1. When right meets left: on the progressive rhetoric of far-right populist parties in Europe

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INTRODUCTION

The ascendancy of far-right populist parties (FRPPs) in Europe has been nothing short of remarkable. Seen as the ‘fastest-growing party family’ in the continent (Golder, 2016, p. 477), FRPPs have won significant numbers of seats in national elections in recent years and assured for themselves a place in governing coalitions as partners or outright leaders. This has happened in a long and varied list of countries, ranging from Italy to Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Estonia, Latvia, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Croatia and Slovakia.¹

Even when electoral successes have not translated into government roles, they have constituted major achievements. In France, for instance, Marine Le Pen’s National Rally (known as National Front until 2018) stunned the political establishment by reaching the final run-offs in the presidential elections, where it lost to Emmanuel Macron’s Forward! party. Meanwhile, in 2017, the Alternative for Germany won seats in 14 of 16 state parliaments, and became the third largest party in the Bundestag (the first time a far-right party secured any seats there since 1957). In Spain, Vox scored an expected victory in the general elections of November 2019 by coming in third. FRPPs have done well at the EU level too: the Danish People’s Party, the United Kingdom’s UKIP and France’s National Rally scored unprecedented victories – for instance, at the 2014 European Parliament elections (Brack, 2015). While the subsequent elections in 2019 did not represent major victories for all major FRPPs, they did so for the Alternative for Germany, France’s National Rally and Italy’s League.

These successes have had consequences. From immigration to taxation to support for the EU, FRPPs have directly shaped programs and priorities. They have also forced parties from the center to veer to the right to retain voters. Chancellor Angela Merkel’s reversal of her 2015 open-door immigration policy for Germany offers a good example. The victories have also helped relegate historically dominant mainstream parties to secondary roles, as in France and Italy.

The rise of FRPPs has logically puzzled casual observers and academics alike. What can explain it? Numerous accounts have been offered. Media commentators have stressed factors such as economic distress, immigration and fears of cultural and identity dilution (Aisch, Pearce & Rousseau, 2017; *Der Spiegel*, 2010; Lebor, 2016; *New York Times*, 2016). Academic arguments point to these and other factors (Carter, 2005; Cochrane & Nevitte, 2014; Lubbers & Coenders, 2017; Mieriņa & Koroļeva, 2015; Stockemer, 2017). For example, Golder (2016) offers a useful categorization of those arguments, in line with previous research (see Halikiopoulou, Mock, & Vasilopoulou, 2013; Kitschelt, 1995; Norris, 2005; Van der Brug, Fennema, & Tillie, 2005). He identifies ‘supply-side’ argu-

ments emphasizing the EU's functional weaknesses, the strong organization and attractive policies of FRPPs, and the corruption of domestic elites (see, for instance, Petsinis, 2015; Senninger & Wagner, 2015). In addition, he examines 'demand-side' arguments highlighting the grievances – economic, political, cultural and so on – held by certain segments of the population (Cochrane & Nevitte, 2014; Nordensvard & Ketola, 2014).

These are all sensible explanations. Yet, they tend to assume that FRPPs are essentially conservative (Carter, 2005, p. 17; Ennser, 2012; Mudde, 2007, p. 30) and thus miss something of significance. For instance, when considering parties like the Alternative for Germany, Freedom Party in Austria and Northern League in Italy, Jungar and Jupskås (2014, p. 218) note their shared commitment to 'traditional family values, and skepticism towards gender equality and gay rights'. In his assessment, Golder (2016, p. 479) concludes that despite some variation in economic policies, what FRPPs 'have in common is a desire to create an authoritarian system that is strictly ordered according to the "natural" differences that exist in society.' In the same spirit, scholars such as Kinnvall (2015, p. 524) write that 'much far right discourse [in Europe] is focused on the gendering of spaces, which is a process through which social systems maintain the organization of powerful hierarchies based on assumptions about masculinity, femininity, and privileges.'

Such wholesale depictions overlook an important development: some of the most successful FRPPs have deviated from traditional conservative stances by articulating progressive positions on issues such as gender equality, support for the poor, and gay rights. Several observers have already noted this (Akkerman, 2015; De Koster et al., 2014; Dudink, 2017; Mayer, 2015; Spierings et al., 2015), but only in relation to single issues, such as gender (see, for instance, Akkerman, 2015; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2015; Siegel, 2017), or multiple issues but in the context of a single party (De Lange & Mügge, 2015; Murdock, 2017). What has happened is in fact more systemic,² and evidence indicates that this unorthodox approach has generated positive electoral returns. In France, for example, the consensus is that the 'gay vote for the National Front has leapt in recent years' (Chrisafis, 2017), with analysts putting the gay support above 35 percent in 2017 (Murdock, 2017). For Scandinavian countries, in turn, evidence suggests that those holding nativist views while also supporting gays and lesbians have voted for these parties (Spierings & Zaslove, 2015). In addition, gays and women have directly strengthened FRPPs by taking on organizational leadership positions (Sengupta, 2017; Wodak, 2017, p. 152).

This chapter aims to underscore and explore the nature of this rhetorical blending of historically incongruent principles. With what logic have FRPPs weaved those principles into coherent wholes? Only a comparative, multi-issue analysis can answer this. At the core of the explanation, we shall see, is the nature of nationalism itself.

THE PROGRESSIVISM OF FRPPS

We can begin by recalling Greenfeld's (2017) recent article on the genesis and history of 'left' and 'right' in political discourse. Her argument is twofold. First, left and right both belonged originally, and continue to belong, *inside nationalism*. Indeed, the terms referred at first to a spatial matter: where two groups with different views sat in the National Assembly of the French nation born out of the 1789 Revolution. On the left were those

eager to leave any vestiges of the old order behind. Those on the right felt that the new nation could include adapted elements of the past, such as monarchy and religion. The difference was certainly important, but what Greenfeld stresses is that both groups ‘represented the new force of nationalism’ – that is, the rise of an entirely new form of social organization rooted in the principles of *equality*, *sovereignty* and *secularism*. Leftist and rightist ideologies should be seen, then, as belonging to nationalism and operating within the conceptual boundaries of its principles.

Second, Greenfeld notes that the ‘actual meanings’ assigned to ‘left’ and ‘right’ are in any case ‘changeable and confusing.’ They are in fact ‘tropes’: ‘evocative’ and ‘self-sufficient’ but lacking in inherent significance. Hence, historically positions that were once considered ‘right’ have not infrequently been viewed as ‘left’ later in time, and vice versa. Indeed, we can consider the present moment when, in many ways, the terms ‘refer to the very opposite’ of what they once did. Specifically, in the age of Trump, UKIP and others, the right is seen as radically committed to nationalism; in the early days of the National Assembly, that was the position of the left.

Greenfeld’s argument can guide our analysis. Per her first point, any political party – whether from the left or right – operating within the nation and especially when purporting to be defending the nation can anchor its claims in the principles of equality, sovereignty or secularism. Per her second point, we should remember that any given political concept does not unquestionably belong to the ‘left’ or ‘right.’ Few ideas are ‘fixed’ in their placement along the left-to-right spectrum, and most can be dislodged from their historical positioning and appropriated for strategic or other ends.

Let us consider now the rhetoric of FRPPs in four issue areas: sexual orientation, gender, religious preferences and generous social services.³ How have these parties managed to weave their ‘progressive’ stances in those areas into their otherwise generally ‘conservative’ platforms? They have stressed that belonging to the nation, or more broadly Western civilization as the cradle in which modern nations developed, includes a commitment to equality, self-sovereignty and secularism. Such a commitment guarantees citizens personal freedoms and the basic support of the whole for those who might be vulnerable. Foreign forces (Islam above all) are depicted as threatening those freedoms and support. Hence, key party leaders have emphasized that they ‘welcome’ – in line with their parties’ broader struggle to protect their nations or Western civilization from external threats – individuals who exercise their various freedoms in various dimensions of life or require support. This, then, is the essence of the FRPPs’ rhetorical logic, in line with Greenfeld’s insights: a defense by the ‘right’ of historically ‘leftist’ values in the name of the ‘nation’ and its core principles.

Of course, subtle variations exist. We consider them below by turning to three successful parties in countries that are otherwise different in terms of size, cultures and political traditions: the National Rally (Rassemblement National, or RN) in France, the Party for Freedom (Partij voor de Vrijheid, or PVV) in the Netherlands and the Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna, or SD). Specifically, the RN’s defense of French ideas of liberty against radical Islam has informed its views on gays and religion. For the PVV, the language has often been about Western civilizational tolerance as it concerns gays, Christians and Jews, and gender equality – all supposedly under attack by intolerant Islam. And for the SD, the focus has turned to community, and with it inclusion, as a Swedish value as it concerns its generous welfare system, LGBTQs and gender equality, and in reaction to the repressive cultures of Middle Eastern and other immigrants.

Methodologically, attention goes to statements by key party members (made via social media, or during interviews and public meetings), party platforms (available online), promotional materials (videos, leaflets, etc., as available online at party websites or other venues) and party initiatives (such as public marches, covered by mainstream media and other venues). Secondary academic sources were considered as well. To be clear, the objective was not to generate a random sample of materials and statements, or to gather evidence of all party members' stances. Rather, it was to identify statements that are especially revealing of the rhetorical logic associated with the turn to progressive values. The time frame is roughly from 2000 onward.

Protecting French Liberties

The RN has been labeled far right since its founding (as the National Front) in 1972 by Jean-Marie Le Pen. Le Pen's pronouncements on the relevance of the Holocaust, for instance, and its gas chambers as a 'detail in the history of World War Two' are well known.⁴ As to homosexuality, he called it a 'biological and social anomaly' and stated that 'there are no queens in the National Front' (Murdock, 2017). Well into the 1990s, the RN depicted women as 'mothers of the nation' with important family responsibilities (Scrinzi, 2017). Strong women in the political sphere could be admired, but then they should probably not be considered women. On Margaret Thatcher, for instance, Jean-Marie Le Pen stated that 'I admire her very much. A real man like Golda Meir.'⁵

His daughter Marine Le Pen ousted him in 2015. On many issues, she has maintained a traditional hard-right stance – opposing, for instance, international interference in France's national affairs. The RN remains anti-EU and anti-globalization. It is also staunchly anti-immigration, and especially against radical Islamists. As Le Pen recently told a group of foreign journalists, '[T]here are two Islams. One is a religion that is perfectly compatible with French values, and practicing Muslims, like Christians and Jews, have never posed a problem. But there is another political, fundamentalist, totalitarian Islam that wants Sharia law over French law' (Llana, 2017). A key RN goal is thus to save France from radical Islam. No other party can do this. This is because, as Le Pen stressed in 2017 during her presidential run-offs against Macron, much like other politicians, Macron 'doesn't see a nation, but land, he doesn't see a people, but a population. We have the obligation to warn the French' (Viscusi, 2017).

Accompanying such stances, however, are pronouncements on matters that, in historical terms, can only be viewed as progressive. Specifically, the RN has declared that radical Islam threatens the essence of France: the belief in 'liberty,' set in the 1958 Constitution as the first principle of the nation, and of course with it the closely linked commitments to equality and secularism (*laïcité*). This, the RN claims, is made evident by, among other things, attacks on LGBTQ French citizens and those who hold Christian, Jewish or religious convictions other than radical Islam. The protection of sexual and religious freedoms becomes part of the defense of France itself.

Le Pen's words in a campaign speech in Lyon in 2010 offer an example. Calls to prayer and Muslim headscarves are so prevalent in a 'number of territories,' she claimed, that citizens feel 'subject to religious laws that replace the laws of the Republic.' As a result, something deeply troubling has happened: 'I hear more and more testimonies about the fact that in certain districts, it is not good to be a woman, homosexual, Jewish' or

anything else. In those areas, one does not feel good being ‘even French’ (Feder & Buet, 2017). But in France things should be precisely the opposite. As Le Pen put it in 2011, ‘whether man or woman, heterosexual or homosexual, Christian, Jewish or Muslim, we are foremost French’ (Bamat, 2014). French citizens should have sexual and religious liberties.

The freedom to be gay has received particular attention. As, for instance, Sébastien Chenu, RN representative in the National Assembly as of June 2017 and a gay activist, put it, the ‘French people feel threatened’ because the country is becoming ‘less free,’ and ‘when society becomes less free, when one is gay, one has very much to lose’ (Feder & Buet, 2017). Several prominent RN members have accordingly expressed their pride in being gay. By 2017 the party boasted more gay high-ranking figures than any other major party in France, including the Socialists (Feder & Buet, 2017). This included the party’s vice-president from 2012 to 2017, Florian Philippot. In fact, Chenu observed in 2015 that ‘the National Front is the only party’ in France ‘whose leader is a woman and its deputy leader is gay’ (Halliburton, 2015). Tellingly, Chenu himself joined the RN by leaving the far-right Union for a Popular Movement because of Le Pen’s ‘consistent views on Europe and social issues’ (Bamat, 2014).

Such statements, it must be stressed, are not intended to affirm the intrinsic merits of being gay. Rather, what is at stake is the *freedom* to be gay. RN leaders have made this point repeatedly. As Philippot, for example, stated, ‘We’re a party that *doesn’t care about people’s preferences*, their sexual practices or whatever . . . You’re a French citizen foremost. And the National Front is a very young party: the members, the voters, the candidates are young. This is a modern party’ (Chrisafis, 2017, emphasis added).

The same reasoning applies to religious freedom. Le Pen has regularly rejected criticisms that she is anti-Islam because she prefers Christianity. Her justification is altogether different: ‘*I’m not interested in knowing what religion someone belongs to. I defend the French people whoever they are, wherever they come from, whatever their origins, whatever their religion. I don’t have a sectarian vision of French society. The only community that exists is the national community*’ (emphasis added).⁶ Any support that Le Pen has expressed for Christians but also Jews and moderate Muslims should therefore be seen as protecting French freedoms from radical Islam. Hence, as she stated in a 2014 interview, ‘I do not stop repeating it to French Jews . . . not only is the National Front not your enemy, but it is without a doubt the best shield to protect you. It stands at your side for the defense of our freedoms of thought and of religion against the only real enemy, Islamist fundamentalism’ (Katz, 2017).

The Dutch Defense of Western Civilization

Founded and led by Geert Wilders since 2006, the PVV believes the Netherlands is facing an existential conflict with Islamic intolerance. In the PVV’s case, at stake is the very survival of Western civilization itself (of which the Netherlands is a part) – something that explains Wilders’s frequent appearances in European and North American venues. A speech in Los Angeles in 2009 summarizes his views well:

Islam wants to dictate every aspect of life and society and prohibits individual, political and religious rights and freedoms. Islam is not compatible with our Western civilization or democracy,

nor will it ever be, because Islam doesn't want to coexist, it wants others to submit and set the entire agenda . . . it is a clash between civilization and backwardness, between the civilized and the primitive, between rationality and barbarity.⁷

Islam should thus not be seen as a religion but a worldview. As Wilders explained to Euronews in 2017, Islam 'might be dressed up as a religion . . . but in reality, it is not so much a religion but an ideology.' Its rigidity and hierarchical positioning above all else define it: 'if you look at anti-Semitism, the Koran has more anti-Semitism in it than Mein Kampf, the book of another totalitarian violent ideology' (Euronews, 2017). Hence, 'if we go on like this,' he warned his Los Angeles audience, 'we are heading for the end of European civilization.'⁸

Wilders therefore proposes drastic measures. They include the closure of all mosques, deportations, the revocation of dual citizenships and the banning of the Koran (Mortimer, 2016). For Wilders, all that Western civilization has achieved is at risk. And here of great concern are the rights of gays and women. As Akkerman (2015, p. 39) writes, the PVV 'has been notable for its defence of women's equality and same-sex partnerships.'

Consider Wilders's speech in Germany in January 2017 at the Conference of the Europe of Nations and Freedom (a nationalist political group in the European Parliament):

Politicians from almost all established parties are promoting our Islamization. Almost the entire establishment, the elite universities, the churches, the media, politicians, put our hard-earned liberties at risk. Day after day, for years, we are experiencing the decay of our cherished values. The equality of men and women, freedom of opinion and speech, tolerance of homosexuality – all this is in retreat. (Pieters, 2017)

If the West is tolerant of gays, Islam is barbaric. Thus, in June 2015, Wilders tweeted an image of a public execution in Mosul with this message: 'ISIS thugs execute three gay men in Mosul, Iraq. #islamicbarbarism.'⁹ A year later, following the attack on an Orlando gay club, Wilders told BuzzFeed News (Feder et al., 2017) that 'the freedom that gay people should have – to kiss each other, to marry, to have children – is exactly what Islam is fighting against.' He added 'that we've imported so much Islam to the Western free countries' (Feder & Buet, 2017). This includes Sharia law, which, as he reminded his audience at his 2009 Los Angeles speech, 'means the end of our hard won freedom, for Sharia law denies the equality of men and women.'

The argument extends to religious freedom. The fact that both Christianity and Judaism have historically opposed non-conforming sexual behavior and feminism presents for the PVV no problem: they belong to the Western tradition and, as such, are tolerant and worthy of protection. It is with this spirit that Wilders gave a speech at the 2016 United States National Republican Convention event for LGBT Trump supporters. With a wall of sexually explicit gay posters serving as background, he was introduced by Breitbart News editor Milo Yiannopoulos as the 'hope for Western civilization' (Harkinson, 2016). Berating Islam's intolerance and accusing Western leaders of cultural relativism, Wilder warned about 'the biggest disease in Europe today: politicians believing that Christianity, that Judaism, that humanism is worth as much as Islam, which of course is not the case.'¹⁰ The audience, which on the video appears to include only men, all presumably supportive of LGBTs, responded by cheering. They apparently appreciated the hierarchical positioning of Christianity and Judaism over Islam.

Gender equality is also woven into this rhetoric. As Wilders (2016) put it on Breitbart, for instance, Islam ‘aims to establish a worldwide Islamic state and bring everyone, including “infidels,” such as Christians, Jews, atheists and others, under Sharia law. This is the barbaric Islamic law which deprives non-Muslims of all rights, treats women as inferior beings, condemns apostates and critics of Islam to death, and condones terror.’ The West’s progress on women’s equality is at great risk.

We note that the PVV has also turned its attention to social security, although perhaps with less insistence. Its 2017–21 elections program calls, for example, for the abolition of healthcare deductibles, lowering housing fees and keeping the retirement age at 65. This was under the slogan ‘The Netherlands Ours Again!’ and, as the number one priority, the ‘de-Islamification of the Netherlands.’¹¹ That is, the proposed benefits are not for everyone. As Wilders explained in Berlin in 2011, ‘those who lower their chances of employment by the way they dress, will see their access to welfare payments diminished.’¹² In fact, women wearing burqas will be deprived of all benefits.

Swedish Community and Inclusion

With historical roots in neo-Nazi ideology (Townes, Karsson, & Eyre, 2014), the SD came third in Sweden’s 2014 and 2018 general elections. A 2017 Reuters poll put it second in the country (Sharman, 2017) before it lost some support when the government adopted stricter immigration policies (Sennero, 2017).

Although right-wing by any account, the SD has vocalized repeatedly its support for LGBTQ rights, gender equality and well-funded welfare programs. In its case, the logic has pivoted around the country’s longstanding valuing of community and social inclusion. No one in Swedish society should feel excluded. Those who are in need deserve help; those who exhibit differences should feel welcome. A deep sense of equality drives these positions. But this, of course, also means that all citizens must contribute to, and work for, the same society that cares for them. Those refusing must be opposed.

Welfare programs take center stage in this vision (Nordensvard & Ketola, 2015). A 2016 party video featuring Jimmie Åkesson, the party’s leader, offers a valuable example. Against the background of images of what appear to be Middle Eastern immigrants idling around, begging or damaging property, we hear Åkesson’s voice lamenting the decline in social services:

Our country is in a grave state and our society is falling apart. Vital welfare functions, such as elderly care, schooling, health care, social services, [the] police, [the] judiciary, and more, are in severe hardship . . . [we have become] a society that has lost its optimism, feeling of homeliness and its trust . . . we must have the courage to be open and honest . . . it will take a long time to recreate the security, the feeling of homeliness . . . that once made Sweden one of the best countries in the world to live in.

The welfare state at the heart of the Swedish nation is under threat. This is because there is a ‘conflict,’ Åkesson asserts, that ‘is really not about skin colour, gender, sexual, orientation or about class. Neither is the conflict between those born in this country and those who are not.’ Rather, it ‘is between the constructive and the destructive. Between those who are ready to make an effort and contribute to our country – and those who are not . . . Between those who fill our children with knowledge and self-respect, and those

who fill them with drugs and self-pity.’¹³ Consistent with this, the party platform at one point stated that:

the nationalism of the SD is open and non-racist. By defining the nation in terms of culture, language, identity and loyalty, and not in terms of historical national belonging or genetic membership, our national community is open to people with a background in other nations . . . a community of Swedes sharing certain core characteristics, values and behaviors. (Towns et al., 2014, p. 241)

What, then, should be done to rescue the welfare state? For one, Swedes must choose to support social services and not immigration. Various SD materials reiterate these points. A 2010 national elections ad, for instance, featured women in burqas carrying babies bypassing an elderly white woman struggling to get to a welfare desk. ‘Politics is all about priorities,’ a voice stated, and on ‘the 19th of September you can choose if you want to save money from the pensions or immigration budgets . . . the choice is yours.’¹⁴ In tandem, efforts should also be made to have immigrants *become* Swedish by embracing the country’s commitment to the community. As Åkesson puts it:

Becoming a Swedish citizen is a welcoming into our community . . . but it is also a social contract associated with duties and responsibilities. We will never welcome those who come here only . . . to live at our expense . . . but, at the same time we need to strengthen the way to our community for those whose honest ambition is to become a part of our society . . . I have a dream of a strengthened public spirit . . . a society characterized by trust, a sense of community and faith in the future.

Thus, ‘it is in the citizenship that we find the public spirit. The respect for our heritage . . . for previous generations, for those who built this country. That is how you, me and them – become an us.’ Active participation in the collective ‘us,’ then, is the answer.¹⁵

Such logic of ‘belonging’ is extended to LGBTQs. Sweden recognizes sexual minorities as equal members of society, and the SD thus expects all citizens to accept this. With this in mind, in 2015, the SD organized an unofficial gay pride parade through a predominantly Muslim neighborhood of Stockholm. If immigrants hesitate to integrate into Sweden, the DS will bring Sweden to them. LGBT and anti-racist groups criticized the initiative as disingenuous and provocative. The official Stockholm Pride organization and the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights even labeled Jan Sjunnesson, the organizer, as actually anti-gay. But Sjunnesson quickly replied: ‘I am not homophobic as the media calls me . . . I used to be bisexual, now I am married to an Indian woman, so I am not racist either. However, I am against the Islamisation of Sweden’ (Naib, 2015).

Regarding gender equality, the SD has certainly expressed conservative viewpoints over time, primarily around abortion and family life (Mulinari & Neergaard, 2014, p. 47). But scholars also note that while ‘the party’s ideological core is suspicious of gender equality and its connection with feminism . . . gender equality constructed as a Swedish national trait is often seen as a fundamental boundary between “us and them”’ (Ibid., p. 48). Given, in other words, that Swedish culture prizes equality and inclusion, ‘gender equality is named as something “Swedish” and is set against the “other”,’ especially Muslims (ibid.). SD leaders have accordingly voiced their support for the UN Declaration of Human Rights’ gender equality clauses (Towns et al., 2014). Tellingly, the fear is often

expressed in terms of ‘separation’ or ‘segregation’ – antithetical terms to ‘community,’ as in a 2009 opinion piece by Åkesson: ‘That leading representatives of the Muslim community will demand the implementation of Sharia law (*Sharialagar*) in Sweden . . . that Swedish swimming clubs would introduce separate timetables for women and men, that Swedish municipalities would discuss the possibility of gender-segregated swimming education in schools’ (cited in Mulinari & Neergaard, 2014, p. 48).

DISCUSSION

While puzzling at first glance, the progressive rhetoric of Europe’s FRPPs is grounded in their commitment to the nation or more broadly Western civilization, and their aim to defend them from foreign ideologies that are seen as antithetical to the core principles of equality, secularism and self-sovereignty. The nation and Western civilization support all their citizens regardless of sexual orientation, gender, need for social services and religious preferences. They should accordingly defend themselves from foreign intrusions. We have seen that this unusual (in historical terms) weaving of progressive and conservative ideas should not be too surprising. Per Greenfeld’s (2017) recent work, since the concepts of equality, secularism and self-sovereignty are inherent to the nation and Western civilization more generally, parties from both the left and right can utilize them; moreover, there is a fluidity in the first place to what ‘right’ and ‘left’ can mean when it comes to values.

This chapter has added an additional explanatory perspective to the recent successes of FRPPs. This rhetorical turn toward progressivism has appealed to segments of the population that have historically shunned far-right parties. Centrist and leftist parties are therefore facing a significant challenge. How, exactly, they will respond is the next chapter in the evolution of Europe’s political landscape.

NOTES

1. A useful snapshot of electoral victories in Europe as of May 2019 may be found at: BBC News (2019, 13 November). Europe and right-wing nationalism: a country-by-country guide. Retrieved June 1, 2020 from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36130006>.
2. A few multi-issue and multi-party analyses exist but represent only initial forays into this trend (see Brubaker, 2017; Halikiopoulou et al., 2013, p. 107).
3. Two caveats are in order. Not all party members have subscribed to this rhetorical deviation. Second, the rhetoric has not necessarily translated into actual policies.
4. See Hugh Schofield (2017, March 14). ‘Marine Le Pen: is France’s National Front leader far-right?’ Retrieved March 15, 2019 at https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/1dt-sh/marine_le_pen.
5. From *The Telegraph* (2002, April 28). Jean-Marie le Pen in his own words. Retrieved March 15, 2019 at <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/1392487/Jean-Marie-Le-Pen-in-his-own-words.html>.
6. BBC interview with Le Pen: YouTube (2015, March 3). The power of Le Pen. Retrieved June 1, 2020 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzn5CoEWWII>. See also (Wietzmann, 2014).
7. Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV) (2009, April). Speech Geert Wilders in Los Angeles. Retrieved November 22, 2017 from <https://pvv.nl/index.php/component/content/article.html?id=1878:speech-geert-wilders-in-los-angeles>.
8. See note 7.
9. Twitter (2015, June 6). ISIS thugs execute three gay men in Mosul, Iraq. Retrieved June 1, 2020 from <https://twitter.com/geertwilderspvv/status/607158366729867264?lang=en>.
10. See the video of the speech at: YouTube (2016, July 20). USA: Wilders rails against Islam and endorses

- Trump at LGBT Republican event. Retrieved June 1, 2020 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GJC17c2sfk>.
11. Geert Wilders Weblog (2016, August 26). The Netherlands is ours again. Retrieved June 1, 2020 from <https://www.geertwilders.nl/94-english/2007-preliminary-election-program-pvv-2017-2021>.
 12. Geert Wilders Weblog (2011, September 3). Speech Geert Wilders in Berlin, 3 September 2011. Retrieved June 1, 2020 from <https://www.geertwilders.nl/in-de-media-mainmenu-74/nieuws-mainmenu-114/87-english/news/1764-speech-geert-wilders-in-berlin-3-september-2011-english-version>.
 13. YouTube (2016, May 14). Jimmie Åkesson – tid för Sverige. Retrieved December 22, 2017 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tXeGGpD0Ac>.
 14. YouTube (August 27, 2010). Censured – Sweden Democrats official commercial. Retrieved December 22, 2017 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eeRqAR6rzYQ>.
 15. See note 13.

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