GLOBALIZATION AND THE SURGE OF ANTI-IMMIGRATION GROUPS IN WESTERN EUROPE

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Although scholars almost unanimously concur that an increasingly interconnected international economy and the evolution of a global labor market have significantly impacted and even transformed the domestic politics of the advanced industrial societies, less consensus exists about which domestic political effects are specifically linked to these phenomena and why political change has been unevenly distributed across what appears to be similar and similarly exposed polities.[1] Indeed, there is perhaps no dimension of the broad-based phenomenon of transnationalism or globalization that has inspired less insight, in part because it has been largely neglected by globalization scholars, than the domestic political effects of cross-national immigration.[2] Within this context, two questions can be raised: how is globalization linked to the relatively recent surge of popular support for anti-immigrant political actors; and why, in light of their ubiquity, have anti-immigrant groups achieved different patterns of domestic political success?[3] Although relevant elsewhere, these questions are especially pertinent within the context of the domestic politics of Western Europe, a region where anti-immigrant groups have garnered considerable formal and informal popular support since the early 1970s.

In light of their recent rise to political prominence, the central purpose of this paper is to explore the linkages between the surge of popular support for anti-immigrant groups and one of the more universal dimensions of globalization, the phenomenon of mass immigration. The argument this paper advances is that the unexpected and often remarkable growth of anti-immigrant groups is linked not so much to the economic or material threat posed by immigration but, rather, to a confluence of domestic factors, the most important of which is the subjective or socio-cultural threat that the permanent settlement of immigrants poses for a critical mass of "native" citizens. The variable of socio-cultural threat is not an independent one floating above the political process, however. On the contrary, as we will argue below, it is very much affected, if not primarily framed, by the mainstream domestic political actors–and particularly political parties-- who, at various junctures during the post-WWII period, embraced the arrival and facilitated the settlement of immigrants. It is also significantly

shaped by the rhetoric and activities of the anti-immigrant groups themselves, many of which have

skillfully and successfully navigated the political opportunity structure within their respective countries

to exploit the diffuse fears and resentments of native citizens.

THE PHENOMENON OF ANTI-IMMIGRANT GROUPS

Few phenomena affecting Western Europe during the past three decades indeed have precipitated

greater social and political fallout than the surge of popular and electoral support for anti-immigrant

groups, movements and political parties (Table 1). Whatever their national origins, all these groups

share a common motivation: opposition to new immigration and recently-settled immigrants.[4]

[Table 1 about here]

The proliferation of anti-immigrant groups: a select survey

Unlike its counterpart in Britain, the French National Front (FN) emerged as a significant actor

in domestic politics relatively recently when the National Front list, headed by Jean-Marie Le Pen,

attracted almost 10 percent of the vote in the June 1984 elections for the European Parliament. Within

a few months of the election, the percentage of FN sympathizers within the electorate expanded from

18 to 23 percent.[5] Retaining half of this implicit constituency in the national parliamentary elections

held in 1986, the FN won 35 seats on 9.8 percent of the vote. Exit polls conducted during the election

revealed that 67 percent of all National Front voters in 1984 had remained loyal in 1986.

In April 1988 Le Pen shook the foundations of established French political conservatism by

garnering 14.4 percent of the vote in the first round of the presidential elections. In the city of

Marseilles, the National Front standard-bearer emerged as the most popular presidential candidate with 28.3 percent of the vote. Although the FN ceded all but one of its 35 seats in the National Assembly after the parliamentary elections in June 1988, this political setback did not signal that its electoral appeal had significantly eroded, as it received 9.6 percent of the vote, approximately the same support that the party had received two years earlier. Rather, a change by the Government to a less proportional electoral system resulted in denying the FN significant parliamentary representation.

The FN's steady advance through the mainstream representative institutions of domestic politics continued into the 1990s. As Table 2 demonstrates, the National Front's performance at all electoral levels during the decade either nearly equaled or exceeded its results from the previous decade, peaking at 15.5 percent in the regional elections of 1998. More disturbing than these impressive gains is the fact that the National Front's electorate over time has become increasingly less inclined to support the Party as simply a vehicle for diffuse political protest and more disposed to perceive the FN as a conduit for implementing meaningful policy change. Fully eighty six percent of those who cast their ballots for Le Pen in the first round of the presidential elections in 1995 were primarily motivated to do so because they endorsed his political program.[6]

[Table 2 about here]

In Germany, the modest growth of neo-Nazi and new right groups during the 1980s and early 1990s occurred concurrently, and not coincidentally, with an increase in racist violence against Turkish and other ethnic minority immigrants.[7] These illiberal groups are currently splintered into several dozen separate organizations with approximately 40,000 members.

The most popular group, with approximately 20,000 members, is the German People's Union (DVU). Founded in the early 1970s, the DVU is organizationally linked to several neo-Nazi

organizations, and particularly the National Democratic Party (NPD), that emerged in the early postwar period during West Germany's managed transition to liberal democracy. Until very recently, the DVU was quiescent electorally. Indeed, only on one occasion, in the Saxony-Anhalt state elections in April, 1998 when the Party unexpectedly garnered 12.6 percent of the vote, has the DVU surpassed the 5 percent barrier needed to gain representation in a state legislature. However, much to the disappointment of its supporters, this promising result was very soon followed upon by a dismal performance in the 1998 *Bundestag* elections when the DVU garnered but 1.2 percent of the national vote.

Also operating on the anti-immigrant, political right in Germany is the Republican Party (REP), a party that is reported to have several thousand members. The Republicans' first modest electoral breakthroughs occurred in the Berlin municipal elections in 1989, when it garnered 7.5 percent of the vote, and the German elections to the European Parliament, when it obtained 7.1 percent. Although its performance in subnational elections occasionally has been spectacular since 1989, most notably in the 1992 elections to the Baden-Württemberg parliament (10.9%), the Republicans have failed to translate these regional results into national gains. In the most recent federal elections in 1998, the REP garnered only 1.8 percent of the vote, or slightly less than the support it received in the federal elections of 1994.

In contrast to the sclerotic political advance of its German counterparts, the rise of the xenophobic Freedom Party (FPÖ) to national prominence in Austria during the last decade or so has been nothing less than meteoric. Propelled by its charismatic leader, Jörg Haider, the Freedom Party has swiftly transformed itself from a sclerotic, politically moderate conservative party on the fringe of the Austrian party system in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s to a dynamic force on the populist, political right during the 1980s, 1990s and beyond.

Founded in 1955, the Freedom Party was much of a mainstream party on the traditional

political right until 1986 when, under Haider's leadership, it adopted a highly visible platform of animosity toward foreigners and particularly asylum seekers. Primarily on the basis of its embrace of this and other nationalist and right-wing, populist positions, the Freedom Party improved its vote in the parliamentary elections for the *Nationalrat* from 5 percent in 1983 to 9.7 percent in 1986.[8] Building upon this new foundation of populist support, the Freedom Party expanded its share of the national vote to 16.6 percent in 1990, thus netting the Party 33 seats in a lower legislature of 183. Additional and often spectacular gains in regional elections followed during the early 1990s, as the FPÖ routinely gained between 16 and 33 percent of the vote. In the parliamentary elections of December, 1995 the Freedom Party garnered 40 seats in the *Nationalrat* on the basis of 21.9 percent of the national vote. The FPÖ further solidified its status as the most popular, anti-immigrant voice in Western Europe when the Party unexpectedly won 28.2 percent of the vote in elections for the European Parliament in October, 1996.

The Freedom Party's greatest electoral and political breakthrough, however, occurred in October, 1999, when the Party finished second in the balloting for the *Nationalrat*, thus earning the Party 53 seats in the lower legislative house and four cabinet posts in the Austrian national government. Particularly disturbing to the mainstream Austrian political parties and a potential harbinger of future political complications for them were the sources of the Freedom Party's electoral support. An exit poll conducted by the Fessel-GfK Institute indicated that no other Austrian political party, including the Social Democrats, had more working class voters as a percentage of its supporters than the Freedom Party. The FPÖ was also the leading party among male voters (32%) in the 1999 election.[9]

In Denmark, where organized anti-immigration political activity emerged relatively slowly, the populist, anti-tax Progress Party (FrP) stepped forward to capitalize politically upon anti-immigrant popular sentiment during the 1980s. After conducting a hostile electoral campaign against foreigners,

and particularly Iranian and Lebanese refugees, the Party increased its representation in the Danish

national parliament from four to nine in September 1987. The national parliamentary delegation of the

Party expanded further to 16 after the May 1988 general election, as its national vote virtually doubled

within eight months--from 4.8 percent in 1987 to 9 percent in 1988. During the 1990s, voter support

for the Progress Party precipitously declined, however. The performance of the Party in the most

recent national Danish parliamentary elections in 1998 (2.4% and 4 seats) represented a dramatic fall

off from its electoral results of both 1990 (6.4% and 11 seats) and 1994 (6.4% and 12 seats).

The case of the Flemish Bloc (VB) in Belgium is a classic example of how a rise in popular

xenophobia can help revive the flagging fortunes of political parties that have been historically

organized around traditional, deep-seated ethnic cleavages. Founded in 1977, the Flemish Bloc has

married, since the 1990s, the plank of repatriating immigrants to its core demand that Flanders be

granted political independence. Despite the extensive restructuring of the Belgian constitution that was

effected between 1968 and 1980, the reorganization of the traditional Catholic, Liberal, and Socialist

parties into separate linguistic parties, and an overall decline in the intensity of ethnonational sentiment

in Belgium during the past decade and a half or so, the Flemish Bloc increased its representation in the

National Assembly from two to twelve seats after the 1991 general election, a rise of 400 percent in its

electoral support. Two-thirds of those who voted for the Flemish Bloc cited immigration as their

primary motivation.[10] The Bloc maintained this level of support four years later when the it garnered

7.8 percent of the vote in the May, 1995 elections for both the *Kamer* and the *Senaat*. The xenophobic

party significantly improved upon these results in June, 1999 when it won 14 seats in the *Kamer* on

9.9 percent of the vote and 4 seats in the *Senaat* on 9.4 percent of the vote.

Much like the Italian Northern League, the Belgian Flemish Bloc exploits the social frictions

between native citizens and the new ethnic minorities. It especially capitalizes upon the conflict

between the two groups in the dilapidated sections of Antwerp, Brussels, Mechlin, and other major

cities where immigrants from North Africa have settled within predominantly Flemish communities. At least one expert observer has ranked the Flemish Block the most xenophobic group among the major radical, right-wing populist groups of Western Europe.[11]

The different orientations, forms and strategies of anti-immigrant groups

Although the circumstances of their founding, organizational structure, ideological temperament, programmatic orientation, and core political strategies differ, all of the aforementioned and other anti-immigrant groups that have appeared in Western Europe since the mid 1970s share at least three characteristics. First, they are overtly hostile toward immigrants and vehemently opposed to new immigration. Second, these groups owe much, if not the greater part, of their modest political success during the past two decades to their exploitation of the social tensions that have accompanied the settlement of postwar immigrants.[12] And finally, to varying degrees, the major anti-immigrant groups of Western Europe have successfully cultivated and fostered a climate of public hostility toward immigrants that has, in turn, created a more favorable political context for themselves.

Each of the latter two characteristics will be discussed in greater depth below. Before doing so, we will first briefly sketch the variety of forms, programmatic orientations and political strategies that anti-immigrant groups have historically adopted or assumed since the early 1970s. A survey of the major anti-immigrant groups, movements and political parties that have emerged or evolved since the early 1970s suggests that they can be usefully aggregated within five broad categories: "pure" anti-immigrant groups; neo-fascist or neo-Nazi groups; ostensibly legitimate political parties that fit into the class of the "opportunistic right"; new, radical right parties; and the ethnonational right (Table 3). Although several of the anti-immigrant groups in Table 3 can reasonably be subsumed under more than one of these categories--the German Republican Party, for example, evinces some of the characteristics of neo-fascist groups and the opportunistic right as well as the many of the major

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features of the new, radical right-- for the purpose of analyzing the nature of these groups and their

significance in the larger political order it is necessary to delimit the boundaries of each of the five

categories. As we will argue below, anti-immigrant groups are far from equal in Western Europe;

rather, they significantly vary in form, orientation and political strategy. These differences, in turn,

portend differential outcomes for the politics of immigration and immigrant policy in the immigration-

receiving states.

[Table 3 about here]

Pure Groups

Perhaps the most straightforward of the five classifications, "pure" anti-immigrant groups share several

characteristics that distinguish them from all other major anti-immigrant, political actors. First, and

most importantly, these groups are organized exclusively around the related themes of animosity

towards settled immigrants and new immigration. Pure anti-immigrant groups are not inspired by

grand ideologies. As a rule, they do not adopt detailed economic programs or endorse policy planks

that are not directly linked to their core obsession with state immigrant and immigration policy.

Indeed, if foreign workers and their dependents had never settled in Western Europe, these groups

would have had no founding purpose and, hence, no *raison d'être*. Their activities and political

strategies are thus entirely negatively-inspired and directed: they are geared toward impeding all new

immigration and/or coercing settled immigrants either to return to their country of origin or to adopt,

as a condition of their permanent settlement, the dominant social mores, language and religious

traditions of the host society.

A second distinguishing feature of all pure, anti-immigrant groups is their lack of formal

organizational structure. As a consequence of their ephemeral nature, pure anti-immigrant groups do

not have formal, declared members. Because they exist to achieve predominantly negative purposes and are not inspired by grand ideologies, they tend to assume the shape of political movements or spontaneous pressure groups. To the extent that their supporters "support" the group, they do so through modest and sporadic financial contributions, voluntary labor, and/or spontaneous attendance at the group's scheduled rallies or events.

Neo-fascist groups

Unlike pure anti-immigrant groups, neo-fascist groups *are* inspired by an overarching ideology, an offshoot of classical, pre-WWII fascism, although most of these groups are careful to distance themselves in their public discourse from their infamous, ideological forerunners. Like their pre-war predecessors, neo-fascist groups openly value social and political order and hierarchy, are wary if not openly contemptuous of capitalism, reject ethnic and racial pluralism, and are inspired by an aggressive nationalism. Where neo-fascist groups significantly part company from their prewar predecessors, however, is with respect to their grudging support for the rules of democratic politics. Almost without exception, anti-immigrant, neo-fascist groups in Western Europe concede the political legitimacy of liberal democracy and reject the goal of abolishing the liberal democratic order through violence or extra-legal activities.

The antagonism of neo-fascist groups toward postwar immigrants organically springs from a world view that suggests the naturalness of racial hierarchy and, thus, the inevitability of inter-ethnic and racial conflict and competition whenever incompatible groups mix in the domestic and international arenas. Having said this, it is also the case that neo-fascist groups publicly vent their hostility toward settled immigrants for transparently instrumental as well as ideological reasons. Specifically, they are disposed to adopt a high profile, anti-immigrant posture in order to appeal to the widest possible political audience, and certainly to a broader audience than their core authoritarian positions and ideas,

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divorced from immigration-related issues, would otherwise attract.[13]

In contrast to pure anti-immigrant groups and movements, neo-fascist groups in Western Europe are fairly well organized. Most neo-fascist groups have regular, albeit usually a modest number of, dues paying members; organize annual meetings or conferences; assign routine, if ill-defined, leadership roles and responsibilities; and maintain a central or national headquarters. The greater degree of permanent organization of neo-fascist groups primarily springs from their lofty political ambitions. Unlike pure anti-immigrant groups, neo-fascist groups are not exclusively preoccupied with short-term questions of race or ethnic conflict. On the whole, they are less interested than pure anti-immigrant groups are in changing the course of public policy or influencing the attitudes of established political elites. Since their ultimate goal is to capture national political power, neo-fascist groups create and maintain a durable organizational structure in order to able to prevail politically over the long term.

Thus motivated, it is fairly common for neo-fascist groups to participate in the formal electoral process. Neo-fascist groups usually participate in subnational, and very often, general elections in order to create and secure a sizeable and loyal political constituency. An important difference between neo-fascist groups and conventional conservative political parties is that few of the former are available to join electoral or parliamentary coalitions. Their unavailability stems from the reluctance of mainstream parties to ally with them as well as the ideological aversion of these groups to democratic political compromise and parliamentary bargaining. As a result of their pariah status, neo-fascist groups normally do not enjoy access to the formal levers of political power.

Opportunistic right

Perhaps the most important distinctive feature of the opportunistic right is that its anti-immigrant posture and its public opposition to new immigration are primarily motivated by a calculated strategy

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to win votes. Unlike neo-fascist groups, the opportunistic right is not driven by an obsessive, race-centered ideology. Rather, its hostility to state immigrant and immigration policy is folded into a broader, populist political appeal, an appeal that pragmatically weaves immigration-related issues into a larger critique of the existing political and, very often, the socioeconomic order.[14] In contrast to neo-fascist groups, the opportunistic right will trim its illiberalism on immigration-related issues if the political context is unfavorable, that is, if its anti-immigration and/or immigrant positions do not attract significant voter support. On the other hand, the opportunistic right will accentuate such issues if and when it appears that, in so doing, it will attract a critical mass of voters.

A second important feature that distinguishes the opportunistic right from neo-fascist groups is the pliableness of its ideological identity. Put simply, the opportunistic right will, at various points in its history, ideologically waver between the extreme and the more moderate political right. Where such parties are situated on the ideological spectrum at a given moment in time depends upon a confluence of political variables, including the personal, ideological disposition of its leaders and the political opportunity structure created by the configuration of the party system. Although the opportunistic right and neo-fascist groups sometimes share a similar ideological heritage the former is not unduly or forever burdened by this heritage.

The opportunistic right can also be distinguished from neo-fascist groups with regard to its orientation toward the mainstream parties of government and the party system as a whole. Unlike neo-fascist groups, the opportunistic right is not permanently constrained either by its ideology or by the content of its policies from allying itself with mainstream political parties or being embraced by them. As a consequence, the opportunistic right is very much an active player in the formation of governments and parliamentary coalitions.

New radical right

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Perhaps the most politically potent of all the major anti-immigrant actors in Western Europe with respect to their immediate influence on immigration-related discourse are the groups and political parties included within family of the "new radical right" (NRR). Although some confusion prevails about which groups/parties can be appropriately subsumed under this category, at least three, the French National Front and the Progress Parties of Denmark and Norway, are important examples of this genre of anti-immigrant political actor. Like the three previously-cited groups, new radical right parties are inspired by a right-wing authoritarianism that situate them at the forefront of the domestic political opposition to new immigration and the permanent settlement of immigrants. Like neo-fascist parties and the opportunistic right, new radical right parties are formally organized with dues-paying members, they routinely contest elections, and they aspire to govern, especially at the national level. As with the opportunistic right, many of the electoral appeals of the new radical right have an explicit, populist foundation. However, despite sharing several characteristics and ambitions with their ideological cousins, the new radical right is a qualitatively distinct anti-immigrant actor.

What makes the new radical right very different from other anti-immigrant actors is the unique manner in which it combines a neo-liberal commitment to capitalism and individual economic freedom with an illiberalism toward immigrants, immigration, materialism, and contemporary democracy.[15] For the new radical right, the social conflict engendered by immigration essentially serves as a catalyst that crystallizes "right-wing extremism on the level of party competition if political entrepreneurs can embed xenophobic slogans in a broader right-authoritarian message for which they find a receptive audience."[16] New radical right parties are extremely hostile toward immigrants and adamantly opposed to all new immigration. However, unlike pure anti-immigrant and neo-fascist groups, the NRR is not politically overinvested in these positions. Rather, immigration-related social conflict provides but an opportunity for the new radical right to mobilize citizens who, in the first instance, are deeply disillusioned with the broader political and socioeconomic order.

Despite its skillful political exploitation of immigration-related conflict, the new radical right should not be subsumed under the umbrella of the opportunistic right because its hostility toward immigrants and immigration, while generally subordinate to its larger commitment to promarket and authoritarian positions, is not politically dispensable. Unlike the opportunistic right, the new radical right does not propagate anti-immigrant views in a cynical attempt to win votes. On the contrary, its racism and xenophobia are deeply embedded in its authoritarian ideological orientation and its disdain of multi cultural societies.

To date, both its virulent racism and its xenophobia have made the new radical right ineligible to join mainstream parties in electoral pacts or governing coalitions. Unlike the opportunistic right, the political parties of the NRR cannot trim their illiberal positions in order to accommodate or placate potential mainstream conservative political allies. Potential mainstream conservative coalition partners, in turn, cannot easily embrace new radical right parties without incurring a significant risk of alarming their core, predominantly moderate, cadre of supporters. However, electoral and political isolation do not, ultimately, lead new radical right parties to disdain parliamentary democracy. To the contrary, all new radical right parties are publicly committed to respecting liberal democratic conventions.

Ethnonational right

In many respects, the ethnonational right overlaps with the opportunistic right. Like the latter, the ethnonational right "appropriates" anti-immigrant and anti-immigration policies in a calculated effort to attract votes.[17] Like the opportunistic right, the ethnonational right enjoys the political luxury of accentuating or submerging immigration-related issues as the political opportunity structure and/or short-term electoral circumstances permit. Moreover, the opportunistic right is formally organized, it regularly contests elections and it focuses on achieving political power through conventional political and electoral structures. However, in contrast to the opportunistic right and every other right parties

bar pure anti-immigrant groups, ethnonational parties are primarily single-issue oriented. As a consequence, the ability of ethnonational groups to reinvent themselves politically is severely constrained.

The single issue that energizes the ethnonational right in the first instance is, of course, ethnonationalism, a broad-based sentiment that Leslie defines as "a form of group solidarity or community feeling *based on ethnicity rather than territory*; it refers to subjective attachments that demarcate one particular group from other groups within a total population."[18] Ethnonationalism, not immigration-related conflict, is thus the cleavage around which the ethnonational right is primarily organized and without which the ethnonational right could not long survive politically. Although many ethnonational groups currently operate across contemporary Western Europe, only the Italian Northern League and the Belgian Flemish Bloc properly belong to the ethnonational right because they alone marry traditional ethnonational appeals with a publicly-articulated animosity toward immigration and settled immigrants.

The fact that the ethnonational right is primarily organized around, and politically driven by, ethnonationalism not only relegates its anti-immigration posture to a secondary status but, more importantly for our analysis, it prevents it from becoming too prominent in the rhetoric or electoral appeals of the ethnonational right. Just as the new radical right cannot jettison its promarket positions or accentuate its anti-immigration posture at the expense of its promarket policies so, too, the ethnonational right is similarly constrained with respect to its commitment to ethnonationalism. Like the NRR, the ethnonational right cannot fully exploit anti-immigration sentiment within the electorate without compromising its core mission, i.e. advancing the agenda of ethnonationalism. Indeed, anti-immigration appeals merely complement and reinforce the traditional agenda of the ethnonational right by explicitly linking the economic, cultural and political "penetration" of the periphery (i.e. the traditional regions or national homelands) by the metropole (i.e. central government) with its

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simultaneous human "invasion" by unwanted and undesirable immigrants.

Although its racial illiberalism and xenophobia are sufficient reasons for mainstream parties to shun it, it is, in fact, the ethnonationalist agenda of the ethnonational right that ultimately disqualifies it from participating in parliamentary coalitions. Since much of its agenda (e.g. territorial sovereignty, regional autonomy, etc.) cannot be accommodated within the framework of prevailing domestic constitutional arrangements, the ethnonational right is typically a pariah within the traditional party system.

THE LOGIC OF ANTI-IMMIGRANT GROUPS

Filling a niche in the domestic political marketplace

Whatever their respective policies, ideological orientation, organizational form or core political strategy, anti-immigrant groups in Western Europe, as we mentioned above, are united in their overt hostility toward postwar immigrants and new immigration. Anti-immigrant groups carve out, secure and/or advance their position in the domestic political order by publicly opposing both new immigration and the presence of settled immigrants. In staking out this illiberal political ground, we will argue in the next section, anti-immigrant groups fill the lacuna that is created when mainstream political actors and parties are either unwilling or unable to address the anxieties of a critical mass of so-called native citizens. Moreover these groups "crowd out" other political actors who potentially too might exploit the social tensions engendered by immigration and immigrant settlement.

How politically important are anti-immigrant groups? On the basis of their ubiquity alone, it appears that anti-immigrant groups are vital participants in the ongoing struggle of the immigrant-receiving societies to come to grips with the logics and politics of the successive waves of postwar

migration.[19] Without exception, organized anti-immigrant actors have eventually surfaced wherever postwar immigration has emerged as a salient political issue, occasionally but *most often not* in the form of pure anti-immigrant groups. Indeed, it seems that wherever pure groups are not prominent or, for reasons unrelated to the conflict over postwar immigration, they fail to emerge, alternative anti-immigrant actors have arisen or previously-established political parties have coopted immigration-related issues. For example, in those countries where pure anti-immigrant groups have not become firmly rooted, either the new radical right or the opportunistic right has seized political center stage (e.g. in Austria and Norway). Similarly, in those polities where neo-fascist groups have been reluctant or sluggish to exploit anti-immigration public sentiment, the ethnonational right has aggressively stepped forward to do so (e.g. in Italy).

In assuming the mantle of public, political opposition to immigration and immigrants, anti-immigrant groups usually preclude other groups in the domestic political marketplace from doing so successfully. In most countries, only a single group seems capable of politically exploiting public anti-immigration sentiment at any given moment in time. The Italian and French cases classically illustrate this phenomenon. In Italy, the Northern League has more or less monopolized the political market on immigration-related concerns during the last decade, despite the opportunities presented to the Italian Social Movement (now the National Alliance) to attract anti-immigrant voters.[20] In this instance, a relatively new ethnonational movement has politically out trumped a long-established and formerly neo-fascist party on the issue of immigration. In France, the National Front has all but seized exclusive political ownership of questions of immigration and immigrant settlement since the early 1980s. Indeed, the Front has dominated public discourse on immigration-related questions in France to an unparalleled degree.[21]

Why, in most countries, is an anti-immigration posture exploitable by only a single group? One obvious constraint is structural. Since anti-immigration sentiment is virulent within but a small

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minority of the electorate, it can only be successfully exploited by one or, at most, two groups. There are simply too few citizens whose votes or general political behavior are primarily inspired by either hostility toward state immigration policy or by xenophobia. Yet, structural constraints do not tell the whole story, as these constraints do not account for why the *same* group through time retains the more or less exclusive political ownership of anti-immigration positions.

Part of the explanation, the reluctance or unwillingness of most mainstream political parties to address the immigration-related concerns of native citizens, will be discussed below. Suffice it to say, in the absence of any significant inter-group competition, those groups who articulate or aggregate anti-immigrant public sentiment will, by default, politically "own" immigration-related issues. Having said this, however, it is also the case that once these issues are conscientiously nurtured by a particular group, it is extremely difficult for other groups to appropriate them. The shear inertia of prior ownership is undoubtedly a factor, but perhaps more important is the credibility that anti-immigrant groups establish within the electorate whenever they contravene the pattern of issue avoidance that often prevails with regard to immigration-related concerns.[22] By staking out their opposition to immigration and immigrants early in the policy attention cycle,[23] anti-immigrant groups establish themselves in the mind of the public as more credible and principled actors than those who would attempt to follow in their footsteps.

Violating the conspiracy of silence

Once having coalesced and established their identity and reputation, the political viability of most anti-immigrant groups and parties is inextricably linked to the prominence of immigration-related issues. As long as these issues remain salient and the mainstream political parties fail to address them to the satisfaction of a critical mass of citizens and voters, anti-immigrant groups are likely to reap the political rewards, returns often, although not automatically, dispensed in the form of an increased

number of voters or formal members. With few exceptions, those anti-immigrant groups that first seized the initiative on immigration-related issues in the domestic political context in Western Europe did so against a backdrop of the neglect of these issues by the mainstream political parties. Anxious to avoid publicly accounting for their original decision to allow substantial postwar immigration and/or to submit their subsequent immigrant policies to public scrutiny, parties of government, from the earliest years of the first wave of migration through the labor stop of the mid 1970s, often engaged in a "conspiracy of silence" on immigration-related issues.

The issue-avoidance behavior of the Conservative and Labour Parties in Britain during the peak years of the first and second waves of postcolonial or New Commonwealth migration to that country is an especially prominent case in point. As an area of public policy which engendered sharp, intra party divisions and threatened to alienate that critical block of "floating" voters whom the party leaderships believed decided general elections, immigration-related conflict was extricated from interparty politics for most of the 1960s and 1970s.[24] While removing immigration-related issues from the formal political agenda in the short term, these strategies ultimately did little to diminish their salience within the British electorate. On the contrary, by skirting problems of race relations and non-white immigration, the Conservative and Labour Parties in Britain inadvertently created a space in the political opportunity structure for the British National Front to emerge, consolidate and grow. For the major political parties, this was an especially unwelcome development that was rectified only once their bipartisan consensus began to disintegrate.[25]

Although the British example has been cited most often by scholars, it is certainly not unique. A similar pattern of issue avoidance occurred in France and Germany, although a consensus among the major political parties to remove immigration-related issues from the political agenda never materialized in these countries. Rather, the predominance of a technocratic approach to policy making, including decisions pertaining to immigration and immigrant policy, largely shielded the major political

parties in France and Germany from the popular pressures that were visited upon their British counterparts at a relatively early stage during the first wave of post-WWII immigration. Thus, despite differences of national policy making regimes across the major immigrant-receiving countries, political outcomes have been similar. The main political parties in France and Germany largely avoided discussing immigration-related issues prior to the early 1970s and, thereafter, issues of immigration assimilation and settlement.

Although this pattern of issue avoidance is no longer as pervasive as it once was, it has not entirely dissipated. Indeed, despite the obvious absurdity of their official position, German political elites continue to deny that Germany is a "country of immigration." Set against this pattern of denial, neglect or deliberate avoidance of immigration-related issues by mainstream parties is the energetic embrace of these issues by anti-immigrant groups.

Immigrants as a perceived threat

In considering the recent surge of popular support for anti-immigrant groups in Western Europe, it is fair to conclude that, contrary to conventional thinking, this trend is probably less the product of "objective" conditions (e.g. the state of the economy or the objective economic burden of immigration) than it is the result of "subjective" perceptions and anxieties (e.g. the erosion of national identity and/or racial or cultural homogeneity) within the general population. Indeed, as a general phenomenon, popular support for anti-immigrant groups appears to be connected only tenuously to the demonstrated economic effects of immigrant labor. This counterintuitive thesis is supported by four lines of evidence.

First, there is little correlation between the degree to which populations in the respective European Community (EC) countries accept the presence of immigrants and the unemployment rate in these countries. Rather, levels of anti-immigrant sentiment seem to be more sensitive to the percentage

of foreigners in the overall population, a possible signal that noneconomic anxieties are very salient.

Second, there is little correlation between the size of the foreign-born population and the demonstrated

electoral success of right-wing parties, including anti-immigrant parties, within the immigrant-

receiving countries. In other words, the size of the pool of potential immigrant workers is a poor

predictor of the extent to which the public will embrace anti-immigrant parties. Third, many anti-

immigrant groups in Western Europe are primarily motivated by "symbolic" or "subjective" (e.g.

sociocultural) rather than "objective" or "pragmatic" (e.g. economic) objections to immigrants and

immigration. And finally, the surge of popularity for anti-immigrant groups is primarily a post-1970

phenomenon. As such, it coincides not with the first wave of labor migration but, rather, with the

second and third waves of migration and the attendant effects these waves of migration have had on the

domestic socio-cultural environment.

Anti-immigrant sentiment and unemployment

Evidence drawn from a public opinion survey conducted by the European Community in the

spring of 1992 challenges the supposition that stressful economic conditions and, specifically,

circumstances of high unemployment, are primarily driving popular support for anti-immigrant groups.

When asked how they felt about the presence of non-EC nationals in 1992, half of all European

Community respondents replied that, "generally speaking," too many non-EC nationals resided in their

country. A further 35 percent felt there were "a lot but not too many," foreigners and 9 percent of

respondents indicated that there *were not* too many non-national residents.[26] Disaggregating the data

along national lines, Table 4 ranks each member country on the question of whether or not its

population perceived that there were "too many" non-nationals in residence. Italy, with 65 percent of

its general population who felt there were too many foreigners, occupies the pinnacle of the EC

opinion scale, while Ireland, with only 11 percent of the population resenting the presence of non-EC

nationals, is located at the opposite, and lowest, end of the scale.

What Table 4 quite clearly reveals is the lack of close fit between the rank of each EC country on the scale of the anti-immigrant feeling of its population and its overall rate of unemployment. That is to say, the rank of a country on the scale of anti-immigrant feeling poorly correlates with its place in the EC unemployment scale. Aside from the Italian and Luxembourg cases, which are exceptional for reasons peculiar to each country, the countries that underscore this lack of fit are Denmark and Germany.[27] In the latter country, where anti-immigrant sentiment is relatively robust, the unemployment rate is comparatively low. In Denmark, on the other hand, where anti-immigrant sentiment is comparatively low, unemployment is relatively high.

[Table 4 about here]

The size of the foreign population

The weak correlation between the size of the foreign-born populations and the electoral performance of right-wing political parties, including anti-immigrant parties, was first established by Kitschelt.[28] Building upon Kitschelt's findings, and updating his original data to include electoral outcomes and changes in the number of foreign born persons in the immigrant-receiving countries during the 1990s, Table 5 clearly demonstrates that there is still very little association between the size of the foreign born population as a percentage of the total population and electoral support for right-wing parties in Western Europe. In Germany and Sweden, for example, where the size of the foreign born population is, and historically has been, relatively high (8.2 and 5.9 % respectively), electoral support for anti-immigrant and other right-wing parties is extremely low (<2 %). Similarly, in Denmark and Italy and Norway, where the size of the foreign born population is comparatively low (3.7, 2.6 and 3.4% respectively), electoral support for anti-immigrant parties is relatively robust (>6

%). Indeed, only in Austria and France were both the size of foreign born population and the average electoral support of anti-immigrant parties consistently greater than 6 percent during the 1980s and 1990s. Belgium, with a large foreign born population (9.8%) and a level of electoral support for the Flemish Bloc now exceeding 7 percent, has also fallen very recently into this category.

[Table 5 about here]

In addition to discovering no clear relationship between the overall size of the foreign population and electoral support for right-wing parties, Kitschelt also found little association between the rates of change in immigration and/or political refugee flows and the electoral performance of the far right in the immigrant-receiving countries. For example, despite the explosion in the number of persons seeking asylum in Germany between 1985 and 1995, electoral support for anti-immigrant parties remained relatively low. Indeed, it never exceeded the threshold of popular support obtained in Denmark, where asylum seekers were far fewer and a smaller percentage of the total population. Similarly, in Britain, a sharp upturn in the number of asylum-seekers did not stimulate greater public support for anti-immigrant groups during the 1980s and 1990s .

In sum, then, the size of the foreign born population correlates poorly with electoral support for anti-immigrant parties. Moreover, rates of change in the number of refugees and asylum seekers do not predict the extent to which national electorates will embrace anti-immigrant parties.

Subjective versus objective opposition

If anti-immigrant groups were primarily inspired by a world view that was rooted in an objectively-based hostility toward immigrants and immigration, and, in particular, if they were mainly informed by the perspective that immigrants undermine the economic security or the physical safety of

native populations, then it would logically follow that the electoral appeals of these groups and their overall rhetorical posture toward immigrants primarily would be governed by "pragmatic" concerns such as unemployment, crime, housing shortages, competition over access to quality education, etc. As Gibson argues, the motivations of anti-immigrant groups would then conform to a theory of realistic group conflict. In this instance, their opposition to immigration would mainly stem "from perceptions that immigrants actions and their behavior are threatening the indigenous citizens' material or physical sense of well-being."[29]

In an empirical test of the above hypothesis, Gibson uncovered evidence that suggests that an objectively-founded opposition to immigration, rather than "symbolic racism" or "subjective" opposition, does, in fact, primarily motivate most anti-immigrant parties in Western Europe. In a survey administered by Gibson to which 13 anti-immigrant parties responded, eight of the parties cited one of five "objective" motivations as among the most important reasons why they opposed immigration. These five objective concerns included unemployment, abuses in the welfare system, a shortage of housing, escalating crime and the declining quality of education. Only two of the eight parties, including the German Republican Party, specifically cited unemployment as the principal reason why immigration should be restricted.

On the surface, these results would seem to validate the thesis that increasing popular support for anti-immigrant groups is primarily linked to objective rather than subjective factors. At the very least, these results would appear to suggest that subjective concerns are less powerful than objective anxieties in explaining the popular appeal of, and the particular appeals made by, anti-immigrant groups. Yet, these tentative conclusions are challenged, if not undermined, by three realities. First, despite the fact that Gibson offered but one subjective choice among six possible options for opposing immigration in her survey, fully five of her 13 anti-immigrant groups made this selection, affirming by doing so that they opposed immigration primarily because of the threat they believe it posed to their

society's culture and customs. It is not unreasonable to assume that if the number of subjective and objective choices had been represented equally in Gibson's survey (i.e. not over weighted in favor of objective options by 5 to 1), more anti-immigrant groups would have cited a subjective reason for why they opposed immigration.

Second, in measuring the intensity of their opposition, an important variable upon which we will expound below, Gibson discovered that the so-called "symbolic racist" parties are "more intense in their opposition to immigration than parties fueled more by particularistic concerns of realistic group conflict theory."[30] Specifically, she found that the anti-immigrant parties that were primarily concerned about preserving their country's cultural heritage were much more inclined to endorse extreme policy prescriptions to remedy the negative effects of immigration. Four of the five anti-immigrant parties that were primarily motivated by a concern to preserve the national culture, for example, favored ending *all* immigration and forcibly repatriating settled immigrants, fairly radical prescriptions. In contrast, only one of the eight objectively-motivated parties, the German Republican Party, endorsed this extreme viewpoint. Moreover, as yet another indicator of the greater intensity of their views, Gibson discovered that "those parties endorsing immigration restrictions because they fear national culture dilution" also cited as either very or quite important several of the other reasons for opposing immigration.[31]

And finally, as Table 6 self-evidently demonstrates, opposing immigration primarily on pragmatic grounds correlates not at all with an anti-immigrant party's success in the electoral arena, as one would logically expect it would if objective factors were primarily driving popular support for anti-immigrant parties. Taking the ten parties in Table 2 that were also participants in Gibson's survey, we can see that, of Gibson's six objectively-inspired parties, five are electorally unsuccessful, as these parties routinely garner two percent or less of the national vote. Only the Dutch Center Party has surpassed 6 percent of the vote in recent national parliamentary elections. Indeed, on the surface at

least, a subjective rather than an objective posture on immigration appears to be a better predictor of an anti-immigration party's electoral success, as half of Gibson's four subjectively-motivated parties in Table 2 are electorally successful. These two relatively successful parties include the Flemish Bloc, which, as we mentioned earlier, is one of the most xenophobic parties in Western Europe.

[Table 6 about here]

On the whole, it appears that subjectively-oriented parties are an important, although not the predominant, type of anti-immigrant party in Western Europe. More significantly for our analysis, subjective parties seem to be more intensely opposed to immigration, and more ready to prescribe extreme solutions in order to remedy its negative effects, than their more objectively-motivated counterparts.

Anti-immigrant groups as a post-1970 phenomenon

Yet a fourth line of evidence that supports the view that anti-immigrant parties are primarily a product of popular anxieties about the socio-cultural effects of immigration is that these parties have primarily proliferated and expanded their support during the second and third waves of immigration, waves that only began to gather force after 1973. However unscientific and inelegant, the argument here is that it is only once the socio-cultural implications of the first wave of postwar immigration became transparent to native citizens and these implications were reinforced and exacerbated by the experience of the second and third migration waves, that a significant space was created in the political opportunity structure which anti-immigrant groups eventually filled and profitably exploited, albeit some more successfully than others.[32] In this view, xenophobia is a popular response to the partial integration of immgrants and, specifically, to the ubiquitous presence of the new ethnic and racial

minorities in spheres where they were once excluded or did not previously seek to enter. Paradoxically, as the new ethnic and racial minorities become more permanently settled, and as they become more European and less tied to their countries of origin, they often pose a greater threat to natives who are inclined toward intolerance.

Of course, in some areas, especially in certain segments of the housing and labor markets, the immigrants do compete with natives. However, on the whole, economic competition is not the source of social friction.[33] Rather, it is the prospect of social and cultural change, especially permanent change, that often breeds resentment and xenophobia. This is why many subjectively-oriented, anti-immigrant groups in Western Europe oppose the project for European integration.

In advancing this argument we do not deny that negative economic conditions factor into the post-1970 proliferation of anti-immigrant groups.[34] Nor do we presume that socio-cultural concerns can be artificially divorced from the economic insecurities of citizens. Rather, what we maintain is that the *perception* among natives that immigrants pose a serious threat to their way of life is *the* common thread that underpins the near universal phenomenon of anti-immigrant groups. It is the ubiquitous variable that transverses the spectrum of objective economic conditions within the immigrant-receiving countries.

The definition and acceleration of threat

If anti-immigrant feeling correlates closely with the presence of foreigners in the immigrant-receiving countries, how can the lack of a close relationship between levels of anti-immigrant sentiment and electoral support for anti-immigrant parties be logically explained? More specifically, how we explain the apparent paradox that anti-immigrant feeling is often average to very high in countries where electoral support for anti-immigrant parties is comparatively low (Britain, Germany, the Netherlands) while, conversely, anti-immigrant feeling is sometimes comparatively low where support for anti-

immigrant parties is very high (Denmark)?

Popular support for anti-immigrant parties and, by extension, the larger universe of extreme Right parties in Western Europe is a decidedly complex phenomenon, a phenomenon that has been investigated and explained with varying degrees of sophistication by Betz, Kitschelt and others.[35] No single or simple variable can account for cross-national differences. Rather, as Kitschelt has demonstrated empirically, factors of political context (e.g. whether or not parties of the moderate left and right habitually engage in an excessively consensual-based politics), political entrepreneurship (e.g. whether or not extreme right parties embrace an optimal mix of the right economic and ethnocentric policies) and political-historical legacies (e.g. whether or not particular anti-immigrant groups are too closely bound to, or associated with, a strong fascist or national socialist past) intersect almost uniquely within each country to make it more or less likely that far right political parties will garner substantial popular support. Nevertheless, having said this, it is self-evident that, in the absence of an environment of perceived threat, anti-immigrant groups would have few political legs upon which to stand. That is, so long as immigrants and immigration do not subjectively or objectively threaten a critical mass of native citizens, anti-immigrant groups will not secure and maintain a substantial foothold in the domestic political order.

What, then, drives popular perceptions of threat? On the basis of the above analysis and the results presented in Tables 4 and 5, we can confidently conclude that popular perceptions of threat are not exclusively, or probably even primarily, driven by the level of overall unemployment in a given country. Rather, perceptions of threat, while often founded upon conditions of economic stress and predicated upon the presence of a critical mass of immigrants in a given country, must first be framed.[36] Two political actors in particular frame popular perceptions of immigrants within the domestic social and political context: mainstream political parties and anti-immigrant groups.

The role of mainstream parties

The role of mainstream political parties in creating a political space within which anti-immigrant groups can emerge and grow has already been discussed. As we argued earlier, by maintaining a "conspiracy of silence" on immigration-related issues, established parties inadvertently facilitate the conditions necessary for anti-immigrant groups to attract the support of thousands of anxious and disillusioned citizens. Through their relative neglect of immigration-related questions, these parties lend political legitimacy to, and bolster the credibility of, anti-immigrant groups. However, the role of mainstream political parties in influencing the progress of anti-immigrant groups is not exclusively negative, nor does such influence inevitably cease once anti-immigrant groups have coalesced. To the contrary, even after anti-immigrant groups have appeared on the political scene or expanded their influence in the domestic political order, the established political parties can and do exercise considerable influence over the political fortunes of these groups.

Established parties can affect the political trajectory of anti-immigrant groups in one or both of two ways. First, mainstream parties can often "correct" their previous neglect of immigration-related issues by articulating and aggregating anti-immigrant sentiment in a manner that steals political support from anti-immigrant groups. By violating their self-imposed "conspiracy of silence" on immigration-related issues, for example, established parties can undercut the electoral support of anti-immigrant groups, an albeit difficult political strategy that was effected with considerable success by the British Conservative Party during the mid to late 1980s.[37]

Secondly and most importantly, established parties can and do indirectly affect the political trajectory of anti-immigrant groups by influencing popular perceptions of threat. Through their policies and/or their rhetoric mainstream political parties can either diminish feelings of anxiety and threat within the native population or not. They can reinforce or ameliorate social tensions and resentments. To be sure, there is no single best strategy or policy approach the established parties can

pursue irrespective of country or specific domestic context. In some countries (e.g. Britain), the established political parties have largely pandered to illiberal popular sentiment with considerable effect; in others (e.g. the Netherlands), endorsing a progressive paradigm of inter-ethnic relations and challenging the critics of postwar immigration policy have helped to keep anti-immigrant groups politically at bay.[38] Whatever the particular strategy, what all share is that the established political parties are explicitly responding to the fears and resentments of native citizens. In so doing, the established parties can shape and diminish popular perceptions of threat in a manner that erodes the political soil in which anti-immigrant groups grow.

The role of anti-immigrant groups

Anti-immigrant groups are not simply passive actors or "receivers" of their fate, however. Rather, as Kitschelt and others have argued, operating within reasonably expansive parameters, anti-immigrant groups are very much political entrepreneurs; that is, they are facilitators of the conditions that are vital to their success.[39] Indeed, with regard to fostering popular perceptions of threat and, thus, perpetuating the social and environmental conditions that facilitate their growth and political success, the nature and orientation of the various anti-immigrant groups matter. Specifically, subjectively-oriented groups may be better positioned than their objectively-inspired counterparts to exploit, cultivate and foster the popular feelings of threat in a manner that politically sustains them over the long term.

Subjectively-oriented groups appear to be doubly advantaged. First, in contrast to objective-oriented groups, who are negatively affected by a sudden decline in the unemployment rate or by an economic upturn, subjective groups are not especially sensitive to short-term events. Socio-cultural conflicts tend to ignite slowly. Moreover, despite the best efforts of government, such conflicts are not easy to ameliorate. As a result, subjectively-oriented groups are more insulated than their

objective counterparts from random exogenous factors that can undermine their popular foundations.

Second, and more importantly, subjectively-oriented groups can better shape as well as exploit the conditions that sustain them. In this context, Gibson usefully distinguishes between objectively-oriented parties that exploit immigration-related social conflict for as long as it is salient within the electorate and subjectively-oriented parties who often act to make such conflict more salient and intense:

> While symbolic racist parties can be seen as "antagonists" around
>
> the issue of immigration, i.e., they will seek to keep it on the national
>
> agenda, parties arguing on realistic group conflict lines can be seen as
>
> "diffusers" of the issue. These parties offer a political outlet for temporary
>
> frustrations with regard to immigrants but do not seek to stir up resentment
>
> in their voters along broader racial lines....
>
> Realistic group conflict parties may provide a somewhat legitimate outlet for
>
> the resentment toward immigrants that might otherwise take a more extreme
>
> or violent form. Symbolic racist parties, however, may actually be
>
> exacerbating these existing hostilities to immigrants through their continued
>
> articulation of hard-core cultural-moral opposition.[40]

Although the extent to which subjectively-oriented groups shape the social conflict that sustains them remains unclear, it is self-evident that, with varying degrees of political success, they do, indeed, mold these circumstances. Along with the mainstream political parties, subjectively-oriented groups frame, for an attentive mass audience, the nature and immediacy of the threat that immigrants pose to the

dominant sociocultural order.

THE EMBEDEDNESS AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF ANTI-IMMIGRANT GROUPS

Distribution along the axes of longevity and commitment

Although it is self-evident that anti-immigrant groups foster and exploit popular anti-immigrant sentiment, it is less clear to what extent they exercise significant political influence. To what degree do the presence and activities of anti-immigrant groups affect the politics of immigrant and immigration policy?

While this question cannot be definitively answered, what we can usefully do is return to our five categories of anti-immigrant groups in order to gain insight into the perseverance of these groups in the domestic political arena and evaluate their respective propensities to advocate forcefully and advance successfully an anti-immigration and anti-immigrant policy agenda. Informed by our earlier discussion, the five categories of anti-immigrant groups can be aligned along the two axes of longevity and ideological/political commitment in the manner represented in Figure 1. In this figure, the higher a group finds itself on the axis of political longevity *and* the further right it is located on the axis of ideological/political commitment, the more influence, *ceteris paribus*, it is likely to exert on the politics of domestic immigration and immigrant policy.

[Figure 1 about here]

The distribution of the five group types along the axes represented in Figure 1 is largely validated by their actual historical experience. What Figure 1 suggests is that when political longevity

(i.e. the tendency of anti-immigrant groups to endure as key actors in the political and/or party system) is juxtaposed with the variable of ideological/political commitment (i.e. the depth of the commitment of a group to an anti-immigration and immigrant policy agenda) the new radical right and the opportunistic right emerge as the most consequential, and potentially the most influential, anti-immigrant actors in Western Europe. They are the most important actors in the sense that, of the five families of anti-immigrant groups, they are best positioned to intervene in the domestic politics of immigrant and immigration policy in a manner that is likely to have the most profound effect on the course of public policy. Moreover, both groups are likely to exercise influence over the medium to long term.

The new radical right is so located because, in contrast to pure anti-immigrant groups and, to a lesser extent, neo-fascist groups, the NRR combines a relatively high degree of permanence within the political and the party system with an unwavering ideological and political commitment to an illiberal, anti-immigrant policy agenda. Unlike its illiberal counterparts, the new radical right combines a deep ideological and political commitment to an anti-immigration policy agenda with its considerable capacity to project its ideas and prescriptions into the political mainstream and endure as an effective, domestic political actor. Pure anti-immigrant groups and, in some countries, neo-fascist groups are more intensely hostile toward nonwhite immigrants and immigration than the new radical right. On the other side of the coin, by virtue of its demonstrated political longevity and its historical ability to straddle successfully the boundary between the hard and moderate political right, the opportunistic right occupies a more secure foothold in the political/party system. However, what privileges the new radical right in the domestic politics of immigration is its unique ability to transcend immigration-related issues and, in so doing, appeal to voters who are not particularly racist or xenophobic while, simultaneously, keeping these issues at the forefront of its public, political agenda.[41] Unlike the supporters of the ethnonational right or pure or neo-fascist groups, who comprise but an eccentric slice

of the overall electorate, the partisans of the new radical right represent a cross-section of the

population. Because of its ability to attract substantial political and electoral support from citizens

across the socio-economic spectrum without compromising its commitment to an anti-immigration and

immigrant agenda, the new radical right is able to bring to bear substantial, effective *and* sustained

political pressure on policy makers and the traditional political parties.

The case of the French National Front

The political advance of the French National Front, the prototype of a new radical right party,

illustrates the kind of profound influence that the NRR can exercise on immigration-related issues.

Contradicting numerous predictions of its impending demise as a significant political force, the FN's

political reach during the past decade and a half has not only stabilized, it has steadily grown.[42]

Indeed, with a foundation of electoral support of approximately 15 percent, the Front has evolved into

a virtual arbiter of French national elections.[43] With over 80,000 dues paying members, the Front is

the only political party in contemporary France with an expanding organizational base.

Although much of the Front's political and electoral progress since the early 1980s can be

attributed to the popularity of its anti-immigration and xenophobic positions, these planks are not

solely responsible for its rather considerable success. Rather, as Kitschelt argues:

> Taking all considerations together, the weight of the evidence... favors
>
> the hypothesis that the contemporary French radical Right represents a
>
> [broader] case of right-authoritarian mobilization. National Front voters
>
> constitute a diverse coalition ... which is configured around law and order,
>
> xenophobia, Catholic fundamentalism, and its correlate, rejection of feminism.
>
> On top of this, sentiments of political alienation, together with strategic voting

... are likely to contribute to the National Front's success as well. Spacial

analyses of the ideological positions endorsed by FN voters ... confirm that the

right-wing electorate evolves from broader ideological predispositions than pure

ethnic resentment.[44]

The French National Front's diverse electoral support and its broad ideological and issue bases

are significant for the domestic politics of immigration for two reasons. First, both embed the

National Front within the political and party system to an extent that is not likely to be seriously

disturbed any time soon, *irrespective of developments in the areas of immigration and immigrant*

policy. In other words, the Front's short and medium term political fortunes are less dependent upon

the salience of immigration-related issues or the strategies pursued by the established parties in

addressing these issues than they would be true, for example, if the Front were a pure or a neo-fascist

anti-immigrant group.[45] As a consequence of its multi-dimensionality, the Front is well situated

politically to weather the peaks and valleys of domestic, immigration-related conflict.

Second, because of the Front's broad popular base, its anti-immigration and immigrant

positions cannot be ignored by France's mainstream political actors and political parties. The risk is

not so much that the National Front can decide specific electoral outcomes, although, as cited above,

the Party is objectively becoming ever more an arbiter of French national elections. Rather, the risk is

that, in ignoring the Front's views and the concerns of its supporters, the mainstream parties will

engender popular political alienation, a risk that is especially salient for the respectable political right.[46]

The National Front's penetration of the French electorate is now too broad, too deep and, from all

indications, too permanent to be ignored by France's major political parties.

Given the Front's significant penetration of the French electorate, it is hardly surprising that,

after their initial reluctance to engage the Front and its supporters, the major political parties in France

have recently adopted a proactive course. This course is comprised of several discreet strategies to undercut the National Front's electoral position.

The first strategy implemented by France's major political parties since the 1980s, and particularly those of the established political right, the Gaullists (RPR) and the Union for French Democracy (UDF), has been to mimic the rhetoric of the National Front.[47] Much like the British Conservative Party of the late 1970s and early 1980s,[48] France's conservative parties have attempted to undercut the National Front's electoral support and policy influence in recent years by assuring French citizens, perhaps somewhat belatedly, that they, too, empathize with their immigration-related concerns. As Simmons points out, this strategy explicitly concedes the National Front's argument that immigration is a major public policy problem. More importantly, it implicitly validates the National Front's claim that it has been asking the right questions, regardless of how flawed are the Front's answers.[49]

A second strategy adopted by the mainstream conservative parties in France has been to coopt some of the Front's more popular, but less extreme, policies. Over the past decade, these policies have included the reform of the Nationality Code so as to make it less inclusive, tightening the regulations governing the entry and stay of foreign nationals and reinforcing the authority of law enforcement officials to scrutinize the identity papers of individuals.[50] The intention of the mainstream conservative parties in adopting these and other illiberal positions has been to wrest control of the policy agenda away from the Front. Thus deprived of much of its potential for mobilizing effective political protest, the conservative parties hope that the Front will eventually return to the political fringe.

Yet a third, and the most controversial, strategy pursued by the mainstream right has been its establishment of informal and, occasionally, formal political and electoral alliances with the Front. Such alliances have been usually adopted by the RPR or UDF as a stop gap measure to prevent the

Left from gaining political office or to retain local or regional power for themselves. On a broader political plane, the mainstream right's cooperation with the Front has been motivated by its anxiety that the French political Right is permanently fragmenting and gradually losing its electoral predominance.[51]

Whatever strategies the major political parties have adopted, none have conjured away the very real influence the Front has exerted to this point on the politics of immigration and immigrant policy in France.[52] Furthermore, the Front's political impact in France is not restricted to the public policy arena. Indeed, as a symbolic racist or subjectively-oriented party, the Front has shaped the very core priorities of the French electorate, an influence that is likely to outlast its impact on policy. Although the immigration-related concerns of French citizens were clearly latent prior to the National Front's founding, it is fair to conclude that such sentiments would not have been expressed as forcefully, vigorously or effectively politically if it were not for the Party's intervention.[53] As the prototype of a new radical right party, the National Front is likely to maintain a special influence in French politics and society into the indefinite future, despite its recent organizational split.[54]

CONCLUSIONS

As Figure 1 suggests, new radical right parties and the opportunistic right are not alone in influencing the politics of domestic immigration and immigrant policy. Indeed, as ephemeral vehicles of political protest with little or no formal organizational structure, only pure anti-immigrant groups are poorly positioned to exert influence over the medium term. Pure anti-immigrant groups rarely survive beyond the brief period during which their demands and concerns may be heard, but are not necessarily acted upon, by policy makers.

Whatever their specific political influence, all anti-immigrant groups operate within three contexts. The first is that, in every major immigrant-receiving country, the experience of postwar immigration has precipitated a nativist backlash. Second, once organized, the political trajectory of anti-immigrant groups is linked, in varying degrees, to the salience of immigration-related issues within the general population. Although some are more sensitive than others to the salience of these issues, all anti-immigrant actors survive as a consequence of the public's dissatisfaction with state immigration and immigrant policy. Anti-immigrant groups that are both intensely committed ideologically to an illiberal posture on immigration-related issues *and* have a established a secure position in the party and the political systems will best weather the peaks and valleys of the policy attention cycle on immigration-related issues.

A third reality is that the salience of immigration-related issues is itself affected by the behavior and strategies of both mainstream political parties and anti-immigrant groups. Regardless of the objective burden created by immigration, immigration-related issues, and particularly perceptions of threat, must first be politically framed in order for them to serve as a catalyst for the mobilization and advancement of anti-immigrant groups. Although neither mainstream parties nor anti-immigrant groups can possibly master the broad political forces which support an illiberal political environment, both can and do influence and contribute to this environment. On this score, subjectively-oriented groups appear to be advantaged over their objectively-oriented counterparts in so far as their political fate is less sensitive to exogenous factors beyond their control. Subjectively-oriented groups are better able to foster the conditions of threat (i.e. the popular perception that immigrants are undermining the dominant socio-cultural order) that, in an ever shrinking global environment, politically sustain them.

The effects of globalization and, specifically, mass immigration on anti-immigrant groups are thus diffuse and indirect. Although most anti-immigrant groups would not have gained a substantial foothold in the domestic political order in the absence of the phenomenon of mass immigration, it is

equally the case that this phenomenon does not determine which groups will best exploit anti-immigration public sentiment, for how long and with what degree of political success. Rather, as is generally true with economic policy management issues,[55] these questions are ultimately decided in the domestic context and on the basis of domestic factors that vary, sometimes substantially, from country to country. Within this context, the political behavior and strategies of both mainstream political parties and anti-immigrant groups are critical factors.

NOTES

1. This debate is especially fierce in the political economy literature. See, for example, Carles Boix, *Political Parties, Growth and Equality: Conservative and Social Deomcratic Strategies in the World Economy* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Suzanne Berger and Ronald Dore, eds., *National Diversity and Global Capitalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press); and Kenichi Ohmae, *The Borderless World: Power and Strategy in the Interlinked Economy* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991).

2. There are, however, important exceptions. See, for example, Hans-Georg Betz, "Introduction," in Hans-Georg Betz and Stephan Immerfall, eds., *The New Politics of the Right: Neo-Populist Parties and Movements in Established Democracies* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); James F. Hollifield, *Immigrants, Markets, and States: The Political Economy of Postwar Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Saskia Sassen, *Losing Control? Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); and Duane Swank and Hans-Georg Betz, "Internationalization and Rightwing Populism in Western Europe." unpublished paper presented to the Conference on Globalization and Labor Markets, UCLA, 1996.

3. With regard to the latter point see Paul Hainsworth, ed., *The Politics of the Extreme Right: From the Margins to the Mainstream* (London: Pinter, 2000); and Betz and Immerfall, *New Politics of the Right*.

4. See Herbert Kitschelt, *The Radical Right in Western Europe:A Comparative Analysis* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995).

5. Martin Schain, "The National Front in France and the Construction of Political Legitimacy," *West European Politics* 10 (April, 1987): 229-52.

6. Harvey G. Simmons, *The French National Front: The Extremist Challenge to Democracy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 182.

7. Wilhelm Heitmeyer, "Hostility and Violence toward Foreigners in Germany," Tore Bjorgo and Rob Witte, eds., *Racist Violence in Europe* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 17-28.

8. See Christopher T. Husbands, "The Other Face of 1992: The Extreme-right Explosion in Western Europe," *Parliamentary Affairs* 45 (July, 1992), 269; and Hans-Georg Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press), 12.

9. As cited by Karl Stas, http://web.wanadoo.be/karl.stas/radright/europe/austria.htm.

10. As cited in Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism*, 65.

11. Ibid., 139.

12. Ibid., 67.

13. Ibid., 80-81.

14. *The Radical Right*, 162.

15. Ibid., 19-20.

16 Ibid., 3.

17. Ibid., 175.

18. Peter M. Leslie, " Ethnonationalism in a Federal State," in Joseph R. Rudolph and Robert J. Thompson, eds., *Ethnoterritorial Politics, Policy and the Western World* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner, 1989), 45.

19. On this point see Rachel K. Gibson, "Anti-immigrant Parties: The Roots of Their Success," *Current World Leaders: International Issues* 38 (April, 1995): 128.

20. Piero Ignazi, "The Changing Profile of the Italian Social Movement," in Peter H. Merkl and Leonard Weinberg, eds., *Encounters with the Contemporary Radical Right* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993).

21. On this point see Martin A. Schain, "The National Front and Agenda Formation in France," unpublished paper, 1995.

22. On this point see Piero Ignazi, "New Challenges: Postmaterialism and the Extreme Right," in Martin Rhodes, Paul Heywood and Vincent Wright, eds., *Developments in West European Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 316-18.

23. Kitschelt, *The Radical Right*, 206.

24. See, for example, Anthony M. Messina, *Race and Party Competition in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

25. Kitschelt, *The Radical Right*, 249.

26. *Eurobarometer 37*, Commission of the European Communities, June 1992.

27. At the time of the survey, Italy was gripped with a minor political crisis over the sudden influx of Albanian refugees.

28. Kitschelt, *The Radical Right*, 60-62.

29. Gibson, "Anti-immigrant Parties," 122.

30. Ibid., 127.

31. Ibid.

49. Jonathan Marcus, *The National Front and French Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1995), 74.

50. Ibid., 91

51. Marcus, *The National Front*, 133-43.

52. *The French National Front*, 230.

53. "The National Front."

54. Led by the former National Front subleader, Bruno Megret, a break away party, the National-Republican Movement was formed in 1999.

55. Suzanne Berger, "Introduction," in Berger and Dore, *National Diversity*, pp. 1-25.

Table 1. Major anti-immigrant groups in Western Europe since 1970

Country	Party/Movement
Austria	Stop the Foreigners Freedom Party
Belgium	Movement against Insecurity and Immigration Abuses Front National Flemish Block Reformist Political Federation
Denmark	People's Party Progress Party
France	New Order National Front
Germany	Foreigner Repatriation Initiative Free German's Workers Party German People's Union National Democrats Republican Party
Italy	Northern League Italian Social Movement/National Alliance
Netherlands	Center Party Center Democrats Dutch People's Union
Norway	Progress Party
Sweden	Keep Sweden Swedish New Democracy
Switzerland	National Action/Swiss Democrats National Socialist Party People's Party/Democratic Union of the Center Republican Movement Vigilance Automobilist/Liberal Party
United Kingdom	British Movement British National Party National Front

Table 2. Electoral support for the French National Front (1973-98)

Date	Type of Election	Percent of Vote	Seats
1973	legislative	0.6	0
1974	presidential	0.8	0
1978	legislative	0.8	0
1981	legislative	0.3	0
1983	municipal	0.1	175
1984	European	11.1	10
1985	cantonal	8.8	1
1986	legislative	9.6	35
1986	regional	9.5	137
1988	presidential	14.4	0
1988	legislative	9.6	1
1988	cantonal	5.3	1
1989	municipal	2.1	804
1989	European	11.7	10
1992	regional	13.6	239
1992	cantonal	12.2	1
1993	legislative	12.5	0
1994	European	10.5	11
1994	cantonal	9.8	3
1995	presidential	15.0	0
1995	municipal	6.7	1075
1997	legislative	14.9	1
1998	regional	15.5	275

Source: As adapted and updated from Harvey G. Simmons, *The French National Front:*

The Extremist Challenge to Democracy (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 267.

Table 3. Types of anti-immigrant groups

Pure	Neo-Fascist	Opportunistic Right	New Radical Right	Ethnonational Right
Stop the Foreigners	National Front	Freedom Party	Front National	Northern League
Vigilance	National Democrats	Italian Social Movement	Progress Party (Norway)	Flemish Bloc
Keep Sweden Swedish	Dutch People's Union	Swiss People's Party	Progress Party (Denmark)	
Mov. against Immigration Abuses	German People's Union			
	Republicans			
	New Order			

Table 4. Anti-immigrant sentiment in the European Union (1992)

Country	Rank in EU by:		
	Anti-immigrant Feeling	*% Foreign Pop.*	*Unemployment Rate*
Italy	1	9	6
Germany	2	3	8
Belgium	3	2	4
France	4	4	4
United Kingdom	5	6	5
Netherlands	6	5	9
Denmark	7	7	3
Greece	8	8	7
Luxembourg	9	1	11
Portugal	10	11	10
Spain	11	10	1
Ireland	12	12	2

Source: Commission of the European Communities, *Eurobarometer*, 37 (June, 1992).

Table 5. Size of foreign born population and anti-immigrant group mean
electoral performance

Electoral Support	Percent of Foreign Born Population (1997)	
	< 5 Percent	*5-10 Percent*
Average > 6%	Denmark (3.7)	France (8.0)
	Norway (3.4)	Austria (6.3)
	Italy (2.6)	
Average > 2%		Belgium (9.8)
Average < 2%	Netherlands (4.8)	Germany (8.2)
	Britain (4.2)	Sweden (5.9)

Source: Updated and adapted from Herbert Kitschelt, *The Radical Right in Western*

Europe: A Comparative Analysis (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press,

1995), 60.

Table 6. Anti-immigrant groups by electoral success and type of opposition

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Electoral Support	Type of Opposition	
	Objective	*Subjective*
> 6 percent	Progress Party (N)	Flemish Block
		Italian Soc. Movement
< 6 percent	Reformist Pol. Federation	National Action
	Center Party	National Democrats
	New Democracy	
	Automobile Party	
	Republican Party	

Source: Adapted from Rachel K. Gibson, "Anti-Immigrant Parties: The Roots of Their Success," *Current World Leaders: International Issues* 38 (April, 1995), 126-27.

Figure 1. The influence of anti-immigrant groups