2. Radical right parties in the post-Communist party systems of Central and Eastern Europe

After the fall of Communism, it took about a decade before comparative research on right-wing radicalism started to turn its attention to Central and Eastern Europe (Ramet 1999; Mudde 2000a, 2005b; Beichelt and Minkenberg 2002; Minkenberg 2002). Since then, scholars have discussed whether or not radical right parties in post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe constitute a phenomenon *sui generis*. This discussion also touches upon the issue of whether or not these parties are comparable to their Western European brethren, and further, whether or not they can be studied using the theoretical and methodological toolkit developed by scholars of radical right parties in Western Europe (Minkenberg 2002, 35, 2017; Mudde 2007, 3–4; Pirro 2016; Pytlas 2018). Since these issues are also relevant in the context of this study, this chapter examines the characteristics of radical right parties in Central and Eastern Europe and the region's party systems.

2.1 The Central and Eastern European radical right

Defining radical right parties remains one of the most contested issues in research on the radical right. Without indulging in extensive taxonomic debates, this section presents a working definition that is suitable for comparative research on radical right parties and discusses the main features of this party family in Central and Eastern Europe.

The terminology in the existing literature can be separated into rather specific concepts, such as neo-Nazism or ethno-nationalism, and into broader ones, such as the far, radical, or extreme right. Despite ongoing debates about labels, most research on radical right parties ends up studying a very similar set of usual suspects (for an overview, see Mudde 2007, 11–13; Minkenberg 1998, 29–31). Nevertheless, the choice of a particular terminology and definition leads to specific theoretical and conceptual ramifications. Given the centrality of the parties' fierce opposition to immigration, some research on Western Europe, for instance, has defined the party family as "anti-immigrant" (van der Brug, Fennema, and Tillie 2005). Such a defi-

nition, however, implies that these are single-issue parties which makes it difficult to transfer findings to Central and Eastern Europe, where immigration was hardly on the radical right's agenda before the so-called migration crisis in 2015 (Minkenberg 2002, 346, 2017, 48–49; Mudde 2007, 19). Others have done quite the opposite and defined the radical right using a bundle of different issues (Mudde 2000b; Heitmeyer 2002; O. Decker, Brähler, and Geißler 2006). While offering a very precise description, such "shopping list" definitions can also be over-specific and thus limit the scope to particular temporal or spatial contexts (Minkenberg 1998; Pytlas 2016, 24). It is quite striking, for instance, that gender issues have rarely been discussed in connection with the ideological platform of the radical right until recently. In the last decade, however, authors have concluded that issues of gender identity, reproductive rights, homo- and transphobia, or even women's rights with a distinct anti-Muslim twist, have become key issues in radical right mobilisation (Kováts and Põim 2015; Akkerman 2015). The above-mentioned example of anti-immigrant parties also alludes to the spatial limitations, since this concept would not have addressed the ideological core of Central and Eastern European radical right parties until recently. Several studies, particularly in the German context, also highlight the glorification of National Socialism as a key feature of the radical right ideology (O. Decker, Kiess, and Brähler 2012, 18), but members of this party family in other countries would credibly reject this claim.

A comparative analysis of radical right parties in several countries and over a period of 30 years warrants a definition that captures the broader ideological core of the party family. Therefore, the present study follows Pytlas (2016, 25) and defines right-wing radicalism as an ideology based on "mythicized nativist ultra-nationalism". The focal point of this ideology is the mythicized image of a homogenous nation, a naturalistic *Volksgemeinschaft*, which is constructed by combining different criteria of inclusion and exclusion, such as race, ethnicity, or religion that can vary over time and between "nations" (see also Minkenberg 1998, 33; Mudde 2007, 19). Nativism adds the notion that "states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ('the nation') and that non-native elements, (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state", which underlines the exclusionary nature of right-wing radicalism and sets it apart from liberalising nationalisms of minorities (Mudde 2007, 19).

The ideology of the radical right bears a strong exclusionary thrust and is therefore always directed against the values and principles of liberal democracies (Minkenberg 1998, 34; Pytlas 2016, 25; see also Mudde 2007). Political parties that adhere to this ideology, however, cannot be automatically conceived as anti-system parties in the sense that they aim to overthrow the liberal democratic order as such. There are nonetheless members of the radical right party family that pursue precisely this goal. Such parties constitute a distinct sub-group of the radical right and will be termed extreme right. In contrast to other authors who perceive opposition to the

democratic system as the ideological core of extreme right parties (Backes and Jesse 1996; Ignazi 2003; Carter 2005), the definition applied in this study considers their anti-systemness to be a secondary ideological feature. In this vein, the present study understands right-wing radicalism—and extremism—not as a fringe phenomenon, disconnected from a supposed democratic centre. Rather, "key aspects of the populist radical right ideology are shared by the mainstream, both at the elite and mass level, albeit often in a more moderate form" (Mudde 2010, 1178; see also Minkenberg 1998, 34–35; O. Decker, Brähler, and Geißler 2006, 12; Pytlas 2016, 7).

The ideological core of nativist ultra-nationalism is shared by radical right parties across Europe. However, there are two developments in Central and Eastern Europe which created a favourable environment for radical right mobilisation and set the region apart from Western Europe. First, there is the legacy of unfinished state- and nation-building which, in turn, led to the high salience of nationalism in post-Communist Europe (Beichelt and Minkenberg 2002; Pirro 2016; Pytlas 2016; Minkenberg 2017, chap. 3.2). The idea of the nation took root in Central and Eastern Europe when the region was ruled by multinational empires. Hence, nationalism started out as anti-imperialist independence movement which emphasised ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or (mythical) historical events to define the common identity of the nation (Schöpflin 1996; Bunce 2005). State- and nation-building always includes elements of ethnic and political nationalisms, both of which have been present in Central and Eastern as well as Western Europe (Shulman 2002; Blokker 2005; Pytlas 2016). However, as a result of the region's imperial history, ethnic and (religio-) cultural elements outweigh political ones when defining the boundaries of Central and Eastern European nations (Bunce 2005, 422–24; Grzymała-Busse 2015; Pytlas 2016, 50–55; Minkenberg 2017, 45).

Brubaker (1996, 4–6, chap. 3) models the specific nationalisms that emerged in the new Central and Eastern European states after World War I as a triadic nexus of mutually reinforcing interactions between nationalising states, national minorities, and external homelands. National minorities in many of the new states sought to fulfil the promise of statehood, or at least greater autonomy. As a reaction to such minority nationalist stances, the "core nation" continued its nationalist project by reinforcing the unity between national identity and state borders (see also Bunce 2005). In addition, most national minorities, such as Germans or Hungarians in Czechoslovakia, possessed external homelands in the immediate vicinity which supported their claims on the basis of shared national identity. In turn, the potential threat from these kin states also served as an integrative element in the national identity of the core nation. In this vein, nationalism continued to play a major role in the mostly short-lived attempts of democratic statehood in Central and Eastern Europe. In fact, these nationalist dynamics are often deemed largely responsible for these states' return to right-wing authoritarian rule in the 1920s and 1930s (Hobsbawm 1995, chap. 5; Minkenberg 2017, 45–47).

The idea of the nation continued to play a role under Communist rule, despite the strong internationalist thrust in the Communist ideology (Brubaker 1996, chap. 2; von Beyme 1996, chap. 3; Bunce 2005). The Soviet Union's recipe to deal with its multinational population was the creation of an ethno-federation, in which the subunits were structured along ethno-cultural lines and formally enjoyed a high degree of autonomy. Effectively, however, Moscow sought tight control over the republics, for instance by sponsoring and co-opting national elites, supporting the development of nationally defined institutions, and catering to the socio-economic needs of the population. By doing so, the regime successfully penetrated these territories, hoping that citizens' identification with the Communist regime and ideology would eventually substitute national identity. Moscow also extended the ideas of ethno-federalism, such as securing hegemony through sponsoring and control of national elites, to the independent states of Central and Eastern Europe within the Communist bloc (Bunce 2005, 426–27). While this strategy aimed ultimately at eliminating nationalism from the Communist sphere, the regimes in some satellite states, such as Romania or Bulgaria, actively invoked nationalism as a tool to secure power in light of growing discontent, thus developing a specific ideology of national Communism (Ishiyama 1998).

In the post-Communist era, the issue of nation-building and national identity resurfaced with full force (von Beyme 1996, chap. 3; Elster et al. 2000; Bunce 2005, 441–43) and rendered the ideological core of radical right ideology highly salient. Depending on the specific national context, different facets of nationalism gained prominence in the Central and Eastern European countries. They comprised, for instance, hostility towards ethnic minorities, including Roma; irredentist claims that were previously silenced by Moscow's hegemonic power; clericalism and ethno-religious nationalism; a strong anti-Communist or, in countries with a national Communist history, even a pro-Communist thrust (Minkenberg 2002, 2015a, 2017; Buštíková 2015, 2018; Pirro 2016; Pytlas 2018). The immigration issue, in contrast, has not played a role in radical right mobilisation until the so-called migration crisis in the mid-2010s.

Another difference between Western and Central and Eastern Europe concerns processes of modernisation in society. The (new) radical right that has emerged in Western Europe since the 1980s can be characterised as a counter-movement to rapid modernisation, and more precisely to the post-industrial transformation and the post-materialist value change, which occurred during the 1960s and 1970s. This "silent revolution" resulted in the rise of progressive left-libertarian actors, often labelled as green parties (Inglehart 1977). The nativist ultra-nationalist ideology of the radical right, focusing on the issues of immigration and law and order, appealed to those voters who struggled with the growing liberalisation and individualisation of the economic, political, and cultural spheres resulting from these modernisation processes. Therefore, Ignazi (1992) refers to the emergence of the radical right

in Western Europe as a "silent counter-revolution", which created a new conflict dimension in Western European politics and societies which initially cut across existing cleavage structures (see also Betz 1994; Minkenberg 1998; Ignazi 2003; Pirro 2016).

Central and Eastern European radical right parties came to life under quite different circumstances. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, post-Communist societies were confronted with the mammoth task of (re-) building a new economic and political order in new—or at least newly independent—nation states, a challenge often referred to as the "dilemma of simultaneity" (Offe 1991, 872). Compared to other post-Communist regions, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe managed these complex and far-reaching tasks much better than expected and established functioning democracies and capitalist economies rather quickly (von Beyme 1996; Elster et al. 2000). Yet, at the same time, the region experienced a dramatic economic decline in the first half of the 1990s, which was even worse than the Great Depression of 1929 (Merkel 2010, 329–39), and resulted in massive economic hardships as well as losses to social status and economic security among large parts of the population (Minkenberg 2017, 13–14). Thus, the emergence of Central and Eastern European radical right parties took place in a context of rapid modernisation as well, even though the causes of modernisation were different from those in Western Europe. Moreover, the modernisation shifts after the fall of Communism have been even "more far-reaching, deeper and complex than in the West" a generation before (Beichelt and Minkenberg 2002, 5–6; see also Pytlas 2016; Minkenberg 2017).

In such an environment, radical right parties clearly appealed to those who experienced economic hardships and status insecurity by providing an alternative course to political and economic liberalisation. It would be short-sighted to credit the support for radical right parties to socio-economic grievances alone, however. The supporters of the radical right also embrace the particular concept of national identity that these parties convey (Pytlas 2016, 5–7). In other words, they can be better characterised as "axiological modernization losers" who "perceive the post-communist state- and nation-building path as a threat to the integrity, values, and interests of the radicalized interpretation of 'the nation'" (Pytlas 2016, 7). Under these circumstances, an opposition to post-material values, and the parties that represent them, hardly affected the emergence of radical right parties in Central and Eastern Europe (Pirro 2016, 36).

In light of the economic hardships during the post-Communist transformation, it is hardly surprising that socio-economic issues feature quite prominently in the ideological platforms of many Central and Eastern European radical right parties—mostly in the form of left-leaning positions combined with a strong nationalist element. This policy of "social-national economics" (Pirro 2016, 41) generally accepts the framework of free-market economy but advocates for national protectionism and social security provided only to those who are considered mem-

bers of the nation. In this vein, the socio-economic positions of the radical right are strongly linked to the socio-cultural core of their ideology (Pirro 2016; Buštíková 2018; see also Łapiński 2004; Mudde 2007; Minkenberg and Pytlas 2013; Pirro 2017).

The discussion has shown that an exclusionary, nativist ultra-nationalism constitutes the overarching ideological core of the radical right. However, the manifestations of right-wing radicalism, and the people who radical right parties consider members of the in-group, or the out-group, can differ between countries and regions as well as over time. The immediate adoption of the immigration issue and anti-Muslim racism in Central and Eastern Europe in the mid-2010s, or the increasing importance of anti-LGBTIQ+ mobilisation for the radical right across Europe, underlines that these parties are able to adapt to changing contextual conditions (Pytlas 2018).

Particularly in the context of Central and Eastern Europe, it is important to highlight the distinction between radical right parties and radical right politics (Mudde 2018, 261; see also Pytlas 2018). Mainstream parties have adopted various elements of radical right politics, not least due to the salience of nationalism in the region. Some scholars even speak of a radicalisation of the mainstream in Central and Eastern Europe (Minkenberg 2013; see also Pytlas and Kossack 2015; Pytlas 2016).

In some cases, the boundary separating mainstream parties that use radical right politics from radical right parties is becoming increasingly blurred. Since the 2010s, for instance, the Hungarian Alliance of Young Democrats (Fidesz) and the Polish Law and Justice (PiS) have embraced radical right politics to such an extent that some scholars include them in the radical right party family. In the mid-2010s, Minkenberg (2017, 2, 24) mentions that both parties have drifted toward the radical right, but still labels Fidesz as a "right-wing populist party" and PiS as a "national-conservative" one. Pytlas (2016) conceives of PiS and Fidesz as "nearby competitors" of the radical right, but he also shows that both parties increasingly apply radical right frames and thus gravitate towards the ideology of *völkisch* nationalism (see also Sata and Karolewski 2020, 12–14; Markowski 2020, 1516). A few years later, Mudde argues that "[a]fter regaining power in 2010, Orbán quickly transformed Hungary into an illiberal democracy (or even a competitive authoritarian regime) and Fidesz into a far-right party" (Mudde 2020, 302). In another recent article, he includes PiS and Fidesz into the radical right party family and describes them as "transformed conservative parties" (Mudde 2019, 32). Hence, in both cases, the notion of conservative parties that underwent a gradual transformation into radical right ones seems plausible.

Because of the gradual nature of this transformation, however, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly when PiS and Fidesz ultimately joined their new party family, if this is possible at all. In the context of the present study, however, it is necessary to determine whether or not these parties belong to the radical right party family during each instance of government formation. Given that this project lacks the re-

sources to carry out a detailed analysis of the transformation of these parties, and because Fidesz and PiS did not belong to the radical right party family for most of the period under study, the government participation of these—transformed radical right—parties in the 2010s is not included in the analysis. Moreover, this study analyses government formation in minority situations in parliament. It argues that, under these circumstances, the dynamics of coalition bargaining fundamentally differ from situations where one party controls an absolute majority (see Chapter 4.4). Since Fidesz and PiS have constantly won more than half of the seats in parliament during the time scholars consider them to be transformed radical right parties, the majority status also justifies their exclusion from the analysis. However, in the late 1990s and mid-2000s, before their transformation, Fidesz and PiS appear in the analysis as formateurs of coalitions while radical right parties were present in parliament.

The Latvian parties Latvian National Independence Movement (LNNK) and For Fatherland and Freedom (TB), and the Estonian National Independence Party (ERSP) experienced a reverse transformation. In the former Soviet republics, nation-building took place in the presence of a large Russian-speaking minority. During the first years of independence, political elites debated how to treat this minority, particularly with regard to citizenship. Although nativism was an essential part of LNNK's, TB's and ERSP's agenda, the family affiliation of these parties remains controversial (Pettai and Kreuzer 1998; Muižnieks 2005; Poleschuk 2005; Mudde 2007; Bennich-Björkman and Johansson 2012). Empirical research on the ideology of Central and Eastern European parties in the early 1990s is scarce (Mudde 2007, 53), and the Baltic states received even less attention than other regions in Central and Eastern Europe (Auers and Kasekamp 2009, 242; Mudde 2018, 260), so determining the party family affiliation for these parties is difficult.

In Latvia, the LNNK and TB began to moderate their nativist positions in the mid-1990s (Dehmel and Reetz 2011, 217; Bennich-Björkman and Johansson 2012). Both parties and their alliance, For Fatherland and Freedom/Latvian National Independence Movement (TB/LNNK), are sometimes included in the radical right party family, particularly in the first half of the 1990s (Auers and Kasekamp 2015; Minkenberg 2017, 72). Other research, however, characterises them as nationalist or (national) conservative (Muižnieks 2005, 120; Bennich-Björkman and Johansson 2012), and sometimes the classification even varies within a single study (Dehmel and Reetz 2011). Due to the lack of unambiguous classification and the shortage of empirical research on the ideology of the LNNK and TB, both parties and their alliance, TB/LNNK, are excluded from this study.[1] The literature agrees, however,

1 The People's Movement for Latvia (TKL), a flash party founded by former LNNK member Joachim Siegerist and elected to parliament in 1995, definitely qualifies as a radical right party (Muižnieks 2005, 103–4; Dehmel and Reetz 2011, 117; Mudde 2018, 256). However, empirical

that the Estonian ERSP can be considered a radical right party until its merger with the more moderate Pro Patria in 1995. Pro Patria and, in particular, the party which resulted from the merger of these two parties, the Pro Patria Union, were never radical right (Kasekamp 2003, 404; Poleschuk 2005, 60; Mudde 2007, 143; Reetz and Thieme 2011, 103; Bennich-Björkman and Johansson 2012). The present study follows this assessment and conceives of the ERSP as a radical right party until 1995.

Table 2.1 provides an overview of radical right parties in Central and Eastern Europe. It includes only those parties that passed the threshold of parliamentary representation at least once, because representation in parliament is a vital precondition for participation in coalition formation. The table illustrates that some parties, like the Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIÉP) in 1998, were only present in parliament for a single term, while others, such as the Slovak National Party (SNS), celebrated repeated success at the polls. Moreover, several countries witnessed more than one radical right party in their national parliament and some legislatures even included two radical right parties at a time, for instance the Romanian parliament between 1992 and 1996.

Table 2.1: Radical right parties in Central and Eastern Europe and their presence in parliament since the first free elections

Country	Radical right party	Presence in parliament
Bulgaria	Ataka	2005 – 2017
	PF*	2014 – 2017
	UP**	since 2017
Czech Republic	SPR-RSČ	1992 – 1998
	Úsvit	2013 – 2017
	SPD	since 2017
Estonia	ERSP	1992 – 1995
	EKRE	since 2015
Hungary	MIÉP	1998 – 2002
	(Jobbik)	since 2010
	(Fidesz)	since 1990

information on this short-lived party, in particular its ideological positions, is so scarce that it cannot be included in this study.

Latvia	(TKL)	1995 – 1998
	NA	since 2010
Poland	LPR	2001 – 2007
	(PiS)	since 2001
	(Konfederacja)	since 2019
Romania	PRM	1992 – 2008
	PUNR	1992 – 2000
Slovakia	SNS	1992 – 2002, 2006 – 2012, 2016 – 2020
	ĽSNS	since 2016

Source: Own compilation; parties in parentheses are not included in this study.
* Electoral alliance of VMRO, the NFSB and several small parties and organisations.
** Electoral alliance of the PF and Ataka.

2.2 Central and Eastern European party systems: The context of coalition politics

Having discussed Central and Eastern European radical right parties, this section now turns to the party systems in which they compete and interact with other parties. Sartori (1976, 44) defines a party system as "the system of interactions resulting from inter-party competition". With regard to Central and Eastern Europe, Savage underlines the importance of party systems as a context for government formation, while also highlighting how their fluidity causes problems in the region: "Party systems provide the essential structure of the coalition-bargaining environment, as they contain information on the parties' relative bargaining weights and preferences. Each party in the system uses this information when making decisions on potential coalition partners. What distinguishes party systems in new democracies from those of established democracies is the lack of routinized interactions between parties, which brings a higher level of uncertainty" (Savage 2016, 503–4).

The literature assesses the institutionalisation and stabilisation of post-Communist party systems quite differently. In a brief summary of the academic debate, Thorlakson (2018) shows that the arguments of proponents and critics of party system stabilisation do not necessarily contradict each other, but that the disparities often result from emphasising different elements of the party systems. Those who stress party system fluidity often highlight structural features, such as volatility and the emergence of new parties, while advocates of stabilisation focus rather on the content of party competition. The following discussion outlines the main arguments in this debate and relates them to the present study. The discussion follows Sartori's

(1976) classic distinction between the structural-numerical and the ideological configuration of party systems.

2.2.1 The structural stabilisation of party systems in Central and Eastern Europe

The political developments in Central and Eastern Europe since the inter-war era had an impact on the structure of the emerging party systems in the region after 1989. The region's inter-war democracies were quickly toppled by either domestic authoritarian forces, or external political powers, such as the Nazi regime that occupied Czechoslovakia in 1938/9 (Elster et al. 2000, 37–38; Minkenberg 2017, 45–46). Thus, there was little time for democratic parties to take root in society. In the early days of Communist rule after World War II, the independent, Central and Eastern European countries adopted constitutions that closely mirrored the Soviet model, including one-party rule and tight control over every sector of society. Even though the individual regimes certainly developed their own specific traits after Stalin's death and several uprisings in the 1950s and 1960s, for instance with regard to domestic, foreign, or economic politics, none of the Communist parties in the Central and Eastern European satellite states risked their hegemony by tolerating party competition (Rothschild 1993). Even in countries where bloc parties existed, they were never truly independent from the Communists and posed no challenge to the ruling elite (Cabada, Hloušek, and Jurek 2014, 48).

With two notable exceptions, most parties that emerged in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989 were newly created political entities without any roots in historical party politics (von Beyme 1996, 127–29; Cabada, Hloušek, and Jurek 2014, 53). First, some leaders attempted to revive historical parties from the inter-war era, though most were unsuccessful (Cabada, Hloušek, and Jurek 2014, 44–47, 182). Second, and more importantly, the Communist parties themselves continued as more or less reformed political forces in the new party systems. The organisational continuity that equipped the Communist successor parties with substantial personal and financial resources, gave these parties an advantage over their newly founded competitors (von Beyme 1996, 133–35). Moreover, even in countries that witnessed a strong and well-organised political opposition, for example the Polish Solidarność, these movements did not necessarily transform into equally strong and well-organised political parties after 1989 (Ekiert and Kubik 1999). Hence, new parties played a major role in party system formation after 1989, but party competition did not entirely take place in a "tabula rasa" situation (Elster et al. 2000, 131).

Due to the large number of new parties, Central and Eastern European party systems were weakly structured and characterised by a high degree of uncertainty, particularly in the early phase of the post-Communist transformation. The opposition to the Communist regime mostly established broad umbrella organisations,

so-called forum or movement parties, which claimed to act in the national interest rather than as advocates for particular strata or groups of society. In organisational terms, they were characterised by horizontal structures and blurry borders between the party and civil society. The opposition's distaste for vertical power structures and their (over-) emphasis on civil society is hardly surprising given their experience under four decades of authoritarian one-party rule. Despite the anti-elitist appeal of many of these parties, elites and individual personalities played an important role in their development from the very beginning (Ágh 1998, 102–4; see also Geddes 1995; von Beyme 1996).

Moreover, the early design of post-Communist democracies favoured the influence of political parties over other interest groups, providing a strong incentive for political entrepreneurs to form parties, which often resembled small elite organisations without formal organisational structures. Though for different reasons, power was concentrated among individual personalities and elites in the forum and the entrepreneurial parties as well. The new members of this political class consolidated and extended their power after the first elections, when they entered parliament and government (Ágh 1998, 104–8). The dominance of political elites in weakly organised political parties resulted in an "overparticization" and "parliamentarization" (Ágh 1998, 105) of Central and Eastern European party systems in the first half of the 1990s. However, Ágh (1998, 109–12) identifies two stabilising trends which followed the dissolution of the forum parties and the institutional learning gained from the West. First, these processes contributed to horizontal differentiation in the party system, because more distinctive parties emerged from the catch-all forum parties, leaving room for a broader spectrum of political elites. Second, a growing vertical differentiation could be observed, since interest groups and civil society became more independent from political parties (see also Enyedi and Casal Bértoa 2018, 434–35) Thus, by the end of the 1990s, a professional political class had emerged and the functional differentiation improved parties' ability to represent societal interests.

Other observers were less optimistic about the prospects for party system institutionalisation at that time (Mair 1997; Elster et al. 2000). In one of the most recent and comprehensive empirical accounts of party system institutionalisation[2] and stability in Central and Eastern Europe, Enyedi and Casal Bértoa (2018) illustrate that the initial scepticism was not completely unwarranted. Low levels of party membership, for instance, remain a characteristic feature in post-Communist parties. In fact, the average share of party members in the electorate is even decreasing in Central and Eastern Europe. Such downward trend is also visible in Western Eu-

2 The concept of party system institutionalisation was mainly developed and advanced by Mainwaring to explain democratic transformations in Latin America (e.g. Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Mainwaring 2018).

rope, but these states started from significantly higher levels of party membership (see also Cabada, Hloušek, and Jurek 2014, 121–23; Minkenberg 2017, 57–58).

The patterns of government formation have become more stable in Central and Eastern Europe since the 1990s, even though the level of party system closure still remains below those in the established democracies of Western Europe.[3] Furthermore, the decreasing intensity of fragmentation also points to a stabilisation of Central and Eastern European party systems. In fact, fragmentation, reflected in the effective number of parties that compete in elections or enter parliament, is the only indicator of party system stability examined by Enyedi and Casal Bértoa (2018, 440) which shows no statistically significant difference between East and West. The authors even find the average effective number of parliamentary parties to be exactly the same in both parts of the continent in the period since 2010. The structural feature which sets post-Communist party systems apart from their West European counterparts most clearly, however, is their high degree of volatility, reflecting the gains and losses of parties in an election compared to the previous one. The average volatility in post-Communist democracies is twice as high as in Western Europe between 1990 and 2016 (24 per cent versus 12 per cent) and four out of five elections result in a change of more than 15 per cent of the votes between competing parties (Enyedi and Casal Bértoa 2018, 435–37).

Much of the volatility in post-Communist party systems results from the frequent emergence of new parties, which often make remarkable electoral gains. Powell and Tucker (2014, 131) find that more than 70 per cent of the electoral volatility between 1989 and 2009 originates from new parties (see also Tavits 2008a).[4] The continuous rise and fall of new parties has prompted scholars to speak of a new party sub-system, in which "multiple parties shar[e] a common and distinct pool of ideas, voters, and elites" (Haughton and Deegan-Krause 2015, 69). Therefore, the individual new parties that emerge in these party systems should not be regarded as completely isolated phenomena. Moreover, Sikk (2005) points out that these parties are not always true newcomers to the political scene. He rather argues that many of the region's allegedly new parties are the offspring of existing political circles or parties and only few are "genuinely new". Genuinely new parties are those that are not "successors to any previous parliamentary parties, have a novel name and structure, and

3 The concept of party system closure reflects the stability of the patterns of government formation, based on the alternation in government, the familiarity of the format of governments, and the parties' access to power (Enyedi and Casal Bértoa 2018, 426; see also Mair 1997).

4 Tavits (2008a) makes an important theoretical contribution when investigating the causal relationship between electoral volatility and the emergence of new parties. While the literature suggests causal effects between these two factors in both directions, she illustrates that the emergence of new parties, including splits and mergers, is a cause of electoral volatility in Central and Eastern Europe and not vice versa.

do not have any important figures from past democratic politics among their major members" (Sikk 2005, 399). Such legitimate newcomers, however, are less successful than the high levels of volatility suggest, since their gains account for only about 20 per cent of the overall volatility in the first decade of democratic rule in Central and Eastern Europe. Many genuinely new parties did not even manage to enter parliament, and those that did often disappeared as quickly as they emerged (Sikk 2005, 402–6). Later studies which follow Sikk's (2005) coding approach for defining new parties corroborate his conclusion. Emanuele, Chiaramonte, and Soare's (2020) results show that less than a third of the total volatility in Central and Eastern Europe between 1990 and 2016 can be credited to genuinely new parties.[5] Moreover, they find that electoral changes caused by new parties are somewhat lower in the 2010s, when compared to the previous two decades, while volatility resulting from shifts between existing parties has increased during this period. Based on these findings, they conclude that some "'core' parties of the system have finally succeeded in creating (more) stable and enduring loyalties with their voters" while new parties remain a relatively frequent phenomenon in the region (Emanuele, Chiaramonte, and Soare 2020, 317).

Overall, Central and Eastern European party systems have undergone a process of consolidation over the last three decades, even though many indicators of their institutionalisation do not match the scores of established party systems in Western Europe. This is hardly surprising, however, given that they are much younger. Existing patterns of convergence between both regions, for instance regarding fragmentation and volatility, are not only a result of Central and Eastern Europe catching up with the West. In particular, the converging levels of volatility also result from the steep increase of volatility in Western Europe after the economic crisis of 2008/9 (Emanuele, Chiaramonte, and Soare 2020). Hence, even scholars who are more sceptical about the structural stabilisation of Central and Eastern European party systems agree that they provide a sufficiently stable context for the application of "Western" concepts and theories (Cabada, Hloušek, and Jurek 2014, 185–186, 189). Where coalition politics are concerned, these scholars also claim that political parties have been "key players in government formation" in Central and Eastern Europe ever since "the very first months and years" of the transformation when only the "torso of the party-political structure" existed (Cabada, Hloušek, and Jurek 2014, 151).

5 The results also diverge from previous studies since these authors try to avoid biased case selection. First, a temporal bias emerges from the frequent comparison of Central and Eastern European elections since 1990 with the whole post-war period in Western Europe, which can obscure similar trends in both regions in the same period. Second, Western European patterns are often compared to a broader sample of post-Communist countries (Powell and Tucker 2014; Enyedi and Casal Bértoa 2018), which includes post-Soviet or Balkan countries that differ significantly from the post-Communist EU member states in terms of democratic consolidation (Emanuele, Chiaramonte, and Soare 2020, 312–13).

2.2.2 Political divides in Central and Eastern European party systems

The ideological configuration of Central and Eastern European party systems shows a higher degree of stability, even though it differs significantly from the established Western European party systems (Bakke and Sitter 2005; Enyedi 2008; Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2009). In their seminal work on cleavage structures in Western European party systems, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) show how party competition resulted from cleavages between societal groups and their collective interests, which political parties then articulated. They identified the conflicts between labour and capital, urban and rural interests, centre and periphery, and state and church as the primary, structuring elements of Western European politics (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, 14).

While cleavage theory has become one of the most prominent approaches to studying party systems in democratic countries, some scholars have cast serious doubts about its applicability to the post-Communist party systems of Central and Eastern Europe. They argue that the region's political parties lack programmatic coherence and a solid grounding in societal conflicts (Elster et al. 2000; Innes 2002). Other research, however, provides evidence for the emergence of predictable issue-based party competition along relevant societal conflicts soon after the fall of the Iron Curtain (Kitschelt 1995; von Beyme 1996; Kitschelt et al. 1999; Beichelt 2001; Marks et al. 2006; Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2009). Returning to the concept of cleavages allows for some reconciliation between these conflicting positions. Bartolini and Mair (1990, 214–16) characterise a cleavage as having an "empirical", a "normative", and an "organisational" element. Hence, in order to speak of a cleavage there must be a socio-structural division in society, which is reflected in the self-consciousness of these groups, and which results in political organisation and mobilisation. The authors also state that other terms are needed for situations in which all three elements of a cleavage are not present. Deegan-Krause (2007, 539–40) suggests the term "difference" when only one of the elements is present. A "divide" describes the simultaneous presence of two elements but not a "full cleavage", where all three elements are present. In this vein, he proposes the term "position divides" for situations that combine structural and attitudinal differences, "census divides" when structural and organisational elements are present at the same time, and "issue divides" when a conflict merges an attitudinal basis with organisational representation but lacks demographic roots.

Based on this analytical distinction, Deegan-Krause (2007) illustrates that full cleavages are indeed rare in Central and Eastern Europe, because political competition has shallow roots in the demographic structure of society.[6] When settling for

6 Deegan Krause (2007, 543) argues that Western European democracies have evolved in a similar direction. The erosion of class or religious identity, and the development of new con-

the notion of issue divides, however, there is ample evidence for a linkage between the conflicts in society and programmatic positions of political parties in Central and Eastern Europe (Kitschelt 1995; von Beyme 1996; Kitschelt et al. 1999; Beichelt 2001; Marks et al. 2006; Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2009). Yet, the question remains, which issue divides structure party competition in the region and how different divides relate to each other.

Klaus von Beyme (1996, chap. 7) attempts to capture the conflict structure of post-Communist party systems by supplementing Lipset and Rokkan's traditional cleavages with four new conflict dimensions.[7] He adds, however, that some of them overlap and not all are relevant across the entirety of Central and Eastern Europe. The cleavage between labour and capital, for instance, did not fully materialise in post-Communist Europe, because the egalitarian politics of the Communist regimes prevented a capitalist, bourgeois elite from emerging and entering party politics. On the opposite end and as a consequence of a wide-spread, anti-socialist bias in the region, social democratic parties remained underdeveloped.[8] Beichelt (2001, 182–90) finds that five salient divides structure party competition in Central and Eastern Europe, and he groups them into socio-economic and socio-cultural ones. The socio-economic dimension contains the conflict between labour and capital as well as urban versus rural interests. He adds that sectoral differentiation may emerge over time, which would render the socio-economic dimension somewhat similar to the economic cleavage in Western Europe, but not in the strict sense of class-based voting (see also von Beyme 1996; Deegan-Krause 2007). In the socio-cultural sphere, Beichelt's classification includes the conflict between centre and periphery as well as ethno-linguistic and religious divides. Here, he expects different issues to align and merge into integrated party policies. Finally, Beichelt (2001, 190–94) argues that these divides would only fully unfold after the so-called regime divide between Communist successor parties and parties that have their roots in the opposition to the former regime had vanished (see also Grzymała-Busse 2001).

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flicts, such as the one between materialism and post-materialism, narrowed the societal basis of political parties, casting doubt on the existence of full cleavages in Western Europe as well.

7 Von Beyme (1996, 129) lists a total of eight cleavages: labour versus capital, city versus countryside, secular versus religious, Westernisers versus nationalists, centre versus periphery, materialism versus post-materialism, centralism versus decentralisation, and libertarian versus bureaucratic.

8 In some countries, reformed Communist successor parties took the place of social democratic parties, but their position in the party system was strongly affected by other cleavages, most importantly the regime divide. The Czech Republic is an outlier here, as a social democratic party without any roots in the former regime emerged as one of the most stable and successful political forces in the country.

Regardless of the exact divides, there are considerable within-region differences between Central and Eastern European party systems. Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2009) acknowledge these differences, but conclude that party competition still follows a similar pattern across the region which can be described as a "structured diversity". It is structured in a way that party positions "coalesce around a pro-reform versus antireform dimension"—liberal socio-economic positions correspond with liberal socio-cultural ones in the pro-reform pole, and the anti-reform pole unites economic protectionism and cultural conservatism (Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2009, 299–300). The diversity then arises from differences in issue salience. The authors argue that a country-specific set of salient issues, resulting from socio-historical trajectories and the agency of political parties, constitutes the specific content of national party competition. Regarding the relation and hierarchy between different issue dimensions, they conclude that "economic issues constitute the common basis for party competition in the region and other conflicts add a country-specific flavour" (Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2009, 298).

While the literature widely agrees that individual issue divides within the socio-economic and the socio-cultural dimensions reinforce each other, the unidimensional concept of party competition along a pro-reform versus anti-reform dimension remains contested. Some authors provide evidence in support of this notion (Marks et al. 2006; see also Kitschelt 1995), whereas others find that socio-economic and socio-cultural divides align in some countries and cut across each other in others (Kitschelt et al. 1999; Deegan-Krause 2007; Casal Bértoa 2014). The findings regarding the hierarchy between these two cumulative issue dimensions are similarly inconclusive. Kitschelt and co-authors (Kitschelt et al. 1999; Buštíková and Kitschelt 2009), for instance, tend to agree with the predominance of distributional conflicts in Central and Eastern Europe. Yet, there is ample evidence that socio-cultural conflicts about citizenship, minority rights, religion, language, gender, or the interpretation of history are of equal, or even higher, importance (von Beyme 1996; Bunce 2005; Enyedi 2008; Pirro 2016; Pytlas 2016; Minkenberg 2017). In a comparison of Western European and post-Communist democracies, Deegan-Krause summarises the situation regarding cleavage structures as follows: "Economic issues […] are not necessarily the best way to compare the strength of issue divides in East and West. Although economy-related divides emerged throughout post-communist Europe, non-economic issue [sic] also aligned closely with party preference" (Deegan-Krause 2007, 543–44). Pytlas (2016, 6) points out that different socio-cultural conflicts have a tendency to reinforce each other and result in highly polarised "value wars" (Ágh 2001, in Pytlas 2016, 6) between deeply divided political camps.

These observations make it difficult to reduce a content analysis of party competition in Central and Eastern Europe to one single dimension. Given the salience of socio-economic and socio-cultural issue divides, and reinforcing divides within each dimension, the present study applies a two-dimensional concept of the pol-

icy space, using comprehensive socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions. Another reason for focusing on broader socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions is that the issue positions of Central and Eastern European parties are less stable than those of Western European parties; however, the vast majority of them developed an ideological, or value, core that remains relatively constant and offers orientation to voters and other parties (Hloušek and Kopeček 2010, 9–10). In such a situation, where parties have rather shallow roots in the society's structural differences, the use of the broader ideological dimensions can be beneficial.

2.2.3 Party competition with radical right parties in Central and Eastern Europe

How do these developments and characteristics of post-Communist parties and party systems affect radical right parties and their participation in government? Central and Eastern European radical right parties are electorally less successful and consistent than their Western European counterparts (Minkenberg 2002, 336, 2017, 101; Mudde 2005a). Yet, the discussion of the structural development of parties and party systems in the region has revealed that these features are not limited to radical right parties. High levels of volatility and the constant appearance of new parties indicate that fluctuating electoral fortunes affect other parties just as much as the radical right. Several new parties even managed to enter government immediately after their electoral breakthrough. In such an environment, radical right parties did not need one or two decades of organisational consolidation and electoral growth to gain executive power (Minkenberg 2017, 129), as was the case in Western Europe (Bale 2003; de Lange 2008, 2012).

Despite the perpetual advent of new parties, an electorally and organisationally stable core of established parties populate many Central and Eastern European party systems, reflecting the fact that it is possible for parties to survive in the long term. Stabilising patterns of government indicate that these established parties might also have advantages when it comes to participating in government. Hence, while organisational instability and limited, or short-lived, electoral successes are not necessarily an obstacle to their participation in government, parties which display electoral consistency and organisational consolidation should still have advantages over new weakly institutionalised parties.

The ideological configuration of the Central and Eastern European party systems has implications for government formation with radical right parties as well. Socio-cultural divides feature prominently in the region's party systems. Given the politicisation and salience of the core issues of radical right parties and the presence of corresponding attitudes in significant parts of society (Zick, Küpper, and Hövermann 2011), the limited electoral success of these parties may come as a surprise. However, the salience of nationalism also helps explain the relatively poor perfor-

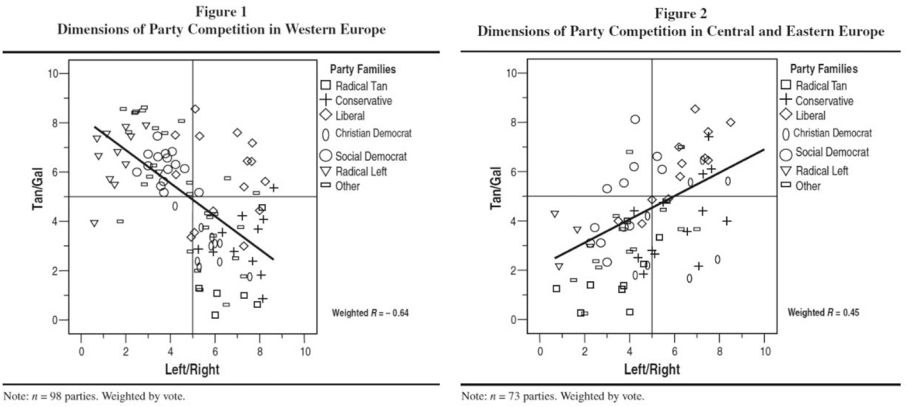
mance of radical parties at the polls. Radical right parties are not the only suppliers of radical right politics. In Central and Eastern Europe, they face fierce competition from mainstream parties that offer similar policies, though often in a more moderate fashion or with a different framing (Minkenberg and Kossack 2015; Pirro 2016; Pytlas and Kossack 2015; Pytlas 2016; Minkenberg 2017, chap. 6). However, while mainstream parties' openness to radical right politics has a negative impact on the radical right in the electoral arena, it may facilitate cooperation in government.

The ideological configuration of Central and Eastern European party systems also has a bearing on the potential partners of radical right parties in government. In Western Europe, centre-right parties, which combine conservative socio-cultural positions with liberal socio-economic views, have been the natural allies of the radical right. While not all Western European radical right parties adopted Kitschelt's winning formula of combining ultra-nationalism with economic liberalism (Kitschelt and McGann 1995), conservatives and Christian democrats are still situated closest to the radical right in a two-dimensional space (see Figure 2.1). Green and socialist parties are located in the opposite quadrant and represent their fiercest competitors.[9]

The picture in Central and Eastern Europe is quite different and less clear. Here, radical right parties tend to combine their ultra-nationalist agenda with social-national economics, which places them in the lower left quadrant of Figure 2.1. The party families present in this quadrant represent a diverse group of potential allies and coalition partners for radical right parties, including social democrats and conservatives. Both party families, however, can be found in the opposite quadrant as well. This diversity results from the specific Communist and transformational legacies of different Central and Eastern European countries (Kitschelt et al. 1999). Most social democratic parties in the region are reformed Communist successor parties. Particularly in countries with a patrimonial Communist regime, such as Bulgaria or Romania, these parties had embraced elements of nationalism in the Communist era, and they underwent a slow and partial process of structural and ideological reform after 1989. Therefore, they maintained a nationalist and protectionist profile, which situated them in close ideological proximity to the radical right (Ishiyama 1998). In other countries, the social democrats developed as part of the opposition or, more frequently, as credibly reformed Communist successors with relatively liberal socio-cultural and even socio-economic positions (Hloušek and Kopeček 2010, chap. 2).

9 Even though the general alignment that Marks et al. (2006) suggest is viewed rather critically in the case of Central and Eastern Europe and this study's definition of radical right parties differs from the equivalent of "Radical Tan" parties used by those authors, the figures still illustrate the general patterns of party positions discussed here.

Figure 2.1: Party positions in Western and Central and Eastern Europe in the mid-2000s



Source: Marks et al. 2006, 158–59.

The conservative party family is also located in different quadrants. According to Hloušek and Kopeček (2010, chap. 8), Central and Eastern European conservative parties can be divided into liberal and nationalist branches. National-conservative parties, such as the Polish PiS and the Hungarian Fidesz before they transformed into full-fledged radical right parties, attribute great importance to nationalism and (Christian) religious values. They often advance national-protectionist economic policies, which renders them potential allies of the radical right as well. Liberal conservative parties are rather opposed to the radical right, because they do not share their national-protectionist positions, and they often reject the exclusionary nationalism of their national-conservative and radical right counterparts.

The emptiness of the upper left quadrant in Central and Eastern Europe can be understood as a legacy of the Communist and transformational periods. The oppositional "pro-reform" forces, including those Communist successor parties that underwent credible changes pursued a rather centrist, or even liberal, economic agenda due to the widespread anti-Communist bias (von Beyme 1996, 125), placing them in the upper right. Green parties, which traditionally occupy the left-libertarian end of the new politics dimension in the West, are missing in Central and Eastern European party systems because a post-materialist silent revolution has not occurred in the region.

2.3 Different but similar: Parties and party systems in Central and Eastern Europe compared to the West

The discussion of radical right parties and the configuration and development of party systems points to similarities and differences between Western and Central and Eastern Europe. Central and Eastern European radical right parties emphasise, at least in part, different issues than their Western European counterparts, and the political mainstream in Central and Eastern Europe has been more open to radical right politics from the beginning. Moreover, party systems are less stable and institutionalised than in the West, particularly in the first post-Communist decade. They are becoming more consolidated in the following decades but this development is proceeding rather slowly, it is not always linear, and it exhibits significant intra-regional variation. Value conflicts related to state- and nation-building play a more important role in Central and Eastern Europe than in most Western European countries. However, socio-economic issues have never been absent from party competition in Central and Eastern Europe, particularly during the early phase of the post-Communist transformation when rebuilding the whole economic system was one of the top priorities on the political agenda. Many of these specific features of Central and Eastern European politics are related to the region's historical legacies from the Communist and transformational period, and, in part, even from the pre-Communist era (Jowitt 1991; Crawford and Lijphart 1995; Kitschelt et al. 1999; Ekiert and Hanson 2003a; Pop-Eleches 2007; LaPorte and Lussier 2011; Ekiert 2015). These legacies serve as text and context for radical right parties: They are "revived […] and reinterpreted" in the parties' ideology and they affect their "cultural and structural opportunities" (Minkenberg 2009, 454; see also Pirro 2016).

Nevertheless, there are also substantial similarities between radical right parties and party systems in Western and Central and Eastern Europe. The party systems of both regions are converging in terms of stabilisation and institutionalisation. Their convergence does not result from a one-sided movement of Central and Eastern Europe catching up with the established party systems in the West, but from opposite trends in the party systems of both regions. Thus, they are meeting somewhere in the middle. Moreover, societal roots of cleavages—or divides—are eroding in both parts of the continent, and increasing polarisation of socio-cultural value conflicts is not a unique feature of Central and Eastern European party systems either. These similarities suggest that the fundamental patterns of party competition are comparable in Western and Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, radical right parties assume a similar role in party competition in East and West. They participate in democratic politics in order to advocate for the idea, and supremacy, of a homogenous national community in their own nation-state. By doing so, they oppose the basic values of liberal democracy—and sometimes the democratic system itself.

These similarities observed in the discussion support Mudde's (2007, 3–5) plea for pan-European research on radical right parties, whereas the differences resonate with Minkenberg (2002), who considers the Central and Eastern European radical right a phenomenon *sui generis* (see also Pirro 2016). However, Minkenberg neither rejects the use of established concepts and theories, nor does Mudde neglect contextual differences between both parts of the continent. The present study follows a middle path and integrates both perspectives. This approach conceives of radical right parties and party competition in Western and Central and Eastern Europe as functionally equivalent (Pytlas 2018). At the same time, it emphasises the need to adapt and modify "Western" concepts and theories in order to account for specific features of radical right parties and party competition in Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, the present study does not start from scratch in its quest to explain the government participation of radical right parties in Central and Eastern Europe, but it draws on the rich body of literature on the radical right and government formation in Western European democracies. Moreover, evaluating contextualised versions of these theories in light of new empirical data has the additional benefit of providing "broader lessons relevant to the study of radical right politics across Europe and in 'the West'" (Pytlas 2018, 11).