

Chapter 10

Consolidating party organizations

Previous chapters suggest that party strategy when emphasizing ideological or populist appeals plays a vital role in determining the electoral fortunes of the contemporary radical right, within institutional constraints. Yet the cross-national survey evidence considered so far, while essential for constructing a picture of the factors associated with individual-level voting behavior and the outcome of specific contests, cannot demonstrate the conditions necessary for sustained radical right success over a series of elections. Fringe and minor electoral parties often remain fragile and unstable organizations, vulnerable to unexpected shocks caused by internal organizational splits, difficult leadership transitions, factional rivalries, or sudden scandals. The history of the radical right is littered with short-lived 'flash' parties, exemplified by the Poujadist movement in France, the Reform Party in the United States, and *Lijst Pym Fortuyn* in the Netherlands. Such parties can surge into the headlines on a tidal wave of public protest, to the consternation of many commentators, gaining seats in 'deviating' elections, but they can equally suddenly fall back into obscurity when circumstances change. Without ballast, they bob in the wake of government and opposition popularity. Minor parties can also experience a precipitate rise and an equally sudden decline. The *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (FPÖ) became part of the ÖVP coalition government in spring 2000, for example, with the support of one in four voters, but their share of the popular vote plummeted to just 10% four years later. Many reasons probably contributed towards the decline in FPÖ fortunes, including organizational difficulties illustrated by public conflict between the conservative nationalist wing and the more pragmatic faction within the parliamentary party, and problems of ineffective communications by the party leader.¹

By contrast, minor parties which have developed effective party organizations and forged more enduring roots among activists can be expected to prove more resilient to sudden fluctuations of electoral fortunes. They may experience a breakthrough into minor party status in a 'critical' election, and then manage to consolidate and build upon this success in subsequent contests. In these circumstances, certain radical right parties have proved more durable. The *Alleanza Nazionale*, for example, repackaged in 1994 as the *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (MSI), was first founded almost six decades ago. Le Pen's *Front National* has survived turbulent electoral peaks and troughs in a long series of elections for thirty years, as has the *Fremskrittspartiet* in Norway. The question is whether many of the parties under comparison have built and consolidated effective party organizations to maintain them through gains and losses.

To consider these issues, *Part I* in this chapter develops a theoretical framework based on classifying types of elections based on the strength of party-voter alignments. *Part II* then applies this framework by comparing contests where the radical rise has, and has not, steadily advanced into power over successive contests. The chapter compares six case-studies which are selected from among established democracies and affluent postindustrial economies and which demonstrate party competition within both majoritarian electoral systems and adversarial democracies (including contests in Britain, Canada, and the United States) and also within PR elections and consensus democracies (exemplified by elections in Austria and the Netherlands)². The case study examples illustrate the conditions facilitating persistent success among the radical right. Admittedly the evidence about the importance of party organizations remains less systematic than in several earlier chapters, as we lack much reliable comparative data on matters such as party membership and financial resources. Nevertheless this dimension remains an important part of the theoretical framework for explaining radical right success and some of the cross-national contrasts can be illustrated from the cases.

The evidence presented here suggests that, by itself, trends in partisan dealignment fail to account satisfactorily for radical right success; many commentators highlight Britain, for example, as a country exemplifying secular dealignment, with steadily weakening party loyalties and class identities, but, despite a few limited and sporadic victories, the National Front, BNP, and UKIP currently remain marginal forces on the periphery of the political system. Yet a loosening of traditional voter linkages with the mainstream parties does facilitate intermittent cases of deviating elections, exemplified by the meteoric rise of LPF popularity in the May 2002 election in the Netherlands and by Perot's Reform Party vote in the 1992 U.S. presidential election. More importantly, the occasional 'critical' election represents an enduring breakthrough for radical right parties, and a long-term realignment in traditional patterns of party competition. This process is exemplified by breakthroughs for radical right parties which subsequently consolidated, notably the success of the *FN* in the 1984 European elections in France, the sudden shift in the *FPÖ* support during the 1986 Austrian election, and the watershed for the Reform Party in the 1993 Canadian election. The conclusion builds on this framework to consider the conditions under which the radical right can consolidate its rise and how we should interpret the occasional 'flash' success.

I: A framework for classifying elections and party competition

To understand the conditions under which radical right parties can experience a sudden electoral breakthrough, and the conditions facilitating a longer-term process of consolidation in their fortunes, elections can be classified into distinct categories. The five-fold typology employed here as a heuristic framework distinguishes among maintaining alignments, secular dealignment, deviating dealignment, secular realignment, and critical realignments³. These types of election each have important consequences for the radical right and also more broadly for party systems, understood here as the stable and enduring pattern of interaction and competition among political parties in any country. Particular parties can and do experience fluctuating electoral fortunes in each contest, but the party system represents the broader and more long-lasting features of competition in government and in the electorate among all parties which persist over a series of elections.⁴ The conceptual framework helps to interpret the results of specific elections and the way that these have, or have not, altered the long-term fortunes of radical right parties and enduring patterns of party competition.

(i) Maintaining alignments

The prospects for any advance by new radical right challengers are theorized to be least favourable in elections characterized as maintaining alignments which essentially reflect the status quo in the party system. In such contests, no strong issues, events, or major shifts in public policy deflect citizens from expressing their habitual electoral preferences, and each party typically mobilises its 'normal base' of support. This concept requires splitting the actual vote cast for a party into two parts: a 'normal' or baseline vote to be expected from a group, based on their behaviour over successive elections in the past, and the current deviation from that norm, due to the immediate circumstances of the specific election. This concept draws upon the traditional 'Michigan' model originally developed in *The American Voter (1960)*, whereby most voters are perceived to be psychologically attached to parties for long periods of time, perhaps for their lifetime, through developing stable social and partisan alignments⁵. During the 1960s and early-1970s, partisan identification was found to be closely related to voting choice in the United States and in many other established democracies which had developed a series of national election surveys, such as Britain, France, and Norway⁶.

Maintaining elections are characterised by electoral flux more than flow; a few waverers shift between parties leaving the balance of power largely unchanged. In these contests, the underlying party system persists largely unaltered; they rarely produce much incumbency turnover, let alone changes of government, allowing minimal opportunities for new parties to

challenge the status quo. The conventional wisdom, accepted during the 1960s and 1970s, assumed that most elections fell into this category and as a result party systems were largely 'frozen' in established democracies, so that outsiders had few realistic prospects of entering parliament, let alone government. Lipset and Rokkan's classic account regarded the pattern of party competition as highly stable, predictable, and unchanging after the initial expansion of the mass franchise in European democracies, based on enduring links which parties forged with core social groups, leaving minimal room for new challengers: "*The party systems of the 1960s reflect, with few but significant exceptions, the cleavage structures of the 1920s*".⁷ Maintaining elections generate minimal shocks to disturb the status quo in parliament and in government, effectively eliminating new challengers. As a result, maintaining elections provide the least opportunities for either incremental or stepped gains in the electoral fortunes of new radical right parties, or for other insurgents parties such as the Greens or nationalists, as the traditional mainstream parties consolidate and maintain their usual share of the vote.

(ii) *Secular dealigning elections*

Secular dealigning elections are characterized by loosening bonds linking voters with mainstream parties. In these elections, the traditional party system in each country may persist through institutional inertia, and indeed the government in power may be returned to office, as in maintaining contests, but nevertheless beneath the ice the underlying condition of electoral support become destabilised, less predictable, and potentially more fluid. This expands the opportunities for fringe or minor radical right parties to expand their share of the vote, at least on a temporary basis, from citizens dissatisfied with the mainstream status quo or unhappy with the government.

With secular dealignment, the ability of social and partisan identities to predict voting behavior is gradually weakened in a steady series of incremental steps over successive contests, like glaciers eroding rock. During the early-1960s, most voters in established democracies were regarded as largely stable in their voting choices, due to enduring social identities and long-term party loyalties which framed attitudes towards voting choices. This stability was attributed to a cohesive socialization process reinforcing social cues and party identification acquired within the family, school, work-group, and social milieu. Lipset and Rokkan suggested that patterns of party politics reflected the main social class, religious, and centre-periphery cleavages in the European electorate. Since the early-1970s, there is considerable evidence that changes in the workforce and process of secularization have gradually worn away some of the most important class and religious identities which used to anchor voters to parties over successive elections, so that today many contests are expected to fall into the dealignment category.⁸ Such elections are expected to expand the opportunities for radical right challengers to gradually improve their share of the vote over a series of contests. But any support they gather is expected to prove conditional upon specific contingent factors – such as the appeal of individual leaders, the policy issues they emphasize, the effectiveness of their campaign organization and political communications, and their general party image, as well as the popularity of other parties.

(iii) *Deviating elections*

Secular and deviating cases of dealignment are closely related, but they differ in a specific election primarily in the pace and durability of electoral change. The long-term process of dealignment can also be expected to facilitate occasional *deviating* elections, characterized by a temporary rapid reversal in the 'normal' share of the vote for major parties, but one which proves highly transient in subsequent contests. The change can be best understood as one of 'trendless fluctuations' or 'impulse-decay', where a temporary shift is not sustained, leaving no lasting imprint on the party system. Such contests are characterised by dramatic negative protests against the governing parties, for example concerning a series of highly-publicized

ministerial scandals, or a dramatic failure of government policy, which cause dissatisfied supporters to defect temporarily to minor parties, only to return home again in the next contest. ‘Second-order’ mid-term contests are particularly prone to fall into this category where voters register a temporary mid-term ‘kick’ against the party or parties in power in local or regional elections, by-elections, and elections to the European parliament, without the risk of causing the government to fall.⁹ In deviating cases the break-down of traditional party-voter linkages is more sudden, dramatic, and sharp, for example due to institutional reforms to the electoral system, or decisive events transforming the political agenda, such as the impact of the end of the Cold War on foreign policy and security issues. In such contests, we expect that radical right fringe and minor parties and candidates can suddenly surge in popularity, unexpectedly gaining votes and seats, but that this proves transitory as they fail to consolidate their gains. Deviating elections, where radical right support proves ephemeral, while dramatic, usually have few long-term consequences for the party system.

(iv) Secular realigning elections

By contrast, secular realigning elections generate an evolutionary and cumulative *strengthening* in a new party system, meaning an enduring pattern of party competition in government and the electorate which persists over a series of elections. The idea of realignment has attracted a substantial literature, and the utility of this notion as a way of distinguishing distinct periods in the history of American party politics continues to be debated.¹⁰ For V.O. Key, the American party system was thought to display a stable equilibrium for long periods of time; over successive maintaining elections, the pattern of voting by Southerners, African-Americans, or Italian émigrés was regarded as largely predictable. But in the exceptional cases of realigning elections, the American party system was thought to experience an abrupt but enduring change, with long-term consequences for patterns of party competition, for party identification in the electorate, and for governance and public policy, which persisted over a long series of contests¹¹. The potential impact of realigning elections is most evident where radical right parties have made a consistent and sustained series of advances at multiple levels over successive contests, including in local and regional councils, the European Parliament, and national parliaments, thereby gaining greater status, power, and resources. The impact of any sudden growth in radical right voting support can be expected to prove more enduring if they use this as a springboard to nurture a grassroots mass movement, if they win seats in a range of local, regional, and national bodies, and if they expand their membership and activist base, consolidate their party organization, and accumulate financial resources.

Secular realignment is a familiar model in political sociology, giving primacy to broad socio-demographic developments which gradually alter the structural basis of the population, workforce, and community. These processes are exemplified by patterns of generational turnover, where the young gradually replaces older cohorts in the electorate; by significant population migrations within or across national borders, such as the influx of Latin American hispanics seeking work in California, Texas and New Mexico; by processes of secularization reducing religiosity in most post-industrial societies; and by long-term socio-economic trends, notably the decline of manufacturing industry and the expansion of the service sector economy. Their impact upon voting behaviour is exemplified by the evolution of the modern gender gap in many affluent nations, where younger generations of women have gradually more leftwards, and also by the erosion of churchgoing habits, the lower salience of religious values, and the weakening links connecting the church to Christian Democratic parties¹². Long-term patterns of party support can also be gradually transformed by the enfranchisement of new groups of voters, for example, the 1964 US Civil Rights Act expanding voting opportunities for African-Americans, and the impact of the reduction in the qualifying age of the franchise on voting turnout. The secular realignment model is understood to produce an incremental, durable, and persistent strengthening in the long-term contours of party support. In this context, any electoral gains made by the radical right are expected gradually to consolidate and institutionalize over a

series of contests. Voter-party bonds may strengthen, for example if voters develop habitual preferences for radical right parties, or if an initial breakthrough gives the party access to public-funding, media visibility, and the resources and legitimacy that derive from elected office, so that they strengthen campaign organizations and build a core grassroots base of party activists and loyalists who will stick with them through good times and bad.

(v) *Critical elections*

Certain exceptional contests, however, can be understood to represent *critical elections*, characterized by abrupt, significant, and durable realignments in the electorate with major consequences for the long-term party order. While *secular* realignments produce a gradual shift in the electorate over successive elections, with the more or less continuous creation of new party-voter linkages and the decay of the old, by contrast *critical* elections generate a more rapid realignment of the party system in government and in the mass electorate. Such contests have a significant impact, not just by altering the electoral fortunes of a single party, but also by generating an enduring shift in general patterns of party competition and in the dominant policy agenda of successive governments. In this sense, the pendulum of party competition ratchets decisively in a new direction. The period before, and after, these contests can be regarded, rightly, as distinct historical eras. While every contest sees some electoral flux back and forth between parties, lasting transformations of the party order occur rarely. V.O. Key identified critical elections as those "...in which more or less profound readjustments occur in the relations of power within the community, and in which new and durable electoral groupings are formed."¹³ Critical elections move the party system from equilibrium to a new level, which subsequently stabilises and consolidates, in a model of punctuated equilibrium. Maintaining elections remain the norm, due to a process of dynamic equilibrium, but the occasional experience of a profound external 'shock' can produce stepped change, before maintaining elections again set in producing another period of institutional stasis and party-voter alignments.

The standard exemplar of this phenomenon in the American literature is the 1928-1932 American presidential elections, which saw the assembly of Roosevelt's New Deal coalition, securing Democrat control of the White House for a quarter century and still evident in faded form today¹⁴. Experience of the Great Depression was thought to reinforce cross-cutting issue cleavages which subsequently consolidated around fundamentally different visions of the role of government in society presented by Democrats and Republicans. Other historical examples include the 1924 and 1945 general elections in Britain, and probably the 1997 Labour landslide as well, as watersheds where the party order changed at Westminster, and changed decisively¹⁵. Contemporary illustrations also include the 1993 Canadian election, which saw the meltdown of the Progressive Conservative governing party, the rise of Reform, and widening regional cleavages in party politics; the 1994 Italian election, witnessing the disintegration of the long-dominant Italian Christian Democrats; and the 1993 New Zealand general election held under the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) electoral system, which produced a dramatic fragmentation of the traditional two-party system. Critical elections are often attributed to ideological causes and specific events, notably the emergence of new, salient polarising issues which cross-cut traditional left-right ideological cleavages, or the growing irrelevance of old divisions, scrambling and reassembling the familiar landscape of party competition. As V.O. Key noted: "*Only events with widespread and powerful impact or issues touching deep emotions produce abrupt changes.*"¹⁶ But, as the New Zealand case shows, fundamental reforms to the electoral system can also generate these changes. In critical elections, radical right parties have not just achieved a short-term victory, for example based on a temporary protest vote, but they have managed to consolidate their support and alter patterns of competition in the party system within each country. Through substantial parliamentary gains, these parties have an opportunity

to improve their resources and status, institutionalize their organization and consolidate processes of leadership transitions, and thereby sustain popular success over a further series of contests.

II: Evidence and cases

The insights provided by this five-fold typology can prove most valuable when interpreting the outcome of specific elections and the implications of the results for the radical right, in particular when judging whether any sudden breakthrough which they experience is likely to be a relatively transient shock to the party system (classified as a deviating election), or a more enduring change in the traditional party system (if regarded as a critical election). It often remains difficult or even impossible for contemporary commentators to make any satisfactory classification immediately after any specific contest but, with the benefits of hindsight and the insights derived from analysis of a series of national election surveys, contests can be classified more reliably based on subsequent developments over a series of elections. In considering how best to classify and interpret elections using this typology, this study uses a series of indicators. In particular, the most important evidence concerns any changes in party identification over successive elections; maintaining elections see little change in the strength of these attachments, whereas weakening party identification suggests dealignment, and strengthening identification suggests a realignment process. The degree and persistence of electoral change are also important indicators, along with any major shifts in ideological competition. In particular, elections which involve a major breakthrough by the radical right are interpreted here as a critical realignment only if they fulfil certain strict conditions, namely: (i) if any sudden surge in the share of votes or seats won by a radical right party is consolidated and sustained over a series of subsequent elections; (ii) if the party strengthens its support among core identifiers; and also, (iii) if other parties respond to the advance of the radical right by changing their ideological position and shifting further rightwards. The typology can be illustrated by considering six cases, selected to compare radical right parties seeking office under different electoral rules, as shown in Figure 10.1.

[Figure 10.1 about here]

The progressive weakening of partisan attachments

The long-term erosion of social and party identities in electoral behavior, and the growth of dealignment, has now been established by a large body of evidence in many established democracies¹⁷. The most comprehensive recent comparison by Dalton and Wattenberg collected data from the series of National Election Studies and Eurobarometer surveys conducted in advanced industrialized democracies. The study reported that the proportion of the electorate willing to express a party identification fell significantly over time in thirteen out of nineteen postindustrial societies and the erosion of 'strong' party identifiers who felt very close to a party was even more widespread and consistent cross-nationally¹⁸. To update this analysis, and to replicate earlier work by Schmitt and Holmberg,¹⁹ patterns of partisan attachments can be compared in thirteen societies based on the Eurobarometer. The Mannheim Eurobarometer Trend File has integrated these bi-annual surveys on a consistent basis from 1970 to 1999. The Mannheim data facilitates analysis of the trends in the proportion of all party identifiers (Figure 10.2), while the regression lines summarize the direction of the trends and their significance across the series (in Table 10.2). The results clearly illustrate and further confirm the steep erosion of party identification found in seven of the thirteen European societies under comparison, plus the more gentle subsidence of party identities occurring in another three societies. The only exceptions, although they are important ones, are the newer Mediterranean democracies, which experience a slight growth in the proportion of party identifiers over a shorter time-period, a statistically significant pattern in Greece and Spain (although not Portugal). It seems plausible that the particular historical experience of autocracy and third

wave democracy in these countries may have maintained or even strengthened party loyalties, although unfortunately the difference in time-periods of the available comparisons based on EB surveys makes it difficult to test this proposition with any certainty. A significant decline is also observed for the proportion of ‘strong’ party identifiers in nine European societies under comparison, although not in Ireland, Spain, and, (contrary to some national election study data), Britain.

[Figure 10.2 about here]

Dispute in the literature continues to surround the interpretation of these trends; as the figures illustrate, the magnitude, pace, and precise timing of partisan dealignment is far from identical in every country. The idea of ‘party identification’ may also have less meaning in European parliamentary democracies, where this measure often tends to fluctuate consistently with voting choice, rather than acting as a long-term stable ‘home’ anchoring loyalists over successive elections²⁰. Indeed the limited panel survey election data which is available in the United States also throws doubt on the validity of the basic ‘anchoring’ proposition, even in America²¹. Yet at the same time, despite these serious doubts, alternative indicators also indicate growing skepticism about political parties as institutions in many established democracies, including measures of public confidence and trust in parties²².

Moreover the picture painted by the survey data is supported by other important aggregate indicators of system-level electoral change in these countries which is consistent with the thesis of partisan dealignment (although theoretically these indicators could always rest upon other causes, such as the impact of top-down shifts in party strategies or electoral reform). This includes evidence of declining party membership, growing electoral volatility, the greater fragmentation of party systems, more split-ticket voting, the later timing of electoral decisions, and increasingly leader-centered campaigns²³. For example, Dalton, McAllister and Wattenberg compared 21 advanced industrial democracies, and found that party fragmentation increased during the last four decades in two-thirds of the countries, measured by the effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPP) which existed in the 1950s compared with the 1990s.²⁴ An alternative measure of system-level change is the share of the vote won by ‘new’ parties in Western Europe, defined as those which began to contest elections no earlier than 1960. Mair found that the proportion grew steadily decade by decade: new parties won 3.9 percent of the vote during the 1960s, 9.7 percent during the 1970s, 15.3 percent during the 1980s, and 23.7 percent during the 1990s.²⁵ Total electoral volatility at aggregate level can be measured using the Pedersen index, summarizing the aggregate electoral gains of all winning parties in a given election²⁶. A comparison of fifteen Western European nations found that volatility stayed fairly steady from the 1950s until the 1980s, in the range of 7.9 to 8.8 percent, but during the last decade this index rose sharply to 12.6%²⁷.

What are the implications for the radical right? Any long-term weakening of the bonds anchoring voters to parties and growing electoral volatility expands the opportunities for newer challengers to mobilize support and (within institutional constraints) to breakthrough into elected office. More voters become ‘up for grabs’ on a contingent basis, which could plausibly lead towards more short-term support for radical right parties based on the factors already seen as important in earlier chapters, notably disaffection with the government and the mainstream opposition, combined with the particular ideological strategies and signature issues they adopt. The process of secular dealignment in many established democracies since the 1970s, as well as weak party-voter alignments in newer democracies, could therefore be an important part of the underlying conditions generating openings for new challenger radical right parties. Certainly the few exceptional cases where partisan alignments have not deteriorated – Portugal, Spain and Greece – are also ones where radical right parties currently remain extremely marginal.

Nevertheless this common claim needs certain important qualifications. By undermining established party systems, the process of electoral dealignment can benefit any challenger parties and independent candidates from across the political spectrum, not just the radical right. Therefore elections characterized by secular dealignment should perhaps be understood as representing a necessary but *not* a sufficient condition facilitating the advance of the radical right; what matters is how far challenger parties take advantage of the greater permeability provided by this context in crafting their electoral appeals and ideological strategies. There is nothing automatic about partisan dealignment causing the rise of the right. Moreover, dealignment implies that any electoral gains made by radical right parties are based upon contingent factors -- whether disaffection with government, the popularity of leaders such as Haider and Le Pen, or the salience of the issues of cultural protectionism -- so under these conditions these parties remain equally vulnerable to sudden voting losses in subsequent contests. Support remains conditional and temporary, rather than enduring and loyalist.

Secular dealigning elections: Britain

Social and partisan dealignment is a long-term process which has occurred in most established democracies, whereas, as we have seen, the radical right demonstrates a highly varied electoral performance in these countries. Despite the overall pattern, there is, in fact, only a poor fit at macro-level between the countries which have witnessed the most successful advance of the radical right and those which have seen the greatest fall in party loyalties. Table 10.2 shows that some of the clearest evidence for partisan dealignment since the early-1970s can be found in the Ireland, West Germany, and Britain, for example, all countries where radical right parties have failed to establish a serious and sustained challenge²⁸. By contrast, the proportion of partisan identifiers did not fall so sharply in Denmark and Belgium, both countries where radical right parties have established a very successful and enduring presence in parliament. In fact, there are numerous examples of countries where radical rightwing parties have failed to make any sustained impact over a long series of contests, despite substantial evidence of dealignment in the mass electorate, including the failure of the National Front in Britain and in Francophone Belgium, as well as the *Republikaner* party in Germany (despite some minor fluctuations in support for this party during the early 1990s after unification). The reason is that partisan loyalties are only *one* important legal barrier to new parties, and their erosion is insufficient to facilitate the rise of the radical right if there are prior institutional constraints, derived from majoritarian elections or barriers to ballot access.

The British NF and BNP

This pattern is perhaps best illustrated by the British case, where both the National Front and the British National Party have failed to break through in successive elections, despite substantial evidence for social and party dealignment in the British electorate, as well as the growth of a strongly multicultural society profoundly transformed by patterns of ethnic and religious diversity, and the erosion of national borders caused by membership of the European Union, all conditions which might be considered conducive to the advance of the radical right.

The National Front party was formed in 1967 in Britain following merger of the Racial Preservation Society, the British National Party, and the League of Empire Loyalists. The NF made repeated attempts to win Westminster seats during the 1970s, fielding ten parliamentary candidates in the 1970 general election, 54 in February 1974, 90 in October 1974, and 303 in 1979. Yet at the peak of their popularity, during the mid-1970s, the party achieved a negligible share of the nation-wide vote (less than 1 percent). The NF had become engaged in violent scuffles in mass street demonstrations, actively opposed by the Anti-Nazi League and the Labour party, so its image became indelibly associated with extremist 'skinhead' and Union-Jack wearing football-hooligan gangs of young men. The liberal consensus in British mainstream party politics agreed not to play the 'race card', although in January 1978 (in the

run-up to the 1979 general election) Mrs. Thatcher came out with a widely publicized television comment in which she claimed that she understood the fears of the British people of being “swamped by people with a different culture”. This coded message about Conservative policy towards immigration, and a shift rightwards symbolized by Thatcherism, coupled with the steep vote threshold required at Westminster first-past-the-post elections, constituted an insurmountable barrier for the NF. The party had a poor result in the 1979 general election, despite contesting almost half the available seats nation-wide²⁹. After 1979, the NF split into contending factions, and disappeared as an effective force in national politics, although persisting on the ultra-fringe of public life³⁰. The new Conservative government introduced the *British Nationality Act* in 1981, slightly tightening the definition of citizenship and introducing new registration requirements, although this was arguably influenced by the 1981 Brixton riots, and the instinctively populist strain of the party represented by Enoch Powell, as much as by any perceived electoral threat from the NF, and Conservative immigration policy was diluted by the traditional paternalism of the Tory wets in cabinet, led the Home Secretary, Willie Whitelaw.³¹

The extremist fringe in the public transferred their energies from the National Front to the breakaway British National Party (BNP), formed in 1983. Yet this party also failed to achieve more than a negligible share of the vote at Westminster elections; in 2001, for example, the BNP contested 34 out of 659 UK parliamentary seats, achieving 3.7% of the vote in these constituencies.³² They gain disproportionate campaign publicity among journalists and commentators and perform best at local level, in Northern councils like Burnley and Oldham with substantial Asian populations, although there remain less than two-dozen NF councillors out of almost twenty-two thousand seats in Britain³³. In the June 2004 local government elections in England and Wales, for example, the party fielded a record number of local candidates (309), had a controversial party political broadcast shown on national TV, and hosted a high profile visit by Jean-Marie Le Pen. Nevertheless, with an average 16.1% of the vote in the wards they fought, the party picked up only four additional council seats, making in the total only 21 BNP councillors nation-wide³⁴.

In the simultaneous British elections to the European parliament, held under PR rules, the BNP won 808,000 votes (4.9%), an increase, but no seats. The protest vote in these contests mainly benefited the anti-EU UK Independent Party, which doubled its share of the vote to 16.1%, returning a dozen MEPs. A single-issue rightwing party which shares hostility towards Brussels, UKIP advocates British withdrawal from the European Union, but without the overt racist baggage and violent ‘skinhead’ image which characterizes the NF and BNP. UKIP performed well in the European contests, using regional party list PR, but it may be difficult for them to repeat this performance in a general election, with a broader political agenda, and with the higher vote thresholds found in single-member plurality districts for Westminster³⁵. Long-term processes of secular dealignment facilitates the growth of minor parties, and the conditions should be ripe for radical right parties in Britain, given widespread public hostility towards the entry of asylum-seekers and political refugees, as well as pervasive anti-EU sentiments and illiberal attitudes towards Britain’s ethnic minorities³⁶. Nevertheless the growth of the NF and BNP has been curtailed so far by their extremist image, their narrow single-issue agenda, and the substantial vote thresholds facing parties contesting the single-member plurality districts, used to date in local council and Westminster elections.

Deviating elections: the Netherlands and the United States

Secular dealignment also facilitates deviating elections, where radical right contenders can occasionally achieve temporary popularity as ‘flash’ parties, experiencing sudden surges in popular support and short-term seat gains, but then failing to consolidate these advances with support abruptly melting away in subsequent contests. This pattern was exemplified in earlier decades by the 1959 French election where a temporary surge in popularity by the Poujadists caused shockwaves in the political establishment, as well as by the 1969 American presidential

election where George Wallace's American Independent Party gathered support as a southern backlash against attempts at racial integration, and civil rights, and the expansion of the welfare state. Deviating elections are also evident more recently by Perot's success as a third party challenger in the 1992 and 1996 presidential elections, by Pauline Hanson's One Nation party prominence on an openly-racist anti-aboriginal rights platform in the 1999 state elections in Queensland Australia, by *Ny Demokrati* temporary gain of 25 seats in the 1991 Swedish election³⁷, and most dramatically by *Lijst Pim Fortuyn's* stunning performance to become the main opposition party on their first attempt in the May 2002 Dutch general election. These contests were widely regarded by contemporary commentators as symbolizing a cataclysmic breakdown of established party systems, but in fact these proved, with the benefit of hindsight, to be strictly temporary phenomena. Deviating elections provide dramatic media headlines, attracting considerable popular and academic attention, but they fail to overturn enduring patterns of party competition.

The Dutch elections in May 2002 and Lijst Pym Fortuyn

The May 2002 general election in the Netherlands provides a classic illustration of a deviating case. Pim Fortuyn began organizing his party in February 2002, after he was removed for making controversial statements as head of the candidate list for the *Leefbaar Nederland*. A flamboyant personality and strong debater, who was an openly gay publicist and former professor, Fortuyn proved a controversial politician who attracted a diverse group of candidates, most without any political experience. The party platform promised the standard radical right policies, including tougher action against immigrants who did not assimilate into Dutch culture, stronger measures against crime, and less government bureaucracy, as well as some moderate social policies reducing teacher shortages in schools and shortening hospital waiting lists. The immigration issue caused heated debates all over the Netherlands. Fortuyn was accused of being a far-right racist, an accusation he vehemently denied, and he distanced himself from Le Pen and Haider. He did not advocate deporting immigrants already in the country, nor closing all borders, though he did propose setting an immigration quota that prohibited Muslims from entering the country. In addition, he favored revoking the article of the Dutch constitution which prohibited discrimination. The assassination of Fortuyn by an animal rights activist, Volkert van der Graaf, on May 6th 2002, just nine days before the Dutch general election, led to a sudden surge of support for the *Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF)*. The party, founded just three months earlier, caused an electoral earthquake by gaining 17% of the national vote and 26 out of 150 members of parliament, making them the second largest in parliament.

After a period of negotiations, the party entered coalition government with the *Christen Democratisch Appèl (CDA)* and the *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD)*, with the cabinet led by Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende. Studies suggest that the electoral success of LPF was due to the popularity of Fortuyn among those who had cynical attitudes towards government or who were dissatisfied with the performance of the incumbent government, as well as by attitudes relating to asylum seekers and the integration of foreigners in the country³⁸. A critical pre-condition for their rise was the exceptionally low vote thresholds in the PR nationwide electoral system used in the Netherlands, where any party requires only 0.67% of the national share of the vote to win a parliamentary seat. Yet the sudden LPF advance proved transient; in the months following the election, the recently established party was beset by power struggles between various factions. The news media provided extensive coverage of continuous bickering and scandals within the LPF party as a whole, within their parliament faction, between LPF ministers and high-ranking government officials, and between their officials and the press. Party officials came and went. Moreover, the Balkenende cabinet proved highly unstable, afflicted by the resignation of a series of ministers, including two appointed by the LPF. The party fell apart, without its founder and leader, prior experience of government, and a coherent program. The administration lasted only 86 days, the shortest-lived Dutch cabinet in the post-war period. Their most notable decisions were supporting the United States invasion of

Iraq and approving EU expansion plans. Lacking experienced political leaders and internally divided, in the January 2003 *Tweede Kaamer* election which followed the government's collapse, the LPF vote faded to just 5.7% (see Table 10.1). Reduced to only eight MPs, the party lost two-thirds of their parliamentary representatives.

Commentators suggest that the populist 'outsider' appeal of the LPF also contributed towards their initial surge, but they lost this advantage once they became part of the coalition government. This parallels the erosion of support for the FPÖ after they entered into coalition government in Austria, so this may represent a classic dilemma facing populist anti-establishment parties, undermining their long-term success in government³⁹. The contests which followed in the June 2004 elections to the European parliament saw no LPF members elected, and their long-term prospects as a viable force in Dutch politics must remain in doubt, despite continuing disaffection with mainstream party politics in the Netherlands. The initial success of this party in May 2002 exemplifies deviating elections which generate a short, sharp, shock to the party system, representing dramatic events for headline writers, but without lasting consequences for long-term patterns of party competition. Their meteoric rise and fall, and the subsequent period of political instability and upheaval, did have consequences, however, for the Netherlands, as constitutional reform arose on the political agenda, with debate about electoral reform designed to strength linkages between representatives and constituents⁴⁰.

Perot's Reform Party and the 1992 US presidential election

Also in this category, H. Ross Perot's candidacy in the United States, and the subsequent fragmentation of the Reform Party, provides insights into the reasons why American independent candidates and third parties have had so little success⁴¹. It can be argued that Perot had little in common with the virulently anti-immigrant racist appeal typical of radical right parties such as the *Vlaams Blok*, *FN* or the *FPÖ*, and indeed the Reform Party could be regarded as more center-right than many others in this study, as well as being a one-man show rather than an organized mass-based party. Nevertheless Perot emphasized many classically populist, anti-establishment, and 'outsider' themes in his campaign, adopting folksy appeals and simplistic slogans designed to attract 'the little man' focusing mainly upon the need to reduce the size of government and levels of taxation, with the anti-NAFTA theme tapped into fears of 'foreigners' stripping away American jobs and companies.⁴²

In the early primary season for the Clinton-Bush 1992 presidential election, Ross Perot was the guest on CNN's Larry King Live when he first declared that he would run for president if citizens would get him nominated on the ballots in all fifty states. This triggered a remarkable outpouring of volunteer activism, especially among those most negative towards government institutions and the major party candidates, for example supporters from every state started collecting the necessary nomination petitions to get Perot into the race while over one million people were estimated to have called the "800" telephone number asking Ross Perot to be their presidential candidate.⁴³ The campaign suffered, however, from the candidate's erratic behavior; in mid-July, despite success in state petitions, Perot suddenly withdrew from the contest, shocking his volunteer activists, then in early September, after the last petitions were validated, Perot reversed himself and stepped in again by announcing his official candidacy. By the fall, his support stood at around 5-7% in the opinion polls and he was included in all the presidential debates, as well as airing 30-minute 'info-mercials'. On polling day, Perot eventually won one fifth of the popular vote across the country, with the support of almost 20 million Americans, a remarkable figure, easily the best result for a third-party candidate in post-war American politics. As Table 10.3 illustrates, the closest equivalent was the 9.9 million votes cast for George Wallace in 1968 and the 5.7 million that John Anderson won in 1980. Perot's support was especially strong, not surprisingly, among those dissatisfied by the major party candidates, a pattern similar to that also found in earlier elections for Wallace and Anderson.⁴⁴

[Table 10.3 about here]

As a result of this performance, Perot qualified for \$29.5 million in matching public campaign funds during the 1996 Clinton-Dole presidential election, in return for accepting spending limits on private funds. Nevertheless in this contest he was excluded from the official presidential debates, and public satisfaction with the economic performance of President Clinton reduced Perot's support to 9 percent of the popular vote (8 million). The following year, the National Reform Party was created as a more independent organization, with an elected executive and a membership convention. Their greatest success was the election of Jesse Ventura, who ran under the Reform Party banner in 1998, as Governor of Minnesota. In the run-up to the 2000 presidential elections, however, the nascent party organization fell apart, with factions and the executive divided by internal squabbles about whether the party should move further right before they eventually adopted Pat Buchanan as the official nominee. Many third party and independent candidates contest American elections but they have minimal success in large part because of the complex legal procedures for gaining ballot access in American states, discussed earlier, designed as protectionist cartel arrangements to deter challengers, coupled with the exceptionally high costs of campaigning, and the vote threshold required in the majoritarian electoral college. The permeability of the primary nomination process in the major parties also deters candidates from pursuing more independent paths. For all these reasons, the 1992 and 1996 presidential elections proved to be deviating contests for the Reform party; in 2000, Buchanan won less than half a million votes. In 2004 the Reform Party moved in a radically different direction by officially endorsing Ralph Nader, the consumer advocate and independent candidate, facilitating his entry on the ballot in Florida and other states.

Critical elections: France, Austria and Canada

Three cases exemplify critical elections, generating durable changes in party competition in each nation, include the surge in support for Le Pen's *Front National* registered in the 1984 European elections in France, the advance by the *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* in the 1986 parliamentary elections in Austria, and the decisive improvement in Reform Party fortunes in the 1993 Canadian general election. The Austrian case involved PR elections and a consociational or consensus democracy, but Canada illustrates that such decisive changes can also occur in majoritarian elections and adversarial democracies.

The 1984 European election and Le Pen's Front National

Jean-Marie Le Pen's *Front National* has been a persistent presence in French politics, attracting around one fifth of the French electorate in different contests during the last fifteen years, after an initial breakthrough or critical election occurring in the mid-1980s. The party was founded by Jean-Marie Le Pen in 1972 but during the first decade the FN achieved a negligible share of the national vote, receiving less than 1% of the first round vote in parliamentary elections in 1978 and 1981 (see Table 10.1 and Figure 10.3).⁴⁵ Le Pen failed to become a presidential candidate in 1981, after he could not gather the 500 sponsorship signatures needed to qualify, and the party won a miserable 0.18% of the vote in the parliamentary elections that year. In the following years the party made some modest gains in second-order elections, including at cantonal and municipal levels as well as in by-elections, raising its visibility, with Le Pen appearing on French national TV for the first time.

The critical election which catapulted the NF from fringe into minor party status was the 1984 contest for the European parliament.⁴⁶ Held under PR rules, with Le Pen heading the party list of 81 candidates, this campaign represented a decisive historical breakthrough. FN won one fifth (11%) of the vote, electing ten MEPs, with particularly strong support concentrated in Paris, Lyon, Alsace, and the Marseilles areas⁴⁷. The lower vote barriers under PR, combined with the opportunity to cast a temporary mid-term protest vote in a second-order contest against the Mitterrand socialist government, allowed the *Front National* to gain credibility as a force in

national politics. Their success led to a growing number of party members and local deputies. The European elections gave the party momentum which sustained it at roughly the same level with the support of about one-fifth of the French electorate in the 1986 parliamentary elections, when Mitterrand had introduced PR temporarily in the attempt to divide the French right. Although shortly afterwards the electoral system reverted back again to the 2nd ballot majoritarian system, in an attempt to put the FN genie back in the bottle, by then Le Pen was a force on the national political stage⁴⁸. The shift in rules failed to dampen the FN share of the first ballot vote in the 1988 parliamentary contests, which was fairly stable (9.7%), but support rose to 14.4% in the first round of the presidential elections that year.

As shown in Figure 10.3, subsequent contests saw FN voting support fluctuating from the low of 6% in the 1999 European elections, immediately after a damaging split in the party, to a peak of 16.9% in the first round of the May 2002 presidential elections. The latter caused a minor political earthquake, jolting French voters out of electoral apathy, when Le Pen came out just ahead of the socialist Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin. Although Le Pen secured 17.7% of the vote in the second round, party support fell back to 11% just a month later in the June 2002 elections for the National Assembly. After their initial electoral breakthrough in the early-1980s, the Front National has become a persistent presence in French politics. The party has developed their organization and membership, consolidated the loyalty of core party supporters, fielded candidates with growing success at regional, national and European levels (gaining patronage and negotiating governing coalitions with the center-right in five of the 22 regions), gained resources from generous campaign funding laws and from commercial and investment income, and has arguably influenced the national political agenda by raising the salience of the issue of immigration, forcing the major parties in France to respond to this agenda.⁴⁹

[Figure 10.3 about here]

The 1986 Austrian election and the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ)

Critical elections which benefited the radical right are also exemplified by the 1986 Austrian parliamentary elections. The *Verband der Unabhängigen* (League of Independents) was formed in 1949, and subsequently renamed as the *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* or Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) in 1956. The party was led by a group dissatisfied with the predominance of the conservative *Österreichische Volkspartei* (Austrian People's Party – ÖVP) and the socialist *Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs* (SDP). Anton Reinthaller, the original chairman of the FPÖ, focused attention on opposition to Marxism and pride in the country's past, arguing that all Austrians should see themselves as part of a greater German cultural community, attracting many ex-Nazis and army veterans. Reinthaller died two years after founding the party, and was succeeded by an ex-SS officer, Friedrich Peter. Aware that their connection to nationalism was tarnished by the connection to their working with the Nazis after the Anschluss, the FPÖ aimed to modernize by developing liberalism. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s support for the party stalled at around 5-7% of the vote, with the division of government spoils divided between the Social Democrats and People's Party, except for a short period in 1983 when the FPÖ joined the SPO governing coalition.

The FPÖ's turning point was the surge in popularity which occurred in 1986 when their leader, Norbert Steger, left office and was replaced by Jörg Haider, a man who became the public face of the FPÖ.⁵⁰ When Haider took over the leadership, the party share of the vote almost doubled, from 5% in 1983 to 9.7% in 1986. The young and dapper Haider moved the FPÖ sharply towards the radical right, based on an anti-immigrant and anti-EU platform, and populist exploitation of government disaffection, as well displaying some neo-Nazi sympathies in his language and rhetoric⁵¹. For example, the platform of the FPÖ favors strict enforcement of existing immigration laws. Each potential immigrant, they feel, should be required to prove that they have a job and accommodation. They also believe in actively searching out and deporting

all illegal immigrants in Austria, deporting legal immigrants guilty of any crime, and mandating all aliens carry state-issued identification. The party was officially renamed in 1995 as *Die Freiheitlichen* (the Freedom Movement), dropping all party references in the title. The 1990 election saw the FPÖ share of the vote leap from 9.7% to 16.6%, with their seats rising from 18 to 33. Nor was this simply a one-off deviating case; instead, they consolidated this advance and even rose further to take one fifth of the vote in the next two general elections, before advancing to take one quarter of the vote in 1999, winning 52 members of parliament, tying them in second place, equal to the ÖVP (see Table 10.1).

This result led to the entry of the FPÖ into the Austrian government, in coalition with the mainstream conservative ÖVP of Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel. This step provoked immediate outrage with mass demonstrations at home - and for a few months - a diplomatic boycott by Austria's partners in the European Union and the withdrawal of the US Ambassador. To avoid major political sanctions, and to keep the FPÖ in power, Haider stepped down and Herbert Haupt, the new party leader, became the Austrian Vice Chancellor. Haider continued to remain a strong influence within the party. The entry of the FPÖ into the governing coalition reflected a major break with traditional patterns of government formation and alternation in Austria, producing a fundamental shift in the options for cross-party co-operation and competition within the legislature. Following divisions within the party and instability in the leadership, support for the FPÖ subsequently fell sharply to just 10% in the 2002 general election, leading some commentators to suggest that radical right parties may experience serious problems in sustaining their appeal as 'outsiders' once they enter governing coalitions⁵². Public divisions within rival wings of the FPÖ appear to have damaged their credibility, and critics argue that their leadership has been ineffective. The party may also have been hurt by a broader shift in the Austrian public policy issue agenda, shifting priorities from problems of immigration to rising concern about the economy, unemployment, and social security. The entry of the FPÖ into coalition government also probably undermined their anti-establishment image. Nevertheless despite falling party popularity reported in the opinion polls, in March 2004 Haider was reelected as Governor of Carinthia, his home province, slightly increasing his share of the vote. The future of the party remains to be determined by subsequent contests, so it would be foolhardy to predict their role in Austrian party politics. Compared with their previous performance, however, the 1986 election represents a watershed contest which changed the credibility, status, and influence of the FPÖ, leading towards their later victories and their entry into government.

The 1993 Canadian election and the Reform Party

Breakthrough contests are not confined to PR electoral systems; the Canadian case also illustrates how these events can also occur among parties with support concentrated in a strong regional base even in majoritarian systems of first-past-the-post. The geographic distribution of voting support is vital for success within single-member districts. The Canadian Reform Party was formed in 1987 by Preston Manning as a populist neo-conservative party reflecting alienation with the established party system, and also a reaction by the western states against the rise of nationalist demands by the *Bloc Québécois* in Francophone Canada.⁵³ Like other parties under comparison, the Reform party shared a populist style and certain concerns about the issues of multiculturalism and out-group threats to 'nativism', although these issues combined with an more traditional free-market economic philosophy where they were close to the 'old-right' Progressive Conservatives by emphasizing the need for retrenchment of the Canadian welfare state and reductions in income tax. The party promised a new kind of politics, rejecting pan-Canadian accommodation, interest group pluralism, and the recognition of special

minority rights. Reform contested the 1988 general election but it won only 2.1 percent of the vote and no seats. The 1993 election is widely regarded, rightly, as the equivalent of an electoral earthquake in Canadian party politics. The election saw the meltdown of the Progressive Conservatives; the party which had been in government saw its seats decimated from 169 to just two. The beneficiaries were the *Bloc Québécois* and Reform, both new challengers intent on remaking the Canadian party system. Support for Reform jumped from 2.1% to 18.7% of the national vote, with support concentrated in Ontario and western English-speaking provinces, returning 52 MPs, in third place just behind the *Bloc Québécois*⁵⁴. The result was initially regarded as a temporary protest vote against government and a regional reaction against BQ, but Reform consolidated its position in subsequent contests, winning 19.4% and 60 MPs in the 1997 general election, with support concentrated in the western states⁵⁴. It was repackaged under the label of the 'Canada Reform Conservative Alliance' ('Alliance for short), in the attempt to expand out from its regional base, winning 25.5% of the vote and 66 MPs in the November 2000 general election.

Reform/Alliance subsequently merged with the Progressive Conservatives in October 15, 2003, to become the new Conservative Party of Canada under Stephen Harper's leadership. The merger occurred too close to the June 2004 general election to allow development and publication of an official party platform laying out detailed policy proposals, but their declaration of general principles, agreed at merger and available on their website, emphasized the older conservative tradition in Canada, characterized by fairly vague platitudes but also expressing tolerance of multiculturalism combined with free market economics. Yet at the same time, even after the election, the position of the party remains ambiguous; certain campaign comments and candidate speeches seemed to indicate a hard-line stance against abortion rights and gay marriage, which may indicate a strong strand of social conservatism within the new party. The situation still appears to be in flux so that at this point in time the party still has important elements of the old radical right, such as some Reform activists running the 2004 campaign, although the party leader appears to recognize that this is not where their ideal target voters lie. Some coming from the old centrist Progressive Conservative tradition saw the merger of the two parties as a hostile takeover by the Alliance. The former PC leader and prime minister, Joe Clark actually left the new party and campaigned for Liberal candidates, albeit not for the party as a whole. Several other former MP's also defected and ran as Liberals. Yet there are also elements of the PC party remaining in the party - mainly from Atlantic Canada - although whether they will be heard in a parliamentary caucus dominated by Westerners from the Reform movement remains to be seen⁵⁵. Compared with the Alliance in 2000, surveys suggest that people were much less likely to name the new party when asked if any federal party is 'just too extreme'⁵⁶. After the election, the Conservatives became the official opposition, with 99 MPs and 29.6% of the vote, facing a minority Liberal-NDP administration, and the prospects of another possible general election in the foreseeable future. This result was an achievement and yet its vote share was less than the combined vote for the Alliance and the Progressive Conservatives in 2000, despite public fury with the Liberals. The new party is in transition and it remains to be seen whether the party leadership and parliamentary party adopts more moderate appeals, in the attempt to maximize its support, necessary under majoritarian rules if it is ever to attain government, or whether its Reform activists will pull the party in a more radical direction.

Conclusions

Understanding the rise of the radical right promises to provide general insights into processes of electoral change and party competition, including the facilitating conditions and campaign strategies that could, in principle, allow any minor party to expand their base, whatever their ideological persuasion. The process of partisan dealignment is widely regarded as integral to the fragmentation of party systems, with weakening psychological anchors to mainstream parties allowing newer challengers to emerge. The evidence considered in this

chapter relies upon selected case-studies, which is a less reliable process of comparison than the cross-national survey data used in earlier parts of the book, although specific illustrations also facilitate more contextual description of the conditions leading towards radical right success.

The evidence we have considered suggests that, by itself, secular dealignment fails to account for radical right success. A loosening of traditional voter-party linkages does facilitate intermittent cases of deviating elections. More importantly, the occasional critical election represents an enduring breakthrough for the radical right and a long-term shift in national patterns of party competition. The examples which have been described show that the breakthrough of the radical right has occurred in specific contests under many different conditions; in both majoritarian and proportional electoral systems, in Anglo-American democracies such as Canada as well as in Western Europe, in adversarial as well as consensus democracies. The most important distinction shown in this chapter is the contrast between *dealigning elections* where the radical right have failed to register any substantial and sustained advance (exemplified by the NF and BNP in Britain), *deviating elections* where they have made some sudden progress which has subsequently receded (shown by the Reform party in the United States and by the *Lijst Pym Fortuyn* in the Netherlands), and *critical elections*, where parties such as the French FN, Austrian FPÖ and Canadian Reform have made an initial breakthrough which they then solidified in a series of subsequent contests, altering patterns of party competition on an enduring basis across the political system, and thereby generating processes of partisan realignment.

Proportional electoral systems with low thresholds, combined with partisan dealignment and disaffection with the mainstream alternatives, facilitate breakthroughs by minor party challengers, as in the Austrian and French cases. But even under the most favorable conditions, there are no simple guarantees that radical right parties can maintain and build upon any initial breakthrough to consolidate their support on a long-term basis, as shown by the rise and equally rapid downfall of *Lijst Pym Fortuyn*. Some contextual conditions are beyond each party's control, but the cases strongly suggest that at least part of the answer for long-term success lies in their own hands. The shift rightwards that occurred under Haider's leadership in the FPÖ, a long-established party in Austria, generated a strong improvement in their fortunes. There are also many cases, notably Perot's Reform Party, which show how organizational failures, notably disputes about leadership succession, ideological splits, and internal fractionalization, have proved deeply damaging for new and poorly institutionalized parties, causing public support to dissipate rapidly. What remains to be considered in the concluding chapter is whether the advance of new radical right challengers has caused other parties to respond by also moving rightwards, for example on issues of immigration and race relations, and what consequences the rise of these parties has had on broader processes of representative democracy and the public policy agenda.

Table 10.1: The share of the vote in national legislative elections for relevant radical right electoral parties in established democracies, 1948-2004

<i>Country</i>	<i>Canada</i>	<i>Austria</i>	<i>Switzerland</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Norway</i>	<i>Italy</i>	<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>Denmark</i>	<i>NZ</i>	<i>Belgium</i>	<i>Italy</i>	<i>Denmark</i>	<i>Australia</i>
<i>Ref</i>	<i>VdU/ FPO</i>	<i>SVP</i>	<i>FN</i>	<i>FrP</i>	<i>MSI/ AN</i>	<i>LPF</i>	<i>DF</i>	<i>NZF P</i>	<i>VIB</i>	<i>LN</i>	<i>FP</i>	<i>ON</i>	
1948						2.0							
1949		11.7											
1950													
1951													
1952													
1953		11.0				5.8							
1954													
1955													
1956		6.5											
1957													
1958						4.8							
1959		7.7											
1960													
1961													
1962		7.1											
1963						5.1							
1964													
1965			11.4										
1966		5.4											
1967			11.0										
1968						4.4							
1969													
1970		5.5											
1971		5.5	11.0										
1972						8.7							
1973					5.0							15.9	
1974													
1975		5.4	9.9									13.6	
1976						6.1							
1977					1.9							14.6	
1978				0.3					1.4				
1979		6.1	11.6			5.3						11.0	

Country	Canada	Austria	Switzerland	France	Norway	Italy	Netherlands	Denmark	NZ	Belgium	Italy	Denmark	Australia
	Ref	VdU/ FPO	SVP	FN	FrP	MSI/ AN	LPF	DF	NZFP	VIB	LN	FP	ON
1980													
1981				0.2	4.5					1.1		8.9	
1982													
1983		5.0	11.1			6.8							
1984												3.6	
1985					3.7					1.4			
1986		9.7		10.0									
1987			11.0			5.9				1.9		4.8	
1988	2.1			9.7								9.0	
1989					13.0								
1990		16.6										6.4	
1991			11.9							6.6			
1992						5.4					8.7*		
1993	18.7			12.4	6.3				8.4				
1994		22.6				13.5					8.4	6.4	
1995		21.9	14.9							7.8			
1996						15.7			13.4		10.1		
1997	19.4			14.9	15.3								
1998								7.4				2.4	8.4
1999		26.9	23.3						4.3	9.9			
2000	25.5												
2001					14.7	12.0		12.0			3.9	0.6	4.3
2002		10.0		11.3			17.0		10.4				
2003			26.6							11.6			
2004							5.7						
Mean 1948+	16.4	10.9	14.0	8.1	8.1	7.3	11.4	9.7	9.1	5.2	7.8	9.1	6.4
Mean 1990+	21.2	19.6	19.2	12.9	12.1	11.7	11.4	9.7	9.1	9.0	7.8	3.9	6.4

Notes: *Relevant electoral parties* are defined as those winning on average at least 3 percent of the vote in successive elections to the lower house of the national legislature held since 1990. *Radical right* parties are defined as those with a mean combined score on the Lubbers expert judgment scales of 9.0 or more out of 10. *The 1992 result was for the *Lega Lombarda*, the predecessor of the *Lega Nord*.

Sources: Thomas T. Mackie and Richard Rose. 1991. *The International Almanac of Electoral History*. Washington DC: CQ Press; Tom Mackie and Richard Rose. 1997. *A Decade of Election Results: Updating the international Almanac*. Studies in Public Policy. Glasgow: University of Strathclyde; Elections around the World www.electionworld.org

Table 10.2: Trends in party identification, EU 1970-1999

	All partisan identifiers			Strong partisan identifiers		
	B	Std. Error	Sig.	B	Std. Error	Sig.
France	-.007	.000	.000	-.035	.003	.000
Belgium	-.002	.000	.000	-.038	.003	.000
Netherlands	-.001	.000	.008	-.039	.003	.000
West Germany	-.007	.000	.000	-.027	.003	.000
Italy	-.009	.000	.000	-.021	.002	.000
Luxembourg	-.006	.001	.000	-.027	.005	.000
Denmark	-.001	.000	.031	-.034	.003	.000
Ireland	-.014	.000	.000	.011	.004	.003
Britain	-.008	.000	.000	.029	.003	.000
Northern Ireland	-.013	.001	.000	.016	.008	.050
Greece	.003	.001	.000	-.039	.004	.000
Spain	.013	.001	.000	.049	.012	.000
Portugal	.001	.001	.646	-.072	.015	.000

Note: Binomial logistic (logit) regression analysis of the effect of year on party identification as the dependent variable, coded as a dummy variable.

Q: *“Do you consider yourself to be close to any particular party? <If yes> Do you consider yourself to be very close, fairly close, or merely a sympathizer?”* ‘All’ % ‘Yes’. ‘Strong’ identifiers are ‘very close’.

Source: The Mannheim Eurobarometer Trend File, 1970-1999.

Table 10.3: Vote cast for leading minority party candidates for President: US 1940 to 2000

<i>Election</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Vote (000's)</i>
1992	H. Ross Perot	Independent	19,742
1968	George Wallace	American Independent.	9,906
1996	H. Ross Perot	Reform Party	8,085
1980	John Anderson	Independent	5,720
2000	Ralph Nader	Green	2,883
1948	Strom Thurmond	States' Rights	1,176
1948	Henry Wallace	Progressive	1,157
1972	John Schmitz	American	1,099
1980	Ed Clark	Libertarian	921
1976	Eugene McCarthy	Independent	757
1996	Ralph Nader	Green	685
2000	Pat Buchanan	Reform	449
1988	Ron Paul	Libertarian	432
1992	Andre Marrou	Libertarian	292
1984	David Bergland	Libertarian	228
1988	Lenora B. Fulani	New Alliance	217
1976	Roger McBride	Libertarian	173
1952	Vincent Hallinan	Progressive	140
1940	Norman Thomas	Socialist	116
1956	T. Coleman Andrews	States' Rights	111
1944	Norman Thomas	Socialist	79
1972	Benjamin Spock	People's	79
1984	Lyndon H. LaRouche.	Independent	79
1944	Claude Watson	Prohibition	75
1952	Stuart Hamblen	Prohibition	73
1940	Roger Babson	Prohibition	59
1968	Henning Blomen	Socialist Labor	53
1960	Eric Hass	Socialist Labor	48
1960	Rutherford Decker	Prohibition	46
1964	Eric Hass	Socialist Labor	45
1956	Eric Hass	Socialist Labor	44

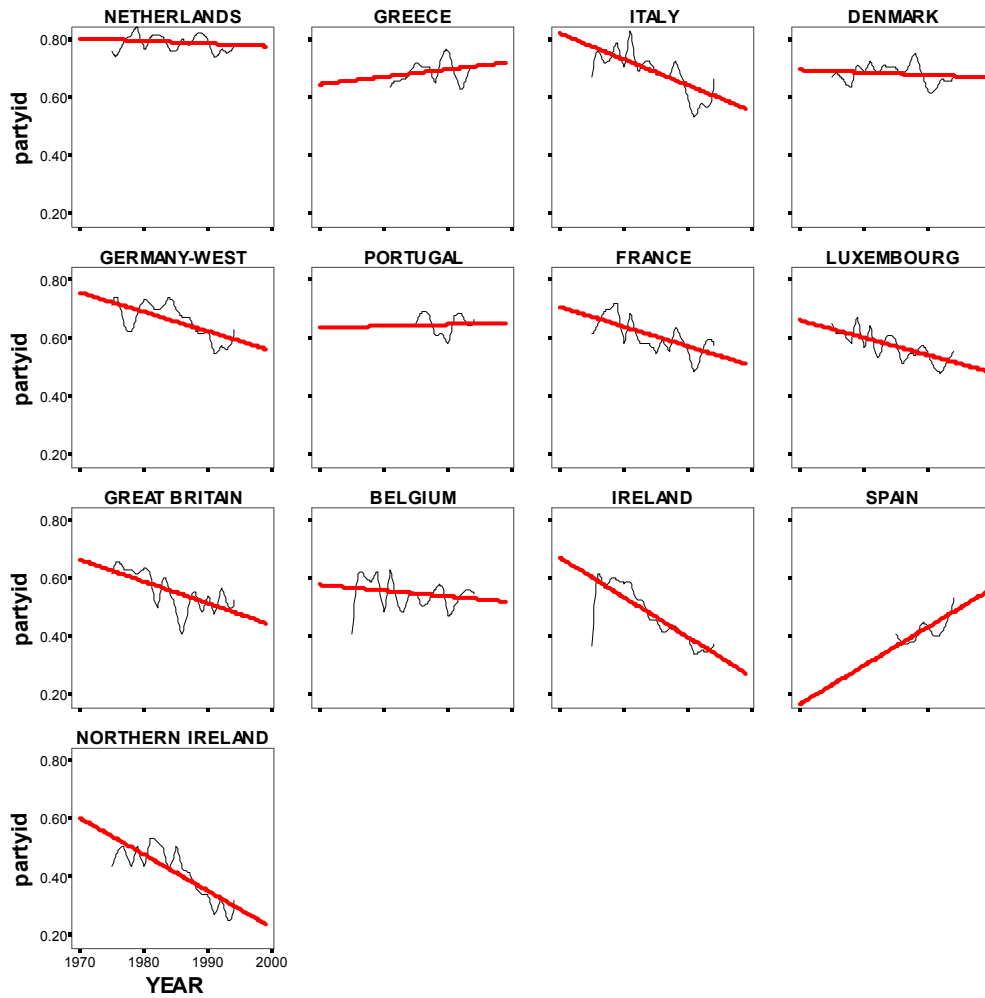
1964	Clifton DeBerry	Socialist Workers	33
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Source: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., Washington, DC, *America at the Polls, 1920-1996, 1997;* and *America Votes*, biennial.

Figure 10.1: Selected election case-studies illustrating the typology

<i>Secular dealignment</i>	<i>Deviating elections</i>	<i>Critical realigning elections</i>
UK National Front and British National Party	Dutch <i>Lijst Pym Fortuyn</i> (LPF) (2002) U.S. Reform Party (1992-96)	Austrian <i>Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs</i> (FPÖ) (1986) French <i>Front National</i> (FN) (1984) Canadian Reform Party (1993)

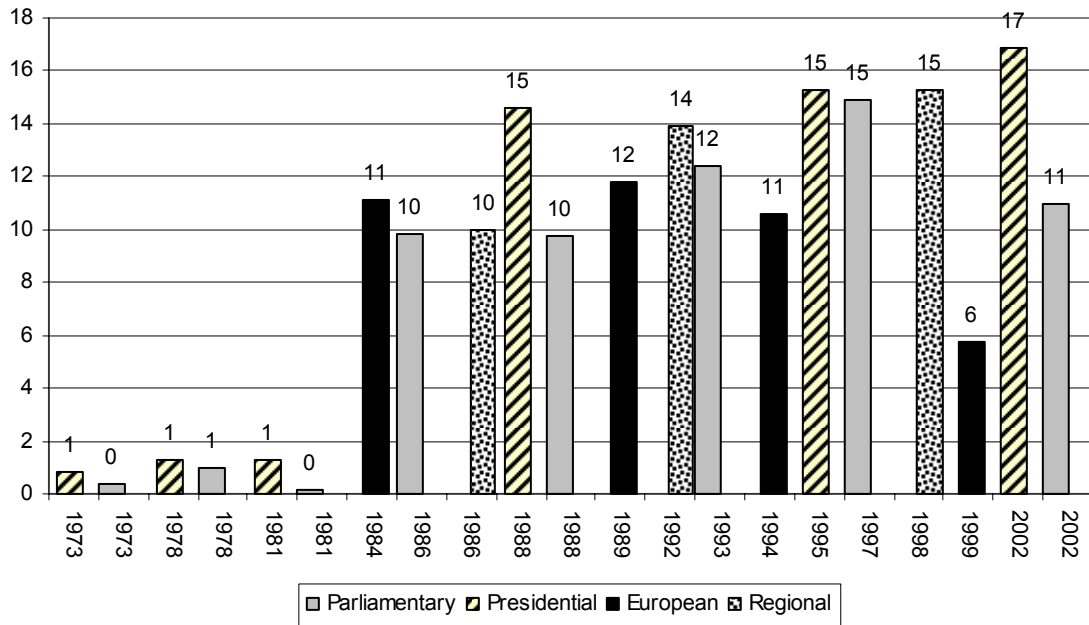
Figure 10.2: Trends in party identification, EU 1970-1999



Notes: Q: “Do you consider yourself to be close to any particular party? <If yes> Do you consider yourself to be very close, fairly close, or merely a sympathizer?” % ‘Yes’. The proportion ‘yes’, from 1970 to 1999, and the regression line summarizing the trend.

Source: The Mannheim Eurobarometer Trend File, 1970-1999.

Figure 10.3: Trends in voting support for the *Front National*, France 1973-2002



Notes: The percentage share of the vote won by the *Front National*, including the first round vote in 2nd ballot elections.

Sources: Thomas T. Mackie and Richard Rose. 1991. *The International Almanac of Electoral History*. Washington DC: CQ Press; Tom Mackie and Richard Rose. 1997. *A Decade of Election Results: Updating the international Almanac*. Studies in Public Policy. Glasgow: University of Strathclyde; Elections around the World www.electionworld.org

¹ K. R. Luther. 2003. 'The self-destruction of a right-wing populist party? The Austrian parliamentary election of 2002.' *West European Politics* 26 (2): 136-152. I am also most grateful to personal communications with Fritz Plasser for this information.

² France is a mixed category: the 1984 and 1986 'critical elections' facilitating the surge in FN support used PR, although these were exceptional and the French usually use the 2nd ballot majoritarian system for parliamentary election. For the main conceptual and institutional differences between 'adversarial' and 'consensus' democracies, see the discussion in Pippa Norris. 2003. *Electoral Engineering: Voting Rules and Political Behavior*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2.

³ The conceptual framework presented here was first developed to interpret developments in British elections, following Tony Blair's historic landslide in 1997, but the theory can be applied equally, and indeed extended, to clarify developments for the radical right in many countries. See Pippa Norris and Geoffrey Evans. 'Introduction: Understanding critical elections.' 1999. In *Critical Elections: British Voters and Parties in Long-term Perspective*. Eds. Geoffrey Evans and Pippa Norris. London: Sage.

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⁵ Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc; Philip Converse. 1969. 'Of time and partisan stability.' *Comparative Political Studies*. 2: 139-71. For more recent work from in the Michigan tradition, see Warren Miller and J. Merrill Shanks. 1996. *The New American Voter*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; Donald P. Green, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler. 2002. *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identity of Voters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

⁶ For Britain, see David Butler and Donald Stokes. 1974. *Political Change in Britain*. Revised edition. London: Macmillan. For Norway see Angus Campbell and Henry Valen. 1961. 'Party Identification in Norway and the United States.' *Public Opinion Quarterly* 22:505-525. For France see Philip E. Converse and Georges Dupeux. 1962. 'Politicization of the Electorate in France and the United States.' *Public Opinion Quarterly* 26:1-23; Philip E. Converse and Roy Pierce. 1986. *Political Representation in France*. Cambridge Harvard University Press.

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Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies: Realignment or Dealignment? Princeton: Princeton University Press; Mark Franklin 1985. *The Decline of Class Voting in Britain: Changes in the Basis of Electoral Choice, 1964-1983*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Jeff Manza and Clem Brooks. 1999. *Social Cleavages and Political Change: Voter Alignments and U.S. Party Coalitions*. New York: Oxford University Press; Terry Nichols Clark and Seymour Martin Lipset. Eds. 2001. *The Breakdown of Class Politics*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press.

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¹⁰ See, for example, David R. Mayhew. 2003. *Partisan realignments*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

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¹⁴ Walter Dean Burnham. 1970. *Critical elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics*. New York: Norton.

¹⁵ For a summary of the evidence, see the introduction and conclusion in *Critical Elections: British Voters and Parties in Long-term Perspective*. Eds. Geoffrey Evans and Pippa Norris. London: Sage

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¹⁷ Russell J. Dalton, Scott Flanagan, and Paul Allen Beck, Eds. 1984. *Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies: Realignment or Dealignment?* Princeton: Princeton University Press; Ivor Crewe and David Denver. Eds. 1985. *Electoral Change in Western Democracies: Patterns and Sources of Electoral Volatility*. New York: St. Martin's Press; Mark Franklin, Tom Mackie, Henry Valen, et al. 1992. *Electoral Change: Responses to Evolving Social and Attitudinal Structures in Western Countries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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⁵⁵ I am indebted to Lynda Erickson, Larry LeDuc, and André Blais for these observations, made in personal communications with the author.

⁵⁶ I am indebted to Elisabeth Gidengil for this observation, made in a personal communication with the author.