

Conference Program
The Radical Right and its Impact on Migration Politics and Policies
Paris, November 17-18, 2006
New York University in Paris, CEVIPOF/Sciences-Po
Organizers: Martin Schain (NYU), Damir Skenderovic (University of Fribourg)
Sponsored by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF) and the Center for European and
Mediterranean Studies (NYU)

Friday, November 17, 2006 (NYU/Paris)

3:00 P.M.

Welcome

Martin Schain (New York University), Damir Skenderovic (University of Fribourg)

Coffee

4:00 - 6:00 P.M.

1. Session: The Migration Agenda of the Radical Right

Chair: Martin Schain (New York University)

Speakers:

Ariane Chebel-d'Appolonia (CEVIPOF/Science-Po):

“How Wonderful It Is To ‘Hate’: The Use of Anti-Migrant Sentiments by ERPs”

European countries have experienced increasing levels of xenophobia coupled with the development of extreme right wing parties and/or anti-migrant groups. In 2003, 50% of the respondents expressed “resistance to immigrants”, defined by the ESS as “the resistance to the influx and admittance of immigrants belonging to a different race or ethnic group than the majority population”. Resistance to immigrants is complemented by the increasing feeling shared by a large majority of Europeans that their country has reached the limits of cultural or ethnic diversity. 60% of the respondents in 2003 (EU 15) believed that “there is a limit to how many people of other races, religions or cultures a society can accept” and “if there were to be more people belonging to these minority groups, we would have problems”. Europe has also seen the rise of parties that have been labeled ERPs, Radical Right or right wing populist. These parties are ideologically a “mixed bag”. However, the main features they have in common are their opposition to immigration and their hate for other ethnic groups.

In this paper, I attempt to address two related questions: How do the ERPs use anti-migrant feelings? What is the impact of xenophobic and exclusionary discourse on the European public opinion? A critical evaluation of the current ethno-centric trends suggests that the correlation between anti-migrant feelings and xenophobia is much more complex than expected. For the last two decades, negative attitudes against immigrants turned out to be a strong determinant of the vote for ERPs and extremism generated xenophobia. Support for ethnocentrism is today higher than support for ERPs and preference for ERPs is far from being the only predictor of anti-immigrant feelings. Furthermore, mainstream right parties in many countries have to some extent co-opted the anti-immigration agenda of the ERPs. Meanwhile some ERPs have recently decided to soften their racist and exclusionary discourse or have tried to move beyond this “single-issue” strategy. The most recent electoral results reveal that the most successful ERPs are those that have succeeded in being perceived not only as anti-immigrant, but related to other issues as well. So, if it is still “wonderful” for them to hate, is it still useful?

Hans-Georg Betz

“Europe for the Europeans: The Nativist Turn in the Radical Right’s Anti-Immigrant Discourse”

The electoral success of radical right-wing populist parties in Western liberal democracies has to a large extent been a reflection of their ability to mobilize voter resentments against immigrants from developing countries. Central arguments have been that immigrants take away jobs from ‘native workers’ and that at times of mass unemployment; that immigrants abuse social services and thus contribute to the crisis of the welfare state; and that immigrants represent a major cause of rising crime and insecurity.

Although xenophobic arguments still figure prominently in radical right-wing populist programmatic statements, they no longer are at the center of these parties' ideology. Instead, in recent years, the radical right has increasingly adopted a broader 'nativist' agenda, that argues from the basis of cultural compatibility. In the process, the notion of identity has become central to radical right-wing populist rhetoric. The paper traces the contours of this discourse using the examples of the *Vlaams Belang* and the *Dansk Folkeparti*, two parties, which have gone to great lengths to promote themselves as the defenders of their countries, culture and identity.

Damir Skenderovic (University of Fribourg)

“From Non-Issue to Key Theme: Migration on the Political Agenda of the SVP and the FPÖ”

In the last ten years or so, the Swiss People's Party (SVP) and the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) have been the two most successful parties of the radical right in Western Europe. Both are prominent examples of long-established right-wing parties that have undergone a process of major ideological and political transformation by espousing a radical right-wing agenda and ideology. The most significant expression of these changes can be seen in the parties' shifting positions on policies related to various aspects of migration. The paper discusses from two perspectives, how the issue of migration has played a key role in this process of transformation: First, by examining the changes that have occurred in the positions and policies on migration that have been promoted by the SVP and the FPÖ since the 1980s, the paper shows that exclusionist ideas have gradually become part of their core ideology, qualifying both parties as full members of the political family of the radical right. Second, the paper shows how the migration agenda became a key constituent of the identity politics of both these parties, a rationale they also applied to other issues such as European policies and national history. Both the SVP and the FPÖ regarded migration as a particularly convenient issue through which to pursue the dialectical purpose of identity politics aimed both at inclusion and exclusion.

Jack Veugelers (University of Toronto)

“The Migration Agenda of Far-Right Parties in Britain, France, and Italy”

This paper compares the immigration program of the far right in Britain, France, and Italy. In particular, it examines three kinds of variation: (1) change over time, i.e., from the 1980s to today; (2) between far-right parties within a single country; (3) between the leading parties of each of the three countries studied. The parties examined (with the leading party for each country underlined) are: Britain – National Front, British National Party; France – Front national, *Mouvement National Républicain*; Italy – Movimento sociale italiano, *Lega Nord*, *Fiamma Tricolore*, *Azione Sociale*. While none of these parties has defended immigration, the extent to which they have treated immigration as an issue that is either important or complex has varied significantly. I will conclude with a discussion of whether such variation is better explained by the core ideology or the electoral strategy of these parties.

Discussant: Roger Eatwell (University of Bath)

6.00 P.M. Cocktail

8:00 P.M. Dinner

Saturday, November 18, 2006 (CEVIPOF)

9:30 A.M.

Coffee

10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

2. Session: The Radical Right in the Party System

Chair: Damir Skenderovic (University of Fribourg)

Speakers:

Michael Minkenberg (Viadrina University Frankfurt/Oder)

“The Radical Right and Policy Effects in Europe: Between Party and Movement Mobilization”

In this paper I intend to broaden the debate the radical right's impact by combining a discussion of organizational structures of the radical right with their policy effects. Success of the radical right is not measured primarily in electoral support but more broadly in mobilization and policy effects. Based on previous and more conceptual work on this issue, the paper starts out with the hypothesis that there is a link between various organizational manifestations, i.e. that more right-wing radical mobilization in the electoral arena tends to go along with less mobilization in the ideologically more extreme movement sector, and that policy effects result from the interplay of these actors and the established political actors. The main point will be that a country's opportunity structures, including institutional and cultural variables as well as the structure of party competition, largely determine the organizational manifestations and their policy effects.

Jens Rydgren (University of Stockholm)

“The Radical Right in Sweden and Norway: Still Isolated, But For How Long?”

By holding very restrictive positions on immigration, and by building part of their rhetoric on xenophobic frames, the radical right-wing parties in Sweden and Norway largely deviate from the consensus on these matters within respective party system. In both Sweden and Norway, the official response from the mainstream parties has been one of repudiation. Unlike in Denmark, for instance, the Swedish and Norwegian mainstream right has clearly emphasized that they do not see a coalition with the radical right as a viable alternative in order to win power; and, moreover, they have not accommodated frames and issue position from the radical right to the same extent as has been the case in Denmark (Rydgren 2004). Instead, which is interesting, did a further politicization of the immigration/integration issue occur in Norway when feminist actors started mobilize against what they perceived as a threat of multiculturalism.

Marc Swyngedouw (ISPO-CESO-K.U.Leuven)

“Comparing the Vlaams Blok/Belang (B) and the List Pim Fortuyn (NL) on the Question of Immigration Policies and Their Influence on Other Parties”

In this paper we want to show that although there are important differences between the ideology of the Belgian-Flemish Vlaams Blok/Belang (VB) and the Dutch List Pim Fortuyn (LPF), their platform on the so-called solution of the immigration question runs parallel. We will first analyse the national platform of the Vlaams Belang on the immigration issue and the different writings of Pim Fortuyn on this issue. To show the influence of both on their respectively party system we will use two different strategies. For the Flemish case we will analyse the programs of the main parties in the local elections of 2006 in the city of Antwerp on ethnic minorities and related issues. For the Netherlands we will build on the work of Hanspeter Kriesi and others, which analyse the adaptation of the public discourse of the main Dutch parties after the initial success of the LPF in the national elections of 2001, running up to the 2002 national elections.

Discussant: Cas Mudde (University of Antwerp)

Lunch

2:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

3. Session: The Radical Right and Public Policy

Chair: Roger Eatwell (University of Bath)

Speakers:

Michelle Williams (University of Florida)

“Contenders in the Ring: Far Right Party Effects in Austria, France and Germany”

Radical right-wing parties have achieved the status of a contender party in many West European democracies. Even though they remain unlikely to garner the most votes in national parliamentary elections, they have become

a factor in party competition and in agenda-setting. This paper argues that additionally far right parties impact the policy process and policy outcomes. In order to examine the efficacy and effect of far right parties, both intra-party competition and inter-party competition are examined. One contention of the paper is that far right parties are critically aware of their relationship to other parties in their party system as they craft their platform and strategy. Also, far right parties make use of alternate channels of influence in addition to regular policy channels, therefore both will be considered. Three issue areas provide the focus for analysis including immigration, law and order, and European Union politics. Interview data collected from personal interviews with approximately 35 MPs and party representatives in France, Germany and Austria provides insight into these propositions. The interview data is examined using a variety of both qualitative and quantitative techniques.

Gianni D'Amato (University of Neuchâtel)

“Riding the Cobra, or: How the SVP and FPÖ Won Hegemony on Migration and Minority Policies and No Other Party Dares to Do Anything Against It”

Cooptation and demarcation, two established strategies to marginalize radical populist challengers, has not worked out in Switzerland and Austria since the SVP and FPÖ entered the political scene and oriented their strategy to migration and minority politics in the early 1990s. In both countries, where immigration, immigrant and asylum policies were framed by economic interests and a discourse on humanitarian tradition, the reevaluation of a national(ist) argumentation and the use of a winning political formula by populist challengers took the government, over the years, to a change of the political bar center on migration issues. This article will argue on the dynamics that influenced governmental decisions and conducted the established parties into a loose-loose situation on migration issues.

Dietrich Thränhardt/Anita Böcker (University of Münster)

“Taboo or Moral Panic. The Radical Right and Public Policy in Germany and the Netherlands”

Among Europe's wide variety of party systems, political atmospheres, and public policies, Germany and the Netherlands are particularly interesting to compare. The last years have witnessed a sweeping change in the political climate with regard to immigration and immigrant integration in both countries. The Netherlands, which used to pride itself on its minorities policy, are now in a state of moral panic. Debates about immigration have become politicised, there is a deep and widespread pessimism about the integration of 'non-Western' immigrants, and mainstream parties have become receptive to ideas which used to be associated with the radical, xenophobic right. Germany, on the other hand, has gone through a process of consensus-building between parties, churches, business and trade unions after the turmoil of the asylum crisis of the early 1990s. This has led to the introduction of several reforms that run against the instincts of the radical right. The paper will analyse and compare these changes, paying special attention to the role of the radical right. Developments in Germany and the Netherlands will be compared on three levels: political debates on immigration and immigrant integration; actual policies in various areas related to immigration; and effects on integration processes.

Discussant: Martin Schain (New York University)

4:00 P.M. Coffee

4:30 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

Roundtable: The Radical Right and Migration Politics

Chair: Riva Kastoryano (CERI/Science-Po)

Participants: Roger Eatwell (University of Bath), Nonna Mayer (CEVIPOF/Science-Po), Cas Mudde (University of Antwerp), Martin Schain (New York University), Damir Skenderovic (University of Fribourg)