

**Some Theoretical Problems and Issues in Comparison of
Anti-immigrant Parties in Western Europe**

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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is about political parties that have made immigration their main issue and used immigrants as scapegoats for their countries' social problems. It is not on racism in general nor do we restrict ourselves to extreme right parties. The parties we discuss are potential members of a political family which prospers against the background of recent developments in European societies.

First, unemployment has become a structural characteristic of Western European economies. In all Western European countries, the unemployment ratio is persistently above 10 per cent among the adult population aged between 18 and 65. Even economic growth does not seem to help the employment figures. 'Jobless growth' has become the dominant feature of these economies. And where the number of jobs grow they no not keep pace with the population growth.

Secondly, the number of immigrants from outside Western Europe has increased steadily and created a European-wide policy problem. There is no country where the right to asylum is not a hotly debated issue. There is no country where illegal immigration has not aroused considerable attention. In addition to that we find a population growth which is higher among the immigrant population than among the native population.

Thirdly, all European governments, whether socialist or conservative, have implemented neo-liberal policies in the last two decades or so. These policies are based on the assumption that the market is a better mechanism to solve social problems than is state intervention with its governmental bureaucracy. Due to these neo-liberal policies economic inequalities have increased considerably and society has become more fragmented. Hence, the fear of an ethnic underclass has become a new specter in European politics.

Fourthly, racist violence has become endemic in most European countries. In Germany, racist violence caused the death of 17 immigrants in 1992. Although racist violence has recently received attention in the media, it is definitely not a recent phenomenon. In 1973 12 Algerian casualties from racist attacks were reported in France. At the end of the sixties, 'Paki-bashing' was popular among British hooligans. Yet the few systematic and quantitative studies that have been done suggest that terrorist attacks have indeed increased spectacularly during the nineties (Björge and Witte, 1993:32; Koopmans, 1995).

Since 1984, and even earlier in Great Britain and The Netherlands, anti-immigrant parties have been increasingly successful in national and European elections. Some of these parties, like the Italian MSI founded in 1945, the French Front National (1972), the Belgian Vlaams Blok (1978) and the Dutch Centrumpartij (1980), have emerged from extreme right groupuscules. Others, like the Danish Fremskridtsparti (1972), the newly founded Lega Nord (1991) and the Swedish Ny Demokrati (New Democracy, 1991), are based on anti-establishment sentiments, but they cannot be called extreme right without stretching that concept too far. As Klaus von Beyme (1988) and Michael Billig (1989) have pointed out, difficulties generally arise when using the term extreme right. Even though the term is frequently used by journalists and scholars alike, it is hardly ever explicitly defined. Most writers just state that extreme right parties are anti-democratic, xenophobic and extremely nationalist, without giving any argument for why such parties should be labelled extreme right. Literally, extreme right means at the very right of the political left-right scale. Yet the leaders of the parties under investigation do not always consider themselves to be right-wing, let alone extreme right. The Italian MSI, as well as the Dutch Centrumpartij considered itself as «neither left nor right». 16 percent of the MSI delegates who attended the 1991 party congress placed themselves in the center of the left-right scale while 26 percent considered themselves left-wing (Ignazi and Ysmal, 1992:118).

Voters are not sure about the ideological position of these parties either. Jean Tillie (1995) has shown that the Dutch Centrumdemocraten (CD) initially did not fit very well in the left right ideological space in which the other Dutch parties fitted. In the course of the eighties, however, the CD entered in the ideological space created by the Dutch party-system and eventually, in 1992, was firmly positioned at the extreme right of the left-right scale. Yet even in 1992 42 percent of the Dutch voters considered the CD an extreme right party, but 12 percent considered the CD as an extreme-left party.

In sum, there are quite a number of empirical problems related to the term extreme right. But there are, as we will see in the next section, even more theoretical problems involved in defining extreme right.

2. FASCISM AND THE CONCEPT OF «EXTREME RIGHT»

Piero Ignazi (1992:7-13) maintains that to be called extreme right a party should not only be located on the very right edge of the left-right scale, but it

should also express a fascist ideology and an anti-system attitude. Other political scientists tend to conceive the prefix «extreme» not as «very», but as anti-democratic. Thus, extreme right and extreme left are the undemocratic fringes of a democratic and pluralist political system (Sartori, 1982:210). According to Klaus von Beyme (1988:2), such an approach tends to give a one-dimensional vision to the political landscape and contains «an obsession with symmetry».

We may conclude that the concept of extreme right is linked to the theory of totalitarianism in which fascism is put on par with communism. The term extreme right is implicitly or explicitly equated with or related to the concept of fascism. This conceptual framework is fairly consistent but creates a problem for contemporary analysis, especially because historians tend to follow Ernst Nolte ((1963)1984) in limiting the concept of fascism to a specific historical period which begins around 1920 and ends in 1945. The fascist label is then reserved for the Fascist movement in Italy, the German National Sozialistische deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP), the Austrofascism headed by Dollfuss and, at least according to Ernst Nolte, the French movement Action Française. Historians are very reluctant to use the term fascism for movements or regimes outside this specific place and period. A certain diffidence about labeling contemporary political parties as fascist also exists among social scientists. If the term (neo) fascist is used at all, it is more often than not referring to movements which explicitly hark back to the pre-war fascist movements (see Van Donselaar, 1993). To use the term neo-fascism for some of the presentday anti-immigrant parties, as Cheles et al. (1991) do, we clearly need a generic concept of extreme right.

Although there is apparently much hesitation in using the term fascism, there definitely is a relationship between this concept and that of extreme right. Even though there is little explicit agreement among scholars, they tend to use the different concepts in a similar way. Quite often, the concept of fascism is nested in the concept of extreme right, that is, all fascist parties are regarded as extreme right parties but not all extreme right parties are considered fascist. A fascist party is an extreme right party in a specific time period and with a specific party organization based on the Führerprinzip, strong leadership made into a party principle. Following Sternhell (1976) we may say that fascism is defined in terms of practices. Thus, the violent activities of a movement form a necessary corollary to the doctrine which we will define below. Fascism demands an active participation of the population in all fields of society and this obligatory political participation defines its totalitarian character. The misgivings of intellectuals like Oswald Spengler or Maurice Barrès about the NSDAP and Action Française respectively, had more to do with the totalitarian claim of these parties than with

ideological differences. Many extreme right intellectuals, moreover, found the fascist parties too plebeian for their liking. Their critique was on style rather than on ideological content. We propose to define the term extreme right as a concept that refers to ideology and not to political practices. On the level of ideology, extreme right equals generic fascism. In 'real life' however the extreme right is a broader concept; it includes the fascist movement but also other tendencies.

3. DEFINING EXTREME RIGHT IDEOLOGY

In this section we will try to define the ideology of the extreme right movement as it developed before the War. Ideology is defined by Martin Seliger as «a conceptual frame of reference which provides criteria for choice and decision by virtue of which the major activities of an organized community are governed» (cited in Sternhell, 1976:318). A conceptual frame of reference is a set of key concepts which are related in a specific way. The relations between these key concepts do not have to be logically related, as long as they are psychologically related. In the latter case the relations between the key concepts are of an axiomatic nature, without any logical grounding. The logical relations between the key elements in a political ideology are part of the political doctrine, the psychological relations are part of the political axiom. Not just the extreme right, but all ideologies are based on a political axiom. The political axiom of the democratic ideology is expressed in the American Declaration of Independence which claims that «all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights». The fact that this is indeed a political axiom is shown in the outset of this sentence: «We hold these truths to be self-evident...».

The political axiom of the extreme right is the direct opposite of the democratic axiom. Extreme right ideology has developed as an anti-ideology, in polemical opposition to the democratic creed (Linz, 1976). Social inequality forms the basis of the political axiom of the extreme right. Inequality is perceived in two ways: as social and moral differentiation and as social and moral hierarchy. Given the fact that existing society is both differentiated and hierarchical, the social axiom of the extreme right has a «natural» plausibility. Indeed, there are inborn differences between human beings and people have different social positions. The extreme right gives these empirical facts a moral significance: «Because democratic majority rule denies the authority of the individual and replaces it with the sheer number of the transitory mass, it transgresses the

aristocratic laws of nature («(...) sündigt es wider den aristokratischen Grundgedanken der Natur»)» (Hitler, 1942:87).

Social hierarchy is explained and legitimized by reference to nature. This 'common sense' of the extreme right explains part of its attractiveness and forms the mythical fundamentals of the extreme right ideology. Although this myth of natural hierarchy is characteristic of the political right in general, it does not define the ideology of the extreme right. The specificity of the extreme right lies in its political doctrine. The doctrine of the extreme right is made up of four different themes which have been found in the scientific literature on the extreme right. (Nolte, (1963) 1984; Sternhell, 1985, 1987; Chebel d'Apollonia, 1988; Mosse, 1981; Van den Toorn, 1975) They are the common denominators in the works of Francisco Franco (1982), Adolf Hitler (1942), Charles Maurras (1978), Benito Mussolini (1952) and José Antonio Primo de Rivera (1933). These themes are: ethnic nationalism, anti-materialism, anti-parliamentarianism and conspiracy theory.

Ethnic nationalism

The first element in the extreme right doctrine is ethnic nationalism. The nation is not defined in political but in ethnic terms and thus has a biological connotation. Political organization in itself therefore does not constitute the nation, as it does in nationalism based on contract theories. The state should be an expression of the ethnic community. They who do not belong to this ethnic community are excluded from the nation. In his book on nationalism, Hans Kohn (1945) has elaborated upon the distinction between ethnic or cultural nationalism and contract or political nationalism. The latter is based on the principle of natural rights or on utilitarian philosophy according to which the state should optimize the welfare of citizens and its success is measured in terms of citizen's wellbeing. The nation is primarily a political and economic community. Ethnic nationalism, on the other hand, is based on a metaphysical notion of nation. The nation has a 'soul' and membership is defined by descent, and by a common 'destiny'. Membership in the ethnic nation is based on ius sanguinis, whereas membership in a nation based on contract is based on ius soli. Ethnic nationalism is expressed both in terms of «blood» and «culture». In the extreme right discourse «ownness» and «rooted» are juxtaposed to «alien» and «uprootedness».

Anti-materialism

The second element in the extreme right doctrine is anti-materialism. Gentile wrote in his «Doctrine of Fascism»: (...) Fascism is against all individualist abstractions based on materialism such as those which flourished in the 18th century» (Mussolini (1952:67). Although materialist philosophy developed in the 18th century, extreme right parties usually attack Marxist and utilitarian doctrines of the 19th century¹. Anti-materialism attacks the rational choice model of civil society, where interests define social actions and (lack of) solidarity. According to the anti-materialist position, liberalism preaches the pursuit of private interests, which leads to the fragmentation of society. Marxism, on the other hand, preaches class warfare which equally leads to the destruction of the nation. For tactical and historical reasons extreme right movements have emphasized their anti-Marxist views rather than their anti-liberalism. Yet Marxism is closer to the extreme right ideology because it has a similar diagnosis of bourgeois society, even though its solutions are diametrically opposed to those of the extreme right. Marxism and fascism share a holist conception of society (Silverman, 1985). The extreme right pretends to provide a new synthesis between nationalism and socialism. The term 'Socialist Nationalism' was coined by Maurice Barrès as early as 1898 (Sternhell, 1976:326) and became one of the recurrent themes in extreme right ideology. In the words of the British fascist leader Oswald Mosley: «If you love your country you are national, and if you love your people you are socialist» (Sternhell, 1976:321). Here we find the ambivalence which makes the label «extreme right» problematic. The anti-liberal element in the doctrine can take an anti-capitalist form and hence be considered as 'left-wing'. This is also the doctrinal basis for the slogan «Neither left, nor right» (Sternhell, 1987). The individual should subordinate himself to the people, to the nation. The concepts patriotism/heroism are juxtaposed to individualism/egoism.

Against democracy

The extreme right doctrine loathes democracy because democracy favours quantity over quality. In part the extreme right borrows from the 19th century anti-democratic tradition in that it assumes the mass of people to be incapable of governing. Yet the anti-democratic critique is populist rather than elitist in content. The political elites in a democracy do not represent the people, nor do they pursue the common good. The political elite as a whole only strives for its own material benefits, it is a parasitical class. The concept of a parasitical political class harks back to Saint-simonism. Yet the extreme right adds something new to the anti-democratic tradition. Majority rule is not just the rule of stupidity, as is maintained in the Burkean tradition, nor is it just avarice and exploitation as in the

utopian socialist tradition; democracy in the extreme right tradition is the rule of cowardice. The political leaders hide behind the democratic procedures because they are cowards. According to Adolf Hitler:

«The invention of democracy brings forward a human quality which has recently grown into a real shame, that is the cowardice of the major part of our so-called «leadership». How happy they are to be able to hide all important decisions behind the skirts of this so-called majority» (Hitler, 1942:89).

Hitler's contempt for the masses was immense, but his contempt for the political elite was even greater. The extreme right critique of democracy thus becomes a critique of political leadership. The political elites in a parliamentary democracy are cowardly and slick, masters in the manipulation of public opinion at best. They refuse to take any personal responsibility for their decisions. The anti-democratic bravado of the extreme right never directly attacked the common people, as in the conservative tradition, it aimed at discrediting democratic leadership.

A second critique of democracy is that it extinguishes differences between people that are natural as well as socially useful. «To organize means to differentiate, that is to create useful differences, to democratize means to equalize which is sterile and even mortal» (cited by Tournier, forthcoming).

A third critique of democracy is the inverse of the former: democracy leads to money-rule. «Démocratie vaut ploutocratie, gouvernement du peuple signifie gouvernement de l'or» (Action Française, 12 June 1914). The revolt against democracy is a revolt against politics, or rather against «the political class». Politicians, according to extreme right discourse, do not stand for political ideals, not even for societal interests; they just stand for their own interests. Hence, the political class is corruption-prone.

Finally, democracy is associated with quarreling, with partisan politics. The extreme right wants to do away with political parties: «Nobody was ever born into a political party; on the other hand, we are all born in a family, we all live in a municipality, we all toil in a job» (Primo de Rivera, 1933:22). In the anti-democratic discourse of the extreme right the political class/the politicians is juxtaposed with the people/the common man. The political establishment is accused of greed, selfishness and cowardice.

We should add, however, that the attacks upon parliamentary democracy are always launched in the name of 'true democracy' or pure democracy

(Mussolini, 1952:72). Anti-democratic opinions are quite often wrapped up in populist rhetoric about direct democracy. Yet in the more intellectual writings of the extreme right the attacks on democracy were quite often fierce and open (e.g. Julius Evola, 1934). Nowadays it is difficult to find in the party programs of the extreme right openly an all-out attacks upon democracy. Such attacks are considered illegitimate in Western Europe and in Germany such attacks are even unconstitutional and thus prohibited. Therefore, in contemporary extreme right discourse the assault upon democracy will take the form of attacks against the moral integrity of the members of parliament and against the political parties. An example of the latter is the practice used by the Front National to indicate the four main French parties as the «Gang of four»; this attack on the main parties in Belgium is also found in the propaganda of the Vlaams Blok (Spruyt, 1995).

Conspiracy theory

The fourth recurrent theme in extreme right discourse is international conspiracy. This can be seen as the inversion of the «aristocratic plot» that characterized Jacobinism (Furet, 1981:54 ff). These «plots» appeared during the French revolution in times of acute danger of civil war. The aristocracy did indeed -as has been convincingly demonstrated by historians of the French Revolution- conspire against the revolution in order to prepare their return and to regain their possessions and former positions. In the extreme right discourse, however, the conspiracy is not just related to an acute danger, but to a perceived decadence, a decline of the nation. The aristocracy has been replaced by other 'enemies within': Freemasonry and Jewry who have one characteristic in common: they are internationalist, and thus, by nature, lack patriotism. The conspiracies serve to explain why the nation is not as strong as it should be according to the ideology of ethnic superiority. They are related to political opponents who have, in extreme right discourse, no legitimate right to exist. The conspiracy is also related to the theory of democratic corruption, because the political class is -as we have seen- only out for the money and thus can easily be bought off by a secret money-syndicate -like that of the Dreyfus family in France. The fact that Jews and Freemasons are supposed to spend money for their plotting also links extreme right conspiracy theory to another element in the doctrine: that of anti-materialism. The money power of an 'international plutocracy' undermines the national unity and the prosperity of the nation. Freemasonry is associated with Liberalism and Jacobinism. According to Charles Maurras, the French republic had always been dominated by four «estates» (quatre États confédérés): the Jews, the Protestants, the foreigners and the Freemasons. These four categories had to be

neutralized to root out the «democratic pest» (cited in Chebel d'Apollonia, 1988:75).

After 1917 the Communists were included in the confederation of conspirators, but this time the conspiracy theory was directly related to reality. The Comintern was indeed a secret international organization led by a foreign power (the Soviet Union) with a considerable influence in domestic politics in other countries. In short, it was organized according to the ideal-type of extreme right conspiracy theory. On the other hand the Communist theory of fascism was also fraught with conspiracy thinking (cf. Dimitrov, 1935). In a sense, one might say that the relation between Fascism and Communism was a 'folie à deux'. In the extreme right conspiracy theory the innocent people are juxtaposed with malicious foreign powers and their internal assistants: the 'enemy within' (Franco, 1982:8). More recently extreme right conspiracy theory is to be found in the denial of the Holocaust. Enveloped in a historical-judicial discourse in which the existence of gas chambers in German concentration camps is denied, the inner logic of the revisionist thesis, which holds that there never was a Nazi policy to exterminate the Jews, goes beyond the apology of the Third Reich. It also begs the question how the entire public opinion in Western Europe and America has come to believe in «the Holocaust lie» (Lipstadt, 1993). The fact that so many historians of the Holocaust are of Jewish origin already points out in the direction of the answer. The Jews themselves have invented the Holocaust to force peoples and governments into supporting the Jewish state of Israel. Hence conspiracy theory was adapted to be used in the anti-Zionist Third World movement (Eatwell, 1991:122).

Extreme right ideology takes human inequality as its axiomatic foundation. Its doctrine extols ethnic nationalism, rejects economic materialism and attacks parliamentary democracy. It contains a manichaeian view of a world order in which the enemy is involved in an international conspiracy against the nation.

4. DISCUSSION

If we propose a new definition of extreme right ideology how does it differ from the already existing ones? Of course it does not differ very much from the mainstream definitions of extreme right ideology. In most literature the aspects of nationalism, anti-democracy and anti-materialism in extreme right ideology are mentioned. But many of the definitions are virtually «shopping lists» as Mudde (1995) phrased it. They also include racism, intolerance, elitism, militarism, want

for strong leadership. The main objection against such shopping list definition is that it becomes unworkable. The rule of simplicity requires that we should select as few characteristics as possible to define the elephant, not as many as possibly. Roger Griffin's attempt to formulate a generic definition of fascism is for this reason very interesting indeed, because it limits the ideology of fascism to two elements: a «palingenetic myth» and «populist ultra-nationalism» (Griffin, 1991:32 ff). Palingenesis refers to «the sense of a new start or of a regeneration after a phase of crisis or decline». The second element of Griffin's definition is «populist ultra-nationalism» which refers to «forms of nationalism which 'go beyond', and hence reject, anything compatible with liberal institutions or with the tradition of Enlightenment humanism which underpins them». Against this definition, which is very attractive in its apparent simplicity, I have two objections:

First, the palingenetic element is part and parcel of all ethnic nationalism (see Smith, 1986:192) and therefore the concept of 'palingenetic ultra-nationalism' contains a pleonasm, even though the concept also implies something 'magical' something 'gnostic' in the extreme right's national myth. At the same time, the term ultra-nationalism (including populism) is stretched to a point where the concept also includes the rejection of democracy:

«(...) populist ultra-nationalism rejects the principles both of absolutism and of pluralist representative democracy» (Griffin, 1991:37).

Hence the third element of the extreme right doctrine is explicitly included in Griffin's definition. However, anti-materialism -according to many scholars a crucial element which distinguishes the extreme right from other far right ideologies- is not included in Griffin's definition of fascist ideology. We consider this a major flaw of Griffin's definition because it fails to distinguish between the neo-liberal right which praises the market and attacks all equalizing state interventions and the extreme right which may also attack levelling state interventions, but never praises the market as the alpha and omega of society. The very attraction of the extreme right lies in the fundamental rejection of a society based on individualism and egoism and its reference to higher moral values. Bruno Mégret, one of the representatives of the Front National in the European Parliament, said in an interview:

«The materialism of the consumer society is something that destroys all nations and peoples».

Karel Dillen of the Vlaams Blok held similar view and so did Giuseppe Rauti of the MSI. We have good reasons to include anti-materialism in a definition of the extreme right doctrine.

Nearest to our definition is that of Zeev Sternhell who defines fascist ideology as «a synthesis of organic nationalism and anti-Marxist socialism, a revolutionary movement based on a rejection of liberalism, democracy and Marxism» (Sternhell, 1987:148). The critique launched by other scholars that such definition does not allow a distinction between fascism and political Catholicism which sought to forge a viable alternative to liberalism, communism and fascism (Conway, 1990:1) is not convincing, because political Catholicism lacks the ethnic nationalism which is characteristic of extreme right ideology.

Conspiracy theory is not very often included in a definition of the extreme right ideology. Yet, we consider this as an essential element, because it is the ideological fundament of fascism's violence and its totalitarian claim. The secrecy in the movement's activities -which are a direct result of its conspiracy theory- strengthen the elitism of the fascist movement. This is an important psychological advantage for the militants. As in its extreme left counterpart -Leninism- the idea of an international conspiracy provides fascist ideology with an axe to grind. The idea that the enemy is exceptionally strong leads to an all out struggle against him. The idea of a heroic warfare between good and evil allows all necessary steps to be taken and frees the leaders of the state from ethical restraints on the part of their behavior. We are still living in an international civil war, Francisco Franco maintained in december 1949:

«If the freemasonry would not overstep the national boundaries, if they did not meddle in international affairs, we could be indifferent to what happens in other countries. But because this is not so, because they pursue political objectives over other peoples, these cannot be indifferent to the conspiracies and the collusion against them. This is most evident in the strongest and most powerful countries that until yesterday have employed the freemasonry as an instrument to undermine, divide and deceit their rivals and their neighbours» (Franco, 1982:97).

Franco used the same means as his enemies: he wrote his articles about the freemasonry under pseudonym. According to Hannah Arendt (1973:435ff) conspiracy theory is under totalitarian rule eventually replaced by the notion of «objective enemy» which shortcuts the needs to «prove» any conspiracy at all. Both the concept of conspiracy and that of «objective enemies» are based on a manichaeian worldview and excludes a pluralist political system.

But conspiracy theory has also a populist edge: conspiracy theory is the poor man's social science: it replaces the invisible hand by a visible one, it replaces the counterintuitive law of unintended effects by plots and purposes of friends and foes, of heroes and scoundrels. According to Hannah Arendt

(1973:352) the isolated individuals that form the 'masses' long «for a completely consistent, comprehensible, and predictable world». It is the revolt of the masses against «realism», against common sense. Conspiracy theory allows the commonest man to believe that he belongs to a vanguard or an elite of society. «Conspiracy theory appeals precisely because it offers a simple explanation of complex and diverse political events. In the latter case, the emphasis is more on the psychological compensations to be gained from a belief in conspiracy theory. Thus, there could be a sense of superiority which comes from believing that one knows a hidden truth» (Eatwell, 1991:140).

Conspiracy theory is a simplification of social reality which increases the popular appeal and enhances the action-orientedness of the rank and file.

Finally, it should be stressed that few students of political ideology make a distinction between axiom and doctrine as we have done. It will allow us to distinguish more clearly between the extreme right and other varieties of the right, like the conservative right and the democratic right, which share the axiom of human inequality but not the doctrine. One could argue that in the above presented argument the concept of democratic right is a contradiction in terminis. If the right is characterized by an axiom that is the antinomy of the democratic axiom how can the right possibly be democratic? This contradiction can be solved when we situate the right in a historical context. Indeed from the French Revolution onwards the right has actively opposed the introduction of general suffrage and quite often hindered the more modest democratic reforms. In the process of democratization of government the term democratic right was certainly a contradiction in terms. But once democracy was installed a substantial part of the right adapted to the new system of government and even became a staunch defender of a system which became historically opposed to the totalitarian branch of the democratic movement: Communism. The right has found a philosophical anchor to accommodate the axiom of the right with democratic procedures. A powerful tool in bringing this about has been the theory of democracy defended by Joseph Schumpeter in his «Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy» (1943). This economic theory of democracy maintains that democracy is not and should not be more than an institutional arrangement to produce a government in a competition among the political leaders for the people's vote. This theory, which has rightfully been labelled as «democratic elitism» makes a clear distinction between the political elite and the mass of voters and thus combines the political axiom of the right with the democratic creed (for a critical discussion see Fennema, 1995).

5. EXTREME RIGHT PARTIES

So far we have concentrated in our definition of the extreme right on ideology. Ideology in our opinion is the main defining principle of extreme right parties. Yet, many authors claim the other aspects also contribute to the identity of political parties. Militants, voters and the relative position in the party system also contribute to the party's identity. In a seminal article Ignazi and Ysmal (1992) compare the political profile of the delegates at the party congresses of the Front National and the MSI. Accordingly they define the MSI as a party of the «old extreme right» whereas the Front National belongs to the «new extreme right». For all we can make up from their article the difference between the old and the new extreme right lies in the acceptance by the new extreme right of neo-liberal policies. More recently Ignazi (1995) sees a distinction between traditional and post-industrial extreme right parties. «The second group is alien to fascist imprint. These parties developed in the eighties, in a socio-political climate totally different from that of the pre-war decades. These parties are defined as «post-industrial» because they are byproducts of the conflicts of the post-industrial society, where material interests are no longer so central and bourgeoisie and working class are neither so neatly defined nor so radically antagonistic» (Ignazi, 1995:7). Note that the post-industrial extreme right is defined here in terms of context rather than in content. It reminds us that we cannot neglect the social context in which extreme right parties operate. However, when it comes to defining the programs Ignazi speaks about «a mixture, often magnificent and fallacious, of private initiative and social protection (limited to the native), of modernizing inputs and traditional reminiscences». This brings us not much further. Ignazi claims that also the extreme right has become post-modern. But had not the traditional extreme right also been a mixture of modernizing inputs and traditional reminiscences?

Hans-Georg Betz' (1994) analysis of 'right wing populism' concentrates on the electorates of the extreme right in Western Europe. In his book one hardly finds an attempt to define the extreme right. He explains the electoral success of extreme right parties rather than defining them. Yet explaining the phenomenon is at least partly defining it. Thus, when the Nazi voters are supposed to «revolt against modernity» as Lipset (1981:23) wants it, this adds to the definition of the extreme right by emphasizing its middle class basis. If, on the other hand the voters react against social disintegration and are to be found amongst the social isolated individuals of all classes as Bendix (1952) maintains, then the extreme right phenomenon is different again. In Bendix' theoretical framework the communitarian aspects of extreme right ideology are stressed. Hans-Georg Betz seems to follow Bendix' line of reasoning (fascism as the mobilization of the

marginal men), even though he does refer to Lipset (1981) and Childers (1983) and not to Bendix. Betz' central thesis is that social fragmentation and individualization of risk explains the resurgence of a radical right that expresses of resentment rather than anything else. Betz distinguishes radical right-wing populism from the extreme right (1994:108). Rather than extreme right ideology, the radical right expresses neoliberal -or xenophobic populism. This is a very interesting distinction which may help us to 'deconstruct' the political family of racist and extreme right parties in different sections. Betz' theoretical framework, however, tends to de-emphasize the extreme right elements in the party programs. Moreover, Betz does not explain why a process of social fragmentation should induce the losers of modernization to require more neoliberal policies rather than less. In this respect Wilhelm Heitmeyers title «Why do people act against their own interest?» (1993) is intriguing, but the question has still to be answered. We will come back to this problem in section 7 when discussing protest votes.

The most common explanation for political xenophobia is provided by the theory which takes social isolation as the independent variable. This theory has been formulated by Hannah Arendt:

«it is only natural that the masses of a highly atomized society (...) have tended toward an especially violent nationalism» (Arendt, 1951:317).

Bendix (1952) has explained the electoral success of the NSDAP in Germany in similar terms. For The Netherlands this thesis has been put forward by Nooy (1969) in his path-breaking study of the electorate of the radical right-wing Farmers' Party. A person who feels socially isolated feels powerless and distrusts society, so the argument goes. Such feelings can lead, under certain circumstances, to a search for a 'consensus ex machina'. Ethnic nationalism is a form of kinship illusion, it created an imagined community along ethnic lines. Hence, strong beliefs may arise that the expulsion of foreigners will restore the idealized status quo ante when citizens were still law-abiding and social life appeared more predictable and familiar. A recent survey among the autochthonous population in Amsterdam has corroborated this theory. Ethnic nationalism and social isolation were indeed positively related to preference for anti-immigrant parties. Furthermore, feelings of social isolation strengthened the positive relationship between ethnic nationalism and preference for anti-immigrant parties (Fennema and Tillie, 1994). This theory provides for an explanation in terms of ethnic nationalism, which is both a constitutive elements of extreme right ideology and of racist ideology.

What this paragraph shows is that a discussion about the concept to be used to define presentday anti-immigrant parties is narrowly related to the explanation of what causes the rise of such parties.

6. RACIST PARTIES

In this paper the term anti-immigrant party has a descriptive non-theoretical status. We will try to find out whether anti-immigrant parties can properly be labeled extreme right. That is, whether they have indeed an extreme right ideology, an extreme right rank and file and an extreme right electorate. Subsequently we will see whether these parties can also be labeled racist. Because racist parties and extremeright parties are neither identical nor nested (as in the case of fascism and extreme right) but rather overlapping concepts, we have to define the term racist parties separately. The overlap lies mainly in the strong emphasis on ethnic nationalism which one finds in racist parties as well as in extreme right parties. An example of a racist party which is definitely not extreme right may be the British Conservative Party under Margaret Thatcher (see Miles and Phizaclea, 1984) or the Greek PASOK under Andreas Papandreou (see Elias Dimitras, 1992:252). An example of an extreme right party which is not considered racist by most scholars is the Spanish Falange during the thirties and the Italian MSI during the seventies.

To find an useful definition of racist parties is not an easy task because racist parties have to hide their racist identity because of legal or social restraints (see Van Donselaar, 1993). Thus, racist parties defend their policy positions often in terms of cultural incompatibility. Their own, national, culture is presented as homogeneous and fixed, while alien cultures are also seen as permanently fixed. Barker (1981) has labeled such arguments 'new racism'. But is it really new and, more important, is it racist? Racist arguments are, in our view, all those arguments which explain social inequality by reference to biological differences which are hereditary. Racism differentiates between groups of people by combining biological and social characteristics which are both considered hereditary. Essentially racism implies a downgrading of outgroups according to quasi-biological criteria. This means that to differentiate according to cultural habitus is in itself not racist. Even to look down upon other peoples' culture is not necessarily racist. Generalizing assertions about ethnic groups need not be racist. What, then, makes the theory of cultural incompatibility racist? In the first place because cultural characteristics are ossified into quasi-biological attributes.

The argumentative essence of new racism is that cultures cannot be changed, that some -not all- cultures are incompatible and that culture is in some way inbred. In the words of a columnist of the Daily Telegraph: «Parliament can no more turn a Chinese into an Englishman than it can turn a man into a woman».

This is a very succinct formulation of new racism. Immigration is resisted by reference to cultural incompatibility, but this cultural incompatibility is in the final analysis based on biological arguments. There are variations in the biological argumentation as expressed, for example, in the difference between the use of straight forward biological reasoning and the use of biological metaphors. But difference can also be measured according to the frequency with which biological reasoning is employed or biological metaphors used. In new racist discourse biological argumentation is restricted to metaphorical expressions like the one quoted from the Daily Telegraph.

Yet new racism is different from old racism which is not based on incompatibility of «equal cultures» but on a hierarchy of races and culture. Inferior races have an inferior culture and therefore are subordinates to the higher race that has a higher culture. The old racism grew out of a colonial context and is strongest in former white settler colonies. Colonial racism has been used to subordinate rather than to expel, to legitimate socio-economic inferiority of a racialized underclass. Colonial racism formed the counterpoint of the natural rights philosophy. Indeed, if everybody already possessed the right to Life, Liberty and Estate in the state of nature, it was hard to see how some people could be rightfully deprived of such rights in the colonies. Colonial exploitation based on slave production could be made compatible with the liberal ideology and practice in the metropolis only by arguing that the slaves were really not human beings endowed with natural rights. And this is exactly what was done in racist theory.

Colonial racism had its apogee in the nineteenth century, and is thus a relatively recent and short-lived phenomenon even though its effects are long-lasting and disastrous for the victims. It is aimed at subordinating the racially defined group within the nation. The racially defined Other may be regarded as a second class citizen, or -more likely- as not a citizen at all, but he or she is considered as an essential part of society, upon which its economic welfare depends². In many ways colonial racism and new racism resemble each other, however, in one aspect they are diametrically opposed: colonial racism aims at subordination, new, or ethnic racism aims at expulsion. This is the main reason why it is difficult to compare the racist parties in the USA (like the Ku Klux Klan) with the racist parties in Europe.

Racist parties in Western Europe argue against immigration, but one cannot reverse the argument: not all parties that resist immigration are racist. One can defend an immigration-stop also with non-racist arguments. Indeed, the very concept of popular sovereignty implies that the citizens of a country are entitled to decide that no foreigners will be allowed to enter the country, for example with the ecological argument that the country is already overpopulated, or with the economic argument that no work is available for the potential immigrants.

Presently, many racist parties are forced to hide their racism because of legal constraints or fear of public opinion. Hence they will defend their anti-immigrant position by reference to non-racial arguments. To decide whether or not a party is racist we therefore not only look at the content of the programs and propaganda but use a number of additional criteria.

A first additional criterium is the position parties take with reference to racial violence. Racist parties tend to emphasize the violence of immigrants whereas they vindicate violence against immigrants. They deny the discrimination to which immigrants are subjected but maintain, on the contrary, that the native population is discriminated against. In a way this «blaming the victim» eventually may end up in denying social and historical reality altogether as the Holocaust denial shows.

A second criterium is the priority which is given to the immigrants problem. If a party sees the criminality of immigrants or asylum-seekers as the one and only political issue, then this party may be labeled racist, even if their public statements regarded in isolation are not racist. The one-sidedness of the political propaganda gives the impression that immigrants are the cause of all evil and thus they get the blame for all social predicaments. Racist parties hence quite often are 'single issue' parties. And here we may find an important difference between racist parties and the extreme right, because the latter are, by definition, not single issue parties.

Finally, we look at the relations maintained by party leaders and militants with other organizations which are (more) openly racist. Because racism is considered illegitimate in most countries, racist parties tend to 'clean up' their political program. Their 'front-stage' activities are conscientiously screened and 'back-stage' activities are hidden from the public eye by secret organizations with which many interlocking directorates exist but which are formally independent.

Now we have defined racist parties we are able to distinguish these parties from extreme right parties. The main distinction between extreme right -and racist parties is that the latter are single issue parties, focusing their attention on immigrants and immigration. In the wake of this attention, which can turn into an obsession, there often is an emphasis on law and order and a fierce opposition to government policies. Yet this opposition, however fierce, does not turn into anti-regime opposition. Racist parties, contrary to the extreme right are not anti-parliamentary, nor are they necessarily anti-materialist. Nor do the racist parties have a conspiracy theory.

The main overlap between racist parties and the extreme right -in terms of doctrine- is the emphasis on ethnic nationalism. This explains partly why scholars who wish to see no distinction between racist parties and the extreme right emphasize the «ultra-nationalist» character of these parties to the expense of all other ideological characteristics (e.g. Griffin, 1991).

Our theoretical analysis could stop here if not for another label which has been frequently used in the analysis of anti-immigrant parties.

7. PROTEST PARTIES

Many journalists and scholars tend to label the anti-immigrant parties as protest parties. Betz (1994) for example speaks about «resentment as politics». But the operationalization of the concept of 'protest voter' is hardly ever given serious attention. More often than not scholars who consider the anti-immigrant parties as protest parties concentrate their empirical analysis on the electorates. The term protest party refers to the characteristics of the voter rather than the characteristics of the party program (Stouthuysen, 1993; Van Donselaar in Van Praag, 1983; Betz, 1994:3). The voter, according to this argument, has not cast his vote on racist grounds, but rather to express disenchantment with the political system. Unfortunately, this theoretical concept of 'protest voter' is not very well elaborated: are not all voters who do not vote for the ruling parties 'protest voters'? This objection can be dealt with if we accept the concept of anti-regime party as defined by Sartori. There are parties, according to Sartori which can be considered as not just 'loyal opposition'. They reject the political system rather than the government in power, and thus may attract voters who 'protest' against the political establishment. According to Betz «these parties are posing the most significant challenge to the established structure and politics of West Europe today» (Betz, 1994:3). But now we have shifted the argument and we are back to

square one. If protest voters are defined by the character of the party they vote for, it becomes necessary to define the term 'protest party' with more precision. We will discuss this problem in the next section.

7.1 Protest voters

In this section the protest voter should be defined sui generis. In most electoral studies the term protest vote is a residual category. It refers to the votes which cannot be explained with the theoretical model used in the analysis. Hence one distinguishes ideological votes, strategic votes and protest vote. Yet, the distinction between strategic votes and protest votes is not always clear. An elaborate and precise definition of protest vote has recently been presented by Van der Eijk and Franklin (1995), who define a protest voter as a voter who cast a vote for a party which does not offer the maximum to him or her in terms of party utility (see for the concept of party utility: Tillie, 1995). The most important factor contributing to party utility is the party's position on the ideological left-right continuum. Another factor contributing to the party's utility is its size. Many voters prefer a larger party over a smaller one because of its political efficacy. A voter may vote for a larger party in spite of the fact that a smaller party is closer to his or her ideological preference. This is called strategic voting.

A protest voter casts a vote for a party that has a position on the left-right continuum which is not in accordance with the voter's own selfpositioning on that continuum, nor can it be explained as strategic voting. This may be the case because the party he votes for is not preferred because of its stance on particular issues, nor for its chances to enter the government, but because of its (perceived) opposition to the political regime. On the basis of an operationalization of this definition it is possible to determine the number of protest voters with some precision. But how should such a 'non-utilitarian' vote be interpreted? In a way the voter's choice is a choice against politics. One could, therefore, maintain that a protest vote expresses a lack of rationality of the voter. This is the argument presented by Hannah Arendt, who maintains that social isolation creates selfdestructive and irrational impulses.

«The revolt of the masses against «realism», common sense, and all «the plausibilities of the world» (Burke) was the result of their atomization, of their loss of social status along with which they lost the whole sector of communal relationships in which common sense makes sense» (Arendt, 1973:352).

Although this explanation has, with the benefit of hindsight, a strong case to make for the electoral attraction of the NSDAP, there is also a less spectacular interpretation of the protest voting. In this interpretation the rationality of the voter is not questioned. The choice of the party itself may, so the argument goes, not be according to party utility, but it may still fall within the range of rational behavior. The voter may vote for a party that is ostracized by the political elites and thus vote against the political establishment. The protest voter takes the opportunity to «put in the boot» (Van der Eijk and Franklin 1995:298). This argument would imply that a protest vote can only be a vote for parties which have been an object of general and public rejection by all other parties, as used to be the case with the communist parties and still is the case with most anti-immigrant parties. Hence one can define the protest party as a political party that attracts many protest votes. This interpretation assumes that a party can only attract protest votes in a dialectical process between the party's behavior and the responses of the political elite which provide the protest party with a 'spoiled identity' (Van Donselaar, 1993) that makes it, paradoxically, attractive to protest voters. It remains of course a matter of subtle empirical analysis to find out whether this is indeed the case (for an excellent treatment of the Vlaams Blok voters see Billiet and De Witte, 1995).

7.2 Protest parties

Yet, this is not the end of the story. In some instances the term protest party is clearly meant to define a certain type of party by its program rather than by its spoiled identity. Many observers mention the Swiss Automobile Party, the Belgian Rossem-list and the Danish Progress Party as typical for a new type of anti-politics party. The Dutch Farmersparty, founded in 1965, which had a large support in the big cities, was an early example. These parties have an anti-tax program, combining a neo-liberal and an anarchist perspective. Colorful figures tend to play a predominant role, as was the case with Bert Karlsson who founded Nye Demokrati in Sweden and with Mogens Glistrup who founded the Fremskridtsparti in Denmark. The latter declared that paying taxes was damaging the country and compared tax-evasion with the resistance against the Nazi occupation. And as if to prove that he was a resistance fighter he was sent to jail for tax-evasion. In other instances we find parties which are founded by persons with the intention of preventing incarceration as was the case with Ruiz Mateos in Spain who campaigned for the European elections in 1989 and much to his own surprise won 3 seats in the European parliament (Pilar del Castillo, 1995). One may wonder whether Berlusconi did not have similar motives when he founded

Forza Italia. All this, however, does not mean that parties like that of Ruiz Mateos or Berlusconi do not have a political program.

One should be aware of the fact that all parties which present a radically new political discourse are accused of not having a proper party program. The political establishment tends to judge the political weight of a new political formation according to traditional criteria. Nearly all new political parties have been labeled as «protest parties» when they first appeared on the political scene. The political analyst should be aware of this and not simply copy the political vocabulary of the established elites.

Sometimes, however, the new 'a-political politicians' seem indeed to have no political program at all. They call for fun-politics as did the stand-up comedian Coluche in France or erotic-politics, as did the porno-actress Ciciollina of the Radical Party in Italy. Such persons can be singled out for their style rather than their program, but they all tend to call for some soft form of civil disobedience. Such parties can indeed be labeled protest parties, but these should be set apart from the extreme right, because they only share the anti-parliamentary theme of the extreme right doctrine. They should also be set apart from the racist parties. Their main concern is not immigration -even though their leaders sometimes utter racist phrases- nor do they defend violence against foreigners. Their main target is not the immigrants but politics in general.

Nevertheless, there remains an uneasy link between the attitude of political protest and the traditional extreme right. This linkage is best expressed in the seminal article of Juan Linz, «Some Notes Toward a Comparative Study of Fascism in Sociological Historical Perspective» (1976). Linz defends the thesis that fascist movements «were latecomers on the political scene, at the time when, in most countries, the party system had already been crystallized». Therefore, fascism is forced into an anti-system position and develops an anti-ideology. Linz defined fascism «as a hypernationalist, often pan-nationalist, anti-parliamentary, anti-liberal, anti-communist, populist and therefore anti-proletarian, partly anti-capitalist and anti-bourgeois, anti-clerical, or at least, non-clerical movement» (Linz, 1976:12). Fascism had to carve out a niche in the ideological field occupied by liberalism, marxism and conservatism; it had to find its place in the electoral space already defined in terms of left and right; it had to compete for militants with the already established mass movements, like the socialist -communist- and conservative parties. It was not able, so Linz argues, to attach itself to a certain social class or segment of society. It has to draw its support from all classes, regions and occupations. The fascist party was a catch-all party avant la lettre. It

was a protest movement by temporal and structural necessity. The main difference then, between the «anti-character» of the extreme right and the protest parties in the narrow sense of the word is that the latter do not develop a fulfilled ideology and do not aim at taken state-power. Protest parties are typically single issue parties which do not provide an alternative for the political system they attack. The correspondence between racist -and protest parties lies in the fact that both are the lepers in the political arena. Racist parties may become protest parties for this very reason. With the extreme right the protest parties share the 'anti-politics' attitude which tend to steer the protest parties in the direction of anti-parliamentarianism.

8. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper we have tried to disentangle some definitional and conceptual knots which one inevitably encounters when studying anti-immigrant parties in Western Europe. We have defined the extreme right parties in terms of a fulfilled ideology, racist parties as typically single issue parties with an anti-immigrant platform and protest parties as parties that attract many protest votes. These latter parties sometimes are called extreme right or 'xenophobic' because their leaders have made xenophobic remarks. However, since they do not meet our criteria for calling them extreme right or racist, these parties do not belong to the political family which we will call extreme right.

We have noticed in passing that the labeling of anti-immigrant parties as extreme right, racist or protest parties is far from neutral. In the political arena to be labeled 'racist' or 'extreme right' is tantamount to being excommunicated from the political elite if not from the political arena. It creates a spoiled identity and in some countries -like Germany- it may even lead to prohibition of the party. Hence to prevent this label is for many anti-immigrant parties a matter of political or legal survival. Whether or not such a label is attached to a certain party is at least partly dependent on the scientific community which provides the 'expertise' upon which a political or legal judgement may be based. Hence the discussions within the scientific community directly influences the political discussion and the other way around: through various means politics sets the agenda for scientific research on anti-immigrant parties. The very tight relationship between the political and the scientific discussion makes it even more necessary to mark the boundaries between the two arenas.

The labeling of anti-immigrant parties is by no means neutral in purely scientific terms. There is a relation between research methodology and

conceptual framework. Those who start from a «continuity thesis», for example, tend to concentrate on militants and will more often than not label the parties 'extreme right', referring to the political careers of some older militants (Van Donselaar, 1993). Those who start from the migration perspective will tend to focus on the political process in which resentment against immigrants is formulated. These scholars tend to label the parties «racist» or «xenophobic» (Husbands, 1983 and 1988). Those who concentrate on the electoral support of anti-immigrant parties tend to focus on the motivation of the individual voter and frequently use the term «protest party» or «right-wing populism» (Betz, 1994; Pfahl-Traugber, 1994). Finally those who concentrate on party programs and - ideology are generally hesitant to give any label at all because the parties are quite different in the programs and ideology (see Mudde, 1995a and 1995b). Without an elaborate definition of extreme right ideology it is difficult, if not impossible to decide whether a given party is extreme right. Hence the work of scholars, like Mudde, who refrain from a clearcut definition, is bound to remain descriptive.

We suggest that the study of political programs is important to see whether the anti-immigrant parties should be called extreme right parties, ideologically distinct from other right-wing parties. Analyzing their program we may conclude that some anti-immigrant parties should properly be called xenophobic or racist parties, others are extreme right parties, while again others conform to the definition of protest parties.

If we study militants, the focus is more on the political style and practices of parties. It may be the case that party militants consistently harass immigrants and attack their property and hence their party can be properly labeled racist. Here the «backstage» of the parties becomes an important element in the research strategy. The role of violence in extreme right formations should be analysed in more detail to find out whether the violence is a crucial feature. We have reasons to assume that violence is less instrumental more expressive in extreme right movements than in other political movements.

By focusing on the electorates we may find out whether the voters can properly be labeled protest voters or should be considered a xenophobic issue voters. We also are able to relate the anti-immigrant parties to the other parties in the system and to see whether these parties fit into the discursive field which defines the left-right ideological dimension. Hence we can decide whether the term extreme right refers to the space at the outer limit of the left right scale, or whether the term refers to a position beyond right and left.

NOTES

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1. But see the fierce attacks on Rousseau by José Antonio Primo de Rivera (1933).
2. Thus, a political theorist from nineteenth century America defends slavery with the arguments that it is the only way of building a multi-racial society. The slave republic had the historic task of «erecting a nationality upon the union of races, where other nations have but one» (Sollors, 1980).

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