Intimate Rivals or Enemies of the Nation:
Radical Right Movements and Transformative Populism

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Abstract

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Perhaps the most notable political phenomenon of the past decade has been the rise of global populism. Different political systems around the world have experienced the rise of anti-establishment politics, often accompanied by calls for protectionist economic policies, and exclusionary practices. Scholars struggle to define this phenomenon as it takes on different forms in different places. This research examines why some places experience a surge of radical right populism in the margins of the political system, and a populist turn at the center of the political system. In such places, the rhetoric and agenda of right wing radical movements penetrate the mainstream and ultimately transform political institutions. The dissertation explores the dynamics of the relationship between the radical right and mainstream political actors. I address several key questions. What makes some countries more susceptible to transformative populism? Why do mainstream actors in some countries condone or adopt the agenda and rhetoric of radical groups? Which rhetoric frames are more effective than others for radical groups?

I argue that the behavior of central political actors is constrained by acceptable narratives in society. When radical groups compose a narrative that presents them as the true representatives of the nation, it makes it more difficult for states to take direct action against them. This is true even when radical groups employ violent rhetoric and action, disrupt public order, and undermine social cohesion and solidarity. To do so, they appropriate national symbols and myths and reframe them in a manner that places the group as the true successors of national forefathers, and their radical actions and ideologies as expressions of the national will. In an environment of deeply
disputed national identity, the claim over national history and symbols can delegitimize and undermine political actors with a rivaling view of the nation. To understand the nature of the relationship between radical groups and the political center, and the disruptive political outcomes of populism we are witnessing in certain places today, I argue we need to view the populist struggle as a struggle over the nation itself between political centers and peripheries. To that end I define the nation as the effort to create a solidarity group through shared ethnicity, history, culture, language, territory, or civic identity.

To evaluate the theory, I conduct cross case comparison in Central Eastern Europe, and within case process tracing in three different cases: present day radical populists in Hungary, 1970-1980s Jewish religious settlers in the West Bank, and the Ku Klux Klan in 1920s United States. The purpose of the comparison is to explore different ways societies addressed uneven and contradictory national identity in the 1989 transition from communism, and the consequences for the rise of disruptive radical populism. The individual cases serve to evaluate possible mechanisms leading to radical right capture of mainstream politics.

The uneven spread of contradictory national identity is explored in depth in Chapter Two. Through the cases of four Central European states I show that the process of transition presented different options for countries to either reproduce long standing center-periphery cleavages, or address them. Chapter Three delves into the Hungarian case and evaluates explanations for the shift of the mainstream toward radical populism, and the leniency of politicians toward extremist violence.

Continuing to explore rhetorical mechanisms of radical actors, Chapter Four examines the language of Jewish settlers in the 1970s and 1980s through the analysis of unique primary
resources. The case of the 1920s Ku Klux Klan explored in Chapter Five demonstrates that though initially successful, the group was ultimately unsuccessful outside the Deep South.

Chapter Six discusses the research findings and their implications. I find that center-periphery cleavages that do not overlap with ethnicity have their own set of outcomes. While nationalist emergence in ethnically divided center-periphery societies is turned outside – toward the other ethno-national group, the national fervor in ethnically homogenous but center-periphery divided societies is turned inwards – from the periphery toward the center. This is manifested in the rise of anti-establishment anti-elitist discourse that presents the elite establishment as foreign, and legitimates an overturn of liberal institutions. Another key finding is that where mainstream political actors did not address center-periphery cleavages, the rhetorical space was open for the radical right to use an extreme version of them to justify exclusionary and violent actions.
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For my parents
1 THE NATIONALIST CAPTURE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In July 2015, the Israeli Supreme Court ordered the state to tear down two structures in the West Bank settlement of Beit El, which were built on privately owned Palestinian land.1 Right wing Israeli politicians were fast to criticize the decision. Uri Ariel, Minister of Agriculture, of the party Habait Hayhudi which represents religious nationalists including the settlers, called on the Prime Minister to commit to building 300 new housing units in Beit El. Minister of Tourism, Yariv Levin of the right wing Likud, called the ruling a, “shame, and another stain of morality on the legal system,”2 and Knesset Member Moti Yogev of Habait Hayehudi declared, “the Supreme Court should be launched at with a tractor.”3 Tough the aggressive comment was criticized by the Prime Minister and others in the political system,4 Yogev’s agenda was echoed by the highest-ranking government ministers both in regards to the settlement, and to the attack on the Supreme Court. In many ways, the ruling coalition had already been launching at the Supreme Court for several years.

Minister of Justice Ayelet Shaked, Yogev’s fellow party member, responded to the Supreme Court’s decision by acknowledging that the government would accept the difficult ruling, and that

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1 The Supreme Court already ruled on the structures in 2010 and the case has been in appeal processes for several years.

2 Yehonatan Lis, Haaretz. July 29, 2015

3 ibid

4 ibid
the structures would be torn down and immediately rebuilt as, “this is the Jewish way – we do not lose hope and keep building and building.”\(^5\) In addition to the tractor incident, Shaked followed her right wing predecessors in the efforts to curb the Supreme Court, and alter its liberal disposition. Shaked launched a successful move to nominate four new judges to the court, none of them a liberal, and three fourths of whom were conservative nationalist religious Jews. Further, she effectively threatened to abolish the sitting justices’ veto on nominations to the court.\(^6\) This was the latest move of many which have significantly diminished the power of the Supreme Court as a liberal institution in Israel.

The government’s aggressive attack on the Supreme Court is just the latest in a long chain of events leading settlers from the margins of the political system into the mainstream, and continuing Israel’s populist turn. It is the combination of a radical right group (religious nationalist settlers), and a once center right party turned populist (Likud) that brings disruptive outcomes to the Israeli democratic system. This explosive combination is at the heart of this dissertation.

In the past few years, populism has been on the rise around the globe. Places as diverse as the BRICS, Turkey, England, Denmark, Hungary, Poland, the United States, and Israel have all experienced a surge of populism. There is a struggle to define this phenomenon or even determine if it is indeed a singular one, as populism takes on a different form in every region.\(^7\) In some places the populist turn is accompanied by exclusionary rhetoric, in others, the focus is on protectionist economic measures, and in some as the story above suggests, populism leads to a transformation

\(^5\) ibid

\(^6\) Moshe Gorali, *Calcalist*, February 26, 2017

of the democratic system itself through power-concentration actions of elected politicians. This research addresses why some places experience a surge of radical right populism in the margins of the political system, and a populist turn at the center of the political system. In such places, the rhetoric and agenda of right wing radical movements penetrate the mainstream and ultimately transform political institutions. The dissertation explores the dynamics of the relationship between the radical right and mainstream political actors. I address several key questions. First, as noted above, some places experience a populist transformation of democratic institutions. The research attempts to understand what makes these places more susceptible to this type of transformative populism. Second, the theory presented here lies in the realm of the development of the nation, and contestation over identity. I wish to understand how groups use this identity contestation to sway key political actors to accept a radical interpretation of the nation be it exclusionary, or expansionist, as in the example of the Jewish settlements above. Finally, the dissertation explores which rhetoric frames are more effective than others for radical groups.

I argue that to understand the nature of the relationship between radical groups and the political center, and the disruptive political outcomes of populism we are witnessing in certain places today, we need a better understanding of internal contestation over national identity. The development of national identity can result in an internally unified group, but it can also lead to multiple social groups with different and contradicting understandings of the same nominal identity, as explored in depth below.

The proliferation of civil wars at the end of the Cold War brought the study of nationalism back to the attention of scholars and commentators. As a result, in recent decades the literature on nationalism has focused on interethnic tensions as trigger for nationalist mobilization by elites and
the masses. Interethnic relationships are an important component of nationalism however, in the process of studying them, social science nationalism literature has neglected the equally important component of intra-ethnic national consolidation. To understand the current outcomes of nationalism – the surge of nationalist populism, we need to problematize and explore the process of intra-ethnic consolidation, the attempt to create a unified identity group which may be only partially successful and lead to uneven and contradictory identity. This type of national identity bears profound political consequences as explored in this research. To that end, this dissertation focuses on nations that achieved independence in a territorial unit, and often even relative ethnic homogeneity, and yet in which nationalism continues to be a contested issue within the ethno-national group and serves as a narrative for mobilization. I argue throughout this dissertation that where the perception and meaning of the nation is contested, radical groups can use nationalism to frame their actions and undermine mainstream elites.

The process of bringing different people together under a single national identity has been the focus of excellent historical research. However, most of this scholarship treats national consolidation as a process that either results in a single unified ethnicity or in multiple ethno-national groups within a political unit. Moreover, the process is treated as one directional and finite, a process that leads a non-national group to become either a single nation or multiple nations. However, the process of national consolidation has in fact a spectrum of outcomes. A nation can

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become a unified identity group, multiple ethno-national groups, or a single nominal nation which lacks internal unity. In the latter case, different individuals identify as members of the nation nominally, but the meaning of belonging to the nation, and even the meaning of the nation itself – its history, borders, and criteria of belonging, can vary greatly across individuals and groups.

In some cases, national consolidation within an ethno-lingual group is a long and arduous process, which faces setbacks and failures, and the outcome of unified idea of the nation within the group is never fully achieved. As explored in this research, the failure to consolidate is particularly problematic when different segments of the population hold contradictory ideas on national belonging, territory, and national culture. My goal in the dissertation is twofold. First, I aim to understand the rise of radical populism through the lens of national under-consolidation. Second, I use problematized cases of national under-consolidation to point at an understudied aspect of nationalism – the ongoing process of negotiation over identity within a titular national group.

The radical groups explored in depth in this research share several traits. As discussed in depth below, these groups are opposed to the establishment, are nativist and authoritarian, and employ violence and other extralegal methods as part of their strategy. To evaluate the theory, I conduct cross case comparison in Central Eastern Europe, and within case process tracing in three different cases: present day radical populists in Hungary, 1970-1980s Jewish religious settlers in the West Bank, and the Ku Klux Klan in 1920s United States. The purpose of the Central European comparison is to explore different ways societies addressed uneven and contradictory national identity in the 1989 transition from communism, and the consequences for the rise of disruptive

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radical populism. The individual cases serve to evaluate possible mechanisms leading to radical right capture of mainstream politics. The selection of cases is discussed toward the end of the chapter.

The dissertation discusses two types of radical populist groups. The first emerges from the margins of the political system. The leaders of these groups are commonly young, politically inexperienced, and are often linked with violent groups. The second type of group is led by political actors from the mainstream turned radical populists. These are experienced politicians that adopt a populist rhetoric accompanied by transformative legislative agenda. These have the advantage of a party organization and some level of mainstream acceptance. On the other hand, they are more constrained by “normal” domestic and international politics. These groups are far more likely to access political power and have a significant disruptive potential to liberal democracy. I thus term them ‘populist transformative’. The interaction between the two types of groups leading to further radicalization of the mainstream is a center focus of this research.

I argue that the behavior of central political actors is constrained by acceptable narratives in society. When radical groups compose a narrative that presents them as the true representatives of the nation, it makes it more difficult for states to take direct action against them. This is true even when radical groups employ violent rhetoric and action, disrupt public order, and undermine social cohesion and solidarity. To do so, they appropriate national symbols and myths and reframe them in a manner that places the group as the true successors of national forefathers, and their radical actions and ideologies as expressions of the national will. In an environment of deeply disputed national identity, the claim over national history and symbols can delegitimize and undermine political actors with a rivaling view of the nation.
The source of contestation over national identity this work explores is intra-ethnic cleavages between center and periphery groups with different understandings of national identity. I define these differences over national identity as an uneven spread of national identity. The center-periphery cleavage implies that, to some degree, the periphery is subordinate to the center. Periphery members have a history of limited access to political power and to material and cultural resources. Thus, the political struggle between center and periphery where identity is unevenly spread is over both the meaning of national identity, and over access to resources. Second, where the spread of nationalism is uneven, individuals and groups in society hold different and even contradicting views on issues like national belonging and the interpretation of national history. Contradictions in the perception of national belonging become problematic when issues like immigration, integration, or border policy are salient. Similarly, differing interpretations of national history can imply contradictory views on international and domestic friends and foes, sovereignty in the international system, and economic policy. If one group defines the nation as a multi-cultural ethnic or religious group of citizens, whereas the other views national belonging as a specific cultural ethnic or religious identity, the implication for immigration and integration can be contradictory. If one group interprets the country’s success as resulting from cooperation, whereas the other interprets the national history as an ongoing struggle for sovereignty against powerful neighbors, the political implications may be significantly contradicting when changes in the international system demand choosing new foreign policies.

Nationalist issue framing of radical groups is performed in front of an audience that can be mobilized when contradictions become relevant for policy outcomes following existential

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1 Rokkan, 1999
political problems like economic crisis, a surge in migration, or a security crisis. When mainstream political actors cannot credibly justify to the audience their own views through national narratives, they are pushed to accept the underlying nationalist logic of radical groups: if radical groups are the true representatives of national will, where is the government drawing its legitimacy from and how can it reject widely shared understanding of the nation?

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Figure 1-1 The Nationalist Capture Model

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For culturally liberal political actors, accepting the premise of radical populists is hardly an ideal solution. They will always struggle to be more “national” than radical nationalists, and in doing so lose credibility with their own culturally liberal base. Some actors in the mainstream do manage to credibly adopt the radical stance if they identify early the emergence of the political context that activates national contradictions. These become populist transformative parties of the political center. I define as ‘nationalist capture’ the process by which mainstream actors accept radical nationalist premises and incorporate them into their rhetoric and agenda (Figure 1.1). Nationalist capture can have legislative outcomes for cultural-national matters such as education curriculum, national holidays, and public symbols. More broadly, nationalist capture leads to outcomes like centralization of power; legislative limitations on constitutional courts, civil society, and freedom of press; limitations on immigration; economic protectionism; and chauvinist foreign policy may follow. All these further deepen the contradictory national perception of groups in society.

1.1.1 Alternative Explanations

This dissertation examines cases where radical groups employ violence and break the law as part of their repertoire of strategies. Several theories can account for the evident low state response to extremist violence and other extralegal activities. State weakness or low state capacity is the primary political science explanation for failure of states to maintain monopoly over violence within their territory.\(^{13}\) According to these theories, states fail to control violence due to lack of

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resources and organizational capacity.\textsuperscript{14} State capacity explanations are very useful for cases of weak states faced with powerful challengers. However, they fail to explain many cases in which relatively capable states do not arrest violent groups.

Others have noted that some states maintain order by sharing power and capacity for violence with domestic actors.\textsuperscript{15} Still other scholars look at the strategic behavior of actors within the state in aligning with violent groups. One suggested explanation is that political elites use non-state violence to center the political agenda on ethnic conflict, distracting from other issues like government performance, and pushing out political rivals.\textsuperscript{16} Similarly, Wilkinson\textsuperscript{17} suggests that elites use group violence to demark minority ethnic groups, and prevent the formation of interethnic class based coalitions. Another possibility is that the government forms a political alliance with violent groups to pass certain desirable programs in exchange for leniency in law enforcement.\textsuperscript{18}

Indeed, I too argue that politicians turn to a radical populist agenda with their own interests in mind. When national identity is contradictory and uneven, radical populist-nationalist rhetoric can successfully mark mainstream actors as disloyal or even as traitors. In response, mainstream


\textsuperscript{17} Wilkinson, Steven I. \textit{Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India}. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

actors may choose not to act against radical violence, and even adopted some of the radical premises. Other mainstream political actors view the success of such radical framing as an opportunity to marginalize competing elites, even when the cost is decline in rule of law, and accelerating rhetorical and policy bidding competition with the radicals.

Aside from the tolerance toward organized violence, which characterizes many of the cases, I focus on the question of the sources of radical populist rhetoric. Some materialist theories view economic grievances of the “losers” of globalization as the main cause for the rise of populism. Other material theories focus on the supply side of populism, and view populist rhetoric as a strategy elites use to mobilize support without redistribution. Non-material theories on the supply side view variation in the success of populism as an outcome of different electoral laws, or the nature of political parties. Theories on the demand side focus on the backlash to liberal cosmopolitan values.

These explanations are helpful for our understanding of the broad populist phenomena but they have a few shortcomings. First, material explanations do not fully account for the patterns of variation across countries we observe. Some countries that suffered most from the global economic crisis like Hungary have seen a spike in populism, while others like the Czech Republic have not.

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20 Wilkinson, 2006


22 ibid

Some of the countries that were least affected like Poland, have nonetheless experienced a significant populist turn. The same is true for unequal spread of wealth as a result of globalization.

Second, theories which focus on electoral institutions can account for the electoral success of small radical parties, but do not fare well with broad ideological shifts in the political system and in society. These shifts are consequential for the identity of elected officials, their rhetoric and agenda, which in turn impact a variety of policy areas and even the quality of democracy itself. The focus on value based voting is a useful demand side explanation, but it does not account for the response of mainstream politics to the populist challenge.

Finally, all these theories fail to account for the importance of rhetoric in the surge of populism. If populism is a form of rhetoric\(^\text{24}\) then the rhetoric itself should matter. This research addresses questions on the origins of nationalist-populist rhetoric, the ability of some groups but not others to successfully employ nationalist-populist rhetoric, and the ways in which the framing process shapes the response of mainstream politicians, political outcomes like electoral success, and changes in policy agenda.

The chapter continues as follows, I first define key terms as well as the scope of the theory. I then turn to a two-part presentation of the theory. The first part discusses uneven and contradictory nationalism and its sources. The second part explains radical populists rhetorical use of uneven and contradictory national identity and its implications. The following section describes the research design, methodology, and the data used in this research. Finally I outline the plan of the dissertation.

1.2 CONCEPTS AND SCOPE

1.2.1 Radical Right Populism

In recent years, social science scholarship has been striving to define the populist radical right and classify groups and parties accordingly. I follow Cas Mudde, and define populist radical movements as sharing anti-establishment, authoritarian, and nativist ideas. They oppose ruling institutions, political elites, banking elites, and media, and blame them for material and moral corruption. Populist radicals glorify the common man and his labor, often, though not exclusively, appealing to farmers and rural populations. Heavy industry in the periphery is another target group of the new populists of the past decade. The nativist element is key, populists often idolize the native born as the true son of the soil compared to immigrants and minorities. As such they are radicals of the majority identity in society. Following from that identity, populist radical right movements often coalesce around strong leaders. They tend to support majoritarian sovereignty, favoring plebiscites, and rejecting minority veto points and special rights. In terms of gender, populist radicals advance traditional masculinity and traditional family roles. I use the terms ‘populist radical right’, ‘populist radicals’ and ‘radical right’ interchangeably throughout the dissertation.

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25 Mudde, 2007


The term ‘right’ in populist radical right requires further clarification. The definitions of left and right politics are context dependent and they change over time and geographic location. The rise in saliency of the cleavage between ‘local’ and ‘cosmopolitan’ or ‘nationalist’ and ‘liberal’ has redefined many political systems.29 (Figure 1.2) Thus, in this research I term as ‘right’ groups and parties that are located on the local or nationalist side of this cultural axis, and as ‘left’ cosmopolitan and liberal groups. These culturally right wing groups are usually protectionist and not classically right wing conservative on the economic spectrum.

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29 Inglehart and Norris, 2016.
1.2.2 Economic, Ethnic, and Center-Periphery Cleavages

In terms of economic preferences, populist radical right groups are rather diverse. On the one hand, many of these groups support protectionist measures favoring local manufacturers such as tariff barriers. More broadly, they oppose economic globalization and portray it as an infringement on national sovereignty. In Europe, these preferences translate into ‘Euro-Skepticism’, a position probably shared by all populist radicals. In the same line, welfare allocations towards selective nativist populations rather than immigrants or ethnic minorities are favored by many of these groups. On the other hand, economic conservatives have used populist rhetoric to shift the political agenda toward identity politics and away from economic preferences.

The mixed economic policies of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán are an example of the lack of unified economic agenda. After taking office in 2010, Orbán nationalized private pensions in Hungary, heavily taxed foreign owned companies, and subsidized household utilities for private consumers. On the other hand, he lowered the tax rate in Hungary to a flat rate of 16 percent, restructured ownership in the market to benefit wealthy cronies, and pursued an increase in global trade with non-western markets. Thus, despite protectionist rhetoric, populists in power lack coherent economic policy. As a consequence, there is no single populist economic agenda across countries. The common feature across right wing populist movements is the shift of the political system toward the culture/identity/national axis.


The research focuses on center-periphery cleavages within the national group as a source for successful populist radical rhetoric. When the center-periphery cleavage in society overlaps with an ethno-national cleavage, that is when center and periphery do not share ethnicity and/or language, the opportunity for mobilization based on nationalism is even more pronounced. Moreover, center-periphery tensions may be framed as an ethnic grievance. However, in cases of overlapping ethno-national and center-periphery cleavages, there is a different set of political mechanisms to resolve some of the tensions between groups in society. Ethnic cleavages can be manifested in the political system through a variety of arrangements from power sharing to secession. To elucidate the implications of overlapping cleavages, in Chapter Two I explore the case of Czechoslovakia, where the center-periphery cleavage had to be addressed within the political system following the 1989 regime transition as it overlapped with ethnic identity. Since the cleavage between nationalist (Slovak) and liberal (Czech) political elites could not be resolved within the system, the result was the separation of the two republics, an option that did not exist for neighboring Poland and Hungary which also suffered from center-periphery cultural cleavages, but were relatively ethnically homogenous. Researchers have commonly focused only on ethno-national differences as a source for nationalist mobilization. However, center-periphery cleavages within an ethno-national group can also result in nationalist mobilization of a different nature. It is therefore crucial to turn our attention to these intra-ethnic cleavages to understand the populist-nationalist surge.

1.2.3 Why Right Wing Movements?

Liah Greenfeld defines two ideas of nationalism: an individualistic-libertarian idea of nationalism which follows from the perception of the nation as sovereign people; and a collective-authoritarian idea of nationalism which follows from the perception of the nation as a unique
people in which sovereignty lies in the collective.\textsuperscript{32} Though the two forms co-exist, sometimes within the same nation, the latter type, collective authoritarian idea of nationalism, emerged chronologically later and became more widespread.\textsuperscript{33} This distinction can account for the affiliation we often see between the political right and nationalism. In Europe in particular the political right has been more closely affiliated with nationalist ideology. Radical right groups are therefore able to incorporate elements of national identity with greater ease to justify their actions and agenda. Moreover, in the cases I discuss, much of the groups’ violence is framed as vigilante “justice”. Right wing nationalist groups are overtly hawkish and this framing can align with their ‘law and order’ rhetoric.\textsuperscript{34}

Some elements of the theory outlined here however, could explain the ability of other types of groups to avoid state crackdown. The far left can presumably use national ethos to rhetorically coerce the center to adopt radical perceptions. Where contested elements of national identity echo more closely left wing ideas, the dynamics of the relationship between the political center and the radical left should be similar to the relationship between the political center and the radical right theorized here.

In Latin America, many national identities are contested around questions of inequality. Historically, it was often the left making viable claims to represent the people, and portraying the


\textsuperscript{33} Ibid pp. 8-9

right as alien. Accordingly, Latin American populism is associated with the left. Nationalism in these cases was based more on ideas of popular sovereignty than on shared ethnicity. In some Latin American cases, ideas of popular sovereignty are connected to Marxist groups. Accordingly, my theory of the penetration of extremism to the mainstream probably applies to Marxist groups in Latin America as it applies to jingoist right wing groups in Europe, the United States, and Israel. The early development of French nationalism is another notable example. During the French revolution, French national identity was formed around civic ideas, and in turn civic ideas radicalized the political center. I have chosen to limit the study to the relationship between the far right and the political center as it has been the most prominent process of extremism of the center in the last few decades.

Another type of group often connected with organized violence is criminal organizations. Since I discuss political narratives as a driving force of state leniency toward extremist groups, it seems at first that only ideological groups fall within the scope of the theory. While I do not address criminal organizations, some lessons can be drawn about them, and some thoughts on criminal organizations can elucidate the theoretical grounds of this research. Criminal organizations usually enforce law within their ranks, and in their geographical area of control. This action of law enforcement is accompanied by a claim to legitimacy, as no organization can rule on coercion alone over time. Toward the areas under their control criminal organizations can probably claim to represent the people and their interest better than the state. This claim is based on some


combination of shared regional identity, shared history, and public goods provision. While it is not the national claim to hegemony my theory addresses, it is nonetheless a similar process in the local level. The main difference is that state capacity takes a more dominant role in these cases, as states plagued with regionally dominant criminal organizations often lack the resources to compete, and prefer to concede the regional territory altogether.

1.3 Uneven and Contradicting National Identity

1.3.1 Nationalism

The main issue this dissertation problematizes is national identity. I argue that the uneven spread of national identity, and contradictory understandings of the nation create the conditions for successful radical framing around nationalism. Michael Hechter defines nationalism as “collective action designed to render the boundaries of the nation congruent with those of its governance unit.” This political action driven definition allows for a variation in the definition of the nation, the boundaries, and the nature of the governance unit, which is useful for the purpose of this work. A change in the definition of the nation or the perception of its geographical borders


can then explain the reemergence of nationalism in cases where the nation already has a political unit. There are many definitions of the nation, some view it as an identity group based on shared language and ethnicity,\(^{39}\) or on shared history and culture, others emphasize the possibility for civic nationhood, a shared identity based on liberal citizenship. Much scholarship in the past few decades focuses on the constructed nature of the national community, or ties the rise of nations with advancement in communication technology.\(^{40}\) On the other hand, some believe nations are older and less malleable, and regard the constructed view of the nation as both historically misleading, and as misrepresentation of the meaning of the national group.\(^{41}\) These definitions all view a nation as a solidarity group but differ in their analysis of the commonalities nation members share and their origins.\(^{42}\)

Rogers Brubaker offers a different category of analysis. He questions the ‘groupness’ of the national group, the tendency to take for granted that ethno-national groups are internally homogenous and externally bounded units.\(^{43}\) Instead of an innate trait of ethnicity, Brubaker suggests we view the level of ethnic ‘groupness’ as an empirical outcome.\(^{44}\) If this is the case then

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\(^{39}\) Smith, 1986


\(^{42}\) Greenfeld makes the same observation when she argues the content of nationalism changes because nationalism is a set of ideologies rather than a substantial form of group. Greenfeld 1993 p. 7

\(^{43}\) Brubaker, 2002 p. 164

\(^{44}\) Ibid p. 168
group-making should be examined as a project.\footnote{Ibid p. 171} Considering Brubaker’s critique, I define the nation as the effort to create a solidarity group through shared ethnicity, history, culture, language, territory, or civic identity. This problematization of the shared trait of the nation follows from Brubaker, but the purpose here is to discuss conflicting understandings of the nation across populations and geographic territories. Brubaker on the other hand seems to imply that the failure to achieve ‘groupness’ lies in indifference of populations to a top-down group identification, rather than to multiple understandings of a single nation.\footnote{Brubaker, Rogers. \textit{Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe}. Cambridge University Press, 1996.} The ideas of intra-national conflict discussed here and Brubaker’s intra-national indifference are connected. Projects of ‘group making’ targeting indifferent populations might be intended to unify the national group, but they are just as likely to create sub-groups with conflicting perceptions of the nation for several reasons. First, group making assumes the existence of a hegemonic identity which populations can belong to or not. However, if there are competing ideas of the nation then national mobilization around one or both views can lead to intra-national conflict. Second, even if the center elite is trying to mobilize support around nationalism it can lose control over the project and cede power to competing periphery elites.

1.3.2 The Origins of Uneven Nationalism

For Dankwart Rustow there is only one pre condition for democratization – national unity, "It simply means that the vast majority of citizens in a democracy-to-be must have no doubt or mental
reservations as to which political community they belong to.”

But there is a clarification, “The background condition, however, is best fulfilled when national unity is accepted unthinkingly, is silently taken for granted. Any vocal consensus about national unity, in fact, should make us wary. Most of the rhetoric of nationalism has poured from the lips of people who felt least secure in their sense of national identity.”

As Rustow recognizes here, in some cases, though citizens nominally know to which national community they belong, the content of this identity, and the borders of the community are contested, not silently accepted, not taken for granted. I argue that this contestation is the source of populist radical right rhetorical campaigns as elaborated below. This section discusses the origins, nature and implications of absence of national unity or of uneven and contradicting national identity.

According to Anthony Marx, after an initial exclusionary phase, nations consolidated and actively sought to present themselves as naturally inclusionary to all members of the territorial unit. However, some nations never achieve consolidation and the top down process of nation building fails to reach most subjects. Deep divisions between classes or between center and periphery may inhibit the consolidation of a coherent uncontested national identity. Stain Rokkan’s Center and Periphery categories are useful here. Rokkan identifies peripheries as geographically distant from the center, differentiated from, and dependent on the center in the economic, cultural,

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48 ibid


or political spheres.\textsuperscript{51} The level of difference and dependency of the periphery varies, and the variation helps us observe different levels of integration between center and periphery. To Rokkan, the lack of integration of the periphery is defined as ‘resistance’ to integration, a terminology that reflects modernization theories’ view on peripheries more broadly.\textsuperscript{52} Accordingly, peripheries are to be integrated into the center culturally, economically, and politically in a top down process that the center imposes on the periphery. But as noted by Rokkan, center-periphery is a relational definition. Despite the hierarchy between them, the center may fail to integrate the periphery because of its own weakness, the periphery leadership is a political actor with its own agency and agenda, and the process of integration is neither continuous nor linear even when center and periphery share ethnicity and language.

In his book, \textit{Nations and Nationalism},\textsuperscript{53} Ernest Gellner vividly depicts the evolution of nationalism in the periphery. Gellner’s ‘Ruritania’ is a rural region with a common dialect. At some moment in time, Ruritanian emerging urban elite articulated a new shared identity by framing local culture and grievances as national characteristics.\textsuperscript{54} Through this process, Ruritania developed a separate and salient national identity from that of Megalomania, the imperial center. Though the urban elites celebrated the symbols and heroes of the countryside, they remained the urban elite to their rural co-nationals. Gellner ends the process of national formation there, with the crystallization of a new national group. But is that the end of the story?

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid pp. 3-5
\textsuperscript{52} Lerner, Daniel. “The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East,” 1958.
\textsuperscript{53} Gellner, 1983.
\textsuperscript{54} ibid pp. 58-62
I argue that within the national group, the dynamic relationship between urban elite and the periphery, or Megalomania and Ruritania, continues to shape political identities and is a source for ongoing mobilization. Differences between center and periphery in some of the cases discussed in this research are not only socio-economic or cultural, but also reflect fundamentally different views on national identity and national belonging. To Gellner the very emergence of nations is related to industrialization: the national form aligns with, and meets the needs of industrial economies.\(^\text{55}\) We can therefore assume that as long as industrial economies endure so will the national group. This is commonly how scholars conceptualize the story of nationalism: national groups were formed\(^\text{56}\) then persisted supported by widespread self-determination framing,\(^\text{57}\) and the international state system and its institutions.\(^\text{58}\) The politicization of certain national identities over time has been attributed to many factors from weak state capacity to institutional design to economic disparities.\(^\text{59}\) In all these cases however, national identity and its saliency is understood as a relationship between ethno-national groups, rather than as tensions within an ethno-national group over questions of identity. What we see in many places however, is a tension much more similar to the old Ruritania-Megalomania cleavage, short of the formation of new national identity: a struggle over identity between center and periphery, and elite mobilization around that cleavage time and again.

\(^{55}\) ibid

\(^{56}\) Some though argue national groups are not a recent centuries’ phenomenon. Gat, , 2012.


Central Eastern Europe, discussed in depth in the following chapter, serves as a good example for uneven spread of national identity. Following the formation of a separate national identity, the urban political center in most Central Eastern European countries did not engage in nation building projects that resulted in unified identities. Although there were projects intended to make peasants into members of the nation, these were not always officially conducted by the state, and were usually not inclusive projects. Much of the region continued to be subjected to foreign rule after the emergence of national identity. As a result, inclusive top down nation building projects were difficult to achieve as the national group did not control the state. By the time these nations gained independence, many of the political units were composed of multiple national groups, and unifying nation building efforts were doomed to fail. This failure is relevant not only to the relationship between ethno-national groups, but also within the main national group in society. Urban centers in the region were very cosmopolitan, in most of them Germans and Jews and were overrepresented. Moreover, titular urban middle classes were relatively small. Consequently, the urban center and intellectual elite were perceived as foreign to the national group even after countries gained their independence from foreign rule.

Poland is one such example. Struggles over national identity accompanied the Polish national project from early on. The foreign rules of the partitions posed an institutional threat to Polish national identity. Policies of Russification and Germanization limited Polish education and

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60 Darden, 2011


62 Judt and Snyder, 2013
the use of the Polish language. The top-down efforts to establish a unified German or Russian national identity were attempts to abolish Polish identity. This was particularly true for the Prussian controlled areas, where Bismarck’s kulturkampf restricted Catholicism that was so tied with Polish national identity. The Polish “center” national elite of that era was composed of liberal nobility who supported independence, but held inclusive views as to membership in a future independent Poland. In the view of this liberal elite, individuals could hold multiple overlapping identities. This elite is best represented by Józef Piłsudski, Poland’s leader during most of the interwar years. Prior to WWI and Poland’s new-found independence, Piłsudski believed Polish territory should include Lithuania and Ukraine as a counter to its strong neighbors, in particular Russia, and was tolerant toward multiple identities within Poland. As a counter to this cosmopolitan view of citizenship, Piłsudski’s political rival, Roman Dmowski placed an independent and exclusive Polish national identity as the single goal for Poland. Dmowski, considered the father of modern Polish nationalism, viewed the Jews and Germans he encountered in Warsaw as foreign and as dangerous to Polish national identity. The project of nationalization Dmowski initiated in the Polish countryside was not intended to make all peasants into Polish nationals, it was consciously an exclusive project which alienated both non-Pols in urban centers and many peasants in the Russian region of partitioned Poland whose multiple identities were previously tolerated. Thus,

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64 ibid

65 Walicki, 1999

66 Walicki, 1999; Zarycki, 2000

67 Dmowski became convinced later in life that Jews must be removed from Poland because of their threat to a unified Polish nation. Walicki, 1999; Porter, Brian A. Who Is a Pole and Where Is Poland? Territory and Nation in the Rhetoric of Polish National Democracy before 1905. na, 1992.
the struggle between liberal-cosmopolitan views and national-exclusive ones has deep roots in Poland.

Across Central Europe, elites representing the cultural and physical periphery continued to mobilize support on the cleavage between the ‘true’ countryside nationals and the ‘foreign’ urban cosmopolitans. In other words, the urban centers of Central Europe transformed into a Megalomania to the countryside’s Ruritania. Different regimes in the region intensified the center periphery cleavages. This was certainly the case for the communist regimes, which both starved the countryside and launched anti-elitist campaigns at moments of crisis. Thus, even though the urban centers of the region were far from cosmopolitan after the ethnic cleansing of Jews and expulsion of German following WWII, the perception of the center as foreign prevailed.

Foreign rule was a clear challenge in 19th century Central Europe, but even in countries that achieved independence earlier, the political center sometimes remained entirely foreign to the periphery. The case of Italy is one such example. For decades following unification, Italians across the country did not speak the official language and maintained deep regional distinctions. This weakness of identity was the source of recurring tension and violence until World War II, and even in later periods. In the Italian case, large sections of the population were excluded from participation in the elitist political process, and thus sought alternative channels to express discontent.

While many states were formed around a dominant national group, that did not imply that the community of citizens was homogenous. Indeed, regional distinctions persisted in many cases.

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68 Hungary did gain relative independence in the form of the dual monarchy from 1867. Czechoslovakia and Poland, the other cases I explore in the following chapter only gained their independence after WWI.
How did France manage to unite all its citizens under a single identity whereas many Eastern European states failed to do so? The discrepancy might be the result of lower state capacity in Eastern Europe, foreign rule as discussed above, the timing of nation building, or all the above.\textsuperscript{69}

According to Darden, national identity spreads through the education system, and is passed on to following generations through the family unit. Thus, if mass schooling precedes the attempt of national consolidation, national minorities would have already adopted a separate national identity, and would be reluctant to conform to the dominant identity in the state.\textsuperscript{70} As discussed above, the focus of this dissertation is tensions over national identity within a dominant ethnic group.

There are critical junctures that can address uneven national identity. When designing new institutions, center-periphery cleavages can be incorporated and represented in mainstream politics.\textsuperscript{71} Regime transition can change long held practices and alter the power dynamics between groups in society. After WWII, Germany went through a conscious process of construction of a new inclusionary ethos, and denouncing the militarist and nationalist tendencies it held for many years. This process seemed to have been successful, although Germany has not suffered a challenging economic crisis, and the legal control over any public expression of radicalism hinders the possibility of observing deep divisions and extremist views commonly held in society.\textsuperscript{72}

Conversely, critical junctures can reproduce existing cleavages through formal and informal institutions. In some Central and Eastern European transitions from communism, troubled pasts were buried, or worse, violently reproduced. The process of transition itself bears

\textsuperscript{69} Weber, 1976; Darden, 2011

\textsuperscript{70} Darden 2011

\textsuperscript{71} Kitschelt 1992

\textsuperscript{72} “Extremism as a security threat in the Central Europe”, Open Society Foundations Publication. 2013
consequences for its outcomes. Vast literature has been dedicated to the importance of transitional justice; the constitution writing process; and the nature of the relationship between pre and post transition incumbents.\textsuperscript{73} In general, some level of transitional justice is considered important to heal past wounds, although too much of it might lead to conflict. Truth and Reconciliation Committees have become popular in recent years as a mechanism to try and achieve the “right” level of transitional justice, though evidence for their effectiveness is mixed.\textsuperscript{74}

When regime transitions become ‘group-making projects’\textsuperscript{75} they may increase the level of animosity between ethnic groups. As it is a time of destabilization of existing legal frameworks, the sense of insecurity can serve as an opportunity for threatened elites to use long hidden past narratives of exclusion, or even rewrite them if such narratives were not reproduced in social and political institutions in recent times.\textsuperscript{76} Moreover, heightened mobilization coupled with vulnerable institutions may serve as a context for a rise in support for extremist movements in general. As noted in the previous section, group making projects also polarize intra-ethnic groups, which coalesce around different understandings of the nation.


\textsuperscript{74} Elster, 2004

\textsuperscript{75} Brubaker, 2002

The uneven spread of nationalism holds a disruptive potential. In some contexts, different ideas about the nation can be contradictory leading to polarization, the framing of problems as indivisible, and delegitimization of political opponents. This is a problematic type of political polarization because political views are tied to deep identity groups with long histories of grievances. Contrary to interethnic cleavages the possibility for policy solutions such as secession or clear formal political power sharing arrangements is absent. More positively, outburst of civil war is also rather unlikely. However, there are other channels for the expression of contention in these cases. One of them is the de-legitimization of the political center through nationalist mobilization turned against a competing elite.

1.4 Uneven and Contradictory Nationalism and Populist Radical Framing

In his seminal work on frame analysis, Erving Goffman describes how individuals perceive, interpret, and organize events in terms of primary frameworks, which they usually employ unconsciously rather than choose deliberately. Frames, in other words render meaning to what is otherwise meaningless. Though the choice of frame is unconscious on the individual level, political and social entrepreneurs can actively choose existing frames as a rhetorical tool to

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77 Hassner, Ron E. “‘To Halve and to Hold’: Conflicts over Sacred Space and the Problem of Indivisibility.” Security Studies 12, no. 4 (2003): 1–33; Goddard, Stacie E. “Uncommon Ground: Indivisible Territory and the Politics of Legitimacy.”


79 Ibid pp. 21-27
contextualize actions and events, shape how they are perceived, and consequentially to mobilize support. These entrepreneurs can explain their actions as “self-determination”; correction of “injustice”, “a struggle against corruption”, or even “protection of civilization,” all common collective action frames. Framing actions can be contested by counter framing from opponents and the media, and by significant discrepancies between events and frames.

Some framing actions are more difficult to contest than others because they can limit the discursive options available to other actors. According to Benford and Snow, few frames are broad enough such that when political actors employ them, they can constrain the actions of other groups in society. They term these, ‘master frames’, frames that are, “broad in interpretive scope, inclusivity, flexibility, and cultural resonance.” Hegemonic nationalism is such a frame. Groups that can frame their actions through nationalism draw on widespread and deeply held ideas, which also elicit strong emotions.

Elites that represent the periphery can use hegemonic nationalism because they own some of the national mythology. As discussed above, elites drew on the symbols of the periphery to develop and spread national identity. As a result, the locations and “traditions” of the periphery


82 Ibid

83 ibid p 619


85 This does not imply that the traditions of the periphery were simply incorporated into the nation. Many of these traditions were not even practiced in the countryside when elites “rediscovered” them. Hobsbawm, Eric, and Terence Ranger. The Invention of Tradition. Cambridge University Press, 2012; Anderson, 1983
often continue to symbolize the nation, and periphery elites have a deeply rooted claim on national symbols and history. Periphery elites have another powerful master frame at their disposal, injustice frame. The history of grievances vis-à-vis the political center means that a sense of injustice already exists in the collective consciousness. This collective history can connect to personal experiences of injustice and elicit strong emotions.86

The combination of hegemonic nationalism and injustice is commonly used in the political sphere. Political leaders in power can direct a sense of national injustice toward an external enemy, or a domestic ‘other’ like minority groups. This type of framing can unite divided parties around the leader and its effect has been termed “rally round the flag”.87 Such campaigns have been explored in nationalism literature, in particular for cases of ethnic conflict.88 However, when national identity is uneven and contradictory, the combination of hegemonic and injustice frames can be used to target the domestic political center, leading to its delegitimization, and to transformative politics. In other words, periphery groups that use the potent combination of nationalism and injustice both harness hegemony and challenge it.

One useful model to explain how central political actors respond to the rise of nationalist-transformative challenges is that of rhetorical coercion.89 According to Krebs and Jackson, rhetorical coercion occurs when claimants manage to talk their opponent into a corner, leaving the

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89 Krebs and Jackson, 2007
opponents no rhetorical materials to craft their agenda. The opponents thus adopt the claimants’ premises, regardless of the opponents’ original stand.\textsuperscript{90} Using the national ethos, groups undermine the legitimacy of central political actors. Having no preferable alternative narrative to offer, central political actors shift in the direction of the far right. Successful rhetorical coercion is more common when there are limited available narratives in society that actors can use to form claims.\textsuperscript{91} In societies in which the center built national identity on periphery national symbols but failed to create inclusive politics, political elites will have few rhetorical choices, and will be pushed to adopt exclusive nationalism.

Radical right wing groups place national symbols at the front and center of their campaigns. The use of ancient symbols and national myths is intended to demonstrate that they are the ‘true’ followers of the nation’s forefathers, thus they attempt to frame their current day actions through these national motifs. As discussed above, elites of the countries’ metropolis employed the same countryside traditional symbols to stake a claim over the national territory vis-à-vis the imperial metropolis. Using these symbols against the domestic political elite is thus very powerful as the periphery has a strong claim on them, and the public as a whole should have a deep attachment to these symbols. The framing action itself combines old symbols and new agenda. The national flag is the most commonly used symbol, but these groups’ use of national ethos extends far beyond the flag. They infuse traditional holiday customs with new meaning connected to their agenda; reinterpret historical events to fit the group’s message; redraw ancient maps to reflect present day

\textsuperscript{90} ibid

\textsuperscript{91} ibid
political aspirations; and retell stories of past heroics to feature characters similar in spirit and
goals to present day group leaders.

Territory is often central in these stories. Locations bearing historic national meaning are
celebrated and serve as gathering spots for the groups. Memorable battlegrounds are an example
for such key location. Extremist groups will often retell the story of historic battles presenting their
current political goals as similar to those of the national heroes of the past. If successful, this
reconstruction of the past can both bring the extremists under the long coattails of famed national
heroes, and deny ownership over national myths from other groups in society.

Territory is central to the Israeli case discussed in Chapter Five. The Zionist national
movement used from the 19th century to tie its claims of self-determination to a specific land for
political reason. Biblical sites became national ones. Radical right actors followed suit when they
attempted to claim ownership on both biblical and national origins. As Chapter Five demonstrates,
Jewish settlers tied the controversial Occupied territories settlement project to earlier Zionist
project, and named the West Bank territories by the biblical (and geographically inaccurate) name,
Judea and Samaria.

In the Hungarian case, the 1956 Revolution and its sites have served as a common place to
mobilize support around. As will be further discussed in Chapter Four, Gabor Vona, the leader of
radical right party Jobbik often refers in speeches to his party as the true successors of the (left

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92 On the centrality of territory as a national symbol see Smith, Anthony D. “States and Homelands: The Social and
“Homeland Making and the Territorialization of National Identity.” *Ethnonationalism in the Contemporary World:*

wing) 1956 revolutionaries. He draws a direct line from the fight against Soviet control to Jobbik’s current day struggles against political elites and desire to rid Hungary of vestiges of the old regime, and restore national pride. Conversely, current day left wing is portrayed as the successor of those Hungarians who followed Soviet orders and took arms against their own people in 1956. The party commemorates the events of 1956 in locations like the Corvin Cinema, the place most identified with the 1956 street battles between Hungarians and Soviet tanks in the heart of Budapest. Other important locations for Jobbik are historical territories of Hungary from 1920 era that now belong to neighboring states.

The territories of ‘Greater Hungary’ are also an example for myths of victimization, another well used national commonplace that can help radical right groups frame their claims. Some nations carry narratives of victimization by great powers, neighbors, international opinion, or all the above. Some, as discussed here, connect historical domestic actors, and their current day framed successors to historical injustice. These inflammatory stories can trigger powerful reaction in large populations, and serve as a tool of mobilization. In radical right framing, extremist policy like expansion or violence against minorities can be justified by past victimization, and thus they return to the dates, stories, and sites of victimization, refer to them often, and commemorate them publicly. In the Hungarian case, the story of Greater Hungary also places the periphery at the center

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94 Imre Nagy, the leader of the 1956 Revolution wished to break away from the Warsaw Pact, but he remained committed to Marxism.


96 In 2014 for example, I attended the Jobbik rally commemorating the 1956 Revolution (October 23 is a national holiday in Hungary). The rally took place at Corvin Cinema and continued in a march with torches in the center of Budapest.

97 Benfield and Snow 2000 on victimization frames.
both symbolically and geographically. The division of Hungarian territories tore apart the Hungarian countryside, and regions that were in the past the middle of the country are now on the very border. Radicals celebrate these areas as the heart of Hungary. The loss of territory also reinforced the dependency of the periphery on Budapest as Hungary lost many of its peripheral urban areas and geographical peripheries were disconnected from their metropoles.\(^98\)

In Poland, populist right wing party PiS heavily draws on the country’s long history of partition and troubled relationship with its powerful neighbors, Russia and Germany, to mobilize popular support. Events are interpreted to fit this narrative, even without factual basis. For example, the party chaired by Jaroslaw Kaczynski continues to promote the notion, despite no supporting evidence, that the Smolensk air crash, in which President Lech Kaczyński died in 2010, was caused by the Kremlin.\(^99\) This is one of many stories about both Russia and the West intended to reinforce a sense of victimization that justifies extreme actions like the curtailing of liberal rights.

The process of accessing and capturing national history and symbols needs to be problematized. It is by no means obvious that the message of marginal groups will reach the mainstream. Moreover, hegemonic groups are not likely to easily relinquish ownership over national symbols. Chapter Five and Six describes such struggles in the case of Jewish settlers in the 1970 and 1980s, and the case of the KKK in 1920s US respectively. This process entails political struggle over policy preferences and over narrative. Issues that radical actors can tie to national ethos include immigration policy; policy concerning the relationship between groups in

\(^{98}\) Among the large cities that ceded from Hungary in the Trianon Treaty are Bratislava (then Pozsony), Cluj (Kolozsvár), Timisoara (Temesvár), and Zagreb (Zagreb).

society such as chauvinist welfare and service allocation; jingoist foreign policy or policy on domestic security; and rejection of trade and economic and cultural protectionism. Groups can usually present their policy preferences on these issues as following from the creed of national identity, or at least an acceptable interpretation of national identity. Immigration policy determines belonging to the group of national citizens. Policies concerning relations between groups determine who is and isn’t a full member of the national community. Foreign policy and trade shape the borders, sovereignty and independence of the nation. Thus, shared symbols and stories from the national pool can be conjured to frame these issues.

One debate in scholarship on populist radical right parties is whether large mainstream parties change their agenda due to the success of far right parties. This research cannot weigh in on whether there is a cross-national trend of large parties adopting extremist parties agenda. In both the Israeli and the Hungarian case (Chapters Three and Four) the mainstream did adopt radical actors’ agenda. This was not so much a response to electoral success but to the growing attention and exposure radical groups were getting in media and public discourse. This response reinforces the theory that rhetorical coercion was at work in these cases.

The closest competing explanation to rhetorical coercion is electoral competition. According to the logic of electoral competition, the political center competes for votes with the far right and thus strategically chooses to adopt its agenda. The political center does not comply with radical right agenda to demonstrate its loyalty to the nation and preserve its credibility, but to

\footnotesize

100 Mudde, 2007

directly win the radical right constituency. Chapter Three tests these two alternative explanations for the Hungarian case.

1.5 **Research Design, Methodology, and Data**

1.5.1 Cross Case Comparison

To support the theory outlined in this chapter I use both cross case comparison and in depth process tracing within individual cases. The purpose of the comparison (Chapter Two) is to explore the roots of uneven and contradictory spread of national identity and to explore how patterns of nationhood are reproduced in moments of historical change. The cases in this comparison are four Central Eastern European states: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. This is a most similar cases comparison\(^ {102} \) that employs similar historical experiences and transitions in government, and in particular the 1989 regime transition they all share. Though the cases have similar background conditions of historical center-periphery cleavages, their outcomes regarding transformative populism vary. These conditions are conducive for a comparison of the different paths for addressing center-periphery relations these countries took.

To identify uneven and contradictory nationalism I conduct both a historical survey on the development of nationalism in the center and the periphery, and an exploration of the process of democratic transition and constitution drafting in and after 1989. For the former, I rely on secondary sources. The latter is based on several sources: secondary resources, local and international media, and the *East European Constitutional Review*, a professional publication.

\(^ {102} \) On most similar case comparison: Goertz, Gary, and James Mahoney. *A Tale of Two Cultures: Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences*. Princeton University Press, 2012.
which followed constitution making in the region in real time from 1992 onwards. Though this is a liberal publication that takes a normative stand on constitution making, it is also a highly detailed and reliable source of information on the process.

1.5.2 Case Studies

The second element of analysis is process tracing in three individual case studies: Jewish Settlers in the West Bank in the 1970s and 1980s, radical right in Hungary since 1989, and the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s United States. The purpose of this investigation is to trace the logic and causal mechanisms of radical right capture, and examine whether these apply in different contexts. Beach and Pedersen define a case as “an instance of a causal process playing out, linking a cause (or a set of causes) with an outcome.” The causal process I trace appears in all the cases I have chosen but the mechanisms and their interaction changes according to each case’s context. The Hungarian case is a pathway case, a case in which one set of factors and not a different one, is likely to have caused a positive outcome. Uneven and contradictory national identity, radical right use of national ethos, and the outcome of radical nationalist capture are all present in the case. Moreover, Hungarian radical right party Jobbik, its predecessor, MIEP, and other extremist groups follow the generally accepted definitions of radical right; they are exclusionary, xenophobic, and anti-democratic. Thus, the Hungarian case is the most straightforward case in


104 Beach and Pedersen, 2016, p. 5

105 There are many definitions of radical right in the literature. I bring here the widely used Mudde, 2007. See also Carter, Elisabeth. The Extreme Right in Western Europe: Success or Failure? Manchester : New York: Manchester
which to probe causal mechanisms, and evaluate alternative arguments through process tracing method.  

Like the Hungarian case, in the Israeli case as well, the independent variables, causal mechanisms, and dependent variable are present. However, the group I discuss here, though employing violence and other extralegal strategies, is significantly different ideologically. 1970s-1980s settlers in Israel are an expansionist rather than a strictly exclusionary movement. The implication of this difference is that unlike classic radical right groups, the settlers of the period are not status quo seekers nor are they attempting to reverse social reforms or return to lost values. Instead, they seek new reforms. Moreover, the group links its agenda to “positive” (as well as “negative”) elements of national identity such as settling the territory, rather than only to “negative” ones like exclusion or victimization. These differences changed the course of nationalist capture in Israel. For example, they made an alliance between the group and mainstream actors much stronger, and thus the capture more far reaching. I explore these mechanisms in the Israeli case.

Finally, the case of the Ku Klux Klan in 1920s US is not one in which both dependent and independent variables are present. Historically, there were conflicting visions of citizenship in the

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106 Goertz and Mahoney, 2012

107 Qualifications: 1970s 1980s Jewish settlers practiced exclusion and used a heavily Jewish centered language. However, they did not list exclusion as one of their core characteristics nor did they mobilize support based on outspoken exclusion. There were always exclusive strands of settlers. I only refer to their means of persuasion toward broader society. As noted by Lustick 1993 the internal rhetoric of settlers was always Jewish-supremacist. And today’s radical right in general and settlers within them are far more traditional radical right.
United States, and many states had standing exclusionary practices for long periods. However, on the national level liberal values were prevalent, and by the 1920s the idea of full citizenship, if not the practice of it, was widespread in the US North. The result was partial success for the Klan. On the local level, they succeeded and faced little state repression and denouncement where certain conditions were met. On the other hand, on the national level the group achieved some initial success but faced intense resistance and soon failed. Thus, each case provides a different set of conditions that helped update and specify the theory.

The process-tracing element of this research relies on multiple sources of qualitative data. During a year of field work in Hungary and Israel, I conducted seventy two semi structured in depth interviews, with politicians, relevant state officials, NGOs, journalists, and regional specialists. Interview subjects represented a variety of political affiliations, and included ministers, parliament members, and key figures in the military, police, and economic sector. Nearly all interviews were held in person. The length of interviews was between an hour and several hours over multiple meetings with several key subjects. Most interview subjects were selected based on their position and professional knowledge (elite interviews with office holders). In addition, I conducted a series of interviews with citizens from the Hungarian countryside in October-November 2014.

I spent over ten months collecting and analyzing archival data. The main archive I visited was the Israeli National Archive. I also used the online archives of the Israeli Knesset; Historical


109 There were multiple causes for the failure which I explore in depth in the chapter dedicated to the Ku Klux Klan.

110 Sixty eight interviews were in conducted in person; three interviews were conducted on the phone; and one on Skype.
Jewish Press; Hungarian National Assembly; and Hungarian Prime Minister Archive of Speeches. The materials I collected included unique correspondence of politicians and state officials both domestic and international, government, parliament, and committee meeting transcripts, political speeches, official state publications, and pieces of legislation. I also conducted a large-scale newspaper review and integrated data from hundreds of news articles into my research. For the Israeli case, the data served for a systematic discourse analysis to elucidate the rhetorical processes around the settlement issue. The data sources, and analysis protocol are presented in detail in Chapter Four.

Put together, these rich materials helped evaluate my theory vis-à-vis alternative accounts. I supplemented these primary resources with vast literature including memoirs, biographies, and secondary resources. In addition, during my field work trips I observed and participated in gatherings and demonstrations of political parties across the political spectrum.

This research examines cases in which radicals employ violence and other extralegal methods as part of their strategy, most commonly vigilante policing against minorities and other targeted enemies. There are several reasons to focus on such cases. First, mainstream politics’ acceptance and even adoption of radical populist rhetoric and agenda is even more puzzling when radical groups disrupt order and undermine the rule of law. We would expect the state to take measures against organized violence and reject its ideas, but this is not always the case. Second, while recent years have brought about a rise in populism in many places, populism has deep roots in these extreme cases, which allows us to observe a variety of complex mechanisms, and use them to understand the unique and generalizable causes of populisms. Finally, when I started this research, the penetration of radical populism into the mainstream in the form of transformative
populism was still a limited phenomenon and my selection of the focus of this study on the extreme cases was to some extent an outcome of availability of cases.

1.6 PLAN OF THE DISSERTATION

The first stage of the theory outlined here – the uneven spread of contradictory national identity is explored in depth in Chapter Two. Through the cases of four Central European states I show that the process of transition presented different options for countries to either reproduce long standing center-periphery cleavages, or address them. Unlike Poland and Hungary, Czechoslovakia had to address the cleavage in the transition because it overlapped with ethnic identity. The need to define the relationship between the two nations within the federation created a constitutional crisis, and ultimately a separation led by contradictory elites. Though at the time this was an inadvertent outcome, in the long run it resolved tensions between center and periphery that would later burden the rest of the region. The result was the creation of two more even nations, though one was culturally liberal (the Czech Republic) and the other culturally nationalist (Slovakia). The Slovak case in particular demonstrates that national unity rather than liberalism can serve as protection against transformative radical populism. The country had always had radical right parties that were well integrated into the political system, and yet it did not experience the type of radical transformation that Hungary and Poland are currently experiencing.

Chapter Three follows from chapter Two and delves into the Hungarian case. Both Hungary and Poland have a transformative populist party in government that holds an absolute majority in
parliament. In both cases, the ruling party has taken measures to curtail the constitutional court, free media, and civil society. The Hungarian case is of particular interest because the transformation was rapid and unexpected. As Chapter Two shows, Hungary’s transition was the most liberal in the region, its economic liberalization was successful, and for a long period the main axis of the political system was economic rather than cultural. The rise to power of Fidesz as a ruling power in 2010, the success of radical right Jobbik, and the transformations that followed, shocked domestic and international observers.

Chapter Three examines the mechanism of rhetorical coercion vis-à-vis alternative explanations for the shift of the mainstream toward radical populism, and the leniency of politicians toward extremist violence. I show that though electoral competition with the radical right existed, the actors most likely to adopt radical discourse and agenda were not in direct political competition with the radical right. Instead, the claim that only radicals are brave and honest enough to represent the views of real Hungarians against the falsehood of domestic and international liberalism, took over the political system and became nearly impossible to contest.

Continuing to explore rhetorical mechanisms of radical actors, Chapter Four examines the language of Jewish settlers in the 1970s and 1980s. Using unique primary resources, I show that the settler movement was able to frame the settlement issue as an integral part of national identity, whereas Jewish-Israeli settlements opposition used other discourses to frame their claims. Settlers’ rhetorical project was very ambitious. More than justifying specific actions, they attempted to build a narrative that placed the act of settlement as a link in a chain that began when God gave Abraham the promised land, continued with the Zionist movement, and was now picked up by their successors in the West Bank. Settlement opposition had far narrower ambitions and they focused
on instrumental arguments that neither attempted to deny the bond of Jews to the land of the West Bank, nor construct a different identity narrative that contradicted the act of settlement.

Another interesting finding of the research on the Israeli case is that settlers were far more positive than settler opposition in their rhetorical tone. This may seem counter intuitive for a radical group. However, unlike other radicals, settlers had a constructive project to push forward. The positive tone was very helpful in promoting the project in certain periods. It moreover helped the movement form political alliances with significant actors, which in the long run helped transform Israeli political mainstream. However, when threatened, the settlers too resorted to far more negative tone, employing fear rather than hatred in those decades.

In both the Hungarian and Israeli cases mainstream politics adopted radical narratives, and radical groups themselves broke the law and employed violence without facing consequences. The case of the 1920s Ku Klux Klan explored in Chapter Five was somewhat different. On the local level the movement was very successful, mobilizing “true Americans” (white, Protestant, native born) against others (African Americans, Catholics, Jews, immigrants). Their success was of particular interest here because through a combination of persuasion and political mobilization they managed to take over local and state politics, and penetrate local level state institution. The group received relatively lenient treatment by the state even in response to violence. However, the national level was much harder to penetrate.

The chapter demonstrates that the group was ultimately unsuccessful outside the Deep South. Aside from the internal failings of the Ku Klux Klan, several conditions contributed to its national level failure. First, the movement was decentralized in message and organization, making national collective action difficult. Second, The Ku Klux Klan always faced strong liberal opposition outside the Deep South, both locally and nationally. Finally aside from African Americans, the
minorities the group targeted were *ethnic* whites -immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe, Catholics, and Jews. These ethnic whites were a fluid identity category, and the differences between them and the Anglo Saxon whites the Ku Klux Klan represented rapidly declined in the following years.

Chapter Six concludes the dissertation by reviewing the central questions presented here, and making final remarks on the theory as it is manifested in the different empirical cases, the implications of the findings, and future research agenda.
2  **Megalomania and Ruritania Within the Nation**

The Center Periphery Cleavage and the Rise of Right Wing Populism in Central Europe

“The man who is employed for wages is as much a businessman as his employer. The attorney in a country town is as much a businessman as the corporation counsel in a great metropolis. The merchant at the crossroads store is as much a businessman as the merchant of New York. The farmer who goes forth in the morning and toils all day, begins in the spring and toils all summer, and by the application of brain and muscle to the natural resources of this country creates wealth, is as much a businessman as the man who goes upon the Board of Trade and bets upon the price of grain. The miners who go 1,000 feet into the earth or climb 2,000 feet upon the cliffs and bring forth from their hiding places the precious metals to be poured in the channels of trade are as much businessmen as the few financial magnates who in a backroom corner the money of the world. We come to speak for this broader class of businessmen [...] those hardy pioneers who braved all the dangers of the wilderness [...] are as deserving of the consideration of this party as any people in this country.”


In recent years, the political fates of four countries that transitioned from communism in 1989 have diverged. Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia had a similar starting point, but the rise of radical right nationalism and nationalist populism in the region separates them today. Poland and Hungary are experiencing institutional changes and a decline in democratic indicators, Slovakia and the Czech Republic are not, despite the fact that Slovakia has always had a prominent far right.

Though economic crisis hit the region unevenly, it cannot account for the political patterns that emerged. Indeed, Hungary suffered a severe crisis, but so did the Czech Republic, whereas Poland did not. Left wing parties in each country responded differently to the crisis, in Hungary the left-liberal alliance entirely collapsed, whereas in the Czech Republic and Slovakia left wing
or liberal-left parties remained in power. That however is not an explanation but part of the process of the transformation of the political system. Though electoral laws in the region diverge, they too cannot account for the variation in disruptive radical right populism across countries.

I argue in this chapter that one important factor has been mostly overlooked: the regional center-periphery cleavage, and the way different political systems were able to address it when the new democratic structure was put into place. Since the entire region has a long history of deep center-periphery cleavages they continue to influence political outcomes. The chapter examines whether and how center-periphery tensions were addressed at the time of transition and constitution writing. I ask whether and in what way questions of national identity and national belonging entered the process. The central argument is that where center-periphery tensions were not a part of the transition process early on, they were not integrated into mainstream politics, and thus when tensions did arise, mainstream politics was not equipped to address them. The result was the rise of transformative populism. As discussed in the previous chapter, I draw on Ernest Gellner’s terms of the imperial center, ‘Megalomania’ and the peripheral ‘Ruritania’. I argue that where center-periphery tensions were not addressed, the political urban center continued to serve as a foreign Megalomania for the periphery, and rising political elites were able to mobilize support based on claims for authentic national identity of Ruritania vis-à-vis the center.

More specifically, the chapter demonstrates that the breakdown of Czechoslovakia directly addressed the center-periphery cleavage which overlapped with ethnic identity. Hungary and Poland both failed to tackle the center-periphery cleavage at the moment of transition. In Hungary, tensions were completely ignored and were not integrated into the system. In Poland, the center failed to sufficiently integrate the demands of the periphery creating deep polarization.
The four countries examined in this chapter, also known as the Visegrad Group, serve as a useful set for comparative analysis. They have all been a border region between stronger empires, they share common histories of a search for national independence under foreign rule, they were a part of the Soviet bloc, and they transitioned from communism in 1989. Considering these similar background conditions, the current variation in political outcomes is worth a close examination. In addition, the 1989 transitions were a significant moment of change for all countries at the same time, and thus serve as a point of examination for the integration of center-periphery tensions into the new political institutions. The question of the level integration of center-periphery cleavages into politics is relevant to many political systems, the 1989 transitions in these four states provide unique settings for understanding the different paths systems can take in regards to center-periphery tensions. As elaborated below, the theory particularly applies to post-colonial and post-Soviet countries.

2.1 **Transition Paths in Central Europe**

One way in which political scientists often think about political cleavages is through their representation in the party system. In this view, a central role of political parties is to translate social cleavages into political competition. In the cases examined here, the center-periphery

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111 A working Central European alliance of the four states. See: [http://www.visegradgroup.eu/](http://www.visegradgroup.eu/)


113 Lipset and Rokkan 1967
cleavage was not immediately represented by mainstream parties. Specifically, I argue that since in Czechoslovakia the center periphery cleavage overlapped with ethnic identities, the constitutional crisis that followed the transition and resulted in the separation of the Czech Republic and Slovakia directly addressed center-periphery tensions. In Hungary, the central cleavage represented by the political system was economic, pertaining to attitudes toward economic reform. Center-periphery issues in the country were very slow to enter the political system. In Poland, center-periphery representation within the mainstream parties did appear in the long and contentious process of constitution writing, but the periphery was not represented in parliament during those years. In line with Andrew Arato,114 I do not argue that the process of constitution making was entirely flawed or exclusive, but that the process lacked legitimation, which in the long run brought about transformative populism.115

The variation in the nature of transitions and the process of constitution writing created different paths for the four political systems examined here. First, where the center periphery cleavage were addressed there were no deep tensions that led later to the de-legitimation of central rule in a moment of crisis. Both the Czech Republic and Slovakia did not experience the same transformative populism which overhauls political institutions as is currently the case in Poland and Hungary. The Czech Republic and Slovakia nonetheless differ in the nature of their political systems. The Czech Republic, the Megalomania, or ‘center’ of the theory presented here, experienced far more liberal politics. It lacks a significant far right movement and has strong social democratic and liberal parties. Slovakia, which represents Ruritania, has a far more nationalist


115 Ibid. Arato makes that point about Hungary. But notes it is relevant for Poland as well, where the radical right relies heavily on the perception of constitutional illegitimacy.
political discourse throughout the political spectrum. The left, nearly as national leaning as the far right, has not been significantly undermined by accusations of treason, serving foreign interests, and so on. Thus these two countries represent two different paths: the liberal non transformative and the national non transformative (Table 2.1).

The third path is represented by Poland and Hungary, two countries that did not incorporate the center-periphery cleavage into mainstream politics early in the transition. Though there are significant differences between the countries which will be discussed later in the chapter, in both cases liberals were successfully targeted as foreign traitors by elites who mobilized the support of ‘true’, ‘traditional’, ‘countryside’ nationals. The result was sweeping victories for transformative populism (Table 2.1).

Table 2-1 Outcomes of the Center-Periphery Cleavage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Non-Transformative</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Non-Transformative</td>
<td>Slovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformative</td>
<td>Hungary; Poland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lack of incorporation of the center-periphery cleavage into mainstream politics had significant outcomes for several reasons. First, the dichotomy between center and periphery covers a broad spectrum of issues. It includes diverging interpretations of history and culture, views on form of government and constitution, relationship with neighbors and with Russia and the European Union (EU), attitudes toward economic reforms and market structure, attitudes on

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116 Kitschlet 1992
immigration, religiosity, and more. Second, each side views the other as illegitimate and dangerous to the future of the nation. This is particularly true for the periphery’s view of the center. Where the periphery had little input in the transition, the center and even the liberal constitutions written during the transition were perceived as foreign. The global economic crisis of 2008 reinforced this perception because center elites were perceived as aligned with forces of globalization like the EU. This is both an economic alliance and a culture-values one, and thus it was easy to mark liberals as responsible for the economic crisis, the resulting high rates of unemployment and poverty, and for moral failures like the prevalent corruption in the region. Importantly, where there was some resolution to the center-periphery tension during the transition, the center was perceived as more integral to the nation. Even when elites mobilized around this cleavage in later years, they were met with opposition which offered an alternative view of the nation.

To summarize, where the transition did not address the center periphery cleavage and failed to incorporate input from the periphery, the center remained foreign and was easily portrayed as traitor in a moment of crisis. In other words, the persisting tension between Megalomania and Ruritania within a single national group led later to the de-legitimation of Megalomania and the rise of transformative populism. In cases where the cleavage was addressed, sweeping mobilization against the political center could not be as successful and while far right parties and populist parties do exist, they do not overhaul the political system.

Beyond the Central European region, the theory applies more broadly to the level of integration between liberal elites and the national identity of the periphery. Similar tensions over national identity between center and periphery are common throughout the post-colonial world where the center was empowered at the expense of the periphery. In many of these cases, weak state capacity accompanied the uneven spread of national identity. The pattern of development of
a wealthy cosmopolitan center at the expense of the periphery is also common elsewhere in the post-Soviet world.

The chapter proceeds as follows. The next section compares far right populist political outcomes in the region. I then briefly examine the history of cleavages and the way the process of transition addressed them in each case. Finally, I conclude with a few remarks.

### 2.2 Far Right Comparison

Populist radical right movements operate in all the four cases examined here. Moreover, radical right violence has been a feature of all these countries to some extent. In addition to radical right parties, in two of the cases, Hungary and Poland, reformist right wing populist parties currently comprise the government. In this section I compare the electoral strength and the electoral pattern of radical right parties across cases, and briefly discuss the actions of reformist right wing populist governments. The separation between the two types is partly due to differences in size and influence, and partly because of the different origins of the two types of parties as will be elaborated below.

Radical right political parties have existed since the 1989 regime transition in all four Central European cases discussed here. These parties managed to gain seats in parliament in some election cycles in all four countries. In two of the cases, far right parties were also a part of government at least for a short period (Poland 2005-2006; and Slovakia 1992-1998 and 2006-2010). Table 2.2 summarizes the electoral support for far right movements, their term in government, and the main agenda of each party.
### Table 2-2 Electoral Support for the Far Right

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Right Wing Parties</th>
<th>Electoral Outcomes</th>
<th>Ideology/Agenda Pillars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Czech Republic</strong></td>
<td>RMS</td>
<td>In parliament 1992, 1996</td>
<td>Euro Skeptic, anti immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Party</td>
<td>____</td>
<td>Racist, Euro Skeptic, anti immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hungary</strong></td>
<td>MIEP</td>
<td>In parliament 1998.</td>
<td>Nationalism, irredentist, anti-Semitic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jobbik</td>
<td>Third largest party in parliament in 2010 and 2014.</td>
<td>Racist, Euro Skeptic, irredentist, anti immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poland</strong></td>
<td>LPR</td>
<td>In parliament 2001, 2005</td>
<td>Xenophobic, Euro Skeptic, Religious, anti corruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In government 2005</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slovakia</strong></td>
<td>SNS</td>
<td>In government 1992-1998; 2006-2010</td>
<td>Nationalist,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L’SNS (Kotleba)</td>
<td>In parliament 2016</td>
<td>Racist, anti immigration, anti corruption</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources\(^{117}\)

As Table 2.2 demonstrates, Slovakia has the most persistent and normalized political far right. The Slovak National Party (SNS) has been a nearly constant feature in the Slovak National Council from the first elections and has had deputies serving in government several times despite criticism from the European Union.\(^{118}\) However, the size of the far right in Slovakia and the power


\(^{118}\) Global Election Database: [http://www.globalelectionsdatabase.com/](http://www.globalelectionsdatabase.com/)
it holds within the political system remained rather stable over the years (Figure 2.1). Moreover, unlike Hungary, Slovakia still has a left wing party in government regardless of far right success. The new addition to the far right in Slovakia is Marian Kotleba’s party, People’s Party Our Slovakia (L’SNS). Kotleba has been in the margins of Slovak politics for over a decade. His early activities included rallies against the Roma community and marches in the uniforms of the WWII Nazi Slovak party. Though an earlier attempt to run for elections was banned by the interior ministry, in 2013 Kotleba became the governor of the Banská Bystrica region. In 2016 his party L’SNS won a shocking 8% of the votes in the national election. It remains to be seen however whether the party’s success will persist.

While in Slovakia the far right has been fairly stable over time, the far right in Hungary grew significantly since 2010. Prior to Jobbik, Hungary’s far right party was MIEP which was focused less on anti Roma and anti migration and more on irredentism and anti-Semitism. MIEP was a marginal party, which only managed to pass the 5% electoral threshold once in 1998. Jobbik was formed in 2003 but only gained its first electoral success in the 2009 European Parliament election. In 2010 the party became the third largest in the Hungarian parliament with 16% of the vote share. In the 2014 election in won 20% of the vote share and remained the third largest party.

The two other countries, Poland and the Czech Republic, experienced less far right electoral success. Poland’s significant far right party was the League of Polish Families (LPR), a

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119 Barbora Bodnárová; Radka Vícenová. “Anti-extremist strategies of political parties in Slovakia” Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs. 2013

120 Migration was certainly not a salient issue in Hungary until the last couple of years and even now the question is of managing entry to Europe rather than immigration issues.

121 Though it now holds less seats than it did in 2010-2014 because of the skewed electoral system in Hungary
populist xenophobic and Euro skeptic party. LPR gained approximately 8% of the vote share in two election cycles, 2001 and 2005. The Czech Republic had not had a significant far right political party since the first two election cycles.

In recent years Hungary and Poland have experienced a surge of right wing populism at the center of the political system. Both Fidesz and PiS (Law and Justice), which now govern Hungary and Poland respectively, have been a part of their countries politics long before the surge of populism. Fidesz, at the time a liberal student movement, was a part of the 1989 transition in Hungary. PiS was formed in 2001, but its founders, Jaroslaw and Lech Kaczynski were influential
politicians since the transition as well. In that sense these populist parties differ than most far right party (except perhaps the Slovak SNS), they rose from the very mainstream of the political system.

Fidesz and PiS are both populist reform oriented parties. Fidesz, which held constitutional majority in Hungary in 2010-2014, passed a new Hungarian constitution without input from opposition or social groups. The new constitution limits the constitutional court, leaves out several liberal rights, and defines Hungarian identity in ethnic and religious exclusive terms.\textsuperscript{122} Fidesz also restructured ownership in many economic sectors, promoting nationalist economic measures. It instated limitations on media and civil society, and reinforced economic and diplomatic ties with Russia. PiS similarly took steps to limit courts by nullifying the election of judges to the constitutional tribunal and passing a law to paralyze the courts work. It politicized media appointments and fired many senior public servants. Limitations were also placed on civil society, including a recent law limiting public gathering.\textsuperscript{123} PiS lacks the constitutional majority Fidesz enjoyed, but it also faces a strong opposition both in parliament and in the streets.

Populism has been present in Slovak and Czech politics as well. Slovakia has been the slowest country of the four to transition, and its early years under the leadership of Vladimir Meciar were considered nationalist and illiberal.\textsuperscript{124} Nationalist rhetoric remained a defining feature of Slovak politics of both the right and the left. This includes derogatory toward Roma, anti


\textsuperscript{124} Freedom House. Freedom in the World 1999 Slovakia Available at: https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/1999/slovakia
immigration sentiments, and frictions with the Hungarian minority. At the same time Slovakia has advanced in securing democratic institutions and civil liberties. In other words, though populism is inherent to the entire political system it has not thus far had a transformative effect on the Slovak political system, nor has it led to the collapse of the left as in Hungary and Poland, though the left was weakened in the 2016 elections.

Like other European countries, the Czech Republic is currently experiencing a surge of populism. The most notable populist figure is billionaire finance minister and Prime Minister hopeful, Andrej Babis. Babis appears to be a strongman with ambiguous opinions on the democratic process. Though his party ANO is leading in polls ahead of the 2017 elections, it will likely have to operate as part of a coalition unlike Fidesz and PiS.

To summarize, of the four countries examined here, Hungary currently has a populist transformative ruling party as well as a strong far right in parliament. Poland has a populist transformative party in government as well, but it has a strong centrist opposition and does not have a far right party in parliament. Slovakia has the most persistent far right, including in government, but the far right did not have a transformative influence on democratic institutions. And finally, the Czech republic does not currently have a transformative populist government or a far right party in parliament (Table 2.3).

Table 2-3 The Populist Right in Central Europe Summary

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Far Right Parties</th>
<th>Populist Transformative Party</th>
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<td>Hungary</td>
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125 European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. Country Reports (ECRI); “Anti-extremist strategies of political parties in Slovakia” 2013

126 “Andrej Babis may be the next plutocrat to head a Western state” The Economist. February 3, 2017
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<td>Poland</td>
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<td>Czech Republic</td>
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Beyond the political arena, some far right social groups have been active throughout the region since the democratic transition. In particular, all countries experienced some form of far right violence including unorganized hate crime, skinhead groups, and other groups targeting minorities.\(^{127}\) In both Hungary and Slovakia there have also been paramilitary organizations targeting the Roma minority and migrants.\(^{128}\)

Considering the variation in outcomes presented here, the following section examines how the process of transition, and in particular the way it addressed center periphery tensions, influenced political outcomes.

### 2.3 The Center Periphery Cleavage and Regime Transition

Central Europe has been located at the borders of powerful empires for centuries. As such, most countries in the region have a history of multiple foreign imperial occupations. Though particular histories vary, several patterns arise. First, the struggle for independence is a recurring theme in the region. It is probably strongest in Poland where the loss of territorial integrity of the

\(^{127}\) Reports ERCI

\(^{128}\) “Anti-extremist strategies of political parties in Slovakia” 2013
partitions still has a significant hold on Polish consciousness. But the same is true for all countries in the region which have experienced only short periods of independence throughout history, and for a significant part of the past century existed under Russian Soviet control. The theme of struggle for independence makes Central Europeans suspicious of their powerful Eastern and Western neighbors, and attitudes toward cooperation with powerful allies can easily polarize at a time of crisis.\textsuperscript{129} As discussed above, another theme in the is the deep cleavage between center and periphery and the perception of the center, which was often the country’s representative vis-à-vis foreign powers, as serving foreign interests, and moreover not a natural part of the national community. This section examines how the regime transitions from communism addressed these issues in different countries. I examine the process of constitution making in each case, the main contentions, the actors in the process, and their input into the transition and constitution making. Through this process, I describe how the center-periphery cleavage was addressed and to what extent liberal actors integrated national ideas and symbols into the transition process and the new political systems.

2.3.1 Poland

The cleavage between center and periphery has been a defining feature of Polish politics and society long before the communist regime. Poland’s elite experienced an awakening of national identity early. In 1791 in an attempt to preserve Polish independence liberal elites drafted a constitution setting the rule of law and guaranteeing certain liberties to citizens, similar to the American constitution and the French revolutionary constitution of that same year.\textsuperscript{130} However,

\textsuperscript{129} Zarycki, 2000

the Polish constitution preserved the hierarchical structure of Polish society and the rigid absence of social mobility that left peasants tied to their lands and minorities without rights. More crucially, in the international arena the Polish political unit (or the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) could not compete with its increasingly powerful neighbors. From 1795 and on Poland experienced a series of partitions dividing it between the regional powers Russia, Prussia, and the Habsburg Empire. As a result, the Polish national movement developed under foreign control and without territorial integrity. Instead of a search for sovereignty as in Western Europe or even a search for independence as in other Central European countries, Poland was facing more fundamental questions of where is Poland located and who is a Pole.

For the liberal minded Polish nobility, the quest for sovereignty and independence was the main goal. The question of belonging to the national community was secondary to the diplomatic effort to gain independence. The implication was an inclusive vision of Poland. Ethnic minorities such as Lithuanian and Ukrainian peasants were not excluded from the Polish community, as they were physically a part of the territory considered as Poland. While the nobility was fighting to preserve Polish identity and religion against Germanization in Prussia and Russification in the Russian part of Poland, they did not see a threat in local minorities. However, more conservative minded Polish leaders who were challenging the liberal nobility had a different view of the Polish national community. To these emerging conservative actors, Polish language, culture, religion and self identification were crucial for national belonging and national integrity. Thus, neither

131 ibid
133 Walicki, 1999
Lithuanian peasants not Jewish urban dwellers could possibly integrate into the Polish nation.\textsuperscript{134} This liberal/ cosmopolitan- national/conservative elite tension was further exacerbated since the Polish nobility was viewed as responsible for the partitions and the long failed quest for Polish sovereignty and independence.\textsuperscript{135}

As noted in a previous section, the differing views of Poland are best exemplified by the political struggle between Jozef Pilsudski and Roman Dmowski in the early twentieth century and into the interwar years. Pilsudski was a product of the liberal landed nobility. He viewed Russia as the biggest threat to Polish independence and was looking back at a Polish-Lithuanian alliance as a mean to strengthen Poland. In this view Polish citizens could maintain multiple overlapping identities and remain included in the Polish community. Dmowski had an opposing view on both the threat to Poland and the solution to such threat. To him Germany was the most significant threat, and to counter it Poland had to fortify its unique national identity.\textsuperscript{136} In an attempt to strengthen the national affiliation of the peasants, Dmowski turned his attention to the countryside, but also to exclude peasants of different affiliations. He published extensively and was responsible for education programs intended at awakening Polish nationalism. Dmowski had a central role in crafting the Versailles Treaty that lead to Polish independence after WWI.\textsuperscript{137} He was also an anti-Semite; he viewed Jews in Warsaw and other urban center a real threat to Polish nationalism, as inhibiting a Polish middle class, and ultimately by the 1930s as a problem that could only be resolved with the removal of Jews from Poland.

\textsuperscript{134} ibid
\textsuperscript{135} Zarycki, 2000
\textsuperscript{136} Porter, 1992
\textsuperscript{137} Walicki, 1999
The perception of the urban areas as both inhabited by foreigners, and as foreign to the interests of the nation persisted in Poland as it had elsewhere in Central Europe, even after the holocaust and the expulsion of Germans changed the cosmopolitan composition of cities. Poland in particular became homogenous after WWII as its territory shifted west, and Russian-Lithuanian-Ukrainian minorities were no longer a part of the territory. However the cleavage between cosmopolitan elite and nationalist elite remained salient to some extent during the Soviet era. First, as elsewhere, urban centers were developed at the expense of rural areas. Second, the notion of an elite facing outward versus the inward facing “people” continued to define Polish politics as the political elite was at various points an extension of the Moscow. Finally, Moscow itself didn’t hesitate to pit Poles against each other in order to quell resistance. A notable example is the 1967-1968 wave of antisemitism in Poland. Following the 1967 Arab Israeli War, Soviets took a stand against Israel which quickly became the stand of the Polish United Workers Party as well. The party initiated and supported an anti-Semitic propaganda campaign targeting Jewish elites, which resulted in the majority of the remaining Polish Jews leaving the country. Thus, the notion of the foreigners within our midst, or more precisely within the elites, was never put away in Poland, even after WWII turned the country ethnically homogenous.

Poland was the first country to transition from communism in 1989. It had the most well organized opposition, led by the trade union Solidarity. Solidarity was formed in the shipyards of Gdansk in 1980. In 1981 the government cracked down on the movement by issuing martial law, outlawing solidarity, and arresting its leaders including chairman, Lech Walesa. Yet Solidarity continued operating underground, thanks to support from the trade unions in the West, and from

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138 Zaricki, 2000
the Catholic Church which provided meeting spaces and popular legitimacy. As it was outlawed, Solidarity’s gatherings, publications, and local chapters built an organized civil and political society independent from the communist party. Solidarity was a broad social organization which included workers, intellectuals, and religious figures. It seemingly bridged the center-periphery cleavage, though the unity of these very different social forces was mostly an expression of dissent to communism rather than the disappearance of fundamental social cleavages. Despite its strength, Solidarity as a political party disintegrated shortly after the transition just as other transition parties in the region have, though its central leaders would remain key figures in the post-communist political map in Poland.

Since Poland was the first to transition it also faced the greatest uncertainty in regards to Russian influence over the transition, and to the strength of the Polish communist party. As a result, the communists held the strongest negotiation position in Poland. In the 1989 roundtable communists and Solidarity led opposition agreed on a gradual regime transition. In the first elections, the communist party would maintain two thirds of the seats in the lower house (Sejm). Solidarity outperformed expectations and won nearly all the seats available to it in the Sejm and Senate in the first elections. However, after the elections the two houses of parliament struggled to draft a constitution. This was the result of both a schism between the communist controlled Sejm

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139 The Polish Church was a unique institution in the Soviet Union, it was allowed to continue operating throughout the communist era.

140 Kitschelt, 1992

141 ibid
and the Solidarity controlled Senate, but also because of a split within Solidarity that would become the defining feature of the political system.\footnote{142 Jasiewicz, Krzysztof. “From Solidarity to Fragmentation.” \textit{Journal of Democracy} 3, no. 2 (1992): 55–69.}

Solidarity split into seven different parties representing a broad spectrum of social groups from Christians through liberals, nationalists, workers, and a peasant party. Among the notable groups were the liberal conservative, ‘Democratic Union’ led by the first democratic Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki; Christian Nationalist, ‘Catholic Electoral Action’; and nationalist, ‘Centre Agreement’, whose central figure was Jaroslaw Kaczynski. Lech Walesa, who at first was courted by Centre Agreement broke with the party and dismissed Kaczynski from his position as the Chief of the Presidential Chancellery.\footnote{143 Jasiewicz, 1992; Millard, F. 2009. \textit{Democratic Elections in Poland, 1991–2007}. London: Routledge.} Walesa viewed himself as the president of all Poles and was not affiliated with a single party.

The constitution making process turned into a struggle between president Walesa and parliament after 1991. Walesa wished to strengthen presidential power whereas parliament wanted to limit it and place sovereignty clearly in the legislator.\footnote{144 “Special Report: Interim Constitution Approved in Poland,” \textit{East European Constitutional Review} (Summer 1992)\footnote{145 ibid}} Unable to reach a full compromise, parliament did manage to adopt an interim constitution or a “Little Constitution” in 1992. The Little Constitution regulated the relationship between the executive and legislative branches. It strengthened the cabinet and put in place checks and balanced between parliament, the cabinet, and the president. However judicial checks were left out as the constitution did not address the issue of judicial review.\footnote{145 ibid} Also left out from the procedural document were the relationship
between church and state which would become a contentious issue in the discussion over the constitution, as well as other social issues. Centre Agreement opposed the Little Constitution arguing it gave the president nearly dictatorial power, and did not mark a break from the Stalinist constitution, as the 1952 constitution was still not repealed.\footnote{Rzeplinski, Andrzej. “The Polish Bill of Rights and Freedoms: A case study of constitution-making in Poland” \textit{East European Constitutional Review} (Summer 1993). \textit{Movement for the Republic} led by Jan Olszewski also opposed the constitution. It was a breakaway party from Centre Alliance.} The heavily amended 1952 Stalinist constitution continued to serve as the main legal document in issues other than Poland political structure.\footnote{“Constitution Watch: Poland,” \textit{East European Constitutional Review} (Winter 1993).}

The constitution drafting process continued in the following years. The Constitutional Commission received multiple constitution drafts from different parties and actors, and parliament ratified them and charged the commission with the drafting of a single document. There were several challenges in the process. First, the 1993 elections brought the former communists to power, and though the coalition they created was rather stable, it was perceived as marginalizing the right wing. Since the 1992 elections introduced an electoral threshold, the fragmented right wing entirely failed to gain representation in parliament. The former communist party and the formerly communist aligned peasant party gained 66 percent of the seats in the Sejm with only 36 percent of the popular vote. 35 percent of the electorate voted for parties which were not represented in the Sejm at all. President Walesa was a fierce opponent of parliament: he attempted to open the constitution process to more social actors though faced resistance. The constitution drafting process did include parties not represented in parliament, representatives of the church, and legal experts. The animosity between Walesa and parliament persisted however, with Walesa...
at some points withdrawing his support from the constitutional process altogether. Walesa called on the people to support the constitution only if it provides a presidential system.\textsuperscript{148}

Alongside the efforts to draft a constitution, the first years of Polish independence were marred by political scandals and instability. Prime Ministers and other leading politicians were often dismissed and replaced, President Walesa took steps viewed by the Sejm as a threat to democracy. Some of the concerns included threats to freedom of the press and the independence of Polish military.\textsuperscript{149} As part of the political struggles between the president and the Sejm the separation of powers was often infringed upon by both sides.\textsuperscript{150} In 1995 Walesa lost the presidential elections to former socialist, Aleksander Kwasniewski. Interestingly, as president Kwasniewski too supported a stronger presidency, and his demands were rejected by his own party’s Sejm.\textsuperscript{151}

During the long period of constitutional debates, opposition to the constitution had been mounting. The president as well as the right, solidarity trade union, and the Catholic Church all opposed the constitution even before a draft was presented. Solidarity presented its own draft that had been signed by 1.5 million citizens and demanded the draft be presented for referendum as an alternative to the Constitution Committee draft. The suggestion was supported by the president but rejected by the Sejm and the Constitutional Committee.

\textsuperscript{148} “Constitution Watch: Poland,” \textit{East European Constitutional Review} (Summer/Fall 1994).


The Church demanded that the constitution acknowledge and protect “the presence of the sacred sphere in the life of man,” protect human life from the moment of conception, guarantee the rights to natural death, and religious instruction in schools. Religious leaders did not negate democratic institutions but argued that the Sejm was not the highest power, and that the nation had a right to weigh in on the constitutional process.

The compromise the Constitutional Commission agreed to reflected some concessions made to the church. For example, instead of ‘separation’ of church and state, the constitution referred to the ‘neutral autonomy’ of the church and the state. Similarly, the state is not ‘neutral’ in matters of religion and conscience but ‘impartial’. The constitution language also qualified the rights of parents to raise their children according to their own norms and beliefs, and permitted religious instruction in schools, though prohibited the use of coercion in such instruction. The constitution vaguely stated that everyone has a right to life, but avoided the controversial issues of abortions and the death penalty. Despite the cooperation, the church maintained its reservations. One criticism was that the constitution did not refer to ‘God’ and thus could not guarantee human dignity. The preamble of the final draft represented a compromise between the Church who demanded a reference to God, the left who rejected a reference to god, and the right wing.

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154 ibid

opposition who demanded a reference to Poland’s national heritage and Christian roots.156 157 An additional concession to the right and the Church was the recognition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman.158 Another set of compromises between left and right was on social rights. There, the Constitution Committee limited the obligation to implement some of the social rights referred to in the text.159

After four years of deliberations, a new Polish constitution was finally adopted in 1997. The constitution easily passed the National Assembly by the vote of the ruling coalition. The more difficult test was the referendum. The popular vote was preceded by a massive information campaign. It was a highly politicized by both the ruling coalition, in particular President Kwasniewski, and by the opposition. Though the Church promised not to campaign against the constitution in exchange for concessions in the text, it nonetheless issued a statement against the constitution.160 57% of voters supported the constitution. Though turnout was below 50%, the constitutional court ruled the referendum valid.161 While the constitution won, it remained a

156 “We, the people of Poland, all the Polish citizens, both those who believe in God, who is the source of truth, justice, goodness and beauty, as well as those who do not share this faith and derive these values from other sources; equal in rights and obligations toward the common good of Poland; grateful to our ancestors for their work, struggle for independence ... and culture, rooted in the Christian heritage of the Nation ... drawing on the best traditions of the First and Second Republics of Poland... mindful of bitter experiences from the times when basic human freedoms and rights were violated in our Homeland, responsible before God or one's own conscience ... pass this Constitution of the Republic of Poland.” Poland 1997 Constitution Preamble.

157 “Constitution Watch: Poland,” East European Constitutional Review (Winter 1997). Another point of contention was the parliament delaying the ratification of the Concordant defining the relationship between Poland and the Holy See. The Concordant was signed in 1993 but parliament refused to ratify it before the ratification of a new constitution, arguing that some elements in the little constitution should be amended prior to the Concordant ratification.


159 ibid


161 ibid
controversial document. It was criticized in strong terms by the right and by former president Lech Walesa.

Though the transition from communism itself did not address the deeply entrenched center periphery cleavage in Poland, in the following years the political system began to reflect these social tensions. Unlike in the Hungarian case, since the process of constitution making was long in Poland, cleavages between the cultural center and periphery did emerge and enter the constitutional process. Demands from the ‘periphery’, the church, and the nationalist right were made on the left leaning and liberal constitution drafters, and the drafters viewed the final document as a compromise between liberal and national/religious actors. However, the ‘periphery’ actors, the church and the nationalist right, had a different view on both the process and the final document. The lack of representation of the right in the Sejm during those years, and the relatively minimal protection of religion and ethno-nationalism made the document contentious. This contention remains in place. The current PiS government still refers to the constitution as a foreign document that needs to be re-written, though it lacks the parliamentary majority to amend the constitution.

The drafting of the constitution created ongoing crisis in Polish politics in the years that followed the transition. At the time, Polish liberals looked with envy at Hungary, which had managed to avoid the crisis of constitution drafting. In hindsight however, the long process did seem to solidify the commitment of Polish liberals to the constitution. Over the years, liberals in Poland remained committed to the constitutional order, and it remains a powerful opposition both

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163 ibid
in parliament and in society, even in the face of the strong populist reformist PiS government. By comparison, Hungarian opposition is far weaker.

2.3.2 Hungary

The fight for Hungarian independence within the Habsburg Empire closely followed Gellner’s description of the development of national movements in the periphery. Hungary gained its independence from the Habsburg Empire in the 1867 Compromise which created a dual monarchy, the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was the culmination of a process that had started decades earlier and which most notably, included the 1848 revolution and short-term independence. The 1848 revolution was led by Lajos Kossuth, a low rank nobleman, journalist, and radical reformist. Kossuth’s affiliation to the nobility is no coincidence. The class leading reforms and seeking independence was the liberal nobility, and they drew symbols from the Hungarian Magyar countryside including traditional costumes, music, and of course the use of the unique Hungarian language.\(^{164}\) This was particularly true for Kossuth who insisted on the superiority of Hungarian culture vis-à-vis the Slavic inhabitants of Hungary.\(^{165}\) Kossuth was a reformist, he wished to unite Hungary under a nationalist flag, break with the monarchy, and fulfill his democratic aspirations. This however was not to be.

The immediate political achievements of the 1848 revolution were quickly reversed in Hungary as elsewhere in Europe, and Kossuth lost the leadership of the state. In the years that


\(^{165}\) This also led to the loss in 1848 when the Hungarians refused to acknowledge the demands for self determination of minorities within the country and the region’s coalition against Habsburg failed.
followed, other reformists led by Ferenc Deak continued to seek independence, which finally came in 1867. However, the terms of independence in the Compromise were less far reaching than those of 1848. Hungary remained tied to the dual monarchy, and the privilege of the nobility was not eliminated. According to various historians, the reason for the terms of the Compromise was the identity of the Hungarian class negotiating with the Habsburg crown. By keeping a strong monarch, the nobility managed to keep its own hold on power for the following five decades, argues historian Peter Laszlo.\(^\text{166}\) Marxist historians are even more blatant, arguing that,

“...The Hungarian landowning class turned back on the revolutionary achievements of 1848 in order to retain their leading role, economically and politically, in the face of the rising middle class and their rule over the Hungarian people and other nationalities. The new system did not alter, indeed reinforced, national oppression, even if this was now divided ‘more fairly’ between the Austrians and the Hungarians.”\(^\text{167}\)

This interpretation is in line with Eric Hobsbawm’s argument that the 1848 revolution failed since the wealthier classes, having achieved their political goals, wished to close the gate to power for upcoming classes.\(^\text{168}\) Indeed, most Hungarians, and of course national minorities within Hungary, were left out of the benefits of the Compromise. Moreover, in the following decades the spirit of reform of the 1867 dwindled down, social and economic issues remained off the political agenda, and status quo was maintained.\(^\text{169}\) The nobility made its case for independence based on

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\(^{169}\) Cartledge, *The Will to Survive*
national identity, but remained more a part of the Empire than of the “Magyar people” even after independence.

As elsewhere in the region the divide between the budding urban bourgeoisie, and the rural peasantry was also intensifying from the same period. Ethnic Hungarian bourgeoisie was a small class throughout most of the 19th century. However, cities in Hungary were culturally prolific, in particular Budapest. Many urban dwellers and intellectuals belonged to national minorities, rather than the Hungarian nationality. In general, Hungarians were not a majority in Hungary: in 1848 they comprised only 41% of the population. Two large ethno-national populations were the Croats and the Romanians. However, some smaller minorities did not have national aspiration of their own, were rather assimilated in Hungarian society, patriotic, and even nationalist. Two of those, the German speaking minorities, and Jews, were overrepresented in middle class urban areas. Despite their attempts at assimilation, including the adoption of Hungarian names, and in the case of Jews, the Hungarian language, they were still perceived as foreign to Magyar identity. For that reason, the urban bourgeoisie more broadly was viewed as foreign. This perception was preserved through the years over a series of long periods of exclusion of elements in society from political and economic capital.

Hungary continued its uneven progress until WWI. After the defeat, a short term democracy turned socialist dictatorship was established. This, in combination with the Trianon Treaty of 1920 had a profound and lingering effect on Hungary’s future. In Trianon, the treaty

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170 Buda, Pest, and Obuda until 1873.

171 Peter, 2012

that ended WWI for Hungary, the country was stripped off two thirds of its territory and three fifths of its population. The territories and the ethnic Hungarians residing within them were divided between Romania, present day Slovakia, Serbia, and Ukraine. Trianon was a shock to Hungary, historically one of the most populated countries in Europe. Hungarians blamed the socialist dictatorship and international forces for the debacle. As a result, the notion of Greater Hungary (pre-Trianon Hungary) became a political goal, and a focal point for nationalist mobilization. In later years this cause became associated with the right as the return of ‘Greater Hungary’ was achieved in collaboration with Nazi Germany during WWII.

The interwar years were a period of political exclusion under the conservative authoritarian regime of Miklos Horthy. Importantly, following the White Terror that accompanied the Horthy coup, the urban middle class was still considered foreign and overrepresented by Jews and Germans. During these years, the gap between urban and rural deepened in Hungary. Ownership of land became even more concentrated, leaving millions of peasants destitute. \(^{173}\) In the mid 1930s the regime went through a shift to the right, influenced by geopolitical processes in the rest of the continent, particularly Germany. It culminated in an alliance with Germany from 1938 and on. Unlike other countries in Central Europe, though the majority of the large Hungarian Jewish population was killed in the holocaust or left after the war, \(^{174}\) today Hungary still has a significant

\(^{173}\) While Hungary did establish race laws against Jews early in the Horthy Regime years, it informally rescinded them and the government distanced itself from the fascist far right. Jews were well assimilated in Hungary, and in fact it was one of the most tolerant countries in Europe in its regard to the Jewish minority.

\(^{174}\) Out of 762,000 Jews throughout the country (including pre-Trianon territories) between 435,000 and 437,000 were deported (most of those who escaped deportation were Budapest residents). Approximately 100,000 survived the camps.
Jewish population, all concentrated in Budapest due to the historical circumstances. They continue to be an influential minority and at the same time are still the subject of prejudice.\textsuperscript{175}

Social cleavages remained salient after WWII. The communist era included periods of extreme repression, and exclusion of large parts of the population from political, social, and material resources.\textsuperscript{176} The right wing upper class, the nobility, and wealthy bourgeoisie of the previous regime was brutally liquidated and dethroned from influential position in society. The working class continued to suffer impoverished servitude. After national liberalization attempts were decisively repressed in 1956,\textsuperscript{177} Janos Kadar, who took over the leadership, led reforms in the economy and the social sphere, and became a legitimate, if not loved, head of state. Nearly all Hungarians were repressed by the communist regime, particularly in its early years. However, the previous regime’s beneficiaries, the upper classes, as well as the countryside peasantry, suffered most under communism. This again reinforced existing divisions in Hungarian society.

Within the region, Hungary’s 1989 democratic transition was the most peaceful and consensual. Learning from the Polish experience, Hungarian opposition groups understood that Moscow would not back the local communist government. As a result, the regime could not demand the same concessions as its counterpart in Poland. At the same time that transition was being negotiated the regime did not become entirely irrelevant in the process, as its had counterpart in Czechoslovakia. Similarly to the Polish case, the result was Round Table Talks between the communists and opposition groups that set principles for the first free elections as well as

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[175] Jewish community interviews.
\item[176] Molnar, 2001
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fundamental constitutional principles. Based on these principles, the previous communist constitution was deeply amended to create an essentially new document. This document was passed by the Communist Party dominated parliament in October 1989.\footnote{178}{“Constitution Watch: Hungary,” East European Constitutional Review (Summer 1992).}

The 1989 constitution was intended as an interim constitution to be revisited by parliament. A few amendments were passed by parliament in 1990. In 1991, the Young Democrats (Fidesz, which was at the time a political party of young anti-communist libertarians) tried to bring back the issue of constitutional reforms however, multiple negotiations did not lead to any agreement even on the amendment procedure. The government argued that the 1989 document was sufficient to rule Hungary, but others countered that the constitution preserved the status quo on many issues including state ownership and media.\footnote{179}{ibid} In the following years attempts to revise and expand the constitution were similarly met with failure. At the same time the Hungarian Constitutional Court was an active an influential institution.\footnote{180}{Bánkuti, Miklós, Gábor Halmai, and Kim Lane Scheppele. “Hungary’s Illiberal Turn: Disabling the Constitution.” The Hungarian Patient: Social Opposition to an Illiberal Democracy, Edited by Peter Krasztev & Jon van Til, 2015, 37–47.}

In 2010 Fidesz won the national election with a constitutional majority of two thirds of parliament. The party drafted and passed a new constitution with no input from the opposition or civil society. Unlike the thin constitution of 1989, the 2011 constitution is rich with references to the Hungarian nation and Christian religion as a source of identity. It also places significant limitation on the Constitutional Court and leaves out certain liberal rights.\footnote{181}{ibid}
The transition and constitution making process in Hungary did involve the opposition, this opposition did not reflect the center periphery cleavage but rather the economic left-right cleavage. The constitution of 1989 was therefore a thin document that did not necessarily represent many Hungarians. More than the constitution itself, the new democratic order did not include the center periphery cleavage for a long period. Several years into the transition center periphery tensions began to emerge but they were not addressed by mainstream politics. When these tensions were accompanied by an economic crisis in the mid-2000s, nationalist elite were able to mobilize on them with great success. The result was the rise of both far right Jobbik, and transformative populism led by Viktor Orban’s Fidesz. The following chapter analyzes this process.

### 2.3.3 The Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic

The circumstances of Czechs and Slovaks were quite different in the years that preceded the 1918 establishment of an independent Czechoslovakia. The Czech regions were controlled by Austria and were urbanized and industrial, whereas Slovakia was under Hungarian rule and was predominantly agrarian and rural. In the 19th century, alongside other European ethnic territorial groups, the Czech elite experienced a national awakening which included the revival of Czech language, the development of Czech identity, and a national framing of Czech regional folklore. As part of the effort to achieve autonomy from Habsburgs, the Czechs developed a pan-Slavic conscious binding them with Slovaks, and separating them from Germans, Russians, and other ethnic groups in the highly ethnically diverse region. The idea of autonomy for the Czechs and

Slovaks in the region became politically salient at the end of the 19th century, and was finally materialized in the form of an independent Czechoslovakia after WWI.\textsuperscript{183}

Though the national movement originated in the Czech elite, Czechs did not experience other periods of national mobilization vis-à-vis their Slovak compatriots throughout the duration of a unified Czechoslovakia, even prior to the 1993 separation. Slovaks on the other hand, made a variety of demands for national rights and autonomous institutions over the years, and these were accompanied by elevated Slovak national fervor.\textsuperscript{184} I argue that the relationship between Czechs and Slovaks in Czechoslovakia was very similar to the center-periphery relationship in the two other cases examined here. The urban elite Czechs demanded independence based on Slavic identity, but once their demands were met they did little to bridge the cultural gap between center and periphery in Czechoslovakia. They continued to view rural Slovak culture as inferior, and look outward for cultural influences.\textsuperscript{185}

Though Czechoslovakia was a democracy in the interwar years, Slovakia became a client state of Germany between 1939 and 1945 under the leadership of Jozef Tiso. Developments during the communist period exacerbated the cleavage between center and periphery. Most notably, as part of the “normalization” that followed the 1968 Prague Spring, the communist party, operating under Soviet instructions, introduced a federal system into Czechoslovakia. The system did not alleviate ethnic demands in Slovakia but created ethnic friction instead. For Czechs, the change in power balance was a source of resentment. For Slovaks, the institutional arrangement, which

\textsuperscript{183} ibid
\textsuperscript{184} ibid
\textsuperscript{185} Judt and Snyder 2010
included two separate parliaments for Czechs and Slovaks, was insufficient, as both parliaments were merely a rubber stamp for the communist party. The Slovak elite was moreover concerned that the separate local institutions would imply that the central government in Prague was a Czech institution.\textsuperscript{186} Normalizers also approached Czech and Slovaks reformers differently, further separating the two elites. Czech reformers were purged from public office and demoted to manual labor. Thousands of officials, intellectuals, and artists were prosecuted. These purged elites were pushed toward dissent and had little ties with the regime.\textsuperscript{187} As a consequence, the collapse of communism and regime transition brought with it significant elite replacement.\textsuperscript{188} Slovak reformers and intellectuals on the other hand, were coopted by the communist party. Many remained in office and were forced to comply with party guidelines to some extent.\textsuperscript{189} Thus for Slovaks, office holders within the regime were a part of the 1989 transition, and the nature and direction of intellectual elites in the two countries significantly diverged. Toward the end of the Soviet control years, Gil Eyal identifies in the Czech and Slovak republics two polarized elites with a different understanding of their role in the transition.\textsuperscript{190}

The collapse of communism in Czechoslovakia chronologically followed neighboring Poland and Hungary. As a result, the fall of the old regime was more rapid in Czechoslovakia, and the communists had much less control over new political arrangements than their counterparts in

\textsuperscript{186} Leff, 2014


\textsuperscript{189} Eyal 2003

\textsuperscript{190} ibid
Poland and Hungary, as it was clear that the old regime has lost its support and the coercive backup of Moscow.\textsuperscript{191} This was also the result of the communist leadership’s unwillingness to negotiate with dissidents.\textsuperscript{192} The Gustav Husak led party came to power after 1968 and was responsible for the ‘normalization’ or the coercive restoration of Moscow controlled communism. It was a party of hard-liners rather than of moderates capable of leading and controlling the transition. Diverting from most post-communist countries, the Czech communist party never reemerged as a social democratic party and regained control of government. Instead it remains a traditional communist party with a small but steady vote share.\textsuperscript{193}

The first post-communist free elections in Czechoslovakia were held in 1990. The winners were the parties that led the transition, Civic Forum with 52\% of the vote share on the Czech side, and Public Against Violence (PAV) with 32\% of the vote share on the Slovak side.\textsuperscript{194} Both were dissident parties, organized hastily before the transition. Civic Forum and PAV were similar regime-transition parties, though Slovak dissidents included religious leaders unlike its Czech counterpart, and a part of the Slovak agenda was the formation of a democratic federation, a


\textsuperscript{192} Nalepa, 2010 – the collapse of communists in Czechoslovakia is the result of low penetration of the regime into the ranks of dissidents


demand absent on the Czech side.\textsuperscript{195} Beyond PAV, there were two notable nationalist parties in Slovakia, the Christian Democrats, and the Slovak National Party.\textsuperscript{196}

After the 1990 elections the party system in both republics developed in opposite ways. In both republics, the transition parties broke down into smaller parties. In the Czech Republic, pro-market reforms drove the political agenda. Most parties supported the reforms to some extent, and views toward the reforms defined the political spectrum.\textsuperscript{197} In Slovakia, independence and sovereignty were the main agenda driving the formation of the political system. The largest party to emerge from PAV was Vladimir Meciar’s nationalist, anti-capitalist, ‘Movement for a Democratic Slovakia’. The two other powerful parties remained the equally nationalist and anti-market, Slovak National Party and the Christian Democrats. A mark of the polarization between the Czech and Slovaks was the absence of overlapping parties in both republics in the 1990 elections.\textsuperscript{198}

Herbert Kitschelt demonstrates the alignment of political parties in Czechoslovakia after 1990 along two cleavages: the economic cleavage and the national-authoritarian/liberal cosmopolitan cleavage\textsuperscript{199} (Figure 2.2). In effect, parties of the Czech and Slovak republics took different sides on the national-liberal spectrum. Most Slovak parties were clustered in the bottom left corner – they were nationalist and opposed economic reforms. The one exception was PAV

\textsuperscript{195} Leff, 2014
\textsuperscript{196} Kitschelt, 1992
\textsuperscript{197} Kitschelt, 1992; Olson 1998
\textsuperscript{198} Leff, 2014; Olson, 1998
\textsuperscript{199} Kitschelt 1992
which broke down by 1991. The Czech parties by contrast were more spread out, but aside from the Christian Democrats all parties were liberal-cosmopolitan.

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*Figure 2-2 Political Cleavages in Czechoslovakia*\(^{200}\)

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This polarization of the political system between nationalist and liberal parties can be viewed as an early representation of what would become the cultural or center-periphery cleavage in other countries in the region. In both Hungary and Poland at some point the periphery, or the nationalist elite, began to make demands of the center to get more access and influence within the political system, but these demands came much earlier in the case of Czechoslovakia. As ethno-national affiliation in Czechoslovakia overlapped with the center-periphery cleavage it was far easier for Slovak elite to mobilize the “periphery” early, and to offer extreme solutions for this pivotal cleavage. As noted above, even the liberal Slovak dissidents demanded federal arrangements. In 1991 Slovak leaders began to insist on a “state treaty” which would precede the constitution, and formalize the sovereignty of each republic and the federation as a voluntary act.\textsuperscript{201} The need to write a joint constitution and institutionalize the relationship between Czechs and Slovaks precluded the possibility of avoiding the center periphery cleavage as was done in the Hungarian case, or even postponing political negotiation as in the Polish case.

As in other post communist countries, the transition and constitution writing process was done within the existing legal framework.\textsuperscript{202} The first elections were enabled through amendments to the Stalinist constitution of 1960 and the Federation Act of 1969 which abolished the role of the Communist party and appointed interim parliament and president. The Federation Act, which was never upheld during the communist rule, was now treated as law, which meant that Slovaks had a strong veto power in the drafting process.\textsuperscript{203} The parliament elected in 1990 was to complete the


\textsuperscript{202} Elster, 1993

\textsuperscript{203} ibid
drafting of a new constitution within its term. However two years of a constitutional committee of experts as well as a summit meetings of political leaders from both republics convened by President Vaclav Havel failed to produce a constitution before the 1992 elections. Prior to the elections separation was certainly not an inevitable result. Even in 1992 public opinion in both republics opposed separation. However the winners of the elections on both sides drove Czech and Slovak republics toward separation. On the Slovak side, Mečiar’s party promoted separation, and on the other hand, Vaclav Klaus’ liberal-conservative Civic Democratic Party (ODS) promoted rapid and vast economic changes, a direct contrast to Slovak preferences.

Though public opinion in 1992 did not favor the separation of the republics, another public opinion poll demonstrates the differences between Czechs and Slovaks on both economic and identity issues. Where 71% of Czechs identified as Czechoslovak, only 26% of Slovaks responded in that manner. This points at the Czech perception Czechoslovak identity as Czech and the lack of problematizing of national identity by the Czech. Similarly, liberals in Hungary and Poland did not see a need to assert their identity within their respective countries, whereas periphery population did continue to struggle for their identity.

In November 1992, the Federal Assembly passed a law formalizing the end of the federation. The debates over the separate constitutions of the Czech and Slovak republics

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205 ibid
206 Leff 2014
207 Olson 1998
reflected very different concerns. In Slovakia, the process of constitution making was more rapid: the constitution was ratified in September 1992, prior to the formal separation, and several months before it took effect. One of the arguments over the wording of the preamble of the constitution was whether to define Slovaks as ‘Slovak People’ or ‘Citizens of the Slovak Republic’.

This was a part of a broader struggle over language and culture with the Hungarian minority in south Slovakia. Hungarian deputies to the Slovak National Council boycotted the vote on the new constitution because they felt it failed to protect ethnic minority rights. Struggles over independent education, language in public spheres, and even the official form of surnames continued in the following years beyond the constitutional debates.

The Slovak constitution defined state ownership broadly which raised concerns as to the future of privatization. It also gave the government certain powers over the legislative which were viewed by critics as an infringement on the separation of powers and as a proof of authoritarian tendencies. Indeed, in the first decade following the transition, Slovak government under Meciar was leaning toward authoritarianism, suffered international isolation and was first overlooked in the process of EU enlargement. After the replacement of Meciar the country went through significant economic and political reforms, but the nationalist nature of politics remained stable. The entire political spectrum in Slovakia remains highly nationalist, and leftist Prime

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209 “Constitution Watch: Czechoslovakia,” East European Constitutional Review (Summer 1992); The Republic of Slovakia Constitution

210 Constitution Watch: Slovakia,” East European Constitutional Review (Winter 1993); Constitution Watch: Slovakia,” East European Constitutional Review (Summer/Fall 1994)


212 ibid

213 Freedom House Country Report Slovakia 1999
Minister Robert Fico is nearly as harsh a critic of migration and refugee policy as is the far right. The result is a stable far right which is integrated in the mainstream. However nationalistic rhetoric cannot cause the same upheaval that it has in Hungary and Poland because Slovakia’s political inception was on nationalistic claims and these are deeply entrenched in the system.

The Czech constitution, which was approved by a large majority in the National Council, was the outcome of compromise between the government and opposition parties on the structure of electoral institutions. There were several issues that remained controversial including a citizenship law that listed the Czech language as a requirement, which was viewed as targeting Roma, who had arrived en masse from Slovakia. Also controversial was the question of a Bill of Right. Czechoslovakia adopted a Bill of Right in 1990 composed mainly by American and Western European legal experts. The Bill of Rights included extensive liberal rights, but also social rights like the right to health care and free education. Concerned about the extensive, and at times unrealistic social rights, Vaclav Klaus did not wish to adopt the Bill as an integral part of the constitution. Eventually the bill was not integrated into the constitution, but instead addressed in two articles, which recognized it, but left its legal status rather vague.\(^{214}\) As in the rest of the region, a large point of contention in the Czech Republic was the issue of lustration. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the issue was brought up earlier than in the other countries since as noted the transition was less negotiated between communists and the opposition. Czechoslovakia passed lustration laws in 1991 that blacklisted former communist secret police from high public office. This law remained in effect in the Czech Republic after the separation.\(^{215}\)

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\(^{215}\) For a deeper study of lustration in the region see Nalepa 2010.
As noted above, in the Czech Republic economic rather than cultural national issues took center stage. Its politics was similar to Hungarian politics but without the emergence of center periphery tensions which required the attention of mainstream politics. As a result neither a far right party, nor a nationalist populist transformative party became prominent.

2.4 DISCUSSION

The development of national identity in Central Europe was uneven and challenging. While urban elites used the symbols and traditions of their countryside to make claims of self-determination, they did not follow up with strong projects of national unification. This was the result of both the difficulty to pursue such projects under foreign rule, the preferences of these elites to continue facing outward, and the cosmopolitan nature of urban centers in the region, in particular in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This uneven spread of nationalism created a cleavage between the ‘real’ countryside nationals and the cosmopolitan and even ‘foreign’ urban elites, and different political forces continued to sustain these tensions over time. As a result, in 1989 social divisions based on the understanding of national identity, on geography, and tradition existed, but they did not always come forth at the moment of transition.

In Czechoslovakia, the center periphery cleavage overlapped with ethnicity, and so it was front and center in the transition. At the time, the breakdown of the federation seemed like an entirely avoidable error. Indeed, there was little support for the separation outside the polarized political elites. I don’t wish to argue that the ‘Velvet Divorce’ contributed to the Czech and Slovaks ability
to avoid the worse of the surge of right wing populism. It is just as likely that integrating the cleavage into political institutions would have been a successful strategy. My argument instead is that addressing the tensions within mainstream politics neutralized the volatile potential of mobilization over ethno-nationalism. Following the separation, the Czech Republic and Slovakia took different sides on the liberal-national spectrum. But importantly the polarization of this cleavage did not lead to deep transformation of democracy in either case.

The other two cases, Poland and Hungary, did not address at all (Hungary) or did not address sufficiently and inclusively (Poland) tensions between center periphery, or between liberals and nationals. The result was particularly explosive in Hungary in which left liberals were entirely delegitimized by emerging national elites. The following chapter traces this process in depth, and offers a mechanism for the theory outlined here.
Responses to the Radical Right in Hungary

“The first recipient of the Hungarian Order of Honour is Mrs. Ilona Tamás, a school-teacher from the Balog Valley in Upper Hungary, who celebrated her 100th birthday this year. After the Act on Simplified Repatriation was adopted by Parliament, she reclaimed her Hungarian nationality, as a result of which Slovakia stripped her of her Slovakian citizenship. Honour to the brave! She is here with us today; let us greet her with affection!”

-Prime Minister Viktor Orbán

In Hungary, the 1989 political and economic transition from communism carried a liberal promise. The transition was peaceful, and was accomplished through compromise between moderate communist leaders and a coalition of opposition groups. In the first free elections held in 1990 the communists lost control of government, a positive sign of things to come in the post-Soviet world. With the promise of European Union membership on the horizon, Hungarian


leaders took steps to liberalize markets, and created programs to ensure minority rights.\textsuperscript{220} Of course, there were also setbacks. The 1989 interim constitution was intended to serve as a legal basis for the first elections before being replaced by a more comprehensive constitution. However, after the first elections there was no political consensus to allow for the drafting of a permanent constitution. The electoral laws in Hungary adopted in 1989 to fit the communists’ political calculations were very complex, and the allocation of seats in parliament failed to represent parties’ vote share. Arguments in the political system over the status of the Hungarian minority in kin states were prominent.\textsuperscript{221} Yet for the most part, Hungary’s transition was a success story. The country’s economy was thriving, it held the highest measures of rule of law in the region, and it successfully integrated into the EU in 2004.

Today, twenty seven years after the transition, the liberal promise of Hungary has significantly dimmed. In 2011, the Hungarian parliament controlled by a super majority of the right wing Fidesz party adopted a new constitution, drafted with no input from opposition groups or civil society. The new constitution limits the role of the constitutional court, does not guarantee liberal freedoms, and defines the Hungarian people in a narrow ethno-religious manner. Large sections of the economy have been restructured to benefit government allies. The government has been promoting legislation that negatively affects the Roma population, including changes in social policy, and de-facto segregation in schools. More recently, Hungary adopted some of the most restrictive policies and discourse against migrant refugees. Since 2010, Hungary has


experienced a decline in democratic indicators including freedom of speech, property, and government transparency. A recent study also documents clientelistic electoral practices in poor communities in the country. In terms of the political system, right wing populist Fidesz holds an absolute parliamentary majority, and populist radical right party Jobbik is the third largest party in parliament, rapidly closing in on the second largest socialist party MSZP.

What brought about this shift? The answer of course is complicated. On the immediate level, Fidesz came to power following a severe economic crisis that hit Hungary even before the 2008 global crisis, and a leadership scandal within the ruling party at the time, MSZP. But the extreme shift toward nationalist populism calls for a deeper explanation. This chapter explores one element in Hungary’s populist turn: the dynamics between the populist radical right in Hungary, represented in parliament by Jobbik, and the political center.

The populist radical right has been continuously drawing the political center toward ethnic exclusion, anti-elitism, and economic protectionism in terms of rhetoric and policy agenda. This phenomenon is not unique to the Hungarian case. In many countries that experienced a populist turn we can observe a growth in the size and influence of the radical right. How does the radical right draw the center of the political system towards the right when radical right parties have relatively small electoral power?

The Hungarian case is particularly puzzling as from 2007 Jobbik and the extremist paramilitary groups that surrounded it caused significant disruption to public order, and to intergroup ethnic relations in Hungary. Both left and right wing governments failed to formulate a

222 Freedom House Country Reports Hungary 2010-2015 Available at: https://freedomhouse.org\country\hungary

response, even when these extremist groups intimidated and physically attacked entire populations. Moreover, over the years, center right party Fidesz adopted much of Jobbik’s rhetoric and agenda as demonstrated later in the chapter.

One question that requires addressing is the meek state response toward radical right violence. Political science literature often turns to theories of state capacity when addressing questions of state monopoly over violence or lack thereof. However, Hungary is not a weak state. Since its democratic transition in 1989-1990 successive governments have passed and implemented significant reforms, and maintained law and order. Contrary to other explanations that point to neighborhood effects as crucial, Hungary is also not situated in a weak neighborhood. Central Europe is the most successful region in the post-Soviet world to transition toward democracy in terms of economic and political reforms. The region is also, as noted above, an integral part of the European Union.

Another possible line of explanation is that the government had an interest in the attacks on Roma even if it wasn’t openly willing to admit it. According to this logic, the government was politically served by appeasing the majority ethnic Hungarian group that supported actions against Roma, or it may have had an interest in distracting from economic performance by enflaming ethnic hatred. This is a reasonable explanation, but the inaction toward radical right violence

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226 Fish, 1997

was not limited to a particular government, or even to one side of the political spectrum. During
the period that Hungary experienced extremist violence against Roma, governments of both the
right and left failed to take actions against right wing extremists, regardless of their ideology,
constituency, or preferred economic policies. Moreover, the left, which hasn’t benefitted at all
from the rise of the populist radical right or its framing, and was the incumbent during a significant
surge of paramilitary activity, operated even less against radical right violence than Fidesz right
wing government after 2010.

I argue instead that state actors are constrained in their actions by political narratives in
society. When extremist groups incorporate contested elements of the national ethos into their
agenda, they are able to justify extremist ideology and actions and win over mainstream crowds.
This chapter demonstrates how Jobbik and the paramilitary groups that surrounded it framed their
violent actions as acts of vigilante law enforcement intended to protect ‘real’ Hungarians against
the foreign and malignant ‘Gypsy Crime’. Time and time again they referred to common
Hungarian symbols, emphasizing the nation’s long history of victimization and the role of the
countryside in Hungarian ethnic identity, and rejecting urban liberal elites. Hungarian extremists
managed to set the agenda for mainstream media and ‘own’ the issue of the Roma social problem,
with them as a savior in its center.228

The populist radical right framing of their agenda through national symbols and history,
and the successful ownership over the Roma issue, made it difficult for politicians across the

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political map to openly attack them, even when they were being violent, disorderly, and employing hate speech. In this chapter, I show that governments across the political spectrum failed to police the radical right. The decline in extremist violence after 2013 was mainly an outcome of self-policing of the group. For the most part, political leaders did not even condemn the radical right decisively. Moreover, leftist governments struggled more to act against the radical right than right wing governments, as populist radical right narratives undermined their position and questioned their loyalty to the nation.

The other aspect I examine is what I previously termed ‘nationalist capture’, the incorporation of populist radical right rhetoric and agenda into mainstream politics. As populist radical right agenda took over national media, in part thanks to the violent organizations that surrounded Jobbik, mainstream politicians too adopted some of the radical right’s rhetoric and policy preferences. This included protectionist economic measures, discriminatory social policy, and de facto segregation in education.

Jobbik’s rise to power was a precursor to and catalyst of the populist turn in Hungary. Jobbik’s rhetoric and political agenda have been consistently adopted by Fidesz since 2010, and so the radical right’s success partly explains the turn toward populism in the Hungarian mainstream. The Hungarian case is particularly interesting as it demonstrates a path many countries have followed. Within the Central European region, the turn toward populism has been strongest in two of the most successful countries to go through a political transition, Hungary and Poland. Within the region and beyond, the discourse that became prominent in Hungary following the rise of the populist radical right has now been adopted by many populist leaders who openly imitate and collaborate with each other to gain power in a variety of political systems. In many of these countries radical right groups exert political power beyond their electoral size. Thus,
explaining the dynamics of the relationship between the radical right and the center, and the way in which populist radical right agenda penetrates and draws the mainstream is central to our understanding of contemporary politics.

The chapter proceeds as follows: the next section outlines the theory as it applies to the Hungarian case, and the predictions that follow from it. I then delve into the case, describe the rise of the radical right in Hungary, its strategies, and the responses of mainstream politics, and analyze these responses. Finally I discuss the findings of this chapter and their broader implications.

3.1 STATE CAPACITY, STRATEGIC COOPERATION, ELECTORAL COMPETITION, AND RHETORICAL COERCION

Several lines of explanations can account for the meek response of mainstream politicians and governing institutions to radical right violent actions and discourse, and for the adoption of populist radical right agenda. First, it is possible that the state does not have the ability or the resources to address disturbances to public order. In such cases, we should expect to see a failure to respond to other challenges such as law violations from different groups in society as well as difficulty in policy implementation in other areas.

Second, leading politicians might be choosing to cooperate with extremist groups for strategic reasons. By this logic, mainstream politicians stand to make immediate gains such as

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passing a desirable policy, or a broader gain like distracting from failed economic policy. If these explanations best fit the case we shouldn’t expect to see lenient behavior toward the populist radical right in the absence of visible gains. Moreover, we should expect the right wing, which had more to benefit from populist radical right agenda because of ideological proximity, to be more lenient toward the radical right.

Indeed, I too argue that politicians turned to a populist radical right agenda with their own interests in mind. In response to the radical right nationalist-populist framing, some political actors, mainly of the left, were concerned about being marked as disloyal or even as traitors, and so chose not to act against radical right extremism, and even adopted some its premises. Other political actors, mainly of the right, viewed the success of such framing as an opportunity to marginalize the left, even when the cost was a decline in rule of law, and an accelerating rhetorical and policy bidding competition with the radical right. If empirical findings match such an explanation, we should expect to find that actors most de-legitimized by populist radical right narratives would be most lenient toward extremist violence.

A close competitor to my explanation is that of electoral competition. Accordingly, politicians are competing for votes with the populist radical right and are thus strategically taking on radical right agenda. If electoral competition is the strongest mechanism, we should expect the adoption of populist radical right narratives in the groups with the strongest competition with the radical right over votes.

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230 Wilkinson, 2006; Gagnon, 1994; Acemoglu et al., 2009

**3.2 The Hungarian Radical Right**

In 2006-2007 Hungary faced political and economic crisis. In September 2006, Hungarian radio released a recording of then Prime Minister, Ferenc Gyurcsány, admitting to lying to the public about the country’s economic state and budget deficit to get re-elected. Following the airing of the tape, the country was swept with months of political unrest and street protests turned violent. The government’s meek response to the demands of the protests and to the economic crisis more broadly was much criticized by the media, the opposition, and the public. Law enforcement authorities were accused of brutality toward protesters. One of the outcomes of the protests was the formation of Magyar Garda (Hungarian Guard). The Garda, a uniformed paramilitary organization, was first formed to carry out a ‘real’ transition from communism, and to rescue the Hungarian people from left wing elite. In the months that followed, the organization transformed into a vigilante anti-Roma law enforcer, fighting against what it defined as ‘Gypsy Crime’ in the Hungarian countryside.

Although the Garda was not officially connected to radical right party Jobbik, the founders of Magyar Garda were Jobbik leaders: co-founder Gabor Vona has been the head of Jobbik since 2006. Vona and Jobbik’s strategist, Gabor Szabo, used Magyar Garda as a tool to promote Jobbik, at the time a marginal party. The Garda increased Jobbik’s visibility, created grassroots mobilization, and drew vast media attention to ‘Roma Criminality’ as a salient issue. The Garda’s success in these tasks was partially responsible for Jobbik’s remarkable electoral success, first in

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232 The tape was recorded during Gyurcsany speech in front of MSZP party members in May 2006.


234 Jobbik was formed in 2003, its alignment with radical right MIEP failed to gain entry to parliament in the 2006 general elections.
the 2009 European parliament elections, and later in the 2010 national elections in Hungary in which the party became the third largest in parliament.235

By 2014 however, paramilitary organizations became a burden on Jobbik. The party wished to grow beyond its strictly radical right base of support, and the Garda’s violent activities made it difficult to attract center right voters. Jobbik’s attempt to distance itself from paramilitary organizations was evident in the party’s 2014 campaign strategy. During the 2010 campaign, Garda members were conspicuous in Jobbik rallies, sat on stage, served as keynote speakers, and organized violent marches as part of the campaign. In 2014 Garda type organizations were removed from center stage. While members continued to attend the rallies, they were no longer a part of the party’s public front.236 Jobbik further continued to ‘clean up’ its violent past by an internal vote to oust extremist MP Előd Novák, and push out of leadership positions others from the extremist faction of the party.237

In the years 2007-2009, the Garda marched in uniforms in cities and villages across Hungary (60-70 marches), organized night-time uniformed patrols in Romani neighborhoods, and engaged in hate speech and hate crimes against Roma.238 The Garda and similar organizations were linked to dozens of violent attacks on members of the Roma community. The most notable were a series of murders committed in 2008-2009, which combined attacks on homes with

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237 *Hungary Today*, May 30; *Hungary Today* June 7; MP Zuzana Szeleni Interviews 2015-2016. It is difficult to estimate whether this strategy will prove successful for Jobbik. Small Right wing extremist movements are now appearing to its right however they have yet to threaten its core supporters. Tamas Berecz, lead researcher, Athena Institute Hungary interview, October 2014.

238 “Accelerating Patterns of Anti-Roma Violence in Hungary”, *FXB 2014 Report*, Harvard School of Public Health
Molotov bottles and the use of firearms to target members of the Roma community who were escaping from their burning homes. These in particular were not performed by the Garda itself but by individuals associated with the organization. Through their violent activity and propaganda, and demonstrative acts, Magyar Garda and parallel organizations were responsible for creating a threatening atmosphere for Roma communities. Similar organizations were also responsible for attacks on members of the Jewish and LGBT communities.

The Garda operated under outspoken racist ideology. It promoted the notion that ‘Roma Criminality’ or ‘Gypsy Crime’ was both an inherent characteristic of the Roma population, and one of the most prominent social problems in Hungary. As will be further discussed below, the activities of the Garda and similar organizations also emphasized the historical ethnic otherness of Roma. The media and broad sections of the population including individuals in the judiciary and law enforcement systems adopted the Roma Criminality framework. In one instance, a judge ruled against disbanding the radical right paramilitary organization Szebb Jovot (Brighter Future), arguing that Roma was not a protected ethnic group, but a lifestyle “characterized by the avoidance of work and the disrespect of private property and the norms of living together.” The decision was later overturned.

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241 The organization was responsible for the long intimidation campaign in Gyongyspata in 2012.

“Gypsy Criminality” became common in social and political discourse in Hungary. According to a media research conducted in 2011 there was a significant increase in criminality related Roma stories in the media in 2010 compared to 2000 (37% compared to 25% of all Roma related coverage). Other issues that received more Roma coverage were employment and public policy, whereas discrimination and minority rights related stories significantly decreased (from 37% to 23%; and from 16% to 6% respectively). The media was also more willing to take a clear stand on Roma as a social problem. Members of the Roma population have always suffered from low social status, de facto segregation, and high rates of unemployment as will be discussed below. However, they were not addressed as a criminal community until recent years. Magyar Garda was disbanded by the court in 2009. However the organization continued to operate under different names, notably ‘The New Hungarian Guard’. Other organizations imitated its activities, symbols and discourse.

3.3 THE RADICAL RIGHT AND NATIONAL IDENTITY INCORPORATION

3.3.1 Symbols

Radical right movements in Hungary effectively use national symbols both to appeal to large sections of the population, and to establish their extremist path. The Garda’s founding ceremony was held in August 2007 in front of the Buda Castle, a central historic Budapest

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244 Gábor Bernáth and Vera Messing, Szélre tolva Kutatási zárójelentés a roma közösségek többségi médiaképéről, 2011 – Marginalized Roma in the Media Report

245 Athena Institute Hate Group Map http://www.athenainstitute.eu/en/hate_groups/
monument. The members were clad in uniforms drawn from medieval Hungarian (Magyar) traditional folklore, composed of black pants and vest with a lion symbol on its back, white shirt, a black hat, red and white scarf, and a coat of arms on the vest and hat. The pants, vest, and shirt give the appearance of traditional Hungarian countryside attire, presenting Garda members as protecting national tradition. The Arpad Stripes, the red and white stripes on the scarf and coat of arms, are highly controversial historical symbols.

The source of the Arpad stripes is in the flag of the Arpad House, the first dynasty of Hungarian kings between the 9th and 14th centuries. It has been used in Hungary for centuries, and is one of the official flags in parliament. An Arpad Stripes theme is also combined in Hungary’s official coat of arms, adopted in 1990. However, the Arpad Stripes flag was the flag of the Hungarian Nazi party, Arrow Cross. Their flag combined Arpad Stripes with a green cross. It has since been considered offensive in Hungary, especially to the Jewish population. The Arrow Cross flag was banned during the communist regime, and again after the transition to democracy. In 2006, during the anti government protests, the Arpad Stripes flag reappeared with the protesters, without a green cross.

The use of the flag was a direct reference to the fascist era to the left and the Jewish minority in Hungary. They questioned the choice of a symbol that while derived from Hungary’s historical roots, was also tainted by more recent dark history. The radical right rejected these accusations, arguing that the context of the flag was the old Hungarian kingdom. Perhaps more importantly, they made the argument that the communists erased and rewrote fundamental sections of Hungarian history to belittle Hungary’s achievements and emphasize its faults. According to that argument, the left in Hungary cooperated with the communist program, and continues to do so
Rhetoric of victimization as well as the portrayal of the left as hostile to Hungarian national pride are recurring narratives for the populist radical right, but, as elaborated below, they are also the narratives of centrist leading party Fidesz.

Jobbik uses the colors of the Hungarian flag, red, white and green, in its symbol. The symbol contains a green cross, similar to the double bar cross which appears on the Hungarian Coat of Arms. It refers to an ideal of a Christian Hungary. Jobbik does not officially use the Arpad Stripes flag, but it is a common feature in the party rallies and demonstrations.

As in many other European countries, the right in Hungary generally uses national symbols more often than the left. However in Hungary the appropriation of national symbols by the right has been fairly recent. The Hungarian Cockade, for example, was a sign of Hungarian independence dating back to 1848. Wearing it during the late communist era was a symbol of resistance to the regime. However, Fidesz used the cockade in its 2002 electoral campaign to signal support for the party. Not wearing the cockade became a sign of support for the left. This might have played in favor of the left in that single campaign, however, in the long run, the left wing’s ability to use the national symbols was diminished. As a result it lost access to a powerful resource that easily evokes emotion and identification for members of the nation.

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246 Jobbik website http://www.jobbik.com/arpad-striped_flag


248 Though the right was in control of national symbols and identity during the interwar years, the Communist era repressed nationalist agenda.

The combination of national symbols, countryside attire, the Arpad stripes, and national colors, served as an effective shortcut for a radical right identity and message: They are countryside Hungarians and they represent tradition and religious values; They have been the victimized by the communist regime who denied their identity and Christian religion; and they are also the victims of urban elites (and perhaps in particular Jewish elites) that reject their deep historic ties, and are responsible for new economic disparities. This narrative goes hand in hand with the populist radical right’s rejection of politically correct rhetoric. According to them, this ‘false rhetoric’ made it impossible to talk about the problems ‘real’ Hungarians were facing, and forced Hungarians to denounce their traditions in shame, and abandon their co ethnics across the borders.

### 3.3.2 Historical Events

The issue of ‘Greater Hungary’ is a central pillar of radical right mobilization. Hungary lost the majority of its territory and population (two thirds and three fifths respectively) in the 1920 Trianon Treaty after defeat in WWI. The idea of ‘Greater Hungary’ – pre-Trianon Hungary-- was born as a strategic aspiration, a commonplace for political mobilization, and a cornerstone in Hungary’s narrative of ‘victimization by great powers’.

The attitudes toward Trianon were first under consensus and not immediately politically charged. According to Hungarian philosopher Agnes Heller, in the beginning, Trianon raised the same type of longing for the lost territories in the left and the right, in Jews and non-Jews alike. However, when the territories of Greater Hungary briefly returned to Hungary’s possession, it was done in the most politically skewed manner. From 1940 on, Hitler granted the pre 1920 territories to Hungary as part of the country’s alliance with Nazi Germany. The territories remained under
Hungarian sovereignty until the end of WWII.\textsuperscript{250} This act fixed Trianon and the aspiration for Greater Hungary as a distinctly right wing idea, linked to a dark, fascist historical moment.\textsuperscript{251}

The issue of ethnic Hungarians across the border, or irredentism,\textsuperscript{252} played a different role in Hungarian politics in different periods. During the communist era, as with many other topics, a real debate over irredentism was off limits. In those decades there was no opportunity to discuss Hungary’s role in the international system, or the region. The country was a part of the Soviet Bloc and its relationships with its neighbors were dictated from above.\textsuperscript{253} Though the Hungarian minority suffered abuse under Ceausescu, Hungary had to maintain a friendly alliance with Romania and avoid conflict.\textsuperscript{254}

After the transition, irredentism did not immediately become central on the political agenda. There were movements on the right that focused on Greater Hungary as an aspiration, if not a direct political goal. Fidesz later picked up the issue. As will be discussed in the following section of this chapter, Fidesz has pushed different legislation benefiting ethnic Hungarians in kin states and solidifying the Trianon myth in Hungarian collective memory. The radical right’s position was more extreme, calling for the unification of the Hungarian nation, although specific policy implications of such statement are quite vague:

\begin{quote}
“Jobbik considers its most important task to be the reunification of a Hungarian nation unjustly torn apart during the course of the 20th century. It is our most
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{250} Although technically Hungary was under Nazi occupation from 1944.

\textsuperscript{251} Agnes Heller interview December 2014

\textsuperscript{252} I use Michael Hecter’s definition: “The desire to unite segments of a national population in adjacent countries into one polity”. Hechter, Michael. \textit{Containing Nationalism}. OUP Oxford, 2000

\textsuperscript{253} Waterbury, 2006.

\textsuperscript{254} ibid
fundamental moral duty to represent the interests and defend the rights of Hungarian communities. We will strive, perpetually, for the collective rights of the Hungarians of the Carpathian basin, and for the realization of their territorial, economic and cultural self-determination.”

Trianon and ‘Greater Hungary’ elicit strong emotions in Hungarians, even a century after the events have taken place. The radical right often uses the symbolic aspects of Greater Hungary. One of the more active extremist youth organizations was named ‘The Sixty Four Counties Youth Movement’, after the number of counties in historical Hungary. The movement was founded on June 4th, 2001, the anniversary of the signing of Trianon. The movement was linked first to radical right party MIEP and then with Jobbik. It has demonstrated alongside them in front of the Romanian, Slovakian, and Ukrainian embassies in Budapest making demands in the name of ethnic Hungarians and singing songs about Greater Hungary. Radical right movements publish road map atlases of greater Hungary assigning the historic Hungarian names to villages and towns located in current day Slovakia and Romania, and the map of greater Hungary is a notable radical right symbol.

As one interview subject in the countryside noted, “If someone raised the issue of greater Hungary in a history class, you knew they were Jobbik right away. You weren’t too surprised to see them marching later.” Interestingly, Jobbik’s leadership was funded by members of student associations, mostly the ELTE University Department of History, which might account for their occupation with history and use of historic symbols.

255 Jobbik Website http://www.jobbik.com/foreign_affairs_policy


258 Interview with a woman from the countryside, November 2014
‘Greater Hungary’ is a broad symbol that has been used by the right for many years. However, the radical right has also been using symbols not immediately connected with the right, most notably the 1956 revolution. The revolution was led by dissenting members of the communist party, and while their vision for independent Hungary is not entirely clear, it seems they had in mind some form of a nationally independent socialist country. Nationalism was indeed a driving force in 1956, but it was by no means an exclusionary, or even a victimized version of Hungarian nationalism. Instead, it was a liberating narrative influenced by the French Revolution and led by the Hungarian left. Nevertheless, Jobbik and radical right movements refer to themselves as the followers of 1956 whose task is to continue that revolution and be rid of foreign tyranny. The source of tyranny the populist radical right targets today is not in Russia, but in the left, which to some extent continues to dominate the bureaucracy, business sector, and intellectual life, and in European and American capitalist imperialism.

The 1956 references have been especially common during the 2006 protests and in the rhetoric of leaders born out of these protests, like Gabor Vona, the head of Jobbik. These leaders interpret 1956 according to their worldview, and reject a leftist or an inclusive national interpretation of the revolution. In Jobbik’s 2009 commemoration of 1956, Vona responded to criticism on Magyar Garda made by Tibor Draskovics, the minister of Justice and Law Enforcement in the socialist government,


260 ibid

“How does this man [Draskovics] dares to instruct our kind, and the Guardists, about democracy? [He’s from] that bunch who 50 years ago and [then again in 2006] shot at us in the crowd. [That bunch] who in 1956 left in exile and came back with the Soviet tanks...So the question is not what the Guardists are doing at a celebration of 1956, since that is clear: they belong there. The question is what the hell are you doing, Drascovics, at a remembrance of 1956?”  

Jobbik commemorates 1956 every year with a march. In 2014, for example it chose to gather for the march at the Corvin Cinema in Budapest, the location most identified with the civilian resistance to Soviet tanks. In Hungary these are powerful and broad symbols.

As I further explore below, the left in Hungary is portrayed as an extension of the pre-1989 communist party. Indeed many of the members of the socialist party were a part of the late communist regime. By appropriating the 1956 revolution, the radical right drew a direct line connecting itself with the liberating heroes of the revolution. It also equated the contemporary left with those who took arms against the heroes of liberation in 1956, the ultimate traitors. In the same manner, the left is not a part of the 1989 transition, but its enemy, and it continues to be a threat to the interests of real Hungarians. This ownership over 1956 again serves to justify the anti-elitist, anti-politically correct stance of the populist radical right.

### 3.3.3 Anti Roma Sentiment

Generally, Jobbik has three pillars of rhetoric: nationalism, anti-Semitism, and anti-Roma. While national symbols and histories helps the radical right make its appeal to the mainstream, anti Roma rhetoric and actions have been the focus of the paramilitary organizations, and are the

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262 Vona is quoted in Bernhard et al, 2014

263 October 23rd is a national holiday in Hungary.
main cause for Jobbik’s success. Anti Roma views have been the broad consensus in Hungary for decades, and Jobbik has managed to both target and reveal this consensus.

Compared to other countries in the region, Hungary has sponsored more programs to improve the life conditions of the Roma population. However, these programs have not always been effective. The Roma population suffered a decline in status and life conditions from the late 1970s and through the democratic transition. As heavy industry in the Hungarian countryside began to collapse, unemployment rose significantly. Socio economically stronger populations migrated out of the countryside, leaving these areas destitute, and prone to ethnic tensions between Roma and non-Roma Hungarians. This is particularly true in North East Hungary, a former industrial area, now suffering from both high unemployment and frequent ethnic tensions.

Survey information reveals that the Roma is the most prejudiced group in Hungary. These surveys, conducted prior to the rise in popularity of the radical right, demonstrate the negative sentiment non-Roma Hungarians harbor toward the Roma community. There was no difference in the level of prejudice toward Roma between voters of the large party on the left (MSZP) and the large party on the right (Fidesz), indicating the negative sentiment was a broad consensus across the political map, rather than linked to a particular party.

The Garda and Jobbik used these preexisting sentiments to mobilize popular support. But if Roma members were poor and pitiful in public image, the populist radical right now portrayed

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264 Karácsony, 2011
265 Ringold, 2000
266 Enyedi et al., 2005
267 ibid
them as dangerous and emphasized their distinction from and inferiority to ethnic Hungarians. Instead of framing the Roma low status as a social problem, it was portrayed as a threat to the safety of hard working Hungarians. Stories of criminal activity among members of the Roma minority began to receive far more media attention after the Garda started operating. In the radical right presentation of the topic, Jobbik and militia groups were the ones finally speaking out about a problem that has been troubling ‘real’ Hungarians for years, while mainstream politicians were hiding behind a politically correct discourse. Roma were a threat to countryside life, and thus a threat to traditional Hungarian way of living.

3.4 STATE RESPONSE

The formation of the Garda in 2007 led to a growth in ethnic tensions, violence, and hate speech. This section explores the immediate responses of governments and the broader process of incorporation of populist radical right agenda. Next in the analysis section, I show that the strength of radical right framing made politicians across the political map less likely to attack right wing extremism, and more likely to adopt parts of its agenda. I also examine theories suggesting a different set of factors like low state capacity, distraction from economic performance, or destabilization of class-based coalitions granting the radical right free rein, and electoral competition.

268 Karácsony, 2011; Rona interview; Vera Messing interview. December, 2014

269 Szombati interview
3.4.1 Direct Responses to Right Wing Extremism

The large parties on the left and right made statements against radical right violence over the years, however not often, and not always in strong terms. After the initial formation of Magyar Garda, Prime Minister and leader of the socialist party MSZP, Gyurcsány, condemned the organization, calling it “Hungary’s shame”, and asked the country's chief prosecutor to monitor the group for any violations of the Hungarian constitution. Hungarian president, Laszlo Solyom, was much slower to respond to the formation and growing support for the Garda. The issue was one of the most notable on the agenda in Hungary, yet the president did not address the Garda publicly. He did turn to the Garda in request to stop using Arpad Stripes as part of their uniforms to avoid offending holocaust survivors and their families. Only after Solyom was directly confronted by the official Minority Ombudsman following an anti Roma demonstration in Tatárszentgyörgy, did he issue a statement on the topic. In his statement, Solyom condemned the ‘Nazi ideology’ expressed by Jobbik spokesperson at the demonstration.

“‘We have an obligation to contrast our own values with those of these movements and organizations. No well-intentioned person can tolerate affronts to human dignity or question our equal rights...what is needed for the sake of Hungary’s future are peace, openness and a willingness to work together, both on the part of the majority of society and the Gypsy minority... A march such as this works against integrating Gypsies into society.’”

Solyom also refused to meet with Vona and other Garda leaders who turned to him for political assistance. While it was a stronger statement than his previous silence on the topic, it

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270 Der Spiegel, August 27, 2007.

271 Molnar, Anti-Semitism in Hungary November 1, 2010. Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs

remained appeasing, and offered no operative solution to radical right violent discourse and actions.

In general, on the left’s responses to the Garda were negative, focusing on human rights and minority rights, but not indicating an attempt to actively battle the paramilitary phenomena. No broad action was taken against the Garda. Marches were allowed, as was patrolling in uniforms in Romani neighborhood despite the openly intimidating and discriminatory nature of these marches. Public violence such as stone throwing, and individually targeted violence such as setting fire to Romani property, usually went entirely unpunished.\textsuperscript{273} There was no state crackdown on the movement even when it was linked to the serial killing of Roma members in 2008-2009. The killers in this particular case were tried and sentenced a few years later, but only after a cover-up attempt by the police.\textsuperscript{274} It was the only case of violence against Roma that received significant jail time.\textsuperscript{275}

On the right wing’s end, in 2007 Fidesz made few comments regarding the Garda. Fidesz failed to condemn the Garda, but party members did try to distance themselves from the paramilitary organization, mostly by stating that the Garda was dangerous, but rarely attacking the racist values the organization represented.\textsuperscript{276} In 2008, Viktor Orbán commented in a private seminar for students that as Prime Minister he will act as Horthy did with the Arrow Cross Party

\textsuperscript{273} Jovanovic, HCLU interview. EERC report.

\textsuperscript{274} The police initially treated some of the murders as accidents and failed to secure the crime scene. Moreover, in several cases, the police did not connect similar cases to the same ethnically targeted serial crimes, despite notable similarities between the crimes. It later tried to cover-up these mistakes. “Violent Attacks Against Roma in Hungary”, \textit{Amnesty Report} 2010, Amnesty International Publications.

\textsuperscript{275} EERC

\textsuperscript{276} Hungarian Spectrum August 27 2007.
and, “give them [the Garda] two slaps and send them packing.” This was an expression of Fidesz’s law and order approach, and an attempt to belittle the Garda, without directly confronting its ideological stance.

After the sweeping victory in 2010, Fidesz’s position toward the radical right became less ambivalent. Orban stated he was deeply unhappy over Jobbik’s rise and added, “No radical party will be allowed to get rid of law and order in this country…Democracy in this country is strong enough to defend itself.” Once more, the focus was on law and order, and Fidesz supported this line with several pieces of legislation.

The first item of legislation was the 2011 Bill T/2990 on Amending the Criminal Code. The bill followed a long radical right intimidation campaign at Gyongyospata. The government did not respond to the events during the violent spring in the village, nor did local law enforcement authorities interfere with the vigilante activity. After effect, the Fidesz government decided on legislation to prevent vigilante activity. The bill addresses the issue of ‘uniformed crime’, or vigilante law enforcement, by penalizing the use of unofficial uniforms. Organizations that wish to serve as neighborhood guards would have to register with the local police and receive a permit. Most experts argue that the law has not been effective in arresting right wing vigilante activity, whereas Jobbik’s attempt to ‘clean up’ its image reduced the paramilitary activity.

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277 http://www.fidesz.hu/hirek/2010-02-17/meg337rizni-a-letezes-magyar-min337seget/ Marton Barta interview, October 2014

278 Dan Bilefsky, “Hungarian Winner Vows Battle Against the Far Right” New York Times April, 13 2010


280 Interviews with Tamas Berecz Athena Institute; Bulcsu Hunyadi, Political Capital analyst; Eszter Jovanovic HCLU; Daniel Rona; Kristof Szombati, September –November 2014.
In addition, Fidesz passed several laws aimed at protecting the Jewish minority, including the criminalization of Holocaust denial, and the limitation on freedom of speech to exclude violation of the dignity of “Hungarian nation or of any national, ethnic, racial or religious community.”\textsuperscript{281} Interestingly, this is not a law protecting ethnic minorities but rather any ethnic group. It has been used in lawsuits by non-Roma Hungarians against Roma who violated their dignity as Hungarians, and not the other way around.\textsuperscript{282} Large Jewish organizations also report on a significant increase in government funds for Jewish organizations during the Fidesz government compared to previous governments.\textsuperscript{283}

Despite the legislation, Hungary is faring poorly compared to other countries facing right wing extremism. The 2015 country report by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) finds that hate speech in politics and media has been increasing with no legal measures taken to combat it, and violence against Roma, Jews, and LGBT continues.\textsuperscript{284} Further, unlike other countries (Slovakia and the Czech Republic to name two), Hungary did not develop and overarching program to combat extremism and relies solely on the police and a new specialized hate crime unit within it.\textsuperscript{285}

\begin{flushleft}
\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{281} Hungarian Government Publication: “Fact Sheet: The Hungarian Government’s Steps to Combat Anti-Semitism”, www.mfa.gov.hu

\textsuperscript{282} Andras Pap, Hungarian law specialist interview, September 2014.

\textsuperscript{283} Interviews with David Csillik, Antisemitism Monitor and Research group; Kalman Szalai, Action and Protection Foundation October, December 2014.

\textsuperscript{284} ECRI report

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The outcome of the absence of policing and condemnation of extremism was the entry of extremist ideas into the social and political discursive space. As demonstrated in this section, both left and right were hesitant to attack the radical right. The left condemned radical right ideas to some extent, but did not crack down on violent groups; the right, once in government, wished to appear strong on law enforcement, made statements to that effect, and strengthened the criminal code. However, it did not denounce populist radical right ideology. Thus, radical right violent intimidation campaigns continued in the countryside and in periphery neighborhoods, and the radical right agenda continued to echo in mainstream media. These brought about the second facet of the nationalist capture: the incorporation of radical right rhetoric and policy agenda into mainstream politics.

Scholars of the populist radical right have been debating whether the incorporation of its agenda into the mainstream limits the popularity of radical right parties, or strengthens them by legitimizing their views. In the Hungarian case, ruling party Fidesz has implemented many policy points from Jobbik’s published agenda, however this has not diminished Jobbik’s electoral strength thus far. Pandering to radical right voters through a policy agenda does seem to shift median opinion in that direction, and broadens the potential base of support of the radical right.

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287 Szeki Interview
3.4.2 Incorporation

Since 2007, the left in Hungary has been struggling with populist radical right narratives, at times denouncing them, at times accepting their underlying premises, in particular regarding the Roma minority. More prominent has been the penetration of radical right ideas and policy preferences into the mainstream through central right wing party Fidesz, in power since 2010. Between 2010 and 2014 it controlled parliament with over two thirds of the seats, a constitutional majority. After 2014 it held its absolute majority in parliament, just shy of a two-thirds majority. The implication for the Hungarian parliamentary system is that Fidesz was able to write a new constitution without input from opposition or society, and continues to legislate and implement policy with no interference from coalition partners or opposition groups, hence the significance of its adoption of populist radical right themes. This section reviews first the rhetorical incorporation of these themes and later some of the policies the Fidesz government undertook which were either proposed, or strongly supported by the populist radical right.

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is a talented orator. He first came to the attention of Hungarian and international public when he gave a speech at the 1989 burial of 1956 revolutionary leader Imre Nagy. The speech harshly condemned Russia and expressed the hopes and struggles for democracy and independence of Hungarian youth. Despite a very large ideological shift from liberal democrat to populist illiberal,\(^\text{288}\) Orban’s rhetoric has not actually altered much over the years. In his speeches, he often employs key moments from Hungary’s history to tell the following story: Hungary has always been a country on the border of larger empires. It has continuously struggled to for independence under these difficult conditions. There were heroic moments in

\(^{288}\) Orban speeches 1989; 2014
which Hungary fought for rightful independence, despite small size and the powerful enemies that surrounded it, namely the 1848 and 1956 revolutions. And though Hungary failed on both occasions, it proved that it has the spirit to continue the struggle. But the struggle has not ended even after the 1989 transition, and Hungary continues to fight for independence against external powers and internal collaborators.

The significant change in Orban’s speeches over the years is the identity of the enemies standing in the way of Hungary to national independence. In 1989 the enemies were the Russians, and their collaborators were the Hungarian socialists; after 2006 the enemies were the west (European Union, the US, and the international monetary system), and its collaborators were Hungarian left and liberals; today, the enemies are migrants and the European Union that brings them to Europe, and the domestic collaborators are liberals and NGOs who wish to help them pass through Hungary and provide them with shelter in Europe.

Even early on, when Fidesz was still a liberal party, Orban blamed the left for being an internal enemy of the Hungarian people. Later, when the Hungarian Liberal Party (SZDSZ) formed an alliance with the socialist party, Orban and Fidesz turned to the right on cultural issues, and played on a left-right divide in the political system. However, anti-western rhetoric, Euro skepticism, and a portrayal of political divisions in Hungary not as left-right divide, but as a division between Hungarians which seek independence on the one end, and cosmopolitans who wish to abolish the nation state on the other became prominent in his rhetoric only after the rise of the radical right. Euro skepticism, economic protectionism, and an aversion to liberal capitalism

\[289\] International Spokesperson of Government, Zoltan Kovacs made the same point in his interviews (October-December 2014)
are strong populist radical right themes throughout the continent. In the Hungarian context they are framed as issues of national independence.

Rhetoric in line with radical right themes was also written into the 2011 constitution. The preamble of the new constitution is an exceptionally long nationalist document referencing key historical moments and expressing national pride. It reflects a right wing view of Hungary’s history, and thus for example, refers to the loss of sovereignty under Nazi occupation, rather than to the cooperation between Hungary and the Nazis as the Hungarian left views it. The preamble recognizes Hungary as a Christian nation, and employs the words ‘family’, ‘nation’, ‘work’, and ‘order’ as key principles. However, the principle of equality was left out of the new constitution altogether.

Several articles in the new constitution and its amendments were highly criticized by the left and by international forces, among them the severe limitations on the constitutional court. Another criticized item was Article 22, which granted power to local authorities to criminalize homelessness ‘in order to protect public order, public security, public health and cultural values’. This was viewed as targeting Roma and criminalizing it instead of offering a solution to poverty and unemployment.292

Policy Outcomes


Since its 2010 electoral victory, Fidesz has been making a straightforward attempt to reconstruct Hungary’s national narrative through the erection of new national monuments, changes in school curriculum, remembrance days, and other symbols. In the past few years, the Fidesz government has replaced school curriculum and textbooks, adding fascist associated poets to the curriculum (Josef Nyiro, for example) among other changes. Statues have been replaced to reflect Right leaning ideology (Mihaly Karolyi’s statue has been removed from parliament square). Names of streets and squares were changed accordingly (Moscow Square became Szell Kalman Square).

One such notable act that received much criticism was a monument built in the center of Budapest to commemorate WWII. The monument depicts an angel attacked by a vulture, which symbolizes Hungary attacked by the Nazis during the war. To an average tourist, the statue may not seem offensive, but to the left in Hungary it was a red flag. Failing to recognize Horthy’s alliance with Nazi Germany, his accommodation of the domestic radical right, the regime’s race laws, and finally the role of Hungarian Nazis in the holocaust was an abomination.293

The radical right has a strong position on irredentism, and Fidesz too has been taking steps to ‘unify the Hungarian nation’. Some of these measures began long before the rise of the radical right, but others seem to cater to radical right supporters. In 2001 the Fidesz led coalition government passed a ‘Status Law’ granting ethnic Hungarian special rights in Hungary. Neighboring countries vocally criticized the law, accusing it of meddling in their domestic

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293 Since the beginning of the project there have been demonstrations in front of the monument. Today, the monument is surrounded by a makeshift holocaust memorial made of stones, letters, and personal items placed by survivors and their relatives.
affairs. The government also pushed through legislation to change the citizenship law to include ethnic Hungarians across the border, however it did not materialize. In 2004, the NGO ‘World Federation of Hungarians’ (Magyarok Világszövetsége, MVSZ) initiated a nationwide referendum on the question of dual citizenship to ethnic Hungarians. The left wing government headed by socialist MSZP was concerned about the repercussions of such legislation, including the international reaction. As a result, it encouraged citizens to refrain from voting. The outcome of the referendum was a narrow win for dual citizenship (51.6%), however, since turnout was low (under 40%), the legislation did not pass. This was to be one of the left’s great sins.

In the right wing’s story of Hungary, the left is continuously serving foreign interests and neglecting the national interest. Whether during the communist era, or in its post transition relations with the EU, the left is portrayed as subservient to international powers. It sets its policy to suit these powers, sacrificing national pride and the unique economic, cultural, and security needs of Hungary. The 2004 referendum fit well with this narrative. Ethnic Hungarians were dismayed, and the domestic right led by Orban used the incidents to demonstrate the careless neglect the left shows toward the Hungarian nation.

In 2010, the newly elected Orban government passed a new citizenship law, granting a Hungarian passport to all offspring of pre-Trianon ethnic Hungarians. Notably, the 2004


296 Interview Boda Zsolt

297 Interview Zoltan Kovacs

298 The referendum also demonstrated that the issue of ethnic Hungarians alone could not carry the right politically. The topic of Roma criminality which was connected to exclusionary national identity and to existential concerns of many Hungarians in the periphery proved more salient.
referendum proposal did not include special voting rights to ethnic Hungarians, whereas the 2010 legislation granted them voting by mail, a program far more lenient than Hungary’s normal absentee voting.\textsuperscript{299} Approximately one-third of Transylvanian Hungarians requested a passport, out of which 100,000 voted. More than 90\% of these Transylvanian Hungarians voted for Fidesz in the 2014 elections.\textsuperscript{300} Thus, the legislation both gave Fidesz a pool of rather secure voters, and further enshrined the view of the left as foreign to the nation, and the right as its protector. Fidesz did not stop at the citizenship legislation and added a national Day of Remembrance to commemorate the Treaty of Trianon.

\begin{quote}
“4 June is a day of mourning and remembrance, and a historical lesson at the same time. It is a day of mourning, because the Treaty of Trianon was the nation’s greatest tragedy following the division of historical Hungary in 1541... We should be proud of Hungarian heroes, who, living outside the borders of Hungary, have remained true Hungarians under all circumstances.”\textsuperscript{301}
\end{quote}

The entire move proved so successful for Fidesz that in 2013 Socialist party president Attila Mesterházy, speaking in Cluj, Transylvania, apologized for not supporting the 2004 referendum. In general, despite the low turnout in the 2004 referendum and the political nature of the question, there is broad consensus in Hungary today on viewing the territories of pre-Trianon Hungary as a part of an ideal motherland, and on the companionship Hungarians feel for ethnic Hungarians across the borders.


\textsuperscript{300} In other countries the percentage of passport issuing was lower. In Slovakia for example issuing a Hungarian passport would require relinquishing the Slovakian one. Also, Slovakia is a full EU member like Hungary, and so the benefit of a passport is negligible.

The Fidesz government made steps to adopt populist radical right agenda in other policy areas including social policy, economic policy, and education. One change in social policy was the 2010 T/1813 Government Decree that tied eligibility for social benefits with employment. In order to qualify for welfare subsidies from the government individuals have to either be employed for at least a part of the year, or take part in the widely-criticized government’s public works program.\textsuperscript{302} The policy makes it more difficult for the very poor to receive social aid, thus it highly affects the mostly unskilled Roma population.\textsuperscript{303}

Another significant change made by T/1813 decree is tying personal conduct with social aid. According to the decree, local government may set out further conditions for eligibility to social aid such as the cleanliness of the place of residence, namely looking after the surroundings of the house, pavement, garden etc. Again, this has been viewed as targeting Roma populations indirectly. As Roma members live in poor conditions they can be easily accused for neglecting the appearance of their residence. In one town led by a Jobbik mayor, Roma members have been driven out for failing to comply with the town’s appearance regulations.\textsuperscript{304} This form of local discretion is not only in line with extremist policy preferences, it also ignites further extremism in certain localities. More broadly, the Fidesz government cut back on welfare subsidies, and changed the income tax system from a progressive rate to a flat rate tax of 16 percent. This put more strain

\textsuperscript{302} Bako et al, A munkaerőpiac peremén lévők és a költségvetés. Hungarian Academy of Science 2014

\textsuperscript{303} Kristof zombati interview, September 2014. Based on ethnographic work in North East Hungary, and South West Hungary. Dorottya Szikra interview, December 2014; Vera Messing interview, December 2014. Though there is no comprehensive data, some ethnographic data is available at http://www.pillangokutatas.bffd.hu/findings/studies

\textsuperscript{304} Szombati interview
on minimum wage workers. Since the Roma population is generally composed of unskilled labor, the new tax system reduced their living conditions and status.\footnote{Szikra interview, December 2014.}


The government has been criticized for these policies, with critics arguing that the process of ownership change was corrupt, transferring assets from international companies to government cronies without due process. Moreover, in the media sector, critics argue the government has been pushing out foreign companies to limit free press.\footnote{http://www.bbc.co.uk/monitoring/has-hungary-made-peace-with-rtl-klub-tv} Indeed, most media outlets (other than online media) are now economically dependent on the state.

Aside from a large overall reform in education, Fidesz ministers’ of education have been far more supportive of ethnic segregation in school than previous ministers. The anti-discrimination law in Hungary forbids segregation in education. However, in reality there are
segregated schools and segregated classes within schools separating Roma and non Roma students. This is not a new phenomenon, since there is no strict school districting in Hungary, parents can choose schools for their children and take race composition into consideration when making their decision. School principals often cooperate with these tendencies and make admission choices that may reflect a racial bias. Often times, Roma children are sent to ‘special needs’ classes that serve as a means to separate them from non-Roma students. In addition, some Roma communities are geographically separated from non-Roma population due to recent years’ ‘White Flight’. The result is a widely segregated system.\footnote{Approximately two thirds of Roma children study in segregated schools or in special classes. Adel Kegye, Chance for Children Foundation interview, December 2014; Chance for Children reports on segregation in education : http://www.cfcf.hu/en/about-us/annual-reports.html}

The court system has been consistently ruling against segregated schools and classrooms, however there is no evidence of implementation of court decisions, and schools are not penalized for not following through.\footnote{ibid} While this is a longstanding social problem, it has increased in recent years. Since 2010, the policy changed from intent at integration to ‘social catch up’. According to the ‘social catch up’ logic, the Roma population is lagging behind and requires unique conditions to ‘catch up’ with non-Roma Hungarians. It is not entirely clear what does ‘social catch up’ entails, or what means are assigned for the task. In the last few years the minister of education, Zoltan Balog used ‘social catch up’ argument to justify segregation in schools as well as reopen a segregated school closed in 2007. Balog has been repeatedly attempting to change the anti-discrimination law to allow for segregation on the basis of ‘social catch up’. In 2015 after several rulings in European courts against Hungary, the European Commission called for an end to school segregation in Hungary, and in 2016 it launched a probe into the systematic discrimination of Roma students.
Roma children in Hungarian schools. Segregation is one of Jobbik’s policy goals, and the vague concept of ‘social catch up’ seems in line with their preferences and rhetoric.

### 3.5 Analysis

The reaction of the socialist government in 2007 to the formation of the Garda should be understood first and foremost in the context of the political protests of that period, and the general view that the left-liberal government lost its hold on public order. As the crisis of leadership was the backdrop to the formation of the Garda to begin with, it was clearly one of the reasons the government struggled to offer concrete solutions, and even strong formal statements. It seems then that a state weakness argument would be suitable here – the government was failing in general, therefore it failed to deliver on arresting radical right violence and incitement. To some extent this is true, while they won the popular vote in the 2006 election, Gyurcsány and his socialist-liberal government lost the trust of the people and struggled to lead. And yet, Hungary did not collapse overnight in that short period, and it continued to function, implement policies, and broadly maintain the rule of law. In a five parameter state capacity index measured by Jessica Fortin, Hungary scored the highest of all post-communist countries between 1989 and 2006. Hungary was the leader in most parameters ahead of fellow successful EU members Czech Republic,

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312 There have been other reforms in the structure of the education system which promote segregation including the addition of professional schools. Rona interview.

Poland, Slovenia, and Estonia. The weakness the government demonstrated against the radical right cannot be understood as lack of state resources to address the problem, but as lack of ability or willingness to utilize existing resources.

A different measure is more revealing. During the same period, Hungary experienced a sharp decline in trust in governing institutions compared to other periods, and to neighboring countries. The implication is that the capacity of the government was in decline not because of lack of resources, but because a decline in popular support. Therefore if the government failed to act on certain issues it was likely because it sensed it did not have the legitimation to so. This is in line with Goddard and Krebs who view the universe of possible policies as limited by the ability to justify them with an acceptable narrative. The more controversial and salient an issue is, the stronger legitimation it requires. Classic state capacity explanation thus does not apply to the case.

Facing the rise of Jobbik and the extremist militias, politicians on the left were also troubled by electoral calculations. To some extent, radical right Jobbik and the socialist party were competing over the same constituency. Traditionally, the socialist left was strong in the North East, a region troubled by ethnic conflict that is today Jobbik’s stronghold. Once the radical right managed to own the Roma issue, it was hard to attack it without alienating its supporters and their perception of the countryside Roma issue. However, before the 2010 elections, Jobbik was not a member of parliament, as in 2006 the radical right coalition Jobbik-MIEP failed to reach the minimum threshold. At the time it was probably not viewed as a significant electoral contender by

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the ruling party. Direct electoral competition then is a weaker explanation than rhetorical coercion for explaining the behavior of the left toward the radical right, at least between 2006 and 2010.

Following the protests of 2006, the government was an easy target for the radical right. Both Jobbik, and Fidesz portrayed it as fraudulent, detached from the people, and serving the European Union and international banks rather than the Hungarian people. Faced with these accusations, the government hesitated to confront the Garda. The case of Miskolc Chief of Police Albert Pasztor exemplifies the hesitant approach and the struggle with radical right narratives. In 2009, Pasztor made a few statements in a press conference against the Roma population. Among other things he commented that truth must be told, Roma kids will become criminals, and that all crimes in the public sphere are committed by the Roma. His statement had no factual basis as by law, ethnic data is not collected by authorities in Hungary. Pasztor was first removed from his position, but he became a local hero in Miskolc, a stronghold of Jobbik that is ridden with ethnic tensions, and was soon reinstated. Moreover, in 2014 Pasztor competed in the Miskolc mayoral elections as the representative of the socialist MSZP and received the support of former socialist Prime Minister Gyurcsány and others. When explaining his support for Pasztor, Gyurcsány accepted the Roma criminality premise and expressed the struggle of the left with the rhetoric,

“We are in a trap. There is an allegation presumed to be true by many, saying that the ratio of criminals is higher in the Roma community than elsewhere. But we have no factual evidence supporting this claim. We don’t know what is the case because of the lack of statistics in the matter, and following the terrible Shoah and Pharraimos [the Roma genocide committed by the Nazis and their allies during the Second World War] we are instinctively repellent to such ideas...In Miskolc, masses of Roma and non-Roma are facing each other...and non-Roma often have to run from the

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Roma. We can muse about integration, but there in Miskolc and in thousands of other communities, there is only separation and fear.”

Left wing politicians then felt trapped because framing the problems of periphery Hungarians as ‘Gypsy Crime’, and drawing the identity lines between ‘Hungarians’ and Roma resonated with many. Choosing between strong condemnation of hate speech, and acceptance of the discourse, they were often hesitant to act. The fact that organizations like the Garda were perceived as the only ones addressing the problem, further incapacitated the left. Hungary is not the only country in the region where strong anti Roma narratives conquered the mainstream, in Slovakia and the Czech Republic leading politicians have engaged in hate speech in the past decade. However, anti Roma paramilitary organizations first appeared in Hungary, and were later imitated in Slovakia.

It is important to note that strategic cooperation cannot be considered a viable explanation for the response of the left toward the radical right. The left did not gain from the rise in ethnic tensions, they did not serve to distract from its failures, and it was considered as part of the problem for many in areas with rising ethnic tensions.

For the right wing government that followed 2010, strategic cooperation seems a more viable explanation than that of low state capacity. Arguably, Orban’s government was benefitting from the extremist violence as it distracted from economic performance and other issues, or hindered the formation of class-based coalitions. As for distraction from economic performance, indeed the

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318 The Budapest Beacon July 7th, 2014

319 In many of my interviews, subjects referred to non Roma as ‘Hungarians’, and to Roma as ‘Gypsy’ or as ‘not Hungarians’.

320 European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) Country Reports. Available at: http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/countrybycountry_en.asp
Orban government time and time again uses media spins to turn public attention away from controversial policy reforms and reported incidents of corruption. Many debates over minor legislation, and struggles over controversial symbols coincided with the timing of significant reforms that were mostly overlooked by the media.\textsuperscript{321} However, violence against Roma was not one of the government manufactured spins. Rather than distracting attention, the issue of radical right extremism drew unwanted attention, both domestically and internationally.\textsuperscript{322} The reporting on paramilitary activity created a perception that Fidesz itself was an extremist party, a perception the party had been trying to avoid at the time.\textsuperscript{323} Moreover, the issue of “Gypsy Criminality” was owned by Jobbik and the radical right militias in Hungary and not by Fidesz. In other words, they did not gain much from the rise in tension between ethnic groups as they were not considered best able to “handle” the issue.

While Fidesz did not contradict the ideology of the radical right, it did oppose it on grounds of law and order. In the parliament discussion over Bill T/2990 on Amending the Criminal Code, Fidesz members referenced law and order arguments. They did not address the tensions between the Roma and the non-Roma community, and one Fidesz member argued that the system must ignore ethnic background, punish the guilty, and defend the innocent.\textsuperscript{324} The opposition on the left

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\textsuperscript{321} One example is the controversial tax on internet use which was widely viewed as a distraction from corruption scandals in government. If the plan was to distract public attention, it back fired as the plan to tax internet use brought tens of thousands of demonstrators to the streets. “Hungarian Internet tax plan hits ruling party support: poll” Reuters. November 21, 2014.


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agreed something must be done in regard to right wing militias, but was skeptical about the effectiveness of the bill. Jobbik representatives argued the bill targeted the innocent citizens attempting to defend themselves against rising ‘Gypsy Criminality’.\(^{325}\)

This discussion represents the overall relationship between the populist radical right and the center right. The radical right claims to be more authentic, to address the problems of real Hungarians better than the political center. The center right accepts radical right basic interpretation of the relationship between groups in society and of historical events, implicitly or explicitly, and at the same time attempts to assert control over the political system.

Strategic incorporation of the radical right cannot be entirely dismissed. It applies well to the issue of migrants, which originated in the radical right, and was later picked up by Orban and became a rhetorical centerpiece for the government. The government has been targeting migrants to draw support and distract from the unrest that plagued Hungary in 2014. However, its intention here too was not raise the profile of the issue by encouraging vigilante violence against migrants, but by appearing as owning the issue, as powerful on law and order, and as defending the Hungarian nation and Europe against foreign invaders.\(^{326}\) By focusing on migrants the government managed to disarm the radical right of its agenda.\(^{327}\)

Preventing the formation of class-based coalitions by centering political agenda on ethnicity\(^{328}\) is less relevant for the Hungarian case for several reasons. First, the socialist party did not offer a

\(^{325}\) ibid

\(^{326}\) Helsinki Foundation Interview; Interview Zuzana Szelenyi on migrants and violence; Orbán 2016 speeches available at:

\(^{327}\) Marton Gyongyosi Interview

\(^{328}\) Wilkinson 2006
class-based alternative to Jobbik. The socialist party in Hungary is not positioned left of Fidesz or Jobbik on the economic spectrum. As in many post-communist countries, the left in Hungary aligned with the liberal party, was a champion of neo liberal reforms, and cannot be viewed as an economic left. Right wing exclusion on the other hand, offered protectionism and welfare chauvinism. Fidesz itself promotes a mix of economic policies including on the neo liberal end, a flat tax rate of 16 percent, and on the protectionist end, generous subsidies on utilities, and nationalization of economic sectors.

The focus on law and order over content, points at a different explanation; the center right’s desire to contain the radical right without alienating its supporters. By 2010 Fidesz became a “catch all” party, aiming to draw support from all sections of the population. It took a different approach in its competition with the left and with the radical right. Viktor Orban continued to portray the left as an internal enemy to Hungary’s ongoing struggle for independence. However, he did not employ a de-legitimizing rhetoric toward the radical right, and instead chose to adopt many of Jobbik’s policy preferences and rhetoric as described above. However, as mentioned above, Jobbik tends to draw its voters from former voters of the socialist party rather than from Fidesz constituency. Jobbik voters are broadly more rural, less educated, unskilled workers. This was formerly a constituency of left wing socialists who depended on government subsidies

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330 Minkenberg 2015

331 Janos Szeky Interview. August 2015.


333 ibid
and were negatively affected by liberal reforms. This radical right voting behavior is common in other European countries as well. Thus, direct electoral competition between Jobbik and Fidesz was not a strong factor at least until the 2014 elections. Instead, Fidesz’s approach toward the radical right had more to do with the overall narrative the party was creating and its effort to marginalize liberal-leftists. The narrative proximity between Fidesz and Jobbik, the similar reading of Hungary’s history, and the exclusionary view of Hungarian identity did not allow Fidesz to marginalize Jobbik without discrediting itself.

3.6 DISCUSSION

Right and left wing governments in Hungary did not respond decisively to the rise of the populist radical right movement of the late 2000s and the violent groups within it. While left wing politicians expressed disdain toward radical right ideology, they did not offer concrete solutions to alleviate ethnic tensions, or crack down on violent groups. Right wing politicians on the other hand, did promote a limited law and order policy to target radical right violence, but they also accepted populist radical right framing and adopted many of its agenda.

Throughout this chapter, I demonstrated that the narratives the radical right created based on national symbols and history were challenging for politicians. These narratives portrayed the left and liberals as unpatriotic, foreign to the nation, serving international interests, and continuing a long Hungarian tradition of domestic collaborators with malignant international forces. In a moment of economic and political crisis, this portrayal undermined the left-liberal leadership and left it paralyzed in the face of the rising radical right populist challenge.

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334 Norris and Inglehart, 2016
For the right wing, the narratives marginalizing the left were a useful tool, and right wing politicians accepted it along with the costs that follow from the rise of right wing extremism. Even in moments when the radical right employed extreme violence, raising ethnic tensions, and drawing negative international attention, the center right was unable to fully condemn the radical right without undermining its own fundamental narratives.

While other forces like electoral competition were in play in the Hungarian case, even when direct competition was weak as before 2010, or between Fidesz and Jobbik who ultimately had different constituencies, the pandering toward the radical right was still strong based on rhetorical coercion.

Beyond the Hungarian case, this work sheds light on the process of the populist turn experienced throughout Europe, the United States, and elsewhere. In the past decade, electoral support for the radical right in Europe has doubled in size. However, the actual size of the radical right in most countries is still small. At the same time the political center has been increasingly turning toward radical right populism. The dynamics of the relationship between the radical right and the political center has had a transformative effect on many political systems. In England, radical right UKIP has no influence on parliamentary politics, and yet it has been a major force leading up to the 2016 Brexit vote. In France, the growing power of the National Front has driven the entire political competition in the country toward the radical right. These dynamics are often attributed to electoral competition alone. I have demonstrated here that while electoral competition plays a part, rhetorical coercion is central to the dynamics between the mainstream and the radical

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Norris and Inglehart, 2016
right. It marginalizes the left, and drives the center right toward extremism as center right parties wish to compete with the left and to maintain credibility at the same time.

The large question this chapter opens is that of the resonance of national narratives in society vis-à-vis alternative narratives. Under what conditions can nationalist-chauvinist identity undermine central political actors and shift the political system to the right? The immediate answers provided by current political trends are economic crisis, migration crisis, and the threat of terrorism. While the latter two were not initially significant forces in Hungary, economic crisis certainly played a part in the destabilization of political authorities, opening the way for political extremists. The left-liberals were unable to provide solutions for the economic crisis throughout Europe, and in Hungary. As a result, the combination of welfare chauvinism and identity chauvinism became attractive to many voters.

Beyond the immediate political-economic conditions, some political systems are more vulnerable to a significant nationalist-populist shift and others are less. Following from the previous chapter, the Hungarian case points at explanations for the potential strength of rhetorical coercion. The legacies of an urban rural-cleavage maintained the Budapest elite as foreign to the Hungarian nation over time. The 1989 transition reproduced the urban-rural cleavage as it was a very narrow and liberal transition, alienating large groups in society, and never attempting to include them in the vision for a new Hungary. As long as Hungarian people continued to enjoy the fruits of liberalization they were willing to lend liberal-leftists their support. However, once crisis diminished these fruits they turned against the entire liberal project, paving the way for a populist illiberal turn.

The implication of this analysis is that while many countries are experiencing a populist political turn, we should not expect all of them to go through a deep illiberal transformation as
Hungary did. Where populist radical right rhetoric does not meet a background of deep cleavages within the nation, alternative narratives to exclusionary nationalism should be more available, may they be liberal, leftist, or national-inclusive. We should expect that an ideational opposition to populist nationalism will be translated into political opposition.
4 Monopolizing the Nation

Israeli Settlement and the Right Wing Capture of National Lexicon and Symbols

“...I say on behalf on the Jews that the Bible is our Mandate, the Bible which was written by us, in our own language, in Hebrew, in this very country. That is our Mandate. Our right is as old as the Jewish people.”

- David Ben Gurion

4.1 Introduction

In the recently released documentary, Ben Gurion, Epilogue, the elderly couple, David Ben Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel, and his wife, Paula sit down for an interview. After talking with Ben Gurion for long minutes about Zionism, the interviewer turns to Paula and asks whether she is a Zionist. Following a brief contemplation, she replies she is not. To Paula Ben Gurion in 1960s Israel, the question was very specific: was she a part of the political movement that fought to create a national home for Jews in the land of Palestine/Israel? She was not. She had other causes at the time and did not share her husband’s political activity. Answering in the negative, Paula Ben Gurion did not mean to say she was not an Israeli, nor a member of the Jewish nation, or that she did not believe Jews should have a national home on the land of Palestine/Israel. She likely viewed herself as all the above however, the question did not entail these complex elements, and a Zionist she was not. It is hard to imagine a mainstream public figure or their spouse in Israel today responding in this manner. Zionism has departed from this particular historical


context and taken on new meanings that this chapter aims to explore. If nationalism is the struggle to gain a political unit for the nation in a geographic territory, then the reemergence of nationalism after a geographic territory is secured is puzzling.

This chapter examines the negotiation over Zionist identity as expressed in the debate over the settlement issue, and the penetration of right wing settler narratives into the mainstream. The settlers, who started out as a small and marginal movement in the early 1970s have become over the years one of the most important social and political actors in Israel. Settlers are over represented in the Israeli Knesset through their political party, Habait Hayehudi, and through right wing party, Likud. Education and construction in the territories are better funded than in the rest of the country, and settler law violations are mostly overlooked. This situation is puzzling as the settlements are considered a hindrance to any peace solution between Israelis and Palestinians, in particular the Two States Solution which was until recently the accepted mainstream solution for the region. Moreover, according to international law the settlements are illegal, are internationally criticized, and are subject to informal boycotts and boycott attempts.

The chapter follows the early years of the settlement project from the settlement attempts in the north West Bank in 1974 to the early 1980s, and traces the rhetorical processes of settlers and settlement opposition. Through analysis of archival materials, I find that settlers managed to tie the act of settlement to Zionist identity from very early on. Settlement opposition on the other hand did not view the issue as a matter of national identity. As the story of Paula Ben Gurion demonstrates, to many the question of Zionism was settled and secured, and they did not

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339 Yesh Din reports available at: http://www.yesh-din.org/en/category/settler-violence/?refineByType=68
understand immediately the extent of the challenge settler posed in this regard. However, there were other populations, the right wing, and Sephardi Jews in the periphery, who were also alienated from hegemonic Zionism, and were ready to re-negotiate national identity.

The Israeli case lends itself to an investigation about nationalism as a consequence of inter-ethnic conflict. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict looms over Israeli and Palestinian politics and society, and no doubt shapes the identity of both peoples. Moreover, perhaps despite long years of independence and sovereignty, Jewish Israelis still do not feel they have a secure national home vis-à-vis their Arab neighbors. But I argue here that the penetration of right wing ideas, and the ultimate hegemonic shift in Israeli politics and society in the past decades is just as much the result of the way the local and regional conflict relate to intra-ethnic contradictions and conflicts within Jewish Israeli society. Three social tensions are particularly relevant to the success of the settler narrative within Jewish Israeli society. First, to bind together immigrant populations from diverse backgrounds, Zionist pioneers integrated Jewish identity into the secular national Zionist project. The leaders of the movement remained non-observant Jews for many years, but the integration of religious narratives into the national ethos gave Jewish religion authority over Israeli identity. Second, the leader of the Zionist project, hegemonic socialist party Mapai, controlled the political arena and the state for many years, entirely excluding from power the economically liberal hawkish Herut. Mapai was not only the largest party, it was also the largest employer, the largest labor union, and the largest provider of welfare prior to the establishment of the state, and during its early days. The exclusionary politics the party practiced meant that to gain power, the right wing had to search for

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political and ideological allies outside the mainstream. As I show in this chapter, this was the source of the alliance between the right and the settlers.

The third cleavage is not directly addressed in this chapter because of the nature of the evidence I collected. However, I refer to it further toward the end of this chapter. In addition to the political ideological exclusion, Mapai was also exclusive toward non-European Jews, and viewed them as an instrument to fortify the young country rather than equal members of society. By sending new non-European immigrants to remote border towns, and practicing discrimination in the labor market, housing, and education, the party generated a center-periphery cleavage for political entrepreneurs of the opposition. The opportunity for mobilization was made even deeper as non-European Jews were more religious than the hegemonic Mapai. The implication was that opposition to Mapai could unite along national-religious lines, and claim to represent the nation better than the hegemonic Mapai. This claim was brought together under the settlement project.

The first two social tensions: the secular religious tension, and the exclusion of the right are addressed in this chapter. Using unique primary resources, I demonstrate how settlement supporters in the early days of the settlement project tied the issue of settlement in the Occupied territories to Zionism, to the pioneering ethos, and to Judaism. Using these elements, they were able to form alliances with leading politicians. The alliance that turned out to be most influential was that with right wing party Likud (formerly Herut). The formerly marginalized party did not have an active part in the settlement of Palestine in the pre-state days, it also did not have a strong Zionist ethos like its political opponent, Alignment (formerly Mapai). As the party was gaining political strength it was searching for its own hegemonic narrative, which the settlement project provided.
To demonstrate the framing process of the settlers I analyze over a hundred letters written to key political figures in protest and in support of settlement construction in the 1970s and early 1980s. To understand how settler narratives were manifested in the mainstream I review nearly four hundred Israeli media news articles on settlements from the same period.

Analyzing the content of news articles and letters according to type of discourse and narrative, the chapter shows that already in the debate over the first settlement in the north West-Bank in 1974-75, the supporters of the settlement project managed to tie the question of settlement construction to Jewish Israeli national identity. Settler framing was ambitious in its attempt to place the project as the most recent link in the very long chain of Jewish-national vanguard. The association between Zionism and the settlements made it increasingly difficult for protesters against settlements to comfortably access the national discourse and symbols. As the archival materials demonstrate, the struggle over the settlement issue continued in later years. Protesters developed new arguments which may have been effective on occasion, but failed to construct a narrative which retakes the question of national identity, and ultimately they continued to struggle to win hearts and minds for the center-left camp.

The chapter proceeds as follows: the next section describes the construction of Zionism by the hegemonic left in Israel. I then present a brief history of the settlement project in Section Three. The following section discusses the archival data and methods I employ in this chapter. Section Five presents the result of systematic text analysis on archival materials. Finally I discuss the implications of the results in Section Six.

341 The source of these archival materials and their selection is discussed in detail in the Data and Methods section below.

342 Samaria in the language of the settlers which have since became the common use for the Jewish Israeli public.
4.2 ZIONISM AND THE LEFT IN ISRAEL

The right wing in Israel is often referred to as the *national camp*,\(^{343}\) whereas the left is merely the *left bloc*.\(^{344}\) Criticism of the left blames it for failing to serve the national agenda or being post-Zionist.\(^{345}\) Politicians on the right have been incorporating national symbols into their campaigns for a long time. For example right wing Likud’s colors have traditionally been blue and white, the colors of the flag, whereas the labor party colors were red until the 1992 elections.\(^{346}\) Other examples include individual right wing politicians’ common use of the flag and other national symbols, and the common reference of right wing politicians to biblical and historical events tied to national story.\(^{347}\)

Despite indications for the right’s strong hold over the national lexicon, the situation was very different in the past. The labor party, Mapai, was at the center of the Zionist project since long before the formal establishment of the State of Israel. Labor was the head of the Jewish governing institutions in pre 1948 Palestine, it was the head of the labor union which included

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\(^{343}\) In 1984 Likud and its allies began to refer to themselves as the national camp, Hamachane Haleumi, in attempt to exclude their political rivals from the borders of legitimate politics. Lustick, Ian. *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands: Britain and Ireland, France and Algeria, Israel and the West Bank-Gaza*. Cornell University Press, 1993. p, 359

\(^{344}\) In several of the last elections in Israel, left wing party Meretz campaigned around the message that a vote for the party is a safe vote for the ‘Left Bloc’, http://meretz.org.il/meretz-chairwoman-answers-haaretz-readers-questions/. The center-left party, Labor (Avoda) competed in the 2015 elections as a joint party with more centrist nominees under the name ‘The Zionist Camp’ (Ha’Machane Ha’Zioni), the party was attacked by the left for trying to imitate the right, and from the right for false claims over Zionism, and ended up failing in the elections. http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/188666/israels-new-zionist-camp; http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/premiu-m-1.641282;

\(^{345}\) “Netanyahu and Herzog Spar on Jerusalem, Iran,” Haaretz, Mach 14, 2015.


\(^{347}\) Notable example include Likud’s Miri Regev and Zeev Elkin, but also the late Prime Minister Menachem Begin. Lustick, 1993.
most workers in the country (Histadrut). Histadrut owned large sectors of the economy. The ideology behind the ownership was that workers would be the owners of the means of production. But in practice Mapai controlled Histadrut was an extremely powerful employer with an essential monopoly over heavy industry, manufacturing, banking, services, and education.\textsuperscript{348} During these long years in power, right wing politicians and individuals aligned with right wing parties were outcasts within Jewish society. Right wing identified individuals were marginalized in the job market, and their access to the party’s superior welfare system, health care, and other benefits was restricted.\textsuperscript{349} Moreover, the main right wing party, Herut, was considered an illegitimate political actor. When first Prime Minister David Ben Gurion defined the acceptable limits of his governing coalition he coined the slogan “Without Herut and without Maki” to mean that the right wing party and the extremist communist party cannot be considered for governing positions. This utter marginalization from political power lasted for two decades after the formation of the state.

Due to its position in power, the left not only controlled the national discourse and symbols, it practically invented these.\textsuperscript{350} Leaders of the Jewish nationalist project focused on the construction of shared language and symbols. Quite literally, the spoken Hebrew language itself was invented (or “revived”) to serve the national project.\textsuperscript{351} To create the national ethos, Zionists turned stories from antiquity into nationalist symbols and holidays. The stories chosen focused less on faith and the role of god in Judaism, and more on heroic defense of the land and self-rule within

\textsuperscript{348} Shafrirand Peled, 2002.

\textsuperscript{349} Ibid; Lustic, 1993


\textsuperscript{351} Sachar, Howard M. \textit{A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time}. Knopf, 2013.
the land. The examples are manifold, to name a few, the story of Jewish zealots choosing death over surrender to the Romans under siege in Masada, became a symbol of heroic cry for national independence. The Masada myth was not a part of traditional Judaism but a Zionist interpretation. Masada continues to serve as a location for Israeli military formal ceremonies.\textsuperscript{352} Another example is the holiday of Hanukah, which was transformed from a story of divine miracle to a declaration of autonomy of the Jewish Maccabee nation state.\textsuperscript{353} Some holidays were celebrated in a completely new way; the minor ancient holiday of Tu Bishvat was revived in early 20\textsuperscript{th} century and celebrated as a national day for planting trees in the land of Palestine/Israel.\textsuperscript{354}

A central aspect of Zionism was the sanctification of the land. This was done not only by Jewish-turned national symbols, but also through the “religion of labor”. Although the movement was urban from early on, its ideals were of agricultural labor. One of the prominent thinkers promoting this idea was A.D Gordon, who preached for agricultural labor as a mean for gaining legitimate ownership of the land. Though a secular man, Gordon believed in the high spiritual value of labor. Accordingly, the agricultural forms of settlement and in particular the socialist Kibbutz became the representative image of Zionism. The curriculum in schools contained classes named \textit{the land of Israel} (“Eretz Yisrael”), or \textit{homeland} (“Moledet”) instead of geography, teaching children about the terrain, the fauna, the plants of the land. Students were also taught classes in agriculture.\textsuperscript{355}


\textsuperscript{353} Almog 2000, 37

\textsuperscript{354} Almog 2000, 56-57

\textsuperscript{355} These habits persist to date. Almog 2000, 141, 160-161
The special attention to the homeland is a common national practice and by no means unique to Zionism. However, for the early Zionist the political claim over the land was weak. There were few Jews on the land, few that even wanted to come prior to the rise of Nazism and fascism in Europe. Moreover, the land was already inhabited by Palestinians. The British mandate in Palestine was not encouraging the Zionist efforts, the local Palestinian population opposed them, at times tensions erupting into violence, and even diaspora Jews were mostly unsupportive. The emphasis on homeland in Zionism was directed both toward the Jewish people around the globe, and toward important political figures in Europe and the United States.

In the first decades of Zionism and into the early years of the state of Israel, the Zionist ethos entirely belonged to the left. Right wing Herut and politicians of the right in those years used the flag and the discourse of the ‘Whole Land of Israel’, but they did not have access to core Zionist values like socialism, labor as a value, and the mythology of pioneering that belonged to the left. And importantly, they did not have a settling movement and so had no ‘ownership’ over the very crucial land. As I demonstrate below, the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza was an opportunity to change the relationship between the political groups and Zionist identity.

4.3 THE SETTLEMENT PROJECT

The outcomes of the 1967 War marked a new phase in the ongoing Arab Israeli Conflict. Following the war, Israel took control over Golan Heights, Sinai, Gaza, and the West Bank territories between the Jordan River and the Green Line, Israel’s internationally recognized border.

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356 Segev, 1998
357 Lustick 1993
The West bank and Gaza, inhabited by Palestinian population, were neither annexed to Israel nor given an independent status.\textsuperscript{358,359} In the nearly fifty years since, despite some changes in legal arrangements including the Oslo Accords and the formation of Palestinian Authority, the status of the Occupied Territories remains unrecognized by the international community and disputed.

The struggle for self-determination of the Palestinian people during these years has become a central regional and international political issue. This chapter takes on the far more narrow issue of the way the Jewish settlement issue was debated in Israeli politics, the struggle over identity around this issue, and the way this struggle related to pre-existing tensions within Jewish Israeli society. It is important to stress that Zionist identity by no means covers all Israeli citizens. The Israeli population includes a large Arab-Palestinian minority of approximately 20%.\textsuperscript{360} Political parties and political discourse in Israel are divided along ethnic lines.\textsuperscript{361} However, as will be discussed below, it is far more difficult for the left to maintain both liberal and Zionist-national narratives. I will demonstrate this difficulty is increasingly prominent with the growth of the settlement project and its deep ties with Zionist identity.

The settlement project began shortly after the 1967 War; settlements were built first in Jerusalem and later expanded to the West Bank and Gaza strip. At first the government built


\textsuperscript{359} The territories around Western Jerusalem have a different legal status. They were not annexed but are included in the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem. They are sometimes referred to as partially annexed. Lustick, Ian S. “Has Israel Annexed East Jerusalem?” \textit{Middle East Policy} 5 (1997): 34–45.


settlements for security purposes. These began as military camps and were later “civilianized”. Some settlements were formed by ideologically driven individuals with or without state permission. By 1973 the Israeli state had built approximately 50 settlements in the Occupied Territories, home to 4,000 settlers.\textsuperscript{362} However, settling the north West Bank was against the government’s informal policy on the future of the territories because of the region’s dense Arab population.\textsuperscript{363}

The group most motivated to form new settlements in the Occupied territories were young religious Jews. The organizing movement of the settlers was ‘Gush Emunim’, formed in 1974.\textsuperscript{364} In addition to a core religious group, Gush Emunim united other factions of nationalist ideological non-religious activists. 1974-1975 was a forming period for the settlement project, and it is thus a key moment in time to examine the budding discourse of settlement supporters and settlement opposition. In December of 1974 a group of young religious Jews, of Gush Emunim movement, attempted to settle in Sebastia, an old railway station in the north West Bank. The makeshift camp at Sebastia was not the group’s first attempt to settle in the area settlers termed Samaria. Earlier that year, Gush Emunim attempted to settle in and near Nablus several times. In those attempts, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin ordered the military to forcefully remove the settlers from the land. By the time the group got to Sebastia, they had already drawn significant public and media

\textsuperscript{362} Settlement Committee, Ministry of Agriculture, File A/ 17/ 7310 Israeli State Archives

\textsuperscript{363} Allon Plan was the hawkish marker of Labor governments’ policy on the territories. It included constructions in all other areas of the occupied territories, but not in Samaria because of Allon’s expressed concern about the reaction of the local Arab population. Allon Plan was never formally accepted but some argue its logic applied when deciding on new settlements (Gorenberg, 2006). There was no other government plan to build in Samaria, however two members of the government did support the settlers, as will be discussed below.

\textsuperscript{364} Rubinstein, Dani. Mi La-Adonai Eli. Tel Aviv: Hkibbutz Hame’uchad. 1982, 38
attention, making settlements in the Occupied Territories into a truly controversial issue for the first time since 1967.365

Gush Emunim members came to Sebastia in thousands. The government blocked the roads to the area, leading many to travel distances on foot. Among the members were teenagers, families with young children, and pregnant women. The military on the ground, sent to evict the settlers, as well as government ministers were particularly concerned about this composition of the crowd. Government debates show a fear of the consequences of a pregnant woman or a child being injured by an Israeli soldier.366 The place was swamped with media reporters, and photographers.

After initially ordering the evacuation of the settlement, Prime Minister Rabin agreed to negotiate with the settlers. According to the compromise deal they struck, the protesters were to leave Sebastia, and only thirty of them would stay in a nearby military base until the government found a new location for their settlement. The protesters did end up leaving Sebastia, but instead of thirty members, thirty families remained in nearby Kadum. They would become the core of the settlements Kdumim and Elon More later established in the north West Bank. This marked the beginning of the settlement project in the area.

A few years later, the settlement project received a significant boost when right wing Likud became the largest party in parliament for the first time. Likud supported the settlements both materially and ideologically. However, in the following years the project experienced two significant setbacks; first, the peace process between Israel and Egypt led to international pressure on Israel to stop expanding settlements; second, in 1979 the Israeli Supreme Court ruled for the

365 The Occupied Territories were a salient issue since 1967, but the Jewish settlements did not draw much attention before Sebastia. Gorenberg, 2006

366 ibid
first time in favor of Palestinian plaintiffs, and deemed the Jewish settlement Elon Moreh illegal since it was built on private Palestinian land without a security justification. After postponing and deliberation, the state complied with the court’s order causing much concern among settlers. Thus, these were years of settlement expansion but also of fierce struggle over the legitimacy and future of the Jewish settlements.

In the years that followed the settlement project expanded significantly. Moreover, significant portions of the West Bank have become normalized part of the Israel for Jewish Israelis, a part of the territorial idea of the nation. Using archival data, I demonstrate next how the settlement supporters framed the settlement issue as a Zionist cause in the 1974-1975 period. The data also points at an ongoing struggle over the framing of the issue, and implicitly over the framing of national identity.

4.4 DATA AND METHODS

Two main sources of data are used in this chapter: letters written in support and protest of settlement construction and kept in the Israeli National Archives, and news articles on the

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367 Israeli National Archive Publications  Elon Moreh. Available at: http://www.archives.gov.il/chapter/%D7%9C%D7%95%D7%97-%D7%96%D7%9E%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%9C%D7%91%D7%92%D7%A6-%D7%90%D7%9C%D7%95%D7%9F-%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%94/


369 File Codes: G/37/6721; G/38/6721; GL/2/7827; GL/7/7829; GL/8/7827; GL/9/7834; GL/10/7834; GL/11/7834 Israeli State Archives
settlements published in Israel’s widest spread daily newspaper Maariv and in left leaning paper Davar between 1974 and 1981.\textsuperscript{370}

4.4.1 Letters 1974-1975

The first batch of letters was written around the Sebastia settlement affair in 1974. They were addressed to Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin (24 letters against the settlements, 56 letters for the settlements). Many of the letters are hand written, a few are typed, and several are telegrams. Most of the letters are in Hebrew, although several on both sides are in the English language, and were sent from abroad (The US mostly, although one letter was sent from South Africa, and another from England).

While most letters in support of the settlement project were written by private individuals, the majority of letters against the settlements were written by groups, including social movements, party branches, Kibbutz assemblies, and professional politicians from the leftist party Mapam. Interestingly, at least 15% of the letters in support of the settlements were composed by children or teenagers (these letters state the age or school grade of the author in the body of letter, the youngest composer is in the third grade). These letters are in line with the general emotional content of the letters in support of settlements, and the emotional construction of the issue by settlement supporters, as will be elaborated below. The involvement of young teens is also connected to two other factors; first, participation in political youth movements was common in

\textsuperscript{370} The articles were procured from the National Library of Israel and Beit Ariela Library, Tel Aviv. Some of them were available in an electronic version through: The Historical Jewish Press website at: http://www.ipress.nli.org.il.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/Olive/APA/NLI?action=tab&tab=browse&pub=MAR#panel/browse. Davar represented the views of Mapai and was considered the party’s outlet. Almog, 2000.
Israel at the time.371 In these movements, current events were discussed in groups, and each movement had a distinct political orientation. Particularly, within the religious-nationalist movement B’nei Akiva, support for the settlers was in vogue in the mid 1970s.372 Second, many of the Samaria settlers themselves were teenagers. Some where members of different Yeshivas like Merkaz Harav,373 and others were free spirited teens on a holiday adventure.374 Given the rebellious youth image of the settlers, their popularity among other young supporters of similar background is not altogether surprising.

While the settlers were mostly religious, their supporters seem to be more diverse in religiosity. Many letters do not open with a Jewish religious acronym,375 and do not refer to religious symbols. Regionally, letters in favor of the settlement project are very diverse, whereas letters protesting the settlements are commonly from Kibbutz, Tel Aviv or Jerusalem. In terms of gender, most letters in both groups were written by males.

First, I divided the letters to those supporting and those opposing the settlements. The letters are very clear on that issue and usually state the agenda of the writer in the first line (e.g. “We protest the illegal act of settling Sebastia in Samaria”; “Preventing Jews from settling in Samaria is an affront to Zionism”). Next, I identified topics or discourses within the letters. Words or expressions were divided into eight categories: Nationalism; Judaism; Democracy and Rule of

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372 Gorenberg, 2006
373 Rubinstein, 1982. Merkaz Harav, headed by Rabi Zevi Yehuda Kook, was the spiritual center of the early settlement project.
374 Gurenberg, 2006
375 In the Orthodox tradition written documents open with an acronym for Besiyata Dishmaya, or B’ezrat Hashem.
Law; State Institutions; Security; Emotions; Personal; and Other. The words included in each discourse can be found in the Appendix. To ensure coding consistency I first classified the letters in the Hebrew language and then translated them to English and coded them again.

Some words or expressions were readily classified: ‘Zionism’, ‘Pioneer’, ‘State of Israel’, were placed in the Nationalism category; biblical phrases or quotes were placed in the Judaism category. Other terms were more ambiguous, in particular between the Judaism and Nationalism categories. As Jewish nationalism naturally has a Jewish component, it was not always easy to disentangle the two discourses. Two rules guided the categorization; first, I preferred to err in favor of Judaism. As my argument mainly is about settler use of national identity, I was more cautious in classifying a word or term as national if it could also be interpreted as Jewish-religious. For example, ‘Land of Fathers’ was classified as Jewish rather than national as in Hebrew the expression has a highly religious context. Similarly, ‘Jerusalem’ was classified as Jewish rather than national.

The second principle that guided the classification was the context within the text. ‘Democracy’, for example could have been classified as a separate category from rule of law. In democratic countries, ‘Democracy’ is often used to mean ‘Justice’ or ‘Will of the People’. However, in the analyzed letters, ‘Democracy’ was most often used in conjugation with other ‘Rule of Law’ terms such as ‘Law and Order’. The reference to a democratic state was often clarified as one in which citizens abide by the law or the decisions of an elected government. Thus, the context of the letters, more than the general dictionary definition of a word, guided the classification.

4.4.2 Letters 1978-1981
The second batch of letters is a less unified group of documents than the first, and indeed was recovered from six different files in the National Archive. These letters, written between 1978 and 1981, were addressed to Deputy Prime Minister Yigael Yadin. Yadin was the head of the party DMC (‘DASH’, Democratic Movement for Change). The party ran for elections in 1977 on a liberal and anti-corruption platform, and managed to draw votes mostly from the left, causing a tremendous political overturn, when the leftist ruling party was ousted for the first time since the establishment of the state. The letters indicate that many DMC voters did not expect this dramatic political change, and were not supporters of the new right wing government, and particularly their new party’s role within it. DMC did not survive its first term in office and collapsed before the following elections.

From Yadin’s many correspondences, I have selected to analyze all those addressing the issue of the settlements in some way. The result was sixty letters; forty-four are letters of protest against DMC’s lack of action in government, or against Yadin personally. All these protest letters also take a stand against settlements. They address four topics of those years: the peace process with Egypt; Elon Moreh Supreme Court case; the Jewish settlement in Hebron; and the overall expansion of settlement by Minister of Agriculture Ariel Sharon. The rest of the letters in this batch, sixteen in number are of a different nature. Eight were written in support of the settlements,

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376 GL/2/7827; GL/7/7829; GL/8/7827; GL/9/7834; GL/10/7834; GL/11/7834 Israeli State Archives


378 Judging from the archival materials, Yadin was a prolific correspondent. While in office, he received numerous of letters from citizens on a variety of issues including hundreds of letters of protest and few letters of support. Yadin replied to many letters himself, penning hand written responses on the letter, later to be typed by an assistant.
and the rest include either general suggestions about the settlements, or requests for Yadin to clarify his views on the issue.\textsuperscript{379}

For this batch of letters I examined the new lines of argumentation against the settlements that did not appear in earlier letters. I have also examined the language of the letters and compared it with that of earlier letters. All letters opposing the settlements in this period came by male citizens, mostly from urban areas. The authors were different from settlement opposition in the earlier years as they were voters of a centrist party rather than far left political activists. Though some composers claim to represent “thousands of likeminded voters”, or “the views of professors of Tel Aviv University”, all of them were sent by private citizens.

Letters from individual authors in both examined periods do not seem to be directed by a top-down call for action of a political movement. Many of them are long, emotional or personal, and full of pathos. They are not business-like, and do not focus on specific arguments for a course of action. Instead, I view these letters as the way in which the rhetoric of each political group was perceived by engaged supporters. As such they allow us to view not only the arguments made by politicians and social movements, but also their intake by the public.

Finally, I analyzed the narratives of all the letters together by identifying structure, and content, including the temporal dimension, location, symbols, causes, and agents.\textsuperscript{380} This analysis best demonstrates the different ambition and scope of the rhetoric of each group.

\textsuperscript{379} The small number of letters in favor of the settlements is likely not representative of the composition of letters addressed to the government in general. Prime Minister Begin was likely on the receiving end of many letters in favor of the settlements. I have yet to retrieve Begin’s correspondence on the settlements.

To understand the source of some the discourses made by individual letter writers, as well as the mainstream discussion over the settlement I reviewed two Israeli media outlets in the years 1974 to 1981. Maariv was the most widespread newspaper of the time, and was not politically affiliated. Nearly 400 articles published on the settlements in the paper served as data for systematic discourse analysis. Each news article was summarized and coded according to the presence of different topics. News article topics were: nationalism; Judaism; right/sovereignty; security; government decision; strategic settlement; rule of law and democracy; peace; international isolation; land ownership; Palestinians; violence; material cost. Further, to identify variation in the debate, I have also reviewed left leaning newspaper Davar during that period. The articles were randomly selected: I analyzed all articles on settlements available online and as several months were missing, I complemented these with hard copies where available. Newspapers from 1977 were not readily available online or in the archives I visited and thus not included in the analysis.

In addition to the letters and newspapers, the chapter utilizes a variety of archival documents including cabinet meetings minutes, and demographic data. Another source of data is a series of interviews I conducted in Israel with settler leaders, politicians, and bureaucrats.

4.5 RESULTS

4.5.1 Letters Addressing Settling the north West Bank 1974-1975

The letters from this period address the civilian attempts to settle the north West Bank described above. However, there is little communality between letters supporting the settlement in
the area and letters opposing it. The authors use words taken from different discourses, the tone and sentiment are different, as are the lines of argumentation. The discourses used by each group of letters are shown in Figure 4.1. Broadly, letters supporting the settlement project are more national, Jewish, emotional, and personal; whereas letters opposing the settlement project focus on ‘rule of law’ arguments, and are far more impersonal and unemotional in tone.

**Figure 4-1 Issue Comparison in Letters in Support and in Protest of Settlements**

It seems that at least in that early stage, settler supporters viewed the issue in much broader terms than their opponents. Where one group was dramatically discussing the future of Israel and Zionism in almost fatal terms, the opposing group was far more limited in its perspective. Many pro settlement letters refer to a new settlement in the north West bank as “an integral part of the historic land of Israel” or as “a vision, a dynamic of a movement, the heart and soul of Zionism.”
The different scope the groups assign to the issue could be linked to the high saliency of the issue for settlers. Settlers themselves viewed it not only as a personal crucial issue, but as a national and religious matter of life and death. Many of the composers of pro settlement letters are not themselves settlers or personally linked to settlers. The dramatic tone and large scope indicates at the successful construction of the issue by settlers, and the alliances they already managed to form by 1974.

Through their appeal to mainstream Zionism, Gush Emunim, which was not composed of elite or powerful members, managed to gain the support of several notable cultural figures, which symbolized the Zionist movement. Leading Secular Zionists like Moshe Shamir, Naomi Shemer, and Haim Gouri attended Shabbat dinners in the Jewish settlement in Hebron, and published ads in newspapers in support of the idea of the ‘Whole Land of Israel’. These respectable elite intelligentsia and many others aligned themselves with the settlers for different ideological and political reasons.

Interviews with settler leaders further reinforce the existence of three distinct lines of argumentations they chose to utilize over the years: Zionist, Jewish-messianic, and security oriented. According to interview subjects, the Zionist arguments resonate best with the larger Israeli population. This is not to imply that the settlers always spoke in one voice, or that their framing does not authentically reflect members’ beliefs. In fact, over the years, the movement had

381 Gouri later regretted his connections with the settlers. He felt used and manipulated by them, and objected the illegal aspects of the movement. Gorenberg, 2006


383 Interviews with Adi Minz, Pinchas Valerstein, and Otniel Schneller. May- June 2014.
suffered many internal struggles, and these negatively influenced its ability to create a desirable frame. The next period analyzed here (in particular the years after the Camp David Accords) reflects the beginning of these internal divisions. However, for long periods in the past half century, the Zionist framing, and the Jewish-Zionist amalgamation that can be observed in the letters were the dominant settler frame.\textsuperscript{384}

Nationalist type of arguments first included the act of settlement under the Zionist umbrella, and in later years made Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories into the main expression of Zionism. The letters demonstrate that many supporters viewed the settlements in that light, “We visited Elon Moreh and found there the most beautiful expression of pioneering Zionism and love of Israel that may be found in our country;” another letter written by a group of Bar Ilan University professors states, “In these days of malicious attacks on Zionism, we plead you not to curtail the pioneer enthusiasm expressed in the settlement in Elon Moreh and find a way to officially authorize it.” This was a response to 1975 UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 defining Zionism as a form of racism. A north West Bank settlement was still unauthorized, and the settlers tied the two issues together as if saying the proper response to the UN resolution is more Zionism, and more Zionism implies more settlements. A letter from Elon Moreh settlers themselves expresses the view, “This [a government decision which will allow settling the Occupied Territories] will be the most simple and clear expression of our sovereignty over the land of Israel. Us, the Elon Moreh settlers, along with the entire people, strengthen the hands of the government to make this decision, and will not budge from our place.” The last line is somewhat ironic as Prime Minister Rabin wished nothing more than for the settlers to budge from their place.

\textsuperscript{384} Interview Minz
as was expressed in speeches he gave at the time, and his 1979 autobiography in which he referred to the settlers in harsh terms.\textsuperscript{385}

The data presented in Figure 4.1 considers each line of discourse only once per letter, even if it was represented by multiple words and repetition. For example, if a letter from a settlement supporter spoke of the land of Israel, of pioneers and of Zionism it was counted as one entry of national discourse. The differences between pro and anti settlement letters were in fact greater than presented; most pro settlement letters contained multiple words from the national discourse whereas anti settlement letters usually contained one or less. Figure 4.2 attempts to capture these differences by measuring how many words from each discourse were included in each letter on average. The measures in Figure 4.2 still exclude word repetition. Thus, if the word ‘Israel’ appeared several times within a single letter it is still counted as a single entry within the national discourse. Figure 6 illustrates that ‘rule of law’ is the only issue mentioned on average more than one word or expression per letter in anti settlement letters. On pro settlement letters there are two issues with more than one word or expression per letter: nationalism and Judaism. Nationalism in fact is mentioned with nearly 2.5 different words or expressions per letter.

The national discourse varies not only in intensity between the two types of letters; the vocabulary of nationalism is far richer in the pro settlement camp. Figure 4.3 shows the national vocabulary of the letters. Certain words like ‘Israel’ and ‘Country’ are shared between letter types however, there are a variety of national-Zionist words used only in pro settlements letters. These include ‘Zionism’, ‘National’ or ‘Nationalism’, ‘Pioneer’, and ‘Land of Israel’.
References to the land on the side of the settlers are easy to account for, as the purpose of their letters was to obtain permission and support for settling the land. Nonetheless, the choice of ‘land’ (Adama, Eretz) over ‘territory’ (Shtachim) is political, as land connects with Zionism, whereas territory is more easily connected with Occupied Territories.

The language of ‘Zionist- National- Pioneer-British Mandate’ was more metaphoric and constructed and requires clarification. The settler movement connected to the basic myths of the Zionist movement. Being a Jewish minority situated among Palestinians in the ancient territory biblical of Israel they could easily portray themselves as successors of the Masada Jews, another
minority population who refused to surrender the land. As part of the embodiment of the Zionist spirit, settlers used illegal methods similar to those used by the Zionists pioneers to settle the land. Like the Zionist pioneers, settlers often built new settlements at night to create facts on the ground and avoid penalty. Real estate was purchased illegally from Palestinian owners. The settlers named these illegal actions after the historic rebellious activities of the Zionists against British rule. The difference, however, was that the rule against which the settlers were operating was the Israeli state rather than foreign colonial mandate.386

Rhetorically, the settlers used slogans connected to the Zionist ethos of land. In particular, they were the movement of the “Whole Land of Israel” (‘Eretz Yisrael Ha’Shlema’) alluding both to the biblical territory, and to their connection with the expansionist movement formed by Zionist pioneers. They too spoke of agricultural labor as a mean for obtaining ownership of the land. Much like the Zionist movement, the first settlements in the occupied territories were agricultural but the project more broadly was not.387 The Zionist socialist element was left behind, and that too suited the zeitgeist, as Israel was going through an accelerated economic liberalization process, especially after 1977.388

Only two words from the national discourse (Figure 4.3) are used more commonly by settler opposition: ‘Patriot’ and ‘Citizen’. The context of ‘Citizen’ is quite different for pro and anti settlement letters. In the anti settlement group, the word is used in conjugation with the rule of law discourse, and citizenship is referred to as a community of people subjected to state laws.


388 Shafir and Peled, 2002
One of the letters states: “Do not allow the posers of the settlements destroy the faith of the *citizen* in the rule of law.” Another letter protests “the behavior of *citizens* (civilians) toward soldiers…” On pro settlement letters, on the other hand, citizenship is used in the specific context of belonging to the Israeli national state, and the rights that follow from such belonging. “We believe it is the right of the *citizens* and students of the state of Israel to travel through the entire country and especially to pray at ‘Rachel’s Tomb’ which is located a short distance from Jerusalem, the country’s capital,” states one letter, and another “As a Jew and *citizen* I am proud of the idealism and the purity of the struggle of the Emunim youth…” Even when pro and anti-settlements use words from the same national lexicon, they choose different words, or use them to mean different things.

As demonstrated by Figures 4.1 and 4.2, letters composed by supporters of the settlements were far more emotional in tone, using not only a variety of emotions but also pathos filled descriptions, ancient symbols and so on. Perhaps surprising is the fact that the tone of pro settlement letters was far more positive than that of settlement opposition. Figure 4.4 summarizes the use of emotion words in the different letters. While some opponents of the settlements expressed emotional dismay by settler behavior or the response of the government, the emotional range of pro settlement authors was far larger. Many letters expressed admiration for the settlers ‘love’ of Israel, or defined the settlements as the ‘heart’ of Zionism. In general, positive feelings were the dominant ones in their letters including ‘pride’ and ‘hope’. Even the pro settlement letters’ more negative words are not accusatory ones for the most part. The words ‘pain’ or ‘hurt’ were used in the context of their feelings rather than blame. “I was hurt by the fact that under Jewish rule of all things there is resistance to Jewish settlements in the land of Israel,” is just one example.
A striking feature of the letters is that pro-settlement letters rarely address settlement opposition at all. Although they are a small protest group, their language is not that of grievances, but of hope, aspiration, and unity. This, most of all, points at the ambitious, and ultimately successful, framing project of the settlers. During many periods, including the 1974-1975 examined time frame, they did not resort to a fear based campaign, but to a very positive one, set on winning hearts and minds for their project. This is not to say that fear was entirely absent from the pro settlement discourse. The issue of security was used slightly more often and with greater intensity in the settlement group (Figures 4.1 and 4.2). However, the differences in the use of the security discourse were not as pronounced as differences in the use of national, Jewish and
emotional discourses. I further address the positive tone of the settlers in the discussion section of this chapter.

Letters opposing the settlements addressed the opposing camp far more often despite the fact that the government itself opposed the settlements at this point. Notably, many of the letters in this group were not composed by center left supporters but by relatively radical leftists of the workers party Mapam. In addition, the protest is understandable, as the government ultimately acted in favor of the settlers.

4.5.2 Late 1970s and 1980s: The Development of Anti-Settlement Discourse.

The next batch of letters presents a partial reversal of roles from the previous period. Here, the government stated its support for the settlements, and yet during its reign settlers experienced existential threats. As discussed above, the period included settlement evacuation and territory relinquishing to Egypt as part of the Camp David Accords, and the Elon Moreh Supreme Court case, which ruled Jewish settlements on private Palestinian land were a violation of Israeli law and must be removed.

Prime Minister Begin’s conversations with advisors indicate that settlers were vocal in their dismay of his actions. Settler leaders lobbied, wrote, and orchestrated large demonstrations to protest the Camp David accords. Begin took these protests to heart, he had been one of the leaders

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389 When elected Prime Minister Begin declared, “There will be many more Elon Moreh’s” Zertal and Eldar, 2009

of the Whole Land of Israel movement for decades and he worried that the accords he signed signified personal betrayal of his allies.\footnote{Ibid. In a conversation with the American ambassador prior to the parliament vote on the Camp David Accords, Begin promised to resign if the accords would not be supported by the majority of the members of coalition, even though the accords’ majority was guaranteed by the support of the opposition. He felt he needed the support of his own camp.}

Several things can be inferred about settlers discourse during this period from Begin’s conversations on the settlement issue, from letters in favor of settlements addressed to Deputy Prime Minister Yadin, and interviews with settler leaders including the 1983-1986 Secretary General of Yesha council, Otniel Schneller. First, the tone of settlement supporters during much of this period was not a positive one. When Prime Minister Begin landed in Israel after returning from Camp David he was received by settlers protesting with black umbrellas, equating him to Chamberlain returning from the signing of the Munich Agreement.\footnote{Ibid} In some conversations Begin expresses his hurt and disappointment to be named a traitor by his ‘friends’.

A few of the letters Yadin received from settler supporters were quite similar to the 1974-5 letters in the range of discourses, but indeed less positive in tone. Settler supporters continued to incorporate national discourse into their rhetoric. A line from one of these letters seems to best capture the attempts to bind together the settlements and Zionism. The author writes to Yadin, “Do you not see, as the masses of Israel see clearly [that questioning settlements in the West Bank] is questioning the justification for the entire Jewish settlement in Israel?”

Other letters, however, focus more on Jewish messianic ownership over the land of Israel and less on Zionism. The period following the Camp David Accords was one of internal struggles and ideological and political splits within the settlement movement. The failure to prevent land
compromise and Jewish settlement evacuation reinforced extremist voices within the movement.\textsuperscript{393} Some of the heated debates of the era were between those who insisted on building settlements in remote areas to cover as much ground as possible within the Occupied Territories, and those who wanted to create settlement blocs closer to the Green Line.\textsuperscript{394}

The divisions within the settler movement, and the vocal Jewish-messianic voices made it easier for a center-left camp to mobilize against the settlers. The letters all share a common theme: the right wing government is destroying Israel in every sense and so their party, DMC, must quit the government and break the ruling coalition to save the country. Phrases like ‘save the state of Israel’, ‘utter national despair’, and ‘imminent destruction’ actually appear in approximately ninety percent of the letters. The dramatic tones are not only a response to the expansion of settlements but also to economic crisis and rising inflation at the time. In addition, regardless of the settlement issue, struggles between religious and secular powers over policy were prominent during this period.\textsuperscript{395} Many letters do not list any specific reason for the imminent destruction of Israel, but simply take it as common knowledge that this is the path the country is on because of government policies. However, nearly all the letters that do list specific grievances mention the settlement issue as a central source of concern.

In terms of language, there is certainly a vast use of words from the national discourse, in particular ‘State of Israel’ and ‘People’, but also ‘Zionism’. The letters often declare that the

\textsuperscript{393} One extreme example was the appearance of Jewish terrorist group, The Jewish Underground, which stemmed from the core group of Jewish settlers. Zertal and Eldar, 2009; Huberman, 2008; Segal, Haggai. Dear Brothers: The West Bank Jewish Underground. Beit-Shamai, 1988.

\textsuperscript{394} Otniel Schneller Interview. The first group was more religious messianic and viewed the land as a mean for religious redemption; the second preferred pragmatic appeals to mainstream Israelis, and was supported by Ariel Sharon. The struggles also led to political splits, and the formation of multiple political parties.

\textsuperscript{395} Including legislation on abortions (1977, 1978) and religious female military service (1978).
‘Situation’ in the country is a ‘Shame’ or a ‘Disgrace’ to the ‘State of Israel’ and to ‘Zionism’. Unlike the pro-settlement group, these authors do not attempt to define Zionism, but take it for granted that growing economic cleavages, religious extremism, and certain aspects of the settlement project are against the values of Zionism.

Importantly, most letters do not reject or even discuss the basic justification for the settlement project. None of the letters argues that Israel has no right over the Occupied Territories, or that the action of taking the land is against the values of Zionism, for the most part the arguments are technical. Several lines of argumentation against settlements that did not appear in the earlier period come up in these letters, most of them still very much prominent today in the Jewish Israeli center-left. Figure 4.5 summarizes these lines of argument.

![Figure 4.5 Lines of Argument in Letters Protesting Settlements](image-url)
Three related themes recur in many letters: international isolation, peace, and security. The concern of letter composers was that Israel’s visible expansion actions in the settlements were a danger to its relationship with the US and thus to its international position; that these actions were aggravating Palestinians, leading to growing support for the PLO; and that they were damaging the chances of peace in the region.

The rising saliency of Israel’s isolation in the international arena was the result of UN and American pressure on Israel during this period. While the US often tried to shield Israel from direct UN condemnation, at times, American pressure increased and became a source of concern. The Carter administration was clearer in its opposition to the settlements than previous administrations.396

As mentioned above, these arguments were not an ideological rejection of the settlement, but an instrumental one. Several letters reject either ‘showy’ settlement actions of the government, or ‘useless’ small and remote settlements. Of particular objection was the expansion of the Jewish settlement in Hebron. This was deemed by many letters as ‘irrational’, as a cause for aggravation in the heart of a Palestinian city, as entirely ‘useless’, and as a symbol of the government succumbing to Messianic Jews. Indeed, the Hebron Jewish settlement was and still remains at the

396 President Carter right demanded Israel stopped settling in 1976 and 1978. In a 1980 interview he commented, “Our position on the settlements is very clear, we do not think they are legal.” During Carter’s tenure the UN Security Council passed several resolutions defining the settlements as illegal, and condemning Israel. Aronson, Geoffrey. Settlements and the Israel-Palestinian Negotiations: An Overview. Inst for Palestine Studies, 1996, 50-51; Malone, David. The UN Security Council: From the Cold War to the 21st Century. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004. The US generally abstained in the vote on these resolutions. The one exception was resolution 465, the US voted in favor of the resolution but soon after made statements disavowing its vote.
‘Jewish’ end of the settlers’ ideological scale, and is populated by the extreme religious and violent representatives of the movement.\textsuperscript{397}

The resources allotted to the settlements are another prominent theme in the letters, which remains salient in current day Israeli political discourse.\textsuperscript{398} This is another instrumental rather than principle-based issue that settlement opponents take offense with. One author even states this directly, “Let these settlements prove themselves economically.” Similarly, the repeating argument that settlers are a negligible minority, whose agenda is overrepresented in government decisions, does not directly address Israel’s right to settle the territories (Figure 4.5. Majority-Minority).

Two more themes that appear in the letters are worth discussing. First, the Jewish and Democratic theme appears in only a few letters, but has since become a central argument for the settlement opposition center-left camp.\textsuperscript{399} According to this line of argument Israel can only remain both Jewish and democratic if the Occupied Territories do not become a part of the state, as only within the 1967 borders there is a Jewish majority, which will enable to preserve the Jewish nature of the state by democratic means. In the discussion section below I address the internal

\textsuperscript{397} From its formation in 1967 until his death in 2015, the Jewish settlement in Hebron was led by Rabbi Moshe Levinger, the public face of Messianic settlers. Levinger was arrested many times for acts of violence and incitement against Palestinians and for shooting and killing a Palestinian shopkeeper after Palestinians threw stones at his car. Israel Kershner, “Moshe Levinger, Contentious Leader of Jewish Settlers in Hebron, Dies at 80” \textit{New York Times} May 18, 2015.

\textsuperscript{398} Stories about settlements budget are common in Israeli news papers. Several current Israeli politicians have been responsible for raising the saliency of the issue, including Labor’s Stav Shafir and Yisrael Beiteinu’s Orly Levy-Abekasis. The issue has often been framed as a social justice issue within Israeli society, where settlements receive funds at the expense of underprivileged populations. (Interview with Adi Eldar, Chairman of the Union of Local Authorities in Israel).

\textsuperscript{399} Prominent politicians promoting this line of argument in recent years include Yitzchak Herzog, Tzipi Livni, and Haim Ramon.
contradiction of the Jewish and Democratic argument, and the problems it causes for the Jewish center-left in Israel.

The practical implications of the Jewish and Democratic arguments change according to the period, and the agenda behind it. For Yadin himself, ‘Jewish and Democratic’ did not imply the formation of a Palestinian state. He writes in one of his response letters,

“Ultimately, Israel ought to be Jewish and Democratic. This will not be possible if one of our goals would be to include over a million Arabs within the domain of the state. If this is the case, and the state gives all the Arabs voting rights, the state will cease being Jewish. If we will not give them this right, the state will not be democratic. Therefore, I am in the opinion that there has to be a political solution that gives Israel complete security in the East front (and thus I support settlements in the Jordan Valley and the East slopes of Judea and Samaria), and prevents the formation of an independent Palestinian state between Jordan and Israel.”

For Yadin then, some political solution that is not annexation will suffice to fulfill the Jewish and Democratic conditions. Here, the objection is only to certain settlements that will be an obstacle for such political solution. In later periods, the Jewish and Democratic argument did serve in the Jewish center-left as justification for formation of an independent Palestinian state.

Finally, the morality justification that appears in Figure 4.5 deserves attention. These refer to the moral implication of occupation over another people for Israeli citizens and society. They are usually combined with a variety of other lines of argument as expressed by one of the letters,

“The settlements lead us to complete isolation and internal division which destroy all that is good

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400 Israeli National Archive GL/10/7834. Self translation

401 This type of morality argumentation is similar to the a common frame in the Israeli left critically named “shooting and crying.” Following the 1967 war, Israeli government requested an edited volume of interviews with combatants from Avraham Shapira and Amos Oz. The result was ‘The Seventh Day: Soldiers Talk about the Six Day War’ (in Hebrew: Siah Lohamim). The soldiers described their empathy toward the enemy and their moral struggles during and after the war. These conversations became a source of Jewish Israeli mainstream admiration for the morality of the Israeli soldiers. However, they were later criticized by the left as a “shooting and crying” morality. One in which the so called moral struggles do not change the militant reality. Erica Weiss Conscientious Objectors in Israel: Citizenship, Sacrifice, Trials of Fealty. Pp. 137-138
in the morality of the Israeli citizen, and demonstrate the government has no control over its members, and the minority of Gush Emunim can do as they please.” Only a couple of letters mention certain Israeli acts in the Occupied Territories as immoral, for example the destruction of Palestinian property in Hebron. Thus, the debate over the nature of the Zionist project and what acts should define Zionism remains in the pro-settlement group. The settlement opposition remained committed to the Zionist national identity, but its definition of this identity is far vaguer.

4.5.3 Narrative Analysis

Shaul Shenhav breaks down political narratives into three categories: “events, characters and background”, which include the events taking place, location, institutions, and actors; “events in sequence”, which is a temporal element; and “causality”. Drawing on this classification, I analyze the narratives in the different letters and find that letters that opposed the settlements hardly contained political narratives at all. Instead, they used the rhetorical mode of arguments, particularly instrumental arguments. The findings of the narrative analysis are summarized in Table 4.1.

Pro settlement letters use a broad temporal frame, often stretching from biblical times to present day. The letters are rich with symbols from these periods. As was the case for the Zionist movement, the order of events leads directly from the biblical kingdom of Judah to nineteenth and twentieth century Zionist movement. The significant addition here is a third chronological event, the act of settlement in the West Bank as naturally following from the previous two. Similarly, the actors in the story are Jews, Zionist, settlers, and their agency is settling the land of Israel and protecting it. Letters against settlers on the other hand, focus on the present and the near future.

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402 Shenhav, 2005
They often take the structure of an argument: If the government continues to do X the outcome will be Y. The actors in these letters are very specific and neither historical nor symbolic – the government and the settlers engaged in a political struggle, the settlers portrayed as villains, the government as weak. The letters mostly lack symbolism.

In terms of location as well, pro settlement letters fall clearly into the realm of storytelling. Events take place in a defined, though not necessarily realistic, space - the whole land of Israel. Letters against settlements rarely mention a location, but when they do, there is no consensus over space. Some refer to the 1967 borders as Israel’s borders, others single out the north West Bank settlements as a mistake, still others object to settlements in densely populated areas. This vagueness represents the group’s lack of unified agenda and its instrumental stance.

In pro settlement letters causality is both more abstract and more powerful. It presents a far reaching causal chain rather than a particular argument, but the message is unambiguous and unqualified – for the Jewish people to survive on the land of Israel, we must settle the land. The multiple causalities presented by settlements opposition are shorter and more precise, but less powerful - Settlements in the present will lead to democratic decline in the future; settlements in certain areas will lead to disorder among the Arab-Palestinian population, etc.

All these elements point at a fundamental difference in rhetorical mode between the pro and anti settlement groups. Settlement supporters were telling stories while settlement opponents were making arguments. I draw the distinction from Ronald Krebs⁴⁰³, who defines stories and arguments as different in purpose, structure, and breadth. Where arguments deduce a desired

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course of action from known principles and seek to “persuade the audience of the correctness of a course of action”\textsuperscript{404}, stories are far more ambitious. They do not directly attempt to promote one policy but rather to organize and offer interpretation to a series of events, creating a broad understanding from which a course of action can be deduced. Thus, while stories are more distant from a particular course of action than arguments, they are more powerful in defining the limits of argumentation for other actors.\textsuperscript{405}

The settlement opposition’s rhetoric is narrow in scope and presumption, refers to particular events rather than attempting to explain a set of events, and directly suggests a course of action. The pro settlement rhetoric on the other hand, easily qualifies as a story. It is not directly linked to a course of action but much broader, offering historical interpretation out of which a course of action must be deduced. The discussion section below addresses these differences and their consequences.

\textit{Table 4-1 Narrative Analysis Summary}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>For Settlements</th>
<th>Against Settlements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>Long arc of history. Often referred to as 2000 years. With mentions of other historical periods in particular pre state Israel/Palestine under British mandate.</td>
<td>Present and near future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>The whole land of Israel</td>
<td>Israel, no consensus over its borders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Symbols</strong></td>
<td>Biblical locations and stories, heroic myths from the Jewish and Zionist past, pioneering stories from the mandate era.</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{404} ibid

\textsuperscript{405} ibid
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Actors</strong></th>
<th>The settlers as vanguard pioneer leaders acting for a shared national goal. They are comparable to biblical Jews and pioneer Zionists.</th>
<th>A weak government failing to restrain extremist and outlaw settlers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Causality</strong></td>
<td>To continue the existence of Jews in the land of Israel we must settle the land</td>
<td>To prevent disorder/unrest/international criticism difficulties in the peace process/economic distress we must refrain from settling/extravagant settlements/settlements in certain areas/unauthorized settlements/succumbing to extremist settlers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5.4 Media Framing 1974-1981

Where the letters analyzed above represent views of supporters of one agenda or another, media representation can shed light on the source of these views, and on mainstream presence of each side’s rhetoric. The context of discussion of settlements in media changed from the 1974-1976 to the 1978-1981. During the first period, the debate concentrated on the struggle between the Rabin government and Gush Emunim settlers. Stories in the paper described with mixed attitudes the settlement attempts of Gush Emunim members, the response of the government, public figures’ views, and popular opinion. Some stories were feature articles on individual settlers, families, or groups. These were generally the more positive accounts on settlers, describing on the one hand their law violating activities, but on the other hand their ideological conviction, willingness to face challenges, and positive background. Fewer news reports tracked the slow expansion of government authorized settlements.

During the second period, media coverage focused on the peace process between Israel and Egypt, and later on the negotiations over an autonomy plan for the Occupied Territories. In this
context, settlements were often referred to as a hindrance, in particular by international negotiators and domestic opposition, and the government and settlers defended them with a variety of arguments. The only other notable context in which settlements were covered during this period was that of their material cost. News reports described funds allocated to settlements, at times estimating that each settler cost the government an outrageous sum of money.\textsuperscript{406} Other reports covered political struggles over settlement budget, and some opinion pieces attacked or defended the settlement project on these grounds.

Close reading of hundreds of news articles demonstrates that both views of settlement supporters and settlement opposition were present in the media. Figure 4.6 summarizes the discourses in the media between 1974 and 1976 under left wing government, and between 1978 and 1981 under right wing government.

\textsuperscript{406} Maariv: January 18, 1979; August 31, 1979; August 5, 1980
Figure 4-6 Media Representation of the Settlement Issue

As in the letters, in 1974-1976 the most notable discourses were nationalism and Judaism on the pro settlement camp, and democracy and the rule of law on the anti settler camp. The shift in discourse on the center-left evident in the letters is very much a reflection of a changed discourse in mainstream media. Center-left argumentation mostly responded to the peace process and the economic crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The most notable arguments of that group revolved around the dangers that may follow from unsuccessful peace negotiations, international isolation, and unrest among Palestinians. Much of the argumentation of the center-left as represented in the media by politicians and pundits questioned the timing and locations of settlement construction (Strategic Settlement, Figure 4.6). Similar to letter authors, some suggested a more restrained and less “showy” policy in face of American criticism, others argued that only
settlements for security were necessary and these should be built in certain strategic locations. ⁴⁰⁷ These were instrumental arguments, ⁴⁰⁸ normative arguments or attempts at broader narratives by this political group were not represented in mainstream media.

On the settler supporter group on the other hand, Zionism and Judaism remained strong discourses during this period. The other line of argumentation that came directly from the government was that of security. One report on the Israeli ambassador to the UN for example described how the ambassador’s previous strategy of defending the Jewish People’s historic right on the land of Israel gave way to security justification for the settlements. ⁴⁰⁹ While neither strategy managed to sway the unanimously antithetical UN, Israeli officials continued to employ them in international negotiations.

Though both sides of the debate are represented in the media, as in the letters, a clear anti-settlements narrative is missing, whereas a pro-settlements narrative is present. The media by no means gave more space to settlement supporters, quite the contrary as often argued by right wing politicians and voters, mainstream print press was center-left leaning in terms of volume of coverage, giving slight advantage in space to left center politicians and publicists. However, the main bias of the print was toward the mainstream, it reflected mostly views of the two large parties, Likud and Alignment. This mainstream bias actually played in favor of the settlers. On the right, notable figures, in particular Prime Minister Begin, adopted the pro settlement narrative. Central figures on the left on the other hand, did not do the same for possible anti settlement narratives.

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⁴⁰⁷ Maariv: January 27, 1978; February 24, 1978; October 27, 1978; May 17, 1979; August 20, 1979; December 2, 1979; April 3, 1980; September 16, 1980

⁴⁰⁸ Krebs, 2005

⁴⁰⁹ Maariv: February 29, 1980
Despite bitter political struggles within the right between the Prime Minister and the settlers, Begin spoke often and passionately about the land of Israel as the heart of the Jewish people and settling as a pioneering act.\footnote{Maariv: October 1, 1978; May 4, 1979; August 2, 1980} The main figures on the left, Alignment leader Peres and others, continued to employ instrumental arguments, their silence of narrative serving as accession to pro settlement fundamental premises.

To understand whether anti settlement narratives existed on the left but failed to reach the mainstream, I also reviewed dozens of articles on settlements in left leaning newspaper, Davar during the same period. Indeed, Davar promoted a clear anti settlement view and contained deeper reporting on the issue. Unlike in Maariv, many stories in Davar reported on settler violence and popular unrest of Palestinians in response to acts of settlements. While both Maariv and Davar reported on Supreme Court struggles over land in the territories, Davar stressed it far more, and clearly accused the government of law violations intended to appease settlers and preserve lawlessness in the territories. Davar also represented some normative views against the settlements such as the moral decay of the occupying military and society, and the rights of Palestinians for self-determination however, these were not common. Overall, while the paper’s reporting strengthened instrumental arguments against the settlements, it did not promote a clear anti settlements narrative. There was no attempt to tie peace or justice with Israeli citizenship and identity, or to define the borders of Israel and membership in the society more broadly.
4.6 DISCUSSION

Left wing socialist ideas were tied to the Jewish nationalist movement Zionism almost from its inception. Politically, the left controlled the governing institutions for many decades, limiting the access of right wing movement, individuals, and agenda to power positions. This close tie between nationalism and the left began to alter after the 1967 War. The monumental shift can be attributed to economic transformations, and other global transformations such as power shifts during and certainly after the Cold War. However, one of the most influential aspects of this shift in the politicization of the national in Israel was the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, Golan Heights, and Sinai, and the settlement project that followed. The occupation of the territories corresponded with existing tensions within Jewish Israeli society: the religious secular tension, the left-right tension, and the Ashkenazi-Sephardi tension (European descent and non-European descent).

In their framing of the settlement issue, the religious settlers bound together Jewish and Zionist motifs to present themselves as the successors of the ancient Jews and the modern pioneers. This is in line with the teaching of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook at Merkaz Harav Yeshiva, who has preached to his students that as religious Jews they are the true nationals on the land of Israel, and that the act of settlement in the territories is at the same time national heroism and religious redemption.\textsuperscript{411} As Zionism itself was built on religious myths, these new religious myths easily fit the Zionist ethos.

The pioneering left wing generation of leaders never doubted that they were true Zionists. After all, they invented Zionism, and while they required the political support of religious leaders,

\textsuperscript{411} Rubinstein, 1982
they did not need a stamp of approval of their own commitment to Zionism. However, for the second and third generation of leaders, the lack of ownership over religious identity became a problem. While right wing leaders demonstrated their closeness to religion, it was not inherent or authentic for left leaders to do so which alienated large populations and gave further hold over identity to religious groups. A part of the reason for this shift was the rise of importance of the Sephardi Jewish population in Israel. The second generation of Sephardi Jews in Israel was gaining political independence from Mapai, and a cadre of leaders emerged from the periphery and integrated first into local and later into national politics. As noted earlier in the chapter, Sephardi Jews were more religious than Ashkenazi Jews. They were also discriminated against by the hegemonic Mapai based on their ethnic origins. Mobilization based on religion was more powerful than mobilization based on discrimination alone, because it granted the Sephardi population the opportunity to claim ownership over national identity, and even further, to diminish the ownership of the hegemonic left over Zionism.

The result was that the three marginalized groups: the religious settlers, the right wing Likud, and Sephardi Jews could all unite under an alternative hegemonic narrative to that of the left Mapai, a narrative that revived the Zionist national struggle, and placed the act of settlement at its present day core. The alliance between these groups is interesting as there is an inherent conflict of interest between settlers and periphery residents. Most settlements are not located in remote areas in terms of distance from the center, but they nonetheless receive preferential treatment in welfare, education, and tax benefits that was intended to be reserved for periphery

\footnote{I am excluding the Ultra-Orthodox population from this discussion as they were not voters of any of these parties, and were not involved in these issues.}

\footnote{Shafir and Peled 2002; Segev, 1998; Smooha, 2002}
development towns. These tensions have been highlighted by left wing politicians but failed to draw significant support in the periphery because of the resentment toward the left and the strength of the right’s narrative.

The settler movement was the first to frame the issue of Jewish settlements in broad terms. Very early after the 1967 War, the movement began to frame the right of Jewish Israelis to settle in the Occupied Territories as a question of national identity, by equating the right of Jewish Israelis to build on these lands with the right of Jews to form a political unit in Israel altogether. The opposing camp was far narrower, making arguments rather than constructing a narrative around the issue. One of the causes for this disparity was probably the self-perception of the anti-settlement camp as the owners of the Zionist national narrative. While only few Israelis lived in Kibbutz, socialism and cultivation of the land were at the core of Zionist pioneer symbolism. The leftist camp opposing the settlements, still in secure in government, seemed to have not yet been fully aware that its hegemony over the national narrative was severely threatened by the early 1970s, and so it made no attempt to defend it. As shown by the letters, left wing Kibbutz members were at the center of objection to the settlements at the early period.

The right wing government that followed the 1977 election further contributed to the settler narrative by adopting it from a position of power. At the same time, during this period settlement opponents did grow in numbers and fight back, attempting to gain ownership over the issue of the Occupied Territories. This opposition gained mixed success over the years in regards to the

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414 Interview Oded Aron Head of the Unit for Development Towns in the Ministry of Labor and Welfare. Interview Adi Eldar, Mayor of Karmiel, Chairman of the Union of Local Authorities in Israel.
particular issue of the settlements, but suffered significant losses in terms of the definition of national identity and the meaning of national identity for liberal-left ideology.

One of the problems for settlement opposition was that their arguments against settlement were instrumental-procedural whereas the story of the settlers was normative-ideological. While it is easy to contradict procedural arguments, it is much more difficult to do so for ideological narratives. Indeed, at times the procedural arguments won the day, but the underlying story connecting settlements and Zionism remained intact, especially as settlements expanded. The more fundamental problem for the liberal camp was that liberal ideas of equal citizenship and democracy do not sit comfortably with Zionism as a living movement, and in particular they do not align with the notion of Zionism as the settlement project. Scholars like David Miller and Yael Tamir argue in defense of nationalism that national identity can serve as the basis for promoting liberal ideas. This perception of nationalism seems to be the idea that led liberal Israelis who opposed the settlements in the 1980s. The frequent use in the letters of secular nationalism as signifying certain morals is in line with Miller and Tamir’s scholarship.

However, the settlement project and the exclusion of the citizen Arab minority stand between Israel and Tamir and Miller’s notion of liberal-nationalism. The country’s large Arab minority is not included in the Jewish Zionist identity. Many states have a dominant ethnic majority and its relationship with ethnic minorities vary. That in itself does not have to create

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416 Tamir herself was chairwoman of the Israeli association for Civil Rights, and later as a center-left politician she served as Minister of Immigrant Absorption and Minister of Education.
tensions\textsuperscript{417} or a profound clash of ideas between liberalism and national identity. However, that is not the case in Israel, and the tensions between the notions of ‘Jewish’ and ‘Democratic’ have been explored in depth.\textsuperscript{418} The settlement project reinforces these tensions by strengthening the ties between nationalism and religion, which further excludes non-Jew from full membership in the community of citizens. Moreover, a national movement that is actively expansionist and consistently promotes the interest of one group at the expense of another will struggle to fit the liberal-national bill. This has always been the Zionist story and the ongoing expansion of the settlement project ultimately made Jewish-Israeli nationalism less and less compatible with the liberal ideology of the left, in particular as the country became more economically liberal in the 1970s and 80s. These contradictions limited the access of the center-left to national narratives and symbols.

In that sense, the case presented here has wider implications for a larger set of cases. The process of shift in politicization of the national corpus is dangerous for opposing political groups not only because national language and symbols are political assets, but also because they may lead to policies that further reshape nationalist narratives. Politicized national ethos can continue to mobilize in favor of illiberal agenda.


Most radical groups that receive popular and scholarly attention have a strong negative message, and several additional components that could be interpreted as positive: Part of the negative message is derived from anti-establishment sentiment and stresses the failings of the establishment and the system as a whole. Radical narratives usually yearn for a past that was more simple and traditional, but also more glorious for the nation. Another negative element is the exclusionary rhetoric that targets minorities and immigrants and blames them for current decline and moral corruption. A radical message that is less negative in tone is the liberation from the falsehood of liberalism. In recent years, the focus was on breaking from a politically correct rhetoric in favor of speaking “truth” that “everyone” recognize in their heart but cannot speak under liberal hypocritical limitations. While this is not in itself a negative message, it does release a violent surge toward others.

Settler rhetoric on the other hand was far more positive and included sentiments like love, hope, and faith. Several things are worth noting about the positive message of the settlers. First, the settler message in those years as presented here is in line with the focus on land rather than race of other settler colonial movements. Analyzing colonial settlers’ elimination of native populations, Patrick Wolfe notes, “…the primary motive for elimination is not race (or religion, ethnicity, grade of civilization, etc.) but access to territory. Territoriality is settler colonialism’s specific, irreducible element.”

Second, it was mostly the first generation of settlers explored in this study that promoted this positive message. The second and third generations of settlers are far more similar to other radical right groups. This transformation might be the result of several process: the normalization

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of settlements in Jewish Israeli society leading to a decline in the struggle over territory, at least in certain periods; the product of long exclusionary practices and ideological education of settlers themselves; and change in settler demographics bringing poorer and more religious populations into the settlements, and creating a periphery in the settlements. This change of the movement in recent decades deserves further study.

The positive tone of the first generation of settlers did assist them in their territorial goals, as it helped form alliances with powerful mainstream political actors, and with excluded populations of the periphery. Over time through political alliances, the settlers became embedded in the political system, and in state institutions. There are ample examples for this, to name a few, settlers today are overrepresented in commanding positions in the military; the Ministers of Agriculture and Education represent the settlers, as well as the Minister of Defense Advisor on Settlement Affairs. Settlers also have a strong lobby in parliament in addition to formal party representation. The implication is that the role of rhetoric in the movement has declined in recent years to some extent in favor of a state penetration strategy. This is another reason for the change in tone. Still, a lot of the movement’s effort are directed towards propaganda, and in recent years much of this effort is performed inside state institutions, including changes in school curriculum, budget allocation to art, and more.\(^\text{420}\)

### 4.7 Appendix – Categories and Words in the Letters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Word</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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\(^\text{420}\) Interview and haaretz.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<td>Land of Israel</td>
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<td>Land of Israel</td>
<td>Land- soil (Adama)</td>
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<td>Patriot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homeland</td>
<td>Israeli People</td>
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<td>British Mandate/White Paper</td>
<td>State of Israel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Israeli People</td>
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<tr>
<td>State of Israel</td>
<td>People (Am)</td>
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<td>Israeli People</td>
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5 TAKING OVER THE STATE FROM BELOW

The Ku Klux Klan in the US in 1920s

“Now came multitudes of men of the lowest class from the south of Italy, and men of the meaner sort out of Hungary and Poland, men out of the ranks, where there was neither skill nor energy nor any initiative of quick intelligence, and they came in numbers which increased from year to year, as if the countries of the south of Europe were disburdening themselves of the more sordid and hapless elements of their population”

- Woodrow Wilson

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The American Ku Klux Klan had three periods of intense activity. First formed in 1865 during the years of Reconstruction in the South, masked members of the organization rode at night: committing extreme acts of violence to intimidate the newly freed African Americans and prevent their participation in political life. The Klan of that era was disbanded in 1871 but its goal was broadly achieved, planting the seeds for the Jim Crow Southern segregation. The second Klan formed in Atlanta in 1915 is the focus of this chapter. The third Klan operated in the South of the US during the early 1960s. It attempted to thwart the Civil Rights Movement’s efforts to end segregation, and maintain the status quo in the South. The 1960s Klan was small, covert, and violent. It inflicted damage and took lives, but ultimately it failed to arrest the Civil Rights Movement.

The second Klan was a different phenomenon than the other two periods of operation. It was not merely a secret vigilante group. The Klan of that era was a large scale social movement with a

variety of strategies of operation. During its peak in 1924, its size was estimated at 3 to 5 million members and was active throughout the United States. Its most successful centers were in the Midwest rather than the South. The Klan was not directly violent during the entire period of its revival nor was it directly violent in all its regions of operation.

I have chosen to focus on this period because it offers the greatest variation in the group’s choice of strategies. In addition, the early 1920s marks the peak of the group’s popular support, thus the period allows an examination of the causes for support for violent movements and of the relationship between popular support and state reaction. Since the group operated beyond the South during this period, there is much variation across states as well. Like other movements in this study, the Klan had right wing populist features. The movement opposed big business and preached against the corruption of political and law enforcement institutions. It was nativist, racist, and exclusionary, defining membership in the American community through narrow ethno-religious lenses. It supported patriarchal traditional values, which included opposition to female suffrage and support for prohibition. Further, it was extremely hierarchical in structure.

This chapter has several aims. First, the chapter reviews the different strategies of the Klan through time and geographic area and attempts to explain the observed variation. Second, I seek to understand why ultimately the Klan did not have a long-lasting effect on national politics in America as we have seen in other cases, at least outside the Deep South.

When the Ku Klux Klan became popular in the South and Southwest in 1920, it employed a direct violent strategy. However, this strategy was less acceptable in other regions. The Klan was

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criticized more heavily in the Midwest for using violence and thus chose other methods when targeting the area. As this chapter demonstrates, it was not so much the state itself that policed the group, but the broader population. This chapter follows both the causes for the variation in the toleration of the population for violence, and the mechanisms through which the support of the broader population allowed the Klan to operate with relative freedom. I argue that the Ku Klux Klan’s choice of a violent strategy and the group’s ability to operate freely is the result of pre-existing violent vigilante traditions and exclusionary ethnocentric traditions. The ideology of ethnic exclusion gained the group support from large populations who were attempting to preserve their power in a changing environment.

The years following WWI were a period of demographic and economic change. The ‘in-group’ in American society at the time was White, Protestant, and native born. The Klan made its appeal based on these identity features. The movement was not merely identity based, it also has a class affiliation. While it was represented across classes, its main support came from the middle class. However, it was easy to make an appeal based on identity since there was some overlap between class and identity and since religious tensions (Protestant-Catholic and Protestant-Jew) and ethnic tensions (Race, and immigrant-Native born tensions) were already salient in American society. The Klan expressed and intensified views that were already held by large parts of the American ‘in group’.

Though broadly the category of belonging to the in group of one hundred percent Americanism was ‘whiteness’, the group of non-whites was constructed in a different manner than it is today. Immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe were not classified as White but labeled
under different racial categories. These internal differences between Anglo-Saxon whites and white *ethnics* reached a peak in the 1924 Immigration Act which was based on these racial categories. The perception of difference among whites declined significantly from the 1920s to the 1960s when clear lines were being drawn between the white and black categories.

The other important factor that explains the support for the Klan’s violence is vigilante traditions and level of violence. Vigilante traditions existed throughout the United States. In the East, vigilante groups were common in the first half of the 19th century whereas in the West and in particular the Southwest, these groups were still active into the 20th century. Most of the states in the region, like Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona, were new and their law enforcement institutions were underdeveloped and inefficient. A different notable case was that of Texas, a relatively older state (which joined the Union in 1845) with a rich history of violence and extra-legal ‘law enforcement’ activity stretching into the 20th century. The vigilante traditions and high level of violence were the reason largely law abiding populations supported the Klan’s direct violent strategy. Direct violence was considered a viable strategy by large sections of the populations, and consequentially by law enforcement and some politicians. Where exclusionary traditions existed but vigilante traditions were absent, direct violence was frowned upon and the Klan chose less direct strategies instead. This was largely the case in the Midwest. However, as will be discussed below, indirect violent methods existed in this region.

In addition, I identify the mechanism by which direct violence was possible. The support of the local population made it difficult for the state to operate against the Klan’s violence. The local

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law enforcement protected or cooperated with the group. Moreover, the jury system ensured that hardly any indictments were returned and no guilty verdicts were reached while the group was popular. The local justice system was composed of Klan members, Klan sympathizers, or simply those who wished to stay on the Klan’s good side. This was not always the case with state and federal level law enforcement and politicians, and in some cases a clash between different levels of government ensued.

5.2 THE REVIVAL OF THE KU KLUX KLAN

The Ku Klux Klan was ‘revived’ in 1915. The movement had no real ties with the original Ku Klux Klan but its founder William J. Simmons used the nostalgic sentiment towards the original Klan to fuel the new movement. Two key events are usually noted in relation to the revival of the Klan. The first was the trial, conviction, and subsequent lynching of Jewish businessman Leo Frank. Frank was convicted of the murder of a white factory worker. Following the guilty verdict, he was abducted from prison and hung by a lynch mob in Atlanta. Frank’s conviction and lynching was a significant moment for Jewish Protestant relationship in the South and throughout the United States. The case intensified religious tensions and anti-Semitic violence, Jewish establishments were vandalized, and consequently many Jews chose to leave Atlanta.425

The second notable event related to the revival of the Klan was the release of D.W Griffith’s film Birth of a Nation in 1915. The film, based on the novel The Clansmen by Thomas Dixon Jr.

romanticized the old South and in particular the Klan. It created a new popularity for the Klan and its symbols. The film was even allegedly endorsed by southerner president Woodrow Wilson.\textsuperscript{426} Wilson’s writing about Reconstruction era Klan is quoted in Birth of a nation, “The white men were roused by a mere instinct of self-preservation…until at last there had sprung into existence a great Ku Klux Klan, a veritable empire of the South, to protect the Southern country”\textsuperscript{427} Simmons, a veteran of other fraternal movements, used the Atlanta premiere of ‘Birth of a Nation’ to launch the second Klan with the burning of a cross.\textsuperscript{428} Screenings of the immensely successful film throughout the country in the following years were used as recruitment tool for Klan branches.\textsuperscript{429}

The Klan did not draw attention beyond the Deep South in its first years. It was one white supremacist fraternal movement among several. Like other organizations, it contributed to the patriotism of the war years and the concern of social and economic changes in the years immediately following the war.\textsuperscript{430}

In 1921 Simmons hired two public relations consultants, Elizabeth Tyler and Edward Young Clarke, who redrafted the Klan’s message and brought new recruitment methods to the movement. They created the ‘One Hundred Percent Americanism’ package, a bundle of exclusionary identity

\textsuperscript{426} The film was screened in the White House and upon viewing Wilson allegedly commented “It’s like writing history with lightning. My only regret is that it is all so terribly true.” Though the quote became famous, there is no evidence Wilson actually made it. Birth of a quotation Benbow, Mark E. “Birth of a Quotation: Woodrow Wilson and ‘Like Writing History with Lightning.’” \textit{The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era} 9, no. 04 (2010): 509–533.

\textsuperscript{427} Benbow, 2010. The original quotations appear in Woodrow Wilson, \textit{A History of the American People} (repr. New York, 1931), 5:50, 60. ; Griffith altered the quotation for the movie.


\textsuperscript{429} Jackson, Kenneth T. \textit{The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930}. Rowman & Littlefield, 1992. pp. 4-18

\textsuperscript{430} Chalmers, 1987 p. 31
traits and policy agenda that included Protestantism, nativism, white supremacy, support for prohibition, tough law enforcement, public schools reform, and conservative family values.\textsuperscript{431}

The appeal of the different components of ‘One Hundred Percent Americanism’ varied regionally. The Klan was a decentralized movement both in message and in practices. The focus on the Protestant-Catholics cleavage, public school reform, and immigration was greatest in the Midwest. On the other hand, the focus on intimidation of African Americans, law enforcement, and family values was strongest in the South and Southwest. Prohibition was a salient issue across regions.\textsuperscript{432}

After Clarke and Tyler were brought in, the Klan’s recruitment spread all over the US. Between 1922 and 1924 the movement reached peaks in membership, organized social activities, and founded offshoot organizations such as the Women of the Ku Klux Klan (WKKK).\textsuperscript{433} The Klan also gained control over local politics and law enforcement, and later made considerable achievements in state and national politics as well.

The Klan had high membership rates in the South and the Southwest, it also had large branches in California, Oregon, and Washington State, as well as in the East, including in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New York State. The largest Klan membership rates were in the Midwest, where in some counties membership in the Klan was as high as one in every three White native born males.\textsuperscript{434} Members of the Klan were middle class citizens, mostly skilled workers and

\textsuperscript{431} ibid


\textsuperscript{433} MacLean, 1994.

\textsuperscript{434} Although membership in the Klan was secret and many records disappeared after the Klan’s decline, over the years there have been estimates based on recovered personal Klan documents and newspapers. Some of these
professionals. The more dignified professionals were usually early joiners whereas skilled workers followed. They were generally law abiding citizens, white, Protestant, and native born.\textsuperscript{435}

In 1925 following several scandals involving the Klan’s leadership,\textsuperscript{436} and disappointment of the Klan in state and national politics, the movement rapidly declined, until by 1926 it had nearly disappeared. The movement resurged for a period in 1928 around in opposition to Catholic Al Smith’s presidential candidacy but never managed to reproduce its 1922-1924 success.

During its prime years, the Klan instigated and was involved in many activities. Broadly I identify two strategies of actions (although they were often used simultaneously): Direct Violence and Indirect Violence. My focus will be on the Southwest as an example of direct violence and the Midwest as an example of indirect violence, however, other regions followed similar patterns: the south was rather violent, whereas the east took the more indirect approach. The Klan accompanied these patterns of behavior with nonviolent activities such as family friendly events and philanthropic actions however, as will be demonstrated below, these were infused with the Klan’s exclusionary message and can be viewed as a type of indirect violence as well.

\textsuperscript{435} Moore, 1997; Maclean, 1994; Fryer and Levitt, 2012.

\textsuperscript{436} This included large corruption scandals in the Klan leadership, as well as the conviction in 1925 of the head of the Klan (Grand Dragon) in Indiana who was tried for the abduction, rape, and murder of a young white women. Following his conviction Stephenson revealed different public officials have taken bribery from the Klan including Klan supporter and member the Governor of Indiana, Edward Jackson. The governor was investigated and tried but was not convicted as the statute of limitation expired. Lutholtz, M. William. \textit{Grand Dragon: DC Stephenson and the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana}. Purdue Univ Pr, 1991.
5.3 Ku Klux Klan Strategies

5.3.1 Direct Violence

In the two other Klan periods (1860s and 1960s), direct violence was the main strategy employed by the movement. The 1920s Klan, however, was a fraternal movement that held secret meetings, practiced a variety of customs, organized social events, and endorsed candidates for public office. The Klan used direct violence mostly in the South and Southwest. Direct violence was especially predominant in Texas and Oklahoma, although parts of Louisiana shared a high level of direct violence. The movement’s use of direct violence declined in these areas too from 1923 and on.

In the Deep South violence against African Americans was a common practice. It took on the form of “private violence”, including night-time lynching and rape, and the “spectacle” violence of public lynching.\textsuperscript{437} From the 1890s to the 1940s, brutal public lynching took place in urban and rural areas, were publicized in newspapers and radios, and were widely attended.\textsuperscript{438} Klan members took part in these events. However, the rate of lynching, common early in the century, was in decline in the US during this period, and in addition much of the Klan violence was directed at whites. The concerns about changes in racial status quo that were elevated after WWI mostly receded by the early 1920s. Klan members were involved in several large-scale race riots (White violence against Blacks, mostly in large Northern cities) in the post War period, but the Klan as an organization was not a notable part of the riots.\textsuperscript{439} During this period many African

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{437} Hale, 2010.
\textsuperscript{438} ibid
\textsuperscript{439} Jackson, 1992; Alexander, 1995
\end{footnotes}
Americans migrated to the North, but their subordinate status in the South was not significantly challenged. In other words, though the usual violent assertion of white dominance continued, there were new challenges brought on by modernization which the Klan responded to.\textsuperscript{440}

The violence in the Southwest focused primarily on white bootleggers, criminals, and individuals who failed to meet the moral standards set by the Klan (wife beaters, “loose women”, lawyers serving the “wrong” clientele and others. The arbitrators were the Klan’s members). Klan violence usually included abducting victims from their homes, beatings, tarring and feathering, and acid burns. In several cases, individuals were taken directly from police custody, or released abruptly from police custody and then taken by the Klan. This indicates police cooperation, as will be discussed below.

While there are no accurate records on the number of Klan violent incidents, researchers have been able to estimate hooded violence based on contemporary newspapers, and court trials held in later years.\textsuperscript{441} The height of violence was in 1921-1922. For example, there were 60 cases of hooded violence in the spring and summer of 1921 in Dallas County alone. Oklahoma was the most violent state, in the summer of 1922 the state was swept with Klan violence, with Tulsa County leading in violent incidents.\textsuperscript{442}

5.3.1.1 Reaction to Ku Klux Klan violence:

\textsuperscript{440} Mclean, 1994


\textsuperscript{442} Chalmers, 1987; Alexander, 1995
The Klan always faced some level of opposition. In Dallas the Klan was endorsed by Mayor Sawnie R. Aldredge as well as some notable citizens including a former Attorney General, several judges, and religious figures. To counter these, an anti-Klan movement, the ‘Dallas County Citizens League’ pushed to exclude from public office all Klan members in the spring of 1922. Media outlets like the Dallas Morning News and the Dallas American Legion Post were also hostile to the Klan. Some members of the Klan did leave the movement following the opposition, for example the Dallas Chief of Police. However, most members remained loyal to the organization, and moreover mass initiation ceremonies for new members followed. 443 In Louisiana, bills were proposed targeting public masking and organizations with a secretive roll to arrest the Klan. However, the House Committee took no actions on the bills and they were later withdrawn.444

By this period the Klan was deeply embedded in local law enforcement. In Dallas, its members included the sheriff of Dallas County, his chief deputies, the police commissioners, the chief of police and the district attorneys. Many police officers in the Southwest joined the Klan, either because they truly saw the movement as assisting law enforcement or because they were intimidated by the Klan’s growing power in their communities.445

As for direct state response to Klan violence, the mayor of Houston brought in six peace officers from West Texas in 1921 to protect citizens from Klan members operating in the city

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443 Jackson, 1992. pp. 68-69
445 Ibid
without police interference. This example demonstrates the cursory treatment Klan violence usually received from the police.\footnote{Ibid}

District judges in Texas ordered grand jury investigations but no indictments were returned until 1923. One example for a grand jury investigation was the flogging of Rothblum and Ethridge in Dallas in March 1922. Both victims identified three police officers as involved in the violent incident. However, no indictments were returned and the officers were suspended for a short period. The police commissioner, a member of the Klan himself, ordered his officers to “forget all about the charges brought against any member of the force”.\footnote{Jackson, 1992. p. 68} There are many examples for the mixed responses of the law enforcement and justice systems to the Klan. The judiciary too demonstrated an ambiguous approach toward the organization, although judges tended to be less accepting of violent behavior. Some judges condoned the behavior of the Klan as auxiliary to formal institutions, but many others called for grand jury investigations, as noted above.

Even after indictments were returned in 1923, a conviction of Klan members in front of a jury was a rare event. There are several notable examples for high profile trials that ended with no convictions or with minor punishments that usually ended in early parole. An interesting example is the case of the Mer Rouge Louisiana murders of 1922. Four white men were kidnapped and two of them, Watt Daniel and Tom Richards, were murdered by a large Klan mob in Morehouse Parish in northeastern Louisiana. The murders were the culmination of months of Klan versus anti-Klan violence in the parish. The Morehouse grand jury, composed mostly of Klan members, conducted a hasty investigation on the disappearance of the two men and no indictments were
returned. The result was an open warfare between Klan supporters and opposition. After a protest from the anti-Klan faction, the governor of Louisiana, John M. Parker, requested federal assistance in the case, and federal agents were called in to conduct a thorough investigation. Parker then became a notable enemy of the Klan, and after several attacks on Parker’s property and escalating violence, the governor declared martial law on Morehouse parish. The bodies of Tom Richards and Watt Daniel surfaced shortly after. The state made arrests and held an open hearing with over fifty witnesses. The findings were submitted to a grand jury. The grand jury listened to testimonies from 125 witnesses and yet refused to return indictments because of insufficient evidence. Still the state continued to pursue the case and the Attorney General and District Attorney served 31 Klansmen Bills of Information on charges committed before the abductions. These charges ended up appearing as political spite. A few Klansmen were convicted of misdemeanor and the rest of the charges were eventually dropped in 1924.448

This case represents some of the difficulties in taking measures against the Klan. At the local level, no action was taken against the Klan, and when state and federal level officials intervened, the local community made it difficult to operate against the Klan. The Mer Rouge murders gained national interest. In most cases however, higher levels of state did not intervene at all and no measures were taken even though the identity of the law violators was known to their communities.

The response of the state in Oklahoma to Klan violence was extreme but it mostly revealed the difficulty law enforcement faced when dealing with the movement. In 1922, the governor of Oklahoma declared martial law over the entire state following the extreme violence in Tulsa.

County. The response was considered a cover up for the general ineptness and corruption of law enforcement across the state, and the governor was replaced shortly after. The martial law period revealed many acts of Klan violence performed in the state in 1922. Dozens of arrests were made but nearly all charges were dropped.\textsuperscript{449}

5.3.1.2 Analysis:

The Klan in the Southwest mobilized based on ‘One Hundred Percent Americanism’ platform just as it did in other regions. While ‘One Hundred Percent Americanism’ was an identity centered agenda, the strong appeal of the movement in the Southwest was the focus on law enforcement. In ‘Strain of Violence’, Richard Brown traces the roots of violence in the Southwest to small organized vigilante groups that operated in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century to remove unwanted elements of society (the ‘indecent’ poor; criminals; counterfeiters). Vigilante groups were common throughout the United States, they were often named ‘Vigilante Committees’. They usually operated as a substitute to legal institutions where those were absent or inefficient. In the East and Midwest vigilante organization operated in the first half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. In the West, including the Southwest, vigilante committees began to operate only in the 1860s and continued even into the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Texas was the state with the largest number of vigilante organizations and the largest number of extra-legal ‘law enforcement’ executions.\textsuperscript{450} Vigilante committees varied in size but the majority of these groups were composed of a few dozens to a few hundred members, indicating the involvement of large sections of the community in extra-legal law enforcement.


They were generally viewed positively in the public eye and were supported by the local elite. There were cases in which vigilante activity elicited anti vigilante movements and violence ensued however, that was not the common pattern. Brown notes that vigilante groups did not operate exclusively in the absence of law enforcement institutions, at times these movements worked with existing institutions, or separate of them.

These vigilante traditions were still very much present in the early 1920s in the Southwest. It was a period of modernization and urbanization that changed geographic and social structures throughout the US. Many historians view the Ku Klux Klan as a response to modernization, an attempt to maintain old ties and values in a changing world. They point at the pressures from above (increasingly concentrated capital) and below (a growing working class) the middle class was faced with. In addition to the socio-economic power struggle, with urbanization there was a rise in crime in the new cities. The early 1920s saw a wave of crime in the Southwest to which the states were unable or not willing to respond. Prohibition was in effect early on in the Southwest, however there were no means by which to enforce the laws and bootleggers were operating freely. In addition, new youth patterns of reckless behavior became common, such as car theft for ‘joy rides’. These new practices infuriated the middle class conservative population.

451 ibid
452 ibid
454 ibid
455 Alexander 1995. 25-29
456 Jackson, 1992
That was the backdrop to the rise of the Klan in the area. The generally law abiding, white Protestant citizens in the region sought a strong movement to represent their values and maintain law and order by whichever means possible. There was a general dissatisfaction with existing law enforcement institutions, and local public officials were blamed for breakdown in order and morals.\textsuperscript{457} The initial response to the Klan in the Southwest was similar to positive responses to vigilante groups. The group’s violence was viewed as a mean to an end – the end being a restoration of the rule of law.

The Klan’s ethnocentric ideology also played a part here. Not every vigilante organization would have gained such large base of support. Citizens in the region strove to maintain their superior position in the community and the superiority of their moral values. The Klan to them was a beacon of Protestant nationalism. The Klan believed American identity was unitary and rejected the rising ideas of multiculturalism. Among other things, it supported restrictions on immigration according to ethnic background. Again, ethnicity in this sense was not based on the categories of white versus black, but on hierarchical categorization of whiteness. The Immigration Act of 1924 that established quotas according to country of origin reflected the Klan’s ideology. This is one example of the fact that some of the Klan’s views were widespread in American society.\textsuperscript{458}

However, the Klan did not perfectly reflect American views. Its propaganda was intended to intensify existing ethnic conflicts and raise their salience. Public speakers emphasized the dangers of different ethnic and religious groups. The propaganda was not always received without

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Alexander, 1995 32
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criticism. In the Midwest, newspapers and Catholic groups rejected the exclusionary views of the Klan as will be discussed in the following section. The favorable view toward the Klan’s violence in the area was duo of the ethnocentric ideology and vigilante traditions in the region.

The Klan managed to achieve relative freedom of operation in the region with bottom up support. Their power was in the support of the community, or the consent of the community to be regulated by the Klan. This is evident by the striking lack of indictment and convictions in front of jury of peers. It was difficult to find witnesses against Klan members even though the perpetuators of violence were often known to the community and were a minority in the Klan itself, whereas middle class law abiding citizens were the majority. The Klan was supported mostly by local law enforcement rather than political and judiciary elites. The support for violence of all Klan members, and more broadly, of the white Protestant native population allowed the Klan to operate freely outside the legal framework. The lower levels of the state were composed of citizens that were either members of or sympathizers of the Klan.

Another factor to consider here is the age of the state. Some of the states in the regions were new to the union (Oklahoma 1907; Arizona and New Mexico 1912) and new to the idea of statehood, making it more likely for vigilante organizations to act as a substitution to weak law enforcement institutions.

The Klan violence in the region declined when the movement decided to enter the political sphere. Hiram Evans, who became the head of the Klan in 1922, decided to focus on politics and sought to moderate the violence in order to attract a broad base of voters. The states did end up making more of an effort to take a hold on law enforcement as the public in Texas and Oklahoma

\footnote{Blee, 2008}
was increasingly concerned about the rising violence (both from Klan members and from other sources). However, it is more likely that the policing of the Klan was the result of internal conscious decision. The group wished to maintain its popularity and was concerned about the criticism of its violence. Again, the actions of the group were limited by the community rather than by the authorities.

5.3.2 Indirect Violence

In the Midwest (as well as the East), direct violence was less common. Although there were several clashes between Klan members and bootleggers in the Midwest, these usually took the form of a riot or community violence, rather than a covert crime of a small hooded unit as was common in the Southwest.

More common in the Midwest were indirect methods of coercion such as intimidation and boycotts. The Klan used intimidation all over the country. The mere connection with the original Klan in name and symbols was a mean of intimidation and indeed it gave the Klan a violent vigilante reputation from the get go. In every new town the Klan entered, members paraded in full regalia, and burned crosses. The Klan used intimidating banners warning disobedient citizens of the consequences of their actions. At times members of the movement went on hooded night rides through Main Street to demonstrate their presence in the town.\(^{460}\)

While the ‘One Hundred Percent Americanism’ agenda was the Klan’s marketing strategy throughout the US, different location had different emphases according to the most relevant local

\(^{460}\) Pegram, 2011
In the Midwest, demographic changes were more notable than in other areas. On top of the changes in economic structures and the urbanization discussed above, the composition of the population also underwent changes in the area during this period. The Great Migration brought more African Americans to the Midwest; the percent of nonnative born was on the rise, and number of Catholics increased. There was a variation within the region in the significance of these changes. In large cities like Chicago and Detroit the changes in composition were far more notable than in more rural areas. In Indiana, for example, the changes in the composition of the population were less significant. However, the actual demographic change is not correlated with the success of the Klan. Areas that remained white Protestant and native like Indiana were actually the most fertile for Klan operation.

The focus of the Klan in the area was markedly on identity, it was a Protestant nationalist movement. Its recruitment agenda centered on anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant propaganda, and the two messages often combined as immigrants from countries like Italy, Ireland, and Poland were also Catholics. Kathleen Blee describes meetings of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan (WKKK) as infused with a message of fear and hatred toward the Klan’s Racial and religious enemies. The message was meant to unite the women under a joint mission: to ensure the privilege and rights of white Protestants. Correspondently, many of the Klan’s actions targeted these populations.

The Klan created a network of businesses that received its sponsorship. These were “friendly” businesses where the good citizens of the community were encouraged to shop. On the

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461 Moore, 1997; Pegram, 2011

462 Blee, 2008. p. 141
other hand, the organization organized boycotts on Catholic and Jewish places of business. The manner of organization was through interpersonal relationships. It became common knowledge within the community which places were supported and not supported by the movement. The boycotts had an immediate effect. Throughout Indiana, for example, Jewish businesses went bankrupt and Jewish professionals and businessmen left their communities. In some neighborhoods in Indiana, Ohio, and Colorado, boycotts managed not only to affect business trade and drive small businesses out of town, they also influenced relationships between friends and neighbors of different religious sects.463

Another method of indirect violence was attempting to control hiring according to religious and ethnic background. WKKK members bombarded schools with appeals to fire Catholic teachers for corrupting the minds of young Protestant children. Though there is no evidence of teachers losing their jobs, several chose to leave.464 WKKK also campaigned against Catholic doctors and nurses claiming they would refuse to treat Protestant patients. The Klan targeted Jews, foreigners, and Catholics in government. Local committees of the Klan collected information on candidates’ race, ethnicity, religion, family background, attitudes toward the Klan and view on prohibition. Based on this data each Klan chapter made candidate endorsement decisions for school boards, local politics, and later national politics.465

The Klan presented itself as a philanthropic organization and indeed was involved in charity in the communities. As noted by Blee, donations made by the movement had multiple

464 Blee, 2008. p 145
purposes, they contributed to individuals and organizations aligned with the Klan; they distracted from the Klan’s violent actions; and they distributed the Klan’s exclusionary message. This third purpose can be viewed as an indirect coercive method. The Klan made its donations very public, often accompanied by ceremonies, at times in Klan regalia. The common donations were bibles and flags to public schools, or donations to build Protestant-only hospitals. They sent a message against parochial schools and Catholic hospitals and the Klan’s public speakers emphasized the message in extreme terms.466

The Klan in the Midwest directed some of its efforts toward politicians and law enforcement. The organization opposed the corruption that surrounded the enforcement of prohibition, or lack thereof. Members of the movement put surveillance on bootleggers and other law violators and collected information they later gave to state officials, threatening to make it public unless action was taken.467 They used bribery at times. The head of the Klan in Indiana D.C Stephenson, and Edward L. Jackson, a Klan member who became the governor of Indiana in 1925, were charged with an attempt to bribe the previous governor to support the Klan in the State while he was still in office.468

As noted above, the Klan was involved in the political process itself from 1922 and on. It managed to take over local, state, and even national races in many states. The issue of the Ku Klux Klan movement, for and against, was salient in the 1922 and especially 1924 elections reaching all the way to the 1924 Democratic convention in Madison Square Garden New York. The

466 Blee, 2008. p. 143-144

467 Moore, 1997. p 102

468 Both governors of Indiana were involved in damaging cases of corruption. As noted above, Stephenson was convicted for rape and murder in 1925.
convention failed to condemn the Klan due to political efforts by Klan sympathizers in the party, and particularly the southern members.

The Klan was highly embedded in the community and thus its influence on elections was immense. In the 1924 elections the Klan managed to control many political races, especially in the primary stage. The election put in office two Klan member governors, several congressmen, many state legislators, judges and school board members. Not all Klan endorsed candidates were members in the movement but they all declared their support for the movement.\textsuperscript{469} Klan endorsed politicians generally failed to operate for Klan causes as expressed in the ‘One Hundred Percent Americanism’ agenda. Soon after its entry into the political arena there was a broad disappointed with the movement. One of the Klan’s policy preferences was expressed in legislation with the 1924 Immigration Act. The law was highly supported by the Klan, but the movement’s politicians were not involved in its legislation. The combination of political disappointment and large scale scandals and frictions within the movement led to a rapid decline in 1925.

Even when not using violence, the Klan’s discourse was exclusionary, racist, and violent. They were therefore viewed as a violent movement by some sections of society based on their rhetoric, their aggressive methods, and their actions in other states. Many key media outlets opposed the Klan as well as business elites who viewed the Klan as a disruptive force. Elites in the Midwest were the main open opposition to the Klan\textsuperscript{470}. In Indiana for example, the Indiana

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\textsuperscript{469} Moore, 1997 p. 9
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\textsuperscript{470} Pegram, 2011.p 78
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Bar association and the Indianapolis Diocese of the Protestant Episcopal Church officially condemned the Klan.\textsuperscript{471}

The other important source of Klan opposition were Catholics. Unlike the African Americans or poor whites that were targeted by the Klan in the South and Southwest, Catholics had a both a voice in the society and politics, and organizational capacity. Throughout the Midwest, the Catholic counter movement to the Klan, the “Knights of Columbus” was using the tactics of the Klan against the movement. One example for the counterforce Catholics posed is the struggle over the rally in Notre Dame in 1924. The Klan viewed Notre Dame University as a symbol for the rising power of Catholics in the US, and it was a source for conspiracy theories about the power and hidden connections of the Catholic Church in the US. In May 1924 the Klan was planning a week long convention in front of Notre Dame. In response, thousands of students massed the convention area, and clashes between the two camps ensued until the Klan was pushed out of the area.\textsuperscript{472}

5.3.2.1 Analysis:

The Ku Klux Klan’s ideology gained traction in the Midwest, it was the region with the highest Klan membership in the country. The emphasis in the region was on religion, immigration, public school reform and prohibition. The movement was involved in some incidents of direct violence, but most forms of coercion were indirect. In meetings held between Klan national leaders from the South and local leaders from the Midwest and Northeast, the Southern leaders suggested

\textsuperscript{471} Ibid; Moore, 1997. p 65;

the use of violence against minorities, but local leaders rejected the strategy. Acts of violence received more criticism in the Midwest and most members did not openly endorse them.

In the Midwest too, the Klan was very strong amongst local politicians and law enforcement, demonstrating that the choice of strategy was not lack of state support but rather lack of support from the population. Vigilante traditions were further in the past in the Midwest than they were in the Southwest. The states in the region moreover, were more established, and law enforcement institutions were stronger. These can account for the choice of indirect violence. However, indirect coercion still received support from the population and the Klan’s racist, exclusionary rhetoric appealed to large portion of the while Protestant native born population. Moreover, intimidation was a tool of this population to reassert itself within its community, as exclusionary ethnocentric views were widespread.

5.4 DISCUSSION

Despite the success of the Klan, the movement operated for a short period and disappeared. While the failure has as much to do with internal organization as it does with external factors, no similar large scale movement have taken its place, and the Klan never reached consensus status outside the Deep South. Unlike the other cases studied here, the Klan did not manage to penetrate the national mainstream in a long-lasting manner. Indeed, as pointed out by historians, the movement was a response to local and global socio-economic changes. During the same period,

473 Moore, 1997

fascist movements surfaced throughout Europe and elsewhere in response to similar struggles of urbanization, changes in market structure, and the introduction of mass politics. But despite the great depression only a few short years later, the Klan was not revived.

Several fundamental differences set the Ku Klux Klan in the context of the US apart from other cases examined in this research. First, the movement had far more regional and local variation than other radical right movements. The movement was decentralized in both leadership and message, and though there were occasional large rallies, for the most part the movement’s operation was local. Structurally, the US is far more decentralized than all other cases examined here, and there are thus fewer opportunities to form a unified alternative base of power, or a unified alternative narrative to central power.

Second, though successful, the Klan always faced strong resistance from mainstream populations. Nationally, the movement was rejected by liberal elites, and even locally, outside the Deep South there was always resistance based on both a rejection of the movement’s disruptive nature, and of its ideas. Though in all other cases too there are multiple understanding of the nation and the criteria of inclusion in it, in the US, liberal interpretation of the national community was far more widespread than in other cases.475 To put it a different way, while many Hungarians oppose the radical right as a disruptive and even racist force, the movement is not framed as “un-Hungarian”. Similarly, many Israelis oppose the settlers as destructive to Israel’s interests, but a claim that the movement is “un-Israeli” in nature has few supporters. However, the Klan was always perceived as promoting un-American values by many. And though the US often acted on the same values, for example in the 1924 Immigration Act, many Americans still perceived these

acts as instrumental but not ideological, meaning that the limitation on citizenship according to ethnic background are not a substantive declaration on Americanism. The ‘center’ in this case was present on the national level, but also within the periphery, at least outside the Deep South further discussed below.

Finally, the Klan highlights interesting aspects of American ethnic cleavages and national belonging. The others the Klan excluded from the “true” national community in the 1920s were African Americans, but also, ethnic whites – Catholics, Jews, immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. In the decades to follow however, these others became normalized as whites. The fluidity of ethnic categories then is stronger in the American case than it is in Central Europe – where Jews, and Roma remain Jews and Roma to date, or in Israel – where Palestinians remain Palestinians. Even at the time, the white excluded which were certainly affected by the Klan, had the power and voice to fight back far more than the excluded in the other cases. This was of course not the case for African Americans, and in particular in the Deep South.

The deep South lacks all the factors discussed here. It was relatively regionally unified, lacked strong alternative narrative of inclusions, and had rigid categories of ethnic exclusion, carefully constructed through the Jim Crow segregation and the social practices which accompanied it. It is therefore unsurprising that the Klan and Klan members continued to be influential figures in Southern politics and society in the Deep South long after the movement virtually disappeared elsewhere in the US. Moreover, in the 1960s many in the community and in law enforcement in the Deep South supported the Klan which was again an extremely violent

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476 Hale, 2010
covert vigilante movement. The movement was thus able to operate rather freely compared to far less violent Civil Rights organizations.\textsuperscript{477}

6 CONCLUSION

Perhaps the most notable political phenomenon of the past decade has been the rise of global populism. Different political systems around the world have experienced the rise of anti-establishment, politics, often accompanied by calls for protectionist economic policies, and exclusionary practices. Scholars struggle to define this phenomenon as it takes on different forms in different places. I have tried here to understand why some places experience a surge of radical right populism and its adoption in the mainstream, leading to transformative political outcomes such as the concentration of power in the center and a decline of liberal practices and institutions. This dissertation addressed a set of key questions and in this chapter I will review them and discuss the implications of the findings.

6.1 POPULISM, NATIONAL REVIVAL, AND INTRA-ETHNIC CLEAVAGES

The first question this research explored was why some countries are more vulnerable to transformative populism. The most disruptive type of populism is one that combines successful radical right groups and centrist parties which take a turn toward populism. In such cases, chauvinist national rhetoric penetrates the political and social mainstream, and a central political party has the power to translate it into policy agenda. The result is concentration of power in the center and weakening of liberal institutions, laws, and practices. I argued that to understand how radical groups can exert such influence on the political center, we need to examine intra-ethnic cleavages, the way they develop over time, and are incorporated into the political system. Where the nation developed in an uneven manner, groups in society hold different and even contradicting ideas on national identity, including the interpretation of national history, borders, and criteria of
belonging to the national community. In these cases, radical groups that center on nationalism can present mainstream politicians as betraying the “true” nation, and mobilize support against them.

The key to this theory was rethinking nations and nationalism. In recent decades, nationalism scholarship focused on interethnic conflict as a trigger to the reemergence of nationalist mobilization. Studying this element of nationalism made sense in the context of a rise in ethnic conflict in the form of civil war. This scholarship certainly addressed intra-ethnic tensions. For example, scholars noted that elites use inter-ethnic conflict instrumentally to distract from economic issues, or prevent class based coalitions. However, the recent rise of populism requires scholars to go beyond such observations. Populists do mobilize against minorities and foreign actors, but much of the national fervor that populists bring to societies is directed inwards, particularly toward center elites. I argued here that to understand why nationalism reemerges in this manner, we need to view the populist struggle as a struggle over the nation itself. To that end I defined the nation as the effort to create a solidarity group through shared ethnicity, history, culture, language, territory, or civic identity. Thus, while the struggle to create a relatively homogenous national territory might be settled, groups’ struggle for self determination of the nation can continue.

The first part of the dissertation explored the origins of an uneven spread of national identity. I examined the cases of Central Europe’s Poland, Hungary, and the Czech and Slovak Republics, and explored how the development of the nation in all cases left the political and geographic centers disengaged from the peripheries. The centers were cosmopolitan and outward

facing, and though they used the myths and symbols of the periphery, they remained culturally close to the imperial metropole. Peripheries on the other hand, remained dependent, and their access to political, cultural, and material resources was limited. As a result, even after WWII, when countries, and the urban centers in particular, became more homogenous and less cosmopolitan, the foreignness of the center vis-à-vis the periphery remained.

From these similar background conditions, I demonstrated that countries took different paths in the 1989 transitions from communism. Both Poland and Hungary failed to integrate their peripheries into the political systems. Matters were worse in Hungary, where the transition involved limited elite bargaining, was very liberal, and had little input from other groups in society. The case of Czechoslovakia however was different. As center and periphery cleavages overlapped with ethnic identity, the political center in Prague was forced to address the demands of the periphery. It was far easier for the periphery in Bratislava to organize and make demands early on because they had a shared ethnic identity that united them, and made their shared (periphery) interests evident early on. The bargaining between center and periphery failed in Czechoslovakia, though the failure was by no means inevitable. Two divided elites created a political sphere that was homogenous and contradictory on each side. The Czech political representation was liberal and cosmopolitan, whereas the Slovak one was national and opposed economically reforms. It was the perfect division between center and periphery and it resulted in separation – the Velvet Divorce.

Separation was an available solution for Czechoslovakia because of the ethnic divisions between center and periphery. The country fit with seminal nationalism literature that identifies centers and periphery with separate ethno-lingual groups. However, in the other cases, Hungary and Poland, separation was not an available solution for center-periphery tensions. Centers and
peripheries shared language and ethnicity if not an agreement over culture, history, and their implications.

The comparative examination has several important takeaways. First, center-periphery cleavages that do not overlap with ethnicity have their own set of outcomes. While nationalist emergence in ethnically divided center-periphery societies is turned outside – toward the other ethno-national group; the national fervor in ethnically homogenous but center-periphery divided societies is turned inwards – from the periphery toward the center. This is manifested in the rise of anti-establishment anti-elitist discourse that presents the elite establishment as foreign, and legitimizes an overturn of liberal institutions. As civil wars demonstrate, ethnic cleavages can become even more violent and disruptive, but they also have a different set of solutions for alleviating tensions between groups. As the case of Czechoslovakia shows, ethnicity can mark a center-periphery cleavage and force the political center to address it through a variety of power sharing arrangements, or through separation.

Another interesting takeaway is the role of liberal tradition. My working assumption heading into this project was that the absence of strong liberal tradition was the problem, and the source of vulnerability of Central European countries (and of Israel). To some extent the research reinforces this assumption. Had the countries of central Europe had a stronger liberal tradition, the counter-force to nationalist populism would have been stronger. However, the case of Slovakia demonstrates that unified national identity does not bring about liberalism, but it can protect against the disruptive element of populism. Slovakia, the least liberal country in the region, did not really democratize in the first years following 1989. Under Vladimir Meciar, Slovakia was not considered a free democratic country, or a candidate for European Union membership. Slovakia also has a far right party that is and has always been present in political life, and is even a legitimate
government member. However, since the entire political system, including the left, is concentrated in the national/culturally populist end of the political spectrum, it is difficult to undermine the government based on nationalist agenda. This agenda is successful in Slovakia, but so far it has not led to disruptive outcomes. The broader implication is that though a transition that leads to highly liberal country might seem desirable to Western observers, it has a disruptive potential for countries that lack a deep liberal tradition. A more nationalist country is problematic for human and civil rights, and the quality of democracy, but it is also more stable over time, and has potential for incremental democratization. This is in line with literature on the unstable nature of new democracies. A liberal system that exacerbates existing cleavages between liberal and non-liberal groups in society can explain some of the cases of unstable new democracies.

6.2 THE RHETORIC OF THE RADICAL RIGHT

Rhetorical processes are at the center of this dissertation. My argument was that uneven and contradictory nationalism is the background for successful radical right framing. The second set of questions in this research focus on how groups use national narratives and how this rhetorical campaign shapes the decisions of mainstream politicians. The second part of the dissertation approached these questions through case study investigation into the current day radical right in Hungary, the Jewish settlers in Israel in the 1970s and 1980s, and the Ku Klux Klan in 1920s United States.

I argued that since national elites in the early days of national formation used symbols and myths of the periphery, these are easy to access for periphery elites aiming to mobilize support over their own version of nationalism. This was certainly the case for the Hungarian radical right, and the Jewish settlers in Israel/Palestine. Hungarian elites used ethnic Hungarian – Magyar – identity to distinguish themselves from the imperial center in Vienna and demand independence and sovereignty. The traditional picturesque image of Magyar way of life is at the center of radical right imagery. Other national symbols are also easy to access for periphery elites, in particular Greater Hungary, Hungary before the 1920 Trianon Treaty. The image of that Hungary in the popular culture is of a countryside paradise lost. School children are taken on trips to Transylvania to observe the “old ways”, which were simpler, authentic, and true.

In general, the relationship of the radical right with the concept of truth is interesting. Today, the discussion on facts and their importance in political discourse is at the center of public debate. Indeed, the radical right relies on its own media sources and is not always adherent to facts. But the ‘truth’ and ‘authenticity’ play a central role in radical right discourse. The central claim of the radical right is to represent the “real” members of the nation, and to speak “truth” to them where others will not. In Hungary, “real” Hungarians are periphery Magyars, and the “truth” is that Roma members are responsible for all crime. Communist and Jewish elites still control the country, now in the form of liberals and international bankers, and Slovakia is “Upper Hungary”. For many in Hungary these narratives do echo as some form of truth. The periphery indeed suffers from tensions between communities that were often not addressed by mainstream politicians, the transition from communism did not involve bureaucratic replacement, and may individuals have family stories or connections across the border. Since mainstream political actors did not address
these issues the rhetorical space was open for the radical right to use an extreme version of them to justify exclusionary and violent actions.

The timing of the national-populist turn is worth consideration here. In Hungary, the trigger for the nationalist mobilization was political and economic crises. In general, economic crises reveal center-periphery cleavages because they often disproportionately disadvantage the periphery. The global economic crisis of 2008 left periphery populations in many countries vulnerable, and reinforced the notion that they were the ‘losers’ of globalization. In Central Europe, the effect was stronger because the sense of failure and disappointed was tied not only to the global order but to the 1989 transition and their liberal process. This explains why the crisis was a moment in which radical groups could reawaken the alienation and foreignness of the periphery toward the center. The magnitude of crisis itself does not serve as an explanation. Poland was not as affected by the crisis as many other countries, but is still experiencing a populist turn. Further study on the timing of the surge of populism can strengthen the research presented here.

As in the Hungarian case, in the Israeli case too, radical groups used the symbols of pioneering Zionists to justify the settlement project. Pioneering Zionists faced a difficult task, they had to gain access to a land they did not inhabit, bring people from different locations, cultures, languages, and traditions there, and unite them as one nation. To accomplish their mission they sanctified the land to justify it as a national home for Jews both toward the international community, and internally to Jewish people around the world. They also employed mythologies of Judaism shared by Jewish communities from different cultures, and invented the modern Hebrew language. It was an ambitious and very successful national project in that it did bring many

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Jews onto the land of Palestine/Israel, and helped secure them a national home. However, the process left Zionist identity vulnerable to religious claims of ownership. Settlers used the Jewish mythology and the Zionist ethos of the land in their framing of the settlement project. And they managed to draw strong emotions based on the combination of these two frames. I have demonstrated that settlers were ambitious in their framing project: they wished to tie the act of settlements to Zionist identity and Zionist identity to the settlement project. They were aided in their project by a political alliance with the right from above, and support from the periphery from below.

In the Israeli case, the hegemony of the founding left, the long exclusion from power of the liberal hawkish right, and the Sephardi Jew population created a powerful coalition against the ruling elite. The settlers provided the narrative, right wing Likud brought political clout and organization, and periphery population voted in support. I set out to show that the combination of nationalism and injustice is a potent rhetorical tool. That was manifested in all the cases including the Israeli one. At first it is not evident that an injustice frame was present here. As I demonstrated, the first generation of settlers was positive in tone, more settler colonial than a radical right group. However, the frame of injustice was used by right wing Likud, in combination with the settlers’ ‘positive’ national message. Sephardi Jewish political organizations often failed because of their negative tone of injustice.481 But the Jewish element was strong because it was an element of identity which made this community more a ‘real’ part of the community than the hegemonic secular left.482 As in the Hungarian case, this demonstrates how within the ethno-national


482 Shafir and Peled note this was the strategy of religious party Shas that mobilized on religion in later years and gained electoral success in the periphery.
community, where center and periphery are divided, national fervor is directed inward, against the center elite. In Israel, in the context of the long Israeli-Palestinian conflict, national fervor is directed both inwards and outwards toward domestic and external enemies.

The period I have chosen to focus on for the Israeli case is certainly not the only available option. Current day radical right in Israel, including the representation of religious settlers, is far more similar to the other radical populists in this study. The group today follows the criteria provided by Mudde, they are nativist-exclusionary, anti-establishment, and authoritarian. My choice of period was a choice of the ‘story of origins’ of that movement. The original settlers were not a hateful or exclusionary group in rhetoric, but their use of national rhetoric explains how they managed to own parts of the national identity, form political alliances, and integrate into state institutions. This positioned second and third generation settlers inside the state and the political system. The project the settlers created – Jewish settlements in the occupied Territories -- had its own influence on exacerbating inter-ethnic tensions between Jews and Palestinians and escalating violent and exclusionary rhetoric and practices.

The case of the Jewish settlers highlights the importance of ideational tensions within a national identity. The tension between the Jewish and Democratic elements in Israeli identity is inherent. While the settlement project exacerbates it by creating a de-facto one state with a population of inferior subjects, the project did not create the tension. It is this tension which makes it so difficult for Israeli left-liberals to find a coherent counter-narrative to the ‘Zionism as settlements’ story of the right. If Israel is Jewish and democratic, then non-Jews are excluded, and the debate is over the extent of exclusion rather than over the principle of exclusion. This makes

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the coherent right wing exclusive story more powerful. More broadly, inherent tensions between democracy and exclusion play into the hands of nationalist.\textsuperscript{484}

The final case in the study was that of the Ku Klux Klan in 1920s US. The case provides a different outcome than the former two cases. Instead of a successful nationalist capture – a transformation of liberal democratic institution, the outcome was partial success. The movement was very successful on the local and even state level at times, but it failed to capture national politics. I examined two main points regarding the case. First, what explains the observed variation in violence across regions – in the Southwest the Ku Klux Klan was extremely violent, whereas in the Midwest the Klan was not; and second, why did the movement succeed locally but fail on the national level outside of the Deep South.

The Southwest in the 1920s was not far remote from the vigilante practices that defined the American frontiers. Vigilante justice was still considered an acceptable form of violence by both citizens and formal law enforcement. On occasion, when vigilante violence created a significant disturbance to public order, citizens turned against it and political officials, usually on the state rather than the local level, attempted to control it. The cooperation of the community was crucial for the operation of the Ku Klux Klan in the area. Even when authorities attempted to arrest violent criminal Klan members, the community protected them by not giving testimony, and by voting in their favor in grand jury, or trial jury. Eventually it was the Klan itself that curbed the violence of its members because it wished to focus on the political rather than the vigilante arena.

Thus, the Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest can be explained in the context of the vigilante ethos of the region.

The movement was different in the Midwest. To be sure, it was an exclusionary group, with a hateful message, and it practiced ongoing intimidation and coercion of others. However, it was not directly violent. Here, vigilante practices were less acceptable, in that sense the community policed the movement. However, the movement was successful in its exclusionary white nationalist message. White, native born, Protestants were “one hundred percent Americans,” others were not. These others included African Americans, but also immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, Catholics, and Jews. The exclusionary message resonated with Americans who were intimidated by a changing world. Urbanization, industrialization and female suffrage all threatened traditional community life, and the Ku Klux Klan mobilized on that fear. Ultimately though, despite the great success, the movement did not reach mainstream status in national politics. The collapse of the movement was due in part to internal problems of the organization, but several comparative elements are worth considering: the movement’s decentralization, the force of liberal counter-narratives, and the fluidity of white identities.

The Ku Klux Klan had a national organization and strategy, but the power of the movement was in the local organization and the local message. In each locality, the Klan mobilized on the most pressing issues, and the local branches had significant autonomous power. This is the result of the decentralized organization of the US, but importantly also of decentralization of narratives in the US. Narratives of exclusions varied across localities, as well as the relationship between the white middle class the Klan represented, and local and national elites. The result was that coordinated action of the entire movement was difficult to achieve. In contrast, in both Israel and
Hungary, political organization and national narratives are highly centralized, making the task of radicals much easier on the national level.

The Ku Klux Klan always faced strong opposition from liberals that had a counter story of American identity. In the other cases I explored, liberals exist, but they are far less spread out throughout the country, and as noted above, their narratives are less internally coherent than American liberalism. As a result, it was always difficult to sway the entire mainstream in an exclusionary direction.

Finally, some of the categories of exclusion in the American case were relatively fluid. To be clear, African Americans in the South was not a fluid category. But, the divisions between whites the Ku Klux Klan mobilized on were ultimately less rigid. At the time, Catholics were indeed viewed as a threat to freedom of religion and to Protestant communal organization and values. Southern and Eastern Europeans were not considered white as Anglo-Saxons were. However, these categories of whiteness were diminished over time in the following years. The implication is that mobility of identity was possible. This is not the case in the other cases examined here. First the exclusion of groups, the Roma population in the Hungarian case, and Palestinians in the Israeli case, is based on rigid categories. Second, the cleavages and tensions within society between center and periphery, religious and secular, also have deep roots, certainly in the Hungarian case and the region more broadly. The Deep South however, resembles the other case examined here and deserves further investigation. The Deep South as a unit was more centralized in message, less liberal in tradition, and its categories of exclusion were rigid.

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Considering the rise of populism, nationalism scholarship should turn its attention to the struggles within the nation over the meaning of national identity. This research is an opening for further exploration into the ongoing development of nations and the multiple perceptions of identity within them. The center-periphery cleavages described here, and the foreignness of the urban cosmopolitan center to its periphery characterize many societies, most notably in the post-colonial world. Expanding the study into more regions would help specify the conditions under which intra-ethnic tensions develop and the methods by which they can be alleviated.
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