

New far right parties and the (silent) counter-revolution

Session 03

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- ① Overview of the last session
- ② The weakening of party ties
- ③ The (silent) counter revolution
- ④ A new party family? The populist radical right
- ⑤ The impact of PRR across Europe
- ⑥ References

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- ② However, **changes in the socio-economic structure** accompanied by **mobilization through extra institutional channels** can generate an **opportunity window** to newcomers
- ③ These **changes**, however, **are unlikely to be large**, because **the conflict structure tends to absorb new issues**

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- ⑤ Their success depended on (1) the degree of social change, (2) the degree of institutional constraint, (3) the openness of the party system and (4) and the structure of political competition
- In this session we will discuss how **change can trigger change**; and that **political dynamics are not often linear**

The weakening of party ties

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- The **number of party members and party identifiers** was at a low peak
- The silent revolution and **the growing important of green and new left parties** made many scholars think that rooted political identities were weakening
- Instead, people seemed to vote based on their individual preferences on temporarily salient issues rather than as an expression of group identity (i.e., **the 'issue voter' thesis**)

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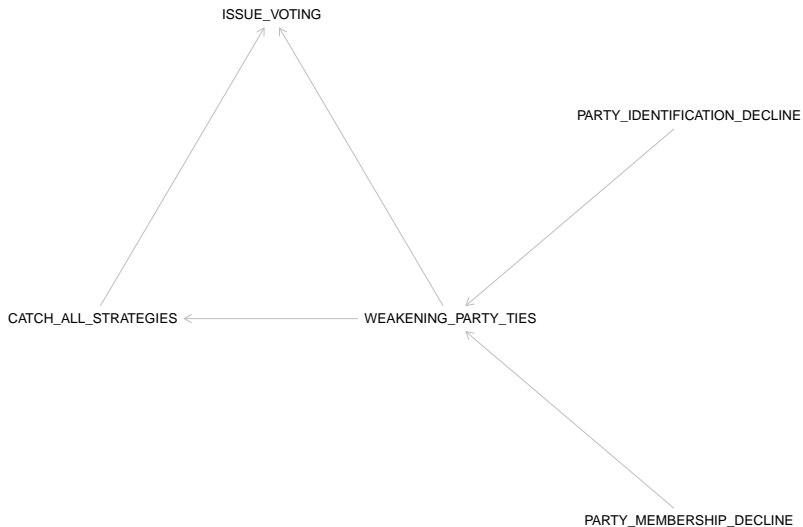
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- Thus, they would devote **less effort to develop programmatic linkages and a strong organization**
- Instead, their mobilization strategies would increasingly focus on altering the **saliency of valence issues** in which to prove their credibility as capable managers of the *res publica*

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- But **were these outcomes true?**
- Let's focus on focus on the first two!

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- “As convincingly argued by Bartolini and Mair (1990), the long-awaited ‘un-freezing’ of partisan alternatives has yet to come.” (Ignazi, 1992, p. 5)
- In other words, the undergoing process seemed to one of ***de-alignment*** rather than ***re-alignment***

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- Most importantly, these parties **resembled those extreme right parties of the inter-war period because they were able to attract highly diversified voters**, cross-cutting existing cleavages
- On the other hand, they were different from the inter-war extreme right parties and their **successors** because **they didn't reject the democratic principles of popular sovereignty**

The (silent) counter revolution

Table 1. Electoral results of ERP's in the 1980s; percentages of vote

Country	Party	81	82	83	84	84E	85	86	87	88	89	89E
Austria ¹	FPÖ	–	–	5.0	–	–	–	9.7	–	–	–	–
Belgium ²	VIB	1.1	–	–	–	1.3	1.4	–	1.9	–	–	4.1
Denmark	FRP	8.9	–	–	3.6	3.5	–	–	4.8	9.0	–	5.3
France ³	FNs	0.2	–	–	–	11.2	–	9.8	–	9.6	(14.4) ⁴	11.7
Germany ⁵	NPD	–	–	0.6	–	0.8	–	–	0.6	–	–	1.6
	REP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	7.1
Greece	EPEN	–	–	–	–	2.3	0.6	–	–	–	0.3	1.2
	KP	1.7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Italy	MSI	–	–	6.8	–	6.5	–	–	5.9	–	–	5.5
The Netherlands ⁶	CP +	0.1	0.8	–	–	2.5	–	0.4	–	–	–	–
Norway	CD	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.1	–	–	0.9	0.8
	FRPn	4.5	–	–	–	–	3.7	–	–	–	13.0 ⁷	–
Portugal	PDC	–	–	0.6	–	–	0.7	–	0.5E	–	–	0.7
Spain	AP	–	26.2	–	–	–	–	26.0	24.7E	–	25.8	21.4
	FNs	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.6E	–	–	0.4
	Falange	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.1E	–	0.1	0.2
Switzerland ⁸	AN/	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
	Vigilantes	–	–	3.5	–	–	–	–	2.9	–	–	–

Figure 2: Table 1 from Ignazi (1992)

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- It is important to notice the formulation of this question thirty years ago because hundreds of papers are still published every year trying to answer it
- Let's reflect on the answer given by Ignazi: that as the same way that a silent revolution had occurred, a (also) **silent counter-revolution** was struggling to be born

The (silent) counter revolution

- Now let's take a look at the cover of a political science best-seller book published in 2019 with more than two thousand citations in February 2022

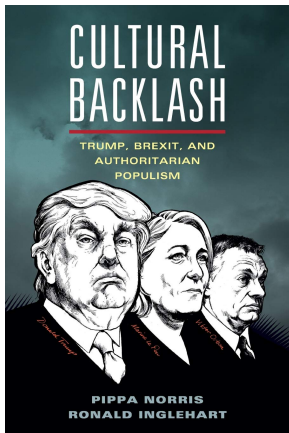


Figure 3: Cover of Cultural Backlash (2019)

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- **We will talk extensively about the last point tomorrow!**

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- He made two important contributions:
 - ① Labelling this growing party family as the **populist radical right** (PRR)
 - ② Coined the term of **political resentment** to explain its success

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- **The politics of resentment** introduce an alternative and complementary explanation. These people would be also disappointed by the promises of growth made during their youth, and the aid to foreign-born population and the new middle classes provided by the public service (*cultural explanation* and counterpart to the silent revolution thesis)

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 - ③ “They are **populist** in their instrumentalization of sentiments of anxiety and disenchantment and their appeal to the common man and his allegedly superior common”

A new party family? The populist radical right

“In short, they tend to combine a **classic liberal position on the individual and the economy** with the **sociopolitical agenda of the extreme and intellectual new right**, and they deliver this amalgam to those **disenchanted with their individual life chances and the political system.**” ([Betz, 1993, pp. 413–414](#))

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The impact of PRR across Europe

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 - ② **Truly new parties**, like the FrP in Denmark and the FN in France

Comparing first movers: Austria & France

- The **Austrian FPÖ** was a liberal conservative party that had lost support in the mid 1980s but recovered force after the young charismatic and populist Jörg Haider was elected to the chair of the party in 1986. In 1991 became the second largest party at the national level. In 1999 became the most voted party in a general election and formed a coalition government with the Christian-democrat ÖVP

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- The **French Front National** was founded in 1972 by right-wing radicals and gained from virtually zero in the 1981 elections to 9.6% of the vote in 1988. However, it wasn't until a moderation shift by Marine Le Pen in 2011 that the party became the third largest party in a presidential election, and then second the largest party in 2017

The impact of PRR across Europe

Table 1. Highest and latest electoral results of main PRRPs in Western Europe, 1980–2011

Country	Party	Highest result	Latest result
Austria	Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ)	10.7	10.7
	Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ)	26.9	17.5
Belgium	Flemish Interest (VB)	12.0	7.8
	National Front (FNb)	2.3	–
Denmark	Danish People's Party (DFP)	13.8	12.3
Finland	None	–	–
France	National Front (FN)	15.3	4.3
Germany	The Republicans (REP)	2.1	0.4
Greece	Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS)	5.6	5.6
Ireland	None	–	–
Italy	Northern League (LN)	10.1	8.3
Luxembourg	National Movement (NB)	2.6	–
Netherlands	Party for Freedom (PVV)	15.5	15.5
Norway	None	–	–
Portugal	National Renovator Party (PNR)	0.3	0.3
Spain	National Front (FNe)	0.5	0.0
Sweden	Sweden Democrats (SD)	5.7	5.7
Switzerland	Swiss People's Party	28.9	26.6
United Kingdom	British National Party (BNP)	1.9	1.9

Source: Election Resources on the Internet: Western Europe, Manuel Álvarez-Rivera, <http://electionresources.org/western.europe.html>

Figure 4: Table 1 from Mudde (2014)

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 - ③ The end of the 'Iberian exceptionalism' (**Vox and Chega in Spain and Portugal**, respectively)
- Here, there may play a factor that we haven't discussed until now: ***diffusion and international contagion***

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 - ② **Institutional factors** (crucially electoral rules)

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 - ⑤ **Individual-level factors** (habits, attitudes and group identities)

References

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