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The radical right in post-communist Europe. Comparative perspectives on legacies and party competition

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Abstract

What role do legacies of past mobilization under late communist rule play in the success of the radical right parties in Eastern Europe? This article considers two major legacies: the legacy of national-accommodative communism and the legacy of patrimonial communism. We investigate the effect of welfare retrenchment on vote support for radical right in 2000s. Social policy reform retrenchment in universalistic welfare systems has a highly incendiary potential for political conflict and radical parties. In countries with a legacy of national accommodative communism, early differentiation of major parties on socio-cultural issues and strategies of social policy compensation kept reform losers at bay, which limited voter success of radical parties. Highly polarized patrimonial regimes, on the contrary, are the most fertile breeding ground for the radical right due to the high levels of inequality and dissatisfaction resulting from a rapid dismantling of the welfare state. The ethnic composition of countries plays an important role in the radical right mobilization as well. Radical right parties benefit from a situation in which the titular majority faces a small ethno-cultural minority.
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Keywords: Radical right parties; Legacies; Party competition; Welfare retrenchment; Ethnic heterogeneity; Nationalism

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Introduction

What role do legacies of past mobilization under late communist rule play in the success of the radical right parties in Eastern Europe? Legacies are deep, durable causes that affect the potential for radical right wing politics across the post-communist region. The distinctive role of these legacies, drawing on the communist and even the pre-communist interwar era, however, tends to become progressively diluted, as post-communist polities move into the 21st century and face new political-economic and socio-cultural challenges. Nevertheless, legacies create the baseline for patterns of party competition, shape partisan politics, and thus mold a proximate cause of radical right mobilization. Building on previous research, we consider two major legacies in Eastern Europe: the legacy of national-accommodative communism and the legacy of patrimonial communism.

Contrary to an often-held view of radical right in Eastern Europe based on political culture and identity politics, we suggest that a political-economic perspective is an apt tool for addressing the sources of radical right voters' grievances (Held, 1996; Hockenos, 1993; Kopecky and Mudde, 2003; Minkenberg, 2002; Mudde, 2005; Ost, 2005; Ramet, 1999). We claim that the study of economic grievances, when matched with ethnic and socio-cultural attributes of party competition, is one of the avenues to account for radical right party success and failure over time. In this paper, we take intolerance to socio-cultural "otherness" as given. We assume that politicization of these attitudes occurs during critical events when the "other" becomes a scapegoat for economic misery. Economic resentment stemming from the retrenchment of the welfare state since late 1990s catalyzes exclusionary party appeals to voters.

In countries with a legacy of national-accommodative communism, which have cushioned losers of reforms through their relatively generous welfare states, the potential for distinctive radical right parties has always been limited. Moreover, moderate right wing parties have incorporated exclusionary appeals into their programmatic agenda, thus further reducing the options for the successful entry and endurance of the radical right.

Regimes with the patrimonial legacy and high political contestation have moved in the opposite direction. The direct successors of communist parties or new right wing entrants have developed 'red-brown' authoritarian and exclusionary appeals that are often mixed with anti-market stances. Highly polarized patrimonial regimes with high levels of inequality resulting from a rapid dismantling of the welfare state are the most fertile breeding ground for the radical right.

Our argument proceeds in several steps. We first define radical right parties and then discuss our theoretical expectations as to how legacies affect radical right party mobilization. We hypothesize that the ethnic composition of countries plays an important role in radical right mobilization, and specifically that radical right parties, particularly those that comply with the democratic rules of game, benefit from a situation in which the titular majority faces a small ethno-cultural minority. Further, we probe the effect of welfare retrenchment on vote support for radical right in 2000s. We argue that social policy reform retrenchment in universalistic,

comprehensive insurance and service systems has a highly incendiary potential for political conflict. We conclude with empirical observations that generally support our theoretical claims.

Legacies

We base our definition of the radical right parties on their authoritarian cultural conservatism and exclusionary character. We relate these two dimensions to the grid-group theory (Wildavsky et al., 1990), where the group stands for exclusionary appeals based on group membership, such as nationalism, and the grid stands for socio-culturally conservative appeals that seek to subordinate individual choices to normative constraints, for example, exclusion of gays from public life. Table 2 contains vote shares for radical right parties in 2000s as well as classification of parties into the radical right and ‘nearby’ moderate right wing parties.

What are the conditions under which politicians choose strategic actions that facilitate the entry and success of radical right parties in post-communist polities with open electoral competition? In order to answer the question, we build on the earlier analysis of one of the paper authors concerning the “legacies” of communist rule for the articulation of partisan alternatives under post-communism and the choice of political-economic reform trajectories (Kitschelt and McGann, 1995; Kitschelt et al., 1999) and blend this with Timothy Frye’s (2002) arguments about the presence of more or less “polarized” party systems. Pop-Eleches defines legacies as “the structural, cultural, and institutional starting points of ex-communist countries at the outset of the transition” (Pop-Eleches, 2007: 910). What we consider here are institutional legacies of the communist rule and we pit against each other two ideal types of non-polarized, consensual “nationally accommodative” democratic post-communism and polarized, conflictual post-communism, that originates in one of two sharply different strands of communist governance, “bureaucratic-authoritarian” or “patrimonial” communism.

While we recognize the important effects of authoritarian pre-communist and religious legacies on the ‘return of the radical right’ (Held, 1996; Hockenos, 1993; Kopecky and Mudde, 2003; Minkenberg, 2002; Mudde, 2005; Shafir, 2008; Ramet, 1999), we focus, in this paper, on patterns of party competition and restrict ourselves to the most proximate legacy, the legacy of communism. While we recognize that radical right ideologies are complex and context specific, we focus our classification of radical right parties on two core ideological components: nationalism and cultural conservatism.

Historical legacies shed light on the content and the origins of the ideological positions held by radical parties in the post-communist setting. Such legacies are relevant, for example, when we consider the potential political opportunities to frame ‘the other’. As far as the legacies of pre-communist political regimes, we believe that these are largely accounted for in the discussion of the types of Leninist legacies that preceded the fall of the Berlin wall. We distinguish three types of legacies: the legacy of national-accommodative communism, the legacy or patrimonial communism and the legacy of bureaucratic-authoritarian communism. The first two legacies are rooted in non-democratic regimes that preceded the World War II.

We place ourselves in the camp of those who believe that the post-communist radical right is “a phenomenon *sui generis*, inherently shaped by the historical forces of state socialism and the transformation process” (Minkenberg, 2009: *ibid.*) Further, two distinct features differentiate the post-communist radical right from the Western counterparts. First, the post-communist region has a more recent history of contentious state building compared to the West. The concept of ‘the other’ revolves around ethnicities settled in the post-communist region for centuries and conceptualizations of ‘the other’ have deep historical roots. By contrast, the West tells a more contemporary narrative of ‘the other’ which focuses mostly on immigrants.

Second, the legacy of state socialism and the transition to markets and democracy creates a distinct set of initial conditions that affect the mobilization potentials of radical right. Patterns of preservation and dismantlement of the welfare state can be directly traced to state capacity and economic transition processes affecting rising inequalities and the quality of governance immediately after 1989. Whereas the pre-communist legacies of ‘the other’ have survived communism and remain important, economic communist legacies may wash away with time. As post-communist countries face ‘mundane’ challenges of political tradeoffs related to economic redistribution and welfare provision, we expect convergence between the East and the West.

We now discuss these communist legacies and their effect on the post-communist radical right.

- (1) National-accommodative communism without polarization of parties on economic issues: in a number of countries or constituent republics of large compound republics (Soviet Union, Yugoslavia) by the mid-1980s at the very latest, communist parties had begun to make concessions to anti-communist opposition forces that were still in their formative stages. These concessions expressed themselves in tolerance for free speech, within narrowly circumscribed boundaries, market-oriented economic reforms, and efforts to cultivate national consensus and autonomy as a political value bringing together both communists and non-communists.

After national-accommodative communism, initially all major political forces—former authoritarian regime incumbents and their challengers alike—endorsed and pursued a liberal democratic transformation of society that had as its most salient features the full establishment of capitalist markets and inclusive, universalistic democratic procedures for all residents. At the same time, given the conditions of fierce electoral competition, neither right nor left governments dared to touch the foundations of the socialist quasi-welfare state inherited from the predecessor regime which left little room for polarization between post-communist social democrats and anti-communist liberal democrats on salient economic policy issues.¹

¹ In fact, post-communist governments expanded the socialist quasi-welfare states in order to compensate the losers of liberalization and capitalist institution building and induced an expansion of social programs, for example, through early retirement schemes for workers who were made redundant by privatization of large companies (Greskovits, 1998; Vanhuyse, 2006).

Vote-seeking mainstream political parties early on began to seek a differentiation of partisanship along a second dimension of socio-cultural issues that divides those with more restrictive, conservative ethno-cultural grid and nationally exclusionary group conceptions of the polity, often combined with and inspired by appeals to Christian traditionalism, from liberal-secular universalistic, libertarian and cosmopolitan visions.

Strategies of social policy compensation, combined with economic recovery after 1993–1995 kept the intensity of grievances and dissatisfaction with economic liberalization and capitalist institution building at bay. Efforts by conservative parties to open a second dimension of competition and articulate grid/group positions contributed to the success of mainstream parties to keep radical right challengers at bay.

By the end of the 1990s and in the new millennium, however, fiscal budget strains in the post-communist polities made it increasingly clear that there were limits to the strategy of social policy compensation through ever expanding quasi-socialist welfare states.² Faced with these political-economic challenges, how can leaders of conventional center-left and center-right parties defend their turf and stave off radical right and/or left-wing mobilization often with a neo-populist rhetoric that the political elites have betrayed the masses? Post-communist politics appears to offer two potential escape hatches. One is extremely rapid economic growth.³

The other escape hatch for established parties is to go into a programmatic political offensive on the second, socio-cultural dimension of ideological differentiation and intensify the incorporation of authoritarian and nationalist exclusionary grid/group appeals in their very own competitive partisan stances, thus increasing the polarization with more secular, libertarian and cosmopolitan programmatic adversaries who are blamed for the social policy reforms and their grievances. Conservative party governments then compensate electoral constituencies not so much by tangible material rewards and benefits, but by appeals to intangible social identities and moral values that invoke restrictive and exclusionary grid/group conceptions. This is a strategy chosen by some of the conservative mainstream parties in countries such as Hungary, Poland, and to a lesser extent Slovenia. Where such grid/group appeals of conventional conservative parties resonate with voters, distinctive radical right parties can be held at bay.

After national-accommodative communism, prospects for the rise of radical right parties were not particularly good in the 1990s. The economic reforms of the 1990s proceeded while compensating losers by maintaining and expanding socialist quasi-

² The share of the population dependent on transfer payments, especially pensions, had grown to or beyond fiscal limits. At the same time, rising prices and wages in the private sector began to compel governments to improve wages in the social service sector (health, education). The cost of social services and pension payments contributed to a financial crisis that could be addressed only by cutbacks, increasing labor productivity in the delivery of services and the introduction or increase of user fees for social services, especially medical care.

³ Mainstream parties in the Baltic countries and to a lesser extent in Slovakia have pursued such strategies against radical right as well as left populist parties with diverging success.

welfare states. But after 2000 the compensatory potential of the socialist quasi-welfare state is exhausted and governments cannot avoid reforming social policy through painful restructuring. Given the intensification of socio-cultural ideological polarization between parties that endorse rather similar economic reform strategies, after 2000s, prospects for the rise of radical right have further dimmed.

Let us indicate a second empirical implication of the interplay between political-economic grievances and party strategies after national-accommodative communism. The deprivations caused by the retrenchment of encompassing, universalist quasi-socialist welfare states pretty comprehensively touched almost every group and stratum in society. If protest and alienation prompted by such policies does cue citizens to opt for radical right wing parties, the supporters of such challengers should have diffuse socio-demographic characteristics. There is not a singular socio-economic category which vulnerability would be so extraordinarily different from that of other categories to give it preponderance in the electorate of radical right wing parties.

- (2) Bureaucratic-authoritarian or patrimonial communism with post-communist partisan polarization: there are at least two very different constellations of communist legacies that promote the emergence of polarized party competition over economic reform strategies with the advent of democratic politics. In either case, the polarization is between a more or less intransigent former communist ruling party that resists social democratization and an uncompromising anti-communist camp of former regime dissidents. In politics with the first constellation, communist rule was preceded by the rise of a powerful and radical working class movement embedded in a liberal democratic society (Czech Republic 1919–1938; in some ways Germany 1918–1933). After the communist seizure of power, communist leaders never made concessions to non-communist forces, as the strong organization and mass support of socialist politics permitted the construction of tightly controlled, bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes. Unreformed communist parties in the Czech Republic and Germany continue to be successful in elections after 1989.

In this scenario, economic reform goes through the same sequence as in formerly national-accommodative communist countries, vigorously pushed by the center-right, but it does not involve the same kind of alternation between center-left and center-right governments, because part of the left is unavailable for compromise and policy convergence.⁴ But opportunities to rally voters around radical right wing

⁴ We are diverging here a bit from the assessment of Vachudova (2005) and Grzymała-Busse (2007) who claim an absence of “robust competition” in the Czech Republic is to be held responsible for a weaker, more inconsistent political-economic reform push, particularly when it comes to the construction of political institutions complementing a capitalist market economy. In the big comparative picture that includes all the Southeast European and post-Soviet polities, however, the reform trajectory of the Czech Republic is much more similar to that of other Central European countries with a prevalent national-accommodative communist legacy.

parties remained modest throughout the 1990s and diminished further in the new millennium. The intransigent communist party always remained available to rally voters disappointed with the introduction of the capitalist market regime.⁵

A second constellation resulting in polarized competition around economic reform occurred in post-communist countries with a (3) legacy of “patrimonial” communism. Here communist incumbents always faced highly dispersed, isolated dissidents who had no experience in overcoming collective action problems. The collapse of communism left behind essentially unreformed communist parties set against economic and political liberalization, regardless of whether they kept their communist labels or adopted some other party names. They opposed a highly inexperienced, diffuse, disorganized pro-market and pro-democratic opposition that was in most instances not able to effectively govern a process of political-economic and institutional reform. Where this situation did not yield an outright return to dictatorial rule, like in Belarus, inconsistent, partial economic reforms without capitalist institution building took a heavy toll on the economies. Party polarization, half-hearted reforms, and frequent government turnover scared off investors (Frye, 2002). This situation was exacerbated by the virtual collapse of social security, as pensions devalued, educational and medical services deteriorated, and former state enterprises reneged on their social service provisions. This environment of very widespread social displacement created a political atmosphere where even in the face of polarization between unreconstructed former communist ruling parties and fledgling divided liberal democratic anti-communists radical right parties could begin to find a space to thrive.

Where communist successor parties presided as new government parties over the deep structural economic crises that unfolded with partial, inconsistent reform in the 1990s, they were eventually forced to adopt social democratic reform strategies and begrudgingly to accept the inevitability of the capitalist market economy, for example, in Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Serbia. But the same post-communist political-economic trajectory also discredited ineffectual market liberal reform politicians and their parties, thus creating a political void for dissatisfied citizens to seek out new social-protectionist populist parties. Because communism was finally discredited as a heterodox ideology to fight the political project of capitalist democracy, nothing has become more plausible for political entrepreneurs than to couch their grievances in terms of a radical right exclusionary group and authoritarian grid interpretation. This template both explains the causes of post-communist societal disintegration and offers an alternative vision of political institutionalization to overcome that predicament.

Where communists did not regain power, such as in Russia, it was not liberal democrats who could take advantage of this situation, but non-partisan technocratic government cadres who increasingly manipulated electoral processes through “parties of power.” Induced by the government executive’s capacity to award

⁵ Vaclav Klaus’s Czech Civic Party, the major moderately conservative pro-market party in the Czech party system, began to embrace more nationalist and authoritarian positions in the late 1990s.

material benefits and inflict coercion on politicians, executive elites eventually succeeded in crafting quasi-parties of government that also embrace elements of a nationalist group and authoritarian grid philosophy.

The legacy of patrimonial communism thus fuels radical right political appeals, whether configured around unreconstructed communist—nationalist successor parties or new right wing creations, particularly in the 1990s. In the new millennium, however, both the consolidation of technocratic governing parties that experiment with radical rightist idioms as well as the eventual recovery of post-communist economies propelled by a raw materials boom may hold the growth potential for radical right wing politics in limits. Nevertheless, where radical right partisan groups could establish and entrench themselves in the 1990s, one or both of the following conditions may help them thrive in the new millennium. First, competitors are ineffective in siphoning off potential radical right support. Second, economic recovery is not sufficiently fast and encompassing to lower the temperature of popular dissatisfaction and disgust with politicians.

Table 1 contrasts two legacies and two phases of post-communist economic reform, as sketched on preceding pages. Where national-accommodative communism prevailed, the potential for distinctive radical right parties has always been limited. As a consequence, major political parties began to incorporate a non-economic dimension into their “product differentiation” that built on distinctive grid/group appeals. When the challenge of social policy reform broadens disaffection with economic reform and distrust of politicians in the most recent phase of economic restructuring, strategic politicians have even more incentives to appeal to voters based on grid/group programs, something that is all the more plausible if such parties have already established a track record of politicizing this dimension. In this strategic configuration, distinctive radical right parties have few electoral opportunities. At the same time, radical right appeals gain prominence in the competitive struggle among mainline political parties.

By contrast, in countries with patrimonial communist legacies, the lingering massive political-economic problems of the 1990s created a much greater radical right wing potential from the very beginning, albeit one that on the supply side was partially absorbed by unreconstructed, intransigent communist successor parties who also invoked exclusionary group and authoritarian grid conceptions of social order. Nevertheless, given the often-observed weakness of the liberal democratic party camps to overcome their collective action problems and build parties that could attract broad mass support, this supply side configuration still left plenty of supporters available for radical right wing partisan efforts.

After 2000, patrimonial post-communist parties either partially gave up their opposition to market reforms or lost support because even the opponents of post-communist reforms wanted more than a return to the status quo ante. This created more space for radical right wing mobilization. At the same time, as post-communist countries with partial market reform finally began to experience economic recovery after a decade of precipitous decline, in part helped by the exogenous force of a resource boom, the new economic developments may contain the growth of radical right mass support and allow incumbents to consolidate power around more technocratic formula.

Table 1
Political economy, historical legacies and party systems.

		Phase 1: 1989–1999	Phase 2: 2000–
East Central Europe Inheritance of national-accommodative communism	Political-economic trajectory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liberalization + capitalist institution building, extension of a quasi-socialist welfare state • Macro-economic stabilization crisis and gradual recovery (1994+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform/retrenchment of social protection • Macro-economic fiscal crisis and pressure to reduce social protection constrain economic growth
	Market liberal democratic center-left and center-right?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong market liberals • Reformist former socialist ruling parties as new social democrats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market-liberal democrats shrink; • Social democratic center-left. • Strengthening nationalist market-protectionist right.
	Anti-capitalist left?	Insignificant	Insignificant
	Radical right?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small separate parties: RR (nationalist, ethnic exclusion, often social-protectionist) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RR parties fail, in as much as center-right parties embrace some of their appeal.
South-Eastern European and Soviet Inheritance of patrimonial communism	Political-economic trajectory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial liberalization and failed institution building. • Prolonged economic depression with very deep turning point. • Collapse of social protection and skyrocketing inequality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incremental liberalization and some institution building • Raw materials rentier economies grow rapidly • Sharp macro-economic recovery from a very low level of economic activity
	Market liberal democratic center-left and center-right?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak and divided market liberal parties and national-conservative parties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak, volatile and divided liberal democrats + national-conservatives. • Social democratizing left (some of the former communists). • “Parties of power”
	Anti-capitalist left?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Post)-communists as anti-liberal anti-democrats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residues of authoritarian socialism;
	Radical right?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absorbed in some cases by communists, but high RR potential. • Ethnic and nationalist right with communist sympathies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New “populists” may assert themselves: social-protectionist + grid/group exclusionary appeals;

Ethnicity and radical right

The ethnic composition of post-communist countries provides important clues to radical right parties’ demands and partisan opportunities. What matters are the proportion of the largest salient ethnic group relative to smaller groups and the relative status of the group in terms of economic and political resource control. Our argument is

based on deterrence logic. Ethno-cultural antagonisms are stoked successfully by radical rightist parties when there is a plausible minority scapegoat and when that scapegoat does not have the capacity to inflict major damage on the titular majority and its political organizations, either because it is too weak in numbers, and/or controls too few economic assets and/or is not needed by one or all of the relevant parties of the largest ethnic group to build a winning governing coalition.

Radical rightist causes in general have the smallest potential in ethno-culturally homogeneous societies. Here it is difficult to find scapegoats, particularly if there are neither plausible indigenous target minorities, nor substantial immigration. Radical right parties may also tend to have limited appeal in highly contested new state formations where the ascending elites must craft broad political alliances and cannot antagonize very substantial ethno-cultural minorities if they want to consolidate their rule, particularly where these minorities were dominant in political-economic terms in the past, as were Russians in Soviet republics that proceeded to become independent states after 1991.⁶

Countries with the greatest potential for radical right mobilization are those with small, entrenched ethnic minorities, as well as those with irredentist claims against their neighbors, whether they are old or new states. Potential grid/group mobilization should be particularly strong where both conditions coincide. Thus, countries such as Hungary and Romania reach out to irredentist Hungarian (Romanian) minorities abroad (such as Hungarians in Slovakia, Romania, Croatia, or Serbia or Romanians in Moldova), but also harbor minorities themselves that can become the object of grid/group antagonisms in a socially incendiary environment of economic strains (for example, Roma, Jews, Hungarians).⁷

Our theoretical framework associates citizens' preference formation with socio-cultural processes of grid/group identification and trajectories of post-communist political-economic reform. It explains radical right party success through a spatial logic of party competition in which the programmatic positions and strategies of the most important initial partisan players in post-communist democracy—namely those of communist successor parties and their anti-communist challengers—are at least initially not freely chosen by political entrepreneurs, but result from communist “legacies” that endow competing emergent parties with resources, activists' ideologies, and capabilities to solve collective action problems. It is in fact radical right wing parties that are conceptualized as the “free agents” that enter successfully only when other parties for reasons of historical constraint and political-economic reform cannot immediately choose electorally efficient positions that would preempt the entry of new competitors.

⁶ Beissinger's (2008) account of why ethnic pluralism sometimes permits the stabilization of democracy homes in on exactly this configuration in some of the new multi-ethnic countries resulting from the former Soviet Union. Of course, as additional element to nudge a country to inter-ethnic peace by restraining the new non-Russian titular ethnic majority, he correctly mentions the influence of the European Union, for example in the Baltic countries, but also beyond.

⁷ Table 4 disaggregates cases within both the national-accommodative East Central European stream as well as the East European patrimonial legacies to hypothesize where the potential for radical rightist party formation may be particularly likely. Table 4 is available online at: <http://www.duke.edu/~lbs11/cpcs>.

The main empirical implications of our theoretical sketch are that the electoral payoffs of radical right parties should vary across post-communist countries over time and across space in systematic fashion related to regime legacies and ethno-cultural configurations. The scope of our theoretical framework is intended to include all post-communist democracies that hold competitive elections. When data were unavailable (as, for instance, in the cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Moldova), we reduced the scope of empirical testing.

If the theoretical framework we have proposed has a semblance of usefulness, we should detect some characteristic profiles of political appeals of parties in different party systems after national-accommodative or patrimonial communism. In the former, there should be very little space for competition among relevant parties over economic-distributive issues and the organization of the economy, as all major competitors have a reputation to embrace market liberalization. Much of the differentiation, even among “moderate” mainstream parties, should be over socio-cultural conceptions of the polity that relate to group-grid characteristics, at least in the first phase of post-communist political-economic reform. The politicization of quasi-welfare state services and insurance systems in the most recent phase of post-communist political-economic reform, however, may enable parties with a right wing grid-group appeal to deliver the feat of ostentatiously associating a defense of the national community with populist lip service against the ills of social policy retrenchment, while simultaneously pursuing a politics of social policy retrenchment in the government executive.

After patrimonial communism, by contrast, polarization over economic policy reform and over socio-cultural grid/group conceptions is less likely to crosscut than to reinforce each other. Economic polarization is alive and well (Frye, 2002). Parties that oppose market liberalization and institution building supplemental to a capitalist economy in order to attract losers of the political-economic reform process may find it easy to reinforce their popularity by exclusionary group and authoritarian group appeals. Particularly in the presence of ethnic minorities and irredentist yearnings this may boost the electoral opportunities of distinctive radical right parties.

Spaces of partisan competition in post-communist democracies: economic distribution and socio-cultural issues

Table 2 reports the position of radical right parties or their closest relevant competitors, measured by parties’ position on grid/group issues (group: nationalism, grid: socio-cultural conservatism). But we also present the position of parties on major economic issues, namely the question of spending on social services (versus tax cuts) and the merits of privatizing state-owned companies. We do not report small splinter parties. We have organized the display of data by legacies and conditions of state formation and we report grid-group (socio-cultural and nationalistic) positions and distributive economic policy positions.

In many of the formerly national-accommodative communist regimes, such as Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Estonia, we find electorally attractive “nearby” parties,

in terms of grid-group positions that have nationalist-socially conservative appeals similar to those of the radical right parties. In terms of economics, as expected, none of the parties assumes radical pro-market or anti-market positions after national-accommodative communism.⁸ And in all of the national-accommodative post-communist polities, the radical right parties signal slightly more market-skeptical positions than their nearby mainstream conservative counterparts while also endorsing even more extreme nationalist positions that are sometimes paired with equally authoritarian socio-cultural conservatism. It is telling that with the exception of Poland, genuine radical rightist parties have earned very limited success in the formerly national-accommodative communist countries, with the partial exception of countries with substantial minorities and irredentist conflicts. This applies to Croatia, Slovakia, and a borderline case we have here classified as homogeneous, Slovenia. The electoral weakness of the radical right may have been bought at the price of much larger, more mainstream, “near radical right” parties that command substantial support in most of the formerly national-accommodative communist countries.⁹ Hungary’s Fidesz/Civic Party became the paradigmatic case for a moderately conservative party with at times radical right wing grid/group rhetoric.

In the formerly patrimonial communist countries, wherever there are substantial ethnic minorities (but do not constitute a strong counter-balance to the major ethnic group) or constellations of irredentism, genuine radical right parties are electorally highly successful. In Russia, where the misnamed Liberal Democrats as the most clear-cut radical right party, their relatively more muted electoral performance is due to the presence of an intransigent, nationalist communist party (KPRF) and advantages enjoyed by dominant ‘parties of power’ in electoral competition. In the other three countries—Bulgaria, Romania, and Serbia—the Benoit/Laver expert survey does not permit us to classify the communist successor parties as “near” to the radical right, since their grid/group positions differ quite dramatically from each other and because the former communist parties began to transform themselves into social democratic parties. Only in Russia has the KPRF maintained a hard-line stance against economic market reforms. Radical right parties constitute a pole in party systems with ethnic divisions that separates a populist, social-protectionist and anti-market radical right with strong grid/group appeals from typically more fragmented centrist and market liberal parties that stand for more cosmopolitan and socially tolerant life style choices.

Our table shows that in none of the formerly patrimonial communist countries without ethnic minority challenges there are substantial radical right parties or even nearby parties that would appeal to radical right themes. In cases such as Moldova and Ukraine, political entrepreneurs will refrain from strong grid/group appeals, given the exigencies of bringing about basic state institutions first in the countries where national independence is a contested innovation.

⁸ The exception being the populist Samoobrona in Poland whose electoral support vanished after the 2007 parliamentary elections, partially due to sexual harassment accusations within party leadership.

⁹ This pattern would become even clearer if we classified Slovenia as having a minority/irredentism issue.

Table 2
Radical right parties, “nearby” radical right competitors and their policy stances.

Legacy	Country	Party labels	RR	Socio-cultural grid- group positions?		Distributive economic policy positions?	
				Nationalism	Culture	Spending	Privatization
B-A	Czech Republic	KSCM (18.5 + 12.8)	n	16.6	6.2	4.4	4.0
		RMS + NS (1.1 + 0.2)	RR	19.2	15.9	11.5	9.3
N-A + H	Hungary	MIEP (4.4 + 2.2)	RR	19.8	19.0	7.9	5.9
		Fidesz (35.1 + 42.0)	n	16.2	15.1	9.3	9.1
	Poland	LPR (7.9 + 8.0 + 1.3)	RR	19.0	19.2	8.2	8.5
		PiS (9.5 + 27.0 + 32.1)	n	14.7	15.1	11.5	13.6
		S (10.2 + 11.4 + 1.3)	n	16.1	13.1	5.2	4.4
		SNS (4.4 + 6.3)	RR	17.1	11.7	10.1	9.3
N-A + E/I	Croatia	Nsi (8.6 + 90.09)	n	15.1	17.3	13.0	14.7
		HSP (6.4 + 3.5)	RR	19.0	15.0	9.7	7.7
	Lithuania	HDZ (33.9 + 36.6)	n	15.7	14.2	8.8	11.8
		LKD (3.1 + 0.3)	RR	15.9	18.0	9.1	10.2
		LKDS (3.1 + 0)	n	11.0	19.0	13.0	14.0
		TS (8.6 + 14.6)	n	14.8	15.8	12.6	15.4
	Slovakia	SNS (3.3 + 11.7)	RR	19.4	16.1	10.4	10.3
		KDH (8.3 + 8.3)	n	15.7	19.7	14.4	15.4
		HZDS (19.5 + 8.8)	n	13.8	9.5	10.2	12.2
N-A + E	Estonia	ISAMAA (7.3 + merged 2007 – 17.9%)	n	19.1	14.6	12.8	16.2
		RL (13.0 + 7.1)	n	17.6	16.0	11.8	8.0
	Latvia	TB/LNNK (5.4 + 6.9)	n	19.3	14.5	12.9	13.9
		None	RR	No data	No data	No data	No data
P + H	Albania	PBK (~2.5 + 2.5)	RR	No data	No data	No data	No data
P + E/I	Bulgaria	PLL (4.0 + 0)	n	19.0	14.0	16.0	17.5
		National Union Attack (0 + 8.9)	RR	No data	No data	No data	No data
		VMRO (1.3 + 5.7 in coalition)	n	18.6	13.5	11.2	12.0
	Romania	PRM (19.5 + 12.9)	RR	19.6	18.7	5.6	4.7
		PUR (1.4 + then moderate)	n	12.9	13.1	9.7	12.1
		PNG (after 2004/2005)	RR	No data	No data	No data	No data
	Russia	LDPR (11.5 + 8.1)	RR	17.5	14.1	9.4	7.8
		KPRF (12.6 + 11.6)	n	16.3	14.3	3.5	3.7
	Serbia	SRS (27.7 + 28.6)	RR	18.7	16.8	6.5	11.0
		SPO (7.7 + 3.33)	n	13.5	13.8	11.3	14.8
	Macedonia	VMRO-DPMNE (2002: 20.8 + large coalition 2007: 32.5) VMRO-NPNDP (2007: 6.1)	n	17.5	17.3	11.8	16.1
		None	RR	No data	No data	No data	No data

(continued on next page)

Table 2 (continued)

Legacy	Country	Party labels	RR	Socio-cultural grid-group positions?		Distributive economic policy positions?	
				Nationalism	Culture	Spending	Privatization
P + E	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Not applicable due to the number of RR parties SDA, SDS, HDZ (46 total + 53 total)	n	RR 19; 20; 20	18; 18.5; 19	14; 11; 14.5	14.5; 15; 17.5
		Moldova	PPCD (9.7 + 9.07) NONE	n RR	13.4 No data	10.4 No data	8.5 No data
	Ukraine	NU (23.6 + 13.95) KUN	n RR	17.0 No data	11.8 No data	9.4 No data	13.5 No data

Notes: Legacy: legacy and state formation; Party labels: % support around 2000–2003+ later; RR: RR or “nearby” competitor? Nearby competitor is labeled as “n”; Nationalism: strong nationalism = 20; Culture: socio-cultural conservatism (strong = 20); Spending: spending cuts and tax cuts (=20) or raise taxes to increase public services (=1); Privatization: merits of privatization high (=20) or low (=1); B-A: bureaucratic-authoritarian regime; N-A + H: national-accommodative regime + ethnically homogenous; N-A + E/I: national-accommodative regime + minorities/irredentism; N-A + E: national-accommodative regime + ethno-politically contested state building; P + H: patrimonial regime + ethnically homogenous; P + E/I: patrimonial regime + minorities or irredentism; P + E: patrimonial regime + ethno-politically contested state building; Bosnia: the vote shares are from elections to the House of Representatives election in Bosnia–Herzegovina, October 2002 (the vote share are: SDA: 22; HDZ: 10 SDS: 14 in 2002; source: [Burwitz, 2004](#)). Source: [Benoit and Laver \(2006\)](#).

Let us now consider more general patterns in cross-national comparison that result from a factor-analytical representation of the party alignments in democracies, as calculated by [Benoit and Laver \(2006: Table 5.7.b\)](#). In most countries a factor analysis of all the issue positions on which a country’s parties were scored yields an economic-distributive and a socio-cultural libertarian/authoritarian factor that characterizes the distribution of parties in the political space in parsimonious, efficient ways. Because the same policies were scored in all countries, it is possible to compare the relative strength of factors depicting different core party appeals, as measured by a factor’s eigenvalue. Panel 1 of [Table 3](#) calculates the ratio of the eigenvalues earned by: (1) the factor that represents economic-distributive conflict with (2) that on which the socio-cultural policy questions load most strongly.¹⁰ In all of the formerly patrimonial communist dictatorships, considerations of economic distribution and property rights far surpass the capacity of socio-cultural issues to structure the landscape of party competition.

¹⁰ In Hungary the factor which assembles a variety of socio-cultural grid and national group related questions is five times as strong as that which configures around economic-distributive issues (Hungary score = 0.20 where: social = 6.62; econ = 1.33; 1.33/6.62 = 0.2).

Table 3
Communist legacies and spaces of partisan competition.

		National- accommodative communist legacy	Bureaucratic- authoritarian or patrimonial communist legacy
1. Factor loadings of parties' policy scores	Socio-cultural factor is much stronger than the economic factor (ratio < 0.75)	Hungary 0.20 Croatia 0.25 Slovenia 0.31 Poland 0.58 Lithuania 0.71	Serbia 0.51 Macedonia 0.65
	Socio-cultural and economic factors are equally strong (0.75 < ratio < 1.33)		Moldova 1.13
	Economic factor stronger than the socio-cultural factor (1.33 < ratio < 2.50)	Slovakia 1.60 Estonia 1.79 Latvia 2.16	Albania 1.47 Czech R. 2.28
	Economic factor is much stronger than the socio-cultural factor (ratio > 2.50)		Bulgaria 3.30 Russia 4.21 Romania 4.38 Ukraine 4.53
2. Dominant factor	Socio-cultural	Croatia Estonia Hungary Lithuania Poland Slovenia Slovakia	Macedonia Moldova
	Economic	Latvia	Albania Romania Russia Ukraine
	None		Czech Republic Bulgaria Serbia
3. Dominant coefficient to predict left–right placement	Economic	Estonia Latvia	Albania Czech Republic Bulgaria Macedonia Romania Russia Ukraine
	Both economic and socio-cultural	Lithuania Poland Slovakia Slovenia	Moldova
	Socio-cultural	Croatia Hungary	Serbia

Notes: 1. Factor loadings of parties' policy scores: ratio of factor strength (eigenvalue) on which economic issues load (taxes-spending and privatization) and socio-cultural policy issues ("social"). Source: Benoit and Laver (2006: Table 5.7.b). 2. Dominant factor: on which factor of division among parties does "nationalism" load (on socio-cultural factor, economic factor or on the separate dimension)? Source: Benoit and Laver (2006: Table 5.7.b). 3. Dominant coefficient (coefficient strength) to predict left and right placement: Predicting parties' left–right placements: economic (taxes/spending), socio-cultural (moral code) or environmental. The dominant coefficient is greater two times than the other one. Source: Benoit and Laver (2006: Table 6.A2).

The same result is driven home by the answer to the question of whether the issue of “nationalism” loads more heavily on the socio-cultural factor or the economic factor. An answer is provided in the middle panel of Table 3. It reveals the pattern one might anticipate from the first panel reported in the same table. After national-accommodative communism, the question of national autonomy loads on the socio-cultural issue dimension, whereas after patrimonial or bureaucratic-authoritarian communism there is much greater weight on polarization over economic issues that also pull the question of nationalism into their vortex. Consistent with this message, the third panel shows that knowing parties’ positions on socio-cultural issues is a much better predictor of the way experts assign left-right scores to parties in national-accommodative communism than that knowledge delivers in countries after patrimonial communism.

Cross-national empirical implications

What are some additional empirical differences between patrimonial and national-accommodative regimes? Does the claim that radical right wing parties are stronger in democracies, which follow patrimonial communism show up in the data? What is the effect of the largest minority ethnic group on the mobilization potential of the radical right? Do the regimes differ in their patterns of inequality and social expenditures?

Table 5 outlines several differences in social expenditures and inequality between the two regimes.¹¹ National-accommodative regimes, on average, spend more than the patrimonial ones on social expenditures and also tend to have lower levels of economic inequality. The average GINI coefficient of inequality around 1996–1998 in Hungary, Poland and Slovenia was 25.1 compared to 31.6 in Bulgaria, Romania, Russia and Serbia. Similar disparities are also present in total social security expenditures as a percentage of GDP. While most of the national-accommodative regimes spend over 20% of GDP on social security, patrimonial regime cases often spend less than 15% of GDP (Table 5). Within the national-accommodative regimes, however, ethnically diverse countries, such as the Baltics and Slovakia, spend the least and have the highest level of inequality.

Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to fully investigate the link between redistribution and ethnic diversity in Eastern Europe, multiple studies have shown that ethnic diversity can undermine welfare generosity (Elias and Scotson, 1965; Alesina et al., 1999; Habyarimana et al., 2007). Uncertainty about the distribution of material resources and the ethnic division of labor during crises enables strategic politicians to invoke ethno-regional sentiments (Olzak, 1992).

As far as party competition is concerned, we argue that radical right mobilization is highest in countries with small ethnic groups in peaceful competitive democracies. Contrary to some intuition, we suggest that the potential of the radical right for group mobilization does not linearly increase with the size of the largest minority

¹¹ Table 5 is available online at: <http://www.duke.edu/~lbs11/cpcs>.

ethnic group. This finding cuts against predictions, which have associated the size of the ethnic group (or sharp jumps in immigrant inflows) with increased political mobilization of ethnicities (Olzak, 1992: 35). The reason for this departure, we argue, is that two distinct mechanisms may be at play when it comes to peaceful democratic competition and political mobilization leading to violence.

If politicians are risk averse when it comes to ethnic violence, they have incentives to comply with the democratic rule of game, for stirring ethnic hatred bears the danger of spiraling out of control and badly damaging the ethno-cultural majority. By contrast, mobilizing against small ethnic groups that cannot monopolize the central administration and the state's resources is largely devoid of the risk that such mobilization will escalate into violence. Only under conditions of intense competitiveness among rival parties drawing their bulk of support from the ethno-cultural majority, have ethnic entrepreneurs a strong incentive to contain inter-ethnic conflict and actually seek alliances with the political representatives of ethno-cultural minority parties. Paradoxically, when the main parties, dominated by the titular nationality, need small ethnic parties to form coalitions in government, this may increase the salience of ethnic cleavages in party competition (Wilkinson, 2004).

Small ethnic parties demand concessions from the main parties in exchange for forming ruling coalitions, and they typically articulate their demands in ethnic and cultural terms. Incorporating ethnic parties has the distinct advantage of channeling ethnic tensions into party competition rather than organized violence. At the same time, it re-focuses party competition towards socio-cultural issues which are of concern to the ethnic minority. Politicians must be able to make potential group losses credible to large electoral constituencies, yet this is implausible in polities that pit large ethno-cultural majorities against minorities.

We, therefore, expect to observe the highest potential for radical right mobilization in countries with relatively small ethnic groups. By contrast, in countries with a large ethnic minority, and with contested state building, the reservoir for the radical right is parched. Examples of such countries with weak radical right parties include Moldova, Ukraine and Macedonia.

Ukraine is an example of a country with a large ethnic minority, a '60–40' split, and possesses a negligible radical right. The extremist Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists ran under the platform of Yushchenko's 'Our Ukraine' and provided security forces to Julia Tymoshenko during the Orange Revolution (Kuzio, 1997).¹² Yushchenko, not surprisingly, caters to the 'nationalist' base of Western Ukraine.¹³

¹² The paramilitary units of UNA (another fringe radical right party in Ukraine) provided security for pro-Yushchenko and pro-Tymoshenko forces in 2004 as well. Moreover, between 2002–2006, once elected to Verkhovna Rada for the Lviv district, Andriy Shkil, (UNA leader), joined the Yulia Tymoshenko bloc faction. Sources: Verchovnyaya Rada (2009); UNA-UNSO (2009).

¹³ For example, on October 12, 2007 President Yushchenko awarded the Hero of Ukraine title and the Order of State posthumously to the chief commander of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army of 1942–1950, Gen. Brig. Roman Shukhevych, in a highly symbolic ceremony. In Western Ukraine, the UPA soldiers are viewed as freedom fighters that opposed both the Nazis and the Red Army. The left and pro-Russian parties have accused the UPA of war crimes against civilians. Source: *Kyiv Weekly* (2007).

‘Our Ukraine’ is a nearby competitor to the radical right, and has successfully drained the pool of potential radical right voters.

When Yushchenko regained power in 2006, the ‘orange bloc’ engaged in the so-called ‘war of languages’. According to the Ukrainian constitution, the predominantly Russian-speaking areas are allowed to use Russian as the official language.¹⁴ The ‘orange bloc’ has attempted to curb the rights of Russian-speaking minorities, yet their efforts have been largely unsuccessful. At the same time, the close competition between the Western Ukrainian party alliance, on the one hand, and the Russo–Ukrainian party, on the other, has made both sides tone down the ethno-cultural base of their disagreement. Moreover, when the Russian-speaking authorities realized that the restriction of language rights contradicted the European Charter for Minority and Regional Languages, the policy was revoked, following pressure from the European Union (Medvedev, 2007: 205).

Contrast Ukraine with Slovakia, a country with much smaller minority, split 90–10 between Slovaks and Hungarians, and has hosted a vibrant radical right party since the early 1990s, the Slovak National Party, or SNS. SNS is currently a member of a governing coalition, led by Robert Fico and his party SMER. The two small parties in the Slovak political system, the Slovak National Party and liberal-oriented Hungarian party, are locked in a seemingly permanent struggle over Hungarian minority rights in Slovakia. Both are needed to form government coalitions; ironically, they also “need each other for their survival, like inseparable twins,” sustaining the salience of the ethnic dimension in Slovak party competition.¹⁵

At the same time, SNS is in constant danger of having its nationalist party program absorbed by the more centrist SMER. When asked directly whether SMER is considering promoting a ‘patriotic’ agenda in order to lure voters from the SNS, Andrej Kolesik, leader of the SMER parliamentary club, answered unambiguously. Kolesik even outlined the steps that the major Slovak party is taking to appeal to Slovak voters on ethno-cultural basis.¹⁶ SMER’s nationalistic appeals are constrained, however, and mild when compared to SNS leader Slota’s more virulent style of ethnic appeals. Aside from football hooliganism among both Slovak and Hungarian citizens, however, there has never been a violent confrontation between Slovaks and Hungarian–Slovaks since 1989.

These two brief illustrations serve only to highlight our argument about the relationship of ethnic group size to radical right party success. Large minorities induce fairly moderate behavior among majority parties, whereas smaller minorities create incentives for more aggressive and possibly violent ethnic appeals. Since collective action is easier among smaller ethnic minorities, party formation is facilitated and these parties tend to have focused, narrow agendas. Laitin (1999) has suggested that there may be incentives for sizable minorities to seek accommodation

¹⁴ Source: KUN (2009); Vasovic (2005).

¹⁵ Interview with Olga Gyarfasova, IVO, summer, Bratislava, 2007 and 2008.

¹⁶ Interview with Andrej Kolesik, July 2008, Slovak Parliament, Bratislava.

and economic success in new polities, an argument that allows him to explain the surprising peace in the Baltics.

In order to assess the plausibility of our claims about the size of ethnic minority groups and radical right party success, we build on a new measure of ethnic heterogeneity called HET (Siroky, 2009a). The HET measure accounts for relative group sizes, consistent with our theory, and allows us to measure the distance between a theoretical distribution of ethnic composition and the empirical distribution in any given country.¹⁷

Since HET is flexible in terms of the selection of theoretical priors, we can implement a version of HET with 90–10 priors on the first and second largest ethnic groups, reflecting our theoretical argument that countries with an ethnic minority comprising 10% of the population are most prone to radical right mobilization. Returning to the example of Slovakia, in which 90% are Slovak and 10% are Hungarian, the HET index yields a value close to one. The value of the HET index is close to zero when the empirical distribution of ethnic groups in a given country is roughly 50–50, a situation that is represented in a stylized version of Ukraine.

The middle values of HET are associated with more or less ethnically homogeneous states, such as the Czech Republic or Poland. This implies, counter-intuitively, that homogeneous states are somewhat more likely to host strong radical right parties than states with large ethnic minorities. The Czech Republicans, Hungarian MIEP and the League of Polish Families all fit this pattern, whereas Ukraine, Moldova and Macedonia, which all have large ethnic minorities, all lack strong radical right parties.

We now turn to the empirical evaluation of our claims. The big caveat is that we are dealing with a very small number of countries, which constrains our choices of statistical techniques based on the asymptotic properties of large-N samples. For these reasons we first use a non-parametric technique known as Random Forest which does not depend on sample sizes, does not assume linearities in data, and can account for curvilinear relations between variables.

Now we will turn to a method that will allow us to assess the marginal importance of variables that explain variation in vote shares for radical right parties. Fig. 1 depicts a “variable importance plot” produced from a non-parametric ensemble method, called Random Forests, which has proven to be a powerful method for selecting important predictors in the presence of many noise variables (Siroky, 2009b). In this application, the method helps to detect the core variables driving radical party vote shares and then ranks the variables in order of their importance (Breiman, 2001; Siroky, 2009b). The method does not rely on restrictive assumptions and produces

¹⁷ We are not using a common measure of ethnic fractionalization known as ELF for two major reasons. First, ELF depends on the number of groups and thus is not comparable across countries with different numbers of groups. Second, ELF gives very high values to countries with many tiny groups but our theory posits that ethnic tensions are derived from a relationship between one dominant group and a small minority group. The major advantage of HET is that “it evaluates the relative proportions of the ethnic groups consistent with the theoretical literature, whereas ELF devotes the greatest weight to the most dominant group as a result of squaring the proportions” (Siroky, 2009a).

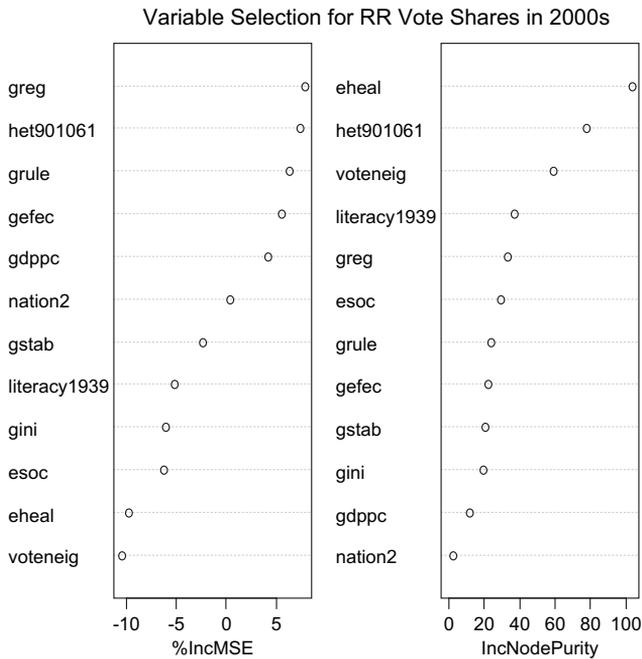


Fig. 1. Variable importance plot. Variables are ordered according to their importance from the most to the least important.

results that are intuitive and consistent with our theoretical expectations. The results show that three variables—ethnic heterogeneity, health expenditures and governance quality—strongly predict vote shares for radical right parties at the aggregate national level, while the majority of other variables can be safely ignored.

The first component of the plot (percentage increase in MSE) can be thought of as a decrease in accuracy of predicting vote shares for the radical right in 2000s if the variable is removed. The best performing variables, regulatory quality: ‘greg’, rule of law: ‘gruel’, government effectiveness: ‘gefec’ are measures of the quality of governance (World Bank, 2007).¹⁸ This is not surprising since radical right parties campaign on anti-corruption platforms (Bustikova, 2009) and attract dissatisfied constituents. Moreover, quality of governance is a proximate measure for the regime type and welfare provision. First, patrimonial regimes score much lower on all components of quality of governance when compared to national-accommodative

¹⁸ The governance indicators are average scores: 2003–2006 (WB). Government effectiveness measures the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government’s commitment to such policies. Regulatory quality measures the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development. Rule of law measures the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, in particular the quality of contract enforcement, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence.

regimes. Second, quality of governance is a pre-requisite for infrastructural powers of the states that deal with welfare goods provision. For example, it is difficult to imagine a well functioning universal health care in a country with a weak regulatory capacity. In this first component of the plot, the measures of state capacity trump measures of health and social security expenditure ('e Heal', 'esoc').

Aside from the variables associated with quality of governance, our measure of ethnic diversity, 'het9010–61' increases accuracy of the prediction if kept in the analysis. The importance of a variable that captures ethnic diversity is corroborated by the second component of Fig. 1. The second component of the plot captures the increase in node purity and can be thought of as another variable selection procedure (Siroky, 2009b). The algorithm searches for the most important explanatory variables that can partition the variation in the dependent variable (support for the radical right). The top four selected variables in the second component of Fig. 1 are: (1) expenditure on health as percentage of gross domestic product in 2000; (2) measure of ethnic diversity based on our theoretical prior or 90–10; (3) percentage of votes for the nearby (moderate) right wing party which competes for radical right votes; and (4) levels of literacy around 1939 as a legacy proxy for state capacity (Corduneanu-Huci and Bustikova, 2006).

The algorithm does not assume a linear relationship between the radical right vote shares and the independent variables, but considers all possible monotonic transformations. But our theoretical postulates have been made in linear fashions. Is it possible to corroborate results from the data-partitioning algorithm in Fig. 1 with an analysis that would mirror our theoretical expectations about the directionality of the variables? Using our small sample of sixteen countries, we perform a Bayesian linear regression on the square root of vote shares for the radical right in 2000s with four dependent variables: measures of health expenditure, regulatory quality, ethnic heterogeneity based on a 90–10 prior and a control dummy for the regime type, national-accommodative versus patrimonial (Table 6).¹⁹ The mean (median) of the posterior distribution is a coefficient, or a conditional effect, of a given variable.

Though Bayesian analysis does not depend on the asymptotic properties of large samples, it does not fully overcome the small N problem because the empirical distribution cannot overcome the prior distribution. Table 6 and plots of posterior distributions (Fig. 2 and Table 6) reveal that all our '5%' credible intervals (from 0.025 to 0.975) of posterior distributions contain zero. This means that variables, multiplied by a slope that can be a zero, may have a null effect.

We would nevertheless like to stress that the effect of all three variables of interest points to the direction that is consistent with our theory. The median, (almost identical with the mean): the effect of health expenditures and regulatory quality points to the negative direction (the posterior distribution is shifted to the left of zero in Fig. 1). This suggests that decrease in health expenditure and lower regulatory quality is associated with larger vote shares for the radical right. Het9010 measure of ethnic diversity goes in the opposite direction: its increase goes hand in hand with the increased vote share for

¹⁹ Table 6 is available online at: <http://www.duke.edu/~lbs11/cpcs>.

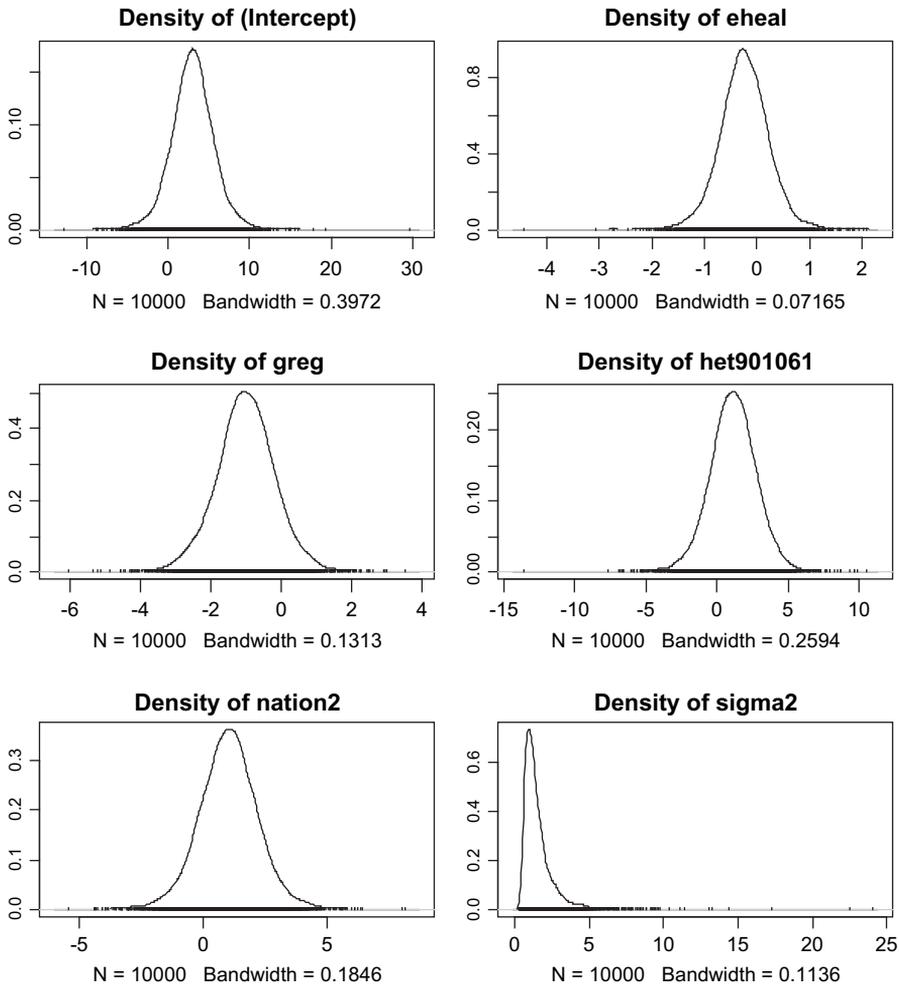


Fig. 2. Posterior densities from Bayesian linear regression. Dependent variable: vote shares for the radical right in Eastern Europe, square root. $N = 16$; the model is using standard conjugate non-informative priors. Figure generated using a MCMC package in R (Martin et al., 2009; R).

the radical right. Thus, if theoretically the country is approaching our distribution of ethnic groups being split between 90–10, we observe higher vote shares for the radical right. We are not suggesting substantive effects, but we are using the analysis to corroborate our theoretical intuitions about the directionality of the variables in a small N setting. These results are in accordance with our theoretical postulates.

Conclusion

This paper grounds the analysis of the potential for radical right mobilization in the ethnic composition of countries and in the institutional legacies of communist

and pre-communist rule. Ethnic endowments predispose countries with small minorities to be susceptible to the radical right appeals. This deep legacy has to be considered in the context of institutional legacies inherited from communism. Since national-accommodative regimes started their transitions with communist parties inclined toward moderation and eagerness in implementing capitalism, major right wing parties had to differentiate their appeals, and they did so on a socio-cultural rather than an economic platform. Patrimonial regimes, by contrast, inherited a polarized political environment and followed a significantly more contested path toward capitalism. The losers of reforms in patrimonial regimes were not cushioned by the relatively generous welfare states that existed in the national regimes. Diverging trajectories of these two regimes became more pronounced due to the fast pace of welfare retrenchment and the sharp rise in inequality, which for instance resulted in a dual-track medical care that benefits the “transitional winners” and creates a pool of dissatisfied voters. However, it is the agency of political parties that translates dissatisfaction with the economy and poor governance into ethno-cultural hostility towards the ‘other.’

This article has focused on the demand side of radical right voter appeals. Legacies are static, and change slowly if at all, so they cannot fully account for abrupt changes in vote shares from one election to another. They do nonetheless cast a long shadow over dynamic processes such as democratization and the transition to market economies. Legacies account for the rough patterns of radical right mobilization in the first two decades of post-communism. To provide a more complete account of radical right mobilization, it would be essential to dissect the strategic role of parties in translating economic dissatisfaction into socio-cultural grievances. In such an analysis, legacies would constitute a springboard constraining the strategic moves of parties in the competitive electoral domain.

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