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6 Nationalism, populism and the rebirth of statehood in Europe

Manuela Caiani

Introduction

Social dissatisfaction and the corresponding political reaction is one of the central concerns of contemporary political and scholarly debate. A particular focus of scholarly attention has been the support expressed for (populist) radical right parties and movements, which has been increasing rapidly in recent decades. Although it may not be cause for any comfort, it is increasingly the case that many citizens give their support to parties and movements that promote xenophobia, ethno-nationalism and anti-system populism (Rydgren 2007). The election of Donald Trump as President of the USA has been taken as further evidence of the "mainstreaming of radical right politics", which has affected Western democracies beyond Europe (Mudde 2016).

Recently, in fact, growing concerns over EU austerity programmes, the current economic crisis and the national and European responses to that crisis, immigration and multiculturalism issues, combined with disillusion with mainstream politics and representative democracy (Caiani and della Porta 2011), have all fuelled sharp criticism from the far right (e.g. Kriesi and Pappas 2016). In Europe, the dynamics of globalization and economic expansion have led to a rise in unemployment as well as anti-immigration sentiment and an increase in the number of racial nationalist parties and organizations (Wright 2009: 189). As Wright notes:

> [R]acial-nationalist leaders in both North America and Europe are able to exploit the new political conditions and widespread fears to their advantage […]. Advocating white-European privilege and heritage, racial-nationalists can effectively formulate a troubling but potent transnational message.
>
> (Wright 2009: 190)

With more relevance to Europe and the challenges it faces – the topic of this book – European integration is seen as having restructured social and cultural cleavages, developing an opposition between the positions of trans- and supranational integration on the one hand and those of national demarcation, with radical right parties and movements standing on the side of the defence of positions of 'demarcation' through economic and cultural protectionism on the other

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(Kriesi 2008). Reactions to European integration and globalization more generally take various forms:

> [T]he radical left opposition to the opening up of the border is mainly an opposition to economic liberalization and to the threat it poses to the left's achievement at the national level. The populist right's opposition to the opening up of the borders is first of all an opposition to the social and cultural forms of competition and the threat they pose to national identity.
>
> (Kriesi 2008: 18; see also Wodak 2015)

The success of the radical right in its "mobilization of the losers", at least in some party systems, is considered to be responsible for a shift in emphasis on the radical right from questions of economics in the 1970s to questions of culture today (Kriesi 2008: 265; see also Caiani 2017). All this is leading to a return to the centrality of states/nationality in Europe, as well as in the USA.

This chapter will address these issues by providing an overview of the current right-wing parties in Europe and their electoral (and social) penetration, especially following the last EU elections and various national elections in which the general trend has been confirmed. Second, I discuss the main causes (at the macro, meso and micro levels or on the so-called supply-side and demand-side) that can explain the current success of the extreme right, arguing that populism is among these causes. Third, I offer an empirical focus on 'populism', as an ideology or rhetoric which matches with the anti-elite sentiment increasingly widespread among European citizens, especially in times of economic/immigration crisis. This third aspect will be supported with a comparative case study based on a frame analysis of current right-wing discourses in Germany and Italy (electoral manifestos and other organizational online documents, from 2013 to 2016, of the NPD political party and Forza Nuova organization), showing the prominent role of the populistic (as well as nationalistic) appeals. The chapter concludes by considering future directions that research on the radical right could take.

Definitional debate and 'map' of the current radical right in Europe

Even though the term 'extreme right' is widely used among scholars, there is lack of a clear definition. Mudde has found 26 different ways of defining the extreme right in the literature (Minkenberg 2000).

Some scholars (e.g. Carter 2005) define right-wing extremism using two criteria: anti-constitutionalism and anti-democratic values (this is the reason why is called extremist), and a rejection of the principle of fundamental human equality (this is the reason why it is called right-wing). Others (e.g. Norris 2005) prefer the label 'radical right' in order to describe those political parties and non-party organizations that are located towards one pole on the standard ideological left–right scale. Different labels such as 'far right' (Ellinas 2007), 'extreme right'

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(Caiani *et al.* 2012; Arzheimer 2009) and 'populist radical right' (Mudde 2007) are used interchangeably by scholars to refer to the same organizations.

Despite the still-open debate on conceptual definition and terminology, this party family is defined in the literature by certain common ideological attributes, such as nationalism, exclusionism, xenophobia, the quest for a strong state, welfare chauvinism, revisionism and traditional ethics (Mudde 2007: 21), and is usually associated, empirically, with various political parties in Europe, such as the Austrian Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, the French Front national, the Belgian Vlaams Belang and the German NPD (for a classification and some lists see Mudde (2007: 44); but also Kriesi and Pappas (2016)). Recently, scholars have tended to define the (new) extreme right, pointing to a shift at stake from 'old' fascism to 'new populism' in its core ideology and identity. The 'old' extreme right, referring to fascism, has been identified with ultranationalism, the myth of decadence, the myth of rebirth (anti-democracy) and conspiracy theories (e.g. Eatwell 2003). Today, populism is considered as one of the four main traits that characterize the common ideological core of the new extreme right (Caiani and della Porta 2011; Ivarsflaten 2008; Pelinka 2013; Aalberg *et al.* 2017). This interpretation is however controversial according to other commentators who see in it the risk of an "unintended form of 'democratic legitimisation' of modern xenophobia and neo-fascism" (e.g. Mammone 2009).

Whether one agrees or not on the definitions of the phenomenon, what is certain is that it is widely accepted that at present there is a clear and widespread trend towards an increase in support for these political parties and an increase in the 'appeal' of this ideology everywhere, as Table 6.1 shows.

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More specifically, the 2009 (and even more so the 2014) European elections mark a clear advancement of the radical right all over Europe. In England, in 2009, the fascist British National Party (BNP) obtained 6.2 per cent of the votes (electing for the first time two deputies) and the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) obtained 16.5 per cent of the votes in 2009 and a spectacular 27.5 per cent in 2014.

In The Netherlands, the anti-Islamic Party for Freedom (Pvv) gained 15.5 per cent of the votes (and third position in the 2010 national election); in Belgium the Vlaams Belang, a Flemish nationalist and populist political party, reached 9.8 per cent in the 2009 European elections and 7.8 per cent in the 2010 elections for the Federal Parliament. In Denmark the Dansk Folkeparti (Party of people) gained 26.6 per cent of the votes in the last European elections, resulting in the first party in Denmark, and 21.1 per cent of the votes (gaining 37 out of 175 seats) in the last national elections. More recently, Marine Le Pen, after

Table 6.1 Aggregate European populism

	A. Pre-crisis	*B. Post-crisis*	*Difference B/A*	*EU 2014*
25 parties in 17 countries	19.0	23.1	4.1	24.6

Source: adapted from Kriesi and Pappas (2016: 323).

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succeeding her father Jean-Marie Le Pen, gained nearly 18 per cent of the ballots cast in the first round of the 2012 French presidential election (a success repeated in the first round of the 2015 regional elections with 27 per cent of votes and in the last 2014 European elections with 24.9 per cent of the votes and 23 seats), and the Norwegian Progress Party is represented in government for the first time in its history after the right-wing coalition's victory in the 2013 parliamentary elections (with 16.3 per cent of support).

Central and Eastern Europe are no exception (Mudde 2013). In Germany the new-born party Alternative fur Deutschland (AfD) gained 4.7 per cent of the votes in the last federal elections (2013) and 7 per cent of the votes (and seven seats) in the last European elections. We can register also a high success of the Freedom Party of Austria, a nationalist and anti-immigration party, in the 2016 Austrian presidential election. The Austrian political scene was 'shocked' by an unexpected success of the candidate of the Freedom Party of Austria (a nationalist and anti-immigration party), Norbert Hofer, who obtained 35.1 per cent of the votes in the first round of the 2016 presidential elections – although the Green candidate succeeded (53.8 per cent vs. 46.2 per cent of votes for the radical right candidate).

The ultranationalist, anti-Semitic and neofascist Jobbik (the Movement for a Better Hungary), after receiving 14.7 per cent of the votes in the last European election, secured 20.2 per cent in the 2014 parliamentary elections, becoming Hungary's third-largest party in the National Assembly. In Bulgaria, Atoka (National Union Attack), which strongly opposes the Turkish minority and is against Bulgaria entering the EU and NATO, had 12 per cent of the votes in the 2009 European elections, and in Slovakia the far-right, anti-Roma, anti-immigration, anti-Jewish and anti-Nato party (also defined a 'criminal organization'), Kotleba – People's Party Our Slovakia, gained 8 per cent of the votes and 14 seats in the 2016 elections for the National Council (Mudde 2013).

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Finally, The Greek neo-fascist Golden Dawn, which openly makes use of Nazi symbolism, gained the third position in the last Greek elections (2015) and 9.4 per cent of consensus in the last European elections. Moreover, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic are experiencing heavy unrest in the form of right-wing extremist incidents targeting the Roma people (TE-SAT 2012: 30). Alongside the success of the political parties and social movements of the new populist and xenophobic right, an underground subculture of racist and frequently violent young extremists has emerged, who are proficient in the use of the internet and social media, and who have their own symbols, myths and language (Caiani and Parenti 2013). It goes without saying that these political groups are extremely heterogeneous and range from English moderate Eurosceptics to the ultranationalist, fascist Greek Golden Dawn, but the groups nevertheless have in common a hostility towards the EU, and aim to return to greater national sovereignty (especially with regard to monetary policy).

In sum, the populist right-wing revitalization has been particularly strong in Southern and Central-Eastern Europe. However, as has been pointed out, the two types of surges show different patterns:

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> while the more recent wave of CEE populism and anti-establishment mobilisation more generally is partly (but certainly not exclusively) related to the emergence of 'purifier' parties promising better and scandal-free governance, Southern Europe populism is generally highly polarising and often anti-systemic.
>
> (Kriesi and Pappas 2016: 323)

Furthermore, in Southern Europe, together with radical right populism, there has also been an increase in left-wing populism (as exemplified by Syriza, the Five Star Movement and Podemos). In Northern Europe too, populist radical right parties have been on the rise during the Great Recession; however, they "have been consistently systemic and, at times, even supportive of their mainstream competitors' policies" (Kriesi and Pappas 2016: 323).

The causes of success of radical right-wing (populist) organizations

Although it may sometimes seem impossible to find an explanation for the emergence and strength of the radical right that is valid across countries and time – for example, as noted above, the strangely divergent fortunes of the Walloon Front National (not successful) and the Flemish VB (successful) within the context of the same country, immigration, increasing cultural diversity and unemployment (Arzheimer 2012; Muis and Immerzeel 2016) – today a vast literature exists that tries to empirically investigate and test the main factors involved in the success of these political parties and movements. What is certain with regard to Europe is that, as illustrated by other chapters in this book, citizens' dissatisfaction with politics, economics and immigration is increasing (see also Eurobarometer 2015) and it is skilfully capitalized upon by the forces of the extreme right.

Despite increasing academic interest in, and the social relevance of, the extreme right, when analysing the causes of the emergence and success of radical right-wing organizations, one is confronted with three main types of explanations and 'schools'. There are those which emphasize, at an individual level, the role of extremists' psychological characteristics and their values and motivations (e.g. Canetti and Pedahzur 2002; Henry *et al.* 2005); those which focus, at a systemic level, on the environmental conditions (e.g. cultural, societal) and the institutional framework and elites' responses that influence actors' mobilization and success (e.g. Koopmans 2005; Van der Brug *et al.* 2005; Arzheimer and Carter 2006); and finally, those explanations, at a meso level, insisting on organizational characteristics and charismatic leaders as entrepreneurs of radical right mobilization (e.g. Eatwell 2005; Art 2011). These factors are generally studied in isolation, although they should instead be viewed as complementary rather than competing theories (see e.g. Caiani and Borri 2016). This corresponds with the distinction between demand-side and supply-side factors (Caiani 2017; Klandermans 2004; Koopmans *et al.* 2005; Rydgren 2007; Van der Brug and Fennema 2007).

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Individual-level explanations: who are the radical-right supporters in Europe?

Individual-level explanations for the success of radical right-wing groups draw mostly upon psychological and sociopsychological aspects. The main focus is on the sociodemographic characteristics and attitudes of radical-right supporters (see e.g. Arzheimer 2012; De Koster *et al.* 2014). Research on extreme right political parties (prominent in the investigation of the extreme right at least during the 1990s) has focused on the emergence, growth and political impact of European extreme right parties (e.g. Betz 1994), stressing the importance of the specific personality traits of right-wing leaders and/or of value orientations of their supporters (e.g. levels of trust in representative institutions, xenophobia, orientation towards immigration; see Norris 2005; Rydgren 2012). For example, Klandermans and Mayer (2006), by focusing through interviews on 157 extreme right activists from both political parties and movements in certain European countries, identify the most important reasons of their activism as being in their past: first of all, an exposure to traditional, nationalist or even authoritarian values (Klandermans and Mayer 2006: 171) during the activists' childhood; and second, feelings of stigmatization, together with a sense of loyalty and inclusion offered by the group, were isolated as the main common factors leading people to join extreme right organizations. Indeed, the authors argue that, in line with Ignazi's "silent counter-revolution" hypothesis (Ignazi 1992), this type of early socialization produces a sharp contrast between activists' traditional values and the values of post-industrial society (such as permissiveness, multiculturalism, etc.), which would in turn cause them to lean towards extremism (Ignazi 1992). Among the social-psychological approaches to radical-right extremism, the importance of belonging and identity is also stressed. The search for status and identity is considered a main motivating factor when youths join racist groups and gangs (see e.g. the study by Bjørgo (1997) on Scandinavian countries). Young people frequently joined militant racist groups to receive protection against various enemies or perceived threats – whether they be school bullies or immigrant youth gangs (Bjørgo 1997). Against those theories that view supporters of radial-right groups as being characterized as somewhat irrational and alienated, rather than being motivated by particular values or ideology, it has instead been shown that voting for these parties is connected largely with ideological and pragmatic considerations (Van der Brug *et al.* 2000; Zhirkov 2014). In this regard, radical-right activists have been found not to have particular psychological disturbances or to be 'sociopathic'; rather, they are socially integrated and appear to be "perfectly normal people" (Klandermans and Mayer 2006: 267; Blee and Creasap 2010: 271). To be sure, we will notice that the activists of the extreme right in Europe are heterogeneous. As early as 1984, French researchers had distinguished five subgroups within the FN's electorate/activists: xenophobes, traditional right, Catholic fundamentalists, young workers, and prodigal sons of the left. Mayer distinguishes four subgroups on the basis of their previous electoral behaviour. The four sub-electorates show substantial

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differences in terms of sociodemographic characteristics and attitudes. In Austria, researchers distinguish between at least two 'sociopolitical types' within the electorate of the FPÖ: "welfare state chauvinists" and right-wingers disillusioned by the system (Plasser and Ulram 2003). In sum, these micro-level accounts, either emphasizing activists' primary socialization, their search for status and identity, or their authoritarian or xenophobic attitudes, are all focused on the demand-side of far-right politics, namely on those individual factors that lead people to sympathize, join or vote for extreme right organizations. This approach has been questioned by other scholars (e.g. Mudde 2010), who highlighted that all these explanations of right-wing extremism implicitly share one assumption: that under normal circumstances, demand for far-right politics should be low.

Macro-level factors: the role of the context

These types of studies focus on the socioeconomic contextual variables (in particular on economic disparities, ethnic or class cleavages and structural factors such as technology and communication) and/or cultural, and even technological, variables (such as political culture, religion and historical experiences), which can account for (right-wing) extremism. In particular, with specific reference to radical right parties' and movements' success, economic and social crises are mentioned (Prowe 2004), as well as political instability, allies in power (Koopmans 2005), the legacy of an authoritarian past, youth subcultures, and hooliganism and the diffusion of xenophobic values within the society (Rydgren 2005; Mudde 2007).

For example, among studies focusing on the economic aspects, the 'deprivation theory' relates right-wing extremism to anomie and poverty, bridging the macro-level socioeconomic features and individual factors (e.g. Heitmeyer 2002; Perrineau 2002). In this regard, the sense of insecurity arising from the breakdown of traditional social structures (e.g. social class, family, religion), and the grievances generated in economic, social or political critical conditions, brought about by processes of globalization and modernization, are considered 'precipitant' factors which favour support for right-wing parties and groups. However, the empirical evidence focusing on these aspects offers contrasting and non-univocal results. On the one hand, for example, studies of right-wing radicals (both from political parties and non-party extreme right organizations) stress that they are usually young (often not even 18 years old), with a lower class background and lack of education and professional skills (Merkl 2003). In addition, difficulties in primary socialization due to weakening of the sense of family and entrenchment in the community (Merkl 2003) are also factors favouring right-wing extremism. On the other hand, other works question the positive correlation between right-wing extremism and (low) economic status. For example, Canetti and Pedahzur (2002) show that right-wing extremist sentiments are unrelated to socioeconomic variables. Similarly, a comfortable individual situation is found to be more conducive to extreme right party affinity than job insecurity

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and deprivation (De Weerdt *et al.* 2004: 81, quoted in Mudde 2007: 223). In fact, according to Mudde,

> [P]opulist radical right parties are supported by people who want to hold on to what they have in the face of the perceived threats of globalisation (i.e. mass immigration and the post-industrial society).
>
> (Mudde 2007: 223)

Among studies which focus on the political contextual factors that can facilitate or, vice versa, hamper the emergence and success of right-wing radical groups, some concentrate on long-term, institutional variables (e.g. the characteristics of the electoral systems – see Kitschelt 2007; Arzheimer and Carter 2006); while others focus on medium-term party system factors (e.g. the models of party competition – see Van der Brug *et al.* 2005; Carter 2005) and short-term contextual variables (e.g. the levels of immigration – see Lubbers *et al.* 2000; Van der Brug *et al.* 2005). Particularly popular is the idea that the *political opportunity structure* (e.g. Arzheimer and Carter 2006; Mudde 2007), available in a specific time and country –which refers to both the stable and the dynamic characteristics of the context (such as the institutional framework of a country, the functional and territorial distribution of powers, the party system or form of government; the shift in the configuration of allies and opposition, new laws, etc.; see e.g. Mudde 2007) – can strongly influence radical right mobilization. While 'open' opportunities imply easy access for new challengers in the political system, the lack (or the closing) of these opportunities often ends up in scarce mobilization or even the escalation of radicalization (della Porta 1995). In this respect, for instance, Koopmans (2005) argues that right-wing radicalism in Europe would be motivated more by the lack of opportunities (e.g. through established political channels of expression) than by the presence of grievances in society (e.g. presence of immigrants, economic difficulties, etc.). As far as Central and Eastern Europe is concerned, the role of the past communist regime has been cited as favouring greater acceptance of right-wing discourses and ideologies, likewise, it has been suggested that the youth of the nation-states in this region has the tendency to favour a stronger appeal to 'nationalism' on the part of the people (Minkenberg 2015).

Group-level explanations: organizations and leaders of the radical right

These studies focus mainly on factors such as organizations and their dynamics, leaders, ideologies and propaganda. For example, by drawing upon 140 interviews with party activists in different countries, Art (2011) explains the cross-national variation in electoral support for the radical right, using the dynamics of party building and, in particular, the skill of radical-right parties in recruiting and maintaining a moderate and educated membership and leadership. Other meso-level studies underline the important role played by ideology and propaganda, and therefore the 'frames' usually employed by organizations and their leaders to

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provide a meaning within which activists can locate their action (Caiani *et al.* 2012). In this respect, the superiority of one race (religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) over others (O'Boyle 2002: 28), racism in terms of "otherness" (Minkenberg 1998: 45), right-wing activists as "executers of a general will" (Heitmeyer 2002: 525), and "blood" and "honour", have all been found to be main elements of extreme right rhetoric (Wagemann 2005). Charismatic leadership is a prominent supply-side explanation in the academic literature (e.g. Eatwell 2005). It has been argued that charismatic leaders who are able to maintain peace in an organization can instigate an upward spiral of organizational strength (Klandermans and Mayer 2006). However, organizational resources seem often to be both a *cause* and a *result* of success (rather than a genuinely 'independent factor'). To be sure, organizational strength may be more important in explaining the persistence of parties after their initial breakthrough (Ellinas 2009). Among organizational resources is the role of *ideology* in current right-wing movements. Because right-wing extremists generally dehumanize their enemies, attacks on target groups, such as black people, or enclaves of foreign workers in Europe, are justified by their ideology (Caiani 2012). Griffin (2003) underlines the role of 'dream time' in extreme right-wing political violence. The most self-evident explanation of the success of right-wing radicalism is that many people hold (populist) radical-right views. Indeed, in multivariate analyses 'extreme right ideology' has been proved to be the most important variable in explaining the electoral failure and success of populist radical right-wing parties. There is a general agreement among scholars that the main reason for their support is a 'nativist position' on the immigration issue. Second comes 'authoritarianism'. The third and final core feature of the radical-right vote has been found to be 'populism', although this concept has thus far been little operationalized (often as anti-establishment sentiments, i.e. political resentment) in empirical studies at the mass level.

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Right-wing parties and populism: empirical evidence from the German and Italian cases

Populism and the extreme right are increasingly discussed, as argued in this chapter, as interrelated 'diseases' in various (academic and political) interpretations of current challenges to liberal democracies (e.g. Mény and Surel 2002; Caiani and della Porta 2011). Populism is considered to be a communication style or 'thin' ideology that divides society into two homogeneous groups that are mutually antagonistic: the 'pure people' (whose will is embodied by the radical right) vs. the 'corrupt political elites' (for an overview and empirical measurements of the concept, see Caiani and Graziano 2016; Akkerman *et al.* 2013). A further element of this 'thin-centred ideology' concerns the idea of restoring popular sovereignty. As 'political rhetoric', populism is marked by the "unscrupulous use and instrumentalization of diffuse public sentiments of anxiety and disenchantment" (Betz 1994: 4) and appeals to "the power of the common people in order to challenge the legitimacy of the current political establishment" (Abts and Rummens 2007: 407).

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Certainly, many of these aspects are discernible in the political discourse of most current radical right-wing parties in Europe, as illustrated by the findings below regarding two leading radical-right political parties in Germany and Italy.[1]

Looking at the (ten) most quoted identity and oppositional actors (i.e. ‘frames’) in the discourse of the Italian and German political parties (Table 6.2), a picture emerges that juxtaposes the ‘pure’ people with the ‘corrupt’ political elites, either domestic or European.

More specifically, the NPD defines itself as the “social homeland party of the Germans”, which stands for “national identity, national sovereignty and national solidarity” (NPD Political Programme 2013: 8). The prime objective of national socialist policy is “taking care of the survival and further existence of the German people in its ancestral middle European habitat”.

‘The people’, a frequently used rhetorical category in the discourse of both groups, are (in both countries) portrayed as being in a desperate state of exploitation as “a prostrated people, which however thanks to its history, its tradition and its community, will rise again and regain their dignity and their freedom”.

Table 6.2 The main ‘allies’ and ‘enemies’ in the discourse of the German NPD and the Italian Forza Nuova (Political Programmes 2013–2016)

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‘Us’	*(N)*	*‘Them’*	*(N)*
(a) Germany_NPD			
Nation/nation state/national (63)	77	Foreigner	12
Germans	67	Globalization	11
NPD/National Democrats	51	Speculative/foreign capital, capital markets, capitalism	9
(German/our) people	56	Supranational institutions (NATO, WTO, UN)	8
Germany/German Republic	47		
Family/families	27		
National identity	14	(Multinational) corporations	6
Children	11	EU-Europe/EU-technocrats	6
Sovereignty	10	‘Established’ political parties/class	6
People ‘community’ (*Volksgemeinschaft*)	8	Government	5
		Multicultural society/‘illusion’	5
Solidarity	8	Integration	3
		Islam	3
(b) Italy – Forza Nuova			
Nation/national	53	System (political)	17
State	39	Politics (national, EU)	15
Italy/Italian	35	Crisis	8
Family	31	Immigrants	7
Forza Nuova	27	Euro	6
Europe	26	Institutions (EU)	7
People (our)	25	Parties	2
Work	21		
Citizens	12		

Source: Caiani and Kroel (2017).

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In line with an anti-establishment interpretation of the new extreme right, when Italian and German extreme right organizations mention the domestic political classes, they severely criticize them for their misbehaviour in relation to politics as well as in terms of moral norms and values. Political elites (from both the left and the moderate right) are depicted as corrupt and focused only on their own personal interests as opposed to the interests of the country. Above all, a lack of accountability to the people is emphasized. For instance, in the discourse of the Italian Forza Nuova organization, political parties (but also the 'political class') are perceived as "restricted circles of power which divide the people into factions and control the will". Similarly, the notion of patronage and corruption is indicated by saying that parties are a "fast way to careers, patronage and undue influence on the work of public administration at the expense of the common good" (Forza Nuova Political Programme 1997: 1).

The anti-establishment frame is also frequently shifted to the EU level in the discourse of both cases. Indeed, the European political elites have a strongly negative connotation in the discourse of the German and Italian extreme right organizations (and they are mostly contrasted with 'the people'). The EU is considered to be a 'dictatorship', a 'technocratic power', a 'conspiracy', which not only "menaces the national sovereignty, but also the power of the people". This attitude towards Europe and the EU is not just typical of the Italian and German radical right; rather, it is widespread across almost all the European radical-right parties, at least those that are currently successful, and which capitalize on the dissatisfaction of citizens against Europe and in particular the management of the Euro crisis (economic but also immigration) in their electoral programmes, as Nigel Farage and Brexit have recently exemplified. For a long time, the English UKIP leader has incited his supporters by stressing: "it's time to decide. We don't need to wait until 2017 to have a Referendum: let's have one right now […] to tell them what you think about the EU" (Caiani 2014: 455).

The corruption of European elites has recently also been one of the main topics in the electoral manifesto of the Hungarian Jobbik. Marine Le Pen calls the Euro a "catastrophic experiment" (Caiani 2014: 456). The political party Front National, likewise, considers the European institutions (especially the Commission) to be 'centralizing' institutions and criticizes their weak legitimacy (they are often referred to as 'not elected') by proposing instead to give more power to the European Parliament and the Council representing national governments (Front National). In sum, Euroscepticism and radical Euroscepticism are recognized to be major factors in understanding the current radical right in Europe (Caiani and Guerra 2017).

Third, in both organizations, a nativist concept of the people emerges from the analysis of their political discourse. For example, society is conceptualized mainly as a 'national community'. In the discourse of the German political party, whether someone belongs to the German people is determined "by ethnic origin and language, culture and customs practiced" (NPD Political Programme 2013). Likewise, the slogan "Germany must remain country of the Germans" is found both in the political programme and in the web news section. To confirm this,

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the frame 'German people' is mostly mentioned in opposition to the categories 'foreigners' and 'asylum seekers' or 'refugees' (see Table 6.2). In fact, the NPD asks for a deportation of "foreigners that are competitors for work and social spongers" and for "segregating German and foreign children in formal school education". In the discourse of the Italian group, too, linguistic, ethnic or religious minorities are often presented as scapegoats who are to blame for current problems or as a threat to the people (since 9/11 this particularly affects Muslim people; see also Betz 2013). On the contrary, in both countries, the forces of the radical right are portrayed as a 'saviour' that will give power back to the people.

Conclusion

In recent years there has been a revival in research into the radical right, as well as, on the other hand, into populism and nationalism. In this chapter, after presenting the definitional debate about the radical right and the current 'state of the art' of radical right-wing parties' fortunes all over Europe, we have critically reviewed the literature on extreme right movements and organizations in Europe. We have seen that there are several approaches attempting to explain the 'when' and 'why' (e.g. the emergence, survival, success, etc.) of right-wing extremism, as well as several fields and disciplines focusing on it. Despite the increasing academic attention given to the subject over the past two decades, however, the causes (and often the definition) of the extreme right remain unclear and somewhat controversial. Nevertheless, there is now agreement among scholars that, in particular, the role of populism and nationalistic appeals are emerging as powerful in most of the current and successful radical right parties in Europe. Recent research has also indicated that the radical right has become a successful social movement of the losers, which reacts against economic and especially cultural globalization and related competition (Kriesi *et al.* 2008). The success of the radical right in its 'mobilization of the losers', at least in some party systems, is considered as responsible for a shift in emphasis from questions of economics in the 1970s to questions of culture today (Kriesi *et al.* 2008: 265). Populist politics are enjoying renewed success in Europe, above all in the former socialist countries. As we have argued in this chapter, presenting the two cases of the German and Italian political party discourses to exemplify the phenomenon, we are witnessing a 'populist momentum'. In contrast to the extremist right-wing parties of the 1930s, new populist movements in Europe, as well as beyond, do not aim to abolish democracy: quite the opposite, since they thrive on democratic support. What we are witnessing today, writes Ivan Krastev, is a conflict among elites "that are becoming increasingly suspicious of democracy and angry publics that are becoming increasingly illiberal" (Krastev 2007).

However, as other scholars stress, if, according to the conventional view, the far right in Europe is antithetical to the values of liberal democracy, new research is needed to show that far right ideology is a radicalization of mainstream values. This would have a major impact on how populism is understood (Mudde 2007).

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Note

1 This study has been conducted recently by the author and was based on a frame analysis of written documents (party programmes, leaflets, election flyers) from 2013 and 2016 and current material from the websites (e.g. web pages of the group, forum of discussion, newsletters) of selected extreme right organizations, chosen from the political party and non-party extreme right milieu (Caiani and Kroel 2017). The goal was to investigate the presence and forms of populist frames in the discourse of these groups, as well as the bridging of appeal to the people with other (more traditional) frames of the extreme right (e.g. nativism). In particular, we looked at how the central populist frame (namely the people versus the elite) is linked to the extreme right definition of the 'us' and the 'them' when developing diagnoses, prognoses and motivations to action (the typical analytical categories of frame analysis literature, referring to the main identity and oppositional concept elaborated by the actors as well as their identified problems and solutions for social and political reality (see e.g. Snow and Benford 1988).

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