

# CONTESTED CITIZENSHIP

## Immigration and Cultural Diversity in Europe

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## The Extreme Right: Ethnic Competition or Political Space?

In this chapter, we shift our attention to another collective actor that plays an important role within the field of immigration and ethnic relations: the extreme right. The last two decades have witnessed the rise and continued saliency of right-wing extremist parties that have xenophobic and racist positions, or at least positions that are against the rights and interests of immigrants (see Elbers and Fennema 1993; Hainsworth 1992; Ignazi 1992; Kitschelt 1995; Kriesi 1999). Parties such as the Republicans in Germany, the British National Party, the Swiss Democrats (formerly National Action) in Switzerland, the Center Democrats in the Netherlands, and above all the Front National in France are typical examples. Our central task here is to explain variations in xenophobic claims and, more generally, in the mobilization by the extreme right across our five countries.

By “xenophobic claims” we mean strategic intervention, either verbal or nonverbal, in the public domain “by groups who react to and mobilize against the presence of migrants and ethnic groups, demanding that the state enforce measures that exclude such groups from social, political and cultural rights” (Statham 1997, 14). The definition of the extreme right is less straightforward. Most attempts at defining and classifying the extreme right deal with parties. Typologies are usually based on the ideology of extreme-right parties and on the issues they address (see, for example, Backes and Moreau 1993; Betz 1993; Elbers and Fennema 1993; Griffin 1992; Hainsworth 1992; Kitschelt 1995). Perhaps the common denominator of all those actors who can be considered as belonging to the category of the extreme right is their ethnocultural stance. Thus, in line with our gen-

eral framework, we stress the ethnic elements of the discourse and mobilization of the extreme right—a collective actor that conveys an ethnocultural conception of national identity, emphasizing cultural difference as a major barrier toward integration and societal cohesion, and that opposes the idea of the nation as a political and civic community (Koopmans and Statham 1999b). Of course, this approach does not exhaust the various ideological and discursive elements of this actor and does not do its full complexity justice. Yet, it focuses on the distinctive characteristic of the extreme right with respect to the political field of immigration and ethnic relations. By doing so, this allows us to link the claims made by extreme-right actors with the prevailing configurations of citizenship.

The success of extreme-right parties varies strongly across countries. While, for example, the French Front National gained the support of 15 percent of the electorate in 1997 and triumphed over the Socialist Party in the first round of the presidential elections in 2002, the British National Party has remained steadfastly at the political margins. Previous work has tended to overlook cross-national differences in favor of a focus on the conditions that have facilitated the emergence or breakthrough of extreme-right parties. In addition, it has tended to focus on parties and electoral strength, stressing two main sets of factors: demand-side and supply-side. The former refers to the conditions that have led to the creation of a social and cultural reservoir to be exploited by far-right political organizations, such as value change and structural cleavages related to the modernization process (e.g., Betz 1993; Flanagan 1987; Ignazi 1992; Minkenberg 1992). Supply-side factors include political and institutional aspects, such as the structure of the electoral system, the responses of established actors, and the dynamics of party alignment, demarcation, and competition (e.g., Betz 1993; Kitschelt 1995; Kriesi 1999; Koopmans 1996a; Schain 1987; Thränhardt 1995), that provide the extreme right with a political niche to be exploited.

With regard to explanations for the rise and mobilization of extra-parliamentary forms of the extreme right (e.g., racist and xenophobic violence perpetrated by skinheads or other groups of apparently disaffected youngsters), there is relatively little systematic research. To find a theoretical framework to explain this form of right-wing extremism, we must resort to the social movement literature. There we find two competing explanations: one focusing on grievances and ethnic competition, the other on opportunities and institutional frameworks (Koopmans 1996a). Grievance theories see the cause of extreme-right violence as discontent with respect to the main target of this collective actor, i.e., foreigners, migrants, and asylum seekers, and as a response to growing pressures stemming from new immigration and its

consequences. In contrast, opportunity theories emphasize the role of political elites and institutions in shaping the mobilization of extreme-right actors.

In this chapter we shall combine political-institutional and cultural-discursive factors within a revised political opportunity approach. In addition to political-institutional variables, which must be considered when explaining collective mobilizations, we look at the impact of national configurations of citizenship as a relevant political opportunity structure for the claims making of the extreme right. Broadly stated, the main thesis is that the collective definitions of citizenship in the five countries provide different sets of discursive opportunities that determine the degree of visibility, resonance, and legitimacy of xenophobic claims and extreme-right actors. This, in turn, affects the role that political-institutional variables, such as political alignments, party competition, and the presence of a political entrepreneur channeling extreme-right demands into the political system, have on this type of claims making. We argue that the political space made available for the mobilization of the extreme right by the policy positions of mainstream parties on issues pertaining to immigration and ethnic relations is a crucial determinant. Thus, the extent and forms of claims making by extreme-right actors stem more from the competition between parties in the institutional arenas than from the competition between ethnic groups, i.e., between the majority native population and minority groups of migrant origin.

In the next section, we address in more detail existing explanations of the mobilization of the extreme right, both in its partisan and extra-parliamentary forms. Then we propose a theoretical framework for understanding the claims making of the extreme right, which attempts to combine political-institutional dynamics and configurations of citizenship. Drawing from this theoretical framework, we propose a way to conceptualize the specific opportunity structure for the extreme right as a combination of discursive opportunities (determining the degree of visibility, resonance, and legitimacy) and the political space made available to the extreme right. The remainder of the chapter tests some hypotheses drawn from our theoretical framework by using our cross-national comparative data. Specifically, we discuss the presence of the extreme right in the public domain (including its organizational forms), its action repertoires, and its contribution to claims making in the field of immigration and ethnic relations.

### **Two Competing Explanations of Extreme-Right Mobilization**

Translated into social movement jargon, the distinction between demand-side and supply-side explanations generally reflects the *differences* between grievance and opportunity theories, two of the major competing social

movement theories, or at least two major competing accounts for the radicalization of protest. *Grievance theories* stress the objective conditions that are assumed to lead to subjective grievances or discontent. This, in turn, is seen as the principal determinant of the mobilization by social movements. Collective behavior and relative deprivation theories are probably the best-known variants of this model (e.g., Gurr 1970; Kornhauser 1959; Smelser 1962; Turner and Killian 1957). Mostly, such accounts assume that social movements are based on anomie and are a collective response to individual frustrations and deprivations. On our current topic, for example, this view would consider that economic downturns impact increasingly on lower-skilled workers, who then suffer disproportionately from unemployment, bad housing, marginalization, and isolation (Heitmeyer 1992; Heitmeyer et al. 1992; Kowalsky and Schroeder 1994). Subsequently, this creates a group of socially excluded people who are considered a resource pool for potential mobilization into extreme-right and xenophobic activities. A similar approach, and arguably more convincing, is ethnic competition theory, which sees racial violence as a result of the competition between ethnic groups over scarce resources (Barth 1969; Belanger and Pinard 1989; Nagel and Olzak 1982; Olzak 1992; Olzak and Nagel 1986).

*Opportunity theories*, in contrast, argue that social movements do not depend on the amount of grievances but stem above all from the political opportunities that are made available to them at a given time (e.g., Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1995; McAdam 1996, 1999; Tarrow 1998; Tilly 1978). Among the aspects of the political opportunity structure that may translate grievances into mobilization are the relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system, the stability or instability of elite alignments that support a polity, the presence or absence of elite allies, and a state's capacity and propensity for repression (McAdam 1996). In this perspective, the structure of political opportunities constrains and shapes the extent and forms of mobilization by social movements, which channel their action repertoires into either moderate or radical forms. Regarding the extreme right, this view argues that the socially excluded will become engaged in xenophobic activities only to the extent that the institutional context provides favorable opportunities for the rise of extreme-right political behavior.

These two competing explanations make opposed predictions about the use of violence for political purposes. Grievance theories assume that the more intense the objective condition or problem, the stronger the grievances and the more radical or violent the collective response. Opportunity theories, in contrast, assume that violence increases to the extent that there are no other alternative political options available for making demands. In other words, not

only protest but also violence are political resources in the hands of the powerless (Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Lipsky 1968; Piven and Cloward 1979).

Grievance-type explanations are popular among extreme-right activists and media and public accounts (Koopmans 1996a). For example, racist attacks on hostels for refugees in Germany in the early 1990s were often presented in the press as morally condemnable but understandable due to the growing number of asylum seekers.

To test the grievance position cross-nationally, we have constructed a summary indicator for the objective situation for each country. This includes three factors that are often assumed to create actual or perceived frustrations and deprivations among sectors of the native indigenous population—the “losers” of the modernization process (Kriesi 1999)—with regard to immigration and migrants, and thus lead to racist violence and/or extreme-right mobilization: the proportion of population of migrant origin, the immigration rate, and the unemployment rate. The ranking of our five countries according to this indicator is the following (from the worst to the best objective situation): Switzerland (35), Germany (27), the Netherlands (23), France (22), and Britain (18).<sup>1</sup>

By contrast, opportunity theories consider that mobilization by the extreme right will become violent to the extent that other channels are not available to express this type of demand. According to this, we would expect the extreme right to be more moderate where extreme-right parties are a relevant force in the political system, and conversely more radical or violent where there is no such institutional ally (see Koopmans 1996a). To test this type of explanation, we have calculated the average percentage of votes received by extreme-right parties in the five countries during the 1990s: France, 12.2 percent; Switzerland, 8.4 percent (excluding the Swiss People's Party); Netherlands, 2.5 percent; Germany, 2.1 percent; and Britain, less than 1.0 percent.<sup>2</sup> Thus, extreme-right parties perform very differently across our countries. In France and, to a lesser extent, in Switzerland far-right parties on average scored relatively highly in the 1990s, but in Germany, the Netherlands, and especially Britain they remained relatively marginal political actors, at least in electoral terms.<sup>3</sup>

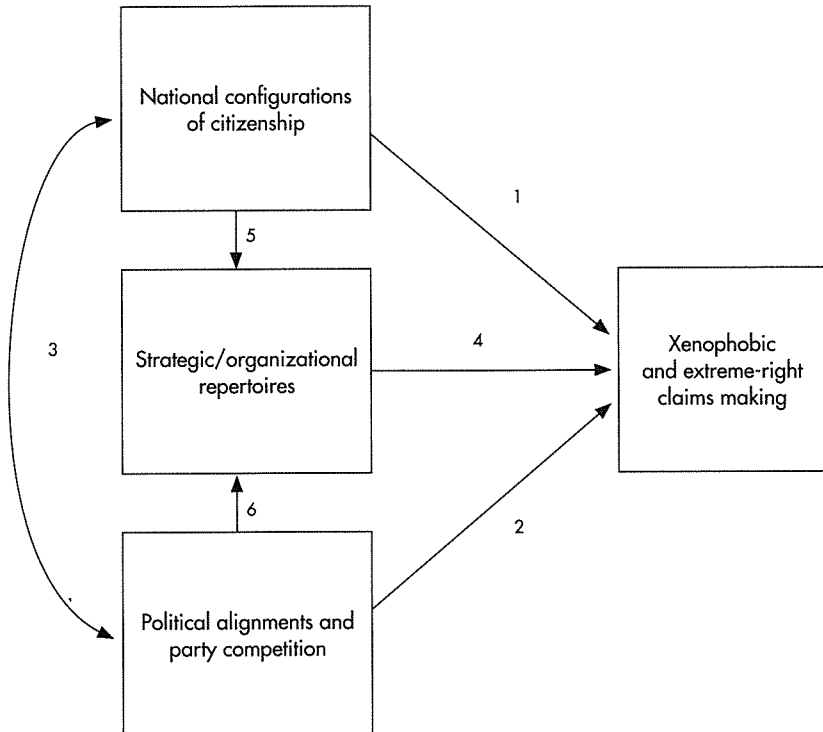
Simply comparing the ranking between the five countries for the objective situation regarding immigration and for the electoral strength of extreme-right parties already casts serious doubt on the grievance explanation. For the grievance position to hold, we would have had to find a strong positive correlation between the two summary indicators. Britain does have a low score in both respects; however, we find that France has a low objective situation score but the strongest far-right party. Likewise, but in the

opposite direction, Germany ranks high in grievances, but low in electoral strength. In sum, we see no systematic correlation that suggests a direct impact of the size of migrant population or immigration rate on the success of extreme-right parties.<sup>4</sup>

On the basis of our claims-making data, we will see whether grievance explanations perform better for the presence of the extreme right in the public domain. First, we outline a more general theoretical framework for understanding xenophobic and extreme-right claims making that is based on insights from the opportunity approach.

### **A Theoretical Framework for Understanding Xenophobic and Extreme-Right Claims Making**

Figure 7 gives the basic features of a theoretical framework for analyzing xenophobic and extreme-right claims making. We see xenophobic and extreme-right claims making as determined by the interplay of three factors: national



*Figure 7. A theoretical framework for the analysis of xenophobic and extreme-right claims making.*

configurations of citizenship, an institutionalized political system, and strategic/organizational repertoires.

First, the opportunities and constraints set by *national configurations of citizenship* influence the extent and forms of claims making by the extreme right (arrow 1). To explain the relevance of this, we briefly retrace the steps of our approach that has been outlined in more detail in previous chapters. To define the prevailing model of citizenship in a given country, we focused on two dimensions: (1) the formal criteria of inclusion in or exclusion from the national community, or the individual equality dimension; and (2) the cultural obligations imposed on outsiders to become members of that community, or the cultural difference dimension (Koopmans and Statham 2000). In the policy area of immigration and ethnic relations, these two dimensions refer to citizenship rights as a crucial factor for determining the ways in which migrants are incorporated into the receiving countries (Brubaker 1992; Castles 1995; Favell 1998; Smith and Blanc 1996). On the formal side, we distinguished between an ethnic-cultural and a civic-territorial basis for countries to grant citizenship rights, whereas on the cultural side, citizenship acquisition implied either the cultural assimilation of newcomers to the dominant (national) culture or, alternatively, some recognition that their ethnic and cultural differences were permitted in the self-understanding of the national community, thus allowing retention of migrant identities. By combining the dimensions, we obtained our four ideal-typical conceptions or models of citizenship: assimilationist, universalist, multiculturalist, and segregationist. As we have discussed at length in the introduction and chapter 1, our countries approximate these ideal types: Germany and Switzerland are closer to the assimilationist, France to the universalist, and Britain and the Netherlands to the multiculturalist positions. Just as we saw in chapter 3 how these different configurations of citizenship were important in shaping the claims making of migrants, they are also determinants of the types of opportunities that are available for the extreme right to oppose migrants and immigration.

In this view, xenophobic and extreme-right claims should be facilitated where they resonate better with the prevailing configuration of citizenship and where they are deemed more legitimate in the sense that they have greater acceptability in the public domain. For example, favoring nationals over foreigners in the job market—a typical demand of the extreme right—might be more viable in a country characterized by assimilationist approaches to the extent that such claims are likely to be more visible, more resonant, with the collective self-definition of the nation and appear more legitimate within such a political framework. In contrast, it might be more difficult to make



similar demands in a state where a more republican rights-based policy style prevails, or even more so in countries that have a more pluralist approach to cultural group rights.

Second, xenophobic and extreme-right claims making are affected by features of the *institutionalized political system* and the political process. Two seem particularly relevant: the structure of political alignments, and the dynamics of party competition and demarcation strategies of established parties (arrow 2). As a number of authors have stressed (e.g., Betz 1993; Kitschelt 1995; Kriesi 1999; Koopmans 1996a; Schain 1987; Thränhardt 1995), these supply-side factors are crucial in that they enlarge or limit the political space available to emerging and outsider parties to increase their electoral strength. In addition, they are a key feature of the institutional opportunity structure for the mobilization of extreme-right actors outside the parliamentary arena.

Our main argument is that configurations of citizenship and political institutions combine to form an opportunity structure that constrains and channels the claims making in the field of immigration and ethnic relations (arrow 3). An important way in which configurations of citizenship and the dynamics of party alignment and competition are interrelated is through the incorporation of the ideological components of the prevailing configuration of citizenship or of the collective definition of national identity in the agenda and program of established parties, and more generally in the polity (Koopmans and Statham 1999b). This is likely to create a different mix of opportunities for extreme-right actors to the extent that established parties occupy the potential political space and adopt preemptive strategies toward the extreme right.

The third factor in our theoretical framework is represented by the *strategic/organizational repertoires* of the extreme right itself (arrow 4). Here we refer to the different forms that the political mobilization of this collective actor may take: either as an important political party engaged in the electoral struggle, or alternatively as extraparliamentary mobilization (i.e., a social movement). These organizational forms may be considered as two strategic options available to extreme-right actors for addressing their claims to the political authorities (Koopmans 1996a). If one option is adopted, the other becomes less viable. As we shall see, this aspect is particularly relevant for explaining the action repertoires of the extreme right because the political space for radical and violent actions expands or shrinks depending on which organizational form is prevalent.

Of course, organizational form is also influenced, at least partly, by the national configurations of citizenship and by the dynamics of political

alignments and party competition. On one hand, just as the prevailing configuration of citizenship enables or constrains the extraparliamentary mobilization of the extreme right, it also determines the opportunities for the emergence of a strong far-right party (arrow 5). On the other hand, such opportunities also depend on the strategies and behaviors of other parties, especially established ones (arrow 6). We turn to the issue of what direction this is likely to take, and what predictions we can make on the basis of this theoretical framework regarding the extent and forms of the claims making by the extreme right, in the next section.

### **The Specific Opportunity Structure for the Claims Making of the Extreme Right**

In the introduction, we argued that social movement scholars have tended to specify political opportunity structures at a too general level, without taking into account the characteristics of particular issue fields and collective actors. For example, Kriesi et al. (1995) explain cross-national variations in the extent and forms of the mobilization of new social movements through certain characteristics of the political system that grant different degrees of institutional access and yield different levels of repression. Yet, opportunity structures vary from one issue field to another as well as between collective actors. Therefore, we need to define a set of political opportunities that are specific to the field of migration and ethnic relations. We have done so throughout the book by stressing the impact of citizenship and migrant integration regimes. However, in the case of the native response to immigration by the extreme right, the *specific opportunity structure* also results from more traditional institutional factors such as the dynamics of party competition. Here we conceptualize the specific opportunity structure of the extreme right as a combination of two dimensions that depend on the three factors outlined above. The three factors determine the extent and forms of xenophobic and extreme-right claims making in two ways. First, they provide different sets of *discursive opportunities*, which can be either strong (or favorable, that is, when extreme-right actors and claims are highly visible, resonant, and legitimate) or weak (or unfavorable, that is, when extreme-right actors and claims have a lower degree of visibility, resonance, and legitimacy). Second, they can provide either a wider or narrower *political space* for the emergence of such claims. The combination of these two dimensions yields four distinct opportunity structures for the mobilization of the extreme right, shown in Figure 8.

The first type we may call *institutionalization* (or institutionalized right-wing mobilization). It results from strong discursive opportunities and a

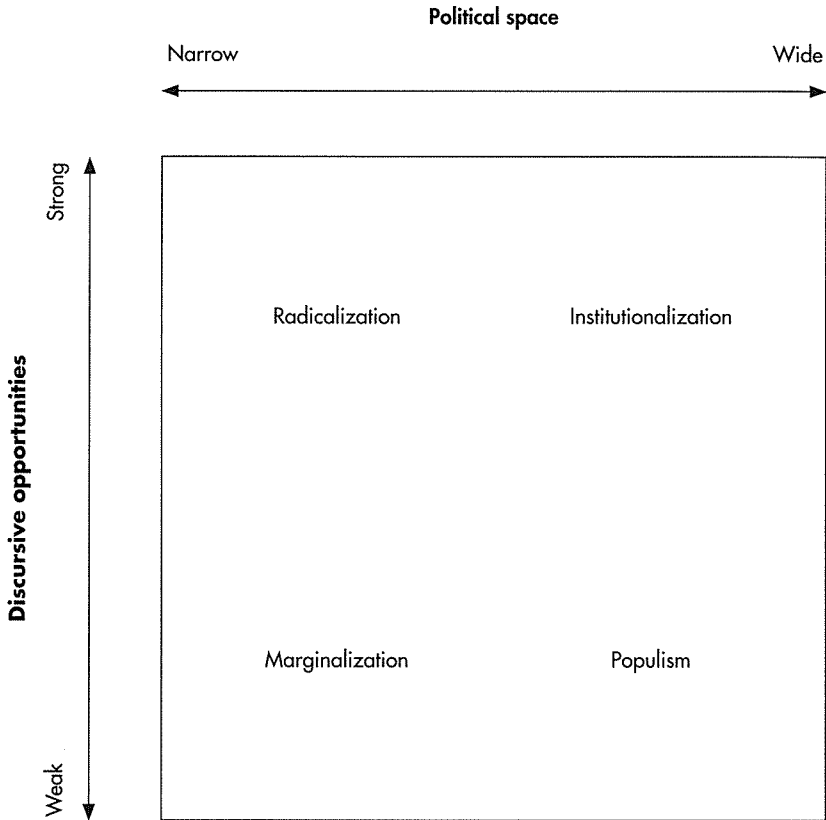


Figure 8. Specific opportunities for right-wing mobilization.

wide-open political space. In this situation, chances are higher that there will be a strong far-right party, for the established parties, especially those on the right of the political spectrum in closer competition with the extreme right, leave open a broad political space that can be exploited by the latter. The crucial aspect is perhaps the differential degree to which established political parties have occupied anti-immigrant positions within the public discourse. If this has not occurred, extreme-right parties have better chances to be electorally successful. The presence of a strong party, in turn, is likely to reduce the share of extraparliamentary mobilization and lead to moderate forms of claims making. However, given the higher degree of visibility, resonance, and legitimacy of xenophobic and extreme-right claims, the overall level of mobilization is expected to be high.

At the other extreme, we have *marginalization* (or marginalized right-wing mobilization). Here the extreme-right actor has at disposal neither

favorable discursive opportunities nor a political space for emergence. As a result, we expect a low level of mobilization but at the same time a radical action repertoire; it is also unlikely that a strong party will emerge in such a situation.

The remaining two cases represent intermediate situations. The type resulting from a combination of strong discursive opportunities and a narrow political space is *radicalization* (or radicalized right-wing mobilization). As its name suggests, here we expect the extreme right to express itself primarily through extraparliamentary mobilization because the narrow political space is unfavorable to the emergence of a strong party. Furthermore, the action repertoire should be particularly radical, partly due to the absence of a strong party and partly due to the poor opportunities on the institutional side. Given the higher degree of visibility, resonance, and legitimacy, however, the overall level of mobilization should be rather high, as compared to marginalization.

Finally, if weak discursive opportunities combine with a large political space, we have a situation of *populism* (or populist right-wing mobilization). The broad political space should favor the emergence of a strong far-right party. At the same time, however, the weak discursive opportunities are expected to counter this tendency and hence to lower the level of mobilization in this respect. Furthermore, very radical and outright racist claims have little visibility, resonance, and legitimacy in this context. Therefore, we are likely to observe a more moderate type of right-wing populism mobilizing anti-immigrant sentiments.

From our theoretical framework and the related specific opportunity structure for the extreme right that we have just outlined, we now turn to empirical analyses. We aim to place our five countries within this typology and explain cross-national variations in the extent and forms of xenophobic and extreme-right claims making.

### **Overall Presence of the Extreme Right in the Public Domain**

Concerning discursive opportunities, we expect the extreme right to be stronger in countries where an ethnic definition of the nation prevails because in such countries the position of the extreme right on immigration and ethnic relations issues will resonate with the legitimate ethnocultural conception of citizenship and national identity. Extreme-right actors also emphasize a monist view of the cultural obligations attached to citizenship, for example, when they claim that migrants should adapt to the habits and customs of the host society and that natives need not reciprocate. Conversely, in countries where the definition of the nation contains important civic-

political elements and a pluralist view of cultural difference for minorities within national belonging, extreme-right claims are likely to be less visible, resonant, and legitimate in public discourses. Thus, with regard to discursive opportunities derived from citizenship configurations, we would expect the presence of the extreme right in the public domain to be higher in Germany and Switzerland (assimilationist), intermediate in France (universalist), and lower in Britain and the Netherlands (multiculturalist).

One way to determine empirically the extent to which members of the polity incorporate ethnocultural elements of the national identity is to look at their position in the migration political field.<sup>5</sup> Our assumption is that the higher the proportion of antiminority, racist, and xenophobic claims, the greater the incorporation of ethnocultural elements in the polity and, as a result, the narrower the political space available to the far right. Yet the political space available to extreme-right parties also depends on other factors, such as the electoral system and the specific strategies of established parties. Thus, the crucial aspect here is whether established parties, in electoral competition with extreme-right parties, cover the electoral terrain of the extreme right in public discourses. The most important aspect for our present purpose is the average position of established parties and the political space they leave to extreme-right actors in the five countries. Table 31 summarizes this information in a straightforward way. The first two rows give, respectively, the most pro-migrant and the most anti-immigrant position. The third row gives the range between these two positions, which represents the political space for the extreme right.

Germany provides the narrowest political space for extreme-right parties. The lowest average position of an established party (in this case, the Christian Socialist Party [CSU]) has an important anti-immigrant stance, as the score is quite negative compared to the other countries except Britain. Most important, the range between the most pro-migrant party (the Party of Democratic Socialism [PDS]) and the most anti-immigrant one (the Christian Social Party [CSU]) in Germany is the widest. The political space for the extreme right is also relatively narrow in Britain, where the lowest average position (the Conservative Party) is even more negative than in Germany, and the range between the most pro-migrant party (the Labour Party) and the most anti-immigrant one (the Conservatives) is nearly as large. At the other extreme, France provides the most favorable context for the emergence of the extreme right, as the lowest average position (the Rally for the Republic [RPR]) is the most positive among the five countries, and, above all, the range between the most pro-migrant party (the Communist Party) and the most anti-immigrant one (the RPR) is the smallest. The

**Table 31. Summary of average discursive positions by established parties**

Positions	Netherlands	Britain	France	Germany	Switzerland
Highest average position	0.68 [Groenlinks]	0.77 [Labour]	0.76 [PCF]	0.91 [PDS]	0.75 (0.75) [SSP-PSS]
Lowest average position	-0.05 [VVD]	-0.44 [Conservative]	0.38 [RPR]	-0.39 [CSU]	-0.25 (-0.07) [SVP-UDC] ([FDP-PRD])
Range between highest and lowest positions	0.73	1.21	0.38	1.30	1.00 (0.82)

*Note:* Includes all forms of claims. Takes into account actors having participated as first actor only. Results are expressed on a scale ranging from -1.00 to +1.00. Code -1.00 corresponds to antiminority, racist, and xenophobic claims. Code 0 corresponds to neutral, ambivalent, and technocratic claims. Code +1.00 corresponds to pro-minority, antiracist, and anti-extreme-right claims. Figures are computed on the basis of party positions shown in Table 34. Figures between parentheses for Switzerland consider the Swiss People's Party as belonging to the extreme right.

resulting political space available to the far right is particularly large. Finally, Switzerland and the Netherlands represent intermediate cases, as the range between pro-migrant (the Socialist Party and the Greens respectively) and anti-immigrant parties (the Swiss People's Party and the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy [VVD] respectively) is neither the highest nor the lowest.<sup>6</sup> Thus, with regard to political space, we expect the presence of the extreme right in the public domain to be highest in France, lowest in Germany and Britain, and intermediate in Switzerland (intermediate-low) and the Netherlands (intermediate-high).

If we combine the two types of explanation (discursive opportunities and political space), we arrive at the following predictions about the overall presence of the extreme right in the public domain, shown in the third row of Table 32: high in France, very low in Britain, and at an intermediate level in Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands.

Table 33, showing the involvement of the extreme right in acts of claims making in the five countries, allows us to see whether these predictions are correct. The table reports the percentage of claims for each country where racist or extreme-right actors were involved.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, it makes a distinction within the extreme right between parties, other organizations and groups, and unknown actors (which are mostly xenophobic or violent actions with no actor reported). A first conclusion is that our findings demonstrate that grievance theories have little explanatory power with respect to the mobilization of the extreme right. If we compare the distribution referring to the totals (last row) with the ranking of the five countries according to a summary indicator of objective conditions, we observe a lack of correlation between the two measures. Thus, grievance theories fail to explain not only the electoral strength of the extreme right but also its mobilization as measured by its involvement in claims making.

**Table 32. Predictions about the extent of claims making by the extreme right**

	Nether- lands	Britain	France	Germany	Switzer- land
Discursive opportunities	Low	Low	Inter- mediate	High	High
Political space	Intermediate- high	Low	High	Low	Intermediate- low
Overall	Inter- mediate	Very low	High	Inter- mediate	Inter- mediate

**Table 33. Share of claims by the extreme right in the public domain**

Claim makers	Nether- lands	Britain	France	Germany	Switzer- land
Parties (%)	5.0	1.0	18.3	2.0	5.4
Other organizations and groups (%)	2.3	1.9	2.5	6.5	3.2
Unknown actors (%)	2.3	0.1	0.8	6.0	0.8
Other and unknown actors together (%)	4.6	2.0	3.3	12.5	4.0
Total (%)	9.2	3.0	21.1	14.1	8.9
N	2,484	1,345	3,231	8,341	1,676

*Note:* Includes all forms of claims. Claims of the extreme right may also deal with issues outside the field of immigration and ethnic relations.

Conversely, our findings largely support our hypotheses concerning the combined effect of discursive opportunities and the political space available to the extreme right. With more than 20 percent of claims overall, the extreme right has been much more active in France than in the other four countries. Indeed, its presence in the French public domain is more than twice that in Switzerland and the Netherlands, where as expected it is at an intermediate level. In addition, also at an intermediate level, though higher than in these two countries, the extreme right in Germany seems to take advantage of the strong degree of visibility, resonance, and legitimacy of its claims in that context. Finally, as expected, the extreme right seems particularly weak in Britain, where it was involved in only 3 percent of the claims.

Our findings also point to a crucial difference in the distribution of claims across the two main forms for the extreme right. According to the theoretical framework, national configurations of citizenship and the political process between parties influence the strategic/organizational repertoires of the extreme right, shaping a choice between two main organizational forms: as a political party or as extraparliamentary mobilization (including unorganized, spontaneous actions). The extreme right in Western Europe, in both its traditional and new variants, has usually been channeled into parliamentary politics, thus taking the form of a party. The extent to which this is likely to occur, however, varies strongly across countries and depends in part on the interplay of the dominant conception of the nation on the one hand, and the dynamics of party alignment, competition, and demarcation on the other. As the table shows, in Switzerland, the Netherlands, and above all France parties play the biggest role, but in Britain and espe-



cially Germany the opposite is true. In this regard, we observe a very strong correlation between the predictions deriving from the political space model and the distribution of claims by extreme-right parties. The same also holds true for the correspondence between the predictions of the discursive opportunity model and the distribution of claims by other extreme-right organizations and groups, although to a lesser extent.

If we collapse the two rows referring to other and unknown actors, we have a clearer picture of the relative shares of the partisan and the non-partisan forms of extreme right in the five countries (fourth row).<sup>8</sup> The party form dominates claims making in France, while the social movement form largely prevails in Germany, the two countries that are most opposed in terms of political space. Compared to the presence of extreme-right parties, extraparliamentary mobilization is also more evident in Britain. Finally, Switzerland and the Netherlands are characterized by a rather homogeneous distribution of claims across the two forms.

While this distribution largely reflects the political space made available by the positions of established parties in the migration political field, when we look at the relative presence of the party and social movement forms of the extreme right, we should also take into account the different electoral strength of extreme-right parties in the five countries. It is likely that parties are more often present in the public domain when they have a strong institutional representation, for they have both more opportunities to address the public and more political responsibility to do so. In electoral terms, these parties are very strong in France, relatively strong in Switzerland, weak in Germany and the Netherlands, and very weak in Britain. This might further strengthen their strong involvement in claims making in France and contribute to explaining their stronger presence than expected in Switzerland.

### **Action Repertoires**

In the introduction, we discussed two competing explanations for racist and extreme-right violence: grievance and opportunity approaches. Grievance theories assume that the more intense the objective condition or problem (for example, a sizable migrant population or increasing flows of immigrants), the stronger the grievances and the more radical or violent the collective response. Opportunity theories, in contrast, assume that violence increases to the extent that other options are lacking for articulating collective interests (for example, a strong extreme-right party). More specifically, political opportunity theorists have linked cross-national variations in the action repertoires of social movements to differences in institutional opportunity structures (e.g., Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1995; Tarrow 1998).<sup>9</sup>

Our aim is to explain the action repertoires of the extreme right by reference to a specific opportunity structure formed by discursive opportunities and the available political space. Concerning the discursive side, we expect the extreme right to be more radical in assimilationist countries where it is more legitimate, and more moderate in multiculturalist countries where it is less legitimate. Universalism, in this respect, is an intermediate case. Thus, as far as public resonance and political legitimacy are concerned, we can make the following predictions about extreme-right action repertoires: radical in Germany and Switzerland, moderate in Britain and the Netherlands, and intermediate in France.

The predictions in spatial terms are partly different. As the figures in Table 33 suggest, the political space for the extreme right is relatively limited in both Germany and Britain, somewhat larger in Switzerland and the Netherlands, and relatively large in France. This translates into a more closed opportunity structure in Germany and Britain, a more open one in France, with Switzerland and the Netherlands in between. From this, we would expect the extreme-right action repertoire to be radical in Germany and Britain, moderate in France, and at an intermediate level in Switzerland (intermediate-radical) and the Netherlands (intermediate-low).

A third important aspect of the specific opportunity structure is the electoral strength of the extreme right. Here we follow Koopmans (1996a) in establishing a relationship between extreme-right radicalism and the presence of a strong extreme-right party. In this view, racist and extreme-right violence is lower where extreme-right parties are stronger, and vice versa. The use of violence is a costly strategy because of the risks of repression and moral sanctions. Therefore, when more viable alternatives exist, the amount of violence should diminish. The presence of a strong extreme-right party provides such an opportunity. If this view is correct, we should observe a negative correlation between the presence of important extreme-right parties and the levels of racist and extreme-right violence. Given the electoral strength of the extreme right in the five countries under study, we predict in this respect a radical action repertoire in Germany, Britain, and the Netherlands, a moderate one in France, and an intermediate one in Switzerland.

If we combine these hypotheses we arrive at the overall predictions shown in the fourth row of Table 34, which summarizes the discussion. The action repertoire of the extreme right is expected to be very radical in Germany, radical in Britain, moderate in France, and at an intermediate level in Switzerland and the Netherlands.

Table 35 confronts these predictions with our data. The table divides into three parts: the upper section gives the distribution of extreme-right claims

**Table 34. Predictions about the action repertoire of the extreme right**

	Nether-lands	Britain	France	Germany	Switzer-land
Discursive opportunities	Moderate	Moderate	Inter-mediate	Radical	Radical
Political space	Intermediate-moderate	Radical	Moderate	Radical	Intermediate-radical
Electoral strength of extreme-right parties	Radical	Radical	Moderate	Radical	Inter-mediate
Overall	Inter-mediate	Radical	Moderate	Very radical	Inter-mediate

**Table 35. Action repertoire of the extreme right**

Actions	Nether-lands	Britain	France	Germany	Switzer-land
Public statements (%)	45.6	42.5	72.0	12.3	62.1
<i>Conventional political actions (%)</i>	1.8	12.5	11.7	6.7	8.3
Meetings (%)	–	2.5	10.1	4.1	2.1
Judicial action (%)	1.8	7.5	1.3	1.7	0.7
Direct-democratic action (%)	–	–	–	–	4.1
Petitions (%)	–	2.5	0.3	0.9	1.4
<i>Protest actions (%)</i>	52.6	45.0	16.2	81.0	29.6
Demonstrative protests (%)	6.1	5.0	6.6	12.0	3.4
Confrontational protests (%)	22.4	5.0	2.9	12.4	4.1
Violent protests (%)	24.1	35.0	6.7	56.6	22.1
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100
N	228	40	683	1175	145

pertaining to the field of immigration and ethnic relations, the middle section concerns other claims (for example, antiestablishment claims or claims dealing with mainstream political issues), and the lower section considers all extreme-right claims. Concerning action repertoires, we basically use the same classification as in chapter 2, which distinguishes between three main forms of action: public statements, conventional political actions (meetings, judicial action, direct-democratic action, and petitions), and protest actions (demonstrative, confrontational, and violent protests).

The results largely support our expectations. Germany clearly has the most radical extreme right, followed at a distance by Britain. At the other extreme, the French far right is the most moderate. Last, Switzerland and the Netherlands stand somewhere in between, but closer to Britain than France. This holds for the migration political field and even more so for extreme-right claims in general. Incidentally, we may note the particularly high proportion of confrontational protests in the Netherlands. This seems to be a peculiarity of political mobilization in this country. Kriesi et al.'s (1995) data point in the same direction.

Importantly, these findings show the limits of the traditional opportunity approach. For example, Kriesi et al.'s (1995) model would predict the most radical repertoire in France and the most moderate in Switzerland, whereas the largest share of violent protests occurred in Germany, and the French extreme right had the most moderate action repertoire. Clearly, Kriesi et al.'s findings cannot be generalized to all social movements, and political opportunity structure ought to be specified for each movement or each movement sector separately.

The important factors appear to be the presence of a strong extreme-right party within the established political system and the political space available. On one hand, there is a clear negative correlation between electoral strength and the proportion of protest actions: the lowest share of protests occurred in France, which is the country with the strongest extreme-right party, and the highest in Germany, which does not have a strong party. Britain and the Netherlands, which are characterized by weak far-right parties, display an important unconventional mobilization as well. Finally, Switzerland is an intermediate case, both in the electoral strength of extreme-right parties and in the share of protest actions. On the other, if we focus on violent protests, the ranking of the five countries on the indicators of political space (see Table 31) follows exactly that of the amount of xenophobic violence. Thus, the incorporation of ethnocultural elements into the programs and discourses of members of the polity reduces the opportunities for the emergence of the extreme right and at the same time tends to radicalize its action repertoire.

Finally, we see that grievance theories are of little help and offer at best only a limited explanation of racist and extreme-right violence in our five countries. The correlation between violent protests and our summary indicator of objective conditions with respect to immigration is far from perfect. True, France, which ranks very low for the objective condition, has the most moderate extreme right, but the correspondence stops there, as the distribution of violent protests in the other countries does not reflect the objective pressure coming from migration.

### **The Contribution of the Extreme Right to Claims Making on Immigration and Ethnic Relations**

Thus far, we have considered all extreme-right claims, regardless of their thematic focus. We would now like to restrict our focus to claims addressing issues pertaining to the political field of immigration and ethnic relations in order to assess the contribution of the extreme right to this field. Do the factors that determine the claims making by the extreme right in general (i.e., its overall presence in the public domain) also account for its claims making in the more specific migration political field?

Table 36 presents the share of extreme-right claims on immigration and ethnic relations by issue field. The upper section refers to the entire field of immigration and ethnic relations and shows the presence of all types of extreme-right actors (first row) as well as excluding parties (second row). The lower section focuses on two more institutionalized issue fields: immigration, asylum, and aliens politics (third row) as well as minority integration politics (fourth row). We have excluded the less institutionalized antiracism and xenophobia issue field from this latter section of the table.

If we first look at the entire field, we can conclude that our hypotheses about the overall presence of the extreme right in the public domain (Table 32) to a large extent hold also for claims making in the more specific field of immigration and ethnic relations. France still ranks first and Britain last. The results for the other three countries are somewhat less consistent, but in general they confirm the prediction of an intermediate to low level of mobilization. Yet, the level of mobilization of the German extreme right is stronger than expected, and its presence is stronger in the migration field than overall. This is largely because in Germany a higher proportion of general, unspecific xenophobic claims are made outside institutional arenas by extraparliamentary organizations and groups.<sup>10</sup> This is evident if parties are excluded from these distributions. As we saw earlier (see Table 33), the level of mobilization diminishes dramatically in France if we exclude extreme-right parties, especially the Front National. At the same time, this

**Table 36. Share of extreme-right actors in claims making**

Issue fields	Netherlands	Britain	France	Germany	Switzerland
<i>All political fields</i>					
Immigration and ethnic relations politics (%)	6.8	2.7	10.2	10.4	7.0
N	2,286	1,313	2,388	6,432	1,365
Immigration and ethnic relations politics (excluding extreme-right parties) (%)	4.2	1.8	2.6	9.2	3.2
N	2,286	1,313	2,388	6,432	1,365
<i>More institutionalized issue fields</i>					
Immigration, asylum, and aliens politics (%)	1.0	0.6	3.2	0.6	3.9
N	1,125	486	882	2,586	787
Minority integration politics (%)	1.0	0.2	11.6	0.6	6.0
N	630	479	465	710	234

*Note:* Includes all forms of claims.

shows again that the strength of this party is detrimental to the mobilization of other extreme-right organizations and groups, not only overall but also when it comes to specific issues pertaining to immigration and ethnic relations. More generally, those countries, like France and to a lesser extent Switzerland, that have an important partisan extreme right leave a narrower space for the mobilization of extreme-right tendencies outside institutional arenas.

If the distribution of extreme-right claims across our five countries looks quite different depending on whether we include certain parties or not, it also varies according to which of the two more institutionalized issue fields we consider. Two findings deserve mention here. First, the mobilization of the extreme right concerning immigration, asylum, and aliens politics is higher in France and even more so in Switzerland than in the other three countries. Second, mobilization in the field of minority integration politics is particularly high in France, relatively high in Switzerland, and low in Britain, the Netherlands, and Germany.

These findings may be interpreted with respect to the varying strength of extreme-right parties in our countries. The presence of the extreme right in the two more institutionalized issue fields (immigration, asylum, and alien politics as well as minority integration politics) is stronger where far-right parties are stronger. This might be because these parties make more policy-oriented claims in comparison with other extreme-right organizations and groups. In other words, their institutional position leads them to focus on specific policy issues rather than making unspecific xenophobic claims. This is particularly true for the minority integration issue field that often represents the focal point of political debates and tends to polarize the position of parties and that of extreme-right parties in particular.

Finally, concerning the substantive focus of claims, as compared to other actors, the extreme right seems to be more concerned with keeping foreigners out than with signaling the difficulties of integrating them in the host society. The extreme right often emphasizes such issues as security, control, and law and order, which in the migration field pertain to the regulation of immigration flow (e.g., entry and border control, registration and internal control, residence rights, expulsions, illegal immigration). However, France is an exception, as in this country the extreme right much more frequently addresses issues concerning the situation of resident migrants than issues concerning the entry into or exit from the country.

This seems to be a result of the specific combination of inclusive and exclusive elements in the French conception of citizenship as it relates to immigrants. On the one hand, the inclusive nature of individual access to

French citizenship makes integration issues more salient than in Germany and Switzerland. On the other hand, the strong rejection of cultural group rights offers a legitimizing discursive frame of reference for interventions of the extreme right in this field that is absent in the multicultural contexts of Britain and the Netherlands. Indeed, the claims made by the French extreme right in the field of integration politics refer to the alleged inability to assimilate of Muslim immigrants and the rejection of the automatic acquisition of French citizenship by way of the *jus soli*. In the eyes of the extreme right, such unconditional attribution of citizenship conflicts with French republicanism because it creates *faux français* (false Frenchmen)—French by nationality, but not by culture. In the Dutch and British context, such an argument would be widely seen as illegitimate, but in the French context it resonates with the unitary conception of national identity and the rejection of group allegiances.

### Conclusion

Prevailing conceptions of citizenship are often seen as one of the factors explaining the emergence of the new radical right (e.g., Kitschelt 1995; Kriesi 1999). In general, this aspect remains underdeveloped in existing accounts, which mostly focus on political and institutional variables. Recent work in the social movement perspective has begun to inquire into the impact of collective definitions of the nation and membership in the national community on the possibilities for extreme-right actors to mobilize existing potentials. Koopmans and Statham (1999b), for example, have attempted to explain the differential success of the extreme right in Germany and Italy with the role of ethnic and civic conceptions of nationhood. Here we followed this line of reasoning in order to account for cross-national variations in the extent and forms of claims making by the extreme right in the public domain, both within and outside immigration and ethnic relations politics.

In addition to citizenship and integration regimes, we must also consider certain aspects of the institutional political system and the political process. Thus, importing insights from spatial theories of political behavior, we have proposed a theoretical framework for understanding xenophobic and extreme-right claims making, arguing that variations are to a large extent determined by the interplay of three factors: national configurations of citizenship, the dynamics of political alignments and party competition, and the strategic/organizational repertoires of the extreme right (in particular the electoral strength of extreme-right parties). Confronting a number of hypotheses derived from this theoretical framework, we were able to show empirically how political-institutional and cultural-discursive opportuni-



ties account for differences in the extent, forms, and contents of xenophobic and extreme-right claims making.

Combining the cultural and spatial dimensions, we singled out four distinct opportunity settings for the mobilization of the extreme right: institutionalization, which favors the emergence of a strong extreme-right party, a large presence in the public domain, and a moderate action repertoire; marginalization, where the extreme right does not possess a strong party and displays a low level of mobilization, but has a radical action repertoire; radicalization, where the extreme right expresses itself primarily through a significant and radical extraparliamentary mobilization; and populism, which is more difficult to characterize because of the contradictory nature of different elements of the opportunity structure.

Based on the assessment of the prevailing configurations of citizenship, which provide different sets of discursive opportunities to extreme-right actors and their claims, and the empirical measure of the political space available to this type of actor, we are able to place the five countries of our study within this typology. France best exemplifies the case of institutionalization, Britain that of marginalization, Germany that of radicalization, and the Netherlands that of populism. Switzerland yields a hybrid situation in this respect (also illustrated by the ambivalent position of the SVP with regard to the extreme right), one that is located somewhere between the French and German cases, but closer to the latter.

Our analysis points to the importance of distinguishing between the two principal organizational forms through which extreme-right interests and identities emerge in the public domain: parties and social movements. This distinction is important not simply for descriptive reasons, but because the electoral strength of extreme-right parties becomes a factor that explains the rise of xenophobic and extreme-right violence outside institutional arenas.

Importantly, our analysis indicates that processes of social and cultural change do not impinge directly on the public articulation of collective interests and identities. Contemporary right-wing extremism is not a direct reaction to a fundamental change in culture and values that has occurred in Western Europe. It depends instead on the politicization of new cleavages or the repoliticization of existing ones. It also relates to the saliency of certain policy areas, and immigration and minority integration are certainly among the most important of such areas today. The amount and forms of claims making by the extreme right largely depends on the political space made available to them by other collective actors within this political field. In this regard, the policy positions of mainstream parties on immigration and ethnic relations is an important feature of the discursive opportunity

structure for the mobilization of extreme-right and xenophobic actors. The extreme right finds more access to the public domain to the extent that established actors (i.e., mainstream parties) do not colonize their political space. In the case of extraparliamentary groups, the very presence of a strong extreme-right party is itself part of this opportunity structure.

In explaining the presence of the extreme right in the public domain, one also has to take into account such institutional factors as the electoral system and, more generally, the structure of the political system in a country. The structure of political alliances and the relationships between different strategic/organizational repertoires are also relevant. These aspects pertaining to the institutional framework and the political process of the political system are central to an explanation for the emergence of the extreme right because they are an important part of the political opportunity structure that channels and constrains extreme-right mobilization, which depends more on such opportunities than on the level of grievances in society. Put differently, objective and subjective grievances are a necessary but insufficient single condition for extreme-right emergence. In short, the political space made available through the political process, rather than the dynamics of ethnic competition, give the better explanatory account for extreme-right claims making in Western Europe.