The Extreme Right-Wing Populist Challenge and the Transformation of Political Space in Western Europe

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1. Introduction

In the course of the last two decades, right-wing populist parties have gained sizable vote shares in France, Switzerland, and Austria. In the Netherlands, Pim Fortuyn has succeeded in breaking into a party system whose segmentation and "pillarization" once made it an example of stability. Throughout much of the post-war period, Switzerland and Austria had also been marked by a high stability of the party alternatives. In these countries, as well as in Denmark, Norway, Italy, and Belgium, the success of new parties of the right has largely surpassed that of older parties of the extreme right, which seemed to have represented a "normal pathology" resulting from tensions created by rapid change in industrial societies (Scheuch, Klingemann 1967). Certainly, the optimism of the "golden age" of growth after World War II has given way to more gloomy feelings of malaise in the era of unemployment and austerity politics. The enduring success of right-wing populist parties, however, as well as the increasing similarity of their discourse suggest that they are more than a populist outbreak of disenchantment with electoral politics. Rather, it has become apparent that a common potential must underlie their rise.

Right-wing populist parties should be seen, I suggest in this paper, in the larger context of changing societal structures that have affected party systems since the late 1960s. More specifically, the populist right rides the tide of a broader societal movement that represents a counter-offensive to the universalistic values advocated by the New Social Movements that have come up in the 1960s. The subsequent emergence of Ecologist parties and the New Left transformation of Social Democracy have caused a first restructuring of political space in the 1970s and 1980s (Kitschelt 1994). In contrast, the populist right has driven a second re-definition of the dimensions of political conflict in the 1990s (Kriesi et al. 2006). A new cultural line of conflict has thereby taken shape across Europe that opposes libertarian-universalistic and traditionalist-communitarian values. As a result, the various types of extreme right parties that Kitschelt (1995) has distinguished have largely vanished since their turn to identity politics. Consequently, I argue that right-wing populist parties mobilize more or less exclusively on the cultural dimension of conflict. What remains of their market-liberal credentials, which play an important role in Kitschelt's (1995) "winning formula" of the New Radical Right, are therefore largely irrelevant to their success.

As a result of their programmatic convergence, right-wing populist parties' discourse now centres on three convictions. They claim, first, that traditional norms based on common understanding stand over abstract universalistic principles, and second, that multicultural society destroys the "organically grown" national community, and thus dilutes those traditional norms. Thirdly, they insist on the primacy of politics, in that majority decisions taken within a political community stand above universalistic normative principles and decisions taken by supra-national political authorities such as the European Union.

Although I argue that the potential underlying right-wing populist parties' appeal is cultural, economic factors have shaped the prospects for the mobilization of this potential in one specific respect. The processes of globalization and European integration have resulted in a diminished autonomy of economic and social policy making at the national level, and have thereby contributed to a weakening of the saliency of economic as opposed to cultural conflicts. Because the mobilization of the populist right hinges crucially on the saliency of cultural, as opposed to economically defined group divisions within its electorate, globalization and Europeanization have catalyzed the (belated) manifestation of the conservative pole of the universalistic-traditionalist axis of political conflict.

In the first part of this paper, I argue from a theoretical point of view that the populist right's traditionalist-communitarian discourse represents a polar normative ideal to the libertarian-universalistic conviction of the New Left. Section 3 then discusses the potentials underlying the rise of right-wing populist parties. Because these potentials may be mobilized both by parties of the established right, as well as the populist right, a clear distinction between these two party families is crucial. In section 4, I lay out three analytical criteria for this task. Section 5 empirically substantiates the claim that right-wing populist parties occupy a distinct position at the traditionalist-communitarian pole of the new cultural divide structuring competition in Western European party systems. This analysis of party positions in the political space covers six countries (France, Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, Germany, and Britain), and relies on data based on a sentence-by-sentence coding of the newspaper coverage of election campaigns in six countries (see Kriesi et al. 2006). By means of this data, the axes structuring political competition can be determined using Multidimensional Scaling (MDS).

2.   The New Cultural Conflict

The advent of value-based conflicts in the late 1960s

Around 1968, new political issues came up that had more to do with values and life-styles than with traditional, distributional conflicts. As Inglehart (1977) has put it, a "silent revolution" took place that led segments of society to question traditional societal values and forms of politics. Differing somewhat from this initial emphasis on political styles (e.g., Offe 1985), the resulting disputes are now more often described as cultural and value-based in character. A "postmodern political conflict" has developed, which was characterized by Inglehart as an opposition between materialist and post-materialist values. As Flanagan and Lee (2003) have recently shown, an opposition between "libertarian" and "authoritarian" values continues to polarize the inhabitants of advanced industrial countries. The two authors conceive the shift from authoritarian to libertarian values as part of a long-term process of secularization, which leads from theism over modernism to postmodernism. In theism, the localization of authority is external and transcendental, and truth and morality are based on absolute principles. In modernism, it is still external, and universal, but based in and constructed by society. Finally, in postmodernism, the location of authority "has become internal and individual" (Flanagan, Lee 2003: 237). The mobilization and the counter-mobilization around the antagonisms between authority and autonomy, and between conformism and non-conformism, according to Flanagan and Lee, are expressions of this shift.

Consequently, after distributive issues had structured the left-right divide for a long time, the movements of the New Left brought value and identity issues on the political agenda. Dalton, Flanagan, and Beck (1984), together with Inglehart (1984), claimed early on that identity- and lifestyle-politics were transforming the traditional left-right dimension, leading to the political realignment of social groups that blurred the socio-structural basis of voting choice. In a similar vein, Kitschelt (1994) has then shown that in the 1980s, the value divide has created a two-dimensional political space in European party systems. Cutting across the "old" distributional axis, a line of conflict opposing libertarian and authoritarian values had come to structure the attitudes of voters. At the heart of this conflict, in Kitschelt's account, are different conceptions of

community, where the values of equality and liberty in a self-organized community form the one pole, while values centring on paternalism and corporatism form the opposite pole (Kitschelt 1994: 9-12).

This conception is quite similar to the somewhat broader pattern that Flanagan and Lee (2003) have detected. As a variety of sources of the policy positions of political parties show, political space in advanced western democracies is at least two, if not three-dimensional (Warwick 2002). However, it is not clear to which degree these dimensions are really new or if they have simply been rendered more salient in the past decades. Most probably, this is due to the fact that the new value opposition so far has only been discussed in relation to the traditional class cleavage. But even if most European party systems do not carry the stamp of all four cleavages that resulted from the national and industrial revolutions (Rokkan 2000), many European countries are characterized by more than just one cleavage. With the religious cleavage representing the second common structuring element of European party systems (Kriesi 1994: 211-234), political space in multiparty systems is likely to have been two-dimensional already before the New Social Movements of the 1960s and 1970s transformed the meaning of „left" and „right". Indeed, Flanagan and Lee's (2003) explicitly relate today's libertarian-authoritarian value divide to an opposition between religious and secular worldviews.

On the political left, the prominence of libertarian political issues has given rise to the establishment of Ecologist parties and a transformation of Social Democratic parties early on in the 1980s, as Kitschelt (1994) has shown. As a result of this change, they have attracted an increasing number of votes from the middle class, especially in certain constituencies of it such as among the so-called social-cultural professionals (Kriesi 1993, 1998, Müller 1999). At least initially, the impact of this new dimension of conflict has had less of a uniform impact on the political right, although Kitschelt (1995) has argued that radical right parties constituted the opposite pole on the new libertarian-authoritarian axis of conflict, and in spite of Ignazi's (1992, 2003) early interpretation of radical right parties are a "by-product of a Silent Counter-revolution" to Inglehart's "Silent Revolution". Kitschelt's (1995: Ch. 1) explicit differentiation of European radical right-wing parties exemplifies the heterogeneity of this category.

Paradoxically, while empirical studies have shown that an authoritarian potential arose at approximately the same time as the libertarian potential (Sacchi 1998), this has

not immediately resulted in strong support for traditionalist stances. For the traditionalist or authoritarian potential to be politicized in a way that mobilizes broad segments of society, it has to be connected with more concrete political conflicts that are conductive to collective identity formation. Both social movement theory, as well as Cleavage-theory teaches us that a durable organization of collective interests requires the prior construction of a collective identity (Melucci 1996, Klandermans 1997, Tarrow 1992, Rokkan 2000, Bartolini, Mair 1990, Bartolini 2000). Whereas the libertarian movements demanded the recognition of difference, the traditionalist-authoritarian pattern, although equally an expression of identity politics, is essentially conservative, rather than liberating. As a conservative movement, the underlying values and goals appear more diffuse than those leading to the grass-roots mobilization of the movements of the libertarian left. Consequently, their political manifestation depends much more heavily on the deliberate molding of a collective identity by political elites.

With their "identitarian turn", as Betz (2004) has termed it, right-wing populist parties appear to have found a political message that is conductive to collective identity formation, resulting in a convergence of their programmatic profile in a number of European countries in the 1990s (Bornschier 2005a). I postulate the programmatic profile right-wing populist parties to have converged regarding two features that make this party family represent the counter-pole to the libertarian left. The first centres on the new issues or discourses embodied in their anti-immigration stance, which does not involve ethnic racism, but rather what Betz (2002, 2004) has called "differentialist nativism" or "cultural racism". A second group of issues brought up by the populist right represents a reaction against the societal changes brought about by the libertarian left, and includes the rejection of the multicultural model of society as well as universalistic values in general. Both groups of issues are theoretically as well as empirically situated at one pole of a new line of conflict that may be labelled libertarian-universalistic vs. traditionalist-communitarian, as we shall see. The next section will briefly substantiate the claim that the issues advocated by the libertarian left and the populist right are indeed polar normative ideas.

From a theoretical perspective, Rokeach (1973) has suggested early on that the space of possible ideological positions is two-dimensional. While Rokeach finds a number of values to structure people's belief systems, there are severe limits to the number of combinations that are effectively viable when it comes to politically relevant values. Furthermore, the range of possibilities is limited because most combinations of values are devoid of "human activity", as Wildavsky (1987: 6) puts it. That is, they are not viable because they have no cultural or historical material to draw upon, no relevant paradigms or blueprints. As a consequence, Rokeach proposes a model where politically relevant ideologies are ultimately combinations of two values: freedom and equality. Similar dimensions are found in the accounts of Wildavsky and his colleagues (Wildavsky 1987, Thompson et al. 1990), and while there is disagreement concerning the labelling of the two dimensions, they essentially correspond to those propagated by Kitschelt (1994): Conflicts over the value of equality structure the state-market axis, while differing emphases on freedom structure the universalistic vs. communitarian or libertarian vs. authoritarian axis of conflict. In other words, these issues are not new as such; only their rising salience is intrinsic to post-industrial societies.

A synthesis of normative models of democracy provided by Fuchs (2002: 40-43) suggests that our conception of viable value-combinations indeed draws on existing blueprints or normative substantiations. In Fuchs' mapping, a first dimension that is observable within political thought represents the responsibility of citizens' life, opposing self-responsibility and a strong role of the state in achieving material equality, corresponding to the established state-market line of conflict. The second dimension concerns the nature of the relationship between individuals. It is exemplified by libertarian or liberal conceptions of democracy on the one hand and republican conceptions on the other.

This latter dimension is at the centre of the ongoing philosophical debate between liberals and communitarians, opposing individualist and communitarian conceptions of the person (see Honneth 1993). Implicit in this discussion is an opposition between universalistic and traditionalistic values. Although communitarian thinkers such as

Walzer (1983) and Taylor (1992) only propose a (modest) communitarian corrective to liberal universalism, this debate has provided theoretical grounds for a more far-reaching critique of the universalistic principles established by Rawls (1971). As an example of the liberal account, Dahl (1989) denies any substantive values as constituting the common good. In his conception, the common good consists in the conditions of equal participation – in the universalistic democratic process itself, in other words.

Even moderate communitarians such as Michael Walzer (1983) and Charles Taylor (1992) have argued that universalistic principles may violate cultural traditions within an established community and therefore engender the danger of being oppressive. If humans are inherently social beings, the application of universalistic principles may lead to political solutions that clash with established cultural practices. And since the liberal-universalistic theory no less than other accounts ultimately depends on the plausibility of this conception of the individual, this view cannot be considered as more objective than a communitarian approach, as Taylor (1992) argues. Communitarians, on the other hand, urge us to acknowledging the fact that our identities are grounded in cultural traditions, and that an individualistic conception of the self is misconceived.

Philosophical currents of the European New Right have borrowed from communitarian conceptions of community and justice in their propagation of the concept of "cultural differentialism", claiming not the superiority of any nationality or race, but instead stressing the right of peoples to preserve their distinctive traditions. This discourse, in turn, has proved highly influential for the discourse of right-wing populist parties (Antonio 2000, Minkenberg 2000). Thus, the liberal-communitarian debate may well have rendered such ideas more plausible, although I would not go as far as suggesting a substantial affinity between the two currents, as Birnbaum (1996) has claimed. However, what seems plausible is that communitarian arguments have provided a "blueprint" (in the above-mentioned sense) or a broader justification for the right-wing populist parties' differentialist discourse, which is much harder to attack intellectually than biological racism.

From a theoretical point of view, then, the defence of cultural tradition and a rejection of the multicultural model of society represent a counter-pole to individualistic and universalistic conceptions of community. Immigration is directly

linked to this conflict since the inflow of people from other cultural backgrounds endangers the cultural homogeneity that thinkers of the New Right as well as exponents of right-wing populist parties deem necessary to preserve. Equally present in communitarian thinking as well as in the discourse of the populist right is an emphasis of the primacy of politics over abstract normative principles. In Walzer's (1983: Ch. 2) account, the right to self-determination within a political community includes the right to limit immigration in order to preserve established ways of life.

3. Potentials and Mechanisms Underlying the Rise of the Populist Right

The mobilization of the traditionalist-communitarian potential

The main innovation of right-wing populist parties, as opposed to older overtly racist parties, is the adoption of a discourse based on "differentialist nativism" (Betz 2002, 2004), and an advocacy of the introduction of direct democratic institutions. These are important changes for the following reasons: On the one hand, social psychological studies have shown that "blatent" prejudice is relatively rare among European citizens, while more subtle forms of prejudice are much more common (Pettigrew, Meertens 1995). On the other hand, democracy represents an almost universal value in advanced industrial nations (Fuchs et al. 1995). Hence, by avoiding overtly racist statements and in advocating more instead of less democracy, the new populist right can mobilize beyond the more narrow radical right constituency.

Rather than rallying a diverse group of voters whose main characteristic is a diffuse resentment vis-à-vis the established parties, I claim that right-wing populist parties mobilize a relatively well-defined group of citizens located at the traditionalist-communitarian pole of the new cultural line of conflict. If these voters are distrustful of the established parties, then this does not imply that their vote for the populist right is primarily a protest vote. Rather, their distrust results from the perception that none of the established parties has forcefully opposed the political enforcement of universalistic values, and therefore fail to represent their views.

Differing from Kitschelt's (1995) claim that the most successful right-wing populist parties mobilize by means of a combination of authoritarian and free-market issues, my argument implies that these parties almost exclusively mobilize along the cultural divide. There is some evidence to suggest that right-wing populist parties are increasingly elected by citizens we would not expect to have very market-liberal preferences. While the petty bourgeoisie used to be over-represented among the voters of these parties, their support base now includes sizable proportions of citizens that can be considered the losers of modernization due to their lack of education and their low or obsolete skills. Betz (2004) has referred to this shift as a "proletarianization" of the populist right's support base. The working class has become the core clientele of parties such as the French Front National, the Austrian FPÖ, the Progress Party in Norway, the Danish People's Party, and the Belgian Flaams Blok, now renamed to Flaams Belang (Perrineau 1997, Mayer 2002, Plasser, Ulram 2000, McGann, Kitschelt 2005, Bjørklund, Andersen 2002, Swyngedouw 1998, Betz 2001, Oesch 2006, Minkenberg, Perrineau 2007).

Studies of the ideological profile of the Front National's electorate by Perrineau (1997) Mayer (2002) and Bornschier (2007a) suggest that its lower-class component has strongly "leftist" or state-interventionist preferences concerning economic policy, contradicting Kitschelt's proposition. Similarly, Ivarsflaten (2005) presents evidence that those voting for the populist right in France and Denmark are fundamentally divided on the economic axis. To the degree that right-wing populist parties still take a market-liberal stance as they did in the 1980s, I assume lower-class citizens to vote for them *despite* the parties' economic profile, rather than because of it. And what is even more plausible is that the changes in their electorates have engendered a shift away from neo-liberal demands on the part of right-wing populist parties in the 1990s, as Betz (2001, 2004) has suggested.

To be able to mobilize an electorate that is characterized by diverse economic preferences, cultural, as opposed to economic conflicts must constitute and remain the primary concern for the voters of the populist right. By implication, the enduring success of these parties crucially depends on the prevalence of culturally, as opposed to economically defined group identifications among its rows. Thus, to the degree that the collective identities and organizational loyalties related to the traditional state-market cleavage remain strong, they limit the room for the mobilization of new group

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divisions. In this respect, the processes of globalization and of European integration have contributed to the weakening of economically defined antagonisms, and have provided right-wing populist parties with an excellent opportunity to denounce the lack of responsiveness of the established parties.

Denationalization as a catalyst for the manifestation of the new cultural potential

Broadly defined, globalization can be understood as a spatial widening and an intensification of regional or global economic and cultural interactions (Goldblatt et al. 1997: 271, Held et al. 1999). In the economic domain, the lowering of boundaries between nation-states nourishes and accelerates the process of economic modernization. By exposing certain sectors to increasing competition, it is likely to engender new social divisions (Kriesi et al. 2006, Esping-Andersen 1999). The "losers" of modernization are lower-skilled individuals who either have increasing difficulty in competing on the labor market, or who face a relative decline in real income, depending on a country's politico-economic system (Scharpf 2000a: 68-124). Income distribution trends show that the share of households at the lowest end of the post-redistribution income scale has risen in countries such as Great Britain, Austria, the Netherlands and slightly in Switzerland since the 1970s or 1980s, while Germany and France do not display such a clear trend (Alderson, Beckfield, Nielsen 2005).

At the same time, the policy repertoire available to national governments is constrained as a consequence of agreements to liberalize international capital flows and trade, some of which are formally enforced by institutions such as the European Union and the World Trade Organization. As a consequence, a real problem of legitimacy arises, since "Governments must increasingly avoid policy choices that would be both domestically popular and economically feasible out of respect for GATT rules and European law or as a result of decisions made by the WTO, the European Commission, or the European Court of Justice" (Scharpf 2000b: 116; similarly Mény and Surel 2000, Offe 1996). As Huber and Stephens show, partisan effects on a whole array of welfare state indicators have vanished in the 1980s, when "(…) governments found themselves with dramatically fewer options" (Huber, Stephens 2001: 221).

Many governments have explicitly justified unpopular measures in economic and social policy making with the structural imperatives of globalization and EU-integration, an example being the obligation to fulfill the Maastricht requirements in order to participate in the European Monetary Union. As a consequence, a potential arises for political actors that insist on the *primacy of autonomous national politics* as against these obligations. Right-wing populist parties, in this sense, can be understood as "anti-cartel parties", which mobilize resentment because the established parties are no longer responsive to the preferences of voters (Katz, Mair 1995, Blyth, Katz 2005). Kitschelt (2000) has vividly criticized this view, arguing that parties always have an interest in exiting the cartel in order to attract votes.[1] However, and this is a further implication, the possibilities of appealing to specific social groups are much more limited in the context of austerity politics and budgetary restraint than in the high times of Keynesianism in the post-war decades. In the contemporary context, as Blyth and Katz (2005) argue, where parties are unable to constantly expand the provision of public goods to secure their support, cartelization represents a rational response. The solution parties have opted for is a collective discourse of "downsizing expectations", "externalizing policy commitments" to independent central banks, the EU or other supra-national organizations, and distancing themselves even further than the catch-all party type from any defined social constituency that could hold them accountable (Blyth, Katz 2005: 42).

This is not to say that parties have converged in their rhetoric. In fact, evidence from the programmatic statements that parties put forward in election campaigns suggests that the major parties of the left and right have converged regarding economic policy only in Germany and Britain, but not in France, Switzerland, Austria or the Netherlands since the 1970s (Kriesi et al. 2006). No more can we expect the left and right to pursue the same policies once in office. Even if the general thrust of the economic policy making in France, for example, has been a liberalizing one in the past two decades, the reforms of left-wing and right-wing governments continue to differ in the way they affect specific social groups (Levy 2000, 2005). However, in conjuncture

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1 Here, Kitschelt's argument is somewhat inconsistent since a few pages on, he traces dissatisfaction with parties to the very non-responsiveness that Katz and Mair (1995) can be assumed to have in mind: „Dissatisfaction with parties does not originate in their new capacity to form cartels and dissociate themselves from their voters, but [...] in the political-economic agenda of policy-making, confronting parties with inevitable trade-offs among objectives voters would like to maximize jointly [...]" (Kitschelt 2000: 160).

with Social Democracy's increasingly middle class support base and an emphasis on the constraints of globalization, the left no longer issues very class-specific appeals.[2] Furthermore, their new core constituency of socio-cultural professionals has political preferences that differ from those of their old core constituency, the manual working class (Kitschelt, Rehm 2005). In appealing to social-cultural specialists, the New Left has increasingly framed its social policy in terms of universalistic values, for instance by uncoupling entitlements from labor market participation (Häusermann 2007). The left has thus further eroded its support in the working classes by advocating policies that are diametrically opposed to the preferences of their old core constituency, which holds rather traditionalist values, as Kriesi et al. (2008) show.

Even if programmatic stances continue to diverge, the left has thereby adopted a cross-class rhetoric that has traditionally been a characteristic of the political right. Voters are therefore increasingly unlikely to interpret the differences in parties' programmatic offer in class terms, with the effect of weakening the collective identities underlying the traditional (worker vs. non-worker) state-market opposition. Along the "new" state-market cleavage that opposes citizens with different views concerning economic policy, the middle class is at least as divided internally as the working class is distant from the middle and upper classes.[3] Furthermore, concerning those segments most affected by economic modernization, persistently high levels of unemployment or declining standards of living have led to a loss of credibility of parties' promises to solve such problems. No matter how pressing economic grievances are, these social groups' class-based collective identities may have been weakened to the extent that they become receptive for culturally framed mobilization efforts. Voting for right-wing populist parties then becomes a viable option, even if these parties do not generally advocate state interventionist economic policies.

Right-wing populist parties have seized the opportunities associated with an insistence on the primacy of national politics in two ways. In what may be called the *political logic* of their mobilization, they have denounced the "cartelization" of the established parties of the left and right, which allegedly no longer differ in their policies. In this sense, the populist right has profited from the processes of globalization and European integration in an indirect way. But it has also more directly

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2   For a similar argument, see Goldthorpe (2002: 15-20).
3   The country studies in Kriesi et al. (2008) provide empirical evidence concerning this point.

exploited them by attacking the gradual process of denationalization. Betz (2002, 2004) has provided evidence that right-wing populist parties increasingly take an anti-globalist stance in their programs. In election campaigns, on the other hand, an explicit pro- vs. anti-globalization conflict is so far not very prominent (Kriesi et al. 2006). A similar conflict is embodied in disputes over European integration, however. Because the delegation of competences to the EU to a certain extent undermines an autonomous economic and social policy at the national level, there is both a cultural or political, as well as an economic rationale for opposing European integration.

Right-wing Populist Parties Within their Party Systems

If a sizable proportion of the electorate hold preferences that are located at the traditionalist-communitarian pole of the cultural axis structuring the belief systems of citizens in advanced industrial countries, it is of course not evident why it should be (exclusively) right-wing populist parties that mobilize this potential. Indeed, I assume that where the established parties take a clear position on the cultural axis and do not leave the related issues to marginal political actors, right-wing populist parties are presumably less successful in mobilizing the potential described above.

At the same time, it is plausible that right-wing populist parties have advantages over the established right in mobilizing this potential. For one thing, voters may prefer the original (right-wing populist party) to the copy, as Jean-Marie Le Pen has frequently stated. For another, the populist right's discourse itself contributes to moulding the attitudes that are supportive to its success. As I have argued, the traditionalist-communitarian bundle of values represents a rather diffuse conservative potential, which is less tied to concrete issues than the fight for recognition of difference on the part of the New Social Movements of the left. Hence, the movements of the right's struggle for recognition has so far often manifested itself not in genuinely new issues but in the "resurfacing" of older identity categories such as national identity and culture – even if they appear in new disguise as in the case of the "differentialist nativist" discourse. The reaction to the societal transformations since the 1960s could, in principle, take various forms, and there have been earlier variants such as the neo-conservative ideology (see Habermas 1985). My contention is that a traditionalist-

communitarian discourse and an opposition to immigration are the most promising way to mobilize the anti-universalistic potential because they are highly conductive to collective identity formation. It thus fosters a much broader following and a stronger appeal among the more disadvantaged sectors of society than was the case for the neo-conservative movement.

Quite often, however, conservative parties actually launched the debate around immigration in the early 1980s, but then lost the ownership of the issue to the extreme right (Ignazi 1992, 2003). A central factor mediating right-wing populist parties' success therefore appears to be whether or not the established parties of the right (continue to) take a clear position along the cultural divide. As Kitschelt (1994) has shown, Socialist parties have positioned themselves near the libertarian-universalistic pole of the cultural dimension of conflict, which has resulted in a realignment of voters on the political left (Kriesi 1993a, 1998, Müller 1999). The parties of the established right have found it more difficult to take a clear position on the new axis, because the electoral coalition that has so far supported them is often divided over the new cultural issues. In most cases, it has therefore been the populist right that drove a process of realignment triggered by cultural issues. As a consequence, a differentiation into Old Right and New Right similar to that between Old Left and New Left has occurred. On the other hand, there have been cases such as Britain and Germany where the populist right did not achieve a breakthrough. To the degree that the political space similarly structured across Western Europe, it appears that right-wing populist parties are only successful in mobilizing the traditionalist-communitarian potential if the established right does not adopt a similar discourse.

If established right-wing parties and new populist right may at times advocate similar issues, then the question arises how these two groups of parties can be analyti-cally distinguished. In the following section, I suggest criteria to demarcate the right-wing populist party family from its mainstream competitors. It is then empirically verified to which degree right-wing populist parties have actually converged on a profile corresponding to the discourse of the New Right, and are located at the traditionalist-communitarian pole of the new cultural divide. Furthermore, I verify the claim that the political space in Germany and Britain is structured by the same dimensions as in France, Switzerland, Austria and the Netherlands, and that

established parties of the right therefore seem able to absorb the potentials that their more polarizing right-wing populist counterparts thrive upon.

4. An Extreme Right-wing Populist Party Family?

The term (extreme) right-wing populist is used in this paper to denote political parties that, despite having distinct historical origins, can be distinguished from others on the basis of a number of commonalities. A first useful definition is offered by Ignazi (2003), who defines extreme right-wing parties as situated at the extreme of the left-right spectrum. Building on Ignazi's criterion of extremeness, I specify the extreme right-wing populist party family as a sub-group of the broader category of extreme right parties. The distinctiveness of the populist right has a programmatic and a contextual component. In *programmatic terms,* it represents a more moderate sub-group of the broader extreme right category by virtue of its "differentialist nativist" or culturalist discourse and its renunciation of biological racism. The criterion of relative extremeness has the advantage of making the definition inclusive towards parties that declare supporting democracy or even call for the introduction of direct democratic means of citizen participation. While their pro-democratic discourse makes it difficult to call them anti-system parties, extreme right-wing populist parties are certainly polarizing parties, drawing on Capoccia's (2002) framework. It is therefore only for the sake of brevity that I at times drop the term "extreme" from their label. While Ignazi (2003) pays little attention to the specific discourses that extreme right parties may employ, the work of Betz (2004) has drawn scholarly attention to the discursive innovations in the populist right's discourse. As van der Brug, Fennema, and Tillie (2005) show, the framing of the populist right issue agenda seems to matter, since their success depends on their being perceived and evaluated as normal parties by voters.

In *contextual terms,* it matters whether or not extreme right parties are conceived as a product of a new cultural conflict in advanced industrial societies. If this is the case, then they must represent a phenomenon different from extreme right parties outside advanced industrial countries both in terms of their raison d'être, as well as in terms of the mechanisms underlying their rise. Thus, while Australia's One Nation Party is a potential candidate for inclusion in the right-wing populist party family (see Mughan,

Bean, McAllister 2003), the parties of the extreme right in Eastern Europe are almost certainly not. Consequently, the potential benefit of analyzing the determinants of the success of all these parties jointly is small, as Norris' (2005) analysis puts in evidence. Even an elementary distinction between "old" and "new" extreme right parties shows that their electoral fortunes depend on different factors, as Goulder (2003) empirically demonstrates.

The term "populist" in the extreme right-wing populist party label refers to a specific style of discourse and to characteristics of the internal structure of these parties. These elements have been important in the mobilization of this party family, but are not necessarily specific to it. For a new party to break into an existing party system with a fully mobilized electorate, it must succeed in displacing the existing structure of conflict by a new one, as Schattschneider (1975: Ch. 4) has pointed out. A promising way to do this is to denounce the established parties of being unresponsive to what really cleaves the electorate, and to accuse them of deliberately forming a "cartel" to protect their privileges. Thus, the populist right's anti-establishment discourse has been part and parcel of its role in drawing up a new conflict between libertarian-universalistic and traditionalist-communitarian values. In addition, these parties are characterized by a hierarchical internal structure that differs from the pluralist organization of mass parties. This allows them to adapt quickly to new circumstances and to seize programmatic opportunity structures more quickly than the established parties, which interpret new issues in terms of the existing structure of conflicts, and thereby seek to reinforce existing cleavages.

A strategic flexibility has already been a key to right-wing populist parties' success in the 1980s, when they still propagated quite diverse issues, for example neo-liberal demands in the case of the Front National and the FPÖ (e.g., Ignazi 2003). Their internal party structure has remained a prime advantage thereafter, allowing them to thrive on new potentials, such as those stemming from diffuse resentments against Muslims after September 11, 2001 (see Betz 2005), or from widespread feelings of insecurity that have fuelled the law and order issue. The populist right has catered the associated issues by pointing out that they belong to a more salient line of conflict than those represented by the established parties. A case in point is the reversal of its originally favourable stance regarding European unification, framing opposition to the project in terms of its traditionalist-communitarian convictions, as we shall see. While

the established parties are divided regarding European integration and therefore avoid taking clear positions (Kriesi et al. 2006, Bartolini 2005), the populist right can successfully combine a critique of the integration project with the political anti-establishment logic of their mobilization.

To distinguish the extreme right-wing populist party family, I use three empirically applicable criteria that sum up this discussion. One is related to these parties' extreme position in political space, while two are related to their populist style of mobilization:

(1) *A location at the extreme on the ideological axis ranging from libertarian-universalistic to traditionalist-communitarian positions.*

(2) A *populist anti-establishment discourse,* in which right-wing populist parties draw a political line of conflict between themselves and the established parties. This is the "political logic" of their mobilization, which they use to portray themselves as anti-cartel-parties and defenders of real democracy. Drawing up a politically defined antagonism, in addition to the divide based on interests or values, also helps them to bridge the internal divisions within their heterogeneous electorate, and to mould a new collective identity.

(3) A *hierarchical internal structure,* setting them apart from the pluralist organization of the established parties. This allows them to repeatedly revert their policy-positions in response to sentiments in the populace, as the vast country-specific literature on their programmatic stances testifies.

Parties have to conform to all three criteria to be included in the group of extreme right-wing populist parties. For example, Mudde (1996: 231ff, 2000) criticizes the concept of populism, employed on its own, as primarily describing a political style and not a specific ideology. While agreeing on this point, I consider the combination of a traditionalist-communitarian stance with a populist anti-establishment discourse as a central element in distinguishing right-wing populist parties from the established right, which may at times advocate similar policy positions for tactical reasons. Since the empirical analysis in the next section primarily focuses on parties' positions in political space, I will provide some support concerning the other two criteria in a brief manner now.

Strong evidence for the importance of the internal party structure is provided by the two cases where a pre-existing, established party underwent a transformation to an exponent of the populist right. The rise of the Austrian FPÖ or the Swiss SVP was accompanied by an abandonment of their former pluralist party organizations in favour of a hierarchical machinery allowing a charismatic leader to dominate the apparatus. This is supported by Ignazi's (2003: 111-116) description of Jörg Haider's ascension to the leadership of the FPÖ, as well as by the Swiss experience (see Skenderovic 2005, Bornschier 2007a). The remaining two candidates for inclusion in the extreme right-wing populist family, namely, the Front National and the List Pim Fortuyn, also fulfil the second and third criterion. The Front National's anti-establishment discourse is well known, Jean-Marie Le Pen regularly referring to the established parties as the "gang of four" and denouncing the lies of the "candidates of the system" (Le Monde, 25.4.1995, p. 5). At the same time, the party's structure is extremely centralized and hierarchical (Venner 2002). The Pim Fortuyn movement is also a obvious case, the LPF essentially having consisted of Fortuyn, and the candidates for parliament having been personally selected by him (Pennings, Keman 2003).

5. Right-wing Populist Parties and Their Competitors in the Political Space of the 1990s and Early 2000s

Research design

The following analysis will track the positions of the List Pim Fortuyn, the Front National, the FPÖ and the SVP in the political space constituted by the programmatic positions advocated within their respective party systems. The structure of political space in these countries can then be compared with the cases of Germany and Britain, where no strong extreme right-wing populist parties are present at the national level. To be able to identify the lines of conflict structuring political competition, a media analysis of parties' "political offer" in the elections for the respective country's first parliamentary chamber was conducted (except for France, where the analysis focuses on presidential contests). In each country, all articles related to the electoral contest or politics in general were selected from a quality newspaper and a tabloid, covering the

last two months before Election day for three elections in the 1990s and early 2000s. The articles were then coded sentence by sentence. For the present purposes, only relationships between political actors and political issues are taken into account. Political actors were coded according to their party membership. Small parties were grouped.

To code political issues, a detailed schema was used, distinguishing between 200 or more categories. For the statistical analysis, they were regrouped into 12 broader categories. In the following, the content of these categories is specified. All categories have a clear direction, and actor's stance towards them can be either positive or negative. The abbreviations in brackets refer to the ones used in the figures later on:

Economic issues

- *Welfare*: Expansion of the welfare state and defence against welfare state retrenchment. Tax reforms that have redistributive effects, employment programs, health care programs. Valence issues such as statements "against unemployment" or "against recession" were dropped if there was no specification whether the goal was to be achieved by state intervention or by deregulation.
- *Budget*: Budgetary rigor, reduction of the state deficit, cut on expenditures, reduction of taxes that have no effects on redistribution.
- *Economic liberalism (ecolib)*: Support for deregulation, for more competition, and for privatisation. Opposition to market regulation, provided that the proposed measures do not have an impact on state expenditure – this is the distinguishing criterion from the Welfare-category. Opposition to economic protectionism in agriculture and other sectors.

Cultural issues

- *Cultural liberalism (cultlib)*: Support for the goals of the New Social Movements: Peace, solidarity with the third world, gender equality, human rights. Support for cultural diversity, international cooperation (except for the European Union and Nato), support for the United Nations. Opposition to racism, support for the right to abortion and euthanasia and for a liberal drug policy. *Cultural protectionism, coded negative:* Patriotism, calls for national solidarity, defence of tradition and national sovereignty, traditional moral values.

- *Europe*: Support for European integration – including enlargement – or for EU-membership in the cases of Switzerland and Austria.
- *Culture*: Support for education, culture, and scientific research.
- *Immigration*: Support for a tough immigration and integration policy, and for the restriction of the number of foreigners.
- *Army*: Support for the army (including Nato), for a strong national defence and for nuclear weapons.
- *Security*: Support for more law and order, fight against criminality and political corruption.

Residual categories

- *Environment (eco)*: Calls for environmental protection, opposition to atomic energy.
- *Institutional reform (iref)*: Support for various institutional reforms such as the extension of direct democratic rights, calls for the efficiency of the public administration.
- *Infrastructure (infra)*: Support for the improvement of the infrastructure.

The data are now analysed using Multidimensional Scaling (MDS), which results in a graphical representation of parties and issues in a low-dimensional space in every country. The grouping of the issues into economic, cultural, and residual categories is provided for illustrative purposes and does not determine the analysis. To give salient relationships between political actors and issues more weight than less salient ones, a Weighted Metric Multidimensional Scaling is used. There are always distortions between the "real" distances and their graphical representation in the low-dimensional space resulting from the MDS, but the weighting procedure ensures that the distances corresponding to salient relationships between parties and issues will be more accurate than less salient ones. The results thus take into account both position and saliency.

In all six countries, political space proves to be clearly two-dimensional, since the move from a one-dimensional to a two-dimensional representation results in the clearest improvement in the goodness-of-fit of the solution.[4] The results of the analysis

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[4] The values for the Stress I statistic, which is an estimation of goodness-of-fit of the final configuration, is 0,32 for Austria, 0,29 for France, 0,25 for the Netherlands, 0,32 for Switzerland, 0,34 for Germany and 0,25 for Britain.

are presented in Figures 1 to 6. The dimensions resulting from the MDS analysis are not substantially meaningful. The solution can therefore be freely rotated and it is possible to lay theoretically meaningful axes into the distribution. It is also important to keep in mind that the distances in the solutions are only interpretable in relation to each other, and not in absolute terms. For example, right-wing populist parties may not be just next to the subject of immigration in absolute terms, because their proximity to other issues also "pulls" them in another direction.

In the solutions, a first line has been drawn between "welfare" and "economic liberalism" as a representation of the distributional political conflict. All the configurations have been rotated to make this antagonism lie horizontally in political space. Arguably, it represents the political content of the traditional state-market cleavage. The cultural line of conflict has been drawn by connecting "immigration" and "cultural liberalism", the two categories that embody the libertarian-universalistic vs. traditionalist-communitarian line of conflict. Cultural liberalism conveys both support for universalistic values, as well as the repudiation of the opposing normative ideals, namely, the defence of tradition, national sovereignty, and traditional moral values. Opposition to immigration and calls for a tough integration policy (denoted in the figures as "immigration"), on the other hand, captures stances regarding the theme the populist right has used for its construction of a collective identity based on the demarcation from people with cultural backgrounds different from that of the majority population.

Right-wing populist parties in the political space of Western European party systems

The first thing we notice when looking at the general patterns is that the *configuration of political alternatives presented in the six party systems is strikingly similar*. Political competition everywhere is structured by an economic and by a cultural line of conflict, although to varying degrees. In France and Switzerland, there are signs of an integration of the two dimensions, cultural liberalism being associated with a pro-welfare position and anti-immigration stances lying closer to the economic liberalism pole of the state-market divide. Britain is an exception in that immigration played a minor role in the elections under investigation, and the category therefore does not

appear in the figure. However, as in the other countries, cultural liberalism, along with support for the EU, is a polarizing issue in Britain. I start by discussing the countries displaying a strong presence of parties that are presumed to belong to the right-wing populist party group, testing the hypothesis that this can be considered a party family. I then analyze the proposition that established right-wing parties are situated in a similar position in Britain and Germany's political space, thereby weakening the chances of an electoral breakthrough of more extreme parties.

The French Front National, the Austrian FPÖ, and the Swiss SVP are clearly situated at the extreme of the political spectrum in their respective countries, as Figures 1 to 3 show. All of them are furthest away from cultural liberalism, and also the most fervent opponents of immigration, making them form the lower pole of the cultural line of conflict. By contrast, the Dutch List Pim Fortuyn, while also located at the limits of the political spectrum (see Figure 4), stands out for not being particularly opposed to immigration, raising doubts concerning its inclusion in the category of right-wing populist parties. In France, Austria, and Switzerland, however, right-wing populist parties are clearly located at the opposite pole of the Social Democrat and Ecologist parties with regard to all the issues associated with the cultural dimension. In Switzerland, support for European integration is also located in the libertarian-universalistic domain, and appears even more polarizing than cultural liberalism. This supports the hypothesis that attitudes towards the EU are becoming "embedded" in the cultural axis of conflict (Kriesi et al. 2006). Finally, right-wing populist parties are also near to law and order stances ("security") and institutional reforms, where calls for direct democracy are included. However, this is not necessarily what distinguishes them from other parties. Having presented the general picture, I now discuss the most important differences between the cases. A brief interpretation focused on the individual countries addresses, among other points, right-wing populist parties' varying positions regarding the economic axis of conflict.

In *Austria* (Figure 1), the cultural line of conflict cuts across the distributional dimension very clearly. The FPÖ is located on the cultural line of conflict and rather remote from the distributional axis, near to anti-immigration and furthest away from cultural liberalism. At the same time, the FPÖ has moved away from neo-liberalism, which was an issue it propagated in the 1980s (e.g., Ignazi 2003), and is now located nearer to "welfare" than to economic liberalism. This is less visible in the figure,
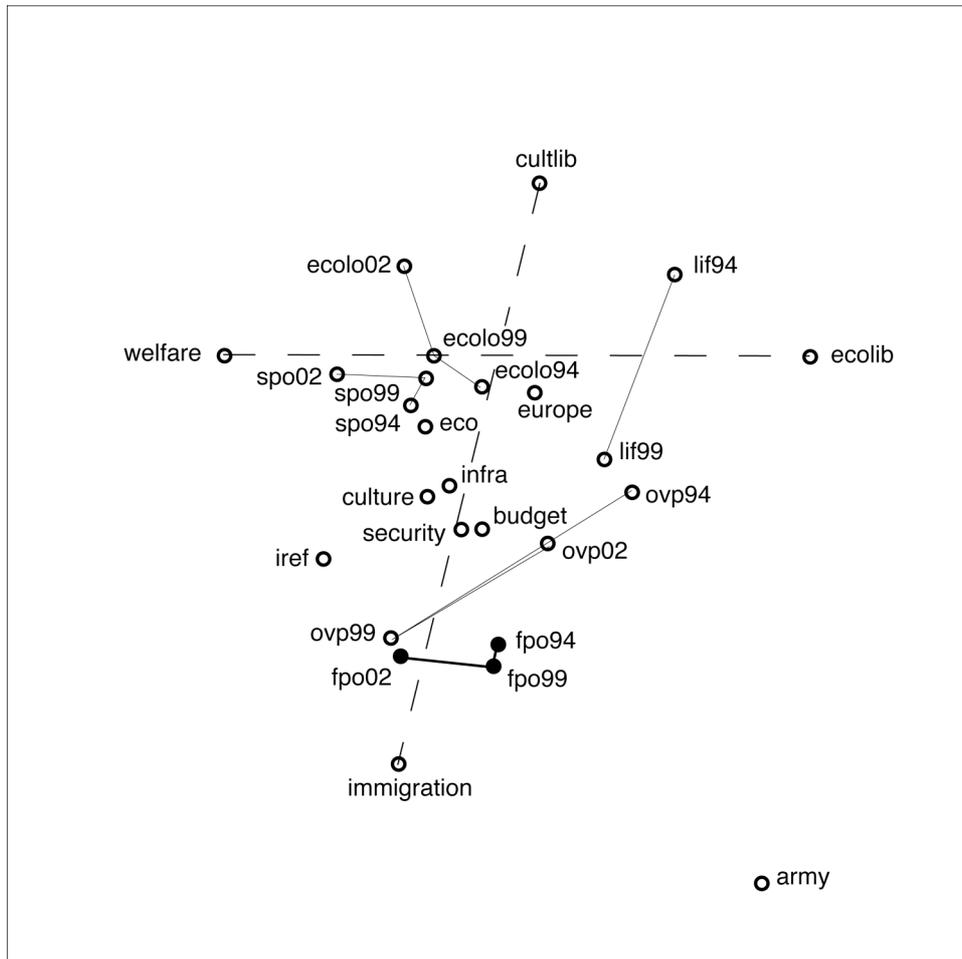
Figure 1: Austria

Legend: fpo: Freiheitliche Partei Österreich (Austrian Freedom Party); ovp: Österreichische Volkspartei (conservatives); lif: Liberales Forum; spo: Social Democrats; ecolo: Greens.

where other issues also condition its position, but the similarity measures show that between 1999 and 2002, the FPÖ has completely reversed its position and has switched to a pro-welfare and anti-economic liberalism position. This move is in line with a strategy aiming to mobilize the losers of economic modernization and globalization. Indeed, the FPÖ represents something like the "master case" of a modernization loser party, combining exclusionary community construction with leftist economic stances. This is not by implication equivalent to success, of course, since the party has faced the difficulties of becoming a government party and of being struck by internal disputes. What is also apparent in Austria is that established parties may seek to attract the same potential a right-wing populist party has been mobilizing, even if this is more difficult for them due to their pluralist internal structure, as I have

argued. It is quite striking how close the conservative ÖVP has moved to the FPÖ's position, especially in the 1999 election campaign.

In *France,* we find a situation similar in some respects to Austria. The cultural line of conflict also clearly cuts across the distributional dimension, and here too, cultural liberalism and anti-immigration stances are located at the extreme points of this axis (Figure 2). The Front National takes a distinct position and is consistently located in the traditionalist-communitarian political space over the years, far away from cultural liberalism. While the parties of the left are always located in the left-libertarian domain, the parties of the established right have shifted their strategy. In 1995 they are located between the left and the Front National, although at a safe distance from the
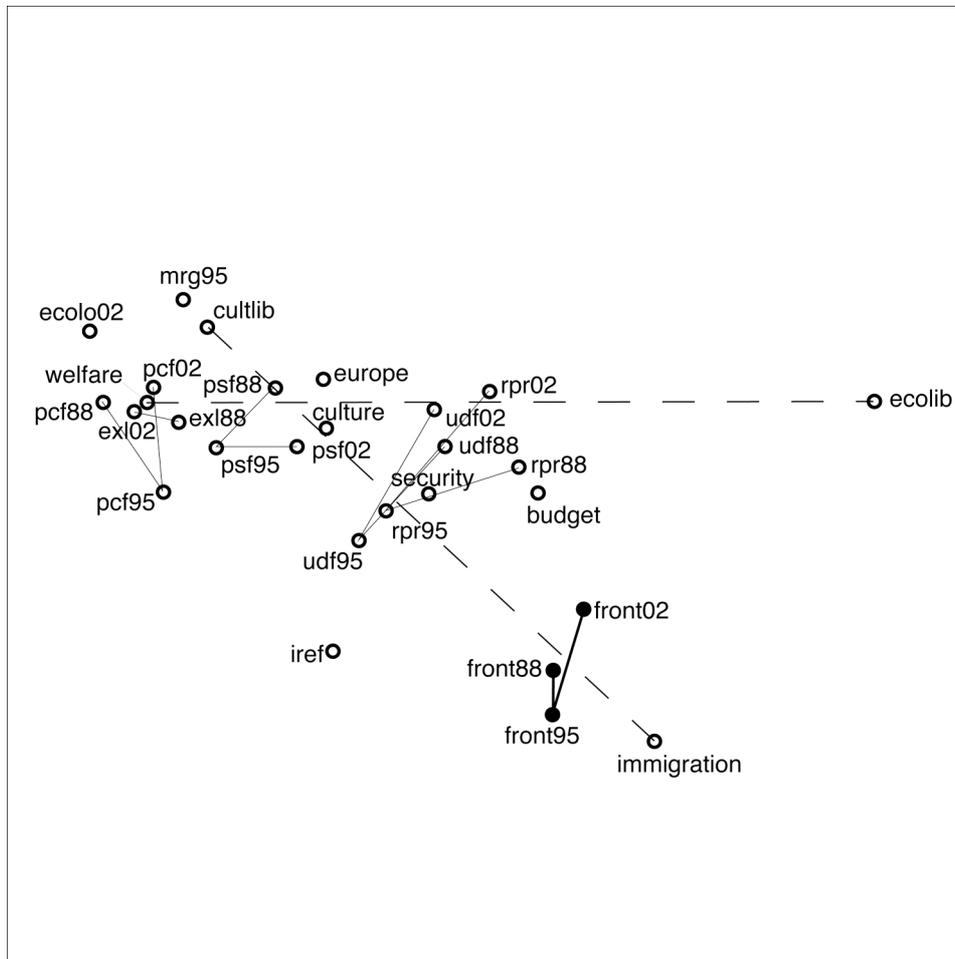

Figure 2: France

latter. In 2002, they move closer to cultural liberalism, back to a position similar to that in 1988. As a consequence, the political space drawn up by the parties becomes triangular, with the parties of the left situated on the upper left, the moderate right-wing parties to their right and the Front National at the lower end of the cultural divide. At the same time, the Front National's position regarding distributional issues is not clear-cut. In 2002, it has moved nearer to economic liberalism and away from the more pro-welfare stance it had taken in 1988 and 1995.

In *Switzerland,* the cultural dimension appears highly polarizing, and the SVP is clearly situated at the one pole of this opposition, advocating cultural protectionism as opposed to cultural liberalism, and a strict immigration policy (Figure 3). The SVP's fervent opposition to joining the European Union is also evident in the location of this issue, whose position is much less centred than in most of the other countries. At the same time, we can see that the cultural divide does not cut across the distributional one very clearly. Anti-immigrant positions are located much nearer to economic liberalism than to welfare state support. In other words, there are signs of an integration of the economic and cultural divides in a single left-right dimension. Thus, the SVP is located at the traditionalist-communitarian pole of the cultural divide, but also close to economic liberalism. Its position in the economic domain does not seem suitable to mobilize the losers of economic modernization.

As a non-member of the European Union, however, the SVP's refusal to join the Union can be considered an expression of economic protectionism as well as part of a defence of national community and its distinct traditions. The importance of the issue of European integration also explains the unexpected position of the Ecologists, which is due to their rejection of a rapprochement. As a more in-depth analysis shows (Bornschier 2007a: Ch. 6), the Ecologists do represent the counter-pole to the SVP along the libertarian-universalistic vs. traditionalist-communitarian line of conflict. What is most striking about the SVP is the fact that it has moved into a political space originally occupied by extreme right parties such as the Freedom Party, the Swiss Democrats and Swiss Democratic Union. As can be seen in Figure 3, the SVP's position is identical to that of the older parties of the extreme right. In the course of the SVP's programmatic shift, the older extreme right parties have almost vanished – due to the diminished attention they have gained in the media, we can no longer estimate their position in 1999.
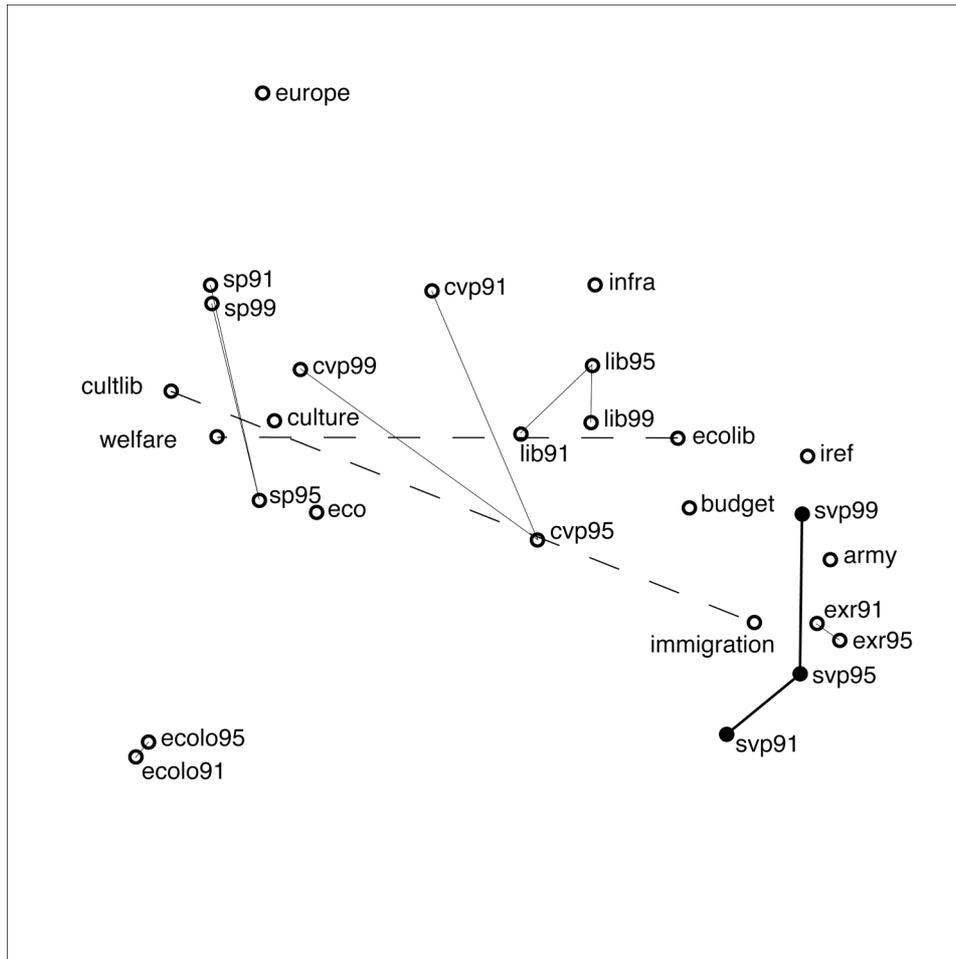
Figure 3: Switzerland

Legend: svp: Schweizerische Volkspartei (Swiss People's Party); exr: older extreme right parties, lib: Liberal Democrats (FDP and other liberal parties), cvp: Christian Democrat group; sp: Social Democrats; ecolo: Greens.

In *the Netherlands,* the data covers the span from 1994 to 2003, but it makes little sense to analyze the four election jointly that took place in this period of time, because the Dutch political space has been profoundly restructured, and we find the largest shifts in party positions in this country. I therefore restrict the analysis to three contests, namely, the 1998 election, before Pim Fortuyn appeared on the political stage, and the 2002 and 2003 elections. In 2002, the List Pim Fortuyn reaped a sweeping success, receiving 17% of the vote. In the elections in 2003, the LPF – without Fortuyn – gained 5.7% of the vote. In the political space of the late 1990s to early 2000s, the line connecting cultural liberalism and immigration cuts across the distributional dimension very clearly (Figure 4). The LPF is manifestly located quite far away from cultural liberalism. This reflects its opposition to the multicultural

model of social integration, demanding instead that foreigners adapt to the Dutch culture. At the same time, the conservative VVD issues a clearer anti-immigration stances than the Pim Fortuyn movement.[5]
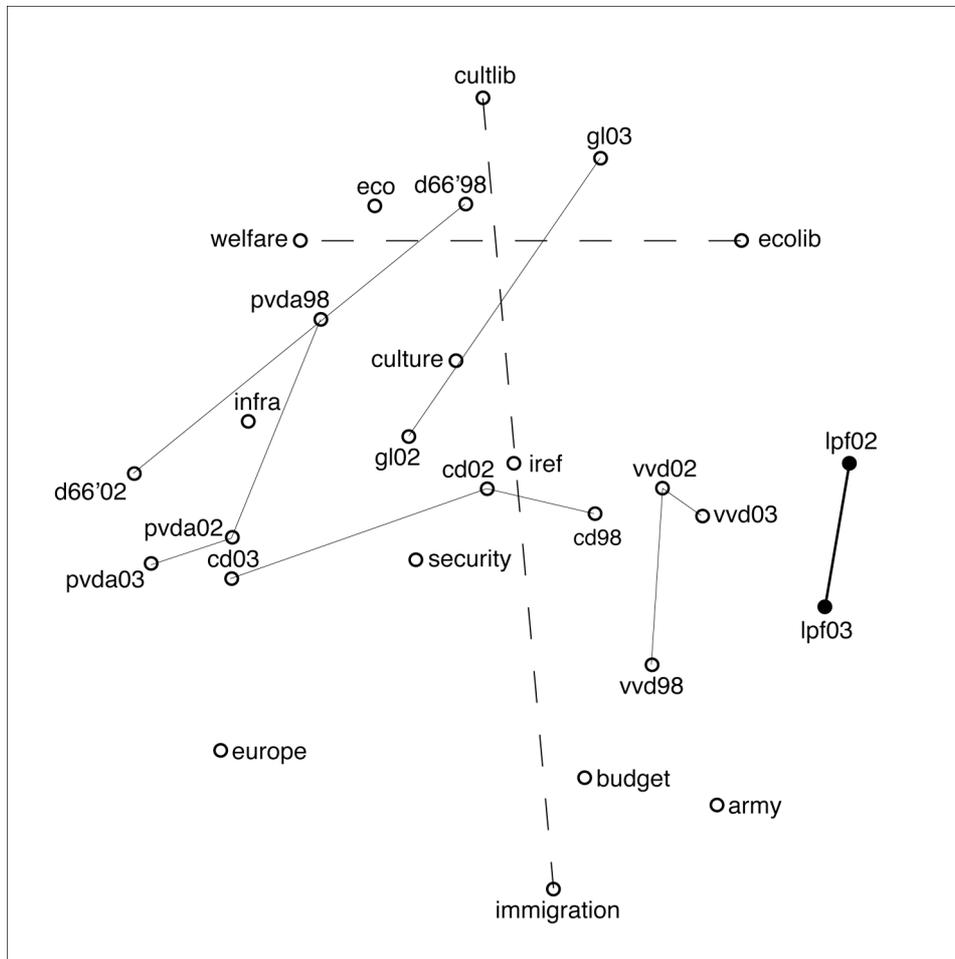

Figure 4: The Netherlands

Legend: lpf: List Pim Fortuyn, Leefbar Nederland; vvd: Liberals; cd: Christian Democrat group; d66: Democrats '66; pvda: Worker's Party; gl: Green Left (Groenlinks, PSP, PPR).

The LPF's position reflects the fact that Pim Fortuyn very much advocated an innovative ideological cluster of his own, which does not fully conform to the libertarian-universalistic vs. communitarian-traditionalist dimension of conflict. Hence, while he was opposed to multicultural society (which forms part of the cultural liberalism category), he held libertarian values concerning homosexuality and related

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[5]   Unfortunately, the Centrumsdemokraten and other extreme right parties, which we would expect to be positioned similarly, could not be included in the analysis because there are too few observations regarding their positioning.

societal values. He expressed neither tough stances against immigration, nor a strong law and order position, as our data show. However, he did criticize the individualization and fragmentation of society (Pennings, Keman 2003: 62), thus aiming at the communitarian potential I have sketched out, yet in a different way than right-wing populist parties do. Consequently, the LPF should not be classified as an extreme right-wing populist party similar to the Front National, the FPÖ or the SVP. Pennings and Keman (2003), come to a similar conclusion in an analysis based on party manifesto data from the MRG-project, noting that the LPF bears more resemblance with established right-wing parties in other European countries than with parties of the extreme right. As far as the LPF's programmatic profile regarding the welfare state and economic liberalism is concerned, it is clearly nearer to a liberal position.

What is also striking is how all the established parties have moved away from cultural liberalism in the Netherlands, though not necessarily towards anti-immigration stances. Indeed, the differences in the parties' positions in the different elections are the largest of all countries studied here. The success of Pim Fortuyn's programmatic stance thus has to be seen in the light of (i) an established party already taking a clear position at the traditionalist-communitarian pole of the cultural divide *before* the appearance of the LPF, namely, the liberal VVD, and (ii) strong competition from other parties, imitating the ideological mix developed by Pim Fortuyn, and collectively challenging what had appeared a multicultural consensus.

No space for the populist right in Britain and Germany?

Starting with *Germany* (Figure 5), we can see that the basic structure of political space is quite similar to the one found in the four countries already discussed. The cultural line of opposition runs from cultural liberalism to anti-immigration stances, cutting across the economic axis very clearly. In 1994, both the Ecologists as well as the Social Democrats take a left-libertarian position, and are located close to the universalistic pole of the cultural divide, and according to general expectations. The FDP in this election is very liberal both in economic, as well as in societal matters. The Union, on the other hand, representing the two Christian Democratic sister parties

CDU and CSU, is located in a rather centrist position with regard to both dimensions. Thus, while the resulting configuration is triangular, the space at the traditionalist-communitarian pole of the cultural divide is not yet occupied.
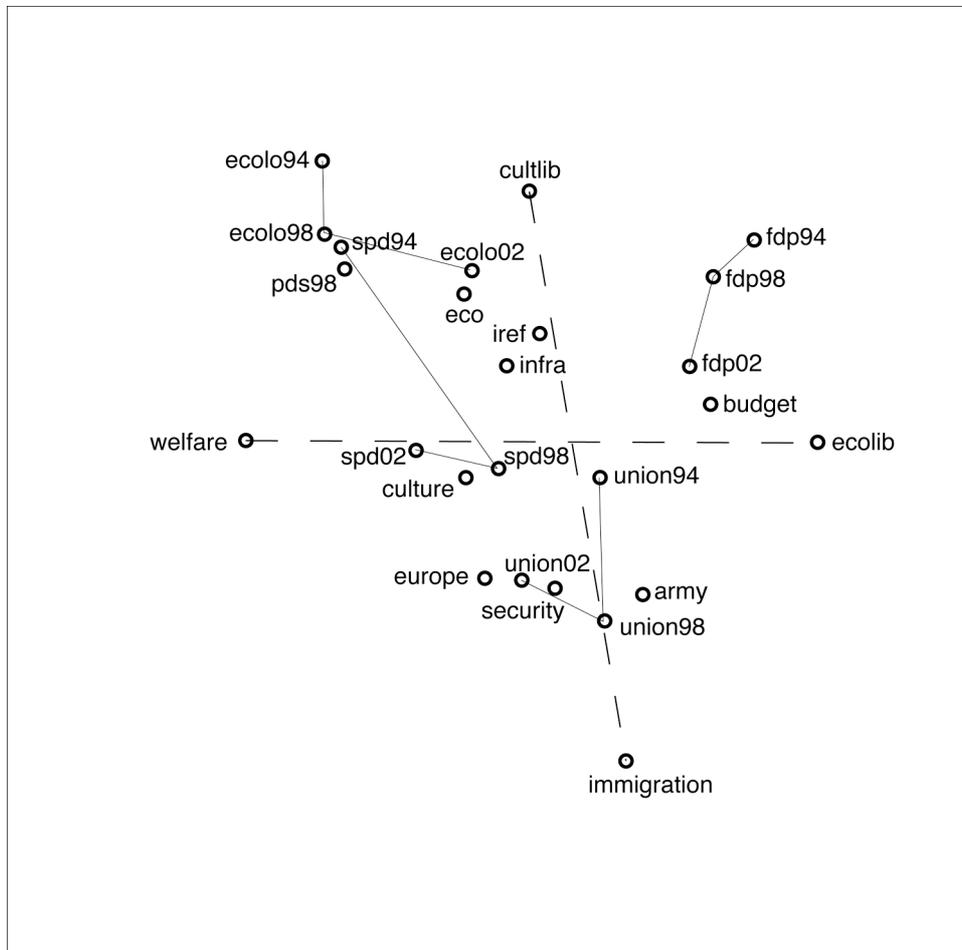

Figure 5: Germany

Legend: ecolo: Greens, pds: Democratic Socialists, spd: Social Democrats, Union: Christian Democrats (CDU, CSU), fdp: Liberals

Between 1994 and 2002, we witness a quite astonishing general move of the major parties towards the traditionalist-communitarian pole, with the (partial) exception of the Ecologists, which primarily move to the right. While the SPD in 1998 takes a centrist position on both dimensions – similar to the Union's location in the first election – the latter has moved further to the anti-immigration pole of the cultural divide. Thus, while the configuration remains triangular, the two main parties have both moved away from a libertarian-universalistic position. Without having seen the

emergence of a strong challenging party of the populist right, German political space is thus characterized by a configuration resembling that found in the countries previously analyzed. The Union's location is similar to the one exhibited by the populist right in other countries, and appears to leave little room for the latter, except for the small parties of the extreme right that represent a rather marginal phenomenon and hardly appear in the media.

Although political space is also two-dimensional in *Britain* (Figure 6), the situation in this country is somewhat different compared to those discussed so far. While a cultural dimension structures the positions of the major parties, it is characterized only by a libertarian-universalistic pole (marked black), lacking the ideological counterpart of a culturally homogeneous community. Budgetary rigor is located at the opposite extreme in political space. This is not entirely surprising because cutting back the state is associated with a neo-conservative political position, which is liberal in economic terms, but traditionalist in cultural matters (Habermas 1985, Eatwell 1989). Right-wing populist parties such as the Front National and the FPÖ have advocated similar positions in the 1980s (Ignazi 2003). Even in the 1990s, budgetary rigor is generally associated with a traditionalist-communitarian stance in Austria, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland, although not in Germany (see Figures 1-5).

However, support for or opposition against universalistic values clearly play a role in parties' appeals in Britain. This dimension also includes attitudes towards the European Union, similarly to Switzerland. While Labour and the Liberal Democrats switch their positions regarding the cultural conflict between 1997 and 2001, the Conservatives are furthest away from cultural liberalism and Europe. However, the Labour party in 1997 and the Liberal Democrats in 2001 come rather near to their position, making it less extreme in relative terms. Still, the Conservatives' most consistently show a neo-conservative profile, characterized by an acceptance of economic, but a rejection of cultural modernity, which Habermas (1985) identifies as the core traits of neo-conservatism. Under Margaret Thatcher, the Conservatives have explicitly emphasised the need to defend national tradition (Eatwell 2004: 64). Nonetheless, a potential for communitarian-traditionalist mobilizations beyond the Conservatives seems to exist, given the success of the UK Independence Party in the last European elections, for example. Furthermore, the historical weakness of the

British extreme right, according to Eatwell (2004), is not due to structural factors, political culture, or even institutions, a frequently quoted explanation (e.g. Ignazi 2003), but rather to the nature of the extremist parties themselves, internally divided and far too radical. In this sense, the British Nationalist Party's "modernization" strategy of the past years, consisting of its adoption of a differentialist cultural discourse and the targeting disadvantaged social groups (Eatwell 2004), may prove successful in the long run.
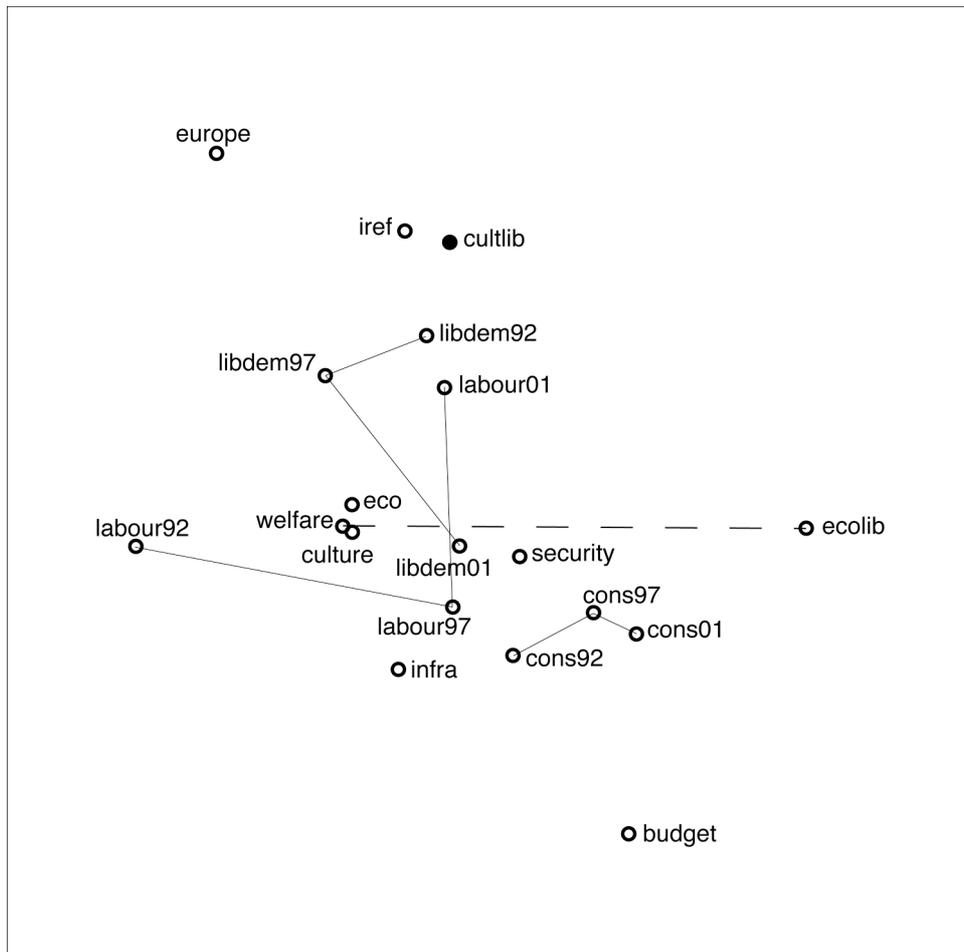
Figure 6: Britain

Legend: labour: Labour Party, cons: Conservative Party, libdem: Liberal Democrats.

6. Conclusion

The evidence from the analysis of political space shows that political conflicts in the six countries examined are structured by an economic state-market and by a cultural line of conflict. Drawing on various theoretical perspectives, I have argued that the issues associated with this axis – the libertarian goals brought up by the New Social Movements of the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the conservative counter-reaction represented by movements of the right – can be interpreted in terms of an opposition between libertarian-universalistic and traditionalist-communitarian values or conceptions of justice. The more recently established pole of this line of conflict is characterized by an opposition to the universalistic conceptions of the New Left – the latter including the right to difference, societal permissiveness, and in some countries also support for supranational integration in the European Union – as well as by an anti-immigration stance. I have further argued that the latter represents an attempt at community construction based on the exclusion of culturally different citizens. With the exception of Britain, where the immigration issue has been almost absent from the political debate until recently, the cultural liberalism of the New Left and the anti-immigration stances advocated by right-wing populist parties indeed lie at opposing poles of a new cultural line of opposition.

The French Front National, the Austrian Freedom Party and the Swiss People's Party are clearly positioned at the traditionalist-communitarian pole of this opposition. Clearly, these are not single-issue parties, but express a coherent ideological vision. Together with the two other criteria proposed – a populist anti-establishment-discourse and a hierarchical internal party organization, centred on a charismatic leader – they can be considered members of a common party family. While the populist-organizational criteria also apply for the Dutch Pim Fortuyn movement, its position regarding the cultural line of conflict differs from that of the other populist parties. Hence, while Pim Fortuyn opposed the multicultural model of society associated with the libertarian left, he did not put forward any tough anti-immigration stances. Consequently, he does not satisfy the criteria I have put forward to identify members of the extreme right party family, namely, an extreme position on the cultural axis of conflict.

By contrast, I have proposed the label those parties that satisfy the criteria of extremeness on the new cultural dimension of conflict "extreme right-wing populist". Like most labels applied to these parties, the term "right" is actually misleading, because the populist right does not represent an extreme form of right-wing thinking, as Mudde (2000: 179) argues convincingly. However, with the term "New Right" comprising too diverse strands (Eatwell 1989), we are by convention stuck with terms identifying these parties as part of the "right". Indeed, right-wing populist parties stand out for their extreme position on the cultural axis of conflict and not for a specific stance regarding the state-market conflict.

Finally, the analytical distinction between the established and the populist right proved crucial in the light of one of the findings brought to the fore in the empirical analysis: The lack of success of right-wing populist parties in Germany and Britain can at least partially be explained by the fact that established parties in these countries exhibit a programmatic profile similar to the one characteristic of the populist right, without, however, endorsing the other characteristics of the populist right. Consequently, right-wing populist parties have only succeeded in mobilizing the potantials underlying the new cultural divide where the established parties have not taken up issues relating to the defense of tradition and opposition against multiculturalism. This underlines the claim that, rather than representing a temporary outbreak of resentment vis-à-vis the established parties, right-wing populist parties thrive on structural potentials that in the late 1980s and the 1990s have led to a transformation of Western European party systems. As a consequence, the new cultural conflict has displaced the religious opposition as the second cleavage dimension in various Western Europe party systems.

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