# THE RISE OF THE EXTREME RIGHT IN FRANCE AND GERMANY AND THE PROBLEM OF IMMIGRATION



GABRIELA MEDELLIN

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# *The rise of the extreme right in France and Germany and the problem of immigration.*

by

Gabriela Medellín

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***Abstract***

The breakthrough of the extreme right during the last decade is a phenomenon that has gathered attention worldwide. This thesis examines the rise of the extreme right in France and Germany and the problem of immigration.

The present study analyses the extreme right placed in a historical context. First through a consideration of the evolution of the extreme right in the early years of the post-war period, its minor presence from the late 1950s to the 1980s, and the rise of the extreme right during the last decade with the appearance of the *Front National* and the *Republikaner*. The analysis of immigration considers patterns of Western European immigration, new trends in European migration, the increase of racism and xenophobia directed towards immigrants, and the perceptions of some Western Europeans regarding national identity, economy and immigration. The thesis focuses upon the *Front National* and the *Republikaner*, particularly their electoral performance, their appeal and their supporters.

The study attempts to determine the influence that the immigration problem has had in explaining the rise of the extreme right. The thesis considers whether or not the problem of immigration explains the rise of the extreme right; ways in which the extreme right has linked immigration and socio-economic problems, and the extent to which immigration, as opposed to other factors, provides an explanation for the rise of the extreme right in France and Germany.

The thesis argues that immigration is a leading causal factor in explaining the vote for the extreme right. However, the relationship is complex. Nevertheless three

conclusions emerge: first, immigration is an issue that appeals to a substantial portion of the population and the extreme right has been successful at exploiting it and crystallizing the fears of some sectors of the population. Second, xenophobia is an important element in explaining the rise of the extreme right. Immigration is associated with the presence of immigrants from non-European countries. Immigrants have become the symbol for a complex pattern of concerns of some native Western Europeans. Third, problems associated with immigration also account for the rise of the extreme right. The problem of immigration is related to a crisis of multiculturalism that seems to be taking place in some Western European societies. Immigration is also associated with unemployment. Some marginalized sectors of the population see immigrants as competitors for social services and employment. Thus, as long as the problem of immigration is not resolved and the problems associated with it continue, the potential for the success of the extreme right will remain.

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Esta tesis te la dedico a ti Mamuchis. Gracias por tu devocion, tu carino y tu confianza. Ellos son la fuerza que me inspira a superarme y seguir adelante. Mamita, te quiero con todo el corazon.

***Table of contents***

## *List of tables and figures*

# Chapter I
# Introduction

The specter of right-wing extremism is haunting Europe today. Although the extreme right seemed to disappear along with Nazism and Fascism after the Second World War, it never completely vanished. The long economic boom of the post-war period favoured parliamentary democracy and condemned the extreme right to the periphery of the political system. However, the resurgence of ideological and political turbulence in the 1960s contributed to a transformation of West European politics. Rising conflicts in the 1970s and 1980s and the spread of mass protest by new social movements and citizen initiatives served as a fertile ground for new sources of radicalism. By the early 1990s, extreme-right parties had emerged in almost every country in Western Europe. Examples include the National Front in France and Britain, Republicans in Germany, the Progress Parties in Denmark and Norway, the Center Party in the Netherlands, the Freedom Party in Austria, the Flemish Block in Belgium and the Northern League in Italy.

The breakthrough of the extreme right has been considered a signal of an important transformation of politics in advanced Western democracies. The new wave of right-wing extremism has been the most successful of the post-war period both in an electoral and an ideological sense. Newspaper articles about the electoral success of extreme-right parties in Western Europe are common. Recent electoral trends illustrate the rise of the extreme right in Western democracies; most of these parties have been able to expand their votes and parliamentary representation. In Germany the *Republikaner*

party received 7.1 percent of the vote in 1989 and 4.3 percent during the 1994 European parliamentary election. In the 1990 Bundestag election the party received 2.3 percent of the vote and in the 1994 federal election 2 percent. In France, the *Front National* won 15 percent of the vote in the 1995 presidential elections and elected more than one thousand members to municipal councils and three mayors in the local elections that followed the same year. Also, during the first round of the parliamentary elections in May 1997, the Front scored 15 percent of the vote and won one seat in the *Chambre des Députés*.

*Definition of the extreme right*

Although many scholars have written about the extreme right, there is little agreement among them about how to define an extreme-right party or the way in which the extreme right differs from parties of the right or the new right. The literature abounds with a multitude of terms such as right-wing radicalism, Fascism, neo-Fascism,[1] neo-Nazism, nationalism, far right, radical-right, ultra-right, right-wing populism, new right or extreme right.

In the *Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, Krieger distinguishes between the concepts of *right* and *new right*.[2] The term *right* is used to characterize the conservative end of the political spectrum in modern polities. Political parties, movements and ideas sharing a commitment to the advancement of conservative, economic, social and political arguments belong to the *right*. The *right* is suspicious of the idea of progress and is generally committed to the status quo; its tendency is

[1] The terms Nazi and Fascist should be restricted to the parties and groups of the post-war period which readily acknowledge their ideological, and in some cases organizational descent from such parties.

invariably nationalist; its adherents want a lean but strong government that does not interfere with their actions. Conservative principles of the *right* also include the veneration of religion, loyalty and a system of social hierarchy. On the other hand, the term *new right* refers to a range of conservative and liberal ideas including a commitment to individual freedom and the primacy of the free market in preference to state intervention. The *new right* approach promotes the conservative values of inequality, social hierarchy and traditional moralism.[3] The *new right* is also conceptualized as the populist extreme version of a "neo-conservative reaction to fundamental change in culture and values in Western democracies".[4] The new right network is considered a conglomerate of organizations, movements and political parties, who attempt to mobilize the neo-conservative ideological potential in the West European public.

Defining the extreme right is not an easy task. Right-wing extremism is a broad concept that is neither static nor precise. The term *right-wing extremism* has been applied to individuals, parties, movements and organizations across the world. It has also been used to refer to a wide range of phenomena from skinhead youths to neo-Nazis, white supremacists, militia groups, extremist fringe political parties and more successful radical political parties.[5] Thus, right-wing extremism consists of many different forms. It can refer to an ideology, a form of behaviour, political activities or personal attitudes and dispositions.

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[2] Joel Krieger. The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World. NY: Oxford University Press, 1993, 431.
[3] Krieger, 431.
[4] Michael Mikenberg. "The New Right in Germany. The Transformation of Conservatism and the Extreme Right." European Journal of Political Research. 22 (1992), 56.
[5] Michi Ebata, "Right-wing Extremism: in Search of a Definition", The Extreme Right. Freedom and Security at Risk. Ed. Aurel Braun and Stephen Scheinberg. (USA: Westview Press, 1997) 15.

It is also useful to distinguish between an economic right and a cultural right. The economic right refers to the neo-liberal model that favours free trade, globalization, lower corporate taxes, reduction of state expenditures, privatization and related issues. Rather than wanting an authoritarian state, this economic right prefers *laissez-faire*. In contrast, the cultural right is often opposed to free trade and is more preoccupied with national issues such as security and identity. This tendency has an authoritarian conception of the state and generally encourages strong government regulations on issues such as immigration and law and order. It is within the framework of a cultural right that we can locate some of the characteristics of an extreme-right party.

Many authors look at the definition of extreme right from different perspectives. Husbands distinguishes four models of right-wing extremism: populist national parties, neo-Fascist parties, nationalist extreme-right parties and traditional xenophobic parties. [6] Unfortunately, Husbands does not mention what the basis of this classification is for the various models. In an anatomy of right-wing politics, Hagtvet asserts that these parties share characteristics such as rejection of democracy, populism, nationalism, exclusion, pessimism, emphasis on law and order, violence, anti-Communism and authoritarianism.[7] Hagtvet explains that these parties reject existing forms of representative government and the democratic values that inform them. They are populist in the sense that they criticize the activities of the elites while emphasizing ordinary people's right to determine the content of politics. He also maintains that extreme-right parties insist on the excellence of their own nation, emphasize its history as particularly glorious, and include allusions to

[6] Christopher Husbands, "The Other Face of 1992; the Extreme-Right Explosion in Western Europe". Parliamentary Affairs (1992) 45.3

its past in their political discourse. Hagtvet claims that the patriotic attitudes of right-wing extremists drive them into ethnocentrism, which assumes racist expressions. They also share a view that the world can be saved from decadence only by ethnic control and orderly social hierarchy based on traditional norms of obedience and social submission.

This definition of the extreme right is complemented by the study of Cas Mudde. Based on an analysis of the party literature, Mudde identified five features of the extreme-right ideology: nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy and a strong state. Mudde defines nationalism as "the political doctrine that proclaims the congruence of the political unit, the state, and the cultural unit, the nation". [8] He argues that extreme-right parties stress the importance of external exclusiveness in their manifestos.[9] He also emphasizes the new racism that characterizes the extreme right. According to this new racism, all races are equivalent and have the right to develop separately; however, this development must take place within their own culture.[10] Xenophobia is introduced as an important element in the discourse of right-wing extremism; Mudde explains that xenophobia has been used as a collective noun for descriptions of fear, hate or hostility regarding ethnic foreigners.

In his directory on organizations of the extreme right, Maolain distinguishes several attributes of the radical right: violence as a political tactic; authoritarianism; nationalism to the point of xenophobia; opposition to immigration; commitment to

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[7] Brent Hagtvet, "Right-Wing Extremism in Europe". Journal of Peace Research (1994) 31.3
[8] Cas Mudde, "Right-Wing Extremism Analyzed". European Journal of Political Research. (1995) 209.
[9] External exclusiveness refers to the event that a state needs to have all people belonging to its nation within its borders.
[10] The policy of racial segregation implemented by the National Party in South Africa proclaimed the privilege of all races to acquire human rights but it also stated that races should be confined to a particular geographical region.

traditional values and opposition to immorality; opposition to Communism; individual heroism, and perception of the existing social order as decadent and corrupt. [11] Ebata enumerates as the most durable characteristics of the extreme right the centrality of hatred towards outsiders, nationalism, anti-Semitism and violence. [12] In a more confined explication, Stöss has defined right-wing extremism as the "totality of anti-democratic attitudes and behaviour patterns directed against parliamentarian or pluralist systems of government".[13] In his view, right-wing extremism is a rejection of democracy and the liberal democratic state. Using the characteristics mentioned by these authors, it is possible to identify the general attributes of an extreme-right party (table 1.1).

***Table 1.1 Characteristics (*) of extreme-right parties***

| | Hagvet | Mudde | Maolain | Ebata |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Anti-democracy* | * | * | | |
| *Populism* | * | | | |
| *Nationalism* | * | * | * | * |
| *Authoritarianism* | * | * | * | |
| *Anti-Communism* | * | | * | |
| *Violence* | * | | * | * |
| *Racism* | * | * | | * |
| *Xenophobia* | | * | * | * |
| *Pessimism* | * | | * | |

Based on the table, we can conclude that an extreme-right party is highly nationalistic and authoritarian. However, two of the characteristics that differentiate them

[11] Ciaran o Maolain, The Radical Right. A World Directory. (UK: ABC-CLIO, 1987) viii.
[12] Ebata, 16.
[13] Richard Stoss, Politics Against Democracy. Right-wing Extremism in West Germany. (NY: Berg, 1991) 15.

from other parties, including those of the right, are the importance attached to racism and xenophobia and the use of political violence as a means to accomplish their ends.

Extreme-right parties in France and Germany share many of these characteristics. The *Front National* for instance, is highly nationalistic and its policies celebrate violence and refer to xenophobia and the threat that immigrants represent to its country. According to some authors, the *Front National* also represents pessimism about the future among certain sectors of the population.[14] In the case of Germany, right-wing extremism includes political parties and action groups whose members hold authoritarian, nationalist and racist views. They emphasize the need for law and order in a society free of conflict. They are also intolerant of different opinions, ready to accuse their enemies and in some cases willing to use violence to accomplish their ends. Some of these tendencies are well represented by political parties. For example, the *Republikaner* party program is xenophobic and nationalist. It talks of the need to *Germanize* the Germans, warns about the invasion of foreigners, defames democratic institutions, makes light of Nazi crimes and denies German responsibility for the Second World War. [15]

*The extreme right in France and Germany*

Although the rise of the extreme right has acquired considerable importance in Europe in the last decade, extremist movements are not new in European history; on the contrary, the extreme right has been a permanent element in the modern history of France

[14] Michalina Vaughan, "The Extreme Right in France: *Lepenisme* or the Politics of Fear", The Far Right in Western and Eastern Europe, ed. Luciano Cheles, Ronnie Ferguson and Michalina Vaughan (England: Longman, 1995) 227.

and Germany. In France, the twentieth century has witnessed the rise and fall of different right-wing extremist groups that have challenged the institutions of the Republic but have never been able to obtain significant power. However, the past two decades can be considered a period of success for the extreme right, because of the increasing presence of the *Front National*. Germany, on the other hand, has experienced one of the most dangerous expressions of the extreme right, Nazism. Both the Nazi experience and the strict control imposed on the activities of the extreme right during the post-war period confined the extreme right to a variety of minor organizations with no political relevance. These include the Economic Reconstruction Association (WAV), the German Rightist Party (DRP), the National Democratic Party (NDP), and most recently the German People's Union (DVU). The NDP achieved success during the federal election of 1969. However, it was not until the late 1980s that the *Republikaner* became the first extreme-right party to achieve continuous electoral success. At the time of the *Republikaner* success, Germany witnessed the revival of violent right-wing extremism expanding throughout the country.

The *Front National* represents the extreme right in France today. The *Front National* is the third most popular party in French politics and one of the most important extreme-right parties in Europe. The Front has achieved significant electoral victories and by doing so has affected the course of politics in France. Today, the *Front National* controls the city halls of major towns in the South including Orange, Toulon and

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[15] Gerard Braunthal, "The Rise of Right-Wing Extremism in the New Germany", The Domestic Politics of German Unification, ed. Christopher Anderson, Karl Kaltenthaler and Wolfang Luthardt (Colorado: Lynne Rienned Publishers Inc., 1993) 97.

Vitrolles; it has eleven delegates in the European Parliament in Strasbourg and thousands of representatives on regional and municipal councils.[16]

In Germany, a political party, the *Republikaner*, also represents the extreme right. However, contrary to the case of France, the *Republikaner* share the periphery of the political arena with other political parties such as the *Deutsche Volksunion* (DVU) and the *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschland* (NPD). Although the *Republikaner* has been the most important electoral force of the extreme right during the post-war, it has not equaled the strength of the *Front National*. This relative weaknesses can be explained not only by the Nazi experience that Germany endured during the Second World War, but also by the establishment of a new democratic system under the Federal Republic. During the early 1950s, the Constitution and Electoral Law favoured the presence of a few strong parties that share power through coalitions. This threshold has prevented the entry of small parties like the *Republikaner* in the Federal Parliament.[17] However, instead of being successful in the electoral arena, the extreme right has found its expression in clandestine neo-Nazi groups. These organizations, the most militant of the extreme-right movement, have captured international attention because of their hostility and violence towards foreigners. In Mölln, one Turkish woman and two girls died and several others were wounded when two local skinheads firebombed their house during the night of November

[16] Phillip Gourevich, "The Unthinkable. How Dangerous is Le Pen's FN?" The New Yorker, (April-May, 1997) 110.

[17] Although it could be argued that the five percent floor is rather generous to small parties, in practice, five percent is a high threshold. In the case of Germany, mainstream politics had been dominated by the CDU/CSU, SPD and FDP until the late 1980s when the Greens obtained seats in the *Bundestag*.

23, 1992. This was just one of more than 700 cases of arson with a presumed right-wing motivation occurring in Germany that year.[18]

*The appeal of the extreme right*

Understanding the appeal of parties of the extreme right is not an easy task. The literature does not provide a single theory that can be used as a reference for explaining the rise and success of the contemporary extreme right. Instead, writings abound with different explanations that nevertheless make possible the identification of some of the factors that account for their success. Different authors have studied the extreme right; they look at it from economic, social and political perspectives. However, a significant element in understanding the rise of the extreme right is its association with the problem of immigration.

It is important to understand that the issue of immigration *per se* is not enough to account for the success of the extreme right. The issue of immigration appears in a context of changes that European society is undergoing. These changes refer to the restructuring of the economy, a sense of dissatisfaction with traditional political parties and the transformation of party politics.

From an economic perspective, different theories argue that the potential for right-wing extremism exists in all Western societies because their economies are undergoing post-industrial transitions. The contradictions in this process result in threats to social and

[18] Tore Bjorgo, "Introduction", Terror from the Extreme Right, (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1995) 1.

economic security and affect groups who feel marginalised by social change.[19] According to this premise, those who have lost their status and economic security as a result of the decline of older industrial sectors vote for the extreme right as a form of protest. Increasing economic and social competition has created a pool of resentful citizens who seek gratification and social acceptance. These theories also explain that right-wing extremism flourishes in the lower strata of society during times of economic stagnation and rising unemployment. The poor, economically the most exposed segments of the population, perceive foreign groups as unwanted rivals in the competition for scarce jobs and social resources. This results in the revival of nationalist and racist attitudes.[20]

Geoffrey Harris attributes the emergence of right-wing ideologies to the crisis that has followed after decades of rapid social change. In particular, he emphasises the rise of unemployment plus the presence of immigrants in explaining the instability of the political system, which, according to him, provides an excellent political opportunity for the extreme right.[21] Similarly, Von Beyme studies the development of the right-wing extremist parties since the post-war. He asserts that waves of social deprivation prepared the way for extremism, facilitated by unemployment and xenophobia.[22]

Richard Stöss claims that favourable conditions for work, production and income are an important requirement for people's personal satisfaction; permanent shortcomings

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[19] Eva Kolinsky, " A Future for Right Extremism in Germany?" The Extreme Right in Europe and the USA, ed. Paul Hainsworth (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1992).

[20] Paul Hainsworth, "Introduction. The Cutting Edge: the Extreme Right in Postwar Western Europe and the USA", The Extreme Right in Europe and the USA, ed. Paul Hainsworth (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1992).

[21] Geoffrey Harris, The Dark Side of Europe: the Extreme Right Today, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994).

[22] Klaus Von Beyme, "Right-Wing Extremism in Post-war Europe" West European Politics 15.2 (1992).

in any of these leads to dissatisfaction in those concerned. Stoss also states that a further important cause of anti-democratic attitudes is relative deprivation.[23] He uses this to refer to quantitative or temporal differences in the developments of different economic branches or different social groups. Stoss stresses in particular structural changes in industrial society which have caused greater inequality between traditional and emerging sectors of the economy or between those who have gained from modernisation and those who have lost. He maintains that being affected by this crisis creates a feeling of being disadvantaged and of alienation and isolation that stimulates prejudice towards outsiders.[24]

Hans-Georg Betz asserts that at the time of the *Front National*'s electoral breakthrough, French society had gone through a prolonged period of malaise. He explains that this was made worse by the economic recession, austerity measures, mounting social tension over unemployment and growing crime rates, which were increasingly associated with the Socialist government's policies. Betz suggests that during the mid-1980s, when the FN became an electoral force, the French public was disaffected from all major parties and profoundly sceptical about their ability to solve France's most urgent problems. Thus, the Front's success was in part a reflection of a profound malaise caused both by economic crisis and the general direction of the evolution of French society.

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[23] The term *relative deprivation* is different from the one of T.H. Runciman who argues that people accept inequality because they see their own deprivation not in absolute terms, but relative to others who are worse off.

[24] Stoss, Politics Against Democracy, 213.

Betz also argues that as German voters grew increasingly pessimistic about the state of the German economy as well as their personal economic situation in the early 1990s, the electorate grew more and more disenchanted with the established parties. He suggests that the German public's deep resentment toward the political class was caused by two factors: on the one hand the established parties' and politicians' failure to preserve the German model of stability and prosperity, and on the other, their failure to show strong leadership, depart form the status quo and show creativity and political innovation.[25]

Political explanations attribute the support for the extreme right to a general sense of disillusionment with the political system as a whole that is manifested in a growing lack of confidence in the functioning of its institutions. The explanatory factors behind this premise are resentment and alienation. Mainstream parties have lost the confidence of many citizens. The main parties no longer seem legitimate. Politicians are viewed as unresponsive to citizens' concerns and interested in the electorate's votes but not in its demands. In response, many voters voice their protest at the ballot box by supporting extreme-right parties. Some scholars explain that while traditional parties neglected popular concerns, extreme-right parties presented themselves as political alternatives by articulating ideas and themes that were crucial for the electorate. By addressing these issues, the extreme right has mobilized support at the expense of traditional parties.

From this perspective, Betz attributes the rise and increasing success of extreme-right parties to voter alienation. From this perspective, extreme-right parties are primarily interpreted as parties of discontent, which have managed to exploit voter dissatisfaction.

[25] Hans-Georg Betz, Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe. (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1994) 58.

Betz also asserts that a growing number of citizens believe that the established political class is no longer able to solve the most basic problems because politicians are too self-absorbed to be able to adapt to a rapidly changing world. He maintains that a growing number of voters feel politicians lack the competence, integrity and vision necessary to respond to such issues as unemployment, crime and immigration.[26]

Westle and Niedermayer support this hypothesis by asserting that in the case of Germany the *Republikaner's* voters do not have an extreme-right ideology but vote for the party as a protest. In their view, the party has benefited from socio-economically and politically motivated dissatisfaction because established parties have failed to respond to these problems. Individuals with a lack of trust in the democratic political institutions are overrepresented among *Republikaner* supporters. When the established parties do not respond quickly enough to new social problems and changes in issue priorities, some citizens regard their own policy preferences as not being represented anymore within the established party system.[27] Kitschelt and McGann assert that *Republikaner* supporters are more racist, nationalist and ethnocentric than the followers of other parties. However, it would be erroneous to see *Republikaner* voters as fanatic neo-Nazis. Rather they are people protesting government's policies such as allowing too many foreigners to come into Germany or tolerating high unemployment.[28]

Husbands, on the other hand, asserts that although the votes for Le Pen and his party have been considered protest votes, the Front electorate seems to be aware of, attracted to

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[26] Betz, Radical Right-Wing, 41.
[27] Betina Westle and Oskar Niedermayer, "Contemporary Right-Wing Extremism in West Germany. The Republikaner and their Electorate", European Journal of Political Research, 22.3 (1992).

and interested in the implementation of the Front's program. Front voters are more committed to and more loyal to Le Pen and the Front than are the supporters of any other French political party. According to Husbands, 7 to 9 percent of the French electorate has developed a genuine partisan attachment to it. [29] Members, especially activists, have a much greater sense of mission than members of the mainstream parties.

A major shift in the defining issues of party politics has also been an important element in explaining the appeal of the extreme right. In the past, there was a correlation between social classes and interest groups or specific political parties, with classes, groups and parties dividing along the same lines over issues concerning the economy or religion. However, this is not longer the case.

Ronald Inglehart interprets the success of extreme-right parties as part of a secular shift in advanced Western democracies from class-based to issue-based politics.[30] He explains that the politics of advanced industrial societies no longer polarize primarily on the basis of working class versus middle class, and that the old issues, centering on ownership of the means of production, no longer lie at the heart of political polarization. Inglehart asserts that Western politics are coming to polarize according to "social class less and less and according to values more and more".[31] He argues that in the context of economic development in the post-war era, there has been a shift from materialist towards post-materialist issues. Because this shift involves basic goals, it implies a gradual change in the types of issues that are most central to political conflicts and in the

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[28] Herbert Kitschelt and Anthony McGann, The Radical Right in Western Europe, (USA: The University of Michigan Press, 1995).
[29] Husbands, "The Other Face of 1992: the Extreme-Right Explosion in Western Europe", 273.

types of political movements and parties that people support. Therefore, the rise of post-materialist issues tends to neutralize political polarization based on social class.

According to Stein Rokkan and S.M. Lipset, mass politics in contemporary Europe had been structured by four major cleavages. Two of these cleavages emerged when the central nation-building cultures came into conflict with peripheral subject cultures on the one hand and with the corporate privileges of the Church on the other hand. These cleavages were center versus periphery and Church versus State. The other two cleavages emerged from the Industrial Revolution and crystallized oppositions between the old landed interests and the new industrialists on the one hand and the owners of the capital and the new working class on the other. The authors assert that the introduction of universal suffrage "froze" these cleavage structures. The party system of the 1960s reflected the same cleavages of the 1920s. According to this hypothesis, the party alternatives and in many cases the party organizations were older than the majorities of the national electorates. The development of party organizations around these cleavages pre-empted the emergence of alternate alignments. Thus the closure of the electoral market and the enduring capacity of cleavages to structure political behaviour left little room for the emergence of new cleavages or new politics.[32]

The "freezing" hypothesis proved to be almost immune to challenge though the early 1970s. However, different arguments assert that there are signs that the structure of party systems, frozen for so long, is beginning to thaw. Inglehart asserts that although

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[30] Ronald Inglehart, "From Class-based to Value-based Politics", The West European Party System, ed. Peter Mair (NY: Oxford University Press, 1990) 276.
[31] Inglehart, 276.

deep-rooted political party alignments continue to shape voting behaviour in many countries, they no longer reflect the forces most likely to mobilize people to become politically active.[33] Since the early 1970s, questions about immigration, national unity and national identity have emerged. These issues sometimes divide existing parties or provide points around which factions or parties may be organized. In many instances, specific issues have increased in importance because potential voters are bound less by traditional party preferences and more inclined to opt for the political party which they perceive to be capable of addressing itself to the issues in question.

Ignazi argues that there are new demands, largely unforeseen, by the established parties. These demands include law and order enforcement and immigration control, two demands which are leading issues for new right-wing parties. Ignazi also asserts that the inability of the established parties to provide an answer to the problem of immigration has favoured the development of extreme-right parties, which advocate xenophobic and racist positions.[34]

Following Ignazi's argument, Eva Kolinsky also maintains that issues have increased in importance as potential voters are bound less by traditional party preferences and more inclined to opt for the political party which they perceive to be capable of addressing itself to the priority issue in question. For that matter, the single most important issue for electoral and organisational success of the extreme right has been that of hostility towards foreigners. Kolinsky attributes the appeal of the *Republikaner* in

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[32] Peter Mair, Party System Change. Approaches and Interpretations, (USA: Oxford University Press, 1997) 57.
[33] Mair, 59.

Germany to a trend towards issue politics. She argues that since the early 1970s the "broad-church" approach to policy articulation which has been the hallmark of the German catch-all parties no longer satisfies voter's expectations. Instead, citizens' initiatives and new social movements have built their political roles on specific issues, which seemed to be bypassed by mainstream parties.

Simmons makes similar arguments about France. He claims that there has been a major shift in issues defining party politics. Questions concerning immigration and law and order constitute new lines of division among societal groups and political parties. Simmons claims that as the correlation between class and party weakens, and as the centrality of questions concerning the role of the state in the economy gives way to concern over national identity, corruption in politics, immigration, crime and housing, a broad cross-section of the French electorate has turned to the extreme right for answers.[35]

*The issue of immigration*

The key in understanding the success of the extreme right lies in the importance of the issue of immigration. The immigration issue has been used by the extreme right in order to attract voters from different areas of the political spectrum. These parties portray themselves as the defenders of national identity and stand for a strong state and the enforcement of law and order. They warn about the *foreignization* of their cultures and see immigrants as a threat to their national identity. Extreme-right parties speak of

[34] Piero Ignazi, "The Silent Counterrevolution Hypothesis on the Emergence of Extreme Right-wing Parties in Europe." European Journal of Political Research 22.1 ( 1992).

"keeping France French", and "Germany for the Germans". They also consider immigrants responsible for the economic crises their countries are experiencing and present them as competitors with the native people in a struggle for scarce resources. According to right-wing extremists, immigrants are responsible for all that ails society. Both the *Front National* and the *Republikaner*, employ the slogan "eliminate unemployment, stop immigration". This deep hostility directed towards outsiders has made immigration the most prominent issue of the platforms of the extreme right.

The problem of immigration can be viewed from two different perspectives, economic and cultural. From the economic point of view, immigrants are perceived as competitors in times of economic recession and as a burden to the welfare system. There is a perception among some Europeans that immigrants take jobs away from the native population and that they also abuse the benefits of the social system. From the cultural point of view, immigrants of non-European origin are viewed as unassimilable by their host societies. Muslims, in particular, have been at the center of the debate of national identity. The increasing presence of non-European immigrants has resulted in an explosion of racism and xenophobia among Europeans. Taking advantage of the fears and apprehensions permeating society concerning the presence of foreigners, the extreme right has helped to dictate the terms in which the issue of immigration has been debated.

The argument of this thesis is that immigration is a viable explanation for the rise of the extreme right. The so-called problem of immigration can be understood not just in terms of the number of immigrants but also in a major distinction of assimilability

[35] Harvey Simmons, The French National Front. The Extremist Challenge to Democracy, (USA: Westview Press, 1996).

between European and non-European immigrants based on cultural differences. The extreme right and the immigration problem coexist in the context of a rapid social change that has increased insecurity and instability for many people, contributing to feelings of alienation and resentment. During the last two decades, advanced Western societies have been confronted by a fundamental restructuring of their economies, changes in their social structure and value system, and major transformations of their culture. Problems such as isolation give rise to anxiety. In order to resolve this anxiety, some individuals seek and find security in extreme-right programs and organizations and at the same time are predisposed to view immigrants as scapegoats.

If we are to understand the rise of the extreme right, it is important to examine their parties, their leadership, their programs and the context in which they appear. Also, in order to understand the strength that these parties have obtained, it is necessary to analyze their electoral performance and the reasons why voters support them. Chapters two and three present the contemporary developments of the extreme right in France and Germany placed in a historical context, first through a consideration of the evolution of the extreme right from the early years of the postwar through its low performance from the late 1950s to the 1980s and finally the electoral success that brought the extreme right to life a decade ago. Chapter four presents an explanation of the problem of immigration, its history, the perception of immigration and national identity and the economy as well as an analysis of the explosion of racism and xenophobia. Finally, chapter five examines the success of the extreme right at exploiting the issue of immigration, their position regarding immigrants, the

influence these parties have had in mainstream politics and the importance of studying the rise of the extreme right.

# Chapter II
# The extreme right in France

One of the main political changes in the French political landscape since the early 1980s has been the rebirth of the extreme right. The extreme right appeared in a momentary vacuum created by the political system. This vacuum originated due to a substantial shift in the center of political gravity in France: the decline of the Communist social base, the conversion of the Socialists to the politics of *rigueur* and the radicalisation of mainstream conservatism on important social issues.

The rise of the Front National since the early 1980s has led to a rightward shift in French politics across the political spectrum. The traditional right is more right than ever before on issues such as immigration, law and order, integration and citizenship; so is the traditional left. The rise of the extreme right has also intensified a polite form of racism widespread in French society. Although crude forms of racism are not allowed, the form of racist expression that the Front uses has ceased to shock and has become accepted as a daily part of French social and political discourse.

*Historical background*

The extreme right is not a new phenomenon in France; since the nineteenth century, the country has experienced several cycles of extreme-right activity. However the context in which it has emerged and the rhetoric of the *Front National* are different from its predecessors. In the past the extreme right reflected deep divisions in French society, particularly the inability of Catholic and aristocratic France to reconcile itself with a secular

republic. After the Franco-Prussian war, radical nationalist ideas emerged as a significant political force giving rise to several political movements during the 1890s. The inter-war period was characterized by a great increase in political violence. During these years, groups known as the *Ligues* or the *Croix de Feu* made headlines with terrorist acts directed towards groups they considered to be different. When the German tanks moved into France in 1940, the National Assembly voted full powers to Marshal Pétain, the 84-year old "Victor of Verdun" and hero of the First World War. A treaty was signed with the Nazis under which the northern half of France was occupied by German troops and the southern half was governed from Vichy by Pétain in an increasingly dictatorial and collaborationist fashion. Extreme right activists helped him in his attempt to achieve a National Revolution, which aimed at the spiritual regeneration of France with certainties such as virtue, patriotism, family, pride and the right and duty to work. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the extreme right suffered from its associations with the Vichy regime and collaborators were vigorously prosecuted. According to Frears, because of its collaboration with Vichy and the Nazis, the extreme right "was more isolated than ever before".[36]

Forces of the extreme right began to re-emerge after 1945. Liberation in 1944 brought a constitutional debate among the forces of the resistance and the Free French Army led by Charles de Gaulle. General de Gaulle supported the creation of a Presidential Republic; instead, an Assembly-dominated parliamentary regime was established and de Gaulle retired from politics. However, a *Gaulliste* movement, then considered an anti-system party, the *Rassemblement de Peuple Français* (RPF) was established in support of his ideas. The RPF was built around its leader and power was concentrated in the president

[36] John Frears, Parties nd voters in France, (NY: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1991) 112.

of the Rally, General de Gaulle, who originally conceived the RPF as a broad non-partisan movement appealing to all classes and especially to workers. The *raison d'être* of the movement was constitutional reform; the rally was to mobilize members of all parties for this essential but limited objective. Instead, it soon developed into a new party in everything but the name. Williams asserts that according to the French political tradition, the RPF was a branch of the Bonapartist stream, with some of its characteristics including the demand for a government with authority and passionate nationalism.[37] The RPF also shared some features of Fascist movements such as the simultaneous call for national revival and social change, a strong government, the evocation of the dignity and power of the state against the demands of pressure groups and sectional interests.

The most important expression of the extreme right in the 1950s was *Poujadisme*. Pierre Poujade, a shopkeeper, led a local tax strike, which rapidly developed into a mass movement of discontented small traders known as UDCA (Union for the Defence of Traders and Artisans). *Poujadisme* sought to go back to a simpler world where the small grocer was not threatened by the supermarket, the small craftsman by mass production, the small farmer by bureaucracy and taxes, and every person by the State, corrupt politicians and political parties doing deals and forgetting their promises. The greatest success of the *Poujadistes* was in the 1956 election when the movement won 2.5 million votes (12.9 percent of the poll) and 52 deputies in the French National Assembly.[38] Subsequently *Poujadisme* declined rapidly, unable to contend with internal divisions, resurgent *Gaullism* in the Fifth Republic

[37] Phillip M. Williams, Crisis and Compromise. Politics in the Fourth Republic, (Great Britain: Longman, 1964). Bonapartism aims at establishing an autocratic government within the framework of democracy. 141.

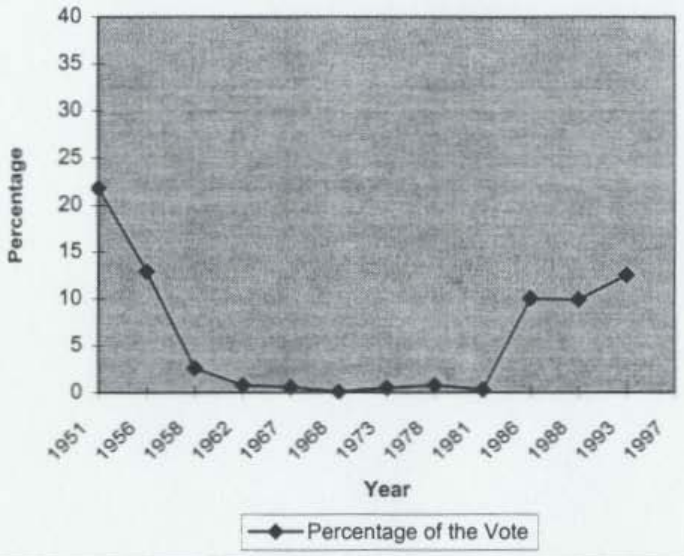
and the switch from proportional representation back to a majority system. The *Poujadist* phenomenon coincided with the Algerian War and preceded de Gaulle's establishment of a presidential regime in 1958.

The context in which the extreme right operated during the early decades of the Fifth Republic was unfavorable. The strong presidency of de Gaulle limited the participation of parties in the political arena, including those of the extreme right. The Gaulliste program drew support from the extreme right by articulating some of its nationalist themes. Although members of the extreme right supported de Gaulle's return to power in 1958, he jailed some of their leaders when they opposed his granting independence to Algeria in 1961.

The years after the Algerian war were a lean period for the extreme right. The extreme right struggled for over two decades to make an electoral impact. In 1965 they helped to organize the presidential campaign of Tixier-Vignancour, former minister of information in the Vichy government and longstanding far-right notable. After the election, the extreme right splintered and Tixier-Vignancour created the ARLP (*Alliance Républicaine pour les Libertés et Progrès*). In 1969, a body of intellectuals, of whom Alain de Benoist was the most prominent and effective, formed GRECE (*Groupement de Recherche et d'Études pour la Civilisation Européene*) to promote the idea of Europe becoming a patchwork of racially distinct cultures and regions that would supersede modern nation states. Also in 1969, a movement called *Ordre Nouveau* emerged as the principal representative of the extreme right. *Ordre Nouveau* was founded by a group of militant

[38] Paul Hainsworth, "The Extreme Right in Post-war France: the Emergence and Success of the Front National", The Extreme Right in Europe and the USA, ed. Paul Hainsworth (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992) 32.

**Fig. 2.1 Extreme right performance in the elections for the *Chambre des Députés* (1951-1997)**




*Source: compiled from Lancelot (1988) and Élections Législatives 1988*

1 RPF (1951)
2 Poujadists and other extreme right (1956-1973)
3 FN and other extreme right (1978-1997)

"national revolutionaries" in response to the student movement of 1968.

During 1969 there was a growing debate within the extreme-right circles on the need for a "new front" organization.[39] The initiative in setting up the *Front National* (FN) was taken by *Ordre Nouveau* which wanted to use it as a parliamentary strategy to reach a wider audience. The FN was created in 1972. Although it brought together a heterogeneous collection of extreme-right groups, members of *Ordre Nouveau* initially held power. The FN spent its first ten years trying, but was unable to make any significant impact on the political scene. Jean-Marie Le Pen led the Front during the 1970s. In the 1974 French presidential election, Le Pen received only 0.8 percent of the vote. In the 1981 presidential election, Le Pen was unable to gather the 500 signatures from local councillors which were a condition for the nomination as an official candidate

in that year's presidential election. However, soon afterward the party was reorganized and began to gain strength. This is demonstrated in figure 2.1 which shows the percentage of the vote won by parties of the extreme right in legislative elections. The FN began to take advantage of a divided and demoralised right-wing opposition and the presence of members of the Communist party in the Socialist-led government.

*The Front National*

Bad news for France is good news for the FN. As the unemployment rate has worsened over the past fifteen years, hitting a post-Second World War high of 12.8 percent in February 1997, the Front's fortunes in national and local elections have steadily improved during the last decade.[40] In 1982, the Front managed to receive 10 percent in a handful of communes in the cantonal elections (table 2.2).

The FN was especially successful in Dreux, where the FN list led by Jean-Pierre Stirbois won 16.7 percent of the valid votes in September. By 1984 the FN was the right party in the right place at the right time. Benefiting greatly from electoral success achieved in Dreux in 1983 and media attention, the FN won 11 percent of the vote in the European election and ten of the eighty-one French seats.[41] At the time of the FN's success in the European election, French society had gone through a prolonged period of malaise that began in the mid-1970s. This was caused by the economic recession,

[39] Jonathan Marcus, The National Front and French Politics: the Resistible Rise of Jean Marie Le Pen (London: Macmillian, 1995) 17.
[40] Gourevitch, 111.
[41] P. Fysh and J. Wolfreys, "Le Pen, the National Front and the Extreme Right in France", Parliamentary Affairs, 45.3 (1992) 315.

austerity measures imposed by the government, social tension over unemployment and growing crime rates.

Success in the 1984 European Parliamentary elections brought funds and supporters into the FN and the party set about organising on a national basis. The 1986 elections represented another successful moment and consolidation of the FN vote as the party entered, for the first time, the French National Assembly. François Mitterrand introduced a one-round proportional voting system for the parliamentary elections of 1986 only. During this election, the *Front National* was able to achieve 35 seats.

***Table 2.2 Electoral performance of the Front National by percentage of the vote***

| *Year* | *Presidential ($1^{st}$. round)* | *National Assembly** | *Cantonal* | *Municipal* | *European Parliament* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1973** | - | 0.6 | - | - | - |
| **1974** | 0.8 | - | - | - | - |
| **1978** | - | 0.8 | - | - | - |
| **1981** | - | 0.3 | - | - | - |
| **1983** | - | - | - | 0.1 | - |
| **1984** | - | - | - | - | 11.0 |
| **1985** | - | - | 8.8 | - | - |
| **1986** | - | 9.6 | - | - | - |
| **1988** | 14.4 | 9.6 | 5.3 | - | - |
| **1989** | - | - | - | 2.1 | 11.7 |
| **1992** | - | - | 12.2 | - | - |
| **1993** | - | 12.5 | - | - | - |
| **1994** | - | - | 9.8 | - | 10.5 |
| **1995** | 15.0 | - | - | 6.7 | - |
| **1997** | - | 14.9 | - | - | - |

*Source: Le monde, various dates as presented by Harvey Simmons, The French National Front (1996).*

* First ballot

Two years later the President dissolved the National Assembly and called new parliamentary elections with the traditional two-round majority system. Under this

system candidates must receive at least 12.5 percent in the first round in order to contest the second round (as a result, the Front was left with only one seat in the parliament). One of the most important successes for the FN came with the presidential election of 1988; Le Pen attracted 14.4 percent of the vote. Also, the local elections of 1989 marked a new electoral trend in favour of the extreme right; the Front received 42.5 percent of the vote in Dreux and 33 percent in Marseille.[42]

The year 1995 marked the consolidation of the FN as a national electoral force. Le Pen had a strong showing in the presidential contest in April, emerging from the first round of voting with a just over 15 percent of the votes cast. He failed to win a place in the second ballot but was only three points behind the Prime Minister, Édouard Balladur, and five points behind Jacques Chirac, who was the front-runner on the right. One of the central themes in Le Pen's campaign was the allegation of corruption against mainstream politicians (from both the left and right). Le Pen claimed that all the three main contenders (Balladur, Chirac and Jospin) were social democrats, while he was the only authentic popular candidate. Another issue that figured in Le Pen's rhetoric was the concept of *national preference*. He proclaimed that there should be two social security systems: the first for French citizens, the second a sort of residual system for *those* foreigners allowed to remain in France, paid for from their own contributions. Le Pen insisted that immigrants either caused unemployment by taking jobs from French people, or were unable to find jobs, being thus a burden to the state. Le Pen also explained that he

[42] P. Brechon and S.K. Mitra, "The National Front in France. The Emergence of an Extreme-right Protest Movement", Comparative Politics 25.1 (1992) 70.

was committed to the creation of four million new jobs. One and quarter million jobs would come from the repatriation of immigrants.[43]

In the municipal elections, the FN put forward 25,000 candidates, some 10,000 more than in 1989. The party concentrated its efforts in the larger urban centers, especially those in its traditional areas of support such as northern France, the east, the area around Paris and the Mediterranean littoral. In the first round the FN obtained 10 percent or more of the vote in over 100 towns with a population of more than 30,000. It also passed the threshold to go through the second ballot in 21 districts in Paris, Lyon and Marseilles.[44] Bruno Mégret obtained the Front's most spectacular score in Vitrolles with over 43 percent; the FN also headed the poll in Dreux, Marignane and Toulon. A considerable amount of the media's attention was set on Vitrolles and Dreux. According to Marcus, this may have been a powerful element in encouraging voters to oppose the FN. Its successes came elsewhere, in Toulon, Marignane and Orange. Toulon is a city of 183,000 inhabitants, and thus, a significant political prize. The Socialist candidate had remained in the race during the second ballot thus dividing the opposition against the local Front leader Jean-Marie Le Chevalier. In Marignane, with 32,000 inhabitants, the FN obtained 37 percent of the popular vote against the mainstream right. In Orange, with a population of 27,000 inhabitants, the FN headed by Jacques Bompard, obtained nearly 36 percent of the vote.[45]

In Vitrolles, seemingly the party's best hope for victory, Bruno Mégret clearly suffered from the improved turnout and the Socialist mayor Jean-Jacques Anglade was

[43] Marcus, The National Front, 307.
[44] Marcus, The National Front, 310.

re-elected. However, during the municipal elections held in February 1997, Catherine Mégret was officially elected mayor of Vitrolles. She defeated Anglade by winning 52.48 percent of the vote in the second round of the election. This was the first time in the FN's history that a candidate achieved an absolute majority. In 1983, two years after François Mitterrand was elected France's first Socialist president, the people of Vitrolles elected a Socialist mayor. About 20,000 people were living there at the time, there were very few immigrants and unemployment was almost unknown. Today, Vitrolles is a town of 40,000, many of whom are immigrants or descendants of immigrants from Arab North Africa. About 40 percent of the population is under the age of twenty-five and the rate of joblessness is one and a half times the national average.

The FN's power base in the South is firm. A total of 30 out of 39 town councilors in Vitrolles are now supporters of Le Pen's party. The FN is slowly building support in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region with 30 representatives out of 123 on the regional council. In the *département* of Bouches du Rhône, including Vitrolles, there are now between 140 and 150 elected Le Pen supporters across 119 communes. There is at least one FN representative in seven sectors of Marseille, and in the eighth, the poorest part of the city, there are two. The *département* of the Var, which is made up of 153 communes, has 73 FN elected members of whom 41 make up the majority of the town council in Toulon. The five most important towns in the Alpes Maritimes have a total of nine *Front National* elected members, two in Nice, three in Cannes, two in Menton and two in Antibes.[46] During the 1997 Parliamentary elections the FN garnered almost 15 percent of the votes in the first

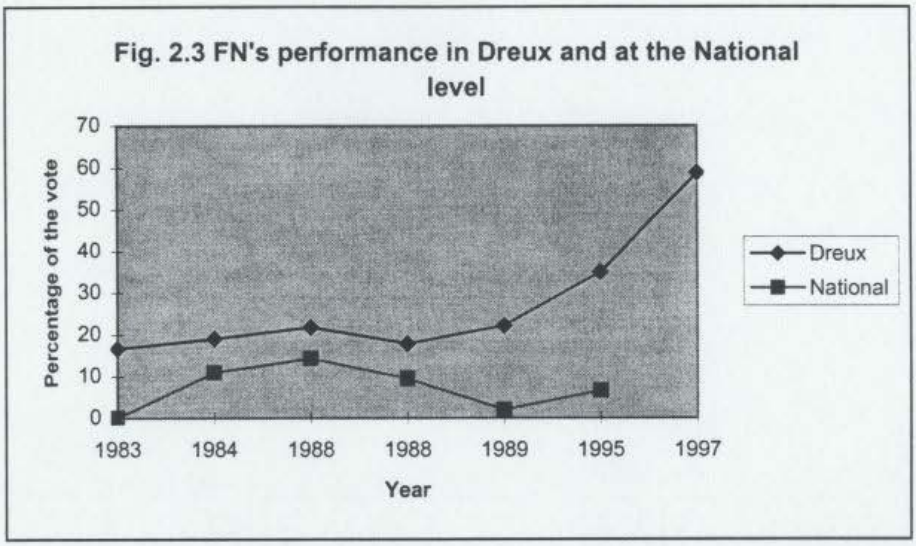
[45] Marcus, The National Front, 312.
[46] Roman Rollnick and Deidre Mooney, "Le Pen on a Long March to Paris", The European, (Feb, 1997) 3.

round of the election and the party also gained electoral importance when 133 FN candidates made it into the second round. However, during the second round the FN entered the National Assembly with only one seat. Jean-Marie Le Chevallier, mayor of Toulon, was elected in the first constituency of Var with 52 percent of the vote against 48 percent for the Socialist candidate.

*Dreux*

One of the most important achievements in the history of the FN has been its electoral performance in the municipality of Dreux. Less than an hour away from Paris, the town marks the passage from the Ile-de-France region into Normandy. Located at the junction of three river valleys, those of the Aure, the Eure and the Blaise, Dreux is a modest town, a subprefecture of the Eure-et-Loir *département.* By French standards, Dreux ranks as a medium-sized city, boasting slightly more than 30,000 inhabitants. For over 15 years, Dreux became a political laboratory for the extreme right. The FN in Dreux was able to develop a winning formula combining good constituency work with its anti-immigration theme. Its first success came in the cantonal elections of 1982 when the Front won 12.6 percent of the vote in Dreux West and 9.6 in Dreux East, levels that had been rarely achieved elsewhere by the party.[47] During the 1983 elections, the FN argued that the presence of too many immigrants in Dreux was the cause of high unemployment, delinquency, and the breakdown of public order, problems, which according to the FN could be eliminated by the reversal of the high level of immigration. In this election, the left won 40.5 percent, the moderate-right 42.8 percent and the FN 16.7 percent. The town became a

strong base of support when in the European elections of 1984 the FN won 19.1 percent of the vote in Dreux. In the presidential election of 1988 Le Pen received 21.8 percent of the vote in the area, but only 17.9 percent in the legislative elections that followed (fig. 2.3).




In 1989 Marie-France Stirbois received 22.2 percent of the vote in the municipal elections, indicating further reinforcement of the FN's position in the area; in the next Senate election, Stirbois came in first with 42.5 percent of the vote.[48] In the first round of the municipal elections of 1995, Stirbois obtained 35 percent of the popular vote. However, during the second ballot left-wing voters rallied behind the mainstream right's list to defeat Madame Stirbois. In the last legislative election, Stirbois lost to Gerard Hamel, mayor of the city, who obtained 58 percent of the vote against 41 percent of the candidate of the FN.[49]

[47] Brechon, 72.
[48] Brechon, 73.
[49] Results published in L'Humanite (French Communist daily) June 2, 1997.

*Jean-Marie Le Pen*

An important element contributing to the success of the FN is undoubtedly the presence of Jean-Marie Le Pen and his charismatic appeal. He has been eminently successful in gaining attention for his party. When the party gained its first electoral successes during the early 1980s, it was Le Pen who personified its message, and it was his rhetoric that, in large part, gained the party a following. Le Pen and the FN have become so closely associated that it is difficult to imagine the party without its charismatic leader.

In the classic manner of extreme-right organisations, the leader, the man of destiny, is at the core of the FN.[50] Le Pen is the embodiment of the FN, its symbol and focal point. As in the case of many charismatic leaders, Le Pen is expected to be larger than life and his followers may well feel that ordinary standards do not apply. The personal role of Le Pen in the rise of the FN cannot be overestimated. According to Marcus, he has been the "far-right's equivalent of de Gaulle".[51] The events of Le Pen's life have been carefully packaged by the FN to present the image of a man from humble origins, who after fighting for his country in the Resistance and in Indo-China, became its youngest parliamentary deputy and then went on to volunteer for military service in Algeria.

The son and grandson of sailors, Jean-Marie Le Pen was born in 1928 in Brittany, heartland of Catholic traditionalism. At the age of nineteen, after graduating from a Jesuit school in Brittany, he enrolled in the Paris Law Faculty, traditionally a centre of extreme-

[50] Fysh, 320.
[51] Marcus, The National Front, 51.

right agitation. During his time in the Faculty, Le Pen's debating skills and energy helped him to become vice-president and then president of the *Corps de Droit* , a right-wing faction of the UNEF (*Union Nationale des Étudiants Français*). Le Pen spent much of his time propagandising for the UNEF, debating and quarrelling with fellow right-wing students, and brawling in demonstrations and street battles against the left.[52] In 1953 he volunteered to serve in Indochina with the Foreign Legion as a parachutist. Elected in a working-class constituency in January, 1956, he rapidly gained a reputation for the effectiveness of his oratory.

The political philosophy of the FN is largely reducible to Le Pen's writings and speeches. He is widely held to be a talented demagogue with great debating skills and a keen understanding of television technique. However, within his own following he is taken seriously as an original thinker.

The leadership principle is the key to the FN's structure. The party insists upon rigid internal discipline and loyalty to the line pursued by its president, Jean-Marie Le Pen.[53] In the FN there is almost a cult of personality centred on Le Pen. He has been capable of binding together the disparate forces of the extreme right under his personal leadership. Vaughan asserts that the founder of the FN could be considered "exemplary to the extent that his background fits all the stereotypes of the extreme right".[54] Because of Le Pen's leadership, the FN has been successful in riding out the risks of splits within the party. The FN has developed a frontist structure that allows the existence of different tendencies in the party. The most important tendencies are represented in the *bureau*

[52] Simmons, 12.
[53] Marcus, The National Front, 35.

*politique*, which includes royalists, Catholic integralists, Solidaristes, ex-collaborators and the *Nouvelle Droite*. Each of these tendencies has its own doctrines and in some cases its own newspapers and magazines. However, they all recognise Le Pen as the undisputed leader of the movement.

Although Le Pen has played an important role in the success of the *Front National*, it has been the issue of immigration that has gained the party a following. As in other European democracies, the extreme right has made its gains at a time of change in party politics. In that respect the extreme right in France shares the same characteristics that the extreme right in Germany. In both situations the success of the extreme right has been made possible by the political opportunities that have been opened up by mainstream parties.

[54] Vaughan, "The Extreme Right in France", 217.

# Chapter III
# The extreme right in Germany

The problem of the recent, violent expansion of right-wing extremist activity is not unique to Germany. Still, right-wing extremist activities in the Federal Republic are viewed with a special distrust and usually arouse sensitive reactions from foreign as well as from German observers. This is due, in part, to Germany's Nazi past and concerns regarding the stability of post-reunification German democracy. It is small wonder that the electoral success of the *Republikaner* has produced not only a wave of protest demonstrations, but also of media reports, conferences and publications dealing with this party.

The increase in extreme right radicalism in Germany has occurred in a time of change in post-war party politics. The German electorate has shown itself more willing than in the past to support new political parties or change established preferences. The emergence of the Green Party as an alternative underscored the exhaustion of post war democratic politics. Support for the Greens demonstrated the public's desire for new alternatives in party politics. This opening up of the process created an opportunity for other groupings to seek electoral support, especially on the extreme right of the political spectrum.

During the 1980s and early 1990s politics and politicians faced a crisis of confidence. The percentage of the popular vote that the large parties received has declined steadily. Both main political parties, the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) and Social Democratic Party (SPD) have lost electoral support. The established parties have relied on coalitions with small parties, normally the Free Democratic Party (FDP) and tended to be oriented towards the center. However, during the past decade the

composition of coalitions has become less predictable because small parties (such as the Greens) are taking a larger share of the vote. Because support for the FDP has been declining and smaller parties such as the Greens have emerged, coalition opportunities are prone to arise quickly for newcomer parties including those of the extreme right.

*Historical background*

Right-wing extremism has been a constant element in the history of Germany. Until 1945 nationalist and anti-democratic parties were the dominant political forces in Germany. During Imperial Germany they constituted the *national camp* and were aligned with the autocratic and militarist government of the day. In the Weimar Republic, such parties proved strong enough to destroy democracy. The *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP) achieved small electoral successes in 1928, but by 1932 it had become the most powerful party in the country. On January 30, 1933 Adolf Hitler was proclaimed Chancellor of the Reich. National Socialism abolished democratic institutions and elevated nationalism to the rank of official state ideology.

As a result of the Second World War, Germany fell under strict control of the allied forces. They divided the territory into zones of occupation and supervised the creation of a new political system based on democratic institutions. The Allied Control Council, developed to coordinate occupation policy efforts, initiated *Control Council Law Number Two* in October 1945. This law was specifically designed to terminate and liquidate all Nazi organizations. The program resulting from this law became known as *denazification.* All Nazi institutions, including paramilitary organizations, were made illegal and any attempt at

developing any kind of organization supporting Nazi ideology was strictly forbidden. As a result of the *denazification* program, the NSDAP and its subsidiary organizations as well as possible successors were banned, and all socio-political activities were subject to a licensing requirement and continuous strict control. It was evident that parties, unions, associations and interest groups could only become active with permission, and at first the occupying powers only licensed such activities at the local and regional levels. Political parties were only granted a license if they could prove that their manifesto was anti-Fascist and that their politicians were not former Nazis.[55] The Cold War resulted in the partition of Germany. The three Western zones were brought together and allowed to establish a liberal democratic regime. The founders of the new regime were concerned to prevent a fragmentation of the party system by encouraging a few promising parties.

The Bonn Basic Law, a temporary Constitution, specified the rights and duties of political parties and contained provisions which allowed the German High Court to ban antidemocratic parties. One of the provisions included in the 1953 electoral law was the *five percent clause*. According to this, only those political parties who have obtained at least five percent of the popular vote or three constituency seats can be represented in the lower chamber of the national parliament (Bundestag).

The Allies mistrusted the German people. Public opinion polls showed a German unwillingness to reject Nazism completely and there seemed to be good conditions for a neo-Fascist revival. International vigilance against the recurrence of extreme-right politics in Europe focused primarily on Germany. The occupation policy of the Western Allies was aimed not only to the elimination of Nazism and militarism but also to the reconstruction of

[55] Stoss, Politics against democracy, 84.

political life on a democratic basis. Hence, the Allies did not only have to prevent supporters of National Socialism from gaining influence in post-war Germany, but they also had to ensure that the problems of the post-war period did not escalate into broad dissatisfaction with the political status quo and develop into a breeding ground for a new right-wing extremism.[56] The Allied powers had very different views about how far they could go with *denazification*, tempered in any case by the need, argued first by the British, later accepted by the Americans and the French, to rearm the Germans against the Soviet Union. There was agreement on the need for a stable regime and the desirability of excluding non-democratic parties.

However, the inability of the allied occupation authorities and the new German government to totally denazify Germany led to a reestablishment of right-wing interests during the early post-war years. Parties of the extreme right emerged during the first decade following the war. They primarily profited from the consequences of the social, political and economic problems of that period. These parties, however, tended to split each year. The number of parties of the extreme right increased steadily from two in 1945 to twelve in 1951. By 1952, the number of parties of both the right and left increased to seventy-four. Interest in the extremist parties began to diminish in 1957 and continued to attract little attention through 1959.[57]

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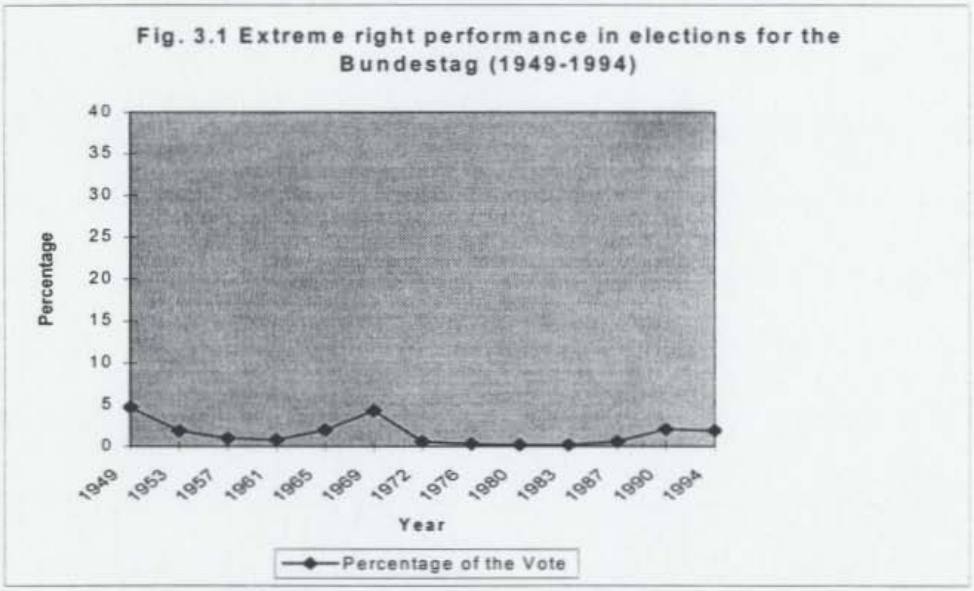
[56] Some of the problems refer to the division of Germany, the hordes of expellees and refugees who were streaming into the three Western zones from the East, the masses of people who had been bombed out, the unemployed and the starving, as well as those subjected to *denazification*.

[57] Rand C. Lewis, A Nazi Legacy, Right-wing Extremism in Post-war Germany, (New York: Praeger, 1991) 41.

Extreme-right parties were successful at the regional and local level, but with a few regionally concentrated exceptions, they never had an impressive electoral performance.




*Source: Wahlzum Deutschen Bundestag am 25.Januar 1987: 29-33*

1 WAV and DRP (1949-1961)
2 NPD (1965-1987)
3 Republikaner (1990-1994)

*Wirtschaftliche Aufbau-Vereinigung* (WAV) won seats in 1946 and 1949 and the *Deutsche Rechtspartei* (DRP) did it in 1949. The *Deutsche Reichspartei* (DRP) was founded in 1950 by a variety of national conservative and neo-Nazi organizations. It entered the Land parliaments in Lower-Saxony in 1951 and 1955, and the Rhineland-Palatinate in 1959 (Fig. 3.1).

The years between 1953 and 1961 have been referred to as the "doldrums years" of right-wing extremism.[58] Indeed, the wave of nationalist sentiment, which had become apparent during the early post-war years, had almost completely subsided by 1953. The consolidation of the domestic and foreign policy of West Germany ensured the growing stabilization of the political order and formed a barrier to the success of anti-democratic parties. Fragmentation, organizational and personal rivalries and social isolation became characteristic of the nationalist opposition. It was not until 1966 that the extreme right experienced a new upturn. This was the creation of the *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschland* (NPD). Under the leadership of Adolf van Thadden, the NPD succeeded in recruiting up to 33,000 members and won seats in seven *Laender* parliaments between 1966 and 1968. In the federal election of 1969, the NPD achieved the best result an extreme-right party had obtained since 1949 when it gained 4.3 percent of the popular vote. Initially, the NPD did not have an autonomous manifesto or a uniform party ideology. Their diffuse conglomeration of demands was an expression of "inner-party heterogeneity which was consolidated by organizational growth".[59] They were concerned to achieve an external image of being nationalist-conservative and faithful to the Constitution, in order to avoid a possible ban.

The second half of the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s were a dismal period for parties of the extreme right. As the German economy strengthened in the early 1970s, the influence of the right-wing and in particular the NPD began a downward trend in popular support. This would eventually bring the party to near extinction in the late 1970s. However,

[58] Stöss, Politics Against Democracy, 127.
[59] Stöss, Politics Against Democracy, 145.

during the late 1980s a number of developments helped to create an atmosphere in which extreme-right parties could succeed. These were unemployment, the continuing influx of foreigners seeking political asylum or simply work in West Germany, and the migration of ethnic Germans and citizens of the German Democratic Republic to the Federal Republic. In 1989 the extreme right scored its biggest success since the 1960s. The *Republikaner*, a new organization on the right, won 7.5 percent of the votes in the West Berlin election to capture eleven seats in the local parliament.

*The Republikaner*

The *Republikaner* party was founded in 1983 by Franz Handlos, Ekkehar Veigt, (dissidents of the CSU, the Bavarian affiliate of the CDU) and Franz Schoenhuber. The name of the party was to symbolize its affinity to a Reagan-style nationalist conservatism, paired with cultural conservatism and anti-Communist rhetoric.[60] The party developed roots primarily in Bavaria, but also created subsidiaries in Berlin, Hamburg and Bremen. Its hard core was primarily drawn from the organizations of expellees and CDU party activists.

In 1983 Schönhuber took over the position of national chairman. Despite further struggles within the party and criticism of his authoritarian leadership, he held that position for almost fifteen years. Schönhuber, a native of Bavaria, had spent the years following the war drifting from one political party to another. He had supported the NSDAP in the 1930s and 1940s. In the post-war period he became a newspaper editor in Munich.[61] Following the war, he then joined the SPD, the German party that was traditionally supportive of

[60] Kitschelt, 216.
[61] Kolinsky, " A Future ", 69.

Socialist programs and which was antithetical to the ideologies of Nazism. After a short stint, Schönhuber then moved to the conservative CSU. By the mid-1980s he had returned to the extreme right and became a spokesman for the party. From 1975 to 1982 he was the host of a popular political talk show on Bavarian television. In 1982 he was fired from his post because of the publication of his autobiography in which he boasted of his SS background. Like the French FN leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen, Schönhuber is a skilful and demagogic speaker. He survived many power struggles within the party, and was always careful to keep right-wing extremist materials out of the party program.[62] The public position of Schönhuber had been German nationalist, exploiting discontent about the alleged breakdown of law and order, and the influx of foreigners and ethnic Germans.

The policy proposals and propaganda of the *Republikaner* fit all the characteristics of an extreme-right party. However, the *Republikaner* consider itself right-wing. In their statute, they distance themselves from any extremist party; as Stöss notes, "no one may become a member of the party *Die Republikaner* who belongs to or supports an unconstitutional organization or a left-wing or right-wing extremist group".[63] The party views itself as a constitutional and democratic party firmly committed to the German Constitution and the maintenance of law and order. The Office for the Protection of the Constitution, the domestic government intelligence agency, does not include the *Republikaner* in its yearly listing of left and right wing extremist parties. Officially, they are described as right-wing radical, hence belonging to the democratic spectrum. The *Republikaner* have been more skilful than other radical right-wing parties in attempting to

[62] Braunthal,99.
[63] Stöss, Politics Against Democracy, 102.

portray themselves as a legitimate party prepared to operate within the constitutional structure. Kitschelt and McGann argue that the program of the *Republikaner* is different from that of other European parties of the extreme right and shows some manifestations of National Socialism in the particular case of the extreme right in Germany.[64]

The party platform adopted by the *Republikaner* in 1987 has antidemocratic, nationalist and anti-European tendencies. The party espouses racism, nationalism and a quest for law and order. It employs a vocabulary that is close to National-Socialist rhetoric, especially through the usage of terms such as *Volk* (folk), *Deutsches Volk* and *Lebensraum* (living space). Party programs demand the protection of the environment as a means of saving the soil and call on women to nurture a family and children at home. Women are said to have a special vocation and duty to create a climate of security through warmth and devotion in which family and children can thrive. Although acknowledging that women have the right to education and a qualified job training in order for them to gain independence and self-esteem, the *Republikaner* stress the necessity to give women the opportunity to fully develop their natural ability as mothers and centers of the family.

Directly and indirectly, the party employs hate messages and social stereotypes. The *Republikaner* follow the footsteps of their precursors from DRP to NPD, with whom they have in common an authoritarian and nationalist view of the social order that also is wary of free market capitalism.[65] With regard to the political order of Germany, the *Republikaner* support the concept of an authoritarian state with the intention of its strengthening as a factor

[64] Kitschelt,104.
[65] Kitschelt, 218.

of control, and view the organizations and institutions of political decision-making with mistrust and aim to reduce their influence.[66]

In socio-political terms, the *Republikaner* project themselves as the party of the "little people", of the man in the street, a party of those "worried about their economic existence and seeking social protection from the vagaries of the market place".[67] The reform of social order for which they strive is to be achieved, they claim, by means of a change in consciousness, and the "feeling of all working people living together must be created".[68]

The *Republikaner* are openly anti-European and inherently anti-American. Closely related to their anti-American feelings is the *Republikaner*'s continuing political agitation against the way the history of Germany and the world has been written since 1945, especially the alleged reorientation of the German people by the allied powers.

*Support for the Republikaner*

Although the *Republikaner* have not been as successful as the Front National in the electoral arena, the party has managed to achieve small gains at the local level and is still within Germany the largest and most influential party of the extreme right. The *Republikaner* gained support in the Land elections in Bavaria with 3.6 percent in 1986. During 1987 they gained 1.2 percent in Bremen and in 1988 they achieved only 1.2 percent of the vote in Baden-Wurttemberg and 0.6 percent in Schleswig-Holstein. In the same year, the NPD and DVU were able to achieve a combined voter share of 3.4 percent in the Bremen parliamentary election. During 1989 the *Republikaner* scored their greatest success

[66] Stöss, 203.
[67] Kitschelt, 218.

when in January they won 6 percent of the popular vote. This percentage gave the party 11 seats in the Berlin legislature. In June of the same year, the *Republikaner* entered the European Parliament with six MEPs and 7.1 percent of the vote. During this election the *Republikaner* scored highest in Bavaria, especially in the region of the Alps where 15 percent of the voters supported them; they also did well in the areas of Baden-Wurttemberg.[69]

***Table 3.2 Electoral performance of the Republikaner***

| ***Elections*** | **Year** | **%** | ***Elections*** | **Year** | **%** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Lander Parliament*** | | | Saarland | 1990 | 3.5 |
| Bavaria | 1986 | 3.0 | North Rhine-Westphalia | 1990 | 1.8 |
| Bremen | 1987 | 1.2 | Lower Saxony | 1990 | 1.5 |
| Baden-Wurttemberg | 1988 | 1.0 | Hesse | 1991 | 1.7 |
| Schleswig-Holstein | 1988 | 0.6 | Rhineland-Palatinate | 1991 | 2.0 |
| Berlin (West) | 1989 | 7.5 | Hamburg | 1991 | 2.0 |
| Bavaria | 1990 | 4.9 | Baden-Wurttemburg | 1992 | 12.0 |
| ***Bundestag*** | 1990 | 2.1 | ***European Parliament*** | 1989 | 7.1 |
| | 1994 | 1.9 | | 1994 | 1.9 |

*Source: Federal Ministry for the Interior*

Local elections in March and June in 1989 resulted in similar gains for the *Republikaner* in Rhineland Palatinate and the Saar region. During the same election, the NPD and DVU attained only 1.6 percent of the vote nationwide.

In the Bavarian Land elections in October, 1990 the *Republikaner* narrowly missed representation with 4.9 percent of the vote. During the same year, they obtained 3.5 percent share of the electorate in the Saarland parliamentary elections, which

[68] Stoss, Politics Against Democracy, 204.
[69] Braunthal, 100.

represented a significant drop from the 5.8 percent they had gathered in that state only six months earlier in the race for the European parliament. Similarly, during the spring legislative election in North Rhine-Westphalia, the *Republikaner* won only 1.8 percent of the vote and 1.5 percent in Lower Saxony. In the first Bundestag election held in December, 1990 after unification, the *Republikaner* gathered 2.1 percent of the votes nationwide. Once again, their stronghold was Bavaria where they received 5 percent of the vote. At the time of the Bundestag election, Berliners were called to vote for the first all-Berlin legislature. Unlike their previous success, the *Republikaner* lost their seats in the local parliament when the party obtained only 3.1 percent of the vote. This downward trend continued in the Land parliamentary elections held during the first half of 1991. The *Republikaner* received 1.7 percent in Hesse, 2 percent in Rhineland-Palatinate and 2 percent in Hamburg.[70] On the contrary, the DVU received renewed attention when in September, 1991 it scored well in the Bremen Land assembly election receiving more than 6 percent of the vote which represented six seats in the legislative assembly. The electoral performance of the *Republikaner* seemed to improve when they won more than 12 percent of the vote in the 1992 election in Baden-Wurttemberg, making them the third largest party in the area. During the local elections in Berlin that year and in Hesse in the spring of 1993, the *Republikaner* obtained more than 8 percent of the vote. In Frankfurt, together with the DVU and the NPD, the *Republikaner* won more than 13 percent of the vote. The *Republikaner*'s share in Frankfurt was 9.3 percent but they won as much as 33 percent in parts of some working-class districts and had ten seats in the city parliament.

[70] Hans-Joachim Veen, Norbert Lepszy and Peter Mnich, The Republikaner Party in Germany. Right-wing Resistance or Protest Catch-all? (Washington D.C.: Praeger, 1993) 8.

However, in the state elections in Hamburg in September, 1993 and in Lower Saxony in March, 1994 once more, they failed to clear the five percent hurdle.[71] During the 1994 Bundestag election, the *Republikaner* failed to enter the parliament when they obtained only 1.9 percent of the vote.

Studies reveal that a basic characteristic of the *Republikaner* constituency is its low level of education. Among *Republikaner* sympathizers, 71 percent have completed only the minimum required schooling. At the time of the European election in 1989, the number of *Republikaner* supporters who had completed not more than first level education far exceeded those with higher or university degrees. A survey conducted by the Allensbach Institute between March and August, 1989 found 75 percent of *Republikaner* sympathizers to have completed not more than compulsory education (compared to 55 percent of the sample).[72] This was considerably higher than among CDU/CSU supporters and even higher than among supporters of the SPD. According to Veen, in 1989 those aged 18-24 with more years of schooling than the minimum required, constituted only 4 percent of the pool of potential *Republikaner* voters, compared with their 9 percent share of the overall population. On the other hand, individuals in the same age group who have completed only the minimum required schooling were over-represented in the pool of potential *Republikaner* voters (9 percent versus 5 percent for the entire population).[73]

The label male party is reflected in all *Republikaner* election results. The *Republikaner* have almost the same difficulties attracting women as winning voters under 40

[71] Betz, Radical Right-wing, 147.
[72] Veen,50.
[73] Veen, 50.

who have acquired more than the minimum required schooling in the last 20 years.[74] In the elections for the European Parliament in 1989, the *Republikaner* attracted almost as twice as many male voters as female voters (9.6 percent versus 4.9 percent).[75] Studies that break down *Republikaner* supporters by occupation consistently show that blue-collar workers are over-represented among *Republikaner* voters. The percentage of farmers and other self-employed voters in the potential *Republikaner* pool is also considerably higher than their percentage in the population at large. In the Berlin election of 1989 the party did well in working-class districts, especially in areas containing numerous low-cost housing projects.[76]

According to political analysts, young and first time voters have shown a strong leaning toward the *Republikaner*. In the 1992 election in Baden-Wurttemberg, for example, the *Republikaner* received 18.6 percent of the vote from voters younger than 25, which was 70 percent higher than their overall proportion of the vote (11 percent).[77] The *Allensbach* survey also found a higher percentage of party supporters from the working class for the *Republikaner* than for any other party. Support from skilled workers accounted for one third of the total of the *Republikaner* support, another fifth came from unemployed and semiskilled workers. According to an official analysis of Hamburg's Statistical Office, during the 1993 state election, both the *Republikaner* and DVU made their biggest gains in traditional working-class areas, characterized by lower than average levels of education,

[74] Veen, 33.
[75] Veen, 34.
[76] Braunthal, 100.
[77] Betz, Radical Right-wing , 146.

high unemployment and a lower than average standard of living.[78] In the state election of Baden-Wurttemberg, the *Republikaner* attracted 17 percent of unemployed voters.

The *Republikaner* have also been able to establish a firm and broad base of support inside sections of the state apparatus like the police and armed forces. According to the official Report of the European Parliament's Committee of Inquiry into Racism and Xenophobia in Europe, published in 1991, surveys suggest that support for the *Republikaner* among policemen is especially strong. Members of the police force, allegedly disappointed with the government's leniency towards former terrorists and their perceived indecision in matters of law and order figure strongly among *Republikaner* voters and members. Policemen have voted for a party that stands for law and order. They consider themselves scapegoats for governmental policies such as the building of nuclear power plants. This policy has sparked massive protest demonstrations and clashes with the police. Moreover, many of those policemen are originally from conservative rural areas but serve in large cities. In Bavaria, more than 50 percent of policemen declared their support for the *Republikaner* while in Hessen more than 60 percent of officers expressed similar loyalties. In addition, the *Republikaner* now have serious backing in the Federal Republic's armed forces with more than one thousand serving soldiers and officers in party membership.[79]

*Neo-Nazism*

The 1970s and 1980s were years in which the right-wing extremists drifted away from the established parties and joined clandestine radical groups. These organizations, the

[78] Betz, Radical Right-Wing, 165.

most militant of the extreme right are referred to as neo-Nazis. Originally formed by former National Socialists, the network of extra parliamentary right-wing extremism has become the political training ground for neo-Nazis, "the post-war newcomers to the right".[80] In the rise of neo-Nazism remnants of past ideologies and contemporary protest potential come together. Neo-Nazism demonstrates a rejection of the democratic consensus. Among the young and educated, neo-Nazism has become a small but volatile protest culture on the right. They make use of Nazi language, symbols, fragments of ideology such as anti-Semitism, xenophobia and a leadership cult. Neo-Nazis have tried to incorporate images of the past Nazi triumphs in order to give themselves a sense of credibility in modern post-war Germany. Leadership provides a sense of tradition, and an ideology that was designed to attract those who wanted to see Germany returned to its once prominent position of power in central Europe. During the late 1970s militant extremist organizations became more evident. The following groups began to come to the attention of the German legal system: *Aktionsgemeinschaft Nationaler Sozialisten*, led by Michael Kuhnen; *Deutsche Aktionsgruppe* led by Manfred Roeder, *Wehrsportgruppen Hoffman*, led by Karl-Heinz Hoffman, and the *Volkssozialistische Bewegung Deutschlands/Partei der Arbeit*, a group of 120 members that called for a youth front led by Friedhelm Busse.[81]

The key to the potential of these groups to develop a following revolved around the potential insecurities associated with domestic economics. As unemployment increased, neo-Nazis attempted to assume the role of fighters for better working conditions and job

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[79] Graeme Atkinson, "Germany: Nationalism, Nazism and Violence", Racist Violence in Europe, ed. Tore Bjorgo (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1993) 157.
[80] Eva Kolinsky, " Socio-economic Change and Political Culture in West Germany", Political Culture in France and Germany, ed. John Gaffney and Eva Kolinsky (London: Routledge, 1991) 59.

opportunities.[82] They used the traditional Nazi slogans in order to provide the reason for the German problems associated with recession. Some of the Germans who had been directly affected by the recession became interested in what the extremists were saying.

It is in the new states of the Federal Republic that neo-Nazism has spread the most. As a result of German unification, former eastern Germans experienced high unemployment and uncertainty about future job prospects during the transformation of a command economy into a free-market economy. This was accentuated by a lack of orientation and social dislocation among the population. Radicalization, then, came as a response to those uncertainties.[83] Neo-Nazism had always existed under the GDR. Groups of neo-Nazis were very active in recruiting among their activists former members of the Communist party. An explanation for the susceptibility of easterners to extreme-right tendencies has been found in some aspects of their former ideology. Under the Communist regime, East Germans were exonerated from their Nazi past. The government of the GDR considered the experience of National Socialism a result of capitalism and denied the responsibility of its citizens for the atrocities committed by the Nazis.[84]

Adherents of neo-Nazism tend to belong to social groups who have been hit especially hard by unemployment. Many are unskilled or semi-skilled. Those who completed apprenticeship tend to work as artisans in small businesses, a sector that has traditionally been close to the right. The dominant membership of neo-Nazi groups has been made up of younger, less educated people who tend to be labourers. Often these people are

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[81] Lewis, 99.
[82] Lewis, 85.
[83] Braunthal, 100.
[84] Gabriela Medellin, El Neonazismo en la Alemania Contemporanea, (Mexico: UIA, 1995) 68.

not equipped with the skills necessary to compete in the modern high technology industries that are prevalent in Germany. The inability to obtain suitable employment, and a sense of being displaced by foreigners, has pushed many of these young people to radicalism and into the more militant neo-Nazi organizations. They are susceptible to the emotional slogans and facile answers provided by the neo-Nazi leaders, who symbolize authority, support and stability.[85] On the extreme-right, with its emphasis on manhood and leadership, unemployment is experienced more directly as a defeat, and as a fundamental loss of status and personal dignity. In both circumstances, "radicalization follows disappointment".[86] Uncertainty has left a special mark on desperate, frustrated and less-educated young men who often come from broken homes. Many angry youth who had grown up in the communist era have viewed themselves in the post-unification period as second-class citizens in relation to the West Germans. As compensation, "they attempt to make life miserable for the defenseless foreigners".[87] Generally, there is a materialist base for neo-Nazism activism, in the sense of economic frustrations consequent upon the state of the economy. However, there are also personal experiences involved such as parental problems and difficulties of various sorts at school and work. Husbands argues that such circumstances influence the decision of young males to resort to "political soldiering and away from a conventional career path".[88] This has led in some cases to feelings of social exclusion, isolation and inferiority that, when combined with an authoritarian and nationalist disposition, produce an extreme-right susceptibility.

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[85] Lewis, 92.
[86] Kolinsky, " Socio-economic Change and Political Culture in West Germany", 60.
[87] Braunthal, 107.

*Violence*

One of the phenomena that has attracted the most attention to the rise of right-wing extremism in Germany has been hostility against foreigners. The appearance of neo-Nazi terrorism in Germany was sobering for much of the population. The previous clandestine activities of these radical groups were traditionally limited to outbursts of Nazi propaganda and attempts to use threats and bombast to place themselves in the public eye. However, the most militant groups in the 1980s used a far more radical and aggressive manner reminiscent of Hitler's SA brown-shirt paramilitary methods. Pro-Nazi activities such as youths painting swastikas, SS runes, Nazi slogans championing nationalism and racism and wearing uniform-like clothing (black leather, army belts, army and parachute boots) took place all over Germany. An especially militant and active extremist group that has crept into the youth societies of a number of Western nations is the *skinheads*. Originally organized in Great Britain, this subculture of extremely radical and violent young people became quite visible in the 1980s. The *skinhead* phenomenon was exported from Great Britain to the United States and continental Europe. The *skinheads* are not considered to be neo-Nazis by most specialists. What is apparent is that these often extremely violent youth are incorporated into neo-Nazi groups as "soldiers". Many are intrigued by the neo-Nazi militarism and the symbolism associated with the Nazi past. This leads to opportunities for

[88] Christopher Husbands, "Militant neo-Nazism in the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1980s." The Far Right in Western and Eastern Europe, ed. Luciano Cheles, Ronnie Ferguson and Michalina Vaughan (England: Longman, 1995) 331.

violence, justified by the need to protect meetings or to strike against minorities who are deemed available targets for the "soldiers".[89]

The primary targets for neo-Nazi terrorist activities over the past two decades have been foreigners. According to the Hamburg Ministry of Interior, as of the fall of 1986 the right-wing radicals were increasingly using violence against immigrants and asylum-seekers from third world countries.[90] Terrorist-related actions that were attributed to right-wing militants showed a steady increase from the mid-1970s through the 1980s. According to the Federal Ministry of the Interior, right-wing extremist crimes rose from 136 in 1974 to 2,475 in 1982.[91] During the next decade, there were at least twenty-five deaths attributed to neo-Nazi terrorist acts. These included the 1980 deaths of two Vietnamese students in a youth hostel in Hamburg which were blamed on members of the Manfred Roeder's neo-Nazi group *Deutsche Aktionsgruppen*. Neo-Nazi terrorists targeted Turkish immigrants into the mid-1980s. Neo-Nazi affiliated *skinheads* were involved in the brutal murder of a Turk by the name of Kaymakei. In July, 1985, these militant neo-Nazis who were constantly against foreigners, particularly the Turks, were looking for a victim. Kaymakei was a convenient target and was killed with little remorse. Later, the same group of skinheads killed another Turk and his friend in Hamburg.

The autumn of 1991 marked a victory for violence in German politics. In the Saxon town of Hoyerswerda, hundreds of local residents joined neo-Nazis in terrorizing and then forcing out 230 foreigners living there. What was in fact a pogrom was conducted for six days under the watchful gaze of police officers who did nothing to intervene while a Nazi-

[89] Lewis, 98.
[90] Lewis, 121.

led racist mob put its victims under siege by smashing their windows and beating them with baseball bats and bicycle chains in the streets.[92] Hoyerswerda "Germany's first foreigner-free city" was the flashpoint for an autumn of horrific violence where, during October, 1991 alone there were, according to the *Bundeskriminalamt* (Germany's main police agency), 904 acts of racist violence, including 167 fire-bomb attacks and 683 cases of criminal damage and other violent behaviour. Opinions conducted during the autumn of 1991 suggested some measure of public support for the avalanche of violence. Polls organized shortly after Hoyerswerda and published in *Der Spiegel* indicated that 21 percent of East Germans and 38 percent of West Germans "had sympathy for the aims of the right radicals".[93]

In the opinions of different analysts, these violent acts were all motivated by xenophobia. The victims were seen to deviate from some other norm. Schmidt asserts that these acts have a common denominator and a goal, "to drive away or eliminate anyone who is different or who appears to be different".[94] The xenophobic feelings on which the continuing violence is based have a wide resonance within the German population. Nowhere was this shown more frighteningly than in the Baltic city of Rostock at the end of August, 1992. There the storming and fire-bombing of a house for foreigners by Nazi-led hooligans was applauded by thousands of local residents. The police were passive and senior politicians openly expressed sympathy with the Fascist rioters. However, this sympathy with the rioters went far beyond Rostock. A poll carried out by the Infas Institute eight days after the Rostock pogrom followed the same pattern

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[91] Stoss, Politics Against Democracy, 166.
[92] Atkinson, 160.
[93] Atkinson, 161.

as polls taken after Hoyerswerda. A further Infas survey broadcast on television in September, 1992 showed that 26 percent considered the slogan "foreigners out" wholly or largely justified, that 35 percent agreed that "Germans should defend themselves in their own country against foreigners" and that 51 percent supported the slogan "Germany for the Germans".[95]

The increase in the number of asylum seekers and refugees has provided the impetus for particularly negative and hostile responses to foreigners in Germany over the last decade. However, these reactions are not simply a contemporary concern. Since the economic downturn of 1973 immigrants have been blamed for a plethora of problems. These include increasing unemployment levels, rising crime rates and welfare costs. The problem of immigration is an issue that has attracted attention due to the increasing number of immigrants and the violent explosions of xenophobia that are taking place in several European countries.

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[94] Thomas Schmidt, "Right-wing Radicalism in the Unified Germany", Resurgence of Right-wing Radicalism in Germany: New Forms of an Old Phenomenon, ed. Ulrich Wank (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1993) 75.

[95] Bruce Hoffman, "Right-wing Terrorism in Europe", Conflict 5.3 (1984) 190.

# Chapter IV
# The immigration problem

Although racism is not new in Europe, discussion of the immigration issue and hostility to foreigners during the past decade have increased concerns about the rising tide of racism that Europe is experiencing. In many respects, there is nothing new in the expression of hostility towards immigrants. From the earliest days of the post-war migration, immigrants have had to face anger and resentment from sectors of the indigenous population, particularly over competition for scarce resources in the spheres of social welfare and employment. However, what is new about today's expression of racism and xenophobia is that anti-immigrant campaigns tend to be legitimized by presenting immigrants as a threat to the integrity of the nation. In this sense, the problem of immigration is viewed not only as an economic problem, but also as an identity problem.

The increase in the inflows of immigrants that have entered Western European countries during the past decades has taken crisis proportions in terms of both the number of immigrants and their impact on the politics and societies of the receiving countries. It has been difficult for the people and governments of Western Europe to deal with the social and cultural realities of immigration in part because of the strong sense of ethnic and national identity in states such as France and Germany. The identity problem associated with immigration is partially explained by the new wave of immigration that is affecting Western Europe. Whereas in the past most of the immigration was intra-European, the new trend in European immigration includes people from non-European countries, mainly North African or Arab nations. The influx of millions of non-white immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers

and migrant workers into West European societies has profoundly altered the social and cultural basis of these societies.

Inter-European migrations were under way before 1940. They were stimulated both by political and economical factors. Industrialized nations drew workers in from neighboring countries, Italians to France and central Europeans to Germany. This process gathered momentum in the 1950s and reached a peak in the 1960s when the buoyancy of the economies of the major industrial countries of Northern Europe led to labor shortages.[96] Governments recruited around ten million immigrant workers, the European labour market became internationalized, and during this period, the countries in the North started to recruit workers from former colonies and from the Mediterranean periphery. The migration boom lasted until 1974. It was brought to an end by the general recession, which had serious effects on many European economies. After the oil crisis of late 1973, the industrial economies of Western Europe were subject to varying degrees of decline with increasing levels of unemployment everywhere.[97] The need for immigrants ceased. Measures to block further primary migration led to stabilization and even a decrease in the number of foreign workers but failed to reduce the overall size of the resident foreign population. Instead, the measures changed the nature of mass migrations. The migration of family members replaced the migration of single workers and migration increased from non-European countries.

[96] Russell King, "European International Migration 1945-90: a Statistical and Geographical Overview", Mass Migration in Europe. The Legacy and the Future, ed. Russell King (London: Behalven Press, 1993) 20.
[97] King, 23.

Today in Europe, Germany is the principal recipient of immigration with inflows of about 1,200,000 foreigners in 1992 and nearly 990,000 in 1993 (excluding ethnic Germans). Following Germany is France with about 100,000 new immigrants per year (table 4.1).

***Table 4.1 Foreign or immigrant population in selected European countries by thousands and as a percentage of total population***

| | *1983* | | *1993* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ***Thousands*** | ***%*** | ***Thousands*** | ***%*** |
| ***France*** | ***3,714*** | ***6.8*** | ***3,597*** | ***6.3*** |
| ***Germany1*** | ***4,535*** | ***7.4*** | ***6,878*** | ***8.5*** |
| *Belgium* | 891 | 9.0 | 921 | 9.1 |
| *Italy* | 381 | 0.7 | 987 | 1.7 |
| *Luxembourg* | 96 | 26.3 | 125 | 31.1 |
| *Sweden* | 397 | 4.8 | 508 | 5.8 |
| *Switzerland* | 926 | 14.4 | 1,260 | 18.1 |
| *United Kingdom* | 1,601 | 2.8 | 2,001 | 3.5 |

*Source: Trends in International Migration. Annual Report 1994. OECD.*

1 Data for 1993 cover Germany and for 1983 Western Germans only.

*Immigration in France*

France has an extensive colonial past and immigration has occurred in many cases because of the historical ties resulting from this situation. A distinctive feature of French immigration policy derives from the fact that France allowed unrestricted entry for many immigrants from former colonies and it also promoted entry from the Mediterranean region. Racial or ethnic background mattered less than being francophone, that is *culturally* French. A central characteristic of French colonial rule was the imposition of French culture and

language on the colonized areas.[98] French overseas territories were administratively part of France, with all that it implies in terms of social, economic and political rights. In the past France could identify itself as a universalist nation. As a colonial power, its aims included bringing to colonized people progress, science, education and reason. The idea was that France was the only nation that could really do so. Even decolonization, under General de Gaulle, was characterized by the idea that as a universalist nation, France had to play a leading role in self-determination of other nations.[99]

The immigration policy of the post-war era reflected the ideal of the French Republic as an asylum for refugees and a country receptive to immigrants from all nations. The French tradition of human rights has welcomed and integrated waves of immigrants. Universalism claims that people are the same everywhere. This view was also influenced by the continued low birthrate and shortage of labour power. By the end of the Second World War, there was a unanimous agreement in industry and government that France needed immigrants in order to provide the labour needed to revitalize the French economy.[100] Some experts estimated that an additional 5.3 million inhabitants were required to compensate for the decline in population resulting from the losses of the First World War, high mortality, and continuing low natality. In 1947 Algerians were granted French citizenship. They immigrated to France and became permanent residents. During the war of independence in Algeria, the number of Algerians arriving in France continued to increase with 70,000

[98] Anthony Fielding, "Migrations, Institutions and Politics: the Evolution of European Migration Policies", Mass Migration in Europe. The Legacy and the Future, ed. Rusell King (London: Behalven Press) 47.
[99] Michel Wieviorka, "Tendencies to Racism in Europe: does France Represent a Unique Case, or is it a Representative Trend?", Racism and Migration in Western Europe, ed. John Solomos and John Wrench (Oxford: Berg) 60.
[100] Simmons, 150.

arriving each week during October 1962.[101] Some of them were colonists of European origin who were unwilling to remain under the new regime and returned to metropolitan France. Others were more like exiles or refugees than repatriated Frenchmen. These so called *harkis* and *moghaznis* were men and women of Muslim origin who had worked for or assisted the French army and civilian bureaucracy. The new National Liberation Front government considered such people to be collaborators with the colonial power and threatened them with death or prison. Those who were able to leave Algeria were granted French nationality. Despite their service to France, they did not always find a warm welcome.[102]

In the 1950s, immigration was viewed as an important asset, especially since most newcomers were from culturally compatible neighbouring countries such as Italy and Spain. As the French economy boomed in the 1960s, authorities rapidly lost control of immigration. Instead of recruiting more labour from culturally compatible countries, the newly independent states of North Africa (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia) became the principal suppliers of foreign labour.[103] By the mid-1960s, however, Algerians were becoming the most numerous immigrant group. Because of their special post-colonial status, they had virtual freedom of movement into and out of the country. The result was the creation of a large undocumented foreign population in France.

By the early 1970s, French immigration policy was influenced by growing anti-immigrant sentiments. The rapid increase in Algerian immigration convinced the Pompidou

[101] Simmons, 152.
[102] Francoise Gaspard, A Small City in France, (London: Harvard University Press, 1995) 38.

government that something had to be done to regain control of immigration. The deep recession of 1973 which brought an end to the post-war boom confirmed this judgement. Authorities feared the economic and social consequences of the large number of Algerians who wished to enter France, especially after continued incidents of extreme-right violence against immigrants. French and Algerian authorities negotiated agreements giving Algeria more control over potential emigrants and France more control over Algerian immigrants in France. At the same time that France tried to reduce the large number of Algerians entering France, they favoured immigration from other countries in North Africa and from Yugoslavia and Portugal. The new government under Valéry Giscard d'Estaing took dramatic steps to stop the immigration flow; authorities called an official halt to further immigration on any meaningful scale by relying on administrative measures to try to stop immigration, repatriate immigrants and deny rights of family reunification. However, even though the National Immigration Office had a monopoly over recruitment, immigration escaped governmental control. Immigrants arrived spontaneously and in direct response to the needs of private capital. During this decade there was a high increase in the number of illegal immigrants who entered the country; the issue of immigration became politicized as a consequence.[104]

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[103] James Hollifield, "Immigration and Integration in Western Europe: a Comparative Analysis", Immigration into Western Societies: Problems and Policies, ed. Emek M. Ucarer and Donald J. Puchala (London: Pinter, 1997) 37.

[104] Philip Ogden, "The Legacy of Migration: Some Evidence from France". Mass migration in Europe. The Legacy and the Future, ed. Russell King (London: Belhaven Press, 1993) 109.

*Immigration in Germany*

Since 1890 Germany has had a history of immigrants and foreign workers. In the early nineteen century the principality of Mecklenburg, for example, could maintain itself only by importing Poles and Swedes. After 1890 a system of contracts between Germany and Italy which did not cease until the late 1930s provided for the importation of Italians. Poles with German citizenship were brought to Germany throughout the industrial revolution and afterwards, Germany imported seven million foreign workers during the Second World War. In the early post-war period, the economic boom forged a consensus among business and labor groups to opt for a policy of importing labour, rather than taking industry, capital and jobs offshore in search of lower labour costs. This was the largest guestworker program in Western Europe, which would eventually bring millions of young Turks, Yugoslavs and Greeks to work in German industry. The unlimited supply of ethnic German refugees and displaced persons from Eastern and Central Europe, including refugees from the GDR, suddenly ended with the construction of the Berlin Wall. The use of foreign labour from the Mediterranean countries began in earnest. Intergovernmental agreements were negotiated with Greece, Spain, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia and Yugoslavia. These agreements strictly controlled the circumstances under which temporary workers were recruited to meet the labour needs of major German manufacturers employers.

In 1973 the federal government decreed a halt to recruitment. The oil crisis had ended the era of rapid economic growth and full employment. Since then, mass unemployment has not been below the million mark.[105] The government introduced a repatriation policy intended to reduce unemployment. Guestworkers were to return to their

county of origin. The opposite happened because guestworkers made use of the right to bring their families into the country and immigration continued to develop, initially in the form of family reunion and later through refugee entries. During the early 1970s Germany was the country that received the largest number of guestworkers with 2.6 million in 1973.[106] By 1975 the efforts of the German government to reduce the number of immigrants entering the country were rewarded when during this year the FRG accepted only 366,000 immigrants and refused the entry of another 655,000.[107]

Since the end of the 1970s and until 1987, immigration of resettlees and asylum seekers grew with about 50,000 resettlees and 30,000 to 100,000 refugees arriving per year. After 1987, there was a dramatic increase in immigration of ethnic Germans and asylum seekers, up to more that 600,000 in 1992. [108]

*German immigrants*

Despite the large number of immigrants residing in Germany, the German government refuses to acknowledge Germany as a country of immigrants. Because of this refusal, newcomers are not called immigrants. Instead, they are referred to simply as Auslaender (foreigners), even when they have been in Germany for decades and are formally citizens.

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[105] Kolinsky, "A Future for Right-Wing Extremism in Germany?", 85.
[106] Fielding, 43.
[107] King, 29.

*Ethnic Germans*

Although in Germany there is no official recognition of the terms immigrant and immigration, there are different types of regulations regarding the status of foreigners in German territory. One is the policy of *Volkdeutsche* which applies to non-territorial ethnic Germans who were residents before May 1945. According to article 116 of the Basic Law, ethnic Germans living outside the country are allowed to return and settle in the Federal Republic and claim their nationality. Thanks to this article, it has been relatively easy for an inhabitant of an East European country with a parent or grandparent designated as ethnic German to immigrate to Germany. According to the Basic Law, a German citizen is either a person who *de jure* holds German citizenship, a spouse or descendant of persons who were settled in the German Reich in December 1937, as well as refugees or deportees with German ethnicity. The concept of German nationality, contrary to that of France, relies on *jus sanguinis*. Following this principle, the nationality of the parents devolves upon their children. *Jus sanguinis* is more restrictive because generations of people born in Germany cannot become Germans because their parents did not hold German nationality.

Kemper asserts that during 1989 there was a net migration of 48,000 Turks, 15,000 Greeks and 118,000 Poles who were acknowledged as ethnic Germans. [109] However, despite their right to claim German nationality, returnees have not been recognized as German nationals by most of the native population. According to Betz, in 1991 only 13 percent of the German population was willing to accept all *aussielder* and 43 percent thought their

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[108] Richard Munch, "German Nation and German Identity", Germany in Europe in the Nineties, ed. Bertel Heurlin (Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1996) 25.
[109] Franz-Josef Kemper, "New Trends in Mass Migration in Germany". Mass Migration in Europe. The Legacy and the Future, ed. Russell King (London: Behalven Press, 1993) 265.

numbers should be drastically reduced.[110] As a consequence, the Kohl government has tried to ensure preferential treatment to German nationals in the countries where they now live in the hope of persuading them to stay there. However, because of the divisive effects of such a policy and turmoil in Eastern Europe, resettlers have continued to arrive. In 1990 new regulations were passed compelling resettlers to demonstrate their German origins before being allowed entry into the Federal Republic.

*Gastarbeiter*

While ethnic Germans have immigration rights and an automatic entitlement to full citizenship, non-German immigrants and their descendants still have only limited access to citizenship. The *Gastarbeiter* (guestworkers) recruitment policy applies to those people who were brought to Germany from recruitment countries and who (despite having established themselves in German society), have no rights or membership in this society.[111] The largest group of guestworkers is composed of Turks (most of them Muslims). According to Askenaski by 1990 there were a total of 4,600,000 foreigners living in Germany, 1,600,000 of whom were Turks.[112] The number of Turks in Germany has remained fairly stable since 1980 with internal growth and a relative high birth rate. Other groups of guest workers include African and Asian people.

Rotation was a basic principle of the guest worker migration system. Migrants were encouraged to come and work in Germany as long as their labour was needed in the factories and on building sites, although only on the basis of short-term contracts. At the

[110] Betz, Radical Right-Wing , 103.
[111] Czarina Wilpert, "Ideological and Institutional Foundations of Racism in the Federal Republic of Germany", Racism and Migration in Western Europe, ed. John Solomos and John Wrench (Oxford: Berg, 1993) 71.

termination of the contract or after a first or second renewal, the guestworkers were to return to their countries to be replaced by new primary migrants. The employers believed that the foreign workers would only stay for a limited time in Germany, long enough to save sufficient money which would allow them an independent existence in their home countries to which they were expected to return. However, when the end of the economic boom came in the early 1970s, facing the risk of not being able to return to Germany, the majority of the guestworkers decided to stay on.[113]

In 1983 a policy of selected repatriation was instituted, which aimed to reduce the number of foreigners by offering them financial incentives if they were prepared to return home. This policy, however, achieved little because it did not offer a real solution to the problem of unemployment in the host country. The official argument to justify the measure was that the home countries would benefit from the qualifications the returning migrants had obtained while working in Germany. However, because of the poor working and living conditions in their home countries and the policy of family reunion introduced by the German authorities, the return did not take place.[114]

Most of the foreign workers were employed either in expanding industries such as the automobile or the metal-processing factories, or in unattractive trades such as steel mills. In both cases, a low level of qualification was required. Workers were housed in hostels. Physical separation from the host population reflected their economic and political status within the country. They had minimal rights, could not vote, and could be deported.

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[112] Abraham Ashkenasi, 'The Turkish Minority in Germany and Berlin", Immigrants and Minorities. (9.3, 1990) 304.
[113] Fielding, 45.

However, despite the short-term nature of the contracts and the low social and civil status attached to them, a large number of guestworkers settled down in their host country.

*Refugees*

The last regulation regarding citizens of other countries wanting to settle in Germany is the asylum law, which refers to refugees. Because of its past, for a long time Germany had the most liberal asylum policy in Western Europe.[115] In an effort to expunge the memory of the concentration camps and to rehabilitate Germany's reputation in the international community, the German Constitution guaranteed that virtually all foreigners persecuted on political grounds could claim the right to asylum. Anyone applying for asylum could require the state to take care of him while his claim was being processed. Procedures would take about one year to complete, applicants would appeal and cases would take as long as four years until asylum was granted or an expulsion ordered.[116]

During the past ten years, all of West Europe has witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of political refugees. Within Europe, Germany is the country that has attracted the largest population of refugees. According to Fekete, during 1993 there were in Germany 332,000 asylum seekers, the largest groups coming from Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and the former Yugoslavia. West Germany experienced consecutive waves of East German refugees in the 1950s, Turks in the early 1970s and again in the 1980s and 1990s ethnic Germans from the former GDR or other parts of Eastern Europe.[117]

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[114] Ursula Muller-ter Blotevogel and Gerald Wood, "From Itinerant Worker to Migrant? The Geography of Guest-Workers in Germany', Mass Migration in Europe. The Legacy and the Future, ed. Russell King (London: Belhaven Press, 1993) 88.
[115] Betz, Radical Right-Wing, 76.
[116] Anthony Messina, "The Not so Silent Revolution. Post-war Migration to Western Europe," World Politics (49:1996) 143.
[117] Lliz Fekete and Frances Webber, Inside Racist Europe, (London: Institute of Race Relations, 1994) 25.

Due to the increasing number of asylum-seekers and the difficult economic situation that native Germans were experiencing, the established political parties decided to toughen Germany's generous asylum law. In 1992 a new legislation restricted access for asylum-seekers and other immigrants curtailing their rights of appeal and facilitating expulsion. At the same time, Germany reached agreements with some East European countries in which these countries agreed to take back nationals who had fled to Germany to escape persecution. According to the new regulation, the right to asylum was refused to all those coming through or from Europe. Those coming from any other country deemed *safe* must provide compelling evidence of persecution. The list of safe countries includes Romania, Bulgaria, Ghana and Pakistan.[118]

*Racism and Xenophobia*

There is a little doubt that the number of incidents involving Germans and immigrant or refugee populations has increased; however, this may or may not reflect racism as typically defined. Xenophobia, rather than racism, is a more useful term to explain hostility towards foreigners or groups that are different. Although the term xenophobia is used as a synonym for racism, it should not be equated with the racism that characterized Nazism or white supremacists. This conception has been especially complicated in Germany where the term racism carries the weight and stigma of the past. Race as a legitimate basis for scientific categorization and hierarchisation of people has been discredited, and with it the concept of racism.

[118] Similar policies were implemented by other Western countries during this time.

Racism takes a new form in the present political environment where there is a widespread confusion about national identity and the role of cultural, religious and linguistic differences.[119] The racism of recent times has stigmatized non-European ethnic minorities that are perceived as simple rivals in the struggle for scarce resources. This racism is about prosperity, and prosperity is white, Western, European. The asylum seeker, refugee or immigrant is invariably non-white, or if white, poor and unsettled.[120] For Betz, "Racism is the belief that history represents a struggle between races rather than classes or nations. Racism is the belief in the superiority of one's own racial or ethnic group. In its extreme form racism call for the annihilation of other racial or ethnic groups. In less extreme form, *it denies other racial or ethnic groups equal rights and opportunities regardless of their willingness to assimilate and to acculturate*. By contrast, xenophobia derives from mixobia: the foreigner is detestable only in that he is postulated as being inassimilable without provoking a destruction of community identity. This tends to provoke defence mechanisms which range from avoidance of those considered as others, their exclusion and/or segregation in ghettos to verbal and physical attacks on them and their property." [121]

Much to the annoyance of some native citizens, West European societies have become increasingly multiethnic, multiracial and multicultural. Results of Western European surveys on foreigners reflect a growing concern about the visibility of non-European cultures. The notion of a multicultural society finds support only among a

[119] John Solomos and John Wrench, "Race and Racism in Contemporary Europe." Race and Migration in Western Europe, ed. John Solomos and John Wrench (Oxford: Berg, 1993) 7.
[120] Liz Fekete and Frances Webber. Inside Racist Europe. (London: Institute of Race Relations, 1994) v.
[121] Betz, Radical right-Wing, 173.

minority.[122] In 1992 only 23 percent of the German population were in favour of multiculturalism while 49 percent did not even know what it meant. In France in 1993, 83 percent of the population agreed that foreigners had to integrate themselves into French society and abandon their customs contrary to French culture.[123]

Extreme-right parties consider multiculturalism as a major threat to Western civilization; their ideological core is built around the confrontation between national identity and multiculturalism. Both the FN and the *Republikaner* promote themselves as the defenders of national interest and identity. Extreme right-wingers justify their attacks on foreigners less because of the colour of their skin than because their cultures are held to threaten national identity.[124] The FN as well as the *Republikaner* have intensified their campaigns for the protection of the interest of the native population against new demands that are bound to arise from those lobbying in favour of immigrants and refugees. Identity has become a central issue in France and Germany. According to Claude Lévi-Strauss, identity is "like a focal point to which we inevitably must refer in order to explain certain things, though it never has a real existence".[125] In response to multiculturalism, extreme-right parties promote racism and do not seek to give a place to immigrants, but to rid the country of those people who belong to different cultures and cannot be integrated.

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[122] Multiculturalism implies the guarantee of the cultural and linguistic rights of a minority. These include not only the right to individual and collective expression, but also the provision of necessary services. A multicultural policy also includes a range of measures to counter discrimination to ensure equal opportunities in all areas, and above all, to combat racism. In other words, the notion of a multicultural society includes not only respect and support for foreign cultures, but also respect for life styles and personal preferences that differ from those of the majority of the population.

[123] Betz, Radical Right-Wing , 95.

[124] Alec Hargreaves, Immigration, Race and Ethnicity in Contemporary France, (NY: Routledge, 1995) 27.

[125] Gaspard, 93.

The Eurobarometer opinion polls carried out for the European Community (EC) reveal the popular reaction to the presence of non-EC nationals.[126] The November 1989 special report of the Eurobarometer on Racism and Xenophobia indicated that half of the Europeans interviewed thought that there were too many non-EC immigrants in their particular country. The impression of an excessive presence of foreigners was particularly strong in France and Germany: 56 percent of French respondents expressed this feeling as did 55 percent of Germans surveyed. The restrictive attitude towards workers from outside the EC was directed mainly towards people originating from the Mediterranean region especially in France, where the debate on immigration is strongly related to the problem of national identity.

Figure 4.2 shows that the share of foreigners from non-European countries has increased and certain nationalities have either appeared or gained in importance compared to others that have been present in the region for a longer period. The kind of foreigners present in Europe from the Mediterranean basin (the Maghreb, Turkey, former Yugoslavia) has changed. France has remained the principal host country for North Africans and Algerian immigration is concentrated almost entirely there.[127] Germany, on the other hand, remains the country where the greatest number of immigrants from the former Yugoslavia is to be found; Germany also has the largest population of Turks in Western Europe.

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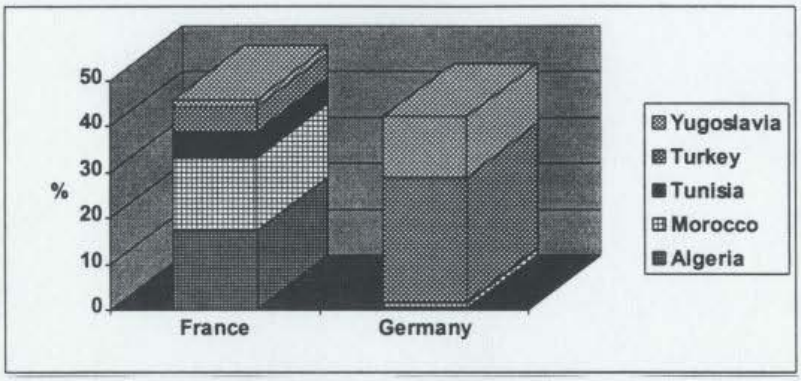
[126] Commission of the European Communities, Eurobarometer. Racism and Xenophobia (Brussels: CEC, 1989).

[127] France has received back a large number of *rapatries* from its former North African colonies and protectorates, especially Algeria. Due to the war of liberation and to the fact that the country had been a settlement colony produced more repatriates than did most other situations of colonial liberation.

***Figure 4.2 Maghrebian, Turkish and former Yugoslav residents in France and Germany as a percentage of the total of foreign population, 1993.***




*Source: Trends in International Migration. Annual Report 1994, OECD.*

During the recent past, Germany has been receiving the majority of immigrants from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, both because of geographical proximity and because of the German origin of certain citizens of eastern European countries who are considered German citizens by right (*Aussiedler*). Although hostile attitudes towards immigrants in Germany include not only non-Europeans but also East Europeans, results from the 1989 Eurobarometer show that most of the problem of immigration is associated with the presence of immigrants from non-European countries.

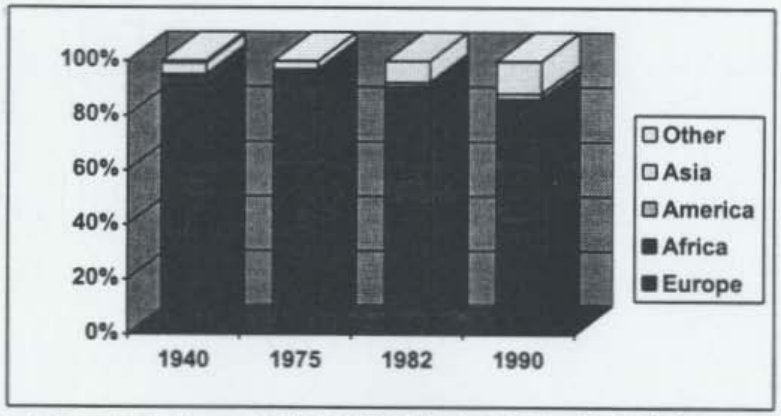
According to the Eurobarometer, opinions about immigrants or the *others* relate to individuals from another race, religion, culture and nationality.[128] When asked about people from other races, 63 percent of Germans associated this concept with black people and 39 percent of French related it to Arabs. Islam was the religion most mentioned when they were asked about people of another religion (73 percent of Germans and 52 percent of French). When asked about people from another culture 24 percent of Germans answered Turks, while in France 15 percent mentioned North Africans and other 15 percent indicated

[128] Commission, 35.

Muslims. For 63 percent of Germans, Turks came to mind as people from another nationality, whereas for 55 percent of French, those were North Africans. These data support the fact that although there are immigrants from different nationalities, cultures, religions and races, Muslims or North Africans are the stereotype of immigrants.

Although in the past intra-European migration supplied most of the immigrants to countries such as France and Germany, the new trend in European migration includes people from non-European countries, mainly North African or Arab nations.

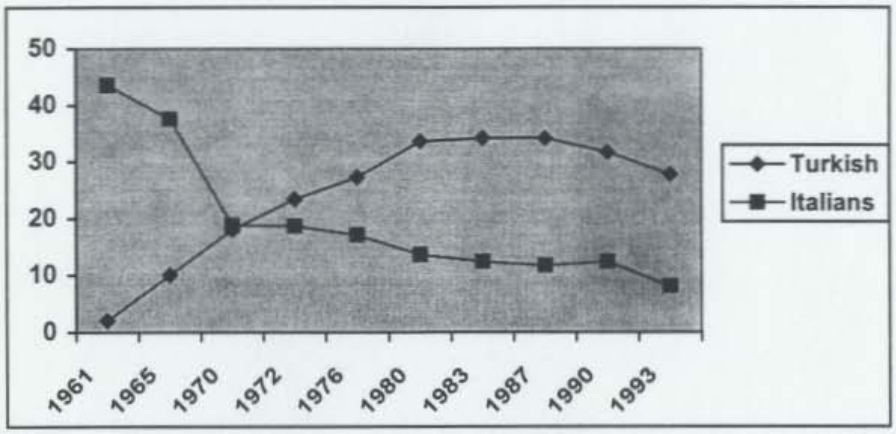
***Figure 4.3 Distribution of immigrants in France by continent***




*Source: Annuair e Statistique de la France 1997 INSEE (L'Institut Nationale de la Statistique et des Études Economiques).*

Figure 4.3 shows a substantial decrease in the number of European migrants entering France during the past five decades. European migrants have been replaced by North African migrants, especially Muslim people, which exacerbates the feeling among some members of the native population that North Africans represent a threat to their national identity because they are culturally different.

***Figure 4.4 Comparison of Turkish and Italian immigrants in Germany as a percentage of the foreign population***




*Source: Compilation of the Federal Statistical Office (Statistisches Bundesamt) and Trends in International migration by OECD 1994*

Table 4.4 shows a significant change in the composition of the foreign population of Germany. During the early 1960s the Turkish community was one of the smallest groups of foreigners residing in the country; Italians, on the other hand, were the largest group of immigrants entering the country. However, the 1970s inverted this trend. Today, Turks form the largest group of foreigners residing in Germany and the proportion of Italians has declined.

*Identity and the problem of immigration*

The problem of immigration is strongly related to a crisis of national identity that seems to be taking place in many Western European societies. Cultural difference has been a strong element in the way Western Europeans feel about the issue of immigration. In France, for instance, the *Front National* links arguments about the social costs of immigration to an ideology of *différence*, namely that immigrants from North and Black Africa, most of whom are Muslims, cannot and will not assimilate into French culture and

that their culture poses a "mortal threat to the preservation of French culture and traditions".[129] In the *Fifty measures on immigration* outlined by Bruno Mégret in 1991, the FN proposed to substitute the principle of *jus sanguinis* or race for *jus solis* or residence as the basis for French citizenship.[130] Mégret claimed that these measures could be seen as part of the ecological movement since they were aimed at preserving the French species. According to these measures, there would also be quotas imposed on the number of immigrants in classes, ethnic ghettos would be dismantled, the construction of mosques would be suspended and the opening of schools and Islamic centers would be regulated.

During the past several years, the various perceptions about immigrants and refugees have come together in the image of the Muslims. The Islamic presence is a factor that has induced uncertainty across most of the political spectrum about French identity. In the 1980s the FN began to focus on religion as the defining characteristic of the North African community and as the single most important reason why North Africans could never assimilate into French society. Le Pen began to warn of the military risk posed to France by the foreign population. Muslims threatened to condemn the French to become a minority in their own country; therefore, he asserted that "as long as we are alive, France will never be an Islamic Republic".[131] The feelings of many French people are rooted in antipathy towards specific values and practices associated with minorities, especially Islam. However, it is among Lepenistes that an antipathy towards ethnic minorities reaches its highest level.

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[129] Simmons, 160.

[130] French citizenship is based on the principle of *jus solis*, which means that being born on French soil carried with it the acquisition of French nationality. This contrasts with the law of *jus sanguinis*, which applies in Germany and where rights are given only to those born of parents who are German nationals. *Jus solis* facilitates naturalization because birth on French soil is sufficient to confer citizenship. As in many other countries, in France, the possession or acquisition of nationality is the key determinant in many political and civil rights. Kemper, 259.

Because of the resentment linked to decolonization in North Africa and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in these countries, Arabs are more often perceived as a threat to national identity than Jews, black Africans or Asians. Not only are FN sympathizers inclined to reject minority groups, whatever the colour of their skin, their religion or the country they come from, but they "do it quite openly with more than three out of four describing themselves as rather or a little racist".[132]

Uncertainty about the Muslim presence can be shown in the *Headscarves affair*, which erupted in 1989. In October 1989 three girls of North African origin, all of whom were pupils at a secondary school in Créteil in the suburbs of Paris, claimed their right to keep their heads covered in the classroom in conformity with the requirements of Islam. Since French law prohibits all forms of religious propaganda in state schools, the headmaster, who considered the action of the Muslim girls to be provocative, asked the girls to cease wearing the scarves in the classroom. Failing to do so would result in suspension from school. Insisting on wearing the scarves, the three girls were suspended from school for a few days and were allowed to go back subsequently without the scarf. Soon after, the girls returned wearing the headscarf and for a few weeks they were asked to stay in the library during class hours.

The FN used the incident for political propaganda arguing that the incident demonstrated a form of religious and cultural colonization of France that threatened its very identity with extinction. Since immigration was the root cause of these problems, the FN argued, most immigrants should be sent back from where they came. At the heart of this

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[131] Simmons, 98.

issue was the position that French society was prepared to accord to immigrants, particularly those of North African origin.

Incidents like this symbolize the difficulties regarding the proper recognition of the position and role of the Islamic community in France and the fear of the foreigner, deeply rooted in French society. According to Husbands, there have been numerous studies documenting the racist bias and prejudice in the manner in which the media have reported certain stories which featured immigrants or foreigners. [133] Much of this research has revealed a general xenophobia against immigrant workers. An important technique of sensitization by the mass media is reporting aspects of Islamic life-style in a manner that reflects negatively upon it. There has been a clear exaggeration in the images of these populations, in the description of their communities, in the threat of fundamentalism or Islamic terrorism.

The headscarves affair served to catalyze French opinion on the issue of immigrants in France, particularly those of North Africa. French opinion was already hostile to immigrants. A poll taken by SOFRES for *Le Nouvel Observateur* in November 1992 found that 68 percent of French people favoured the prohibition of the entry of new immigrants into France and 25 percent said they would like most immigrants to go back home. 74 percent were opposed to granting the right to vote in local elections to immigrants who have been living in France and 64 percent thought that the children of immigrants should adopt

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[132] Nonna Mayer & Pascal Perrineau, "Why do They Vote for Le Pen?" European Journal of Political Research (22:1992), 101.

[133] Christopher Husbands, "They Must Obey our Laws and Customs!: Political Debate about Muslim Assimilability in Great Britain, France and the Netherlands". Racism, Ethnicity and Politics in Contemporary Europe, ed. Alec Hargreaves and Jeremy Leaman, (England: Hartnolls Ltd, Nodmin, Cornwall, 1995) 123.

the customs and values of French society.[134] At the time of the headscarves affair, a poll taken by IPSOS found that 50 percent of French people were afraid of Islam.

*The economy and the problem of immigration*

The problem of immigration in Germany can be studied from a different perspective. Although arguments about the threat to national identity have emerged in the discourse of extreme-right parties, the problem of immigration in Germany is better explained in economic terms. As a result of the liberalization program in the Soviet Union and the eruption of domestic turmoil in Eastern Europe, Germany was confronted with a growing number of ethnic Germans seeking repatriation from the former East bloc and mainly East Germany. Due to the high costs of unification, Germans temporarily experienced a reduction in their standards of living, increased inflation and social instability. In the former GDR unemployment and a massive economical restructuring confronted a population used to state-allocated work, planning and an institutionalized grid of opportunities and social roles.

Part of the resentment against foreigners is reflected in the view that immigrants contribute to unemployment; in Germany, fear of losing one's job to cheaper foreign workers is one of the most common perceptions associated with immigration among marginalized people. Although a significant number of Europeans not only recognize the contribution that foreign workers have made to their economies, but also that foreign workers perform many jobs that unemployed natives refuse to accept, many still see them as

[134] Brechon, 75.

taking away scarce jobs from the native unemployed.[135] Different studies indicate that foreign labour is generally most threatened by redundancy. Guest workers are most likely to be among the first to be negatively affected by the rationalization and modernization of the economy. According to Betz, immigrants contribute to unemployment, but less by taking away jobs from natives than by adding to the overall rate of unemployment.[136]

There are also some feelings that foreigners exploit the economic and social system at the expense of the native people. Migrants are accused of becoming rich because of public welfare. In Germany, foreigners are accused of taking advantage of the democratic *Reichstaat* and exploiting the social system. The same situation occurs in France, where there is a perception among certain sectors of the population that immigrants are much more clever at getting welfare and perverting the system which according to them "has not been created for unemployed people with three wives and ten children".[137]

The increase in the number of immigrants from non-European countries has aggravated the way some Western Europeans feel about the issue of immigration. Among some sectors of the population they are perceived not only as a threat to their national identity but also as competitors for employment and services. Xenophobia and the problems associated with immigration are important elements in understanding the rise and appeal of the extreme right.

[135] Betz, Radical Right-Wing, 86.
[136] Betz, Radical Right-Wing, 88.
[137] Wievorka, 57.

# Chapter V
# Conclusions

Although we have not been able to provide additional data directly linking immigration and support for the extreme right, there is considerable evidence connecting immigration with the success of the extreme right. The literature includes useful poll and survey data that permits us to establish a relationship between the rise of the extreme right and the problem of immigration. However, this relationship is complex. Immigration itself cannot be the sole causal factor influencing the vote for the extreme right. Considering this is equivalent to arguing that a level of general xenophobia exists among Western Europeans. Although xenophobia is one of the elements explaining the rise of the extreme right, it is not simply xenophobia that seems to attract voters to parties of the extreme right. The cultural and economic problems associated with immigration also explain the rise of the extreme right. When immigration is linked with problems such as multiculturalism or the economy, prospects for significant extreme right electoral support remain strong.

## *Success of the extreme right*

Although parties of the extreme right are far from holding power, they have gained electoral support and have succeeded at exploiting the issue of immigration and at influencing mainstream politics. Immigration is an issue that has become increasingly important in Western democracies, especially in France and Germany, which are among the main recipients of immigrants in Western Europe. The increasing number of

immigrants entering Western Europe and their diverse origin has raised question about the compatibility of these immigrants with the native population and has sometimes resulted in violence. Immigration is an issue that appeals to a substantial portion of the population, providing parties of the extreme right with their best political opportunity in decades. The extreme right uses this issue as the main element in their programs. By exploiting immigration they appeal to the fears of the most alienated sectors of the population. Although their diversity makes it difficult to establish a profile of extreme right voters, we can assert that those at the bottom of the economic ladder are more receptive to the discourse of the extreme right. However, what distinguishes such voters from the rest of the electorate is the importance they give to issues such as immigration.

The extreme right has also been successful at influencing mainstream politics. During the last decade established parties and politicians have modified their appeals in order to attract voters from the extreme right. Because parties of the extreme right have gained support using immigration, established parties, from both the right and the left have struggled to show supporters that they are tough on immigration. In several instances, it has been the extreme right which has set the tone of the debate on the issue of immigration. As an example, both the socialist government of Mitterrand and the conservative government of Jacques Chirac have made attempts to toughen laws on immigration. In Germany, as a response to the increasing wave of violence against foreigners, the Kohl government toughened the asylum law and has negotiated agreements with neighbouring countries to stop the flow of the immigrants intending to enter Germany.

*The extreme right and the issue of immigration*

Although most parties of the extreme right are parties whose policies cover a wide range of issues, immigration and national identity are dominant themes. The issue of immigration represents not only a phenomenon present in different European democracies, but also something very much linked to the way European society is now developing. Large majorities of the French and German populations, believe that there are too many foreigners residing in their countries and that immigration has become one of the most important problems facing their societies.[138] Intolerance towards persons or groups persons with different racial, religious, cultural, social or national backgrounds is evident. For certain sectors of the native population, immigrants have become the scapegoats for most of the Western democracies' problems. Immigration has been linked to unemployment, urban crime, delinquency and most of society's ills. In France, for instance, the immigrant has been "resurrected as the traditional scapegoat for all of France's ills".[139] Immigration has become for many a symbol for a complex pattern of concerns such as fear of unemployment, housing problems, rising crime, AIDS, drug abuse and uncertainties about France's place in the world and the meaning of what it is to be French.

Immigration is certainly a problem, for many people *the* problem, and there is a perception that governments have done little about it. Few mainstream political leaders have been willing or able to deal with the issue successfully; instead, governments in both France and Germany have struggled to demonstrate to voters that they are tough on immigration.

[138] Betz, Radical Rigth-Wing, 104.
[139] Marcus, The National Front ,76.

The inability of the established parties to provide an answer to this problem has favored the development of the extreme right, which has chosen immigration as its key element. The immigration issue has enabled the extreme right to claim nationalism and patriotism as its foremost values. In the case of Germany, for example, reports of the Ministry of the Interior show that the extreme right has gained members since it chose hostility towards foreigners as its key theme.[140]

It has been the right-wing extremists' ability to crystallize the growing sense of alienation and the increasing fear of crime into a single "all embracing" issue, immigration, which has accounted for the extreme right's success. Extreme-right parties constantly remind their voters about the economic and cultural aspects of immigration by asserting that immigrants not only cause economic problems but also represent a threat to their hosts' cultures and identities.

In France, the FN is severely critical of the social costs of immigrants, arguing that they are major contributors to unemployment, delinquency and crime, and that they impose a burden on the French economy. The Front contends that immigrants make up a disproportionate number of delinquents and criminals.[141] In order to meet this threat, the FN put forward a comprehensive anti-foreigner program, the central point of which was repatriation. Its core elements were spelled out in the *Fifty Measures on Immigration* proposed in 1991 by Bruno Mégret, the director of Le Pen's presidential campaign in 1988, and designed to create conditions conducive to settle the problem of immigration and to protect national identity. According to Mégret, laws should be rewritten to

[140] Kolinsky, "A Future for Right-Wing Extremism in Germany?", 83.
[141] Simmons, 160.

accelerate the expiration of immigrants' residence permits, thereby rendering the country's three or four million legal immigrants illegal, and illegal immigrants would be deported. He also asserts that the return of immigrants to their original countries will solve many problems. It would, for instance, save public finances, resolve the problem of a threatened national identity and promote national cohesion. In his view, it would also solve the problem of security and it "would certainly be the solution for unemployment".[142]

For the *Front National*, the top priority is to challenge immigration, the blame for which is attributed to the French government over the years and to enforce *national preference. National preference* means putting French citizens first in their own country. They would have first call on scarce state provisions such as health-care, housing and welfare benefits. This would also entail discontinuing any assimilation of foreigners to nationals by laws and regulations, expelling any immigrants who behave in ways unworthy of French hospitality and gradually repatriating others.[143] According to the Front's president, Jean-Marie Le Pen, everything comes from immigration and everything goes back to immigration. The immigrant is the enemy within, denounced as a potential offender, as a drain on state resources and as a competitor. All ethnic minorities are described as an uncontrollable demographic and territorial threat. They are perceived as responsible for unemployment, overcrowding in schools, currency drain, rising crime

[142] Bruno Megret as quoted in Philip Gourevitch, 139.
[143] Vaughan, "The Extreme Right in France", 224.

rate and spread of AIDS. For Le Pen, the immigrant issue is not so much a symptom as a cause of the spiral of moral and cultural decadence into which France has sunk.[144]

The FN has consistently affirmed its concern about France's decline and its desire to see French national greatness re-established. In their view, French identity has evolved during a thousand years of history during which it has been transmitted from generation to generation. To belong to the French people means being part of a line which connects the present to the past and the future, sharing in that heritage and being guaranteed exclusive rights to citizenship and preferential treatment with regard to jobs, housing, social security and other benefits. According to the Front, the weakening of the family and the drop in the birth rate among the French people makes the inflow of immigrants and their large families increasingly threatening to an underpopulated France. For the FN, immigration posses a deadly threat to French national identity. Immigration is seen as a foreign invasion, albeit peaceful, but whose long-term effects will be the same as "the incursion of alien hordes, prepared to fight when denied bread, wine and women".[145]

The FN asserts that the genetic and cultural threat to national integrity must be resisted by a number of policies. Some of these are intended to protect the French family (the mother in particular), while others are restricted to the rights of immigrants, whether to the acquisition of nationality by birth on French soil or to family allowances. Abortion is fiercely opposed by the party in line with the movement's fears about the loss of

[144] James Shields, "The Politics of Disaffection: France in the 1980s" Political Culture in France and Germany, ed. John Gaffney and Eva Kolinsky (London: Routledge, 1991) 72.
[145] Vaughan, "The Extreme Right in France", 223.

French identity as a result of a declining birth rate in contrast to higher immigrant birth rates.[146]

In Germany, the most important issue facilitating the electoral and organizational successes of the extreme right since the late 1980s has been that of hostility towards foreigners. In domestic politics, the *Republikaner* warns about a flood of immigrants pouring into Germany, thereby undermining a social net and making the country a "welfare office for the whole world".[147] In the years before unification the *Republikaner* had two objectives. One was the restoration of national self-confidence and identity to the German people as a precondition for the restoration of national unity. The other was to prevent the threatening *foreignization* of Germany by putting a halt to the growing influx of immigrants and particularly refugees. The foreigner problem is at the center of the *Republikaner*'s political agitation and propaganda. They perceive foreigners and other outsiders as a threat to German nation and its way of life. They have focused on *foreignization*, a concept that is integral to the thinking of radical and extremist right-wing groups. The *Republikaner* claim that safeguarding the German *Volk* means protecting future generations against *foreignization* because it represents dangers such as rising crime rates, unemployment and social and cultural tensions. The party justifies its frontal attack against Germany's immigration policies by arguing the need to prevent abuse of the asylum law and to protect the security of German citizens. With its program, the *Republikaner* has established a clear

[146] Hainsworth, "The Extreme-Right in Post-war France ", 50.
[147] Braunthal, 100.

identity. Appealing to widespread xenophobia and exploiting growing uncertainty and fears with regard to the future, it acts as a populist advocate of the interest of the small people.[148]

*Support for the extreme right*

During the last decade, a growing sense of personal insecurity, linked to the presence of immigrants and the demand for law and order measures appeared to increase among some Western Europeans. The extreme right was bound to capitalise on these negative emotions and claimed that they were daring to speak out on behalf of the common people. Building on the fears of the electorate the extreme right has been able to direct their electoral campaigns to the most alienated sectors of the population.

Although votes for the extreme right cannot be correlated with either lower socio-economic status or the number of immigrants in a given economic area, it is possible to assert that anti-immigrant politics have won sympathy among young, unemployed sectors, the working and lower middle classes in urban and suburban agglomerations.

In Germany, the *Republikaner* have increasingly recruited their supporters among those social groups most negatively affected by the industrial modernization process. Fear of discrimination makes *Republikaner* sympathizers very receptive to anti-foreigner slogans. Foreigners in Germany and the government's policy towards them are held responsible for the real or presumed worsening of conditions in the country. Eva Kolinsky explains that the *Modernisierungsverlierer* (losers in the modernisation process), those who feel threatened by technological innovation and the erosion of traditional qualifications and work processes, are the potential clientele for the extreme-right today. In comparison

[148] Hans-Georg Betz, Radical right-wing, 136.

with other sectors or groups in society, those at the bottom of the educational ladder and at risk of de-skilling may regard themselves as disadvantaged in their income, lifestyle and opportunities, even though their situation would count as advantageous in other countries.[149]

However, different authors have argued that what distinguishes the supporters of the extreme right from the general public is the priority they give to specific issues such as immigration and law and order. The degree of importance attached to the problem of immigration is highly affected by a political factor. The more an individual considers himself to be on the right of the political spectrum, the more importance he attaches to the problem.

Shields asserts that among the major preoccupations expressed by FN voters are themes of law and order and immigration. [150] Where immigration was high and could be linked with themes such as urban blight, insecurity and declining standards, Le Pen polled well. Compared with other voters, the FN voter emphasizes immigration as a factor for voting behaviour, with insecurity and unemployment as the other top themes. According to Hainsworth, interviews with FN members reveal their main concern to be the establishment of a new moral order to overcome the alleged decadence and decline of France. Vaughan also asserts that the avowed motivation for supporting the FN is the dislike and fear of immigrants, linked with a concern for security. Thus, the two main themes of Le Pen's discourse are clearly echoed by his supporters. Attempts to capitalise on moral panic are

[149] Kolinsky, "A Future for Right Extremism in Germany?", 78.
[150] Shields, 74.

frequently associated with nostalgia for the past, prevalent among supporters of the extreme right.[151]

The relationship between immigration, fear, insecurity and the rise of the extreme right is confirmed by findings from opinion polls. Questions about the considerations that influenced the decision to vote for the FN reveal the problem of immigration and the feeling of insecurity as the major factors. According to different results, the electors of the FN appear to have a worse perception of immigrants than does the average voter. In 1985 FN voters were three times as likely as other voters to have been motivated by concerns over insecurity and delinquency and five times as likely to vote FN because of concerns about immigrants.[152] According to a poll conducted in Grenoble in 1985, 55 percent of the electorate sampled thought that there were too many North Africans in France, while 90 percent of the electors of the FN were of that opinion.[153] Sixty-three percent of the voters for the FN thought immigration to be the cause of unemployment, compared to 26 percent for the sample as a whole. There were similar findings on delinquency, where all FN electors thought immigrants to be the cause of delinquency, only 51 percent of the population as a whole thought that to be the case.[154]

Support for the FN is strong in the highly industrialized regions of France, where Le Pen has been adept at exploiting tensions over unemployment, immigration and rising inner-city crime rates. According to Mayer, an important element in explaining the rise of the extreme-right vote is less the size of the immigrant population living in an area than the

[151] Vaughan, "The Wrong Right in France", Opposition in Western Europe, ed. Eva Kolinsky (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1987) 303.
[152] Simmons, 177.

feeling of a threat linked to the prospect that its population might expand.[155] Their living in close proximity to immigrants does not motivate the anti-immigrant sentiments of Front voters; this is rather a negative reaction of voters who live near but not in areas with foreign populations. This suggests that fear of immigrants, rather than actual proximity was what seemed to correlate with support for the Front. However, an exception exists in the *départements* of the south, where a high proportion of North Africans immigrants coexist with a large number of *repatriés* from Algeria who are receptive to Le Pen's nationalistic rhetoric and his nostalgia for *Algérie Française*.

Supporters of extreme-right parties not only consider immigration one of the most important issues in the political agenda, but they are also the most hostile group toward immigrants. In Germany, *Republikaner* supporters have shown the least sympathy of any politically relevant group toward immigrants, refugees or even German resettlees from the former Soviet Union. Among self-confessed *Republikaner* voters, over 90 percent objected to foreigners living in Germany. In France, FN voters are much more hostile to immigrants than those who vote for parties of the left and mainstream right. A survey conducted by CEVIPOF (*Centre d'étude de la vie politique française*) after the second round of the presidential election in May 1988, showed that in questions about the number of immigrants, the power of Jews, the rights of Muslims and the feeling that they were not at home anymore, half of the *Lepeniste* voters were the most pessimistic about the presence of

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[153] Data from a poll conducted by Pierre Brechon and Jean-Paul Bozonnet in Grenoble on the basis of a representative sample of 548 electors in 1985.
[154] Brechon, 70.
[155] Nonna Mayer, "Ethnocentrism and the Front National Vote in the 1988 French Presidential Election", Racism, Ethnicity and Politics in Contemporary Europe, ed. Alec Hargreaves and Jeremy Leaman (England: Hartnolls Ltd. Nodmin Cornwall, 1995) 132.

immigrants. A total of 75 percent of Le Pen electors thought that there were too many immigrants, as opposed to 35 percent in the sample as a whole.[156]

*The influence of the extreme right in mainstream politics*

The extreme right has been successful in influencing mainstream politics. One of the main achievements of the *Front National* has been the importance that the immigration issue has acquired on the political agenda of the French government. The Front, with its anti-immigrant message has done much to keep the issue at the top of the agenda and the related issues of integration and racism have assumed a permanent place in the French national debate. Since the early 1980s French immigration policy has largely been influenced by the rise of the FN.

The FN policy on immigration has had considerable impact, mobilizing public opinion, forcing the traditional right to re-examine the question of French nationality and revalue immigration as a policy priority. During the past decade, France's traditional parties have hardened many of their policies relating to immigrants and ethnic minorities in the hope of competing for the FN's vote. In 1986, the arrival of 35 FN deputies to the National Assembly gave an immediate new focus to debates about immigration. The new government, and its Minister of the Interior, Charles Pasqua, was committed to restrict immigration. The Pasqua Law passed in September, 1986 was intended to strengthen frontier control and ease the expulsion of foreigners who were either in the country illegally

[156] Mayer, 131.

or had been convicted for a prison term of more than six months.[157] The victory of Catherine Mégret in Vitrolles followed a revision of the immigration policy, with the proposal of the Chirac government to tighten once more regulations on immigrants. Last year, Chirac's Minister of the Interior, Jean-Louis Debré, submitted a package of new immigration regulations to the French Parliament. The Debré Law was billed as part of an intent to halt illegal immigration. A controversial article required French residents to get written permission before overnight visits from foreigners requiring visas and to inform their mayor's office after such guest departed. As a result, a protest movement began. There were marches and petitions vowing civil disobedience. In late February 1997, tens of thousands of people took the streets of Paris in a festive demonstration against the law and what was described as the general *lepenization* of the French spirit. In the end, the controversial provision was removed even though opinion polls showed that nearly 70 percent of French voters supported it.

In Germany, there is a concern that the political culture is moving to the right. Parties have become more nationalist and conservative on the political asylum issue. As a response to the increasing tide of violence against foreigners, the number of asylum-seekers and the difficult economic situation that native Germans were experiencing, the established political parties decided to toughen Germany's generous asylum law. For a long time Germany had the most liberal asylum policy in Western Europe. In an effort to expunge the memory of the past and to rehabilitate Germany's reputation in the international community, the German Constitution guaranteed that virtually all foreigners persecuted on political

[157] Christopher Husbands, "The Mainstream Right and the Politics of Immigration in France: Major Developments in the 1980s" Ethnic and Racial Studies (14.2, 1991) 186.

grounds could claim the right to asylum. Anyone applying for asylum could require the state to take care of them while their claim was being processed. Procedures would take about one year to complete, applicants would appeal and cases would take as long as four years until asylum was granted or an expulsion ordered. In 1992 new legislation restricted access for asylum-seekers and other immigrants curtailing their rights of appeal and facilitating expulsion. Although the new regulations continue to grant protection and refuge to victims of persecution, it makes it more difficult to claim asylum without justifiable reasons. The German government excludes from the asylum procedure those foreigners who are not obviously politically persecuted, such as those who have already found refuge in a *safe* third country (which includes Germany's Eastern neighbors) or those who come from safe countries of origin where political persecution does not exist in principle.

In November 1997, the CDU/CSU blocked plans for a major reform of the 1913 Citizenship law, which denies automatic German citizenship to babies born in Germany unless their parents are already Germans. Under the proposal, supported by the SPD, the Green party and the FDP, children born in Germany of foreign parents would be permitted to hold dual nationality. Christian Democrats argued that dual citizenship would give the impression that foreigners are more privileged that ordinary Germans. In a controversial intervention, Chancellor Helmut Kohl said that changing the law could easily lead to a doubling of the number of Turks in Germany.

*The future of the extreme right*

Extreme-right parties cannot be considered a strong electoral or political force yet. However, the study of the rise of the extreme right is important not merely because of its existence, but also for the overall social and political situation that their political relevance reflects. The success of the extreme right goes beyond its ability to gain electoral support. Extreme right parties are channels of political discontent and opting for them is in many cases a defiant choice. The existence of parties of the extreme right reflects not only a crisis of the political culture but also a symptom of a sickness in society. Right-wing extremism is the reflection of deeply rooted feelings such as racism and xenophobia, which are associated with the problem of immigration.

Although racism and xenophobia are two of the characteristics that differentiate parties of the extreme right from other political parties, they are not restricted to the extreme right; racism can also be present among many Western Europeans who support mainstream parties. According to the Eurobarometer, one European in three believes there are too many people of another nationality or race in his country.[158] In the *Declaration against Racism and Xenophobia* of June 1986, the European Parliament recognized the existence and growth of xenophobic attitudes, movements and acts of violence directed mainly against immigrants. Xenophobia appears as a form of self-defense against the uncertainties of the future and the discomforts of the present. Xenophobia has become a hallmark for societies seeking scapegoats for the temporary economic hardships that people are being asked to accept.

[158] Commission , 4.

Racism and xenophobia are political tactics that used in the right circumstances by skilful politicians could be successful. Exploiting resentments and popular fears has turned into a successful strategy for the extreme right. It is difficult to forget that the Nazi rise to power was in part the result of certain ideas having widespread currency but that needed a particular set of circumstances to turn those holding such views into Nazi supporters.

The rise of the extreme right should not be ignored just because its chances of taking power at present seem remote. Whether the rise of the extreme right will be contained in a permanent fashion still remains to be seen. Factors that contribute to the success of the extreme right such as immigration, unemployment and insecurity are unlikely to disappear and as long as they remain, the potential for the upsurge of the extreme right exists. Although there might not be an extreme right breakthrough to power in the near future, racism and xenophobia will continue to be important elements in European society and politics, and as long as they exist, there is a chance for the extreme right.

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## *Appendix*

### *Percentage of foreign population in France by country of origin*

| Country | 1946 | 1975 | 1982 | 1990 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Algeria* | 1.2 | 20.6 | 21.7 | 17.1 |
| *Italy* | 25.9 | 13.4 | 9.2 | 7.0 |
| *Morocco* | 0.9 | 7.6 | 11.9 | 15.9 |
| *Portugal* | 1.3 | 22.0 | 20.7 | 18.1 |
| *Spain* | 17.3 | 14.5 | 8.8 | 6.0 |
| *Belgium* | 8.8 | 1.6 | 1.4 | 1.6 |
| *Poland* | 24.3 | 2.7 | 1.7 | 1.3 |
| *Yugoslavia* | 1.2 | 2.1 | 1.7 | 1.5 |
| *Tunisia* | 0.1 | 4.1 | 5.2 | 5.7 |
| *Turkey* | 0.4 | 1.5 | 3.3 | 5.5 |
| *Other* | 18.6 | 9.9 | 14.4 | 20.3 |

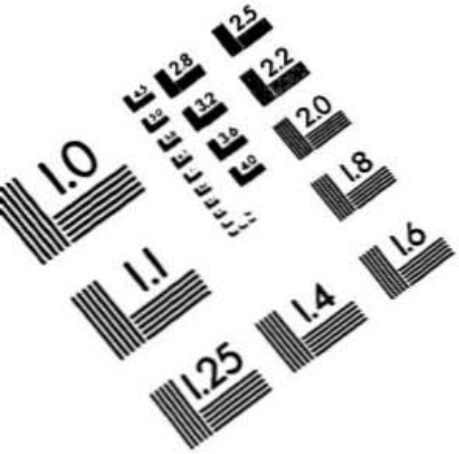
*Source: Annuaire Statistique de la France 1997. INSEE (L' Institut National de la Statistique et de Etudes Economiques.*

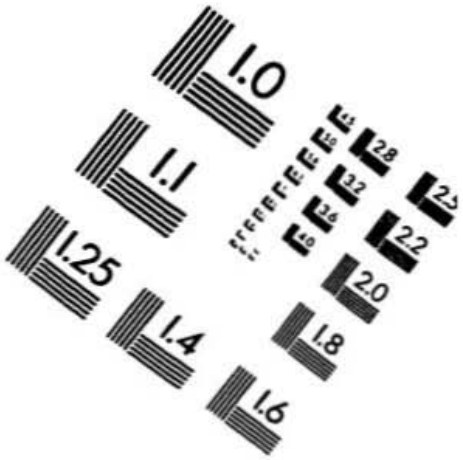
### *Percentage of foreign population in Germany by country of origin*

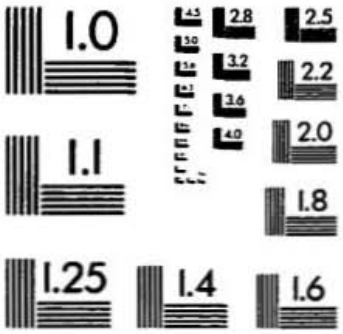
| *Country* | 1961 | 1972 | 1983 | 1993 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Greece* | 9.2 | 6.5 | 6.4 | 5.1 |
| *Italy* | 43.6 | 18.7 | 12.4 | 8.1 |
| *Spain* | 13.1 | 5.7 | 3.6 | 1.9 |
| *Turkey* | 2.1 | 23.4 | 34.2 | 27.8 |
| *Yugoslavia* | 3.3 | 17.0 | 13.5 | 13.5 |
| *Portugal* | 0.3 | 3.1 | 2.2 | 1.5 |
| *Poland* | n/a | n/a | 1.9 | 3.8 |
| *Austria* | n/a | n/a | 3.8 | 2.7 |
| *Romania* | n/a | n/a | 0.2 | 2.3 |
| *Hungary* | n/a | n/a | 0.4 | 1.0 |
| *Other* | 28.7 | 25.6 | 21.4 | 32.3 |

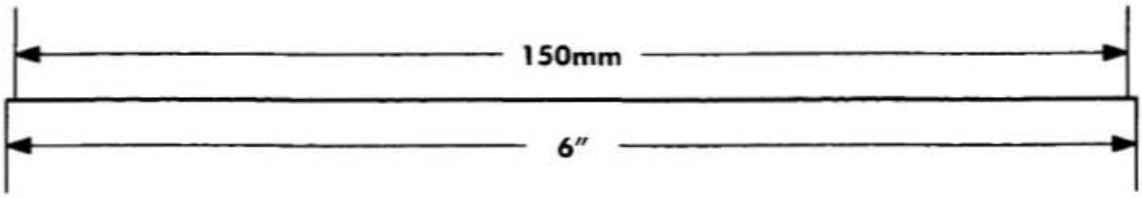
*Source: Compilation of the Federal Statistical Office (Statistiches Bundesamt) and Trends in International Migration by OECD 1994.*

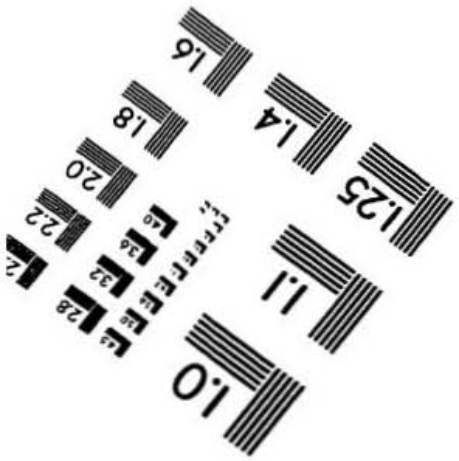
# IMAGE EVALUATION
# TEST TARGET (QA-3)





APPLIED IMAGE, Inc
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Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989