on issues such as suburban crime, cultural 'infiltration' and competition for jobs, and also by pointing to the supposed failure of the established parties. While it is true to say that right-wing

populist ideas fall on fertile ground among these social groups, what is crucial is that these concerns and latent prejudices are fanned by clever rabble-rousing political entrepreneurs (see below). Without such figures, these groups' unease would very likely remain unvoiced.

2.2.2 The strategic behaviour of established democratic parties

Some authors try to lay the blame for the success of right-wing populists solely at the door of Christian Democrats or conservatives (for example, Schäfer 2010, 3). The rather crude argument they use is that through adaptation, toleration or even the formation of coalitions with right-wing populists, Christian Democrats or conservatives have strengthened the hand of right-wing populists and so helped to make them politically acceptable. Although this may hold true for individual countries for short periods, such as Austria between 2000 and 2002 and the Netherlands from 2010 to 2012, this argument does not provide a full explanation of the situation, since in many countries right-wing populists have very successfully penetrated segments of the 'old' Social Democratic electoral base, large sections of which were left politically 'homeless' when Social Democrats in Europe embarked on the course they called 'the Third Way' from the mid-1990s onwards. The resulting vacuum was then filled by right-wing populists with their demands for protection for the domestic workforce, markets and products, and their criticism of the failure of the established workers' parties. Thus, some of Europe's longest-standing Social Democratic and socialist parties were quite simply overtaken on their left flank by the right-wing populists and replaced in their role as workers' parties. For example, in Denmark, Finland and (especially) Sweden, the Social Democrats have been hit much harder than conservative or Christian Democratic parties by the successes of right-wing populist parties (Grabow and Hartleb 2013b, 26−7). However, in Norway the growth of the Progress Party was more at the expense of the liberal–conservative *Høyre*. In Belgium and the Netherlands, the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats each lost about the same share of the vote to right-wing populists. This also holds true for Austria, where the right-wing populists have now recovered once again. Only in Switzerland did the electoral gains of the right-wing populist SVP come more at the cost of the Christian Democrats, in the form of the Christian Democratic People's Party (*Christdemokratische Volkspartei*, CVP), than the left (Kriesi 2005; Lachat and Selb 2005).

However, there is no justification for claiming that one of these camps has suffered more than the other from the successes of the right-wing populists or bears sole responsibility for their advances. Nor have the right-wing populist parties completely exchanged their one-time electoral base of pro-market 'petite bourgeoisie' for the 'forgotten' working class—although in some countries right-wing populists have now become the biggest workers' parties (for example, in France and Austria). Instead, they have quite simply been successful in gaining voters from every social class. They are now firmly established among groups of voters to both the left and the right of the centre who either feel threatened by continued immigration or are fed up with the behaviour of the political establishment domestically and at the European level.

Just as there is no justification for saying that one camp bears more responsibility for the rise of the right-wing populists than another, so there is no clear link between this advance and the dominant parties in the respective country at the time (Decker 2004, 251–5). Parties of the right have grown regardless of whether Social Democrats, Christian Democrats or conservatives have been the long-standing parties of government. What has mattered is the presence of other conditions favouring these parties' growth.

Moreover, most observers agree that the steady progress of right-wing populists can be seen as a result of the declining social entrenchment of the established parties, which over time have lost their role as builders of political and social integration (Decker 2004, 28; see also Katz 1990). With the established parties only able to maintain a lasting bond with a dwindling number of their supporters, new parties are finding the conditions favourable for winning these now 'homeless' voters over to their cause.

In addition to the loosening of the bonds between the established parties and those who used to be their core voters, the specific policy behaviour of the established parties also has a bearing on the populist parties' success. Two policy areas are especially relevant here: first, the regulation of immigration and second, European integration.

Regulation of immigration

Although based on only two case studies, Germany and France, Simon Bornschier (2011) argues that the degree of cooperation between the established parties of the left and the parties of the centre in terms of the regulation of national immigration plays a crucial role in either containing or furthering the rise of right-wing populists. He considers the behaviour of the left, that is, of the socialists or Social Democrats, in the country in question to be decisive. While the French Socialists pursue an open immigration strategy with multiculturalism as a declared policy goal, the Social Democratic Party of Germany (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, SPD) has taken a more restrictive approach (Bornschier 2011, 18). According to Bornschier, while over the decades the French Socialists have lost support from their traditional voters (with some switching to the FN and others no longer voting at all) because of an overly lax stance on immigration, the SPD has managed to avoid this fate by adopting a less open immigration policy.

Similar findings were made by Frank Decker, but for a different period and for a different key player, namely the German Christian Democrats, that is, the Christian Democratic Party of Germany (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*, CDU) and the Christian Social Union in Bavaria (*Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern*, CSU) (Decker 2004, 257–8). When, in 1999, the red–green coalition of the SPD and the Greens drafted a more liberal citizenship law with simplified conditions for holding a second nationality, the Christian Democrats launched a successful campaign against it. By so doing, they secured the support of opponents of the new citizenship regulations and avoided fraying on their right flank. In other words, in Germany the regulation of immigration and citizenship is either based on consensus between the two main camps or is kept so restrictive that it prevents the emergence of an anti-immigration party. Over the years immigration regulations have become stricter, and immigration has declined. As a result of both this tightening-up and these filibustering tactics, immigration has never been an issue that potential right-wing populists could use to their advantage, and no right-wing populist party has emerged—at least not at the federal level.

In France, in contrast, the Socialists were too lax in their immigration policy for a large proportion of their voters, and therefore many of them turned to the FN, while, until 2012, the conservative camp managed to retain the support of its less immigration-friendly voters (Mayer 1998, 18–20; Bornschier 2011, 18–21).

When extrapolated to more than two countries, however, neither the regulation of immigration nor the party constellation provides an adequate explanation for the populist parties' success or failure. While in Denmark, the Netherlands (at least in Jan Peter Balkenende's first years in power), Finland and (especially) France, immigration increased under liberal–conservative, Christian Democratic or conservative governments, in Austria and Norway it continued to increase when Social Democrat-led governments took power again. However, this did not have negative consequences for the respective anti-immigration populist parties, which went on to become the third largest party in Austria and the second largest party in Norway.

Putting this rather blurred picture into a different perspective from that provided by Bornschier, we can conclude the following: regardless of which of the established parties leads the government and has responsibility for immigration policy, if immigration becomes an issue in public debate and is echoed in the media accordingly, this is exploited and fuelled by populists to benefit from the growing discomfort felt among certain groups of voters. This argument applies quite independently of both the absolute numbers of immigrants and long-term immigration rates.[4] The (True) Finns, for example, have become stronger in the last decade, in spite of immigration declining in this period. The same is true for the Dutch PVV and the FPÖ, although admittedly immigration is higher in these countries than in Finland. Nevertheless, both in the Netherlands and in Austria the anti-immigration parties have steadily increased their share of the vote, even though immigration and its visibility have fallen slightly in recent years. Despite this decline, immigration has remained an issue in public debate in the form of 'cultural infiltration' and the image of the 'lazy immigrant' who just wants to draw welfare state benefits and otherwise lives in a parallel society, following its specific conventions and rules. This form of mobilisation was, and still is, apparently enough to ensure the support of those opposing immigration, even though immigration and its related problems have become less salient, or—as is the case in Central and Eastern Europe—have been perceived rather than real.

In no other policy area does the vertical dimension of right-wing populism, that is, the demarcation between 'us', the ordinary, law-abiding people, and 'them', the distant political bureaucrats, come to the fore as much as in matters relating to Europe and its institutions and procedures. Here there are two strands to the populists' arguments. First, they like to claim that European integration represents nothing short of the wholesale handover of national sovereignty to an overbearing EU bureaucracy that regulates every aspect of life. This kind of reasoning is particularly prevalent in the Central and Eastern European transition countries, which achieved hard-won national sovereignty after decades of being satellite states of the Soviet Union. Second, the EU is held to be a costly, distant and bureaucratic elite project that spends vast sums of money on itself but does not take care of the real needs of the net contributors, that is, the people. 'Not a single cent more for any rescue packages at our expense' was one of the slogans used by Timo Soini's (True) Finns in the election campaign in the spring of 2011 (Raunio 2012, 14−17). The FN's campaign in the presidential and parliamentary elections of 2012 was similar, with Marine Le Pen repeating time and again the call made by her and her father for France to leave the eurozone. Nor are these isolated examples.

Although Euroscepticism is a trademark of all populist parties (Hartleb 2004, 132−8; Hartleb 2011), their criticism and polemic against Europe in recent years has intensified, and not only in Scandinavia and France. Unlike the purely extremist forces (hard Eurosceptics), populists are not totally against the European project (soft Eurosceptics; see Taggart and Szczerbiak 2008), but against the EU as a political system, arguing that the EU is too centralised, too bureaucratic and insufficiently concerned about national sovereignty. However, recent years have seen even the formerly soft Eurosceptics turning into hard-core critics of Europe (see above). Geert Wilders has not been alone in shifting his focus from Islam to the EU. Harsh criticism of the EU is now standard fare for all right-wing populists.

Problems with their credibility and legitimacy make the EU and European institutions easy targets for polemic and hatred. The EU is described by populists as 'an inefficient heaven for bureaucrats' and a cosy 'cartel of … elites' who have tended to come to an 'elite consensus' at the expense of both the domestic economy and the hard-working people (Raunio 2012, 9, 13, 16). Such rhetoric appears to resonate with increasing numbers of voters in the net-contributor countries—especially at a time when the eurozone is being shaken by massive financial transfers. As long as this image persists and the EU is perceived by a growing number of voters as a distant elite cartel, the right-wing and national populists will probably continue to prosper.

2.2.3 The institutional context

The third decisive factor in the success or failure of right-wing populist parties is the institutional context in which these parties operate (see also Mudde 2007, 233−7). While institutions are rarely the cause of a given situation, they may reinforce or impede a problem (North 1990). Most European countries use a system of proportional representation (PR). The exceptions are France and the United Kingdom, which have a majority voting system. PR generally makes it easier for smaller populist or other protest parties to enter parliament. The two-tiered single-member/majority system in France explains why the FN has regularly missed out on parliamentary representation over the past 20 years despite winning around 15% of the vote. In June 2012, however, it entered the National Assembly with a similar result but with victories in two constituencies and so cemented its position as the third largest political party in France. The majority voting system is also the only reason why UKIP has not managed to enter the House of Commons, the UK's lower house. However, as mentioned above, this party, with a result of 17%, became the second biggest party in the UK in the most recent European Parliament elections and enjoyed considerable success in the 2013 local elections in England and Wales (see above).

Although up to now the voting system has disadvantaged the populists in France and the UK, this is merely a technicality and does not alter the reasons why right-wing populists get elected. However, as long as the political, economic and social causes that led to the emergence of the FN and UKIP exist, these two parties will remain part of their respective countries' party-political systems.

In those countries with PR there is some variation in the electoral threshold that parties need to reach to enter parliament. At the federal level there is no such threshold in Switzerland. It stands at 0.67% of votes cast in the Netherlands, 2% in Denmark, 4% in Austria and Norway, and 5% in Germany. In this respect, the simple rule applies that the lower the threshold, the higher the chances of smaller and/or new protest parties winning parliamentary seats. However, even a high threshold of 5% is not enough to keep protest parties completely out of parliament, as shown by Slovakia and Belgium (where the 5% rule applies only at the constituency level). Such thresholds can delay populists (or extremists or other protest parties) from entering parliament under certain circumstances or even prevent this for an indeterminate period. However, this is purely a technical matter rather than a reflection of underlying voter attitudes. Nonetheless, such electoral thresholds can provide at least a partial explanation as to why right-wing populist parties have secured seats in parliaments in some countries but not in others.

2.2.4 The public arena

New parties need attention and media coverage to spread their ideas. As mentioned above, the right-wing populists' communication style is usually loud, alarmist and xenophobic, and consistently flirts with taboos. Yet right-wing populist parties do not find appropriate mass-media outlets in every country. The degree of awareness from the established democratic parties of the existence of radical political standpoints and propaganda, especially among the media, which perform a key democratic watchdog function, varies from one country to another.

Although Mudde (2007, 248) and others stress that there is insufficient empirical evidence to indicate a clear causal relationship between the right-wing populists' success and favourable and unfavourable media coverage, there is at least agreement on the fact that the public arena in some countries is more conducive to xenophobic protest parties than in others. For example, the media environment in Germany is tough for right-wing populist parties and anyone even appearing to represent right-wing views. The situation is different in Scandinavia, Belgium and the Netherlands. In these countries the media have either tended to silence right-wing populism to death (Mudde 2007, 252) or to repeat the typical slogans of these right-wing parties. The most favourable media

environments for right-wing populists are to be found in Switzerland, Italy and Austria. This enabled the rise of Jörg Haider and his FPÖ in Austria (Decker 2004, 261–3). A truly symbiotic relationship existed between Haider and the media (Mudde 2007, 249). The more the 'elite media' tried to put him down, the more popular he became among the 'ordinary people'. The *Kronenzeitung* tabloid newspaper constantly broadcast his xenophobic messages, allowing the FPÖ to monopolise the issues of immigration, public apathy for politics and increasingly also Euroscepticism (Decker 2004, 261–2; Mudde 2007, 250). Austria's public sphere, as in Italy, seems much less concerned by the 'shadow of history' or historical guilt than is the case in Germany (Decker 2004, 261–2). In Germany, even the tabloid press is extremely hesitant to so much as report xenophobic statements, while the reluctance of other media to address and discuss delicate issues relating to immigration and integration sometimes borders on the hysterical. Under these conditions of almost complete stigmatisation by the media and the public arena, right-wing populists find the going much harder than in neighbouring countries. This can be seen as part of the explanation for why Germany does not have any relevant right-wing populist parties.

2.2.5 Political entrepreneurs

The high social costs of political activity and the risk of social stigmatisation may also be explanatory factors for the presence or absence of charismatic and unscrupulous political entrepreneurs, our final criterion for the growth of right-wing populist parties. Where the social costs are higher, fewer politicians may be prepared to go against the political mainstream and vice versa. However, charismatic leaders are crucial to the success of a populist party (Minkenberg 1998, 57). Individuals such as Jörg Haider, Heinz-Christian Strache, Jean-Marie Le Pen and his daughter Marine, Pim Fortuyn, Geert Wilders, Christoph Blocher and, to some extent, Timo Soini, and Eastern European party leaders such as the Kaczyński twins in Poland, and Ján Slota and Rolandas Paksas do not grow on trees, nor are they easily copied. Therefore, much of the answer to the question of why there are right-wing populist parties in some countries but not in others has to do with the existence of a charismatic leader who detects or fans public sentiment and is able to captivate people and mobilise them. However, unlike the conditions underlying the growth of right-wing populist parties discussed above, this factor resists

a systematic explanation. To a large degree, the presence of a charis-matic and unscrupulous political entrepreneur who stirs up opinion against foreigners; immigrants; asylum seekers; Muslims and their way of life; the political establishment in his or her own country and, increas-ingly, in Brussels; and who is also listened to and garners a mass follow-ing is purely down to chance. Now, although chance is anything but a satisfactory empirical justification, in combination with the other reasons we have discussed in this section it does provide quite a good explana-tion for why some countries have successful right-wing populist parties while others do not.

In the following table we summarise the conditions underlying the forma-tion and growth of right-wing and national populist parties in a formalised way. It shows that the countries with the best conditions for the estab-lishment of right-wing parties are Austria, Switzerland and Italy, followed by the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland and Slovakia. Right-wing populists have the hardest time in Germany, partly because immigration issues are less pressing there than in neighbouring Western European countries. On top of this, there is a high level of sensitivity to right-wing populism among the democratic forces, especially the media, who—mainly for historical reasons—are very alert to anything resembling right-wing rhetoric. The final decisive factor in Germany is the absence of a charis-matic political entrepreneur unafraid to mobilise the masses with simplis-tic and xenophobic propaganda.

Table 3 Conditions underlying the formation and growth of right-wing populist parties

Country	A critical mass of disillusioned floating voters	Immigration and criticism of Europe as decisive issue in public debates	Institutional conditions/ voting system	Public arena/ behaviour of the media	Existence of a charismatic leader	Total	Existence of a relevant right-wing populist party
Austria	1	1	0.75	0.75	1	4.5	Yes
Belgium	1	1	0.5	0.5	1	4	Yes
Denmark	0.75	1	1	0.5	1	4.25	Yes
Finland	0.75	1	1	0.5	1	4.25	Yes
France	1	1	0	0.5	1	3.5	Yes
Germany	0.75	0.5	0.5	0	0	1.75	No
Italy	1	0.75	0.75	1	1	4.5	Yes
Lithuania	1	0.25	0.5	1	0.75	3.5	(Yes)
The Netherlands	1	1	1	0.25	1	4.25	Yes
Norway	0.75	0.5	0.75	0.5	0.75	3.25	Yes
Poland	1	0.5	0.5	0.75	0.75*	3.5	(Yes)
Slovakia	1	1	0.5	0.75	1	4.25	Yes
Sweden	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.5	0.75	3.5	Yes
Switzerland	0.75	1	1	0.75	1	4.5	Yes

* until 2006

Notes: 0 = reason not applicable / condition extremely unfavourable to formation of a right-wing populist party; 0.25 = reason only marginally in place / condition more unfavourable than favour-able; 0.5 = reason / condition neither favourable nor unfavourable; 0.75 = reason applies / conditions more favourable than unfavourable; 1 = reason very much applies / condition highly favourable to the formation of a right-wing populist party

Source: Authors' own compilation based on Grabow and Hartleb (2013a). We have put 'Yes' in brackets for Poland and Lithuania because the populism in these countries is less xenophobic than in the other countries. For details see the relevant country studies (Wysocka 2013; Ramonaitė and Ratkevičiūtė 2013).

As a rule, the conditions underlying the formation and growth of right-wing populist parties that are outlined here still apply. The importance of some issues has even increased, in terms of both the attention paid to them and their ability to mobilise people. This is especially true of right-wing populists' criticism of Europe and the euro, enabling them to establish this as a second, equally strong pillar alongside their anti-immigration and xenophobic stances. The bailouts for beleaguered national economies in southern Europe and the decision-making pro-cesses in Brussels and Strasbourg, portrayed as light years away from the concerns of 'ordinary people', have developed into a focal issue for right-wing populists. As long as this remote and elitist image of the EU persists and as long as there is the risk of a very costly rude awakening, right-wing populists will continue to use this kind of Europe as ammuni-tion to whip up people's feelings against it. Under these circumstances, the populist virus, though not completely new, will spread further and quicker.

1| *Although in the literature 'relevance' generally means representation in the respective national parliaments (Sartori 1976, 122–3; Lijphart 1984, 115–17; 1999, 65–7), we are also including UKIP in this presentation of the situation, as it increasingly meets the second standard criterion for relevance, namely the exertion of influence on the policies of the other parties ('blackmail' poten-tial) and, in any case, it has 11 seats in the European Parliament.*

2| *One exception to this is Geert Wilders, who continually stresses his closeness to Israel. However, some commentators suspect that behind this solidarity lurks the old idea that 'my enemy's enemy is my friend' (Vossen 2011).*

3| *Apart from the last reason, these factors primarily apply to Western Europe. For Central and Eastern Europe, scholars have identified other factors that favour the formation of populist parties, for example weakening democratic structures; a loss of legitimacy of the traditional political players and parties; a high level of corruption and clientele policy and the legacy of Communism; and finally, the influence of the prospect of EU membership. For details see, for example, Hartleb (2013).*

4| *We find evidence in Central and Eastern Europe of the almost non-existent relationship between immigration, for instance numbers of immigrants, and the existence of anti-immigration parties. While there are xenophobic parties in Poland, Slovakia and Hungary, these countries scarcely have any (Muslim) immigrants. The right-wing populists there have created other 'bogeymen': ethnic minorities, especially Roma (in Slovakia and Hungary); and 'western foreign countries, 'Jewish capital' and 'Brussels fat cats' (in Poland).*

3. DEALING WITH RIGHT-WING AND NATIONAL POPULISTS

As mentioned above, the success of right-wing populists has had a negative impact on both conservative and Christian Democratic parties. While they have not all been affected to the same extent, since other parties too have suffered losses, a number of conservative and Christian Democratic parties, including the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), the Flemish Christian Democrats (*Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams*, CD&V) in Belgium, the Dutch Christian Democratic Appeal (*Christen-Democratisch Appèl*, CDA), the conserva-tive French Union for a Popular Movement (Union pour un Mouvement Populaire, UMP), the Norwegian Conservative Party (*Høyre*) and the Swiss Christian Democratic People's Party (CVP), have been hit hard by the right-wing populists' advances. However, in Denmark and Sweden, the Social Democrats have been affected more than the conservative parties by the growth of right-wing populists.

In this chapter we discuss strategies that the established mainstream parties, in particular those belonging to the European People's Party (EPP), can adopt in response to the right-wing populists. In part this will involve taking a retro-spective view as we examine response strategies that have actually been adopted. In addition, we highlight strategies that could prevent the right-wing populists from making further progress in future.

Essentially, Conservative and Christian Democratic parties have four strategies available to them for responding to right-wing populists.[1] The first is complete demarcation. This strategy, which involves isolating the right-wing populists, is usually called the cordon sanitaire. Second, they can adopt at least some of the right-wing populists' demands for their own purposes to reclaim voters who have strayed away and prevent the right-wing populists from making further gains. Third, they can govern with the support ('toleration') of the right-wing populists. Finally, they can form official coalition governments with the right-wing populists. We have witnessed all of these strategies being adopted in Europe (see Table 4).

Table 4 Responses of Christian Democratic and conservative parties to right-wing and national populist parties

Complete demarcation	Partial approxima- tion/ adoption of individual issues	Toleration by popu- list parties	Coalition
CVP, Switzerland PO, Poland KF, Denmark (since 2011) M, Sweden TS–LKD, Lithuania KOK,* Finland → SDKÙ–DS, Slovakia	UMP* **, France CONS*, United Kingdom	CDA, The Netherlands (2010–12) KF, Denmark (until autumn 2011) CD&V***, Belgium (2007-08) →	ÖVP, Austria (2000-02) Høyre,** Norway (since 2013)

Notes:
CVP = Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei (Christian Democratic People's Party), PO = Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform), KF = Konservative Folkeparti (Conservative People's Party), M = Moderata Samlingspartiet (Moderate Rally Party), TS–LKD = Tėvynės Sąjunga–Lietu- vos Krikščionys Demokratai (Homeland Union–Lithuanian Christian Democrats), KOK = Kansallinen Kokoomus (National Coalition Party), SDKÙ–DS = Slovenská Demokratická a Kresťanská Únia (Slovak Democratic and Christian Union), UMP = Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (Union for a Popular Movement), CONS = Conservative Party, CDA = Christen-Democratisch Appèl (Christian Democratic Appeal), CD&V = Christen-Democratisch & Vlaams (Christian Democratic and Flemish), ÖVP = Österreichische Volkspartei (Austrian People's Party), Høyre (Right) = Conservative Party.
→ party moving in the direction indicated, towards the next category
* on further EU integration, especially bailouts for crisis-hit countries
** on immigration
*** At the federal level there were various kinds of cooperation between the CD&V and the 'borderline case' of the New Flemish Alliance (Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie, N-VA) (Pauwels 2013; Van Hecke 2012, 54–6). At the regional level, there is a coalition between the two parties in Flanders.

While the majority of conservative and Christian Democratic parties responded from the outset with strict demarcation from the right-wing populists, some parties belonging to the EPP adopted a different strategy. The French UMP, for example, repeatedly adopted FN stances to win back voters on its right flank who were ready to switch their allegiance to the FN in order to keep that party from gaining support. The Dutch and Flemish Christian Democrats and the Danish Conservative People's Party adopted an approach whereby they were 'tolerated' by right-wing populists, while the Austrian People's Party went so far as to form a coalition government with the FPÖ from 2000 until 2002.

Furthermore, the EPP member parties' reactions have evolved over time. The pragmatic relationship between the Danish Conservatives (KF) and the populist DF cooled significantly prior to the 2011 elections, when the KF turned to a strict demarcation strategy. The Dutch Christian Democrats obviously regretted their cooperation with the PVV and also reverted—albeit much too late, as it turned out—to a demarcation strat- egy. Other conservative and Christian Democratic parties, too, are now adopting a rejectionist approach towards right-wing populists. Despite taking positions that were diametrically opposed to The (True) Finns' Eurosceptic and nationalist stances both during the election campaign and in the subsequent negotiations to form a coalition government, the Finnish National Coalition Party (KOK) has been unable to completely resist the influence of Timo Soini's party; especially with regard to the euro, and in European matters in general, the KOK has come under pressure to take more restrictive positions (Raunio 2013). We see simi- larities here with the Norwegian Conservatives, who have made conces- sions on immigration in view of the continuing success of the Progress Party (Jupskås 2013).

In order to understand the behaviour of the conservative and Christian Democratic parties, we need to examine in more detail at least three aspects. First, we need to find out whether, when such parties pursue an approximation strategy, they adopt all of the stances of the right-wing populists or only some. Second, we should investigate why some parties change their strategy for dealing with right-wing populists, and finally, we should establish whether there is a single response strategy that can be said to be effective in countering them.

To begin with the first item, if democratic parties, regardless of their actual ideological orientation, adopt ring-wing populists' demands, they run a number of severe risks. One is a potential loss of credibility, both among their own voters and with the wider public. More centrist supporters of conservative or Christian Democratic parties might be disgusted by their party switching to a very restrictive stance on asylum or immigration, or suddenly blaming ethnic minorities for all of society's ills. Moreover, swing voters who sympathise with the right-wing populists' positions are unlikely to reward these shifts with their vote anyway, preferring to stick with the genuine article, even when conservative or Christian Democratic parties adopt right-wing populist demands as their own. Nicolas Sarkozy's attempt in the 2012 presidential election campaign to portray himself as tougher than Marine Le Pen on immigration and tackling suburban crime (his 2007 campaign theme) was a complete failure. Ultimately, an approximation strategy may even result in retroactively legitimising right-wing populists' positions (Goodwin 2011, 24).

On the subject of European integration, European Christian Democrats are particularly vulnerable to attacks from right-wing populists. For decades, during which the European Union expanded without any major problems, Europe was seen as a Christian Democratic success story. Today, however—in particular since taxpayers from some countries have had to underwrite the debts of other Member States—a large proportion of the electorate has lost faith in the EU (Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 2011). Under these circumstances, today's Europe is unlikely to enjoy widespread popularity amongst the electorate.[2] Yet it would cost Christian Democrats a lot of their credibility if they were to distance themselves from the EU for strategic reasons. It is no wonder then that where a strategic change among EPP members has taken place, this has mainly involved the conservative parties, for example, the Finnish KOK, the Norwegian Høyre and the UK Conservatives, who portray themselves as Eurosceptics, or have had to do so due to the competition they face on their right flank.

Turning to our second level of analysis, there are many reasons for a chosen response strategy. In general, it can be said that if a party adapts to be more like another party or adopts a competing party's stances, it does so simply because it wants to lure voters away from that party or other parties. Adopting this strategy towards fringe parties may well have an integrating and stabilising effect on democracy, as long as it is pur-

sued from the centre of the party-political spectrum. When it comes to 'bringing in' the right-hand edge of this spectrum, the words of former German CSU leader Franz Josef Strauß still hold true that to the right of the CSU (or any other Christian Democratic or conservative party) there should be no room for any other right-wing party.

The justification for complete demarcation is usually framed in moral terms (along the lines of a pledge never to cooperate with the relevant parties). However, demarcation not only means that the populists are ignored but also that a democratic party sticks to its principles (Goodwin 2011, 24). As we mentioned above, demarcation and keeping to one's own principles are closely linked. Repeatedly explaining complex problems and unpopular decisions to voters is considerably harder than adopting the often very simple rallying cries of the populists, but a party must preserve its credibility.

During the research for this study, a representative of the Austrian People's Party told one of the authors that his party would generally require either 20 minutes or a full page in a newspaper to explain one of the complex issues surrounding the euro bailout in an even semi-comprehensible way, whereas Heinz-Christian Strache needs only two words—'Paid enough!'—to get the whole country's full attention.

'Toleration' and more official types of cooperation are based on power-related and tactical considerations, for instance when a conservative or Christian Democratic party decides to form a coalition government with populists with itself as the senior partner rather than being a junior partner in a grand coalition. Such strategies are usually justified with the argument that by taking part in government, right-wing populists can be 'demystified'. The temporary collapse of the FPÖ after two years in government appears, at first glance, to confirm this thesis. In the 2002 elections, the FPÖ's share of the vote fell dramatically from 27% in 1999 to just 10%, as they had been unable to implement any of their election pledges (Pelinka 2005, 98). In contrast, the ÖVP triumphed in the election, achieving 42% of the vote. Thus the myth that right-wing populists could be demystified by involving them in a coalition government was born.

However, a look at the situation in Switzerland shows that this is not always true. Unlike the Austrian FPÖ, participation in government has not harmed the SVP. Indeed, ever since it was founded, the party has sat on the Swiss Federal Council (Bundesrat) and has continually improved its results in the years since then. In 2003 it became the strongest party in Switzerland, securing a second seat on the Federal Council. The reasons for its continuing success are to be found in the Swiss political system, under which members of the government, unlike FPÖ ministers in Austria, are not bound by collective responsibility for the government's actions. The seven-member Swiss federal government is a collective body of equals that had always acted on the basis of consensus until the SVP asserted its growing influence. Instead of respecting this consensus-based approach, the SVP (and in particular Christoph Blocher, long-time mentor of the party) chose to pursue its own agenda. Just a few months after becoming head of the Federal Justice and Police Department in 2004, he pushed through an even tougher immigration and asylum law, as he had promised to do in his election campaign (Geden 2005, 79–80). As well as this achievement, the party's continual attacks on Switzerland's consensus style of politics, repeated calls for even more referendums and a series of SVP initiatives to deport immigrants with a criminal record—the 'Ausschaffungsinitiative'—paid off for the SVP, even though it had behaved like an opposition party in government in order to push them through. Although it suffered slight losses in the 2011 elections, it is still the strongest party in Switzerland.

While there is no incontrovertible proof that demystification through participation in government is an effective strategy for successfully politically combating right-wing populists, there is no doubt that the worst response strategy is 'toleration' because this allows populists to directly exert influence on a country's political decision-making without being directly held to account for it. Instead such a strategy enables populists to continue to exploit any public disquiet and mobilise dissatisfied voters against the government.

However, for the EPP member parties there is no clear-cut answer to the question of which strategy to choose when dealing with right-wing and national populists. Complete demarcation has sometimes been beneficial and, in addition to ensuring a high level of credibility, has led to good election results for EPP parties, as has been the case for the Polish Civic Platform and the Swedish Moderate Rally Party. In other cases—for

instance, the Danish KF and the Swiss CVP—complete demarcation has harmed such parties, at least in terms of their election results. This does not mean, however, that these parties would necessarily have won more votes by adopting—in whatever form—or adapting the issues highlighted by the populists. The Danish KF was voted out of government in 2001, but for reasons barely connected to its 'toleration' of the right-wing populist DF or its demarcation from that party's positions. Coalitions too have had only limited success at 'demystifying' populists or even removing them completely from the political scene. Since 2002 the FPÖ has almost regained its previous strength (see Heinisch 2013).

In other words—and this is not only true for Austria—the politics and strategies of conservative and Christian Democratic parties are by no means the only reasons for the emergence of right-wing and national populists. Conservatives and Christian Democrats are also not the only players who need to think about how to deal with the populists. Finding ways to effectively combat populist forces is a challenge for the whole of society, although given ongoing Europeanisation—which provides a breeding ground for populists—national efforts will probably no longer be sufficient to keep the populists at bay.

As we have seen, there is no one ideal solution that Christian Democratic and conservative parties can adopt to deal with right-wing and national populist parties. Demarcation is a strategy which, in the long run, is as ineffective as adopting the specific positions of these parties or forming coalition governments with them. Also, the faint hope that internal divisions will lead them to self-destruct, as has been the case at various times for the Danish Progress Party, the Slovak National Party, the FPÖ and the German right-wing populists of the Schill Party, has not materialised. Once populist parties have established themselves in a country, it is virtually impossible to get rid of them. The best strategy—and this applies to all populist parties, whether left- or right-wing—is to prevent their rise in the first place. It is, however, too late for this in a number of European countries.

This does not mean, however, that the formation or establishment of right-wing populist parties must be seen as inevitable. All democratic forces can and must tackle these populists and the conditions underlying their success. In this regard, they can adopt at least two approaches.[3]

The first one is action, especially if a party is in power in local, regional or, of course, national government. Democratic parties with political responsibility must prevent the social exclusion that results from unemployment and a lack of prospects, a lifelong dependence on welfare benefits, little or even no education, and the impoverishment of entire areas or neighbourhoods. People who feel left behind are particularly responsive to populists' easy 'solutions'. The established parties must not only take the concerns and needs of the whole population seriously, but must also make sure that people have prospects and can find decent jobs, training and leisure activities—in short, they must see to it that people can become an integral part of and participate in society. In other words, democratic parties must effectively combat the social causes of people's susceptibility to populism.

Furthermore, it is a particular responsibility of Christian Democratic and conservative parties to use—or where appropriate, even enhance—existing integration, social and safety laws to eliminate the existence of parallel worlds and lawless areas, and the abuse of welfare benefits. Domestic security and zero tolerance for crime—regardless of whether it is committed by 'natives', people with an 'immigration background' or immigrants—differ from the first kind of prophylaxis mentioned, as taking action in these areas is clearly a priority for conservative and Christian Democratic parties, who place more emphasis on the rule of law and the state's monopoly on the use of force than other parties do. All Western European countries are immigration countries. Without denying both the need for and the social advantages of immigration, immigrants also need to be willing to integrate into and contribute to society and be prepared to accept the norms and rules of the host country. Christian Democratic and conservative parties must ensure that this happens because, in general, no other democratic parties are ready to do so.

Moreover, it is essential, especially for the traditionally pro-European Christian Democratic parties, to give renewed purpose to Europe and its institutions and—more urgently than ever before—to restore stability to the single European currency. The most recent elections in Finland, France and Austria, and opinion polls in Germany and the Netherlands, have shown that, faced with repeated rescue packages for crisis-hit eurozone countries, a growing proportion of voters are concerned about the future of Europe, and in particular about their own financial situation. The fact that Geert Wilders and his PVV could not improve their results in

the latest elections in the Netherlands, even with their anti-euro campaign, and that, in Germany, opponents of the euro did not manage to enter the federal parliament (Bundestag) in the September 2013 parliamentary elections does not mean that voters' unease about the euro has gone away. The present state of the single currency and also the powers of the EU authorities and the overly executive nature of the efforts to manage the crisis remain triggers for a basic sense of dissatisfaction or concern, especially in those countries whose taxpayers are bearing the heaviest burden (Puglisi 2012). Therefore, it is crucial that not only representatives of the export industry, EU officials and others who make their living from the EU or benefit from it in other ways believe that Europe is 'good' for them, but also that the general public at large do too, as they put their trust in the promise of stability that was made when the euro was launched. If this promise is broken, it is very likely that their trust and patience, on which the European project is based, will nosedive. This would create not only a massive crisis of legitimacy for all pro-European parties, but also an excellent opportunity for all those parties that are critical of Europe, including those addressed here.

Therefore, it is essential for pro-European parties such as the Christian Democrats and conservatives to ensure more broad-based support for Europe. Such support is certainly not going to be easy to achieve, given the very different political systems and expectations of EU Member States. However, doing so means engaging with citizens (without turning to populist models to achieve this), emphasising the benefits of closer European cooperation, and insisting on compliance with basic rules for the management of public finances and the responsibility of the politicians involved. This seems necessary in order to give European cooperation new legitimacy and to eliminate the breeding ground for right-wing and national populists, especially in the northern countries of the eurozone.

A second way to deal with right-wing populists is to directly attack their propaganda. Right-wing populists are essentially both demagogues and 'nay-sayers', who stir up feelings against somebody or something but are very rarely able to offer constructive solutions, since there are always voters who—for various reasons—are relatively easily attracted by the populists' simple 'solutions' and their negative campaigns. This makes it all the more important that conservative and Christian Democratic parties in particular show the public what the populists' agenda really involves,

namely mostly empty propaganda without any trace of a proposed solution.

Even if democratic parties need more time to explain their policies and even if political subject matter is very complicated for many voters to digest, democratic parties must not shy away from patiently explaining to the public their goals and measures, and where appropriate, also their visions. In this respect, populist propaganda may even help them to identify areas of policy that are causing dissatisfaction or concern among the public. These areas must be addressed in a clear, targeted way by the established mainstream parties. In this way the growth of right-wing and national populists should be seen as an early-warning system whose signals must be correctly interpreted by the established democratic parties.

1| *In a Chatham House report on potential counteractions, supported by the Stiftung Mercator and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Matthew Goodwin (2011) recently distinguished five possible response strategies, which in part overlap with ours: (1) exclusion, (2) defusing, (3) adaptation, (4) principle and (5) engagement. Among these, 'principle' is, in our view, closely connected with exclusion or, as we put it, demarcation. However, while we are discussing the strategic response options for EPP member parties, Goodwin focuses primarily on centre–left parties.*

2| *Opinion polls have shown that the percentage of voters who are sceptical of the EU in general and of bailouts for beleaguered (southern) European economies in particular has been steadily growing. In 2002, soon after the introduction of the single currency, almost 50% of Germans had confidence in the EU and the European institutions. This percentage had fallen to 33% by 2011, meaning that two-thirds of Germans have little or no confidence in the European Union (Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 2011, 3 and Appendix, Table 7).*

3| *At first glance, 'engagement', that is, democratic forces constantly tackling right-wing populists at the local level, seems to be another effective response strategy, as suggested by Goodwin (2011, 26). However, this strategy could apply to all established democratic forces and parties, and not just to EPP member parties. Moreover, we have doubts about whether this strategy works. Right-wing populist parties are usually led and controlled by charismatic figures. Generally, these leaders or political entrepreneurs directly address the media without much in the way of local party organisation. Thus 'local engagement' will probably only very rarely reach the right audience as right-wing populists usually have only a very weak physical presence locally. For this reason too, the (mainstream) media have a particularly important role to play in dealing with the populists.*

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