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Publication date
2004
Document Version
Final published version

Link to publication

Citation for published version (APA):
Fennema, M. (2004). *Populist parties of the Right*. (Working paper; No. 04/01). Amsterdamse school voor sociaal wetensch. http://www2.fmg.uva.nl/assr/frdocs/wp/downloads/ASSR-WP0401.pdf

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ASSR Working paper 04/01

February 2004

POPULIST PARTIES OF THE RIGHT

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ABSTRACT:

Many people consider the contemporary extreme right as if it were political pornography: it is difficult to define but you immediately recognize it when you see it and then it should be prohibited. Yet, the political scientist cannot accept such simplistic view. He has the painful task of identifying extreme right parties according to some pre-established and well argued criteria, if only to do justice to those who are falsely accused of being extreme right. Legal measures against extreme-right militants are sometimes quite draconic (see Fennema 2000). To be labelled extreme right may jeopardize not only the political position of a person but also his professional career. For a party the label of extreme right may threaten its very existence. Under such circumstances it is necessary to have a precise definition of the extreme right. In this chapter our purpose is to discuss whether the members new political family of the radical right should be considered as extreme-right, as racist or as populist parties. These aspects of the new radical right may be more or less dominant in each of the parties under consideration. After that we will discuss the potential of these parties in the 21st century. We conclude that populist parties of the right have a future in the European Union because of some fundamental changes in European society.

To be published in: Jens Rydgren (ed.) Movements of Exclusion: Radical Right-wing Populism in the Western World. Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science

1. INTRODUCTION[1]

Since 1980 anti-immigrant parties have presented themselves in national and European elections. Some of these parties, like the French Front National (1972), the Belgian Vlaams Blok (1978) and the Dutch Centrumpartij (1980), have emerged from neo-fascist *groupuscules*. Their genesis fits the continuity thesis implicit in the concept of *extreme right*. But most anti-immigrant parties are *not* the offspring of neo-fascist clubs and cliques. The German Republikaner Party, for example, was founded by members of the Christian Social Union (CSU). The Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) developed from the Verband der Unabhängigen (Association of Independents) founded in 1949 by two liberal journalists who wanted to stay clear of the socialist and Catholic '*Lager*'. Other anti-immigrant parties, like the Danish Fremskridtspartiet (Progress Party), founded in 1972, and the Swedish Ny Demokrati (New Democracy), founded in 1991, and more recently de Dutch Lijst Pim Fortuyn, have been created by leaders who had no links whatsoever with fascist groups or extreme-right traditions. Pim Fortuyn even had a political track record that can be traced back to the (extreme) left (Chorus and De Galan 2002; Pels 2003). The founders seemed primarily motivated by anti-establishment sentiments. They may share the latter with extreme right movements, but, as we will argue in this paper, the only *programmatic* issue all radical right parties have in common is their resentment against immigrants and against the immigration policies of their government. To call these parties extreme right is therefore misleading. We will call them anti-immigrant parties instead.

Lubbers (2001:29-31) has asked country experts to indicate the positions of all radical right parties on an "immigration restriction" scale, ranging from 0 to 10. The upper extreme 10 was labelled "very restrictive". The means of the placements by experts was above 9 for all parties mentioned so far, with one notable exception: Alleanza Nazionale (AN) [2]. AN was placed at 7.9 on this scale, which still was 1 full point higher than Forza Italia, but not as extremist on immigration as the other parties (see also: Griffin 1996; Eatwell 1998). Yet, like the other parties mentioned above, the AN is commonly labelled as 'radical right' and will be included in our discussion.

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1 This chapter relies in some of its paragraphs heavily on my article published in 1997: Some conceptual issues and problems in the comparison of anti-immigrant parties in Western Europe. Party Politics 3: 473-492. We thank the editors of Party Politics for their permission to reprint parts of that article. An earlier version of this paper has been published as: M. Fennema, Los partidos populistas de derecha. In: J. A. Mellón (red.), Las ideas políticas en el siglo XXI. Madrid, Ariél, 2002. I want to thank Wouter van der Brug, Eelke Heemskerk, Ingrid Robeyns and Jens Rydgren for their critical comments on this chapter.

2. The MSI-DN was renamed Aleanza Nationale in 1994, in an attempt to enter government with Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia.

The new family of anti-immigrant parties in Western Europe has three different features that characterize the political identity of the members of that family. The first one is their real or alleged lineage from the pre-war fascist movement. We will call all those parties that hark back and celebrate their roots in the fascist past *extreme right*. The second feature of the contemporary radical right is contempt for immigrants and resentment against the immigration policy of the government. Some parties argue for restriction of immigration because they see the newcomers as culturally or racially inferior. We call such parties *racist*. The third feature of the new political family of anti-immigrant parties is that they celebrate the virtue and wisdom of the common man and pretend to represent '*das gesundenes Volksempfinden'*. Parties that expose the latter feature we will call *populist or protest* parties. The three aspects can be seen as nested features: extreme-right parties are also racist and populist; and racist parties are also populist. But not in reverse: racist parties do not need to celebrate the fascist past; populist parties do not necessarily express hatred towards immigrants. Yet, the categories extreme right, racist and populist do overlap. It is therefore difficult to sharply distinguish them.

Each of the three aspects leads us to a different explanation of the rise of the contemporary radical right. If one considers the new radical right primarily as a form of neo-fascism, their rise can be explained by a sort of resurgence theory. The old fascist parties have been successfully suppressed for some time, but the evil has not been extracted root and branch. Its resurgence is due to lack of anti-fascist vigilance. This explanation is often found in radical left-wing circles. If, on the other hand, one sees the contemporary radical right as primarily anti-immigrant parties then the root cause seems to lay in the migration waves that have reached Western Europe in the last three decades of the 20th century. These parties then function, according to more conservative observers, as an early warning for popular discontent about immigration policies and the international commitments to receive political refugees. According to more progressive analysts, these parties make use of feelings of political alienation to scapegoat immigrants. This left-wing perspective on anti-immigrant parties as racist parties is related to the third perspective on the new radical right parties as populist parties.

According to this third perspective, the root cause of the these parties is to be found in the technocratic forms of contemporary governance; in the democratic deficit from which the countries of the European Union suffer because of the concentration of decision making at the EU level without a concomitant transfer of democratic control; and in other forms of

globalisation that have transferred political power from national parliaments to international regulatory agencies (Meny and Surel 2002).

State reactions to the rise of the radical right very much depend on the above-sketched perspectives. In turn, the choice of perspective that the political establishment takes partly depends on the identity and strategy of the parties they are confronted with. If the parties are primarily seen as neo-fascist parties the solution is often seen in fostering the anti-fascist sentiment among the population and in implementing the post-war anti-fascist legislation – as we have seen in Germany. However, neo-fascist parties may also be accepted as legitimate players in the political arena while the legal authorities see to it that they do not overstep the boundaries of democratic procedures – as we see in Italy and Austria.

If the parties are primarily seen as anti-immigrant parties, governments may either rely on anti-racist legislation to ban such parties or create a *cordon sanitaire* - as is done in Flanders and in France. Governments may also try to restrict immigration by passing anti-immigration laws. Quite often we see a combination of the two strategies. This combination of repression and adopting part of its anti-immigration policy proposals has been applied most successfully in The Netherlands until the Fortuyn movement broke the cordon sanitaire that was erected around the immigration issue in the turbulent election year of 2002. Even though he was murdered 9 days before the national elections, as a dead candidate he still collected some 17 percent of the vote (see for an detailed analysis of the Fortuyn movement the special issue of Acta Politica edited by Wouter van der Brug and Huub Pellikaan (Spring 2003)). Van der Brug (2003) has convincingly shown that the salience of the immigration issue largely accounts for the electoral success of the Fortuyn movement.

Finally, if the parties are primarily seen as populist responses to the technocratic nature of contemporary governance, of democratic deficit of European integration and of other forms of globalisation, the reaction is most likely to try to convince the citizenry that something is being done about the democratic deficit in Europe (a), that populist protest is a dangerous dead-end street (b) and that measures are being taken to improve the democratic process at the local level –where the populist challenge tends to be strongest (c).

In this article I want to conceptualise the labels extreme right, racist and populist in order to prevent confusion when they are used simultaneously and to critically evaluate the research strategies to investigate the parties and movements that are given these labels. In the concluding section we will also evaluate the future of anti-immigrant parties according to the labels they claim or obtain. But first I will consider the features that together determine

whether a given radical right-wing party can be considered as primarily extreme right, as primarily racist or as populist.

2. THE RADICAL RIGHT AS EXTREME RIGHT

We agree with Klaus von Beyme (1988) that the concept of extreme right is linked to the theory of totalitarianism in which fascism is put on par with communism. This conceptual framework is fairly consistent if we follow Ernst Nolte (1984) in limiting the concept of fascism to a specific historical period, which begins around 1920 and ends in 1945. The fascist label is then reserved for the National Fascist movement in Italy, the German National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP), the Austro-fascist party headed by Dollfuss and, at least according to Ernst Nolte, the French movement Action Française. Some scholars would also add the Spanish Falange. Historians are very reluctant to use the term fascism for movements or regimes outside this specific place and period. Certain diffidence about labelling contemporary political parties as neo-fascist also exists among social scientists. To use the term neo-fascism for the present day anti-immigrant parties, as Cheles et al. (1991) do, we clearly need a generic concept of fascism. We will call such generic concept of fascism *extreme right* to concur with the present use of these terms.

A fascist party is an extreme-right party in a specific time period and with a specific party organisation based on the *Führerprinzip*, i.e. strong leadership made into a party principle. Following Sternhell (1976) we may say that fascism is not only defined by its ideology but also defined by its *practices*. Thus, the violence of fascist militants forms a corollary to the fascist doctrine, which we will define below. Fascist parties demand a total commitment of their members; ruling fascism demands an *active* participation of the population. It is this obligatory social and political participation that defines its *totalitarian* character. We propose to define the term extreme right as a concept that refers only to ideology and *not* to political practices. Only on the level of ideology, extreme right equals fascism. The difference between the two concepts is in the political practices: fascism is always a particular type of *mass* movement, the extreme right is not necessarily a mass movement. Yet, the term extreme right implies some form of historical continuity with the pre-war fascist movements. To be accurately called extreme right, therefore, a party should show the ideological features that are characteristic of the pre-war fascist movements without necessarily showing the same *practices* (Bourderon, 1982). To emphasise the historical continuity, we will first analyse the ideology of the fascist movements.

2.1 Fascist ideology

Martin Seliger defines ideology as 'a conceptual frame of reference which provides criteria for choice and decision by virtue of which the major activities of an organised community are governed' (cited in Sternhell, 1976: 318). A conceptual frame of reference is a set of key concepts, which are related in a specific way. The relations between these key concepts do not have to be *logically* related, as long as they are *psychologically* related. In the latter case the relations between the key concepts are of an axiomatic nature, without any logical grounding. The logical relations between the key elements in a political ideology are part of the political *doctrine*, the psychological relations are part of the political *axiom*. Not just the extreme right, but *all* ideologies are based on a political axiom. The political axiom of the democratic ideology, for example, is well expressed in the American Declaration of Independence, which claims that 'all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights'. The fact that this is indeed a political *axiom* is shown in the outset of this sentence: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident...'.

The political axiom of fascism is the direct opposite of the democratic axiom. Fascist ideology has developed as an anti-ideology, in polemical opposition to the democratic creed. Social inequality forms the basis of the political axiom of the extreme right. Inequality is perceived in two ways: as social and moral differentiation and as social and moral hierarchy. Given the fact that existing society is both differentiated and hierarchical, the social axiom of the extreme-right has a 'natural' plausibility. Indeed, there *are* inborn differences between human beings and people *have* different social positions. Fascist ideology gives these empirical facts a moral significance. We quote Hitler's *Mein Kampf* to illustrate the point: 'Because democratic majority rule denies the authority of the individual and replaces it with the sheer number of the transitory mass, it transgresses the aristocratic laws of nature ('*(...)sündigt es wider den aristokratischen Grundgedanken der Natur*') (Hitler, 1943: 87).

Social hierarchy is explained and legitimised by reference to nature. This 'common sense' of fascism explains part of its attractiveness and forms its mythical fundament. Although we have quoted Hitler to illustrate our point, this axiom of natural hierarchy is not restricted the ideology of fascism. It is an attribute of the political right in general. The specificity of fascism does not lie in its political axiom, but in its political doctrine. The fascist doctrine is made up of four different themes that are the common denominators in the works of the founding fathers of fascism, Adolf Hitler (1943), Charles Maurras (1978), Benito Mussolini (1952) and José Antonio Primo de

Rivera (1933), amongst others. These four themes are: ethnic nationalism, anti-materialism, anti-parliamentarianism and conspiracy theory. We will discuss them briefly.

2.2 Ethnic nationalism

In the fascist doctrine, the nation is not defined in political but in ethnic terms and thus has a biological connotation. Political organisation in itself therefore does not constitute the nation, as it does in nationalism based on contract theories. The state should be an expression of the ethnic community (*Volksnationalismus),* but the state should also mould the nation and protect its ethnicity *(Staatsnationalismus*). Those who do not belong to this ethnic community are excluded from the nation. In his book on nationalism, Hans Kohn (1945) has elaborated upon the distinction between ethnic or cultural nationalism and contract or political nationalism. The latter is based on the principle of natural rights or on utilitarian philosophy according to which the state should optimise the welfare of citizens and its success is measured in terms of citizens well being. Ethnic nationalism, on the other hand, is based on a metaphysical notion of nation.[3] The nation has a 'soul' and membership is defined by descent, and by a common 'destiny'. Membership in the ethnic nation is based on *ius sanguinis*, whereas membership in a nation based on contract is based on *ius soli*. Ethnic nationalism is expressed both in terms of 'blood' and 'culture'. In fascist discourse 'ownness' and 'rooted' are juxtaposed to 'alien' and 'uprootedness'.

2.3 Anti-materialism

The second element in the fascist doctrine is anti-materialism. Giovanni Gentile wrote in *Doctrine of Fascism*: '(...) Fascism is against all individualist abstractions based on materialism such as those which flourished in the 18th century' (Mussolini, 1952: 67). Although materialist philosophy developed in the 18th century, extreme-right parties usually attack Marxist and utilitarian doctrines of the 19th century. Anti-materialism attacks the rational choice model of civil society, where private interests seem responsible for the lack of national solidarity. According to the anti-materialist position, liberalism preaches the pursuit of private interests, which leads to the fragmentation of society. Marxism, on the other hand, preaches class warfare, which equally leads to the destruction of the nation. For tactical and historical reasons fascist movements have emphasised their anti-Marxist views rather than their anti-liberalism. Yet Marxism is closer to fascist ideology because it has a similar diagnosis of bourgeois society, even though its solutions are diametrically opposed. Marxism and fascism share a holist

conception of society. Fascism pretends to provide a new synthesis between nationalism and socialism. The term 'Socialist Nationalism' was coined by the Frenchman Maurice Barrès as early as 1898 (Sternhell, 1976: 326) and became one of the recurrent themes in fascist ideology. In the words of the British fascist leader Oswald Mosley: 'If you love your country you are national, and if you love your people you are socialist.' (Sternhell, 1976: 321) Here we find the ambivalence which makes the label 'extreme right' problematic. The anti-liberal element in the doctrine can take an anti-capitalist form and hence be considered as 'left-wing'. This is also the doctrinal basis for the slogan 'Neither left, nor right'. (Sternhell, 1987) The individual should subordinate himself to the people, to the nation. The concepts of patriotism and heroism are juxtaposed to individualism and egoism.

2.4 Against democracy

Fascism loathes liberal democracy because such democracy allegedly favours quantity over quality. In part it borrowed from the 19th century anti-democratic tradition, in that it assumes the mass of people to be incapable of governing. Yet the anti-democratic critique is populist rather than elitist in content. The political elites in a democracy do not represent the people, nor do they pursue the common good. The political elite *as a whole* only strives for its own material benefits, it is a parasitical class. The concept of a parasitical political class harks back to Saint-Simon (see Déat, 1995). Yet fascism adds something new to the anti-democratic tradition. Majority rule is not just the rule of stupidity, as is maintained in the Burkean tradition, nor is it just avarice and exploitation as in the utopian socialist tradition; democracy in the fascist tradition is the rule of *cowardice*. The political leaders hide behind the democratic procedures because they are cowards. They refuse to take any personal responsibility for their decisions. The anti-democratic bravado of the extreme right never directly attacked the common people, as in the conservative tradition; rather, it aimed at discrediting democratic leadership.

A second critique of democracy is that it extinguishes differences between people that are natural as well as socially useful. To organise means to differentiate, that is to create useful differences, means to democrats to equalise which is, in extreme right ideology, sterile and even mortal.

A third critique of democracy is the inverse of the former: democracy leads to money-rule. The revolt against democracy is a revolt against politics, or rather against 'the political class'. Politicians, according to extreme right discourse, do not stand for political ideals, or for

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3 The nationalism of Franco is less ethnic and more spiritual than that of Hitler, Mussolini and Dolfuss. It hardly

societal interests; they just stand for their *own* interests. Hence, the political class is corruption-prone. (The term ‘political class’ that has become part of the vocabulary of political analysts, stems from an old fashioned elitist vocabulary that became part of the fascist vocabulary.)

Finally, democracy is associated with quarrelling, with partisan politics. Fascism wants to do away with political parties: 'Nobody was ever born into a political party; on the other hand, we are all born in a family, we all live in a municipality, we all toil in a job' (Primo de Rivera, 1933: 22). In the anti-democratic discourse of fascism the political class/the politician is juxtaposed to the people/the common man. The political establishment is accused of greed, selfishness and cowardice. We should add, however, that the attacks upon parliamentary democracy are almost always launched in the name of 'true democracy' or pure democracy (Mussolini, 1952: 72).

2.5 Conspiracy theory

The fourth recurrent theme in fascist discourse is international conspiracy. This can be seen as the inversion of the 'aristocratic plot' that characterised Jacobinism (Furet, 1981: 54 *ff*) These 'plots' appeared during the French revolution in times of acute danger of civil war. The aristocracy did indeed -- as has been convincingly demonstrated by historians of the French Revolution -- conspire against the revolution in order to prepare their return and to regain their possessions and former positions. In fascist discourse, however, the conspiracy is not just related to an acute danger, but to a perceived decadence, a decline of the nation. The aristocracy has been replaced by other 'enemies within': Freemasonry and International Jewry who have one characteristic in common: they are internationalist, and thus, by nature, lack patriotism. Their conspiracies serve to explain why the nation is not as strong as it should be according to the ideology of ethnic superiority. They are related to political opponents who have, in extreme-right discourse, no legitimate right to exist. The conspiracy is also related to the theory of democratic corruption, because the political class is -- as we have seen -- only out for the money and thus can easily be bought off by a secret money-syndicate -- like that of the Dreyfus family in France. The fact that Jews and Freemasons are supposed to spend money for their plotting also links extreme-right conspiracy theory to another element in the doctrine: that of anti-materialism. The money power of an 'international plutocracy' undermines the national unity and the prosperity of the nation. Freemasonry is associated with Liberalism (Franco 1950).

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refers to biological metaphors (see Fennema 1998).

After 1917 the communists were included in the confederation of conspirators, but this time the conspiracy theory was directly related to reality. The Comintern was indeed a secret international organization led by a foreign power (the Soviet Union) with a considerable influence in domestic politics in other countries. In short, it was organised according to the ideal-type of extreme-right conspiracy theory. More recently extreme right conspiracy theory is also found in the denial of the Holocaust (Eatwell, 1991, Lipstadt, 1993).

Our analysis of the fascist doctrine makes clear that it does not apply easily to the mass of *voters*. Most citizens do not have such articulate views about politics to be able to formulate a political doctrine. Doctrines are typically thought of and elaborated by the political elite and especially the intellectuals among them. This is not specific of the extreme right. For every political party, it can be argued, there exists a gulf between the electorate and the party leadership. As Middendorp (1991:237ff) has argued, party leaders tend to integrate the different elements of a political discourse into a logical coherent political ideology.

It comes as no surprise, then, that researchers who consider radical right wing parties primarily as extreme right parties tend to focus on the discourse of the leaders of these parties and often assume a front stage-back stage strategy of the leadership (see Goffman, 1959). That is, they assume that popular resentment of fascism and legal repression of fascist parties has forced the leaders of extreme right parties to cover up their fascist roots and fascist ideology. In depth interviews with the representatives of anti-immigrant parties in the European Parliament (Fennema and Pollmann, 1998) have led us to believe that this is very unlikely to be the case with most of the radical right-wing parties in Europe. The representatives of the Italian MSI, the Belgian Vlaams Blok and some of the representatives of the French Front National referred quite openly to pre-war fascist intellectuals as their ideological inspiration. They also showed other elements of the fascist doctrine: ethnic nationalism, anti-materialism and conspiracy theory. Yet none of them rejected parliamentary democracy. Moreover, analysis of the parliamentary activities of the members of the so-called 'Technical Fraction of the European Right' in the European Parliament suggests that the representatives of the European radical right parties show a remarkable perseverance in their parliamentary activities even though they are very ineffective due to the boycott by other members of the European Parliament (Daru and Fennema, forthcoming). So even among the parties that are generally considered to have an extreme-right ideology - the Austrian FPÖ, The French Front national, the Italian MSI and the Belgian Vlaams Blok - we see little of the anti-parliamentary discourse that is a key element of the fascist ideology. These parties do,

however, expose the other elements of the fascist ideology, i.e. ethnic nationalism, anti-materialism and conspiracy theory. Although these parties do not openly attack the parliamentary system (both the FPÖ and the Front National even claim that they are the only party to defend that system) their ferocious critique of the elected politicians sometimes approaches the anti-democratic discourse of the fascist doctrine. There is good reason to call these parties extreme right. But even if their critique of the political elites is populist, their leaders seem to have accepted the rules of parliamentary democracy. Rather than reject democracy, these parties claim to be more democratic than the political establishment.

3. THE RADICAL RIGHT AS POLITICAL RACISM

Quite often radical right parties are not primarily conceived as extreme right, but rather as racist. To identify racist parties one must look at their propaganda and their policy positions. A short-hand and pragmatic identification of racist parties seems easy: They are parties that oppose immigration and want to send foreign residents back to their country of origin. A further feature is that they adhere to an ethnic conception of nationhood. But ethnic nationalism itself is not enough to qualify a party as racist. Racist arguments are, in our view, all those arguments that explain social inequality by reference to biological differences that are hereditary. Thus, in science we find theories that we would call racist, independent of the fact whether they are true or false. Thus the theory of Rushton (1997) according to which Asians are more intelligent than Caucasians and Caucasians are more intelligent than Africans is racist, whether he is right or wrong. In politics, racism differentiates between groups of people by combining biological and social characteristics, which are both considered hereditary. Racism generally implies a downgrading of out-groups according to quasi-biological criteria. This definition, though broader than those emphasising the aspect of racial inferiority, is not as broad as the one that is (often implicitly) used by the anti-racist movement. According to our definition of racism, to prefer one's own culture to that of other peoples is not necessarily racist. Generalising assertions about ethnic groups need not be racist either. Thus ethnic nationalism in itself needs not to be racist. Indeed, to differentiate according to cultural *habitus* is in itself not racist. If that were the case then much of the discourse of multiculturalism would be racist (*Cf* Parekh, 2000).

What, then, makes the theory of cultural incompatibility racist? In the first place the fact that cultural characteristics are ossified into quasi-biological attributes. The argumentative essence of new racism is that culture cannot change; that some -- not all -- cultures are incompatible and that culture is in some way inbred. In the words of a columnist of the Daily

Telegraph: 'Parliament can no more turn a Chinese into an Englishman than it can turn a man into a woman.' (Quoted in Barker, 1981:22) This is a very succinct formulation of new racism. Immigration is resisted by reference to cultural incompatibility between the native culture and the foreign cultures, but this cultural incompatibility is based on biological arguments. There are variations in the biological argumentation as expressed, for example, in the difference between the use of straightforward biological reasoning and the use of biological metaphors. In new racist discourse biological argumentation is restricted to metaphorical expressions like the one quoted from the Daily Telegraph. Traditional racist discourse is characterised by a more 'scientific' biological reasoning. Racist discourse can be measured according to the frequency with which biological reasoning is employed or biological metaphors are used.

Yet new racism is not only different from the traditional racist argument because it uses biological metaphors rather than biological arguments. It is also different from old racism in that the latter is not based on incompatibility of cultures but on a hierarchy of races and culture. Inferior races have an inferior culture and therefore are subordinates to the higher race that has a higher culture. The old racism grew out of a colonial context and is strongest in former white settler colonies. It is also stronger in countries that possessed until after the Second World War a colonial empire -- like Belgium, France, The Netherlands or Great Britain -- than in countries -- like Germany or Austria -- that never were colonising countries.

Colonial racism has been used to subordinate rather than to expel, to legitimate socio-economic inferiority of a racialised underclass. Colonial racism formed the counterpoint of the natural rights philosophy. Indeed, if everybody already possessed the right to Life, Liberty and Estate in the state of nature, it was hard to see how some people could be rightfully deprived of such rights in the colonies. Colonial exploitation based on slave production could be made compatible with the liberal ideology and practice in the metropolis only by arguing that the slaves were really not human beings endowed with natural rights. And this is exactly what was done in18th and 19th century racist theory.

Colonial racism had its apogee in the nineteenth century, and is thus a relatively recent and short-lived phenomenon even though its effects are long lasting and disastrous for the victims. It is aimed at subordinating the racially defined group *within* the nation. The racially defined Other may be regarded as a second class citizen, or -- more likely -- as not a citizen at all, but he or she is considered as an essential part of society, upon which its economic welfare depends. In many ways colonial racism and new racism resemble each other, however, in one aspect they are diametrically opposed: colonial racism aims at subordination, new -- or ethnic --

racism aims at expulsion. This is the main reason why it is so difficult to compare the racist parties in the USA (like the Ku Klux Klan) with the racist parties in Europe.

To find an operational definition of racist parties is not an easy task because these parties have to hide their racist identity in the light of legal or social restraints (see Van Donselaar, 1995). Racist parties evade explicit reference to racial inequality. They defend their policy positions often in terms of cultural incompatibility rather than in terms of racial incompatibility. National culture is presented as homogeneous and fixed, while alien cultures are also seen as permanently fixed. Barker (1981) has labelled such arguments 'new racism'. But is it really new and, more important, is it racist? Racist parties are forced to hide their racism because of legal constraints. Hence they will tend to defend their anti-immigrant position by reference to non-racial arguments. To decide whether or not a party is racist it often will not suffice to look at the content of the programs and propaganda. We suggest a number of additional criteria. First there is the position anti-immigrant parties take with reference to racial violence. Racist parties tend to emphasise the violence of immigrants whereas they vindicate violence against immigrants. They deny the discrimination to which immigrants are subjected but maintain, on the contrary, that the native population is discriminated against. In a way this 'blaming the victim' eventually may end up in denying social and historical reality altogether, as the Holocaust denial shows.

A second criterion is the priority which is given to the issue of immigration policy. If a party sees the criminality of immigrants or the number of asylum-seekers as the one and only political issue, then this party may be labelled racist, even if their public statements regarded in isolation are not racist. The one-sidedness of the political propaganda gives the impression that immigrants are the cause of all evil and thus they get the blame for all social predicaments. Racist parties are often 'single issue' parties. And here we may find an important difference between racist parties and the extreme right, because the latter are, as we will argue below, not single-issue parties.

Finally, we look at the relations maintained by party leaders and militants with other organisations that are (more) openly racist. Their 'front-stage' activities are conscientiously screened and 'back-stage' activities are hidden from the public eye by secret organisations with which many interlocking directorates exist but which are formally independent. If the leaders of an anti-immigrant party maintain intimate relations with organisations that express blatantly racist opinions and engage in racist activities then the party can be considered racist. According to the criteria formulated above, the Dutch Center Parties and the Italian Lega Nord should be called racist rather than extreme right. Yet, with the exception of the MSI, the parties that have

been called extreme right could also be labelled ‘racist parties’ (see Fennema and Pollmann, 1998).

4. THE RADICAL RIGHT AS POPULISM

The third feature of the radical right is its populist discourse. The most general characteristic of populist parties is that they consider the political establishment as technically incompetent and morally corrupt. Populist parties find ‘something rotten in the state’. They assume that the common man is basically good and his opinions are always sound, whereas the political elite is - by its very nature – selfish and dishonest. They try to hide their selfish interests behind a veil of democratic and technocratic rhetoric. Even though they frequently talk about the common interest they are only interested in enriching themselves. Populist parties see a fundamental split between what politicians say and what they do. Subsequently, conspiracy theories frequently surface in populist discourse.

Populists claim to solve the social problems they see – whether it is public safety, immigration or medical care for the elderly – by introducing more direct democracy. The politicians should listen to the man in the street. The ordinary citizens have civic virtues that the political elite lacks. The populist has a Rousseauan conception of democracy. Populist claims for more democracy is part and parcel of the democratic tradition that has always hovered between constitutionalism and untrammelled popular sovereignty. Populist parties also blame other parties for quarrelling amongst each other. Rather than unite the nation they divide it. Mudde (1996: 270) has shown that anti-immigrant parties in Belgium, Germany and The Netherlands argue that political parties are only interested in their own well being and not in the public good. The same goes for the Front National, who favours direct democracy (Taguieff, 1989). This anti-party sentiment harks back to the very old radical democratic tradition, which denounces parties as self-interested factions. Populist parties –even those of the right - stand in that sense in an old Jacobin tradition.

Constitutions are aimed at protecting basic human and civil rights against a tyrannical majority or against a government that abuses its power. International agreements and conventions also are meant to protect these rights even against democratically elected governments, as is the case of the 1951 Geneva Convention on Political Refugees and the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). Those who defend the substantive aims of constitutions and conventions tend to

rely on legal arguments, while those who have misgivings about the aims of such conventions call for more democracy and celebrate the common sense of the ordinary citizen. Politicians should listen to the *vox populi* and not to the voices of judges and experts.

Protest or populist parties mobilise those citizens who are unhappy with the way they are being governed. But this leads us to a simple question. Are not all parties that want to replace the governing parties unhappy with the present government? Are not all opposition parties 'protest parties'? This objection can be dealt with if we accept the concept of anti-system party as defined by Sartori (1982). There are parties, according to Sartori, which can be considered as not just 'loyal opposition'. They reject the political system rather than the government in power, and thus may attract voters who protest not just against government, but against the whole of the political elite and sometimes also against the political regime. The main distinction they see is between 'them' and 'us'. 'They' are well organised and take good care of themselves, whereas 'we' are the losers that always end up with the short end of the stick.

It may be useful to distinguish between revolutionary parties and protest parties. Both are anti-system parties in the Sartorian sense of the word. Contrary to the revolutionary party, however, the protest party does not aim at replacing the existing regime with a new one of its own making. Its political aim is profoundly 'anti-political'. It proposes to do away with 'old politics' without presenting a full-fledged alternative as revolutionary parties do. The political establishment is held responsible for all the social evils in the present society, including crime, unemployment and the unrestrained immigration. All this, however, does not mean that these parties do not have a political program of their own. It only means that implementing the political program is not the main concern of the leaders of these parties. Their main concern is discrediting the political establishment, without presenting a full-fledged alternative for the present political regime. Sometimes, however, parties seem indeed to have no political program at all. They call for fun-politics, as did the popular comedian Coluche in France or erotic-politics, as did the porno-actresses Ciciollina and Mona Pozzi in Italy. Such persons or parties can be singled out for their *style* rather than their program, but they all tend to call for some soft form of civil disobedience.[4] [5]

4 In some rare occasions we find parties founded by persons with the intention of preventing incarceration rather than implementing any program at all, as was the case with Mateos Ruiz in Spain who campaigned for the European elections in 1990. Much to his own surprise the party won three seats in the European parliament and thus gave its leader immunity. Also Berlusconi's Forza Italia can be seen as a political device to prevent the legal persecution of its leader. In some democracies that have been established in developing countries it is more common to see that leaders of the political parties are either in office or in jail.

Populist parties should be set apart from the racist parties. The party program of populism of the right is limited to promising the abolition of crime and unemployment and call for a halt to immigration. Even though they attack immigration policy, their main target is not the immigrants but politics in general. A populist party may become racist because it likes to provoke the 'political correctness' of the establishment. Populist parties should also be set apart from the extreme right, because they only share the anti-party and anti-establishment theme of the extreme right ideology. The similarity between extreme-right, racist and protest parties lies in the fact that they are the lepers in the political arena. Parties that most often are labelled protest or populist parties rather than as extreme right or racist are the Danish and Norwegian Progress Parties and the Swedish Ny Demokrati. Denmark became famous in the early 1970s as the home of the strongest right-wing populist party on the continent, the Progress Party, which emerged in the landslide election of 1973 with 15.9 percent of the vote. Today, the Progress Party has withered away, whereas another rightist party, of a new kind—the Danish People's Party—has taken its place (with 7.2 percent of the vote in 1998 election and 12.0 percent of the vote in the 2001 election) (Rydgren 2004). Contrary to the Progress Party—which was a tax-populist, anti-bureaucracy, protest party—the Danish People's Party is, according to Jens Rydgren, as much akin to the new extreme right as to populism. Some observers also place the FPÖ in the category of populist parties. Whether we label these parties as extreme right or populist is not just an academic quibble. It has far reaching political consequences.

According to some of those who take the anti-immigrant parties for protest - or populist parties, their attractiveness will decrease as soon as they are given political responsibility. When they have to govern a city, so the argument goes, it will soon appear that their proposals will not solve the social predicament of the urban population. The incorporation of the FPÖ in the Austrian government, in 2000, has indeed led to an electoral decline in the 2001 regional elections. And the split within the Front National in 1998/1999 did appear *after* some local leaders of the Gaullist RPR had broken the cordon sanitaire. Yet for this hypothesis there is of course little empirical evidence. The proof of the pudding is always in eating it. And that, according to the defenders of the strategy of a cordon sanitaire may be lethal. But defenders of the cordon sanitaire normally reject the label of populism and stick to the extreme right label to stigmatise these parties.

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5 One should, however, be aware of the fact that all parties that present a new political discourse are accused of not having a proper program. The political establishment tends to judge the political weight of a new political formation according to traditional criteria. Nearly all radically new political parties have been labelled as 'protest parties' when they first appeared on the political scene. This, for example, is quite clear in the case of the Green

Politicians as well as scholars who attack the populist discourse tend to reverse that discourse. Instead of the political elites, the ordinary citizen now becomes suspect. Betz (1994), for example, speaks about 'resentment as politics'. He states that 'these parties are posing the most significant challenge to the established structure and politics of West Europe today. (...) They are populist in their unscrupulous use and instrumentalisation of diffuse public sentiments of anxiety and disenchantment and their appeal to the common man and his allegedly superior common sense' (Betz, 1994:3/4). His definition refers to political style rather than to political program. Apparently there is something fishy about these parties, because they appeal to 'public sentiments of anxiety'. It is clearly wrong to appeal to anxiety and disenchantment. It is also clear that Betz himself does not believe in the 'alleged superior common sense of the common man'. Such an attack on the common man easily slips into an unwarranted defence of the political elites.

5. THE VOTERS

So far we have focused on the ideologies and doctrines expressed by the leaders of radical right parties. Such ideologies and doctrines make these parties attractive for potential members and militants and for some segments of the intellectual elites. But what makes these parties attractive for the voters? Is there any particular reason why ordinary citizens should suddenly vote for these new parties of the right? Voters' studies that focus on parties of the extreme right have been informed by theories that account for the rise of the pre-war fascist parties. The first one sees the electoral growth of fascist parties caused by the penetration of the market forces in every domain of society, in massive unemployment and in the social isolation of the individual citizens. We will call this the social disintegration hypothesis. This theory was elaborated by sociologists who tried to explain the electoral fortunes of the pre-war NSDAP. Contemporary voters' studies tend to explain the vote for anti-immigrant parties more often with reference to ethnic competition. We will call the latter the ethnic competition hypothesis.

5.1 The social disintegration hypothesis

The social disintegration hypothesis was presented first by Hannah Arendt to account for the rise of Hitler's NSDAP. It is only natural, said Arendt (1951:317), 'that the masses of a highly atomised society (...) have tended toward an especially violent nationalism' (Arendt, 1951: 317). According to Arendt (1973:352) social isolation creates among the masses self

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parties, which introduced a new issue in the political arena in the 1970s. Initially these Green parties were seen as mere protest parties.

destructive and irrational impulses. "The revolt of the masses against 'realism', common sense, and all 'the plausibilities of the world' (Burke) was the result of their atomisation, of their loss of social status along with which they lost the whole sector of communal relationships in which common sense makes sense." Arendt's hypothesis has a strong case to make for the electoral attraction of the NSDAP. Reinhard Bendix (1951) has shown that the new voters and those who had not turned up in previous elections had a higher propensity to vote NSDAP. According to Bendix it was the not (yet) integrated voters that turned to the National Socialists. More recently, Mayer and Moreau (1995) found among the Front National voters and among the voters for the German Republikaner a higher level of social isolation, measured by weak trade union ties and low religious affiliation. These voters also showed a lack of associative potential: they were less inclined to support new social movements. In a detailed geographical analysis of the Front National votes in Brittany, Richard (1996) has shown that Front National votes came from those coastal areas where tradition has lost its grip on society and where the Breton language was loosing its foothold. The Front National made no inroads in those districts where traditional family ties were strong and Catholicism held its sway. All this, of course, confirms Arendt's thesis.

However, lack of religious affiliation, declining party loyalty or a loosing faith in politics is not the same as social isolation. Drawing on electoral data on a municipal and local level in the Weimar Republic, Hamilton (1982) found that the electoral support for Hitler did not primarily come from voters that had fallen victim to social isolation. For one thing, because the vote for the National Socialists varied inversely with the size of the community (Hamilton, 1982: 37). The big cities where the 'lonely crowd' is supposed to hang out, provided less electoral support for the NSDAP than did the smaller cities. It were rather the voters in traditional rural areas that massively turned to the NSDAP. Hamilton also showed that Protestant voters in the countryside had a far greater propensity to turn to the NSDAP than Catholic voters, who remained faithful to the conservative Zentrumpartei. The shift to the NSDAP seems to have taken place at the community-level rather than at the level of the individual voter. In some very small communities a 100 percent support for the National Socialists was found. Hamilton suggests that it is not so much the objective social isolation of individuals, but rather the sudden loss of protective political relations that turned entire communities towards fascism. Especially those voters who felt let down by the traditional parties they had supported were attracted to the NSDAP. If this interpretation is correct, it is the community leaders rather than the isolated individuals who decide the fate of the traditional parties and lead the voters to new parties. Empirical support for such a theory is

also provided by Nonna Mayer (1999) who found that associational membership of FN voters is not lower than associational membership of voters for other parties. It may well be that feelings of social isolation do not stem from social isolation of individuals, but rather from a disruption of the traditional relations between local communities and the political power structure. Martin (1996) has stressed the fact that Le Pen voters are found in traditional communities that have lost their lines of communication with the political elites. This explanation is often formulated the other way around. There is a lot of complaint that the political elite 'has lost contact with civil society'. Accordingly, the success of new parties heavily depends on the sudden decline of traditional parties, as the Italian example makes abundantly clear. Nevertheless, this explanation seems more plausible if the new parties are extreme right or populist. In the case of anti-immigrant parties another explanation seems feasible.

5.2 The ethnic competition hypothesis

If the radical right parties are primarily anti-immigrant parties another explanation is worth consideration. It is immigration - and not social isolation - that is the principal cause of the rise of anti-immigrant parties. Rather than referring to social disintegration and to the emerging need for social identification, this explanation points to economic interests as a fundamental and independent variable that accounts for the anti-immigrant parties' electoral fortunes. Immigrants are competitors in the labour market, in the housing market and even in the marriage market. From this it would follow that anti-immigrant parties score higher in those areas where many immigrants are found.

In France the direct relationship between Front National votes and the presence of immigrants is contested by analyses at the local level (Mayer and Perrineau, 1996:372) but confirmed at the national level (Martin, 1996). However, geographical electoral analysis at the national and regional level shows a remarkable correspondence between the proportion of immigrants and the proportion of Front National votes. Bijlsma and Koopmans (1996) have shown that in Amsterdam even at the neighbourhood level the correlation between presence of immigrants and electoral support for anti-immigrant parties exists.

It also follows from the hypothesis of ethnic competition that especially those social layers are attracted to the anti-immigrant parties that are directly confronted with competition by immigrants. It is more likely the lower educated, male, native city dwellers that vote for anti-immigrant parties. Again, this hypothesis is corroborated by survey analysis in the Low Countries and in Germany (Scheepers et.al. 1994, Scheepers et. al. 1995; Mayer and Moreau,

1995). It is, however, not fully confirmed by survey analysis in France (Mayer and Moreau, 1995), where the Front National did, at least until 1986, not attract a disproportional amount of lower income and lower educated voters. Yet, after 1986, working class support has increased substantially and in the 1995 presidential elections nearly 30 percent of the working class voters supported the Front National, as against nearly 20 percent in the 1988 presidential elections (Martin, 1996:29). While in France the Front National voters have lost some of its earlier middle class characteristics, in Belgium, The Netherlands and Germany it is just the other way around. As a general trend, the anti-immigrant parties more recently attract an average electorate, but the low educated male voters remain over-represented. There is, clearly some evidence for an explanation of anti-immigrant voting in terms of ethnic competition, or in terms of relative deprivation of certain layers in society due to the immigration of foreigners.

The electoral analyses discussed above focus on ‘objective’ and ‘structural’ conditions that make the new radical right parties attractive for the voters. It tells us, however, very little about the individual motives to vote for such parties. Are the voters racist? We still know very little about racist opinions among the West-European voters. In most surveys no distinction is made between anti-foreigners sentiments and racist opinions. Furthermore, in most countries it is 'not done' to confront the respondents of a survey with racist statements (see Holsteyn, 1994). Only in Belgian election studies we find data on racist attitudes of voters. Even though the definition of racism used in the Belgian surveys is somewhat more restricted than the one we have presented here, it is clear that anti-immigrant parties in Belgium can be identified by the amount of racist voters they attract (Billiet and De Witte, 1995; De Witte, 1996). However Jens Rydgren (2003) has shown that racist attitudes in France have no influence on the likelihood to vote for the Front National. He found, however, that anti-immigration sentiments do matter. Van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie (2000) have shown that voters for all radical right parties in Europe tend to find the migration issue more important than voters for other parties, even though some parties seem to attract more anti-immigration votes than others. This is the main reason why we have called the new party family anti-immigrant (see Fennema, 1997). But are they also populist or protest parties?

There have been many polemics in the public debate about anti-immigrant parties on whether their voters have cast a 'racist vote' or whether they are just 'protest voters'. Many voters who vote for a racist party, according to this latter argument, do not cast their vote on racist grounds, but rather to express disenchantment with the political system. And in response to the

recent electoral success of the FPÖ in Austria – propelling it into a government coalition with the Catholic People's Party – various prominent observers (such as Simon Wiesenthal) have argued that votes for the FPÖ are protest votes, that is, votes without a policy content. According to these observers many people cast their votes for the FPÖ not because they agreed with the political program of this party, but to express discontent with the political clientelism of the SPÖ and ÖVP.

However, the protest vote, to have an analytical meaning, should be defined as a self-standing category and not be defined formally as a vote for a protest party. A substantive definition of protest vote has recently been suggested by Van der Eijk, Franklin and Marsh (1996), who have looked at the voters' motives to vote. They have made a distinction between ideological votes, strategic votes and protest votes. The ideological voter votes for the party that is closest to his own ideological preference. The motive to vote is ideological proximity. The strategic voter does not just follow his ideological preference but also votes to get a preferred party in power or preventing a despised party from getting into power. The pragmatic voter therefore looks also at the chances that a preferred party will become a governing party. A protest voter, finally, casts a vote 'to put in the boot' as Van der Eijk et al. aptly describe it. The protest voter votes for a party that is despised by all other parties.[6] Neither ideological proximity, nor party size play a dominant role as a motive to vote. The party he/she votes for is not preferred because of its ideological stance, nor for its chances to enter the government, but because of its (perceived) opposition to the political regime. Subsequently, one could define a protest party as a political party that attracts many protest votes. Van der Brug and Fennema (2003) found that in the European Elections of 1999 the Danish Fremskridtspartiet, the French Front National, the Wallonian Front National, the Italian Lega Nord, the German Republikaner and the Dutch Centrumdemocraten attracted quite a few such votes. However, the Vlaams Blok, the Allianza Nazionale, and the FPÖ attracted predominantly voters for ideological reasons. It seems to us that those parties that are well established and are not seen by the general public as lepers in de political arena attract their voters primarily on ideological grounds. Voters for these parties tend to be extremely right wing themselves. This is less so for newly established parties, especially when these parties refuse to define themselves as right-wing parties. In other words parties that define themselves as anti-system parties tend to attract protest voters.

6 The protest voter thus defined is not an irrational voter, as is often assumed.

6. IS THERE A FUTURE FOR THE RADICAL RIGHT?

Can we expect the radical right parties to survive in the 21st century? The answer to this question very much depends on the character of these parties. In countries with a fascist tradition it is quite likely that extreme right parties have an electoral potential in the traditional support for extreme right movements among large parts of the population. In Italy, Flanders, France and Austria extreme right parties have flourished in the last two decades of the 20th century and have formed fairly stable electoral constituencies. This is partly due to the fact that the extreme-right parties in these countries have given up the anti-democratic and violent legacy of their predecessors. The neo-fascist parties become 'post-fascist' parties and end up as right-wing populist parties. Anti-fascist legislation will have a hard time to survive more than fifty years after its implementation. The symbolic sanctions of 13 EU countries against the Austrian government that included the FPÖ not only had little effect, they also made clear how little popular support there is for sanctioning a government that has been democratically elected. Most neo-fascist parties in the countries with a fascist tradition, i.e. the MSI, the Vlaams Blok, the Front national and the FPÖ, have shown a remarkable inclination to accept the democratic rules and regulations. In Spain the legacy of the Franquist regime has been incorporated in the Partido Popular, a party with a leadership that had personal ties with the Franco regime (its first leader, Manuel Fraga Iribarne, had been a Minister of Information under Franco; its second leader, José Maria Aznar, was the son of a Franquist journalist). And yet, the Partido Popular soon became a loyal opposition to the socialist government and it did not bend the democratic rules when it became a liberal-conservative ruling party. In short, neo-fascist or post-fascist parties that start to compete for votes in the national elections tend to become 'normal' right-wing parties and voters tend to judge them with the same criteria with which they evaluate other parties. Democracies in Western Europe have shown a remarkable capacity to incorporate revolutionary parties, whether they came from the left or the right. Germany is in this respect an exceptional case. Repression of extreme right parties in Germany is still strong; extreme right parties have very little chance to compete for votes in the national elections. In these circumstances we might expect the continuation of an underground movement of neo-fascist groupuscules that have a revolutionary and violent action repertoire. In the rest of the European Union we see not much future for extreme-right parties.

The future for racist parties in Europe is not very radiant either. The anti-immigrant parties that appeared at the closing of the 20th century have had to hide their racist program and have presented themselves as conservative anti-immigration parties. Whether such parties will survive – or reappear – very much depends on the way the governments of the European Union handle the immigration issue. Given the immense flows of political refugees, the immigration issue will be a main issue for a long time to come. This provides a permanent electoral space for anti-immigrant parties. But even where the anti-immigrant parties has disappeared from the political arena and the established right-wing parties seem to fill most of this space by incorporating that issue in their party program, one can never be sure that anti-immigrant parties will not reappear, as the spectacular resurgence of right-wing populism in The Netherlands has demonstrated. This is in particular the case if anti-immigrant sentiments are censored and radical right parties face repression. Legal repression was particularly strong in The Netherlands and still is very strong in Germany. Thus, in Germany the political opportunities for new and unconventional anti-immigrant parties remain strong. Thus although anti-immigrant parties are likely to flourish, outright racist political parties will have a hard time in the European Union even if the climate becomes more favourable for them. At the European level repression of political racism has been on the increase in recent years.

For a long time anti-racist legislation was a neglected field in European legislation. It was not until 1986 that a special commission against racism and xenophobia took the initiative for a joint declaration of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council. It stated that they wanted "to ensure that all acts or forms of discrimination are prevented or curbed" (The European Institutions in the fight against racism, 1997: 12). It was a very meek declaration in which no specific legal measures were demanded. In that same year a Committee of Inquiry into the rise of Fascism and Racism in Europe, installed by the European Parliament, published a first report. This was followed in 1991 by the Ford Report. Both inquiries were triggered off by the electoral successes of the radical right in the European elections in 1984 and 1989 respectively. However, in these two reports no specific legal measures were suggested. It was not until 1993, after a wave of violent attacks on asylum seekers centers in Germany, that the EP called upon the Commission "to strengthen the legal instruments existing in the field in the Member States". This resolution, and subsequent ones would eventually lead up to a Joint Action adopted by the Council in July 1996 on the basis of Article K.3 of the Treaty on the European Union in the framework of the Third Pillar. This Joint Action aimed at further collaboration between the Member States in the persecution of racial discrimination and "public incitement to discrimination, violence or racial hatred". Title I A, b refers to "public condoning,

for a racist or xenophobic purpose, of crimes against humanity and human right violation". Title I A, c refers to the Holocaust denial while (d) refers to "public dissemination or distribution of tracts, pictures or other material containing expressions of racism and xenophobia".

In the persecution of these crimes judicial co-operation among the member states should be improved and it was acknowledged that such crimes "should not be regarded as political offences justifying refusal to comply with requests for mutual legal assistance" (Title I B, b). It is clear from this text that the Joint Action gave priority to combating racism over the defence of the freedom of speech. This has caused Greece to make a reservation about Title I B, b. The Danish delegation declared that Denmark would apply Title I A only where the relevant behaviour is threatening, insulting or degrading. At the same time it was decided that 1997 was to be the "European Year against Racism".[7]

A second important step that has been taken by the European Union is the foundation of a European Monitoring Center for Racism and Xenophobia that was eventually established in Vienna. It was meant to provide the Union and its Member States with "objective, reliable and comparable data at European level on the phenomenon of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism in order to help them when they take measures or formulate courses of action". Furthermore the Center has to set up and co-ordinate a "European Racism and Xenophobia Information Network" consisting of "national university research centers, non-governmental organisations and specialist centuries set up by national or international organizations". The Monitoring Center should also "facilitate and encourage the organisation of regular round-table discussions or meetings of other existing, standing advisory bodies within the Member States". It is clear from this proposal that the Center should not be just a research centre, but it was supposed to become the hub of a European network of anti-racist organisations, universities, and (local) authorities. Such a network may well become an advocacy coalition in the judicial and educational war on racism.

7 It looks as if the European Union wanted to make up for it slow start in the judicial approach to the combat of racial discrimination by stretching the articles under A even further than Article 4 of the ICERD. The distinction between racism and racial discrimination has disappeared altogether. The concept of racism appeared for the first time in public discourse in 1968 when the General Assembly of the United Nations, acting on a proposal from the USSR, designated 1971 as "International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination". (see Banton 1998: 210) By 1997 racism has became prohibited as if it were equal to racial discrimination.

7. CONCLUSION

Of the three types of anti-immigrant parties only the populist party is likely to survive in the coming decade. For neo-fascist parties the political opportunity structures are likely to be unfavourable, except perhaps in Italy. Even those parties that clearly have a neo—fascist past, such as the French Front National, the FPÖ and the Vlaams Blok, it is very likely that they will shake off their ideological feathers and effectively present themselves as anti-establishment parties. Their programs will nevertheless remain firmly right-wing. Racist parties will face strong legal barriers that will remain firmly established also at the European level. Hence outright racist parties will most likely not appear in the coming decade.

Populist anti-immigrant parties, on the other hand will become a well established phenomenon in the European Union, whether in the form of established parties, as in France, Austria, Flanders and Italy, or as highly unstable but nevertheless successful protest parties as you find in Scandinavian countries, in The Netherlands and in the German "Länder". The root cause for the success of such parties is in the permanent migration towards Europe and the integration problems that arise from it. Populist anti-immigrant parties are also fuelled by some structural transformations in European democracies that have, in it self, little to do with racism and anti-racist legislation.

The greatest of these transformations in European democracies may well be the emancipation of the citizens from the political parties. Since voters have become more educated and have distanced themselves from their religious and traditional affiliations, they have become more demanding citizens. Traditional political parties, trade unions, religious and civic associations are rapidly losing members. Political representatives are watched more closely by their constituency and governments are not just monitored by parties and parliaments but they are closely scrutinized by the mass media. Party democracy has become audience democracy (Manin, 1997). The political elites have a hard time to adapt to these new developments. They still rely on the party apparatus for political support and respond in a defensive way to the transparency of the audience democracy. Rather than opening up new communication lines with the political audience, they continue to act as if public opinion is a threat to good governance. They hide behind technocratic arguments of administrative necessity or behind existing commitment to international agreements. Such arguments are not necessarily false, but they tend to be framed in a paternalistic discourse of democratic elitism.

On the other hand, the predicament of democratic governance also increases because of the possessive individualism that has gained momentum and undermines the associational life of civil society. Accordingly social trust has decreased in all European countries, except in Holland, and this declining social trust has a negative impact on trust in government. Paradoxically, many of those who lack trust in government demand stronger government rather than rely on their own networks and individual capacities (Putnam, 1993).

Thirdly, due to the permanent scrutiny of the mass media, corruption and clientelism of the political elites are now more often disclosed than before. In all European countries corruption scandals have undermined the legitimacy of traditional parties. This is particularly true for the Italian socialists and Christian-democrats who were wiped off the electoral map. It is to a lesser extent also true for the Socialists and Christian-democrats in Belgium. Corruption scandals are now haunting the Parti Socialiste and the Gaullist party in France. In all these countries radical right parties are doing very well. The PSOE in Spain lost at least part of its popular support because of large-scale corruption under the socialist government. Political corruption is far from new, it is even doubtful whether it is increasing. It is, however, more visible than in the old party democracy. Public opinion is more critical and voters are less likely to condone such practises, even if they take place in the parties of their own choice. Declining trust in government is in this respect not necessarily a bad thing, it may also be a sign of increasing demands of good governance.

Fourthly, the gulf between those who have high and increasing income and those who lag behind in their family income has increased within all European countries. In the last decades of the 20th century the gap between rich and poor has widened, after some fifty years of equalizing tendencies. The demand for political equality has increased, while economic equality decreases. This contradiction in European society may well find expression in increased political cynicism and support for populist parties from the left as well as from the right. This is more likely since the advent of the ‘new economy’ and the neo-liberal policies that have accompanied this new economy have undermined traditional solidarities and associational life. The losers of the process of economic growth and liberalization tend to blame the government rather than the blind market forces, the more so since all governments of the European Union, whether of the right or of the left, show a remarkable liking of privatisation and other neo-liberal policies. This similarity in favour of market liberal market policies makes all ruling parties look alike.

Fifthly, the democratic deficit in the European Union has become more apparent due to the recent steps in political integration, from Maastricht onwards. European integration has so far been a technocratic process that transferred decision-making in vast policy areas towards 'Brussels'. Agricultural policy, for example, has come largely under the jurisdiction of the European Commission. During the epidemic of Foot and Mouth disease, in 2001, it became suddenly clear to the European citizenry that the national governments are now very much restricted in their policies to fight such epidemics by the rules and regulations of the European Union. Most citizens, including the farmers, suddenly experienced a strong sense of political powerlessness. Through "structural funds" enormous sums are transferred to poor and sometimes backward regions, without much transparency. Experts rather than representatives of the people decide over such matters. The same goes for the introduction of the European currency and the establishment of a European Central Bank. Expert decisions may be sound in it self, but they lack the legitimacy of a majority vote. The radical right as well as the radical left have taken up these issues. Jean Claude Martinez of the Front National argues in his book *L'Europe folle* (1996) that the European Union acts against the interests of the people. If regional disparities exist, he maintains, it is due to the Union's irresponsible free-trade policies and the use of 'structural funds'. According to Martinez, 'the pyromaniac has become fireman' (National-Hebdo 639:14). At the same time the general public became aware of the technical incompetence and the political corruption that have haunted the European bureaucracy. To fight clientelism and corruption in Brussels seems very difficult indeed. The EU accountant Paul van Buitenen who had taken up the issue of corruption and clientelism within the cabinets of the European Commission, was unable to convince his superiors that something had to be done. When he informed the Green Fraction of the European Parliament, in December 1998, he was suspended from his position. Even after his allegations were proven to be true and the European Commission had to step down, in March 1999, his suspension was not lifted (Van Buitenen, 1999). Even as a successful whistleblower he was still castigated. The socialist fraction in the European Parliament was unwilling to defend him. All this fits very well in a populist discourse. The European Parliament shows a remarkable lack of popular legitimacy. It is seen by many voters as part of the problem rather than as part of the solution. Voters' turnout in European elections has decreased steadily since 1979.

Finally, the paradox of liberalism is, according to Hollifield, that its economic logic is one of openness, but in its political and legal logic is one of closure (Hollifield 2000). Hollifield

advocates an international migration regime ‘to avoid a strong political backlash against migration’. In the sensitive area of policymaking on immigration and naturalization he does not want the people to have much of a say, because democracy easily turns into exclusionary populism. Building such international migration regime without the explicit consent of the peoples involved may create even more popular resentment. The fear of populism may be populism’s best ally.

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