



Lecture 8

Post-communist intolerance and
radical right



Main difference

- The difference between the *radical* right and the moderate right is **intolerance** – the radical right refuses to allow different, alternative ideas the right to exist
- Radical right asserts fundamental truths that are beyond challenge (hence allowing no room for compromise) →
- Anti-intellectualism of organised intolerance (cf. violent destruction of the old world by Italian fascism)



Hatred

- The politics of organised intolerance is about hating difference
- Hatred of difference (either race, nation, religion, sexual orientation, ...)
- Justifications are only added later, hatred is irrational (not rational)



Definition

- Radical right (RR) = ultraright = extreme right
- Generally used for organised intolerance
- Characteristics of right-wing extremism:
- 1) N with hostile attitude toward other states or peoples, 2) denial that all people have equal rights, 3) rejection of parliamentary-pluralist system, 4) folk-ethnocentric ideology (Richard Stöss)



Scheme

(according to Sabrina P. Ramet)

- Organised intolerance
- Radical right politics
- Fascism
- Nazism
- Radical right politics is a particular form of organised intolerance; fascism is a subset of RR politics; Nazism is a subset of fascism



Analytical framework

(according to Minkenbergh, 2002)

- The CEE radical right exists in the specific socio-historical context of a “multiple modernisation process”:
- Transformation from authoritarian regime to liberal democracy
- Transformation from state-socialist to capitalist market economy
- Transformation from industrialism to postindustrialism
- + often also simultaneous nation-building and state-building



The CEE experience

- Economic and political insecurity
- Consolidation of the new regimes
(uncompleted process of democratisation)
- Specific opportunities for the radical right
- However, the electoral success is limited,
radical right movements have trouble
transforming into solid political parties



Emergence of radical right in CEE, Russia and CIS

- Certain key variables promote radical right politics (according to C. Williams):
- Cultural factors (no sense of belonging, national identity crisis...)
- Political changes
- Economic transition (rising prices, growing unemployment, increase in poverty...)
- Social tension (new cleavages emerge, ethnic cleavage being the most important)
- Globalisation



Radical right

- Is post-1989 radical right in Central-Eastern Europe a return of the pre-democratic and pre-communist past?
- Is post-1989 radical right in Central-Eastern Europe an equivalent of today's Western European radical right?
- It is neither: the dominant forces of the radical right in transformation states are ideologically (more extreme and openly antidemocratic) and structurally (less a party, more a social movement) different from most western varieties



Right-wing radicalism

- A response to social change; radical effort to undo such change (cf. modernisation theories):
- Instead of social differentiation back to nationally defined community,
- Instead of individualisation back to traditional roles and status of the individual
- Emphasis on social homogeneity



Ideology

- Right-wing radicalism is a political ideology based on the myth of a homogeneous nation (romantic, populist ultranationalism that is against liberal and plural democracy)
- Radicalising ethnic, religious, cultural, political criteria of who is 'us' and who 'them' – who is excluded
- Populist, anti-establishment political style



Contemporary situation

- Organised intolerance has several different forms:
- Ultranationalist (M. Sladek's Republican Party)
- Fascist (and crypto-fascist) (New Czech Unity Party, Total Neofaschos)
- Clerical
- Ultraconservative
- Radical-populist



Radical right potential in CEE

- Mobilisation potential for radical right in CEE seems large but is in fact not very different from western democracies
- Radical right-wing mobilisation potential includes components of right-wing self-identification, N, anti-system orientations, anti-Semitism, R, authoritarianism, religious fundamentalism



Difference between CEE and the West

- Anti-immigration feelings are low in CEE compared to the West (traditionally migration flows from East to West!)
- Widespread resentment toward the largest regional minority: the Roma
- Declining trust in democracy and low levels of confidence in parliament, pol. parties



Influence on the politics

- Radical right-wing political parties exist in almost all of the transformation states
- Their electoral success is very different



Reading for next week

- Read Michael Minkenberg “The radical right in postsocialist Central and Eastern Europe” pp. 344-362!