Illiberalism, Populism and Democracy in East and West

Wolfgang Merkel and Felix Scholl[*]

Abstract

The emergence and persistence of right-wing populist parties (RWPs) in almost all advanced democracies in Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and across the Atlantic is a result of a new cleavage that revolves around the question of how open borders should be for goods, services, capital, migrants, refugees, human rights, and the transfer of political power to supranational institutions: Cosmopolitans opt for opening the nation states' borders, while communitarians prefer more closed and controlled borders in a broader sense. An economic and cultural-discursive representation gap on the communitarian side allowed RWPs to enter the political stage along this cleavage. The composition of their electorate, their thematic focus and their discourse support our hypothesis. We demonstrate that whether RWPs pose a danger for democracy crucially depends on whether they are in government or opposition and whether the context is that of well-established or less consolidated democracies. We also discuss whether polarization is deemed harmful to democracy. RWPs can indeed have a positive impact on a re-intensified political participation. However, if the illiberalism of RWPs dominates policies, politics, and the political discourse in less consolidated democracies, such as in Hungary and Poland, liberal democracy is in danger.

Keywords: cleavage; right-wing populism; communitarianism; cosmopolitanism; illiberal democracy; discourse

1. Introduction

In 1989, Francis Fukuyama published his essay 'The End of History' diagnosing the final triumph of liberal capitalism and liberal democracy. One year later, the Norwegian-American rational choice theorist Jon Elster (1993) spoke of 'The Necessity and Impossibility of Simultaneous Economic and Political Reform' in post-communist Europe and predicted the failure of transitions to democracy in the region. Ten years later, Freedom House counted 121 electoral democracies around the globe – more than ever in history. In the year

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[*] Wolfgang Merkel, professor of Political Science at Humboldt-University Berlin and Director of Research Unit Democracy and Democratization, Berlin Social Sciences Centre, Reichpietschufer 50, 10785 Berlin, Germany, e-mail: wolfgang.merkel@wzb.eu. Felix Scholl, Institute for Political Science, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Bergheimer Str. 58, 69126 Heidelberg, Germany, e-mail: Felix.Scholl@gmx.de.

2000, Poland's and Hungary's democracies seemed to be consolidated – faster than any of the so-called third-wave democracies, including Spain and Portugal. It seemed that Fukuyama's vulgar Hegelian speculations had come true. Less than one decade later, however, the optimism had evaporated. Growing pessimism pervaded diagnoses and forecasts alike concerning the state and future of democracy. The historian Azar Gat (2007) saw 'The End of the End of History' and 'The Return of Authoritarian Great Powers'. Freedom House entitled its annual report 'Freedom in Retreat: Is the Tide Turning?' (Puddington 2008); Larry Diamond (2008) simply stated 'The Democratic Rollback' in *Foreign Affairs*; others spoke of the emergence of 'electoral authoritarianism' (Schedler 2006).

Last year, John Shattuck, the former rector of the Central European University in Budapest, wrote: 'A new authoritarianism, 'illiberal governance' has taken over in Hungary and Poland' (Shattuck 2016: 173). The illiberal nationalist governing coalitions in Hungary and Poland are by no means isolated occurrences confined to the new democracies of Eastern and East-Central Europe. Even earlier, right-wing populist parties (RWPs) had begun to challenge the liberal elements of democracies and the pejoratively called 'system parties' in Western Europe. They joined governing coalitions in Italy, Austria, and Switzerland during the 1990s and after 2000. At present (in 2018), they constitute the biggest parliamentary party in Switzerland and the second largest in the Netherlands and in the French presidential elections. Right-wing populist parties have become strong even in Scandinavia, where we find the qualitatively best democracies of the globe; they have joined coalition governments, such as in Finland and Norway, or informally support governing coalitions, as in Denmark. The populist traits of the successful Brexit campaign[1] and, last but not least, of Trump's election as President of the United States of America have shown that illiberal right-wing populism appears to be a ubiquitous phenomenon among young *and* old, well-developed democracies on both sides of the Atlantic. Nevertheless, in none of those old and new advanced democracies have right-wing parties dominated politics as ruling parties as strongly as in Hungary and – to a lesser degree – in Poland. However, if we want to broaden our view theoretically and empirically and if we want to examine the relationship between right-wing populism and democracy, we have to answer the following questions:
 – What are the causes of the emergence of illiberalism and populism?
 – Are illiberalism and populism in the East different from those in the West?
 – Is (right-wing) populism a threat to democracy?
These three questions will structure our analysis.

2. What are the causes of the emergence of illiberalism and right-wing populism?

If we look to the Europe of the last four decades, we can recognize four thematic waves of radical right-wing populist opposition to traditional democratic policies, politics, and in some countries (Eastern Europe) even polities:
 – In the 1970s, 'neo-liberal populist' parties (Betz 1993a) emerged in Denmark and Norway campaigning against inefficient bureaucracies and government spending and for

downsizing bloated high-tax welfare states. In 1972, Mogens Glistrup, a well-known tax rebel, founded the Progress Party in Denmark and achieved a major success in the parliamentary elections one year later, winning 15.9% of the votes and becoming the second largest party of the country. Instead of advocating protectionist policies and a strong state, which is at present usually associated with right-wing populism, these parties were characterized by an economically right-wing libertarian stance (Ignazi 1992). Strong opposition to the welfare state later became much less pronounced in both newly emerging and existing populist parties. Rather than opposing economic redistribution in principle, most populist right-wing parties adopted economically leftist policies, while promoting the need for exclusion of specific groups from welfare benefits and the labour market – first and foremost immigrants – in order to provide social protection for so-called natives (Andersen 1992; Bastow 1997). This programmatic shift from radical economic liberalism to 'welfare chauvinism' (Kitschelt, McGann 1997) is hardly surprising considering that the electoral base of populist parties typically comprised the lower educated, who had little interest in a severe cutback of welfare entitlements as we will elaborate later (Betz 1993b; Kitschelt, McGann 1997; Rydgren 2006).

– In the 1990s, opposition to European integration became a second critical issue of right-wing populist parties in Western Europe. Populists around Europe addressed existing democracy deficits of the European Union (EU) and claimed that the corrupt institutions in Brussels had betrayed the people, demanding that sovereignty needed to be taken back from supranational institutions to the people. Until today, opposition to (deepening) European integration ('soft Euroscepticism') and even support for an outright exit from the European Union ('hard Euroscepticism') is a central plank in almost every right-wing populist party platform (Mudde 2012; Rooduijn 2015; Szczerbiak, Taggart 2008). Euroscepticism could at some point be considered a 'marginal but almost ubiquitous' (Taggart 2004: 270) force in both old and new EU member states and even in non-member states. High levels of Euroscepticism have also been shown to be one of the factors driving RWP voting on the micro level in many countries (Werts et al. 2013).

– The third thematic wave of right-wing populism can be described as a general opposition to liberalism and multiculturalism. In the late 1980s and 1990s, RWPs took an increasingly authoritarian stance on sociocultural issues, such as immigration, the criminal justice system, and minority rights. They promoted law-and-order-policies to fight crime as well as restrictions on immigration in order to preserve cultural homogeneity and opposed the expansion of minority rights, such as gay marriage. They favoured the pure will of 'the people' in a majoritarian sense over the institutions of liberal democracies, such as trans- or supranational institutions, civil rights, strong constitutionalism, and judicial review (Mudde 2007; 2010; Mudde, Kaltwasser 2012). Multiculturalism and immigration have at times been the single most important issues for many RWPs and a major catalyst for their electoral success, but it is important to note that RWPs should not be considered single-issue parties at any stage (Mudde 1999).

After 2000, populist right-wing parties increasingly turned against Islam, migration, refugees, and open borders. Migration, especially from non-European countries and among these particularly from Muslim-majority countries, was seen as both a threat to the European welfare states and a threat to national homogeneity, internal security, and eventually

societal peace (Zúquete 2008). Therefore, populists opposed immigration and demanded immigrants in the country to assimilate to the so-called national culture. Immigration has become a highly contentious cultural-identitarian question about the compatibility of Islamic culture and European liberal democracy rather than a mere socioeconomic challenge (Betz 2007; 2013). Anti-immigration stances and Islamophobia had become so abundant in the RWPs' discourses that some scholars now use the term 'Anti-Immigrant-Parties' (Art 2011; Rydgren 2005). These positions against Islam, immigrants, and refugees were already inherent in anti-multiculturalism but they have become so dominant in RWPs' electoral campaigns that it is possible to speak of a new phase during the last decade. The successful anti-positioning on central political issues and against liberal discourses made a representation gap in liberal democracies increasingly visible. Therefore, our main thesis is that an economic and cultural-discursive representation gap allowed RWP to enter and occupy an empty representational space. If we want to find out whether the right-wing populist occupation of such a political space will endure and if we cannot rely on purely constructivist and discursive explanations alone, we may look for underlying structural causes. Seen from a structural and Lipset-Rokanian perspective (Lipset, Rokkan 1967), one of these structural explanations for enduring right-wing populist success is the emergence of a new social and political cleavage in Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and across the Atlantic.

2.1. Cosmopolitans and communitarians: A new cleavage in Europe and beyond?

There is evidence that a new cleavage is emerging in Western and Eastern Europe, and even beyond. It partially crosscuts and overlaps with the traditional left-right distributional cleavages. It basically consists of an economic and, even more, a cultural conflict between cosmopolitans and communitarians (Kriesi et al. 2008; Inglehart, Norris 2016; de Wilde et al. 2018).

Figure 1: Cleavages in advanced democracies
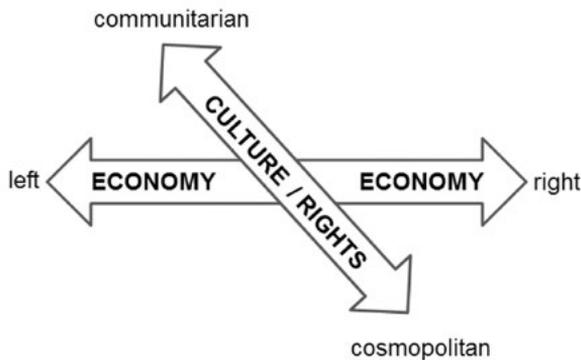
Source: Own figure.

Who are cosmopolitans, who are communitarians, and what determines their conflict? *Cosmopolitans* have above-average levels of education, higher incomes and high levels of human and cultural capital; they prefer multiculturalism, reject cultural assimilation, and are geographically and professionally highly mobile. They opt for open borders for goods, services, capital, labour, refugees, asylum seekers, and trans- or supranational governance. They are highly in favour of further European integration and identify themselves rather as world citizens than with nation states or local communities. Cosmopolitans also opt for 'open borders' and equality with respect to gender and sexual orientation. They believe that traditional gender roles need to be overcome, which particularly finds expression in a strong advocacy of equality between men and women, but also in a preference for gender-neutral language and education. They tend to believe that there are not one or two sexual orientations, but a whole variety, and therefore favour equal rights for sexual minorities in the form of gay marriage, adoption rights for homosexual couples, and unisex public toilets, to name just a few issues raised in recent debates. Cosmopolitans tend to be the winners of globalization in economic and socio-cultural terms. The British sociologist Craig Calhoun (2002) calls them the 'frequent flyers' of our societies.

Communitarians display many of the opposite characteristics. They are less educated, have lower incomes, are less mobile, have less human and cultural capital, and are professionally less mobile beyond their homelands. They reject multiculturalism and display Euroscepticism. Communitarians also tend to prefer traditional 'borders' regarding gender identities and sexual minorities. They often advocate traditional gender roles and reject the notion of a non-binary gender system. They typically oppose the extension of sexual minorities' rights, emphasizing the need for distinguishing traditional sexual identities from other sexual orientations. (Nonetheless, some RWPs such as the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV), the National Front in France, or even the AfD in Germany have become more open with respect to sexual identity and have incorporated well-known homosexuals in their leaderships – while articulating this openness as a contrast to the supposed intolerance of Islam (Kim 2017). In short, communitarians tend to be the losers of globalisation and even have rational interests in strengthening the nation-state and its capacity to close and control borders (Merkel, Zürn 2018).

These are ideal-typical constructions. In reality, many individuals do not possess all of these characteristics. However, the more they do, the more these two camps can be identified as the poles of the cleavage. The larger the camps, the greater are the incentives for political entrepreneurs to mobilize along such a cleavage. There is thus an initial *demand* for new political offerings; political entrepreneurs *supply* new programmatic offerings via new or old organizations (parties). Political demand and supply have a mutually reinforcing effect. The question arises, then, whether there was such a societal demand for illiberal or populist-illiberal programmatic supply to begin with, and if so, why this is the case.

Our hypothesis is, yes, economic and cultural globalization has stimulated a demand for renationalization, social protection, security from alienation, and reassertion of a 'Leitkultur' among potential communitarians with low education and precarious social and professional positions. What matters here more – the economic or the cultural causes? We investigated the attitudes of elites and the population at large in a five-country comparison (USA, Germany, Poland, Turkey, Mexico; see de Wilde et al. 2018). Despite some differences

across countries, our research results show that the individual level of education correlates most with the relation to the two camps: The higher the education, the more we can expect cosmopolitan attitudes and values; the lower the educational level, the more we find communitarians among the citizens. There is a clear divide between cosmopolitan elites and communitarian 'masses' in all five countries. Poland has a generally smaller camp of cosmopolitans than Germany, for example, where we found the greatest inclination towards cosmopolitan positions. Although economic and cultural factors mattered for the mutual attitudes and values, it was, above all, the cultural divide that mattered most (see also Inglehart, Norris 2016). Those who see themselves as the losers of economic and cultural globalisation also found themselves not represented in the public discourse, where, at least in Western Europe, cosmopolitans have established a cultural hegemony.

Chantal Mouffe (2005) draws a straight causal line between the ideological form of anti-political 'post-politics' and the advent of antagonistic politics as we see it in right-wing populism. Post-politics, or the idea of consensual politics and policies beyond right and left, is itself ideological because it proposes consensual politics in an antagonistic world, argues Mouffe. Politics is conflictual and not the sphere of reason and deliberation above and beyond interests. 'The political' requires a legitimate ('agonistic') arena for conflictual struggle; otherwise, the result is an antagonistic politics that does not recognize the legitimacy of the political other. Political adversaries become enemies; politics is displaced onto the 'moral register' (Mouffe 2005). Instead of the struggles between left and right, politics is recoded as the battle between true and false, right and wrong: between those who are inside and those who are outside the rational – or patriotic – consensus. It is this negation of the political, the fiction that social antagonisms can simply be solved by reason and deliberation, which leads to antagonistic forms of politics such as we see between populists and cosmopolitans. We agree with Mouffe: it is, above all, such a moralistic cosmopolitan discourse that excludes political opinions and socioeconomic interests of 'the other' as supposedly unreasonable, illiberal, and backward-oriented from public discourse on moral grounds. If political positions are excluded from public discourse on moral grounds, the consequence is that there exists only one legitimate viewpoint. Politics enters a post-political stage and cosmopolitanism becomes the only truth.

Such a strong liberal and cosmopolitan discursive hegemony never took hold in Poland, where despite widespread support for the EU, Catholicism, nationalism, and conservatism always had their strongholds. Nevertheless, the electoral victory of Law and Justice (PiS) in 2015 can be seen partially as a reaction against immigration and the massive influx of refugees that year and the EU's intention to regulate these questions on a European level. It is true that PiS was previously successful – and in government between 2005 and 2007 – on the basis of a nationalist platform. But the refugee question that powerfully resurfaced in 2015 can be seen as a short-term driver for the party's unprecedented success that year. Whereas in Hungary and Poland there seems to be a political majority in favor of some sort of right-wing chauvinist communitarianism, in most Western European countries these positions are still in a minority. Nevertheless, the communitarian-cosmopolitan cleavage has become increasingly visible in Western Europe. The most visible manifestations are the right-wing populist parties that have grown in almost all Western European countries during the last two decades. However, with the already mentioned numerous 'exceptions' of

Italy, Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Norway, and Finland, they have stayed in opposition or supported minority governments, such as in Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands, but have nevertheless triggered or nurtured themes that dominate many of the political discourses in Europe: Liberal vs restricted immigration, European integration vs renationalization, protection of minority rights vs illiberal-democratic majoritarianism, equal religious rights for Islam vs the claim that 'Islam does not belong to Europe' and that migrants need to assimilate into a so-called *Leitkultur*. Right-wing populist political entrepreneurs have thus constructed a societal discourse that has led to an increasing political demand for right-wing populist politics and policies.

2.2. Electoral evolution of RWPs

If we empirically assess the electoral bases of right-wing populist parties, we get further confirmation for our hypothesis that RWPs are located along a new cleavage between cosmopolitans and communitarians. Figure 2 displays the ratio of RWP voters' education levels to those of the overall population, using data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES).[2] In all countries except Slovenia, a disproportionate share of RWP voters has primary education only. Ranging from about 120% to 140%, low-educated voters are strongly over-represented in the electoral bases of RWPs. In addition, people with second-

Figure 2: Ratio of RWP voters' education and population's education
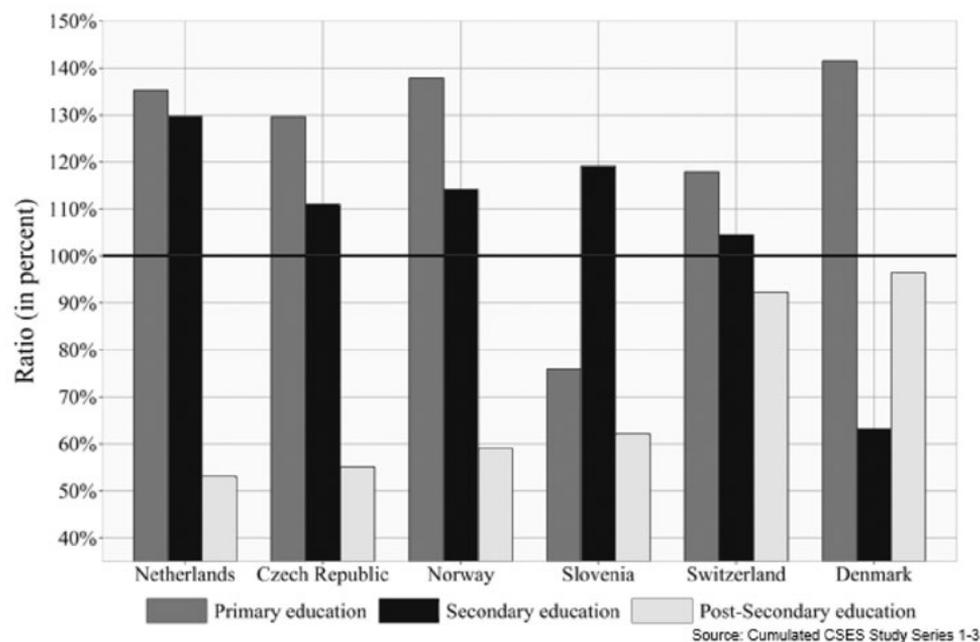
Source: Cumulated CSES Study Series 1–3.

ary education tend to vote for RWPs over-proportionally, even if the effect is somewhat less pronounced. In contrast, highly educated people are consistently under-represented in the voter bases of RWPs. In Switzerland, where the Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP) has almost become a mainstream party, this divide is less pronounced, but in all other countries, the electorate in both Eastern and Western Europe is clearly divided by education. Voters with post-secondary education are under-represented by 40% to 60% in the voter bases of RWPs. This is in line with the rich body of literature dealing with education, class affiliation, or economic well-being and RWP voting (Betz 1993a; 1993b; 1994; Oesch 2008; Rydgren 2012; Spier 2010).

The data also show that there is a clear divide by gender. Men are much more likely than women to vote for right-wing populist parties. Figure 3 displays the ratio of male over female RWP voters. Interestingly, this connection seems to be more pronounced in Eastern Europe. Male voters are overrepresented by 45% in the Czech Republic and by 10% to 25% in Denmark, the Netherlands, and Germany. Right-wing populist parties are clearly male parties, which has led some scholars to name them 'men parties' (Mudde 2007: 90–118; see also Betz 1994: 142ff.; Givens 2004; Kitschelt, McGann 1995; Norris 2005: 144ff.; Spier 2010: 146f.). Class affiliation also seems to be a better predictor for RWP voting for men than it is for women (Coffé 2012). However, surprisingly little research has been conducted about the relationship between gender and RWP voting, especially for the Eastern European cases.

Figure 4 illustrates important differences between RWPs in Eastern and Western Europe. First, even if in recent decades there have been more published articles and books on right-wing populism than on all other party families combined (Mudde 2016), these parties

Figure 3: Ratio of male over female RWP voters

Source: CSES Series 1–3.
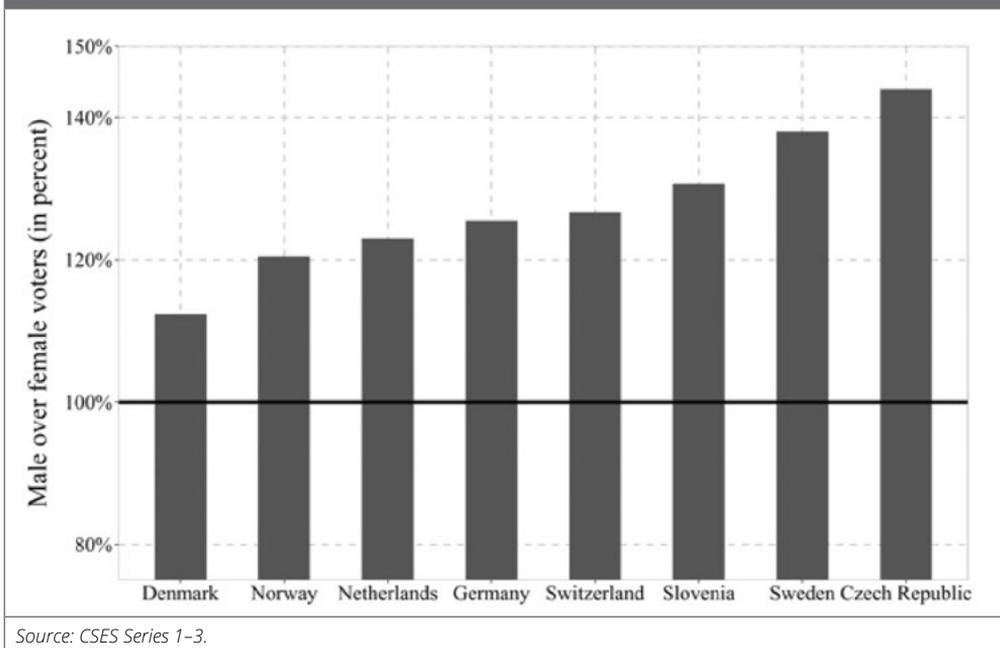
ultimately attract only a small share of the electorate. The vote share of populist right-wing parties in Western Europe has been rising almost steadily since the 1980s and reached its preliminary peak in 2016 with an average of just over 9%. In Eastern Europe, RWPs have gained considerable vote shares since the first democratic elections and witnessed a sharp increase in the early 2000s; with an average vote share of 15%, their electoral appeal had tripled by 2016. If we consider only countries with right-wing populist parties, the average vote share increases to 12% in Western Europe and over 16% in Eastern Europe (see Figure 4). However, in some countries like Poland, Hungary, or Switzerland, RWPs have gained much larger vote shares than that. If we take a look at voter turnout, there is a similar pattern. In Western Europe, turnout had not been decreasing substantially until 1985, but it started to slowly decline just as RWPs attracted more and more voters. In Eastern Europe, average turnout was considerably high until 1995 with around 75%, but dropped dramatically to below 55% in the mid-2000s. Thereafter turnout stabilized at a low level, while RWP vote shares were on the rise. This indicates that there was a representation gap that has been filled by RWPs. People who did not support open borders in the broadest sense and who were disenchanted by the liberal transformation their countries experienced since the collapse of the Soviet Union were attracted by RWPs. In Western Europe, the nostalgic backlash against cultural modernization is the almost logical reaction of a less educated, predominantly male lower and lower-middle class as well as conservatives across all social strata who felt excluded by the dominant, even 'overshooting' cosmopolitan discourse of the ruling elites (Inglehart, Norris 2016; Merkel 2018). From this perspective, the populist

Figure 4: Average vote share of RWPs in parliamentary elections in Eastern and Western Europe (annual averages; EU member states plus Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland)
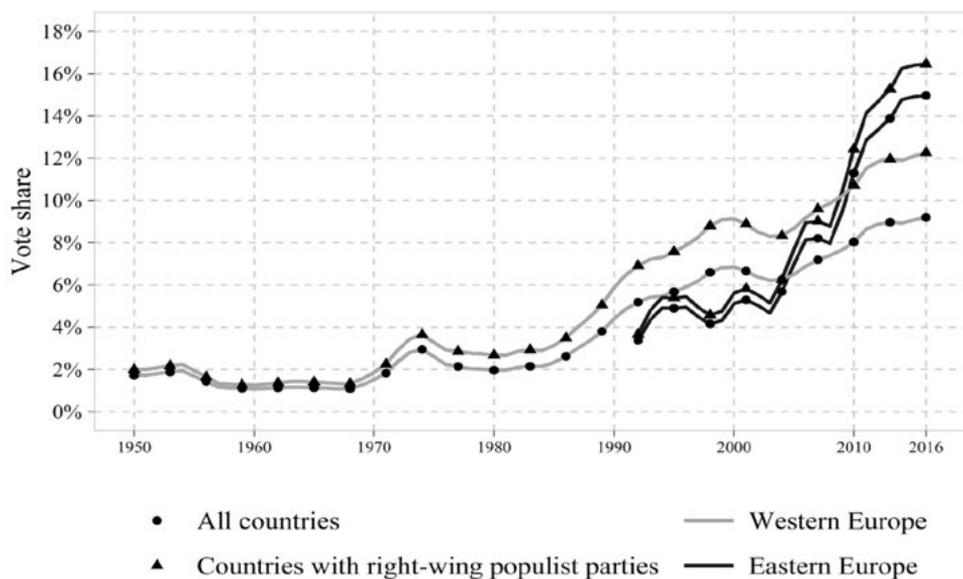

Source: WZB Database 'Elections, Parties, Governments'.

revolt can be interpreted above all as a reaction to the excessive cosmopolitanism and moralism of the mainstream and better-to-do. But it is also a reaction to the supranationalisation and Europeanisation of domestic politics as the losers of economic globalisation and cultural modernization perceive it.

The average electoral share of 16% and 12% in the East and West, respectively, belies the significant electoral success of RWPs in Hungary, Poland, Switzerland, or Austria. In these four countries, RWPs have entered national governments not once, but several times. All in all, RWPs participated in government in 14 European countries until 2014.[3] Figure 5 shows all European right-wing populist parties in government between 1990 and 2014 that lasted for more than six months (Spittler 2018).

In Western Europe, RWPs governed as coalition partners in Austria from 2000 to 2007 and in Switzerland almost uninterruptedly since the 1990s; in Italy there were three periods of RWP government participation by Berlusconi's Forza Italia / People of Freedom and the racist Lega Nord (1994–96; 2001–2006; 2008–2011). In Denmark, they supported the liberal-conservative government for ten years, whereas in Sweden and the Netherlands there were only short-lived periods of government support by RWPs. In Eastern Europe, RWPs supported governments in Estonia and Bulgaria, while they have governed in Croatia, Romania, and Latvia as well as in the well-known cases of Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic (Ágh 2018; Batory 2016; Bachmann 2006; Kaltwasser et al. 2017; van Kessel 2015; Mudde, Kaltwasser 2017; Müller 2016; Pappas 2014).

Figure 5: Right-wing populist parties in government (1990–2014, excluding governments that lasted for less than 184 days)
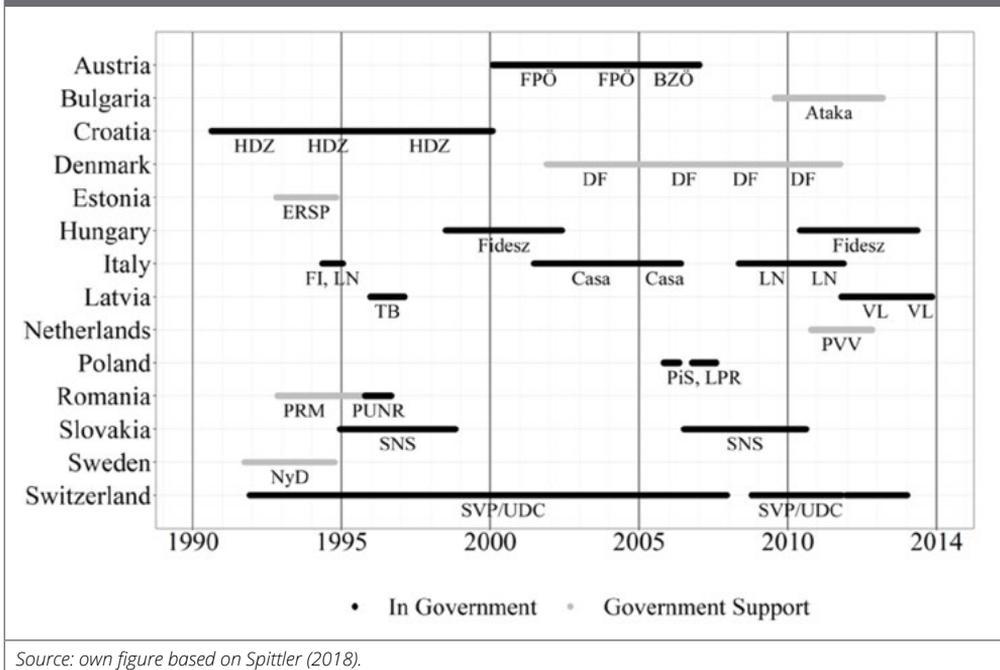
Source: own figure based on Spittler (2018).

3. Do right-wing populists harm democracy?

Do RWPs harm democracy? Cosmopolitans would immediately reply: of course. Nationalist communitarians would deny it. Our cautious answer, however, is: it depends. On what does it depend? It depends on at least three conditions:
 – Whether right-wing populists are in government or opposition.
 – Whether the particular form of political polarization endangers democracy.
 – Whether cosmopolitans present a better concept of democracy.

It matters for democracy whether right-wing populist parties are in government or opposition (Mudde, Kaltwasser 2012). If they are in government, they directly influence concrete policies: they tend to illiberalize group and individual rights, they influence immigration policies along xenophobic lines, they try to renationalize policy making, and they are less sensitive to gender, gay/lesbian/transgender or other minority questions. On the level of politics, they have the means to constrain the freedom of private media, to colonize public broadcasting with their sympathizers, and to constrain the activity of transnational NGOs and domestic civic associations. On the polity level, they may restrict the independence of the judiciary and the jurisdictions of parliaments. They may also restrict certain constitutional rights of the opposition in parliament. Depending on how long and with how much electoral support they govern, they may not only change the working of institutions, but they may also have a lasting impact on the attitudes and values of the citizens on the micro-level. Most of this already seems to be the case in Hungary (Ágh 2016; 2018; Batory 2016) and we also see similar signs in Poland under the PiS government (Albertazzi, Mueller 2013; Markowski 2016; Kelemen 2017). Quantitative studies also detect a negative impact of RWPs in government on (subdivisions of) democratic quality (Huber, Schimpf 2016; Spittler 2018). If right-wing populist parties come to power in young democracies, they may have a faster and more transformative impact on the politics, polity, and the citizen levels than in established democracies. There are clear signs that Poland and Hungary are in a process of democratic deconsolidation (Ágh 2018). In particular, key democratic functions such as freedom of the press, independence of the judiciary, and horizontal accountability are endangered. There is an ongoing erosion of democratic quality during the last years as it can be shown by the data of the Democracy Barometer. In consolidated democracies, on the other hand, such an erosion of democratic quality cannot be shown (Merkel et al. 2014; Merkel, Kneip 2018). Neither in the Nordic countries, where RWPs have been in government (except Sweden), nor in Switzerland do the data of the Democracy Barometer show any qualitative decline in democracy. In consolidated democracies where RWPs have only been junior coalition partners in government, they have not had a visible impact on the quality of democracy.

To sum it up: RWPs are not undemocratic *per se*. They do not want to abolish free general (not necessarily fair) elections. However, they are essentially anti-liberal (Müller 2016). When they are in government, RWPs threaten the liberal elements of democracy in particular and want to substitute the rule of law based liberal democracies with a crude majoritarian concept of democracy where the concept of the sovereignty of the people trumps the rule of law and minority rights. The winner takes it all, in other words. Victor Orban proudly

calls this form of majoritarian democracy 'illiberal democracy'. Right-wing populists are not simply disguised authoritarians; they also follow a neo-Schmittian concept of illiberal-plebiscitarian democracy where the illiberal elements of their politics are (supposedly) legitimized by 'the' will of 'the' people. They do not transform antagonistic conflicts into agonistic politics (Mouffe 2005), but exacerbate these conflicts and frame them into a battle between friends and foes. RWPs in well-established democracies are 'corrective *and* threat' (Mudde, Kaltwasser 2012: 205). They are a 'corrective' insofar as they reveal a representation gap left open by the established parties. They are a threat in less consolidated democracies as the cases of Hungary and Poland exemplify at present. Moreover, RWPs consciously polarize politics and society as a strategic means against the established parties that tend to engage in consensus-oriented policymaking.

3.1. Polarization

Cosmopolitans and nationalist communitarians occupy normatively opposing positions. On the party-system level, this opposition finds its expression in the binary polarization between the liberal constitutionalist parties on the one side and the right-wing populist parties on the other. Given the tight economic constraints imposed by globally unbridled markets, however, this polarization takes place not so much in the economic as in the cultural-identitarian sphere (Inglehart, Norris 2016; de Wilde et al. 2018; Merkel 2018). At the top of the populist agenda is not the communitarian reining in of markets and the inequalities that they produce, but rather the struggle against the foreign other(s). Nevertheless, the new constellation has led to an intensified political discourse as well as diminished political apathy and is bringing back into the political arena parts of those lower strata that had become alienated and demobilized by cosmopolitan discourses, moral exclusion, neoliberal policies, and the race to the center of the party system (Norris 2005; Spies, Franzmann 2011). Even committed pluralists can be in favor of such a polarization that may pluralize political representation, which is too often dominated by two main centrist (center-right and center-left) cartel parties. In this sense, the emergence of RWPs may fill a representation gap that the mainstream parties have left open during the last few decades. If this is true, then we are witnessing the paradox that the semi-democratic right-wing populists are intensifying political discourse, filling a representation gap, giving the less educated and alienated a voice in political discourses, and challenging the self-righteous moralism of the cosmopolitans. Nevertheless, there is a condition and a risk involved as well. The condition is that RWPs should never become a major ruling party, as in Hungary and Poland, but they should ideally stay in opposition as a corrective to representational deficits and not as the threat to democracy that they become when they dominate governing coalitions. The other risk is that mainstream parties adopt too many illiberal and xenophobic elements from these parties into their own discourses, programs, and policies in order to regain political spaces on the right of the party system. Austria in 2017 seems to be an example of this. If this happens, the whole axis of democracies may shift toward the illiberal right.

3.2. Model of Democracy

Cosmopolitans claim with some reason the normative superiority of their greater sensibility to human rights, the rights of minorities, the rule of law, and checks and balances. They favor deliberation and compromises as long as they produce more liberal openness of the polity and society.

But do they also have the better concept of democracy in general? We doubt it. Cosmopolitans disdain the democratic value of the nation state and opt therefore for transferring national sovereignty rights to supranational regimes whenever they believe the higher level can better solve problems that cross the boundaries of the nation state such as trade, pollution, climate change, or human rights. They rely more on expertise, science, and technocracy. The cosmopolitan argument rests on two pillars: a functionalist and a normative one. Functionalists argue that the world is so intensively interconnected that the number of transnational problems has increased and that these problems can only be dealt with in trans- or supranational regimes. The nation state is considered to be nothing more than one level within a multilevel system of governance. Efficiency and effectiveness are elevated to the status of primary justification. Potential democratic losses in participation, transparency, accountability, disempowerment of parliaments, and checks and balances are not taken into consideration or simply accepted as collateral damage of an unavoidable globalization.

More normative advocates of global governance such as Thomas Pogge (1992) or David Held (2010) emphasize the democratic argument that those who are affected by decisions should also have a say in the decisions themselves. This old argument of Roman private law was first introduced by Hans Kelsen into International Law in 1925. The argument makes much sense within the confines of the democratic nation state; in the international context, however, it would *in extremis* lead to the demand that the rest of the world has to have a say in most of the US's decisions since these mostly affect other countries as well. The demand may be normatively justifiable, but politically it is naïve and meaningless.

Cosmopolitans tend to disregard the democratic costs of extending the political space. Already Robert Dahl (1989) argued that the more complex and extended political units are, the less democratically they can be organized. Moreover, the EU's politics of the lowest common denominator or outright blockades and stalemates in decision-making and non-compliance in implementation should be a warning that the effectiveness of the EU is much less than what the advocates of global governance may believe or have us believe. Cosmopolitans and supranationalists disregard the national backlashes against hasty supranational integration. They tend to interpret the pro-Brexit decision simply as a result of manipulation of the backward-oriented people who live in the national world of yesterday and who just need to be convinced of the reasonability and rationality of the brave new cosmopolitan world without borders. These cosmopolitans disregard that a garbage collector in Birmingham may not have the same interests and visions as an investment broker in the City of London. If communitarians cannot be convinced by the superior logic of cosmopolitan globalization, cosmopolitans show nothing but disdain. Cosmopolitans may sometimes follow the right 'Gesinnungsethik' (ethics of conviction), but they may lack 'Verantwortungsethik' (ethics of responsibility) for the society as a whole.

4. Conclusion

The past decades have shown that the presence of right-wing populist parties in Europe is not a flash in the pan fueled by country-specific crises, such as the massive refugee inflow from 2015 onwards or the financial and Euro crisis. These may have further accelerated the establishment of RWPs, but there are much deeper causes. Right-wing populist parties can already be considered a permanent and institutionalized, and in some Eastern European countries even dominant, feature of party systems in advanced democracies, which do not show any sign of withering away in the coming years. Illiberal regimes in Eastern Europe and right-wing populism in Western Europe are a result of a representation gap and the new cleavage between cosmopolitanism and national communitarianism. However, there are two versions of communitarianism, one focusing on social inclusiveness and solidarity within a community; this is what Swedish social democrats once called Folkshemet[4], people's home. The other variant is driven today by ethnic exclusiveness, xenophobia, and low estimation of minorities. This is the rampant right-wing populism in the West and the illiberalism of the current governments in Hungary and Poland. It is not sufficient to respond to them with cosmopolitan hubris. The cosmopolitans should stand by the liberal values of an open society, but they should not think that their values and interests necessarily have to be the values and the interests of all others. They should not exclude the latter from public discourse just because they do not use the politically correct vocabulary of cosmopolitans and do not welcome the consequences of denationalization, globalization, and multiculturalism. Cosmopolitans should also take into consideration that communitarian losers of globalization may have different interests than the cosmopolitan winners. Even if globalization benefits society as a whole, there are also people suffering objective or perceived losses from economic openness and denationalization because they cannot reap the benefits of economic and cultural globalization. It is not that the cosmopolitans have to explain the world to communitarian populists. They also have to learn again to listen to the others – even those others who come not from the third world, but from the lower strata of their own societies, those cultural strata for whom cosmopolitans tend to have less empathy and appreciation.

Footnotes:

1. We do not subsume the whole Brexit campaign or Trump's electoral success under the label of right-wing populism. The Brexit campaign also had strong traits of leftist anti-EU attitudes and Trump's victory was based on the strength of the Republican party as well. Nevertheless, the specific dynamic of both campaigns was driven by right-wing populist rhetoric.
2. We used the combined Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) Series 1–3.
3. Between 2015–2017, three additional RWPs entered government: 2015 in Finland, 2017 in Norway and 2017 in the Czech Republic. As of 2017, seventeen RWPs have been part of governmental coalitions.
4. 'Folkshemmet' was the guiding principle of Swedish social democracy from the late 1930s up to the 1990s and proclaimed the goal of a cohesive and solidaristic community within clearly defined borders. While this idea has declined in Sweden, it has been taken up by almost all parties in Denmark and coupled with the notion of a self-contained nation-state.

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