Christian Responses to the Far Right

ThinkingFaithNetwork
ORIGINS OF THE POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT

• Intellectual Origins: New Right (Bar-On 2001)


• Political Origins: Cartelisation of Mainstream Parties (Katz and Mair 1995)

• Economic Origins: Discontents with economic globalisation (Betz 1994)
DEFINING THE POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT

• ‘Terminological Chaos’ → 26 definitions & 58 different features (Mudde 1996 & 2007)

• Some prefer right-wing populist, far right or extreme right.
  – However, the radical right provides ‘a critique of the constitutional order without any anti-democratic behaviour or intention.’ (Carter 2005: 22)
  – In contrast to extreme right, who ‘espouse violence’ and ‘seek the overthrow of liberal democracy.’ (Eatwell 2003: 14)
  – This makes the radical right both more difficult to place and response to.

• Key ideological features: nativism, authoritarianism and populism.
DIFFERENT FORMS OF POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT ACTIVISM

1. Paramilitary Style Organisations

2. Social Movements

3. Political Parties
## ELECTORAL SUPPORT FOR THE POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Party Name</th>
<th>% vote in EU Parliamentary Elections</th>
<th>Seats in EU Parliament</th>
<th>% vote in national parliamentary elections</th>
<th>Seats in national parliament</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Austrian Freedom Party (FPO)</td>
<td>19.72%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20.50%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>+ 5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Flemish Interest (VB)</td>
<td>4.26%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.67%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>- 4.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Ataka (PPA)</td>
<td>2.96%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9.07%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>+ 1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Worker's Party of Social Justice (DSSS)</td>
<td>0.52%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>- 0.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>People's Party (O)</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>+ 8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>National Front (FN/RN)</td>
<td>24.85%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.75%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>+ 5.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Alternative für Deustchland (AfD)</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>+ 7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Golden Dawn (XA)</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>+ 0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Jobbik (JMM)</td>
<td>14.67%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19.06%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>- 1.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Northern League (LN)</td>
<td>6.15%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.35%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>+ 13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Order and Justice (PTT)</td>
<td>14.25%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.63%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>- 2.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Party for Freedom (PVV)</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>+ 3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland (SRP)</td>
<td>0.04%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>- 0.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>Slovak National Party (SNS)</td>
<td>3.61%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>+ 4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>UK Independence Party (UKIP)</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>- 10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>Radical Right Parties</strong></td>
<td><strong>11.6%</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>9.98%</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.13</strong></td>
<td><strong>+ 3.05%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHRISTIANITY & THE POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT

• Ideology – Clash of Civilisation’s narrative, Eurabia Conspiracy Theory, appeals to emotive issues around tradition.

• Practice – use of Christian iconography, overt Christian rhetoric, and Christian symbols as a way of othering Muslims.

• Support Base – minority of electorate are religious, vaccination effect (Arzheimer and Carter 2009), importance of ‘socio-cultural’ aspects of Christianity (Billiet 1995).
CHRISTIANITY & THE POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT

Case Study I: Anders Breivik

Case Study II: Britain First

Case Study III: Viktor Orbán
ANTI-ISLAMIC PROTEST IN THE UK

- Anti-Islamic Protest: context, origins and scholarship.

- 5 in-depth case studies – focusing on Birmingham, Bradford, Leicester, Luton and Tower Hamlets.

- 58 semi-structured elite interviews – with politicians, police and behind-the-scenes council officials.

- Findings: responses to anti-Islamic protest have varied – mainly exclusionary but some inclusionary also.

- Argument: inclusion, however, only viable strategy to address far right groups in a sustainable way.
EXAMPLES OF CHRISTIAN RESPONSES I – TOWER HAMLETS

• 1930s Christian Anti-Fascism in the East End
  – 1936 Battle of Cable Street

• 1990s Christian Anti-Fascism in the Isle of Dogs
  – 1993 Millwall By-Election

• Contemporary Christian Responses in Tower Hamlets
  – Britain First Demonstrations (2014, 2015 & 2016)
EXAMPLES OF CHRISTIAN RESPONSES II - LUTON

• Contemporary Christian Responses in Luton
  – Britain First Demonstrations (2014, 2015, & 2016)
  – Emphasis on ‘redefining the centre’ & intercultural relations.
TOWARDS A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO THE POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT

- Broad Approach – Holistic (small ‘l’ liberal) Christian Anti-Fascism
  
  - Church – debunking & disrupting the ‘Christianist’ narratives & iconography used by Populist Radical Right groups in their campaigns.

  - Churches – engaging in cross-community projects that break down tendencies towards social polarisation and isolationism.

  - Christians – avoiding the divisive, identity politics of the populist radical right.
THANK YOU FOR LISTENING...
SELECTED REFERENCES


