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Abstract and Keywords

The radical right in Eastern Europe is similar to its West European cousins in its emphasis on mobilization against minorities. Until recently, that mobilization was exclusively against minorities with electoral rights who have been settled for centuries. The arrival of more than a million Syrian refugees in Europe expanded the portfolio of minorities to rally against and, paradoxically, Westernized the East European radical right in its opposition to Islam and migrants with non-European backgrounds. However, this chapter argues that the radical right in Eastern Europe has three unique characteristics that distinguish it from its older West European cousins: (1) left-leaning positions on the economy, (2) linkages between identity and political opening, which leads to the association of minority policies with democratization, and (3) the coexistence of radical right parties with radicalized mainstream parties.

Keywords: Eastern Europe, radical right, anti-minority, political mobilization, right-wing movements, minority policy, radicalism

The Radical Right in Eastern Europe

THE contemporary radical right in Eastern Europe is a relatively new phenomenon, but has been steadily gaining in prominence. Although many radical right movements today embrace the legacy of the fascist movements of the interwar period, their novelty lies in their adherence to the rules of electoral competition and—at least on the surface—their rejection of outright violence as a solution to internal political conflicts. Given the range of East European countries in term of ethnic heterogeneity, economic performance, and cultural legacy, it should not be surprising that East European radical right parties reflect this diversity. In some countries, such as Slovakia, Romania, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Estonia, and Latvia, ethnicity and language create cleavages that structure radical right politics. In more ethnically homogeneous countries, such as Hungary, Czech Republic, and Poland, the ethnic cleavage is less pronounced and radical right politics are focused either on mobilization against Roma or on social and religious issues that map onto particular party systems. Despite the new forms of the radical right in Eastern Europe, historical legacies cast a long shadow on contemporary events, due to the increasingly widely held belief that liberal democracy is not compatible with a vision of societies ruled exclusively by titular majorities.

Since the dawn of East European democracies in the early 1990s, scholars have expressed pessimism about their prospects. The new political and economic regimes, it was argued, were expected to create a large impoverished underclass and a politically unsophisticated electorate, which many believed would block democratic and economic progress. The challenges of nation-building, mixed with Leninist legacies, were primed to create contentious, exclusionary communities that would be incompatible with free markets and liberal democratic institutions. Initially, many nascent East European democracies managed to overcome these economic and political transitional challenges only to discover that identity politics had become a pervasive feature of their party systems. Democracy had empowered minorities and politicized the protection of minority rights. In some instances, the backlash against diversity and inclusiveness was immediate, reflecting the birthing and growing pains of post-authoritarian polities. (p. 566) In other cases, nationalism emerged in the subsequent era of normal politics. After the preoccupation with the establishment of basic electoral institutions passed, resentment toward opportunities that the new liberal democratic order opened up for minorities resulted in the countermobilization of the radical right.[1]

There are two types of radical right mobilization against minorities in Eastern Europe. The first is mostly found in ethnically homogeneous countries and is characterized by mobilization based on socially conservative issues, against sexual minorities, and targeting social groups and ethnic minorities with limited ability and capacity to politically organize, including gays and lesbians, Roma, Jews, Poles, Germans, and Greeks. Radical right parties in Albania, Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovenia fall into this category. In more ethnically pluralistic societies, parties seeking electoral support mobilize against constitutive, larger ethnic groups with a high degree of

politicization; radical right parties in this category are found in Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Ukraine.

Strong radical right parties can be found in both categories. Perhaps the most successful and enduring radical right party is the Slovenská Národná Strana (SNS, Slovak National Party), which emerged in the 1990s and has ever since dominated the fringe of the Slovak political spectrum. The SNS was present in seven out of nine parliaments, both before and after independence. Since 1993, after Slovakia split from the Czechoslovak federation, SNS has served in half of the governments. This impact is highly unusual because most radical right parties in Eastern Europe are rather short-lived and their electoral success tends to be episodic, proceeding in bursts that rarely survive for more than two or three electoral cycles. On average, radical right parties are quite weak, rarely exceeding 7 percent of the popular vote (see Figure 28.1, also Bustikova 2014).

Weak electoral support for the radical right parties does not make for good headlines. The party that is currently most in the media spotlight is the Hungarian party Jobbik, due to its extreme rhetoric and its exceptional ability to attract more than 16 percent of the popular vote in two consecutive national elections. Jobbik also gets media attention because of the Hungarian trajectory of democratic backsliding under the leadership of Jobbik's mainstream party cousin Fidesz, led by Viktor Orbán. Jobbik grew out of a student group organization and draws its support both from young, affluent, and educated voters as well as from voters in economically depressed regions of Hungary. Although Jobbik is a political force to be reckoned with, one should keep in mind that two other radical right parties, in Poland and Romania, were also in the limelight for a time before they disappeared into oblivion. It is therefore plausible that a similar fate awaits Jobbik.

The anti-communist, anti-establishment Polish radical right party Liga Polskich Rodzin (LPR, League of Polish Families) won about 8 percent of the popular vote in the 2001 and 2005 elections. It was advocating socially conservative values and supported by fringe elements in the Polish Catholic Church. It disintegrated after the education minister, appointed from the LPR, encountered strong opposition after a corruption scandal that involved regional savings banks and implicated the parties of the ruling coalition, including the LPR. Similarly, the now defunct but once prominent Greater Romanian Party peaked in the elections of 2000 and 2004 with double-digit popular (p. 567) support but imploded after the party's founder, Corneliu Vadim Tudor, saw his control weaken. These examples of prominent radical right parties gone bust illustrate the volatility of radical right party support and their episodic and meteoric nature.
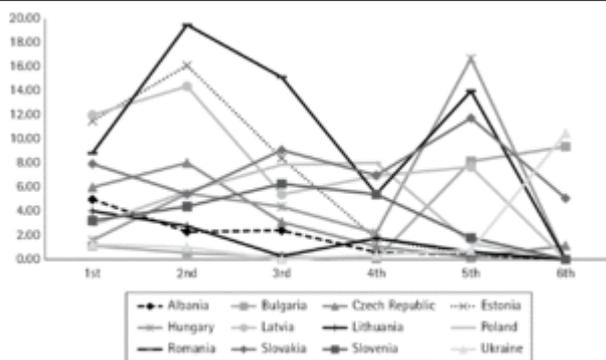
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Figure 28.1 Cumulative Vote Shares for the Radical Right Parties by Electoral Cycles

The radical right in Eastern Europe is similar to its West European cousins in its emphasis on mobilization against minorities. Until 2015, that mobilization was exclusively against minorities with electoral rights who have been settled in for centuries. The influx to Europe of a million-plus refugees from Syria expanded the portfolio of minorities to rally against and, paradoxically, Westernized the East European radical right in its opposition to Islam and migrants with non-European backgrounds.[2] However, the radical right in Eastern Europe has three unique characteristics that distinguish it from its older West European cousins (Art 2011; Arzheimer 2009; Arzheimer and Carter 2006; Betz 1993; Eatwell 2003; Giddens 2005; Golder 2003, 2016; Kitschelt 1995; Meguid 2008; Mudde 2007, 2016; Norris 2005; Inglehart and Norris 2016; Rydgren 2002, 2007; cf. Ignazi 1992). These unique characteristics are (1) left-leaning positions on the economy, (2) linkages between identity and political reforms, which leads to the association of minority policies with democratization, and (3) the coexistence of radical right parties with radicalized mainstream parties.

Radical Right, but Left on the Economy

Notwithstanding their label, East European radical right parties are left-leaning on the economy when compared to other parties in their respective political systems (Allen (p. 568) 2017; Bustikova and Kitschelt 2009). Their policy platforms stand for protection against the volatility of markets, more social spending, and greater state control over the economy, which precludes foreign involvement in free markets and ownership. Despite their overwhelming lean to the left, it does not follow that these parties have a clear social base among lower-income people (Tucker 2002). There are three reasons why economic and other sociodemographic profiles (with the mild exception of gender) do not map onto the economic policy platforms of parties (cf. Bornischer and Kriesi 2013). The first reason is the diffuse nature of economic risk, which obscures the link between voting, income levels, and occupational profiles (Buštíková and Kitschelt 2009). The second reason relates to the fact that economic grievances are tied to identity issues, such as concerns about the loss of national sovereignty and about the perceived unfairness of the economic system, which undermines the legitimacy of wealth acquired by the winners of the economic transformation. Third, shifts in ethnic group hierarchy

due to the process of democratization also undermine purely economic considerations by "ethnicizing" economic grievances (Olzak 1992; Siroky and Cuffe 2015). These three factors obfuscate the direct link between economic deprivation and radical right voting.

Diffusion of the risk obscures the link between voting and pocketbook-related grievances, and it precludes the possibility of finding an equivalent of the disenchanted blue-collar worker voting for the radical right in the East. Market distortions blur the risk profiles of voters. For example, access to a rent-controlled apartment or the ability to purchase an apartment at below market value in the early transition years was a better indicator of economic security than income or sectoral employment. Due to these distortions, it is more difficult to capture exposure to risk associated with educational levels or self-declared levels of income. Exposure to risk is more diffuse and more related to access to high-quality health care, educational opportunities, and protection in retirement (Greskovits 2007).

The second reason is that economic grievances are tied to identity issues. Economic concerns are intertwined with identity concerns because, ultimately, economic concerns are related to issues of national sovereignty and not the particular day-to-day economic expectations of policies. Therefore, at the aggregate level, surges in support for the radical right might follow after an upsurge in aggregate levels of wealth, such as was the case with the rise of Ataka in Bulgaria in 2008, LPR in Poland in 2005, and SNS in Slovakia in 2006. At the individual level, opposition to fiscal austerity is related to the perceptions of fairness. Individual voter profiles are thus poor predictors of radical right voting because improvements in an individual's pocketbook are compatible with dissatisfaction associated with the loss of national sovereignty in a country's fiscal affairs. This is especially true when the country is subjected to austerity policies or privatization that is perceived as benefiting foreign companies, despite any overall positive, individual-level effects on voters. Voters may also be dissatisfied with policies that put minorities at an advantage, either via programs sponsored from abroad or via domestic programs. The relative balance of benefits between the titular majority and the minority might therefore tilt away from the titular majority, despite the overall benefits for all citizens. (p. 569)

The third reason individual-level economic profiles do not map to left-right platforms of parties is related to the shifts in ethnic group hierarchy that result from the process of democratization. This means that economic concerns are related to concerns about policy changes in the status quo as it applies to minorities, rather than objective concerns about poverty. The reason why economics, on the surface, explains little is due to its relational nature. Sensitivity to economic issues is not rooted in individual profiles tied to objective grievances but to sensitivity about the status quo. The experience of having the status quo shifted in an unfavorable way is at the core of support for radical right parties in Eastern Europe (Bustikova 2014, 2017). In Eastern Europe, this shift in the status quo of ethnic relations proceeded in parallel with the process of democratization, which brings us to the second distinction between the East European and West European radical right:

in Western Europe, the resurgence in radical right mobilization that came about in the 1980s did not happen in the context of a regime change and political liberalization.

Democratization and Minority Rights

Democratization in Eastern Europe had empowered minorities and politicized the protection of minority rights. In some instances, the backlash against diversity and inclusiveness was immediate, and reflected the growing pains of post-authoritarian polities. In other cases, after being preoccupied with the establishment of basic electoral institutions, resentment toward opportunities that the new liberal democratic order opened up for minorities resulted in the countermobilization of the radical right. The distinctiveness of Eastern Europe's development stems, in part, from its concurrent transitions: the economic transformation, the democratic transition, and the redefinition of both the state and ethnic boundaries (Brubaker 1997).

The primary targets of radical right parties and groups are minorities, but in some important ways political parties as well as domestic and international organizations that are associated with the promotion of minority rights and minority accommodation are also targeted. Democratization and political transformation free ethnic and social minorities to pursue their demands, but they also unleash the mobilizational capacity of actors to pursue hostile acts against minorities (Kopecký and Mudde 2003; Chambers and Kopstein 2001; cf. Ekiert and Kubik 1999; Giddens and Case 2014).

Democratization allowed minority groups to organize, to form political parties, to engage in civic life, and to create pressure from below to expand the rights of ethnic groups and their access to state resources. This pressure resulted in the diversification of public education by opening up possibilities for the bilingual education of children and young adults. The process of accession to the European Union and the Council of Europe facilitated the opening up of a political discourse to minorities, and diversity in general. For example, countries that signed the Council of Europe's Charter for Regional or Minority Languages are required to pledge to protect historical (non-immigrant) (p. 570) regional and minority languages. This charter was signed by seventeen out of twenty-two post-communist regimes and resulted in the expansion of minority schooling and an increase in budget allocation for minority cultures (Bustikova 2015, 67). Compliance with the Copenhagen criteria, which determine eligibility to join the European Union, resulted in the improvement of the rights of ethnic and social minorities, but at the same time politicized issues of diversity and inclusion. This created an opening for radical right parties to campaign against issues of minority accommodation.

Political radicalism and extremism are often studied in the context of racism. By examining the politicization of minority accommodation, Bustikova (2014) challenges a widely held assertion that prejudice and xenophobia fuel radical right support (also Rydgren 2008). Instead, she argues, electoral extremism originates in dissatisfaction with

the ascension of minority groups to political power, rather than in xenophobia. This has potentially important implications for our understanding of the effectiveness of certain accommodative arrangements to mediate ethnic tensions, especially in new democracies. Although accommodative arrangements can sometimes be effective barriers to the outbreak of large-scale violent ethnic conflict, in periods of normal politics they can also have unexpected adverse effects that exacerbate rather than soothe ethnic tensions.

Democratization does not mix well with nation-building. While this insight may be accurate for the onset of democratization, it overlooks the possibility that ethnic relations might sour after the transition period as a result of an increase in domestic minority demands or due to external pressures to expand minority rights. It is perhaps surprising that the highest volume of radical right mobilization is observed not in countries with unresolved ethnic boundaries but rather in polities with institutionally delineated boundaries between titular majority and minorities. In fact, radical right parties are often quite weak in states where national boundaries have not (yet) been firmly established. Countries such as Albania, Georgia, Greece, Portugal, Spain, and Ukraine either have failed to produce radical right parties at all or have experienced radical right political mobilization very recently.

Although it might be tempting to associate support for radical right parties with worsening economic conditions, rampant corruption, or voter apathy and prejudice, these factors do not explain why specifically a radical right party, and not an anti-corruption party or another niche party, emerges in response. Bustikova (2014) proposes that support for radical right parties originates in policy hostility, which is defined as an opposition to policy changes in the status quo of ethnic relations, and that such parties succeed when they compete politically on a platform that seeks to counterbalance or roll back the political gains of minorities (see also Dancygier 2010; Rydgren 2008). The claim that radical right parties are not fond of minorities is of course an old one, but we should not be blinded by the inflammatory nature of party rhetoric into concluding that voting for radical right parties originates in hatred against minorities, since xenophobia is something that many non-radical-right voters in Eastern Europe openly express. What differentiates radical right voters in Eastern Europe is their vehement opposition to policies that accommodate minority demands and elevate their status. This implies that (p. 571) variation in minority accommodation, rather than differences in xenophobia, should predict change in electoral support for radical right parties across countries and time. Radical right mobilization, on this account, is rooted in policy hostility rather than in group hostility.

The process of building a liberal democracy resulted in paying special attention to the socioeconomic well-being of minorities and politicizing their rights. Policies that expand minority rights induce powerful grievances in the electorate when small ethnic and social groups are viewed as being accommodated and when mainstream parties appear to be helping do that. The political rights and benefits achieved by minorities irritate some

voters, and it is these voters who are attracted to radical right parties that seek to reverse those gains.

This relates to another major difference between West and East European democracies. Dissatisfaction with policies undertaken during the process of democratization, such as the expansion of ethnic and social minority rights, by politicians who are viewed as unaccountable is increasingly linked to anti-democratic attitudes in Eastern Europe (Minkenberg 2015). Although corrupt political practices are certainly present in Western Europe at the highest levels, they are not associated with calls to question the core rules of democratic governance. In Eastern Europe, responsiveness to the demands of minorities and democracy are bundled together, so the backlash against establishment politicians and parties feeds off the intensity of an identity-based cleavage. Given the relatively higher levels of aggregate xenophobia in the East (Enyedi and Erős 1999; Kopecký and Mudde 2003), attempts to modify ethnic relations, which are wrapped in populist calls for a more direct relationship between voters and leaders, can be interpreted as covert appeals to revisit inclusive democracy as a form of political representation. The ability of new liberal democracies to survive hinges on their ability to contain this backlash against the expansion of minority rights.

Nationalism and sour attitudes toward liberal democracy have three interconnected sources. The first is the European Union, which is associated with rights for ethnic, social, and sexual minorities along with restrictions of national sovereignty. Opposition to these principles of liberal democracy in Europe conveniently provides a pathway to increasing sovereignty in domestic affairs. Second, opposition to liberal democracy is often disguised as opposition to diversity, and goes hand in hand with advocating further restrictions on civic life. Third, since the democratic and economic transitions proceeded simultaneously, voters associate the introduction of free markets with democratization. The corrupt nexus of politics and economics, which was born in this dual transition, has cast a dark shadow on democratic institutions, which have often failed to establish adequate regulatory oversight institutions to curb political corruption.

Corruption and anti-establishment attitudes engage economic issues and are enhanced by feelings of economic unfairness. For the most part, however, economic issues are bundled with identity issues, where "us vs. them" is associated with rage against the political elites who sold national interests to outsiders, foreigners, and ethnic minorities. Calls to rearrange ethnic relations and empower groups that benefit from (p. 572) equalizing social issues and ethnic power relations are de facto challenges to the very foundations of the entire liberal democratic project.

The European Union, by its design, limits national sovereignty. Euroskepticism and Eurorealism (Kopecký and Mudde 2003) are an acquired taste for the East European radical right, however. After the collapse of communism, radical right parties started off with an anti-communist agenda.[3] Sovereignty was initially associated with the Western Europe security umbrella, its cultural supremacy, and freedom from Soviet rule. Being vassals to Moscow compromised the deposed communist rulers unless they discovered

nationalism in time to become leaders of newly sovereign polities. The anti-communist cleavage was still relevant in the third wave of post-communist elections, around the time of the EU accession, when anti-establishment parties, including radical right parties, exploited dissatisfaction with the first wave of reform politicians and their second-wave replacement. Political corruption, clientelism, volatility, and state capture drove voters away from mainstream parties (Ceka 2013; Hanley and Sikk 2016; Haughton and Deegan-Krause 2015; O'Dwyer 2014; Pop-Eleches 2010; Powell and Tucker 2014; Rovny 2015; Tavits 2007). More important, voters were upset that the representatives of new democratic parties allowed former members of the Communist Party to capitalize on market liberalization and state-led privatization and lapsed in creating institutions of market oversight (Grzymala-Busse 2007; O'Dwyer 2006). This anti-establishment sentiment was fed by the idea that new political representatives sold out national interests by allowing former communists to convert their social capital into an economic capital and by not prosecuting former communists for participating in a repressive political regime that constrained state sovereignty.

With time, the post-communist cleavage faded away and the danger to national sovereignty turned from the East to the West. Radical right parties are acutely aware of the benefits of membership in the European Union, which brings subsidies as well as developmental funds to the East. None of the radical right parties in Eastern Europe has, so far, called for a referendum or a petition that would call for an exit from the European Union comparable in scale to the efforts of the British Euroskeptic parties. On the other hand, the second generation of radical right parties, such as Hungarian Jobbik and Marian Kotleba's People's Party–Our Slovakia (LSNS), have not rejected the possibility of leaving NATO and the European Union. Both parties rose to prominence after Hungary and Slovakia joined the EU in 2004, and both have been actively involved in attempts to create paramilitary units that protect "public order."

Radical right parties therefore found new and unexpected friends among their Western counterparts in the European Parliament. Euroskeptic views bridge many East-West differences. The first East-West bloc in the European Parliament, established in 2007, was called Identity, Tradition, and Sovereignty and capitalized on the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU. The bloc was short-lived, however, when significant tensions erupted between the Italian and Romanian radical right. Once the Romanian representatives left, the bloc was dissolved because it did not have the twenty required members. The French and Dutch radical right parties lead the current bloc, called the European Alliance for Freedom, which relies on three weak members from (p. 573) Poland and Romania and has suspicious pro-Russian leanings. After the EU Eastern Europe enlargement, Euroskeptic attitudes have become powerful predictors of radical right voting across Western and Eastern Europe. Yet it is not a fear of technocrats from Brussels and their investigations of fraud in disbursing European funds that fuels radical right support, but irritation with EU reports that criticize violations of Roma rights, demand the expansion of minority language rights and praise gender equality in the

workplace. This comes at a time when the EU is losing credibility due to its democratic deficit and its failure to avert and resolve the post-2008 economic crisis (Grittersová et al. 2015; cf. Guasti 2016).

Until 2015, the East European radical right never effectively mobilized against new minorities arriving from non-European countries. This suggests that issues of immigration and mobilization against Islam due to the refugee crisis and to terrorist attacks in Paris in 2015 and Brussels in 2016 could unify Eastern and Western radical right movements more than Euroskepticism. However, it is not clear whether the fear of Islamic refugees and terrorism will benefit radicalized mainstream parties, radical right parties, or both. If the threat to national sovereignty is perceived as so severe that only a large party can restore security, by embracing a more hawkish position mainstream parties might subdue radical right parties because they are seen as more competent to deal with the issue (Meguid 2008).

Large radicalized parties have more credibility when they claim to be able to avert a severe threat posed by the European Union's policies. In Hungary, Prime Minister Orbán successfully mobilized fear by claiming that half a million Syrian refugees would be moved from Turkey to the EU. In 2015, the Slovak government filed a lawsuit against the European Union at the European Court of Justice because it feared a new EU mandatory quota system to allocate asylum seekers. Fear of Muslim asylum seekers led to mass demonstrations in Eastern Europe, despite the fact that there are almost no migrant communities from the Middle East. The proposed EU quotas on how many asylum seekers each of the East European countries was expected to absorb were tiny relative to the size of the population, and few of the migrants actually wanted to go to Eastern Europe (even before they knew how unwelcome they were). The prime ministers of Poland and Slovakia, Ewa Kopacz and Robert Fico, explicitly asked for Christian refugees from Syria. Similar sentiments against Muslim refugees were echoed in Estonia, Hungary, and Bulgaria.[4] Celebrations of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1989 Velvet Revolution were marked by large anti-government and anti-migrant demonstrations in Prague during November 2015.[5] The refugee crisis and counter-Islamic mobilization resulted in a great variety of radical right mobilization.

Eastern Europe is an interesting laboratory in which political parties experiment with three core strategies to tackle the radical right: delegalization as a form of a cordon sanitaire, radicalization that weakens the radical right, and radicalization that leads to outbidding. Andrea Pirro (2015) and Bartek Pytlas (2016) have shown that in Eastern Europe, strategies of inclusion and exclusion yield mixed results, and no single strategy can be identified to suppress the radical right party vote. Recent elections in Poland in 2015 and Slovakia in 2016 reflect this schism. In Poland, the radicalized mainstream (p. 574) right-wing Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS, Law and Justice Party) won elections in a landslide. In Slovakia, elections were marked by the implosion of mainstream parties and strengthened both the radical right (which received 8.6 percent of the vote) and the extreme right (which got 8 percent of the vote). Although the refugee crisis was not the sole focus of the electoral campaigns, both the Slovak and Polish mainstream parties used

it to stir up nationalistic sentiment before the elections. The informal leader of the PiS, Jarosław Kaczyński, has claimed that refugees bring cholera to Europe. Robert Fico's campaign to "protect Slovakia" against refugees cost him a comfortable majority in the Slovak parliament. The strategy badly backfired and made the task of forming a durable governing coalition after the elections a challenge. In Poland, by contrast, the nationalist sentiment gave PiS an unprecedented majority in the parliament that has allowed it to weaken core institutions of democratic governance such as the Constitutional Court and free media. This suggests that rhetorical radicalization of the mainstream parties is a double-edged sword for the mainstream parties.

Radicalized Mainstream Parties

The third common aspect of radical right mobilization is the presence of radicalized mainstream parties. They are typically left-leaning on the economy and advocate greater involvement of states in the economy. Some originated in anti-communist movements prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The most prominent examples are Fidesz in Hungary, PiS in Poland, and in Slovakia the social democratic parties of former and present prime ministers Vladimír Mečiar (Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko [HZDS, Movement for a Democratic Slovakia]) and Fico (Smer–sociálna demokracia [Smer, Direction–Social Democracy]) in Slovakia. Although many West European mainstream parties embrace tough policies on immigration and home-grown terrorist networks, East European mainstream parties are, comparatively speaking, much more comfortable with their radical right cousins. Radical right parties thus operate in a much more permissive environment and are often incorporated into governing coalitions.

Far right parties have been successful in steadily attracting some voter support since the early 1990s in Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Slovenia. In these countries, the far right was able to attract between 5 percent and 40 percent of the popular vote at various points in time. Furthermore, in Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Serbia, and Slovakia, far right parties have been present in governing coalitions since the founding elections and have significantly shaped minority policies. In the East, the boundaries between the "radicalized right" and "radical right" are especially blurry and it is becoming increasingly difficult to determine whether prominent mainstream parties, such as Fidesz (led by Victor Orbán) in Hungary, PiS (unofficially led by Jarosław Kaczyński) in Poland, and Smer (led by Robert Fico) in Slovakia, can be considered as not radical right parties. (p. 575)

The weakening of the radical right can be perhaps attributed to the wide presence of radicalized mainstream parties that siphon away their true electoral potential. On the surface, radical right parties in the East are a rare phenomenon (Bustikova 2014) and on average are less electorally successful than their Western counterparts. But higher aggregate levels of xenophobia in the East (Kopecký and Mudde 2003), which contributes to the permissiveness of radical rhetoric, indicates a weakness of liberal democratic consolidation. Paradoxically, the historical legacies of authoritarian fascist interwar regimes are more relevant after more than twenty-five years of democratic consolidation than they were in 1989, because radicalized mainstream politicians are now looking for new forms to organize political systems. The nostalgic association with past glory ultimately benefits both the radical right and the radicalized mainstream right, since both claim to be the political successors of previous nationalistic movements, often associated with state independence and territorial unity.

Voters and politicians have begun to contemplate possible substitutes to replace liberal democracy. Eastern Europe is experiencing democratic fatigue, low levels of trust in deliberative institutions, and dissatisfaction with democratic governance (BTI 2014). Unlike in 1989, when democracy was the only game in town, there is no agreement on how the alternative form of governance might look like this time around. Liberal democracy, with its appeal to inclusiveness, has its opponents. Since the Communist Parties that preceded the democratic experiment have been discredited as well, some voters and some parties are looking to the distant past of the interwar period and resurrecting nationalistic heroes with dubious democratic credentials.

Hence the explosion of T-shirts featuring the image of the Polish interwar authoritarian statesman Pilsudski, who unified Poland (and protected minorities); of the controversial interwar leader of the Ukrainian Nationalists, Stepan Bandera; and of the similarly controversial leader of the Romanian Iron Guard, Corneliu Codreanu. A newly elected member of the Slovak parliament, Marian Kotleba, occasionally wears symbols of the Hlinka guard, associated with the clerofascist Slovak state during World War II. The third-largest political party in Hungary, Jobbik, uses symbols similar to those of the authoritarian and anti-Semitic Arrow Cross Party from World War II.

The narrative that rejects both communist rule, which diminished national sovereignty, and botched democratic rule, which increased the power of ethnic and social minorities at the expense of the titular nationality, is compelling because fascism is an alternative to democracy and was also antagonistic toward communism. Countries with a nationalist legacy of communist rule are in a unique position. Mainstream or extreme political mobilization can evoke interwar authoritarianism and, to a certain extent, fascism (Bustikova and Kitschelt 2009). If there is a reversal in liberal democratic governance in Eastern Europe, it will most likely be initiated not by a small radical right party but by a large radicalized mainstream party that will move the country into new and uncharted territory. Whether the presence of a radical right party will facilitate such a turn, by introducing new issues and ideas into the mainstream, or will block democratic sidelining, by offering an alternative channel for discontent, needs to be explored (p. 576) further. Most of the research on Eastern Europe has treated post-1989 radical right parties as a Western equivalent of pathological normalcy. But if radical right parties contribute to the dismantling of democratic governance by undermining constitutional checks and balances, such an approach would be imprudent. (p. 577)

	Radical Right Parties in Eastern Europe
Albania	PBK, BK—Balli Kombëtar [National Front Party]; PBKD—Balli Kombëtar Demokrat [Democratic National Front Party]
Bulgaria	BNRP—Bălgarska Nacionalna Radikalna Partija [Bulgarian National Radical Party]

	NSA—Nacionalen Sayuz Ataka [National Union Attack, which includes BNRP (Attack Coalition)]
Croatia	HDZ—Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica [Croatian Democratic Union]
	HSP—Hrvatska Stranka Prava [Croatian Party of Rights] HSP-ZDS—Hrvatska Stranka Prava–Zagorska Demokratska Stranka HSP-HKDU—Hrvatska Stranka Prava–Hrvatska Krščanska Demokratska Unija
Czech R.	SPR-RSČ—Sdružení Pro Republiku–Republikánská Strana Československa (Sládek)
	RMS—Republikáni Miroslava Sládka [Republicans of Miroslav Sládek]
	NS—Národní Strana [National Party]
	NDS—Národně Demokratická Strana [National Democratic Party] DSS/DS—Dělnická Strana/Dělnická Strana Sociální Spravedlnosti [Workers' Party]
Estonia	ERSP—Eesti Rahvusliku Sõltumatuse Partei [Estonian National Independence Party]
	EK—Eesti Kodanik [Estonian Citizens]
	ERKL—Eesti Rahvuslaste Keskliit [Estonian Nationalists Central League]
	PE—Parem Eesti [Right Estonia]
	EIP—Eesti Iseseisvuspartei [Estonian Independence Party]; Isamaa—Isamaa ja Res Publica Liit [Pro Patria and Res Publica Union]
Hungary	MIÉP—Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja [Hungarian Justice and Life Party]
	MIÉP-Jobbik—[MIÉP-Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom (Movement for a Better Hungary)]

	Jobbik—Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom [Movement for a Better Hungary]
Latvia	TB—Tēvzeme un Brīvībai [For Fatherland and Freedom]
	TB/LNNK—Apvienība Tēvzeme un Brīvībai [Alliance for Homeland and Freedom]/ Latvijas Nacionālās Neatkarības Kustība [Latvian National Independence Movement]
Lithuania	LKDS/LTJS—Jaunoji Lietuva Susivienijimas uz Vieninga Lietuva [Young Lithuania for United Lithuania]
	LNP-JL—Lietuviu Nacionaline Partija [Lithuanian National Party]/ Jaunoji Lietuva [Young Lithuania]
	LlaS—Lietuvos Laisvės Sąjunga [Lithuanian Liberty Union]
	LNDP—Lietuvos Nacionaldemokratu Partija [Lithuanian National Democratic Party]
Macedonia	VMRO-DPMNE—Vnatreška Makedonska Revolucionerna Organizacija–Demokratska Partija za Makedonsko Nacionalno Edinstvo [Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity]
	VMRO-DP—Vnatreška Makedonska Revolucionerna Organizacija–Demokratska Partija
Poland	SN—Stronnictwo Narodowe [National Party]
	Partia X—Party X
	PWN-PSN—Polska Wspólnota Narodowa–Polskie Stronnictwo Narodowe [Polish National Commonwealth–Polish National Party]
	ROP—Ruch Odbudowy Polski [Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland]
	LPR—Liga Polskich Rodzin [League of Polish Families]
	LPR—Liga Prawicy Rzeczypospolitej [League of the Right of the Republic

	(League of Polish Families (LPR) + Real Politics Union + Right of the Republic)]
Romania	PUNR—Partidul Unităţii Naţionale a Românilor [Party of Romanian Unity]
	PRM—Partidul (Popular) România Mare [Party for Greater Romania]
	PNG—Partidul Noua Generaţie–Creştin Democrat [New Generation Party] PP-DD—Partidul Poporului–Dan Diaconescu [People's Party—Dan Diaconescu]
Serbia	SRS—Srpska Radikalna Stranka [Serbian Radical Party] NS—Nova Srbija [New Serbia] SPO—Srpski Pokret Obnove [Serbian Renewal Movement]
Slovakia	PSNS—Pravá Slovenská Národná Strana [Real Slovak National Party]
	SNS—Slovenská Národná Strana [Slovak National Party] LSNS—Ľudová Strana Naše Slovensko; Slovenská Pospolitosť—Národná Strana
Slovenia	SNS—Slovenska Nacionalna Stranka [Slovenian National Party]
Ukraine	KUN—Kongres Ukraiins'kikh Natsionalistiv [Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists]
	Rukh—Narodnyi Rukh Ukrajiny [People's Movement of Ukraine]
	Svoboda [Freedom]

Source: Buštíková 2017

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Notes:

(1.) Studies of the radical right in Eastern Europe have focused on the ideological roots of radical parties dating back to the interwar period and the role of legacies in party competition (de Lange and Guerra 2009; Held 1996; Hockenos 1993; Mesežnikov, Gyárfášová, and Smilov 2008; Mudde 2005; Ramet 1999; Shekhovtsov and Umland 2014), ideological foundations, anti-establishment and populist appeals (Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2009; Ishiyama 2009; Kopecký and Mudde 2003; Minkenberg 2015; Mudde 2005, 2007, 2016; Ramet 1999), the agency of radical politics (Minkenberg 2015); attitudes toward democracy (Allen 2017), territorial disputes (Mareš 2009; Siroky and Cuffe 2015), European Union conditionality and Euroskepticism (Kelley 2004; Kopecký and Mudde, 2002, 2003; Polyakova 2012; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004; Vachudova 2008), the effect of mainstream parties' behavior and party systems (Pop-Eleches 2010; Vachudova 2008), and the interaction between the radical right parties and both their mainstream competitors and their ideological competition (Pirro 2015; Pytlas 2016).

(2.) Eastern Europe was home to refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina who were of Muslim faith. Yet there was never rallying against refugees from the former Yugoslavia comparable to the mass demonstrations of the summer of 2015 against Islam that swept Eastern Europe and mobilized both mainstream and fringe parties against settlement policies for migrants.

(3.) A notable exception was the Romanian radical right party led by Corneliu Vadim Tudor, a celebrated poet, associated with (post-)communist nostalgia.

(4.) In Hungary, harsh reaction to non-Christian refugees followed after the 2013 constitutional annulment of the law on churches adopted in 2011. The annulment was issued by the Orbán government, which favored Christian churches and politicized the registration process for religious organizations.

(5.) The Czech president, Miloš Zeman, a mainstream politician, celebrated the anniversary by singing the national anthem with Martin Konvička, an advocate of concentration camps for Muslims and the leader of the Bloc Against Islam, on the same university campus where student protests began in 1989.

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