

EXTREME POLITICS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE STATE LEVEL CONDITIONS

FAVORING FAR RIGHT PARTIES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Jason Matthew Smith, B.A.

Thesis Prepared for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

May 2003

APPROVED:

Milan J. Reban, Major Professor

James D. Meernik, Committee Member

Kimi L. King, Committee Member

James D. Meernik, Chair of the Department
of Political Science

C. Neal Tate, Dean of the Robert B. Toulouse School of
Graduate Studies

Smith, Jason Matthew. Extreme Politics: An Analysis of the State Level Conditions Favoring Far Right Parties in the European Union. Master of Arts (Political Science), May 2003, 90 pp., 4 tables, 8 figures, 64 references.

Three models are developed to analyze the state level conditions fostering the rise of far right parties in the European Union in the last two decades. The political background of these parties is examined. This study offers a definition for far right parties, which combines several previous attempts. The research has focused on the effects of the number of the parties, immigration, and unemployment on support for the far right in Europe. Empirical tests, using a random effects model of fifty elections in eight nations, suggest that there are political, social, and economic conditions that are conducive to electoral success. Specifically, increases in the number of “effective” parties favor the far right, while electoral thresholds serve to dampen support. Immigration proves to be a significant variable. Surprisingly, changes in crime and unemployment rates have a negative effect on support for the far right. Suggestions for future research are offered.

Copyright 2003

by

Jason Matthew Smith

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my parents and family for their love and support throughout my college career. I would also like to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Reban, Dr. Meernik, and Dr. King, for their continued support during my time in the Department of Political Science. I appreciate the opportunities afforded me by the faculty members of the department. I would like to thank Dr. Tan and the other members of the Graduate Studies Committee for the opportunity to work for the department for the last two years. I give thanks to my fellow graduate students who help me over the last two years. Without all of you this would not be possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	vii
Chapter	
I INTRODUCTION.....	1
II POLITICAL BACKGROUND	8
Austria	
Belgium	
Denmark	
Finland	
France	
Germany	
Greece	
Ireland	
Italy	
Luxembourg	
Netherlands	
Portugal	
Spain	
Sweden	
United Kingdom	
III REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	31
Defining the Far Right	
Voting For the Far Right	
State Level Conditions Favoring the Far Right	
IV THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND OPERATIONALIZATION.....	45
Conceptualizing the Far Right	
Data Collection	
Hypotheses and Operationalization of Variables	
Dependent Variable	
Independent Variables	

V	STATISTICAL METHODS, RESULTS, AND INTERPRETATIONS.....	59
	Bivariate Statistics	
	Regression Models	
VI	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	75
APPENDIX	82
REFERENCES	86

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
I.	Pearson's Correlations—Support for the Far Right.....	63
II.	Determinants of Support for Far Right Parties—Model 1	66
III.	Determinants of Support for Far Right Parties—Model 2.....	69
IV.	Determinants of Support for Far Right Parties—Model 3	72

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. Electoral success of the FPÖ in national elections (1980 to present)	11
2. Electoral success of the Vlaams Blok in national elections (1980 to present)	13
3. Electoral success of the Progress Party in national elections (1980 to present)	15
4. Electoral success of the National Front in national elections (1980 to present)	18
5. Electoral success of the far right in German national elections (1980 to present)....	20
6. Electoral success of the MSI/AN and LN in national elections (1980 to present) ...	23
7. Electoral success of the far right in Dutch national elections (1980 to present)	25
8. Electoral success of the BNP in national elections (1980 to present)	28

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is so good to see this many people out here. The world needs to know that this is the real France. Everyone is in the streets because we don't want a fascist.

Richard Girault

On May 1, 2002, nearly one million people took to the streets throughout France to express the above sentiments of Richard Girault in demonstrations against Jean-Marie Le Pen, the far right presidential candidate, whose political views have sparked controversy throughout the European Union and invigorated the French electorate to repel such views. In the first round of presidential elections on April 21, Le Pen stunned the political leaders of France and the European Union by placing second in the first round of voting, eclipsing Prime Minister Lionel Jospin and qualifying for the runoff election for president. Following these results, political leaders, in an unprecedented move, rallied around French President Jacques Chirac in a united front to oppose Le Pen. Three days later, British Prime Minister Tony Blair spoke out against the "repellent racism" of Le Pen urging voters to reject the British National Party, a political party with a similar platform to that of Le Pen's National Front. On May 5th, Chirac won the presidential runoff dominating with 82.2 % to 17.7 % for Le Pen.

A day after the French elections, another far right candidate, Pim Fortuyn, made headlines in the Netherlands and across Europe. Instead of the elation of electoral success, however, it was the assassination of Fortuyn that brought the far right into the news once more. After giving an interview with a radio station near Amsterdam, Fortuyn, whose views on immigration had made him a controversial political figure, was gunned down in the street. On

May 15, Fortuyn's party, List Pim Fortuyn (LPF), finished second behind the Christian Democrats, with 14 % of the vote and an unprecedented 26 seats in the 150-seat lower house of parliament. This placed the LPF second and allowed the party to enter into a governing coalition with the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA).

What could cause leaders in France to "bury the hatchet" and aid a former enemy in the political arena? What phenomenon could bring drastic, violent actions and emotional responses, like that in the Netherlands following Fortuyn's assassination? One possible answer could be the rise of far right parties and the threat they pose to the European mainstream. The rise of far right parties, over the last two decades, has changed the face of politics within the European Union.

The revival of such parties in the 1980s may have caught politicians and opinion leaders off guard, but their persistence and electoral gains through the 1990s have challenged the widespread characterization of European party systems being "frozen." Far right parties have taken advantage of cleavages in the party system caused by social, political, and economic conditions in Europe. This phenomenon has prompted various scholars to question numerous theories concerning party systems. Robert Jackman and Karin Volpert (1995, 501) note that it has contradicted many "scholarly claims about the end of ideology, the advent of post-industrial society, the growth of postmaterialist values." Likewise, Piero Ignazi (1992, 4) believes that this upsurge not only set politicians off balance, but also "has not been taken into account as a possible outcome of party system change." The dominant view posited by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) held that no fundamental shifts had occurred in the party systems of Western Europe since the beginning of the twentieth century. The party systems of the 1960s were strikingly similar to those of the 1920s; hence the party systems appeared to be "frozen."

The frozen party theory prevailed for nearly three decades. During those years, much attention has been placed on new parties entering the political arena and a possible “thawing” of the frozen party system. Ronald Inglehart’s (1977) silent revolution thesis focused on value change on the left pole of the political spectrum, omitting the right (Ignazi 1992). For Inglehart (1977), the shift in the value system towards the left affects partisan preferences, and thus new political alignments and movements on the left have formed (Ignazi 1992). What is even more perplexing for Ignazi (1992) is the inconsistency between Inglehart’s thesis and the current rise of the far right. Mogens Pedersen (1979) furthered the study of “thawing” party systems by introducing an index of system volatility. This index shows a trend toward increasingly volatile electorates. Findings have shown that party systems are becoming more volatile as voters have displayed less loyalty to parties in the past (Pedersen 1979; Shamir 1984). Ersson and Lane (1998, 35) note “[t]he evidence from several sources is that electoral instability is up in the late twentieth century in Western Europe. The voters are no longer frozen in established commitments towards political parties.”

In this context, parties of the far right have paved new roads into the political arena. The National Front in France, the Freedom Party in Austria, and the Vlaams Blok in Belgium, along with others, have made impressive gains and have placed representatives in national and European parliaments. The shifting electorate has become increasingly dissatisfied with mainstream parties. However, the question remains, why have far right parties made these gains? Why has the electorate shifted away from the major parties? What conditions have led to these developments and the possible thawing of the once frozen party systems in Europe? This study seeks to answer these three questions.

Literature and research on the far right can be grouped into two broad categories. The first, single case studies, can be beneficial to the development of generalizable theories if executed properly (Mayer 1989, Lijphart 1971). Single case studies have examined the far right from different levels of analysis. State level conditions, party level conflicts, and individual level support for these parties have all been topics of study in this literature. In their studies of Germany, Betz (1993a), Chapin (1997), Lubbers and Scheepers (2000), Minkenburg (1992), and Westle and Niedermayer (1992), each found high rates of unemployment and immigration to be favorable to parties of the far right. In studies of Austria (Knight 1992), Belgium (Fitzmaurice 1992), and the Netherlands (Voerman and Lucarie 1992), immigration was found to be a tailor-made issue for the far right. Arend Lijphart (1971, 692) believes that these “theory building” case studies are necessary in the understanding of political phenomena. In this study, the state level conditions that give rise to parties of the far right will be the level of analysis.

However, this research will look at more than one nation and, thus, be placed into a second category. Case studies can provide political scientists with accurate conclusions concerning a phenomenon in a given country, but these conclusions cannot be generalized to the rest of the globe. By studying multiple nations, a researcher sacrifices some accuracy, but can develop conclusions that can be generalized to a global scale. The conclusions drawn from cross-national studies have more predictive value to a “comparative” political scientist than conclusions drawn from studies of a single nation.

Lawrence Mayer (1972) believes that research must address a political phenomenon in two or more nations to be truly “comparative.” Research in this group tends to develop cross-national theories of the far right, examining electoral systems, dissatisfaction of voters, and party platforms. In cross-national studies of Europe, Betz (1994), Husbands (1992), Kitschelt (1995),

and Knigge (1998) have found that rising unemployment and immigration rates explain the emergence of the far right in recent decades. Bohrer et al. (2001) and Jackman and Volpert (1996) have found the number of effective parties in the electoral system has a positive effect on support for far right parties. This study looks to further the research in this area by focusing on far right parties within the member states of the European Union in the last two decades. Factors such as electoral laws, unemployment, immigration, and crime rates have all been linked to the electoral success of the far right.

Understanding why the far right has jumped into the mainstream may prove important to the parties of the left currently governing eleven of the fifteen European Union members. According to Ignazi (1992, 12), parties of the far right have little respect for the “constitutional rules of the democratic regime.” The governments of the European Union have attempted to limit the support of far right parties by censuring or attempting to ban them altogether. The electoral success of the Austria Freedom Party in the 1999 national elections quickly prompted other member states to sanction Austria in an effort to remove the party from the governing coalition (Bohrer, Krohn, and Tan 2000). This reaction was a response to anti-immigrant, anti-system sentiments expressed by the party’s leader at the time, Jorg Haider (Bohrer et al. 2000), who would eventually resign from office.

In Germany, attempts to ban the far right have been met with support from parliament and other political parties. However, the German reaction seems more of a fight over constitutionality of these parties than a fear of their growth, because the far right in Germany has found limited success in national elections. The percentage of the total vote garnered by these parties in national elections has typically been small, but they have been far more successful than anticipated. Indeed, the revival of the far right has attracted attention, because the sentiments

expressed in their platforms represent a “blunt challenge to the norms of tolerance in liberal democratic societies” of the European Union (Jackman and Volpert 1995, 502).

Far right parties continue to grow in popularity and possess the potential to be a greater threat to the liberal democracies of the European Union. This potential will only grow as the European Union looks to expand. The number of immigrants from non-European Union countries continues to rise. Many far right parties have adopted xenophobic, anti-immigrant platforms and argue that immigrants are responsible for the growing unemployment and crime rates. Their platforms have found an audience with a dissatisfied electorate.

The following chapters explain this research project in further detail. Chapter II provides the reader with a historical background of the far right in each member state of the European Union and presents their platforms. This chapter employs case study literature focused on specific countries and parties. Chapter III reviews the relevant comparative literature on parties of the far right. Research on far right parties is extensive, but by no means exhaustive, having yet to study the effects of crime rates on far right party support. The theories that have driven past, current and future research will be analyzed. Chapter IV provides the theoretical framework, testable hypotheses derived from the literature, and a discussion of the operationalization of variables used in this project. This chapter lays the foundation for quantitative testing of the theoretical model in the next chapter. The statistical procedures, findings, analysis, and discussion follow in Chapter V. The final, concluding chapter discusses the significance, along with the limitations, of this project and offers suggestions for possible future research.

Perhaps the insight gained by the present research will benefit politicians in Europe. If the conditions responsible for the rise of the far right can be identified, then the mainstream

parties of Europe will be able to combat these parties in a more democratic manner than simply banning their participation. Many conservative parties have co-opted some, but not all, of the views espoused by the far right, depriving these extreme parties of their platforms. The emergence of the far right is not a passing fad in the political arena. To survive this persistent threat, politicians and political scientists must have more information concerning the rise of these far right parties. It is my hope to increase their knowledge with this research project.

Another goal for this study is to aid scholars by increasing their understanding of the conditions that favor parties of the far right. If these conditions prove significant for far right party formation, perhaps the same, or at least some of the same, conditions may lead to rise of other parties placed differently on the political spectrum. This may help scholars formulate studies concerning the formation of new parties in Europe. The idea of the frozen party system has been uprooted by far right party success in recent decades. The cleavages caused by the conditions investigated here have allowed the far right to enter mainstream politics in many European nations. Understanding why the electorate has voted these parties into office is important in understanding mass political behavior. Political scientists must question previous research, while looking for explanations for the recent gains of the far right in Europe. By continuing on the same path as previous research, while adding new conditions to this study, I hope to make a contribution to the literature and help with this explanation.

CHAPTER II

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Case studies are beneficial to theory building, because such studies can be more accurate and parsimonious. However, political scientists lack the ability to draw generalizable conclusions from the analysis of these single cases (Mayer 1972). The theories tested in these case studies, if not proven false, could then be applied to cross-national studies (Mayer 1989). It is for this reason that the case study method can and should be closely connected with the comparative method (Lijphart 1971, 691). In this chapter, I detail the far right parties in each of the fifteen member states of the European Union.

Before detailing each individual right-wing party in the European Union, however, a discussion of definitions is necessary. As other scholars have noted, one of the problems within the literature on far right parties is the question: what constitutes a far right party? The far right is not necessarily a uniform type bearing essentially homogenous traits (Hainsworth 2000). Different scholars set different criteria to define far right parties. Ignazi (1997) distinguished between old, traditional extreme right parties and new, post-industrial extreme right parties. Far (extreme) right parties are located at the far right of the political spectrum, exhibiting an ideal-ideological link to fascism and expressing a set of beliefs that undermines the fundamental structures of a polity (Ignazi 1997). Mudde (2000) places the far right into its own party family based on ideology. Similarly, Paul Taggart (1995) places “new populist parties” to the right of the ideological spectrum and characterizes these parties by their anti-system orientation. Yet, far right parties still claim to speak for the mainstream of society (Taggart 1995).

Using the left-right scales developed by Castles and Mair (1984) and data from Laver and Hunt (1992), as well as the literature, to determine exactly what constitutes a far right party, this chapter presents the political platforms to which each of these parties adhere. Far right parties tend to adopt populist, anti-immigrant, anti-system, anti-corruption, nationalistic platforms. Taken individually, these stances are not different from the “mainstream” parties of Europe. Most political parties claim to be for the people, patriotic, and against corruption in politics. However, far right parties have taken these issues to a different level by using channels outside convention political participation, i.e. strikes and violent acts, to deliver their message. Typically, the leaders of these parties are charismatic and use this charisma to gain attention for their party. These leaders often oppose the expansion of the European Union and, in some cases, oppose their particular country’s continued involvement within the organization. Party platforms often include law and order planks appealing to voters’ concerns over the increasing crime rates in Europe. These views, along with nationalistic (but not necessarily separatist) rhetoric, characterize far right parties within the European Union.

Austria

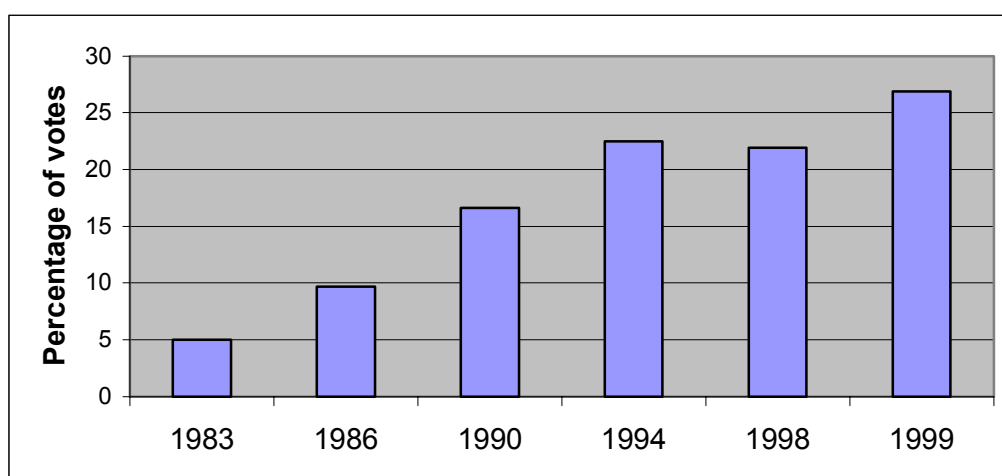
The Austrian Freedom Party (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*, FPÖ), and its controversial leader, Jörg Haider, has embodied the far right movement in Austria. The founding of the FPÖ dates to after the Second World War, with the formation of the League of Independents (VdU) as an alternative to the two-party system that dominated post-war Austria. The VdU placed performance, anti-corruption, and justice as the central planks to its platform. It was eventually disbanded, only to form again as the FPÖ. The FPÖ continued to undergo a fundamental process of transition as it adopted the VdU heritage and gradually changed from

being an almost liberal party to being one of the “most successful right-wing parties” in Europe (Helms 1997, 39). The installation of Haider as leader in 1986 is generally seen as the official starting point of the FPÖ’s transformation to a right-wing populist party (Helms 1997, 40). This transformation within the party system is also an important factor, which favored the FPÖ’s unprecedented rise from the late 1980s to the present (Helms 1997, 48). In 1989, Haider became the governor of Carinthia in southern Austria, gaining national recognition. In the following years, Haider and the FPÖ adopted a critical position on Austrian membership in the European Union, as well as a xenophobic, i.e. fear of foreigners, anti-immigration policy. In 1993, the FPÖ began an initiative, *Austria First*, which was largely responsible for the Austrian government rethinking its immigration policy. This initiative was a response to the influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe following the collapse of communism, which gave Haider “an issue tailor-made for his skilled demagogy” (Knight 1992, 296). However, “Haider’s chance of actually gaining power still seems slight” (Knight 1992, 298).

This “slight” chance would become a reality in 1999. In Carinthian elections, the FPÖ took 42.1 % of the vote propelling the party ahead of both the Socialist (SPÖ) and People’s Party (ÖVP) in the region. This would not be the only success for the FPÖ, however, as the FPÖ replaced the ÖVP as the second party in national elections later that year, increasing from 41 to 52 seats in the national parliament. On February 1, 2000, the FPÖ and the SPÖ announced they were joining to form a governing coalition with 60.1 % of the seats in parliament. The European Union denounced the coalition and threatened sanctions against Austria if Haider was not removed from his position. These sanctions were imposed successfully and eventually lifted after Haider resigned leadership of the FPÖ. Even without Haider as leader, the FPÖ continues to be a force in Austrian politics. Jörg Haider may have given up leadership of his party, but his

aspirations to lead Austria continue. In 1992, Robert Knight wrote that Haider was “well on his way to becoming Europe’s most successful right wing, populist leader” (298). Indeed this may have been the case. However, Haider’s political ride may not be over. He has not ruled out running for office again, as well as leadership of the party. The conditions that favor Haider’s rhetoric and political views and precipitated his rise to power persist in Austria. Immigration rates continue to rise, while unemployment rates have hovered around 5 % and crime rates have risen to 6 % in the last five years.

Figure 1 Electoral success of the FPÖ in national elections (1980 to present)



Source: Parties and Elections in Europe (<http://www.parties-and-elections.de>)

Belgium

The Vlaams Blok (Flemish Bloc) has been at the heart of the Belgian far right movement, and the focus of this party is the fight for self-determination, especially regarding linguistics, and the unequal status of Flemish or Dutch-speaking citizens versus French-speaking citizens (Ishiyama and Breuning 1998). The Vlaams Blok has its origins in the Volksunie (People’s

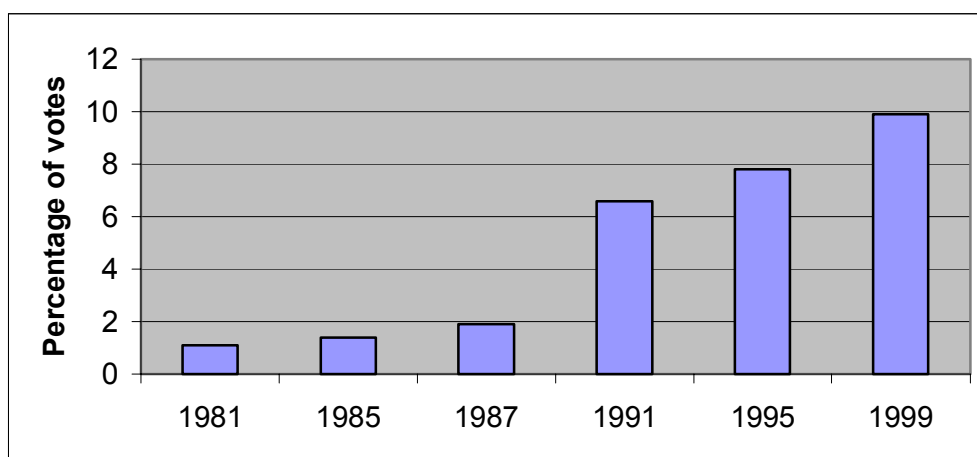
party founded in 1954. The Volksunie set two main goals: (1) It aimed to reform the Belgian state into a federal structure; and (2) it hoped to change the political structures and political culture more generally (Ishiyama and Breuning 1998). The first goal relates directly to the ethnopolitical or nationalist aspect: through federalization, the Volksunie aimed to secure greater autonomy, and self-determination, for Flanders, the northern region in Belgium (Ishiyama and Breuning 1998). By 1977, the Volksunie gained enough support to participate in a coalition government, which led to the creation of the Vlaams Blok (Ishiyama and Breuning 1998).

The Vlaams Blok, founded in 1978, was a reaction to the willingness of the Volksunie to compromise with the mainstream political parties. Karel Dillen, founder of Vlaams Blok, left the Volksunie to protest the acquiescent nature exhibited by the party during the coalition government. Starting in the 1980s, the party would adopt the slogan “*Eigen volk eerst*,” meaning “own people first” (Ishiyama and Breuning 1998, 117). This slogan expressed the party’s sentiments towards immigrants, who they perceived as culturally and economically detrimental to Flanders. The Vlaams Blok is open to “people from elsewhere,” who want to permanently settle in Flanders, as long as these “people” are willing to adapt to the Flemish language and culture (Ishiyama and Breuning 1998, 117). The party’s agenda hopes to establish Flanders as an independent state. Its pro-Flemish proposals include the desire to have the taxes collected in Flanders benefit only the Flemish, to have unemployment benefits and other social services operate on the “own people first” principle, and to ensure that employment, i.e. job allocation, work in the same manner. Like the other far right parties, Vlaams Blok stands as a party that protests traditional political parties and the “politics as usual” approach.

These policies gained minimal support through most of the 1980s. However, in the municipal elections of October 9, 1988, the Vlaams Blok gains 17.7 % of the votes in Antwerp

and became the third party there with 10 out of 55 seats, leaving the Volksunie “far behind” (Ishiyama and Breuning 1998, 117). In the May 1989 European elections, Karel Dillen gained a seat in the European Parliament. The 1990s saw an increase in popularity for the Vlaams Blok. In the November 1991 elections, the Vlaams Blok gained 6.6 % of the national vote and 12 seats in the Belgian Parliament. In 1994, the party gained a second seat in the European Parliament, despite what they labeled a “witch hunt” as the media accused the party of series of attacks against the immigrant population. Frank Vanhecke, a loyal party member and deputy to Dillen, took this seat. The elections of May 1995 would see the Vlaams Blok gain eight per cent of the vote, but lose a seat in the Belgian Parliament. The party’s leadership would change hands in June 1996, as the seventy-year-old Dillen passed the reins to Vanhecke. In June 1999, the Vlaams Blok surpassed the Socialist Party as the third largest party in Flanders and became the largest party in Brussels, the capital. As in Austria, the conditions that have fostered the rise of the Vlaams Blok as immigration, crime, and unemployment rates continue to rise.

Figure 2 Electoral success of the Vlaams Blok in national elections (1980 to present)



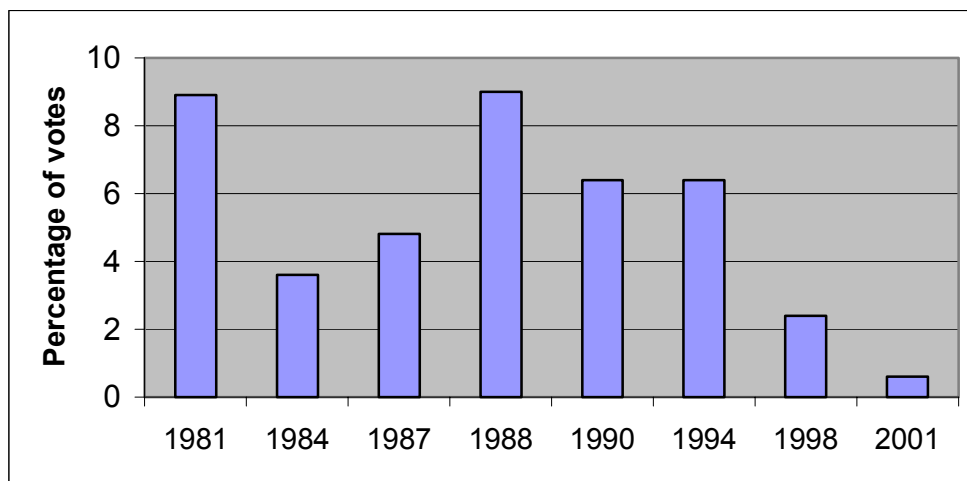
Source: Parties and Elections in Europe (<http://www.parties-and-elections.de>)

Denmark

Denmark's far right movement has seen the emergence of the Danish Progress Party (*Fremskridtspartiet*, FRP). Mogens Glistrup formed the FRP as an anti-tax party in 1972 (Andersen 1992, 193). Under this anti-tax, anti-welfare platform, the FRP had an election breakthrough in 1973, garnering 15.9 % of the vote. The Danish public had shown that it was tired of the old parties' failure to keep their promises; however, this success did not endure. Throughout the 1970s to the mid-1980s, the FRP continued to suffer electoral defeats. In 1984, the FRP only gained 3.6 % of the national vote. Much of this electoral decline came from a common problem faced by the far right. Conservative parties within Denmark adopted many of the planks adhered to by the FRP, leaving the party without a platform to stand on. In 1979, the FRP began its rhetoric against the foreign population living in Denmark (Andersen 1992, 201). After this apparent change in policy, the well-educated members of the electorate, once loyal to the party, abandoned the FRP for the left. Unsatisfied by their lack of success, Glistrup left the party to form the Party of Well-Being (Andersen 1992, 193). Although, the party's platform was similar to that of the FRP, Glistrup failed to collect a sufficient number of signatures to place his new party on the ballot (Andersen 1992, 193). In an attempt to get candidates on the ballot, Glistrup established a partnership with a far left party (Andersen 1992). After this coalition failed to achieve the necessary 2 % of the national vote needed to gain representation, Glistrup lost much of his support within the party. As these intraparty conflicts subsided and Glistrup faded from the public eye, the FRP saw a reversal of sorts in the mid-1990s, gaining over 6 % in each election between 1988-1994. However, the 2001 general election saw the FRP drop to only 0.6 % of the national vote, failing to gain representation.

The party has expressed its dissatisfaction with the system and its aversion to foreign populations. However, the FRP remains a proponent of personal freedom. The object of the FRP is to work to create a society in which the personal freedom of all citizens is protected optimally (Arter 1992). The party believes that this personal freedom exists when any person can live free from coercion and intervention by others. One of the main anti-system platform planks of the FRP concerns the payment of taxes by the public. The FRP opposes government expenditures on cultural purposes, foreigners, aid to developing countries, and for people unwilling to work. Like other far right parties, another platform plank forms around the FRP's euro-skepticism. The FRP is opposed to the use of coercion and intervention in order to achieve political objectives. It is for this reason that the FRP opposes Denmark's inclusion in the European Union.

Figure 3 Electoral success of the Progress Party in national elections (1980 to present)



Source: Parties and Elections in Europe (<http://www.parties-and-elections.de>)

Finland

Finland has not seen the emergence of any far right party or movement. The party farthest right on the political spectrum is the *Kansallinen Kokoomus* (National Coalition Party, KOK), an ideologically conservative party. The conditions that have been linked to the rise of far right parties, i.e. immigration and unemployment, have remained low during the last decade. This may account for the lack of a far right party in the country.

France

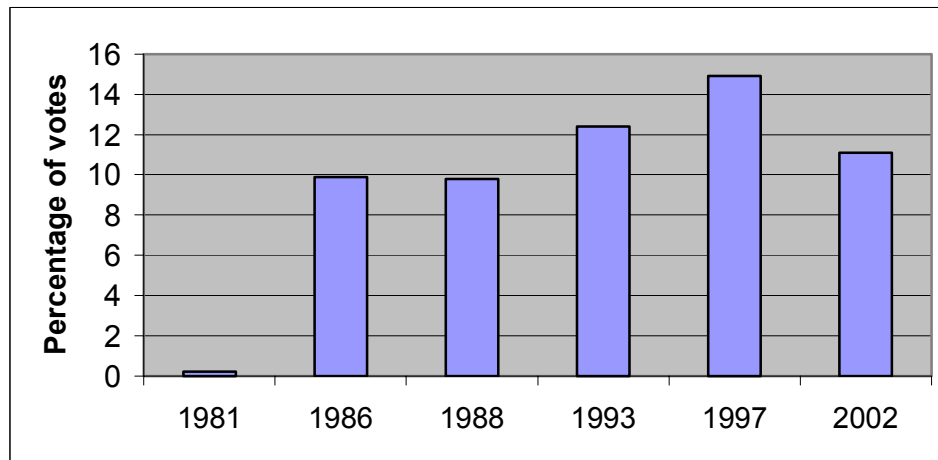
Perhaps the most successful far right party in terms of longevity on the national level has been the *Front National* (National Front, FN) in France. The FN is also known for its charismatic leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen, who founded the party in 1972, as an attempt to unify the far right in France. Conflicts within this alliance, however, made any electoral success impossible. In 1981, the FN failed to obtain the 500 signatures required to get on the ballot (Betz 1994). This “humiliation” was furthered after the FN received only 0.2 % of the vote in the following parliamentary elections (Betz 1994, 15). In 1983, the FN entered into a coalition with more moderate right wing parties. Regional victories for this alliance only helped to legitimize the FN and “marked its political rebirth” (Mayer and Perrineau 1992, 123-124). In compensation for this victory, the FN received seats on the city council of Dreux, recognition from the established parties, and national publicity (Fysh and Wolfreys 1992, 312).

In 1984, the National Front received 11 % of the vote, and 10 of 81 French seats in elections for the European Parliament (Fysh and Wolfreys 1992, 309). In the four years that followed, the FN returned 35 members to the French legislature as four and a half million (14.4 %) voted for Le Pen in presidential elections (Fysh and Wolfreys 1992, 309). Throughout the

1990s, the FN continued to gain seats in the French Parliament. Le Pen has hounded the political establishment in France by maintaining an electoral base, despite being censured for his political stances on numerous occasions. Dissatisfaction with the parties in power, along with rising crime and immigration rates, helped Le Pen qualify for the 2002 presidential runoff elections after finishing second in the first round of voting, marking the greatest electoral success for the National Front and serving as a wake-up call for the mainstream parties.

The platform planks on which the National Front stands are the personal beliefs of Le Pen who is openly xenophobic, against the traditional parties of France and skeptical about the European Union. The National Front's nationalist rhetoric and actions cross the lines of racism as the party has been accused of fire bombing Jewish synagogues in Marseilles and Paris. The party has appealed to the electorate using the rising immigration and crime rates as ammunition against the mainstream parties. Similar to the political maneuvering of Nazi Germany, the FN has used immigrants as a scapegoat for the problems of France. In fact, Le Pen has been known to trivialize the Holocaust referring to the gas chambers of Nazi Germany as "a mere detail" of history. Le Pen has also accused President Jacques Chirac of being "in the pay of Jewish organizations."

Figure 4 Electoral success of the National Front in national elections (1980 to present)



Source: Parties and Elections in Europe (<http://www.parties-and-elections.de>)

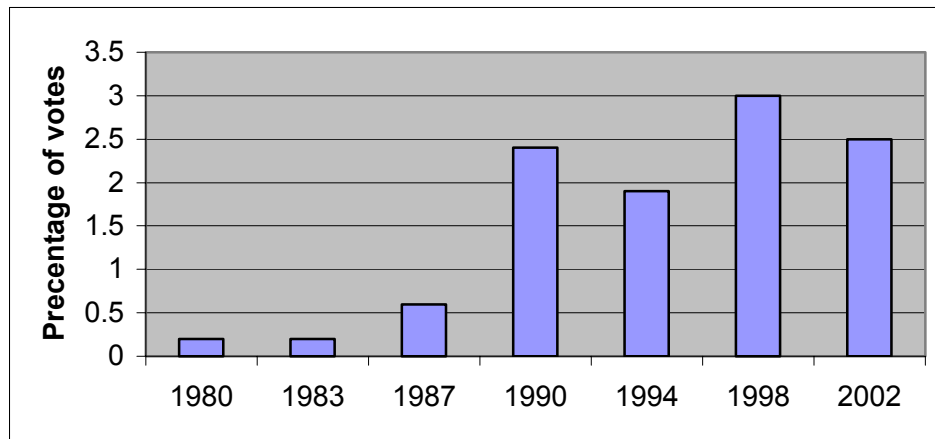
Germany

The German far right movement has seen the rise of numerous far right parties, but none have threatened the mainstream or garnered enough votes to gain representation. The two most vocal and “dominant” of these parties has been *Die Republikaner* (The Republicans, REP) and the *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (National Democratic Party of Germany, NPD). A third party, *Deutsche Volksunion-Liste D* (DVU-L), has met with even less success. Combined, these three parties have not gained enough votes to break the five per cent electoral threshold necessary in Germany. These parties struggle to appeal to the same voters, thus canceling out each other in elections (Chapin 1997). For this reason, the DVU-L has, in fact, aided the REP in elections (Chapin 1997). Still, the far right movement in Germany has met with the most ardent opposition in all of Europe. The historical conditions in Germany are different from other nations in Europe as it pertains to the far right. As such, The NPD and REP have frequently been compared to Germany’s Nazi past. The German constitution banned the

Nazi party following the Second World War. For these reasons, the mainstream parties have tried to ban the NPD. The far right continues nonetheless.

Immigration has become the biggest platform plank for the German far right. The NPD and REP have been accused of numerous violent acts against foreign “guest workers” including beatings and even deaths. This violence has led the mainstream parties in Germany to call for a ban on far right parties on constitutional grounds. These attempts have met with limited success and have only served to bring the far right international attention. Being oriented on a single issue, immigration has brought the far right much success, even if this relationship is time bound due to immigration rates rising and falling (Chapin 1997). It is hypothesized that as immigration rates rise, so to does support for the far right (Chapin 1997). Voting for the far right in Germany, as in other countries, tends to come from young, male voters in urban areas affected by immigrant populations (Chapin 1997; Westle and Niedermayer 1992). However, Westle and Niedermayer (1992, 98) believe that the REP “is more a reservoir of protest articulated by different social groups.” Chapin (1997, 68) believes that the potential for new right success remains, should socio-economic problems associated with immigration persist. However, due to Germany’s past, far right success does not seem likely.

Figure 5 Electoral success of the far right in national elections (1980 to present)



Note: Three parties are included: DVU, REP, NPD

Source: Parties and Elections in Europe (<http://www.parties-and-elections.de>)

Greece

There has been no significant far right movement in Greece in recent decades. Much like Germany, the history of Greece has played the largest role in suppressing support for the far right. The dictatorial regimes that dominated Greece following the Second World War ruled the country under a harsh, far right, fascist ideology. Due to these dictatorial regimes, the electorate has tended to reject the policies and platform of typical far right parties.

Ireland

Ireland has not seen the rise of any far right movement. Castles and Mair (1984) place the Fianna Fáil (Soldiers of Destiny, FF) political party on the right on the political spectrum. However, from the literature on far right parties (Jackman and Volpert 1996) and the party's platform, the FF is merely considered conservative. The FF does campaign on anti-immigration, fascist, or Euro-skeptic issues typical of far right parties. Therefore, FF does not belong to the political family of the far right. Immigration rates have remained low, as have unemployment

rates, relative to the rest of Europe. Thus, the conditions that have favored the far right in other European countries have been absent, for the most part, in Ireland.

Italy

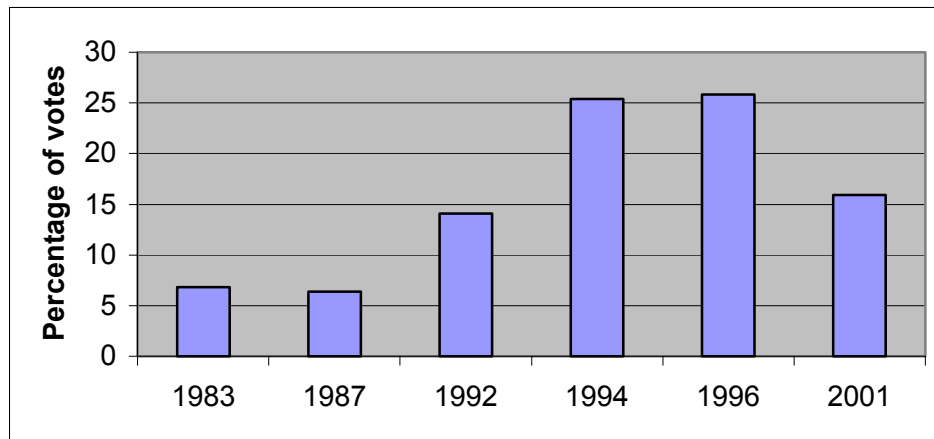
The Movimento Sociale Italiano (Italian Social Movement, MSI) has been the keystone of the far right family in Italy (Ignazi and Ysmal 1992, 101), and it has many of the same characteristics as that of France and Germany. The environment in Italy is ripe for the far right to blossom, as immigration has increased and street violence has become more common (Furlong 1992). Recent volatility in Italian elections has made conditions fertile for the MSI (Furlong 1992). Giorgio Almirante, the leader of the MSI from 1969 to 1987, attempted to “end the MSI’s isolation” and place the MSI in the mainstream of legitimate politics in Italy by merging the party with the remnants of the Monarchist Party (Furlong 1992, 347). Since the end of the Second World War, the MSI has maintained at least five per cent of the electoral vote. However, the emergence of the Northern League, a separatist movement in Northern Italy, has taken votes from the MSI in the region traditionally a stronghold for the party (Furlong 1992).

The MSI made attempts to counteract this setback. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the party tried to appeal to more left voters. The MSI continued to insist that they are not extremists. The leader of the MSI released a statement noting that the party “was dedicated to preventing extremism of the right” (Sidoti 1992, 158). This appeal to the electorate and other political parties failed to have the desired effect of gaining support. This movement to the left appeared to shake the foundations of the MSI as it dealt with the inner conflict between its original identity as a neo-fascist party and its recent opening to modernity, trying to form coalitions with other parties (Ignazi and Ysmal 1992, 119). In 1994, this opening to modernity led to a split, or renaming of the party with the formation of the *Alleanza Nazionale* (National Alliance, AN).

While the MSI declined, the AN and the Lega Nord (Northern League, NL) saw the reverse. Gianfranco Fini, leader of the AN, believed that the party could enter into the mainstream of Italian politics while keeping the original identity of the MSI (Gallagher 2000). The AN continued to appeal to voters with nationalistic, anti-immigrant rhetoric while trying to gain respectability in the political arena (Gallagher 2000). Since changing its name, the party has seen a revival of its electoral fortunes, garnering 12 % of the vote in each general election. While these results may lead to more credibility, much of the respectability earned by the AN has come from the extremism of the NL.

Under the leadership of Umberto Bossi, the NL has seen successful campaigns garnering 8.4 % of the vote in 1994 and 10.1 % in 1998. However, the 2001 general election did not prove fruitful for the NL, gaining only 3.9 %. Bossi still declared that the NL would be a “decisive” member of the Italian Senate with only 17 seats (out of 630 seats). Bossi’s optimism may come from the NL joining the governing coalition along with five other parties after the elections in 2001, or the fact that he had been there before. This was not the first time the NL had helped to govern Italy. Silvio Berlusconi, the current prime minister of Italy, offered the NL a position in the governing coalition after his win in 1994, as well (Gallagher 2000). At times, Bossi’s rhetoric has hurt his party. In September 1996, the NL proclaimed the “Republic of Padania” in Northern Italy and marched in front of the world’s media (Gallagher 2000). With most Padanians staying at home, this protest only help to fuel the popularity of the AN and increase its chances of entering the mainstream of Italian politics (Gallagher 2000).

Figure 6 Electoral success of the MSI/AN and LN in national elections (1980 to present)



Source: Parties and Elections in Europe (<http://www.parties-and-elections.de>)

Luxembourg

Luxembourg does not have a party placed on the far right of the political spectrum. It would seem the economic conditions in Luxembourg have not been conducive to far right party support. The unemployment rate has been consistently low, reaching its highest level at 2.3 % this year. Immigration and crime rates have also been low, but the size and low total population of the country may account for these numbers.

Netherlands

On November 7, 1984, four people walked into a notary office in The Hague (Mudde 2000). When they left eleven minutes later, they had created the *Centrumdemocraten* (Center Democrats, CD) (Mudde 2000). Four weeks later, Hans Janmaat would join the party (Mudde 2000). From the time he joined the party, the CD was recognized as his (Mudde 2000). The CD used Janmaat's charisma to gain attention, but would only garner 0.1 % of the vote in 1986, largely due to competition with the old Centre Party (CP), which earned 0.4 percent (Mudde 2000). Eventually, the old CP would split and form the CP '86. This split only served to

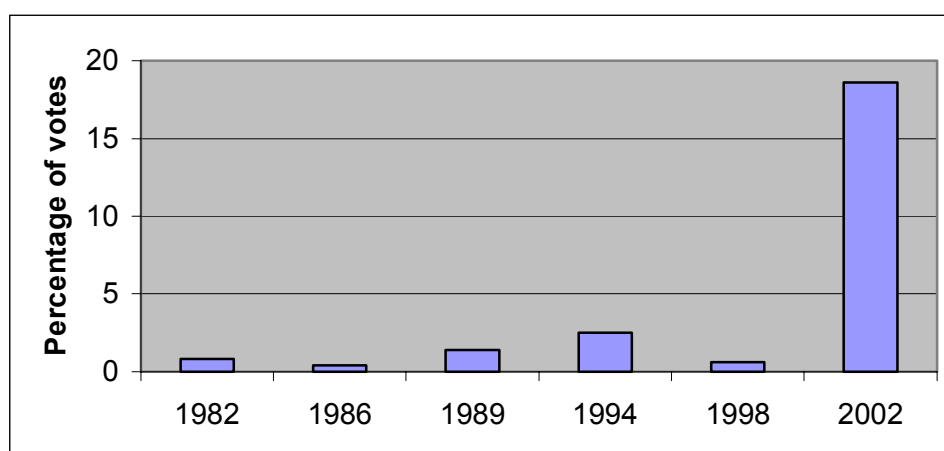
increase the competition between far right parties and reduce their chances for gaining representation. Like many far right parties, the CD, CP and CP '86 campaigned on an anti-immigrant platform. Each party used the slogan “Nederland voor de Nederlanders,” meaning Netherlands for the Netherlanders. However, none of these parties could gain significant seats in national elections.

The competition between these far right parties left the movement so fragmented in the late 1980s and early 1990s that no ground could be gained on the mainstream parties (Voerman and Lucardie 1992). This changed in the late 1990s as the movement centered around one man, Pim Fortuyn, who led one far right party and founded another in the country. Fortuyn was the leader of *Leefbaar Nederland* (Livable Netherlands, LN), an ultraconservative, law-and-order party. When his rhetoric incited racial hatred against the Muslim population of the country, Fortuyn was fired as party leader. Soon, “Professor Pim,” as he liked to be called, would found *Lijst Pim Fortuyn* (List Pim Fortuyn, LPF), which was against parliamentary democracy and immigrants, but denied the label of far right. Fortuyn’s flamboyance, with his shaved head and flashy dress, gained him the media spotlight. His positions on the issues appealed to a dissatisfied electorate, who, like in other European countries, feel that the mainstream parties have not delivered on their promises. Admiration for Fortuyn was shown by the emotional outpouring at his funeral both from the public and politicians alike, and media polls prior to the May 2002 general election placed the LPF as the second leading party.

Once stating that the country was full and did not need any more people coming into the Netherlands, Fortuyn’s anti-immigrant views appealed to an electorate wary of foreign populations. The LPF feels that the mainstream parties have left the country burdened with a highly disappointing healthcare system, high crime rates, and an educational system that is

lacking behind its European counterparts. Unfortunately, it was Fortuyn's assassination nine days before the election that sealed the victory for his party. The LPF garnered 17 % of the vote in its first national election allowing the party to enter into a coalition government. As with other party leaders of the far right, Fortuyn questioned the expansion of the European Union and was skeptical of the Netherlands involvement in the organization. The LPF has recently been besieged with intraparty conflict concerning the leadership of the party. It remains to be seen if the party can overcome this struggle and continue its recent success.

Figure 7 Electoral success of the far right in national elections (1980 to present)



Note: Parties included: CD, CP/CP'86, LPF and LN

Source: Parties and Elections in Europe (<http://www.parties-and-elections.de>)

Portugal

Portugal has seen its far right parties marginalized to the point of nonexistence. Much of this is due to the Salazar dictatorship that rule Portugal until 1974. Although conditions have favored the emergence of the far right, i.e. high unemployment, no such party has developed. Like Spain, Portugal is included in some studies (Jackman and Volpert 1996), but the parties

included in these studies do not fall in the political family of the far right (Mudde 2000). None of the parties of the right in Portugal, campaign on anti-immigrant, fascist platforms.

Spain

Spain has seen the rise of a far right party in the form of the *Alianza Popular* (Popular Alliance AP). However, this party has been transformed into the conservative *Partido Popular* (People's Party, PP) with a more moderate platform, while the literature on the far right is divided on this change. Some studies (Jackman and Volpert 1996) have included Spain, while others (Gilmour 1992, 227) argue that the far right has been declining into obscurity since General Franco's death in 1975. The PP is considered a conservative party and does fall to the right of the political spectrum. However, from reading the party's platform and definitional problems within the field, the PP does not fall into the far right political family. The PP does claim to be for the people, i.e. populist, but does not adhere to a fascist ideology typical of the far right. Therefore, the far right movement in Spain is not included in this study.

Sweden

Sweden has, in fact, seen the rise of a significant far right movement. The party *Ny Demokrati* (New Democracy, ND) was founded in 1990 and managed seven per cent of the vote in the 1991 general election, only seven months after the party's formation (Arter 1992, 357). However, this party was just a "flash" party as it disintegrated during the 1994 parliamentary elections (Kitschelt 1995). The ND campaigned under a anti-immigration umbrella; however, the party did not adhere to the fascist ideology that Ignazi (1992) believes is essential to classifying a far right party. For these reasons, the ND is not included in this study.

United Kingdom

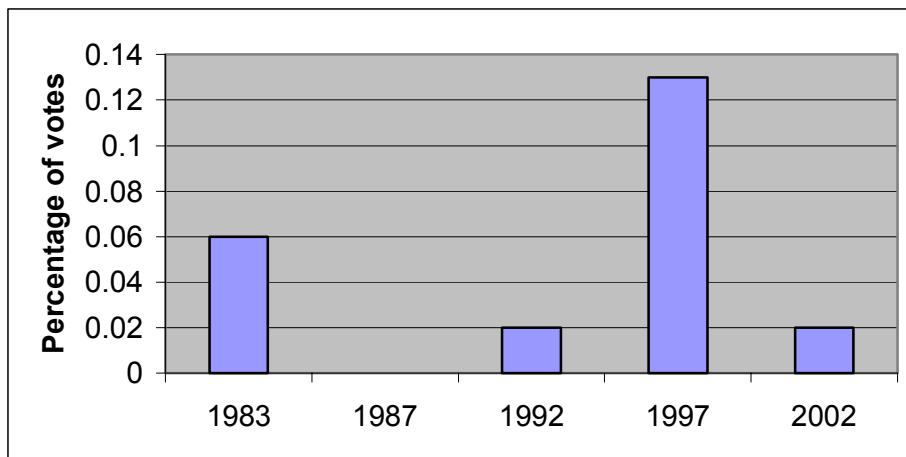
In the United Kingdom, as in Germany, far right parties have met with limited success due to party conflicts and electoral laws. Increasingly, the Conservatives occupy the right side of the political spectrum in Britain. The far right has found it difficult to appeal to voters. Two “major” far right parties have attempted to gain representation in the country, the British National Party (BNP) and the National Front (NF). The NF was founded in 1966, and enjoyed success in its early years; however, internal schisms and the emergence of the BNP in 1982 have seen the NF flounder in obscurity (Husbands 1988). In recent years, the NF has not fielded candidates of any significance and has only garnered a miniscule number of votes in elections. Prime Minister Tony Blair has appealed to the electorate to stand up to the BNP and to not support the party in local elections. For whatever reason, these appeals seem to have worked, as the BNP and NF have failed to muster any significant support on the national level. However, it should be noted, although it is not studied here, that the BNP has done quite well in local elections in Britain.

Their platforms of the BNP and NF resemble those of their continental counterparts. They both oppose membership in the European Union, sharing this goal with many in the Conservative Party. The BNP and the NF have also opposed immigration, but the NF has become more militant in their opposition to foreign populations. The Conservative Party has moved to the right on the issue of immigration, wanting to strengthen the obstacles to immigration, thus taking votes away from the NF and BNP. In the late 1970s, Conservative Party leader Margaret Thatcher openly remarked that Britain was “swamped” by alien cultures (Durham 1996, 82). Thatcher’s comments may have only served to hasten the decline of the FN

and the far right (Eatwell 1992, 186-187). Even the Labour Party has pushed to gain more control over the immigration and asylum laws in Britain.

The country has chosen not to fully sign onto the Schengen Agreement adopted and implemented by the European Union in 1995. The agreement provides for the free movement of European Union citizens and outlines the movement of non-European Union citizens as well. In order to maintain some control over their borders, the government has balked at implementing the tenants of the Schengen Agreement. With the policies of the far right being incorporated and implemented by the two major parties, a major platform plank has been taken away from the NF and BNP. These parties are having some influence on the mainstream parties, but this influence comes at the price of losing electoral votes to these mainstream parties.

Figure 8 Electoral success of the BNP in national elections (1980 to present)



Source: Parties and Elections in Europe (<http://www.parties-and-elections.de>)

Summary

From these countries, several patterns seem to emerge. Far right parties, as noted earlier, tend to adopt anti-immigration policies that are aimed at stopping the influx of foreigners into the

country. These parties claim to be populist, anti-corruption, and typically share a common ideology in fascism. The far right movements focus on three major issues, immigration, crime, and unemployment, believing that immigrants are responsible for the rising crime and unemployment rates. These parties appeal to the electorate by using immigrants as scapegoats for the domestic problems plaguing their country.

Cooperation is necessary for these parties to succeed. Many of the far right movements in Europe are beleaguered with internal conflicts that hamper their ability to gain electoral support. These parties appeal to a finite number of voters. In the Netherlands in the 1980s, the CP/CP '86 and the CD fought over the same voters, thus splitting their electoral percentage. In electoral systems that have adopted proportional representation, electoral thresholds hinder far right parties, as they fail to meet the minimum percentage of the vote in order to gain representation. In Germany, the NPD, DVU, and *Republikaner* have effectively cancelled out each other by fighting over the same voters, thus failing to break the five per cent electoral threshold. With cooperation, or even a coalition, these parties could break the electoral threshold and gain seats in the parliament. Electoral thresholds are included in this study, to test their effects on support for the far right.

In the cases of Austria, France, Italy, and the Netherlands, a leader who can rally the far right has helped to calm these conflicts, thus leading to electoral success. Jörg Haider has brought the FPÖ into the mainstream of Austrian politics and earned the party a place in the governing coalition. In the 1980s, the far right movement in the Netherlands was exemplified by its leader Hans Janmaat, much as it was in the late 1990's before the assassination of Pim Fortuyn. Leaders, like Le Pen in France, have unified the far right into a united front and made their parties into viable competitors in the political arena.

The far right suffers from its fixation on a few issues, such as immigration. These issues seem time bound, meaning that once the issue is resolved, or at least dealt with in a meaningful manner by the parties in government, far right parties lose their appeal. In the cases when the far right has met electoral success, they have lacked the program to govern effectively for the long term. Thus, the voters to which the far right appeals in the short term are not those that vote for them in the long term. This is due, in part, to other parties of the right, i.e. those parties labeled “conservative” adopting, albeit to a lesser degree, the issues of the far right, leaving these parties without a platform to stand on and less appeal to voters. For example, the Conservative Party in Britain has strengthened its opposition to immigration. This has the effect of stealing votes away for the far right.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mayer (1972) argues that in order for a study to be considered truly “comparative” it should encompass two or more nations. The case studies of the second chapter may be used to understand particular far right parties in the individual countries, but such research fails to yield hypotheses that can be generalized to the whole of Europe. Only by taking the knowledge gained from cases studies and applying it to other nations, can generalizations be made. It is through these generalizations that political scientists can attempt to predict the occurrence of political phenomena. This chapter reviews the pertinent literature on far right parties and discusses the theories driving current research, as well as this study.

First, I address definitional issues concerning the study of far right parties. Researchers have yet to yield an exact definition of far right parties. Some research (Husbands 1992) has gone as far as to group far right parties into different categories. While this may not be necessary, a review of different definitions may prove beneficial to synthesizing a universal definition. Second, I review cross-national studies of the rise of far right parties in Europe. Researchers have looked at both individual level support and state level conditions in attempting to explain the rise of the far right. By looking at both types of research, I hope to identify what issues are important to the far right and determine which conditions better favor electoral success for these parties.

Defining the Far Right

The far right movement in Europe may be recent, beginning in the last three decades, but the amount of literature studying this phenomenon is extensive, although it has its limitations.

Researchers have failed to establish a concrete, universally accepted definition of a far right party. Betz (1993b, 664) defines “right-wing populist parties” as those rejecting the established socio-cultural and political systems and combat the integration of alien cultures. These parties cater to the “anxiety” of disenfranchised voters with a program of xenophobia and a strong-armed sense of law and order (1993a, 1993b, 1994). Taggart (1995), in his study of “new populist parties” used ideology as the main indicator of a far right party. Mudde (2000) developed the idea of the far right political family. Using other scholarly work, he posited three criteria for a political family: origin, transnational federations, and policies. Focusing mostly on policies or ideology, Mudde believed that parties like the FPÖ in Austria, the National Front (FN) in France, and Vlaams Blok (VB) in Belgium, share the same characteristics and belong to the same far right family. Ignazi (1997) divided far right parties into two categories, old traditional and new industrial parties, seeing members of the far right as exhibiting an ideal ideological linkage with fascism. This supported an earlier study (Ignazi 1992, 12), in which he examined the far right parties according to three criteria: (1) their spatial placement on the political spectrum, (2) basic ideology of fascism, and (3) the party must have little respect for the constitutional rules of the democratic regime. As in the work of Betz, ideology plays a role in defining parties of the far right.

Kitschelt (1995, 49) provides two tests to define the far right: (1) whether the party’s competitors perceive it to be located on the right of the political spectrum and not a viable coalition partner; and (2) when the party entered the political arena. For this, Kitschelt (1995, 49) borrowed data from Lavar and Hunt (1992) to determine party placement on a left-right continuum and only used parties founded since the late 1960s. Huber (1992, 268) has written that one criterion that “unites all of these parties is their particular commitment to some sort of

ethnic exclusionism.” Ethnic exclusionism refers to the anti-immigration policies to which far right parties adhere. Through “aggressive nationalism,” e.g. violent acts, the far right directs its xenophobia toward immigrant populations (Husbands 1992, 268). Husbands (1992) applies this policy of ethnic exclusionism as the only criterion for a far right party neglecting other planks in the platform.

Several features seem to be common in each conceptualization of the far right: their ideology, placement on the political spectrum, and their policies of exclusionism. These commonalities within the definitions of the far right will be used to operationalize and define far right parties for this particular study. The next section will look at support for far right parties, with a brief discussion of why the electorate may choose to vote for these parties, and the conditions that may favor these parties.

Voting for the Far Right

Many mainstream political parties have seen individual support for the far right as merely a protest vote, assuming that these parties are single-issue parties that fade once the mobilizing issue has been addressed or solved. In his work, *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe*, Hans-Georg Betz (1994) disputes the protest vote hypothesis. He gives three reasons why voters supporting the far right are not doing so merely in protest to the mainstream. First, supporters of the far right are not disinterested in politics (Betz 1994). Instead, these parties have a loyal base of voters, regardless of size, that have helped them persist. Second, these supporters have a “distinct ideological identity,” even if the data do not seem to support this theory conclusively (Betz 1994, 63). Betz compares the far right of today to the fascist movement of the 1920s and

1930s, noting that each received a limited amount of protest votes. Other scholarly works tend to sustain arguments made by Betz (Hainsworth 1992, 2000; Kitschelt 1995).

Kitschelt (1995,276) believes that there are “identifiable patterns” of support for the far right, disproving any notion of protest voting for parties of the far right (Kitschelt 1995). Protest votes are usually cast only once before the electorate returns to the mainstream parties; however, these patterns show continual support for the far right. Kitschelt (1995) questions a second hypothesis applying to the far right: single-issue voting. Like Husbands (1992), Kitschelt (1995) argues that such parties can be considered single-issue parties because the issue of immigration is predominant on their platforms. However, analysis of the data shows support rooted in “broader right authoritarian dispositions,” meaning supporters are concerned about issues other than immigration (Kitschelt 1995, 276). If parties of the far right are not single-issue parties, then what issues, other than immigration, influence the electorate to support the far right?

Betz (1994) argues that the main planks of the far right platform concern immigration and crime (law and order). Crime, as an issue, is seen in interviews with supporters of the far right, more so than in the research. This is best witnessed in France, where the crime rate has remained above six per cent consistently in the 1990s. “A vote for Le Pen is a vote for our children, and especially for a fight against crime,” Marie-Caroline Mantin, a 37-year-old homemaker stated after Le Pen’s victory in the first round of presidential voting (New York Times, 2002). Michel Allagrini, a Swiss economist who has lived in France for a year believes that Le Pen “wants to have security here, like Rudy Giuliani, and that’s good, because it is completely crazy here” (New York Times, 2002). Allagrini continued, “[t]here’s no respect for the law” (New York Times, 2002). These sentiments have been echoed throughout the European mainland as crime rates have soared in recent years. The platforms of the far right also included planks opposing

the expansion of the European Union and in some cases, i.e. the FN in France and the VB in Belgium, opposing their country's membership in the organization.

Thus, the notion that the far right is a protest or single-issue party has been called into question in research on the far right. However, if their supporters are not protesting against the mainstream parties, and are not focusing on a single issue (e.g. immigration), then why do they continue to persist across Europe? A possible answer could be found at the state, or nation level conditions that may give rise to these parties. Among these are electoral system characteristics, the "effective" number of parties, immigration, unemployment, and crime rates. The following section examines the research that has focused on such conditions.

State Level Conditions Favoring the Far Right

Researchers have focused mainly on political conditions, such as electoral systems and the effective number of parties, social conditions (e.g. immigration) and economic conditions (e.g. unemployment). These conditions have been found to be significant in the rise of far right parties. Each of these conditions, political, social and economic, will be discussed below. Additionally, crime rates will be added to the social conditions that presumably have contributed to support for the far right.

Political Conditions

There has been much attention paid to the relevant political conditions leading to increased support for the far right. Powell (1986) notes that the fragmentation (i.e. number of parties in a given system) and polarization (i.e. the proportion of legislative seats held by far right parties) might lead to instability. When considering the characteristics of the political

system, Jackman and Volpert (1996) ask two questions. To what extent do electoral systems encourage a proportional translation of popular votes into legislative seats? To what degree does multi-partism prevail in the party system as a whole? These two studies suggest the appropriateness of studying the effects of a multi-party disproportional electoral system on the level of support for far right parties.

A disproportional electoral system is one, which does not promote a one-to-one translation of vote percentages into seats in parliament. For example, Italy has an electoral threshold of four per cent, meaning that a party must garner four per cent of the vote to gain representation in the parliament. If a party gains 3.6 % in the national election, they do not receive 3.6 % of the seats, thus the system is disproportional.

Maurice Duverger (1963) posits the hypothesis that the single-member plurality district method fosters two-party systems and systems that use proportional representation tend toward multi-partism. In disproportional systems, voting for far right, non-mainstream, parties becomes a fruitless act (Duverger 1963). As Duverger states, “the electors soon realize that their votes are wasted if they continue to give them to the third party,” thus voters tend to vote for the lesser evil of the two major parties (1963, 226). The more disproportional the electoral system, the less multi-partism will prevail. This also affects the opportunities far right parties have to gain entry into the political arena. Focusing on multi-partism and disproportional electoral systems, Arend Lijphart (1994) presents evidence that links electoral thresholds to disproportional representation. The electoral threshold is the minimum level of support, which a party needs in order to gain representation (Lijphart 1994, 11), and he notes, “thresholds clearly matter in the sense that thresholds of 8.0 % and higher, substantially reduce the effective number of parliamentary parties” (1994, 105). He also believes that multi-partism and disproportionality

may be linked. This linkage may be difficult to sort out because disproportional electoral systems and multi-partism affect each other in opposite directions: disproportionality *decreases* multi-partism, but, to at least some extent, multi-partism *increases* disproportionality (Lijphart 1994, 76-7). However, the direct effect of electoral thresholds on multi-partism is stronger than the effect of disproportionality (Lijphart 1994, 76-7).

By placing a minimum percentage of votes necessary to gain representation, electoral thresholds limit the opportunities of far right parties. This, in turn, affects the number of parties in a given electoral system. Thus, electoral thresholds and multi-partism affect far right parties, but in different directions. Electoral thresholds serve to dampen support for far right parties, while a multi-party system increases the chances that a far right party will be present in the electoral system and gain support. But does the interaction between these conditions help or hinder far right parties?

Jackman and Volpert (1996, 507) believe that there are three ways in which these two variables can influence support for the far right. The first is the possibility that each has a direct and independent effect. Second, if Duverger is correct in his assumption that disproportionality inhibits multi-partism, then disproportionality may have no direct effect on support for far right parties (1996, 507). The third possibility is drawn from Lijphart's conclusion that disproportionality and multi-partism are closely linked (Jackman and Volpert 1996, 507). For the authors, this would lead them "to anticipate a statistical interaction between the political variables" (Jackman and Volpert 1996, 507). The specific interaction is one where the dampening effect of disproportionality on far right support increases with multi-partism, while the positive effect of multi-partism diminishes with rising disproportionality (Jackman and Volpert 1996, 507). Jackman and Volpert (1996) use electoral thresholds in their study of 103

elections across Western Europe. They find that electoral disproportionality, measured by electoral thresholds, increasingly dampens support for far right parties, while multi-partism “fosters” parties of the far right with “rising electoral proportionality” (Jackman and Volpert 1996, 516). In sum, the extent to which a system promotes multi-partism and limits disproportional representation affects the opportunities smaller parties (i.e. far right) have to garner electoral support.

A second political condition analyzed in research on far right parties is multi-partism. The typical method of measuring this condition is the "number of effective parties" index. Developed by Laakso and Taagepera (1979), this measure accounts for the relative size of the parties in a given electoral system. The effective number of parties can be calculated using the number of seats in the legislature or by vote shares (Laakso and Taagepera 1979). The higher the number produced by this calculation, the higher the level of multi-partism. The “effective” number of parties also accounts for parties not gaining representation in the parliament. For example, in countries that have electoral thresholds, numerous parties do not gain seats; however, the index reports these parties as well.

The number of parties competing, logically, effects the amount of electoral support an extreme right party can obtain, since parties fight over a finite number of seats (Bohrer et al. 2001). As the number of parties decreases, the likelihood that the extreme right can gain seats increases, since each party can gain a greater share of the legislative seats (Bohrer et al. 2001). However, Jackman and Volpert (1996) believe that an increase in multi-partism will have the opposite effect. “Multi-partism itself provides a larger opportunity than is typical of other party systems for political entrepreneurs from smaller parties to mobilize electoral support,” (Jackman and Volpert 1996, 507). Each study finds multi-partism to be a significant condition in the

electoral success of the far right. Arguments for both of these hypotheses can be made. I believe that the level of multi-partism has a positive effect on support for far right parties.

Social Conditions

Immigration has been the main social concern of researchers of far right movements. As immigration rates continue to increase across the European Union, this issue has become salient for the European Union governments and the far right. Betz (1994, 69) reports that in 1990, the question of how to confront immigration ranked second (41 %) after the question of how to fight unemployment (66 %) as issues French voters deemed important. At the end of 1991, German voters responded with 71 % believing that immigration was the most important, far exceeding any other issue (Betz 1994, 69).

Far right parties usually adopt xenophobic, i.e. fear of foreigners, platforms. Husbands (1992) and Hainsworth (1992, 2000) believe immigration to be one of the primary underpinnings of support for the far right. Kitschelt (1995) explains that one of four hypotheses that has guided the debate on the rise of the far right concerns xenophobia. Kitschelt (1995, 273) holds, “the contemporary far right is a single-issue racist and xenophobic backlash... caused by the influx of immigrants from non-Occidental civilizations, particularly from Islamic, African, and Far Eastern regions.” Pia Knigge (1998) hypothesizes that raising immigration rates facilitate growing support for extreme right-wing parties among Western European publics. Immigration rates have far exceeded emigration rates leading to high proportions of foreigners within the European Union (Knigge 1998). As economic conditions worsen, voters may not blame those in power, but marginalized social groups such as immigrants (Knigge 1998). This assertion will be discussed further when economic conditions are addressed. Other scholars have

also stressed immigration as a key factor in support of the far right (Bohrer et al. 2000; Gibson 2002).

Although their study is not “comparative” by Mayer’s definition, it is worth noting that Lubbers and Scheepers (2000) hypothesized that manual workers, unemployed, less well educated people, and people with a low income are more likely to vote for *Die Republikaner* party, because they feel threatened by ethnic immigrants and are in favor of limiting “ethnic immigrants.” Likewise, Ignazi (1992) uses the French Front National (FN) as an example of the far right utilizing immigration to gain support. The ability of Jean-Marie Le Pen to “politicize” this issue is widely recognized as the cornerstone of FN electoral success (Ignazi 1992).

Unfortunately, the findings regarding immigration are mixed. In her study of far right movement in six European nations, Knigge found that rising levels of immigration facilitate electoral success of far right parties, while noting that, “it is unlikely that the immigration problem will disappear from the political agenda shortly” (1998, 272). Thus far right parties “may continue to benefit at the polls from the public’s concern over the impact of persistent immigration on their economy and culture” (Knigge 1998, 272). In their study of far right party support from 1979 to 1999, Bohrer et al. found that immigration played no role in the electoral success of far right parties.

The other social condition in question, crime, has been a major issue for the far right in recent years. Although the far right has used the rising crime rates as rallying tools, researchers have failed to test the linkage between crime rates and support for the far right. Betz (1994) argues that law and order is a major plank in the platform of far right parties. As seen by the quotes of supporters of the FN in France, crime appears to be a relevant issue for supporting the far right and, the far right has attempted to tie these two social conditions together. As crime

rates have risen in Europe, the far right has placed the blame squarely on immigrants and appealed to the electorate as “law and order” parties. Le Pen in France and Haider in Austria, have also placed the responsibility on the parties in power. The far right has campaigned on the broken promises of the mainstream parties, believing that those in power have failed to provide safety for the public. Chapter nine of the FPÖ’s program, or manifesto, states, “as it is a central task of the state to meet its citizens' need for security, ...the protection of society must rate higher than the rehabilitation of the criminal.”

Because crime has not been empirically tested before, this study only examines changes in the crime rate. Far right parties, however, have attempted to link immigration and crime. The manifesto of the Vlaams Blok provides some evidence of this link. “Criminal foreigners should be sent back home. Whosoever abuses our hospitality should be expelled from the country immediately. Approximately one third of all crime is committed by foreigners.” While these numbers are not tested or backed by this study, far right parties continue to scapegoat immigrants for the woes of Europe.

Economic Conditions

Kitschelt (1995) states that another hypothesis driving the research of far right parties centers on unemployment. It has been called Europe’s most “pressing domestic problem,” and continues to be so in many European countries (*The Economist*, August 28, 1993). As noted with the social conditions, French voters believed that combating unemployment was the most salient issue over the next few years (Betz 1994, 69). The FN in France has campaigned under the slogan, “two million immigrants are the cause of two million French people out of work” (Jackman and Volpert 1996, 507). The German *Die Republikaner* movement has also used the

slogan “Eliminate unemployment, stop immigration!” (Jackman and Volpert 1996, 507).

Jackman and Volpert (1996) feel that unemployment is the economic condition most closely linked to support for the far right. They anticipate that political “scapegoating” of immigrants and foreigners will find much more support when jobs are scarce than when unemployment is low (Jackman and Volpert 1996). Unemployment rates have increased from 2 and 3 % in the 1970s to around 10 % in the 1980s, and have hovered around this rate since (Jackman and Volpert 1996, 508).

The far right “represents a revival of fascist and national socialist ideology in the midst of an economic crisis with high unemployment” (Kitschelt 1995,). Knigge (1998) hypothesizes that as economic conditions worsen, Western European citizens are more likely to lend their support to far right parties. However, unemployment does not exert the anticipated effect on potential vote support (Knigge 1998, 266). The results instead suggest that, on average, higher levels of unemployment hinder far right parties, and in fact, a slight negative relationship emerges (Knigge 1998, 266). These results are disputed by Jackman and Volpert (1996), who find that higher rates of unemployment provide a favorable environment for far right parties. Likewise, Bohrer et al. (2000) finds that unemployment is statistically significant to support for far right parties. Using the change in the rate of unemployment between the election year and the year prior, the result leads researchers to infer that a higher rate of change in unemployment leads to greater increases in support for parties of the far right (Bohrer et al. 2000, 16).

Lubbers and Scheepers (2000) believe that in regions where unemployment and immigration are higher, or unemployment and the number of immigrants increases rapidly, people are more likely to vote for *Die Republikaner*, a far right party. This suggests that the social and economic conditions do interact with each other affecting support for the far right.

Indeed, several scholars (Knigge 1998, Lubbers and Scheepers 2000, and Bohrer et al. 2001) have developed models to study these effects. However, none of this research concludes that there is a significant relationship between the interaction of these two variables and support for the far right. Even with these findings, studying the interaction effects between these two variables once more proves necessary. Far right parties have continued to campaign against immigration while making references to its link to unemployment.

Summary

Definitional issues pertaining to the far right have been as problematic as the study of the conditions favoring right far parties. The research has yet to yield a universally accepted, concrete definition. Researchers have based definitions of far right parties on placement on the political spectrum, date the party was founded, and their lack of respect for the constitutional rules of the democratic regime, sharing some commonalities, i.e. ideology and policies of exclusionism. From these, the definition used for this study is developed and discussed in the next chapter. Along with these definitional issues, researchers have attempted to explain the rise of the far right from the late 1970s to the present. Rather than focusing on individual level support, most of this research has looked at conditions at the state level of analysis.

I argue that there are three types of conditions that may factor into electoral success for the far right: political, social, and economic. The results pertaining to the political conditions are similar; however, it is the social and economic conditions that have produced mixed results. The political conditions are twofold: the level of disproportionality and the level of multi-partism. Recent work by Lijphart (1994) has linked these two variables together. Each has been found to be significant (Jackman and Volpert 1996). There are two social conditions as well: immigration

and crime rates. Immigration has been the main plank in the far right platform; however, it has been found to be a significant variable in some studies (Knigge 1998) and not significant in others (Bohrer et al. 2000). This variable has been measured as a percentage of the total population (Knigge 1998) or as the percentage change in the rate between the election year and the year prior (Bohrer et al. 2000). This difference may account for the mixed results. Surprisingly, crime rates have yet to be tested statistically in the ongoing research. Economic conditions, e.g. unemployment, have also been associated with the rise in far right parties. Considered Europe's "most pressing problem," the far right has used rising unemployment rates to rally support and advance its anti-immigrant platform. Unemployment and immigration have been linked, but have proven to be statistically significant to the rise of far right parties.

CHAPTER IV

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND OPERATIONALIZATION

This chapter presents the theoretical framework and operationalization of a cross-national study of far right parties. Using the existing research, I attempt to unify the extant descriptions and classifications into one definition. Although the discussion in chapter two alludes to the parties under study, the definition is key to choosing which parties are analyzed. Next, I explain the operationalization of the variables utilized in this study. Focusing on the European Union between 1980 and 2000, I develop several generalizable hypotheses to build upon the extensive literature in the field. From these variables, I develop a model to test these hypotheses.

Conceptualizing the Far Right

Definitions of the far right in previous research have focused on placement along the political spectrum. Spatial criteria are commonly used to define far right parties. The very term, far right, refers to the placement of these parties on the political spectrum. These data are easily accessible and easy to replicate. Using the political scales produced by Castles and Mair (1984), placement of many of these parties falls within the “6.25-10—Right” range. Within the breakdown of left and right, there are two categories: ultra and moderate. Moderate-right parties are placed between 6.25 and 8 on this 1 through 10 scale. The parties in this study are clearly situated in the ultra category, having a score of eight or higher, on the right side of the scale. The survey conducted by Laver and Hunt (1992) asked political scientists to rate parties, on a 20-point scale, on a variety of issues. A score of zero meant total party disapproval on the issue while twenty meant total party approval. Kitschelt (1995) and others (Fieschi, Shields, and

Woods 1996), use these criteria in their studies, although the manner, or issues, they used may be different. Kitschelt (1995) focused on economic issues, while Fieschi et al. (1996) examined immigration as the major issue of the far right. The index created by Castles and Mair (1984) yields a small number of “ultra” parties. This is noted in Jackman and Volpert (1996). They combine the spatial criterion, where the party is located on the political spectrum in relation to other parties in the same political system, with the index developed by Castles and Mair (Jackman and Volpert 1995). Ignazi (1992) also uses a spatial criterion as one of his three criteria for identifying far right parties.

Other researchers have focused on policy positions (i.e. ideology) in order to define far right parties. Husbands (1992) believes that immigration policies are the unifying thread for all far right parties. In determining their placement on the political spectrum, the policy of exclusionism is the only criterion that Husbands (1992) uses to define a far right party. Betz (1993a, 1993b, 1994) believes that the far right rejects the established political system and fights against any inclusion of foreigners. Mudde (2000) also uses policies as one of three criteria to define far right parties. Ignazi (1992) believes that the far right movement shares a common ideology with the fascists of early twentieth century Europe. This fascist ideology includes populist, anti-statist, and anti-corruption policies. Other parties, however, claim some, or all, of these policies as their own. What separates a far right party from others in the political arena is their regard for the democratic rules of the political arena. These parties tend to use unconventional means of political participation (i.e. protests, strikes, and even violent acts) to deliver their message to the electorate.

Still other researchers have used perceptions of other political parties and temporal criteria to define the far right. Kitschelt (1995) identified two tests to determine a far right party.

The first is whether the party's competitors perceive it to be located on the right of the political spectrum and not a viable coalition partner. For the second, Kitschelt asks when did the party enter the political arena. For his operationalization Kitschelt (1995, 49) borrowed data from Lavar and Hunt (1992) to determine party placement on a left-right continuum and only used parties founded since the late 1960s. While this definition works for Kitschelt, it is impractical for the study of far right parties, or political parties in general. In most European electoral systems, no party gets a majority of seats in parliament. It seems unrealistic to think that "mainstream" parties would not consider entering into coalitions with far right parties. To get elected or form a government, far right parties and mainstream parties *must* enter into coalitions together. In 1999, the FPÖ in Austria entered into a governing coalition with the Social Democrats. Also, coalitions of far right parties have come to power. The Northern League and the MSI/AN are current members of the coalition government in Italy.

A far right party is one whose placement on the political spectrum is farther right than any other party in a given electoral system. In some cases, the placement of two parties on the political spectrum is identical. The second criterion used pertains to ideology. All political parties claim to be for the people, anti-corruption, and against crime. However, far right parties adopt anti-immigration platform planks, which "mainstream" parties tend not to adopt. Mainstream parties may stress tougher immigration laws or more stringent limitations on asylum seekers, but they have not gone as far as to express a hatred of foreigners. Betz (1993a, 1993b, 1994), Gibson (2002), Husbands (1992), and Kitschelt (1995) believe that immigration is the cornerstone of the far right. These xenophobic sentiments have garnered the most attention from the public, press, and European community, and are the most important issue to the rise of the far right.

The final criterion used by this study is the disregard that far right parties have for the rules of a democratic regime. Betz (1994) and Ignazi (1992) have noted that this disregard for the political system is the greatest difference between the far right and the mainstream parties. Numerous parties under the far right umbrella have been linked, or claimed responsibility, for street violence, protests, and other unconventional forms of political participation. Many times, these parties step outside the political arena in order to make gains within it. In Germany, the REP has been linked to numerous beatings of “ethnic immigrants” since 1990.

These three criteria form the basis of a far right party analyzed by this study. Every study detailed here has used one of these three criteria to define far right parties. The placement of these “far right” parties is obviously important. The policies adhered to by the far right, as well as the forms of participation employed by these parties, mark their difference from other parties in the electoral system. For the purposes of this research, far right parties are those placed furthest right on the political spectrum in their given country which campaign on populist, anti-statist, anti-corruption, anti-immigrant platforms using unconventional forms of political participation. As detailed in chapter two, parties under this definition include the Freedom Party in Austria, Vlaams Blok in Belgium, the Progress Party in Denmark, and the National Front in France. Others included are the Republicans, NPD, and DVU in Germany, the MSI/AN and the Northern League in Italy, and the British National Party in the United Kingdom. In the Netherlands, the CP, CP’86, and CD fit these criteria in the 1980s and 1990s, while the LN and LPF continue the far right movement in this decade.

Data Collection

The data for this research were collected from a variety of sources. The dependent variable is support for far right parties in national election for the eight countries in this study. Vote percentages were collected from the *International Almanac of Electoral History* developed by Thomas Mackie and Richard Rose (1991). This volume contains the results for national elections across the globe since 1945 until 1990. Elections results for the 1990s were collected using the Parties and Elections in Europe website maintained by Wolfram Nordsieck at the University of Dusseldorf and located on the Internet at www.parties-and-elections.de on the Internet. This website contains data on European national parliamentary elections since 1945 covering every party within this study. It also contains data on elections for the European Parliament (EP). Since some parties (i.e. the MSI/AN in Italy) have been renamed during the years of this study, it is important to cross-reference the data during the period that it overlaps (1980s). To cross-reference the data on elections in the 1990s, I employed the website maintained by Election World located at www.electionworld.org. These three sources also provided the data for the two political condition variables: the number of effective parties and electoral thresholds. The calculations of these two variables will be explained in the next section.

Data on immigration rates can be collected from various sources; however, data on crime rates was more difficult to obtain. One source for data on immigration rates is *Trends in International Migration* published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Bohrer et al. (2001) feel that *Trends in International Migration* is the most authoritative source of international migration data. However, there are other sources for data concerning immigration into Europe, which include the European Commission and United

Nations Demographic Yearbooks. For this study, the data on immigrations was collected from the OECD's *Trends in International Migration* and cross-referenced with the United Nations Demographic Yearbooks. I chose to use *Trends in International Migration* because it gives a more detailed look at immigration focusing on both European Union citizens and immigrants from outside the European Union. *Trends in International Migration* gives information concerning the immigrants' countries of origin, as well as the number of naturalizations that took place during a given year.

Finding reliable data on crime rates without actually traveling to a specific country proved a more complicated task due to the lack of standardization of the data. The different countries of the European Union define, and therefore, measure crime differently. To locate standardized data on crime, I turned to the *International Crime Statistics* volumes published by the International Police Organization (INTERPOL). These volumes have been published every two years since 1950 and every year since 1993. The data provided by these volumes includes the total number of offenses from murder to theft, as reported by a given country. Since the definitions of many crimes vary across Europe, these rates may lack some comparability; however, the availability of data make the *International Crime Statistics* the best source for this research.

Data on unemployment suffer from the same problem. European nations have different definitions for unemployment and calculate the rate differently. Standardization of the data means that the rates are calculated using the same definition and formula and, therefore, can be compared cross-nationally. For this study, I collected data from the various issues of *OECD Main Economic Indicators* and *OECD Economic Outlook*. I then cross-referenced them with data

from the World Bank *World Development Indicators* dataset. These numbers were strikingly similar due to this standardization of the unemployment rates of Europe.

Hypotheses and Operationalization of Variables

This section provides the five testable hypotheses driving this research and details the operationalization of the variables used to measure the state level conditions that give rise to far right parties. For this study, there are two electoral system characteristics, multi-partism and electoral thresholds, two social conditions, immigration and crime, and one economic condition, unemployment. The measurement of each of these variables is explained. The variables are listed with the name of each variable as it appears in the model in parentheses.

Dependent Variable

Far Right Party Support (Support)

The independent variable in this study is support for the far right. This variable is the percentage of vote shares garnered by each far right party in national elections in their respective countries from 1980 to the present. Although, many far right parties were established in the 1960s, the last two decades have seen the greatest rise in the number of, and support for, far right parties.

Independent Variables

Multi-Partism (ENPP)

From the research detailed in chapter three, I believe that multi-partism has a direct positive effect on the electoral success of the far right. I hypothesize the following:

H₁: The higher the degree of multi-partism within a system, the more likely extreme right parties will find electoral support in the system.

The number of parties competing, logically, effects the amount of electoral support any far right party can obtain, since parties fight over a finite number of seats (Bohrer et al. 2001). As the number of parties decreases, the likelihood that the far right can gain seats increases since each party can gain a greater share of the legislative seats (Bohrer et al. 2001). Jackman and Volpert (1996) hypothesized the opposite, believing multi-partism has a positive relationship on support for the far right. I believe this hypothesis to be more logical. The level of multi-partism within a given electoral system has a positive relationship with the success of the far right. The higher the number of parties in an electoral system, the more likely a party is placed on the far right of the political spectrum.

To measure the extent of multi-partism, I make use of the “effective” number of parties in the parliament. The “effective” number of parties index developed by Laakso and Taagepera (1979) takes into account the relative size of the competing parties in a given electoral system. The effective number of parties is calculated as follows:

$$ENPP = 1/\sum s_i^2$$

where s_i is the fractional share of seats of the i^{th} party (Laakso and Taagepera 1979). This formula produces the number of viable parties and, therefore, measures the degree of multi-partism in a given electoral system. This measure has been incorporated into the studies of Jackman and Volpert (1996) and Bohrner et al. (2000).

Disproportional Representation (Thresh)

From the works of Duverger (1963) and Lijphart (1994), I argue that proportional representation affects the rise of new parties in a given electoral system. Therefore, I hypothesize that:

H₂: The more the electoral system promotes a one-to-one translation of percentage of popular votes to legislative seats, the more likely extreme right parties are to gain support.

Electoral thresholds do not allow for this one-to-one translation of the popular votes. This is how disproportional systems develop. For example, the FRP in Denmark received less than one per cent (0.6) of the vote in the 2001 national election. If there were a one-to-one translation of the vote, then the FRP would have been entitled to one seat in the Danish Parliament. However, Denmark has a 2 % electoral threshold. Therefore, the FRP did not receive a seat in the parliament. Electoral thresholds exist in Austria (4%), Denmark (2%), Germany (5%), and Italy (4%).

Duverger (1963) argues that the single-member plurality district method fosters two-party systems, and systems that use proportional representation tend toward multi-partism. In disproportional systems, voting for far right, non-mainstream, parties becomes a fruitless act (Duverger 1963). Electors realize that their votes are wasted if they continue to give them to the third party, thus voters tend to vote for the majority party that best represents their beliefs. The more disproportional the electoral system, the less multi-partism will prevail. This will also affect the opportunities that far right parties have to gain entry into the political arena. Arend Lijphart's (1994) recent work on electoral thresholds and their link to the level of disproportionality within the electoral system, leads to the use of electoral thresholds as the measure of disproportional representation in the system. To observe if disproportionality effects

support given to far right parties, electoral thresholds are included as a variable in this study. In their study, Jackman and Volpert (1996) find electoral thresholds to be significant. However, this was the first test of disproportionality (e.g. electoral thresholds) on support for far right parties. Clearly, more testing of their conclusions needs to be done.

Jackman and Volpert (1996) also find that the interaction effects electoral thresholds have with the “effective” number of parties index, to be significant in dampening support for the far right. For this reason, one model in this study introduces an interaction effect between the variable for multi-partism, the “effective” number of parties, and the variable for disproportional representation, electoral thresholds. This variable is treated as a simple percentage.

Rate of Immigration (Immigration)

The third hypothesis of this study concerns the effects of immigration on the level of support for far right parties.

H₃: As the rate immigration into a given country increases, the more likely the electorate of that country is to support the far right.

Immigration can be measured in a number of ways depending on what specific data the researcher desires. If I were interested in looking at the *number* of immigrants, then the proper method would be to take the total number of immigrants in a given country. However, for this research I have chosen to look at the *rate* of immigration. This rate is operationalized as a percentage of non-European Union citizens entering into a country against the total population of that country in a given year. Some researchers, i.e. Knigge (1998), have operationalized this variable in the same manner. Still others, Bohrer et al. (2001) have looked at the change in the rates of immigration from the year before the election to the year of the election. Their research yielded the conclusion that immigration rates did not affect support for far right parties.

I have chosen to operationalize immigration as a percentage rather than as the change in this percentage. More specifically, I take the average immigration rate for the years of each election cycle. Regardless if there is a sudden influx of immigrants or the rate actually decreases, the electorate simply sees that more and more immigrants are moving into the country. I believe that voters are more worried about the percentage of immigrants entering into the population. The fear, or even hatred, of foreigners possessed by these voters does not rise and fall with the changes in the immigration rate.

Crime Rates (Crime)

I hypothesize that rising crime rates will lead voters to support far right parties. The fourth hypothesis in this study is as follows:

H₄: As the crime rate increases, the more likely voters are to support far right parties. Far right parties have campaigned on three major issues in recent years. The first two issues, immigration and unemployment, have been researched extensively in the literature on far right parties. However, the third issue, crime, has not been tested empirically within this research. For this reason, I include crime rates. More specifically, I incorporate changes in the crime rate into this study. Increasingly, voters are frustrated with the mainstream parties inability to deal with rising crime rates. This growing disillusionment with the parties in government can be seen in the words of Le Pen supporters in France as well as the protest marches organized by the far right. In this study, I measure crime rates as the change, positive or negative, from the year before the election to the year of the election. I believe voters will be more interested in the changes in the crime rate than the crime rate itself. To voters, the parties in power are responsible for the increases and decreases in the crime rate.

The actual crime rate is then figured using this formula:

$$\frac{\text{number of crimes}}{\text{size of the target population}}$$

This crime rate formula is the same used by law enforcement agencies across the globe. The size of the target population in the *International Crime Statistics* volumes is 100,000 (e.g. the number of crimes divided by 100,000). Although far right parties have campaigned that immigrants are responsible for the rising crime rates, I do not introduce any interaction effects between the two social variables of this study. I believe it necessary to establish a link between changes in the crime rate and support for far right parties, first, and then test the interaction effects between immigration and crime.

Rate of Unemployment (Unemployment)

The following hypothesis concerning unemployment arises from the literature:

H₅: As the unemployment rate increases, the more likely the electorate is to support far right parties.

Betz (1994) believes unemployment has increasingly become a major problem for Europe. High levels of unemployment have helped to create and fuel large pools of disenchanted voters open to the ideas of far right parties. In addition, this disenchantment has only been helped by perceptions that unemployment is a result of the influx of immigrants into the European Union. For this reason, researchers (Bohrer et al. 2001, Knigge 2001) have included interaction effects in their models. This literature has clearly linked these two variables, therefore, one of the models tested by this research include interaction effects between these two variables. The measure for unemployment is simply the rate of unemployment for the entire labor force

reported for a given year in a given country. For this study, I take the change in the unemployment rate for the year before the election to the year of the election in a given country.

Summary

The definition provided in this study is a synthesis of the definitions presented in previous research. How one defines a far right party dictates which parties are examined. To reiterate, a far right party is one which is placed furthest right on the political spectrum in their given country which campaign on populist, anti-statist, anti-corruption, anti-immigrant platforms using unconventional forms of political participation. From this definition, fifteen parties emerge in the twenty years under study. It is hoped that the definition used here will become universally accepted and used in future research on far right parties.

This study examines the effects of disproportional electoral systems, multi-partism, immigration, crime, and unemployment on support for the far right in the European Union. The operationalization of these variables is critical for replicating this study. The electoral threshold in that given system measures the disproportionalism of the electoral system, while the “effective” number of parties index, measures the level of multi-partism in a given electoral system. Immigration is measured by the number of immigrants entering into a country as a percentage of the total population. Crime and unemployment are measured as the change in the rate from the year prior to the election to the year of the election. From these variables, the basic model for my analysis is as follows:

$$\text{Support} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{ENPP}) + \beta_2(\text{Thresh}) + \beta_3(\text{Immigration}) + \beta_4(\text{Crime}) + \beta_5(\text{Unemployment}) + \varepsilon$$

Due to the problems that arise with pooled cross-sectional data, the model employed by this research is a two-way random effects regression model. This type of model controls for heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation that could bias the model leading to a misinterpretation of the results. This is explained further in the next chapter. Two other models are introduced to test interaction effects between variables. Again, this is explained in chapter five.

CHAPTER V

STATISTICAL METHODS, RESULTS, AND INTERPRETATIONS

The previous chapter outlined the operationalization of the variables investigated by this study, as well as introduced the hypotheses that are tested. This chapter provides the statistical methods used to test these hypotheses and interpret the results from these tests. These variables will be tested using a two-way random effects regression model. With multiple regression, the model can incorporate more than one variable into an equation (Lewis-Beck 1995).

This is useful for two reasons. First, it offers a more complete explanation of the dependent variable, since few phenomena are products of a single cause (Lewis-Beck 1995). Second, the effect of a particular independent variable is made more certain, for the possibility of distorting influences from the other independent variables is removed (Lewis-Beck 1995). From this analysis, I employ a cross-sectional time-series (pooled) design because I wish to look at the effects of these variables over time and across eight countries. More specifically, this design may be labeled a pseudo-pooled design since the intervals between elections varies both within and across countries (Jackman and Volpert 1996, 508-509).

The greatest potential problem with this analysis is heteroskedasticity, since the data vary over both time and space. Elections for each country occurred at different intervals. For example, the United Kingdom may be on a four-year election cycle, while France holds an election every six years. Due to this, the dependent and independent variables will also vary. This problem could be addressed by including dummy variables for each country in the model. In addition to minimizing possible non-constant variance problems, this method captures country differences ignored by the specified independent variables (Jackman and Volpert 1996). Such

differences include minor cross-country variations in measuring crime and immigration rates. However, doing this leads to a loss of degrees of freedom and can lead to the problem of autocorrelation. The two-way random effects model incorporated by this research should control for this problem, since the model includes the variance between countries in its assessment of the results.

Another problem to address is serial autocorrelation. Serial autocorrelation refers to the existence of a linear relationship between the residuals of the regression equation. When using time series data in regression, there are certain assumptions that must be satisfied. One of these assumptions is that the residuals or error terms are normally distributed and not correlated (Lewis-Beck 1995). The covariance between any pair of error terms must be zero (Lewis-Beck 1995). When the covariance is not zero, the residuals are autocorrelated. One possible method to address this problem is to lag the variables on each side of the regression equation. This should offset the effects of autocorrelation (Lewis-Beck 1995). However, this drops one observation per country in my sample leaving forty-two observations, thus dropping the degrees of freedom. Again, the model should control for this problem by treating each variable as a random effect varying between observations.

A third possible problem is multicollinearity, which exists when one independent variable correlates perfectly with another independent variable (Lewis-Beck). One method of testing this problem is the Klein test which regresses each independent variable against all other independent variables (Lewis-Beck 1995). When any of the R-squared from these equations is near 1.0, there is high multicollinearity (Lewis-Beck 1995). In fact, the amount of multicollinearity that exists is indicated by the largest of these R-squared estimates (Lewis-Beck 1995). The largest of these R-squared estimates is .049 between the “effective” number of parties and electoral thresholds.

The basic model (1) for my analysis is as follows:

$$\text{Support} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{ENPP}) + \beta_2(\text{Thresh}) + \beta_3(\text{Immigration}) + \beta_4(\text{Crime}) + \beta_5(\text{Unemployment}) + \varepsilon$$

Two other models introduce interaction effects into this equation. The second model tests the interaction effects between immigration and unemployment. The extant literature has linked these two variables in empirical testing (Bohrer et al. 2000; Knigge 1998). The third model tests the interaction between the two political variables in this study, the “effective” number of parties and electoral thresholds. Jackman and Volpert (1996) have linked these two variables together.

Model 2:

$$\text{Support} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{ENPP}) + \beta_2(\text{Thresh}) + \beta_3(\text{Immigration}) + \beta_4(\text{Crime}) + \beta_5(\text{Unemployment}) + \beta_5(\text{Immigration} * \text{Unemployment}) + \varepsilon$$

Model 3:

$$\text{Support} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{ENPP}) + \beta_2(\text{Thresh}) + \beta_3(\text{Immigration}) + \beta_4(\text{Crime}) + \beta_5(\text{Unemployment}) + \beta_5(\text{ENPP} * \text{Thresh}) + \varepsilon$$

Bivariate Statistics

Table I illustrates bivariate descriptive statistics measuring the strength of the relationship between the dependent variable (i.e. support for the far right) and the various independent variables. Since the variables in this study are measured at the interval level, Pearson’s correlation is the most appropriate measure to use. This correlation ranges from –1 to +1, in

which a +1 correlation means there is perfect positive linear relationship between variables. The closer the measure is to -1 or $+1$, the stronger the relationship, while a correlation of zero means there is no linear relationship between the variables.

The relationship between the effective number of parties and support for far right parties is significant, but only moderate in strength with a positive Pearson's correlation of .416. Electoral thresholds have a significant positive relationship to support for the far right, but the strength of the relationship is weak. The Pearson's correlation for immigration (0.479) shows a significant positive relationship, but only moderate in strength. While the relationships between these independent variables and support for far right parties agree with the hypotheses put forth in this analysis, the Pearson's correlations for crime rates and unemployment are not consistent with this research. Changes in the crime and unemployment rates have a weak negative relationship with support for the far right. However, changes in the unemployment rate prove significant in these correlations. The interaction effects between immigration and unemployment have a weak positive relationship, but prove significant at the .05 level. The interaction effects between the effective number of parties and electoral thresholds have a moderate positive relationship and are also significant at the .05 level.

Table I – Pearson’s Correlations—Support for the Far Right

Effective Number of Parties	0.416**
Electoral Thresholds	0.274*
Immigration	0.479**
Crime	-0.049
Unemployment	-0.250*
Immigration*Unemployment	0.291*
Number of Parties*Thresholds	0.468*

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Regression Models

Table II shows the results of the first model for the determinants of support for far right parties. Of the variables analyzed by this research, the “effective” number of parties has a coefficient of 1.90 and is statistically significant at the 0.01 (99%) level of confidence. The combination of the Pearson’s correlation and the statistically significant positive coefficient seems to support the hypothesis tested in this research, that far-right parties have a greater chance of gaining electoral support when the number of parties competing in a given electoral system is high. Electoral thresholds are significant at the 0.05 level on a one tailed test with a coefficient of 1.15. Again, this seems to support the second hypothesis of this research. The more the electoral system promotes a proportional translation of votes to seats, the more support far right parties can garner.

The rate of immigration also proves significant at the 0.01 level in the first model with a coefficient of 4.20. Rising immigration rates have a positive effect on support for far right parties. As the levels of immigration rise, support for the far right increases. Immigration also possesses the largest coefficient in the model. A one per cent change in the rate of immigration would result in a 4.20 increase in the predicted value of the dependent variable (i.e. support for the far right). This large coefficient and the Pearson's correlation suggest that immigration has the greatest impact on support for the far right. Changes in the unemployment rate are significant at the 0.10 level; however, the negative coefficient suggests that this relationship is the opposite of what is hypothesized. As unemployment rises, support for the far right decreases. The findings on the effective number of parties, thresholds, and immigration are consistent with previous research; however, the findings on unemployment run counter to the conclusions of previous research (Bohrer et al. 2000; Jackman and Volpert 1996; Knigge 1998; Lubbers and Scheepers 2000).

The new variable tested by this research, crime rates, is insignificant and the negative coefficient seems to oppose what is hypothesized in this study. As crime rates increase, support for the far right declines. It may be of interest to note that crime, like immigration, might be based on the perceptions of the electorate. Crime rates may be decreasing overall; however, if the electorate has the perception that more crime is occurring, voters may support far right parties. Likewise, if the crime rate is increasing, but individuals are not personally affected by it, they may not notice or simply not care about the increase, and support other parties.

The Wald chi-square tests the null hypothesis that all slope coefficients are jointly equal to zero. This is a test of overall significance of the regression line. The significance score reported in Table II gives the probability that the coefficients are jointly zero, thus testing the

significance of the model. The Wald chi-square value meets the critical value for the degrees of freedom in the model; therefore, I can reject the null hypothesis. Given these results, the first model proves highly significant. Another way to test the fit of the model is a likelihood ratio test (Kennedy 1998). Again, this tests the assumption that some of the coefficients (β s) are not equal to zero (Kennedy 1998). The score of this test ranges from zero to one, with a score of one meaning that one fails to reject the null hypothesis (Kennedy 1998). The results of this test show that the null hypothesis is rejected and the coefficients are not zero. The results of this test also show that the model is significant. These two procedures have tested the goodness of fit of the model. The quality of the fit can be determined by the coefficient of determination, or R^2 . This is done by multiplying the Pearson's correlation by themselves and summing them together. The score ranges between zero and one, with one being the highest quality of fit for the model. For the first model, the coefficient of determination is .541. From this result, the first model has a moderate quality of fit.

Table II
Determinants of Support for Far Right Parties—Model 1

Effective Number of Parties	1.90 (.486)***
Electoral Thresholds	1.15 (.382)**
Immigration	4.20 (1.09)***
Crime	-0.081 (.090)
Unemployment	-0.114 (.058)*
Constant	-6.05 (3.26)
Goodness and Quality of Fit	
Wald Chi-Square	61.05
Significance	0.00
Likelihood Ratio Test	0.00
R-squared	0.541

Note: $N = 50$

Note: * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$ (one-tailed)

Coefficients are shown with standard errors in parentheses

Table III illustrates the results of the second model in this study, which regresses the basic model, but tests the interaction effects between immigration and unemployment. The Wald chi-square score for the second model is 56.05. This score meets the critical value necessary to reject the null hypothesis, thus the slope coefficients are not jointly equal to zero. The second model proves highly significant. The likelihood ratio test supports the Wald chi-square score and the coefficient of determination is .625. The second model has better quality of fit than Model 1. This is due to the interaction effects introduced by this model.

As in Model 1, the “effective” number of parties remains significant at the 0.05 level with a positive coefficient of 2.44. Electoral thresholds remain statistically significant at the .05 level, with a positive coefficient of 3.36. From these results, it may be inferred that the lower the electoral threshold (i.e. the more proportional the electoral system), the higher the support for far right parties. However, the strength of this relationship is weak to moderate at best.

The rate of immigration is statistically significant once again; however, the level of confidence goes up to the 99 % level, while the coefficient for the change in unemployment variable remains negative in the second model and is no longer significant. The coefficient for immigration has grown in the second model. A one per cent change in the rate of immigration will lead to an 8.63 increase in the percentage of votes received by the far right. Testing of the immigration variable holds with previous research (Knigge 1998). Once again, the coefficient for immigration is the largest for the independent variables under study. From these results, immigration appears to have the largest impact on support for the far right.

As with the first model, the results of these empirical tests of unemployment break with the conclusions of previous research (Jackman and Volpert 1996; Knigge 1998). These changes could be due to the interaction effects presented in the model. When an interaction effect is

present, the impact of one variable depends on the value of the other variable. The interaction effects between immigration and unemployment show significance at the 0.05 level. This result concerning these interaction effects is inconsistent with previous research (Knigge 1998, Bohrer et al. 2001).

Surprisingly, the coefficient for these interaction effects is negative, meaning that when these variables are taken together, they dampen support for the far right. Immigration significantly affects support for far right parties independently and not jointly with unemployment, as hypothesized by previous research (Knigge 1998). When these two variables are regressed against each other, the coefficient is -0.004 , revealing a negative relationship. As immigration increases, unemployment declines. This relationship may account for the negative relationship between the interaction of these two variables and support for the far right. Change in the crime rates remains insignificant with a negative coefficient of -0.061 . Once again, these results lead to the inference that a rise in the crime rates dampens support for the far right, but the strength of this relationship is negligible.

Table III
Determinants of Support for Far Right Parties—Model 2

Effective Number of Parties	2.44 (.535)***
Electoral Thresholds	3.36 (.797)**
Immigration	8.63 (2.31)***
Crime	-0.061 (.088)
Unemployment	-0.090 (.332)
Immigration*Unemployment	-0.531 (.264)**
Constant	-6.36 (3.16)
Goodness and Quality of Fit	
Wald Chi Square	56.05
Significance	0.00
Likelihood Ratio Test	0.00
R-squared	0.625

Note: $N = 50$

Note: * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$ (one-tailed)

Coefficients are shown with standard errors in parentheses

Table IV shows the results of the third model, which tests the interaction effects of the two political variables included in this study, the “effective” number of parties and electoral thresholds. This interaction effect tests the hypothesis put forth by Jackman and Volpert (1996) that these two variables jointly affect support for far right parties. Like the previous models, the Wald chi-square rejects the null hypothesis that the coefficients are jointly equal to zero, thus the third model proves to be significant. This is supported by the likelihood ratio test and the coefficient of determination is .760. The third model proves to have the best quality of fit of the three models tested.

The number of “effective” parties, measuring multi-partism in the electoral system, shows significance at the .05 level. Although still significant, the level has dropped, possibly due to the interaction effects being tested. Electoral thresholds remain highly statistically significant in the third model; however, the coefficient is negative in this model. This leads to the inference that disproportionality has a negative effect on support for far right parties, contradicting the hypothesis in this research. However, the interaction effects between the number of parties and thresholds, which are significant at the 0.01 level, may account for this switch in signs. When the number of parties and thresholds are regressed against each other, the coefficient is -.210, revealing a negative relationship. This negative relationship supports Duverger’s hypothesis that proportional representation fosters multiple parties in a given electoral system.

Consistent with the previous models and literature, immigration rates are significant at the 0.01 level. The coefficient for immigration has dropped from the second model, to 7.33 in the third model, but still remains the largest coefficient in the model. As with the first two models, immigration appears to have the greatest influence on support for the far right. Crime

continues to be statistically insignificant in the third model with a negative coefficient of $-.104$. This variable continues to have the weakest relationship with the dependent. Unemployment has a negative insignificant relationship with support for the far right in the third model. The direction and insignificance of this direction relationship contradicts previous research (Bohrer et al. 2000; Jackman and Volpert 1996; Knigge 1998).

Table IV
Determinants of Support for Far Right Parties—Model 3

Effective Number of Parties	1.23 (.626)**
Electoral Thresholds	-4.03 (.926)**
Immigration	7.33 (1.02)***
Crime	-0.104 (.078)
Unemployment	-0.049 (.053)
Number of Parties*Threshold	1.25 (.207)***
Constant	-1.14 (2.48)
Goodness and Quality of Fit	
Wald Chi Square	114.16
Significance	0.00
Likelihood Ratio Test	0.00
R-squared	0.760

Note: $N = 50$

Note: * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$ (one-tailed)

Coefficients are shown with standard errors in parentheses

There are some consistencies between the models. First, the political conditions tested in these models favor the rise of the far right. The political characteristics of the electoral system influence the percentage of votes far right parties receive. In each model, these political conditions have a moderate relationship with support for the far right. The number of effective parties is statistically significant in each model. From these results, one can infer that the far right parties have a greater chance of electoral success when there is a high number of political parties competing in a given electoral system. Logically, as the number of parties increases, the greater the likelihood that one party will place itself on the far right of the political spectrum. This agrees with previous research on the “effective” number of parties. Bohrer et al. (2000) and Jackman and Volpert (1996) have both found the number of parties to be an important factor in the rise of the far right. Electoral thresholds prove to be highly significant in all three of the models tested. The more disproportional the electoral system, the less likely far right parties are to gain support. This continues earlier findings by Jackman and Volpert (1996), who found electoral thresholds dampened support for the far right. However, this is only the second empirical test of electoral thresholds on far right party support.

The social conditions tested show opposite results. The rate of immigration is significant in all three models, while changes in the crime rates are not statistically significant in any of the models. This finding concerning immigration supports some scholars (Knigge 1998), while contradicting others (Bohrer et al. 2000). Of the independent variables, immigration has the strongest relationship with, and greatest influence on, support for the far right. Changes in immigration provide for the largest changes in the predicted values of the dependent variable. Surprisingly, in two of the models, the coefficient for crime rates shows a negative relationship between crime rates and support for the far right parties. As the crime rate increases, support for

the far right decreases. The strength of this relationship proves negligible in each model and weak in the Pearson's correlation. This is counter to the hypothesis tested by this study. The availability of standardized crime data may hinder empirical testing, since each country measures or reports crime differently.

The only economic condition, unemployment, produced some interesting findings. The coefficient for the unemployment variable is negative in all three models. From this, one may deduce that as the unemployment rate rises, support for the far right decreases. This finding contradicts earlier conclusions in the literature (Bohrer et al. 2000; Jackman and Volpert 1996; Knigge 1998) that changes in unemployment lead to higher vote percentages for the far right. The relationship between changes in the unemployment rate and support for the far right is weak in each model. Again, this could be the result of the manner in which unemployment is operationalized. The finding that unemployment has a negative effect could infer that other factors are at play or more important. These are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the last twenty years, far right parties have changed politics in Europe and challenged many of the theories posited by political scientists and other scholars. Across Europe, the party systems have “thawed” and allowed for the emergence of these far right parties. The electorates in the European Union have become more volatile, opening the political arena to new parties. The far right has slipped into this opening, gaining electoral votes and earning positions in the governing coalitions of Austria, Italy, and the Netherlands.

The literature on far right parties has suffered from the lack of a unified definition of a far right party. To understand the emergence of these parties, so that generalizable conclusions can be made, studies must include the same parties. Some studies have included the People’s Party in Spain or New Democracy in Sweden that do not meet the definitions offered by other scholars in the field. Researchers use different definitions; thus, they use different parties and lose comparability to other studies that have been conducted. Without a uniform definition, scholars are merely researching the conditions that lead to the rise of new parties, not necessarily far right parties. The definition offered by this research has attempted to unify the definitions of previous research. Whether this definition or any other unifies the literature is a matter for future research. The conclusions from this research, as well as other suggestions for future research follow in this chapter.

There is no single explanation for the emergence of these far right parties. Rather, multiple conditions are responsible for this political phenomenon. It is hypothesized that voters lend their support to far right parties under certain political, social, and economic conditions.

These conditions, the number of parties in the electoral system, electoral thresholds, immigration, and unemployment, have been proven significant in previous studies. While some conclusions have been supported here, others have called into question the findings of previous research.

The characteristics (i.e. the level of multi-partism and electoral threshold) of the electoral system allow for the emergence of far right parties. The degree of multi-partism in a given electoral system has a positive effect on the electoral success of the far right. As the number of “effective” parties increases, support for the far right increases. This conclusion supports the previous research of Bohrer et al. (2000) and Jackman and Volpert (1996). Although, Bohrer et al. (2000) hypothesized that multi-partism had a negative relationship on support for the far right, they concluded the opposite after empirical testing.

Electoral disproportionality, through the mechanism of thresholds, dampens support for the far right. If an electoral system does not promote a one-to-one translation of votes into seats in parliament, then far right parties are less likely to gain electoral support. Thresholds keep smaller parties from gaining entrance into the political arena. The hypothesis put forth by Jackman and Volpert (1996) is supported by this conclusion. This conclusion also strengthens arguments of Lijphart (1994) and Duverger (1963) that disproportional systems do not promote multi-party systems. These conclusions may be an effect of the electoral system as countries with more “effective” parties have adopted more proportional electoral systems. This lends some credence to the hypothesis that the number of parties interacts with the electoral threshold to produce an environment that favors this rise of the far right. However, since this is merely the second test of electoral thresholds in relation to support for far right parties and this relationship appears to be weak, more work should be done.

Immigration has the most pronounced positive effect on support for the far right. As immigration rises in a given country, the far right parties gain electoral support. This conclusion is not a surprise, since leaders of the far right have used this issue to launch their parties into the mainstream of European politics. What is surprising is the strength of the relationship between immigration and support for the far right. Although scholars have continually linked support for the far right and the issue of immigration, the relationship proves only moderate in strength. Clearly, anti-immigrant sentiments lead to support for the far right, but this relationship may not be as strong as previously found (Knigge 1998). The far right has scapegoated immigrants as the cause of numerous domestic problems, such as crime and unemployment. For this reason, this study looked at the interaction between immigration and unemployment. When these two variables, multiplied together, increase, support for the far right decreases. This conclusion reinforces the findings of previous research (Knigge 1998; Bohrer et al. 2000). Regardless, the political entrepreneurs of the far right will continue to use these two issues as long as the high levels of immigration and unemployment persist.

Although far right leaders campaign on the issue, rising crime rates in the European Union are not responsible for emergence of far right parties. As crime rates rise in Europe, support for the far right decreases. This conclusion is inconsistent with the hypothesis tested by this research. This may be due to the operationalization of the variable, changes in the crime rate from the year prior to the election, to the year of the election. Crime rates could be operationalized in a number of different ways (e.g. as an average over the election cycle); however, I argue that changes in the crime rate would be more salient to the electorates of Europe. I believe voters see rising crime rates as the responsibility of the parties in power; therefore, changes in the crime rate are more salient to this research. Operationalization may not

be the sole factor leading to this conclusion. Crime might be based on the perceptions of the electorate. Crime rates may be increasing overall, however, if the electorate has the perception that less crime is occurring, or does not personally feel affected by crime, then they may choose to support more mainstream parties. Whatever the reason for this finding, more work needs to be done.

Despite this conclusion, more empirical testing of the effects of changes in the crime rate on support for far right parties needs to be done. Crime rates for the individual members of the European Union may be difficult to standardize because all countries report crime differently. This is certainly a weakness in the data presented here and the results are not statistically significant. In fact, the direction of the relationship contradicts the hypothesis put forward by this research but further testing may prove otherwise. This finding may prove that other factors are more important to the rise of the far right. There may also be interaction effects between immigration and crime that needs to be tested in future research.

The most surprising conclusion of this study is that unemployment has a negative relationship to support for the far right. As the unemployment rate in a given country increases, electoral support for the far right tends to decline. The bivariate correlations show this negative, yet weak, relationship. This break with the previous research (Jackman and Volpert 1996) may be due to measuring the variable as the change in the rate. Unemployment rates could be operationalized as the average over the election cycle; however, as with crime, I argue that voters would be more interested in changes in the rate, particularly if these changes affect them personally. High unemployment rates may not matter to those with secure jobs, but changes in the rate may cause voters to question that security. This may lead the electorate to support the

far right. Regardless of this conclusion, unemployment will continue to be a salient issue to the far right and its supporters.

The effects of unemployment on support for the far right have, at the very least, been questioned by this study. This finding infers that there may be other factors leading to the emergence of the far right. One of these factors could be the leadership of these parties. In the cases of Austria, France, Italy, and the Netherlands, the leaders of the far right have gained more recognition than their parties. With this personal recognition, these leaders have brought their parties into the mainstream of European politics. The charisma of these leaders may account for the rise of these parties, while crime and unemployment rates decrease. Have the conditions studied in the literature led to the rise of the far right or has the charisma of the party leaders been the catalyst for the recent emergence of these parties? More than likely, it has been a combination of these two; however, this is mere speculation until further research is done.

Studying the cueing messages provided by the leaders of these parties to the electorate may explain the results of this study. The fact that unemployment and crime rates have a negative relationship to support for far right parties contradicts previous research. However, these parties continue to gain support in national elections. The messages delivered by these leaders could be leading the electorate to ignore the changes in the crime and unemployment rates and still vote for the far right. Previous research shows that the far right thrives during times of high unemployment; however, further research on these possible messages could help to explain the rise of these parties when unemployment is decreasing.

It could be argued that far right parties are the only parties that campaign on the issues discussed in this research. Other parties, however, claim to be populist, anti-corruption, against the rising crime rate, and Euro-skeptic. Is it possible that these conditions lead to the rise of

other parties, not placed on the far right of the political spectrum? Do other parties gain electoral support while these conditions are present? More research should be done on support for parties at the other end of the political spectrum (i.e. far left parties) while these conditions are present.

While studying other parties in Europe may produce some interesting findings, studying far right parties across the globe is necessary. The hypotheses tested by this study can be applied to other countries in different regions. Far right parties are not confined to Europe. Does the same definition apply to parties of the far right in other countries? Parties of the far right in other countries may not campaign on the same issues. Immigration has proven to be the most important issue to far right parties in Europe; however, this may change across the globe. Do far right parties in other countries gain electoral support under the same conditions studying in this research? How does the literature on far right parties in Europe help to explain the far right in other countries?

It may prove beneficial to look at far right party support regionally or locally rather than nationally. Studies have looked at the conditions favoring the far right and different levels, but have continued to use support at the national level as the dependent variable. Looking at the local or regional elections, may offer new insights in the study of far right parties. For example, crime rates may not be a factor in the rise of the far right at the national level; however, regionally, crime may be the most important factor in the rise of the far right. The BNP in the United Kingdom has consistently received more votes on the local level (i.e. 2 % in some regions) than in national elections (i.e. 0.2 % of the vote in 2002). Likewise, the FPÖ in Austria, even with its high electoral support national (i.e. 26 % in 1999), has had more success in regional elections in Carinthia (i.e. 43 % in 1999). These studies may lose generalizability by looking at

local or regional elections while gaining accuracy concerning the conditions that have favored the far right. The insights provided by these studies may outweigh these costs.

This research has sought to expand the knowledge on the state-level conditions that have favored parties of the far right. To this end, I believe this research project has been successful, but more work needs to be done. The suggestions presented here may help to broaden this knowledge and aid politicians and scholars alike, to understand these parties and their supporters. It has been suggested that these parties present a challenge to the liberal democracies of the European Union. Perhaps the insights gained here can be used to combat the emergence of the far right. The upcoming elections in Austria may signify the continual rise of the far right movement or signify a shift by the electorate away from the far right. Will the recent change in leadership of the FPÖ affect its electoral success? Does leadership make the difference for the far right? Do individuals vote for the party platform or the party's leader? Future elections in Europe, as well as future research, may serve to answer these questions.

APPENDIX

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection for this study took some time and effort. In the interest of future research and replication of this research, I want to outline the methods in which the data were collected. The dependent variable in this study is the percentage of votes garnered by the far right parties in eight countries of the European Union. Due to these parties changing their names or fading from the political scene altogether, cross-referencing the data becomes necessary. For the years 1980-1990, the data on elections were collected from the 3rd edition of *The International Almanac of Electoral History* authored by Thomas Mackie and Richard Rose. This volume provides extensive election data for all the countries in this study. To cross-reference this data I used the Parties and Elections in Europe website maintained by Wolfram Nordsieck available at <http://www.parties-and-elections.de>. This website contains data on elections since 1945 to the present. To confirm the data between 1990 to the present I employed the website maintained by Wilfried Derksen at <http://www.electionworld.org>. For obvious reasons, these numbers did not differ from source to source; however, the cross-referencing of the data proved useful in certain cases, such as the MSI/AN, in which the far right changed its name during in the period under study.

Data on the independent variables were more difficult to obtain and verify. For the “effective” number, I incorporated the formula discussed in chapter four. The data on the number of seats for each party were gathered for the same sources as the dependent variable. The number of parties was then hand calculated using the formula developed by Laakso and Taagepera. This is a simple, but time consuming process. The data on electoral thresholds were also collected from the aforementioned sources.

The data on immigration were collected using various sources to verify their accuracy. Using *Trends in International Migration* and United Nations *Demographic Yearbooks*, I can compare the number of immigrants in a given country. In many cases, these numbers were strikingly similar varying by 100,000 at the most for any given year in the study. These volumes also provide the total population for the countries of this study. From these data, I could calculate the percentage of immigrants against the total population of the country. The formula for this is:

$$\frac{\text{Number of Immigrants}}{\text{Total Population}}$$

It is also possible to calculate the change in immigration rates from these data. However, as explained in the fourth chapter, this study looked at the immigration rate and not the changes in this rate.

Data on unemployment rates were collected from various issues of the OECD's Economic Outlook and Main Economic Indicators. These data were then verified using the World Bank's World Development Indicators database. Due to the standardization of these data, the numbers were similar. Calculating the change in the unemployment rate is done by subtracting the unemployment rate of the year before the election from the rate of the election year. This number is then divided by the unemployment rate of the election year and multiplied by 100 to give you the percentage change in the unemployment rate. This number can be negative indicating a decrease in the unemployment rate from the year before the election. The formula for this is:

$$\frac{\text{Unemployment rate (year before election)} - \text{Unemployment rate (year of election)}}{\text{Unemployment rate (year of election)}} \times 100$$

Crime rates were harder to calculate due to the lack of standardized data. Each country defines, and therefore reports, crime differently. For this reason reliable and comparable data on crime are difficult to find. The source used for this study, *International Crime Statistics*, provides the best, standardized account of crime from the countries under study. These volumes provide the number of crimes reported by individual countries to the International Police Organization, INTEPOL. The crimes reported by these volumes include homicide, rape, theft, assault, and fraud. These data are reported per 100,000 population therefore, the total crime rate is calculated as the total amount of crime per 100,000 persons. I added to these statistics together and divided by 100,000 as detailed in chapter four. I then subtracted the crime rate for the year before the election from the year of the election. The change in the rate is then calculated by this figure divided by the crime rate for the year of the election and multiplied by 100.

$$\frac{\text{Crime rate (year before election)} - \text{Crime rate (year of election)}}{\text{Crime rate (year of election)}} \times 100$$

REFERENCES

- Arter, David. 1992. "Black Faces in the Blond Crowd: Populist Racialism in Scandinavia" *Parliamentary Affairs*, 45 (3): 357-372.
- Andersen, Jorgen Goul. 1992. "Denmark: The Progress Party – Populist Neo-Liberalism and Welfare State Chauvinism." In *The Extreme Right in Europe and the USA*, ed. Hainsworth, Paul. New York: St. Martin's Press: 193-205.
- Anonymous. "Getting Europe Back to Work." *The Economist*, 28 August, 1993. pp. 43-44.
- Betz, Hans-Georg 1993a "The New Politics of Resentment: Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe." *Comparative Studies*, 25 (4): 413-427.
- Betz, Hans-Georg 1993b "The Two Faces of Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe." *The Review of Politics* 55 (4): 662-683.
- Betz, Hans-Georg. 1994. *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Bohrer, Robert E., II, Lauren A. Krohn, and Alexander C. Tan. 2001. "Taking Advantage: Far-Right Parties in Post-Maastricht Europe" Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association. Chicago, April 19-22.
- Castles, Frances G. and Peter Mair. 1984. "Left-Right Political Scales: Some Expert Judgments." *European Journal of Political Research* 12: 73-88.
- Chapin, Wesley D. "Explaining the Electoral Success of the New Right: The German Case." *West European Politics* 20 (2): 53-72.
- Cowell, Alan, "Discontent Exposed In a 'Hidden Vote' For French Righist," *New York Times*, 3 May 2002, sec. A.
- Daley, Suzanne, "Anti-Le Pen Protests Draw a Million Into Streets in France," *New York Times*, 2 May 2002, sec. A.
- Derksen, Wilfried, ed. "Election World." available at <http://www.electionworld.org>.
- Durham, Martin. 1996, "The Conservative Party, the British Extreme Right and the Problem of Space" in *The Failure of British Fascism: The Far Right and the Fight for Political Recognition*, ed. Cronin, Mike. London: Macmillan Press.
- Duverger, Maurice. 1993 *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd.

- Eatwell, Roger. 1992. "Why Has the Extreme Right Failed in Britain?" In *The Extreme Right in Europe and the USA*, ed. Hainsworth, Paul. New York: St. Martin's Press: 175-192.
- Ersson, Svante and Jan-Erik Lane. 1998. "Electoral Instability and Party System Change in Western Europe," in *Comparing Party System Change*, eds. Paul Pennings and Jan-Erik Lane. London: Routledge: 23-39.
- Fieschi, Catherine, James Shields, and Roger Woods. 1996. "Extreme Right-Wing Parties in the European Union," in *Political Parties and the European Union*, ed. John Gaffney. London: Routledge.
- Fitzmaurice, John. 1992. "The Extreme-Right in Belgium: Recent Developments." *Parliamentary Affairs* 45 (3): 300-308.
- Furlong, Paul. 1992. "The Extreme Right in Italy: Old Orders and Dangerous Novelties" *Parliamentary Affairs* 45 (3): 345-356.
- Fysh, Pater and Jim Wolfreys. 1992. "Le Pen, the National Front and the Extreme Right in France." *Parliamentary Affairs* 45 (3): 309-326.
- Gallagher, Tom. 1992. "Portugal: The Marginalization of the Extreme Right." In *The Extreme Right in Europe and the USA*, ed. Hainsworth, Paul. New York: St. Martin's Press: 232-245.
- Gibson, Rachel 2000. *The Growth of Anti-Immigrant Parties in Western Europe*. Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- Gilmour, John. 1992. "The Extreme Right in Spain: Blas Piñar and the Spirit of the Nationalist Uprising." In *The Extreme Right in Europe and the USA*, ed. Hainsworth, Paul. New York: St. Martin's Press: 206-231.
- Hainsworth, Paul, ed. 1992. *The Extreme Right in Europe and the USA*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Hainsworth, Paul, ed. 2000. *The Politics of the Extreme Right: From the Margins to the Mainstream*. New York: Pinter Press.
- Helms, Ledger. 1997. "Right-Wing Populist Parties in Austria and Switzerland: A Comparative Analysis of Electoral Support and Conditions of Success." *West European Politics* 20 (2): 37-52.
- Husbands, Christopher. 1992. "The Other Face of 1992: The Extreme-Right Explosion In Western Europe." *Parliamentary Affairs* 45: 267-84.
- Interpol. Various Years. *International Crime Statistics*. New York.

- Ignazi, Piero. 1992. "The Silent Counter-Revolution: Hypotheses on the Emergence of Extreme Right-Wing Parties in Europe." *European Journal of Political Research* 22: 3-34.
- Ignazi, Piero. 1997. "New Challenges: Post-Materialism and the Extreme Right." In *Developments in West European Politics*, Martin Rhodes, Paul Heywood, and Vincent Wright, eds. New York: St Martin's Press: 300-319.
- Ignazi, Piero and Colette Ysmal 1992. "New and Old Extreme Right Parties: The French Front National and the Italian Movimento Sociale." *European Journal of Political Research* 22 (1): 101-122.
- Inglehart, Ronald. 1977. *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Polities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Ishiyama, John, and Marijke Breuning. 1998. *Ethnopolitics in the New Europe*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Jackman, Robert W. and Karin Volpert. 1995. "Conditions Favouring Parties of the Extreme Right in Western Europe." *British Journal of Political Science* 26: 501-521.
- Kennedy, Peter. 1998. *A Guide to Econometrics*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Kitschelt, Herbert. 1995. *The Radical Right in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Knigge, Pia. 1998. "The Ecological Correlates of Extreme-Right Extremism in Western Europe." *European Journal of Political Research* 34: 249-279.
- Knight, Robert. 1992. "Haider, the Freedom Party and the Extreme Right in Austria." *Parliamentary Affairs* 45 (3): 285-299.
- Laakso, Markku and Rein Taagepera. 1979. "'Effective' Number of Parties: A Measure with Application to West Europe." *Comparative Political Studies* 12: 3-27.
- Lavar, Michael and W. Ben Hunt. 1992. *Policy and Party Competition*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Lewis-Beck, Michael. 1980. *Applied Regression: An Introduction*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *The American Political Science Review* 65: 682-693.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1994. *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of Twenty-Seven Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Lipset, Martin and Stein Rokkan. 1967. *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*. New York: The Free Press.
- Lubbers, Marcel and Peer Scheepers. 2000. "Individual and Contextual Characteristics of the German Extreme Right-Wing Vote in the 1990s: A Test of Complimentary Theories." *European Journal of Political Research* 38: 63-94.
- Mackie, Thomas and Richard Rose. 1991. *The International Almanac of Electoral History*. 3rd edition. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.
- Mayer, Lawrence C. 1972. *Comparative Political Inquiry*. Homewood, Illinois. The Dorsey Press.
- Mayer, Lawrence C. 1989. *Redefining Comparative Politics: Promise Versus Performance*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Mickenburg, Michael. 1992. "The New Right in Germany: The Transformation of Conservatism and the Extreme Right" *European Journal of Political Research* 22(1): 55-82.
- Mudde, Cas. 2000. *The Ideology of the Extreme Right*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Nordsieck, Wolfram. "Parties and Elections in Europe." available at <http://www.parties-and-elections.de>.
- OECD. Various Years. *Main Economic Indicators*. OECD: Paris.
- OECD. Various Years. *Economic Outlook*. OECD: Paris.
- Powell, Jr., G. Bingham. 1986. "Extremist Parties and Political Turmoil: Two Puzzles." *American Journal of Political Science* 30: 357-378.
- Pederson, Mogens. 1979. "The Dynamics of European Party Systems: Changing Patterns of Electoral Volatility." *European Journal of Political Research* 7: 1-26.
- Shamir, Michal. 1984. "Are Western Party Systems 'Frozen'?" *Comparative Political Studies*. 17: 35-79.
- Sidoti, Francesco. 1992. "The Extreme Right in Italy: Ideological Orphans and Countermobilization." In *The Extreme Right in Europe and the USA*, ed. Hainsworth, Paul. New York: St. Martin's Press: 151-174.
- SOPEMI. 2002. *Trends in International Migration: Continuous Reporting System on Migration*, Annual Edition 2001. OECD: Paris.
- Taggart, Paul. 1995. "New Populist parties in Western Europe" *West European Politics* 18: 34-51.

- The United Nations. Various Years. *United Nations Demographics Yearbooks*. New York.
- Voerman, Gerrit and Paul Lucarie. 1992. "The Extreme Right in the Netherlands: The Centrists and the Radical Rivals" *European Journal of Political Research* 22(1): 35-54.
- Westle, Bettina and Oskar Niedermayer. 1992. "Contemporary Right-Wing Extremism in West Germany: The 'Republicans' and Their Electorate" *European Journal of Political Research* 22(1): 83-100.
- World Bank. 2002. World Bank *World Development Indicators*. Washington, DC.