

# **From Pariah to Power: The Government Participation of Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in West European Democracies**

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*For Joël and Marthe*

*Every result in nature is a riddle to be solved, and the initial difficulty in investigation is the discovery of a clue which may be followed up...*

*What ensues... is sustained cognition...The imagination of the inquirer is put to the test in the construction of a working model of a process or processes; his critical ability is called upon to check his ideas by the facts*

Frederick J. Teggart (1962: 162-164)

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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Abbreviation	Name	Country
AD	<i>Alleanza Democratica</i>	Italy
AGALEV	<i>Anders gaan leven</i>	Belgium
AN	<i>Alleanza Nazionale</i>	Italy
BZÖ	<i>Bündnis Zukunft Österreich</i>	Austria
CCD	<i>Centro Cristiano Democratico</i>	Italy
CD	<i>Centrum Democraten</i>	Netherlands
CD	<i>Centrum-Demokraterne</i>	Denmark
CDA	<i>Christen-Democratisch Appèl</i>	Netherlands
CD&V	<i>Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams</i>	Belgium
CDH	<i>Centre Démocrate Humaniste</i>	Belgium
CNIP	<i>Centre National des Indépendants et Paysans</i>	France
CP	<i>Centerpartiet</i>	Sweden
CP	<i>Centrumpartij</i>	Netherlands
CPN	<i>Communistische Partij Nederland</i>	Netherlands
CU	<i>ChristenUnie</i>	Netherlands
CVP	<i>Christelijke Volkspartij</i>	Belgium
CVP	<i>Christlich Demokratische Volkspartei</i>	Switzerland
DC	<i>Democrazia Cristiana</i>	Italy
DF	<i>Dansk Folkeparti</i>	Denmark
DP	<i>Democrazia Proletaria</i>	Italy
DNA	<i>Det norske Arbeiderparti</i>	Norway
DS	<i>Democratici di Sinistra</i>	Italy
D66	<i>Democraten 66</i>	Netherlands
DVU	<i>Deutsche Volksunion</i>	Germany
EL	<i>Enhedslisten – Die Rød-Grøne</i>	Denmark
ECOLO	<i>Ecolo</i>	Belgium
EVP	<i>Evangelische Volkspartij</i>	Netherlands
FDF	<i>Front Démocratique des Francophones</i>	Belgium
FDP	<i>Freisinnige-Demokratische Partei der Schweiz</i>	Switzerland
FI	<i>Forza Italia</i>	Italy
FNb	<i>Front National</i>	Belgium
FN	<i>Front National</i>	France
FP	<i>Folkpartiet Liberalerna</i>	Sweden
FPÖ	<i>Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs</i>	Austria
FRP	<i>Fremskridtspartiet</i>	Denmark
FRP	<i>Fremskrittspartiet</i>	Norway
GL	<i>GroenLinks</i>	Netherlands
GPV	<i>Gereformeerd Politiek Verbond</i>	Netherlands
GROEN	<i>Groen!</i>	Belgium
GRUN	<i>Die Grünen – Die Grüne Alternative</i>	Austria
H	<i>Høyre</i>	Norway
KD	<i>Kristendemokraterne</i>	Denmark
KD	<i>Kristdemokraterna</i>	Sweden
KF	<i>Det Konservative Folkeparti</i>	Denmark
KPB	<i>Kommunistische Partij van België</i>	Belgium
KPÖ	<i>Kommunistische Partei Österreichs</i>	Austria

KRF	<i>Kristeligt Folkeparti</i>	Denmark
KRF	<i>Kristelig Folkeparti</i>	Norway
LDD	<i>Lijst Dedecker</i>	Belgium
LiF	<i>Liberales Forum</i>	Austria
LN	<i>Leefbaar Nederland</i>	Netherlands
LN	<i>Lega Nord</i>	Italy
LPF	<i>Lijst Pim Fortuyn</i>	Netherlands
M	<i>Moderata samlingspartiet</i>	Sweden
MNR	<i>Mouvement National Républicain</i>	France
MP	<i>Miljöpartiet de Gröna</i>	Sweden
MPF	<i>Mouvement pour la France</i>	France
MR	<i>Mouvement Réformateur</i>	Belgium
MRC	<i>Mouvement républicain et citoyen</i>	France
MSI	<i>Movimento Sociale Italiano</i>	Italy
ND	<i>Ny Demokrati</i>	Sweden
NPD	<i>Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschland</i>	Germany
N-VA	<i>Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie</i>	Belgium
ÖVP	<i>Österreichische Volkspartei</i>	Austria
PATTO	<i>Patto Segni</i>	Italy
PCF	<i>Parti Communiste Français</i>	France
PCI	<i>Partito Comunista Italiano</i>	Italy
PdCI	<i>Partito dei Comunisti Italiani</i>	Italy
PLI	<i>Partito Liberale Italiano</i>	Italy
PPR	<i>Politieke Partij Radicalen</i>	Netherlands
PR	<i>Parti Républicain</i>	France
PR	<i>Partito Radicale</i>	Italy
PRC	<i>Partito della Rifondazione Comunista</i>	Italy
PRG	<i>Parti Radical de Gauche</i>	France
PRI	<i>Partito Repubblicano Italiano</i>	Italy
PRL	<i>Parti Réformateur Libéral</i>	Belgium
PS	<i>Parti Socialiste</i>	Belgium
PS	<i>Parti Socialiste</i>	France
PSDI	<i>Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano</i>	Italy
PSI	<i>Partito Socialista Italiano</i>	Italy
PSP	<i>Pacifistisch-Socialistische Partij</i>	Netherlands
PvdA	<i>Partij van de Arbeid</i>	Netherlands
PVV	<i>Partij voor de Vrijheid</i>	Netherlands
PVV	<i>Partij voor de Vrijheid en Vooruitgang</i>	Belgium
REP	<i>Die Republikaner</i>	Germany
RETE	<i>La rete</i>	Italy
RI	<i>Radicali Italiani</i>	Italy
RPF	<i>Rassemblement pour la France</i>	France
RPF	<i>Reformatoisch Politieke Federatie</i>	Netherlands
RPR	<i>Rassemblement pour la République</i>	France
RV	<i>Det Radikale Venstre</i>	Denmark
RV	<i>Rød Valgallianse</i>	Norway
S	<i>Sveriges Socialdemokratiska arbetarparti</i>	Sweden
SD	<i>Socialdemokraterne</i>	Denmark
SDI	<i>Socialisti Democratici Italiani</i>	Italy
SF	<i>Socialistisk Folkeparti</i>	Denmark
SGP	<i>Staatskundig Gereformeerde Partij</i>	Netherlands
SP	<i>Senterpartiet</i>	Norway

SP	<i>Socialistische Partij</i>	Belgium
SP	<i>Socialistische Partij</i>	Netherlands
SP.A	<i>Socialistische Partij - Anders</i>	Belgium
SPÖ	<i>Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs</i>	Austria
SPS	<i>Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz</i>	Switzerland
SV	<i>Sosialistisk Venstreparti</i>	Norway
SVP	<i>Südtiroler Volkspartei</i>	Italy
SVP	<i>Schweizerische Volkspartei</i>	Switzerland
UDC	<i>Union Démocratique du Centre</i>	Switzerland
UDC	<i>Unione dei Democratici Cristiani</i>	Italy
UDF	<i>Union pour la Démocratie Française</i>	France
UMP	<i>Union pour un Mouvement Populaire</i>	France
V	<i>Vänsterpartiet</i>	Sweden
V	<i>Venstre – Danmarks Liberale Parti</i>	Denmark
V	<i>Venstre</i>	Norway
VB	<i>Vlaams Blok/Vlaams Belang</i>	Belgium
VEC	<i>Les Verts</i>	France
VERDI	<i>Federazione dei Verdi/ Liste Verdi</i>	Italy
VLD	<i>Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten</i>	Belgium
VLOTT	<i>Vlaams, Liberaal, Onafhankelijk, Tolerant en Transparant</i>	Belgium
VS	<i>Venstresocialisterne</i>	Denmark
VU	<i>Volksunie</i>	Belgium
VVD	<i>Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie</i>	Netherlands



## CHAPTER 1

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### Introduction

*The politically organized radical right has made considerable progress in moving 'from the margins to the mainstream' of political life*

Betz (2003: 74)

### Introduction

Radical right-wing populist parties have incessantly increased their presence in Western Europe since the early-1980s. The number of countries in which radical right-wing populist parties compete in elections has grown, as has the number of countries where these parties manage to pass the electoral threshold and enter parliament. In addition to well-known radical right-wing populist parties like the French National Front (*Front National*, or FN) or the Austrian Freedom Party (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*, or FPÖ), the rise of a multitude of lesser known radical right-wing populist parties like the Danish People's Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*, or DF), the List Pim Fortuyn (*Lijst Pim Fortuyn*, or LPF), or New Democracy (*Ny Demokrati*, ND) has characterized West European politics since the late-1980s. More importantly, the electoral success of these parties has grown exponentially. The FN, arguably the most prominent West European radical right-wing populist party, failed to meet the threshold of representation throughout the 1970s and early-1980s and collected no more than 0.2 per cent of the votes in the 1981 elections. By 2002 the support for the party had increased to 15 per cent and FN-leader Jean-Marie Le Pen has reached the second round of the presidential elections. Similarly, support for the FPÖ, another prominent radical right-wing populist party, increased from 5.0 per cent in 1986 to 26.9 per cent in 1999. The electoral success of radical right-wing populist parties is unprecedented in West European post-war politics. No other newly established party family has made similar gains in such a short period of time. In short, radical right-wing populist parties have succeeded in "securing a permanent niche in West European's emerging political market" (Betz 1994: 189), which makes it more than appropriate to speak of a true political success story.

In the late-1990s the party family has added a new chapter to the success story. After having conquered parliament, a number of radical right-wing populist parties also conquered government. Several radical right-wing populist parties rose to power with the help of mainstream parties, arguably the highest level of success any party can reach. Radical right-wing populist parties joined majority government coalitions in Austria, Italy, and the Netherlands and supported minority government coalitions in Denmark and Norway. The FPÖ, for example, teamed up with the Austrian People's Party (*Österreichische Volkspartei*, or ÖVP) and governed Austria from 2000 to 2005. Similar developments have taken place in Denmark, where the DF supported a minority government lead by the Liberals (*Venstre*, or V) from 2001 to 2007; in Italy, where the National Alliance (*Alleanza Nazionale*, or AN), Go Italy (*Forza Italia*, or FI), and the Northern League (*Lega Nord*, or LN) briefly governed together in 1994 and again from 2001 to 2006; in the Netherlands, where the LPF briefly joined the Christian-Democratic Appel (*Christen Democratisch Appèl*, or CDA) and the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (*Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie*, or VVD) in a government coalition in 2002; and in Norway, where the Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet*, or FRP(n)) supported a minority government headed by the Christian People's Party (*Kristelig Folkeparti*, or KRF) from 2001 to 2005.

This dissertation explores the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. My interest in this topic stems from a strong belief that it is time to turn the page and focus no longer exclusively on the first chapter of the radical right-wing populist success story. The second chapter contains more than enough cliff-hangers to keep any student of West European politics interested. Hence, it focuses on one of the most important consequences of the persistent representation of radical right-wing populist parties in West European parliamentary democracies. A study of the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties directly touches upon the imperative “so what?” question. It highlights why the rise of radical right-wing populist parties is relevant in the first place and investigates if and how radical right-wing populist parties matter politically.

To account for the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties, I adopt a broad comparative perspective in this study. The choice for this perspective is motivated by that fact that radical right-wing populism is a transnational phenomenon (Betz 2003: 75; see also Minkenberg 2000: 170) and that there is substantial cross-national variation in the government participation of these parties (cf. below). Of course, government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is only a relevant phenomenon in countries that have an electoral system that includes some kind of proportional element. In countries that have a pure majoritarian electoral system radical right-wing populist parties have virtually no chance to gain parliamentary representation. Consequentially, it is also impossible for these parties to take the next step and join government coalitions. For this reason this study focuses exclusively on countries in which radical right-wing populist parties have at least passed the threshold of parliamentary representation: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland.

### **Puzzles**

The government participation of radical right-wing populist parties presents political scientists with a number of fascinating puzzles. Each of these puzzles arises from observed differences: between countries, between time periods, and between parties. Hence, each of the puzzles implicitly includes a comparative element.

The first puzzle stems from the observation that radical right-wing populist parties have entered government alliances in some countries, but not in others. In Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, and Switzerland radical right-wing populist parties have been full-fledged cabinet members. In Denmark and Norway they have served as support parties to minority governments. In Belgium, France, and Sweden radical right-wing populist parties have up till now been unable to trade the opposition benches for government seats. This begs the question *what explains the differential coalition opportunity structure for radical right-wing populist parties in Austria, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, and Norway, on the one, and Belgium, France, and Sweden, on the other hand?*

The second puzzle arises from the observation that radical right-wing populist parties have joined government coalitions during a particular period, roughly the late-1990s and after. Prior to 2000, radical right-wing populist parties had been in government only twice: in 1983 the FPÖ governed for three years in a coalition with the Austrian Social-Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs*, or SPÖ, and in 1994 three Italian radical right-wing populist parties (AN, FI, and LN) assumed office together for several months. Between 2000 and 2002 the group of radical right-wing

populist parties with government experience expanded rapidly. In 2000 the FPÖ assumed office again, this time with the ÖVP. In 2001 the Danish DF and the Norwegian FRP(n) adopted the role of government support party and in 2002 the newly founded LPF joined the government coalition in the Netherlands. This begs the question *what explains the differential coalition opportunity structure for radical right-wing populist parties between 1981 and 2005?*

The third puzzle emerges when one looks at the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties in specific countries. Within several countries two radical right-wing populist parties have emerged on the political scene, but only one of these has been able to take the next step and achieve government participation. In Denmark, for example, the FRP(d) emerged in the early 1970s and secured parliamentary representation for two decades, but never attained the status of government support party. The DF, on the other hand, emerged in the mid 1990s and became a government support party less than a decade later. In a similar fashion, the Dutch Centre Party/Centre Democrats (*Centrum Partij/Centrum Democraten*, or CP/CD) was represented in parliament in the 1980s and 1990s, but never even entered coalition negotiations. The LPF, on the other hand, made its electoral breakthrough in 2002 and directly entered a government coalition. This begs the question *why have some radical right-wing populist parties participated in government coalitions, while others have not?*

Each of these questions is part of a broader inquiry into the explanations for the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. The general question that I seek to answer in this dissertation is *what explains the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties?* In other words, the substantive aim of the study is to explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties, from a *cross-national*, a *cross-temporal*, and a *cross-party* point of view.

It is important to make several observations about the cross-national, cross-temporal, and cross-party patterns of variation in the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties in advance. The pattern of cross-national variation seems to transcend conventional patterns of country classifications in terms of electoral systems, party systems, and political systems. Radical right-wing populist parties have assumed office in countries with more proportional and more majoritarian electoral systems, in party systems with low and high levels of party system fragmentation and polarization, and in less and more consociational democracies. The pattern of cross-temporal variation appears quite similar to that found in other party families. New parties have a general tendency to linger on the sidelines of politics for several decades before they join government coalitions. The experiences of communist parties and green parties are a case in point. Moreover, the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties happens to coincide with, what Bale (2003: 68) has termed, "the apparent swing of western Europe's political pendulum away from social-democracy and back towards the centre-right" around the turn of the century. The government participation of radical right-wing populist parties thus fits broader political trends in West European countries. The pattern of cross-party variation seem largely unrelated to conventional classifications of radical right-wing populist parties. Radical right-wing populist parties that have joined government coalitions include parties as diverse as the AN, the FPÖ, the FRP(n), and the LPF. Hence, any explanation for the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties will have to go beyond some of the more obvious distinctions in West European politics.

### **The contribution of this dissertation**

Why study the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties? And, what are the contributions this study seeks to make? I put forward three main arguments to study the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. Of these arguments, the last is surely the most important, and it is also in this domain that I want to make my main contribution to the political science literature.

The first argument concerns the newness of the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties (Delwit 2007b: 14). Radical right-wing populist parties have been electorally successful for many years, but their government participation is quite recent. Other currents part of the broadly defined 'far right' (e.g. neo-fascists, neo-nazists, poudjadists) have never participated in government coalitions, even though their electoral success dates further back than that of radical right-wing populist parties. In other words, the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties constitutes a *first*, and hence a break with a political taboo (cf. below). In the past, the sheer newness of their government participation has been sufficient reason to study particular party families. The unprecedented government participation of communist and green parties, for example, inspired a great deal of academic interest in this topic in the 1990s. It seems only fair that radical right-wing populist parties receive the same kind of coverage now that they have crossed the threshold of government participation in the late 1990s.

The second argument concerns the lack of academic attention for the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. Only a hand full of authors have undertaken either country (Heinisch 2002; Lalli 1998) or comparative studies (Ahlemeyer 2006; Bale 2003; De Lange 2007a; Heinisch 2003) of this phenomenon. In the country studies the focus has been heavily skewed towards the Austrian and Italian experiences, which potentially produces a one-sided image of the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. Additionally, the focus in the few studies that are available has been primarily on the *effects* and not on the *causes* of the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. Several scholars have assessed the impact of radical right-wing populist parties in government on policy outcomes. Finally, the lack of attention for the causes of *government participation* of radical right-wing populist parties stands in sharp contrast with the excessive attention for the causes of the *electoral success* of these parties.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to these valid reasons to study the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties I identify a more imperative reason to study the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. This reason relates to the position radical right-wing populist parties take in the political science literature. These parties have often been studied in isolation from other political parties, because scholars have been convinced that the radical right-wing populist party family is qualitatively different from other party families. The radical right-wing populist party family has been seen as an anomaly from which no inferences about other party families can be drawn.

It is questionable whether it is justified and fruitful to see radical right-wing populist parties as an anomaly. In my opinion, radical right-wing

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<sup>1</sup> For an overview of the state of the art in the latter field, see De Lange and Mudde 2005; Mudde 2007; Van der Brug and Fennema 2007.

populist parties are not qualitatively different from other types of parties. More specifically, I contend that radical right-wing populist parties share many features with other party families, in particular with other types of non-mainstream parties. Although scholars frequently write about mainstream parties, they usually do not define what they mean by this term. In my opinion, mainstream parties defend established norms and values, while non-mainstream promote unestablished norms and values.

Obviously, what are established norm and values and what are unestablished norm and values is not a given. Rather, it depends on elite and popular opinions, and on the relationship between these two elements. Consequentially, established norms are likely to change over time and vary from one country to the next. More specifically, non-mainstream parties can adjust their ideologies to fit better with established norms and values, or mainstream parties can adjust their ideologies in reaction to the success of non-mainstream parties and hence change the established norms and values.

Nevertheless, Christian-Democratic, conservative, liberal, socialist, and social-democratic parties generally advocate policies that are more or less in line with the status quo and are therefore qualified as mainstream parties. Non-mainstream parties are less easily identified. Green parties, for example, qualified as non-mainstream parties when they emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, but are part of the political mainstream in many countries today.

Several additional criteria are available to identify non-mainstream parties. Adherence to an ideology that promotes unestablished norms and values often implies that non-mainstream parties take a non-centrist position on the left-right position. Consequentially, most non-mainstream parties are niche parties (e.g. most communist parties and radical right-wing populist parties) (Adams *et al.* 2006; Ezrow 2008). The group of non-mainstream parties is broader than that of the niche parties though and also includes a number of parties with a centrist position on the left-right dimension (e.g. most regionalist parties).<sup>2</sup> Moreover, given that new parties are more likely to promote non-established ideologies than parties that have been represented for a reasonable amount of time; non-mainstream parties are usually fairly young.

In other words, this dissertation departs from the assumption that radical right-wing populist parties are similar, but not identical to other parties. They have most in common with other non-mainstream parties and less in common with mainstream parties. In the most basic form radical right-wing populist parties are, however, parties and on this ground they share an important number of features with other parties, irrespective of party family affiliations. To stress the similarities between radical right-wing populist parties and other parties, especially non-mainstream parties, is to take a functionalist rather than an essentialist approach to the study of particular party families. Throughout this dissertation I hope to show the academic value of this approach and to promote a paradigmatic shift in the study of radical-right wing populist parties.

### **Approaches to the study of radical right-wing populist parties**

Throughout this dissertation I reject the idea that radical right-wing populist parties are best seen as a normal pathology, and instead approach these

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<sup>2</sup> D66, a social-liberal party that entered the Dutch Tweede Kamer in 1967, is an example of a party with a centrist ideology that was for many years identified as non-mainstream. In socio-economic terms the party has always supported mainstream policies, but its advocacy of far-reaching institutional reform has been contrary to accepted Dutch norms and values.

parties as a "pathological normalcy" (Mudde forthcoming). My approach contrasts with that of many other scholars in the field. For this reason it merits a more detailed discussion.

*The radical right-wing populist party as normal pathology*

Many scholars approach radical right-wing populist parties as a "normal pathology" in democratic societies (Scheuch and Klingemann 1967). Radical right-wing populist parties are interpreted as remnants "a distant past, not as a consequence of contemporary developments" (Mudde forthcoming: 4). Scholars that work within the normal pathology framework depart from the premises that the values that these parties promote are alien to West European democracies and that the support for radical right-wing populist parties is virtually non-existent under normal circumstances. Only in times of crisis large groups of voters can be persuaded to support radical right-wing populist parties. Consequentially, radical right-wing populist parties are seen as unrelated to mainstream politics, both in terms of ideological and programmatic appeal and in terms of the electoral constituency that falls for this appeal.

To assume that radical right-wing populist parties are a normal pathology has several implications for the study of these parties. Most importantly, it implies that mainstream concepts and theories are not applicable to radical right-wing populist parties, since these parties qualify as "a pathology, and can thus only be explained outside of the 'normal'" (Mudde 2008: 3). To study radical right-wing populist parties alternative concepts and theories are developed instead, which often incorporate a distinct normative component. In other words, scholars that study radical right-wing populist parties habitually decide to construct their own vocabulary and formulate their own theories, which depart from the assumption that the existence of these parties is problematic or even dangerous.

This decision is problematic for two reasons. First, it is frequently not taken on scientific, but on political grounds. Many scholars seem to believe that the application of mainstream concepts and theories to radical right-wing populist parties legitimizes these parties. Second, it has no theoretical or empirical foundation. There are no a priori reasons to suppose that mainstream concepts and theories do not work when applied to radical right-wing populist parties.

One of the central concepts in the study of radical right-wing populist parties that clearly bear this mark is that of the "streitbare Demokratie" or "defending democracy". This concept describes democracies in which political actors (e.g. parties, governments) actively combat radical right-wing populist parties and their electoral success (Backes and Jesse 2005; Capoccia 2005; Pedahzur 2003; 2004; Van Donselaar 1995; 2003). Ideally, political actors in every one of the West European democracies in which radical right-wing populist parties are represented are motivated to defend democracy.

The concept of the defending democracy has shaped how scholars think about the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. It is generally assumed that collaboration is one of the strategies available to parties to counter the threat radical right-wing populist parties pose to West European democracies (Downs 2001a; 2001b; Kestel and Godmer 2004; Widfeldt 2004).<sup>3</sup> Art (2005: 8), who has investigated the

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<sup>3</sup> Downs (2001a; 2001b) distinguishes between disengagement and engagement strategies. The government participation of radical right-wing populist parties, or what he terms executive collaboration, is situated in the second category of strategies.

effectiveness of various strategies to deal with radical right-wing populist parties, concludes that

“the most effective strategy [...] appears to be a combination of cooptation, confrontation and marginalization. Established political parties seize on the themes of right-wing populist parties (cooptation) while simultaneously denouncing them as enemies of the system (confrontation) and refusing to cooperate with them, or even speak with them, at any political level (marginalization).”

Studies that depart from the assumption that radical right-wing populist parties are a normal pathology in democracies have three observations to make about the government participation of these parties. First, radical right-wing populist parties do not belong in government coalitions. Second, radical right-wing populist parties participate in government coalitions, because mainstream parties believe this will somehow reduce the threat radical right-wing populist parties pose to the political system. Third, this strategy is not particularly effective and the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties should therefore be infrequent. The government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is an aberration that should only occur under special circumstances. In short, radical right-wing populist parties in general, and their government participation in particular, are political and scientific anomalies.

#### *The radical right-wing populist party as pathological normalcy*

As said, the decision to adopt the normal pathology approach is problematic for two reasons. First, the approach is unjustified, because it is highly disputable that radical right-wing populist parties are a normal pathology and consequentially pose a threat to democracies, as I will show in detail in chapter 3. From this it follows that it is premature to presuppose that democratic responsibility is a major concern for mainstream parties and that this concern guides the interaction between radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties. It is also premature to assume that the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is an aberration. The little that is known about the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties suggests that this phenomenon is not an aberration (e.g. the relative frequency with which radical right-wing populist parties have governed in recent years) and that the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is first and foremost related to pragmatic considerations of mainstream parties (e.g. Downs 2001b: 23).

Second, the approach is not fruitful, because it conflicts with important objectives of scientific inquiry. Most notably, the approach is vulnerable to the development of *ad hoc* explanations. The problem with *ad hoc* explanations is that they are used to explain away facts that refute general theories and that they move research outside the realm of falsifiability. The account provided for the government participation in the previous section is a case in point.

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Kestel and Godmer (2004) discriminate between the “exclusionary oligopoly”, in which radical right-wing populist parties are excluded from coalitional markets at the national and subnational level, and the “model of maximum integration”, in which radical right-wing populist parties are included in these coalitional markets. Widfeldt (2004) proposes a distinction between four, not mutually exclusive, strategies: general accommodation, specific accommodation, general marginalization, and specific marginalization. In this typology the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties would be an example of a strategy of specific accommodation.

Interestingly though, it has not yet been established that the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties actually refutes any type of general theory; this is simply assumed by scholars that stick to the normal pathology approach. *Ad hoc* explanations are also not falsifiable, because they do not account for any other phenomenon than the very specific one for which they have been developed. In other words, *ad hoc* explanations make it impossible to take the specific (the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties) and extrapolate this to the general (the government participation of parties *tout court*).

To remedy these problems, I propose to take an approach to the study of radical right-wing populist parties that is diametrically opposed to that of the "normal pathology". I concur with Mudde's (2007b: 23) assertion that it is more fruitful to conceive of radical right-wing populist parties as a "pathological normalcy" rather than a "normal pathology". This approach relies on the observation that radical right-wing populist parties are essentially radical versions of mainstream right parties (see also chapter 3). As Betz (2003: 88) has argued, "much of the discourse of radical right-wing populist parties represents nothing more than a radicalized version of mainstream positions promoted and defended by the established parties".

Students of the electoral success of radical right-wing populist parties have shifted from the "normal pathology" approach to the "pathological normalcy" approach a number of years ago, with great scientific progress as a result. The paradigmatic shift has promoted the development of generic models of party competition that are applicable to parties in general, rather than to radical right-wing populist parties alone (for excellent examples see Kitschelt 1995; Meguid 2005). The important insights this approach has generated for the study of the electoral success of radical right-wing populist parties provides a strong case for the application of the same approach to other aspects of the radical right-wing populist phenomenon, including the government participation of these parties.

The implications of this shift are fairly straightforward. When radical right-wing populist parties are radical versions of mainstream parties, the government participation of these parties should be explained by many of the same factors that explain the government participation of mainstream parties. The only difference is that radical right-wing populist parties are more radical than mainstream parties, but it is possible to theorize about the impact this has on coalition formation in a deductive fashion. I elaborate on this point in more detail in chapter 3.

### **Approaches to the study of government coalitions**

In the political science literature two distinct functionalist approaches to the study of government coalitions exist. A first approach explains the formation of government coalitions in terms of party system dynamics. The general idea behind this approach is that coalition governments are an indistinguishable part of party system typologies and that the composition of government coalitions is determined by party system related features, such as the effective number of parties or the degree of party system polarization. A second approach explains the formation of government coalitions in terms of strategic party behavior. The theories to belong to this approach assumes is that parties seek to realize three related party goals (office, policy, and votes) and that government participation is one amongst several ways to realize these.

The major difference between the two approaches is that the first focuses on macro-level explanations to account for the composition of

government coalitions, while the second focuses on micro-level explanations. For the purpose of this dissertation the second approach is the most fruitful. One of the criticisms launched against the normal pathology approach is that it focuses excessively on the contextual situation of radical right-wing populist parties and devotes only limited attention to radical right-wing populist parties themselves (Mudde 2008). To redress this imbalance this dissertation takes an actor-oriented approach, in which micro-level explanations for the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties take center stage. The micro-level approach provides a direct answer to the question why radical right-wing populist parties have assumed office in some cases but not in others, because it explores the motives of parties (radical right-wing populist and mainstream) to form specific government coalitions.

### *Coalition formation theories*

The selected approach offers comprehensive explanations for coalition outcomes. Through the micro-level perspective, the approach is able to explain coalition outcomes in specific countries and at specific elections. It can also account for the government participation of specific parties. To this end, the approach includes several types of theories that focus on different aspects of the coalition outcome (e.g. the composition of the government coalition, the status of the government coalition). A comprehensive overview of these theories, to which I will refer as *coalition formation theories* throughout this dissertation, is provided in the next chapter.

Skeptics will argue that the application of coalition formation theories to radical right-wing populist parties is impossible, because these theories assume that parties have *allgemeine Koalitionsfähigkeit* or general coalitionability (Sartori 1976; Von Beyme 1983). This objection is invalidated in detail in several chapters of this dissertation, but it is important to highlight already here why it is wrong. When radical right-wing populist parties are regarded as a pathological normalcy, there are no *a priori* grounds to conclude that these parties lack general coalitionability. After all, they are not qualitatively different from other types of parties. Consequentially, there are no reasons to abandon the vast instrumentarium that coalition formation theories offer to explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties.

### *The general model*

On the basis of the key ingredients of coalition formation theories I have developed a general model that depicts the main factors that shape coalition outcomes. Figure 1.1 illustrates this model and highlights the main factors that determine coalition outcomes, as well as the relations between these factors. The model consists of four key ingredients elements: (1) party characteristics, (2) party goals, (3) party strategies, (4) coalition preferences, (5) coalition outcomes, and (6) new party characteristics. The idea behind the model is that parties have goals (office, policy, and votes) they try to achieve, amongst others through participation in government coalitions. The way parties seek to realize these goals is shaped by party characteristics. These characteristics do not only concern the parties' own characteristics, but also those of the other parties that are represented in parliament. They are general party features, such as parties' weights (electoral and legislative) and parties' policy positions. On the basis of the priority given to their goals, parties determine the strategies they employ in elections and the coalition formation process. An important element of these strategies is the formulation of coalition preferences; that is, the identification of the coalition

alternatives in which parties believe they can realize their party goals. On the basis of these coalition preferences parties bargain over government participation, which eventually leads to the formation of a government coalition. The model highlights that coalition outcomes in turn influence parties' characteristics, and that the coalition formation process is invariably related to the electoral process. The model thus has a dynamic component to it.

Applied to the topic of this study, this model suggests that the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is a consequence of a combination of (1) the characteristics of radical right-wing populist parties, (2) the characteristics of mainstream parties, and (3) the interaction between these two factors. Together they shape parties' goals, their strategies, and hence preferences to form government coalitions that include radical right-wing populist parties.

The model highlights potential explanations for the government participation of specific radical right-wing populist parties in specific countries after specific elections, as well as potential explanations for the patterns of variation in the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. In other words, it provides answers to the crucial questions *where?*, *when?*, and *why?*.

To account for the pattern of cross-national variation the model offers several potential explanations. It is possible that the pattern of cross-national variation is a consequence of differences in characteristics of radical right-wing populist and/or mainstream parties in West European countries. In some countries radical right-wing populist parties might have characteristics that make them attractive coalition partners, while in other countries they lack these characteristics. In a similar way mainstream parties might have characteristics that predispose them to government coalitions with radical right-wing populist parties in some countries, but not in others. A combination of, or interaction between, these factors can also explain the pattern of cross-national variation in the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. Cross-national variations in party characteristics will make that parties have different goal orientations in different West European countries. For instance, if radical right-wing populist parties in particular countries are relatively small, they are probably not office-seekers. It is only logical that these parties do not participate in government coalitions, because they have no aspiration to govern.

To account for the pattern of cross-temporal variation the model also proposes several potential explanations. It is possible that the characteristics of radical right-wing populist and/or mainstream parties have changed over time and hence explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties in recent years. Moreover, it is possible that a combination of, or interaction between, these factors explains why radical right-wing populist parties have joined government coalitions in recent years. Cross-temporal variations in party characteristics can make the goal orientations of radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties have changed over time and hence explain why the former parties have participated in government coalitions in recent years. It is conceivable, for example, that radical right-wing populist parties were initially not concerned with the pursuit of office, but have adopted office-seeking strategies in recent years. If this is indeed the case, it explains why radical right-wing populist parties have only participated in government coalitions in the later 1990s and early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

To account for the pattern of cross-party variation the most obvious explanation is that this pattern is a consequence of differences in the characteristics and hence goal orientations of radical right-wing populist parties. After all, when these parties are represented in the same country, they also interact with the same mainstream parties. It is, however, possible that the pattern of cross-party variation is closely related to the pattern of temporal variation, i.e. that radical right-wing populist parties that have been represented in earlier decades have not participated in government coalitions, while those parties that have been represented in the most recent decade have participated in government coalitions.

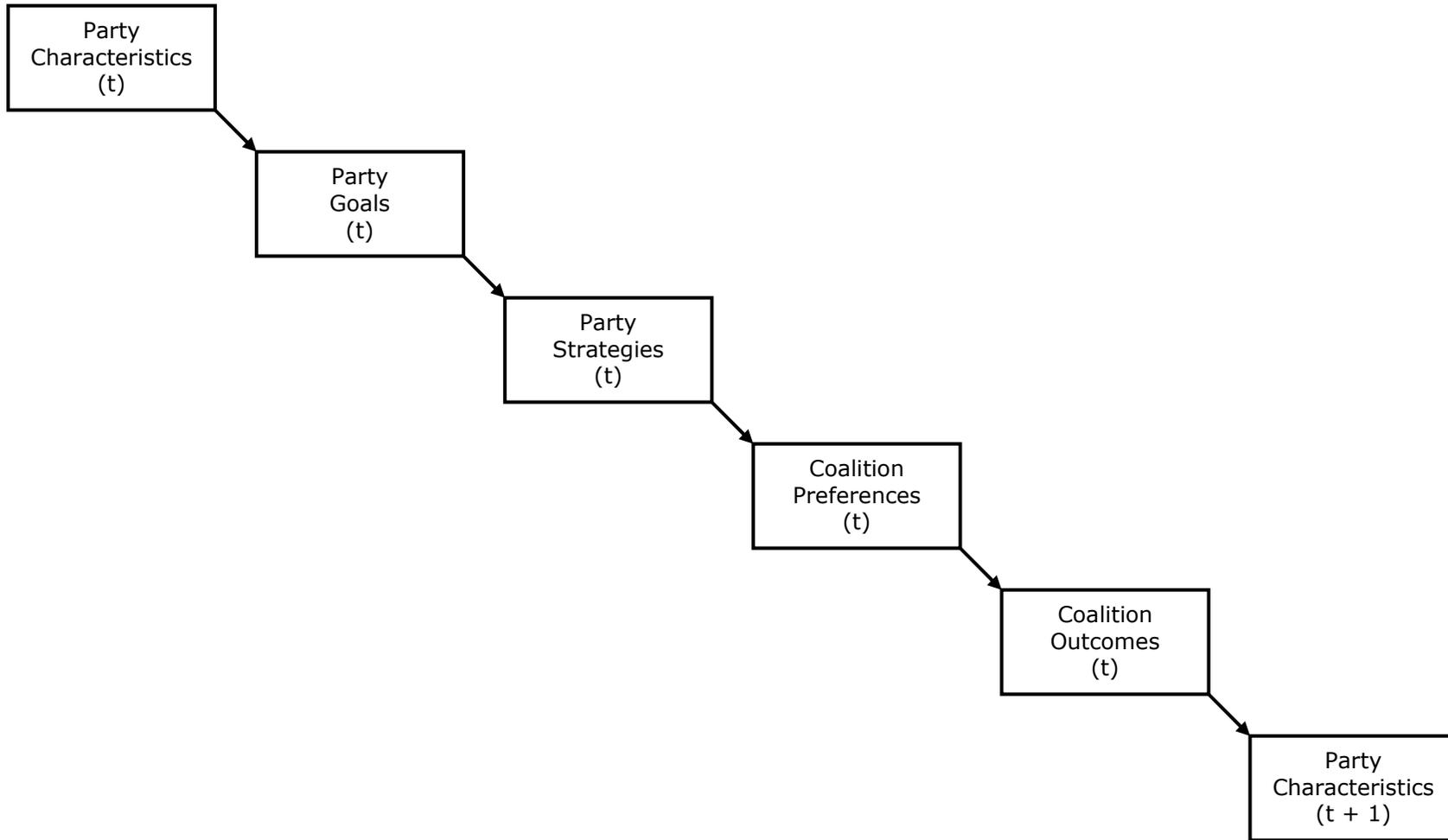
On the basis of this model, and through the application of coalition formation theories, I hope to identify the reasons for the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties and bring these parties “in from the cold”, at least academically speaking. With this attempt I follow in the footsteps of other scholars, who have undertaken similar research endeavors for other niche party families.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Bale and Dunphy (forthcoming)’s study of radical left parties’ strategic decision to join government coalitions.

Figure 1.1

*A model to explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties, part I*



### **Outline of the dissertation**

The study contains five analytical chapters that each provide some of the blocs with which the answer to the central question posed in this introduction is built. The chapters 2 and 3 provide the foundational stones of this answer. These chapters contain a more detailed discussion of many of the issues raised in this introduction. Chapter 2 devotes attention to coalition governments and coalition formation theories and sketches the research design on which subsequent chapters are based. Chapter 3 presents a general overview of the radical right-wing populist party family and demonstrates support for the claim that this party family is not qualitatively different from other party families. The chapter also highlights that there are no major objections to the application of coalition formation theories to the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties.

The chapters 4, 5, and 6 present the results of a series of analyses that seek to uncover the reasons for the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. Chapter 4 focuses primarily party characteristics, both of radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties, and examines how these characteristics can account for the government participation of the former type of party. Chapter 5 focuses primarily on coalition characteristics and investigates what these tell us about the reasons for the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. Chapter 6 explores the government participation of a specific radical right-wing populist party, namely that of the FPÖ in the government coalition lead by the ÖVP that assumed office after the 1999 elections in Austria.

In the chapters 4, 5, and 6 I further develop the model presented in this introduction. In each of these chapters I take the findings of the analyses and integrate these in the general model that seeks to account for the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. The final model that integrates the findings of each of the chapters is presented and discussed in the conclusion of this dissertation. On the basis of this final model I answer the central question posed in this introduction and I explore the implications and generalizability of the model. Finally, I discuss the implications of the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties and I propose several avenues for future research.



## CHAPTER 2

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### The Study of Coalition Governments

*There can be no doubt at all that the government formation process [...] is one of the most fundamental processes of European parliamentary democracy. Understanding how a given electoral result leads to a given government is, when all is said and done, simply one of the most important substantive projects in political science*

Laver and Schofield (1990: 89)

#### Introduction

Coalition government is an important object of study for political scientists. Since the early post-war years scholars have sought to explain their birth, life, and death. This chapter provides a general overview of the literature on coalition governments. It discusses the prominence of coalition governments in West European politics and presents the main approaches to their study. I argue that one approach is particularly well-suited to explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. This approach consists of deductively derived theories and assumes that parties are rational actors that seek to realize office, policy, and votes and that government participation is one of the ways through which these objectives can be realized.

From the many theories that make up this approach, I select two that can explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties: (1) non-formal actor-oriented coalition formation theories that identify the party characteristics of radical right-wing populist parties that have governed, as well as the party characteristics of the mainstream parties with which they have governed, and (2) formal coalition formation theories that identify the properties of the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated.

The chapter also sketches the research design employed in this study. I opt for a nested research design, which combines a large-N study with a small-N study. The large-N study employs quantitative methods to test the coalition formation theories that are part of the theoretical framework. The small-N study uses qualitative methods to re-evaluate the conclusions reached in the large-N study. The two studies are complementary, because they explore different aspects of coalition governments, and hence different aspects of the coalition formation theories. The large-N study focuses on the circumstances under which radical right-wing populist parties are likely to govern (the causal effect), while the small-N study explores why these circumstances matter (the causal mechanism). Together they provide a more complete answer to the central question of this dissertation.

#### Coalition practices in Western Europe

Where voters in majoritarian democracies directly elect the government, this is not the case in proportional democracies (Powell Jr. 2000). In proportional democracies the link between voters and government is indirect. To determine the composition of the government elected representatives engage in negotiations that ought to translate elections results to the executive level. In sum, in proportional democracies "elections do not choose governments, they alter the power relations between the parties [...]. The formation of a government then is the process of artificially constructing a majority" on the basis of election results (Bogdanor 1983: 272).

In most proportional democracies parties play an important role in elections and governments. For this reason governments in proportional democracies are often characterized as party governments (Katz 1986; 1987). The system of party government is loosely defined by five key elements: (1) elected party representatives make up the government and make government decisions; (2) political parties decide on government policies; (3) political parties enact and implement government policies; (4) political parties recruit government members; and (5) government members are accountable to voters through political parties.

In essence this means that in West European countries voters vote for parties that govern on their behalf. Parties either have majority status, and govern on their own, or have minority status, and govern together in a coalition. Only under exceptional circumstances elections produce majority situations, i.e. a single party wins a majority and can form a single party majority government. Single party majority governments roughly make up 14 per cent of the governments in Western Europe (Gallagher, Laver, and Mair 2006: 401; Müller and Strom 2000a: 560-561). Under normal circumstances elections produce minority situations, i.e. none of the parties wins a majority and a majority government has to consist of multiple parties. Minority situations are thus conducive to the formation of coalition governments. The importance of coalition governments has grown over time, largely as a result of the increased fragmentation of West European party systems (Lane and Ersson 1999: 142), and the expansion of parliamentary democracy to Central and Eastern European countries.

#### *Majority governments and minority governments*

Coalition governments come in many different forms and shapes. Probably the most important distinction is between coalition governments that have majority status, on the one, and coalition governments that have minority status, on the other hand. Of all governments that assume office in West European countries roughly 58 per cent has majority status. Majority government coalitions are especially prominent in Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, and the Netherlands (see Table 2.1). In these countries more than half of the coalition governments that have assumed office between 1945 and 2003 had a majority in parliament, the other half being single party minority governments or minority coalitions.

Coalition governments with minority status make up roughly 10 per cent of the governments in West European countries. They are especially prominent in the Scandinavian countries. In Denmark for example, minority coalition governments account for almost half of the governments that have assumed office between 1945 and 2003. In the rest of Western Europe minority coalition governments occur less frequently. Countries like Austria, Belgium, France, Ireland, Italy, and the Netherlands have nevertheless had incidental experiences with minority coalition governments (Gallagher, Laver, and Mair 2001: 401; Laver and Schofield 1990: 71). In the Scandinavian countries one also frequently encounters single party minority governments, which make up roughly 17 per cent of the governments in West European countries. Given that single party minority governments can only survive when they are supported by a legislative coalition that has majority status, it is fruitful to include them in a discussion of coalition governments.

Table 2.1  
West European governments

	Single party governments		Government coalitions	
	Single party majority governments	Single party minority governments	Majority coalitions	Minority coalitions
Austria	17%	4%	78%	9%
Belgium	8%	3%	84%	5%
Denmark	0%	45%	13%	42%
France	0%	7%	84%	9%
Italy	0%	21%	62%	17%
Netherlands	0%	0%	100%	0%
Norway	21%	46%	11%	21%
Sweden	12%	62%	19%	8%
West European countries	14%	17%	58%	10%

Source: Gallagher, Laver, and Mair 2001: 401; author's calculations

Studies of coalition governments sometimes wrongly qualify minority governments as a pathological or an inferior form of government. There are, however, perfectly rational reasons why minority governments form quite frequently. Minority governments make it possible for parties to influence policy from the sidelines without having to take up government responsibility and run any unnecessary electoral risks. Consequentially, minority governments are more common in countries where it is easy to influence policymaking in parliamentary committees and where the electoral costs of holding cabinet positions are relatively high (e.g. Herman and Pope 1973; e.g. Strom 1990b).

Minority governments can survive in office, even though they do not have majority status. As long as they can rely on majority support in parliament, their survival is assured. Minority governments have two main ways to secure majority support. First, they can rely on flexible legislative majorities and seek support from individual parties on a proposal-by-proposal basis. This strategy is hazardous, since the support for the proposals of the minority government can prove insufficient at any given moment. This increases the likelihood that the government has to resign prematurely, but the advantage of this strategy is that it reduces its dependence on a single party or group of parties. In other words, when a minority government relies on flexible majorities, it is improbable that it will be blackmailed by the parties in the legislature.<sup>5</sup> Second, minority governments can also decide to ally on a more permanent basis with one or more parties, in which event the parties that belong to the legislative coalition but not to the executive coalition are usually denoted as 'support' parties.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The construction of legislative alliances on an ad hoc basis also makes it possible for a minority government to approach the party that is most likely to support a particular policy proposal (e.g. because of its policy profile) first, and thus increases the likelihood that proposal get accepted.

<sup>6</sup> The presence and role of support parties in systems with minority governments have received considerable scholarly attention in recent years (Bale and Bergman 2006a, 2006b; Bale and Dann 2002; Christiansen 2003). The terminology used in these works is, however, diverse and dependent on country specificities. Laver (1986), for example, speaks of 'stable voting coalitions', while Bale and Bergman (2006) prefer

### *Studies of West European coalition governments*

Students of West European politics have investigated patterns of coalition government for many decades (e.g. Blondel 1968; Daalder 1986; Duverger 1954; Lijphart 1982; Mair 1997; Sartori 1976; Smith 1979). They have primarily been interested in patterns of coalition government, which are inevitably linked to typologies of party systems. Mair (1997: 206, italics in original) argues that "what is perhaps the most important aspect of party systems [...] is *the structure of interparty competition*, and especially *the competition for government*". His argument is easily illustrated with an example. According to Sartori (1976), a polarized multiparty system is characterized by (1) a high number of represented parties, (2) that are ideologically distant from each other, and (3) the presence of at least one anti-system party. The competition for government in polarized multiparty systems evolves around the centre parties, because the anti-system parties are excluded from government on a priori grounds. Consequentially, polarized multiparty systems are also characterized by low levels of government alternation and innovation.

The interest of students of West European politics in coalition governments is to a considerable extent instrumental. Coalition governments partly define party systems and changes in coalition governments are indicative for party system change. Only few students of West European politics have explicitly sought to explain why particular coalition governments form (Bogdanor 1983; Browne and Dreijmanis 1982; Pridham 1986). Other students of West European politics only touch upon general patterns of coalition government; that is, they take a macro-perspective that focuses on broad patterns and trends in West European politics.

As a consequence of this helicopter view, students of West European politics occasionally make remarkable observations about coalition trends. In 2001, for example, Mair (2001a: 114) declared the left had taken a potentially permanent lead over the right, because mainstream left parties dared to rely on green parties to form coalition governments, while mainstream right parties refused to rely on radical right-wing populist parties to construct coalition governments. With regard to the position of the mainstream right he concluded that

"On the right, by contrast, pariah parties had emerged in the form of the often unacceptable face of the extreme right. [...] The result is that while coalition building on the left has now become easier [...] coalition building on the right has now become fraught with difficulties. It is in this sense that the strategic advantage has finally passed from right to left".

In the same year, however, several radical right-wing populist parties joined government coalitions.

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the use of the term 'contract parliamentarism', denoting the process of minority governance by which a minority government rules with the help of the committed support of one or several parliamentary parties. This support is formalized through a written agreement and is made available to the public. Scholars of Danish politics usually speak of legislative accommodation (e.g. Christiansen 2003). Like the terms listed above, legislative accommodation signifies the establishment of a more or less permanent coalition between government and support parties. Contrary to the other types of support described here though, legislative accommodation usually concerns a specific policy field and does not need to extend to an entire legislative period.

A short review of Mair's declaration highlights some of the main problems of the party system approach. First, the approach primarily generates descriptive accounts of patterns of coalition government. Browne and Dreijmanis (1982: ix), editors of one of the few books dedicated exclusively to coalition governments in Western Europe, are quite open about the limitations of their study. They acknowledge that the objective of their study is merely "to produce descriptive analyses of cabinet coalition behaviour in national settings" and that "the idea is to study a research problem which is common to a variety of settings by offering descriptive analyses of its manifestations which are particular to experiences in individual cases".

Second, the approach accounts for patterns of coalition government at a macro-level. Party system related factors, such as the effective number of parties, electoral volatility, the level of fragmentation and the level of polarization, are used to account for patterns of coalition government and changes in these patterns. Katz and Mair (1996: 530), for example, note "a marked increase in the promiscuity of coalition formation with almost all possible combinations of parties being conceivable in both theory and practice" in the 1990s, and relate this observation to the emergence of new parties and the consequential increase in the level of party system fragmentation in many West European countries (see also Bartolini 1998). The approach is unable, however, to identify micro-level explanations for the increase in the level of promiscuity in coalition formation processes. It does not explain why parties decide to change coalition partners and why new parties are integrated in government coalitions.

Third, the approach implicitly relies on the idea that radical right-wing populist parties are a normal pathology to democracies. In the party system literature some parties are seen as qualitatively different from other parties, as is exemplified by Sartori's concept of the polarized multiparty system. This concept relies on the idea that some party systems are characterized by the presence of anti-system parties, which are excluded from government coalitions on a priori grounds. The problem is that anti-system parties are seen as a more or less invariant feature of West European politics. Parties are either anti-system parties, or they are 'normal' parties. Changes in the status of parties are unaccounted for.

In sum, the party system approach represents "essentially empirical attempts to fit the experience of European coalition government to an inductive theory". It makes far more sense "to assess the academic worth of such theories in heuristic terms, looking for the insights that they can give us into the coalitional process rather than for rigorous 'scientific' 'tests'" (Laver and Schofield 1990: 8-9).

### **Coalition formation theories**

To account for the government participation of individual radical right-wing populist parties, as well as cross-national, cross-temporal, and cross-party patterns of variation in their government participation, an approach that is explanatory rather than descriptive, that focuses on micro-level explanations instead of macro-level explanations, and that is party-neutral, is required. Coalition formation theories belong to such an approach.

The objective of coalition formation theories is to explain and predict the formation of government coalitions independent of specific countries or time periods. They rely on the intuition that "deep and significant patterns run through the making and breaking of governments in a range of different institutional settings" (Laver 1998: 4). On the basis of this intuition, theories have been constructed that include two ingredients: assumptions about

government coalitions (e.g. how, and why, they are formed, and by whom) and parameters expected to impact on coalition outcomes. These two factors are linked together by logic. Of course, coalition formation theories offer "a stylized and thus inevitably simplistic description of core features of government formation" (Laver 1998: 2). They do not pay attention to historical, institutional, or political circumstances in particular countries, but make general assumptions about the actors in the coalition formation process, their motivations, and the general context in which they bargain about the composition of the coalition government. Although these theories evidently lack an eye for context and detail, they have great appeal because of their "parsimony and simplicity" (Laver 1998: 2). The theories have the capacity to capture the essence of complex political situations in formal models that express "real-world situations in abstract and symbolic terms in a set of explicitly stated assumptions" (Morton 1999: 36). On the basis of these formal models it is possible to compare situations in countries that seem markedly different at first sight and to draw conclusions about the government participation of a particular party family even though differences between individual parties and the context in which these parties operate appear substantial.

#### *The rational choice paradigm*

Coalition formation theories belong to the rational choice paradigm. They employ a set of assumptions about party behavior that relies heavily on the model of the *homo economicus*. In other words, parties, or in rational choice terms actors, are assumed to behave in a rational way. As Green and Shapiro (1994: 17) emphasise "rational choice theorists generally agree on an instrumental conception of individual rationality, by reference to which people are thought to maximize their expected utilities in formally predictable ways." This general assumption contains three more specific assumptions (De Swaan 1973: 24): (1) a rational actor is an actor who, if completely informed, acts so as to maximize his utility function; (2) a utility function is determined by a complete and transitive ordering of preferences among all state of affairs that may result from the actions open to the actor; (3) a completely informed actor is an actor who knows all courses of action open to him or to any other actor at any point in time and all outcomes that may result from those actions, or the utility functions for all actors over all these outcomes, and this actor is capable of performing all necessary calculations at no cost or at a cost that is known to him. In brief, the rational choice paradigm sees action as purposive, i.e. actions are meant to bring about desired outcomes. To determine whether an outcome is desired, an actor has to have knowledge of the possible outcomes in a situation, and he has to be able to order these outcomes in terms of their desirability. The ordering of the possible outcomes requires that the actor is aware of the utility the outcomes generate and of the preference structures of the other actors.

Many have criticized the rational choice paradigm, contending that the assumptions that underpin the paradigm are overly simplistic and unrealistic. Coalition formation theories have been criticized for many of the same reasons and have even been described as "an intellectual *cul de sac*" (Browne 1982: 336). Von Beyme (1983: 342; 1985: 323) states that coalition formation theories have "not come to grips with the peculiarities of European party systems" and that the "highly abstract assumptions on the rationality of those concerned and the degree to which all the participants understand and approve the rules" do not comply with the complex character of West European politics. Coalition formation theories are also criticized for their

limited explanatory and predictive power (Bogdanor 1983), which is attributed to “the general failure of analysts to systematically connect the major concepts of formal coalition theories with counterpart phenomena present in real coalition environments” (Browne and Dreijmanis 1982: ix) and to the failure “to take account of a range of variables or determinants of coalitional behaviour highlighted by studies of party systems” (Pridham 1986: 2).

Although the assumptions of the rational choice paradigm are indeed overly simplistic, and at times unrealistic, they approximate the general features of the coalition formation process quite well. It is far from unrealistic to assume that parties try to maximize some sort of utility through their participation in government coalitions, that they have a complete and transitive ordering of the potential coalitions that can form after elections, and that have a fairly defined idea of how to bring about the coalition they find most preferable. Moreover, the strength of coalition formation theories lies in their capacity to account for coalition outcomes in a wide range of settings, without having to rely on idiosyncratic explanations. According to Strøm (1990a: 565), “arguably the defining characteristic and virtue of rational choice theory is precisely its resistance to ad hoc explanation and its quest for equilibrium results independent of structural peculiarities”. It is exactly for this reason that coalition formation theories are employed in this study.

Coalition formation theories come in various shapes and forms. I briefly discuss some of the most important types of coalition formation theories: formal or game-theoretic (more specifically, cooperative and non-cooperative), and non-formal coalition formation theories (see Table 4.2).

#### *Formal coalition formation theories*

Formal coalition formation theories are part of the game-theoretic tradition within the rational choice paradigm. Game theory models the strategic interaction between actors. According to Morton (1999: 82) “a situation is strategic when the actors involved make choices knowing that their choices might affect the choices of other actors, and so on”. The strategic element is evident in the coalition formation process, where parties bargain about the composition of the coalition government. Formal coalition formation theories predict equilibrium outcomes to the strategic interactions of parties. In this sense, formal coalition formation theories are deterministic, that is, they make predictions about the outcomes of coalition formation processes that should *always* occur if the theories are correct.

A first strand of formal coalition formation theories predicts *coalition composition*. Within this strand a further distinction exists between cooperative and non-cooperative coalition formation theories. Cooperative coalition formation theories predict an equilibrium that represents a collective optimum, while non-cooperative game theories predict an equilibrium that represents players’ individual optima. Consequentially, the rules of the coalition game differ in cooperative and non-cooperative coalition formation theories. As Morton (1999: 82) explains,

“in cooperative game theory, it is possible for actors to make binding commitments outside the game. Thus, cooperative outcomes are not endogenously derived but instead are assumed to occur as a consequence of the actor choices within the game. [...] In noncooperative game theory, the solution to the model must be immune to deviations by individual actors or players. That is, an outcome cannot be a solution to a noncooperative game if an individual can optimize by choosing a different strategy”.

Cooperative formal coalition formation theories have primarily been developed in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s by famous rational choice specialists like Axelrod, De Swaan, Gamson, Leiserson, Riker, and Von Neumann and Morgenstern. Their models assume that parties seek to maximize their proportion of office spoils (Gamson 1961; Leiserson 1966; Riker 1962; Von Neumann and Morgenstern 1944) or a combination of office spoils and policy rewards (Axelrod 1970; De Swaan 1973). These cooperative coalition formation theories stand out for their elegance, simplicity, and general applicability. In fact, some have not been designed to study coalition governments, but the formation of coalitions in a wide variety of social situations. Laver and Schofield (1990: 9) note in this respect that "the politics of coalition was seen simply as a particular logical type of social interaction, one forcing a subset of actors to strike a particular type of bargain with each other before they could 'win'". In later stages cooperative coalition formation models have been expanded to include the elements that define the specific character of the parliamentary coalition game (e.g. multi-dimensional political spaces, portfolio allocation) (De Vries 1997; Grofman 1982; Laver and Shepsle 1990; Laver and Shepsle 1996; McKelvey, Ordeshook, and Winer 1978; Schofield 1993a; 1993b; 1995).

Non-cooperative coalition formation theories do not have the historical legacy of cooperative coalition formation theories. They have been primarily developed in concurrence with theories of party competition. The objective of non-cooperative coalition formation theories has been to come to comprehensive accounts of the interaction of actors in the electoral, legislative, and executive arenas (Austen-Smith and Banks 1988). The most important non-cooperative coalition formation theories have been published by Baron (1989; 1991; 1993; 1998), often in collaboration with other game-theorists (Baron and Diermeier 2001; Baron and Ferejohn 1989). In general, non-cooperative coalition formation theories make more complex assumptions about the way in which parties seek to realize office, policy, and votes and trade-off between these party goals, than cooperative coalition formation theories. Moreover, non-cooperative formal coalition formation theories pay more attention to the specific institutional setting in which government coalitions are formed, since institutional constraints significantly reduce the number of coalition alternatives (Diermeier, Martin, and Thies 2005; Mershon 1994: 41; Strom, Budge, and Laver 1994a).<sup>7</sup>

Another strand of formal coalition formation theories seek to predict which *parties* will join government coalitions. The theories predict which parties have strong bargaining positions and will consequentially integrate the government coalition. These actor-oriented coalition formation theories include concepts that identify the dominant player, the centre player, the Very Strong Party (VSP), the Merely Strong Party (MSP), and the Partners of

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<sup>7</sup> Numerous types of institutional constraints have been included in formal models of coalition formation. On the formateur effect see Alsolabehere et al. (2005) and Baron (1991), on the role of the head of state see Kang (2006), on the effect of bicameralism see Bottom et al. (2000), Diermeier et al. (2002a; 2002b), Druckman and Martin (2005), Druckman and Thies (2002), and Volden and Carrubba (2002), on the role of the investiture vote see Huber (1996a; 1996b), on the impact of electoral systems and pre-electoral coalition formation see Golder (2005; 2006a; 2006b). Although these models describe the government formation process more accurately than the models of the early game-theorists, they are not easily applied to real instances of government formation because of their complexity and capacity to model only limited interaction between parties (e.g. only three parties at a time).

the Strong Party (PSP) (Einy 1985; Laver and Shepsle 1996; Peleg 1981; Shikano and Becker 2004; Van Deemen 1989; 1997; Van Roozendaal 1992; 1993). With the exception of the first concept, identification of these players with above average bargaining power occurs on the basis of centrality. In addition to these concepts there are the power indices, which are composite measures of parties 'actual' power (Banzhaf 1965; Bartolini 1998; Shapley and Shubik 1954).

Table 2.2  
*Typology coalition formation theories*

		Actor-oriented theories	Coalition-oriented theories
Formal theories	Cooperative theories	Banzhaf 1965, Bartolini 1998, Einy 1985, Laver and Shepsle 1996; Peleg 1981; Shapley and Shubik 1954; Van Deemen 1989; 1997; Van Roozendaal 1992; 1993;	Axelrod 1960; De Swaan 1973; Gamson 1961; Leiserson 1966; Riker 1962; Von Neumann and Morgenstern 1944;
	Non-cooperative theories		Austen-Smith and Banks 1988; Baron 1989; 1991; 1993 1998; Baron and Diermeier 2001; Baron and Ferejohn 1989; Diermeier, Martin and Thies 2005;
Non-formal theories		Bäck 2003; Dumont and Bäck 2006; Isaksson 2005; Mattila and Raunio 2002; 2004; Warwick 1996; 1998	Bäck 2003; Dodd 1976; Dumont and Bäck 2006; Luebbert 1986; Maor 1998; Martin and Stevenson 2001;

*Non-formal coalition formation theories*

Non-formal coalition formation theories differ from formal coalition formation theories on three accounts. First and foremost, non-formal coalition formation theories lack the (mathematical) formalization of formal coalition formation theories. They express theoretical premises in the form of hypotheses, instead of axioms and theorems. Second, non-formal coalition formation theories have a probabilistic, rather than a deterministic character. They hypothesize about the likelihood that a certain coalition or party will assume office. Consequentially, non-formal coalition formation theories do not have predictive capacities. Third, non-formal coalition formation theories adopt the rational choice paradigm, but also borrow heavily from the European politics tradition. Party system features, for example, take an important position in non-formal coalition formation theories. As a result, non-formal coalition formation theories are more accessible than formal coalition formation

theories, they create more comprehensive accounts of government formation processes and outcomes, and they give more accurate explanations of why certain coalition governments form. Moreover, they are more open to empirical tests than formal coalition formation theories.

Non-formal coalition formation theories either seek to explain coalition composition or coalition membership. The distinction between theories of coalition composition and of coalition membership is more pronounced in non-formal coalition formation theories than in formal coalition formation theories. On the one hand, there are theories that try to explain coalition composition, i.e. "the probability of particular coalitions taking office". On the other hand, there are theories that try to explain coalition membership and concentrate on the question 'who gets in', i.e. "the probability of particular parties entering governments" (Warwick 1996: 472). In terms of research output, the former group of theories is more prominent than the latter. In short, "most studies on government formation have focused on the types of coalitions or governments formed by parties, not on the factors influencing the chances of *individual parties* joining the government" (Mattila and Raunio 2002: 263, italics in original).

Non-formal coalition formation theorists concerned with coalition composition borrow heavily from formal coalition formation theories. They take the predictions of formal coalition formation theories and transform them in testable hypotheses. To give one example, Leiserson (1968; 1970a)'s prediction that only coalitions that conform to the bargaining proposition theory will form has been reformulated into the hypothesis that "potential governments are more likely to form the fewer the number of parties they contain". In a similar fashion, De Swaan (1973)'s prediction that only minimal range coalitions will form has been transformed into the hypothesis that potential governments are more likely to form the smaller the policy distance between the coalition members (see also Bäck 2003; Dumont and Back 2006; Martin and Stevenson 2001: 35).

Non-formal coalition formation theories that focus on coalition composition also include many ideas that have originally been developed in the context of the party system approach. Most notably, the effect of party system features on coalition composition receives a prominent place in these theories (e.g. Dodd 1976). Müller and Strøm (2000a: 562) note in this respect that "party systems are generally considered the major explanatory variable in coalition politics". Factors like party system fragmentation, the effective number of parties, and the level of polarization, to a large extent determine the bargaining complexity that parties face in the coalition formation process (Warwick 1994). In formal coalition formation theories the effect of these factors remains implicit, while in non-formal coalition formation theories it is made explicit. Lastly, non-formal coalition formation theories occasionally relax the assumptions that are central to formal coalition formation theories and examine, for example, the impact of intraparty dynamics on the composition of coalition governments (Luebbert 1986; Maor 1998).

Non-formal coalition formation theories that deal with coalition membership focus on the likelihood that individual parties join the government coalition. This makes "parties rather than coalitions the unit of analysis" in these theories (Warwick 1996: 472). Actor-oriented coalition formation theories distinguish between two types of coalition parties: the first, prime minister parties, invite the second, the junior coalition members, to join prospective coalitions. They distinguish between these two types of coalition members, because "the choice of PM party is, to some extent,

influenced by factors other than the choice of a coalition party. [...] Favourable conditions for the choice of a PM party do not equal favourable conditions for the choice of a coalition party" (Isaksson 2005: 333). Prime minister parties are usually large and ideologically central. Junior coalition members have less pronounced features. As Isaksson (2005: 331) notes

"the choice of coalition partner is more complex. This is understandable because potential coalition parties are frequently diverse. Furthermore, the demands made on a coalition party are also not as strict as in choosing a leading party for the new government. Hence, it is easier to characterize a typical premier party than it is to characterize a typical coalition party."

At a general level though, junior coalition members are distinct in the way they complement prime minister parties, both in terms of size and ideological proximity (Bäck 2003; Dumont and Back 2006; Isaksson 2005; Mattila and Raunio 2002; 2004; Warwick 1996; 1998).

### **The background of coalition formation theories**

To better understand coalition formation theories, it is essential to know what they try to model, and how they try to model it. The first part – what they try to model – requires more in-depth knowledge of the government coalition and the way in which this coalition is formed. The second part – how they try to model it – requires a discussion of the assumptions coalition formation theories make to arrive at parsimonious theories that represent the coalition formation process in abstract terms.

#### *Government coalitions*

Central to coalition formation theories is, of course, the government coalition. The concept of government coalition is constructed on the basis of two components: coalition and government. Coalitions are temporary alliances between political groups built *to pursue a common goal*. In the definition of the coalition we thus recognize the idea of purposive action central to the rational choice paradigm. Governments are groups of people, ministers or other executives, that are responsible for the government of a nation. The government is more or less equal to the cabinet, the council of ministers, or the executive council. Müller and Strøm (2000a: 11) define the cabinet as "the set of politically appointed executive offices involved in top-level national policy making" or the "set of individuals with voting rights in this peak executive organ". If these two definitions are combined the government coalition is defined. The government coalition is a temporary alliance between political parties to form and sustain the cabinet.

This definition does not stipulate *when* parties belong to the government coalition and is in this respect rather vague. As noted earlier, a government remains in office by virtue of majority support in parliament. Laver and Schofield (1990: 67) note that "while the executive coalition comprises the set of parties who control positions in the executive, the coalition which determines the viability of a government is a legislative coalition". The alliance to form and sustain a cabinet can thus comprise parties that belong to the legislative, but not to the executive coalition.

It has been common practice in coalition formation studies to ignore this point and equate government coalition with the cabinet. Only sporadically scholars have taken this point seriously and proposed alternative definitions and operationalizations of government coalition. De Swaan (1973: 85), for example, has defined government coalition as "a more or less permanent coalition that ensures acceptance of all or almost all government proposals".

An even less stringent definition has been employed by Baron (1991: 138, italics in original), who states that "the term *government* will be used to refer to the parties that do not vote against a motion of confidence on a policy proposal". Neither of these definitions requires parties to have cabinet representation to qualify as government parties, but otherwise they are quite far apart. De Swaan points at the existence of a more or less permanent coalition, while Baron relies on more incidental support relations to draw the line between government and opposition.<sup>8</sup>

I reckon that the first approach fits better with the concerns raised above. The crucial purpose of the definition of the term 'government coalition' is to identify the parties that ally to form and sustain the government. The inclusion of the term 'coalition' presupposes that through their cooperation the parties in government seek to realize a common goal. This element lacks in Baron's definition, which defines membership of the government coalition primarily in negative terms. For this reason I adopt De Swaan's definition of government coalition as *a more or less permanent alliance of parties that is formed to ensure the acceptance of the main part of cabinet proposals*.

Exploration of this definition highlights that a party counts as a member of the government coalition when it has cabinet representation or when it "is nevertheless known to have supported the government consistently, and when there are grounds to believe this support was based on some sort of an agreement with the leaders of the government parties" (De Swaan 1973: 143). Strøm (1990b: 61-62) adds to this definition that the allegiance of the support party "takes the form of an explicit, comprehensive, and more than short-term commitment to the policies as well as the survival of the government". When these conditions are met, "what are formally minority governments (formed by either a single party or a coalition of parties) have relationships with their 'support' parties that are so institutionalized that they come close to being majority governments" (Bale and Bergman 2006a: 422).

Two elements of the definition merit further discussion: (1) the nature of the agreement between the minority government and the support party, and (2) the type of support agreed upon. With regard to the first aspect, it should be noted that the relationship between government coalition and support party needs to be consensual and reciprocal. In other words, there has to be a mutual agreement upon which the support relationship is based. In the parliamentary arena parties are free to vote as they wish on any type of motion. Thus, an opposition party is at liberty to vote with the government coalition, even when the latter has not solicited the formers support. This implies that support can at times be unexpected and even unwanted, in which case one cannot speak of a coalition. Moreover, the agreement should be concluded prior to the swearing of the new government. The agreement does not necessarily have to take the form of an official document (verbal agreements can weigh as heavily as written ones), but does need to be public in order to ascertain its existence.

With regard to the nature of the backing provided through the agreement, the support should, most importantly, be committed. I concur with De Swaan (1973: 143) that "when such support in parliament, without representation in the cabinet, consists mainly in a vote of abstention at critical times [...] this will not be considered sufficient as a condition for

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<sup>8</sup> In most West European parliamentary democracies confidence motions are submitted only sporadically.

membership of the coalition".<sup>9</sup> This does not mean that support parties, and cabinet members for that matter, cannot occasionally vote against the government. It is assumed that when such a vote occurs, the government coalition has agreed to disagree and has left each party or politician to vote according to its own preferences. If no consent has been reached in this type of situation, and the question to be voted upon is sufficiently important, a vote against the government will signal the end of the government coalition. In short, a support party loyally rallies behind a minority government when it uses "all the votes at his disposal whenever its continued existence is at stake" (De Swaan 1973: 143).

Thus, I opt for a broad interpretation of the concept of government coalition. At the same time, membership of a government coalition is strictly delineated. The conditions for support party status have been clearly listed: the presence of a public, consensual and reciprocal agreement concluded prior to the swearing of the government in which the support party promises to assist the minority government and subscribes to its policy programme. Consequently, "an actor is either in or out of the coalition, there is no "in between" (De Swaan 1973: 143). Parties that support minority governments on an ad hoc basis, or have a non-institutionalized relationship with a minority government, cannot be counted as support parties.

#### *The coalition formation process*

Coalition formation theories try to model the process that leads to the formation of the government coalition. But what does this government formation process look like in most West European countries? In its most extensive form, the coalition formation process comprises fourteen stages: (1) establishment of pre-electoral coalitions between parties; (2) draft of electoral manifestos; (3) nomination of candidates to stand in the elections; (4) electoral campaign; (5) legislative elections; (6) post-electoral consultations to establish parties' coalition preferences; (7) nomination of an informateur, who conducts preliminary negotiations; (8) nomination of a formateur, who leads the actual coalition negotiations; (9) selection of the parties involved in the coalition negotiations; (10) actual negotiations over cabinet portfolios and policy; (11) formulation of a coalition agreement; (12) endorsement of this agreement by the various organizational levels of the parties involved in the negotiations; (13) formal nomination of the cabinet; and (14) formal or informal investiture of the new coalition government (De Winter 1995: 119-120).<sup>10</sup>

The way in which elections function has been documented extensively. Parties present candidates and electoral manifestos to vie for the favour of voters on the basis of policy positions. Voters make their decision based upon the attractiveness of candidates and electoral manifestos and upon beliefs about parties' behaviour after the elections. In most coalition formation theories these aspects take only a minor position (but see Austen-Smith and

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<sup>9</sup> Laver and Schofield (1990: 67) take the opposite stance and argue that "for cases in which the difference between an abstention and a vote against the government is crucial to its viability, however, the effect of abstention is the same as outright support and can be treated as such, since abstention in these circumstances is typically undertaken with a clear foreknowledge of its effects".

<sup>10</sup> Under certain circumstances, most notably when government coalitions fall prematurely, the coalition formation process is shorter. The stages (1) to (5), which concern interactions in the electoral arena, are passed over and parties immediately start with the consultations (6) that should lead to the establishment of a new government coalition.

Banks 1988). Note though that parties do not always compete in elections on an individual basis. Under certain circumstances they will form pre-electoral coalitions, which are essentially proto-government coalitions. Pre-electoral coalitions come in many different forms and shapes (e.g. stand-down agreements, joint lists and shared manifestos) and roughly compete in forty per cent of elections in parliamentary democracies. Moreover, close to a third of the eventual government coalitions have their origin in a pre-electoral agreement. Pre-electoral coalitions have two functions. First, they help parties overcome electoral barriers in non-proportional electoral systems. As Strøm et al. (1994a: 316) observe "systems not based on PR lists tend to force parties to coalesce before elections in order to exploit electoral economies of scale. The more disproportional the electoral system, the greater the incentives for pre-electoral alliances.". Second, they provide voters with a clear choice between potential coalitions and show that parties have the intention and capacity to govern together (Golder 2005; 2006a;2006b).<sup>11</sup>

Once the election results are known, the most important part of the coalition formation process starts. In many parliamentary democracies the president, monarch, or speaker of parliament makes an inventory of the parties' interpretations of the election results and their coalition preferences. On the basis of the information collected, he appoints an informateur, who explores the parties' willingness to participate in the prospective government coalition and to compromise on important policy issues. When the informateur gives the green light, a formateur is appointed, who undertakes the actual coalition negotiations. The formateur serves as "a bargaining coordinator", but is at the same time also "the intended prime minister" (Müller and Strom 2000a: 15). He bargains with representatives of prospective coalition parties over the allocation of the cabinet portfolios and over the content of coalition agreement. The allocation of cabinet portfolios occurs on the basis of proportionality and parties' policy preferences (Laver and Shepsle 1996). The coalition agreement contains details about the policy compromise to which the coalition parties commit, as well as details about the portfolio allocation, and procedures that structure the operation of the coalition (e.g. conflict resolution mechanisms. It represents "the most binding written agreement joined by all parties, i.e. the most authoritative document which constrains party behaviour" (Müller and Strom 2000a: 18; 2000b; Strom and Müller 1999a; Timmermans 2006).

On the one hand, the coalition formation process is separated in two distinct parts. The first part takes place in the electoral arena and is driven by a competitive impetus. The second part takes place in the legislative and executive arena and is driven by a cooperative impetus. This provides parties with conflicting cues. Narud (1996: 19) argues that

"in the legislative arena, in order to build up viable executive coalitions, parties must *water down* the clarity of the party program by giving concessions to and compromising with other parties. In the electoral arena, on the other hand, in order to gain votes, parties need to *stress the clarity* of the party program and must mark distances to other parties".

On the other hand, there is substantial continuity and congruence between the two parts. The behaviour of parties in the electoral arena sets the

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<sup>11</sup> This practice is especially common in countries where bargaining complexity is high due to party system fragmentation or in countries with a dominant party (e.g. Sweden) where parties are forced to ally to form a credible alternative to a single party government.

conditions for their behaviour in the legislative and executive arena. Moreover, parties are bound to the manifestos they present during the election campaign, and have to honour any arrangements made prior to the elections.

The point of gravity in the coalition formation process lies nevertheless in the legislative and executive arena. Only after the electoral results are known, parties have exact information about the coalitions that control a legislative majority. With regard to Dutch politics, De Jong and Pijnenburg (1986: 146) note that parties' calls for more "political clarity" and the formation of pre-electoral coalitions have been "unable to change the fact that it [is] not the elections, but the process after the elections that decide[s] the political colour of the government". The actual coalition negotiations can take days, weeks, or even months. Several formation attempts or bargaining rounds are often needed to come to a coalition that agrees on the distribution of portfolios and the content of the coalition agreement. In many ways the coalition negotiations resemble a romantic "courtship process" (Müller and Strom 2000a: 13) in which parties try hard to seduce each other, or conversely play hard to get.

Parties are, however, not at liberty to court whomever they want. The coalition formation process is structured by exogenous and endogenous bargaining constraints. Strøm et al. (1994a: 308) define bargaining constraints as "any restriction on the set of feasible cabinet coalitions that is beyond the short-term control of the players". In the former category the most clear-cut example concerns institutional structures, such as bicameralism, electoral thresholds, or positive parliamentarism. Institutions act as a constraint on the coalition formation process, because they "define the options available to party leaders during coalition bargaining" (Müller and Strom 2000a: 567) and "structure choices by operating on actors' expectations, perceptions of incentives and disincentives, and evaluations of costs and benefits" (Mershon 1994: 41).<sup>12</sup> In the latter category one finds several types of self-imposed behavioural rules that "arise as a result of party competition" (Narud 1996: 22). These rules either prescribe or proscribe certain coalitions, as a consequence of parties' commitments (not) to govern with other parties. When endogenous bargaining constraints are positively formulated, they usually take the form of the already mentioned pre-electoral coalitions. When they are negatively formulated they either relate to a party's decision to stay in opposition or to treat a party as a pariah and exclude it from the coalition formation process. The latter aspect touches directly upon the position of radical right-wing populist parties in West European parliamentary democracies and is discussed more in-depth in the next chapter.

### **Assumptions**

What kinds of assumptions do coalition formation theories make about coalition politics in order to reduce the complexity of the coalition formation process as described in the previous section? Two types of assumptions stand out: about the motivations that structure the behaviour of these actors, and about the context in which the coalition formation process takes place.

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<sup>12</sup> There is a high degree of variation in the extent to which coalition opportunities are defined by institutions. Some countries have very few formal rules about the organization of the coalition formation process, while other countries have meticulously formulated rules and regulations that apply to the selection of (in)formateurs, or the composition and recognition of the government coalition.

### *Assumptions about the actors' motives*

Coalition formation theories attribute one or several of three objectives to parties. They either seek to maximize office, policy, or votes, or a combination of these objectives.<sup>13</sup> As Strøm (1990a: 570-571) argues "we can fruitfully think of vote seeking, office seeking, and policy seeking as three independent and mutually conflicting forms of behavior in which political parties can engage". Office, policy, and votes correspond closely to the three arenas in which parties compete: the executive arena, the legislative arena, and the electoral arena.

The office-seeking party seeks to win control over the executive in order to maximize its access to the spoils of office, which are the "private goods bestowed on recipients of politically discretionary governmental and subgovernmental appointments" (Strom 1990a: 567). These private goods usually take the form of cabinet portfolio's, but can also entail patronage appointments in and outside legislature (e.g. in the judiciary, the civil service, parastatal agencies, and sub- and supranational government institutions).<sup>14</sup> The latter addition is crucial, because it implies that support parties can also share in the spoils of office. Even office-oriented coalition theories can thus shed light on minority governments and the role support parties play in their survival.

The model of policy-oriented parties assumes that "considerations of policy are foremost in the minds of the actors [...] the parliamentary game is, in fact, about the determination of major government policy" (De Swaan 1973: 88). Parties are expected to have policy positions on which they campaign in elections and which they seek to realize in the legislative and executive. If parties are unable to change policy in the direction of their most preferred position, they will attempt to prevent changes in the opposite direction. An important way to realize policy objectives is to assume office, since this gives parties a vote in the cabinet decision making and control over government portfolios and hence over policy-making (Doring 1995; Doring and Hallerberg 2004).<sup>15</sup> However, it is also possible for parties to bring about policy changes through legislative procedures. Moreover, policy payoffs are public goods that benefit parties in government and opposition alike, and it is therefore conceivable that parties realize policy objectives by remaining passive (Laver and Schofield 1990: 53-54). The ways in which policy-seeking parties can achieve their goals are thus manifold.

The model of the vote-seeking party is derived from the work of Downs (1957: 28), who claims that "parties formulate policies in order to win elections, rather than win elections in order to formulate policies". The idea that political parties are first and foremost vote maximizers has always been widely accepted in the study of electoral competition, but is less prominent in the coalition formation literature. Generally speaking, vote-seeking behavior is qualified as an instrumental party goal, i.e. it is normally interpreted as a

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<sup>13</sup> Some scholars distinguish a fourth party goal, which is either internal cohesion (Luebbert 1986; Sjöblom 1968) or intraparty democracy maximization (Harmel and Janda 1994: 269; see also Deschouwer 1992).

<sup>14</sup> The spoils of office can also be less tangible; for example, in the form of public recognition and media exposure.

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted, however, that the control the executive can exercise over policy-making has declined considerably in recent years. Parties have had to give up many of their policy-making privileges to sub- and supranational institutions, interest groups, and the public (e.g. through referenda). Interestingly, in many instances the decision to delegate policy-making was taken by political parties themselves, which casts doubts on their policy-seeking nature (Strøm 1990: 569).

means to achieve either office or policy influence. This has already been acknowledged by Downs (1957: 34-35), who underlines that

“[party] members are motivated by their personal desire for the income, prestige, and power, which come from holding office [...] Since none of the appurtenances of office can be obtained without being elected, the main goal of every party is the winning of elections. Thus, all its actions are aimed at maximizing votes”.

In a similar fashion he stresses that “the more votes a party wins, the more chance it has to enter a coalition, the more power it receives if it does enter one, and the more individuals in it hold office in the government coalition. Hence vote-maximizing is still the basic motive underlying the behavior of parties” (Downs 1957: 159).

In more recent years the idea that *the* office-seeking party, *the* policy-seeking party, or *the* vote-seeking party does not exist has become widespread. The vast majority of political parties seek to satisfy more than one goal simultaneously, which has led to attempts to come to an integrative theory of competitive party behavior (Budge and Laver 1986; Bueno de Mesquita 1975; Huber 1996a; Laver 1989; Müller and Strom 1999; Narud 1996; Sened 1996; Sjoblom 1968; Strom 1990a). These theories take account of the fact that parties 1) compete in different arenas; 2) have to reconcile short- and long-term interests; and 3) can pursue goals for intrinsic and instrumental reasons. These analytical observations are closely linked.

An integrative theory of competitive behavior starts with the acknowledgment that government formation, which takes place in the parliamentary and executive arena, is nested in a more elaborate pattern of political competition, which also encompasses the electoral arena in which parties compete for votes (Austen-Smith and Banks 1988; Laver and Shepsle 1990; Strom 1990a; Tsebelis 1990). Coalition building is then part of a cyclical process of elections, parliamentary and executive majority construction, legislative activity, after which new elections are scheduled. The cyclical nature of this process requires that parties are future-oriented and have to make trade-offs between short- and long-term interests. At times they will have to forgo immediate benefits, because the pursuit of these benefits interferes with a party's long-term ambitions. This means also that the pursuit of an objective is not necessarily motivated by intrinsic considerations; it might also be part of an instrumental strategy, i.e. a means to an end rather than an end in itself. In short, “to the extent that the actor at the same time strives towards several goals that are interdependent – for instance, so that all goals cannot at the same time be optimized, a weighing of one against the other must be made” (Sjoblom 1968: 31)

To give only one example in which these elements surface: policy realization requires parties to please voters and form and maintain agreements with other parties over a sustained period (Lupia and Strom forthcoming). However, in the legislative arena parties are forced to water down their positions in order to make policy compromise possible, while in the electoral arena parties have to mark policy distances to maintain a distinguishable profile for the voter. Changes in party positions between the electoral and legislative and/or executive arena are risky, because voters prefer reliable and responsible parties (Downs 1957: 103-109). To satisfy the two conditions necessary for policy realization is thus not an easy task, since competition in different arenas can ask for different strategies, and strategies employed in one arena can have a contradictory effect on the realization of objectives in another (Narud 1996).

This study focuses on government participation. In an ideal world, government participation is attractive to parties for three reasons. First, through government participation parties obtain a share of the spoils of office, most notably portfolios. Second, through their control of these portfolios, they are able to influence government policy, an objective they also realize on a more general level through their contribution to the coalition agreement, which constitutes the cornerstone of government policy. Third, government participation can have positive effects on a party's future electoral results, since it can deliver the policy promises made during the election campaign and demonstrate its reliability and authority.

However, the world is far from ideal and government participation can also entail negative consequences, as a result of which parties can decide to prefer opposition over government. The benefits of government participation can be insufficient to satisfy a party. The potential coalition agreement can entail policy compromises a party is unwilling to make, either out of principle, or because the party fears electoral punishment if it does not keep its electoral promises. Retrospective voting is an important determinant of electoral behavior and it has been demonstrated that incumbency effects are often negative, because voters judge that the discrepancy between promises and performances is too large as a consequence of which parties lose reliability and hence support (Rose and Mackie 1983; Strom 1985; 1990b; Strom and Müller 1999b).

When parties evaluate the potential consequences of government participation, they are likely to face trade-offs. These impose themselves when the realization of one goal (e.g. office) is incompatible with the realization of another (e.g. votes). Although office and votes are notoriously difficult to reconcile, potential trade-offs between office and policy, and between policy and votes, also present themselves at times. In the end most trade-offs boil down to contrasts between the satisfaction of short-term interests, on the one, and the realization of long-term objectives, on the other hand. How then, do parties prioritize goals when they are forced to make trade-offs? The factors that influence the process of prioritisation are numerous and the space to discuss these extensively lacks at this point, but they include environmental factors, party-organizational factors, and situational factors (Strom 1990a; Strom and Müller 1999b: 24-27).

#### *Assumptions about the context in which coalition formation takes place*

Coalition formation theories make several other assumptions; for example, that actors have "perfect information about all aspects of the decision process, and complete information about the preferences of other actors" (Laver and Shepsle 1996: 23) or that parties have *allgemeine Koalitionsfähigkeit* or general coalitionability (Von Beyme 1985). Due to space constraints it is impossible to discuss these additional assumptions in detail in this chapter. Given that the assumption that parties have general coalitionability relates directly to the normal pathology versus pathological normalcy controversy sketched in the introduction of this dissertation, I will discuss this briefly here.

Coalition formation theories assume that "there are no *a priori* constraints which circumscribe or inhibit the negotiation and coalition between any two parties" (Dodd 1976: 40). Less formally put, each party considers every other party as a potential coalition partner until the parameters that shape parties' coalition preferences (e.g. election results) are known. Clearly, the assumption that parties have general coalitionability conflicts to some degree with the behaviour of parties in coalition formation processes. Some

parties are treated as political pariahs and excluded from government coalitions on a priori grounds. Individual communist parties, green parties and radical right-wing populist parties have occasionally been sidelined in coalition formation processes, because mainstream parties refused on a priori grounds to negotiate with these parties.

There are important reasons to maintain the assumption of general coalitionability and not integrate these kinds of behavioural regularities in coalition formation theories. When these regularities are included in coalition formation theories, they are taken as invariant features of the coalition formation process. As Laver and Schofield note,

“it implies that certain social features of the bargaining process should be treated as ‘laws’, over which the actors themselves have no control whatsoever. But such patterns, however inflexible they may appear to be, are not really laws at all, but are rather the consequences of purposeful decision making of the actors themselves.”

In other words, parties have strategic reasons to treat some parties as political pariahs, and they will change their behavior when the conditions that shape their strategic behavior change. In this sense, it is useful to think of pariah status as the polar opposite of government status. Pariah status and government status are opposite sides of a specter or different sides of the same medal. Whether parties end up as pariah parties or government parties depends on the strategic considerations of the parties involved. For this reason, these kinds of behavioral regularities “should be treated as outputs of the bargaining process rather than inputs to it. They are things to be explained rather than things to be used, like magic wands, to do the explaining” (Laver and Schofield 1990: 201).

### **Research design**

Within the confines of this dissertation it is not possible to use every single type of coalition formation theory to explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. I therefore select two types of theories that are in my opinion (1) best suited to answer questions about specific aspects of the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties; (2) best positioned to account for cross-national, cross-temporal, and cross-party differences in the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties; (3) most open to empirical applications. The first type of coalition formation theories I employ are the non-formal actor-oriented coalition formation theories. These theories can help explain why certain radical right-wing populist parties have become coalition members whilst others have not, and why these parties have become coalition members after specific elections. The focus in actor-oriented coalition formation theories is primarily on *party characteristics* and the *interaction between party characteristics*. The second type of coalition formation theories I use are the cooperative formal coalition formation theories. These theories can help explain if and why the government coalitions of radical right-wing populist parties have certain features. The focus in cooperative formal coalition formation theories is primarily on *coalition characteristics*. Both types of theories also contain assumptions about *party goals*. With these two types of theories I thus cover all the key ingredients of the general model that can explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties, which I presented in this introduction of this dissertation.

The combination of these two types of theories enables me to answer a series of questions about the government participation of radical right-wing

populist parties. With regard to the first type of coalition formation theories, I focus on questions such as *what are the characteristics of the radical right-wing populist parties that have been members of government coalitions, what are the characteristics of the mainstream parties that have been members of government coalitions that included radical right-wing populist parties and what are the characteristics of the relationship between radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties that participated in these government coalitions*. With regard to the second type of coalition formation theories, the focus is on questions such as *what are the characteristics of the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated, and are these characteristics different from those of 'conventional' government coalitions*. The answers to these questions provide information about the conditions under, and the reasons for, which radical right-wing populist parties have assumed office in recent years.

#### *Mixed methods as the way forward*

The combination of two types of theories is complemented by a combination of two types of empirical research. I opt for mixed method approach, which combines large-N analyses (LNA) with small-N analyses (SNA). More particularly, this study is organized as a "nested analysis" (Lieberman 2005) and consists of two main parts. The first part, the LNA, puts the two types of coalition formation theories described above to the test and establishes causal effects that together explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. The second part, the SNA, investigates the causal mechanisms that lie beneath the causal effects found in the first part.

Lieberman (2005: 435) has argued that there is "a synergistic value to the nested research design", because LNA and SNA are highly complementary. In the words of Bennett (2002: 5), "the advantages and limitations of case study methods are in many respects the converse of those of statistical methods, which is why combining the two methods has the potential to reduce limitations that afflict each one when used in isolation". LNA establishes causal *effects* and has the capacity to control for and isolate effects and measure uncertainty. SNA is better equipped to establish causal *mechanisms* and has the capacity to test the plausibility of statistical relationships found in LNA, thus increasing theoretical insights. Together the two approaches can uncover causal explanations that include arguments about both causal effects and causal mechanisms. More specifically, an LNA followed by an SNA enables the researcher to eliminate irrelevant hypotheses in an early stage of the study, to polish theoretical arguments that have proved relevant, to investigate hypotheses for which one does not have (good) data for every single case, to solve problems of endogeneity, to detect spurious relationships, and to establish a chain of causality. None of these objectives is easily realized by either a LNA or a SNA in isolation. Consequentially, the analytical payoff of the nested analysis is greater than the sum of the separate parts (Lieberman 2005: 436).

In studies of government formation the mixed method approach provides researchers with the means to tackle two important problems. First, coalition formation theories have a limited capacity to correctly predict coalition outcomes. With the mixed method approach one can establish the reasons for the low predictive power of these theories and build new and more powerful theories. Second, coalition formation theorists have a particularly poor understanding of the causal mechanisms that create causal effects in coalition studies. The mixed method approach enables the development of coalition formation theories that not only correctly predict

coalition outcomes, but also have the ability to explain how and why coalitions form (cf. Gerring 2005). It gives researchers the opportunity "to measure and isolate the effects of important coalition variables, to study the mechanisms underlying some of these effects, and to find new explanatory variables" that enhance our understanding of coalition formation process (see also Bäck 2003; Bäck and Dumont 2007: 472).

#### *The large-N study*

Lieberman (2005: 436) conceives of LNA "as a mode of analysis in which the primary causal inferences are derived from statistical analyses which ultimately lead to quantitative estimates of the robustness of a theoretical model". The formation of government coalitions has been predominantly studied through LNA (Bäck 2003; Bäck and Dumont 2007; Bartolini 1998; Browne 1973; Golder 2006a; Isaksson 2005; Martin and Stevenson 2001; Mattila and Raunio 2002; Mattila and Raunio 2004; Warwick 1996; 1998). These LNA's have usually included "as many relevant cases as possible and for as many points in time as feasible. This is what is also called a pooled time series Research Design." (Keman 2006: 11). The most common pooled time series research design includes coalition outcomes drawn from post-war formation opportunities in West European countries. According to Keman, this type of study "allows for a truly comparative research design" (ibid.).

The types of statistical techniques on which these LNA's have relied, vary. Some studies have relied exclusively on descriptive statistics (Bartolini 1998). Other studies have used more advanced statistical techniques. Dependent on the question under investigation and the operationalization and measurement of the dependent variable, LNA's have employed OLS regression models (Browne 1970; Franklin and Mackie 1984), logistic regression models (Bäck 2003; Warwick 1996), probit models (Laver and Shepsle 1996), conditional logit models (Bäck 2003; Bäck and Dumont 2006; Diermeier, Martin, and Thies 2005; Diermeier and Merlo 2004; Dumont and Back 2006; Golder 2006a; Kang 2006; Martin and Stevenson 2001; Skjaeveland, Serritzlew, and Blom-Hansen 2004), and nested mixed logit models (Glasgow, Golder, and Golder 2007).

The LNA in this study combines descriptive analyses and a variety of sophisticated statistical techniques. The combination of various techniques fits best with the decision to employ two different types of coalition formation theories. Coalition membership theories have a probabilistic character, and are thus tested on the basis of probabilistic techniques. Cooperative formal coalition formation theories have a deterministic character, and are thus better not tested on the basis of probabilistic techniques (Morton 1999). Instead, I use these theories first and foremost as heuristic devices and evaluate them on the basis of the congruence between coalition predictions and coalition outcomes.

#### *The small-N study*

Lieberman (2005: 436) conceives of SNA as "a mode of analysis in which causal inferences about the primary unit under investigation are derived from qualitative comparisons of cases and/or process-tracing of causal chains within cases across time, and in which the relationship between theory and facts is captured largely in narrative form". In this form, coalition formation studies have rarely involved SNA; neither to test coalition formation theories, nor to systematically investigate coalition outcomes. The only exceptions to this rule are the few edited volumes that have been published on coalition governments, which are comprised of collections of country studies (Bogdanor

1983; Browne and Dreijmanis 1982; Deschouwer 2008; Muller and Strom 2000). These volumes usually take an inductive approach to the question of coalition formation.

In some respects it is quite surprising that coalition governments have rarely been studied through case studies. As Smith (1997: 157) has argued,

“a good knowledge of the history and politics of at least some foreign states is the only sound way of approaching comparison. Without such a grounding, generalisation on the basis of a few selected features or quantitative indicators courts the danger of becoming superficial, just as it is to make a comparative journey armed with a selection of handy concepts without any real awareness of the context to which they are being applied.”

I believe coalition formation processes lend themselves particularly well for case studies. They generally involve relatively few individuals, who are easily identifiable (e.g. the head of state, (in)formateurs, and negotiators). Moreover, coalition negotiations are usually fairly complex and contain elements that are not easily incorporated in LNA. Bargaining failure is one of these elements. LNA are often unable to accommodate failed formation attempts, while these can convey important information about the reasons for the successful formation of government coalitions. Sequence is another of these elements. On theoretical grounds it appears that it matters greatly in which order parties are selected as formateurs and in which order policy proposals are made. LNA have not yet been able to include these elements. Of course, small-N studies require that scholars get access to crucial information about the coalition formation process. The secrecy with which coalition negotiations are surrounded makes this not evident. In several countries the coalition formation process has become more transparent in recent years.<sup>16</sup>

The objectives of the SNA are twofold. First, to establish whether the causal effects found in the large-N studies hold up when a specific case is explored in more detail. Even though causal effects can prove significant in large-N studies, the logics to which individual cases obey, can deviate substantially from general patterns of causality. According to Laver, cross-national differences that affect coalition outcomes are substantial and warrant analyses on a country-by-country basis (Franklin and Mackie 1984; Grofman 1989; Laver 1989). Second, case studies enable the investigation of the causal mechanisms that are hypothesized to bring about causal effects, i.e. they serve as solutions to the intricacy of making causal inferences about coalition formation in large-N studies. Theories formulate hypotheses about the reasons why causal effects occur. In coalition formation theories it is hypothesized that causal effects are the consequences of the office, policy, and vote-seeking behaviour of parties. Most large-N studies are, however, unequipped to establish whether these hypotheses are correct. In a case study, on the contrary, one has ample opportunity to evaluate these assumptions. This is exactly what the authors do in the book *Policy, Office, or Votes. How Political Parties in Western Europe Make Hard Decisions*, edited by Müller and Strøm (1999). They demonstrate how all kinds of parties in a wide variety of circumstances trade-off between office, policy, and votes. This is also the objective of the case study included in this dissertation. It shows how

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<sup>16</sup> In the Netherlands, for example, the letters party leader send to the queen to report their coalition preferences are now made public, as are the assignments the queen gives to the (in)formateurs.

parties evaluate different coalition alternatives and how specific government coalitions are formed.

There are two ways to go about the selection of cases for a small-N study in a nested analysis. One can either opt for a closer examination of cases that are explained by the model developed in the LNA, to further corroborate the support for the model, or for a closer examination of cases that are not explained by the model, to come up with a new model that better explains the phenomenon under investigation. If the first path is taken, the SNA serves “as a check for spurious correlation and can help to fine-tune a theoretical argument by elaborating causal mechanisms” (Lieberman 2005: 444). If the second path is taken, the SNA forms a point of departure for the construction of a new theoretical model. The choice for either of these approaches is clearly dependent upon the outcomes of the LNA.

The LNA in this study shows that the two types of coalition formation theories selected explain the rise to power of radical right-wing populist parties remarkably well. This conclusion guides the selection of the case studied in the SNA. I closely examine a case that fits the two types of coalition formation theories employed. More specifically, I scrutinize the formation of the government coalition of ÖVP and FPÖ that assumed office in Austria after the 1999 parliamentary elections. In the SNA, the characteristics of the FPÖ, the characteristics of the ÖVP, the relationship between the characteristics of these two parties, and the characteristics of the government coalition of ÖVP and FPÖ are investigated. I re-evaluate the two types of coalition formation theories tested in the LNA, but this time on the basis of process-tracing evidence.

### **Some preliminary methodological notes**

Prior to any empirical analysis some important methodological questions merit attention. Coalition formation theories include notions about the policy-seeking behaviour of parties. To employ these theories, information about parties’ policy positions is necessary. The measurement of policy positions is unfortunately one of the most debated topics in political science research. Scholars disagree fundamentally about the way in which policy positions are most adequately measured. In this section I briefly review two important choices researchers have to make when they collect information about parties’ policy positions. The first concerns the nature of the political space about which the policy positions are meant to give information, the second the actual measurement of policy positions.

#### *Political spaces*

To study the complex systems of policy preferences to which political parties adhere, a conceptual toolkit has been developed that consists of abstract representations of these preferences that can ‘travel’ without difficulty across time and countries (Mair 2001b: 10). Spatial representations of parties’ policy positions summarize these complex policy preferences and depict the arena in which party competition takes place. Spatial representations of party positions, or political spaces, are more than analogies to the physical spaces in which parties compete (e.g. the French Constituent Assembly of 1789). They are analytical tools with which representations of a series of common notions in politics can be visualized and understood. Essentially, they are maps, or visual images, of relations between parties.

The construction of these spatial representations starts with the observation that parties take stances on a wide range of political and societal questions. To compare these stances in a systematic fashion, they are

thought of as policy dimensions. Policy dimensions are nothing more than aggregations of policy issues that share a thematic basis. The idea is that policy dimensions capture latent lines of conflict and add to these the notion of intensity; i.e. parties can take a range of positions on a dimension that reflect the extent to which they lean more towards the one or the other extreme of the dimension.

It is possible to compare party positions on many different policy dimensions. However, not every policy dimension is equally important to parties. Some dimensions are more salient than other, that is, parties attribute more weight to the dimensions they feel very intense about than to dimensions they do not feel intense about. The political space comprises only those policy dimensions to which parties attach importance. Of course, it is not easy to establish which dimensions are more important, and where the cut-off point lies between important and unimportant policy dimensions. Consequentially, the dimensionality of the political space is difficult to determine. The most important distinction in terms of dimensionality is between uni-dimensional and multi-dimensional political spaces. When only one dimension is salient, the political space is uni-dimensional. When more than one dimension is salient, the political space is multi-dimensional. In a uni-dimensional space the distances between parties, indicative of their policy differences, are easily measured. In multi-dimensional spaces the measurement of distances between parties is far more complex.

Regardless of the dimensionality of the political space, party positions in this space have a number of properties and functions. First, the positions provide indications about parties' policy stances. Second, the distances between parties' positions provide indications about differences between parties' policy stances. Third, the configuration of party positions provides indications about parties' centrality or extremism. Fourth, changes in party positions provide indications of changes in the relationships between parties. Parties either move towards each other, or away from each other. These patterns of convergence and divergence inform us about party system dynamics.

#### *West European political spaces*

What are the general features of West European political spaces in terms of dimensionality and party positions? Scholars disagree substantially on this point. A first group of scholars claims that West European political spaces are essentially uni-dimensional (Budge *et al.* 2001; Knutsen 1998; Van der Brug 1999). These scholars argue that "left-right is the core currency of political exchange in Western democracies" (McDonald, Mendes, and Kim 2007: 64). A second group of scholars claims that West European political spaces are multi-dimensional (Kitschelt 1995; Kriesi *et al.* 2006; Lubbers 2001; Pellikaan, De Lange, and Van der Meer 2007; Pellikaan, Van der Meer, and De Lange 2003; Skjaeveland 2005; Warwick 2002). These scholars argue that "the use of a single ideological dimension to describe the structure underlying the splendid complexity of tastes in any real political system is obviously a gross oversimplification" (Laver and Hunt 1992: 15).

These two views are not that far apart as might seem at first sight. Scholars that defend the uni-dimensional model generally acknowledge that the left-right dimension integrates parties' positions on several policy dimensions and engenders loss of information, while scholars that defend the multi-dimensional model acknowledge the existence of a more general left-right dimension that gives a more simplified and stylized representation of

party positions. Whether one prefers the one view over the other largely depends on the objectives of the research project.

The vast majority of coalition formation theories assume that political spaces are uni-dimensional (some notable exceptions are discussed in chapter 5). The primordial question is whether this assumption conflicts with the objective of this study to explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. Several scholars have argued that the dimensionality of West European political spaces has changed under influence of the rise of new politics parties, which attach more importance to the cultural dimension than to the socioeconomic dimension (e.g. Kitschelt 1995; Kriesi *et al.* 2006).<sup>17</sup> On the cultural dimension the libertarian pole has generally become associated with a preference for libertarian cultural policies that focus on cultural egalitarianism and individual freedom, while the authoritarian pole has become associated with a preference for authoritarian cultural policies that focus on authoritarianism, cultural inequality, and traditionalism. On the socioeconomic dimension “the left pole has in general become associated with policies designed to bring about the redistribution of resources from those with more to those with less; and with the promotion of social rights that apply to groups of individuals taken as a whole even at the expense of individual members of those groups. The right pole has become associated with the promotion of individual rights, including the right not to have personal resources expropriated for redistribution by the state, even at the expense of social inequality and of poverty among worse off social groups.” (Laver and Hunt 1992: 12).

Empirically, parties’ positions on these two dimensions are generally highly correlated. As Laver and Hunt (1992: 49) have rightfully argued, “if the relative observed positions of a set of actors on two policy dimensions are identical, then both dimensions are ‘really’ manifestations of a single underlying policy dimension”. The libertarian-authoritarian and the socioeconomic dimension both structure parties’ positions on the left-right dimension. The latter dimension has important absorptive capacities and incorporates both parties’ stances on both ‘old politics’ issues and ‘new politics’ issues (Knutsen 1998; Mair 1997). Consequentially, “some form of Left-Right dimension dominates competition at the level of parties”, regardless of the underlying dimensionality of West European political spaces (Budge and Robertson 1987: 349).<sup>18</sup>

### *Party positions*

To locate parties in political spaces, reliable and valid estimates of party positions are needed. Various practices to estimate party positions exist (for overviews and discussions, see Benoit and Laver 2006; Carter 2005; Laver and Schofield 1990; Mair 2001b). The practices most commonly used to test coalition formation theories are (1) the estimation of party positions on the basis of expert surveys and (2) the estimation of party positions on the basis of content analyses of party manifestos.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> A wide variety of labels has been attached to the latter dimension, including the post-materialist dimension, the GAL-TAN dimension, and the New Politics dimension.

<sup>18</sup> The exact interpretation of the left-right dimension differs from country to country, and from one decade to the next. This leads to the conclusion that “what experts do have in mind when they talk about left and right, in terms of substantive policy dimensions, varies in intuitively plausible ways from country to country” (Benoit and Laver 2007: 94; see also Benoit and Laver 2006; Laver and Hunt 1992).

<sup>19</sup> Other approaches are available, but have been designed for markedly different research endeavours. They include voter surveys, rank-and-file surveys, media

Expert surveys come with “a certain weight and legitimacy”, give a timely account of a party’s position, are “quick, easy, and comprehensive”, and generate “highly *comparable* and *standardized* data” (Mair 2001b: 24, italics in original). The most important expert surveys have been administered by Castles and Mair (1984), Laver and Hunt (1992), Huber and Inglehart (1995), Lubbers (2000), and Benoit and Laver (2006).<sup>20</sup> Expert data have been frequently used to test coalition formation theories (e.g. Bäck 2003; Dumont and Back 2006; Warwick 1996). The content analysis of manifestos has been mainly executed within the framework of the Manifesto Research Group (MRG), today named the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP).<sup>21</sup> The CMP “consistently produces the best estimates of party positions and they are quite good as compared to other accepted approaches” (Gabel and Huber 2000: 94). They generate “solid basis and reliable estimates as a general standard for validating other methods” (Budge 2001: 210). Data created in this context have also frequently been used to test coalition formation theories (e.g. De Vries 1999; Martin and Stevenson 2001; Warwick 1996).

The party position estimates generated on the basis of expert surveys and the CMP are usually highly correlated and measure by and large the same thing (Benoit and Laver 2007; Keman 2007; Laver and Hunt 1992: 41; McDonald, Mendes, and Kim 2007).<sup>22</sup> The differences between estimates for individual parties are sometimes, however, noteworthy. Radical right-wing

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analysis, roll-call analysis, and the analysis of expenditure flows. Kleinnijenhuis and Pennings (2001: 180) note, for example, that “media coverage taps the vote seeking positions of parties” and is therefore not suited to analyze the office- and policy-seeking motives of parties; an argument that also applies to the use of voter perceptions. Laver and Schofield (1990: 245) describe roll-call analysis as “a tautologically inappropriate method of defining party policy positions as independent inputs in the bargaining process”.

<sup>20</sup> In addition to these cross-national surveys, a vast number of national expert surveys have been conducted in West European countries (e.g. Laver 1995; Laver and Mair 1999 on the Netherlands; Ray and Narud 2000 on Norway).

<sup>21</sup> The approach developed by the CMP relies on the sentence by sentence coding of manifestos presented by parties at election time. To code manifestos, the CMP has chosen a saliency (or valence) approach, assuming that “parties argue with each other by emphasizing different policy priorities rather than by directly confronting each other on the same issues” (Budge and Bara 2001: 6-7). In other words, the CMP believes that issues are salient in nature; i.e. parties give attention to some issues and neglect others, regardless of their positions on these issues. Thus, the MRG measures how often parties mention certain issues in their manifestos, rather than the positions they take on these issues. In recent years alternative techniques to code manifesto’s have been developed (e.g. De Lange 2007; Klemmensen et al. 2007; Laver and Garry 2000; Pellikaan et al 2003; 2007 Pennings and Keman 2002) and applied to questions of government formation (e.g. De Lange 2001; Debus 2006; Elkink and De Lange 2002; Van der Meer 2003).

<sup>22</sup> The analysis made by Laver and Hunt reports correlations of roughly .85 between expert surveys and CMP data, while the correlation between the various waves of expert surveys is above .90. Benoit and Laver (2006: 143) make a similar comparison and correlate the policy positions obtained through their expert survey with policy estimates reported by the CMP. They come to the conclusion that “the two scales seem to measure the same thing, albeit noisily”. Moreover, they observe that “there is a lot of apparently random noise”, especially related to the positions of “parties for which immigration, nationalism, or the environment are important issues” (Benoit and Laver 2006: 143-144). Like the previous authors, they attribute these differences mainly to faulty measurements in the CMP dataset, rather than to problems with their expert survey.

populist parties, for example, often receive markedly different estimates in expert surveys and the CMP (Benoit and Laver 2007: 98; McDonald, Mendes, and Kim 2007: 72). These differences are likely to affect the predictions made by formal coalition formation theories, because these theories are extremely sensitive to minor deviations in party positions. Hence, it is crucial to establish which of the two approaches yields the best estimates of parties' positions.

To establish which of these two approaches is best suited to estimate party positions with the specific objective to employ coalition formation theories, I rely on a evaluative scheme developed by Benoit and Laver (Benoit and Laver 2006: 90-92; see also Laver 2001). This scheme assesses the approaches on the basis of three important criteria: (1) the origin of the estimates, (2) the a priori assumptions made about the estimates, and (3) the statistical properties of the estimates. I introduce a fourth criterion, namely the cross-national and cross-temporal availability of the estimates.

The first criterion focuses on the origin of the estimates, that is, the sources from which information about parties' positions is derived. It distinguishes between approaches estimating party positions indirectly (i.e. estimates based on evaluations of party positions by third parties, for example experts) and party positions that estimate party positions directly (i.e. estimates based on the observable behaviour or output of parties, for example manifestos). The first approach generates subjective estimates of party positions, while the second approach generates objective estimates of party positions.

What kind of data input do coalition formation theories require? Bäck (2003: 43) argues that "politicians evaluate potential coalitions on the basis of their own perceptions of the other parties' ideal policy positions". These positions do not necessarily correspond to parties' actual policy positions. Moreover, Brams, Jones, and Kilgour (2002: 359) observe that "the strange bedfellows frequently observed in legislative coalition [...] suggest that even when players agree on, say, a left-ordering, their perceptions of where players stand in this ordering may differ substantially".

The best way to tap into parties perceptions of each others' positions is to ask politicians, for example through parliamentary surveys. As Müller and Jenny (2000) note, "data about the policy preferences of political elite [are] extremely suited to explain the future coalitional politics of parties". However, only in the Netherlands a proper research tradition has been established in which parliamentary surveys are conducted on a regular basis (1968, 1972, 1979, 1990, 2001, 2006).<sup>23</sup> In recent years similar projects have been set up in other countries as well, but the availability of data remains too limited for comparative analysis.<sup>24</sup>

Expert surveys are a worthy proxy for parliamentary surveys. The resemblance between expert and parliamentary surveys are noteworthy at the theoretical *and* at the empirical level. Politicians and experts have largely the same socio-demographic characteristics and command the same level of information about parties' policy positions. The results of expert and parliamentary surveys appear to 'suffer' from similar ideological biases when

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<sup>23</sup> These studies have lead to various publications on the policy positions of Dutch parliamentary parties (e.g. Daalder and Van der Geer 1997; Hillebrand and Meulman 1992).

<sup>24</sup> In Austria, for example, a parliamentary study has been conducted during the twentieth legislature on the basis of which Müller and Jenny (2000) have made an analysis of the policy positions of the parties represented in the Austrian National Council (see also chapter four).

it comes to the evaluation of the positions of radical right-wing populist parties, with parliamentarians and experts locating radical right-wing populist parties further to the right the further they position themselves to the left (Laver and Hunt 1992).<sup>25</sup> Mair (2001b: 25) believes that "expert judgements [...] reflect a crude synthesis of these other approaches, filtered through the perceptions of well-read and intelligent observers. They are less an alternative than a short-cut". In other words, they are proxies for other indirect estimates of party positions.

The second criterion to evaluate the two approaches concerns two questions of operationalization: (1) the assumptions made about the dimensionality of the political space, and (2) the *a priori* or *a posteriori* definition of the content of the dimensions. Coalition formation theories assume that the left-right dimension is the most important dimension structuring coalition behaviour in West European politics. Expert surveys and manifesto research each have the capacity to estimate parties' positions on this dimension, but the way they do this differs. Expert surveys inquire directly after parties' positions on the left-right dimension, while the CMP calculates parties' left-right positions on the basis of their positions on 54 separate policy dimensions. Moreover, in expert surveys the interpretation of the concepts 'left' and 'right' is unspecified, while in the CMP the content of the left-right dimension is determined by the 54 policy dimensions that make up this dimension. Since coalition formation theories often leave the substantive interpretation of the left-right dimension, along which parties compete for government, unspecified, the latter approach is preferable over the former.

The third criterion focuses on the statistical properties of the estimated party positions. Important statistical criteria include precision, accuracy or (face) validity, reliability, and uncertainty. Party position estimates derived from expert surveys and the CMP score high on most of these criteria. Expert surveys represent a low "risk of unreliabilities" and "errors of expert judgement" (Laver and Schofield 1990: 250), as a result of the large N on which the estimated party positions are based (Mair 2001b: 18). McDonald and Mendes (2001: 111) confirm that expert surveys score high in terms of reliability, and conclude that "there is little randomness in the experts' placement of the parties". Expert surveys are also "among the most valid measures of party positions at our disposal" (Klemmensen, Hobolt, and Hansen 2007: 747). CMP estimates score high in terms of reliability too, but the face validity of estimates for individual parties is at times extremely low (Pelizzo 2003). This problem primarily, but not exclusively, affects the estimates of radical right-wing populist party positions and persists even when the estimates are corrected.<sup>26</sup> For this reason, expert surveys are preferable over the CMP estimates.

The fourth criterion concerns the cross-national and cross-temporal availability of estimates. Expert surveys have the great disadvantage that

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<sup>25</sup> This claim is supported by a comparative analysis of the policy position attributed to the CD in the Netherlands in the expert survey of Laver and Hunt (1992) and the data of the Dutch parliamentary survey analyzed by Hillebrand and Meulman (1992).

<sup>26</sup> The low face validity of the scores attributed to radical right-wing populist parties is a consequence of 1) the focus of the CMP on electoral competition (manifestos) and saliency; 2) the emphasis in the programs of radical right-wing populist parties on issues not included in the CMP coding scheme; 3) the complex economic positions taken by radical right-wing populist parties which falsely make these parties come across as left-wing; 4) the brevity of many radical right-wing populist parties programmes.

they cannot produce estimates of party positions prior to the first expert survey conducted in the early 1980s, because surveys with retrospective questions yield notoriously unreliable results (Mair 2001b). The CMP covers more than 600 parties in 50 countries, but does not include many small parties in their analyses of manifestos (Volgens 2001: 95). Consequentially, many of the smaller radical right-wing populist parties are not included in the CMP dataset (e.g. CP/CD, FNb, ND). Again the expert surveys are preferable over the CMP, because this study focuses on a party family that has gained notoriety after 1980s. The absence of estimates for particular parties in the CMP is therefore more problematic than the absence of pre-1980 estimates in expert surveys.

On each of the four criteria the expert surveys appear to generate party position estimates that are better equipped for the purposes of this study than the CMP. The use of expert surveys in coalition formation studies is, however, not without risk. Laver, Benoit, and Garry (2003: 311) rightfully argue that indirect approaches generate estimates of parties' positions that are "a product of the political processes under investigation". In other words, there is a causal link between the behaviour of political parties, including their coalitional behaviour, and the perceptions observers have of their party positions. According to Laver and Schofield (1990: 245), "expert surveys are the most likely to be conditioned by historical experiences of coalitions".<sup>27</sup> To counter this argument, I would argue that the perceptions politicians have of each others' party positions are equally influenced by prior coalition behaviour. This is one of the factors that make expert surveys good proxies for parliamentary surveys and, hence, produce estimates that are valid inputs for coalition formation theories.

The estimates of party positions contained in the five cross-national expert surveys that have been conducted between the early 1980s and the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, do not have identical theoretical and statistical properties. To use them as inputs in coalition formation theories, they need theoretical and statistical standardization. First, the dimensions have to be standardized. The various expert surveys measure party positions on a general left-right dimension, as required by coalition formation theories. The only exception to this rule is the Laver and Hunt survey, for which party positions on the left-right dimension have been calculated on the basis of parties' scores on a number of socio-economic and social policy dimensions (Carter 2005: 133; 143 footnote 8). A next step is the standardization of the party positions on the left-right dimension, since some studies have used 10-points scales (ranging from 1 to 10) (Inglehart and Huber 1995), and some 11-point scales (ranging from 0 to 10) (Castles and Mair 1984; Lubbers 2000), and some 20-point scales (ranging from 1 to 20) (Benoit and Laver 2006; Laver and Hunt

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<sup>27</sup> Several other arguments have been advanced against the use of expert surveys. They include the uncertainty about the status of the experts involved and the information on which they found their judgement (Mair 2001), the inability of expert surveys to register movements in policy positions (McDonald and Mendes 2001; McDonald, Mendes, and Kim no date), and the difficulties for experts to position newcomers and parties that exhibit high degrees of intraparty democracy. The first point is a valid concern that has been addressed sufficiently by those who have administered expert surveys (e.g. Laver and Hunt 1992). The second problem has been solved by an increase in the number of expert surveys as a consequence of which party movements are now observable. The third problem is particularly interesting, and actually strengthens the arguments in favour of the use of expert surveys, for it has been established that political parties experience similar difficulties when they position each other (Bäck and Vernby 2003).

1992). To make these different scales comparable, the scores attributed to parties have been standardized and a scale that ranges from 0 to 10 has been constructed.<sup>28</sup> The standardized data have been attributed to specific time slots. The Castles and Mair survey has been taken as a valid measure for parties' positions during the period 1981-1985, the Laver and Hunt survey for the period 1986-1990, the Inglehart and Huber survey for the period 1991-1995, the Lubbers survey for the period 1996-2000, and the Benoit and Laver survey for the period 2001-2005. Lastly, extrapolation is necessary for those entries in the dataset that have missing values. Occasionally expert surveys have failed to include parties that unexpectedly gained parliamentary representation in the elections directly succeeding the period during which the survey was administered. For these parties values have been imputed from the expert survey that is closest in time to the year in which the elections were held. The details of the estimated positions of parties included in this study are listed in appendix A.

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<sup>28</sup> The formula for standardization that is selected in this study is taken from Elizabeth Carter's book *The Extreme Right in Western Europe. Success or Failure?*. In order to standardize the expert surveys, Carter calculated normalization scores using the formula  $(\text{score} - \text{minimum possible score}) / (\text{maximum possible score} - \text{minimum possible score})$ . After standardization the score 0 represents an extreme left position, whereas the score 1 indicates an extreme right position (Carter 2005: 114; 143, footnote 11).

## CHAPTER 3

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### The Radical Right-wing Populist Party Family

*It is very important to resist the popular and journalistic tendency to reify the Radical Right, turn it into a "thing", a Platonic "essence" surfacing in many places*

Peter H. Merkl (1993: 204)

#### Introduction

Coalition formation theories enable researchers to study government coalitions in a systematic fashion. They can account for the formation of minority governments and majority governments, for the selection of prime minister parties and junior coalition members, and for the emergence of specific government coalitions in specific countries and at specific points in time. Coalition formation theories even offer a framework to study the government participation of specific party families, as has been demonstrated most noticeably by Bale and Dunphy (forthcoming) and Dumont and Bäck (2006).

This study seeks to explain why government coalitions that include one or more radical right-wing populist parties have formed. To establish this, it is crucial to know in more detail the party family of our concern. This chapter outlines some of the basic features of the radical right-wing populist party family. It defines the party family and establishes which parties belong to it and which do not. It provides a general overview of the development of the radical right-wing populist party family and the way in which the parties that belong to this party family have approached and have been approached by mainstream parties. It establishes which radical right-wing populist parties have been cabinet members, which radical right-wing populist parties have been support parties to minority governments, and which radical right-wing populist parties have been part of the opposition. The chapter also investigates whether the characteristics of radical right-wing populist parties potentially conflict with the assumptions on which coalition formation theories are based.

#### Radical right-wing populist parties

Concepts, definitions, and classifications are vital to the social sciences. To the study of the radical right-wing populist party family they are even more important, since concepts, definitions, and classifications that seek to identify this party family are highly disputed. For an extensive discussion of this "war of words" (Mudde 1996), one is referred to the many studies devoted to concepts, definitions, and classifications (Backes 2004; Carter 2005; De Lange and Mudde 2005; Eatwell 2000; Goodwin 2005; Hainsworth 2000a; Ignazi 2002; Mudde 1996; 2000; 2007b). In this section I briefly present the general conclusions of these studies and explain why I prefer the term radical right-wing populist parties over other commonly used terms. I discuss the definition of this term and present a list of the parties that in my opinion fit this definition.

#### *Concepts and definitions*

Many terms have been used to describe the party family that emerged in the late 1980s, and of which the FN is often believed to be the prototype. The most commonly employed labels include anti-immigrant parties, extreme right parties, far right, new right, and a series of combinations of the words

radical, right, and populism (e.g. populist radical right, radical right, radical right-wing populism, right-wing populism) or variations on the latter term (e.g. exclusionary populism, national populism, neopopulism, new populism, populist nationalism, xenophobic populism) (see Table 3.1). This overview leaves aside more generic terms that either refer to the alleged fascist or racist character of these parties (e.g. Husbands 1988; Karapin 1998) or describe the broader movement of anti-establishment parties<sup>29</sup> (e.g. Abedi 2004; Bélanger 2004; Lane and Ersson 1999; Schedler 1996; e.g. Von Beyme 1985).

Table 3.1  
*Concepts and definitions*

Term	References
Anti-immigrant	Gibson 2002; Fennema 1997; Van der Brug et al. 2005; Van Spanje and Van der Brug 2007
Ethno-nationalist	Rydgren 2004a
Exclusionary populist	Betz 2001
Extreme right	Carter 2005; Schain et al. 2002; Perrineau 2001; Hainsworth 2000a; Ignazi 1992; 2003; Pfahl-Traughber 1993; Stouthuysen 1993; Von Beyme 1988
Far right	Jungerstam-Mulders 2003; Marcus 2000
National populist	Backes 1991; Taguieff 1984
Neopopulist	Betz and Immerfall 1998
New populist	Taggart 1995
New right	Delwit and Poirier 2007
Populist nationalist	Blokker 2005
Populist radical right	Filc and Lebel 2005; Liang 2007; Mudde 2007;
Radical right parties	Minkenberg 1998; Kitschelt and McGann 1995; Merkl and Weinberg 1993
Radical right-wing populist parties	Betz 1994; Evans 2005; Rydgren 2005a; Zaslove 2004a
Right-wing	Betz and Immerfall 1998
Right-wing populist	Decker 2000; Pfahl-Traughber 1994
Xenophobic populist	DeAngelis 2003

In this study I prefer the term radical right-wing populist party, because I believe it is descriptively the most useful concept. It strikes the right balance between exclusiveness, on the one, and inclusiveness, on the other hand. As Zaslove (2007: 66) has argued, “referring to this group of parties as radical right populist parties avoids overly narrow definitions [...]. At the same time by making this distinction at a theoretical and methodological level we will avoid an overly inclusive characterisation [...]”.

To define radical right-wing populist parties, I look at their ideology, as opposed to their name, origins and sociology, or membership of transnational

<sup>29</sup> Terms used to describe this movement include antipartism, anti-party parties, anti-political-establishment parties, discontent parties, or protest parties.

party federations (Mair and Mudde 1998). I presuppose the existence of an ideological core, which is "central to, and constitutive of, a particular ideology" (Ball 1999: 391; see also Freedon 1996; Mudde 2007b). The ideological core of the radical right-wing populist party family consists of three components. Radical right-wing populist parties are *right-wing* in their "rejection of individual and social equality and of political projects that seek to achieve it; [...] their opposition to the social integration of marginalized groups; and [...] in their appeal to xenophobia"; they are *radical* in their "rejection of the established socio-cultural and social-political system [...] without, however, openly questioning the legitimacy of democracy in general"; and they are *populist* in their "unscrupulous use and instrumentalization of diffuse public sentiments of anxiety and disenchantment; appeal to the common man and his allegedly superior common sense" (Betz 1994: 4).

Although many radical right-wing populist parties describe themselves as 'neither left nor right', the emphasis these parties put on (cultural) inequalities unmistakably place them in the right-wing camp. After all, the right is defined by its propensity to defend natural inequalities as ineradicable. It qualifies attempts to neutralize inequalities as utopian or authoritarian efforts to change the natural state of affairs (Bobbio 1996). Important right-wing ideological references in the programs of radical right-wing populist parties include ethnic nationalism, neo-liberalism, and xenophobia (cf. *infra*).

The right-wing program proposed by radical right-wing populist parties is more radical than that of mainstream parties. The parties are radical "both with respect to the language they employ in confronting their political opponents and the political project they promote and defend" (Betz and Johnson 2004: 312). This project generally "abides by a belief system that does not share the values of the political order within which it operates" (Minkenberg 1997: 67-68). Even though there exist cross-national differences between the particular ideological direction the radicalism of radical right-wing populist parties takes, the common denominator that sets these parties apart from mainstream parties is the "opposition to some key features of liberal democracy" (Mudde 2005; 2006; 2007b). This opposition is, for example, directed against pluralism, the constitutional protection of minorities, or the right of association. Radical right-wing populist parties do not oppose the democratic system as such though. Instead, they often make "a conscious effort to abide by the democratic rules of the game" (Griffin 1999: 298).

The opposition of radical right-wing populist parties to pluralism stems from the third core feature of their ideology, namely populism. Radical right-wing populist parties have a monist conception of the relationship between rulers and ruled, in which there is no place for the party democracy that is prevalent in Western Europe (Canovan 1999; Taggart 2000). Together with populists of other political orientations, radical right-wing populist parties adhere to "an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people" (Mudde 2004: 543). Central to this definition are the suggestion of a divided society, on the one, and the domination of the silent majority, on the other hand. In sum, radical right-wing populist parties make "an appeal to 'the people' against both the established structure of power and the dominant ideas and values of the society" (Canovan 1999: 3).

The provided definition of the ideology of radical right-wing populist parties fits with the pathological normalcy approach adopted in the introduction of this dissertation. Radical right-wing populist parties differ from mainstream parties, but the key difference is defined in degree rather than in kind. Radical right-wing populist parties are more radical than mainstream parties, but they are not the antithesis of these parties (Mudde 2008: 10).

On the basis of the three constitutive elements of the radical right-wing populist ideology, it is possible to delineate the radical right-wing populist party family from other party families. First, there is the broad group of mainstream parties that is neither radical nor populist. Some of these mainstream parties espouse a right-wing ideology (e.g. liberal or conservative parties), but even though these parties regularly campaign on issues similar to those promoted by radical right-wing populist parties, "these issues are dealt with in a completely different way" (Ignazi 1997: 301). Some authors have noted that mainstream parties increasingly resort to populist tactics (Jagers 2006) and that a "populist Zeitgeist" characterizes West European politics (Mudde 2004). Populism is, however, not a central feature of mainstream parties' ideology.

On the fringes of West European party systems one finds several party families that champion ideologies that combine two of the three features that define radical right-wing populist parties. On the left fringe there are the radical left-wing populist parties, most notably represented by the Dutch Socialist Party (*Socialistische Partij*, or SP) and the German The Left (*Die Linke*) (March and Mudde 2005; Mudde 2006). Ideologically quite distinct from radical right-wing populist parties, these parties are nevertheless functional equivalents to radical right-wing populist parties in systemic terms. On the right fringe non-populist radical right-wing parties are only sporadically found in West European parliaments (e.g. the German National Democratic Party (*Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschland*, or NPD)). These parties have, however, gained notoriety as extraparliamentary movements.

### *Classification*

On the basis of the proposed definition of radical right-wing populism, identification of parties that belong to this family does not pose any major difficulties. I count thirteen radical right-wing populist parties in Western European parliamentary democracies since the 1980s, which is generally taken as the decade in which the radical right-wing populist movement gained momentum (Von Beyme 1988).<sup>30</sup> These parties are the National Alliance, (*Alleanza Nazionale*, or AN), previously known as the Italian Social Movement (*Movimento Sociale Italiano*, or MSI), the Centre Democrats (*CentrumDemocraten*, or CD), previously known as the Centre Party (*Centrum Partij*, or CP), the Danish People's Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*, or DF), Go Italy (*Forza Italia*, or FI), the National Front (*Front National*, or FN), the Belgian National Front (*Front National belge*, FNb), the Austrian Freedom Party (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*, or FPÖ), the Danish Progress Party, (*Fremskridtspartiet*, or FRP(d)), the Norwegian Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet*, or FRP(n)), the Northern League (*Lega Nord*, or LN), the List Pim Fortuyn (*Lijst Pim Fortuyn*, or LPF), New Democracy (*Ny Demokrati*, or ND), the Swiss People's Party (*Schweizerische Volkspartei*, or SVP), also

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<sup>30</sup> I count only radical right-wing populist parties with representation in national parliaments. A number of parties have competed in national elections, but have failed to secure parliamentary representation (e.g. DVU, REP). For them government participation has evidently never been an issue.

known as the Democratic Union of the Centre (*Union Démocratique du Centre*, or UDC), and the Flemish Interest (*Vlaams Belang*, or VB), previously known as the Flemish Bloc (*Vlaams Blok*, or VB).

To support the classification of these parties as radical right-wing populist parties, I summarize the most important aspects of their ideologies. The summary focuses on those ideological elements that are particularly important to the definition above mentioned. I demonstrate why these parties qualify as right-wing, as radical, and as populist. Unfortunately, constraints of space make it impossible to discuss the particularities of the ideologies of individual radical right-wing populist parties. Table 3.2 provides an overview of key works that address the ideology of individual radical right-wing populist parties.

Table 3.2  
*West European radical right-wing populist parties*

Party	References
AN/MSI	Adler 1996; Ignazi 1996; 1998; 2005; Tarchi 2003; Gallagher 2000 ; Griffin 1996 ; Ter Wal 2000 ; Veugelers and Chiarini 2003
CD/CP	Lucardie 1998; Mudde 1998; 2000; Mudde and Van Holsteyn 2000
DF	Andersen and Bjørklund 2000; Bjørklund and Andersen 2002; Hasselbach 2002
FI	Farrell 1995; Poli 2001; Ruscino 2002
FN	Minkenberg and Schain 2003 ; Schields 2007; Swyngedouw and Ivaldi 2001 ;
FNb	Alaluf 1998; Blaise 2004 ; Coffé 2005 ; Delwit 2007 ; Swyngedouw 1998
FPÖ	Bailer-Galanda 1995; 1997; Betz 2001; Moreau 2004; Morrow 2000; Luther 2006; Riedlsperger 1998; Wodak and Pelinka 2002
FRP(d)	Andersen and Bjørklund 2000; Bjørklund and Andersen 2002; Rydgren 2004; Svasand 1998
FRP(n)	Andersen and Bjørklund 2000; Bjørklund and Andersen 2002; Lorenz 2003; Svasand 1998
LN	Albertazzi 2006; Betz 1998; 2001; Cento Bull and Gilbert 2001; Gomez-Reino Cachafeiro 2002; Diamanti 1993; Giordano 1999; 2000; 2001; 2003; Gold 2003; McDonnell 2006; 2007; Zaslove 2007
LPF	Pellikaan et al. 2003; 2007; Lucardie and Voerman 2002; Mudde 2007a
ND	Rydgren 2001; Svasand 1998; Taggart 1996; Widfeldt 2000; 2004
SVP/UDC	Betz 2001; Geden 2006; Mazzoleni 2003; McGann and Kitschelt 2005; Skenderovic 2007;
VB	Coffé 2005; Hossay 1996; Gijssels 1992; 1994; Spruyt 1995; 2000; Swyngedouw 1998; Swyngedouw and Ivaldi 2001

The fourteen radical right-wing populist parties adhere to “a comprehensive and explicitly ideological framework” (Betz 2001: 12) and share a hostility towards general principles of individual equality and towards political measures that seek to promote equality (Moreau 2004: 100).<sup>31</sup> Based on the

<sup>31</sup> Several radical right-wing populist parties (e.g. CD and FNb) lack a coherent ideology altogether. After a thorough analyses of the manifestos of the CD, Mudde and Van Holsteyn (2000: 151) come to the conclusion that “the term ‘ideology’ should thus be very loosely applied to the CD, conjuring up more a collection of unrelated

ideological references that are most prominent in their programs, they qualify either as neo-liberal populist parties or national populist parties (Betz 1994). The first group of parties focuses on economic inequality and promotes neo-liberalism, while the second group of parties focuses on cultural inequality and promotes nationalism.

References to neo-liberalism are found most prominently in the programs of FI, FPÖ, FRP(d), FRP(n), LPF, ND, and SVP. These parties stress the importance of individual freedom in the economic sphere and promote a free market economy.<sup>32</sup> Silvio Berlusconi, for example, succinctly summarizes the FI program as "less taxes and less state". References to individual freedom in the economic sphere are often linked to references about individual freedom in other spheres (e.g. the public and private sphere). According to these parties, individual freedom is under threat from mainstream parties that seek to expand the state, but also from Islam that seeks to impose religious norms on West Europeans.

References to (ethnic) nationalism are found most prominently in the programs of the CP/CD, DF, FN, FNb, LN, VB. These parties frequently refer to the importance of the preservation of cultural identity and put the interests of the cultural community before those of the individual. Most parties conceive of the cultural community as the nation, but the LN and VB adhere to a form of ethnic regionalism that situates the cultural community at the regional level, in Padania and Flanders respectively. The AN arguable also belongs to the group of nationalist parties, because the party stresses the importance of national identity and territorial integrity. Moreover, the party presents itself as the national-popular alternative to liberal-capitalism. On the basis of their ethnic nationalism, radical right-wing populist parties reject the multicultural utopia and opt for a monocultural society. The ethnic nationalism or regionalism of radical right-wing populist parties is particularly manifest in well-known campaign slogans like "*Eigen volk eerst*" (VB), "*Les Français d'abord*" (FN) or "*Un solo interesse: Gli Italiani*" (AN).

The ethnic nationalism of radical right-wing populist parties is closely related to their xenophobia. The parties are extremely worried about foreignization, especially as the consequence of the influx of non-European immigrants. In recent years radical right-wing populist parties have defined Islam as the most significant enemy and have increasingly warned against the Islamization of Western European societies. Even the radical right-wing populist parties that put more emphasis on neo-liberalism include xenophobic references in their programs. Again, campaign slogans of radical right-wing populist parties tell more than extensive analyses of these parties' manifestos. The CD made use of the slogan "*Vol is vol*", while the FPÖ campaigns against the *Überfremdung* of Austria.

The programs of radical right-wing populist parties also include many ideological references that qualify as populist. Mainstream parties are depicted as bureaucratic, corrupt, and out of touch with voters. Radical right-

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thoughts on different topics than a consistent and comprehensive theory of how society should be organized". With regard to the ideology of the FNb, party leader Daniel Féret has once commented that his party adheres to "D'absolument aucune. Le FN est un parti qui essaie d'apporter des réponses aux problèmes d'aujourd'hui sans aller les chercher dans des idéologies" (quoted in Coffé 2005 : 65). Delwit (2007: 163) notes that the FNb seems "caught up in the ritual recitation of certain words and formulas, without any precise proposals".

<sup>32</sup> Many of these parties speak of a fair and free market, or a guided free market, to emphasise that they are also concerned with the protection of economically weak actors.

wing populist parties present themselves as parties that employ the language of common sense and defend the interests of the ordinary Austrians, Belgians, Danes, Dutch, Flemish, French, Italians, Norwegians, Swedes, and Swiss. The FN, for example, frequently lashes out against the *politique politicienne* conducted by the *bande de quatre*, while the LPF strongly criticized the Dutch *regentencultuur*.

Independent of the specific ideological references used, radical right-wing populist parties' analyses of societal problems are largely identical. Consequentially, they by and large promote identical policy proposals. Each of the parties' manifestos includes calls for: (1) deregulation, privatization, and tax reduction; (2) protection of weak economic actors and implementation of the principle of national preference; (3) a halt to immigration, the compulsorily integration of immigrants, and the reduction of the influence of the Islam;<sup>33</sup> (4) investment in the maintenance of law and order; (5) institutional reforms, most notably the implementation or expansion of popular initiatives and referenda, and the (further) presidentialization of political systems.

The radicalism of radical right-wing populist parties ideologies surfaces in three ways. First, ideological references to ethnic nationalism and xenophobia are markedly different from the mainstream consensus in West European countries, which advances cultural egalitarianism as the norm. Second, ideological references to populism show that radical right-wing populist parties promote a type of democracy that is deviant from the representative democracy mainstream parties support. Third, the policy proposals of radical right-wing populist parties are more radical than those of mainstream parties and at times conflict with national and European legislation and international conventions.

This brief overview demonstrates that radical right-wing populist parties share important ideological features. At the same time notable differences in content and emphasis are also observable. Moreover, many radical right-wing populist parties have changed the content of, and emphasis in, their ideologies over the past decades. A number of radical right-wing populist parties started out as members of other party families or have moved away from the radical right-wing populist party family in recent years.<sup>34</sup> Changes in party family affiliation do not pose a major challenge to this study. What matters is whether a party at one point in time has belonged to the radical right-wing populist party family. After all, changes in party family

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<sup>33</sup> See, for example, the FN's *Immigration: 50 mesures concrètes. Les Français ont la parole*, which calls for "the repeal of anti-racist legislation; the restriction of nationality to a blood right; the review of all cases of naturalisation since 1974; the practice of 'national preference' in employment, housing and welfare provision; a special tax on employers using immigrant labour; the restriction of family allowance to French nationals; the conversion of immigrant hostels into housing for French nationals; the expunging of 'cosmopolitan' ideas from school textbooks; quotas for immigrant children in schools; a ban on the building of 'places of worship foreign to French identity'; the expulsion of illegal and unemployed immigrants together with those convicted of crimes; the creation of secure detention centres for immigrants facing deportation" (Shields 2007: 239-240). The VB's *70-punten plan* calls for many similar measures.

<sup>34</sup> The LN and VB started out as ethnoregionalist parties (e.g. De Winter and Türsan 1998; Hix and Lord 1997; Gallagher et al. 1995; Ignazi 1992), while the SVP/UDC was initially qualified as an agrarian, centre, or conservative party (e.g. Gallagher et al. 2001; Helms 1997; Müller-Rommel 1993). The AN started out as a neo-fascist party and has in recent years often been described as a conservative party (e.g. Ignazi 1996; 1998).

affiliation are indicative of changes in policy positions, which in turn are an important element in office-oriented coalition formation theories. In other words, when a party joins or leaves the radical right-wing populist party family this can impact on coalition politics.

### **Radical right-wing populist parties between opposition and government**

Radical right-wing populist parties have emerged at different points in time and have reached different levels of electoral success and institutional integration. This section outlines the trajectories of individual radical right-wing populist parties between their entry in parliament and the last elections that preceded the publication of this dissertation. It sketches the way in which these parties have approached and have been approached by mainstream parties and establishes whether and when they have been cabinet members or government support parties. The overview is organized on a country-by-country basis.

#### *Austria: a cyclical process*

First represented in the Austrian National Council in 1956, the FPÖ has gone through a cyclical process in which periods in opposition have alternated with periods in government.<sup>35</sup> The party spent a decade in parliament as a “ghetto party”, with minimal electoral support and an ideology that positioned the party on the far-right of the Austrian political spectrum.<sup>36</sup> Consequentially, the party was in no way involved in government formation processes (Luther 2000). From the 1960s onwards the FPÖ gradually put more emphasis on economic issues and highlighted liberal stances. This made the party a more acceptable partner in the eyes of the mainstream parties. In subsequent years the FPÖ developed tight relations with the SPÖ, which culminated in the formation of a SPÖ-FPÖ government coalition in 1983.

When Jörg Haider seized control over the FPÖ in 1986, and introduced a new ideology centered on typical radical right-wing populist positions, the government coalition was immediately terminated. During this phase of “populist protest”, the FPÖ was consistently excluded from national government coalitions, even though cooperation with the radical right-wing populist party at the subnational level continued (Kestel and Godmer 2004). In the late 1990s the FPÖ removed the sharp edges from its populist program, which increased the acceptability of the party in much the same way as during the 1960s and 1970s.

After a decade and a half in opposition the radical right-wing populist party assumed office again in 2000 after protracted negotiations between the SPÖ and ÖVP had failed. The ÖVP invited the FPÖ to form a government coalition, an offer the party gladly accepted. The government coalition proved short-lived, mainly as a consequence of continuous internal struggles within the FPÖ. The early elections, held on 24 November 2002, decimated the parliamentary representation of the radical right-wing populist party and largely restored the traditional Austrian party system. The government coalition between ÖVP and FPÖ was nevertheless rebuilt, for reasons explained in detail in chapter 6. The second ÖVP-FPÖ government coalition proved equally short-lived as the first and resigned in the spring of 2005. The

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<sup>35</sup> Technically, the history of the FPÖ can be traced back to 1949, when the VdU gained representation in the Austrian National Council. The VdU was dissolved in 1956 after a number of internal crises and large sections of the party joined the newly founded FPÖ that year.

<sup>36</sup> Most importantly, the FPÖ positioned itself as a pan-German nationalist party.

early elections held on 01 October 2006 brought two radical right-wing populist parties to parliament: the Alliance for Austria's Future (*Bündnis Zukunft Österreich*, or BZÖ) and the FPÖ. The former party was founded by the previous FPÖ-leader, Jörg Haider, on 04 April 2005, after a rift in the FPÖ had become apparent. The electoral support for the BZÖ is, however, limited, while the FPÖ continues to thrive electorally.

Table 3.3  
*Radical right-wing populist parties in Austria*

	Represented after the parliamentary elections of	Government support party in	Cabinet member in
FPÖ	1983; 1990; 1995; 2002	1986; 1994; 1999;	- 1986; 1999; 2003

*Belgium: a cordon sanitaire around radical right-wing populist parties*

The parliamentary representation of radical right-wing populist parties in Belgium dates back to 1978 when the VB entered the Chamber of Representatives with one seat, occupied by then-party leader Karel Dillen. The VB has been ignored by the Flemish mainstream parties until the late 1980s, because it lacked electoral relevance during the early and mid 1980s. The electoral breakthrough of the VB occurred in the municipal elections of October 1988, which and motivated mainstream politicians to erect a cordon sanitaire around the party. The cordon sanitaire has been formalized by a protocol that outlines that parties will "not form political alliances or make agreements with the VB, neither within the framework of democratically elected institutions at the local, provincial, regional, national, or European level, nor within the framework of elections for the mentioned levels" (Protocol, May 10th 1989). Analysts and politicians differ in their interpretation of the cordon sanitaire. According to some it prohibits 1) cooperation in administrative and executive institutions or in government coalitions; 2) joined legislative activities; 3) requests to support resolutions; 4) support for resolutions introduced by the VB; 5) joint press conferences or releases; and 6) electoral arrangements (Damen 2001: 92).<sup>37</sup>

The cordon sanitaire around the VB has always been surrounded by substantial controversy. In fact, the first cordon sanitaire was formally revoked by the Christian People's Party (*Christelijke Volkspartij*, or CVP), the Party For Freedom and Progress (*Partij voor de Vrijheid en Vooruitgang*, or PVV), and the People's Union (*Volksunie*, or VU), only forty days after the adoption of the official protocol on 10 May 1989. Mainstream parties informally maintained the cordon sanitaire and partially resurrected it through parliamentary resolutions adopted in 1992 and 1997. The cordon sanitaire was formally restored in its original form in 2000, when the mainstream parties signed the Charter for Democracy. Even after the mainstream parties committed themselves to this charter, individual politicians have often questioned the appropriateness and effectiveness of the ostracization of the VB. In recent years several politicians have even been expelled from the

<sup>37</sup> Other observers claim that the cordon sanitaire is less encompassing and primarily prohibits the formation of executive coalitions (e.g. Dewitte 1997: 174).

Flemish Liberals and Democrats (*Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten*, or VLD), because they opposed the cordon sanitaire.<sup>38</sup>

In spite of these controversies, parties have conscientiously lived up to the elements of the cordon sanitaire outlined above. Most importantly, the VB has not been part of executive coalitions at the local, regional, or national level. Mainstream parties have also refrained from joint legislative activities with the VB, have been extremely reluctant to ask for support for their resolutions and to support VB resolutions, have never engaged in joint press conferences or press releases, and have not concluded electoral alliances with the VB. The (cosmetic) transformation the VB underwent in November 2004 after three of its constitutive organizations were convicted for racism,<sup>39</sup> and the continuous electoral success of the party, have not inspired mainstream parties to revoke the cordon sanitaire.

In 1991 the VB was joined by a second radical right-wing populist party in the Belgian Chamber of Representatives. That year the FNb gained parliamentary representation, after an earlier successful bid for public support in the 1989 municipal elections. The behavior of the francophone mainstream parties vis-à-vis the FNb has evidently been constrained by the precedent created by the cordon sanitaire around the VB. The francophone mainstream parties have erected their own cordon sanitaire in 1993, and reconfirmed the principles that underlie it in 1998. The francophone mainstream parties have agreed to "refuse any mandate which might have been obtained thanks to the support or abstention of the representatives" of the FNb, because this party adheres to an ideology that is "likely to undermine democratic principles" (*Le Soir*, 09-05-1998). The enforcement of the cordon sanitaire around FNb has proven more straightforward than of the cordon sanitaire around the VB, that mainly because the FNb is considerably weaker in electoral terms than the VB (Delwit 2007a).

Table 3.4  
*Radical right-wing populist parties in Belgium*

	Represented after the parliamentary elections of	Government support party in	Cabinet member in
FNb	1991; 1995; 1999; 2003	-	-
VB	1981; 1985; 1987; 1991; 1995; 1999; 2003	-	-

#### *Denmark: a new start, new chances*

<sup>38</sup> Prominent politicians that have been expelled are Hugo Coveliers and Jean-Marie Dedecker. The first has founded a party named Flemish, Liberal, Independent, Tolerant and Transparant (*Vlaams, Liberaal, Onafhankelijk, Tolerant en Transparant*, or VLOTT), which now competes elections in an electoral cartel with the VB. The second has founded a party named List Dedecker (*Lijst Dedecker*, or LDD) which rejects the cordon sanitaire and at the same time refuses to ally with the VB.

<sup>39</sup> The party changed from Vlaams Blok to Vlaams Belang and replaced party logos and symbols. It also revised the party principles, but analyses of these changes highlight important ideological continuities (Erk 2005).

The FRP(d) achieved its electoral breakthrough in 1973, when it entered the *Folketing* with two other challenger parties (the Centre Democrats (*Centrum-Demokraterne*, or CD) and the Christian People's Party (*Kristeligt Folkeparti*, or KRF)). The radical right-wing populist party was electorally the most successful of the challenger parties, gaining 16 per cent of the parliamentary seats, more than any of the mainstream parties save the social-democrats. For at least a decade the FRP(d) systematically refused to accommodate non-socialist minority governments, in reaction to which mainstream parties decided to marginalize the party (Bille 1989; Christiansen 2003; Green-Pedersen 2001).

In the 1980s the FRP(d) abandoned this strategy of obstruction and adopted a more cooperative strategy, largely under influence of the new party leader Pia Kjærsgaard. The adaptation of a cooperative strategy increased the influence of the FRP(d) in the *Folketing*, especially when the party proved vital for the installation of non-socialist minority governments in 1982, 1983, 1987, and 1993. It also participated in negotiations to resolve the budgetary crises that Denmark faced in 1982 and 1989 (Bjorklund and Andersen 1999), but the negotiations never resulted in the formalization of the relationship between the FRP(d) and the non-socialist parties represented in the various minority governments. According to the non-socialist parties, the FRP(d) demanded excessive policy concessions in return for an institutionalized support relationship. Moreover, the party was torn by internal disputes, which made consented support unreliable (Bille 1989; Ganghof 2003; Green-Pedersen 2001).

One of the major causes of the internal disputes was disagreement about the effectiveness of cooperative strategies. Several people in the party argued that a strategy of obstruction would raise more votes in elections. The disagreements about strategy culminated in a party split and party leader Pia Kjærsgaard left the FRP(d) to found a new party. This new party, named the DF, manifested overt government aspirations and pursued an office-oriented strategy in which reliability and cooperativeness were central concepts (Pedersen and Ringsmose 2004). The new radical right-wing populist party performed much better at the polls than the FRP(d). In the 2001 elections the support for the party increased further and V, the liberal party, invited it to support a non-socialist minority government. This government, composed of liberals and conservatives, had the opportunity to assume office without the help of the previously pivotal center parties for the first time since the Second World War (Qvortrup 2002). An extensive agreement was negotiated, which formalized the status of the DF as support party. In return of its support the party received the chairmanships of three parliamentary committees (Finance, Agriculture, and Health) (Bille 2002; Evers 2002). The party also secured considerable policy concessions, most notably in the field of immigration. From 2001 to 2005 the DF conscientiously lived up to the agreement, and when the 2005 elections confirmed support for the government coalition, the agreement was renewed (Bille 2006).

Table 3.5  
*Radical right-wing populist parties in Denmark*

	Represented after the parliamentary elections of	Government support party in	Cabinet member in
DF	1998; 2001; 2005	2001; 2005	-
FRP(d)	1981; 1987; 1990; 1994; 1998	1984; 1988;	-

*France: from the mainstream to the margins*

In France the two-round majoritarian electoral system disfavors smaller parties and parties with geographically dispersed electorates, providing parties with strong incentives to form pre-electoral coalitions. These two factors make that debates about coalition formation take place prior to the elections, rather than after the elections, and that even parties without or with limited parliamentary representation are important potential coalition partners.

The electoral system has had a profound impact on debates within mainstream parties about how to approach the FN, and within the FN about how to approach mainstream parties. Pragmatists, who stress the strategic advantages of coalition formation, have always had to confront purists, who underline the ideological incompatibility between mainstream parties and the FN. In the Rally for the Republic (*Rassemblement our la République*, or RPR) and the French Democratic Union (*Union Démocratique Française*, or UDF), the most important mainstream right-wing parties, some consider the FN as an electoral competitor with which they have ideological affinity. Others stress the historical and ideological illegitimacy of the FN, and consequentially oppose cooperation with the party.<sup>40</sup> A similar division exists in the radical right-wing camp, where some believe it is the FN's responsibility to keep the left from power. Others, however, give priority to electoral expansion and opt for an isolationist strategy. The power struggle between these two camps has caused the FN to present itself both as an alternative *within* the system and an alternative *to* the system (Dézé 2004). It has eventually led to a split in the party and to the foundation of a new radical right-wing populist party, the National Republican Movement (*Mouvement National Républicain*, or MNR) lead by Bruno Mégret, in 1998.<sup>41</sup>

Initially, many politicians in the mainstream and radical right-wing populist parties estimated that the advantages of cooperation outweighed the disadvantages. The formation of pre-electoral coalitions was seen as an effective way to defeat the left and contain the success of the FN (Minkenberg and Schain 2003: 182). For these reasons the FN, RPR, and UDF frequently formed electoral alliances to defeat the left in the 1980s and early 1990s. The electoral breakthrough of the FN in the mid-80s, for example, was enabled by

<sup>40</sup> The former camp was particularly strong in the National Centre of Independents and Peasants (*Centre National des Indépendents et Paysans*, or CNIP), a minor right-wing party in the French National Assembly, and the PR, a faction within the confederal UDF that has its roots in the French extreme-right movement *Occident*, while the latter camp was particularly strong in the RPR and was promoted by the party's former leader Jacques Chirac.

<sup>41</sup> This party never gained parliamentary representation and is therefore not included in this study.

joint lists and *accords de désistement* between the party and the RPR and UDF in local, regional, and national elections.<sup>42</sup> The FN also concluded a series of agreements with the RPR and UDF at the subnational level, which provided the FN with executive positions in municipal and departmental councils in these years.<sup>43</sup>

However, these subnational arrangements never spilled over to the national executive arena, because the electoral system used for the elections to the National Assembly left the FN deprived of any legislative weight. Moreover, as a consequence of electoral and ideological considerations, coalitional practices ended altogether in the mid-90s (Kestel and Godmer 2004; Villalba 1998).<sup>44</sup> From the mid-1990s onwards the FN has been completely ostracized by the French mainstream parties, although an official *cordon sanitaire* has never been erected.<sup>45</sup> Sanctions for politicians who have not respected the ostracization of the FN have been severe, albeit not irreversible (Balme and Rozenberg 2000).<sup>46</sup> And even though Jean-Marie le Pen reached the second round of the 2002 presidential elections, his party lost its parliamentary representation in the same year, and has been unable to regain it in the 2007 legislative elections.

Table 3.6  
*Radical right-wing populist parties in France*

	Represented after the parliamentary elections of	Government support party in	Cabinet member in
FN	1986; 1988; 1997	-	-

*Italy: the advantages of a radical right-wing populist canon*

The MSI, founded in 1946 and represented in the Italian Chamber of Deputies since 1948, has historically been divided between radicals and moderates. Dependent on which of these two factions led the party, the party presented itself either as an alternative within the system or an alternative to the system (Dézé 2004; Ignazi 1993; Newell 2000). In the late 1940s the MSI positioned itself as a neo-fascist party that mobilized voters against the newly founded Italian Republic. According to observers, the party “displayed implacable hostility to the institutions and values of Italian democracy” in these years (Gallagher 2000: 68).

<sup>42</sup> Crucial was the joint list of the FN, RPR, and UDF at the 1983 municipal elections in Dreux, which enabled the united right to defeat the left and take over the municipal council. The alliance signified the electoral breakthrough of the FN in the small town (with 16.7% of the votes), secured the party’s the first executive position (Jean-Pierre Stirbois became deputy-Mayor of the town), and generated substantial media attention for the radical right-wing populist party at the national level (e.g. Schain 1987).

<sup>43</sup> For an overview of these subnational agreements see De Lange (2007); Ivaldi (2007), Seondy (2007) and Shields (2007).

<sup>44</sup> The FN was increasingly seen as racist, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic. Moreover, mainstream parties increasingly believed that the party benefited electorally from the coalitions at the local and regional level.

<sup>45</sup> Attempts to erect a *Front Populaire* failed miserably.

<sup>46</sup> In 1998, for example, several regional presidents elected with help of the FN were expelled from the UDF.

Mainstream parties reacted to the success of the MSI (and the Italian Communist Party (*Partito Comunista Italiano*, or PCI), the MSI's radical left counterpart) with a pact named the *conventio ad excludendum*, which prescribed the ostracization of parties posing a threat to the Italian system (Sartori 1976). To counter this convention the MSI adopted an *inserimento* strategy in the 1950s, and commenced what is today known as the "long march through the institutions" (Newell 2000: 470). The accommodative behavior of the MSI resulted in cooperation with the Christian Democracy (*Democrazia Cristiana*, or DC), and the MSI agreed to support the minority governments of Zoli (1957), Segni (1959), and Tambroni (1960). Cooperation between the DC and MSI ended, however, after public indignation about the latter's character created insurmountable pressure on the dominant mainstream party.<sup>47</sup>

From the early 1960s onwards the MSI was no longer eligible as coalition partner (Lalli 1998).<sup>48</sup> Moreover, centre-left majority governments replaced the single party Christian-Democratic minority governments and the MSI lost all bargaining power it had acquired in the 1950s. The party nevertheless hoped to turn the tide and stuck to the *inserimento* strategy. This strategy proved unsuccessful and after a lengthy exclusion from coalition politics, and several leadership changes, the MSI resorted to a strategy of tension "to promote a conservative backlash and goad the military into closing down civilian political institutions" (Gallagher 2000: 69).<sup>49</sup> In 1987 the leadership of the MSI passes on to current leader Gianfranco Fini, who revised the *inserimento* strategy, and sought to bring his party "in from the cold" (Newell 2000). In the first half of the 1990s, Fini executed an ambitious plan that transformed the MSI into the AN, and a neo-fascist party into a post-fascist party.

In 1992 a second radical right-wing populist party entered the Italian Chamber of Deputies. The LN, a party that united a number of regional parties represented in North Italian councils, presented itself as a regionalist party that defended the interests of an imagined community named Padania. The party immediately became involved in executive alliances at the subnational level, but at the national level the party was completely isolated. On the one hand, the isolation of the LN was self-inflicted; i.e. the party adopted a strategy of distinction that served to set it apart from mainstream parties. On the other hand, the isolation was the consequence of the mainstream parties' decisions to ostracize the LN. Mainstream parties thought that the LN was "too unreliable, 'out of system', and locally focused to be considered as a potential ally" (Ruzza and Schmidtke 1996: 180).

The situation of the MSI and the LN changed fundamentally when the Italian political and party system collapsed under the pressure of a multitude of public scandals (e.g. *Tangentopoli*; *Mani pulite*).<sup>50</sup> The crisis had three

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<sup>47</sup> The public indignation was primarily caused by the riots that surrounded the MSI conference in Genoa in 1960, which resulted in a number of casualties.

<sup>48</sup> Although formally no longer eligible to function as support party, the DC did accept help from the MSI to elect its candidates to the Presidency of the Republic in 1962 and 1971 (Ahlemeyer 2006).

<sup>49</sup> Supposedly, the strategy of tension did not prevent Socialist leader Bettino Craxi from making overtures to the MSI. It is said that Craxi believed that "the PSI's chances of supplanting the DC at the heart of the political system could be enhanced by encouraging the MSI to steal DC votes" (Gallagher 2000: 71)

<sup>50</sup> For an in-depth account of the political changes that took place in Italy after 1992, see, for example, the special issue of *West European Politics* 'Crisis and Transition in Italian Politics' edited by D'Alimonte (1997); Bardi and Morlino (1994); Bartolini,

important effects that gave the two radical right-wing populist parties incentives to adopt more accommodative strategies. First, it discredited the mainstream parties and paved the way for new parties to enter parliament. Without the historical baggage that constrained the mainstream parties, new parties had few reasons to ostracize the MSI and LN. One of these new parties was FI, the third Italian radical right-wing populist party to enter the Chamber of Deputies in the post-war era. FI was founded by media-mogul Silvio Berlusconi in 1994, primarily to avert a left-wing victory in the first post-crisis elections. Second, a new majoritarian electoral system was adopted, which provided strong incentives to form electoral cartels. FI and the LN formed the *Polo delle Libertà* in the north and FI and the MSI formed the *Polo del Buon Governo* in the south (Hopkin and Ignazi 2008: 80).<sup>51</sup> The two pre-electoral coalitions proved highly successful in the elections and together won sufficient seats to form a government coalition under the leadership of Berlusconi. Already after seven months, however, the LN withdrew from the government coalition and it was forced to resign.

In the 1996 elections the LN competed independently from the other radical right-wing populist parties, which deprived the parties of an electoral victory. The LN sought to achieve a pivotal position in the Italian parliament and drive a hard bargain to complement either a left- or a right-wing government coalition (Newell and Bull 2003: 626). This strategy failed miserably and, in the run-up to the 2001 elections, the AN, FI and the LN build a new pre-electoral coalition that was baptized the *Casa delle Libertà*. The coalition won the elections and the three parties joined forces in a second government coalition, again under the leadership of Berlusconi. This government coalition proved more enduring and served till the 2007 elections.

Table 3.7  
*Radical right-wing populist parties in Italy*

	Represented after the parliamentary elections of	Government support party in	Cabinet member in
FI	1994; 2001	1996; -	1994; 2001
MSI/ AN	1983; 1992; 1996; 2001	1987; 1994; -	1994; 2001
LN	1992; 1996; 2001	1994; -	1994; 2001

*The Netherlands: two parties, two trajectories*

The Netherlands has seen the rise of three radical right-wing populist parties. The first, the CP and the second, the CD, were unsuccessful in two respects. Their electoral support was limited and the parties were ostracized by the mainstream parties. The second, the LPF, was successful in electoral terms and secured cabinet positions in the first government coalition lead by Jan Peter Balkenende.

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Chiaramonte and D'Alimonte (2004); Bufacchi and Burgess (2001); and Grundle and Parker (1996).

<sup>51</sup> The two parties refused to join a single right-wing alliance, since the regional interests of the two radical right-wing populist parties were diametrically opposed.

The CP entered the Second Chamber in 1982, when party leader Hans Janmaat was elected to parliament. It lost the only seat it occupied in 1986, but Janmaat returned to parliament in 1989 as leader of the newly founded CD. The weak support for the two party and the xenophobic stances promoted by Janmaat made it relatively easy for the Dutch mainstream parties to ostracize the CD.<sup>52</sup> For several years the party was completely ignored by the politicians and pundits in the hope that the party would just vanish. When this strategy proved ineffective, mainstream parties adopted a strategy of argumentation. Whether this strategy was more successful is debatable, but the CD nevertheless did not return to parliament after the 1998 elections (Schikhof 1998).

Four years after the demise of the CD a new radical right-wing populist party, the LPF, entered the Second Chamber. Although mainstream parties promised to treat the party the same regime as the CD, this proved difficult after the murder of LPF leader Pim Fortuyn on May 6, 2002, and the subsequent electoral success of his party. According to most mainstream politicians the election results indicated public preferences for a government coalition of the CDA and the LPF (*Handelingen* 7434A02). On the issues most prominent in the campaign (e.g. healthcare, education, immigration and integration, security) the CDA and LPF promoted stances that resembled those of the VVD, the party that was invited to complement the government coalition. The government coalition assumed office under the leadership of CDA leader Balkenende, and was by many commentators greeted as the “only realistic option” after the tumultuous elections (Lucardie 2003: 1034). The government coalition had to resign after only three months in office, because internal upheaval in the LPF had greatly destabilized interpersonal relations in the cabinet. The early elections that followed the resignation of the Balkenende I government decimated the support for the LPF. The party lost roughly three-quarters of its voters and did not return to the government coalition. In the 2005 elections that followed the resignation of the Balkenende II government, the LPF lost the few parliamentary seats that remained and the party has been formally dissolved on January 1, 2008.

Table 3.8  
*Radical right-wing populist parties in the Netherlands*

	Represented after the parliamentary elections of	Government support party in	Cabinet member in
CP/CD	1982; 1989; 1994	-	-
LPF	2002; 2003	-	2002

*Norway: a pivotal radical right-wing populist party*

The electoral breakthrough of the FRP(n) dates back to 1973, when the party garnered sufficient support to send four parliamentarians to the *Storting*.<sup>53</sup> In

<sup>52</sup> For a while most parliamentarians actually left the lower house when the leader of the CD, Hans Janmaat, held speeches. As a result the party leader was able to criticize immigration policies without interruption or contradiction on TV (Dutch parliamentary session are transmitted directly by the public broadcaster) which made mainstream politicians reconsider their tactics.

<sup>53</sup> The party officially started out as “Anders Lange’s Party for Strong Reductions of Taxes, Charges and Government Intervention”, and adopted the name “Progress Party” in 1977.

subsequent elections the party collapsed, mainly as a result of leadership problems. In 1983 Carl I. Hagen took over the party leadership and successfully reorganized the FRP(n). The electoral success of the party continued to fluctuate for several decades (e.g. 13 per cent in the 1989 elections versus 6 per cent in the 1993 elections), but this did not affect the party's power in the *Storting*. Regardless of the exact number of seats the party obtained in elections, it had a pivotal position in parliament as early as 1985. In June 1987, for example, the FRP(n) held only two seats in the *Storting*, but had the power to bring down the Labour government if it allied with the Norwegian non-socialist parties. After days of speculations the party decided not to support a motion of confidence that would terminate the Labour government, because it believed it would benefit electorally from conflict between the non-socialist parties (Strom 1994).

The way the FRP(n) behaved in this and other situations created the image of a "truculent, unpredictable, and opportunistic" party that was not considered a trustworthy coalition partner (Narud and Strom 2007: 25). Consequentially, the FRP(n) blocked coalition politics in Norway for many years. The party was necessary for the construction of non-socialist majority governments, but was nevertheless ostracized.<sup>54</sup> The ostracization of the FRP(n) was facilitated by the Norwegian tradition of ad hoc legislative coalitions, in which majority governments and minority governments complemented by support parties are largely unknown. Although no formal cooperation between the non-socialist parties and the FRP(n) existed in the 1980s and 1990s, the former parties did rely on the FRP(n) to pass the annual budget in 1985, 1989, 1997, 1998, and 2001.

The 2001 elections shifted the balance of power within the non-socialist coalition. Previously dominated by the centrist KRF, the Conservatives (*Høyre*, or H) took over the position of largest party. This party favored cooperation with the FRP(n) and an agreement was concluded with the radical right-wing populist party to support a non-socialist minority government. In return for its support the FRP(n) received the chairmanship of two parliamentary committees (agriculture and finance), as well as some policy concessions.<sup>55</sup> The party fulfilled its duties as support party, although it voted against one of the four budgets presented by the non-socialist minority government during the 2001-2005 legislative period (Aalberg 2002). In the 2005 elections the FRP(n) benefited from its position as government support party and surpassed H in terms of votes and parliamentary seats. The party became the strongest party in the non-socialist bloc and the second party in the *Storting*. It is currently part of the opposition, because the non-socialist bloc has lost its parliamentary majority and a left-wing majority government has assumed office (Narud and Strom 2007). Shortly after the 2005 elections Carl I. Hagen resigned from the party leadership to become Vice President of the *Storting* and appointed Siv Jensen his successor. In recent polls the FRP(n) has

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<sup>54</sup> The CP and KRF, the two centrist parties in the non-socialist coalition, also opposed any form of government participation of the FRP(n), because they considered the party to be populist and xenophobic.

<sup>55</sup> The party had asked for the appointment of FRP(n) leader Carl I. Hagen as President of the *Storting*, but this request was rejected on the grounds that the President of the *Storting* "must be above the cut and thrust of party politics and, with his extreme views, Mr. Hagen would not be a sufficiently 'unifying' figure and hence was not thought fit to hold a positions which ranks second only to the reigning monarch". Apparently, Hagen felt "personally humiliated" by this decision (Aalberg 2001: 1053).

overtaken the Norwegian Labour Party (*Det Norske Arbeiderparti*, or DNA) as the most popular Norwegian party (e.g. *Aftenposten* 22-11-2007).

Table 3.9  
*Radical right-wing populist parties in Norway*

	Represented after the parliamentary elections of	Government support party in	Cabinet member in
FRP(n)	1981; 1989; 1997; 2005	1985; 1993; 2001	-

*Sweden: a radical right-wing populist flash party*

Although relatively strong outside the electoral arena, the Swedish radical right-wing populist movement has had troubles gaining parliamentary representation. It succeeded in 1991, when ND entered parliament with 25 seats. Although pivotal (i.e. necessary for a non-socialist majority), ND was kept out of the government coalition, because the party differed from the other non-socialist parties in terms of policy positions and political style (Pierre and Widfeldt 1992: 525-526). The party was considered xenophobic and was resented for its "provocative style", "drastic language", and "lack of respect for democratic institutions and procedures" (Widfeldt 2004: 152, 156). The non-socialist parties proposed to form a minority government that would rely on ad hoc coalitions to pass legislation. When the *Riksdag* voted on the identity of the new prime minister, ND abstained. The government coalition initially allied with the Swedish Social Democratic Labour Party (*Sveriges Socialdemokratische arbetarparti*, or S) to pass legislation and solve the financial crisis that hit Sweden in the early 1990s, but occasionally also allied with ND.<sup>56</sup> When the minority government was no longer able to secure sufficient support to remain in office – S adopted an oppositional strategy when the parliamentary term drew to a close, and ND was succumbed by "internal conflicts, defections and poor party discipline" - new elections were scheduled for 1994 (Widfeldt 2004: 160). As a consequence of its internal problems, ND lost its parliamentary representation and the party was dissolved shortly after the 1994 elections.<sup>57</sup> A "return to normality" restored stability in the Swedish party system (Widfeldt and Pierre 1995: 480-481).

<sup>56</sup> At the very start of the financial crisis Bildt considered cooperation with ND. According to Widfeldt (2004: 159), "Bildt may have been open to discussions with ND during the first phases of the crisis. Wachtmeister openly expressed interest in participating in the negotiations, and Bildt said on TV that Wachtmeister had behaved in a 'responsible and impressive manner', while others did not have the same 'crisis awareness'". Some authors have questioned Bildt's motives and have interpreted his words as a provocation vis-à-vis S. Teorell (quoted in Widfeldt 2004) speaks in this regard of an "alternative strategy", which was blocked by the Liberals, who refused to use ND as a lever in the negotiations with the S. ND-leader Ian Wachtmeister (quoted in the same study) agrees with this interpretation of the facts.

<sup>57</sup> The loss of votes can also be partly attributed to a tightening of immigration law, which was implemented "to accommodate public discontent with the influx of refugees, and take away the potential support for ND" (Widfeldt 2004: 158)

Table 3.10  
*Radical right-wing populist parties in Sweden*

	Represented after the parliamentary elections of	Government support party in	Cabinet member in
ND	1991	-	-

*Switzerland:*

The origins of the SVP (UDC in the French speaking part of Switzerland) date back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The support for the party has hovered around 10 per cent for many decades, until the party transformed into a radical right-wing populist party under the leadership of Christoph Blocher in the 1990s. The electoral support of the party has picked up since, and the party now controls 62 of the 200 in the Swiss National Council. The SVP has held positions in the Swiss executive throughout the post-war era.

Although the SVP qualifies as a radical right-wing populist party that has been included in government coalitions, its inclusion of in this dissertation is problematic. Strictly speaking, Switzerland does not qualify as a parliamentary democracy and coalition formation in this country does not occur along the same lines as in other West European countries. Instead, Switzerland is ruled through a system of co-governance, which brings together parliamentary parties in a collective executive body, named the Swiss Federal Council (Church 2004). Membership of, and distribution of seats in, this council are determined on the basis of a "magic formula", which takes into account parties' strength in the National Council. Traditionally, the SVP held one seat in the Federal Council and the three other major parties two seats each. In 2003 the formula was revised. Together with the Free Democratic Party of Switzerland (*Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei der Schweiz*, or FDP) and the Social Democratic Party of Switzerland (*Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz*, or SPS) the SVP now has two seats in the Federal Council, while the Christian Democratic People's Party of Switzerland (*Christliche Demokratische Volkspartei*, or CVP) has one seat. The way in which the composition of the Swiss Federal Council is determined, markedly differs from the way in which coalition composition in other West European countries is determined, and thus falls outside the scope of coalition formation theories.

**Cross-national perspectives**

A quick count shows that over the course of the past decades, *seven* radical right-wing populist parties have participated in government coalitions in *five* West European countries.<sup>58</sup> In other words, roughly half of the radical right-wing populist parties studied in this dissertation have been included in government coalitions, and a majority of the countries in which the radical right-wing populist party family has secured parliamentary representation are included. Of the seven radical right-wing populist parties that have participated in government coalitions, one has participated in three government coalitions (FPÖ), four in two government coalitions (AN, DF, FI, LN), and two in one government coalition (FRP(n) and LPF). Five parties (AN, FI, FPÖ, LN, LPF) have been cabinet members, while two parties (DF, FRP(n)) served as support parties that had a pre-negotiated and formalized relationship with the minority government they sustained. The latter parties

<sup>58</sup> Note that the SVP is not included in this count.

benefited indirectly from their government participation through the distribution of extraexecutive spoils, most notably prestigious positions in parliamentary committees.

This count leaves six radical right-wing populist parties that never secured government participation. In three countries radical right-wing populist parties have been completely absent from government coalitions at the national level: Belgium, France, and Sweden. In other countries some radical right-wing populist parties have succeeded where others have failed. This has been the case for example in Denmark, where the DF became a government support party and the FRP(d) did not, and the Netherlands, where the LPF became a cabinet member and the CP/CD did not. The latter two cases are particularly interesting, because they enable control for country specific variables and exclusive focus on the properties of the radical right-wing populist parties in question and party system characteristics.

### *Singularities and commonalities*

The trajectories of the various radical right-wing populist parties highlight the importance of idiosyncratic events and idiosyncratic institutional contexts in the rise to power of these parties. The most striking example of an idiosyncratic event is, of course, the murder of Pim Fortuyn, which is inevitably linked to the electoral success and subsequent inclusion of the LPF in the Balkenende I government, only several weeks after the murder. Similarly, the rise to power of the Italian radical right-wing populist parties can not be analyzed separately from the profound changes that took place in the Italian political system in the first half of the 1990s. Since there were virtually no established parties left after the 1994 elections, new parties had no other choice but to take up government responsibility (Hopkin and Ignazi 2008: 75). The most notable example of an idiosyncratic institutional context concerns Flanders, where the erection and continuation of the cordon sanitaire around the FN and VB cannot be studied independently of the Belgian federal state structure and the communitarian tensions that are created by this structure.

The commonalities in the trajectories of the radical right-wing populist parties that have succeeded in their quest for power are, however, also apparent. A first evident commonality is the fact that the government coalitions have almost exclusively been formed in recent years. When radical right-wing populist parties first emerged on the political scene in Western Europe, in the 1980s they were generally perceived as unwanted intruders with unacceptable political programs and obstructive behavior. In the late 1990s attitudes towards radical right-wing populist parties changed, not in the last place because these parties progressively became more relevant in Sartorian terms. However, this trend cannot be observed in every West European country under study.

A second important commonality concerns the composition of the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated. They have usually been comprised of (centre-)right and radical right-wing populist parties. The FPÖ governed with a conservative party, the DF with a conservative and a liberal party, the Italian radical right-wing populist parties with a number of tiny Christian-democratic parties, the LPF with a Christian-democratic and a liberal party, and the FRP(n) with a Christian-democratic, a liberal, and a conservative party. Government coalitions have rarely brought together social-democratic and radical right-

wing populist parties.<sup>59</sup> Only in Austria a social-democratic party invited the FPÖ to participate in a government coalition after the 1983 elections. This suggests that the left-right distinction has a pervasive effect on coalition politics and that party family affiliation and ideological compatibility have played a role in the formation of the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties participated.

This dissertation seeks to systematically assess these kinds of patterns through the application of the coalition formation theories presented in the previous chapter. These theories largely ignore the idiosyncratic events and institutional contexts that might have influenced radical right-wing populist parties' trajectories. Instead, they focus on the identified patterns of variation and seek to account for these through deductively derived propositions and hypotheses.

### *Cross-national effects*

This study has a broad comparative focus. It includes a dozen radical right-wing populist parties that have emerged in eight different West European countries. It is difficult, however, to consider the developments in each of these countries independently from developments in other West European countries. The electoral success of radical right-wing populist parties has spread over Western Europe like an oil stain. It started in Austria, Denmark, France, and Norway and subsequently reached Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. To account for this pattern, Mudde (2007), Rydgren (2005a) and Schain et al. (2002a: 16-17) point at the importance of cross-national diffusion effects.<sup>60</sup> These effects have promoted the electoral breakthrough and growth of radical right-wing populist parties in countries where radical right-wing populist parties initially were absent or relatively weak. The argument of these authors essentially posits that radical right-wing populist parties have directly and indirectly supported each other in their quest for electoral success through the exchange of knowledge, ideological and organizational models, and resources. Moreover, the success of radical right-wing populist parties in some West European countries has increased the legitimacy of the radical right-wing populist program, also in countries where radical right-wing populist parties were not (yet) successful.

Coalition formation theories attribute considerable importance to electoral success as a determinant of bargaining power. For this reason the cross-national diffusion effects described by Rydgren and Schain et al. probably have an indirect impact on the formation of government coalitions that include radical right-wing populist parties. What is even more important, a number of cross-national diffusion effects that are *directly* related to the

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<sup>59</sup> This sets radical right-wing populist parties in West European parliamentary democracies apart from radical right-wing populist parties in Central and East European parliamentary democracies. The latter group of parties has frequently governed with former communist parties in 'red-brown' coalitions (Ishiyama 1998).

<sup>60</sup> Cross-national diffusion effects are most often observed in studies of democratic and policy reform. According to Simmons, Dobin, and Garret (2006: 787) "international policy diffusion occurs when government policy decisions in a given country are systematically conditioned by prior policy choices made in other countries" (see also Simmons and Elkins 2004; Mesequer 2004; Braun and Gilardi 2006). One could argue that an international electoral diffusion effect exists when vote choices in a country are systematically conditioned by vote choice made in other countries, or that an international coalition diffusion effect exists when coalition patterns in a country are systematically conditioned by coalition patterns in other countries.

formation of these government coalitions are observable as well. These effects concern the fact that parties learn from the coalition behaviour of parties in other countries.

One observation that supports this claim is the fact that radical right-wing populist parties have frequently alluded to the experiences of other radical right-wing populist parties in government coalitions. With regard to the government participation of the FPÖ, VB leader Filip Dewinter writes that he criticizes the FPÖ "for having sold out its program in order to participate in the Austrian government. The FPÖ has paid a heavy electoral prize for that" (*Het Pallieterke* 05-01-2005). Radical right-wing populist parties have even organized meetings to discuss the advantageous and disadvantages of government participation. One of these meetings took place in Antwerp, on December 1, 2004, and brought together representatives of the FN, FPÖ, LN, and VB.<sup>61</sup> The main conclusion reached by the participants was that "the nationalist-right parties should fight shoulder to shoulder and learn from each others mistakes".<sup>62</sup> Given that the radical right-wing populist party family is not particularly united (Mudde 2007b: 172-181), this exchange of best practices is remarkable.

Another observation that supports this claim, is the fact that mainstream parties have frequently alluded to the experiences other mainstream parties have had with radical right-wing populist parties in government. In the Flemish debate about the *cordon sanitaire*, for example, mainstream politicians and political commentators occasionally claim that it is better to give the VB access to government coalitions to counter the electoral success of this party. The politicians and commentators that make these statements allude to the negative consequences government participation has had for the FPÖ and the LPF, and argue that the VB will suffer the same fate (e.g. Smit 2008).

Where do these cross-national diffusion effects originate from? It seems that the government participation of the FPÖ in 2000 has had a pervasive impact on coalition politics in Western Europe. Shortly after the FPÖ assumed office, several other radical right-wing populist parties entered government coalitions as well: the AN, DF, FI, FRP(n), and LN in 2001 and the LPF in 2002. The identification of the government participation of the FPÖ as a source of the diffusion effect is intuitively appealing. First, when the ÖVP invited the FPÖ to join a government coalition, the party ended a taboo that constrained coalition formation in post-war West European politics. In the minds of many the government participation of the FPÖ constituted a break with the post-war consensus that radical right-wing populist parties are political pariahs, even though technically speaking other radical right-wing populist parties had governed prior to 2000. Second, the government participation of the FPÖ was highly mediatised, which made it easy for parties to inform themselves about the developments in Austria. Third, the sanctions imposed on the Austrian government by the EU-14 could not be maintained very long. The withdrawal of the sanctions in reaction to the report of the Wise Men Committee (see chapter 6) effectively legitimized the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties.

The government participation of the FPÖ in 2000 occurred only after the AN, FI, and LN had briefly governed in Italy in 1994. Why did the government participation of the three Italian radical right-wing populist

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<sup>61</sup> The meeting was organized by the Vlaams Nationale Debatclub and was attended by the author.

<sup>62</sup> <http://www.filipdewinter.be/page.php?linkID=30>, downloaded 14-11-2007.

parties not generate the same effects as the government participation of the FPÖ? Several explanations are possible. First, the government participation of AN, FI, and LN was not surrounded by the same controversy as the government participation of the FPÖ. Surely, some politicians expressed concern about the AN's rise to power, but not with the same intensity as they reacted to the FPÖ's rise to power.<sup>63</sup> Second, the Italian radical right-wing populist parties do not constitute a role model for other West European radical right-wing populist parties, at least not to the same extent as the FPÖ. This is partly the result of the rather specific character of the AN, FI, and LN. Each of these parties has certain characteristics that makes it difficult for other radical right-wing populist parties to identify with these parties and relate to their government experiences.<sup>64</sup> The FPÖ on the other hand is one of the prototypes of successful radical right-wing populist parties. Moreover, the Italian radical right-wing populist parties are also not to the same extent embedded in the international radical right-wing populist network as the FPÖ. Finally, the Italian radical right-wing populist parties formed a government coalition amongst each other, which made it impossible for mainstream parties to draw any lessons from the Italian experience. In short, the Italian experience is simply very different from that of the other West European parliamentary democracies, a fact that one should keep in mind throughout this dissertation.

### **Radical right-wing populist parties and coalition formation theories**

The trajectories of radical right-wing populist parties suggest that there are deep and significant patterns that structure the formation of government coalitions including these parties. The existence of these patterns justifies the decision to apply coalition formation theories to radical right-wing populist parties. However, coalition formation theories are based on a number of assumptions that ought to have some empirical support if the application of these theories is to be meaningful. This section investigates whether two of the most important assumptions – that parties are office-, policy-, and vote-seekers and that they have general coalitionability – hold for radical right-wing populist parties.

#### *Radical right-wing populist parties and the pursuit of office*

Coalition formation theories assume that parties are office-seekers. They seek a spot in the limelight and want to control cabinet portfolios, either for the prestige attributed to these portfolios, i.e. for intrinsic reasons, or to influence policymaking, i.e. for instrumental reasons. This assumption is believed to apply to parties, irrespective of their party family affiliation. But are radical right-wing populist parties office-seekers? Do they want to govern? And if they do, for the same reasons as other parties?

At least three observations suggest that radical right-wing populist parties are indeed office-seekers. First, radical right-wing populist parties

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<sup>63</sup> Gallagher (2000: 75) notes that some politicians did in fact object to the government participation of the AN. "Officials from Germany, Spain, Greece and Portugal were concerned that working with neo-fascists in the European Union's Council of Ministers would make neo-fascism appear more respectable in their own countries. On 29 May, the Danish and Belgian telecommunications ministers refused to shake hands with their AN counterpart. But Douglas Hurd, the British Foreign Secretary, stated that his government had 'no reservations' about working with the new Italian government."

<sup>64</sup> The AN sets itself apart through its neo-fascist heritage, while the LN is distinct in its ethno-regionalism.

have rarely, if ever, declined offers to participate in government coalitions. Although this claim is not easily substantiated given that coalition negotiations are usually surrounded by secrecy, it appears that when asked radical right-wing populist parties have entered government coalitions at the national level without any exceptions. More particularly, invitations to participate in coalition negotiations have not been refused by radical right-wing populist party leaders and failed bargaining attempts between radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties have never been reported. I therefore concur with Bale (2003: 69) that "far right party leaders over the past decade have deliberately (and not always without difficulty) sought to achieve a place in national government".

Second, radical right-wing populist parties have rarely voluntarily left government coalitions. Surely, many of the government coalitions in which these parties have participated have been short-lived, but their tenure has usually been terminated by the mainstream parties involved in the government coalitions. The only radical right-wing populist party that has actively brought down the government coalition in which it participated was the LN. Bossi's party withdrew from the first Berlusconi government after it had been in office for slightly more than seven months, for a variety of reasons.<sup>65</sup> The LN has, however, participated in a subsequent government coalition and thus appears clearly office-oriented (Ruzza and Fella forthcoming).

Lastly, the vast majority of radical right-wing populist parties have extensive experience in subnational executive coalitions. This experience usually precedes participation in national governments by several years, if not several decades. The subnational experiences of radical right-wing populist parties testify to these parties willingness to take up responsibility in executive coalitions. The FPÖ, for example, has governed at the subnational level from the 1950s onwards, and by the late 1990s counted roughly 8000 office-holders distributed over various subnational levels in Austria (Luther 2003a: 208). Other radical right-wing populist parties have held subnational offices as well, albeit less frequently. The FRP(n), for example, obtained the mayorship of Oslo in 1990. In 1999 the party also conquered the mayorship of Os, and obtained the deputy mayorship of twenty additional municipalities. Even some of the radical right-wing populist parties that have not participated in national governments have secured executive positions at the subnational level. The FN, for example, has provided deputies to the municipal council of Grasse and has taken part in numerous regional executive coalitions.<sup>66</sup>

These observations do not demonstrate that radical right-wing populist parties are equally concerned with getting into office as other parties. Conventional wisdom has it that radical right-wing populist parties are less interested in government participation than mainstream parties. While mainstream parties are often characterized as primarily or exclusively office-seeking, radical right-wing populist parties are often described as more concerned with vote maximization than government participation. De Swaan (1973: 166), for example, contends that "[...] the extreme actors in

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<sup>65</sup> The decision of the LN was primarily motivated by vote-seeking considerations. The party did not want to associate itself with the budget cuts proposed by Berlusconi, nor with the tarnished image of Berlusconi who was being prosecuted by the judiciary.

<sup>66</sup> Most importantly in Aquitaine, Bourgogne, Centre, Franche-Comté, Haute-Normandie, Languedoc-Roussillon, Midi-Pyrénées, PACA, Picardie, and Rhône-Alpes. The FN has succeeded in the election of its candidates to the mayorship of three cities (Marignane, Orange, and Toulon). Albeit directly elected, electoral coalitions did facilitate the election of the FN mayors.

parliament tend to be less willing to participate in a coalition government [than central actor] and are more inclined to follow a strategy of maximizing future electoral support than other actors”.

Although his observation is not completely unsubstantiated, De Swaan’s oversimplifies the strategic preferences of fringe parties. Most importantly, he ignores that even fringe parties wish to exercise power. Votes have no intrinsic value of their own. They are not an end, but a means to an end. They will use their votes to gain access to the executive, to influence policy-making, or both. Even though government participation is often a long-term goal of fringe party, it is nevertheless one of the objectives they try to realize. According to Pedersen (1982: 8), “the goal of any minor party is to pass the threshold of relevance, and, to become an influential, at best a ruling party”. This rule applies just as much to radical right-wing populist parties as to other fringe parties.

Additionally, radical right-wing populist parties have a number of incentives to actively pursue office. First, they are usually led by charismatic leaders, who are likely to attach great importance to public recognition. Government participation is an obvious way to assure this type of recognition. Second, they rely heavily on party members in their electoral campaigns and therefore need access to patronage arrangements to reward their members for their activism and assure their loyalty. Third, government participation provides these parties with direct influence over policy-making and thus gives them the opportunity to realize (parts of) their policy programs. Given that radical right-wing populist parties have been mandated by voters to execute their programs, they cannot pass by the opportunity to govern. As Sjöblöm (1968: 80) notes, “if the party abstains from every possibility of influencing the content in the authoritative decisions, it can be interpreted by the party’s voters as evidence of lack of “efficacy” in the party [...]”. Thus, radical right-wing populist parties have important intrinsic and instrumental reasons to pursue office-seeking strategies.

Why, then, is the general perception that radical right-wing populist parties are not office-seekers? Radical right-wing populist parties do sometimes put policy and votes before office, a point further discussed below. Moreover, the populist rhetoric of radical right-wing populist parties might cloud observations. Radical right-wing populist parties are generally highly critical of governments and government coalitions, which supposedly interfere with the direct translation of voters electoral preferences in policy outcomes. This does not imply, however, that they reject government participation on a *a priori* grounds. On the contrary, as the true representatives of the people, radical right-wing populist parties might feel they are more entitled to govern than other parties.

#### *Radical right-wing populist parties and the realization of policy*

Coalition formation theories assume that parties are not only office-seekers, but also policy-seekers. They want to participate in government coalitions to realize their policy programs, either because they value the policy positions included in these programs for intrinsic reasons, or because they want to satisfy their voters. Again, this assumption is believed to apply to parties, irrespective of their party family affiliation. But are radical right-wing populist parties policy-seekers? Do they want to leave their mark on (government) policies? And if they do, for the same reasons as other parties?

Studies that examine the radical right-wing populist party family provide a number of indications that radical right-wing populist parties are indeed policy-seekers. First, these parties have a clearly circumscribed and

coherent ideological program, which they seek to implement. Second, they actively promote this program in elections. Third, they try to influence policy-making directly and indirectly. They actively take part in the legislative process (e.g. Minkenberg 2001) and try to spread their ideology through a 'strategy of contamination' (cf. below).

These observations show that radical right-wing populist parties are policy-seekers, but they give no indication whether radical right-wing populist parties are more or less concerned with policy than mainstream parties. May (1973)'s law of curvilinear disparity suggests that the members of radical right-wing populist parties take more extreme policy positions than the members of mainstream parties, that they attach more importance to these policy positions, and that they have a greater say in strategic decisions. If one follows this line of argumentation, one might conclude that radical right-wing populist parties are more concerned with policy than mainstream parties. Some scholars contend that the strategic behaviour of radical right-wing populist parties provides indications that these parties are pure policy-seekers. They are, for example, less likely to respond to changes in public opinion than mainstream parties (Ezrow et al. 2007) and when they adjust their policy positions, they normally face a decrease in electoral popularity (Adams et al. 2006).

The argument ignores that the members of radical right-wing populist parties have hardly an impact on strategic decisions as a result of the centralized lines along which these parties are organized (Carter 2005). In most radical right-wing populist parties members do not have the right to elect the party leader, have limited capacity to influence the content of party manifestos, and, most importantly, do not get to decide on questions of party strategy and government participation.<sup>67</sup> Consequentially, these parties are not exposed to the same incentives to adopt policy-seeking strategies as green parties, which have a decentralized organizational structure that gives their members the opportunity to have a say in strategic decisions.

The opposite claim, that radical right-wing populist parties are less concerned with policy than mainstream parties, is equally problematic. Although many authors portray radical right-wing populist parties as opportunistic parties that show high levels of ideological flexibility (Decker 2003; Heinisch 2003; Lorenz 2003; Mény and Surel 2002), they are bound to their ideological principles and electoral promises. Observations as those of Immerfall (1998: 258), who notes that "charismatic leadership and tight party organization allow these parties to respond quickly and without too much internal debate to hot issues or shifts in their constituencies [...]. As a result [they] have been able to change ideological course, and discard previously important issues, or change the emphasis of their programmes", fail to note that radical right-wing populist parties are to a certain degree constrained in the policy changes they seek to implement. Moreover, they also ignore that mainstream parties regularly display the same kind of ideological flexibility, especially when they practice catch-all strategies.

This does not imply that radical right-wing populist parties never change their ideologies. They have at times changed passages in their manifestos quite radically and have occasionally even made complete u-turns with regard to specific policy issues. The way in which the LN has transformed from a pro-EU party in an anti-EU is a case in point (Chari, Iltanen, and

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<sup>67</sup> Although the impact of party members on party strategies in mainstream parties is also limited, many mainstream parties submit coalition agreements to party congresses or to broadly composed and directly or indirectly elected party executives.

Kritzing 2004). Sudden and dramatic changes have, however, mainly concerned issues that belong to the “pragmatic issue domain” (Tavits 2007). On issues that belong to the “principled issue domain” radical right-wing populist parties have often made less significant and swift changes. Profound programmatic changes have nevertheless occurred sporadically, as is demonstrated by the FPÖ’s adoption of Austrian patriotism, the LN’s move from separatism to regionalism to autonomism, and the transformation of the MSI into the AN. In this respect radical right-wing populist parties are no different from other parties. Parties frequently change positions on issues that do not have a manifest link to their core ideology, especially when these changes are believed to be electorally profitable. They less frequently change positions on issues that do have a manifest link to their core ideology, but profound changes happen incidentally. The transformation of most communist parties in the 1980s and 1990s illustrates this point (e.g. Bull 1995; Waller and Fennema 1988), as does the transformation of Labour in the 1990s (e.g. Heath, Jowell, and Curtice 2001). Consequentially, radical right-wing populist parties do not qualify as more or less policy-seeking than mainstream parties.

#### *Radical right-wing populist parties and the maximization of votes*

Coalition formation theories assume that that parties are not only office- and policy-seekers, but also vote-seekers. Since parties need votes to get into office and influence policy, they have important instrumental reasons to practice a strategy of vote maximization. Again, this assumption is believed to apply to parties, irrespective of their party family affiliation. But are radical right-wing populist parties vote-seekers? Do they attempt to maximize their electoral support? And if they do, do they have purely instrumental reasons to adopt a strategy of vote maximization?

Radical right-wing populist parties are indeed vote-seekers. They employ a series of vote-seeking strategies that are designed to bring in various groups of voters. Close examination of these strategies brings to light that Electoral studies show that a substantial portion of voters that support radical right-wing populist parties do this on the basis of their policy agenda. In other words, the vote for radical right-wing populist parties is an ideological vote (e.g. Van der Brug, Fennema, and Tillie 2000). This implies that policy positions are an important part of radical right-wing populist parties’ vote-seeking strategies. More specifically, they have alternated between two different vote-seeking strategies. First, radical right-wing populist parties have presented themselves as an alternative *to* the system and pursued a strategy of distinction. This strategy has provided them with an electoral niche and a reservoir of loyal voters. Second, radical right-wing populist parties have presented themselves as an alternative *within* the system and pursued a strategy of differentiation. This strategy has broadened their electoral appeal and boasted their electoral success (Dézé 2004).

If these strategies are interpreted in more general terms, one could say that radical right-wing populist parties attempt to expand their electoral appeal through moderation of their policy positions. This strategy fits with a Downsian perspective on party competition. Incidentally, a moderation of policy positions will also reduce the policy distance between mainstream and radical right-wing populist parties, which could make the latter parties more attractive coalition members (see also chapter 4). Hence, radical right-wing populist parties’ vote-seeking strategies can actually contribute to the realization of their office and policy goals.

Radical right-wing populist parties are, however, not necessarily vote-maximizers, in the sense that they adopt just about any policy program that

might strike a chord with large groups of voters. In the discussion above it was noted that radical right-wing populist parties are less to change their positions on issues that belong to their principled issue domain than on issues that belong to their pragmatic issue domain. Additionally, radical right-wing populist parties are also constrained by the positions mainstream parties take up, at least if they wish to maintain an appeal that is clearly distinct from that of these parties. In line with these reservations several studies show that radical right-wing populist parties are less likely to adjust their positions to that of the median voter than mainstream parties (Ezrow et al. 2007).

#### *Radical right-wing populist parties between office, policy, and votes*

When the party goals of radical right-wing populist parties are ranked in terms of importance, it appears that these parties attach more importance to votes than to office or policy. Radical right-wing populist parties seem to focus on votes, but only because these are a means to achieve office and policy. Thus, they are short-term vote-seekers and long-term office- and policy-seekers.

Four factors explain why radical right-wing populist parties distinguish between the realization of short- and long-term party goals and give votes a more prominent position than office or policy, at least in the short run. First, radical right-wing populist parties are smaller than most mainstream parties and hence run a greater risk to fall below the threshold of representation (Bolleyer 2007). The pursuit of votes is thus vital to the survival of these parties as parliamentary forces. Second, radical right-wing populist parties have fewer coalition options than mainstream parties, because they are situated on the fringe of the political spectrum (Smith 1997). To compensate for this handicap, they will try to strengthen their bargain position through electoral growth (Sened and Schofield 2006: 3). Third, radical right-wing populist parties run greater risks when they pursue office-seeking strategies and will seek to control these risks through the creation of an electoral buffer (cf. below). Fourth, radical right-wing populist parties can rely on a strategy of contamination, but this strategy only works when these parties manage to put electoral pressure on mainstream parties.

Several of the listed explanations link radical right-wing populist parties' short-term vote-seeking strategies to their long-term office- and policy-seeking strategies. They highlight that the pursuit of votes can help radical right-wing populist parties to get into office and influence policy-making. The electoral growth of these parties enhances their position in coalition negotiations and thus makes it more likely that they enter government coalitions. In these coalitions radical right-wing populist parties have the opportunity to influence policy-making directly. Government participation is, however, not a precondition for influence over policy-making. Radical right-wing populist parties can also use their electoral strength to influence policy-making in parliament. Sened and Schofield (2006: 3-4) note that parties on the extremes of the political spectrum often link their strategies in the electoral and the legislative arena. They observe that "small parties often adopt radical positions, ensure enough votes to gain parliamentary representation, and bargain aggressively in an attempt to affect government policy from the sidelines".

Even when radical right-wing populist parties do not succeed to influence policy-making directly, they might still do this indirectly. They can exercise electoral pressure on mainstream parties and 'force' these parties to co-opt their policy positions. This 'contamination' strategy is widely practiced by parties, especially when they are located on the fringes of the political

spectre (e.g. Dumont and Bäck 2006). The effectiveness of the strategy depends on the inroads parties can make in other parties electorates. Hence, it necessitates the espousal of vote-seeking strategies.

*Right-wing populist parties' trade-offs between office, policy, and votes*

Radical right-wing populist parties are indeed office-, policy-, and vote-seekers. In this respect they are quite similar to other parties. Unlike many other parties, they (initially) value votes more than office and policy and hence focus primarily on vote-seeking strategies. Even when radical right-wing populist parties move office- and policy-seeking over time, a fundamental difference with many other parties remains. The trade-offs between office, policy, and votes, radical right-wing populist parties face differ from those of many other parties. They have a particularly difficult time when try to reconcile these three goals. More than many other parties, radical right-wing populist parties face a trade-off between office, on the one hand, and policy and votes, on the other.

The reason for this difference lies in the fact that government participation entails a series of challenges that affect radical right-wing populist parties' capacities to realize their policy objectives and maximize future vote shares. More specifically, in government radical right-wing populist parties have to make serious policy concessions and abandon some of the policy positions that belong to their principled issue domain. As a result, they are highly likely to suffer electorally from their government participation. And, although negative incumbency effects are registered by most parties that assume office (Müller and Strom 2000), radical right-wing populist parties lose on average significantly more voters than mainstream parties and other non-mainstream parties in the elections that directly follow their government participation (Buelens and Hino 2008).<sup>68</sup> Thus, even though government participation satisfies one objective of radical right-wing populist parties, it is detrimental to the attainment of others.

The obvious question is why radical right-wing populist parties have an exceptionally difficult time to reconcile office, policy, and votes. The answer to this question is found in an analysis of the ideological and organizational features of these parties. Some of these features are generic, that is, they are characteristic of non-mainstream parties in general (e.g. newness and consequential low levels of organizational institutionalisation) (Bolleyer 2007; 2008; Deschouwer 2008). Other features pertain more specifically to the character of radical right-wing populist parties, even though they can also be found in other party families. Populism is the most noteworthy of these characteristics, but charismatic leadership and excessive organizational centralization also play a role.

Since the constraints on the pursuit of votes largely follow from the constraints on the pursuit of policy, let me first address the latter point. In policy terms, government participation puts a serious strain on the strategic behaviour of radical right-wing populist parties. First, it implies a commitment to a policy agreement, which is based on policy compromise and hence necessitates the justification of policy positions that are different from radical right-wing populist parties' ideal policy positions. Second, the impact radical

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<sup>68</sup> Unfortunately, Buelens and Hino (2007) have not explored whether radical right-wing populist parties lose more votes after their first period in office than after the second or third. It is probable that the negative incumbency effect is more severe when parties have no prior government experience and that they gradually adjust to the responsibility of government when they have participated in government coalitions on more than one occasion.

right-wing populist parties will have on this policy agreement is limited, since they are normally only junior coalition members. Moreover, radical right-wing populist parties' desire to finally reap the benefits of office makes it probable that these parties will swallow unusual policy compromises to gain governmental representation (Strom and Müller 1999b: 25). In this position, radical right-wing populist parties risk subordination to the larger mainstream parties in the coalition, especially the prime minister party. Unless radical right-wing populist parties are pivotal in the coalition, this endangers the implementation of policy concessions reached during the coalition negotiations (Bolleyer 2007). Third, in government radical right-wing populist parties have fewer opportunities to set the political agenda. Instead, they will have to follow the agenda of the cabinet, which is usually dominated by issues with no particular appeal to radical right-wing populist voters.

More specifically and related to points three and four, radical right-wing populist parties have grave difficulties to maintain their electorally rewarding populist profiles when they assume office. Radical right-wing populist parties in government are faced with a fascinating paradox. They either have to adapt to their new role as government parties, and risk to alienate (some of) their supporters, or maintain their profile as radical right-wing populist parties, which is most of the time incompatible with the responsibilities that come with an executive position. As Heinisch (2003: 91-92) has put it,

“on the one hand, their nature as relatively de-institutionalized parties oriented toward charismatic personalities and as organizations to maintain ‘movement character’ while engaging in spectacular forms of self-presentation is a poor match for the specific constraints of public office. On the other, parties that adapt too well and ‘normalize’ quickly may mutate into ordinary right-of-centre parties and thus lose their *raison d’être* in the eyes of their supporters”.

There is no easy solution to this dilemma. Few radical right-wing populist parties have the skills to strike the right balance between these two extremes and successfully assume the role of the ‘opposition in government’ (Albertazzi, McDonnell, and Newell 2007; McDonnell and Albertazzi 2004).

A number of additional features of radical right-wing populist parties further complicate the government capacity of these parties and consequentially their ability to maximize votes while in office. Given the organizational focus on the charismatic leader (Pedahzur and Brichta 2002), radical right-wing populist parties usually lack skilled party functionaries that can fulfil government positions. Charismatic leaders tend to perceive talented up-and-coming politicians in their own ranks as threats to their positions and frequently nip their rise in the bud. In their recruitment of party functionaries radical right-wing populist parties are also hampered by the stigmatization that surrounds their organizations (Klandermans and Mayer 2005), and the fact that it is unlikely that they receive weighty or visible portfolios (Deschouwer 2008). The selection of competent and experienced office holders is, however, a crucial precondition for successful government participation (Deschouwer 2008; Laver and Shepsle 2000). Additionally, radical right-wing populist parties also lack the administrative resources to support their cabinet members in their daily activities. Together these factors lead to high rates of ministerial turn-over when radical right-wing populist parties are in government, and to the promotion of an image of incompetence that hurts the parties.

*The general coalitionability assumption*

Coalition formation theories assume that parties are willing to enter coalition negotiations with other parties without any a priori reservations. In the previous chapter, I already noted that this assumption is sometimes violated. Laver and Schofield (1990: 200-201) observe that "certain parties have what almost amounts to a 'pariah' status, being excluded from the bargaining process by all other parties" and that "one of the strongest behavioural regularities that we observe in the politics of coalition in Europe is that certain parties are designated by the other as 'non-coalitionable'." It is important to establish to what extent this assumption is violated when the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is studied. If the assumption is seriously violated, radical right-wing populist parties are not parties like any other, and the claim that they are better approached as a pathological normalcy than a normal pathology is undermined.

An evaluation of the status of radical right-wing populist parties in West European parliamentary democracies suggests that radical right-wing populist parties do not structurally lack general coalitionability. Most importantly, Van Spanje and Van der Brug (2007: 1026) note that "it is only seldom that established parties react en bloc to an anti-immigration party." The authors claim that only five radical right-wing populist parties have at some point in time been treated as political pariahs by the most important mainstream parties in their respective countries. These five parties are the CP/CD, FN, FNb, MSI, and VB. Their inventory corresponds fairly well to the one that can be derived from the discussion of the trajectories of individual radical right-wing populist parties presented earlier in this chapter. In other words, it seems that the assumption of general coalitionability is only violated in Belgium, France, Italy, and the Netherlands. It is important to note though, that some radical right-wing populist parties have acquired coalitionability along the way, as the case of the MSI demonstrates

The study of Van Spanje and Van der Burg also shows that radical right-wing populist parties that have pariah status take more extreme positions on the left-right dimension than other radical right-wing populist parties. Each of the radical right-wing populist parties that has been treated as a pariah party takes a position of 8.75 or higher on a scale from 0 to 10, while only one radical right-wing populist party that has not been treated as a pariah takes a position that is this far to the right. Thus, there is a strong correlation between the positions radical right-wing populist parties take on the left-right dimension and their status as pariah parties, which suggests that radical right-wing populist parties are treated as political pariahs as a consequence of their far right positions.

What are the implications of these observations for this study? They mainly suggest that the claim made in the previous chapter that pariah status and government status are polar opposites is correct, since the two are each functions of parties' policy positions. Policy positions are an important ingredient of policy-oriented coalition formation theories, which have the potential to explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties and, at the same time, explain why some radical right-wing populist parties are systematically excluded from government coalitions. Consequentially, it is not necessary to apply any kind of lexicographic explanations to the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties (cf. D'Alimonte 1999).



## CHAPTER 4

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### The Characteristics of Radical Right-Wing Populist Coalition Members

*And because quantity is a dominant political factor, the end of the political isolation [of radical right-wing populist parties] was merely a question of time*

Rinke van den Brink (2005: 414)

#### Introduction

This chapter investigates the party characteristics that determine whether radical right-wing populist parties become coalition members or not. It seeks to answer three interrelated questions: (1) why have radical right-wing populist parties become coalition members in some countries, but not in others?; (2) why have radical right-wing populist parties become coalition members in the late-1990s and not prior to this period?; and (3) why have some radical right-wing populist parties become coalition members while others have not?

These questions are answered on the basis of coalition membership theories and three types of explanations, which assume that parties are either office-, policy-, or vote-seekers (see also chapter 2). Additionally, to explain why radical right-wing populist parties have become coalition members I concentrate on three types of party characteristics: the characteristics of radical right-wing populist parties, the characteristics of mainstream parties, and the interaction between these two types of party characteristics.

First, I focus on the characteristics of radical right-wing populist parties, because it is plausible that these parties contribute to their government participation in one way or another. At first sight, the group of radical right-wing populist parties that have risen to power seem quite diverse. Some of these parties have a lengthy history in West European politics (e.g. FPÖ or AN), while others have been founded quite recently (e.g. DF or LPF). Some of the parties belong to the subgroup of neo-liberal populist parties (e.g. FRP(n) or LPF), while other are best qualified as national populist parties (e.g. DF or LN). To determine what unites the radical right-wing populist parties that have been coalition members, and to establish what sets these parties apart from those that have always been members of the opposition, one thus has to go beyond superficial party characteristics. On the basis of coalition membership theories several hypotheses about the party characteristics of radical right-wing populist parties are formulated, which are likely to influence whether these parties become coalition members or not.

Second, I pay attention to the characteristics of the mainstream parties, because it is probable that the characteristics of the parties with which radical right-wing populist parties govern matter for their selection as coalition members. Given that mainstream right parties have allied with radical right-wing populist parties much more frequently than mainstream left parties, the left-right orientation of mainstream parties appears a crucial explanation for the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. There are, however, numerous mainstream right parties that have never governed with radical right-wing populist parties. This suggests that certain mainstream right parties have characteristics that predispose them to ally with radical right-wing populist parties. On the basis of coalition membership theories, I formulate several hypotheses about the

characteristics of mainstream parties that are likely to influence whether radical right-wing populist parties become coalition members or not.

Third, I concentrate on the interaction between the characteristics of radical right-wing populist parties, on the one, and mainstream parties, on the other hand. Many explanations for the government participation of parties are relational; that is, they are a function of the characteristics of the parties involved in the coalition formation process. Whether parties find each other attractive coalition members, depends on whether the characteristics of other parties 'match' their own characteristics. Coalition membership theories include several hypotheses about the interaction between the characteristics of radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties that are likely to influence the whether radical right-wing populist parties become coalition members or not.

The structure of the chapter is straightforward. First, I briefly introduce the theories and conclusions of earlier studies that have investigated the determinants of coalition membership. I theorize if, and to what extent, these theories also apply to radical right-wing populist parties. From this discussion I derive a series of hypotheses about the factors that determine whether radical right-wing populist parties become coalition members or not. These hypotheses are tested in the second part of the chapter. It starts with a presentation of the method used to test the hypotheses and a discussion of the operationalization and measurement of key variables. I test the hypotheses, thoroughly evaluate my findings, and explore the implications. In the conclusion of this chapter, I show that only two party characteristics determine whether radical right-wing populist parties become coalition members or not: the legislative weight of radical right-wing populist parties and their policy proximity to prime minister parties.

### **An introduction to coalition membership theories**

Coalition membership theories are relatively new, especially compared to the formal coalition formation theories that have their origins in the 1950s and 1960s. The pioneering study in this subfield dates back to 1996, when Warwick published "Coalition Government Membership in West European Parliamentary Democracies". In this article, Warwick establishes which factors determine the selection of prime minister parties, also known as formateur parties,<sup>69</sup> and junior coalition members. He points "to the important roles played by the formateur's preferences and by the need to build workable coalitions" (Warwick 1996: 471), as crucial factors that structure the selection of prime minister parties and junior coalition members. In more recent years the subfield has been expanded with studies of the determinants of coalition membership at the local level (Bäck 2003) and of specific types of parties (see Dumont and Back 2006 for the determinants of the coalition membership of green parties). Special emphasis has also been put on the link between

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<sup>69</sup> Technically speaking, the formateur party and the prime minister party are different concepts. The formateur party is the party that is appointed to form the government coalition, whereas the prime minister party is the party that obtains the prime ministership in this government coalition. In most cases, the formateur party will obtain the prime minister, but this is not always the case. Moreover, a formateur party may fail to form a government coalition and replaced by a new formateur party. Despite these differences, the prime minister party is usually taken as proxy for the formateur party, since the identification of the former is easier than the latter (Bäck 2003; Isaksson 2005; Mattila and Raunio 2002; 2004; Warwick 1996; but see Bäck and Dumont 2006).

electoral responsiveness and coalition membership (Isaksson 2005; Mattila and Raunio 2002; Mattila and Raunio 2004).

#### *Prime minister parties versus junior coalition members*

Theories of coalition membership make a crucial distinction between determinants of coalition membership of prime minister parties and of junior coalition members. Prime minister parties obtain the prime ministership in the government coalition, while junior coalition members have to settle for ministerships in the government coalition. In line with this distinction, the coalition formation process is framed as a two-stage procedure, or sequential game, in which the prime minister is selected first, and the junior coalition member(s) are selected second (e.g. Bäck and Dumont 2006; Glasgow, Golder, and Golder 2007; Grofman, Noviello, and Straffin 1987; Mattila and Raunio 2002). In this process prime minister parties have substantial control over the selection of the junior coalition members. They usually propose to form a government coalition of a certain composition and extend invitations to parties to join the coalition negotiations (Bolleyer 2007: 131). They also determine to a large extent the issues that are debated in the negotiations. Consequentially, the coalition preferences of the prime minister party weigh heavily on the outcomes of the coalition formation process. In the words of Warwick (1996: 473), "the party whose leader officially forms the government and assumes the leadership role clearly enjoys a more central role than is exercised by the other party or parties in the coalition".

Of course other parties are not hapless victims at the mercy of the prime minister party. They can refuse to take part in the coalition negotiations or put conditions on their government participation. Dependent upon the strength of their position in the negotiations, e.g. the number of coalition alternatives available to the prime minister party, they can drive a hard bargain. The influence of the prime minister party over the selection of the junior coalition members is nevertheless substantial. Warwick (1996: 487-488) notes,

"the term 'selection' should not be taken to imply that the formateur (or anyone else) acts as selector. [...] Although the formateur party may not be in control of the final outcome, however, its preferences concerning coalition partners can be expected to have a substantial influence".

In a similar fashion, Bäck and Dumont (2006: 1) argue that the prime minister party has the capacity to "bias government composition in line with its preference". Any explanation for the selection of junior coalition members therefore has to start with an analysis of the goals prime minister parties seek to achieve through their participation in government coalitions, and of the way in which junior coalition members contribute to the realization of these goals.

#### *Prime minister parties between office, policy, and votes*

As discussed in detail in chapter 2, coalition formation theories assume that parties pursue three party goals: office, policy, and votes. Government participation is one way to realize office and policy, but it usually goes at the expense of parties' ability to maximize votes. To prime minister parties this rule applies as well. They seek to maximize their proportion of cabinet portfolios and their influence over government policy, while they seek to minimize electoral losses that might follow from their government participation. The selection of the right junior coalition members can contribute to the realization of these objectives. I briefly discuss the way in

which the selection of junior coalition members can help prime minister parties realize their party goals.

First, prime minister parties seek to maximize their portion of the cabinet portfolios for intrinsic reasons (the portfolios are perceived as a reward) or instrumental reasons (the portfolios are perceived as a means to influence policy or satisfy electoral constituencies). No matter what the reasons for the pursuit of office, the maximization of cabinet portfolios occurs through the principles of the formal office-oriented coalition formation theories: (1) the exclusion of unnecessary parties from the coalition; (2) the minimization of the proportion of seats controlled by the coalition; and (3) the minimization of the number of necessary parties in the coalition (see also chapter 5). These principles rest on the assumption that portfolios are divided over coalition members in proportion to the percentage of seats they contribute to the government coalition. From these principles it follows that prime minister parties will seek to minimize the number of junior coalition members and their weight in the government coalition.

Second, prime minister parties seek to maximize their influence over policy-making for intrinsic reasons (a concern with the policy output of the government coalition) or instrumental reasons (a concern with voter dissatisfaction when electoral promises are not kept). Again, the reasons prime minister parties have for their pursuit of policy, do not really matter. The result is that prime minister parties want to form a government of which the coalition agreement corresponds closely to their own policy programmes (Warwick 1998).<sup>70</sup> In other words, they will want to avoid making policy compromises, something best realized in a government coalition that includes junior coalition members with policy programmes similar to that of the prime minister party.

Third, prime minister parties seek to minimize the electoral losses that are likely to ensue from their government participation, because they want to maximize their chances to govern in the future. Theoretically, parties are concerned with the maximization of votes, but it has been demonstrated at length that government participation usually has negative effects on a party's electoral fortunes. Elections are essentially referenda on the popularity of governments and governments are forced to take unpopular measures. The "negative incumbency effect" (Strom 1990b), or the "cost of ruling" (Paldam 1991; Paldam and Nannestad 1999; Powell Jr and Whitten 1993; Stevenson 2002; Stevenson 1997; 1998) therefore affect parties in various types of democracies. Prime minister parties will seek to avoid these types of losses through the instrumental pursuit of office and policy, but these strategies might prove insufficient. An additional strategy to control negative incumbency effects consists of the integration of electoral successful parties in government coalitions. Prime minister parties have thus incentives to select junior coalition members that are successful at the polls.

### **Determinants of junior coalition membership**

Although coalition membership theories are relatively new, a vast number of theories have already been developed to explain why parties become junior coalition members. I have grouped these theories into three categories, on the basis of whether they correspond most closely to prime minister parties

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<sup>70</sup> While the policy range of a government coalition (central in formal coalition formation theories) is determined by the policy positions of the coalition members on the extremes of the coalition, the policy position of a government coalition is determined by the (weighted) policy positions of each of the individual coalition members, including the prime minister party.

office-, policy-, or vote-seeking behaviour. Within each of the three groups, one can find explanations that focus on the characteristics of the prospective junior coalition members, on the characteristics of the prime minister parties, and on the interaction between these two types of characteristics.<sup>71</sup>

#### *Office-related explanations*

A first group of explanations assumes that prime minister parties seek to maximize their control over the spoils of office and therefore select their junior coalition members on the basis of their legislative weight. The idea behind these explanations is that prime minister parties maximize their control over cabinet portfolios and other office benefits, through the minimization of the coalition's total weight; either in terms of a minimization of the number of seats the government coalition commands or in terms of a minimization of the number of coalition members.

Although it is clear that size matters for the selection of junior coalition members, scholars disagree about the ideal size of these parties. Some authors argue that junior coalition members are usually small, since they complement large prime minister parties.<sup>72</sup> These authors find that the likelihood that parties become junior coalition members is indeed negatively related to the proportion of seats they control (Warwick 1996). Moreover, when parties are categorized as either small, medium-sized, or large parties, most junior coalition members qualify as small parties (Isaksson 2005: 353). Finally, the party with the largest legislative weight is especially unlikely to become a junior coalition member.

Other authors argue that junior coalition members are usually large to comparative standards, because small parties have no impact on the total weight of government coalitions. Dumont and Bäck (2006: S40) claim that the odds that parties become junior coalition members are unfavourable for parties that are relatively small, because they lack relevance (cf. Sartori 1976). The authors convincingly demonstrate that green parties are more likely to become coalition members, the larger the proportion of seats these parties control. Their claim is also substantiated by Mattila and Raunio (2002; 2004), who find a positive relationship between parties' legislative weight and the likelihood that they join government coalitions. Moreover, these authors conclude that junior coalition members are usually medium-sized, instead of small parties.<sup>73</sup>

The conclusions of these two groups of scholars are not necessarily diametrically opposed. It is very well possible that there is a positive linear relationship between a party's legislative weight and the likelihood that it becomes a junior coalition member, but that this effect occurs only for a

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<sup>71</sup> Party characteristics that have nothing to do with office-, policy-, or vote-related explanations are not discussed in the chapter. The most important of these characteristics, political experience, is addressed in the next chapter though. At this point it suffices to note that neither executive nor legislative experience have a significant impact on the likelihood that radical right-wing populist parties become junior coalition members.

<sup>72</sup> Prime minister parties also prefer small coalition partners over larger ones, because they can more easily be dominated. Thus, intracoalition dynamics also give small parties a head start in the coalition formation process.

<sup>73</sup> The discrepancy between the studies of Isaksson (2005) and Warwick (1996), on the one, and the studies of Dumont and Bäck (2006) and Mattila and Raunio (2002; 2004), on the other hand, can partially be explained by the decision of the former scholars to exclude parties with a proportion of seats lower than one per cent from their analysis. This naturally alters the interpretation of what constitutes a small, medium-sized, or large party.

certain range of values. When parties are too small, they lack the relevance to become junior coalition members, and when they are too big, they are more likely to become prime minister parties than junior coalition members. In other words, junior coalition membership is determined by two thresholds: one below which parties are unlikely to become junior coalition members, and one above which parties are unlikely to become junior coalition members. If this is the case, there is probably a non-linear or curvilinear relationship between a party's legislative weight and the likelihood that it becomes a junior coalition member.<sup>74</sup>

The effect of parties' legislative weight is likely to interact with the legislative weight of prime minister parties, and the proportion of seats these parties need to construct a winning coalition. Generally speaking, prime minister parties are large to comparative standards (Isaksson 2005; Warwick 1996). The legislative weight of prime minister parties nevertheless varies substantially, primarily as a consequence of the different degrees of party system fragmentation in West European countries. For this reason, prime minister parties need variable proportions of seats to complement their government coalitions. The greater the proportion of seats needed by prime minister parties, the higher the number of junior coalition parties prime minister parties will seek to recruit. The more junior coalition parties a prime minister party needs, the higher the chances of individual parties to end up in the government coalition. Hence, the legislative weight of prime minister parties is likely to be one of the determinants of junior coalition membership. Several studies indeed find that when the size of the prime minister party decreases, the likelihood that a party becomes a junior coalition member increases (Isaksson 2005; Mattila and Raunio 2002; Warwick 1996).

The same studies do not document a significant effect of the size of the remainder - which is a function of the size of a potential coalition member, the size of the prime minister party, and the proportion of seats these parties need to construct a winning coalition - on the likelihood that parties become junior coalition members. Party system features (e.g. the level of fragmentation, the level of aggregation and the effective number of parties) have no significant effect on the likelihood that parties become radical right-wing populist parties either (Isaksson 2005).

#### *Policy-related explanations*

Policy-related explanations depart from the assumption that prime minister parties seek to maximize their influence over policy-making. To this end they will attempt to form government coalitions of which the policy positions are close to their own policy positions, which implies that they will select junior coalition members on the basis of their policy positions.<sup>75</sup>

Several ideas circulate in the coalition membership literature about the ideal positions for parties to become junior coalition members. First, there is the idea that parties that are centrally located are more likely to become junior coalition members than other parties. The reason for this argument is that centrally located parties have more coalition opportunities than parties that are located towards the extremes of the left-right dimension. In the words of Isaksson (2005: 336),

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<sup>74</sup> In fact, Mattila and Raunio (2002; 2004) find a negative relationship between a party's squared size and the likelihood that it becomes junior coalition members, which indicates the existence of a non-linear relationship between these two variables.

<sup>75</sup> Note that this chapter assumes that the left-right is the most important axis West European political spaces (see also chapter 2).

“a party on the outskirts of a traditional left-right scale reasonable has a less beneficial starting point in government negotiations. The probability of a right- or left-wing party being included in a coalition is, hence, smaller than that of a party in the ideological centre”.

In other words, centrally located parties make attractive junior coalition members for greater numbers of prime minister parties than parties that are located on the fringes of the left-right dimension. The measures of central tendency, which are used to describe the centrality of parties' policy positions, are the weighted mean and the median. The closer parties are located to the weighted mean, the more likely they are to become junior coalition members. Parties that qualify as median parties, are also more likely to join government coalitions as junior coalition members (Bäck 2003; Bäck and Dumont 2006; Isaksson 2005; Mattila and Raunio 2004; Warwick 1996).<sup>76</sup>

Second, there is the idea that parties that are located in close proximity of the prime minister parties are more likely to become junior coalition members, regardless of the centrality of their policy positions. As Luebbert (1986: 64) notes, “it is self-evident that the leaders of the formateur's party will prefer tangential and convergent preference relationships” with their junior coalition members. Through the selection of junior coalition parties that are located in close proximity on the left-right dimension, prime minister parties avoid making compromises, and assure the establishment of a coalition agreement that reflects as much of their policy programmes as possible. Policy distance to the prime minister party has a significant impact on the odds that parties become junior coalition members in each of the studies conducted up till now (Dumont and Back 2006; Isaksson 2005; Mattila and Raunio 2004; Warwick 1996; 1998). Moreover, the effect of policy distance not only affects the likelihood that parties become junior coalition members, but also the likelihood that parties become support parties to minority governments (Warwick 1998).

In the end, the two types of explanations are not that far apart. The policy positions of prime minister parties usually reflect the weighted mean and median positions on the left-right dimension. Consequentially, policy distances to measures of central tendency and to the position of prime minister parties are roughly equivalent. In other words, parties that are located close to the weighed mean or the median are also located close to the prime minister parties and vice-versa.

Two important factors mediate the effect of the two most important policy explanations; both relate to party system features. The first factor

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<sup>76</sup> The median party, denoted as the centre player in formal coalition formation theories (Van Roozendaal 1992; 1993), is derived from Black (1958)'s median voter theorem. The concept identifies the party that controls the median legislator. The policy position of this party represents the most preferred policy position for any government coalition if parties' coalition preferences are aggregated. In multi-dimensional political spaces, no median party is present. For these spaces Laver and Shepsle (1996) have developed the concepts of the Very Strong Party (VSP) and the Merely Strong Party (MSP), which control the 'dimension by dimension median'. VSPs and MSPs are likely candidates for the prime ministership, but the concepts do not necessarily help with the identification of junior coalition members. To this end Laver and Shepsle have developed the concept of the Partners of the Strong Party (PSPs), that is, parties with which the VSP or MSP is likely to share cabinet portfolios. Although conceptually attractive, there is little empirical evidence to support the claim that PSPs are more likely to become junior coalition members than non-PSPs (Warwick 1996).

concerns the existence of a clear left-right division, as a result of which socialist parties refuse to govern with non-socialist parties and vice-versa. Parties that are located on one side of the left-right divide are highly unlikely to become junior coalition members when the prime minister party is located on the other side of this divide. The second factor concerns the presence of anti-system parties. Anti-system parties are highly unlikely to become junior coalition members, even when they are located in close proximity of the prime minister party (Isaksson 2005; Mattila and Raunio 2002; Warwick 1996).

#### *Vote-related explanations*

Vote-related explanations depart from the assumption that prime minister parties seek to minimize their electoral losses through the selection of junior coalition members on the basis of their electoral success. There are at least two reasons why prime minister parties would adopt strategy. The first reason is normative, while the second reason is strategic.

The first reason relies on the observation that parties' behavior in the coalition formation process is guided by three principles: the majority principle, the plurality principle, and the electoral principle. The majority principle posits that a government coalition depends on the support of a parliamentary majority, the plurality principle that the largest party leads or participates in the government coalition, and the electoral principle that the government coalition reflects the coalition preferences of the public, expressed through voting behaviour (Isaksson 1999). More specifically, the electoral principle entails that parties that have made gains in the elections should enter government coalition and that the party that has made the greatest gains is most entitled to participate in the government coalitions.

In proportional democracies the electoral principle is crucial, because it assures the support for the government coalition and in a broader sense that for the political system. Electoral responsiveness guarantees an indirect link between election outcomes, government composition, and the policy-making process when the election results have not given a single party a mandate to govern (Powell Jr. 2000). In the words of Laver and Shepsle (1996: 29),

“changes in government depend on changes in the cabinet generated by changes in the balance of forces in the legislature. It is by having an effect on the balance of forces in the legislature when voting at election time that voters in parliamentary democracies can have some control of affairs of state”.

The electoral principle can, however, conflict with the plurality principle. A large party can suffer great losses and remain large, while a small party can make substantial gains and stay small. The electoral principle suggests that the small party is more entitled to government participation than the large party, while the plurality principle suggests that the large party is more entitled to government participation than the small party (Isaksson 2005: 330).

On the basis of these considerations, prime minister parties are likely to select junior coalition members that have made gains at the elections. These parties have a more legitimate claim to power than parties that have suffered losses. The magnitude of parties' gains and losses also matters, with parties that have made substantial gains having more chances to join government coalitions than parties that have made minimal gains (Warwick 1996). Mattila and Raunio (2002; 2004) demonstrate, however, that electoral success does not have a linear relationship to the probability of becoming a junior coalition member. Junior coalition membership is affected by the size of

a party's electoral losses (the more a party has lost, the less likely it is to become a coalition member), but not by the size of a party's electoral gains. In a similar fashion, Budge and Keman (1990: 183) find that the majority of parties that have made the greatest gains at post-war elections have not been included in government coalitions. A further investigation of these results by Isaksson (2005) brings to light that parties that have suffered the biggest electoral losses are less likely to become junior coalition members. Parties that have lost at the elections, but not as much as the biggest loser, are not significantly less likely to become junior coalition members.

Responsiveness to electoral changes is not the only reason why electoral success matters in the coalition formation process. Parties also look at patterns of electoral gains and losses, because these patterns inform their identification of electoral competitors and hence their vote-seeking strategies. The chain of arguments that is at the core of this claim departs from the observation that the competition for government is inevitably intertwined with electoral competition. Parties engage in short-term office- and policy-seeking behaviour, and long-term vote-seeking behaviour. The two are, however, likely to conflict. Government parties have to make policy compromises and take responsibility for unpopular measures. Additionally, the visibility of parties is greater in government than in opposition, which makes it easier for voters to keep tabs on government parties. Consequentially, prime minister parties and junior coalition members often get punished in the elections that follow their term in government. There is thus a clear trade-off between office and policy, on the one hand, and votes, on the other.

Given this fact, it is attractive for prime minister parties to invite their electoral competitors to join their government coalitions and expose these parties to the same electoral risks they run. The incorporation of electoral competitors in government coalitions can "neutralize" them (Jungar 2000: 252-265), since coalition governance presumes "some form of compromises or of 'give-and-take-deals', i.e. the participating parties more or less relinquish their declared programmes. Such surrenders can also act negatively on the credibility image of the party" (Sjoblom 1968: 80). The integration of electoral competitors into government alliances might therefore be an effective way to counter the electoral success of these parties, especially because the electoral success of parties that govern together functions as communicating vessels. If one government party loses the elections, the others are likely to win (Buelens and Hino 2008). Although this explanation has not been investigated in many studies of coalition membership, Dumont and Bäck (2006: S53) find that

"the willingness of the main party of the left to include Green parties in government seems indeed to increase when the latter are seen as electoral opponents who would continue to win votes in the opposition if the main party of the left were to be the only party of the left in government (due to the negative electoral effect of incumbency)".

#### *Trade-off related explanations*

The explanations of the selection of junior coalition members discussed above assume that prime minister parties are either office-, policy-, or vote-seeking. The last point highlights, however, that prime minister parties face clear trade-offs between these three party goals. The extent to which prime minister parties value office, policy, and votes will thus influence their selection of junior coalition members. Prime minister parties that attach more importance to office will focus primarily on size related party characteristics, while prime

minister parties that attach more importance to policy will focus primarily on policy related party characteristics.

Prime minister parties are not the only ones that are faced with trade-offs between office, policy, and votes. Prospective junior coalition members face similar choices. It is plausible that the importance parties attach to office, influences the likelihood that these parties are selected as junior coalition members. Parties that rank office above policy and votes, can be expected to have a better chance to become coalition members than parties that put office in a second or third position. The reasons for this claim are straightforward. Parties that value office more than policy or votes are willing to make policy compromises and accept electoral losses. Consequentially, they make attractive junior coalition members. Warwick (1996: 491) concludes that parties that are primarily office-seeking are indeed more likely to become junior coalition members than parties that are predominantly policy-seeking. Bäck (2003), however, finds no significant relationship between the extent to which parties value either office or policy and the likelihood that parties enter government coalitions. A plausible reason why Back reaches this conclusion is that parties' goals are not fixed. Rather, they are likely to evolve over time, in function of parties' electoral development (Pedersen 1982). In line with this argument, Dumont and Back (2006) observe that green parties have moved from policy- and vote-seeking strategies to office- and policy-seeking strategies under the influence of electoral losses they encountered in the 1990s. According to these authors, the adoption of office-seeking strategies has clearly promoted the government participation of green parties.

The way in which prospective junior coalition members trade-off between office, policy, and votes is influenced by organizational characteristics (Strom and Müller 1999b). The differential access to office benefits make party leaders more likely to have government aspirations than party members (Luebbert 1986). The value placed upon office, and especially the extent to which policy is subordinated to office objectives, is therefore dependent on the division of power between the party leadership and rank-and-file membership. Parties with a strong leadership have good chances to become junior coalition members (Warwick 1996). Inversely, parties with high levels of internal democracy have poor chances to become junior coalition members (Bäck 2003). Another organizational characteristic that is likely to influence coalition membership probabilities is factionalization, which can obscure a party's policy position and hence complicate policy calculations (Mershon 2002). This factor has, however, received scant attention in studies that investigate the determinants of junior coalition membership (but see Bäck 2003).

Table 4.1  
*Explanations for the selection of junior coalition members*

Explanation	Operationalizations	Measurement	Empirical support	Qualifications
<i>Office</i>				
Parties' parliamentary strength	Size party Squared size party	Continuous; proportion of parliamentary seats	Support	Either larger or smaller parties more likely to become junior coalition members. Relationship non-linear
PM parties' parliamentary strength	Size PM party Remainder	Continuous; proportion of parliamentary seats	Support	
Party system characteristics	Aggregation Effective number of parties Fractionalization	Continuous;	No support	
<i>Policy</i>				
Centrality	Median party MSP PSP VSP	Dichotomous	Support	Except for PSP
Anti-systemness	Anti-systemness Extremism	Dichotomous	Support	
Policy differences between coalition members	Party family affiliation Distance to PM	Continuous	Support	
	Distance to median Distance to weighted mean Socialist/Non-socialist	Dichotomous		

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<i>Votes</i>				
Electoral responsiveness	Change size Gains Losses Biggest gains Biggest losses	Continuous; proportion of parliamentary seats  Dichotomous	Support	The extent of parties' gains does not matter, only the extent of parties' losses. Stronger effects for the biggest winners and losers
Patterns of electoral competition	Opposite electoral fortunes	Dichotomous	Support	
<i>Trade-offs</i>				
Future-orientation		Continuous; ordinal 5 categories	No support	
Office as primary goal		Continuous; 10-point scale	Mixed support	
Organizational characteristics	Factionalism Intraparty democracy Leadership control	Continuous; ordinal 4 categories	Support	

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### **The junior coalition membership of radical right-wing populist parties**

To what extent do these coalition formation theories explain whether radical right-wing populist parties are selected as junior coalition members or not? In this section I relate the insights from previous studies to the particular case of the coalition membership of radical right-wing populist parties. I disqualify and modify a number of explanations on theoretical and empirical grounds.<sup>77</sup>

#### *Radical right-wing populist parties and office-related explanations*

In one of the few studies dedicated to the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties in Western Europe, Bale (2003: 67) argues that mainstream right parties have proven increasingly “willing to rely on former pariahs” for the construction of legislative and executive coalitions after they realized that mainstream left parties stood a better chance to gain power when they embraced green parties as junior coalition members. Bale’s argument suggests that prime minister parties have had office-seeking motivations for the inclusion of radical right-wing populist parties in their government coalitions. His argument even conveys the image of radical right-wing populist parties as purely instrumental means for mainstream right parties to maintain the prime ministership. If Bale is correct, office-related explanations should at least partly account for the selection of radical right-wing populist parties as junior coalition members by prime minister parties.

Two office-related explanations can conceivably explain why radical right-wing populist parties have been selected by prime minister parties as junior coalition members. First, radical right-wing populist parties become junior coalition members, because their legislative weight makes them attractive partners for prime minister parties. Even though coalition membership theories are inconclusive when it comes to the exact effect of parties’ size on the likelihood that they become junior coalition members, it seems most plausible that radical right-wing populist parties benefit from more rather than fewer seats. After all, radical right-wing populist parties are functional equivalents of green parties, which makes it likely that the conclusions of Dumont and Bäck (2006) that green parties are more likely to govern the larger their proportion of seats also applies to radical right-wing populist parties. Additionally, the scarce studies that investigate the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties show that these parties are usually medium-sized when they join government coalitions.<sup>78</sup> On the basis of a comparison of Austria, France, and Italy Ahlemeyer (2006) contends, for example, that the size of the party sets the FN apart from the FPÖ, the AN, and the LN and thus partly accounts for the inclusion in government of the latter three parties. He rightfully notes, however, that the relationship between party size and junior coalition membership is mediated by the electoral system and that it is therefore vital

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<sup>77</sup> Explanations for which there is no empirical support in previous studies are completely excluded from this discussion.

<sup>78</sup> Radical right-wing populist parties have rarely been large parties. In fact, only one radical right-wing populist party has been the largest in parliament. In 1994 FI realized an unprecedented victory and entered the Italian Chamber of Deputies with 16.7 per cent of the seats. It managed to strengthen its position by winning 19.5 per cent of the seats in the 1996 elections and 31.1 per cent in the 2001 elections. The position of largest party in parliament provided FI twice with the prime ministership (in 1994 and 2001), which is in line with prime ministership theories. The other radical right-wing populist parties have, however, never achieved the status of largest party. It is therefore impossible that this factor negatively affects the chances of radical right-wing populist parties to become junior coalition members.

to distinguish between a party's electoral weight, on the one, and its legislative weight, on the other hand.

Second, radical right-wing populist parties become junior coalition members, because radical right-wing populist parties are in need of junior coalition members. This explanation is in principle a logical addition to the first explanation. Prime minister parties will only select radical right-wing populist parties when their legislative weight is too small to form a single party government. Moreover, the smaller the prime minister party, the more junior coalition members it has to select to form a majority government. When the prime minister party needs more junior coalition members, the likelihood that it selects a radical right-wing populist party as one of these members increases.

#### *Radical right-wing populist parties and policy-related explanations*

The fact that radical right-wing populist parties have almost exclusively been selected as junior coalition members by prime minister parties that belong to the mainstream right already suggests that policy-related should partly account for the government participation of these parties. Country studies present anecdotic evidence that support this assertion, although some policy-related explanations are better able to explain why radical right-wing populist parties are selected as junior coalition members than others.

First, explanations that point to the importance of the occupation of central positions by parties are of little relevance, since radical right-wing populist parties usually do not occupy these positions. Expert surveys show that radical right-wing populist parties are located on the far right of the left-right dimension. More specifically, radical right-wing populist parties usually occupy the *most* right-leaning position on this dimension. There are some exceptions to this rule (e.g. FI, the FRP(n), and the LN), but of these three parties only FI has ever qualified as the median party, namely after 1994 elections. As a matter of fact, FI obtained the prime ministership in the government coalition that assumed office after these elections, which corresponds closely with theories of prime ministership.

Second, policy explanations that focus on policy proximities do not have the same limitations as those that focus on policy positions. The latter types of explanations also take into account the positions of radical right-wing populist parties, but relate these to the policy positions of prime minister parties. This creates more cross-national, cross-temporal, and cross party variation, because the exact positions of radical right-wing populist and prime minister parties are likely to vary from one country and from one election to the next. Policy explanations that focus on the interaction between the policy positions of radical right-wing populist and prime minister parties are thus more likely to explain the selection of the former as junior coalition members by the latter than policy explanations that focus on the centrality of the policy positions of the former.

Certain party system features can diminish the explanatory power of policy explanations. They are, however, unlikely to interfere with policy explanations when these are applied to radical right-wing populist parties, because of the specific policy positions these parties take. This assertion holds for the presence of both a clear left-right division and anti-system parties.

In some countries in which radical right-wing populist parties have been represented, the left-right division does not structure the party system (e.g. Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands). In other countries, the left-right division is a prominent feature of the party system (e.g. Denmark, Norway). Given the position of radical right-wing populist parties on the far right of the

left-right dimension it is, however, questionable whether this factor has any explanatory power in addition to other policy-related explanations. It has already been noted that radical right-wing populist parties have rarely joined government coalitions led by mainstream left parties, but it is more probable that this is a consequence of the large policy distance between radical right-wing populist and mainstream left parties than of the pervasiveness of the left-right division.

In previous studies of junior coalition membership, radical right-wing populist parties have without an exception been qualified as anti-system parties (Isaksson 2005; Mattila and Raunio 2002; Warwick 1996). In the introduction of this dissertation, I have strongly argued against this type of approach, because radical right-wing populist parties are merely radical versions of mainstream right parties. This observation makes it inappropriate to categorize radical right-wing populist parties on a priori grounds as anti-system parties. Certainly, specific radical right-wing populist parties have at times been perceived as anti-system parties by mainstream parties (see also chapter 3). The already mentioned research of Van Spanje and Van der Brug (2007) suggest, however, that the attribution of this label is directly related to radical right-wing populist parties' positions on the left-right dimension. Consequentially, this factor should not interfere with other policy-related explanations.

#### *Radical right-wing populist parties and vote-related explanations*

There are two reasons why prime minister parties would want to include radical right-wing populist parties that have made large gains at the elections in government coalitions. First, there is the normative argument that focuses on the electoral responsiveness of coalition outcomes. To this general argument it can be added that radical right-wing populist parties actively campaign for a change in coalition practices. The inclusion of these parties in government coalitions gives voters the message that their call for change has been heard and taken seriously. In line with this argument, prime minister parties have stronger incentives to include radical right-wing populist parties in government coalition the greater the electoral success of these parties.

Second, there is the strategic argument. The inclusion of radical right-wing populist parties in government coalitions can neutralize their electoral success. Many scholars have speculated about the effect government participation might have on radical right-wing populist parties. According to Heinisch (2003: 99-100) "public office will [...] deflate the hyperbole that has accompanied their meteoric rise". In a similar fashion, Downs (2001b: 6) asserts that "incumbency will give the pariah the rope with which it will ultimately hang itself". Political commentators and politicians have made many similar statements, especially with regard to the abolishment of the cordon sanitaire in Flanders. Hossay (2002: 184) notes in this respect that

"calls by politicians and pundits to allow VB participation in governance is growing, and not just from the right. For some this is a question of democracy, for others it is based on the hope that the party will lose its ability to cast itself as the perennial outsider when faced with the responsibilities of participation".

The fact that radical right-wing populist parties try to maximize voters through a variety of populist strategies (e.g. anti-establishment rhetoric, overpromising) makes that they are faced with a normalization dilemma when they participate in government coalitions. As a result radical right-wing populist parties are more prone to negative incumbency effects than mainstream parties and other non-mainstream parties. For this reason "It's

probably better to have him inside the tent pissing out, than outside the tent pissing in".<sup>79</sup>

Under which conditions will prime minister parties include radical right-wing populist parties in their government coalitions with the objective to diminish the electoral support for these parties? Dumont and Bäck (2006) posit that prime minister parties will take this step when the niche party in question is identified as the prime minister party's main competitor and when the electoral fortunes of these two parties are diametrically opposed. Green parties are, for example, mainly in competition with mainstream left parties. Consequentially, mainstream left parties will include green parties in government coalitions when their electoral fortunes are contradictory.

The same logic does not apply as easily to radical right-wing populist parties. First, the identification of the main competitor of radical right-wing populist parties is extremely difficult. Radical right-wing populist parties appear to make gains at the expense of mainstream left, mainstream right, and even other non-mainstream parties (e.g. Mudde 2007b: 225). Second, this approach does not take into account the magnitude of the losses or gains of either the radical right-wing populist parties or the prime minister parties. It is plausible that the greater the gains of the radical right-wing populist party, and the greater the losses of the prime minister party, the greater the incentives for the latter to invite the former to govern jointly. Third, to look at contradictory electoral results, ignores that there are two directions in which electoral results can be opposite. And they do not necessarily have the same effect on the likelihood that radical right-wing populist parties become coalition members. When a radical right-wing populist party wins and the prime minister party loses, a prime minister party has incentives to include the radical right-wing populist party in the government coalition. When a radical right-wing populist party loses and the prime minister party wins, there is no reason to expect the same effect.

To investigate this argument empirically, one would have to identify patterns of electoral competition between radical right-wing populist parties and prime minister parties; for example through the analysis of voter flows between these parties. Unfortunately, election studies do not contain sufficient information to identify these patterns of electoral competition.<sup>80</sup> An alternative approach is to look separately at the gains and losses of radical right-wing populist and prime minister parties, and examine the interaction between these two factors. Although this makes it impossible to establish whether radical right-wing populist parties have actually made gains at the expense of prime minister parties, this method can tap into perceptions parties might have of their electoral competitors.

#### *Radical right-wing populist parties and trade-off related explanations*

Radical right-wing populist parties are office-, policy-, and vote-seekers, but they nevertheless have to make individual trade-offs between these three party goals. It is conceivable that radical right-wing populist parties that are more willing to sacrifice policy and vote for office, are more likely to become coalition members than radical right-wing populist parties that rank policy and votes higher than office.

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<sup>79</sup> This quote is ascribed to Lyndon B. Johnson, who referred to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover in these terms in *The New York Times* of the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 1971.

<sup>80</sup> Especially the smaller parties with parliamentary representation are not included in these studies (e.g. the CD or the FNb).

On the basis of their expert survey, Laver and Hunt (1992: 73) qualify the FN, FRP(d), and VB as parties most interested in policy, the FRP(n) as a party that balances office and policy, and the FPÖ and MSI as parties most interested in office. The parties in the latter two categories are incidentally also the ones that have become junior coalition members in recent years, while the parties in the first category are still opposition members. The Laver and Hunt data thus suggest that radical right-wing populist parties willing to trade policy for office are more likely to join government coalitions. Of course, the number of radical right-wing populist parties included in the Laver and Hunt survey is relatively small, and no longitudinal data are available that allow the detection of changes in goal orientations over time. Hence, it is impossible to investigate this promising explanation any further in this chapter.<sup>81</sup>

For the same reason it is also difficult to assess the impact organizational characteristics have on the likelihood that radical right-wing populist parties become junior coalition members. Our knowledge about the organizational aspects of radical right-wing populist parties is hampered by a lack of research and availability of information. Generally speaking, radical right-wing populist parties are said to have “a minimalist organization, i.e. simple structures and few members, which is structured hierarchically and completely dominated by a charismatic leader” (Mudde 2007b: 264). The party leadership of radical right-wing populist parties can thus easily control decisions over government participation, which enhances these parties attractiveness as coalition partners. At the same time radical right-wing populist parties often have to overcome factionalism, which is a “perennial problem” for these parties (Marcus 2000: 35). Divisions within radical right-wing populist parties usually pit *Fundis* against *Realos* (Mudde 2007b: 273), and thus represent a battle between those primarily concerned with policy and those more oriented towards office. Radical right-wing populist parties in which the *Realos* have the upper hand are more likely candidates for coalition membership than parties led by *Fundis*.<sup>82</sup>

I would like to posit that radical right-wing populist parties also face challenges as a result of their organizational characteristics. The charismatic nature of the leadership in radical right-wing populist parties compromises the coalitionability of these parties. Charismatic leaders generally inhibit party institutionalization (Harmel and Svasand 1993; Panebianco 1988; Pedahzur and Brichta 2002) and tend to not tolerate talented politicians by their sides (who are needed to fill positions in the executive). More importantly even, they are polarizers. You either love or hate them. The leaders of mainstream parties usually fall in the latter category. In reaction to the strong verbal attacks they bear from radical right-wing populist party leaders, mainstream party leader often develop an undeniable antipathy against these men.

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<sup>81</sup> One way around this problem is to measure the changes in party goals indirectly, as is done by Dumont and Bäck in their study of the government participation of green parties. Following Harmel and Janda (1994) they argue that one of the main reasons why parties change their strategies is as a result of electoral shock. From this it follows that green parties that have suffered electoral shocks are more likely to become coalition members. This explanation is unlikely to apply to radical right-wing populist parties, since these parties have rarely experienced serious electoral setbacks.

<sup>82</sup> Conceivably, this explanation interacts with policy explanations. Parties dominated by *Realos* are more likely to have more moderate policy positions than those dominated *Fundis*, because they are more open to collaboration with mainstream parties (cf. Dézé 2004).

Although not prominent in coalition government studies, poor personal relations between politicians can put a heavy strain on coalition formation (but see De Winter, Andeweg, and Dumont 2002: 32).

### Hypotheses

On the basis of the arguments presented in the previous section, I formulate a number of hypotheses about the party characteristics that are expected to influence the likelihood that radical right-wing populist parties are selected as junior coalition members by prime minister parties. On a priori grounds several explanations for the selection of junior coalition members are excluded from the list of hypotheses. These explanations are either (1) irrelevant because there is no empirical support that they determine coalition membership; (2) irrelevant because they are not applicable to the case of radical right-wing populist parties; or (3) relevant, but at this point not testable due to a shortage of data. This exercise seriously reduces the number of hypotheses about the junior coalition membership of radical right-wing populist parties. Nevertheless, hypotheses can be derived from each of the three central categories of explanations: office-related explanations, policy-related explanations, and vote-related explanations.

In the first category, I test the hypothesis that *radical right-wing populist parties are more likely to participate in a government coalition the larger their proportion of seats*. I also hypothesize that *radical right-wing populist parties are more likely to participate in a government coalition the smaller the proportion of seats of the prime minister party*. In the second category, I formulate only one hypothesis: *radical right-wing populist parties are more likely to participate in a government coalition the smaller the policy distance to the prime minister party on the left-right dimension*. In the third category, I hypothesize that *radical right-wing populist parties are more likely to participate in a government coalition the greater their gains in the preceding elections* and that *radical right-wing populist parties are more likely to participate in a government coalition the greater the losses of the prime minister party in the preceding elections*.

Table 4.2  
*Hypotheses*

<i>Hypothesis 1</i>	Radical right-wing populist parties are more likely to participate in a government coalition the larger their proportion of seats
<i>Hypothesis 2</i>	Radical right-wing populist parties are more likely to participate in a government coalition the smaller the proportion of seats of the prime minister party
<i>Hypothesis 3</i>	Radical right-wing populist parties are more likely to participate in a government coalition the smaller the policy distance to the prime minister party on the left-right continuum
<i>Hypothesis 4</i>	Radical right-wing populist parties are more likely to participate in a government coalition the larger their gains at the elections
<i>Hypothesis 5</i>	Radical right-wing populist parties are more likely to participate in a government coalition the larger the losses of mainstream parties at the elections

Each of these hypotheses assumes a linear relationship between party characteristics, on the one, and the likelihood that radical right-wing populist parties become junior coalition members, on the other hand. The theoretical discussion highlighted, however, that it is conceivable that relationships are

non-linear or curvilinear. Moreover, the discussion also underlined that it is probable that there is interaction between the characteristics of radical right-wing populist parties (hypotheses 1 and 4) and the characteristics of prime minister parties (hypotheses 2 and 5). In the evaluation of the hypotheses I will pay considerable attention to these possibilities.

### **Method and data**

To test the hypotheses, I use logistic regression. I briefly discuss this technique in this section and provide details about case selection, unit of analysis, and operationalization and measurement of variables.

#### *Method*

To analyze the relationship between sets of independent variables (or predictors) and a dependent variable (or outcome variable) one would normally resort to Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression. However, when the dependent variable is categorical in nature, OLS regression cannot be used, because it assumes that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is linear. When the dependent variable is categorical, this assumption is violated (Berry 1993), and it is therefore more appropriate to perform a logistic regression. Essentially, logistic regression is a form of OLS regression in which a logarithmic transformation is included to approximate the linearity assumed in OLS regression (Berry and Feldman 1985). OLS regression and logistic regression are thus in many respects equivalent procedures developed for different kinds of dependent variables.

However, where an OLS regression model predicts the value of the dependent variable on the basis of the values of the independent variables, a logistic regression model predicts the *probability* (or log-odds) that the dependent variable occurs given the values of the independent variables. Probabilities range from 0, which indicates that a certain outcome will not occur, to 1, which indicates that a certain outcome will occur.

Despite this difference, logistic regression proceeds along the same lines as OLS regression. Through an iterative process the values of the logit coefficients and related values are estimated. To calculate the logit coefficients logistic regression uses Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) instead of Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimation used by other regression procedures. The logit coefficients (or b-coefficients) indicate the individual contribution of the independent variables to the model. The significance of these coefficients is calculated on the basis of the Wald statistic (instead of the t-statistic used in OLS regression). In addition, logistic regression also calculates  $\text{Exp}(b)$ , which represents the log-transformation of the logit coefficients.

The assessment of the goodness-of-fit of logistic regression models is either based on comparison to a baseline model, i.e. a model that does not include the independent variables but only a constant, or a comparison to various (sub)models. To facilitate these comparisons the likelihood ratio's (-2LL ratio's), which are functions of the log-likelihood, of the models are calculated. The -2LL ratio's give an indication of the amount of the unexplained variance in the dependent variable. Decreases in the -2LL ratio's of models point at improvements of the goodness-of-fit of the models (i.e. lower levels of unexplained variance) and the significance of these decreases

can be established on the basis of  $\chi^2$  tests.<sup>83</sup> Logistic regression also reports several measures that are functional equivalents to the  $R^2$  included in OLS regression. Examples of these measures are Cox & Snell's  $R^2$  and Nagelkerke's  $R^2$ . Contrary to the  $R^2$  in OLS regression, these coefficients are not representative for the percentage of explained variance. Rather, they give a crude indication of the strength of association between independent variables, on the one, and dependent variables, on the other hand (Garson n.d.). For this reason these values are not reported in this chapter.

Not included in OLS regression, but a prominent feature of logistic regression are classification tables. These are cross tabulations of predicted and observed values of the dependent variable that demonstrate the model's capacity to correctly predict the outcome of individual cases.<sup>84</sup> Ideally, cases are situated in the upper-left (the 'true negatives') and lower-right (the 'true positives') cells of the classification table, in which event predictions are 100 per cent correct. This hardly ever happens, because logistic regression creates a probabilistic model. Often cases will be situated in the upper-right (the 'false negatives') and lower-left (the 'false positives') cells of the classification table, which indicates that the predictions of the model are not 100 per cent correct.

#### *Cases and unit of analysis*

The previous chapter established that there are eight West European countries in which thirteen radical right-wing populist parties have been represented in parliament between 1981 and 2005. These parties have participated in a total of 45 elections. In several elections, however, more than one radical right-wing populist party has passed the parliamentary threshold. The VB and FNb have simultaneously been represented in parliament since 1991. In Denmark the DF and FRP(d) each won seats in the 1998 elections. Similarly, the MSI/AN and the LN each sent members to the Italian parliament after the 1992, 1994, 1996, and 2001 elections. In the last three elections FI also won a significant number of seats, and, theoretically, each of these parties could gain a position in the executive independent of the others. A calculation of the number of cases that takes into account this fact reveals that there are 57 instances in which radical right-wing populist parties secured parliamentary representation after elections. In each of these instances they could theoretically have become coalition members. The distribution of the cases over the parties and countries is listed in table 4.3

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<sup>83</sup> Additional measures of goodness-of-fit are available (e.g. the Hosmer and Lemeshow test), but these are seriously affected by small sample size and therefore not presented in this study (Garson n.d.).

<sup>84</sup> They are, however, not measures of goodness-of-fit, since they replace predicted probabilities with dichotomized predictions based on a cut-off point of .5. Classification tables ignore to what extent models are able to distinguish unambiguously between cases, i.e. by estimating predicted probabilities close to 0 or 1 (Garson n.d.).

Table 4.3  
Case details

Country	Number of elections	of Party	Number of elections
Austria	7	FPÖ	7
Belgium	11	FNb	4
		VB	9
Denmark	10	DF	3
		FRP(d)	7
		FN	3
France	3	FN	3
Italy	13	AN/MSI	6
		FI	3
		LN	4
		CP/CD	3
The Netherlands	5	LPF	2
		FRP(n)	7
Norway	7	FRP(n)	7
Sweden	1	ND	1
Total	57	Total	57

Two cases are, however, excluded from the logistic regression model, because FI, the party in question did not qualify as junior coalition member. Instead, the party was selected as prime minister party and the determinants of prime minister party status are fundamentally different from those of junior coalition membership. Moreover, several of the formulated hypotheses concern the relationship between the prime minister party and the junior coalition member, which would insert a number of missing values in the dataset. The total number of cases in the dataset to which the logistic regression model will be fitted is thus 55.

#### *Variable selection, operationalization, and measurement*

The dependent variable is dichotomous and measures whether radical right-wing populist parties have or have not been junior coalition members after a particular election (junior coalition membership value 1, not junior coalition membership value 0). The grounds on which cases have been assigned to either of the categories are identical to those in previous chapters; i.e. parties are coalition members when they are part of the cabinet or when they are government support parties. Eleven cases are qualified as positive cases (value on the dependent variable is 1, radical right-wing populist party is junior coalition member) and 44 cases are qualified as negative cases (value on the dependent variable is 0, radical right-wing populist party is not a junior coalition member). These parameters define the baseline model against which the hypotheses are tested. The baseline model does not include any independent variables and assigns all cases to the category of the dependent variable that contains the highest frequency of cases. In other words, the baseline model predicts that in all 55 cases radical right-wing populist parties did become junior coalition members and thus correctly predicts 80 per cent of the cases.

In logistic regression high numbers of independent variables and low numbers of cases are even more problematic than in OLS regression, since the dependent variable has only two categories and therefore contains less information. A general rule of thumb, that avoids these risks, is to include no more than one independent variable per ten cases in the dataset (Garson n.d.; Long 1997). The maximum number of independent variables that can be

included in this analysis is therefore five. Of course, this puts a severe constraint on the analysis in general, and on the selection and operationalization of the independent variables in particular. Two solutions to this problem are available. First, it is possible to perform a stepwise logistic regression analysis and let the analysis sort out which variables are important to the model and which are not. Given the strong theoretical considerations on which the hypotheses presented in this chapter are based, this solution has to be rejected. Second, it is possible to perform a logistic regression analysis on a broader dataset that does not only include radical right-wing populist parties, but all parties with parliamentary representation. This chapter adopts this solution, but commences with a model that includes only the five most important hypotheses identified earlier.

Table 4.4  
*List of independent variables*

Variable name	Variable meaning	Hypothesis
<i>Size</i>	Size of the radical right-wing populist party (% of parliamentary seats)	H1
<i>Size PM</i>	Size of the prime minister party (% of parliamentary seats)	H2
<i>Policy Distance</i>	Difference between the policy position of the radical right-wing populist party and the policy position of the prime minister party on the left-right scale	H3
<i>Change Size</i>	Change in size radical right-wing populist parties as compared to the previous elections (% of parliamentary seats)	H4
<i>Change Size PM</i>	Change in size prime minister party as compared to the previous elections (% of parliamentary seats)	H5

Table 4.4 summarizes the variables included in the analysis and provides details of their operationalization and measurement. Variable 1, *Size*, measures the proportion of seats controlled by the radical right-wing populist party in question. Variable 2, *Size PM*, measures the proportion of seats controlled by the prime minister party. Variable 3, *Policy Distance*, measures the policy distance between the radical right-wing populist party and the prime minister party on the left-right dimension. Variable 4, *Change Size*, measures the direction in which and the extent to which the electoral fortunes of the radical right-wing populist party in question have changed from the previous to the most recent elections. Variable 5, *Change Size PM*, measures the direction in which and the extent to which the electoral fortunes of the prime minister party have changed from the previous to the most recent elections. Again these variables are measures on the basis of changes in percentages of seats, rather than percentages of votes. Even though perceptions of electoral gains and losses are probably dependent on both factors, I believe the former to be more strongly associated with the type of considerations hypothesized to influence preferences and decisions regarding coalition formation.

Four of the five independent variables relate in one way or the other to elections results and the seat distribution that result from elections. For the measurement of these variables several authoritative sources have been used, most notably *The International Almanac of Electoral History* (Rose and Mackie 1991), the *Political Data Yearbook* published by the *European Journal of*

*Political Research*, and the website [www.parties-and-elections.de](http://www.parties-and-elections.de). A combination of sources assures the completeness of information, especially for those countries in which the composition of parties and parliamentary groups is rather fluid (e.g. France and Italy). On the basis of the mentioned sources, I have also collected information about the identity of the prime minister party.<sup>85</sup> The fifth independent variable relates to parties' positions on the left-right dimension. An extensive discussion of the most appropriate way to estimate parties' positions has already been provided in chapter 2. On the basis of considerations of availability, reliability, and validity, I opt for position estimates measured through expert surveys.

Of course, most of the presented hypotheses are open to alternative operationalizations and measurements. The ones proposed here have been chosen for their simplicity and tractability. Alternative operationalizations and measurements have been developed as well, and are used to assess the robustness of the results later in this chapter. They mainly concern the operationalization and measurement of the variable *Policy Distance*, which has also been calculated on the basis of radical right-wing populist parties distance to the weighted mean and the median.

Prior to the presentation of the results of the analysis, I briefly discuss the statistical properties of the dependent and independent variables. Although the requirements for logistic regression are far less strict than for OLS regression, it does assume that observations are independent and that there is a linear relationship of the independent variables to the logit of the dependent variable.<sup>86</sup> Each of these assumptions is violated in this study. First, the cases are not independent, because (1) individual radical right-wing populist parties have been represented repeatedly after various elections, and (2) more than one radical right-wing populist party has occasionally been represented after a specific election in a specific country. This is, however, a more general problem for cross-national, cross-temporal, and cross-party research and it has become common practice to use logistic regression even when this assumption is violated.<sup>87</sup> Second, the hypothesized relationships are not necessarily linear. To account for the non-linearity of relationships, quadratic functions of variables and interaction effects between variables and their quadratic functions are used to test the robustness of the linear relationship.

To use logistic regression more basic requirements should be met as well. To make the model meaningful, something has to be explained, which implies sufficient variance on the dependent variable. The same applies for the independent variables; if they are to explain the dependent variable, variance is needed. Moreover, like any regression procedure, logistic regression is sensitive to outliers on the independent variables. Given that the dependent variable is dichotomous, it cannot include outliers. Finally, logistic

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<sup>85</sup> Note that the prime minister party is in most cases identical to the formateur party. Exceptions to this rule occurred in Austria in 1999, when the initial formateur was the leader of the SPÖ but the prime minister came from ÖVP, and in Norway in 2001, when the right-wing government was formed by H but the prime ministership was given to KRF.

<sup>86</sup> Logistic regression does not assume linearity of the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, it does not assume that variables are normally distributed, and it does not assume homoscedasticity.

<sup>87</sup> It is important to note though, that when the assumption is violated, effects become more easily significant. This is, however, unlikely to happen in this particular study, because the relatively small N on which the logistic regression model is based actually makes it more difficult for effects to become statistically significant.

regression gives unreliable results if there are problems with multicollinearity, i.e. correlation between the independent variables.

Given that the dependent variable is dichotomized, there are few relevant statistical properties to report. The variable has, of course, only two values, and a simple analysis of the frequencies with which these two values occur provides any needed information. The first category, coalition membership, contains 11 cases, or 20.0 per cent of the cases. The second category, no coalition membership, entails 44 cases, or 80.0 per cent. The obvious conclusion that can be drawn from this, is that radical right-wing populist parties are far more likely to be opposition members than junior coalition members.

The statistical properties of the independent variables are listed in Table 4.5. The table highlights the mean values for each of the independent variables, their standard deviations, as well as measures of skewedness and kurtosis to assess whether the variables are normally distributed. Outliers are identified by their case number in the dataset.

On average, radical right-wing populist parties command 8.63 per cent of the parliamentary seats, while prime minister parties control 26.56 per cent. The average policy distance between the two types of parties is 29.45 (on a scale that ranges from 0 to 100). Average values for the variables that measure changes in party size are quite close to zero (1.41 for radical right-wing populist parties and 2.48 for prime minister parties), which reflects the fact that parties sometimes win and sometimes lose at elections. The figures also demonstrate that there is more than sufficient variance on the independent variables to account for the distribution of values over the two categories of the dependent variable. The variables are not always normally distributed; especially the variables that reflect changes in party sizes have values for skewedness and kurtosis that differ greatly from zero. Given that normal distribution of the independent variables is not required by logistic regression, this is not a problem.

More noteworthy are the outliers detected by the analysis. They are situated on the variables that relate to changes in party sizes, with three cases on the variable *Change Size* and one case on the variable *Change Size PM*. The first three cases are the FPÖ at the formation opportunity after the 2002 elections, and the LPF at the formation opportunity after the 2002 and 2003 elections. Of these three cases, the Austrian one and the second Dutch case are negative outliers; i.e. the two parties suffered great losses at the mentioned elections. The first Dutch case is a positive outlier, i.e. the party made great gains at the mentioned elections. The outlier that belongs to the variable *Change Size PM* corresponds to the FN at the formation opportunity that followed the 1997 elections in France. The French PS, which obtained the prime ministership after these elections, creates a positive outlier, because the party increased the proportion of parliamentary seats it controlled with an astounding 38.40 per cent.<sup>88</sup> Although clearly outliers, there are no solid theoretical or empirical grounds to exclude these cases from the analysis.<sup>89</sup> To check whether they have any effect on the robustness of the models

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<sup>88</sup> The growth evidently compensated for the huge losses the party had suffered in the previous elections. Substantial changes in seat shares in the French parliament are not uncommon and are related to the two-round majoritarian electoral system.

<sup>89</sup> The outliers are not a consequence of selection bias, because this study includes the entire population of radical right-wing populist parties that have been represented in West European parliaments. They are not the result of measurement error either, because election results are not susceptible to measurement error.

developed in subsequent sections, I will rerun models without the identified outliers.

Table 4.5  
*Statistical properties of independent variables*

	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewedness <sup>90</sup>	Kurtosis <sup>91</sup>	Outliers
<i>Size</i>	8.63	7.07	.774	-.094	-
<i>Size PM</i>	26.56	10.87	.355	-.923	-
<i>Policy</i>	29.45	16.51	.420	-.490	-
<i>Distance</i>					
<i>Change</i>	1.41	5.96	-.425	2.135	Case 20
<i>Size</i>					Case 263
					Case 271
<i>Change</i>	2.48	7.97	1.833	6.402	Case 177
<i>Size PM</i>					

To ensure that the results of the logistic regression are not affected by multicollinearity, a series of tests has been executed. Given that the various office- and vote-related variables are potentially related and measured on the basis of the same election results, these tests are necessary. An analysis of the correlations between the independent variables demonstrates that none of the independent variables is significantly correlated to any of the other independent variables. The strongest correlation exists between the variables *Size* and *Change Size* (.418), a level of correlation which does not create problems of multicollinearity. These findings are confirmed by a VIF collinearity test.<sup>92</sup> The tolerance values of collinearity statistics for each of the independent variables is higher than .7, the threshold normally set to detect multicollinearity

### **Empirical analysis**

This section tests the hypotheses on the basis of a series of bivariate and multivariate analyses. The results of the analyses show clear support for the hypotheses that radical right-wing populist parties are more likely to become coalition members the larger their proportion of seats is, and the more proximal their positions to that of the prime minister party.

#### *A preliminary test*

A first assessment of the hypotheses occurs on the basis of a series of bivariate analyses that investigate the relationships between the various independent variables and the dependent variable. A comparison of means, i.e. of the average values of each of the independent variables on the two categories of the dependent variable, shows an identical picture (see Table 4.6). The means of the variables *Size*, *Policy*, *Distance*, and *Change Size PM* differ significantly when the cases are split on the basis of their values on the dependent variable. Coalition members control on average 14.55 per cent of the parliamentary seats, while non-coalition members control on average

<sup>90</sup> Standard error .322

<sup>91</sup> Standard error .634

<sup>92</sup> Logistic regression does not provide a collinearity test. Since a collinearity test only investigates the relationship between the independent variables, the collinearity test included in OLS regression can be used instead (Menard 1995).

7.14 per cent of the parliamentary seats. Similarly, the average policy distance for coalition members is 15.65, while this figure amounts to 32.97 for non-coalition members. Finally, the average change in size of prime minister parties is 7.01 per cent for coalition members and 1.35 per cent for non-coalition members. Although there are minor differences in the means of the other independent variables (*Size PM* and *Change Size*), these are not statistically significant.

Radical right-wing populist parties that have been coalition members are larger than their counterparts that have not been coalition members. They are also located in closer proximity of the prime minister party. Moreover, prime minister parties have made larger gains in the elections after which radical right-wing populist parties have become coalition members than in the elections after which radical right-wing populist parties have not become coalition members. Prime minister parties are, however, not smaller when radical right-wing populist parties are coalition members than when they are not. Neither have radical right-wing populist parties that are coalition members made greater gains in the elections than radical right-wing populist parties that are not coalition members.

Table 4.6  
*Comparison of means*

	Mean for radical right-wing populist party in opposition	Mean for radical right-wing populist party in government	Difference
<i>Size</i>	7.14	14.55	7.41***
<i>Size PM</i>	25.92	29.10	3.18
<i>Policy Distance</i>	32.98	15.65	-17.33***
<i>Change Size</i>	1.08	2.71	1.63
<i>Change Size PM</i>	1.35	7.01	5.66*

\* Significant at the .05 level. \*\*\* Significant at the .001 level

Table 4.7 reports the correlations between the various indicators and the coalition membership of radical right-wing populist parties. The figures in the table demonstrate that three variables are correlated significantly with the dependent variable: *Size*, *Policy Distance*, and *Change Size PM*. *Size* and *Change Size PM* are positively correlated with *Coalition Membership*, while *Policy Distance* is negatively correlated with *Coalition Membership*. The strength of the correlations varies from one independent variable to the other. The strength of the correlations of *Size* and *Policy Distance* with *Coalition Membership* are roughly equal (.423 and -.431 respectively). The correlation between *Change Size PM* and *Coalition Membership* is considerable weaker (.287). The variables *Size PM* and *Change Size* are weakly correlated to *Coalition Membership* (.118 and .110 respectively) and the correlations are not significant, which implies that there is no relationship between these independent variables and the dependent variable.

Table 4.7  
*Correlation between independent variables and dependent variable*

<i>Size</i>	.423**
<i>Size PM</i>	.118
<i>Policy Distance</i>	-.431**
<i>Change size</i>	.110
<i>Change size PM</i>	.287*

\* Significant at the .05 level, \*\* Significant at the .01 level

Together the preliminary analyses provide substantial support for hypotheses 1 and 3. There is no support for the hypotheses 2 and 4, while hypothesis 5 appears to be contradicted by the data. On the basis of the analyses it thus seems that radical right-wing populist parties are more likely to participate in government coalitions the larger their proportion of seats and the smaller their policy distance to the prime minister party on the left-right scale. Contrary to expectations, radical right-wing populist parties also seem more likely to participate in government coalitions the larger the gains of the prime minister party at the elections. The size of the prime minister party and the change in the size of the radical right-wing populist party appear unrelated to the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties.

The analyses hint at the fact that the coalition membership of radical right-wing populist parties is explained by a combination of particular office-, policy-, and vote-related variables. At the same time, other office- and vote-oriented variables do not seem to add to our understanding of the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. Effects are also not ascribable to either radical right-wing populist or prime minister parties. The size of a radical right-wing populist party does seem to matter, but changes in a radical right-wing populist parties size do not. The inverse happens for effects related to characteristics of the prime minister party. Changes in the size of a prime minister party do seem to affect a radical right-wing populist party's chances of coalition membership, but the size of a prime minister party does not.

#### *The model*

The question is how these results hold up in a logistic regression model, in which the relative contributions of each of the independent variables on the odds that radical right-wing populist parties become coalition members are evaluated. The independent variables are introduced in the logistic regression model in three blocs, because I assume that the variables relate to three types of strategic behaviour of prime minister parties. The variables *Size* and *Size PM* tap into the office-seeking behaviour of prime minister parties, the variable *Policy Distance* taps into the policy-seeking behaviour of prime minister parties, and the variables *Change Size* and *Change Size PM* tap into the vote-seeking behaviour of prime minister parties.

The logistic regression model is presented in Table 4.8. Model 1 includes only variables related to prime minister parties' office-seeking strategies. The variables *Size* and *Size PM* have positive effects on radical right-wing populist parties' odds to become coalition members (.153 and .032 respectively), but only the effect of the variable *Size* is statistically significant at the .05 level. In other words, radical right-wing populist parties are more likely to become coalition members the larger their proportion of seats. They are not more likely to become coalition members the smaller the proportion of seats of the prime minister party.

Model 2 includes variables that relate to the office- and policy-seeking strategies of prime minister parties. In this model the positive effects of the variables *Size* and *Size PM* persist and that of the variable *Size* remains statistically significant at the .01 level. The variable *Policy Distance* has a negative effect on the odds that radical right-wing populist parties become coalition members (-.149). The effect is statistically significant at the .01 level. Radical right-wing populist parties are more likely to participate in government coalitions the smaller the policy distance to the prime minister party on the left-right scale.

Model 3 includes variables that relate to the office-, policy-, and vote-seeking strategies of prime minister parties. In this model the positive effects of the variables *Size* and *Size PM* and the negative effect of the variable *Policy Distance* persist. The effects of the variables *Size* and *Policy Distance* remain significant, at the .05 and the .01 level respectively. The variable *Change Size* has a negative effect (-.031) on the odds that radical right-wing populist parties become coalition members, while the variable *Change Size PM* has a positive effect (.127) on these odds. Neither of these effects is, however, statistically significant.<sup>93</sup> Radical right-wing populist parties are not more likely to participate in government coalitions the larger their gains in the elections or the larger the losses of the prime minister party in the elections.

An alternative way to interpret the logistic regression model is through the evaluation of the odds ratios predicted by the model. The odds ratios produced by a logistic regression model give an indication how changes in the independent variables affect the odds that the dependent variable occurs. In other words, the odds ratios describe how a one unit increase in any given independent variable affects the odds that the dependent variable has a positive score, i.e. how a one unit increase in the variables *Size*, *Size PM*, *Policy Distance*, *Change size*, or *Change size PM* affect the odds that a radical right-wing populist party participates in a government coalition.

Odds ratios above 1 point at a positive relationship between the independent variable and the odds that the dependent variable occurs, while odds ratios below 1 point at a negative relationship. However, when the confidence interval around the odds ratio includes the value 1, the independent variable does not have a significant impact on the odds that the dependent variable occurs. The information contained in the odds ratios is thus largely identical to the information contained in a logistic regression model, but odds ratios are a useful tool to clarify the results of logistic regression analysis.

The odds ratios point to the variables *Size* and *Policy Distance* as the variables that have a significant impact on the odds that radical right-wing populist parties become junior coalition members. The odds ratio for the variable *Size* is 1.249, which indicates that each additional percent of the parliamentary seats won by a radical right-wing populist party increases the odds of coalition membership by 24.9 per cent. Another way to express the information contained in the odds ratio is as change in the probability that radical right-wing populist parties achieve coalition membership. An increase of one per cent of a radical right-wing populist party's seat share increases the chance of becoming a coalition member by 4 per cent.

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<sup>93</sup> The positive effect of the variable *Change Size PM* comes very close to the .05 threshold of significance though. Given the small N on which the logistic regression is based it cannot be excluded that this variable does indeed have an impact on the odds that radical right-wing populist parties become junior coalition members.

The odds ratio for the variable *Policy Distance* is .865, which means that when the policy distance between radical right-wing populist parties and prime minister parties increases one unit, the odds of coalition membership reduces to .865. In other words, each additional unit a radical right-wing populist party moves further away from a prime minister party (or inversely, the prime minister party moves away from a radical right-wing populist party) decreases the odds of coalition membership by 13.5 per cent. Similarly, an increase of the policy distance between radical right-wing populist parties and prime minister parties by one unit decreases the probability that radical right-wing populist parties become junior coalition members by 2.2 per cent.

Table 4.8  
*Determinants of the junior coalition membership of radical right-wing populist parties*

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	B	B	B
	(SE)	(SE)	(SE)
<i>Independent variables</i>			
Constant	-3.860	-2.493	-3.056
	1.254	1.633	1.816
Size	.153**	.215*	.222*
	.055	.084	.092
Size PM	.032	.074	.073
	.034	.048	.054
Policy Distance	-	-.149**	-.145**
	-	.054	.055
Change size	-	-	-.031
	-	-	.083
Change size PM	-	-	.127
	-	-	.076
-2LL	44.704**	31.614***	26.092
Percentage correctly predicted cases	74.5	80.9	92.7
N	55	55	55

\* Significant at the .05 level, \*\* Significant at the .01 level, \*\*\* Significant at the .001 level

Table 4.9  
*Odds ratios of the determinants of the junior coalition membership of radical right-wing populist parties*

	95% CI for Exp (B)		
	Lower	Exp (B)	Upper
<i>Size</i>	1.042	1.249	1.497
<i>Size PM</i>	.968	1.075	1.194
<i>Policy distance</i>	.777	.865	.963
<i>Change size</i>	.825	.969	1.140
<i>Change size PM</i>	.979	1.135	1.316

How well does the model fit the data? Or put more clearly, how well do the five variables explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties? To assess the goodness-of-fit of the model, I evaluate the extent to which the -2LL improves from the baseline model to the final model that includes the three blocs of independent variables. The -2LL of the baseline model is 52.004 (df. 0), that of the first model 44.704 (df. 2), that of the second model 31.614 (df. 3), and that of the third model 26.092 (df. 5). From the baseline model to the first model, and from the first model to the second model, the decreases in the values of the -2LL are significant at the .01 and .001 level respectively, which indicates that the introduction of the office- and policy-related variables significantly increase our understanding of the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. The decrease of the value of the -2LL from the second model to the third model is not significant, which suggests that the introduction of the vote-related variables do not add anything substantial in terms of explanatory power of the model. In sum, to explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties one has to focus first and foremost on office- and policy-related variables, and especially on the variables *Size* and *Policy Distance*.

A second way to assess how well the model fits the data consists of the evaluation of the classification tables that belong to the logistic regression model. These tables indicate how well the model succeeds in correctly classifying the 55 cases included in the analysis. The baseline model correctly classifies 80.0 per cent of the cases, the first model 74.5 per cent, the second model 89.1 per cent, and the third model 92.7 per cent. In other words, the first model actually performs worse than the baseline model, while the second and third models are better able to classify cases than the baseline model.

The evaluation of the predictive performance of the model should take into account that relatively few radical right-wing populist parties have been junior coalition members. The baseline model is therefore already fairly accurate, and it is difficult to come up with a model that is better able to correctly classify cases than the baseline model. In this light it is not problematic that the first model performs worse than the baseline model, and it is very satisfactory that the second and the third model are able to correctly classify high percentages of cases. Especially the high percentages of correctly classified cases in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated in government coalitions is noteworthy (9.1 per cent, 63.6 per cent, and 72.7 per cent respectively). The third model nevertheless misclassifies 17.3 per cent of the cases, or four cases. Three cases concern instances in which the model predicts that radical right-wing populist parties are opposition members, while they actually were junior coalition members. The fourth case involves a radical right-wing populist party that was actually an opposition members, while the model predicts that it is a junior coalition member.

#### *The robustness of the model*

To establish the robustness of the results, a series of additional logistic regression analyses have been performed with the alternative operationalizations and measurements of the hypotheses listed in table 4.2. These operationalizations and measurement concern the same hypotheses, but measure these in slightly different ways. Most importantly, the policy-related hypothesis has been operationalized on the basis of alternative reference points. The original variable measures the policy distance of radical right-wing populist parties to prime minister parties, the new variables

measure the policy distance of these parties to the median and the weighted mean respectively. The analyses register no differences in effects produced by these variables and the explanatory power of the model is not affected by alternative operationalizations. These results are probably a consequence of the close correspondence between the position of the prime minister party, on the one, and the median and weighted mean, on the other hand. The importance of policy proximity is thus substantiated and persists when other reference points are chosen.

Additionally, analyses have been rerun with variables to measure non-linear and curvilinear effects. First, each of the variables in the model has been replaced with variables that contain the squared values of the original variables. On the basis of these variables the non-linearity of the relationships is investigated. Each of the variables with squared values has a weaker effect on the dependent variable than the original variables, and the goodness-of-fit of the model with the former variables is significantly lower than that of the original model. Second, the original variables and the squared variables have jointly been introduced in the model to investigate whether any of the relationships are curvilinear. The goodness-of-fit of the model that include combinations of original and squared variables is systematically lower than that of the original model. Third, the vote-related hypotheses have been operationalized on the basis of variables that measure electoral gains and losses separately, instead of in single variables. These alterations do not produce a model that fits better than the original model. A similar conclusion is reached when these hypotheses are operationalized by dichotomous variables, which identify the parties with the largest gains and losses. The loss of information this kind of operationalization engenders, slightly reduces the explanatory power of the model. Hence, the relationships between the office-, policy-, and vote-related variables are linear, in spite of the occasional claims of previous studies to the contrary.

Furthermore, models have been run that include interaction terms. The effect of two interaction terms has been investigated: the interaction between the size of the radical right-wing populist parties and the size of the prime minister party, and the interaction between the change in the size of the radical right-wing populist parties and the change in the size of the prime minister party. Neither of these interaction terms has a significant effect on the likelihood that radical right-wing populist parties become junior coalition members and the goodness-of-fit of the models that include interaction terms is not higher than that of the original model.

Finally, analyses have also been rerun without those cases that have been identified as outliers: the FPÖ at the 2002 Austrian elections, the LPF at the 2002 and 2003 Dutch elections, and the FN at the 1997 French elections. The results of the analyses are not altered by the exclusion of any of these cases. The significant effect of the variables *Size* and *Policy Distance* persist and the model maintains a good fit.

In sum, the results of the model presented in table 4.8 do not change significantly when the hypotheses are operationalized in a different way, when analyses are rerun with non-linear or curvilinear variables, or when cases are excluded from the analyses. If results deviate slightly from the original model, this is a consequence of the loss of information alternative operationalizations entail. The robustness tests give further support to the conclusion that radical right-wing populist parties' parliamentary strength and their policy proximity to the prime minister party are the most important determinants of the coalition membership of these parties.

### *Evaluation of the hypotheses*

What do these results mean for the hypotheses formulated earlier in the chapter? Two hypotheses find strong support in the data. Radical right-wing populist parties are more likely to participate in government coalitions the larger the proportion of seats these parties control. Radical right-wing populist parties are also more likely to participate in government coalitions the smaller the policy distance of these parties to the prime minister party. These factors indicate that the integration of radical right-wing populist parties in government coalitions is primarily motivated by prime minister parties' desire to maximize their control over cabinet portfolios and bring about preferred policies.

The other hypotheses are not supported by the data. The variables *Size PM* and *Change Size* have no impact on the coalition membership of radical right-wing populist parties, even though there are good theoretical reasons to expect an effect. Radical right-wing populist parties are not more likely to participate in government coalitions the smaller the proportion of seats of the prime minister party. Radical right-wing populist parties are also not more likely to participate in government coalitions the greater their gains at the elections. The reason why the size of the prime minister party has no effect on the coalition membership of radical right-wing populist parties is probably because government coalitions control a variable percentage of excess seats; i.e. the proportion of seats above the winning criterion controlled by government coalitions differs. The lack of effect of changes in the size of radical right-wing populist parties is perhaps attributable to the fact that prime minister parties take the total size of the radical right-wing populist party as an indicator of the electoral success of these parties. If this is indeed the case, the size of the radical right-wing populist party reflects several motives prime minister parties might have for the inclusion of these parties in government coalitions.<sup>94</sup>

One of the most remarkable findings is the fact that hypothesis 5, which pertains to the expected effect of changes in the size of the prime minister party, has to be refuted. The reason for the rejection of this hypothesis is not that there is no effect of changes in prime minister size on the odds that radical right-wing populist parties become coalition members, but that the effect is in a direction diametrically opposite to the one expected. The greater the gains of the prime minister party, the more likely radical right-wing populist parties are to become coalition members. To account for this finding, I argue that prime minister parties that have won the elections can feel a stronger mandate to change established coalition practices and hence include radical right-wing populist parties in their government coalitions. In particular when the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is still considered a taboo, a strong electoral mandate can legitimize a prime minister party's decision to include this type of party in a government coalition.

On a more general level, the results suggest that the way in which vote-seeking motivations work, needs reconsideration. There are two points I like to stress. First, there are good reasons why electoral competitors do not want to govern together. According to Panebianco (1988: 218), government coalitions between electoral competitors will threaten parties' identities,

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<sup>94</sup> This interpretation is supported by Isaksson (2005: 330)'s claim that electoral success is a two-dimensional concept that comprises a party's total size and changes in this size.

because electoral competitors have similar (ideological) profiles.<sup>95</sup> This makes it difficult for parties to claim policy achievements for their constituencies. Parties that have different "hunting grounds" do not face similar problems, because each party can stress achievements in different policy domains (Luebbert 1986).<sup>96</sup> The link between vote- and policy-seeking behaviour made here by Panebianco, is noteworthy.

A second point is that there is also the possibility that electoral responsiveness works in a different way than theorized in previous studies. One possibility is that parties do not look at electoral success as an indicator of the popularity of potential coalition members, but at coalition preferences expressed in opinion polls. There is abundant evidence that political parties pay attention to opinion polls when they determine their electoral strategies and formulate public policies (Geer 1991; Monroe 1998; Page and Shapiro 1983). Given that the selection of coalition members can have a strong impact on parties' future electoral successes, coalition preferences of voters might have a significant impact on coalition outcomes. Mainstream parties are, however, unlikely to take cues from random voters. Given the electoral link, they are most likely to take into account the coalition preferences of their own electoral constituencies.

This line of reasoning is followed by Downs (2001b: 29), who contends that

"future electoral ambitions constitute inhibitions to risk taking. Future-conscious politicians are constrained by the need to 'compete for the electorate's favours in order to attain or retain office'. This necessity should increase the likelihood that representatives will prefer to appear reliable and consistent to the electorate by adopting a 'clean hands' strategy of disengaging from the pariah."

In other words, mainstream parties refrain from cooperation with radical right-wing populist parties when they believe that this will have negative electoral consequences. Downs assertion rests on the assumption that voters of mainstream parties perceive radical right-wing populist parties as pariahs and therefore oppose the government participation of these parties. This assumption merits extensive empirical evaluation. The high numbers of voters that defect from mainstream to radical right-wing populist parties cast some doubt on it the validity of the assumption. They suggest that radical right-wing populist parties are not necessarily perceived as pariahs by voters of mainstream parties.<sup>97</sup> If this is indeed the case it is not inconceivable that these voters favor the coalition membership of radical right-wing populist parties. When mainstream parties exclude radical right-wing populist parties

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<sup>95</sup> Parties with similar profiles do not necessarily appeal to sociologically and politically identical electorates. Sometimes parties are only competitors in appearance.

<sup>96</sup> Luebbert (1986: 64) makes a similar point when he argues that prime minister parties will prefer coalitions with parties with whom they have "tangential and convergent preference relationships". When they have to chose between these two types of relationships, they will prefer a tangential preference relationship over a convergent preference relationship. Luebbert notes that these preferences are a consequence of parties desire to maximize votes. He argues that "the reasoning behind this is in the simple need for leaders to preserve the distinctiveness of their parties [...] Insofar as parties who advocate the same preferences tend to compete for the same pool over voters, cooperation based on convergent preferences [...] will enhance the competitor's image as a legitimate alternative recipient of electoral support".

from government, even though their electoral constituencies favor the government participation of these parties, mainstream parties risk electoral penalization for this decision. The anticipation of this penalization can guide the behavior of these parties in the coalition formation process.

### **The position of individual cases and parties in the analysis**

A general model tells relatively little about the extent to which individual cases fit the model. To shed more light on the junior coalition membership of individual radical right-wing populist parties, and also strengthen the argument that the model provides a good explanation for the selection of radical right-wing populist parties as junior coalition members by prime minister parties, I discuss three different types of cases: deviant cases, influential cases, and counterintuitive cases.

#### *Deviant cases*

A first step in the evaluation of the model is the identification of outliers. Given that regression models are probabilistic models, some cases are bound to fit the model poorly. The identification of these cases is meaningful, because deviant cases can highlight problems with measurement, point at relevant variables that have not yet been included in the model, or even provide alternative explanations that have not been considered. The most obvious way to identify outliers is through the analysis of residuals. Generally, cases that have standard deviations that fall outside the range of -2 to + 2 are qualified as outliers (Menard 1995).

An analysis of the residuals of the model highlights that the model includes two deviant cases.<sup>98</sup> These are the government participation of the FPÖ in 1983 and the government participation of the FRP(n) in 2001. The model estimates that the probability that the FPÖ and the FRP(n) became junior coalition members in these years is extremely low (.020 and .079 respectively). Why are these cases misclassified? Crucial for the misclassification of the two cases is the fact that the radical right-wing populist parties were not located in close proximity of the prime minister party at the time of the 1983 Austrian elections and the 2001 Norwegian elections.<sup>99</sup> Given that the prime minister party after the 1983 Austrian elections was the Austrian SPÖ this makes perfect sense. After the 2001 Norwegian elections the prime minister party was the KRF, which did not share a clear right-wing policy orientation with the FRP(n) either.

Why did the SPÖ and the KRF decided to ally with radical right-wing populist parties when there was no clear policy rationale between these parties? In the Austrian case two reasons stand out. First, at the time of the

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<sup>98</sup> For two additional cases, the formation opportunities that followed the Austrian elections in 1990 and the Italian elections in 1994 (but only for the AN, not the LN), the predicted probabilities do not correspond to the actual status (junior coalition member vs. not junior coalition member) of the radical right-wing populist parties. The FPÖ did not participate in the government coalition after the 1990 elections, but the model does predict the party's coalition membership. The AN did participate in the government coalition after the 1994 elections, though the model does not predict the party's coalition membership. The standardized residuals for these cases do not exceed the -2 and +2 boundaries and the predicted probabilities are very close to the .5 cut-off point (.52413 and .44537 respectively), which suggests that these cases do not fit very poorly to the model.

<sup>99</sup> The probability that the FPÖ became a coalition member after the 1983 Austrian elections is also negatively affected by the small proportion of seats the party secured in these elections (6.6 per cent).

1983 elections the FPÖ did not qualify as a radical right-wing populist party. Rather, the party had adopted an ideological program much akin to that of liberal parties. Unfortunately, the dataset does not reflect this fact and situates the FPÖ on the far right of the Austrian left-right dimension at the time of the 1983 elections. Second, relations between the SPÖ and the ÖVP were strained by negative coalition experiences in previous years. In the Norwegian case the way in which the government coalition was formed play an important role. Although the KRF obtained the prime ministership, the coalition formation process was actually led by H. This party had every reason to include the FRP(n) in the government coalition. The dataset shows that the FRP(n) and the H take almost identical positions on the left-right dimension, which indicates that it was attractive for H to include the FRP(n) in a government coalition.

In sum, it seems that the cases of the Freedom Party after the 1983 Austrian elections and the Progress Party after the 2001 Norwegian elections are primarily deviant, because expert surveys incidentally fail to measure party positions accurately and formateur parties are not always the same as prime minister parties. In other words, the cases are deviant as a result of measurement and operationalization problems. They are not deviant as a result of the interference of factors not included in the model.

#### *Influential cases*

One also has to ask whether the results of the logistic regression model, and consequentially the conclusions reached about the junior coalition membership of radical right-wing populist parties, are affected by particular cases, parties or even countries. Given that some radical right-wing populist parties and countries are represented with more entries in the dataset than others, this kind of evaluation is essential in this study. The introduction of dummy variables to control for these factors is one way to conduct this type of evaluation (for an example of this approach see Warwick 1996). The small N on which the logistic regression in this chapter is based rules out this option, however.

To control for party effects the introduction of thirteen dummy variables is necessary (there are thirteen different radical right-wing populist parties in the dataset), to control for country effects eight dummy variables are required. Ideally one would also control for time effects; for example, through the categorization of cases in decades that are then measured as dummy variables. The introduction of only one type of these control variables would already make the regression model overdetermined, let alone the simultaneous introduction of the various types of control variables.<sup>100</sup>

A less certain, but nevertheless useful way to evaluate the impact of specific cases, parties and countries is through the analysis of the residuals, more specifically through an analysis of the leverage statistic. Cases that have a disproportional impact on the logistic regression model are characterised by high values on the leverage statistic, that ranges from 0, no influence of the particular case, to 1, the case completely determines the parameters in the model (Menard 1995: 71). The point at which the influence of a case becomes unacceptable is usually set at  $(k+1)/N$ , but this formula sets an excessively strict threshold given the ratio between independent variables and the number of cases in this study. About a quarter of the cases have higher reported values than  $(k+1)/N$  or .11, but these values do not

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<sup>100</sup> Remember that the maximum number of independent variables for a logistic regression is  $N/k > 10$ , where k represents the number of independent variables

exceed .4.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, no systematic patterns are observable in the values of the leverage statistics. They are not clustered around specific radical right-wing populist parties, countries, or time periods.

Another way to evaluate the impact of specific cases, parties, and countries is to rerun the regression model with less cases, parties, and countries. These models have been systematically analyzed and in each of the models the variables *Size* and *Policy Distance* are the only ones that have a significant effect on the likelihood that radical right-wing populist parties become junior coalition members.<sup>102</sup> The fit of these models is good and the percentage of correctly predicted cases high.

The absence of disproportionately influential cases can also be taken as an indirect sign that there are no major differences between cases in which radical right-wing populist parties have been members of the cabinet and cases in which radical right-wing populist parties have been support parties. Although the numbers on which this observation is based is too small to make any definitive conclusions, it is a point that deserves to be highlighted. There are no indications in the results that countries in which minority governments are the norm weigh on the results in a different way than countries where majority governments are the dominant form of government. More specifically, the cases in which radical right-wing populist parties been government support parties fit the model quite well.

#### *Counterintuitive cases*

The general conclusion is therefore that the model fits very well with the data and it is easy to derive conclusions for individual cases from it. The Dutch CP/CD, for example, has never been in office, because they were small and distant from the prime minister party. For some cases the conclusions might, however, prove counterintuitive. If the size of the radical right-wing populist party is one of the main determinants of the coalition membership of these parties, why have successful radical right-wing populist parties like the VB or the FN never been part of government coalitions? Part of the answer to this question lies of course in the policy gap that exists between the prime minister parties, on the one, and radical right-wing populist parties, on the other hand.

It should also be noted, however, that popular perceptions of what are successful radical right-wing populist parties are not always related to the proportion of seats parties control in parliament. The FN clearly proves this point. Although the party consistently achieves good electoral results, if one looks at the proportion of votes cast for the party, the proportion of seats controlled by the FN has always been minimal. Even after the elections of 1986, held under a new electoral law that featured a proportional electoral system, the FN only commanded 6.1 per cent of the seats in the National Assembly. The discrepancy between the successful image of the party and the party's actual power in parliament is thus noteworthy.

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<sup>101</sup> The cases that have values on the leverage statistic above the .11 level are actually the cases in which radical right-wing populist parties have been members in the coalition government. This is an effect of the imbalance between the number of cases in the two categories of the dependent variable, i.e. the fact that radical right-wing populist parties have for more often been part of the opposition than of the government.

<sup>102</sup> Only when Norway is excluded from the analysis other variables become significant as well. Without Norway in the model the variable Change size PM has a positive and significant effect on the likelihood that radical right-wing populist parties become junior coalition members.

A similar argument can be made in the case of the VB. Generally perceived as one of the most successful radical right-wing populist parties in Western Europe, the party has always controlled a modest proportion of seats in the Belgian Chamber of Representatives. After the 1991 elections, which signalled the electoral breakthrough of the VB at the national level, the party obtained only 5.7 per cent of the seats in this representative organ. After the 2003 elections, the most recent in the dataset, the party obtained 12.0 per cent of the seats, less than the average percentage of seats controlled by radical right-wing populist parties that have been coalition members. The discrepancy arises in this case from the fact that the VB participates only in Flemish electoral constituencies. In these constituencies the party is highly successful, but this does not translate to an equally high proportion of seats in the federal parliament.<sup>103</sup>

### **Radical right-wing populist parties vs. other junior coalition members**

One of the claims made in the introduction of this dissertation is that the rise to power of radical right-wing populist parties is not substantively different from that of other parties and that the government participation of radical right-wing populist party family is structured by the same determinants as the government participation of other types of party families. This chapter allows the comparison of the frequency and determinants of junior coalition membership of radical right-wing populist parties with those of parties in general, irrespective of their party family affiliation. Do radical right-wing populist parties become junior coalition members less often than other parties? And are the determinants of the coalition membership of radical right-wing populist parties the same as those for other parties?

A rerun of the model that includes the three blocs of relevant variables (i.e. office-, policy-, and vote-related) on a dataset that comprises entries on parties regardless of their party family affiliation, and the comparison of this model to the one discussed in previous sections answers this question. This analysis is conducted on a dataset that contains 317 cases, i.e. 317 individual parties with parliamentary representation obtained after 45 different elections held in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden between 1981 and 2005. The parties included in the dataset are both mainstream parties and non-mainstream parties. The only parties excluded from the dataset are prime minister parties, since they participate in government coalitions on different grounds. Operationalization and measurement of independent and dependent variables is identical to that in the previous analysis.

Table 4.10 shows that radical right-wing populist parties have less frequently been junior coalition members than other parties, but the difference between the two groups of parties is not significant. Radical right-wing populist parties have become junior coalition members after 20 per cent of the elections held in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden between 1981 and 2005, while other parties have become junior coalition members after 30.4 per cent of these elections. The difference between these two groups of 10.4 per cent is not statistically significant,

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<sup>103</sup> The VB is not the only party that participates exclusively in Flemish electoral constituencies. Since the 1983 elections, the Belgian party system has been split in a Flemish party system and a francophone party system. Parties in the Flemish system compete in the Flemish electoral constituencies, while parties in the francophone part compete in Walloon electoral constituencies. Only in Brussels do Flemish and francophone parties compete directly in the same electoral constituencies.

which suggests that radical right-wing populist parties are not less likely to become junior coalition members than other parties.

Table 4.10  
*Comparison of the frequency of the junior coalition membership*

	Junior coalition members	Opposition members	Total
Radical right-wing populist parties	11 (20 %)	44 (80 %)	55 (100 %)
Other parties	80 (30 %)	183 (70 %)	263 (100 %)
Total	92 (29 %)	227 (71 %)	318 (100 %)

$\chi^2 = 2.417$ , not significant

The logistic regression model, discussed earlier in this chapter, identified radical right-wing populist parties' legislative weight and their proximity to the prime minister party as the most important determinants of these parties' coalition membership. These findings correspond closely to those that are obtained when a similar logistic regression model is constructed to establish the determinants of coalition membership for parties, irrespective of their party family affiliation. Two variables consistently have a significant effect on the odds that parties become junior coalition members, namely the variables *Size* and *Policy Distance*. Parties are more likely to become coalition members the larger the proportion of seats they control and the smaller the policy distance to the prime minister party on the left-right continuum. The odds ratios that belong to the model give the same indication. The variables *Size* and *Policy Distance* are the only ones that have odds ratios that do not include the value 1 in their confidence interval, and, consequentially, the only two variables that have a significant impact on the odds that parties and radical right-wing populist parties in particular become junior coalition members.

To establish whether the junior coalition membership of radical right-wing populist parties is indeed not different from that of other parties - as is suggested by the largely similar frequencies with these parties have become junior coalition members and by the fact that their junior coalition membership is determined by the same determinants - a fourth model has been developed, which includes a dummy variable that measures whether the parties included in the dataset are radical right-wing populist parties or not. This variable is added to the office-, policy-, and vote-related variables and has no significant effect on the odds that parties become junior coalition members. In other words, there is no independent effect of being a radical right-wing populist party, other than those already covered by the office-, policy- and vote-related variables, on the likelihood that parties become junior coalition members. Radical right-wing populist parties have no intrinsic qualities that make them more or less likely to become junior coalition members than other parties.

Also in terms of the goodness-of-fit and the predictive power of the model there are no significant differences between the model presented here and the model that only includes radical right-wing populist parties. The goodness-of-fit of the model improves significantly from the baseline model to the first model and from the first model to the second model. From the second model to the third model and from the third model to the fourth model

there are no significant improvements of the models, which suggests that the introduction of vote-related variables and the dummy variable that indicates whether parties are radical right-wing populist parties or not do not enhance our understanding of the reasons why parties become junior coalition members. The increase in the percentage of correctly predicted cases from the baseline model to the first model and from the first model to the second model give similar indications.<sup>104</sup>

Table 4.11  
*Determinants of the junior coalition membership of parties*

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	B	B	B	B
	(SE)	(SE)	(SE)	(SE)
<i>Independent variables</i>				
Constant	-.625 .373	.564 .435	.592 .440	.679 .448
Size	.033**	.053***	.054***	.054***
Size PM	-.025 .013	-.014 .014	-.017 .015	-.018 .015
Policy Distance	-	-.074***	-.074***	-.073***
Change size	-	.012	.012	.012
Change size PM	-	-	.040	.050
RRWP	-	-	.028	.030
	-	-	.030	.033
	-	-	.019	.020
	-	-	-	.592
	-	-	-	.432
-2LL	370.269**	316.480***	312.507	310.429
Percentage correctly predicted cases	70.3	75.1	74.4	75.1
N	318	318	318	

\* Significant at the .05 level, \*\* Significant at the .01 level, \*\*\* Significant at the .001 level

<sup>104</sup> The percentages of correctly predicted cases are notably lower for this model than for the model that includes only radical right-wing populist parties. The difference between the two models is for a substantial part attributable to the increase in the number of cases.

Table 4.12

*Odds ratios of the determinants of the junior coalition membership of parties*

	95% CI for Exp (B)		
	Lower	Exp (B)	Upper
Size	1.026	1.056	1.086
Size PM	.954	.983	1.012
Policy distance	.907	.928	.951
Change size	.985	1.041	1.101
Change size PM	.992	1.030	1.070

### **Conclusion**

The main objective of this chapter has been to establish which party characteristic determine whether radical right-wing populist parties become coalition members. To formulate hypotheses about these characteristics, I relied on coalition membership theories. My analysis started with the observation that radical right-wing populist parties have almost exclusively been junior coalition members, that is, they have been invited to join government coalition by prime minister parties. On the basis of this observation, I proposed three types of explanations for the junior coalition members of radical right-wing populist parties (related to prime minister parties office-, policy-, and vote-seeking behaviour) and focused on three types of party characteristics (radical right-wing populist parties' characteristics, prime minister parties' characteristics, and the interaction between these two types of characteristics). From these three explanations, five hypotheses were derived about the party characteristics that make it more or less likely that radical right-wing populist parties become junior coalition members. These hypotheses posited that radical right-wing populist parties are more likely to become junior coalition members (1) the larger their proportion of seats, (2) the smaller the proportion of seats of the prime minister party, (3) the smaller the policy distance between the radical right-wing populist party and the prime minister party on the left-right dimension, (4) the larger their gains at the elections, and (5) the larger the losses of the prime minister party at the elections.

In the analyses executed in this chapter two hypotheses found support: (1) radical right-wing populist parties are more likely to participate in government coalitions the larger the proportion of seats these parties control and (2) the smaller the policy distance of these parties to the prime minister party. The other hypotheses did not find support: radical right-wing populist parties are not more likely to participate in government coalitions the smaller the proportion of seats of the prime minister party, the greater their gains at the elections, or the greater the losses of the prime minister party at the elections.

The most important party characteristics that determine whether radical right-wing populist parties become junior coalition members are thus these parties' legislative weight and their policy proximity to the prime minister party. Radical right-wing populist parties that have participated in government coalitions control about 15 per cent of the parliamentary seats, with some outliers below and above this percentage, and are located roughly 15.6 points away from the prime minister party on the left-right dimension.

These party characteristics explain why radical right-wing populist parties have joined government coalitions in Austria, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway, but not in Belgium, France, and Sweden. In the first group of countries radical right-wing populist parties have achieved electoral

success and have been able to translate their electoral success into legislative power. In this group of countries radical right-wing populist parties also occupy policy positions that are congruent with those of mainstream right parties. In the second group of countries radical right-wing populist parties either have had insufficient electoral success to become junior coalition members, have not been able to translate their electoral success into legislative power, or have taken policy positions that are divergent of those of mainstream right parties. The party characteristics also explain why radical right-wing populist parties have only joined government coalitions in recent years. In the 1980s and early 1990s the radical right-wing populist parties that are now junior coalition members lacked electoral success, legislative power, and took policy positions that were divergent of those of mainstream right parties.

Moreover, the party characteristics explain why in particular countries some radical right-wing populist parties have become junior coalition members while others have not. In Denmark the FRP(d) achieved limited electoral and legislative success in the 1980s and 1990s. Moreover, the party presented a policy program that was markedly different from that of mainstream right parties. In the late 1980s the DF, successor to the FRP(d), secured a stronger electoral and legislative presence and was more moderate. In the Netherlands the CP/CD, on the one hand, lacked electoral and legislative strength and policy differences between this radical right-wing populist parties and mainstream right parties were substantial. The LPF, on the other hand, acquired electoral and legislative prominence in the 2002 elections and presented a policy program that was in line with that of mainstream right parties.

The importance of radical right-wing populist parties legislative weight and their proximity to the prime minister party on the left-right dimension suggests that prime minister parties have two main reasons to include radical right-wing populist parties in their government coalitions. First, the inclusion of these parties furthers their office-seeking objectives. Second, the inclusion of these parties promotes their policy-seeking objectives.

This chapter finds no indication that prime minister parties invite radical right-wing populist parties to participate in their government coalitions in order to win back votes lost to these parties. This is quite remarkable, because this explanation for the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties has been fairly popular amongst political commentators and journalists. It cannot be excluded, however, that the indicators used in this chapter to tap into the vote-seeking behaviour of prime minister parties do not capture the way in which parties link electoral competition to the competition for government.

Additionally, the relationship between the parliamentary strength of radical right-wing populist parties and the likelihood that these parties become junior coalition members indicates that, even though there is no direct link between these parties' electoral growth and their government participation, an element of electoral responsiveness is still present. Radical right-wing populist parties do not appear underrepresented in government coalitions and their inclusion in the executive is related to their popular support, even if occasional distortions occur as a consequence of institutional factors (e.g. the electoral system). In light of the cartel party thesis (Katz and Mair 1995), and the more general claim that non-mainstream parties are underrepresented in government, this is a noteworthy observation. As Downs (1998) highlights, "there is frequent criticism that parties are insensitive to shifts in electoral support and that they use the coalition process to evade

electoral verdicts. Here the politics of mutual self-preservation is said to win out over responsiveness to popular will". This criticism appears largely unfounded.

### *The model*

It is now time to assess how these conclusions fit with the general model that explains the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties developed in the introduction of this dissertation. The general model consists of six elements: (1) party characteristics, (2) party goals, (3) party strategies, (4) coalition preferences, (4) the coalition outcome, and (6) new party characteristics. It assumes that parties' characteristics shape their party goals, which in turn lay the foundation for their strategic preferences, most notably their coalition preferences. On the basis of these preferences parties negotiate during the coalition formation process and they determine the eventual outcome of the coalition negotiations. The findings of this chapter have been integrated in this model, which is visualized in Figure 4.1.

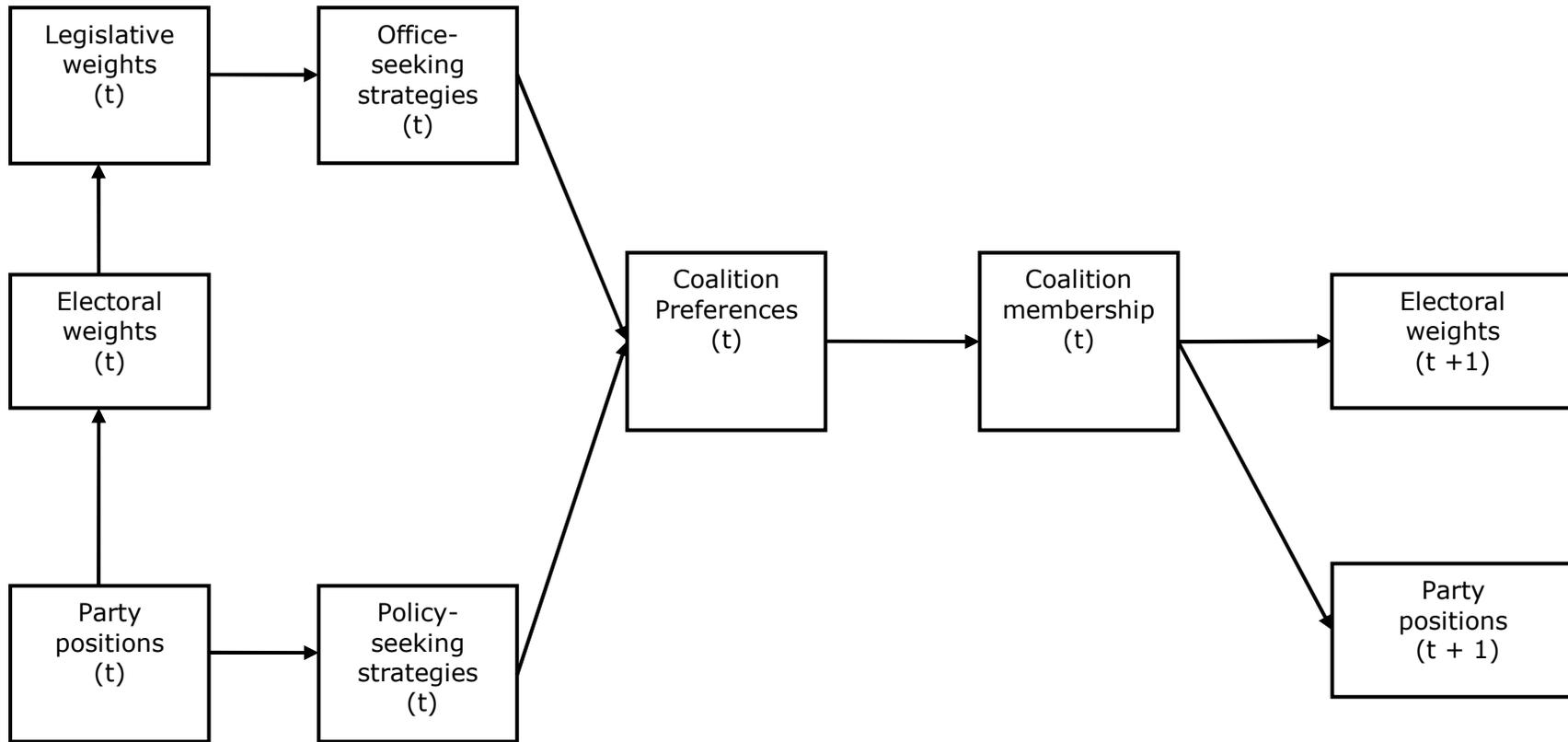
Although this chapter focuses on a specific aspect of the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties (the selection of radical right-wing populist parties as junior coalition members by prime minister parties), the conclusions of the chapter do provide a wealth of information about the way in which party characteristics shape party goals, party strategies, coalition preferences, and coalition outcomes. Parties' legislative weights shape the office-seeking strategies of prime minister parties, while their party positions shape the policy-seeking strategies of these parties. Together these strategies inform prime minister parties' preferences for government coalitions that include specific coalition members. According to the conclusions reached in this chapter, the coalition preferences of prime minister parties matter more than those of other parties, and quite possibly they are the only coalition preferences that truly matter for the selection of coalition members.

The model also incorporates a dynamic component, because it assumes that coalition membership influences parties' characteristics in future elections. Parties in government are likely to lose the elections, which reduces their chances to become members of the new government coalition. They are also likely to change their party positions in accordance with the coalition agreement to which they have committed themselves, which affects their coalition preferences after the new elections.

The model does not specify how prime minister parties' preferences for the selection of individual junior coalition members lead to the formation of government coalitions of a particular composition. Prime minister parties can decide on the grounds of their legislative strength and party positions that radical right-wing populist parties are attractive coalition members, but they usually have to select a number of junior coalition members and form a government coalition that satisfies the party goals of each of the coalition members. To explore this aspect of the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties the characteristics of the government coalitions in which these parties have participated are analyzed in detail in the next chapter.

Figure 4.1

*A model to explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties, part II*





## CHAPTER 5

### **The Characteristics of Radical Right-Wing Populist Government Coalitions**

*The concept of a game is not used for poetic expression or imagery. It is an analytical tool, a conceptual strategy that can help order the apparent chaos of multiparty politics. Through this analytical orientation, we may discover systematic patterns of cabinet formation and maintenance that were previously hidden*

Dodd (1976: 16)

The previous chapter provided important insights into the radical right-wing populist parties that have participated, as well as the parties with which radical right-wing populist parties have governed. The radical right-wing populist parties that have participated in government coalitions have been relatively larger, and they have primarily governed with mainstream right parties that have policy positions that are relatively close to those of radical right-wing populist parties. But what are the characteristics of the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated? In other words, how can these government coalitions be characterized, when the features of the individual parties that have participated in these coalitions are aggregated?

The topic of this chapter is easily illustrated with an example. Take the Schüssel I government that assumed office in Austria in 2000, and the Berlusconi II government that assumed office in Italy in 2001. At first sight the differences between these two government coalitions appear substantial. The Schüssel I government counts only two members (the FPÖ and the ÖVP), while the Berlusconi I government comprises five parties (the AN, the CCD, FI, the LN, and the UDC). Moreover, the ideological composition of the two governments differs. The Schüssel I government includes a Christian-democratic party and a radical right-wing populist party, while the Berlusconi I government is comprised of three radical right-wing populist parties and two Christian-democratic parties. Finally, the Schüssel I government was build after the elections, while the Berlusconi I government was constructed prior to the elections.

This chapter demonstrates that underneath these apparent differences systematic patterns of coalition formation are present. The Schüssel I and Berlusconi II governments are, for example, both minimal connected winning coalitions. They include parties that are necessary to build a winning coalition and that take adjacent positions on the left-right dimension. Cooperative formal coalition formation theories offer a framework to assess these types of similarities in a more systematic fashion. Two types of theories are used in particular, namely office-seeking and policy-seeking theories.

The formal coalition formation theories are used for several purposes. First, they uncover the coalition opportunity structure for radical right-wing populist parties. More specifically, the predictions made by formal coalition formation theories are analyzed and used to assess whether the coalition opportunity structure for radical right-wing populist parties is favourable or unfavourable. Second, the coalition formation theories are used to characterize the governments in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated. In order words, it is established whether office- and policy-oriented coalition formation theories predict the formation of the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated. Third,

a comparison of the characteristics of the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated to other government coalitions establishes whether the characteristics of the former government coalitions are qualitatively different from those of the latter.

On the basis of these analyses I not only gain more insight in the characteristics of the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated, but also get more leverage over the motives that parties have for the formation of these government coalitions. In particular, this chapter incorporates more explicitly some of the notions that structured the coalition membership theories tested in the previous chapter. It enables me, for example, to verify whether prime minister parties indeed select relatively large radical right-wing populist parties as junior coalition members, because they can build minimal winning coalitions with these parties.

### **Models of coalition formation**

Coalition formation theories are formal models of parties' behaviour in the government formation process. They consist of axioms and theorems that describe the behavior of parties in the coalition formation process, usually in mathematical terms. Axioms are the formal equivalents of assumptions; that is, propositions that are assumed to be correct. Theorems are the formal equivalents of hypotheses; that is, propositions that are open to empirical evaluation. They are deduced on the basis of logical reasoning from the axioms that are part of a formal model. The content of the axioms and theorems is determined by the perspective taken on party behaviour. Most formal models, and hence most coalition formation theories, take a rational choice perspective. They assume that human behaviour is driven by utility maximization. The axioms and theorems included in coalition formation theories reflect this assumption.

Coalition formation theories are a particular kind of rational choice models, in which the focus is not on parametric behaviour; i.e. the behavior of isolated individuals, but on concurrent or sequential behaviour of more than one actor. This particular kind of model is usually referred to as the game-theoretical model. They describe the strategic behavior of players that interact with each other. Contrary to other rational choice models, the cost-benefit analyses made by the players in game-theoretical models include anticipations about the strategies of other players. On the basis of these cost-benefit calculations players choose optimal strategies that together result in a particular outcome. The essence of the game-theoretical model is best described by Luce and Raiffa (1957: 5), who state that

“there are  $N$  players each of whom is required to make one choice from a well defined set of possible choices, and these choices are made without any knowledge as to the choices of the other players. Given the choices of each of the players, there is a certain resulting outcome, which is appraised by each of the players according to his own peculiar tastes and preferences”.

In sum, game-theoretical models ascribe more complex motivations to individuals or groups than other rational choice models. As Morton (1999: 77) notes, in game-theoretical models “the outcomes one individual or group faces are functions of the decisions of other individuals or groups [...] in game theoretic models an individual is assumed to know her decision will impact the decisions made by others and vice-versa”.

The game-theoretical models discussed in this chapter specifically concern the formation of government coalitions. They are so-called

cooperative simple games, a particular subtype of game-theoretical model that is characterized by two aspects: (1) the ability of actors to enforce agreements, and (2) the existence of two subsets of coalitions. The first aspect contrasts cooperative coalition games with non-cooperative coalition games, while in cooperative coalition games groups of players have the capacity to enforce agreements. In non-cooperative coalition games they do not have this capacity and agreements are self-enforced. Accordingly, the utility maximized differs. In cooperative coalition games this is the collective utility, in the non-cooperative coalition games the individual utility. Hence, in the cooperative game the competition is not between individual players, but between coalitions of players.

The second aspect relates to the types of coalitions included in the model. Simple games classify coalitions in two subsets. The first subset consists of winning coalitions, i.e. coalitions that meet the criteria to obtain the prize that coalition parties get to divide between them. These coalitions are attributed a value of 1, the value to be divided over the coalition parties. The second subset consists of losing coalitions, i.e. coalitions that do not meet the criteria to obtain the prize. These coalitions are attributed a value of 0 and members in this coalition receive nothing. Which coalitions win and which lose, is determined by the winning criterion, which is normally set at the majority of weights in the coalition game.<sup>105</sup> From this definition follows that in the event of multiple winning coalitions, every two winning coalitions have at least one actor in common and that predicted coalitions thus have overlapping membership (Luce and Raiffa 1957; Ordeshook 1986; Rapoport 1970; Riker and Ordeshook 1973).

Cooperative models of coalition formation consist of two elements. First, they include a descriptive part in which the rules of the game are made explicit. These rules take the form of axioms and theorems. Second, they contain a predictive part in which the solution of the game is presented. This solution is made up of one or several predicted outcomes of the game and is also known as the game's solution set. The focus in the predictive part is on the apportionment of the prize among the players of the coalition game, i.e. on the payoff each player receives. The set of individual payoffs corresponding to each conceivable outcome of the game comprises a characteristic function or payoff structure. From this the predictions that form the solution set can be derived. Of course, the eventual concern is with the determinants of coalition formation - who gets in and why - , but these are only investigated indirectly through the assumptions made about the stakes of the game. The explanations for the formation of particular coalitions are thus embedded in the axioms and theorems of the model. On the basis of the assumptions made about the stakes of the coalition game, two types of models of coalition formation can be distinguished: office- and policy-oriented coalition formation theories. In the first variety of coalition formation theories parties seek to maximize their share of the spoils of government, in the second variety of coalition formation theories parties seek to maximize their influence over policy-making.

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<sup>105</sup> If the winning criterion is set at less than a majority of the weights in the coalition game an insurmountable problem emerges, because two coalitions can claim the prize at the same time. Coalition formation theories therefore have great difficulties to account for the existence of minority governments. Attempts have nevertheless been made to integrate minority governments into formal models of coalition formation, e.g. through the construction of the *Government Viability Criterion* (Budge and Keman 1990; Budge and Laver 1986).

### *Office-oriented theories*

Office-oriented coalition formation theories (also named power-oriented theories, policy-blind theories, or theories from the 'size school') depart from the assumption that political parties are primarily office-seeking. Their main goal is to attain the benefits associated with holding power, usually cabinet positions. These positions provide parties with a spot in the limelight, give them the resources to bind functionaries to the party, and influence policy-making.

Office-oriented coalition formation theories have their origin in the truly seminal work of Von Neumann and Morgenstern, *Theory and Games of Economic Behavior* (1944). The model of Von Neumann and Morgenstern conceives coalition formation as a constant-sum game, in which a fixed "prize" is divided amongst the winners of the game. The actors that lose the game receive no payoff. The way to win the game is through the construction of a coalition that is sufficiently large to satisfy a quota, normally related to the majority status of the coalition. From the constant-sum assumption it follows that the value of a winning coalition does not increase when new members are added. The more members a coalition has, the smaller the payoff of each individual member. Consequently, actors will strive to form a minimal winning coalition, that is, a coalition without "unnecessary actors"; i.e. actors whose weight is not necessary for the winning status of the coalition. If a member leaves a minimal winning coalition it becomes losing.

The minimal winning theory proposed by Von Neumann and Morgenstern has considerable resemblance to real life political situations. "A majority coalition in a voting body may conquer some fixed 'prize' e.g. the cabinet portfolios and this 'prize' may be considered the same independent of the composition of the winning coalition that acquires it: the value of the coalition does not increase with its membership" (De Swaan 1973: 50). It therefore represents a "main simple solution" to the question of government formation. However, under normal circumstances the number of coalitions predicted by the minimal winning theory is substantial, if not very large, and dependent on the number of actors in the coalition game. Consequentially, the minimal winning theory gives an indication of which coalition will form, but nevertheless proposes numerous alternative coalitions.

The minimal winning theory of Von Neumann and Morgenstern has not been designed to model a specific type of coalition game. Rather, it can be applied to a wide range of political and social situations that have the features of an n-person single game. The parliamentary coalition game has, however, the specific feature that it is a weighted game, i.e. that actors have resources (seats) that determine their weight in the coalition game. To accommodate these specific features two office-oriented theories have been developed that limit the predictions of the minimal winning theory: the minimum size theory (Gamson 1961; Riker 1962) and the bargaining proposition theory (1968; Leiserson 1970a).<sup>106</sup>

The minimum size theory predicts the formation of the minimal winning coalition with the smallest weight. In Riker (1962: 47)'s words, "in social situations similar to n-person, zero-sum games with side-payments, participants create coalitions just as large as they believe will ensure winning and no larger". The minimum size theory rests on the assumption that "any participant will expect others to demand from a coalition a share of the payoff proportional to the amount of resources which they contribute to the

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<sup>106</sup> The application of these theories to unweighted simple games leads to predictions identical to those of the minimal winning theory.

coalition" (Gamson 1961: 376).<sup>107</sup> Thus, actors maximize their payoff through the maximization of their weight in the coalition, which is in turn achieved through a minimization of the coalition's total weight. The predictions of the minimum size theory are more precise than those of the minimal winning theory and extremely sensitive to minor changes in the weights of actors.

The bargaining proposition theory predicts that the minimal winning coalition with the smallest number of actors will form. In Leiserson's (1968: 775) words, "the proposition regarding bargaining is that as the number of actors increases there is a tendency for each actor to prefer to form a minimal winning coalition with as few members as possible". The bargaining proposition theory does not only rest on the assumption that actors seek to maximize their payoffs, but also takes into account the ease with which a coalition can be constructed and maintained. According to Leiserson (1970a: 90), "the members of the smaller coalition will prefer to form it, since negotiations and bargaining are easier to complete and a coalition is easier to hold together, other things being equal, with fewer parties".

The empirical performance of office-oriented coalition formation theories is not easily evaluated. The theories predict large solution sets, that is, the number of coalitions predicted by the theories is high. In other words, the precision rate of office-oriented theories is low.<sup>108</sup> This makes it difficult to falsify these theories (Popper 2002). The situation is further complicated by the fact that several coalitions can assume office on the basis of the same election results, for example when a government resigns mid-term. The difficulties to test office-oriented coalition formation theories have been extensively documented (cf. *infra*). The result is that scholars have praised and criticized the same theories on the basis of identical or similar data. Figures have been interpreted as rather disappointing, because a substantial proportion of the government coalitions that have formed in Western Europe are over- or undersized. These government coalitions are not predicted by office-oriented theories, despite the large solution sets presented by these theories. The same figures have also been judged satisfactory, since the number of potential government coalitions that can form in a multiparty system is almost infinite and office-oriented theories regularly predict the right government coalition (Laver and Budge 1992; Laver and Schofield 1990). In fact, the chances that the minimal winning theory predicts the coalition cabinet that actually forms are far higher than if one were to pick one at random from the set of possible coalitions (Taylor and Laver 1973).

Fact is that the minimal winning theory, the least efficient of the three office-oriented theories, predicts less than one-third of the government coalitions that have assumed office in post-war Western Europe. The remainder of the government coalitions are either minority governments or larger-than-minimal-winning government coalitions, with the balance divided more or less equally between the two types of government (Browne 1970; Browne and Dreijmanis 1982; De Swaan 1973; De Swaan and Mokken 1980; Gallagher, Laver, and Mair 2001; Herman and Pope 1973; Laver and Schofield 1990; Martin and Stevenson 2001; Muller and Strom 2000; Pappalardo 1978; Strom 1984; Taylor and Laver 1973). As such, the minimal

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<sup>107</sup> Studies of portfolio allocation (e.g. Browne and Franklin 1973; Schofield and Laver 1985) demonstrate that this is a realistic assumption, even though the distribution of cabinet portfolios is more complex and also involves a relationship between particular parties and ministries that is guided by policy claims and competences (Browne and Feste 1975; Budge 1985; Budge and Keman 1990).

<sup>108</sup> The precision rate is calculated as  $1 - (\# \text{ of potential government coalitions in the prediction set} / \text{total } \# \text{ of potential government coalitions})$  (Bäck 2003: 76).

winning theory performs significantly better than the minimum size or bargaining proposition theory. These theories are more efficient in their predictions, but government coalitions are less frequently included in their solution sets. (Browne 1970; 1973; De Swaan 1973; De Swaan and Mokken 1980; Taylor and Laver 1973). Of the two specifications of the minimal winning theory, the bargaining proposition theory has more predictive power than the minimum size theory. The general conclusion is therefore that parties seek to minimize the number of parties in a government coalition (i.e. no unnecessary members and the fewest members as possible), but not the number of seats controlled by the government coalition. This conclusion holds, however, only in a minority of cases of government formation.

### *Policy-oriented theories*

Policy-oriented coalition formation theories assume that "a player strives to be member of a coalition in order to see her preferred policy implemented" (De Vries 1999: 55). Parties seek to realize policy objectives through their government participation, either through the control of cabinet positions or through the policy compromises reached between the government parties. Contrary to what the name might suggest, policy-oriented theories "maintain as a fundamental assumption the notion that politicians are motivated above all else by a desire to get into office" (Laver and Schofield 1990: 91). Parties seek to achieve policy objectives, but do this in winning coalitions that do not contain unnecessary parties unless this promotes the realization of policy objectives. Hence, policy-oriented theories combine size and policy criteria to come to solution sets that are considerably smaller than those of office-oriented theories. Only in sporadic instances policy-oriented theories have been presented that assume that parties are pure policy-maximizers (e.g. De Swaan's policy distance theory (1973), see also (Budge and Laver 1986)).

Policy-oriented theories are characterized on the basis of actors' weights and expressions of actors' location on the left-right dimension. The position of the actor within this space reflects its most preferred or ideal policy, also known as an actor's bliss point, and can be measured at the ordinal or interval level. In the first case, the aggregated positions lead to the construction of a complete and transitive sequence or rank-ordering of parties on the left-right dimension. In the second case, positions can be used to calculate distances between parties on this dimension. Two policy-oriented theories have received most attention: the minimal connected winning theory of Axelrod (1970) and the minimal range theory of Leiserson (1966).

The minimal connected winning theory predicts the formation of coalitions that are connected or closed, i.e. of which the members are adjacent on the left-right dimension. These minimal connected winning coalitions contain necessary actors situated on the extremes of the coalition, but can also include unnecessary actors located in between these extreme actors. Hence, the minimal connected winning theory does not always predict a subset of those coalitions predicted by the minimal winning theory. Depending on the distribution of weights and policy positions over the actors, minimal connected winning coalitions may contain members that make the predicted coalitions oversized, but are necessary to keep it connected. Parties are assumed to prefer connected coalition over unconnected ones, because connected coalitions minimize the "conflict of interest" between coalition members.

The predictions made by the minimal connected winning theory have a number of specific properties. A minimal connected winning coalition will always contain the party that controls the median legislator on the left-right

axis, also known as the centre player (Laver 1998: 15). Since this party is part of every single predicted minimal winning coalition, it has a particularly strong bargaining position (Van Roozendaal 1992; 1993). While the party that controls the median legislator has a strong bargaining position in the minimal connected winning theory, the bargaining power of parties located on the fringes of the political space is limited in this theory, because these parties can never participate in more than one minimal connected winning coalition.

The minimal range theory, formalized by De Swaan (1973), predicts the formation of the coalition with the least "ideological diversity". The ideological diversity in the coalition, also known as the coalition's policy range, is understood as the distance between the two members of the coalition that are furthest apart on the left-right dimension. The minimal range theory comes in two variations: a closed and an open version. In the closed version the minimal range theory is a specification of the minimal connected winning theory, in that it predicts the minimal connected winning coalition with the smallest policy range. The open version, however, does not stipulate that the coalition has to be connected. It simply predicts the formation of the minimal winning coalition of which the most extreme parties are located in closest proximity of each other. Thus, where the closed version is a specification of the minimal connected winning theory in which policy considerations have priority over office consideration, the open version is a specification of the minimal winning theory in which office considerations override policy concerns.

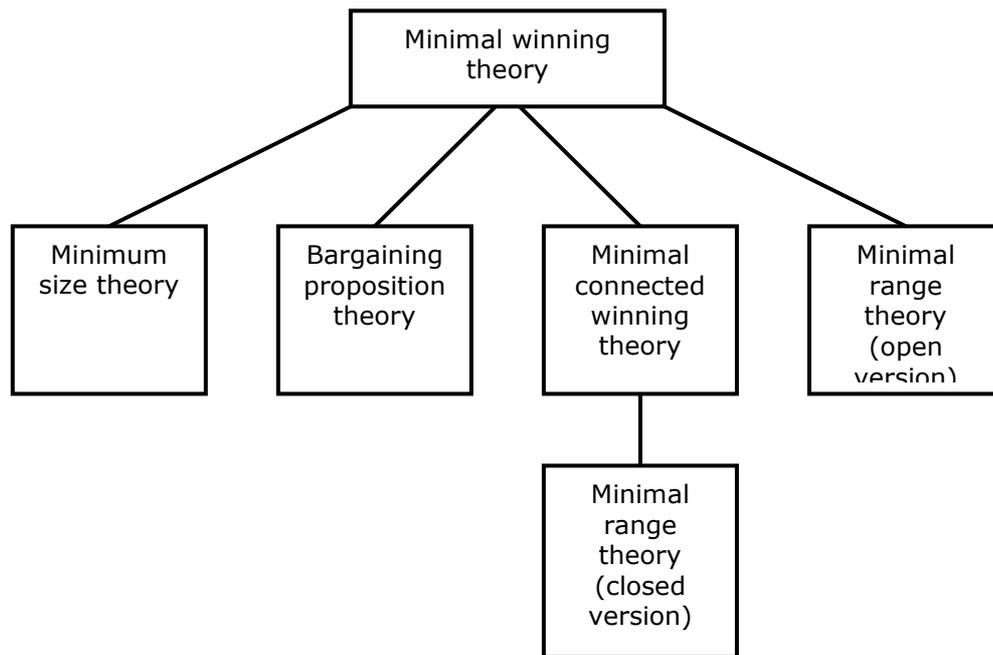
In terms of precision rates, policy-oriented theories are superior to office-oriented theories. The number of coalitions predicted by the minimal connected winning theory is normally low, with two, three, or four predicted coalitions dependent on the number of actors and the distribution of weights over the actors. The minimal range theory comes to a unique prediction, exceptional cases left aside. This makes the falsification of policy-oriented theories easier than that of office-oriented theories.

The empirical track-record of policy-oriented theories is quite good, especially to standards employed in the social sciences. The first scholar to test policy-oriented coalition formation theories, De Swaan (1973), contrasted the empirical performance of the minimal connected winning theory and the minimal range theory with that of office-oriented coalition formation theories. He concludes that policy-oriented theories perform significantly better than office-oriented theories. The minimal connected winning theory, for example, was able to correctly predict 55 government coalitions out of a total of 108. The figures for the office-seeking theories were much lower: 51 of the 108 coalitions were in accordance with the minimal winning theory, 33 with the minimum size theory, and 30 with the bargaining proposition theory. A statistical correction of these figures in the light of the number of predictions made by the various theories highlighted that office-seeking theories failed to produce significant predictions. On the basis of his findings, De Swaan declared that "every theory that postulates a maximization relationship in terms of the coalition's spoils as distributed over the actors, fails decisively", and that coalitions "tend to form from actors that are adjacent on the policy scale and, in times of normalcy, these closed coalitions tend to be of minimal range". Other comparisons between the empirical performance of office- and policy-oriented theories have come up with similar results (Martin and Stevenson 2001; Taylor and Laver 1973).

Within the group of policy-oriented theories it is not very clear which of the two theories, the minimal connected winning theory or the minimal range

theory, offers the best explanation for the formation of government coalitions. Few scholars have put the minimal range theory to the test. Martin and Stevenson (2001: 41) nevertheless find that “any potential coalition is less likely to form the greater the ideological incompatibility of its members, regardless of its size”. Moreover, they observe that “policy divisions seem to be important for all potential coalitions, not just minimal winning ones”.

Figure 5.1  
*Office- and policy-oriented coalition formation theories*



*Spatial coalition formation theories*

A special group of policy-oriented coalition formation theories is formed by the spatial coalition games. These specific policy-oriented theories of coalition formation are founded on the assumption that parties differ from each other on several related or unrelated lines of conflict. In spatial coalition games “policy or ideological positions of parties are presented in an Euclidian metric space, and positions on more than one dimension are permitted” (De Vries 1999: 15). Given this conception of the multidimensional policy space, spatial models of coalition formation are closely related to spatial models of party competition and can be traced back to the seminal works of Hotelling (1929), Downs (1957), and Black (1958). Examples of spatial coalition games include the heart solution theory (Schofield 1993a;1993b; 1995), the proto coalition formation theory (Grofman 1982), the winset theory (Laver and Shepsle 1990; Laver and Shepsle 1996), the competitive solution theory (McKelvey, Ordeshook, and Winer 1978), and the maximal satisfaction solution (De Vries 1997).

Spatial theories are much more complex than the more conventional uni-dimensional policy-oriented coalition formation theories. For many, their complexity has come at the expense of accessibility. It could even be argued that spatial modelling has become a discipline in its own right, functioning in isolation of political science. This is exemplified by the fact that the publications of scholars working in this domain often appear in journals aimed

at economists rather than political scientists. Laver and Schofield (1990: 10) argue in this respect that "on the other side of the Atlantic, as the solution concepts developed by game theorists have become more powerful, there has been a tendency for them 'to let go' of the real world of European coalition government, except when this can be operationalized neatly in terms of the concepts at issue".

On top of the complexity, spatial theories suffer from a number of theoretical problems. Most importantly, they generally fail to come up with a stable solution set. In spatial theory, this set only exists when there is a core, i.e. when there is a specific policy package that is preferred over other packages by all players that take part in the coalition formation process. When the political space consists of two dimensions, a core is only present in unusual circumstances. In case of more than two dimensions, a core is almost never generated (Laver and Schofield 1990: 122). Consequently, most of the spatial theories have not yet been integrated into mainstream studies of coalition behaviour (but see De Vries 1999). For these reasons, and because this study assumes that the left-right dimension is dominant in West European political spaces (see chapter 2), spatial theories will not be included in the analyses performed in this chapter.

#### *Radical right-wing populist parties and cooperative formal coalition formation theories*

One of the issues that have received considerable attention in the previous chapters is the extent to which coalition formation theories are applicable to radical right-wing populist parties. I have argued on several occasions that the assumptions of coalition formation theories are not compromised by the character of radical right-wing populist parties. The previous chapter supported this assertion, because it turned out that the coalition membership of radical right-wing populist parties is in no way affected by any intrinsic qualities these parties might have. The problem is that formal coalition formation theories are even more restrictive in their assumptions than coalition membership theories. The fact that some radical right-wing populist parties (such as the CP/CD, the FN, the FNb, and the VB) lack general coalitionability, therefore merits attention again.

More specifically, it is useful to discuss what the consequences are for the predictions of formal coalition formation theories when the assumption of general coalitionability is violated. Two consequences stand out. First, the predictions that feature radical right-wing populist parties that have no general coalitionability are mathematically possible, but politically unthinkable. This point mainly concerns the predictions made by office-oriented coalition formation theories, because the predictions of policy-oriented coalition formation theories take into account the positions of radical right-wing populist parties on the left-right dimension, which determine these parties general coalitionability. Office-oriented theories will thus incidentally ascribe coalition opportunities to radical right-wing populist parties when these obviously are not present. Second, when the assumption of general coalitionability does not hold oversized government coalitions are more likely to assume office (Bäck 2002; Geys, Heyndels, and Vermeir 2006). Faced with anti-system parties, mainstream parties feel the need to stress unity and will form larger-than-necessary coalitions (Mershon 1994).<sup>109</sup> As a result, formal

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<sup>109</sup> With regard to Italian coalition practices in the 1950s till 1980s, Mershon (1994: 57) notes that " self-proclaimed anti-system parties joined in coalition formulas to make governments credible as defences against extremes and to enforce their

coalition formation theories will have difficulties to correctly predict government coalitions in countries where radical right-wing populist parties do not have general coalitionability.

## **Methodology**

This section details the methodological choices made to apply the aforementioned office- and policy-oriented theories to the empirical case of the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. It contains information about the method employed, the operationalization of key concepts, and the measurement of the data needed to calculate predictions of office- and policy-oriented theories.

### *Method*

Formal models can be evaluated in three ways (Morton 1999: 101-105). First, the assumptions on which the model is based, can be evaluated in the light of theoretical and empirical evidence. This endeavour has rarely been undertaken by students of coalition formation, who have generally assumed that their models are built on realistic assumptions (but see Browne, Gleiber, and Mashoba 1984). Second, the models can be evaluated on the basis of their predictive power; i.e. the correspondence of their predictions to actual outcomes of the processes they seek to describe. Arguably, this is the most important type of evaluation, since "a model is not evaluated if its predictions are not analyzed, regardless of how true the assumptions of the model are believed to be" (Morton 1999: 102). It has also been the avenue most commonly taken by coalition formation theorists and will be discussed in-depth below. Third, models can be compared to other models, to evaluate which model meets scientific criteria (e.g. degree of falsifiability, compatibility with empirical evidence). This type of evaluation has often been implicit in tests of coalition formation theories. Office- and policy-seeking coalition formation theories have regularly been tested in comprehensive models of coalition formation and the general conclusion has been that policy-oriented theories outperform office-oriented theories. Few tests have been performed, however, in which different types of office-oriented theories (or policy-oriented theories for that matter) have been compared to each other.

As was highlighted before, the high numbers of predictions made by office-oriented theories makes it difficult to evaluate the predictive power of these theories. A number of advanced statistical techniques have been developed to deal with this problem, the most important of which is the conditional logit model. This model conceives of the coalition game as "an unordered discrete choice problem where each formation opportunity (*not* each potential coalition) represents one case and where the set of discrete alternatives is the set of all potential combinations of parties that might form a government" (Martin and Stevenson 2001: 38).<sup>110</sup>

The purpose of this chapter is, however, not to test coalition formation theories. Rather, I intend to use coalition formation theories as "heuristic tools" and juxtapose theory and reality in an attempt to better understand the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties (Laver and Schofield 1990: 90). The objective is to derive a number of observations

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definitions of the Italian Communist Party and Italian Social Movement as anti-system parties".

<sup>110</sup> The conditional logit model has been successfully used to evaluate formal coalition formation theories by Bäck (2003), Bäck and Dumont (2006a; 2006b), Diermeier and Merlo (2004), Druckman, Martin and Thies (2005), Golder (2006), Kang (2006), Martin and Stevenson (2001), and Serritzlew and Skjæveland (2006).

about the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties on the basis of the characteristics of the government coalitions in which these parties and mainstream parties have joined forces. My focus is thus on the outcome of the coalition formation process, in fact on a specific type of outcome, rather than on the formal coalition formation theories as such. The latter are merely a means to gain insight in a structured way about the circumstances that lead to the formation of these specific government coalitions. I therefore opt for the more old-fashioned descriptive approach.

This approach also avoids the pitfalls associated with the empirical testing of formal models, most notably the zero-likelihood problem. Morton (1999: 117) explains this problem in comprehensible terms when she writes that

“most statistical analysis used in political science involves finding a set of parameters in the empirical model that are the most likely to generate the observed outcomes. The procedure is to maximize a likelihood function that is the product of the probabilities of the observed outcomes for the values of the independent variables and the parameters of the empirical model. The statistical analysis then requires that the researcher assign a probability distribution over the outcomes of the dependent variable for the parameters and the independent variables in the analysis. But the prediction of the deterministic game theoretic model with a unique equilibrium is that the equilibrium outcome will occur with certainty (probability equal to 1) and that nonequilibrium outcomes will certainly not occur (probability equal to 0). However, if even a single outcome is not predicted by the model then the likelihood equation to be estimated (because it is a product of the probabilities) will equal zero, regardless of the parameters specified or the values of the independent variables.”

On these grounds it is impossible to statistically estimate the parameters of deterministic game-theoretical models.

The coalition formation theories are used to make two related analyses. First, the predictions made by the office- and policy-oriented theories are analyzed to uncover what I refer to as the coalition opportunity structure. Two factors are considered: (1) whether radical right-wing populist parties are included in the solution sets predicted by the coalition formation theories for each formation opportunity, that is, for each individual election; and (2) the proportion of predicted coalitions in the solution set that feature radical right-wing populist parties, calculated as the number of coalitions including radical right-wing populist parties divided by the total number of predicted coalitions. Figures for individual formation opportunities are aggregated and analyzed per theory, but also per country, and for various time periods. The aim is to see whether changes in the coalition opportunity structure correspond to the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties in specific countries and specific years.

Second, I take the reverse perspective and analyze whether the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated are predicted by the coalition formation theories. The objective of this analysis is to establish whether there are specific theories that are better placed to explain the formation of these government coalitions and can guide analyses in subsequent chapters. In addition, I also investigate whether the governments in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated are more or less frequently predicted by coalition formation theories than the average government coalition. This analysis establishes whether the rationale that underpins the formation of government coalitions involving radical right-

wing populist parties is similar to the one that structures the formation of other types of government coalitions.

#### *Operationalization, data and measurement*

Predictions of office- and policy-oriented coalition formation theories rely on information about parties' weights and policy positions. To calculate these predictions one needs information about parliamentary seat distributions and party positions on the left-right dimension. The party positions have to be measured on an ordinal level to test the minimal connected winning theory and on an interval level to test the minimal range theory. I rely on the same sources of information as in the previous chapters to estimate these parameters. Parliamentary seat distributions have been taken from *The International Almanac of Electoral History* (Rose and Mackie 1991), the *Political Data Yearbook* published by the *European Journal of Political Research*, and [www.parties-and-elections.de](http://www.parties-and-elections.de). Party positions have been derived from the expert surveys of Castles and Mair (1984), Laver and Hunt (1992), Huber and Inglehart (1995), Lubbers (2000), and Benoit and Laver (2006) and standardized according to the procedure described in chapter two.

It is important to note that I have attempted to obtain complete information about parties' weights and policy positions. In previous coalition formation studies smaller parties have often been excluded from analysis for two reasons. First, information about small parties' weights and policy positions is not easily collected. Second, the inclusion of small parties in the analysis substantially increases the number of predicted coalitions and makes it thus more difficult to assess the predictive power of coalition formation theories. There are, however, three important reasons to abandon this practice and include small parties in the analysis. First, the inclusion of small parties alters the type of predictions made by coalition formation theories. The deterministic character of coalition formation theories makes that minor differences in the distribution of weights and policy positions can lead to considerably different predictions. Second, even though coalition membership is a function of a party's legislative weight, small parties are occasionally included in government coalitions. The LN, for example, participated in the Berlusconi II government, even though it commanded only 4.8 per cent of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies after the 2001 elections. Third, radical right-wing populist parties are predominantly small parties. The exclusion of small parties would significantly reduce the number of parties under study and hence affect the conclusions reached in this chapter.

To compare the predictions of the office- and policy-oriented coalition formation theories to the actual outcomes of government formation processes, one also has to know the composition of the government coalitions. This information has been collected from the already mentioned sources, as well as from Müller and Strøm (2000) and Woldendorp, Keman, and Budge (2000). The same criteria have been applied to determine coalition composition as in previous chapters.

#### **Coalition formation theories, predictions, and government coalitions**

On the basis of parties' weights and policy positions, predictions have been calculated for the five coalition formation theories presented in this chapter: the minimal winning theory, the minimum size theory, the bargaining proposition theory, the minimal connected winning theory and the minimal

range theory.<sup>111</sup> These predictions have two functions. On the one hand, they describe the coalition opportunity structure for parties. In other words, they give an indication which coalitions could have formed if parties behaved exactly as stipulated in the theories. The coalition opportunity structures for radical right-wing populist parties, which obviously consist of those predictions that feature radical right-wing populist parties, are discussed in the first half of this section.

On the other hand, the predictions also serve as a means to characterize the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated and as a basis for the appraisal of the empirical performance of the theories. The extent to which the predictions of the theories match the actual government coalitions that are formed, gives an indication about the correctness of the theories and hence about the motives that guided the behaviour of the parties that formed these government coalitions. The motives embedded in the theories used in this chapter are the pursuit of office and policy. The different variations on these themes are represented by the specific office- and policy-oriented theories. On the basis of the correspondence between the predictions of these theories, on the one hand, and the properties of the governments in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated, on the other, the intentions of the parties involved in the formation of these governments can be uncovered. Simply put, when these government coalitions are correctly predicted by one of the coalition formation theories, this suggests that the actors involved in the formation of these governments acted according to the motivational assumptions that underpin this theory. This investigation is conducted in the second half of this section.

A comparison between the extent to which the coalition formation theories correctly predict government coalitions in general, and government coalitions including radical right-wing populist parties in particular, concludes this section. On the basis of this analysis it is possible to determine whether the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated differ from other government coalitions.

#### *Coalition opportunity structures*

The predictions of office- and policy-oriented theories form the point of departure of any analysis of formal coalition formation theories, because they are the source of information against which real life government coalitions have to be compared. On their own these predictions are valuable as well, because they give an idea which government coalitions could have formed if parties obeyed strictly to the propositions of the theories. In other words, they give an impression of the coalition opportunity structure for parties under conditions of perfect rationality. The interesting question is, of course, what the coalition opportunity structure for individual radical right-wing populist parties, and for the radical right-wing populist party family as a whole, looks like. The answer to this question conveys already considerable information about the office- and policy-oriented coalition formation theories that are best positioned to explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties.

Let us first assess the predictions made by the office-oriented coalition formation theories. The minimal winning theory predicts a total of 6,445

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<sup>111</sup> The calculations were made on the basis of a script written by Jos Elkinck, University College Dublin, for the statistical programme R. The script is available from the author.

coalitions, of which 3,022 coalitions include radical right-wing populist parties. The theory predicts on average 143 predicted coalitions per formation opportunity and gives hardly an indication of the coalition that could assume office. Radical right-wing populist parties are included in roughly half of the predicted minimal winning coalitions, or in 67 coalitions per formation opportunity. The minimum size theory and the bargaining proposition theory make fewer predictions (on average 34 and 8 per formation opportunity respectively) and thus give a better indication of the coalition that could assume office. The minimum size theory predicts 1,550 predicted coalitions of which 783 include radical right-wing populist parties. Again radical right-wing populist parties feature in roughly half of the predicted coalitions, but the absolute number of coalitions is far lower than that predicted by the minimal winning theory (or 17 coalitions per formation opportunity). The bargaining proposition theory predicts 362 predicted coalitions of which 77 include radical right-wing populist parties. Radical right-wing populist parties feature in roughly one-fifth of the predicted coalitions, or 2 coalitions per formation opportunity. Both in absolute and relative terms, the bargaining proposition theory thus predicts lower numbers of coalitions with radical right-wing populist parties than other office-oriented coalition formation theories.

Interestingly, this hierarchy does not correspond to the one usually found in the coalition formation literature, which assumes that the minimal winning theory is the least and the minimum size theory the most restrictive of the office-oriented coalition formation theories. The deviation can be explained by the fact that radical right-wing populist parties tend to emerge in more fractionalized party systems in which many minimum size coalitions can be formed.

In table 5.1 the predictions of the office-oriented coalition formation theories are broken down per party. The table demonstrates that, in general, the office-oriented theories predict a favourable coalition opportunity structure for radical right-wing populist parties. Few radical right-wing populist parties completely lack coalition opportunities according to the office-oriented theories. Only the FN is devoid of any opportunities, a consequence of the concentration of the French party system. Coalition opportunities also look rather bleak for the FNb, which features in a small proportion of the coalitions predicted by the minimal winning theory, and in none of the coalitions predicted by the bargaining proposition theory.<sup>112</sup> The other radical right-wing populist parties feature prominently in the solution sets of the office-oriented coalition formation theories, with predicted proportions of coalitions with radical right-wing populist parties of around 50 per cent for the minimal winning and the minimum size theory. Predicted proportions of coalitions for the bargaining proposition theory are more varied.

The policy-oriented coalition formation theories predict fewer coalitions than the office-oriented coalition formation theories, and also predict lower numbers of coalitions with radical right-wing populist parties. The minimal connected winning theory predicts a total of 164 coalitions, of which 51 include radical right-wing populist parties. The theory predicts on average 4 coalitions per formation opportunity, of which one third includes radical right-wing populist parties. The minimal range theory comes to unique predictions

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<sup>112</sup> The fact that the francophone radical right-wing populist party is present in a considerable number of coalitions predicted by the minimum size theory, can be attributed to the fact that it for a long time commanded only one seat, which makes it the ideal party to complement coalitions that control 50 per cent + 1 seat in parliament. This rule only applies in fractionalized party systems where the size of coalitions can come close to the winning criterion.

in every one of the 45 formation opportunities. Of the 45 predicted coalitions, 16 coalitions include radical right-wing populist parties.

A breakdown of these figures per party shows that some radical right-wing populist parties feature far more prominently in the predictions of policy-oriented coalition formation theories than others (see Table 5.1). Coalition opportunities for the CP/CD, FNb, and FN are non-existent. For the FRP(d), ND, and VB, the coalition opportunities are extremely limited, and only exist when the minimal connected winning theory is applied. The coalition opportunities for the other radical right-wing populist parties (DF, FI, FPÖ, FRP(n), LN, and LPF) are more widespread, although within this group variations in predicted proportions exist as well.

Table 5.1

*Proportion of predicted coalitions that include radical right-wing populist parties*

	Office-oriented coalition formation theories			Policy-oriented coalition formation theories	
	Minimal Winning Theory	Minimum Size Theory	Bargaining Proposition Theory	Minimal Connected Winning Theory	Minimal Range Theory
FPÖ	.63	.83	.61	.50	.50
VB	.41	.50	.18	.17	.00
FNb	.17	.54	.00	.00	.00
FRP(d)	.45	.39	.17	.25	.00
DF	.51	.50	.00	.38	.67
FN	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
MSI/AN	.52	.48	.25	.30	.33
FI	.53	.49	.79	.89	1.00
LN	.53	.51	.24	.47	.50
CP/CD	.50	.56	.00	.00	.00
LPF	.61	.33	.50	.50	1.00
FRP(n)	.44	.64	.33	.44	.29
ND	.50	1.00	.00	.33	.00
Total	.47	.50	.21	.29	0.25

In conclusion, cooperative formal coalition formation theories paint a diversified picture of radical right-wing populist parties' coalition opportunity structures. The levels of precision with which the various theories predict coalitions varies greatly. Policy-oriented coalition formation theories are far more precise in their predictions than office-oriented theories. Consequentially, policy-oriented coalition formation theories probably give a more accurate picture of the coalition opportunity structures radical right-wing populist parties can exploit.

On the basis of the characteristics of these coalition opportunity structures three groups of radical right-wing populist parties can be distinguished: those with no coalition opportunities, those with limited coalition opportunities, and those with many coalition opportunities. For the first group of parties (e.g. the FN), the question of government participation is completely irrelevant. On the basis of parties' weights and policy positions no incentives are identified that would motivate the inclusion of these parties in government coalitions. The second group of parties (e.g. the VB) does have coalition opportunities, but primarily according to office-oriented coalition

formation theories. For this group of parties the prospects of government participation are low, but nevertheless present. The low coalition opportunities for these parties are related to their positions on the left-right dimension. The third group of parties (e.g. DF) has ample coalition opportunities, if parties indeed behave along the lines predicted by office- and policy-oriented coalition formation theories. Not surprisingly, the radical right-wing populist parties that have been in government are without exception categorized in the last group.

#### *Government coalition characteristics*

In chapter 3 it was established that seven radical right-wing populist parties have participated in a total of nine government coalitions. The game-theoretical properties of these government coalitions are assessed in this section. First, I investigate whether the government coalitions are predicted by the various office- and policy-oriented coalition formation theories and establish whether particular theories describe the nine government coalition more accurately than others. If this is indeed the case, it is examined whether these specific theories offer plausible explanations for the formation of government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated. In the event the office- and policy-oriented coalition formation theories fail to accurately predict the government coalitions, or specific coalitions in this group, I search for the reasons behind this failure and contemplate the necessity of improvement of the existing theories.

Let us start with the Sinowatz I government, which included the SPÖ and the FPÖ, and assumed office after the Austrian general elections of 1983. This government coalition is predicted by the minimal winning theory and the bargaining proposition theory, since it is comprised of two members. The government coalition is not predicted by the minimum size theory, because the number of seats commanded by the alternative minimal winning coalition of the ÖVP and the FPÖ is smaller (93) than that of the government coalition (102). The government coalition is not predicted by the policy-oriented theories either. It is unconnected (the ÖVP is located in between the two government parties) and the policy range of the government coalition is larger (38) than that of the alternative minimal winning coalition of the ÖVP and the FPÖ (10). The obvious question is why this alternative minimal winning coalition was not formed, when it is predicted by every single one of the formal coalition formation theories under investigation. The answer to this question is straightforward, but at odds with the minimum size theory. The majority commanded by the ÖVP and the FPÖ after the 1983 elections was too small to guarantee the long-term survival of a coalition between these two parties.

The second government coalition to consider is the Schüssel I government, composed of the ÖVP and the FPÖ, that assumed office after the 1999 elections in Austria. This government coalition is predicted by four of the five coalition formation theories. The office-oriented coalition formation theories predict the government coalition, because it contains no unnecessary partners, commands a minimal number of seats (104) seats, and consists of two parties. The government coalition is also predicted by the minimal connected winning theory, since the ÖVP and FPÖ take adjoining positions on the left-right dimension. The government coalition is not predicted by the minimal range theory, given that a coalition of SPÖ and the ÖVP had a smaller policy range (22 for an ÖVP-FPÖ coalition versus 20 for an SPÖ-ÖVP coalition).

The Schüssel II government, a continuation of the Schüssel I government, assumed office after the 2002 elections. This government coalition is also predicted by four of the five coalition formation theories, although a different theory (the minimum size theory) fails to account for the formation of this government. Thus, two of the three office-oriented coalition formation theories predict the formation of the government coalition of the ÖVP and the FPÖ, that is comprised of two necessary partners. The number of seats commanded by the government coalition is, however, slightly larger than that of the potential coalition of the ÖVP and the Greens (97 seats for the Schüssel II government versus 96 seats for the potential ÖVP-Greens coalition); the government coalition is therefore not predicted by the minimum size theory. The policy-oriented coalition formation theories predict the formation of the Schüssel II government, since the ÖVP and FPÖ take adjacent position on the left-right dimension and the policy distance between these two parties (17) is considerably smaller than that between the SPÖ and the ÖVP (29), the other minimal connected winning coalition that could have been formed on the basis of the 2002 election results.

The Rasmussen I government, which assumed office after the Danish elections of 2001, and which was comprised of V, KF, and DF, is predicted by three of the five coalition formation theories. Only one of the three office-oriented coalition formation theories predicts the government coalition, namely the minimal winning theory. Given that the government coalition commands 94 seats and is comprised of three parties, the government coalition is not predicted by the minimum size theory (which predicts several coalitions with 88 seats) or the bargaining proposition theory (which predicts a two party coalition of the SD and V, deemed unrealistic because of the two bloc structure of the Danish party system). The policy-oriented coalition formation theories, on the contrary, do predict the Rasmussen I government. This government is connected on the left-right dimension; V as the most left-leaning party in the coalition and the DF as the most right-leaning party in the coalition. The policy range of this coalition (1) is smaller than that of the alternative minimal connected winning coalition, which covers the entire mainstream of the Danish political spectre and has a very wide policy range (39).<sup>113</sup>

The continuation of the Rasmussen I government, Rasmussen II, consisted of the same parties and was formed under largely the same conditions (similar distribution of seats after the 2005 elections and identical party positions). Consequentially, the government coalition is predicted by the same three coalition formation theories as the Rasmussen I government coalition, i.e. the minimal winning theory, the minimal connected winning theory, and the minimal range theory.<sup>114</sup>

The Berlusconi I government, formed after the watershed elections of 1994, is predicted by none of the office- or policy-oriented coalition formation theories. The coalition is oversized (it does not need the CCD or the UDC for its majority status) and hence is not included in the solution sets of the office-oriented theories. Moreover, since these parties are the most left-leaning parties in the government coalition, they are not needed for the formation of a minimal connected winning or minimal range coalition either. Why then did the Italian parties, and especially the three government parties that could

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<sup>113</sup> In 2001 the alternative minimal connected winning coalition was comprised of SD, KRF, RV, and V.

<sup>114</sup> The only notable difference between the 2001 and 2005 Danish elections is the electoral demise of the KRF, as a consequence of which the alternative minimal connected winning coalition consists of SD, RV, and V.

have formed a government coalition predicted by most office- and policy-oriented coalition formation theories (FI, the AN, and the LN), opt for the formation of this particular government coalition? To explain this decision a few words on the changes in the Italian electoral system and the subsequent transformation of the Italian party system in the mid-1990s are in order.

In the early 1990s the Italian political system collapsed under pressure of a number of corruption scandals, in which many of the established parties played a prominent role. One of the main reactions to the crisis of the Italian political system consisted of a series of electoral reforms, which were approved by referenda in April and August of 1993. Like the old electoral system, the new consisted of two components, one proportional, the other majoritarian. In the new system the share of seats attributed by a proportional formula was reduced from three-quarters to one-quarter. Conversely, the share of seats allocated by means of a plurality vote increased from 25 per cent to 75 per cent. So the balance in the electoral system clearly shifted from proportionality to majoritarianism (Katz 1996; 2001). According to Donovan (2002: 107), this type of electoral system provides at least two incentives for alliance formation: "at the SMC level [Single-Member Constituency, SdL], parties not belonging to a major alliance are likely to find their candidates systematically defeated unless they are the largest of the competing parties and/or their vote is geographically concentrated; at the parliamentary level, the alliance that obtains a majority of seats forms the government". Arguably, there is also a third incentive in the form of an electoral threshold of 4 per cent that motivates small parties to coalesce in order to gain parliamentary representation.

As has already been demonstrated by Golder (2006a), electoral coalitions are essentially proto government coalitions. They are established to signal coalition preferences and offer the public a clear choice of government alternatives. Consequently, successful electoral coalitions are normally transformed into government coalitions. When these government coalitions are oversized, the unnecessary member(s) are retained. This is exactly what happened in Italy in 1994. In the 1994 elections the left-wing parties were represented by one coalition, the Progressives, whereas the right-wing parties were represented by two coalitions, the Pole of Liberty (in which the LN participated) in the north and the Pole of Good Governance (of which the AN was a part) in the south. The right wing coalitions won a clear majority in the Italian parliament (364 out of 630 seats) and thus were entitled to form the government coalition. The CCD and the UDC were not needed to form a minimal winning coalition, but the parties were nevertheless rewarded for their participation in the pre-electoral coalitions with cabinet positions.<sup>115</sup>

The Berlusconi II government, which assumed office in 2001 after the Berlusconi I government had resigned in 1995 and the Italian radical right-wing populist parties had spend six years in opposition, is only predicted by the policy-oriented coalition formation theories. None of the office-oriented theories predicts the Berlusconi II government, since the coalition is

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<sup>115</sup> The inclusion of the Christian parties in the Berlusconi I government has also been interpreted as a "goodwill gesture" towards the Catholic electoral constituencies of these parties (Warner 1996: 147). In addition to the Christian parties the first Berlusconi government also included several representatives of small centre parties that had not participated in the pre-electoral alliances (e.g. the List Pannella). The inclusion of these representatives can be explained by the fact that the right only had a relative majority in the Italian Senate after the 1994 elections. To obtain an absolute majority in the upper house, the small centre parties were invited to participate in the government coalition (Chiaramonte 2002: 201).

oversized. It does not need the LN for the attainment of majority status. This party is, however, needed for the formation of a minimal connected winning coalition, since it is located in between two of the other government parties (i.e. FI and the AN). Given its central location in the government coalition the LN does not contribute to the coalition's policy range and the government coalition is therefore also predicted by the minimal range theory.

In the Netherlands the Balkenende I government, which assumed office after the tumultuous elections of 2002, is predicted by two office-oriented and one policy-oriented coalition formation theory. Given that the government coalition does not contain unnecessary coalition partners (CDA, VVD, and LPF each contribute to the government's parliamentary majority), it is predicted by the minimal winning theory. With three members the government coalition also contains the lowest possible number of coalition parties, hence its prediction by the bargaining proposition theory. The number of seats commanded by the government coalition is, however, higher than that of other minimal winning coalitions (93 seats for the government coalition versus 76 seats for the smallest minimal winning coalitions) and the government coalition is therefore not predicted by the minimum winning coalition.

Even though the government coalition is predicted by the minimal winning theory, it is not included in the solution set of the minimal connected winning theory, since it is unconnected. The government coalition fails to include the party situated between the VVD and the LPF on the left-right axis, namely the SGP. The exclusion of this party could have been motivated by several factors. First, disconnectivity is not irrational when the excluded player represents a very small amount of resources (Rosenthal 1970: 44ff43), which is indeed the case (the SGP gained only two seats at the 2002 elections). Second, the SGP positions itself primarily on issues of secondary importance to mainstream parties and can therefore not easily be located on the left-right dimension.<sup>116</sup> The government parties are therefore unlikely to have perceived the government coalition as unconnected. The absence of the SGP from the government coalition has no effect on its policy range and given that the coalition of CDA, VVD, and LPF has a smaller policy range (21) than the alternative minimal connected winning coalition of PvdA, D66, CU, and VVD (32), the government coalition is predicted by the minimal range theory.

The Bondevik II government, formed after the 2001 Norwegian elections and composed of KRF, V, H, and FRP(n), is not predicted by the office-oriented coalition formation theories as a result of its oversized character. The government coalition does not need V for its parliamentary

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<sup>116</sup> As has already been demonstrated by several scholars (De Beus, Lehning and Van Doorn 1989; Pellikaan *et al.* 2003), the Dutch political space has traditionally been three-dimensional. The main axes of competition in this three-dimensional space have always been the economic dimension, the social or communitarian dimension, and the religious or ethical dimension. It is the latter dimension that is vital to understand the peculiar position the SGP takes in the Dutch party system. This party is defined almost exclusively by its ultra-orthodox position on the religious dimension. During the past decades the SGP has actively campaigned against abortion, euthanasia, and gay rights. In the run-up to the 2002 elections the Dutch political space changed dramatically. The three-dimensional structure of the political space was replaced by a two-dimensional structure in which the economic dimension and the cultural dimension played a dominant role (Pellikaan *et al.* 2003; 2007). However, for the SGP the religious dimension remains the most salient. It has therefore become increasingly difficult to locate that party in the Dutch political space, since there is a large discrepancy between the issues on which the average Dutch party positions itself, and the issues the SGP promotes.

majority, since the party gained only two seats at the elections. Hence, the Bondevik II government does not feature in the solution sets of the minimal winning, minimum size and bargaining proposition theory. Although V does not contribute to the winning status of the government coalition, the party does provide a link between the KRF and H, and therefore makes the government coalition connected on the left-right axis. As a result of the inclusion of the V, the government coalition is thus predicted by the minimal connected winning theory. With its policy range of 29 the government coalition is significantly more compact than alternative minimal connected winning coalitions, hence its prediction by the minimal range theory.<sup>117</sup>

To summarize these findings (see also table 5.2), the two Austrian governments are predicted by four of the five theories, the Danish governments and the Dutch government are each predicted by three theories, the second Berlusconi government and the Norwegian coalition feature in the solution set of two of the formal coalition formation theories, and the first Berlusconi government is predicted by none of the theories and thus falls outside the range of formal theory altogether.

Table 5.2

*Government coalitions including radical right-wing populist parties predicted by office- and policy-oriented coalition formation theories*

	Office-oriented coalition formation theories			Policy-oriented coalition formation theories	
	Minimal winning theory	Minimum size theory	Bargaining proposition theory	Minimal connected winning theory	Minimal range theory
Sinowatz I	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Schüssel I	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Schüssel II	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rasmussen I	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Rasmussen II	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Berlusconi I	No	No	No	No	No
Berlusconi II	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Balkenende I	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Bondevik II	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
% of correctly predicted coalitions	67%	11%	44%	67%	67%

In sum, the office- and policy-oriented coalition formation theories generally correctly predict the formation of the nine government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated. The minimal winning, minimal connected winning and minimal range theory score highest in terms of predictive capacity (each six out of nine of the government coalitions) (see Table 5.2). The bargaining proposition theory does not come further than four out of nine of the government coalitions, while the minimum

<sup>117</sup> Two alternative coalitions are predicted by the minimal connected winning theory, one which spans the entire political spectre (DNA, V and the FRP(n), policy range 4.2) and the other with a clear left-wing orientation (SV, SP, and DNA, policy range 3.5).

size theory only correctly predicts one of the nine government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated.

To this equation, considerations of precision should be added. The minimal winning theory correctly predicts six of the nine of government coalitions, but normally comes up with large solution sets. This is less the case for the minimal connected winning theory (few predictions), and not the case for the minimal range theory (unique predictions). Hence, it is not a great achievement for the minimal winning theory to correctly predict coalition outcomes. The chances that this happens are far greater than when the minimal connected winning theory and the minimal range theory are applied. Moreover, the minimal winning theory frequently predicts coalitions with radical right-wing populist parties when these parties have not been included in the government coalition.<sup>118</sup> The same goes for the minimal connected winning theory, albeit to a lesser extent. Only the minimal range theory is able to clearly distinguish between the formation opportunities at which radical right-wing populist parties have secured coalition membership and the formation opportunities at which they have not been able to realize their office aspirations. There are no more than three cases in which the minimal range theory predicts coalitions with radical right-wing populist parties when these have not been formed (in Austria at the time of the 1986 and 1990 elections and in Norway at the time of 1989 elections).

The minimal range theory clearly outperforms the other formal coalition formation theories and therefore offers the best explanation for the formation of government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated. The theory suggests that policy ranges of coalitions are the paramount factor when parties evaluate coalition alternatives. The coalition alternative with the smallest policy range is the most attractive and thus the government coalition that will form. From this it follows that parties become government members when they are part of the coalition alternative with the smallest policy range. In other words, the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated have been constructed, because they represented the coalition alternative with the smallest policy range.

Why do the office-oriented coalition formation theories perform this poorly? Do they give an inaccurate picture of the motives that drive parties in the government formation process? To some extent the office-oriented theories indeed make unrealistic assumptions. The race to the bottom, theorized by the minimum size theory, for example, is not very plausible, as has been demonstrated by Laver and Schofield (1990: 94). According to these authors, "members of the government are typically assumed to prefer having at least a few seats over and above the bare minimum as a cushion against accidental government defeats arising from illness, stupidity, maverick defections, and other natural or man-made disasters". For this reason, parties tend to prefer 'working majorities' over minimum size coalitions. The bargaining proposition theory, on the other hand, frequently puts together naturally antagonistic parties in the coalitions it predicts (e.g. socialist or social-democratic parties and liberal or conservative parties), since these parties are usually the largest in the party system and thus in need of

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<sup>118</sup> The FN is the only party that does not feature in the solution sets of the minimal winning theory, a consequence of the specific distribution of seats in the French parliament, which are concentrated in the hands of a few parties that can easily construct majority coalitions. In this concentrated party system the smaller parties in the French parliament, especially the FN that has always commanded a minimal number of seats, play no role in the coalition formation process.

few coalition partners to achieve a parliamentary majority. These coalitions are unlikely to assume office for policy reasons, especially in countries where there is a clear left-right divide (e.g. France or the Scandinavian countries).

Most importantly, however, parties pursue office objectives as long as these do not compromise policy goals. This seems also to be the case when the focus is not on coalition governments in general, but on the coalition governments in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated. The size of these coalitions is minimized (e.g. few of the governments coalitions are oversized and they contain relatively few members and seats), but often coalitions remain large enough to assure connectedness. It should also be noted that in a few cases the theories completely fail, because country specific institutional constraints influence the government coalition parties form. This is most notably the case in Italy, where the incentives provided by the majoritarian electoral system override incentives to pursue office and policy objectives. The general impact of institutional constraints (Strom, Budge, and Laver 1994b) appears limited though, since formal coalition formation theories accurately predict the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated in the vast majority of countries under investigation.

The predictive performance of formal coalition formation theories also does not seem to be seriously affected by the fact that some radical right-wing populist parties lack general coalitionability. Certainly, the absence of general coalitionability is one of the reasons why the minimal winning theory, the minimum size theory, and the bargaining proposition theory, overestimate the coalition potential of the CP/CD, the FN, the FNb, and the VB. It is noteworthy though, that the parties that lack general coalitionability already face a particularly poor coalition opportunity structure to begin with. It appears that there is a fairly straightforward relationship between the lack of general coalitionability of particular radical right-wing populist parties, the characteristics of these parties, the predictions of formal coalition formation theories, and these parties' exclusion from government coalitions. Radical right-wing populist parties that lack general coalitionability do not feature very prominently in the predictions of formal coalition formation theories, because they are small to comparative standards and take positions on the left-right dimension that are far away from those of other parties. Consequentially, the exclusion of these parties from government coalitions is only natural. Even if these parties would have had general coalitionability, they would still not have featured in the predictions of formal coalition formation theories, and it would have been extremely unlikely that these parties would have participated in government coalitions.

#### *Governments with and without radical right-wing populist parties*

Now that it has been demonstrated that policy-oriented coalition formation theories are particularly well-placed to identify the characteristics of the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated, one important question remains. Do the government coalitions that include radical right-wing populist parties have different characteristics than other government coalitions? The answer to this question sheds more light on the extent to which the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is similar to that of other parties, and whether it is justified to think of these parties as a pathological normalcy.

This question is tentatively addressed by a simple comparison of the percentages of correct predictions for three categories of government coalitions: those with radical right-wing populist parties, those without radical

right-wing populist parties, and the two groups taken together. The results of this analysis are presented in table 5.3. It shows that roughly fifty per cent of the government coalitions formed between 1981 and 2005 in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden are predicted by the minimal winning theory, while 8.3 per cent of the government coalitions features in the solution set of the minimum size theory, and 38.6 per cent of the government coalitions are predicted by the bargaining theory. Close to a third of the government coalitions are predicted by the policy-oriented coalition formation theories (34.1 per cent by the minimal connected winning theory and 31.8 per cent by the minimal range theory). These figures are more or less in line with previous studies of coalition governments in Western Europe in the post-war era and confirm recent trends in coalition formation patterns (Gallagher, Laver, and Mair 2001: 401).

Of course, the percentage of government coalitions not explained by the coalition formation theories is substantial, but this has always been one of the major criticisms advanced against coalition formation theories. Undersized and oversized government coalitions are recurrent phenomena in Western Europe, which have been extensively documented. The occurrence of undersized governments has been associated with the policy- and vote-seeking behaviour of parties, more specifically opposition parties' ability to influence policy and the electoral liability constituted by government participation. These effects are mediated by institutional features (negative parliamentarism, a strong committee systems) and party system features (the existence of a sizable and central player) (Bergman 1993; Crombez 1996; Herman and Pope 1973; Strom 1984; 1990b). The occurrence of oversized governments has been associated with the policy-seeking behaviour of parties as well, albeit in a different manner. These types of governments occur when the maintenance of the coalition bargain is difficult, when intraparty factionalization is high, when informal bargaining rules exist, when there is a need for constitutional reform, and when there is no sizable and central party (Carrubba and Volden 2000; Crombez 1996; Lijphart 1984; Sjölin 1993). Undersized governments are the norm in most Scandinavian countries, while oversized government coalitions are a frequent phenomenon in Italy and the Low Countries.

When these figures are broken down into two categories, one pertaining to government coalitions with radical right-wing populist parties and one referring to government coalitions without radical right-wing populist parties, large differences emerge. Government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated are more frequently predicted by coalition formation theories than other government coalitions. Especially where the predictions of the policy-oriented theories are concerned, the differences are striking. Where 66.7 per cent of the government coalitions including radical right-wing populist parties are predicted by the minimal connected winning theory, this percentage is only 25.0 per cent for the government coalitions without radical right-wing populist parties. The figures for the minimal range theory are more or less identical, with 66.7 per cent of the governments including radical right-wing populist parties predicted by the theory versus 22.2 per cent of the government coalitions without radical right-wing populist parties. These differences exist also where office-oriented theories are concerned, but are less striking. The government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated are predicted in 66.7 per cent of the cases by the minimal winning theory, while this percentage is only 47.2 for the government coalitions without radical right-

wing populist parties. Smaller differences are found for the bargaining proposition theory (44.4 vs. 38.9 per cent) and the minimum size theory (11.1 vs. 5.6 per cent).

Table 5.3  
*Predictive power of office- and policy-oriented coalition formation theories*

	Government coalitions including radical right-wing populist parties	Other government coalitions	All government coalitions
Minimal winning theory	67%	47%	51%
Minimum size theory	11%	6%	7%
Bargaining proposition theory	44%	39%	40%
Minimal connected winning theory	67%	25%	33%
Minimal range theory	67%	22%	31%

These figures raise a rather peculiar question, namely why coalition formation theories work in the particular case of the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties when they generally fail to predict government coalitions. Deviations from office- and policy-oriented theories appear to be the norm in Western Europe, a norm to which the government coalitions that involve radical right-wing populist parties do not conform.

The explanation I propose to account for the differences between the two groups relies on a dynamic interpretation of patterns of coalition formation. Cooperative formal coalition formation theories are "thoroughly static" (Leiserson 1970b: 271), i.e. these theories treat parties as if they have "no history and no future" (Strom 1990a: 569). Each election and each process of government formation is taken as an independent events, unrelated to each other and past and prospect elections and government formation processes. The theories do not contain feedback effects and model the government formation process as if parties take their benefits and go home without considerations about their current behaviour upon future coalition opportunities (Laver 1989).

It is evident that parties are "neither amnesiac nor myopic" and that previous coalition experiences inspire new ones (Strom 1990a: 569). Coalition formation theorists have identified at least two ways in which previous coalition experiences impact on coalition outcomes, namely through familiarity and inertia. Familiarity refers to the fact that "in any coalition-forming situation a coalition will form containing that set of partners most familiar with working together" (Franklin and Mackie 1983: 277). In other words, parties with government experience have an advantage in the coalition formation process and parties that have governed together are especially likely to govern together again. Familiarity makes that government outcomes can be explained "precisely by the predisposition of parties to continue coalitions found practicable before" (Daalder 1983: 15).

The reasons for the occurrence of the familiarity effect are that (1) parties that have governed together have created trust and channels to communicate and co-operate; (2) parties that have governed together are more certain about each others preferences and future actions; (3) government parties can get a reputation as good coalition partners; and (4) parties with government experience know the ins and outs of the government formation process (Franklin and Mackie 1983; Warwick 1996). Innovative government coalitions (Mair 1997) that either contain parties that have never governed together or contain parties without prior government experience lack these advantages. The members of these government coalitions are faced with higher transaction costs; that is, higher levels of uncertainty about the future behaviour of their coalition partners and hence the durability of the government coalition.<sup>119</sup> The formation of innovative government coalitions entails high costs and uncertain benefits and thus constitutes a significant political risk.

A special form of the familiarity effect is the incumbency effect, which stipulates that incumbent governments have a high propensity to govern again when they maintain their majority in the elections. In addition to the reasons that produce the familiarity effect, the incumbency effect is also caused by the fact that incumbent governments form the reversion point in the event of breakdown of the coalition negotiations (De Winter, Andeweg, and Dumont 2002; Martin and Stevenson 2001; Strom, Budge, and Laver 1994a). The incumbency effect creates high levels of inertia in the government formation process (Franklin and Mackie 1983).

The formation of government coalitions that include radical right-wing populist parties entails high transaction costs, because the level of uncertainty that surrounds the formation of these government coalitions is high. Parties know little about the viability of government formulae that include radical right-wing populist parties, because the vast majority of these parties have no prior experience in government coalitions. For this reason it is unclear whether radical right-wing populist parties can and want to act as responsible government parties. The formation of government coalitions that include radical right-wing populist government coalitions therefore constitutes a political risk.

Political parties are risk averse organizations that seek to control the risks to which they expose themselves (Levy 2003). Of course, it is not possible for parties to directly control the risks involved in the formation of innovative government coalitions. It is, however, possible for parties to build in assurances that control the damage when innovative government coalitions fail. The major risk that parties run when government coalitions fail, is that they are punished electorally. To avoid this punishment, parties will attempt to form innovative government coalitions that are predicted by formal coalition formation theories, because these coalitions yield the greatest spoils of office, both in terms of cabinet positions and policy influence.

When this logic is applied to radical right-wing populist parties it becomes evident why parties form minimal winning, minimal connected winning, and minimal range coalitions with these parties. In these coalitions parties reap the greatest spoils of office, which makes it easier to defend the formation of government coalitions to voters and minimize electoral losses when these coalitions end prematurely. Moreover, the maximization of the

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<sup>119</sup> Lupia and Strøm (2001: 2) describe transaction costs as "a form of bargaining costs that are high when future contingencies are difficult to foresee – they increase the costs of safeguarding the original deal".

spoils and policy concession obtained in these coalitions makes it possible to sell these high-risk coalitions to parties' rank-and-file memberships, who are usually highly critical of innovative government coalitions.<sup>120</sup> This logic only applies to the formation of innovative government coalitions. The formation of other government coalitions is not particularly costly, because familiarity assures that parties are reasonably certain about the life-expectancy of the government coalition. Thus, it is easier for parties to sell familiar government coalitions than innovative government coalitions to their electoral constituencies and rank-and-file members.

This explanation is, however, far from perfect. Intriguingly, some radical right-wing populist parties (e.g. DF, FPÖ) have participated in successive government coalitions, which suggests that the transaction costs associated with the formation of these types of government coalitions decrease as time goes by. The government coalitions in which these specific parties have participated do not differ in terms of size through. The theory as outlined above indicates that the decreased transaction costs and increased levels of familiarity could lead to the formation of oversized coalitions. In the case of radical right-wing populist parties this has not occurred. Conceivably, familiarity does indeed develop and takes affect through inertia. Indeed, the government coalitions that have been reformed after a first period in office have not changed in composition. The new government coalitions consisted of the exact same parties as the incumbent government coalitions, regardless of the status of these government coalitions as, for example, minimal winning or minimal range coalitions.

Another possibility is that the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated have been extremely conflictuous and short-lived and therefore remain high-risk coalitions even when they assume office for a second or even a third period. In fact, several of the government coalitions that assumed office a second time have been more short-lived than the initial government coalitions. The Schüssel I government, for example, lasted from February 2000 to November 2002, while the Schüssel II government lasted from November 2002 to October 2006. In a similar fashion, the Rasmussen I government lasted from 2001 to 2005, while the Rasmussen II government lasted from 2005 to 2007.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has picked up where the previous chapter left off. Where the previous chapter focused on the characteristics of the parties, this chapter focused on the characteristics of government coalitions. It assessed the composition and status of the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated through the heuristic application of formal coalition formation theories. These theories assume that parties are either office-seekers, or office- and policy-seekers, and predict which coalitions will form on the basis of parties' legislative weights and their policy positions.

On the basis of the predictions of office- and policy-oriented coalition formation theories, I first mapped the coalition opportunity structures of

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<sup>120</sup> My position is diametrically opposed to that of De Swaan (1970: 426), who argues that "increases in the size of the coalition are due to uncertainty over the actual resources of members and the reliability of their support". Where De Swaan believes that uncertainty motivates parties to take precautionary measures and enlarge coalitions, I contend that it gives parties incentives to maximize their returns and minimize the size of coalitions, both in terms of numbers of parties and number of seats.

radical right-wing populist parties. The general conclusion is that coalition formation opportunity structures look fairly positive for most radical right-wing populist parties. The coalition opportunity structures of radical right-wing populist parties that have been in government seem more promising than those of radical right-wing populist parties that have not been in government, because the former group of parties has on average more coalition opportunities than the latter group. Moreover, office-oriented coalition formation theories predict undifferentiated coalition opportunity structures for radical right-wing populist parties; that is, they have difficulties to distinguish between radical right-wing populist parties with few and many coalition opportunities. Policy-oriented coalition formation theories are better able to distinguish between radical right-wing populist parties with few and many coalition opportunities. The predictions made by policy-oriented coalition formation theories also show closer correspondence with the actual government participation of radical right-wing populist parties.

These observations are confirmed by the fact that most government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated are predicted by several office- and/or policy-oriented coalition formation theories. Office-oriented theories have less predictive power than policy-oriented coalition formation theories though. Especially the minimum size and bargaining proposition theory fail to correctly predict the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have joined. The minimal winning, minimal connected winning, and minimal range theory each achieve good levels of correct predictions (see Table 5.2). Given the substantial theoretical overlap between these theories, preference should be given to the most stringent of the three, namely the minimal range theory.

The most remarkable conclusion reached in this chapter is that government coalitions involving radical right-wing populist parties are more often predicted by formal coalition formation theories than other government coalitions. This discrepancy emerges despite the fact that the presence of radical right-wing populist parties reduces the level of information certainty in the coalition formation process, because these parties are relatively new. I believe that the newness of radical right-wing populist parties actually gives mainstream parties incentives to form minimal winning, minimal connected winning, and minimal range coalitions with these parties, as it is uncertain that these government coalitions will prove long-lasting.

Together these findings suggest that the formation of radical right-wing populist government coalitions is motivated by a combination of office and policy considerations. Minimization of the number of parties in the coalition and of ideological diversity are key objectives of the actors involved in these coalitions. The realization of these two objectives goes well together. Under normal circumstances, a reduction in the number of parties in a coalition also reduces a coalition's ideological diversity.

What do these conclusions tell us in more general terms about the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties? First, this chapter corroborates the conclusion of the previous chapter that the inclusion of radical right-wing populist parties in government coalitions is primarily motivated by parties' desire to realize their office- and policy-related objectives. Second, it supports the conclusion of the previous chapter that parties' legislative weights and policy positions determine how parties evaluate the costs and benefits of various coalition alternatives. Additionally, the analysis establishes that the selection of radical right-wing populist parties as junior coalition members not only serves to minimize the costs and maximize the benefits that prime minister parties receive in government

coalitions with these parties, but actually serves to minimize the costs and maximize the benefits for each of the parties involved in these government coalitions.

The observations made in this chapter also help account for the patterns of variation in the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties detected in the introduction of this thesis. Radical right-wing populist parties have participated in government coalitions in Austria, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, and Norway, because in these countries radical right-wing populist parties had the legislative weight and policy positions that gave them the opportunity to join minimal connected winning or minimal range coalitions. Radical right-wing populist parties have primarily participated in government coalitions since the late-1990s, because prior to this period they did not yet have the legislative weights and policy positions that gave them the opportunity to join minimal connected winning or minimal range coalitions. In some countries only one radical right-wing populist party has been able to participate in government coalitions, because the legislative weight and policy positions of the other radical right-wing populist party made that they did not feature in any of the coalitions predicted by the minimal connected winning or minimal range theory.

#### *The model*

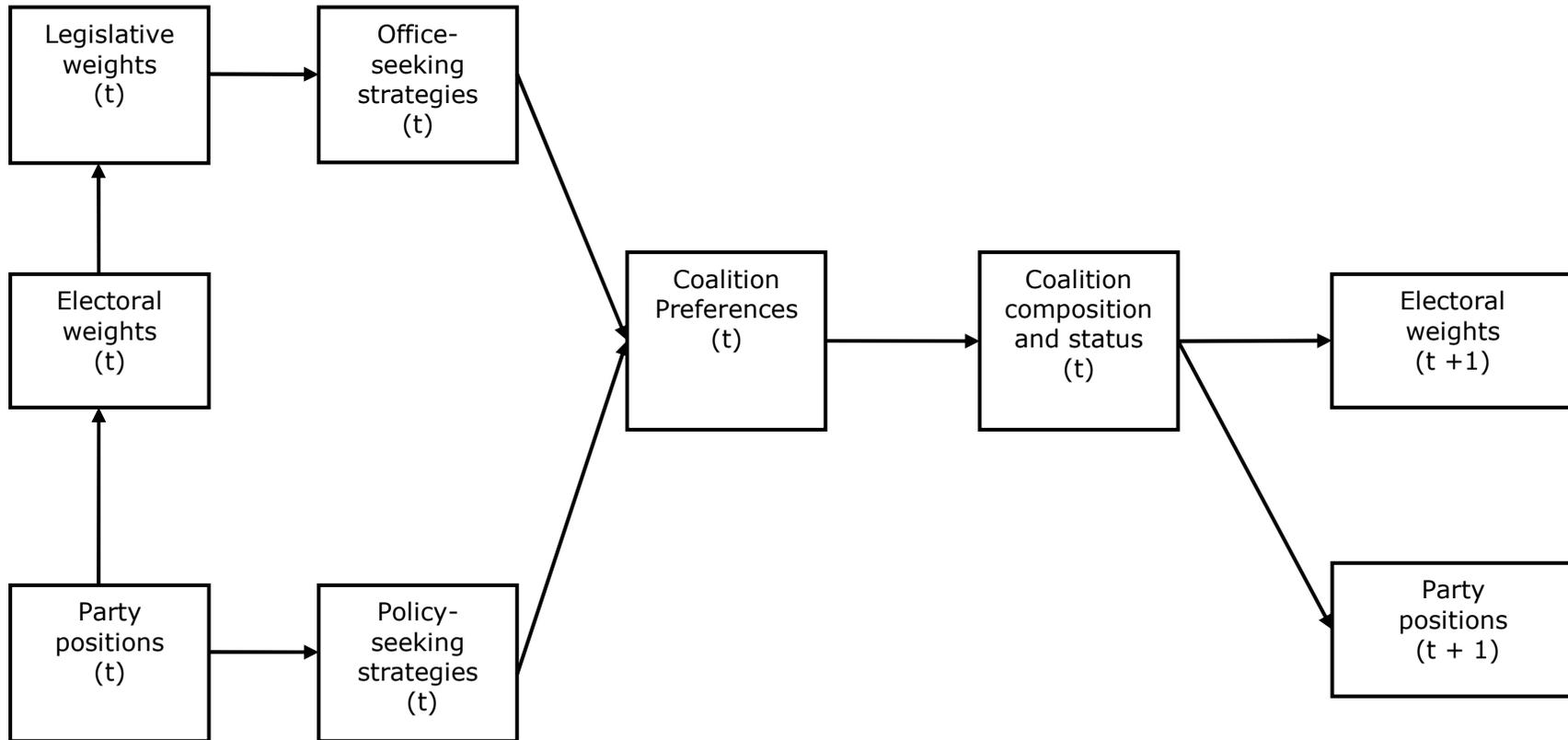
How do these conclusions relate to the general explanation for the government participation developed in the previous chapters? According to this model, party characteristics determine parties' goals and their strategies to reach these goals. Preferences for particular coalition outcomes are part of these strategies and lead to the formation of particular government coalitions. Can the findings of this chapter be integrated in this model?

Figure 5.2 displays a model that depicts the most important findings of this chapter and their relation to the aforementioned models. The model consists of the same elements as the model presented in the chapters 1 and 4, namely party characteristics, party goals, party strategies, coalition preferences, coalition outcomes, and new party characteristics. It also contains a new element, namely the composition and status of the government. Parties' office- and policy-seeking strategies are a function of their office and policy goals, which are best realized in minimal (connected) winning and minimal range coalitions. For this reason parties develop coalition preferences that are in line with the predictions of formal coalition formation theories and eventually form government coalitions that are predicted by these theories.

The inclusion of coalition composition and status in the model fits neatly with the model developed in chapter 4. Prime minister parties' preferences for particular junior coalition members are the result of their preferences for the formation of minimal connected winning or minimal range coalitions. Parties that are large, but not too large, can facilitate prime minister parties with the formation of minimal winning coalitions. When these parties are also located next to and in close proximity of the prime minister party they can also contribute to the construction of minimal connected winning and minimal range coalitions. In some cases radical right-wing populist parties satisfy these requirements, while in other cases they do not.

Figure 5.2

*A model to explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties, part III*





## CHAPTER 6

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### A Radical Right-Wing Populist Party's Rise to Power

*Sooner or later the big parties will take his measure. They will discover their similarities and their marriage potential*

Peter Turrini (quoted in Höbelt 2003: 169)

#### Introduction

The exploration of the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties has almost reached its completion. The characteristics of the radical right-wing populist parties that have risen to power have been investigated, as well as the characteristics of the mainstream parties that have governed with radical right-wing populist parties. Moreover, the characteristics of the government coalitions in which these parties have teamed up have been examined. On the basis of these characteristics a model has been developed that has the potential to explain the government participation of specific radical right-wing populist parties, in specific countries, and after specific elections.

It is now time to apply the model to a specific case and evaluate how well it explains the government participation of a particular radical right-wing populist party in a specific country after a specific election. As Lieberman (2005: 442) notes, "not only are we interested in our ability to make sense of patterns of variation, but also we would like to use theory to account for decidedly important and seemingly anomalous outcomes in specific times and places". To assess how well the model explains the government participation of specific radical right-wing populist parties in specific countries after specific elections, a case study of the government participation of the FPÖ in Austria after the 1999 elections is included in this dissertation. This case study analyzes the FPÖ's ascendance to power through the lens of the elements of the coalition membership theories and formal coalition formation theories that have been integrated in the model. The objective is to "to gain contextually based evidence that a particular causal model or theory actually 'worked' in the manner specified in the model" (Lieberman 2005: 442). In other words, the aim is to verify whether the government participation of the FPÖ has been brought about by certain party characteristics (e.g. the FPÖ's electoral and legislative weight and its policy proximity to the ÖVP) and the way in which these characteristics have defined the ÖVP's office-, policy-, and vote-seeking strategies.

#### *Why Austria?*

The selection of cases for the small-N analysis of a nested research design occurs on the basis of the extent to which individual cases fit the model developed in the large-N study. Lieberman (2005: 444, emphasis in original) argues that "when carrying out Mt-SNA, [Model-testing Small N Analysis, SdL] scholars should only select cases for further investigation that are *well predicted* by the best fitting statistical model". In this dissertation two large-N analyses have been conducted, so the case selected for the small-N study should be well predicted by both large-N analyses. The Austrian case fits this profile neatly. The government participation of the FPÖ in the Schüssel I government is explained by the coalition membership theories presented in chapter 4 and the formal coalition formation theories presented in chapter 5.

There are, however, additional reasons to study the formation of the ÖVP-FPÖ coalition. First, several coalition formulae were considered by the

parties involved in the negotiations. It is therefore possible to trace the strategic calculations made by the various actors throughout the coalition formation process. A comparison of the perceived costs and benefits of continuation of the SPÖ-ÖVP coalition, on the one, and a plunge in the unknown of an ÖVP-FPÖ coalition, on the other hand, yields important insights that would otherwise have remained uncovered. In most other cases included in this dissertation, only one coalition alternative was considered during the coalition negotiations, which makes it more difficult to evaluate why parties preferred this alternative over others.<sup>121</sup>

Second, the focus on Austria annihilates any potential diffusion effects that might have their origin in the high levels of mediatization the government participation of the FPÖ received. It cannot be excluded that the controversy and mediatization that surrounded the formation of the black-blue coalition had a direct or indirect impact on specific cases of radical right-wing populist party government participation that occurred after 1999. Of course, the national and international controversy with which the formation of the ÖVP-FPÖ government coalition has been surrounded also sets the Austrian case apart from the other cases discussed in this thesis. I will, however, demonstrate that this element does not affect the general conclusions that can be drawn from this case.

Third, the high levels of mediatization also assure that information about the government formation process is widely available. In addition to the numerous articles that have appeared in the media, one also finds abundant scholarly literature on the topic (notably Heinisch 2002; Höbelt 2003). These works rely on extensive interview material and the personal diaries of politicians that played a key role in the coalition negotiations. The analyses made by the *Politische Akademie*, affiliated with the ÖVP, also provide valuable information and are, by and large, unbiased. This might lead one to question the added value of a case study focused on Austria. In my opinion, a re-evaluation of primary and secondary literature is useful, because none of the published works have thus far looked at the question from the theoretical perspective employed in this thesis. Moreover, my analysis disputes some of the claims other authors have made in previous studies.

The goal of case studies in nested research designs is to demonstrate the robustness of causal arguments. This is best done on the basis of evidence that traces the process that links causes to effects (Lieberman 2005: 444). For this reason, I use process tracing evidence to determine whether the characteristics, goals, and strategies of the FPÖ, ÖVP, and SPÖ have indeed been the reasons why the ÖVP and FPÖ joined forces in the executive after the 1999 elections.

Since previous studies have shown that "at least some of the benefits of SNA can be captured using readily available data sources without extensive primary research" (Lieberman 2005: 450), the process tracing evidence used in this chapter comes primarily from a reading of primary and secondary literature. Two types of primary sources have been relied upon: party documents and media content. Party programmes, related party publications, and broad range of newspapers and magazines published in Austria and abroad in the run-up and aftermath of the 1999 elections have been analyzed, albeit in a non-systematic fashion.<sup>122</sup> A broad range of studies

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<sup>121</sup> The notable exception to this rule is the formation of Bondevik II in Norway, a minority government that came about after coalition negotiations had broken down twice.

<sup>122</sup> The period studied is 01-09-1999 till 28-02-2000.

about Austrian politics in general, and the ÖVP-FPÖ government coalition in particular, have been surveyed as well. Many of these studies give a timely account of the day-to-day development of the coalition negotiations and thus provide important insights in the behaviour and motives of the actors involved in these negotiations

This chapter contains five main components. First, it discusses the historical background against which the formation of the Schüssel I government coalition should be interpreted. Second, it describes the course of the 1999 elections, with special attention for the election campaign, the election results, and, of course, the coalition negotiations. Third, I analyze the way in which parties' characteristics, goals and strategies brought about the ÖVP-FPÖ coalition, and relate the particularities of the Austrian case to the conclusions of the previous chapters of this dissertation. Fourth, a number of explanations are evaluated that have been advanced by other scholars and that do not directly concern parties' characteristics, goals, and strategies. These explanations have some serious shortcomings, especially where causality is concerned. Fifth, I theorize about their generalizability and implications.

### **Historical background**

The formation of the Schüssel I government coalition in 2000 cannot be understood without proper historical contextualization. The traditional patterns of coalition formation, the position of the FPÖ in the Austrian party system, and recent changes with regard to these two key factors, put the construction of the Schüssel I government coalition in a particular light.

#### *1945-1966: the establishment of a pattern*

Post-war coalition politics in Austria have always been dominated by the enduring alliance between the two major players, the SPÖ and the ÖVP. Often described as the Grand Coalition, "Black-Red", and later "Red-Black", the two dominant Austrian parties first assumed office in 1947, under the leadership of ÖVP-leader Figl, and governed uninterruptedly until 1966. The broad alliance, on average controlling 95.3 per cent of the popular vote, was founded on the fear of *Alleinherrschaft* that had its roots in pre-war conflicts between the *Lager* camps represented by the SPÖ and the ÖVP.

With the grand coalition also came the installation of the *Proporzdemokratie*, the Austrian patronage system that controls appointments in various sectors of the labour market. The establishment of the Social Partnership, the Grand Coalition, proportionality and corporatism make post-war Austria a classic example of a consensus democracy (e.g. Lijphart 1999).

In addition to these two main camps, a third *Lager* existed, which grouped German nationalists and national liberals.<sup>123</sup> Politically represented by the VdU, and later the FPÖ, the influence of this camp was relatively small, with an average vote share below 5 per cent. The alternative coalitions to the Grand Coalition that included the VdU or FPÖ, although mathematically and ideologically appealing to the ÖVP, were considered "politically impossible"

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<sup>123</sup> In addition to the FPÖ, ÖVP, and SPÖ, a fourth party was represented in the Austrian National Council in the immediate post-war years. This party, the KPÖ, had limited impact on coalition formation, because it was relatively small and ideologically distant from the other three parties. Like many other communist parties the KPÖ was perceived as an ally of the Soviet Union and not part of mainstream politics.

(Dreijmanis 1982: 245).<sup>124</sup> The Grand Coalition partners were unable to view the political process as a zero-sum game, since this would have “revived fears of the past”; i.e. recreated tensions between the two main *Lager* (Dreijmanis 1982: 248). Consequently, Grand Coalition rule was assured and the coalition outcome was suboptimal, at least for the ÖVP.

In the immediate post-war years, ÖVP attempts to break with the tradition of broad coalition governance were countered by subsequent SPÖ presidents, who vetoed the government participation of the VdU and the FPÖ. In 1953, President Theodor Körner dismissed the ÖVP’s request to include the VdU in the government (Kollman 1965: 114/374). Körner and his SPÖ feared that the ÖVP desired to eliminate the SPÖ and establish again a *Bürgerblock*, as had been the case during the interbellum. Moreover, Körner had to take into account the preferences of the Western Allies, which still occupied Austria and would veto the government participation of a party inspired by pan-Germanism (Dreijmanis 1982: 245). A similar incident took place in 1959, when President Schärff told ÖVP-leader Raab in a private discussion that his plan to include the FPÖ in an all-party government was unacceptable (Müller 2000: 90). In 1962-63, both mainstream parties threatened with the formation of small coalitions; i.e. coalitions that included the FPÖ, to strengthen their bargaining position in the negotiations (Tschadek 1967: 42).

On the one hand, these incidents reflect the ÖVP’s (and to a lesser extent the SPÖ’s) attempts to enhance their bargaining position in coalition negotiations. This is to a considerable extent determined by the number of coalition alternatives available to the players in a coalition game. With the VdU/FPÖ vetoed, neither of the mainstream parties had a credible coalition alternative that could strengthen their bargaining position. However, the incidents also signalled the growing dissatisfaction of the two parties with their Grand Coalition, which is also reflected by the increasing time needed for the formation of the coalitions between 1945 and 1966 (Vodopivec 1966: 392-398), and the decreasing coalition duration during the same period (Dreijmanis 1982: 254-255).

#### *1966-1983: single party governments*

The first episode of Grand Coalition rule ended in 1966, when the ÖVP formed a single party government.<sup>125</sup> Since this government had majority status, coalition formation was pushed to the background, and the FPÖ played a non-significant role in Austrian politics. The situation remained largely the same when alternation in 1970 heralded a decade of SPÖ rule under the leadership of Bruno Kreisky. The first SPÖ government had minority status and primarily relied on support of the ÖVP for the passage of its legislation. It had, however, to rely on the support of the FPÖ on several crucial votes. The SPÖ leadership bargained directly with the FPÖ leadership, most notably about the 1971 budget proposal and a proposal for electoral reform. In addition to its support, the FPÖ also abstained on a motion of no confidence introduced by the ÖVP (Dreijmanis 1982: 244-245). The subsequent SPÖ governments

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<sup>124</sup> A coalition of the ÖVP and the FPÖ would have satisfied the standards of the various office-oriented coalition formation theories. Moreover, to conventional standards (e.g. left-right dimension), the policy distance between the ÖVP and the FPÖ was smaller than that between the SPÖ and the ÖVP (Dreijmanis 1982: 245; Müller 2000: 93).

<sup>125</sup> Interestingly, the ÖVP won the elections, because its coalition partner was caught up in a scandal that revolved around Federal Minister of Interior, Franz Olah, who had secretly allowed party funds to be used to facilitate the formation of an alliance between the SPÖ and the FPÖ (Dreijmanis 1982: 244).

commanded a parliamentary majority, as a consequence of which questions of coalition formation did not play a role in Austrian politics between 1971-1983.

### *1983: Small Coalition governance*

In the 1983 general elections the SPÖ lost its absolute majority and parallel coalition negotiations between the SPÖ and the FPÖ, the SPÖ and the ÖVP, and the ÖVP and the FPÖ commenced. The outcome of these negotiations, a coalition between the SPÖ and the FPÖ, was more or less predictable, since the SPÖ leader and formateur Fred Sinowatz expressed a clear preference for the construction of a government of this particular constellation.<sup>126</sup> His preference for government innovation was shaped by the SPÖ's dissatisfaction with the ÖVP's alleged dictatorial behaviour in the previous Grand Coalitions, which the SPÖ still had freshly in mind. The FPÖ was at that point in time seen as a legitimate party, since it had undergone profound ideological changes, and had recently been admitted to the Liberal International.

After almost forty years in opposition, the FPÖ was eager to assume office for a number of office- and vote-seeking reasons. First, the party wanted to be part of the *Proporzsystem* and reap the extraparliamentary benefits of government participation. Second, it wanted to have the opportunity to recruit among ÖVP voters and thus enhance its electoral position in the Austrian party system. This was better achieved from within government than from the opposition, since cabinet representation assured that the FPÖ could execute its economic liberal programme and demonstrate its government skills.

After the Small Coalition, or "Red-Blue", assumed office, it quickly became clear that the FPÖ had overestimated the advantages of being in office. The party obtained three cabinet ministers,<sup>127</sup> largely insufficient to satisfy the FPÖ's basis in the various regional strongholds (Morass and Neischenböck 1987). What is more, the SPÖ did not allow its junior coalition partner any "autonomous space to manoeuvre", which gave the ÖVP ample opportunity to campaign against what was generally perceived as a SPÖ government (Plasser 1987: 88). Finally, the Vice-Chancellor and leader of the FPÖ, Norbert Steger, lacked strength and appeal and was thus unable to impose his party's goals on his coalition partner. The inevitable consequence of the FPÖ's first experience with government was the electoral collapse of the party, with opinion polls showing no more than one or two per cent support for the FPÖ.

The poor showing of the FPÖ, in both the government coalition and the polls, created internal upheaval among the party's rank-and-file members. Amidst the turmoil, a young Carinthian politician, named Jörg Haider, seized the opportunity to attack party leader Steger, and claim the party leadership for himself at a party conference held in Innsbruck on September 13-14 1986.<sup>128</sup> Haider proposed several changes to turn the electoral tide of the FPÖ, of which the most important was a return to the nationalist ideology the party had promoted in the 1950s. In addition to a return the party's

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<sup>126</sup> The purpose of the negotiations between the SPÖ and the ÖVP was primarily to keep up appearances. Moreover, the SPÖ wished to signal to its electoral constituency that it was consensus-oriented. Allegedly, ÖVP did not take the negotiations with the SPÖ seriously (Müller 1999: 122).

<sup>127</sup> The FPÖ obtained the Federal Minister of Economic Affairs, the Minister of Defence, and the Minister of Justice.

<sup>128</sup> The evident split in the FPÖ had already been manifest prior to the coup, for example at the time of the 'Reder Affair' (Bailer-Galanda 1995).

ideological roots, he also advised to renew the party ideology on several points. Most significantly, the new party leader introduced populism as a key ideological feature, and added a number of themes to the FPÖ programme (e.g. crime, immigration, political reform). This transformation had profound implications for the position of the FPÖ in the Austrian party system. It moved towards the fringes of this system, especially when the SPÖ terminated the red-blue government coalition and called early elections. Although the FPÖ benefited electorally from these elections and more than doubled its parliamentary representation, it was unable to use its electoral and legislative strength to return to office.

#### *Re-establishment of the Grand Coalition*

In reaction to the changes in the FPÖ, the Grand Coalition was re-established in 1987. It governed for another thirteen years; first under the leadership of SPÖ leader Franz Vranitzky, and later under his successor Viktor Klima. The re-creation of the Grand Coalition signified a return to stability, but can also be seen as "a distinctly new phase" that "produced a range of independent effects on the course of political change in Austria in the 1990s" (Heinisch 2002: 169). Led by SPÖ-Chancellors instead of ÖVP-leaders, the Grand Coalition was no longer built on the animosity between the *Lager*, but on "the common view that the necessary social and economic reforms of the Austrian model required the kind of broad electoral majority and deep political reach which only the SPÖ and ÖVP were able to guarantee" (Heinisch 2002: 184). Furthermore, the balance of power in parliament after 1986 was also quite different from that prior to 1966. With the growth of the FPÖ, and the emergence of the Greens, the power base of the mainstream parties gradually eroded.

In other respects, the second round of Grand Coalitions was largely similar to the first. The main alternative to the Grand Coalition, the bourgeois bloc, remained mathematically and ideologically more attractive to the ÖVP (e.g. Debus 2005), but again the government participation of the FPÖ was deemed politically impossible. Haider's coup had placed the FPÖ "outside the constitutional arc", as the party maintained a problematic relationship with the concept of the Austrian nation (it advocated pan-Germanism) and the nationalsocialist regime. On a more general level, the mainstream parties disputed the FPÖ's "fundamental democratic attitude", without necessarily qualifying the party as undemocratic or unconstitutional (Burkert-Dottolo 2000: 28).

On the basis of these evaluations the FPÖ was subjected to *Ausgrenzung*, which formalized the exclusion of the party from the federal government.<sup>129</sup> Especially the SPÖ was firmly committed to the ostracization of Jörg Haider's party. "The conservatives were at times rather unclear about it. The door often seemed left ajar if only to force the social-democrats to make concessions during the coalition negotiations" (Van den Brink 2005: 387). The ambiguity of the ÖVP resulted from the difficult position in which the party found itself: trapped between principles, on the one hand, and strategic considerations, on the other. The exclusion of the FPÖ deprived the conservatives of an alternative to the Grand Coalition and thus convicted the SPÖ and ÖVP to each other. Over the course of the years ÖVP politicians became increasingly dissatisfied with their position in the Grand Coalition and with the lack of alternatives.

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<sup>129</sup> According to Richard Heinisch (2002: 114), the ostracization of the FPÖ also extended to personal and after-hour contacts.

### *Signs of Change*

Already in 1987, after the first elections that followed Jörg Haider's take-over and the termination of the small coalition, a faction within the ÖVP emerged that favored "Black-Blue" over "Red-Black". The most important advocate of the bourgeois bloc was then party leader Alois Mock, who represented the neo-conservative wing of the ÖVP. His proposal to pursue an alliance with Haider's party was rejected by the party executive. According to Mock (quoted in Meysels 1995: 23),

"when in difficult negotiations the possibility of a Small Coalition was discussed, I had to realize that I would not be able to get the required majority among the members of the party executive. The Salzerburger *Landeshauptmann* Haslauer as well as the Voralberger *Vize-Landeshauptmann* Faustgruber favored this option. Three of four others approached me and told me they were in favour as well. But overall this was not enough".

His position nevertheless received support from factions that felt traditionally close to the FPÖ, such as the party's youth organization and the regional branches in Styria and Vorarlberg.<sup>130</sup>

Mock's main rival, leader of the liberal wing and subsequent party leader, Erhard Busek (quoted in Meysels 1995: 23), claims that the Small Coalition was never formally debated.

"The possibility of a Small Coalition with the FPÖ was never even formally discussed by the party executive. Therefore, there was never an official vote on this issue. The main topic was reforms concerning the formation of the new Grand Coalition. I personally recommended that we stay in the opposition."

While at the head of the party, Busek "consistently rejected internal calls to take the ÖVP into opposition or seek some arrangement with the FPÖ" (Heinisch 2002: 177).

The disagreement between the two leading ÖVP politicians persisted till 1995, when a new party leader was elected. The new leader, Wolfgang Schüssel, vowed to make the ÖVP again bigger than the SPÖ. In his acceptance speech, he unfolded his ambitious plans with the words: "I want to become number one and Chancellor". Schüssel refused to reveal his coalition preferences though, and only stated that he would see this Grand Coalition, which had assumed office one year earlier, to the end (De Smet 2003: 152; Heinisch 2002: 171).<sup>131</sup>

With the arrival of Schüssel as ÖVP leader, the tension in the Grand Coalition rose considerably. The SPÖ-ÖVP government had already been under significant pressure prior to 1995, since the two mainstream parties had lost a substantial part of their electorate to the FPÖ, and to a lesser extent to the Greens. In an attempt to counter the electoral decline of the ÖVP, Schüssel became more insistent on economic and financial reform (most notably on the implementation of an austerity package). This created friction between the Grand Coalition partners and eventually caused the downfall of

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<sup>130</sup> Especially *Landeshauptmann* Josef Krainer has always been vocal about his coalition preferences and has stated that "For me the FPÖ under Jörg Haider is a trustworthy partner" (quoted in Meysels 1995: 30).

<sup>131</sup> Interestingly, the preferences of the neo-conservative wing were based on perceived ideological differences from the SPÖ, on the one, and fear that the SPÖ would block free-market reforms, on the other hand. These are exactly (some of the main) reasons for the construction of the Small Coalition in 2000.

the fourth Vranitzky cabinet. Early elections were held in 1996, after which the Grand Coalition was reformed, albeit after extensive negotiations. These lasted 86 days, and were only concluded after the establishment of a coalition free space; that is, after the identification of policy domains in which the coalition members were not bound to act in unison.

With the leadership changes in the mainstream parties, the SPÖ replaced Vranitzky in January 1997 by Viktor Klima, came also an ideological reorientation of the Grand Coalition partners. The new ÖVP party constitution, presented in 1995, signified a return to the right-wing roots of the party. The programme was reform-oriented and decidedly neo-conservative. The new programme of the SPÖ, presented three years later, emphasized the social democratic roots of the party. Thus, the two mainstream parties drifted apart ideologically, which further undermined the working relations in the Grand Coalition. With the Grand Coalition on the rocks, the marginalization of the FPÖ was questioned more and more within the ÖVP ranks. In the *Österreichisches Jahrbuch für Politik* published by the *Politische Akademie* 1998, ÖVP sympathisers analyzed the pros- and cons of the Grand Coalition and evaluated alternatives. The analyses highlighted the general dissatisfaction with the Grand Coalition and demonstrated the increased acceptability of the FPÖ. Many authors nevertheless still dismissed the Small Coalition as unrealistic (Bochskanl 1998; Rohrhofer 1998; Zankel 1998). Only Andreas Unterberger, at the time editor of *Die Presse*, deemed the risks associated with the Small Coalition acceptable. According to this author, "this risk was counter-balanced by the frustration about the possibility of another four years of Grand Coalition government" (Unterberger 1998: 829).

That the ÖVP gradually became more receptive to an alliance with the FPÖ was clearly demonstrated in 1997, by the developments that surrounded the sale of the *Creditanstalt* (CA), Austria's largest bank with strong ties to the ÖVP. The prospective buyer had strong affiliations with the SPÖ, and the ÖVP therefore opposed the merger. To block the sale, however, the ÖVP had to cooperate actively with the FPÖ.<sup>132</sup> Several ÖVP politicians evaluated this cooperation rather positively and the idea of a mid-term change of coalition partner took root in some minds.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> The FPÖ was unwilling to block the sale of the CA, but put forward a motion to also privatize the other (semi)-public banks, a proposal welcomed by the ÖVP. Höbelt (2003: 167-168) claims, however, that Haider's financial spokesman, Gilbert Trattner, did sign an agreement with the ÖVP about the acquisition of the CA. At the same time, it appears that the Freedomites' floor leader, Ewald Stadler, was engaged in negotiations about the sale of the CA with the SPÖ. Both parties were reluctant to make their dealings with the FPÖ public. Höbelt (2003: 168) observes that "When the FPÖ negotiating team arrived at the offices of the ÖVP minister of commerce on Monday, January 12, 1997, their host gave a ho-hum response and then asked them to leave by the back door to escape the cameras".

<sup>133</sup> According to Höbelt (2003: 167), there were also "persistent, but as yet unsubstantiated, rumours about a secret meeting arranged between Haider and Schüssel at a farmhouse in Styria that belonged to an ÖVP backbencher. The story is far from straightforward, however: In public, at least, Haider said he did not want a simple change of coalition. If the ÖVP wanted to switch partners, that decision would have to be ratified by a new general election. For the ÖVP to call a third election in as many years on an issue that was central to the country's power structure but did not affect the daily life of its citizens at all, moreover, was clearly suicidal, and everybody knew it."

## The 1999 elections

It was in this context that the 1999 general elections in Austria unfolded. In the summer of 1999 the polls nevertheless predicted electoral successes for the Grand Coalition partners. The EU elections in June of that year had given a similar indication. The SPÖ and ÖVP had won and the FPÖ had lost seats. The government parties appeared to benefit from the good economic results realised between 1996 and 1999, while the FPÖ seemed to suffer the consequences of the Rosenstingl affair.<sup>134</sup>

### *Campaign*

Given that adversarial campaigns had proved successful in the previous general elections, and in the EU elections, the SPÖ and ÖVP opted for a continuation of this strategy. The SPÖ mainly campaigned on three issues: neutrality, state intervention (especially on the labor market), and integration of women in the labor market. The ÖVP stresses markedly different issues: family policy (especially extension of paid maternity leave), tax reductions for enterprises, and security issues (drugs and criminality). The issues on which the FPÖ campaigned were more akin to those of the ÖVP than of the SPÖ, most notably the shared emphasis on family policy. In terms of personalities, the mainstream parties did not change their frontmen. The SPÖ-list was headed by Klima, the ÖVP-list by Schüssel, while the FPÖ selected the well-known industrialist Thomas Prinzhorn as its top candidate; Jörg Haider was bound to his governorship in Carinthia (Fallend 2000; Müller 2000a).

In addition to traditional issues related to policy and personalities, the campaign also focused heavily on the coalition preferences of parties and voters. Speculations about the future government coalition were fuelled by pre-electoral commitments voiced by the main parties. In the run-up to the elections, the SPÖ declared that, despite the disagreements that had surfaced during the past years, it intended to renew its broad coalition with ÖVP. At the same time, the SPÖ refused *a priori* an alliance with the FPÖ; a position also taken by the Greens and the Liberals.<sup>135</sup> The SPÖ also actively mobilized against the *Bürgerblock*, i.e. the prospect of a right-wing coalition (Heinisch 2002: 182). The ÖVP decided to keep its options open. It declared that the FPÖ was no longer "outside the constitutional arc" and that it featured on its list of prospective coalition partners. More important for the course of the campaign, elections, and coalition negotiations was the ÖVP's announcement to go into opposition if it would come third in the elections.<sup>136</sup> This declaration followed poll results, which demonstrated that the FPÖ would surpass the ÖVP in the elections, a trend confirmed by the Land elections in Vorarlberg on September 19.

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<sup>134</sup> Peter Rosenstingl, a former FPÖ MP, had taken a large amount of money from the party funds (approximately 100 million ATS, or 7.2 million Euro) to finance his own corporation. He was arrested in Brazil and extradited to Austria shortly before the 1999 elections. An internal investigation into the affair brought to light serious mismanagement in the FPÖ-branch in Lower Austria (Falland 1999).

<sup>135</sup> This position was formalized at party meetings on September 26, 1999, October 4, 1999, and October 13, 1999 when a text that read "we are in favour of cooperation and reform-oriented collaboration with all democratic parties – but not with the FPÖ" was ratified.

<sup>136</sup> This statement gained formal status when it was ratified at party meetings on September 27, 1999, October 4, 1999, and October 13, 1999.

With this strategic move the ÖVP hoped to mobilize voters, an objective the party realized.<sup>137</sup> In an interview with the Dutch author Rinke van den Brink (2005: 388-389), Wolfgang Schüssel defended the resolution with the following arguments:

“It is not self-evident that the Grand Coalition continues to exist, even though the media might pretend that it is. If the FPÖ becomes larger than us, the ÖVP will return to the opposition. The voters determine which role these parties will play. I cannot give a clearer signal. For starters I have to awake the cadre of my party. By now they have understood that the situation is serious. Further I want to make clear to voters that they have influence and have the opportunity to make a choice. Finally, I give a signal to our opponents: I refuse to give the social-democrats a blanco cheque. I am not prepared to govern under any circumstances or at any price. [...] After the elections we will have to negotiate and make compromises. If we are the second party in parliament, we are open for anything. Our concern is to realize as many of our own ideas as possible. We approach prospective talks with an open mind and are not bound to a particular coalition partner. I have clearly dismissed the FPÖ, with its fear of foreigners and its anti-European sentiments, and the SPÖ, with its anti-NATO attitude. I strive for only one thing: the ÖVP has to emerge from these elections as strong as possible.”

The FPÖ, eager to assume office, declared that it was willing to govern with either of the incumbent parties. The party deliberately set out to come across as an acceptable coalition partner, a campaign strategy tested earlier that year in the regional elections in the FPÖ stronghold of Carinthia. The campaign focused mainly on economic and social issues; little attention was paid to the party’s traditional issues such as immigration and security. The fundamental opposition style that normally characterized FPÖ campaigns was absent as well. Haider even stated that he “no longer wished harsh words” (*Profil* 30-08-1999: 16). The party used Jörg Haider’s record in Carinthia to demonstrate that it was fit for government; e.g. success of the introduction of the children’s cheque, decrease of rents and electricity prices. This type of non-adversarial campaign was, however, contested in the party, since a considerable portion of the functionaries favored a strong anti-establishment campaign.

Opinion polls conducted in the run-up to the elections showed that a majority of the Austrian population favored continuation of the Grand Coalition. Roughly 57 per cent of the Austrians expressed “positive feelings” about yet another SPÖ-ÖVP coalition, whereas 31 per cent claimed to have “negative feelings” about this type of arrangement. The main alternative to red-black, a bourgeois bloc presided by Wolfgang Schüssel, received support from 45 per cent of the public, whereas 56 per cent of the Austrians rejected this coalition alternative. A right-wing alliance under the leadership of Jörg Haider registered slightly lower levels of support, with 41 per cent listing “positive feelings” and 58 per cent “negative feelings”. The Austrian public also did not seem convinced of the FPÖ’s coalitionability, given that approximately 53 per cent of citizens agreed with the statement that the FPÖ was “a party like any other, which can also take part in government” (Plasser, Ulram, and Sommer 2000: 258).

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<sup>137</sup> Exit polls and voter surveys demonstrate that the abstention among ÖVP voters was relatively low. Moreover, new ÖVP voters listed the race between the ÖVP and FPÖ as their primary motive to vote for the ÖVP (results from SORA Institute and Fessel Institute, reported in Müller 2000).

### *Das Fahrt ins Blaues*

The general elections held on October 3 1999, confirmed the trends in the latest polls. They clearly demonstrated the public dissatisfaction with the Grand Coalition, given that the SPÖ and ÖVP each recorded their lowest score since 1945. The SPÖ suffered a tremendous defeat, registering a decrease in its vote share of 4.8 per cent. Consequently, its parliamentary representation was reduced to 65 seats. The party nevertheless maintained its leading position in the National Council. The losses of the ÖVP were considerably smaller, and the party managed to keep its 52 seats in parliament. In symbolic terms the defeat of the ÖVP was noteworthy though. Given that the party obtained the same number of seats as the FPÖ, which realized an astounding victory and added another five per cent to its vote share, the position of the conservatives was already precarious. Since Haider's party surpassed the ÖVP by 415 votes, it also lost its position as second party in the Austrian parliament, now ranking third.

Although generally perceived as a setback, the new balance of power in the Austrian parliament did give Schüssel's party an ideal position in the coalition negotiations. The ÖVP was not too small and not too big. If the party would have suffered substantial losses, it would have fallen prey to disarray. If it had maintained its position as second largest party, however, the vote for the ÖVP would have been interpreted as tacit support for the Grand Coalition and the party would have had no credible threat to go into opposition. The symbolic third place was ideal, since it generated internal and external backing for a change of coalition practices. Of course, the ÖVP's strategic assessment relied heavily on the party's control of the median legislator. On the Austrian left-right spectre, the party covered the middle ground, with a minority to its left (Greens and SPÖ 79 seats, 18 seats short of a parliamentary majority) and to its right (FPÖ 52 seats). Any majority coalition connected on the left-right axis, would thus have to involve the ÖVP, a fact from which the party expected to derive substantial bargaining power. Compared to previous elections, the bargaining position of the ÖVP had improved, in spite of the party's electoral losses.

Table 6.1  
*Austrian election results, 1999*

Party	Votes		Seats	
	% (change since 1995)	N	% (change since 1995)	
Austrian Freedom Party	26.9 (+5.0)	52	28.4 (+6.2)	
Greens	7.4 (+2.6)	14	7.7 (+3.8)	
Austrian People's Party	26.9 (-1.4)	52	28.4 (+0.0)	
Austrian Socialist Party	33.2 (-4.8)	65	35.5 (-3.3)	

Source: Fallend 2001

The election results did not point at a specific coalition clearly preferred by voters. Consequentially, politicians, commentators and public disagreed about what was the most likely coalition government to assume office. Three combinations of parties controlled a parliamentary majority: SPÖ and ÖVP

(117 seats), SPÖ and FPÖ (117 seats), and ÖVP and FPÖ (104 seats).<sup>138</sup> In mathematical terms, the three coalitions were roughly equivalent, with the coalitions involving the SPÖ having a broader parliamentary majority than the coalition between ÖVP and FPÖ. Ideological unconnectedness and the a priori commitment of the SPÖ not to govern with the FPÖ made the SPÖ-FPÖ coalition highly unlikely. Two possibilities thus stood out: continuation of the previous government or a change of coalition government in favour of the Small Coalition.

The split that was already apparent in the last years of Grand Coalition rule, the electoral campaign, and in the opinion polls conducted prior to the elections, surfaced again. Some commentators maintained that the grand coalition was still broadly supported, since it had the strongest electoral basis. Others interpreted the elections results as a "Fahrt ins Blaue" (Welan 2000b: 5), or shift to the right (Müller 2000a), and claimed a rejection of traditional coalition patterns. The weekly magazine *Format* put the anticipation of the latter faction into words with the telling headline "Österreich wählt die Wende: Kommt Schwarz-Blau?" (*Format* 04-10-1999).

### **The coalition negotiations**

Change seemed far away, however, when SPÖ formateur Klima attempted to reform the Grand Coalition. After months of explorations and negotiations his efforts turned out to have been futile, and a coalition of ÖVP and FPÖ assumed office instead. The bourgeois bloc had been able to reach agreement, where the old coalition partners had not. A detailed account of the various rounds of coalition negotiations is needed to understand the failure of Klima, on the one, and the success of ÖVP leader Schüssel, on the other hand.

#### *Negotiations between SPÖ and ÖVP*

Once the election results had been officialized, the ÖVP repeated that it lacked popular endorsement and would not take up government responsibility. This created a stalemate, which President Thomas Klestil (ÖVP) sought to resolve through several rounds of 'sounding-out talks' between the leaders of the four parties represented in the Austrian parliament. The focus in these talks, which constituted a novelty in Austrian politics,<sup>139</sup> was primarily on policy issues. The aim was to find enough common ground between the parties to justify official coalition negotiations.

However, many politicians and commentators felt that the talks were unnecessary, since the positions of all parties were well-known. The FPÖ was particularly dissatisfied with Klestil's strategy to appease the troubled relations between the SPÖ and ÖVP, because his interference ignored the will of the electorate. It judged that the President was reluctant to accept the FPÖ

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<sup>138</sup> Given that four parties were elected to the National Council, fifteen combinations of parties could have theoretically assumed office. Four of the fifteen options concerned single-party governments, while eleven represented coalitions of parties. Of these fifteen alternatives, seven would have been minority and eight majority governments. In the latter category, three coalition had minimal winning status (the mentioned combinations of SPÖ and ÖVP, SPÖ and FPÖ, and ÖVP and FPÖ), while the remaining five would have been oversized cabinets.

<sup>139</sup> Traditionally, the Federal President directly designates a formateur, who conducts the coalition negotiations, draws up a government programme, and recruits a government team. The position of formateur pertains normally to the largest party in parliament, and until 1999 this party had always succeeded in forming a government coalition (Falland 2000; Welan 2000a; 2000b).

as a government party, even though he had previously declared that he did not perceive fundamental obstacles to the government participation of this party. His reluctance appears to have been motivated by fear of international protests, which later turned out to be justified (Fallend 2001: 241).

The sounding-out talks, which lasted until December 6, demonstrated that the ÖVP was, in policy terms, significantly closer to the FPÖ than to the SPÖ, especially in the areas of economic policy, family policy, and security policy (Fallend 2000: 333). However, by that time public dissatisfaction with the pace of the talks had become particularly worrying, and President Klestil pressured the ÖVP to make up its mind. In response to the public dissatisfaction, the ÖVP announced its willingness to govern on December 5, arguing that "the sounding-out talks have shown that there can be no stable government in Austria without the People's Party". Although the ÖVP decision was commonly regarded as a strategic move, the party maintained that it had wished to go into opposition, but could "for the sake of the public interest could not refute [to join the coalition]" (Burkert-Dottolo 2000: 40).

On December 9, coalition negotiations started with the official designation of SPÖ's Klima as formateur. With this step, President Klestil followed Austrian convention that the largest party in parliament received the assignment to form a coalition government. Klima was instructed to build a "stable government with a solid majority in parliament and respect at home and abroad", a reflection of President Klestil's preference for the renewal of the SPÖ-ÖVP coalition. The negotiation teams of the two parties consisted of leading party officials: formateur Klima was joined by Heinz Fischer, Peter Kostelka, Barbara Prammer, Michael Häupl, and Rudolf Nürnberger, while the ÖVP team consisted of party leader Schüssel, Wilhelm Molterer, Elisabeth Gehrler, Elisabeth Zanon, Maria Rauch-Kallat, Josef Pühringer, and Andreas Khol.<sup>140</sup> The teams were divided into subgroups that were to negotiate about specific issues. The ÖVP brought a list of demands to the coalition table. It wished to achieve the consolidation of the budget, realize a strong democracy, improve on Austria's attractiveness as a business location, create more (economic) freedom and opportunities, promote cooperation between societal groups and encourage use of opportunities provided by European integration (ÖVP 1999). On these issues, the party declared that it was unwilling to compromise; the SPÖ had to either take or leave this package of reforms.

With these demands in mind, the coalition negotiations commenced on December 17. Until early January the prospects for another period of Grand Coalition governance appeared good, even though official statements about the progress of the negotiations were scarce. The most important statement, quoted in Ender (2000: 248), read that

"the SPÖ and ÖVP have started talks about the formation of a government in accordance with the mandate received from the president. The parties have agreed to inform the president about the progress of the negotiations by the end of the year. Moreover, they have agreed to maintain strict confidentiality in the interest of constructive objectivity. The shared objective is to clarify the possibilities of government formation by mid-January."

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<sup>140</sup> The two teams were comprised of a broad cross-section of political functionaries (e.g. presidents of the National Council, ministers in the previous Grand Coalition, and representatives of the various *Länder*). The negotiators also represented various ideological tendencies in the two parties, and had previously expressed a wide variety of coalition preferences.

It goes without saying that this statement gave fuel to speculations that the negotiations had reached a dead end. The two teams nevertheless presented an agreement to their party executives on January 18. The agreement detailed a list of reforms that covered a broad range of policy domains and included reorganization of the military, participation in EU defence policies (and hence *de facto* abolishment of neutrality), electoral reforms, further federalization, and a series of socio-economic reforms amongst which liberalization of various aspects of the social system and promotion of the business environment featured prominently (Heinisch 2002: 234). In the ÖVP 23 of the 27 members voted in favour of the agreement, in the SPÖ the agreement was supported by 32 of 45 members.

Although a formal agreement had been reached and ratified, the ÖVP pushed for additional concessions. It demanded that the SPÖ hand over the Finance ministry in exchange for the Foreign Affairs ministry, and that the coalition agreement, including the austerity measures, were officially endorsed by the powerful and recalcitrant *Österreichischen Gewerkschaftsbund* (ÖBG). The SPÖ leadership tried to accommodate these demands, but encountered strong internal opposition to the concessions. The chair of the trade union for metal workers refused to endorse the coalition agreement, and his decision was supported by a substantial portion of the SPÖ members. Formateur Klima had no other choice than to inform Schüssel that the requested concessions could not be granted, upon which the latter concluded that the negotiations had failed. Subsequently, the termination of the coalition talks was acknowledged on January 21, even though the announcement of the successful re-formation of the Grand Coalition had already gone to press.

Given the conditions surrounding the breakdown of the negotiations, many in the SPÖ claimed that the ÖVP never intended to govern with the socialists and that the negotiations were merely a way to demonstrate the lack of common ground between the two parties. This would legitimize the subsequent decision of the ÖVP to cooperate with the FPÖ. Scholars still disagree today about the true motives of the ÖVP, and it is extremely difficult to verify this type of political "Dolchstoß-Legenden" (Ender 2000: 244). Retrospectively, there are several scholars that claim that the ÖVP engaged in coalition negotiations with the SPÖ, but never intended to govern with this party. Luther (2003b: 136), for example, declares that

"it is now widely believed Schüssel had long since decided the only way to staunch losses his party had been suffering since the early 1980s was to coalesce with the FPÖ. Aware that 'supping with the devil' would be unpopular, Schüssel maintained the appearance of engaging in serious coalition talks with the SPÖ, but deliberately set conditions he knew the SPÖ would be unable to agree on".

This analysis is supported by the persistent rumours about parallel negotiations between the ÖVP and FPÖ (similar, albeit less persistent, rumours exist about negotiations between SPÖ and FPÖ).<sup>141</sup> According to ÖVP officials, these negotiations only took place in the framework of sounding-out talks, and ceased when the coalition negotiations between SPÖ and ÖVP started in December.<sup>142</sup> ÖVP-leader Schüssel has declared that "parallel

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<sup>141</sup> According to Burkert-Dottolo (2000: 39), SPÖ's parliamentary chair Peter Kostelka held several secret meetings with his FPÖ colleague Herbert Scheibner in Paris.

<sup>142</sup> Andreas Khol remembers a meeting on November 2 (i.e. prior to the start of the negotiations between SPÖ and ÖVP) in which "all themes within the framework of the

negotiations were not serious" (*Format* 10-01-2000) and that the ÖVP was committed to continuation of the Grand Coalition.<sup>143</sup> This is disputed by several FPÖ politicians, who have confirmed the existence of parallel negotiations (e.g. Burkert-Dottolo 2000; Luther 2003a). A crucial role seemed to have been played by Martin Bartensteiner, at the time Minister of Environment, Youth, and Family, and known for his good relations with the FPÖ, who met on several occasions with officials from the radical right-wing populist party (De Smet 2003: 151).

Regardless of the truth there is to these rumours, the ÖVP certainly increased its walk away value on the basis of the (alleged) parallel negotiations. It could credibly threaten to leave the negotiations and form an alternative coalition. The ÖVP reminded the SPÖ on a regular basis of this possibility. In an interview with the *Tiroler Tageszeitung* on December 27, for example, Andreas Kohl stated that the small coalition was a viable option in case of a non-agreement with the SPÖ (quoted in Burkert-Dottolo 2000: 42). In a similar fashion, Herbert Paiarl, member of the Styrian *Wirtschaftslandesrat*, declared on December 28 that upon reformation of the old coalition the ÖVP would be dragged down by the SPÖ (in Ender 2000: 247). Political commentators also estimated that Black-Blue was the only feasible alternative to Red-Black. *Die Presse* (17-12-1999) estimated that "if the Red-Black negotiations fail, the inevitable alternative will be a coalition between ÖVP and FPÖ – either with or without new elections".

The rumours were also fuelled by the behavior of the FPÖ, which continuously stressed its willingness to govern with either of the mainstream parties. According to Haider, the Freedomites could govern with any party. The FPÖ leader further declared that he personally believed that Austrian politics "had reached a turning point" and the odds for an ÖVP-FPÖ coalition were 60 to 40 (*Profil* 10-01-2000). Mid-January the party presented an alternative government program, under the header *Ideen 2000 – Unser Programm für Österreichs Zukunft*. It contained plans to consolidate the budget, strengthen the economy, create jobs, improve income, secure old-age pensions, ensure internal and external security and reform democracy (FPÖ 2000). The program underlined the similarities between the policy objectives of the FPÖ and the ÖVP, and thus highlighted once again the likelihood of political change.

Although these facts give some credit to the assertion that the ÖVP went into the coalition negotiations with the SPÖ under false pretext, it is important to note that, no matter what went on during the negotiations, the causes for their failure transcend the events of the 1999 bargaining process. As has been highlighted before, the relations between the SPÖ and ÖVP had slowly deteriorated since the re-establishment of the Grand Coalition in 1986. A number of political conflicts; e.g. the already mentioned sale of the CA, as well as the adversarial and self-centred campaign of the SPÖ, had created an atmosphere in which cooperation was ever more difficult. In short, the relationship between the Grand Coalition partners had gone sour prior to the 1999 elections, as a consequence of which neither of the two teams was willing to compromise when the coalition negotiations reached a crucial stage.

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constitutional arc" were discussed, including the FPÖ's ideas for a child cheque, a flat tax, and a Third Republic. According to Kohl, the radical right-wing populist party was surprisingly flexible when it came to many of its core issues (Ender 2000: 246).

<sup>143</sup> The claim of the ÖVP leader is contradicted by other leading ÖVP politicians. Landeshauptman Pröll (Niederösterreich), for example, has stated that, "in reality, the union between the ÖVP and FPÖ was brought about by the behaviour of the SPÖ and had been prepared for a long time" (Quoted in Burkert-Dottolo 2000: 53).

### *The formation of the Small Coalition*

It therefore came as no surprise that the ÖVP turned to the FPÖ after the negotiations with the SPÖ had come to an unsuccessful end. President Klestil's suggestion that formateur Klima could explore the formation of a minority government comprised of independent experts was rejected by ÖVP and FPÖ and therefore not a realistic alternative.<sup>144</sup> Instead, the ÖVP and FPÖ entered negotiations without the consent of the president. Within one week, the parties managed to agree on a government program and composed a ministerial team. The parties clearly benefited from the sounding-out talks held in November, during which agreement had already been reached in many areas.

According to the coalition agreement, each party received six ministries. The distribution of ministries is listed in table 6.2. The chancellorship went, as expected, to Wolfgang Schüssel, the vice-chancellorship was given to Haider's secondant, Susanne Riess-Passer; often referred to as "her master's voice" (De Smet 2003: 155). That Haider was, however, by no means irrelevant to the Black-Blue government, was demonstrated at the press conference in which the coalition agreement was clarified. Traditionally this press conference is attended by the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor; in the case of the presentation of the ÖVP-FPÖ programme, Jörg Haider replaced Susanne Riess-Passer. Another novelty constituted the establishment of a coalition committee, which was to coordinate government actions, and in which Haider secured a prominent position.

The coalition agreement between the bourgeois parties represented a synthesis of the ÖVP and FPÖ programmes, even though the ÖVP clearly drove a more successful bargain and managed to include more of its wishes in the final document. The agreement consisted of proposals in fifteen policy domains.<sup>145</sup> The most important proposals regarded economic and budget reform, most notably the curtailment of the corporatist system (e.g. limitation of the powers of the Social Partnership and trade unions), fiscal reform, pension reform, privatization (e.g. liberalization of the energy market), reductions of bureaucratic regulations, reductions of social welfare benefits, and tax reductions for enterprises (Minkenberg 2001; ÖVP-FPÖ 2000). The agreement further contained several proposals to reform immigration procedures, most notably the streamlining of administrative and expulsion procedures. The introduction of an integration contract also found its way into the coalition agreement. Other controversial claims of the FPÖ were not honored: the party failed to realize the idea of a child cheque and had to settle for an extension of maternity leave instead. What is more, the implementation of a flat tax was postponed till further notice. The coalition agreement was surprisingly similar to the agreement that had been reached

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<sup>144</sup> More precisely, SPÖ Minister of Interior Karl Schlögl offered Haider a deal in which the FPÖ supported two budgets of an SPÖ minority government in return for new elections (Ender 2000: 253). According to Höbelt (2003: 184), Vienna Mayor Häupl even talked with his former fellow-student about two to four cabinet nominations for the FPÖ. Supposedly, Klima also offered Haider to help his party improve its image abroad. The SPÖ was unwilling, however, to put these promises in writing, and the FPÖ-leader therefore declined the offer.

<sup>145</sup> The policy domains were entitled: foreign and European policy, strong democracy, new social contract, domestic security and integration, education and sport, science and research, strengthening of business investment in Austria, effective state, federalization, environmental policy, art and culture, development of media, justice, security policy, armed forces, and budget policy.

between SPÖ and ÖVP prior to the breakdown of their negotiations; roughly 90 per cent of the agreement concluded between ÖVP and FPÖ was identical to that previously reached by SPÖ and ÖVP (Fallend 2001: 242).

Table 6.2  
*Composition of Schüssel I*

ÖVP	
Wolfgang Schüssel	Federal Chancellor
Martin Bartenstein	Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Labour
Benita Ferrero-Waldner	Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs
Elisabeth Gehrer	Federal Minister for Education, Science, and Culture
Wilhelm Molterer	Federal Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, the Environment and Water Management
Ernst Strasser	Federal Minister of Interior

FPÖ	
Susanne Riess-Passer	Vice Chancellor; Federal Minister for Public Services and Sports
Karl-Heinz Grassler	Federal Minister of Finance
Michael Krüger	Federal Minister of Justice
Elisabeth Sickl	Federal Minister for Social Security and Generations
Herbert Scheibner	Federal Minister for National Defence
Michael Schmid	Federal Minister for Transport, Innovation and Technology

Source: Falland 2001

On February 1, the coalition negotiations were finalized, and the coalition agreement submitted to the respective party executives. The FPÖ ratified the agreement unanimously, the ÖVP with one vote against. After ratification, the government programme and team were presented to President Klestil, who swore the government in on February 4.<sup>146</sup> He nevertheless managed to show his disapproval of the new government, by refusing two of the proposed FPÖ ministers: Thomas Prinzhorn and Hilmar Kabas.<sup>147</sup> The President also assured that a special preamble was added to the coalition agreement, entitled "Responsibility for Austria – A Future in the Heart of Europe", which stipulated that the government was committed to Austria's EU membership and respected democratic values, the rule of law, and human rights, and was willing to fight against xenophobia, anti-Semitism and racism (Fallend 2001: 242-243; ÖVP-FPÖ 2000).

<sup>146</sup> This means that, officially, the coalition negotiations lasted a total of 129 days, which was only six days less than the longest coalition negotiations ever in Austrian parliamentary history (Falland 2001: 243).

<sup>147</sup> The candidacy of Thomas Prinzhorn was contested, because he had claimed that the Austrian social services provided foreigners with free hormones to increase birth rates. Hilmar Kabas' candidacy was declined, because, as the chairman of the FPÖ-branch in Vienna, he had been responsible for the aggressive anti-immigrant campaign in the run-up to the European elections (Falland 2000).

### *National and international reactions*

Despite these gestures, national and international protests erupted over the (prospective) government participation of the FPÖ. Several mass demonstrations were organized in Austria, the most successful rallying 250,000 people in Vienna on February 19. The organization of the protest was in the hands of *SOS-Mitmensch*, which had also campaigned against the FPÖ's "Austria First" petition. The protesters called for an 'open Austria' and opposed intolerance and racism. Demonstrations against the ÖVP-FPÖ government continued on subsequent Thursdays (the so-called *Donnerstag Demonstrationen*), albeit with fewer protesters, a practice only abandoned in 2002.

Already during the election campaign, commentators had warned that a ÖVP-FPÖ coalition could harm Austria's position on the international scene. The international concern with the FPÖ was certainly not new; the European Parliament had, for example, adopted a resolution in 1991 to condemn Haider's statements about the employment policies in the Third Reich and the FPÖ had been forced to leave the Liberal International in 1993. But the extent to which international forces reacted to the prospects of an ÖVP-FPÖ government was unforeseen. Especially the threat of the EU-14 to implement a series of sanctions against Austria, came as a surprise to many Austrians.

The deterrence of international punishment did not prevent the ÖVP-FPÖ government from assuming office, and the sanctions took effect immediately after the appointment of the new government. The EU-14 agreed to break bilateral contacts with members of the Austrian government; to withdraw the support for Austrians that applied for positions in international organisations; and to reduce all diplomatic contacts with the Austria state to technical issues only (Fallend 2001: 242). Although these sanctions had a strict bilateral character, they nevertheless marginalized Austria within the EU institutions.<sup>148</sup> The motivations for the sanctions were two-fold. On the EU level, concerns with human rights and democratic principles played a role central role, as did the embeddedness of the Austrian opponents of the Black-Blue coalition in transnational party federations.<sup>149</sup> However, the sanctions reflected domestic concerns with the growth of radical right-wing populist parties as well.<sup>150</sup> Furthermore, several Austrian political actors are said to have urged their European colleagues to discourage the formation of the ÖVP-FPÖ government. The sanctions thus served a dual purpose, one related to value-based norms and situated on the European level, the other associated to self-interest and national political affairs (Merlingen, Mudde, and Sedelmeier 2001).

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<sup>148</sup> Officially fourteen individual countries collectively imposed sanctions that fell beyond the scope of the judicial and institutional framework of the EU (Merlingen, Mudde, and Sedelmeier 2001).

<sup>149</sup> Heinisch (2002) gives a detailed account of the international processes that preceded the sanctions, which suggests that contacts between SPÖ leader Klima and President Klestil, on the one hand, and their social democratic and conservative colleagues, on the other, facilitated the intervention of the EU-14. Contacts with French politicians seem to have been crucial, and the influence of President Jacques Chirac on the sanctions disproportional.

<sup>150</sup> The success of radical right-wing populist parties was perceived by some liberal and conservative party leaders as a threat to their positions. Although the ÖVP belonged to the same European parliamentary faction as for example Jacques Chirac's RPR and Guy Verhofstadt's VLD, the strongest criticism to the government participation of the FPÖ came exactly from these parties.

In addition to the sanctions of the EU-14, the ÖVP and FPÖ also faced international critique from Israel and the United States, who temporarily suspended diplomatic relations with Austria. The European Parliament passed a resolution that expressed concern with the political situation in Austria. The ÖVP was threatened with expulsion from the European Peoples' Party, and a wide range of cultural boycotts were imposed by various European and national organizations.

To counter the international pressure, Haider handed over the FPÖ party leadership to vice-Chancellor Riess-Passer. But what was designed as a conciliatory gesture, did not alter the relationship between Austria and the EU-14. Instead, a political impasse emerged as the sanctions seriously affected the daily practice in the EU institutions. Consequently, discontent with the sanctions grew, not only among European elites, but also among the European public

To resolve the deadlock, a Committee of Wise Men was appointed, which was to evaluate the new Austrian government and provide a way out. The committee, comprised of the former President of Finland, Martti Ahtisaari, the director of the Max-Planck-Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Jochen Frowein, and the former Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and former member of the European Commission, Marcelino Oreja, finalized its report in September 2000, concluding that the Austrian government was "committed to the common European values" and that its "respect in particular for the rights of minorities, refugees and immigrants is not inferior to that of the other European Union Members States". The report nevertheless included several critical notes regarding the nature of the FPÖ and the actions of some of its politicians. The general conclusion, however, stated that "the measures taken by the XIV Member States, if continued, would become counterproductive and should therefore be ended" (Ahtisaari, Frowein, and Oreja 2000), with which the international aftermath of construction of the ÖVP-FPÖ government came to a close.

### **Office-, policy-, and vote-seeking explanations for the *Wende***

In the previous chapters I have argued that explanations for the formation of government coalition involving radical right-wing populist parties should primarily be sought in the office-, policy-, and vote-seeking motives of mainstream and radical right-wing populist parties. Especially seat distributions, and more specifically the seat shares of radical right-wing populist parties, and policy distances between mainstream and radical right-wing populist parties, are crucial factors that account for the rise to power of radical right-wing populist parties in the second half of the 1990s and thereafter. This section investigates if and how these factors played a role in the construction of the Schüssel I government. Special attention is given to the causal mechanisms that underlie the effects observed in the previous chapters. With the focus on causal mechanisms also comes attention for the sequence in which events have taken place, and the hierarchical position of the various factors in the broader explanatory framework. The analysis pits the advantages and disadvantages of continuation of the Grand Coalition against those of the formation of the Small Coalition. The comparison of the properties of these two coalitions explains the ÖVP's preference for the latter option.

#### *Office- and vote-seeking explanations*

Only two coalition alternatives were discussed extensively during the coalition formation process: first, the continuation of the coalition of SPÖ and ÖVP,

and, later, the eventual government coalition of ÖVP and FPÖ. Each of these coalitions was predicted by the minimal winning and bargaining proposition theory. Neither the SPÖ nor the ÖVP seriously attempted to form a single-party minority government, because this type of construction does not fit with the Austrian tradition of stable government. Moreover, each of the parties involved in the coalition formation process perceived a number of substantive benefits to be acquired through government participation (e.g. access to the *Proporz* system, financial resources, portfolios), which made them unwilling to support a minority government (Müller 2000b: 16). This suggests that the primary actors in the coalition formation process behaved according to some of the most rudimentary principles of office-seeking coalition formation theories.

What gives the ÖVP-FPÖ coalition a clear advantage over the SPÖ-ÖVP coalition, is the fact that only the former coalition is predicted by the minimum size theory. The number of seats brought together in the Small Coalition (104) was significantly lower than that commanded by the Grand Coalition (117). In the Small Coalition, the ÖVP contributed 50 per cent of the seats, while in the Grand Coalition the party supplied 44 per cent of the seats. Consequentially, the proportion of the payoffs the ÖVP could expect to obtain in a coalition with the FPÖ was considerably higher than in a coalition with the SPÖ. The ÖVP placed great value on control over payoffs for two reasons. First, the party had been in a subordinate position in the Grand Coalition for 13 years. For a party that had previously dominated the same coalition, this was particularly hard to swallow. The junior position in the Grand Coalition deprived the ÖVP of the Chancellorship and had important implications for the extent to which the party could realize policy objectives. Second, Schüssel had made a pledge to re-conquer the Chancellorship when he took over the ÖVP leadership in 1995. To realize this goal the ÖVP would have to grow electorally, or build a government coalition in which it was the senior partner. Although neither of these options seemed feasible at the time of the 1999 elections, the ÖVP benefited from leverage it had over the FPÖ which made it *defacto* the senior partner in a prospective coalition.

It is noteworthy that minimal winning coalitions of the ÖVP and FPÖ have been a mathematical possibility since 1983. For many years, these potential coalitions did not have a viable character, because their parliamentary majority was too small. Between 1983 and 1996 the combined number of seats of the ÖVP and the FPÖ fluctuated between 93 and 95 (see table 6.3), which made the 'cushion' against defections and other problems between 1 and 3 seats. This type of majority is largely insufficient to secure the survival of a government coalition, especially when the stability and internal coherence of one of the coalition partners is not assured. Müller and Jenny (2000: 151) note that

"during the 20th legislature a coalition between ÖVP and FPÖ would only have had a majority of three seats. [...] While a majority of three seats was sufficient for the SPÖ single-party government between 1971 and 1979, but a coalition government does not only have to watch out for an outbreak of the flu, it also has to beware of dissent within the parliamentary factions on whose support it relies."

As a consequence of the electoral growth of the FPÖ, the parliamentary majority of the ÖVP-FPÖ government was much larger in 1999. With a total of 104 seats, the buffer against defections and other threats to the survival of the coalition was sufficient to justify the formation of a bourgeois coalition.

Table 6.3  
*Parliamentary basis for ÖVP-FPÖ coalitions between 1983 and 2002*

	ÖVP-FPÖ	ÖVP	FPÖ
1983	93	81	12
1986	95	77	18
1990	93	60	33
1994	94	52	42
1995	93	53	40
1999	104	52	52

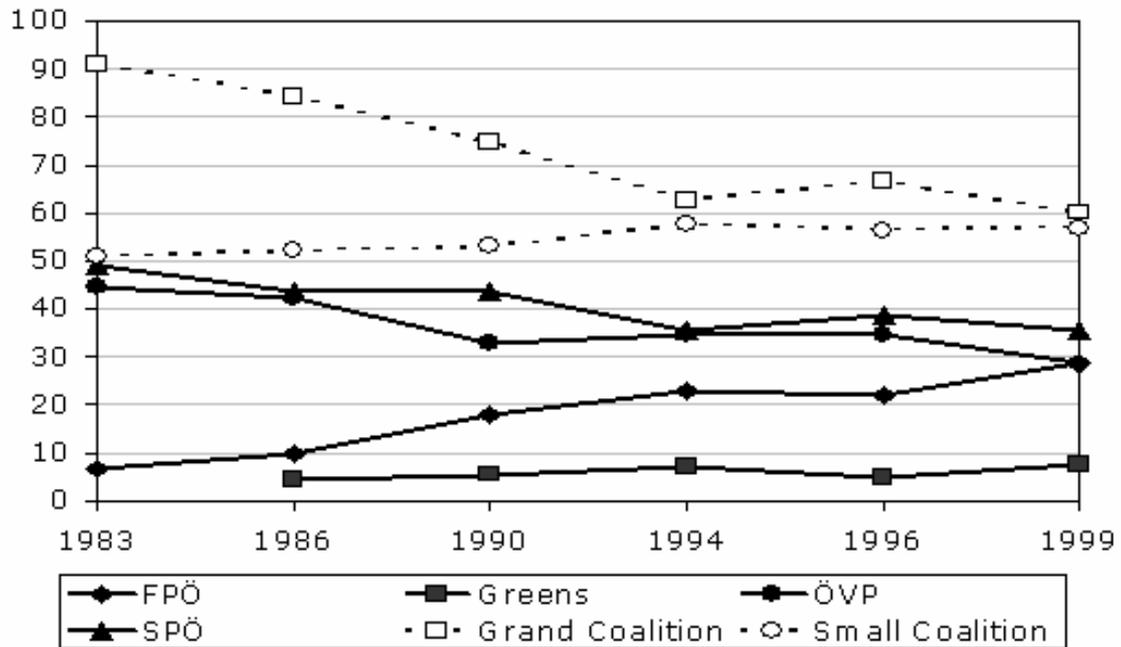
Note: the total number of seats in the Austrian National Council is 183, the number of seats required for a parliamentary majority 92

To these office-seeking considerations, one should also add vote-seeking considerations. These consist of interpretations given to previous electoral developments and estimations of future electoral trends. Table 6.3 shows that the electoral strength of the bourgeois bloc remained relatively stable during the 1980s and 1990s. The relative input of the two right-wing parties, however, changed considerably during this period (see also Figure 6.1). The contribution of the FPÖ to a bourgeois coalition increased, while that of the ÖVP decreased. The electoral growth of the FPÖ started in 1986, when the party garnered 9.7 per cent of the votes. This percentage was twice as high as the party had gained in previous elections. In subsequent elections this percentage increased to 16.6 in 1990, 22.5 in 1994, 21.9 in 1995, and 26.9 in 1999. Historically, the ÖVP has always been one of the two largest parties in the Austrian parliament. In the 1980s and 1990s, the ÖVP faced heavy electoral losses though, which eroded the position of the party. In 1983 it gained 43.2 per cent of the votes, a figure that dropped to 41.3 in 1986, 32.1 in 1990, 27.7 in 1994, 28.3 in 1995, and 26.9 in 1999. The electoral margin between the ÖVP and FPÖ shrunk from 38.2 per cent in 1983 to 31.6 per cent in 1986, 15.5 per cent in 1990, 5.2 per cent in 1994, and 6.4 per cent in 1995. The elections in 1999 were crucial in this respect, because the margin between the two parties disappeared. The ÖVP and FPÖ became equally strong, and the FPÖ surpassed the ÖVP even by 514 votes.

Estimations demonstrated that the electoral trends observable between 1983 and 1999 would continue in future elections. On the basis of opinion polls it could be concluded that the FPÖ would grow further, while the ÖVP would lose even more voters (*Der Standard* 19-01-2000; *Kleine Zeitung* 24-01-2000; Kopeinig and Kotanko 2000; Plasser and Ulram 2000: 192). The fact that the poll results further indicated that the rank-order of the Austrian parties would change. In 1999, the SPÖ came in first, and the ÖVP and FPÖ shared the second place. In future elections, the FPÖ was likely to become the largest party, with the SPÖ coming in second, and the ÖVP third.

The impact on the coalition formation process of these electoral trends was two-fold. First, the trends altered the cost-benefit calculations related to parties' office aspirations. Most notably, they created fears in the ÖVP that the party would not have a chance to obtain the Chancellorship if it waited for the next elections. According to Meysels (1995), this scenario had always been present in conservative minds. Apparently, "the phantom of a Black-Blue coalition government that could transform all too easily into a Blue-Black team under the proper leadership" haunted the nightmares of many ÖVP politicians.

Figure 6.1  
*Development of electoral support for Austrian parties, 1983-2002*



Second, the electoral trends shaped parties' vote-seeking behaviour. The substantial losses for the mainstream parties gave a clear indication of the public dissatisfaction with the Grand Coalition. Polls published during the coalition negotiations also confirmed disapproval for the decision to continue the Grand Coalition, as well as discontent with the slow pace of the coalition negotiations. Collectively, the polls indicated that the impasse in the coalition negotiations between the SPÖ and ÖVP could not be solved by new elections, because this would further erode the electoral positions of the mainstream parties.

This made the ÖVP hesitant to reform the Grand Coalition. Moreover, the party considered the possibility that the formation of the Small Coalition could stop the electoral losses of the ÖVP and perhaps even strengthen the position of the party again. Given the dissatisfaction with the Grand Coalition, the ÖVP believed that voters might return to the party when a change in coalition practices had been established. More importantly, expectations existed that the FPÖ would suffer electorally from the responsibilities that come with government membership. Its long absence from government and its populist character made the party especially vulnerable to negative incumbency effects.

There is substantial evidence that the ÖVP indeed expected that the FPÖ would not be able to cope with government responsibility. On the basis of interviews conducted with ÖVP-politicians, Ahlemeyer (2006: 119) concludes that "the parties' politicians voluntarily admit that their objective of integrating the FPÖ into government was also to undermine the 'opposition reflex', i.e. the FPÖ's capacity to attract voters who cast their vote rather 'against' the government than in favour of the opposition". According to Heinisch (2002: 229), Schüssel concluded that "trying to marginalize the FPÖ had not worked and that the only way to contain Haider was to bring the FPÖ in a position where they had to exercise governmental responsibility". In government the ÖVP anticipated "the domestication of the FPÖ as government party" (Müller 2006: 295). The ÖVP was aware, however, that

the occurrence of the desired electoral effects was conditional upon the functioning of the government coalition. Schüssel is quoted as having stated that "this coalition can only contain Jörg Haider if it delivers credible reforms and quarrels less" (quoted in Pelinka 2000: 240).

At the same time the formation of the Small Coalition also constituted an electoral risk for the ÖVP. Though support for the Grand Coalition decreased between 1990 and 1999, a plurality of Austrian voters listed the SPÖ-ÖVP coalition as their most preferred option. In 1990 and 1994 a majority of voters named it their most preferred coalition (65 per cent and 58 per cent respectively). In 1995 and 1999 support for the Grand Coalition fell below the 50 per cent threshold, but it remained the most popular (47 per cent and 48 per cent respectively). Voters appeared divided over the question which party should obtain the Chancellorship in a Grand Coalition. In 1990, 46 per cent of the voters supported a coalition led by the SPÖ, and 19 per cent a coalition led by the ÖVP. In 1995, the percentages were much closer together: 25 per cent in favour of the SPÖ and 22 per cent in favour of the ÖVP.

Support for a coalition of ÖVP and FPÖ almost doubled between 1990 and 1999. In 1990, this type of government coalition was named as most preferred by 11 per cent of the voters. In 1999 this figure had risen to 19 per cent. Other coalition alternatives were far less popular with Austrian voters. A coalition of SPÖ and FPÖ was named by 5 to 11 per cent of the voters as most preferred coalition, while another 2 to 18 per cent listed a coalition of SPÖ and Greens. The latter option never had a parliamentary majority though.<sup>151</sup>

Table 6.4  
*Coalition preferences of Austrian voters, 1990-1999*

	1990	1994	1995	1999
SPÖ-ÖVP/ÖVP-SPÖ	65	58	47	48
ÖVP-FPÖ	11	14	21	19
SPÖ-FPÖ	5	6	-	11
SPÖ-Green/SPÖ-Green-LIF	2	11	18	12
Other	12	8	8	3

Source: FESSEL-GfK, Exit Polls national elections (n=2000 – 2200 each)

A breakdown of the coalition preferences of voters, on the basis of party choice for the elections of 1999, demonstrates a clear preference of SPÖ and ÖVP voters for continuation of the Grand Coalition (supported by 73 per cent of the SPÖ voters and 79 per cent of the ÖVP voters). FPÖ voters are in majority in favour of the construction of the Black-Blue coalition (55 per

<sup>151</sup> Exit and opinion polls of other agencies paint a similar picture. An opinion poll conducted by Market, in November 1998, reports SPÖ-ÖVP/ÖVP-SPÖ 50 %, ÖVP-FPÖ 14 %, SPÖ-FPÖ 10 %, SPÖ-Green/SPÖ-Green-LIF 24 % (Seidl, Beutelmeyer and Wührer 1998/1999). An opinion poll published in *Der Standard*, on January 19, 2000, (i.e. at the time the coalition agreement between the SPÖ and ÖVP was submitted to the respective party executives for ratification) demonstrates that a minority of the Austrians was in favor of continuation of the Grand Coalition (46 per cent). An opinion poll published in the *Kleine Zeitung*, on January 24, 2000 (i.e. after the coalition negotiations between the SPÖ and ÖVP had ended), shows that support for the various coalition alternatives was minimal. More than a quarter of the Austrians discarded each of the coalition alternatives. Support for the ÖVP-FPÖ coalition did not surpass 10 per cent.

cent), even though a significant minority of FPÖ voters supports a coalition with the SPÖ (31 per cent). This division in the FPÖ electorate is probably the result of the fact that the FPÖ had recruited voters on an equal basis from the ÖVP and SPÖ. The support among ÖVP voters for an ÖVP-FPÖ coalition is limited (14 per cent).

Table 6.5  
*Coalition preferences of Austrian voters, 1999*

	Total voters	SPÖ-voters	ÖVP-voters	FPÖ-voters	Green-voters
SPÖ-ÖVP	48	73	79	3	11
ÖVP-FPÖ	19	1	14	55	2
SPÖ-FPÖ	11	5	1	31	2
SPÖ-Green-LIF	12	11	1	1	72
Other	6	3	4	9	12

Source FESSEL-GfK Exit Poll national elections 1999 (n=2200)

How do these coalition preferences relate to the widely cited dissatisfaction with the Grand Coalition? It appears that the Austrian electorate was highly divided at the time of the 1999 elections. First, there was no consensus that it was time for change. In an opinion poll conducted by *Market* in November 1998, 50 per cent of the respondents expressed that it was time for political change, while 37 per cent opposed this statement (Seidl, Beutelmeyer, and Wührer 1998/1999: 10). Especially within the latter camp, government participation of the FPÖ was a sensitive topic. An exit poll conducted in 1995, commissioned by the magazine *Profil*, demonstrated that roughly two-thirds of the Austrians rejected the idea of an ÖVP-FPÖ government, with 38 per cent of the population "strongly" and 29 per cent "somewhat opposed" (*Profil* 11-12-1995: 40).

Second, the voters in favor of political change fundamentally disagreed on the direction this should take. Various coalition alternatives to the Grand Coalition were named as most preferred coalition, none of which could clearly benefit from broad public support. The antagonistic relationship between the two exponents of new politics (FPÖ and Greens) complicated things further. FPÖ and Green voters generally have great antipathy for their ideological adversaries, as a consequence of which some of these voters preferred continuation of the Grand Coalition as the lesser evil.<sup>152</sup> Voters that had shifted from one of the mainstream parties to the FPÖ, tended to have a clear preference for a coalition that included their new party though (Plasser and Ulram 2002).

These figures establish that the ÖVP ran an electoral risk when they decided to ally with the FPÖ. Even though it counted to regain voters previously lost to the FPÖ, it risked the loss of current voters. According to Burket-Dottolo (2000: 31) "some of its voters wanted a 'change' almost at any cost after thirty years of social-democratic chancellorship, even if that meant accepting the FPÖ as a partner. An at least equally large share of voters was opposed to exactly this type of change". The ÖVP estimated, however, that the benefits outweighed the costs.

#### *Positions and distances: the left-right model*

<sup>152</sup> This point was brought to my attention by Prof. Peter A. Ulram.

Office- and vote-related explanations alone do not fully explain why the ÖVP preferred the Small Coalition over the Grand Coalition. Office-related explanations are an equally important part of the story. Any analysis of policy-seeking behaviour necessarily starts with an analysis of parties' policy positions. The placement of Austrian parties on the left-right axis has always been fairly consistent. The extremes of the political spectre are occupied by the Greens (on the left) and the FPÖ (on the right), between them one finds the SPÖ on the centre-left and the ÖVP on the centre-right. This type of rank-order is not only observable in the expert surveys used in this thesis, but also in Austrian expert surveys (Campbell 1992), elite studies (Müller and Jenny 2000), voter studies (Plasser and Ulram 1995; Plasser, Ulram, and Seeber 1996), and manifesto analyses (Jenny 2006); although some sources position the FPÖ to the left of the ÖVP in the 1970s and 1980s, as a consequence of its liberal phase (e.g. the mentioned voter surveys).<sup>153</sup> On the basis of the rank-ordering of the parties, two alternative coalitions have always been possible, namely the Grand coalition and the Small Coalition.

The ideological distance between the Austrian parties on the left-right dimension has, however, varied over time (see table 6.6). On the left-side of the political spectre, the policy positions of the Greens and the SPÖ have always been fairly consistent. Over the years the Greens have moved back and forth on the left extreme of the political spectre, with a minimum score of 2.1 and a maximum score of 2.5. The SPÖ has most of the time been located just above the four point threshold, with the notable exception of the first expert survey of Castles and Mair, in which the party was positioned more to the left. The trajectories of the right-wing parties are more volatile. According to the expert surveys, the ÖVP started out quite close to the centre of the left-right scale, moved towards the right to return to its original position, and move right-wards again. The positions attributed to the FPÖ reflect the process of radicalization that took place in the party during the late 1980s, and that are also documented by other data sources (Campbell 1992; Jenny 2006: 314). In recent years, the party has been firmly located on the right extreme of the left-right spectre with an average score of 8.5.

At the time of the 1999 election, the policy distance between the SPÖ and the ÖVP, on the one, and the ÖVP and the FPÖ, on the other hand, was almost identical. The SPÖ and ÖVP were both located close to the centre of the left-right scale; the SPÖ at 4.3, the ÖVP at 6.3. The policy distance between the two mainstream parties amounts to 2.0. The FPÖ is firmly situated at the right extreme of the left-right axis and the policy distance between the radical right-wing populist party and the ÖVP comprises 2.2. On the basis of these policy distances the minimal range theory predicts the formation of a coalition of the SPÖ and the ÖVP and not the formation of the Schüssel I government.

In this particular case the analysis at the party level is identical to that at the coalition level. Since each coalition consists of only two parties, the policy range of the coalition equals the policy distance between the prime minister party and the junior coalition party. The policy distance between the SPÖ, the intended prime minister party during the first round of negotiations, and the ÖVP is 20, while the policy distance between the ÖVP, the eventual prime minister party, and the FPÖ, the eventual junior coalition party, was 22. A historical perspective demonstrates that the policy distance between the

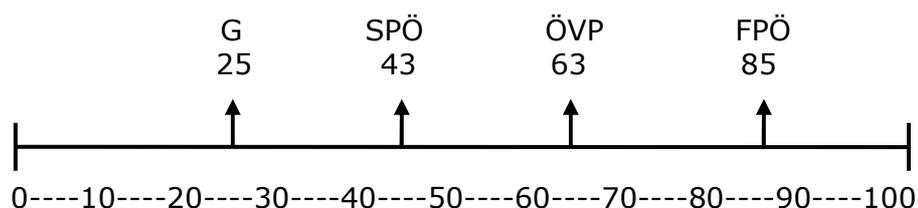
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<sup>153</sup> As a result of the short manifestos published by the FPÖ, analyses on the basis of manifestos also display some variation in that party's position (Horner 1987; Müller, Philipp, and Jenny 1995).

ÖVP and the FPÖ was significantly larger at previous coalition formation opportunities. In 1994, for example, the policy distance between the two parties amounted to 27. The policy distance between the mainstream parties, on the other hand, was with 16 significantly lower in that year. Over time the coalition alternative of the ÖVP and the FPÖ thus became more attractive in policy terms, while the current government coalition of the SPÖ and the ÖVP became less attractive, an observation for which there is plenty of evidence in the analysis conducted above.

At the time of the 1999 elections the policy ranges of the two coalition alternatives differed so little, that it is conceivable that the ÖVP did not have a clear preference for either of the alternatives. This observation fits well with the dual attempt to form a government coalition. This does not mean, however, that policy-oriented coalition formation theories cannot account for the formation of the Schüssel I government. It requires that one digs deeper to uncover the policy motives of the parties involved in the government formation process.<sup>154</sup>

Figure 6.2  
*Left-right positions of Austrian parties, 1999*



*Positions and distances: a multi-dimensional approach*

Even though the number of parties represented in the Austrian parliament is relatively limited, the left-right dimension still paints a simplified picture of the Austrian policy space. In reality, a number of policy dimensions structure party competition in Austria. The multi-dimensional complexity of the Austrian political space is, however, a point of debate. Scholars distinguish anywhere between two and five dimensions that structure inter-party competition in Austria. Müller (2000c: 87), for example, claims that, in addition to the traditional socio-economic left-right dimension, a religious dimension is relevant, which pits the anti-clerical SPÖ against the Christian ÖVP. Lubbers (2000) also conceives of a two-dimensional Austrian political space, but he estimates that immigration is the second dimension that structures competitive behavior. The polar positions on this dimension are taken up by the Greens and the FPÖ.

The most comprehensive account of the multi-dimensionality of the Austrian political space is provided by Müller and Jenny (2000), who asked politicians to place the four Austrian parties on five policy dimensions: 1) the traditional economic dimension; 2) the religious dimension; 3) the socio-

<sup>154</sup> Moreover, the difference in policy distance between the ÖVP and SPÖ, on the one, and the ÖVP and the FPÖ, on the other hand, is so small that it can easily be the result of measurement error.

cultural dimension; 4) a dimension pertaining to European integration; and 5) a dimension related to the Austrian political system. Since their investigation was conducted in 1997-1998, it is particularly well-positioned to shed light on the policy distances between the main protagonists of the 1999 coalition negotiations.

According to the authors, the economic dimension recreates the traditional left-right ranking of the Austrian parties, with the Greens positioned on the far left and the FPÖ on the far right. The mainstream parties are located between these two extremes, with the SPÖ leaning to the left and the ÖVP leaning to the right.<sup>155</sup> On this dimension the policy distance between the ÖVP and FPÖ is smaller than that between the SPÖ and the ÖVP, since the two right-wing parties share a common neo-liberal economic agenda. In the programme of the FPÖ one also finds several welfare chauvinist elements (e.g. maintenance of welfare support levels for autochthones, protection of national business interest), which might suggest that the party is subject to centrist tendencies as well. The general orientation of the FPÖ is, however, decidedly right-wing (Ahlemeyer 2006).

On the religious dimension the positions of the ÖVP and the FPÖ are reversed, with policy proximity between the SPÖ and the FPÖ as a result.<sup>156</sup> The ranking of the parties on this dimension is, however, problematic. The parliamentary survey conducted by Müller and Jenny fails to identify the reorientation of the FPÖ with regard to religious issues. Already in the mid-1990s Haider connected the immigration question, reduced to the problem of the Islam, to the Christian identity of Western Europe in general and Austria in particular. In Haider's words (1995: 31), "the social order of Islam is diametrically opposed to our Christian values. [...] the individual and freedom, as perceived by us, count for nothing, the fight for the faith, everything".<sup>157</sup> In the party's 1997 *Linzer Programm* the Freedomites officially departed from their long-standing anti-clerical tradition, and embraced Christianity as the "foundation of Europe". According to the party program, the threat of Islam called for "the preservation of the values, moral foundations, and traditions of the Christian Civilization" (FPÖ 1999: 112-113).

The inspiration for this programmatic reorientation was partly ideological (similar stances can be found in the programmes of other radical right-wing populist parties, such as that of the LPF), and partly strategic. It created "also a better condition for negotiations with the as potential coalition partner identified ÖVP" (Luther 2006: 379). Thus, even though the parliamentary study of Müller and Jenny suggests that the SPÖ and the ÖVP were the most compatible coalition partners on the religious dimension, by 1999 the ÖVP and the FPÖ arguably had more in common when it came to religious matters than the Grand Coalition partners.<sup>158</sup>

On the socio-cultural dimension the left-right ranking of the Austrian parties is identical to that on the economic dimension, and the smallest policy

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<sup>155</sup> The positions of the parties have been measured on the basis of five questions, related to social justice, the role of the state, the position of the welfare system, the importance of unemployment, and the internationalization of the Austrian economy.

<sup>156</sup> Positions measured on the basis of the abortion question.

<sup>157</sup> In the German version of Haider's book "the fight for the faith" reads "the holy war, the Djjihad" (Heinisch 2002: 126).

<sup>158</sup> The party ranking on the religious dimension presented by Müller and Jenny is, of course, a consequence of the narrow focus of the issues presented to the politicians in their elite study. The abortion issue is arguably not completely representative of the conflicts that structure the party ordering on this dimension.

distance is that between the ÖVP and the FPÖ.<sup>159</sup> Although the immigration issue was not very prominent in the 1999 campaign, the law and order issue, another component of the socio-cultural dimension, was. On this issue, the ÖVP and the FPÖ had largely identical positions, with the FPÖ proposing more extreme solutions to similar problems. Despite the relative unimportance of the immigration issue in the 1999 campaign, the socio-cultural dimension did play a substantial role in the coalition negotiations between the ÖVP and the FPÖ and the coalition agreement contained extensive measures to reduce immigration flows (cf. below).

The fourth dimension relates to the question of European integration. On this question, there is considerable consensus between the Austrian parties, with the FPÖ as a dissenting voice campaigning against (further) European integration.<sup>160</sup> The position taken by the FPÖ is in line with that of many other radical right-wing populist parties that reject the European Union on cultural grounds (Chiantera-Stutte 2002). Consequently, the Grand Coalition partners have the most compatible policy positions on the dimension of European integration.

On the fifth and final dimension, which relates to the party's attitudes towards the Austrian political system, the opposition parties disagree with the mainstream parties. The position of the FPÖ is particularly radical, while the Greens take a more moderate position. The SPÖ and the ÖVP defend the interests of mainstream parties against the plans for political renewal presented by the opposition parties.<sup>161</sup> Again it should be noted, however, that the parliamentary survey does not reflect changes in the FPÖ that took place in the run-up to the 1999 elections. The party's ambitious plan to erect a "Third Republic" had been abandoned in the *Linzer Programm*, and its anti-establishment rhetoric was toned down. The party nevertheless still advocated the "extensive overhaul of the Austrian system of government" and "a shift from a party-based to a personality-based voting system as well as expanding the instruments of direct democracy" (Heinisch 2002: 111). The changes in the party program are therefore unlikely to have reduced the distance between the FPÖ and mainstream parties to such an extent that other coalition preferences would have emerged on this dimension.

To summarize the multi-dimensional analysis, a coalition of the ÖVP and the FPÖ has the shortest policy distance on at least two, and arguably three policy dimensions: the economic, socio-cultural, and, in the light of additional research, religious). A coalition of SPÖ and ÖVP has a minimal policy distance on the dimension that pertains to the issues of European integration and the Austrian political system. Given that the economic dimension, and to a lesser extent the socio-cultural dimension, were particularly salient at the time of the 1999 elections, the formation of the Schüssel I government is consistent with the policy-orientations of the Austrian parties (Müller and Jenny 2000: 137). On other dimensions, not included in the survey, such as defence and foreign policy, the consensus between the ÖVP and the FPÖ has always been self-evident, given that both parties favour Austria's entry into NATO. Since the debate about Austrian neutrality played a significant role in the 1999 election campaign, this certainly further facilitated the formation of the Schüssel I government.

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<sup>159</sup> Positions measured on the basis of the security vs. civil right dilemma and the question of the liberalization of drugs legislation.

<sup>160</sup> Ranking derived from two questions concerning the Euro and border controls.

<sup>161</sup> The politicians were asked to express their satisfaction with the Austrian political system.

### *The role of salience: an opportunity for logrolling*

The conversion from a uni-dimensional to a multi-dimensional policy model increases our understanding of the formation of the Schüssel I government, because it demonstrates on which dimensions the ÖVP was located in closer proximity to the FPÖ, as compared to the SPÖ. The analysis can gain even more depth when issue and dimensional salience are taken into account.

In policy terms, salience refers to the "cognitive and motivational importance" actors attribute to dimensions or issues (Stokes 1966: 169). The saliency of issues and dimensions is likely to vary from one actor to the other. Müller and Jenny (2000: 141; see also Sjoblom 1968: 170ff) argue that "not all policy dimensions within a party system are of equal importance. Moreover, importance attached to policy dimensions can differ across parties. An issue that is vital for one party, can be considered marginal by another" In a similar fashion, Laver and Hunt (1992: 82) note that "different parties do indeed attach different weights to the same policy dimensions" in most West European countries (see also Benoit and Laver 2006).

The implications of these observations are far-reaching. When parties attribute different levels of salience to policy issues and dimensions, this affects the perceptions they have of other parties' policy positions, and of policy differences and similarities. For example, "when one actor weights a first dimension very highly and a second not at all, while another actor weights the second dimension very highly and the first dimension not at all [...] the two actors might even feel there is no difference between them in policy terms" (Laver and Hunt 1992: 80). This principle also works the other way round. When two parties have identical positions, but attach different levels of salience to these positions, they are likely to perceive the presence of substantial policy differences (Benoit and Laver 2006: 42). As a consequence of these differences in perceptions of policy positions, and of policy distances, individual parties will paint different pictures when asked to describe the configuration of parties in the political space. Laver and Hunt (1992: 76) claim in this respect that "if different actors do weight policy dimensions in different ways, then each will paint a different picture of the party constellations that characterise politics in each country".

Issue and dimensional salience play an important role in Austrian politics, and especially in the coalition formation process that took place after the 1999 elections. At the time of these elections, the four Austrian parliamentary parties attributed differential salience to various issues and dimensions. On a general level, the economic dimension and the socio-cultural dimension appeared particularly salient in Austrian politics. The prominence of economic and financial issues can be explained by the budgetary crisis that confronted Austria in the late 1990s. The question of European integration was less salient at the time of 1999 elections, since participation in the Euro had already been secured and the question of enlargement had not yet gained momentum (Müller and Jenny 2000). Religious issues appeared secondary at the time of the 1999 elections as well, even though family policy was quite prominent in the electoral campaign. Individual parties did attribute different levels of salience to these dimensions though. For the FPÖ and the Greens, the socio-cultural dimension and the dimension related to the Austrian political system were particularly relevant at the time of the 1999 elections. The SPÖ and the ÖVP attached more importance to the economic dimension. Even within one dimension, parties emphasized different issues. Although the ÖVP and FPÖ agreed on the importance of the religious dimension and family policy issues in particular, the former party proposed among other things an extension of maternity

leave, while the latter party especially strove for the introduction of a children's cheque.

The combination of multi-dimensionality of the policy space and variable dimensional saliency and issue saliency creates a particular environment in which logrolling is a distinct possibility. The term logrolling refers to a type of bargaining in which support for policy proposals is exchanged on the basis of the importance that is attached to particular issues. In other words, it refers to a situation in which parties negotiate on a *quid pro quo* basis.<sup>162</sup> In more formal terms, the logrolling deal represents a policy agreement in which "actor A agrees to accept the ideal policy of actor B on one dimension in exchange for actor B's agreement to accept the ideal policy of actor A on another dimension" (Laver and Hunt 1992: 80). It differs fundamentally from other types of policy agreements, which are based on the "split-the-difference" principle.

The coalition negotiations and coalition agreement between the ÖVP and the FPÖ are characterized by logrolling. According to Ahlemeyer (2006: 98), "the ÖVP gave almost free reign to the FPÖ in terms of immigration policies – as part of a *quid pro quo* between the two partners". In return, the FPÖ supported an extensive economic reform programme to which the ÖVP was strongly committed. This deal was attractive for several reasons. First, it allowed the ÖVP and FPÖ to realize the policy at the core of their policy programs. Second, it allowed the parties to please their electoral constituencies. Given that roughly 47 per cent of FPÖ voters listed the party's immigration position as the main reason they had cast a vote for it (Plasser, Ulram and Sommer 2000: 107), it was essential that the party obtained substantial policy concessions in this policy domain.

This account is supported by the course of the coalition negotiations in 2002, when the ÖVP engaged in mutual coalition negotiations with the Greens and the FPÖ. These two parties are situated on opposite ends of the political spectre, and particularly differ in their positions with regard to immigration issues. The ÖVP offered each party free reign in the domain of immigration policy. It appeared willing to revoke measures taken by the ÖVP-FPÖ government, when it negotiated with the Greens. At the same time, the ÖVP gave the FPÖ control over the immigration policy, when the incumbent parties decided to renew their government coalition (Ahlemeyer 2006: 114). The ÖVP's willingness to let parties legislate without any constraints in the domain of immigration policy, regardless of the specific policies they proposed, proves that the Christian-democratic party attached little significance to it.

The formation of the Schüssel I government demonstrates that it has been easier for the ÖVP and the FPÖ to reach a policy agreement, than for the SPÖ and the ÖVP. The reason for this difference extends beyond the simple explanation that the policy differences between SPÖ and ÖVP are greater than between ÖVP and FPÖ. A comprehensive explanation also includes the observation that the nature of the policy differences between SPÖ and ÖVP and ÖVP and FPÖ diverge. Where SPÖ and ÖVP take divergent positions on the same dimension, ÖVP and FPÖ take divergent positions on different dimensions. In the former situation the only solution is policy compromise, which requires that parties abandon their preferred policy

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<sup>162</sup> Logrolling, a practice common in the U.S. Congress, usually refers to the trading of votes by members of parliament to obtain the passage of legislation of interest to individual members of parliament. The practice relies on differential patterns of saliency of issues or dimensions. Logrolling is also closely associated with pork barrel; i.e. the realization of private goods for electoral constituencies (Weingast 1979; Shepsle and Weingast 1982; Grofman 1984).

positions. In the latter situation parties have the possibility to logroll, and realize part of their preferred policy positions. The policy preferences parties see included in the government agreement under this scheme are normally at the core of their policy program. The cost-benefit calculations in this situation are more positive than when a conventional policy compromise is reached.

The role of dimensional and issue saliency has received remarkably little attention in coalition formation research. Most policy-oriented models of government formation assume that policy proximity facilitates policy compromise, that the compromise agreed upon is located between government members and takes the form of the (un)weighted average of the policy positions of the parties involved in the coalition. However, if a party attaches particular importance to an issue, whether for principled or electoral reasons, it will find it more difficult to compromise on that issue than when it attaches little importance to an issue. Under these circumstances logrolling is a worthy alternative to conventional policy compromise.

The inclusion of logrolling in models of coalition formation significantly alters the nature of the coalition game, and consequently also the strategies by which it can be won. First, when logrolling is allowed, the coalition game no longer has a zero sum character; i.e. the gains of one party do not necessarily equal the losses of another party. Instead, the coalition game takes a variable or positive sum character (Müller and Jenny 2000). Moreover, policy proximity no longer assures a positive outcome of the coalition game. Actors can have markedly different and distant positions on the left-right dimension and still achieve a policy compromise that is satisfactory to the actors involved. In other words, the outcome of the coalition game is not necessarily situated in the centre of the policy space. The pressures on actors therefore differ.

In a coalition game, where the coalition agreement includes policy compromises, actors experience centripetal pressures; that is, they will converge in the centre of the policy space since this increases their chances of coalition membership. In a coalition game, where the coalition agreement includes logrolling deals, actors experience centrifugal pressures; that is, they diverge and move away from the centre of the policy space. Consequentially, logrolling benefits parties with extreme positions. "Indeed, if parties tend to feel more strongly about their more extreme policies (not an unreasonable assumption), then logrolling should produce policy packages located well away from the centre, with no pivotal role for the median legislator" (Budge and Laver 1986: 498). This would explain why a relatively high number of radical right-wing populist parties have been included in government coalitions, despite their unfavorable position on the right-wing extreme of the left-right axis.

Logrolling deals are less easy to maintain, because parties have more incentives to defect than when they make conventional policy compromises. Government proposals are submitted to parliamentary votes in sequential order. This enables parties to withdraw from the government coalition, once their most important policy proposals have been approved (Gallagher, Laver, and Mair 2006: 393). This logic could explain why government coalitions that include radical right-wing populist parties have proved highly unstable at times.

#### *Linking office-, and vote-seeking motives to policy considerations*

The saliency of particular issues also provides the link between the office- and vote-seeking motives of the Austrian parties, on the one hand, and their policy considerations, on the other. More than changes in policy positions,

changes in the saliency of certain political issues created a pattern of convergence and divergence that made the Small Coalition a more probable government coalition than the Grand Coalition. The reasons behind the changing patterns of issue saliency have been manifold, but electoral competition played a crucial role. To maintain or expand vote shares, the main actors in Austrian politics have abandoned old electoral alliances and established new ones. Party strategies have been revised in reaction to the electoral growth of new parties and the electoral unpopularity of the grand coalition. The traditional pattern of issue competition in Austria has been replaced with a new one, in which centrifugal tendencies and bipolarization have taken the place of centripetal tendencies, centre alliances, and consensual politics (Müller 2004). Thus, the rapprochement of the ÖVP and FPÖ, and the simultaneous drifting apart of the SPÖ and ÖVP, has been motivated by vote-seeking considerations and especially the desire to combat the success of the FPÖ. The result of these developments in the electoral arena is that the competition for government also has come to follow different dynamics. This logic is illustrated by the changing competition in the fields of immigration and family policy (cf. Heinisch 2002: chapter 9).

The immigration issue was first introduced by the FPÖ in the early 1990s. The party had three main reasons to campaign on the issue. First, it clearly resonated with the Austrian public as a result of a series of developments that have affected West European societies since the last quarter of the twentieth century (e.g. immigration flows, increased economic vulnerability). Second, the mainstream parties did not have consistent positions on this issue, because internal divisions existed between party factions. These divisions originated in the dual nature of the immigration issue, with a strong economic component, on the one hand, and a clear cultural dimension, on the other. This pitted the interests of blue-collar workers against multiculturalists in the SPÖ and business interests against cultural conservatives in the ÖVP. Third, and related, the FPÖ noticed the opportunity to split the electorates of the mainstream parties, since the divisions that ran through the party elite also existed at the mass level. The immigration issue thus quickly received considerable attention in Austrian politics, and turned into an important component of the FPÖ's expansion.

To counter the electoral success of the FPÖ, the mainstream parties took up the immigration issue; it has been a prominent part of the SPÖ-ÖVP coalition agreement since 1990. This further increased its salience. From 1992 onwards, the ÖVP increasingly sided with the FPÖ on the issue, while the SPÖ maintained an internationalist and multicultural stance.<sup>163</sup> Consequently, the policy distance between the two coalition partners grew on this dimension. Moreover, the interpretative scheme of the two parties differed, i.e. the economic versus the cultural interpretation, as did the specific emphasis within this policy domain, i.e. immigration vs. integration. This further complicated matters. Additionally, the ÖVP increasingly linked the immigration issue to other issues (e.g. security), albeit to a lesser extent than the FPÖ.

Hence, the efforts of the mainstream parties were insufficient to stop the electoral growth of the radical right-wing populist party. Voters seemed to prefer the original over the copy, and the manoeuvrability of the mainstream parties on the immigration issue was seriously constrained by their government responsibility, which bound them to a strictly defined national

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<sup>163</sup> It for instance mobilized actively for the "Multicultural Initiative", which was launched in reaction to the FPÖ's "Austria First Initiative".

and international legal framework. The actions of the mainstream parties simply proved the FPÖ's point and arguably furthered its success. Besides, the actions of the mainstream parties did not only fail to achieve their objectives, they unwillingly also drove a wedge between the Grand Coalition partners and produced a rationale for cooperation between the ÖVP and FPÖ. On many accounts the two right-wing parties agreed.

In the area of family policy, a similar story unfolded during the 1990s. The main difference with the immigration issue, however, consists of the fact that positions on this dimension have always been firmly rooted in the ideological identity of the Austrian parties. The way this policy domain has shaped competition is thus almost entirely related to variations in saliency. Throughout the twentieth century family policy has functioned as fission fungus between the SPÖ and ÖVP, with the SPÖ as defender of women's rights and advocate of social and economic equality, and the ÖVP as shepherd of the nuclear family. Well-aware of the conflict potential of the family issue, it was largely depoliticized when the Grand Coalition assumed office again in 1987.

However, when the ÖVP found itself trapped between its principles and government policy, which left little room to accomplish family policies because of the financial constraints imposed on the Grand Coalition in the 1990s, the party decided to radically change its course of action and emphasise its family-oriented character. Attempts by the FPÖ to acquire issue-ownership over family issues heightened the need for a distinct ÖVP profile on this dimension.<sup>164</sup> Of course, this reorientation of ÖVP strategy went at the expense of intracoalition relations and highlighted the disagreements in the grand coalition. In the run-up to the 1999 elections, family politics even appeared a threat to the survival of Red-Black. Significant signs in this respect were the appointment of Martin Bartenstein as minister of Family Politics,<sup>165</sup> and the ÖVP's decision to make infant money a "condition for continuation of the grand coalition" (*Der Standard* 01-01-1999). Thus, in the 1990s family issues gained more and more attention, bringing to the surface latent conflicts between the SPÖ and ÖVP and demonstrating the potential for cooperation between the ÖVP and FPÖ. Once in office, the ÖVP-FPÖ government introduced extensive reforms in the domain of family policy.

### **Alternative explanations**

Scholars of Austrian politics have frequently argued that the government participation of the FPÖ was the result of the increased legitimization of the radical right-wing populist party. The increased *Koalitionsfähigkeit* of the FPÖ is generally attributed to two factors: (1) the government participation of the party at the subnational level; and (2) the legitimization of the party and its program by the Austrian media, most notably the *Neue Kronenzeitung* (KZ). Although these two factors have facilitated the rise to power of the FPÖ, I do not attach the same importance to them as other scholars for two reasons. First, the increased *Koalitionsfähigkeit* of the FPÖ is directly related to changes in policy positions of the FPÖ, on the one hand, and the mainstream parties, on the other. The combination of intrinsic and instrumental policy-seeking motives that have brought about the ÖVP-FPÖ government, have

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<sup>164</sup> The FPÖ was interested in taking over issue ownership over family issues, because the party sought to enlarge its support among women. Like most radical right-wing populist parties, the FPÖ has always been underrepresented in the female electorate (e.g. Amesbergen and Halbmayer 2002).

<sup>165</sup> A staunch supporter of the Small Coalition, he took up the role of secret negotiator after the 1999 elections.

already been discussed extensively. I will nevertheless briefly outline the role government coalitions at the level of the *Länder* and the media in this process. Second, the sequence and timing of subnational government participation and media interventions and the FPÖ's government participation in 2000 contradict the existence of a direct causal relationship between the various developments. I therefore conclude that while subnational government experiences and media influence have acted as precipitants in the formation of the ÖVP-FPÖ cabinet, strategic calculations related to parties' office-, policy-, and vote-orientations have been the eventual triggers that brought this coalition into office in 2000.

#### *Entry from the periphery*

The FPÖ has always been an important player at the regional and local level. Traditionally, the party has regional strongholds in Carinthia, Styria, and Vorarlberg. The Austrian federal system converts substantial powers to the regional and local levels, and these are therefore perfect proving grounds for alternative government coalitions. The FPÖ has always participated in numerous municipal and state governments. A sharp increase in the number of positions occupied at the regional and local level occurred after Jörg Haider took over the party in 1986. Between 1981 and 1999 the FPÖ increased its number of mayoral posts from 27 to 36, its number of deputy mayors from 46 to 127, and its number of provincial government seats from 4 to 12. The party's mayors ruled important cities like Graz and Kufstein, while the FPÖ appointed the deputy mayor of Innsbruck. Moreover, Jörg Haider held the governorship of Carinthia from 1989 to 1991 and again from 1999 (Luther 2000: 432).<sup>166</sup>

Several authors have argued that the alliances formed between mainstream parties and the FPÖ at the subnational level, have facilitated the acceptance of the radical right-wing populist party at the national level, and promoted the formation of the ÖVP-FPÖ government coalition (Ahlemeyer 2006; Heinisch 2002; Kestel and Godmer 2004). According to Heinisch (2002: 107), subnational government experiences "allowed Haider and the party to demonstrate 'ability to govern' by trying to allay public fears that he and his followers were loose cannons that could not be trusted with a political office". These assessments appear to be in line with the more general observation that subnational government coalitions are "sources of feedback" that enable parties at the national level to "coalitional learning" (Downs 1998: 224). According to Dodd (1976: 217), "provincial or state parliaments could provide an experimental setting in which party coalitions could be attempted between long-term adversaries with the intermediate provincial experience

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<sup>166</sup> Haider's first term as Carinthian Governor came about in 1989, when the ÖVP supported his candidacy. He had to resign in 1991 though, after he had commented on the unemployment policies in the Third Reich. Three years later the FPÖ realized another electoral victory in Carinthia, but the party was unable to take over the governorship because of refusal of the ÖVP to (tacitly) support Haider's candidature. Allegedly, the ÖVP withdrew its support at the last minute under pressure of the national leadership. Personal animosities between Carinthian ÖVP and FPÖ politicians allegedly also played a role. Ahlemeyer (2006: 88) claims that "ÖVP politicians felt verbally and physically attacked by their FPÖ counterparts during interviews and the latter tried to take over the ÖVP politicians' offices". In the spring of 1999 the FPÖ won the elections again, this time with 42.1 per cent of the popular vote, compared to 32.9 per cent for the SPÖ and 20.8 per cent for the ÖVP. On the basis of these scores, the ÖVP was no longer willing to deny Haider the Carinthian governorship. The party abstained on the crucial vote (Dachs and Wolfgruber 2000).

making national-level coalitions more possible than they would be without the provincial experience”.

The existence of these “spillover” or “trickle-up” effects of subnational government are conditional upon a number of factors that are only weakly present in the Austrian case: unconstrained formation of subnational government coalitions, the positive evaluation of cooperation, and the presence of a temporal connection between subnational and national government coalitions. First, government formation at the subnational level is seriously constrained in many states by constitutional provisions that stipulate that parties, once they have past an electoral threshold, are entitled to governmental representation.<sup>167</sup> The representation of the FPÖ in government coalitions at the *Länder* level is therefore obliged by law. Second, for subnational experiences to have a spill-over or trickle-up effect, they have to be positive; i.e. it has to have been demonstrated that, in one way or another, the subnational government coalitions achieved the objectives for which they were formed. There is little documentation about the experiences mainstream parties had at the subnational level, and it is therefore difficult to assess to what extent mainstream parties have evaluated government coalitions with the FPÖ positively. Third, to establish a causal relationship between the subnational and national government participation, there has to be a temporal link between these two phenomena. Yet, cooperation between the FPÖ and the mainstream parties is a recurrent phenomenon in Austrian politics. Most striking is the example of Vorarlberg - the only *Land* in which the composition of the government coalition has never been fixed by constitution - in which the ÖVP and FPÖ have cooperated in a government coalition for over a quarter of a century, even though the ÖVP had a majority in the Landtag. Another telling fact in this respect is Jörg Haider’s belief that control over the governorship of Carinthia would serve as stepping stone for the Chancellorship in the 1989 general elections. His belief proved unfounded, and the FPÖ returned to its populist vote-maximizing strategies.<sup>168</sup>

The apparent influence of subnational experiences on national politics is thus unrealistic. It is more plausible that subnational and national politics are closely related, and that the conditions that instigated the formation of the national ÖVP-FPÖ government were present at roughly the same time at the subnational level. A number of more subtle and indirect effects of subnational politics on the formation of Schüssel I do exist though. First, subnational elections served as polls for national elections, and thus indicated the magnitude of the losses mainstream parties were to expect. In 1999, for example, the state elections in Carinthia, Salzburg, Tyrol, and Vorarlberg gave the mainstream parties a clear indication that they would lose substantial portions of voters to the FPÖ once again. This gave mainstream parties time to consider their strategic reactions to the probable victory of the FPÖ, and think about coalition alternatives. Second, at the subnational level parties were able to experiment with campaign strategies. This way they

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<sup>167</sup> Exceptions to this rule are found in Tyrol, Salzburg, Vienna, and Vorarlberg. Until 1999, however, the constitutions of Tyrol and Salzburg also provided for proportional governmental representation (Schauburger 1999).

<sup>168</sup> Some authors have pointed to the temporal connection between the formation of voluntary coalitions in Carinthia and Vorarlberg, in the Spring of 1999, and the formation of Schüssel I, after the elections later that year. It is questionable, however, whether these experiences can indeed have had an effect on national politics, since the time-span between the formation process at the subnational and national level were quite short. It seems almost impossible for national politicians to evaluate subnational experiences on the basis of only several months of tenure.

could assess how their voters reacted to plans executed in a later stage at the national level. The conquest of the Carinthian governorship in 1999 gave the FPÖ the opportunity to experiment "the southern strategy"; i.e. a less adversarial campaign tactic aimed at appeasing relations with the mainstream parties. Third, the Carinthian elections also tied Jörg Haider to his Land, which facilitated the formation of Schüssel I.

### *The role of the media*

A similar story can be told about the role of the media in the ascendance to power of Haider's FPÖ. Several scholars note that the Austrian written press, most notably the KZ, helped the radical right-wing populist party establish an image of respectability (Art 2005). The tabloid paper, which has the highest per capita readership in Western Europe, has indeed favored the FPÖ in various ways.

Most prominently, the KZ has had a series of indirect effects on the preferences of Austrian voters and contributed to the electoral success of the FPÖ (Art 2007). These effects run through two communication mechanisms: agenda-setting (or priming) and framing. First, the KZ has devoted considerable attention to the immigration issue and hence had an agenda-setting function. The extensive coverage of the immigration issue, by the tabloid paper enhanced the general saliency of the topic. Second, the KZ also framed the immigration issue through attention devoted to specific aspects of immigration (e.g. illegal immigration, link to criminality). Together, these elements made voters more susceptible to the campaigns of the FPÖ. Plasser and Ulram (2003), for example, note that anti-immigrant sentiments are more widespread amongst readers of Austrian tabloids than amongst the general public.

In addition to these indirect electoral effects, the KZ also supported the FPÖ in a more explicit fashion. On average the amount of coverage the FPÖ received in the KZ exceeded that devoted to the mainstream parties. The general tone of the coverage was usually positive and the tabloid even defended the party when it was under public scrutiny, for example after Haider's infamous statements about the labour policies of the Third Reich. It has often been said that the FPÖ benefited from the good personal relations its politicians maintained with the owner and writers of the KZ; e.g. columnist Richard Nimmerichter, who published under the pseudonym Staberl, and Wolf Martin (Meysels 1995: 150-151).

The KZ has, however, been rather sceptical about the government participation of the FPÖ. Even though the tabloid was for a long time one of the fiercest critics of the Grand Coalition, it supported continuation of this arrangement in 1999. Supposedly, this change of course was motivated by the friendship between the owner of the KZ, Hans Dichand, and President Klestil (Heinisch 2002: 233). The intensification of relations between the SPÖ and the KZ appears to have played a role as well (NRC 31-01-2000). In line with its support for continuation of the Grand Coalition, the KZ argued against a leap in the unknown of a Small Coalition. On November 29, 1999, the tabloid published an opinion article in a series entitled *Gedanken zur Politischen Situation*, that stated: "The current circumstances beg the question, what exactly is currently going on with Jörg Haider. After the elections Haider declared that a coalition would only, if ever, be possible without Schüssel. Now rumour has it that Jörg Haider would be ready to clear the way for Schüssel to become Chancellor".

Given the stances taken by the KZ during the coalition negotiations, it is highly unlikely that it directly influenced the coalition outcome. It thus

seems that the impact of the KZ has been primarily circumlocutory. The newspaper certainly has persuaded voters to cast their ballot for the FPÖ, which in turn has influenced coalition politics. Moreover, the way in which the KZ promoted the immigration issue has augmented pressures on mainstream parties to take up the issue and change positions. In the long run this has led to the divergence of the ÖVP and SPÖ and the convergence of the ÖVP and FPÖ. In short, the KZ has contributed to the changes in Austrian politics that eventually altered the office-, policy-, and vote-seeking behavior of mainstream parties. Direct effects on the coalition behavior of the Austrian parties cannot be established though.

### *Veto-players*

In addition to these factors that have served as precipitants, scholars of Austrian politics have also devoted considerable attention to potential deterrents, that is, factors that could have, or ought to have prevented the formation of the Small Coalition.

Although parties seek to form government coalitions out of the public eye, they are not immune to external influences when they decide their coalition strategies. Parties are answerable not only to voters, but also to a wide variety of political and non-political actors. If these actors are opposed to certain coalition outcomes, they can mobilize to influence the coalition formation process. As De Swaan (1973: 86) has argued,

“certain institutions and organizations in the surrounding society, e.g. business, finance, churches, trade unions, the army, universities, may entertain ties with only a relatively small number of representatives in parliament and yet such interests may occupy a position that makes it necessary to seek their consent, or to form large majorities in order to overcome their opposition, if the parliamentary decisions is not to remain ineffective”.

These actors are called *external veto players* (Strom, Budge, and Laver 1994a: 319). Especially pillarized systems, like the Austrian one, external veto players can have a substantial impact on coalition outcomes, because in these systems their positions and power are institutionalized.

The formation of Schüssel I has been highly contested. Numerous actors have attempted to intervene in the coalition formation process, but two of these stand out. A first important veto-player, Thomas Klestil, actively tried to prevent the formation of the ÖVP-FPÖ government coalition through his presidential prerogatives. A second important veto-player, the EU-14, actively attempted to persuade the ÖVP to select a different coalition partner through the threat of sanctions.

In the end, both actors certainly influenced the course of the coalition formation process, but they had little impact on the actual coalition outcome. President Klestil is responsible for the invention of sounding-out talks and the lengthy coalition negotiations between the SPÖ and ÖVP. Moreover, he enforced the inclusion of a preamble in the coalition agreement and vetoed two ministerial candidates proposed by the FPÖ. His freedom of action was, however, constrained by constitutional regulations and electoral considerations, and he was unable to bring about another Grand Coalition. The sanctions of the EU-14 forced Haider to resign from the party leadership, which created a series of internal problems for the FPÖ that precipitated the downfall of Schüssel I. However, the primary objective of EU-14 intervention, a government coalition of different composition, was not realized.

One reason for the limited influence of these veto-players is the fact that the ÖVP anticipated the contestation that would follow from the construction of a government coalition with the FPÖ. An interview with former ÖVP leader Alois Mock, published in 1995, coincidentally also a specialist in foreign affairs, shows the high awareness of the consequences of cooperation with the FPÖ. According to Mock, "a coalition with Haider would certainly have put a strain on Austria's foreign relations. After all Haider had been portrayed as a Nazi in Western and Austrian media. Of course something like that has to be taken into account. Nevertheless, this should not result in a situation where we have to ask ourselves who actually governs. Or should we allow foreign countries to dictate this?".<sup>169</sup>

Another reason why the veto-players had little influence is the fact that veto-players had insufficient resources to alter the cost-benefit calculations of the ÖVP. President Klestil had the power to start negotiations between the SPÖ and ÖVP, but lacked the means to make the continuation of the Grand Coalition more attractive, or the Small Coalition less attractive. In fact, his actions influenced public opinion in such a way that the opposite occurred. The sanctions imposed by the EU-14 made the position of Austria in the EU precarious, but actually had a positive influence on the position of Schüssel I in Austria (cf. below). The latter was clearly more important to the vote-oriented ÖVP.

## **Conclusion**

Heinisch (2002: 76) has qualified Wolfgang Schüssel as the "most significant and politically most savvy ÖVP leader since the 1950s". Certainly, his decision to choose the FPÖ over the SPÖ during the coalition negotiations conducted in the Fall of 1999 and the Winter of 2000 has fundamentally altered Austrian politics, if even only temporarily. The significance of the role of the ÖVP leader in the formation of the Small Coalition has been eloquently summarized by Welan (2000a: 21-22):

"Vor der Wahl wusste man nicht, "Wer mit wen?". Nach der Wahl fragte man lange: "Was will Schüssel?", "Wen will Schüssel?", später vielleicht auch "Wer will Schüssel?". Aber die ÖVP war einig wie kaumzuvor. Sie erhielt eine Schlüsselposition in der Verhandlungen. Der Schlüssel war Schüssel; aber wer hatte den Schlüssel für Schüssel?"

The key for Schüssel consisted of a thorough cost-benefit analysis of the two coalition alternatives available to his party: continuation of the Grand Coalition, on the one hand, and formation of the Small Coalition, on the other. A combination of office-, policy-, and vote-seeking considerations tipped the balance in favor of the latter option. Four important elements about these considerations ought to be repeated in this conclusion.

First, the recourse to Small Coalition governance is a recurrent pattern in Austrian politics to which mainstream parties turn when tensions created by long spells of Grand Coalition governance make continuation of the latter type of coalition impossible. The similarities between the failed tentatives to form Small Coalitions in the 1950s and 1980s, the formation of the Red-Blue in 1983, and the formation of Black-Blue in 2000, are striking. In each of these instances, dissatisfaction with the distribution of portfolios, the reached policy compromise, and the consequential lack of interparty trust, made the FPÖ seem like an attractive coalition partner. The FPÖ thus functioned as an emergency valve to let of steam. The acknowledgment of this element of

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<sup>169</sup> The awareness was clearly raised as a result of the Waldheim affair.

historical continuity is crucial. It puts the formation of Schüssel I in the right context and it emphasizes the fact that the government coalition was not without precedent. Moreover, it underlines that the increased attractiveness of the Small Coalition in the 1990s has been a direct consequence of the decreased attractiveness of the Grand Coalition.

Second, the combination of office- and vote-seeking motivations that led the ÖVP to prefer FPÖ over SPÖ cannot easily be disentangled. The distinction between vote shares and seat shares, on the one hand, and seat shares and changes in seat shares, on the other, fails to tap into the complex interpretation parties give to election results. Gains and losses are calculated on the basis of vote *and* seat shares and matter both in absolute and in relative terms. More importantly, evaluations of electoral and parliamentary strength take place in a comparative framework, in which two dimensions play a role. First, parties compare their position to that of other parties. Second, parties compare their current position to past results and to projections of future failure or success. The Austrian case demonstrates that electoral losses do not necessarily cause changes in strategic behaviour, unless they profoundly affect the self-perception of a party. Like voters, parties thus combine retrospective and prospective elements in their evaluation of strategic choices. This observation ties in with the previous argument that path dependency and historical continuity play an important role in coalition formation.

Third, the complexity of the policy-seeking motivations that led to the construction of the ÖVP-FPÖ government coalition, surpasses simple policy distance calculations on the left-right dimension. Even though the policy distances between SPÖ-ÖVP and ÖVP-FPÖ on the left-right dimension were roughly equal, the FPÖ was a more attractive coalition partner for the ÖVP in policy terms. In a multidimensional setting ÖVP and FPÖ were significantly closer to each other than ÖVP and SPÖ. More importantly, the differential saliency ÖVP and FPÖ attributed to policy dimensions and issues enabled logrolling, which facilitated the establishment of a coalition agreement. Given that ÖVP and SPÖ attached similar levels of saliency to policy dimensions and issues, logrolling was impossible and a coalition agreement difficult to reach.

The introduction of saliency in the equation also provides the missing link between the office- and vote-seeking behaviour of the Austrian parties, on the one, and policy-seeking behaviour, on the other hand. It highlights that electoral competition and competition for government are closely related, and that the rise to power of radical right-wing populist parties cannot be seen separately from the effects these parties have (had) on patterns of electoral competition. In short, mainstream parties react to the electoral success of radical right-wing populist parties and change their policy positions to preserve current voters and regain lost voters. Naturally, these changes alter policy distances between mainstream and radical right-wing populist parties. The side-effect of this process is that government coalitions between mainstream parties become less attractive, and government coalitions between mainstream and radical right-wing populist parties become more attractive.

Fourth, the legitimizing role of subnational government experiences and the media have had some influence on the formation of the Small Coalition. Neither of these factors can explain, however, why the ÖVP-FPÖ government was formed in 2000, and not in earlier years. Conversely, the actions of external veto-players have not prevented the formation of the Small Coalition. It appears that if parties perceive sufficient benefits from contested cooperation, they are extremely reluctant to give in to pressure.

### *The model*

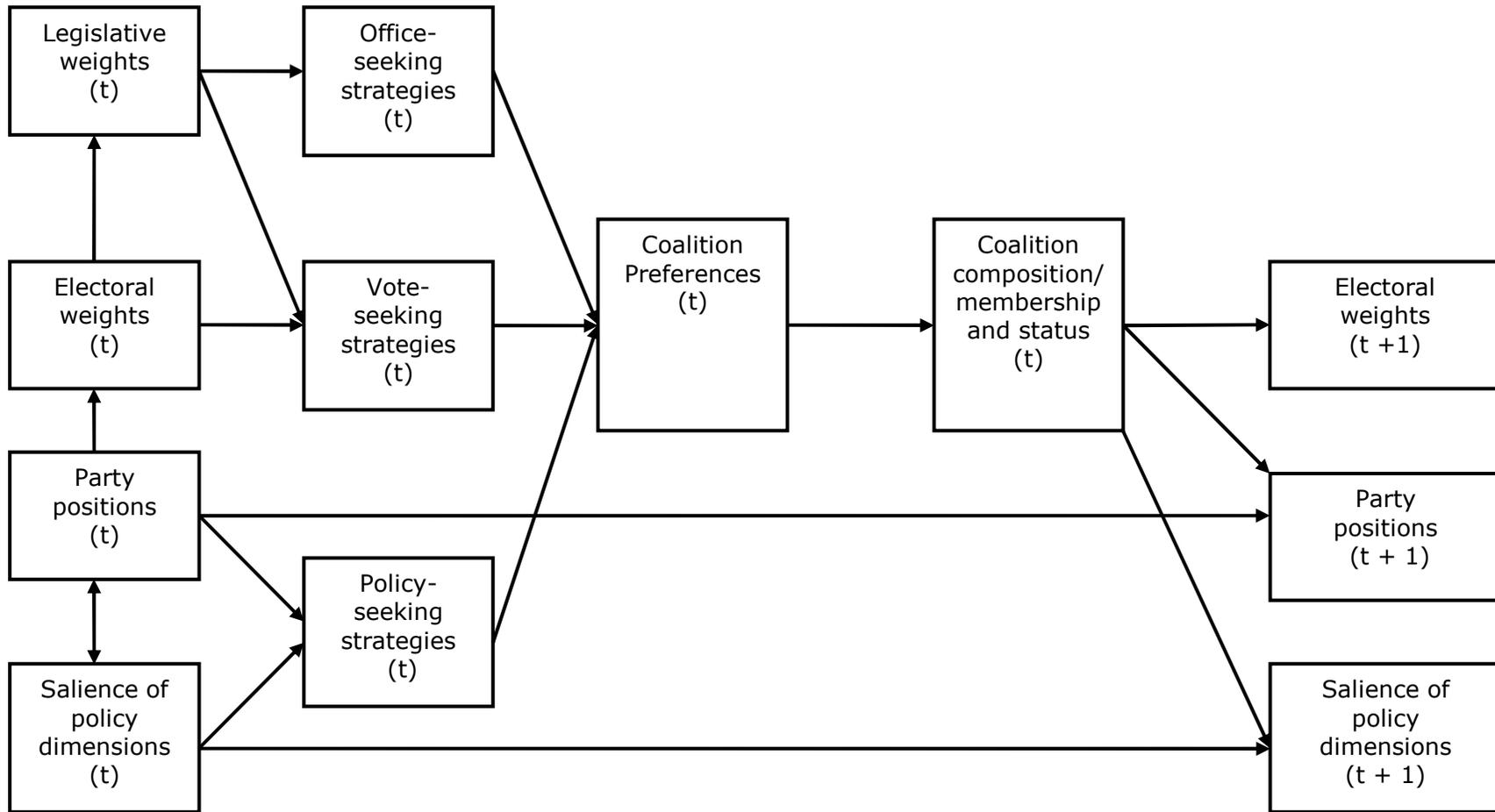
Several of the conclusions reached in this chapter have implications for the models that explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties developed in the previous chapters. First, they demonstrate that in addition to office and policy, parties are also concerned with votes. The previous chapters concluded that the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is not the result of parties' vote-seeking behaviour, but the large-N analyses conducted in these chapters appear to have failed to accurately capture the relationship between parties' vote-seeking behavior and their coalition preferences.

Second, they show that party positions are complex, and that any explanation for the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties should acknowledge that there are numerous policy dimensions that structure these positions. The most important of these dimensions are the socio-economic and the cultural dimension. Moreover, party positions are also structured by the salience of these policy dimensions.

Figure 6.2 depicts a model that adds these elements to the models presented in the chapters 1, 4, and 5. In the model, the way in which parties seek to maximize their control over votes, is influenced by their electoral and legislative strength. These two factors determine the vote-seeking strategies parties employ, and hence the government coalitions they form. The model also highlights that the way in which parties seek to influence policy-making is influenced by parties' positions and by the salience of the dimensions that structure these positions. The model highlights that radical right-wing populist parties join government coalitions when they have the right characteristics to contribute to the realization of mainstream parties' office, policy, and vote objectives.

Figure 6.3

*A model to explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties, part IV*





## CHAPTER 7

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### Conclusion

*Like blind men, each touching different parts of the same elephant, each of the existing theories of government formation focuses on only part of the whole picture and thus has only limited explanatory power. We have made progress. Indeed, when we take all the theories as a group, we have at least explored much of the elephant. The challenge now is to integrate that knowledge into a single coherent theory*

Martin and Stevenson (2001: 49)

*In short, and somewhat belatedly, Cinderella and her ugly sisters may have become each other's fairy godmother*

Tim Bale (2003: 69)

### Introduction

The government participation of radical right-wing populist parties in West European parliamentary democracies constitutes a relatively novel phenomenon that challenges conventional wisdom about the status of these parties as political pariahs. In the early-1990s many observers did not even conceive of the possibility that radical right-wing populist parties would one day assume office (Hainsworth 1992; Merkl and Weinberg 1993; 1997). Today radical right-wing populist parties have moved "from the margins to the mainstream" in many West European parliamentary democracies. And they have joined government coalitions, which in many respects qualifies as the summum of political integration, in Austria, Denmark, Italy, Norway, and the Netherlands. This dissertation has explored this evolution and sought to establish why radical right-wing populist parties have risen to power in the past decade. The objective has been to account for three patterns of variation in the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties: (1) cross-national variation, (2) cross-temporal variation, and (3) cross-party variation.

To this end several types of coalition formation theories were used: coalition membership theories to investigate the party characteristics that determine which radical right-wing populist parties become junior coalition members, and formal coalition formation theories to examine the characteristics of the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated. To establish whether these theories can explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties, a nested research design was constructed. This design included two LNA's and an SNA. The LNA's explored two types of causal relationships: whether certain party characteristics make radical right-wing populist parties more likely to become junior coalition members, and whether radical right-wing populist parties have participated in specific types of government coalitions. The SNA explored whether these two types of causal effects together could explain the government participation of the FPÖ in the government coalition formed after the 1999 Austrian general elections.

### **A comprehensive explanation for the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties**

In the introduction of this dissertation, I presented a model that included some of the key ingredients defining coalition formation theories. The model

incorporated information about parties' goals, their characteristics, their strategies, and coalition outcomes. The idea behind the model is that parties try to obtain the benefits that come with office, to influence policy-making, and to maximize their share of votes. Government participation is one of the ways to achieve these goals. However, some coalitions provide parties with better possibilities to realize office, policy, and votes than others. In government coalitions predicted by the minimal winning, the minimum size, or the bargaining proposition theory parties obtain greater numbers of cabinet portfolios than in oversized government coalitions. Similarly, in government coalition predicted by the minimal connected winning theory and the minimal range theory, parties maximize their influence over policy-making.

Whether government coalitions are predicted by these theories depends on parties' characteristics, most importantly their electoral and legislative weight and their policy positions. In combination with parties' goals these characteristics thus shape parties' coalition preferences and the strategies they employ to bring about their most preferred government coalition. Parties' coalition preferences and strategies eventually determine the coalition outcome, both in terms of the coalition composition and the status of the government coalition. Hence, parties' goals and characteristics indirectly influence coalition outcomes. For this reason they are important factors that can explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties.

#### *The explanatory model*

The analyses in the individual chapters of this dissertation have enabled the refinement of the model. More specific information about parties' characteristics, their goals, their strategies, and the coalition outcome has been included and the relationship between these factors has been explicitated. Especially the relationship between specific party characteristics, on the one hand, and specific party goals, on the other, has become more complex as the research in the dissertation progressed. The final model has already been presented in the previous chapter; but is depicted in this conclusion as well for reasons of clarity (see Figure 7.1).

The model highlights the most important ingredients of a comprehensive explanation for the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. This explanation starts with parties' characteristics, which shape their party goals and strategies. Preferences for coalition alternatives in general, and for coalition alternatives that include radical right-wing populist parties in particular, are formed as part of parties' strategies. The dissertation shows that radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties are office-, policy-seekers, and vote-seekers. The coalitional preferences of these parties are strongly influenced by the belief that these objectives are best realized through executive and legislative collaboration. The party characteristics that determine whether radical right-wing populist parties have a preference for coalitions with mainstream parties and mainstream parties have a preference for coalitions with radical right-wing populist parties are (1) their electoral and legislative weights, especially those of radical right-wing populist parties, (2) their party positions, and (3) the salience of the policy dimensions that structure their party positions.

The electoral and legislative weight of radical right-wing populist parties shapes the office- and vote-seeking strategies of these parties and those of mainstream parties. First, they determine whether radical right-wing populist parties are predominantly office- or vote-seeking, because radical right-wing populist parties face a trade-off between these two party goals.

Small radical right-wing populist parties have more need to maximize votes than larger ones, and they are therefore less likely to pursue office and join government coalitions than their larger brethren. Second, they ascertain whether radical right-wing populist parties are well-placed to 'help' mainstream parties fulfil their office, policy and vote goals. Larger radical right-wing populist parties are in a better position to help mainstream parties build minimal connected winning coalitions than smaller ones, and pose a greater electoral threat to mainstream parties. For these reasons mainstream parties have more incentives to include large radical right-wing populist parties in government coalitions than small ones.

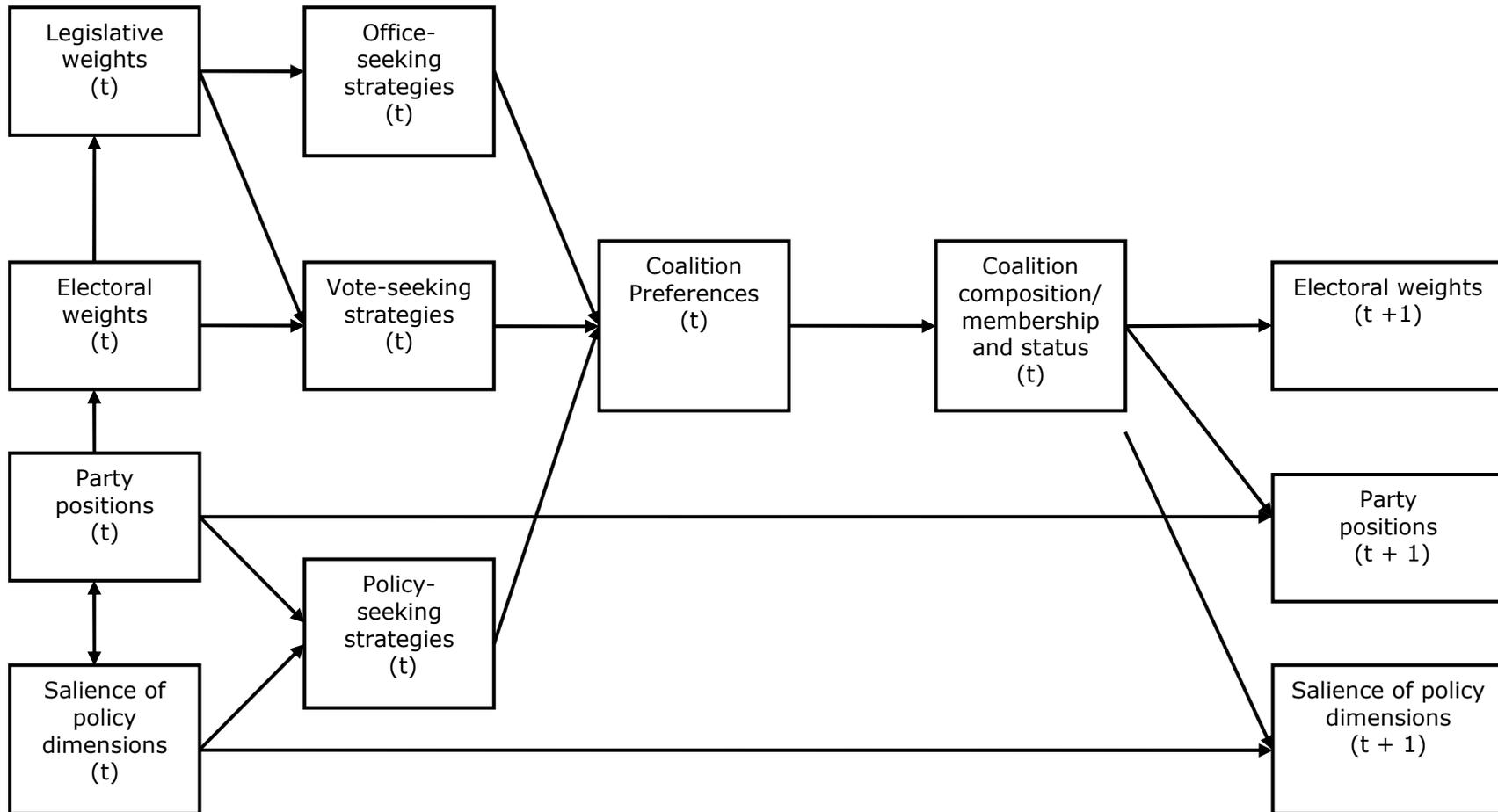
The party positions of radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties shape the policy-seeking strategies of these parties. When the policy positions of radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties are close together, there is sufficient ground to conclude coalition agreements that satisfy the policy goals of each of these parties. When the policy positions of radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties are far apart, it is more attractive for mainstream parties to ally with other mainstream parties instead.

Whether the party positions of radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties are close together or far apart depends on the distance between these positions on the policy dimensions that are important to at least one of these parties. The socio-economic dimension is particularly salient for mainstream parties, whereas the cultural dimension is particularly salient for radical right-wing populist parties. Each of these dimensions is thus important to determine the party positions of these parties and the proximity of their party positions. The salience of the policy dimensions that structure the party positions of radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties has an impact on these parties' policy-seeking strategies. When radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties attach different levels of importance to these dimensions, it is easier for these parties to construct a coalition agreement that satisfies each of these parties' policy goals. In this case, neither of these parties has to make compromises on policy positions that are crucial to their programs. In other words, differential salience allows radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties to logroll over policy, and thus facilitates the formation of government coalitions between these parties.

The model incorporates two perspectives: that of radical right-wing populist parties and that of mainstream parties. Each of the two kinds of parties pursues office, policy, and votes, and their strategic calculations are influenced by the same party characteristics. This does not mean, however, that the goals of radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties do not conflict. On the contrary, radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties each enter government coalitions with the intention to gain votes in the next elections, or at least minimize their losses. Given that the electoral success of government parties often develops in opposite directions, it is unlikely that each of these parties can realize their vote-related objectives in a joint coalition. In addition to government partners, these parties are thus also electoral competitors.

Figure 7.1

*A comprehensive explanation for the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties*



### *A static or dynamic model?*

The model presented in the previous section might appear rather static at first sight. It includes a series of party characteristics, but it does not include changes in these characteristics. The model is made up of the party characteristics 'electoral weights', 'legislative weights', 'party positions', and 'salience of policy dimensions', but it does not incorporate changes in the electoral and legislative weights of parties, changes in their party positions, or changes in the salience of the policy dimensions that structure their party positions. The exclusion of the latter group of factors does not imply, however, that changes in party characteristics do not play a significant role in the model and contribute to the explanation of the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. They are implicitly incorporated in the model through the inclusion of a time horizon in the model, which runs from  $t$  to  $t+1$ . The inclusion of this horizon underlines that coalition formation processes are part of a larger cycle of electoral competition. Elections create election results, on the basis of which parties form government coalitions. Government coalitions produce a series of intended and unintended effects, which influence new elections and their results. On the basis of these results, parties form new government coalitions, which in turn produce effects that influence the next elections and their results. Any model that seeks to explain coalition outcomes is therefore inherently dynamic.

How precisely does the embeddedness of the coalition formation process in the larger cycle of electoral competition influence the way in which government coalitions are constructed? First, parties distinguish between short- and long-term party goals, but the realization of these goals is not easily reconciled. Although electoral strength is a precondition for government participation, the ways in which parties seek to boost their electoral appeal can conflict with the way in which they seek to obtain cabinet positions and influence policy-making. In other words, parties' short-term vote-seeking strategies have intended and unintended repercussions on their long-term office- and policy-seeking strategies.

A brief discussion of patterns of electoral competition and competition for government in a series of elections clarifies this argument. Imagine that at the election held at point  $t$  a new party emerges that siphons away votes from mainstream parties. One of the most effective vote-seeking strategies available to mainstream parties is to co-opt the policy positions of the new party and in this way win back lost voters. The co-optation of policy positions of the new party alters mainstream parties' policy positions. If mainstream parties collectively move their policy positions in the direction of that of the new party, this will not significantly affect their coalition preferences. The policy distances between the mainstream parties remain intact, only the policy distance between the mainstream parties and the new party is slightly reduced. If the new party manages to steal more votes away from mainstream parties at the next elections ( $t+1$ ), the mainstream parties can decide to move more in the direction of the new party. When this process is repeated several times, the new party gradually becomes the most attractive coalition partner to the mainstream party that is located adjacent to the new party. When sufficient elections have taken place and the new party has exercised sufficient electoral pressure, the policy distance between the new party and the adjacent mainstream party becomes smaller than that between the adjacent mainstream party and the next mainstream party. At this point mainstream parties will change their coalition preferences and invite the new party to participate in their government coalitions. This process takes place at an accelerated pace when some mainstream parties decide to co-opt the

policy positions of the new party and other parties decide not to adopt this vote-seeking strategy. When mainstream parties opt for different vote-seeking strategies, this will lead an increase in policy distances between mainstream parties and a rapid change in coalition preferences and coalition outcomes.

The interaction between the short-term vote-seeking and long-term office- and policy-seeking strategies of mainstream parties has paved the road to power for radical right-wing. The electoral breakthrough and persistence of these parties has forced mainstream parties to acknowledge the importance of the cultural dimension and co-opt many of the policy positions promoted by radical right-wing populist parties. These two reactions to the rise of radical right-wing populist parties have laid the foundation for the cooperation that has taken place between mainstream and radical right-wing populist parties in recent years.

The electoral breakthrough of radical right-wing populist parties in the 1980s has to a considerable extent been the result of these parties' capacity to rally voters around a political program that frames a wide range of societal problems in cultural, instead of socio-economic, terms. In other words, radical right-wing populist parties have acted as 'mobilizers' (Rochon 1985) or 'prophetic' parties (Lucardie 2000); i.e. they have managed to put a set of new issues on the political agenda that together form a dimension that cuts across the traditional left-right dimension.

To counter the electoral success of radical right-wing populist parties, mainstream parties have co-opted the issues on which these parties campaign. As Wilson (1998: 257) contends,

"the response of the mainstream parties to the resurgence of extreme right parties has often been the incorporation of part of the far right's agenda into their own programs. Over the past decade, many parties – on the left as well on the centre-right – have proposed more restrictive policies on immigration, naturalization, and asylum rights. They have urged more repressive police measures to combat rising crime rates and the decline in the sense of domestic security. Mainstream parties have sought to regain lost terrain by promising stricter enforcement of drug laws and cleaning up of low-cost, crime-ridden public housing. They are more aggressive in finding and prosecuting corruption in their own ranks."

This argument has become known as the 'contagion of the right' thesis that states that "after a national election where a radical right party registers a sharp gain in their share of votes and/or seats, then in subsequent elections other mainstream parties in the same country who may feel threatened will respond (particularly parties on the centre-right) by moving their own position further right-wards" (Norris 2006: 266; see also Bale 2003; Carter 2005; Harmel and Svasand 1997; Heinisch 2003; Husbands 1996; Meguid 2005; Minkenberg 1998; Minkenberg and Schain 2003; Pettigrew 1998; Schain 2002; 2006; Van Spanje 2006; Williams 2005; Wilson 1998).

The extent to which mainstream parties have co-opted radical right-wing populist parties' issues and positions depends on the composition of their electoral constituencies. The electoral constituency of mainstream left parties consists of voters with either social-authoritarian or social-libertarian attitudes. The co-optation of the radical right-wing populist agenda satisfies the first constituency, but alienates the second. The electoral constituency of mainstream right parties consists of voters with either liberal-authoritarian or liberal-libertarian attitudes. Again, the co-optation of the radical right-wing populist agenda can help to please the first category of voters, but risks the

defection of the second (Bale forthcoming; Bale *et al.* forthcoming; Van den Brink 2005; Zaslove 2006). In general, mainstream right parties are better positioned to follow a strategy of co-optation than mainstream left parties, given the relative weight of voters with authoritarian and libertarian attitudes in the two electorates.

Regardless of the extent to which mainstream parties have adopted radical right-wing populist positions, the general objective of mainstream parties has been to undermine the distinctiveness of radical right-wing populist parties' appeals (Meguid 2005). However, given that voters seem to prefer the original over the copy, co-optation strategies actually reinforce the electoral success of already successful parties.<sup>170</sup> The persistent growth of radical right-wing populist parties has given mainstream parties more incentives to adjust their policy positions and has created a self-perpetuating dynamic in West European party system that shifts party positions and the centre of gravity of the system towards the authoritarian extreme of the cultural dimension. With regard to this dynamic, Minkenberg (1998a: 2) notes that "the new radical right [...] had significant effects on the political environment in general, and on the established political parties in particular by pushing their agenda to the right – not in an overall way but along a new value-based conflict axis that cuts across the major cleavages".

The process of issue co-optation can have an evolutionary or revolutionary character (Pellikaan, De Lange, and Van der Meer 2007), dependent upon the capacity of mainstream parties to freeze the obsolete dimensionality of the space of competition (Schattschneider 1960). In the Netherlands the transformation has occurred almost overnight, after the rise of Pim Fortuyn in 2002, but in most countries the process has been slow and the impact on political competition gradual. Regardless of the character of the process it has in many countries cumulated in the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties.

There are at least three reasons why this has been the almost inevitable consequence of the process of issue co-optation. First, the process has created a policy rationale for cooperation, given the divergence of mainstream left and right parties and the convergence of mainstream right and radical right-wing populist parties. Second, it has fuelled the electoral success of the right-wing bloc, which is more in tune with electoral preferences for liberal-authoritarian reform. Third, it has replaced previous centripetal tendencies in the party system with centrifugal tendencies. This has led to increased bipolarization and the development of a two-bloc structure of party competition in which patterns of government formation are determined by the "swing of the pendulum" (Bale 2003: 69).

The described process is evident when changes in party positions in the eight countries studied in this dissertation are examined (see the tables in Appendix B). The tables describe changes in the party positions of radical right-wing populist parties and mainstream parties between 1981 and 2005. Detailed analysis of the patterns of change documented in these tables reveals two trends. The first trend is that of the moderation of the positions of radical right-wing populist parties, which has taken place in Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Norway. In these countries radical right-wing populist parties have either moved to the centre of the left-right scale (e.g.

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<sup>170</sup> The extent to which accommodative strategies are effective probably depends on whether radical right-wing populist parties control issue-ownership of the immigration and integration issue (Mudde 2007). In many cases they have acquired this in an early stage and are unlikely to let go of it any time soon.

France, Italy, Norway), more moderate parties have succeeded more radical radical right-wing populist parties (the Netherlands) or a combination of the two (Denmark). The second trend is that of the radicalization of mainstream parties, especially Christian-Democratic, conservative, and liberal parties, which has taken place in all countries, albeit with different intensity. In some countries all major mainstream right parties have moved to the right (e.g. Austria, Italy, the Netherlands), while in other countries only particular mainstream right parties have moved this way (e.g. Belgium, Denmark, France, Norway). In general, it seems that conservative parties are more inclined to move towards the positions of radical right-wing populist parties than Christian-Democratic or liberal parties, even though exceptions to these rules exist. Moreover, the position at which mainstream right parties were located initially differs greatly, as does the extent to which mainstream right parties have moved. Finally, the moment at which they have started to move also varies greatly and indeed appears to be a function of the success of radical right-wing populist parties. Together these factors make for a rather diffuse picture in which it is not easy to discern any systematic trends that apply to West European countries in general.

Unfortunately, the tables do not show that the changes in the positions of mainstream parties on the left-right dimension originate primarily in from changes in the salience of the cultural dimension and the adaptation of more authoritarian stances by these parties on this dimension. Analysis of developments in individual countries nevertheless suggest that in general radical right-wing populist parties have moved to the left on economic issues and maintained their positions (or even moved to the right) on cultural issues, while mainstream parties have moved to the right on cultural issues and maintained their positions on economic issues. Given that the cultural dimension is more salient to radical right-wing populist parties and the economic dimension more salient to mainstream parties, this has brought the parties closer together in most West European countries and thus enabled the rise to power of radical right-wing populist parties.

#### *Implications of the model*

The model contains many of the key ingredients of the coalition formation theories tested in this study. Some of these ingredients have been drawn from formal coalition formation theories, while others have been drawn from non-formal coalition formation theories. The model also incorporates elements of actor-oriented and coalition-oriented coalition formation theories. The way in which these elements have been integrated in the model reflects the complementary character of various types of coalition formation theories. Through the integration of these theories one can make up for many of the shortcomings of individual coalition formation theories. The model explicitly addresses two of these shortcomings.

First, it underlines that parties form particular government coalitions to satisfy their office-, policy-, and vote objectives. This point highlights that the assumption of coalition formation theories that parties are *either* office-, policy-, or vote-seekers is not valid. The model stresses the need for an integrated theory of coalition formation and represents a first step to the development of such a theory. Unfortunately, it lacks the formalization that characterizes most coalition formation theories and further research to elaborate the model is called for.

Second, it emphasizes that the way in which parties pursue office, policy, and votes is significantly more complex than previously assumed by coalition formation theories. Office- and vote-seeking strategies largely

overlap, because parties focus excessively on parliamentary strength to determine their position in prospective government coalitions *and* future elections. Essentially, the way in which parties' legislative weight influences strategic calculations in the coalition formation process is threefold: (1) it determines which coalitions are (minimal) winning and which are not; (2) it determines the balance of power in coalitions; and (3) it shapes parties' perceptions of electoral threats and opportunities and hence their estimated performance in future elections and opportunities in future coalition formation processes. Policy-seeking strategies are also more complex than previously assumed, because parties' perceptions of policy distances are influenced by policy positions *and* the salience of the dimensions that structure these positions. An integrated theory of coalition formation should also include the latter element and acknowledge that parties attach differential and variable importance to policy dimensions. This implies the abolishment of the notion of absolute or objective political spaces, which should be replaced with the notion of relative or subjective political spaces.

Notwithstanding these critical notes, coalition formation theories have a great capacity to explain coalition outcomes. Critics of coalition formation theories wrongfully dismiss these theories as too abstract to accurately explain the government participation of specific parties. Coalition formation theories correctly assume that parties act as rational agents in the coalition formation process, that their strategic decisions in this process are based on evaluations of costs and benefits, that these costs and benefits relate to parties' goals, that their strategic decisions based on cost-benefit calculations lead to the formation of minimal (connected) winning and minimal range coalitions, and that the parties that participate in these types of coalitions have particular characteristics.

More specifically, this dissertation shows that coalition formation theories have a universal appeal. They are truly party neutral and therefore explain the government participation of parties that belong to a family that is often believed to behave non-rational and to be approached in a non-rational manner by other parties. Moreover, they work in many West European countries, irrespective of party system characteristics and particular institutions settings. Where institutions do constrain the coalition formation process and hence the applicability of coalition formation theories, the rational choice framework offers sufficient opportunities to incorporate these constraints in an integrated model of coalition formation (cf. below).

What remains underspecified in most coalition formation theories is the way in which parties effectively form government coalitions, and how they pursue their office-, policy-, and vote-seeking strategies during the coalition negotiations. The eleven stages of the coalition formation process identified by De Winter (1995) do not come back in coalition formation theories, which usually describe one, and incidentally two, stages of this process. It is conceivable that parties pursue different objectives in consecutive phases of the coalition formation process, and that there is a high level of path dependency in this process. How parties pursue cabinet portfolios during the allocation phase of the coalition formation process will probably depend on the extent to which they have realized their vote-seeking goals during the elections and their policy-seeking goals during the negotiations over the coalition agreement.

The path dependency in the coalition formation process is also evident in the link between election results and coalition outcomes. This dissertation emphasizes that electoral competition and the competition for government are closely intertwined. Parties' short-term vote-seeking strategies are part of

their long-term office-seeking strategies and their short-term office-seeking strategies are part of their long-term vote-seeking strategies. Differently put, election results do impact on the composition of government coalitions, contrary to what scholars have often claimed. This conclusion is highly relevant, because students of electoral behaviour have often argued that voters wish to influence coalition outcomes. Kedar (2005), for example, contends that voters support extreme parties to move coalitions in the direction of their most preferred policy positions. This study suggests that this kind of strategy is effective, because these parties do enter government coalitions and pull policy in the direction desired by voters. The vote for non-mainstream parties is thus not at all a wasted vote.

#### *Methodological considerations*

The model used to explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties has been developed on the basis of a nested research design. On the basis of two LNA's the various components of the model were identified, as well as the relationships between these components. This resulted in the presentation of the explanatory models depicted in the figures 4.1 and 5.2. On the basis of an SNA the relationships between the various components of the model were further explored, which resulted in the refinement of the previously presented models and the construction of the explanatory model presented in figure 6.2. In other words, the SNA served to correct the model developed on the basis of the LNA's.

The way in which findings of LNA's and SNA's should be integrated is not always clear. Ideally, model-testing SNA's confirm the conclusions of robust LNA's, while model-building SNA's help develop models that replace those that proved to be non-robust in LNA's. It is conceivable, however, that model-testing SNA's come to different conclusions than the LNA's which they seek to confirm. In this case the researcher has to make an assessment of the reliability and validity of the LNA's, on the one hand, and SNA's, on the other, and decide which part of the analyses produces more credible results. Lieberman (2005: 436) notes in this respect that "those assessments provide a framework for either ending the analysis or carrying out additional iterations of SNA or LNA".

This dissertation suggests that matters are not as clear-cut as Lieberman presents them. The conclusions reached in the SNA deviate on some points from those reached in the LNA's. The SNA suggests that parties' electoral weights matter as much as their legislative weights, that the salience of parties' positions matters as much as the positions themselves, and that coalition outcomes are not only determined by parties' office-, and policy-seeking strategies but also by their vote-seeking strategies. Thus, the SNA contradicts the LNA's on two points (electoral weights and vote-seeking strategies) and introduces a new element (the salience of parties' positions).

I believe there are several ways to approach these types of divergent conclusions. First, the assessment depends on the representativeness of the sample of the LNA, and the grounds on which the case(s) for the SNA have been selected. In this study the LNA was not only representative, but in fact complete. It included every coalition formation opportunity between 1981 and 2005 at which radical right-wing populist parties have been represented. The SNA focused on a case that in many respects qualifies as a typical case (Gerring 2007). The case is predicted by the LNA's and has additional features that make it easy to generalize from the case. Consequentially, the findings of the SNA cannot be dismissed as entirely context specific. Should the findings of the LNA prevail over those of the SNA, as some quantitative

researchers would argue? And should the findings of the small-N study always be interpreted as context specific and hence not generalizable, as some qualitative researchers would argue? After all, the findings of the LNA are, if conducted appropriately, representative, while the findings of the SNA are not. If this is indeed the case, the added value of the nested research design is seriously diminished. It merely serves to identify the parameters within which the general theory works.

Second, the assessment depends on the extent to which measurement problems might play a role in the LNA, the SNA, or both. Retrospectively, the indicators used to measure parties' electoral strength and changes therein did not accurately capture parties' *perceptions* of (changes in) their own electoral positions and that of their competitors. The SNA highlights that the way in which parties think about electoral gains and losses is more complex than assumed by coalition formation theories. For starters, parties do not seem to disentangle electoral and legislative strength, but combine information about these two factors to determine their office- and vote-seeking strategies. Additionally, parties evaluate their strength and that of other parties in retrospective and prospective terms. They take into account where they come from (in terms of their number of votes and seats, but also in terms of their position in the party system) and where they are going. These observations call for the development of new quantitative indicators. One possibility would be to create ordinal variables that reflect parties' relative strength, another to construct composite measures of party strength that measure electoral and legislative strength more accurately (e.g. Bartolini 1999).

Regardless of the interpretation one gives to the divergent conclusions of LNA's and SNA's, the way forward is to test the new model, developed in the SNA, in an LNA. On the basis of a new LNA one can establish whether the model works for more cases than those included in the SNA, and whether the measures developed in the SNA translate to the LNA. A new series of LNA's and SNA's is, however, often not self-evident. It requires the availability of new data on which the model can be tested, because otherwise one would create "an incestuous relationship between theory and data" (Bäck 2003: 17; see also Laver 1989).

Given that this study included every national election after which West European radical right-wing populist parties have been represented between 1981 and 2005, it is difficult to test the new model on new data. One would either have to wait for new elections to take place and add these to the original dataset, or create a new dataset that focuses, for example, on the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties in Central and Eastern European countries, or on the participation of these parties in executive coalitions at the subnational level. If the latter option is chosen, one had to take into consideration that coalition formation at the subnational level is not identical to coalition formation at the national level (Bäck 2003). It is therefore quite possible that the new model does not work in at the subnational level.

### **The government participation of radical right-wing populist parties**

On the basis of the model it is possible to explain the government participation of *particular* radical right-wing populist parties in *particular* countries after *particular* elections, as has been demonstrated by the case study of the FPÖ. It demonstrated that the Austrian radical right-wing populist party assumed office after the 1999 elections, because it had sufficient parliamentary weight to form a minimal winning coalition with the ÖVP. Moreover, the parliamentary strength of the FPÖ also made the ÖVP perceive

the party as an electoral threat, and sought to incorporate it in a government coalition. Finally, the policy positions of the FPÖ and ÖVP were not far apart, and the differential salience they attached to the socio-economic dimension and the cultural dimension made it possible for them to base their coalition agreement on the *quid pro quo* principle. Hence, the two parties could each influence policy-making to a large extent without having to make major concessions to their coalition partner.

#### *Explanations for patterns of variation*

The model can also account for the three patterns of variation in the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties observed in the introduction of this dissertation. In the introduction it was noted that radical right-wing populist parties have participated in government coalitions in some countries, but not in others. It was also observed that radical right-wing populist parties have participated in government coalitions during a specific time period (1994 to 2005) and that in some countries only one radical right-wing populist party has participated in government coalitions, even though more than one radical right-wing populist party succeeded to gain parliamentary representation.

Each of these patterns of variation emerges as a result of variations in parties' characteristics: cross-national, cross-temporal, and cross-party variations in radical right-wing populist parties' electoral and legislative weight, cross-national, cross-temporal, and cross-party variations in radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties' positions, and cross-national, cross-temporal, and cross-party variations in the salience of the policy dimensions that structure these positions. The three patterns of variation are closely related. The countries in which radical right-wing populist parties have never participated in government coalitions have only been briefly exposed to these parties in the late 1980s or early 1990s (e.g. France and Sweden). In countries where two radical right-wing populist parties have been represented in parliament, they have usually been represented during different time periods (e.g. Denmark and the Netherlands).

Radical right-wing populist parties have not entered government coalitions in Belgium, France, and Sweden, because in these countries these parties lack electoral and legislative strength and have taken up policy positions that are far apart of those of mainstream parties. The FNb in Belgium, for example, is a minor force in the Chamber of Representatives. The party has never occupied more than a handful of seats in parliament and has in this sense never formed a credible threat to mainstream parties. Consequentially, these parties have not co-opted the positions of the FNb and policy differences between mainstream parties, on the one hand, and the FNb, on the other, have stayed substantial.

Radical right-wing populist parties have only sporadically joined government coalitions prior to the turn of the century, for the same reasons as they have not participated in government coalitions in particular countries. Prior to the late 1990s radical right-wing populist parties lacked electoral and legislative strength and had policy positions that were not in line with those of mainstream parties. As time went by, however, changes in party characteristics occurred and radical right-wing populist parties did participate in government coalitions. The exact timing of the government participation has been dependent on changes in the characteristics of individual radical right-wing populist parties, as well as on changes in the characteristics of individual mainstream parties. The FRP(n), one of the oldest radical right-wing populist parties included in this study, structurally enhanced its electoral

and legislative position between the early 1980s and late 1990s. Consequentially, the party increasingly compromised mainstream parties' ability to access office and maximize votes. To counter the success of the FRP(n), mainstream parties adjusted their positions to those of the radical right-wing populist party. As a result the FRP(n) has moved from the margins to the mainstream and has served as support party in the Bondevik II government.

Radical right-wing populist parties' characteristics, and the impact these have on mainstream parties office-, policy-, and vote-seeking strategies, also explain why the LPF has participated in a government coalition, while the CP/CD has not. The LPF was electorally successful and strong in parliament and, hence, affected mainstream parties' ability to realize their office and vote goals. The party also took positions that were not that different from those of mainstream parties and, thus, had an impact on these parties' policy-seeking strategies. For these reasons it was a very attractive option for the CDA and the VVD to include the LPF in the government coalition they formed after the 2002 elections. The CP/CD had neither of these characteristics, and did not influence mainstream parties ability to realize office, policy, and votes in any way. Hence, the party did not play any role in coalition politics.

The patterns of variations do not appear in any straightforward way connected to structural differences between countries, time-periods, or parties. Belgium, France, and Sweden are not characterized by striking similarities, nor are Austria, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, and Norway. The only thing the first group of countries has in common is the fact that their radical right-wing populist parties have been relatively unsuccessful, or unable to translate their electoral success in legislative strength. Moreover, their radical right-wing populist parties have often situated themselves at the far extreme of the left-right dimension, while their mainstream parties take quite centrist positions. In a similar fashion, the 1980s and early 1990s are not markedly different from the late 1990s and the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The main differences between the two periods are that the success of radical right-wing populist parties has become more pronounced in recent years and that the positions of radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties have converged in recent years. In other words, variations in party characteristics determine where and when radical right-wing populist parties join government coalitions.

#### *Bringing the context back in*

In the introduction of this dissertation a conscious decision was taken to take an actor-oriented approach in this study. As a result of this decision contextual factors have not featured very prominently in the analyses in the chapters 4, 5, and 6 and are not included in the model presented in this conclusion. At first sight this seems unproblematic, since the model is able to explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties in a range of different national contexts. The explanatory power of the model indicates that contextual factors play at best a minor role in the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. A second look at the model reveals that contextual factors do have an indirect impact on the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. Especially contextual factors that affect parties' electoral and legislative strength, their party positions and the salience of the policy dimensions that structure these positions, and the number and type of coalition alternatives from which parties can choose are relevant to the model.

A thorough assessment of the contextual factors that have an impact on the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is not feasible within the confines of this conclusion. The range of institutional and party system features that potentially influences party characteristics and coalition practices is quite broad and diverse. The Belgian *cordon sanitaire* and federal system, the French and Italian electoral systems, the Scandinavian system of minority governments each have a direct impact on party characteristics or the number of potential government coalitions. The cleavage structures of party systems in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden have a similar impact.

Even though it is beyond the scope of this conclusion to gauge the exact importance of these contextual factors, it is useful to theorize about the relationship between the most important of these contextual factors and the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. In this section three of these relationships are discussed in more detail: (1) the relationship between electoral systems, party characteristics, and the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties; (2) the relationship between party system characteristics, behavioural constraints, and the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties; and (3) the relationship between party characteristics, institutional constraints, and the participation of radical right-wing populist parties in minority governments.

A first contextual factor that indirectly explains the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is the electoral system, which has a dual effect. First, the electoral system determines parties' electoral and legislative strength. While proportional systems translate parties' electoral weight almost without distortion into legislative weight, plurality systems significantly distort the translation of votes into seats. Plurality systems tend to favour larger parties and parties that have geographically concentrated electoral constituencies. Radical right-wing populist parties are often small to comparative standard, and thus find themselves in a disadvantageous position when they compete with mainstream parties under plurality rules. The FN is a case in point. The parliamentary representation of this party is seriously reduced by the two-round majoritarian electoral system, which distorts the translation of votes into parliamentary seats. It has a detrimental effect on the impact of the FN on coalition politics, because the party had a minimal number of seats in the National Assembly in 1988 and 1997 and has been completely absent from it in 1992, 2002, and 2007.

Second, the electoral system can provide parties with incentives to coalesce prior to elections. Since it is difficult to gain parliamentary representation in plurality systems, parties tend to form pre-electoral coalitions to pass the threshold of representation and win the elections. The formation of pre-electoral coalitions has a bearing upon parties' electoral and legislative strength and on the government formation process that ensues after the elections. Pre-electoral coalitions are essentially proto-government coalitions and not dissolved after the elections.

Radical right-wing populist parties that compete in plurality systems have to participate in pre-electoral coalitions to (1) have a fair chance to gain parliamentary representation and (2) have a shot at government participation. In many ways the plurality system actually favors the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. It makes that the electoral pressure exercised by these parties is more quickly felt by mainstream parties than in proportional systems. Consequentially, mainstream parties have strong incentives to include these parties in their

pre-electoral coalitions and hence their government coalitions. The rise to power of FI, the LN, and the MSI/AN illustrates this point. After the Italian political crisis of the early 1990s, the introduction of a majoritarian electoral system has been crucial for the reconstitution of the Italian party system. It has prohibited the reconstruction of a strong centre party and has given radical right-wing populist and mainstream right parties persuasive incentives to focus on cooperation rather than competition. The system has also permitted the survival of no less than three radical right-wing populist parties, which has facilitated the rise to power of these parties.<sup>171</sup>

A second contextual factor that indirectly explains the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is the extent to which parties impose behavioral constraints on themselves. These constraints limit parties' coalition options, because they wish to or, on the contrary, refuse to govern with specific parties. When parties have clear *a priori* ideas about the government coalition they would like to form, the parties that are not part of these prospective coalitions have no chance to govern. More specifically, if mainstream parties refuse to govern with radical right-wing populist parties even before the election results are known, these parties are highly unlikely to end up in a government coalition.

The most significant behavioural constraint, at least in the context of this study, is the anti-pact. Several radical right-wing populist parties have been subject to anti-pacts and have been excluded from government participation on *a priori* grounds (e.g. the MSI and the VB). The findings of this study suggest that radical right-wing populist parties are not excluded from government coalition because they are subject to anti-pacts, but that anti-pacts are formed against radical right-wing populist parties that do not qualify as potential coalition members on the basis of their party characteristics. Radical right-wing populist parties that are systematically excluded from government coalitions lack legislative strength, either as a consequence of their limited electoral support or of the distortions created by the electoral system. They also have policy positions that are markedly different from those of mainstream parties, which makes it virtually impossible for these two types of parties to reach policy compromises.

This does not mean that anti-pacts do not play a role in the coalition formation process. They have an important impact on the way in which parties define and pursue their long-term party goals and hence on coalition outcomes. Radical right-wing populist parties that face an anti-pact receive a clear sign that policy moderation is a precondition for government participation. In this sense the anti-pact serves as both stick and carrot. It punishes radical right-wing populist parties for their radical positions and presents coalition membership as a reward for more moderate positions. This strategy is not effective though, when radical right-wing populist parties manage to put sufficient electoral pressure on mainstream parties and force them to radicalize their positions, as this undermines the legitimacy of the anti-pact. Thus, radical right-wing populist parties can overcome the constraints that result from the anti-pact by a strategy of vote maximization.

The mainstream parties that impose anti-pacts on radical right-wing populist parties do not experience any direct effects of this decision. The anti-pact reduces the coalition options available to them, but only eliminates

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<sup>171</sup> Studies of the electorate of the Italian radical right-wing populist parties suggest that especially LN voters have a propensity to support left-wing parties as well. The defection of LN voters would reduce the strength of the Italian right-wing bloc and make it more complex for this bloc to govern.

potential coalitions which were highly unlikely to form in the first place. The choice for an anti-pact does have a number of indirect effects on party competition in general, and the competition for government in particular. Anti-pacts constrain mainstream parties in their pursuit of policy, because they cannot move in the direction of the radical right-wing populist party without deligitimizing the anti-pact. If mainstream parties cannot radicalize, they also cannot slow down or even stop the electoral success of radical right-wing populist parties through the co-optation of their parties policy positions. Moreover, the anti-pact can become of element of contention in elections. If the anti-pact is unpopular among large portions of the electorate, mainstream parties run the risk that more voters defect to radical right-wing populist parties to express their discontent with the exclusion of these parties from government.

A third contextual factor that indirectly explains the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is the extent to which minority coalitions are an accepted governmental formula. A number of institutional constraints, as well as party system features, can provide parties with incentives to form minority governments. To survive in parliament these governments rely on support parties; that is, parties that are part of the government coalition but not of the cabinet. This dissertation assumed that cabinet and support parties are in many ways equivalent. They each participate in government coalitions and receive material (cabinet positions and (extra)parliamentary spoils) and policy concessions in return for their participation. The results of this study suggest that this approach is valid. The conditions under which radical right-wing populist parties in minority government systems are likely to assume office do not differ from those in majority government systems. Moreover, the features of the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated do not differ notably between the two types of systems, of course with the essential note that the cabinets formally do not control a parliamentary majority in minority government systems. The consistency of these results suggests that cabinet members and support parties are not qualitatively different.

This conclusion is at odds with some of the assumptions that underpin coalition formation theories. These theories assume that parties can only obtain office benefits in government coalitions, and that they have the greatest influence on policy when they control cabinet portfolios. For these reasons parties will seek cabinet representation and not settle for the position of support party. The government participation of the DF and FRP(n) demonstrates, however, that support parties receive spoils as well, and that support party status does not necessarily compromise radical right-wing populist parties' office-seeking strategies. The same goes for the realization of policy objectives. In the government coalitions in which they participated the DF and FRP(n) had a strong influence on policy-making, because they could threaten to leave the government coalition at any point. This observation corresponds to Artés and Bustos (2008: 303) claim that "cooperating in parliament to maintain the minority government in office can be a rational choice for a party because it allows it to obtain significant gains in terms of programme fulfilment". Also in terms of vote maximization the DF and FRP(n) are well off as support parties. They do not have to take up actual government responsibility and can maintain the populist strategies that have made them successful. As such, they are more likely to avoid any negative incumbency effects and have a better chance to continue to participate in government coalitions than other radical right-wing populist parties.

The conclusion that radical right-wing populist parties can realize their office-, policy-, and vote-seeking strategies without becoming cabinet members contradicts the conclusion of many students minority governments that most support parties are relatively unhappy with their half-way position between opposition and government. They argue that this position deprives these parties of substantial influence over policymaking and at the same time does confer government responsibility on these parties (Aylott and Bergman 2003; Bale and Bergman 2006a;2006b; Bale and Dann 2002). The experiences of the DF and FRP(n) show that the reverse is actually true for radical right-wing populist parties. The DF and FRP(n) have exploited their pivotal positions as support parties and extracted extensive policy concessions from the government coalitions they have supported. In unison they have skilfully avoided the impression that they are no longer part of the opposition and have refused to take responsibility for unpopular measures or government mistakes. Consequentially, the DF and FRP(n) have thrived electorally since they have been government support parties.

Although the number of cases in which radical right-wing populist parties have been government support parties are limited, the experiences of these parties give credit to the claim that populist parties are probably better off as government support parties, given their difficulties to deal with the responsibilities that come with cabinet membership. The radical right-wing populist parties that have been support parties seem to realize this very well. In an interview to *Danmarks Radio* (DR) Pia Kjaersgaard has given voice to her party's satisfaction with its position as support party and stated "You know, really what we want is as much political influence as possible. We get a lot of influence on government policy now. So our participation in government depends on whether we can get more influence in government than outside. And that is an open question." (29<sup>th</sup> of December 2006).

#### *Radical right-wing populist parties: parties like any other?*

In the introduction of this dissertation I argued that it is not justified or fruitful to think of radical right-wing populist parties as a normal pathology; i.e. qualitatively different from other kinds of parties. Instead, I proposed to approach radical right-wing populist parties as a pathological normalcy. The choice to study the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties with coalition formation theories corresponded to this approach. Coalition formation theories provide a stringent examination of the idea that radical right-wing populist parties are a pathological normalcy, because they are 'party-neutral' and ascribe a fixed range of motivations to parties that do not include any normative considerations.

This dissertation shows that it is indeed not justified or fruitful to approach radical right-wing populist parties as a normal pathology. Coalition formation theories have a great capacity to explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. They identify where and when radical right-wing populist parties have joined mainstream parties in government coalitions, and explain why this has happened. The results of this study also establish that it is not necessary to include any normative components to explain why some radical right-wing populist parties have never entered government coalitions. The results further confirm that it is not necessary to integrate behavioral constraints (e.g. anti-pacts) or notions of anti-systemness in coalition formation theories to account for the non-government participation of certain radical right-wing populist parties. Instead, they demonstrate that radical right-wing populist parties that are systematically excluded from government coalitions, lack the electoral and

legislative relevance to have an impact on coalition outcomes, and/or lack a shared policy rationale with mainstream parties that justifies their government participation.

In sum, this dissertation illustrates that the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is a relatively ordinary phenomenon. Radical right-wing populist parties are not less likely to participate in government coalitions than other kinds of parties, especially when the frequency of government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is compared to that of other non-mainstream parties. Moreover, the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is structured by the same factors that structure the government participation of other kinds of parties, mainstream and non-mainstream.

Although some have interpreted the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties as revolutionary, in fact it is merely the logical consequence of the electoral growth of these parties, and the affect this has had on party competition in West European parliamentary democracies. Some would argue that that the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is suspiciously normal, or that it is the normalcy that makes it abnormal. This argument is easily countered.

To avoid misinterpretation, it is not my claim that radical right-wing populist parties are identical to other kinds of parties. In fact, they differ from other parties on several accounts (cf. below). The combination of right-wing, radical, and populist ideological elements is, for example, unique to the radical right-wing populist party family. Consequentially, coalition formation theories work at times differently for radical right-wing populist parties than for other kinds of parties. Radical right-wing populist parties have, for example, participated less frequently in over- or undersized government coalitions than other kinds of parties.

Contrary to what scholars adopting the normal pathology approach believe, it is not necessary to develop ad hoc explanations to account for these types of differences between radical right-wing populist parties and other kinds of parties. Instead, it is possible to theorize about these differences in general terms and integrate explanations for them in coalition formation theories. The reason that radical right-wing populist parties participate more frequently in minimal winning coalitions, for example, is attributable to the fact that government coalitions with these parties constitute a significant political risk. For this reason, mainstream parties seek to maximize benefits and minimize costs to a greater extent when they ally with radical right-wing populist parties than when they ally with other mainstream parties. The idea that mainstream parties minimize costs and maximize benefits corresponds closely to the rational choice paradigm to which coalition formation theories belong, and it is therefore not difficult to integrate this element into these theories.

#### *Beyond the radical right-wing populist party family*

From the argument that radical right-wing populist parties are a pathological normalcy follows that the model developed to explain the government participation of these parties should also apply to other types of parties. More specifically, the model should apply to other non-mainstream parties, because these parties are functional equivalents to radical right-wing populist parties. Studies of different party families that qualify as non-mainstream parties (e.g. other far right parties, communist parties, and green parties) suggest that the model can indeed explain the government participation of particular non-mainstream parties at particular elections, as well as account for the

cross-national, cross-temporal, and cross-party patterns of variation in the government participation of these parties. The observations that scholars make with regard to the government participation of various non-mainstream parties correspond closely to the elements that are central to the model developed to explain the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties; i.e. parties desire to realize office, policy, and votes, their electoral and legislative weight, and their policy positions.

Let us first look at other far right parties (e.g. fascist parties, Nazi parties, poudjadist parties), which have arguably most in common with radical right-wing populist parties, especially in terms of policy positions. Although other far right parties have almost never participated in government coalitions in the post-war era, they have joined government coalitions in the interbellum. Capoccia (2004: 90) notes with regard to the government participation of the latter group of parties, that they exercised important electoral pressures on mainstream parties. Consequentially, mainstream parties had strong electoral incentives to "put their immediate electoral and political interests first" and "defect from the centre either in order to reclaim the votes lost to extremists, or to create the political conditions for a different and more rewarding governing majority". In other words, the electoral and legislative growth of far right parties influenced mainstream parties' office- and vote-seeking strategies in much the same way as the electoral and legislative growth of radical right-wing populist parties influenced mainstream parties' office- and vote-seeking strategies.

Communist parties are different from radical right-wing populist parties in terms of their positions on the left-right dimension, but are in many other respects functional equivalents. A comparison between the reasons for the government participation of the two kinds of non-mainstream parties is therefore instructive. The government participation of communist parties in the 1980s and 1990s has often been linked to the demise of communism worldwide. Arguably, the more direct reason for the government participation of these parties is that through their weight and policy positions these parties had an impact on mainstream parties' abilities to realize office, policy, and votes. The similarities between the rise to power of communist parties and radical right-wing populist parties are striking. According to Wilson (1998: 256), "in many ways, the mainstream centre-right parties today face the same dilemma that confronted social-democratic parties in the 1950s and 1960s. During these years, social-democrats in many European countries competed with communist or other far-left parties for electoral support and political position. Where the communist presence was strongest, moderate centre-left parties found that the communists influenced their conduct as they drafted programs, recruited party members, set electoral and coalition strategies, and wooed voters."

Green parties are in several ways present-day equivalents of communist parties. They share with radical right-wing populist parties, however, the emphasis they put on the cultural dimension. A comparison between the reasons for the government participation of green parties and radical right-wing populist parties is illustrative of the general applicability of the model presented in this dissertation. Research on green parties confirms that office-, policy-, and vote-seeking strategies guided the decision of mainstream left parties to form government coalitions with these parties in the 1990s (e.g. in Belgium, Finland, France, and Germany). The conditions under which these parties have assumed office are largely identical to the conditions under which radical right-wing populist parties have joined government coalitions. Dumont and Bäck (2006: S35) conclude that "Greens

participate in government when they have lost votes in at least one election, when the main party of the left identifies them as a clear electoral threat, *and* when the policy distance between the Greens and either the *formateur* or the main left party is small (the latter condition must be accompanied by a substantial proportion of seats for the Green party in parliament)“.

Parallels can even be drawn between the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and that of socialist parties at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century socialist parties qualified as non-mainstream parties, because they took the most left-leaning position on the left-right dimension. Only with the emergence of communist parties, after the Third International in 1919, socialist parties became parties of the mainstream left. Many of the debates between *Fundis* and *Realos* in radical right-wing populist parties about office versus policy and votes echo the famous debates between Jules Guesde and Jean Jaurès about the prospective government participation of the socialist in the French bourgeois governments that ruled during the First World War (Bergounioux and Grunberg 1992).

On the basis of these parallels several observations can be made about the government participation of non-mainstream parties. Most importantly, non-mainstream parties linger in the opposition for many years, because they lack the legislative weight and centrality to become important actors in the coalition formation process. They have the possibility to overcome these obstacles when they succeed electorally and manage to reshape patterns of competition. Under these conditions their legislative weight increases, and a policy rationale develops between mainstream parties and non-mainstream parties that provides both types of parties with incentives to cooperate in the executive. In this respect radical right-wing populist parties are firmly located within the group of non-mainstream parties. The way in which radical right-wing populist parties enter government coalitions is largely similar to that of other non-mainstream parties.

In some respects radical right-wing populist parties differ from other non-mainstream parties. Radical right-wing populist parties use populist strategies (e.g. anti-establishment rhetoric and overpromising) to garner electoral support and they have a populist ideology that conceives of society in antagonistic terms. In office these parties have to abandon their highly successful electoral strategies, and reformulate one of their core ideological features. They have to redefine the antagonistic groups of which society is comprised, because they collaborate with the parties they previously identified as the main representatives of the corrupt elite. While other non-mainstream parties also use populist strategies, most of them do not have a populist ideology. When the latter parties enter government coalitions they are forced to revise their electoral strategies, but not their ideology.

Populism thus makes that radical right-wing populist parties are affected more strongly by negative incumbency effects than other non-mainstream parties, which in turn impacts on the way in which radical right-wing populist parties trade off between office, policy, and votes. It takes radical right-wing populist parties longer than other non-mainstream parties to become office-seeking. Radical right-wing populist parties will take up government responsibility when they believe they have sufficient electoral support to survive the negative electoral consequences associated with government participation. Other non-mainstream parties might do the same, but the electoral support they need to survive the any negative incumbency effects is lower and hence they will more quickly become office-seeking. For mainstream parties it is more attractive to integrate radical right-wing

populist parties in government coalitions to win back votes than it is to integrate other non-mainstream parties in government coalitions. Mainstream parties can certainly win back votes lost to other non-mainstream parties, but it will take more effort.<sup>172</sup>

In West European parliamentary democracies radical right-wing populist parties are the only populist parties that have participated in government coalitions, at least at the national level. Populist parties of left-wing signature, like the Dutch SP or the German PDS-Die Linke, are still opposition members. This makes it difficult to check whether populist parties are more likely to suffer more substantial electoral losses as a consequence of government participation than other parties, irrespective of their ideological affiliation. The government participation of several Central and East European populist parties does give credit to this assertion. Left- and right-wing populist parties in Poland, for example, have been decimated after they joined a government coalition in 2006. Even though this example merely serves illustrative purposes, it does indicate that populist parties have a fairly particular handicap when they are in office. The handicap sets these parties apart from other non-mainstream parties, but it certainly does not make specific party families unique. Radical right-wing populist parties are almost identical to other non-mainstream populist parties, and largely similar to other non-mainstream parties that are not populist.

### **Where do we go from here?**

This dissertation gives a clear answer to the question *what explains the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties in West European parliamentary democracies?* Moreover, in addition to an answer to the crucial *why* question, it also answers the *who*, *where*, and *when* questions. The model that answers these questions is comprehensive, but certainly not complete. Additional research on the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is called for. The set-up of this study precluded the investigation of certain explanations for the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties. More specifically, several party characteristics have not been examined, such as party leadership and party organization, even though there are theoretical reasons to believe that they matter. Most of these characteristics have been briefly mentioned in passing in some of the chapters, but a lack of data made it impossible to explore their impact on the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties in a more systematic fashion. Further research in a comparative setting can establish whether these characteristics have a structural impact on the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties in West European parliamentary democracies.

This study does not only answer many questions, it also raises many new ones. What happens when radical right-wing populist parties join government coalitions? Do Cinderella and her ugly sisters indeed become each other's fairy godmother? Do the parties live happily ever after, or does the fairytale go sour at some point?

These questions are relevant as follow ups to this study, because explanations for the formation of government coalitions rely heavily on assumptions about the way parties will behave in office. One of the reasons

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<sup>172</sup> Other non-mainstream parties might have other electoral vulnerabilities. Green parties, for example, are likely to suffer severely from government participation, because their democratic internal structures are not very compatible with the demands government participation makes on parties.

why parties form minimal connected winning coalitions, or other types of coalition predicted by formal coalition formation theories, is to assure that their coalitions function well and last. Minimal connected coalitions are believed to reduce conflict between coalition members and are therefore expected to govern longer than unconnected coalitions. Similarly, minimal winning coalitions are expected to last longer than oversized or undersized coalitions (Browne, Frensdreis, and Gleiber 1984; 1986; 1988; Warwick 1992; Warwick and Easton 1992).

The participation of radical right-wing populist parties in government coalitions has been the subject of some scholarly inquiry. Most notably, several studies have examined the influence radical right-wing populist parties have on policy-making when they take up government responsibility. These studies have concluded that radical right-wing populist parties do influence policy-making (Bouillaud 2007; Perlmutter 1996; 2002; Zaslove 2004), but that their influence is limited and first and foremost symbolic (Minkenberg 2002: 262). Moreover, only the symbolic influence of radical right-wing populist parties increases significantly when these parties enter government coalitions.

Examples to illustrate these conclusions are easily drawn from this study, as well as from country studies that assess changes in immigration policies. The FPÖ, for example, had a major impact on the reform of the Austrian asylum and immigration laws in 2001. The new laws oblige old and new immigrants to take integration courses, to which the state only contributes 50 per cent of the expenses. Moreover, fingerprints of asylum seekers are now taken upon entry into the country and quota for labor migrants have been adjusted. In Italy, the new Bossi-Fini law has been introduced in 2002 as part of a pre-electoral agreement between AN, FI, and LN. The law has tightened labor migration regulations, impedes family reunification, and penalties for illegal immigration are substantially higher than before 2002 (Colombo and Sciortino 2003; Zaslove 2004). Similarly, the DF has had a major say in the reforms of the asylum and immigration laws under the Rasmussen I government. Introduced measures include reductions of immigration numbers, limitations to opportunities for family reunification, drastic reductions in the levels of social assistance for immigrants, and the abolishment of the Committee for Ethic Equality (Bjorklund and Andersen 2004: 200). The greatest achievement of the LPF has been the creation of the post of Minister of Foreigners and Integration, charged exclusively with immigration and integration policy (Lucardie 2003), thereby following in the footsteps of Denmark, where the Minister for Refugees, Immigrants, and Integration made its appearance when the DF became a government support party in 2001 (Bille 2002).<sup>173</sup>

The reason why radical right-wing populist parties primarily influence immigration policies is straightforward. Parties first and foremost seek to influence policy-making on policy issues that are central to their ideologies. For radical right-wing populist parties the immigration issue is highly salient, and it is also the issue over which these parties have acquired issue-ownership. Mainstream parties attach far less importance to the immigration issue and therefore do not have any problem to concede their position on it.

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<sup>173</sup> Occasionally, radical right-wing populist parties have also weighed on other policy domains. The FRP(n), for example, has been instrumental in the augmentation of pensions for Norwegian senior citizens (Bjørklund and Andersen 2004: 198). In a similar fashion, the DF has played a decisive role in the diminution of Danish investments in environmental projects and cutbacks in development aid (Bjørklund and Andersen 2004: 200).

Thus, logrolling over policy issues has given radical right-wing populist parties free reign in the domain of immigration policy and their influence on policy is most manifest in this domain.

The government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated have been at times been rather conflictuous. The radical right-wing populist parties in these coalitions have succumbed to intraparty conflicts. Once in government, antagonisms between *fundis* and *realos* have become more pronounced, because government participation requires a choice between office, on the one hand, and policy and votes, on the other. The tensions between these two camps have been exacerbated by the fact that power has become more dispersed in the radical right-wing populist parties that have joined government coalitions. The radical right-wing populist politicians that have taken up cabinet positions have gained more autonomy and legitimacy and thus have a stronger position vis-à-vis the party leader. Three loci of power are present in radical right-wing populist parties with government experience: "the party on the ground" and "the party at central office", and additionally "the party in public office" (Katz and Mair 2002). Each of these loci has a different degree of access to office spoils and hence promotes different office-, policy-, and vote-seeking strategies. These differences in strategic preferences have aggravated the latently present antagonisms between *fundis* and *realos* and have led to intraparty conflict and even party splits (see the establishment of the BZÖ in 2005).

As a consequence of intraparty conflicts some of the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated have been extremely short-lived. This has created an image that radical right-wing populist parties are unfit to govern. According to Heinisch (Bale 2003; Heinisch 2003), radical right-wing populist parties display "inherent" and "significant structural weaknesses" that make these parties' "long-term success in government questionable" (Heinisch 2003: 91). Usually, the intraparty conflict that emerges within radical right-wing populist parties over the tension between office and policy, on the one hand, and votes, on the other, turns into interparty conflict in which the same opposition is central.

The problem with this analysis is that it focuses excessively on the Austrian and Dutch situation. The fate of Schüssel I has been briefly addresses in this dissertation, and that of Balkenende I has been almost identical. To generalize on the basis of these cases is, however, problematic. The fate of Balkenende I and Schüssel I contrasts sharply with that of Berlusconi II, Bondevik II, and Rasmussen I. The latter governments served their full term and did not encounter any major difficulties during their time in office.<sup>174</sup> Especially the Italian case is noteworthy, because Berlusconi II is the only Italian government coalition that has not had to resign prematurely. It is also worthwhile to note that radical right-wing populist parties appear to adapt progressively to their roles as government parties, since coalition governments that include these parties have shown greater endurance in recent years. Berlusconi II served the full five-year term, whereas Berlusconi I was dissolved after seven months. Similarly, Schüssel II lasted almost four years, whereas Schüssel I resigned after two years.

The discrepancy between coalition formation theories' predictions about the life expectancy of the government coalitions in which radical right-wing populist parties have participated and their actual longevity nevertheless remains remarkable and deserves further investigation. Research that

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<sup>174</sup> The Norwegian case is somewhat deviant, because the Norwegian electoral system does not allow early elections.

explores this discrepancy can shed more light on the way in which parties evaluate coalition alternatives and decide on the office-, policy-, and vote-seeking strategies. In light of the findings of this study it is plausible that mainstream parties decide to end government coalitions with radical right-wing populist parties prematurely, because this fits with their vote-seeking strategies. If this is indeed the case mainstream parties will dissolve these coalitions as soon as the polls indicate that the voters of radical right-wing populist parties are dissatisfied with their party and consider voting other parties in the government coalition. Analysis of polls results could substantiate this argument.

The behaviour of radical right-wing populist parties in office immediately raises questions about the (long-term) effects of the government participation of these parties. I believe it is useful to distinguish three types of effects: on parties' electoral and legislative strength and their office- and vote-seeking strategies, on their policy positions, the salience of the dimensions that structure these positions and their policy-seeking strategies, and on parties' organizational characteristics. These effects do not only concern radical right-wing populist parties, but also mainstream parties. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to address them in detail, they are relevant to this dissertation for two reasons. First, radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties' strategic behaviour in the coalition formation process is guided by anticipations of the effects collaboration will have on these parties. Second, it seems that there is a lot of received wisdom about the effects government participation will have on radical right-wing populist parties, but this wisdom is not backed up by empirical research. Few studies investigate the effects government participation has on radical right-wing populist and mainstream parties (but see Bale 2003; Buelens and Hino 2008; Frölich-Steffen and Rensmann 2007) and on these parties policy positions (but see Bale 2003; Minkenberg 2001)

When the effects of the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties are investigated more thoroughly, it also becomes possible to analyze the systemic impact of these parties on West European party systems. This study has established that the short-term impact of the success of radical right-wing populist parties entails a clear change in coalition practices. It has also found evidence of broader changes in the structure of party competition, such as a shift from centripetal to centrifugal patterns of competition. In other words, the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is a result of, and reinforces, bipolarization in West European party systems.

The long-term consequences of these short-term trends remain uncertain. Are party systems truly transformed as a result of the electoral rise and government participation of radical right-wing populist parties? Or are these effects only temporary? These questions require detailed analyses of party system trends in West European parliamentary democracies. These analyses are fundamental, because they touch upon the capacity of party systems to incorporate new parties and their appeals, and as such inform us about party system stability and survival.

Analyses of party system trends can also provide clues as to whether the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties has been a temporary phenomenon. Will these parties govern again or have they profited from once in a lifetime opportunities? Although the electoral success of some radical right-wing populist parties seems to diminish (e.g. the results of the FN and Haider's BZÖ in recent elections), other parties are still going strong. The Danish elections of November 2007 showed that the DF remains one of

the largest parties in the *Folketing*, and it has once again secured a position as support party in the Rasmussen III government.<sup>175</sup> Recent polls in Norway list the FRP(n) as the largest party in the *Storting*, and it is anticipated that the party will make the transition from support party to cabinet member when the next elections are held in 2010.

The continued government participation of radical right-wing populist parties would offer additional information about what motivates mainstream parties to govern with these parties, on the basis of which the conclusions of this study can be corroborated. What is more, it would provide further credit to the central claim of this study that the government participation of radical right-wing populist parties is an ordinary phenomenon, and that radical right-wing populist parties should be approached as a pathological normalcy, rather than a normal pathology.

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<sup>175</sup> With the reformation of his incumbent government coalition Anders Fogh Rasmussen has become the longest serving prime minister in Danish history.



## APPENDIX A

### Election Results

#### Austria

		1983	1986	1990	1994	1996	1999	2002
FPÖ	Seats	12	18	33	42	40	52	18
	%	5.0	9.7	16.6	22.5	21.9	26.9	10.0
GRÜN	Seats	-	8	10	13	9	14	17
	%	-	4.8	4.8	7.3	4.8	7.4	9.5
LiF	Seats	-	-	-	11	10	-	-
	%	-	-	-	6.0	5.5	-	-
ÖVP	Seats	81	77	60	52	53	52	79
	%	43.2	41.3	32.1	27.7	28.3	26.9	42.3
SPÖ	Seats	90	80	80	65	71	65	69
	%	47.7	43.1	42.8	34.9	38.1	33.2	36.5
Total	Seats	183	183	183	183	183	183	183

## Belgium

		1981	1985	1987	1992	1995	1999	2003
AGALEV/GROEN	Seats	2	4	6	7	5	9	-
	%	2.3	3.7	4.5	4.9	4.4	7.0	-
CVP/CD&V	Seats	43	22	25	26	21	23	25
	%	21.3	10.7	11.5	12.0	13.1	14.3	15.4
ECOLO	Seats	2	5	3	10	6	11	4
	%	2.2	2.5	2.6	5.1	4.0	7.4	3.1
FDF	Seats	8	3	3	3	-	-	-
	%	4.2	1.2	1.2	1.5	-	-	-
FNb	Seats	-	-	-	1	2	1	1
	%	-	-	-	1.1	2.3	1.5	2.0
KPB	Seats	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
	%	2.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
N-VA	Seats	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	%	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.1
PRL/MR	Seats	24	24	23	20	18	18	24
	%	8.6	10.2	9.4	8.1	10.3	10.1	11.4
PVV/VLD	Seats	28	22	25	26	21	23	25
	%	12.9	10.7	11.5	12.0	13.1	14.3	15.4
PS	Seats	35	35	40	35	21	19	25
	%	12.7	13.8	19.5	13.5	11.9	16.2	13.0
PSC/CDH	Seats	18	20	19	18	12	10	8
	%	7.2	8.0	8.0	7.7	7.7	5.9	5.5
SP/SP.A	Seats	26	32	32	28	20	14	23
	%	12.4	14.5	14.9	12.0	12.6	9.5	14.9
VU	Seats	20	16	16	10	5	8	1
	%	9.8	7.9	8.0	5.9	4.7	5.6	3.1
VB	Seats	1	1	2	12	11	15	18
	%	1.1	1.4	1.9	6.6	7.8	9.9	11.7
Other	Seats	3	1	-	1	-	-	-
	%	10.6	11.2	-	4.8	-	-	-
Total	Seats	212	212	212	212	150	150	150

## Denmark

		1981	1984	1987	1988	1990	1994	1998	2001	2005
CP/CD	Seats	15	8	9	9	9	5	8	-	-
	%	8.3	4.6	4.8	4.7	5.1	2.8	4.3	-	-
DF	Seats	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	22	24
	%	-	-	-	-	-	-	7.4	12.0	13.3
EL	Seats	-	-	-	-	-	6	5	4	6
	%	-	-	-	-	-	3.1	2.7	2.4	3.4
FRP(d)	Seats	16	6	9	16	12	11	4	-	-
	%	8.9	3.6	4.8	9.0	6.4	6.4	2.4	-	-
KF	Seats	26	42	38	35	30	27	16	16	19
	%	14.5	23.4	20.8	19.3	16.0	15.0	8.9	9.1	10.3
KRF	Seats	4	5	4	4	4	-	4	4	-
	%	2.3	2.7	2.4	2.0	2.3	-	2.5	2.3	-
RV	Seats	9	10	6.2	10	7	8	7	9	16
	%	5.1	5.5	11	5.6	3.5	4.6	3.9	5.2	9.2
SD	Seats	59	56	54	29.8	69	62	63	52	47
	%	32.9	31.6	29.3	55	37.4	34.6	36.0	29.1	25.8
SF	Seats	21	21	27	24	15	13	13	12	11
	%	11.3	11.5	14.6	13.0	8.3	4.6	7.5	6.4	9.2
V	Seats	20	22	19	22	29	42	42	56	52
	%	11.3	12.1	10.5	11.8	15.8	23.3	24.0	31.3	29.0
VS	Seats	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	%	2.7	2.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	Seats	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
	%	-	-	3.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	Seats	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175

Note that table does not include Faroe Islands (2 seats) and Greenland (2 seats)

## France

		1981	1986	1988	1993	1997	2002
FN	Seats	-	3.4	1	-	1	-
	%	-	9.9	9.8	-	14.9	-
MPF	Seats	-	-	-	-	2	1
	%	-	-	-	-	2.4	0.8
MRC	Seats	-	-	-	-	7	-
	%	-	-	-	-	1.0	-
PCF	Seats	44	34	27	23	38	21
	%	16.2	9.8	11.3	9.2	9.9	4.8
PRG	Seats	14	7	9	6	12	7
	%	-	1.0	1.1	0.9	1.4	1.5
PS	Seats	265	199	260	54	241	141
	%	37.5	31.2	37.0	17.6	23.5	24.1
RPR/UMP	Seats	88	150	126	247	134	357
	%	21.2	27.0	19.2	20.4	15.7	33.3
UDF	Seats	53	127	129	213	108	29
	%	21.7	15.5	18.5	19.1	14.2	4.9
VERTS	Seats	-	-	-	-	7	3
	%	-	-	-	-	6.8	4.5
Total	Seats	491	575	575	577	577	577

### Italy pre-1994

		1983	1987	1992
DC	Seats	225	234	206
	%	32.9	34.3	29.7
DS	Seats	198	177	107
	%	29.9	26.6	16.1
DP	Seats	7	8	-
	%	1.5	1.7	-
LN	Seats	-	-	55
	%	-	-	8.7
MSI	Seats	42	35	34
	%	6.8	5.9	5.4
PCI	Seats	198	177	107
	%	29.9	26.6	16.1
PLI	Seats	16	11	17
	%	2.9	2.1	2.8
PR	Seats	11	13	7
	%	2.2	2.6	1.2
PRC	Seats	-	-	35
	%	-	-	5.6
PRI	Seats	29	21	27
	%	5.1	3.7	4.4
PSDI	Seats	23	17	16
	%	4.1	2.9	2.7
PSI	Seats	73	94	92
	%	11.4	14.3	13.6
RETE	Seats	-	-	12
	%	-	-	1.9
SVP	Seats	3	3	3
	%	0.5	0.5	0.5
VERDI	Seats	13	16	11
	%	2.5	2.8	2.7
Other	Seats	3	3	3
	%	2.7	2.4	4.6
Total	Seats	630	630	630

### Italy post-1994

		1994	1996	2001
AD	Seats	18	-	-
	%	1.2	-	-
AN	Seats	109	93	99
	%	13.5	15.7	12.0
CCD/UDC	Seats	27	30	41
	%	-	5.8	3.2
DL	Seats	33	64	86
	%	11.1	6.8	14.5
DS	Seats	125	176	137
	%	20.4	21.1	16.6
FI	Seats	107	123	193
	%	21.0	20.6	29.5
LN	Seats	117	59	30
	%	8.4	10.1	3.9
PATTO	Seats	13	-	-
	%	4.6	-	-
PdCI	Seats	-	-	9
	%	-	-	1.7
RETE	Seats	6	-	-
	%	1.9	-	-
PR	Seats	6	-	-
	%	3.5	-	-
PRC	Seats	39	35	11
	%	6.0	8.6	5.0
PSI	Seats	14	-	-
	%	2.2	-	-
RI	Seats	-	4.3	-
	%	-	24	-
SVP	Seats	3	-	3
	%	0.6	-	0.5
VERDI	Seats	11	21	17
	%	2.7	2.5	2.2
Other	Seats	2	2	4
	%	2.8	2.5	8.5
Total	Seats	630	630	630

## The Netherlands

		1981	1982	1986	1989	1994	1998	2002	2003
CP/CD	Seats	-	1	-	1	3	-	-	-
	%	-	0.8	-	0.9	2.4	-	-	-
CDA	Seats	48	45	54	54	34	29	43	44
	%	30.8	29.3	34.6	35.3	22.2	18.4	27.9	28.6
CPN	Seats	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
	%	2.1	1.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
CU	Seats	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	3
	%	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.5	2.1
D66	Seats	17	6	9	12	24	14	7	6
	%	11.1	4.3	6.1	7.9	15.5	9.0	5.1	4.1
GL	Seats	-	-	-	6	5	11	10	8
	%	-	-	-	4.1	3.5	7.3	7.0	5.1
GVP	Seats	1	1	1	2	2	2	-	-
	%	0.8	1.0	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.2	-	-
LN	Seats	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
	%	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.4	-
LPF	Seats	-	-	-	-	-	-	26	8
	%	-	-	-	-	-	-	17.0	5.7
PPR	Seats	3	2	2	-	-	-	-	-
	%	2.0	1.7	1.3	-	-	-	-	-
PSP	Seats	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	-
	%	2.0	1.7	1.3	-	-	-	-	-
PvdA	Seats	44	47	52	49	37	45	23	42
	%	28.3	30.4	33.3	31.9	24.0	29.0	15.1	27.3
RPF	Seats	2	2	1	1	3	3	-	-
	%	1.2	1.5	0.9	1.0	1.8	2.0	-	-
SGP	Seats	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	2
	%	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.6
SP	Seats	-	-	-	-	2	5	9	9
	%	-	-	-	-	1.3	3.5	5.9	6.3
VVD	Seats	26	36	27	22	31	38	24	28
	%	17.3	23.1	17.4	14.6	19.9	24.7	15.4	17.9
Other	Seats	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-
	%	-	-	-	-	4.4	-	-	-
Total	Seats	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150

## Norway

		1981	1985	1989	1993	1997	2001	2005
DNA	Seats	66	71	63	67	65	43	61
	%	37.1	40.7	34.4	36.9	35.1	24.4	32.7
FRP(n)	Seats	4	2	22	10	25	25	38
	%	4.5	3.7	13.0	6.3	15.3	14.6	22.1
H	Seats	53	50	37	28	23	38	23
	%	31.7	30.4	22.1	17.0	14.3	21.2	14.1
KRF	Seats	15	16	14	13	25	22	11
	%	9.4	8.3	8.5	7.9	13.7	12.4	6.8
RV	Seats	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
	%	-	-	-	1.1	-	-	-
SP	Seats	11	12	11	32	11	10	11
	%	6.7	6.6	6.5	16.7	8.0	5.6	6.5
SV	Seats	4	6	17	13	9	23	15
	%	4.9	5.5	10.0	7.9	6.0	12.5	8.8
V	Seats	2	-	-	1	6	2	10
	%	3.9	-	-	3.6	4.4	3.9	5.9
Other	Seats	-	-	1	-	1	1	-
	%	-	-	1.5	-	1.5	1.7	-
Total	Seats	155	157	165	165	165	165	169

## Sweden

		1982	1985	1988	1991	1994	1998	2002
CP	Seats	56	44	42	31	27	18	22
	%	15.5	9.9	11.3	8.5	7.7	5.1	6.2
FP	Seats	21	51	44	33	26	17	48
	%	5.9	14.2	12.2	9.1	7.2	4.7	13.3
KD	Seats	-	-	-	26	15	42	33
	%	-	-	-	7.1	4.1	11.8	9.1
M	Seats	86	76	66	80	80	82	55
	%	23.6	21.3	18.3	21.9	22.2	22.7	15.1
MP	Seats	-	-	20	-	18	16	17
	%	-	-	5.5	-	5.0	4.5	4.5
ND	Seats	-	-	-	25	-	-	-
	%	-	-	-	6.7	-	-	-
SdAP	Seats	166	159	156	138	161	131	144
	%	45.6	44.7	43.2	37.7	45.4	36.6	39.9
V	Seats	20	19	21	16	22	43	30
	%	5.6	5.3	5.8	4.5	6.2	12.0	8.3
Total	Seats	349	349	349	349	349	349	349



## APPENDIX B

### Party Positions

#### Austria

	Castles and Mair (1982)	Laver and Hunt (1989)	Huber and Inglehart (1993)	Lubbers (2000)	Benoit and Laver (2006)
FPÖ	68	67	85	85	86
GRUN	-	24	21	25	23
LiF	-	-	59	44	-
ÖVP	58	67	58	63	70
SPÖ	30	41	41	43	41

## Belgium

	Castles and Mair (1982)	Laver and Hunt (1989)	Huber and Inglehart (1993)	Lubbers (2000)	Benoit and Laver (2006)
AGALAEV/Groen	45	36	27	27	13
CVP/CD&V	58	75	56	58	60
ECOLO	45	36	28	21	13
FDF	56	49	67	-	-
FNb	-	-	-	95	94
KPB	14	-	-	-	-
N-VA	-	-	-	-	70
PRL/MR	76	63	70	66	62
PS	25	24	33	33	18
PSC/CDH	63	70	52	57	51
PVV/VLD	78	58	-	68	71
SP/SP.A	29	24	36	36	30
VB	98	84	-	93	94
VU	68	71	61	51	-

## Denmark

	Castles and Mair (1982)	Laver and Hunt (1989)	Huber and Inglehart (1993)	Lubbers (2000)	Benoit and Laver (2006)
CD	57	55	56	56	54
DF	-	-	-	87	75
EL	-	-	11	10	07
FRP(d)	87	83	90	87	91
KF	73	67	73	72	75
KRF	62	76	58	59	54
RV	48	42	52	48	44
SD	38	37	36	40	35
SF	19	19	21	25	19
V	67	73	79	77	74
VS	08	07	-	-	-

## France

	Castles and Mair (1982)	Laver and Hunt (1989)	Huber and Inglehart (1993)	Lubbers (2000)	Benoit and Laver (2006)
FN	98	93	100	95	-
MRG	38	34	42	-	-
PCF	14	20	14	15	-
PS	26	23	35	34	-
RPR	82	70	76	75	-
UDF	66	61	63	64	-
VEC	-	25	38	26	-

## Italy

	Castles and Mair (1982)	Laver and Hunt (1989)	Huber and Inglehart (1993)	Lubbers (2000)	Benoit and Laver (2006)
AN	-	-	-	82	84
CCD/UDC	-	-	-	59	60
DC	54	68	59	-	-
DP	05	06	-	-	-
DS	-	-	17	30	26
FI	-	-	-	67	77
LN	-	-	72	76	84
MSI	91	84	93	-	-
PCI	16	16	-	-	-
PDCI	-	-	-	-	12
PdUP	06	-	-	-	-
PLI	59	58	70	-	-
PPI	-	-	-	45	-
PR	23	20	-	-	-
PRC	-	-	00	07	06
PRI	48	50	51	-	-
PSDI	54	44	47	-	-
PSI	31	35	44	-	-
SDI	-	-	-	-	40
SVP	-	-	-	-	48
V	-	21	18	26	16

## The Netherlands

	Castles and Mair (1982)	Laver and Hunt (1989)	Huber and Inglehart (1993)	Lubbers (2000)	Benoit and Laver (2006)
CP/CD	-	-	94	90	-
CDA	57	69	59	54	66
CPN	08	07	-	-	-
CU	-	-	-	70	59
D66	44	31	42	45	49
GL	-	-	09	24	21
GPV	90	84	87	-	-
LPF	-	-	-	-	87
PPR	16	08	-	-	-
PSP	06	04	-	-	-
PvdA	26	21	36	37	40
RPF	92	88	89	-	-
SGP	92	88	89	79	82
SP	-	-	21	14	11
VVD	74	57	59	67	81

## Norway

	Castles and Mair (1982)	Laver and Hunt (1989)	Huber and Inglehart (1993)	Lubbers (2000)	Benoit and Laver (2006)
DNA	30	28	35	40	36
FRP(n)	94	73	91	81	78
H	77	59	78	74	82
KRF	61	69	62	55	53
RV	-	-	05	20	05
SP	58	56	48	42	34
SV	12	15	17	22	18
V	40	41	54	66	60

## Sweden

	Castles and Mair (1982)	Laver and Hunt (1989)	Huber and Inglehart (1993)	Lubbers (2000)	Benoit and Laver (2006)
CP	59	54	55	60	59
FP	55	48	55	57	70
KDS	-	71	67	73	79
M	77	72	81	80	85
MP	-	30	36	35	34
ND	-	-	90	90	-
SdAP	29	32	34	40	30
V	12	15	18	22	29

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## SAMENVATTING

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### **Van Paria tot Pluche: Verklaringen voor de Regeringsdeelname van Radicaal Rechts Populistische Partijen in West Europese Parlementaire Democratieën**

#### **Introductie**

Sinds het begin van de jaren '80 zijn radicaal rechts populistische partijen steeds succesvoller geworden in West Europa. Het aantal landen waarin deze partijen deelnemen aan verkiezingen is gegroeid, net als het aantal landen waarin deze partijen de electorale drempel weten te passeren en in het parlement zetelen. Het heeft echter tot de late jaren '90 geduurd vooraleer radicaal rechts populistische partijen er in zijn geslaagd om hun electorale succes om te zetten in regeringsdeelname. Bovendien is het aantal landen waarin deze partijen tot regeringscoalities zijn toegetreden beperkt. Alleen in Denemarken, Italië, Nederland, Noorwegen en Oostenrijk hebben radicaal rechts populistische partijen regeringsverbonden gesloten met gevestigde partijen. In landen als België, Frankrijk, en Zweden zijn radicaal rechts populistische partijen electoraal succesvol (geweest), maar blijft hun rol beperkt tot het voeren van oppositie.

Dit proefschrift verklaart de regeringdeelname van radicaal rechts populistische partijen vanuit een rationele keuze perspectief. Het analyseert verschillende aspecten van de regeringsdeelname van radicaal rechts populistische partijen op basis van verschillende types coalitieformatietheorieën en op basis van verschillende methodologische benaderingen. Op deze manier kan worden vastgesteld waarom sommige radicaal rechts populistische partijen wel regeringspartijen zijn geworden en andere niet.

#### **Het rationele keuze perspectief en coalitie formatie theorieën**

Hoewel vaak wordt gesteld dat radicaal rechts populistische partijen niet bestudeerd kunnen worden met bestaande theoretische kaders, wordt in dit proefschrift gekozen voor het verklaren van de regeringsdeelname van radicaal rechts populistische partijen aan de hand van coalitieformatietheorieën. Deze keuze is geïnspireerd door de overtuiging dat radicaal rechts populistische partijen niet als een *normal pathology* beschouwd moeten worden, maar eerder als een pathological normalcy. Naar mening van de auteur verschillen radicaal rechts populistische partijen niet fundamenteel van gevestigde partijen, maar zijn zij eerder als radicale versies van deze partijen te beschouwen.

Het rationele keuze perspectief behelst een serie assumpties die als volgt kunnen worden samengevat. Individuen worden verondersteld zich rationeel te gedragen, in de zin dat zij streven naar nutsmaximilisatie op formeel voorspelbare manieren. Individuen kunnen zich alleen rationeel gedragen wanneer zij volledig geïnformeerd zijn over alle strategische opties die zij ter beschikking hebben en hun voorkeuren voor deze opties kunnen op complete en transitieve wijze kunnen ordenen.

Over het algemeen wordt tijdens coalitie onderhandelingen aan deze voorwaarden voldaan. Politieke partijen zijn op de hoogte van de mogelijke coalities die kunnen worden gevormd en zijn in staat op deze mogelijke coalities te ordenen aan de hand van het profijt dat zij van deelname in deze coalities verwachten te ontvangen. Coalitieformatietheorieën veronderstellen dat partijen drie politieke doelen nastreven en derhalve drie soorten profijt van regeringsdeelname kunnen verwerven. In de eerste plaats zijn partijen

*office-seekers*, dwz. dat zij streven naar vertegenwoordiging in regeringscoalities om zo kabinetsposities te kunnen vervullen. In de tweede plaats zijn partijen *policy-seekers*, dwz. dat zij proberen beleid te beïnvloeden. In de derde plaats zijn partijen *vote-seekers*, dwz. dat zij trachten zo veel mogelijk stemmen te verwerven om zo eerder genoemde doelen binnen handbereik te brengen.

Er bestaan verschillende types coalitiefomatietheorieën die deze principes als uitgangspunt nemen. Sommige theorieën concentreren zich primair op de partijen die in regeringscoalities samen werken, terwijl andere theorieën juist voornamelijk focussen op de regeringscoalities zelf. In dit proefschrift worden deze verschillende types coalitie formatie theorieën gebruikt om verschillende aspecten van de regeringsdeelname van radicaal rechts populistische partijen te belichten.

### **Onderzoeksresultaten**

In hoofdstuk vier zijn de kenmerken van radicaal rechts populistisch en gevestigde partijen onder de loep genomen om te bepalen onder welke omstandigheden deze partijen zullen samenwerken. De conclusies van dit hoofdstuk zijn dat (1) radicaal rechts populistische partijen die deel uit maken van de regering wezenlijk andere kenmerken hebben dan radicaal rechts populistische partijen die deel uit maken van de oppositie, (2) gevestigde partijen die met radicaal rechts populistische partijen regeren wezenlijk andere kenmerken hebben dan gevestigde partijen die dit niet doen, en (3) de relatie tussen de kenmerken van radicaal rechts populistische partijen enerzijds en gevestigde partijen anderzijds een belangrijke rol speelt bij het bepalen van de regeringsdeelname van het eerste type partijen. De partijkenmerken die doorslaggevend zijn in het gehele proces zijn het parlementair gewicht van radicaal rechts populistische partijen en de afstand tussen radicaal rechts populistische partijen en gevestigde partijen op de links-rechts schaal. Deze bevindingen suggereren dat radicaal rechts populistische partijen en gevestigde partijen samen regeren om zowel hun *office-seeking* als *policy-seeking* doeleinden te bereiken.

In hoofdstuk vijf zijn de kenmerken van de regeringscoalities waaraan radicaal rechts populistische partijen hebben deelgenomen onder de loep genomen. De conclusies van dit hoofdstuk zijn dat radicaal rechts populistische partijen bijna zonder uitzondering hebben geparticipeerd in regeringscoalities die geen overbodige partijen bevatten en ideologisch compact zijn. Deze bevindingen suggereren wederom dat radicaal rechts populistische en gevestigde partijen samen regeren om zowel hun *office-seeking* als *policy-seeking* doeleinden te bereiken.

In hoofdstuk zes is de formatie van de ÖVP-FPÖ coalitie die in 2000 in Oostenrijk aan de macht is gekomen in detail bestudeerd om vast te stellen of radicaal rechts populistische en gevestigde partijen inderdaad door *office* en *policy* overwegingen worden gemotiveerd wanneer zij besluiten om samen te regeren. Deze *case study* toont aan dat deze overwegingen inderdaad een rol spelen, maar ook electorale overwegingen niet onbelangrijk zijn. Radicaal rechts populistische partijen en gevestigde partijen regeren dus niet alleen samen omdat dit past binnen hun *office-* and *policy-seeking* strategieën, maar ook omdat dit past binnen hun *vote-seeking* strategieën. Ook maakt de *case study* duidelijk dat naast de al genoemde partij kenmerken ook de *salience* van beleidsdimensies (met name de socio-economische en culturele dimensies) invloed heeft op het besluit van radicaal rechts populistische en gevestigde partijen om samen te regeren. Wanneer radicaal rechts populistische partijen aan andere dimensies belang hechten dan gevestigde

partijen, bevordert dit het gemak waarmee deze twee types partijen tot een regeringsovereenkomst kunnen komen. Zij kunnen dan tot een uitwisseling van standpunten komen zonder dat een van de partijen verregaande compromissen hoeft te sluiten op punten die zij van wezenlijk belang achten.

### **Conclusie: het belang van partijkenmerken**

Dit proefschrift toont aan dat coalitie formatie theorieën een goede verklaring bieden voor de regeringsdeelname van radicaal rechts populistische partijen. Wanneer de bevindingen van de hoofdstukken vier, vijf, en zes gezamenlijk worden beschouwd kunnen de volgende algemene conclusies worden getrokken. De radicaal recht populistische partijen nemen regelmatig deel aan regeringscoalities, zeker wanneer de frequentie van regeringsdeelname wordt vergeleken met die van andere types partijen. Zij is een gevolg van (1) de electorale groei van deze partijen en het daaruit voortvloeiende parlementair gewicht van deze partijen; (2) het feit dat radicaal rechts populistische partijen standpunten innemen die niet veel verschillen van de standpunten van sommige gevestigde partijen, met name wanneer de laatste van rechtse signatuur zijn; (3) wanneer het belang dat radicaal rechts populistische en gevestigde partijen aan bepaalde standpunten hechten verschillend is en deze partijen daardoor op basis van *logrolling* tot een regeerakkoord kunnen komen.

Deze drie factoren geven aanwijzingen voor het feit dat radicaal rechts populistische en gevestigde partijen samenwerken in regeringscoalities om op deze wijze hun office, policy, en vote doelstellingen te realiseren. Wanneer radicaal rechts populistische partijen voldoende electoraal succes hebben en zo druk uit oefenen op gevestigde partijen ontstaat een dynamiek van electorale competitie waardoor gezamenlijke regeringscoalities aantrekkelijker worden voor bepaalde gevestigde partijen, met name van rechtse signatuur, dan regeringscoalities tussen gevestigde partijen onderling.

Deze conclusies benadrukken dat het radicaal rechts populistische vraagstuk door gevestigde partijen in de eerste plaats strategisch benaderd wordt. Samenwerking met radicaal rechts populistische partijen kan instrumenteel zijn om politieke doelstellingen te bereiken en wordt om deze reden niet geschuwd door gevestigde partijen. Deze observatie toont aan dat radicaal rechts populistische partijen door gevestigde partijen niet als fundamenteel anders dan andere partijen worden gezien, en dat deze partijen daarom inderdaad het beste als een *pathological normalcy* worden beschouwd.