The Far-right in Europe: A Geopolitical Analysis

Béatrice Giblin

Abstract
The electoral rise of the Front National (FN) starting in the early 1980s (it was created in 1972) made France an exception in Europe. However, this is no longer the case, and far-right parties in many European countries not only score just as high but also sometimes higher. Moreover, the electoral system enables them to participate in government coalitions for purposes of constituting right-wing majorities. The principal cause of electoral support for far-right parties in many European countries is the rejection of Muslim immigration, now seen in France as a threat to the national identity and values of the nation. In a context of economic globalization, foreigners serve as scapegoats and are blamed for offshore manufacturing and, therefore, for unemployment. While these forces are common to the rise of the far-right in Europe, the particular features of national situations remain. This is why we have chosen to present various European situations, including that of Russia, to better understand this phenomenon.
HÉRODOTE

was the first European state to have a coalition government that included members elected to public office of the far-right *Freiheitspartei Österreichs* (FPÖ, or Austrian Freedom Party). This has not happened since World War II, and it caused strong political reaction in European Union countries since most Austrians had been pro-Anschluss (the occupation and annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany), and some political leaders were, in the image of Kurt Waldheim, the same ones who had been around during that sad period. Since the ascent of this Austrian coalition, the presence of far-right ministers in some European governments no longer gives rise to such strong reactions, no doubt because their history is not the same as Austria’s and because shunning the Austrians had no effect. In fact, the FPÖ continued to prosper even after its leader Jörg Haider died in an automobile accident in 2008. In 2011, the concern of EU leaders and Secretary of State Hilary Clinton regarding the extent to which the Hungarian government, led by the Fidesz party and its leader Viktor Orban, was veering onto an authoritarian, nationalist course could be seen. And, so was their powerlessness in opposing it with anything stronger than an official warning letter. Viktor Orban, with the backing of most Hungarians, defied the EU by passing laws judged to be incompatible with EU legislation, including a law curtailing the freedom of the press. Another was on religious denominations, and an electoral law that allowed ethnic Hungarians in neighboring countries to vote for party lists.

As expected, many political scientists took an interest in the phenomenon of the far-right growth in Europe (Perrineau 1988, Camus 1998) and set themselves the task of pointing out specific features of the far right, the populist right, and the radical right. However, despite their usefulness, these studies rarely included a geographical approach despite election mapping being very much on the agenda. A geopolitical approach goes beyond a localized approach to election results by adding analyses of the economic, social, and cultural situations at the local level and by taking into account the importance of nation-related representations in political behavior.

This paper will not differentiate between parties which political scientists classify as far-right and those they classify as radical or populist right. The difference between them should be taken into account in a political science analysis but not in a geopolitical approach, as we shall. Rather, I will use the term “far-right” here even if, in the manner of Marine Le Pen’s *Front National*, traditional themes such as anti-Semitism, anti-secularism, the defense of Western Christianity, and opposition to abortion and homosexuality are no longer emphasized, even though they still reflect the convictions of many active party members. Moreover, although leaders of right-wing populist parties, as in Scandinavia, want to appear as if they have nothing in common with the traditional far-right, going so far as to condemn as

II
unacceptable racist or xenophobic public statements made by their activists or sympathizers, this does not mean that racist and xenophobic discourse and behavior have actually disappeared.

The various meanings of the term “nationalist” must also be clearly distinguished from each other. Clearly, the term is charged with positive values in a context of those fighting for the independence of their country. However, in independent states, where such struggles for independence are no longer on the agenda, the label “nationalist” takes on a clearly negative meaning. Here, those who claim to be nationalists present themselves as the “true” defenders of the nation, who fiercely oppose the representatives of the majority of the people, whom they accuse of auctioning off national values, weakening national identity, and even abandoning the nation to foreigners.

**Neither the End of the Nation nor the End of Territory**

Let us recall that Hérodote has long been interested in the FN vote from shortly after its breakthrough in the 1984 European election (Giblin, 1986) and, in particular, with regard to geographic distribution, which was explored by several authors in the collection entitled, *Géopolitique des régions françaises* (Lacoste 1986). In fact, Lacoste was convinced that this breakthrough was not accidental at all but a serious matter, and what came next proved this.

In 1986, the electoral geography of the FN mostly related to areas that had traditionally voted for the left. What the areas of the FN voting geography had in common, whether in southern or northern France or the in “red suburbs”, was the presence of a North African immigrant population, of both French and other citizenships. In 1988, in the special issue of Hérodote entitled “*La France, une nation, des citoyens*,” I published two articles on the FN vote: “*Le vote Front national: Un vote raciste?*” (Giblin 1988a) and “*Front national dans une région de gauche: Le Nord-Pas-de-Calais*” (Giblin 1988b). In that regard, taking the example of Roubaix on a large-scale map that shows neighborhoods and polling stations, a correlation between votes for the FN and immigrant presence (which is very high in that city) was clearly shown. However, also noteworthy was the fact that this longstanding presence (from the early 1960s) that started before the reuniting of families (1978) did not, for a number of years, give rise to any hostile vote even if it involved higher numbers of immigrants. Perhaps this was due to a lack of supply of candidates but also to the fact that economic conditions were clearly not as bad as they became in the 1980s. The crisis in the textile industry then struck the region, and the unemployment rate was one of the highest in France. Delinquency rates soared in just a
few years, hitting low-income neighborhoods the hardest (Alidières, 2006). The same trend was observable in low-income, high-rise public housing in the suburbs of Paris, Lyon, Grenoble, Nice, and Marseille. Though located within municipal boundaries, the northern neighborhoods of Roubaix are comparable to the public housing complexes located in suburban territory, as the work of Sebastian Roché confirmed in the early 1990s.

In the editorial to this special issue of Hérodote, Yves Lacoste points out the importance of the idea of nation, at the time considered by many to be cloying at best and dangerously right-wing at worst, an idea he developed almost ten years later in his book, *Vive la Nation* (Lacoste, 1997). Lacoste’s intuition, or rather his conviction, was that this vote for the Front National in low-income neighborhoods was also due to the fact that Le Pen was the only politician talking about “the nation”, making it into an important, even essential value. This was at a time when the Left, which was uncomfortable talking about it particularly in the aftermath of the Algerian War, was talking about “the republic.” However, the two terms are not equivalent. A political system does not elicit feelings in a population as strong as the idea of “nation.” Following a number of debates among members of Hérodote’s editorial team and an equally substantial amount of research, I published a paper entitled “L’immigration et la nation: Un problème géopolitique” (Giblin 1993), in which Muslim immigration and its manipulation by the FN were discussed, among other topics.

I point this out here because I think that the main reason citizens vote for far-right parties in a number of European countries is the rejection of Muslim immigration, seen by some citizens as a threat to national identity and to the values of the nation. In my conception of geopolitics, the concept of nation is fundamental and must be taken into account regardless of how it is defined by intellectual and political elites. Also important is whether or not the definition is open and generous, as most French people would agree; or closed and exclusive, as in some European countries where an ethnic nation means that common blood is the essential, unifying factor. However, there is one feature these opposing definitions share, namely attachment to the nation’s territory because without it, there can be no nation (Lacoste, 1993). \(^1\)

\(^1\) The counter example of the Roma nation, which is invariably cited, is not very convincing. The representation of the existence of a Roma nation is in fact recent and a construction by a small group of intellectuals not shared by all of the Roma spread across Europe. Thus in France, “travelers” are hostile to Roma who come from Romania, and above all do not want to be confused with them.

IV
In some highly segregated neighborhoods such as the Sensitive Urban Zones (Zones Urbaines Sensibles – ZUS), there is a high concentration of black and Arab populations. Despite the fact that many among this minority population have French citizenship and are not immigrants, the white French population continues to perceive them as foreign.

France has long been an immigrant country in which migrants and their families, whether Italian, Polish, or Flemish, also experienced difficult living conditions and were also rejected. For example, during the economic crisis of the early 1930s, and even perceived as incapable of integrating into the nation (Noiriel, 1988). Yet a portion of these immigrants and their descendants, who are French in their own right and proud to be so, may sometimes even vote for the FN precisely in the name of defending the nation they chose. France must have some value for justifying in their eyes the sacrifice they made in abandoning their homelands and having borne difficult living conditions for many years.

Let us take the example of the Pas-de-Calais mining area where foreign miners, mostly Polish, Italian, Moroccan, but also Belgian poured into the region following the two world wars to revive the mining machine and win the famous “battle for coal.” The goal was to reach 100,000 tons per day in 1946. However, when coal-mining activities were halted in 1991, the economic and social situation went from bad to worse, including an unemployment rate of 15% despite enormous efforts by the government under constant pressure from local and regional elected officials. Given the left’s decades-long domination over local and regional elections, it is viewed as being responsible by some residents for the ongoing social and economic difficulties they experienced. Marine Le Pen’s strategic choice for setting up her operations in the Hénin-Beaumont municipality at the heart of the mining area near Lens at the suggestion of Steeve Brioris, a local FN activist and now one of her closest colleagues, is thus understandable. The embezzlement of public funds by the Socialist mayor of Hénin-Beaumont and those close to him and the municipality’s major debts made for an increasingly angry and rebellious voting public. Only a very small portion of these voters joined the ranks of the far-left because they were so disappointed by it. In contrast, Marine Le Pen’s “they’re all rotten” speech and the social work undertaken by FN elected local officials among residents drew many voters. As a result, she was elected to the Hénin-Beaumont municipal council by a comfortable margin.

2. There are 751 ZUS in France, mostly in Île-de-France, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, and Corsica and in French Overseas’ Departments. The proportion of the population of foreign origin (whether foreign citizens or having acquired French citizenship) is twice as high as in the ZUS (17.5%) than in non-ZUS areas (INSEE, 2010).
However, her discourse on the defense of the working class and her commitment to fight alongside them turned out to be enough for her. Constrained by the prohibition on holding multiple office (European MP, regional council member, and municipal council member), she chose to abandon the lowest paid of the three, namely her seat on the municipal council, with the faithful Steeve Briois holding the local office.

**Common Features of European Situations**

In the current context of economic globalization, which is directly responsible for offshoring industrial companies, and therefore unemployment; it is known that a foreigner, or whoever is represented as a foreigner, even if he or she is not one, becomes the scapegoat.

In the simplistic and above all, demagogic reasoning of the FN, which has not changed fundamentally despite what Marine Le Pen would have everyone believe, immigration is the source of all of France’s troubles. Unemployment, delinquency, insecurity, and public deficits, are worsened by the cost of social welfare payments paid to foreigners and their families. This assertion is even more scandalous in light of the fact that social welfare system accounts would have even higher deficits without foreign workers. (See the May 2011 audit by the French Assembly on immigration, integration, and co-development policy.)

Although immigration remains at the core of FN discourse, it is now presented, above all, as a Muslim threat. This discourse finds favor and credibility because of the Islamic terrorism that occurred since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York; the March 2004 attacks in Madrid; and the July 2005 attacks in London. Even if it has not yet reached French territory due to efficient action by French intelligence services (*Direction Centrale du Renseignement Intérieur*) at home, French citizens abroad have been its victims as hostages held by Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in Niger and Mali. This situation has been shamelessly exploited to suggest that a potential Islamist extremist lies dormant in any Muslim, whether French or foreign.

In a country such as France, where immigration is a well-known phenomenon with a long history and where integration is known to be accompanied by hostility issues that can take two generations to be resolved, the discourse on the

3. On this topic, see Fourest and Venner’s (2001) and Monnot and Mestre’s (2001) work, which are serious investigations into Marine Le Pen’s entourage, while the work of Parizot and Lapresle (2011) provides detailed analyses of her speeches.
impossible integration of Muslim immigrants appeals to some. Moreover, conflating the terms “Muslim” and “Islamist” exacerbates this appeal. In countries where immigration is a recent phenomenon, it is easy to imagine how this discourse is favorably received. This happens in Scandinavian countries, which were traditionally emigration countries and which have become immigration destinations, much like Italy and Spain.

Does not the tragedy of the murderous madness of a Norwegian in his thirties during the summer of 2011 owe anything to the discourse of extreme-right nationalist who denounce over the Internet, the alleged threat posed by the Muslim world to the Christian West and to blue-eyed, blond Norway? To these activists, the Internet is a godsend as everything can be said, shouted out, and broadcast at no risk. Social networks, which are said to have played some role in rallying Tunisian and Egyptian protest marches (at least for those who have a mobile phone and Internet access) also play a role in spreading the populist, demagogic ideas of the far-right. Though small in numbers, well-referenced Internet sites today affect a very large number of people.

Supporters of the far-right contend that in the face of the alleged threat arising from Muslim immigration to Western Christian nations, i.e., France, the nation must be protected. Border control must be strengthened to stop the entry of new migrants of the Muslim faith. This argument is based on a two-pronged misrepresentation. First, the idea that the utterly uncontrolled mass arrival of immigrants is actual, and second, that positive effects will be gained from total borders closures (when the negative effects would be highly harmful to economic activity). Fewer and fewer clandestine migrants are managing, often at the risk of their lives, to get through the net of coastal radars and other airport or port controls. This has led activists working for associations that defend foreigners to represent the European Union as a fortress, while extreme right activists always represent it as a sieve. In their eyes, the free circulation of goods and people within the Schengen area is seen as a Trojan horse allowing for the uncontrolled influx of migrants. In this view, the EU is no longer an economic and policy blueprint with positive effects. It is no longer a place of lasting peace between former enemies, with strong trade growth, and the end of monetary competition harmful to all. But, rather an undertaking contributing to the weakening of the nation by facilitating immigration, by pitting European workers against each other, and unequal wage conditions with higher paid workers watching their jobs move offshore to EU countries where wages are low. Furthermore, the euro is no longer a currency that provides safeguards against inflationist devaluations. Rather, it is only a currency that pushes up the cost of living and weakens national sovereignty since devaluations are no longer possible. Devaluations are presented as being export drivers
without anyone pointing out that they would cause the cost of imports (oil, for example) to rise correspondingly and that savings, very high in France, would lose some value with each successive devaluation. Moreover, the unlikely proposal by Marine Le Pen that “1 new franc would equal 1 euro.” In this scenario, the French would then see their savings lose more than six times their value since 1,000 euros would then equal 1,000 francs and no longer equal 6,500 francs. However, the more this formulaic discourse and its simplistic arguments are spouted, the more television viewers (rather than radio listeners since Marine Le Pen comes off well on television) have the impression of understanding what seemed to be a complicated situation. Solutions are being proposed, even though they are riddled with fallacies that defy common sense.

**European Situations for Specific Parties**

The forces common to the rise of the far-right in Europe: Muslim immigration; globalization (associated with deindustrialization and rising unemployment); and the EU, accused of being responsible for abandoning national sovereignty over each country’s currency especially since the 2010-2011 Eurozone crisis; are not enough to erase the particular national circumstances of each country. For this reason, I decided to present various situations in Europe in order to better understand them without forgetting to discuss the case of Russia. This country’s political evolution is of obvious concern to the EU (see the special issue of Hérodote 138, 2010) and because far-right parties such as Marine Le Pen’s FN see Russia as a major foreign policy partner, justified by the FN’s hatred of the United States and above all, its economic dominance. Putin’s discourse and policy aimed at restoring Russia’s prestige. That is, the respect any great nation is owed in part because it is feared, and the role of the uncontested chief restorer of respect cannot fail to attract far-right supporters.

Although in all far-right parties is the idea of the nation represented as something to be protected from a threat, the forces behind the rise of far-right parties in Western Europe are not exactly similar to those playing out in Eastern Europe. Moreover, the far-right does not generate the same response across all Western European countries.

---

4. Even if this is not necessarily the case, as is shown in the case of Germany, but rather the result of a choice of economic orientation in favor of services and finance.
The Rightward Shift in Public Policy

The positive image of social and democratic examples of small Northern European countries such as the Netherlands or Scandinavian countries has been somewhat tarnished by election results showing the ascendancy of political parties on the radical right (See the paper by Cyril Coulet). Once again, high numbers of immigrants were not needed to generate outright hostility among voters. Media manipulation of religious and societal conflicts among Islamist Muslim migrant families and the host society had greater effect than the actual number of immigrants might lead us to assume. Moreover, due to the fact that their presence is indispensable for most right-wing government coalitions to constitute a majority, the political influence of right-wing populist parties is now being felt in public policy orientation.

Furthermore, even if the scores reached by these parties are high only in some cities or neighborhoods, their discourse is picked up by traditional parties to keep or lure back voters who have fallen for the simplistic, radical solutions of the far-right. These solutions have greater credibility as they have never been implemented and therefore have never disappointed anyone. In France, this is illustrated in the discourse of the populist wing of the UMP (Union pour un Mouvement Populaire) party, which unscrupulously borrows FN’s arguments. And all the more passionately as their electoral strategy is strengthened by the policy of Minister of the Interior Claude Guéant, implemented by order of President Sarkozy. This electoral calculus is reprehensible as it contributes to legitimizing fallacious solutions put forth by the FN and may make FN voters believe more strongly in their choice. Clearly, these voters prefer an original to a copy, especially if they have not yet experienced that original at the national level. Let us recall that in some cities in central France, where the mandate of FN-administered municipalities was inconclusive in terms of fighting corruption and easing unemployment and even more so in terms of security and the management of municipal finances. Let us also recall that until Jacques Chirac came out very strongly in 1995 against any alliance with the FN, liberal right-wing parties such as the RPR had no such scruples in the late 1980s and early 1990s in making alliances with the FN for the purpose of winning a few regional majorities, as they did in the Côte d’Azur-Alpes-Provence (PACA) region (Lefevre, 2005). How may it be asserted, therefore, that to ensure a right-wing majority in the National Assembly, there will be no need for a few withdrawals in favor of better positioned FN candidates who can block a left-wing candidate? Moreover, this is done all the more readily as Marine Le Pen and her advisors have put in place a strategy of

5. However, it is not clear that this mere calculation as the same analysis may apply to the populist right and far-right since their visions of the nation are perhaps not so very far apart.
“de-demonizing” the FN since the daughter took the place of the party’s founding father? This strategy has been effective in light of voting surveys (with 19% of voters intending to vote for the FN in the presidential election) even if Marine Le Pen claims unfailing support for her father, whose most scandalous positions and proposals she has never publicly disavowed.

At first sight, some European countries are better than others at fending off nationalist ideology of retreating into oneself. The scores of the far-right are weak in Great Britain and Spain. However, Kevin Braouezec’s paper on Labor Party voters who voted for British National Party (BNP) candidates in some areas of London’s East End shows that conditions for the rise of far-right parties are present, especially if the economic crisis sets in. There, the feeling of no longer feeling at home and of becoming a white minority despite having been British for generations (Giblin 2011) is radicalizing the vote of some who have been faithful Labor voters for generations. In fact, most Labor voters choose not to vote, while those who vote for the BNP believe that they are defending their national identity. The radicalization of the English Defense League (EDL), which was set up in 2009, provides a sketchy idea of the violence that can taint these far-right movements, even if they are thankfully still very much in the minority.

Regional Nationalism

Some years ago, I wrote that regional nationalism could attract far-right parties (Giblin 1999). Its presence may be observed in Italy in the electoral successes of the Northern League as well as in Belgium with those of the Vlaams Belang and the New Flemish Alliance (NV-A). In the June 2010 federal election, the NV-A won 30% of the vote, and Vlaams Belang and Lijst Dedecker6 together won 13%. It was a poor showing for Vlaams Belang, holding its own, mostly on the home turf of Antwerp. This difference between the two parties is due to the middle, educated class rejecting the radical positions of Vlaams Belang, which appeal to the less skilled, working class, whose numbers are shrinking fast. By contrast, the NV-A is less objectionable as its radical regionalism is not openly xenophobic and racist. In fact, winning a high percentage of the vote enabled the NV-A to block the formation of a Belgian government for a record 534 days! A number of factors can explain this situation including: the weakness of Belgian national sentiment; a desire for revenge on the part of the Flemish population over political, cultural, and

---

6. This pro-independence party exists only due to its leader Jean-Marie Dedecker and only gets votes in its hometown of Nieuport.
economic domination by French-speaking Belgians whether in Wallonia or Brussels or even by Flemish-speaking Belgians; the fransquillon\(^7\) middle class; and the good economic health of Flanders (with its 6.4% unemployment rate in 2010) compared to the economic decline in Wallonia (with its 17% unemployment rate). It is true that Walloons cannot do without federal social welfare, mostly financed by Flemish social welfare contributions, with each Fleming paying the federal government €2.50 per day while each Walloon receives €4.50.

However, demands by Flemish far-right nationalists are above all felt in very small areas. The settling of political tensions between Flemish, Brussels’ Belgians, and Walloons was addressed whenever a serious crisis arose by giving ever greater autonomy to the regions, to the point where Belgium, the size of Brittany, is now a federal state. The definitive setting in 1962 of the linguistic border between Flemish and Walloon French was a great victory for the Flemish. Except for those municipalities with adequate language facilities,\(^8\) where residents can express themselves publicly in both languages, fewer in number and located near the linguistic border or in the Brussels region (where 80% of the population is French speaking), any French speaker who moves into a Flemish municipality must speak Flemish in public service agencies in the name of the regional monolingualism decided upon in 1932, and may only vote for Flemish parties. However, one electoral and judicial district, the famous Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde (BHV) canton, straddles the territory of the Brussels and Flanders regions, making it a bilingual canton. For that reason, French speakers living in Flemish municipalities without linguistic facilities are allowed to vote for French-speaking parties, a situation Flemish nationalists of Vlaams Belang and the N-VA no longer accept. Instead, they are now clamoring for dividing up the canton. However, this could increase the size of the Brussels’ region at the expense of Flanders. The six municipalities bordering the Brussels’ region have thus become a geopolitical hotspot, with French speakers wanting it to be part of the Brussels’ region and Flemish speakers rejecting this categorically. If acquiring a nationality based on jus soli appears more open and generous than jus sanguinis, this is not the case in Flanders. Jus soli is, in fact, the only mechanism for ensuring that every person born on Flemish territory is mandatorily Flemish, even if that person speaks French and does not wish to be Flemish.

\(^7\) The pejorative name for French-speaking Flemings.
\(^8\) The exact drawing of linguistic borders requires coming to some arrangement over neighboring municipalities when the percentage of the population that speaks the other language reaches 30%. This has been called “external bilingualism” in municipalities with the required facilities, where there is tolerance for the French-speaking population in Flanders and the Dutch-speaking population in Wallonia being allowed to express themselves in their own language in administrative and judicial matters.
In Spain, the breakthrough of the far-right Plataforma party in Catalonia (see Hassen Guedioura’s paper) took election analysts by surprise, especially since it was undoubtedly much less expected there than elsewhere in Spain. The party’s discourse is one of “Welcoming Catalonia,” as is the discourse of the Catalan nationalist pro-independence forces, in a land of immigration with traditions of outsider integration (in truth, above all, of Spaniards who go there to work though much less so for “Moors,” that is, Moroccan workers). Had this been the case in Andalusia, it would have been less surprising in light of the anti-immigrant riots in El Ejido in 2000. Although the brutality and gravity of the economic crisis led to the downfall of the Socialist government, it also led to the right-wing Partido Popular achieving an absolute majority as well as the coming to the fore of new parties. What will happen electorally and politically, only the future will tell.

**Unacceptable Partition of National Territory**

The bond between nation and territory is particularly strong (even carnal, as I was about to write). One need only mention the territorial defense of the homeland in the phrase “To arms, Citizens!” of the French National Anthem; the recovery of lost provinces such as Alsace-Lorraine; the issue of irredentist territories; or the never-abandoned hope of reuniting in the same territory all those who speak the same language. The 1990s saw the rekindling of Balkan nationalism in various places following the break-up of Yugoslavia. Political parties or small political groupings often discuss Slovenia, Carinthia, Serbia, and Kosovo. One of the forces behind the success of parties on the radical nationalist right in Serbia and Slovenia, even if the degree of radicalness and electoral significance differs sharply between them (see Laurent Hassid’s paper), is without a doubt the loss of territory. Recently, this has been Serbia’s case and much earlier (in 1920) Carinthia’s, when Slovenia was not yet an independent state. The extremist parties play on the representation of the “nation as victim” due to Western interference in its internal affairs. To this irredentism is added the rejection of migrant non-Serbian and non-Slovene populations even stronger in its rejection of Muslim populations. The Serbian nationalist strategy was to try to bring together in the same political grouping all territories where there were Serbs to create a Greater Serbia of Bosnian and Croatian Serbs. And to achieve that goal, war was used to force the “others” to flee, i.e., the Bosnian Muslims, Croatians, and Kosovo’s Muslim Albanians. The dramatic consequences of this violent policy of ethnic cleansing are well-known, and the failure cost the Serbs dearly. Nevertheless, nationalist sensibilities are far from calm.
The German far-right, tightly monitored by various government agencies, does not play the lost-territories card. However, even without explicit reference to lost territories, reference to the German nation conjures a past when the country was the most powerful in Europe lingers, as shown in Delphine Iost’s paper. She examines documents disseminated over the Internet or in song lyrics by the far-right. Glorification of the German soul, implying a superiority over other people, recalls bad memories. The extreme vigilance of right-wing and left-wing German democrats suggests that control over this resurgence will remain.

The situation in Hungary is very different and very worrisome. If managerial errors by previous left-wing governments, corruption among some ministers and their entourage, and the catastrophic economic situation of the country explain why the right-wing Fidesz party achieved an absolute majority in Hungary, this veering into authoritarianism is of another order and evokes unfortunate periods in Hungarian political history. As Fidesz can count on support from a majority of Hungarians, it appears to be a traditional right-wing party coming to power legally since to its right is a much more extremist party, namely Jobbik (Alliance of Right-wing Youth and Movement for a Better Hungary, Jobbik in Hungarian means “the more to the right, the better”). This very new party, set up in 2003, supports traditional extreme right-wing ideology, Christianity, family, the role of State authority, and anti-Semitism. Its activists stoke the memory of Horthy, who was Hungary’s interwar leader, an authoritarian, and an anti-Semitic nationalist backed by the German and Italian governments. Meanwhile, Marine Le Pen’s FN has a good relationship with this party, and the Roma are very useful to both. Chased out of the country by Jobbik activities, they fled to other countries like France, which then allowed the FN to brandish the threat of invasion by foreigners and of insecurity.

This success of the nationalist right and far-right\(^9\) cannot only be explained by Hungary’s difficult economic and financial situation. For the last two or three years, part of the Hungarian population has clearly rejected the EU, accusing it of wanting to achieve oversight over Hungarian politics and thereby attacking national sovereignty. For many Hungarians, this is a very touchy subject. The loss of two thirds of its territory at the end of World War I remains, understandably, a painful memory that is very much present. For instance, the famous “red map”\(^10\) (Kubassek, 2011)

---

9. Jobbik won 3 seats out of 22 in the 2009 election for the European Parliament, with almost 15% of the votes. In the 2010 legislative election in Hungary, it won 47 seats, with over 17% of the votes.

10. The Hungarian geographer Pál Teleki to represent the spatial spread of nationalities in Hungary drew this map and thus shows the importance of areas where Hungarians are in a clear majority. The use of red to designate Hungarians, with orange for Germans, purple for Romanians, and green for Slovaks explains the continuing reference to the “red map.”
is widely distributed through all sorts of media, including bumper stickers, table mats, postcards, and shop window backgrounds. It illustrates the force with which national territory is represented in the imagination of a people, even if a substantial majority of Hungarians know very well that these territories are lost forever (as the consequence of Hungary’s alliance with Germany during World War II, even if the hope of recovery lives on in memory). Furthermore, Hungarians do not want to see Hungarians from neighboring states come to Hungary since this would only exacerbate economic difficulties. Nevertheless, exploitation of this national wound by nationalist right-wing parties proves effective in attracting voters of all ages. In fact, Orban recently decided to do away with the name “Republic of Hungary” in favor of calling it simply, “Hungary.”

Finally, the awakening of a far-right Russian nationalism has the desire to return Russia’s lost power as long as it is not the Soviet Union in its toolkit. Once in power, Vladimir Putin wanted to put a stop to the cutting up of Russian territory with war in Chechnya, a republic in the Russian federation. In Putin’s eyes Chechnya had no right to independence, unlike the federated republics of the Soviet Union. However, Anastasia Mitrofanova’s paper on the forms of Russian nationalism shows that the new Russian nationalism, which has been thriving since the 2000s, is very different from traditional Russian nationalism. Specifically, it rejects any immigration, and even more strongly, any Muslim immigration (Azerbaijanis, Tatars, and Caucasian populations) leading its activists to draw closer to Israel since it is seen as a rampart against Islam, which consequently unwinds the anti-Semitism at the root of nineteenth century Russian nationalism. The rejection of Muslim immigration is thus the common feature in many forms of European nationalism, Russian included.

Conclusion

The rise nationalist discourse forms is highly worrying, and above all their normalization in parties who claim to be moderate in order to attract the largest possible number of members. This is why they have distanced themselves from the skinhead garb and from openly racist speech and prohibit activists from inciting battles with Arabs and Jews. Their vision of the role of the state varies with each case. The new Russian nationalism rejects state intervention in the economy or on social matters (perhaps due to negative memories of Russian centralism). In contrast, the new FN calls for the state to play an active and protective role against predatory capitalists who impoverish the weakest. It’s almost a revolution in the traditional ideology of the extreme right, where the weak are despised and the strong glorified.
In a difficult economic environment, where everyone can feel that economic actors who seek large profits quickly subject them to consequences of risky choices, a nationalist discourse may attract an increasingly large electorate, especially since this nationalist discourse is moderate only in appearance and denounces simplistically and forcefully the thorough rottenness of all political leaders. It is therefore necessary to worry since democratic elections can also lead to amplifying the appeal of far-right ideology if they are not taken seriously enough or frustrated by too general discourse. Vigilance must therefore be exercised and counter-arguments developed. However, the strategy for effectively fighting these parties and other movements should be adapted to each specific situation, which is why it is useful to thoroughly understand them.

**Bibliography**


HÉRODOTE


XVI