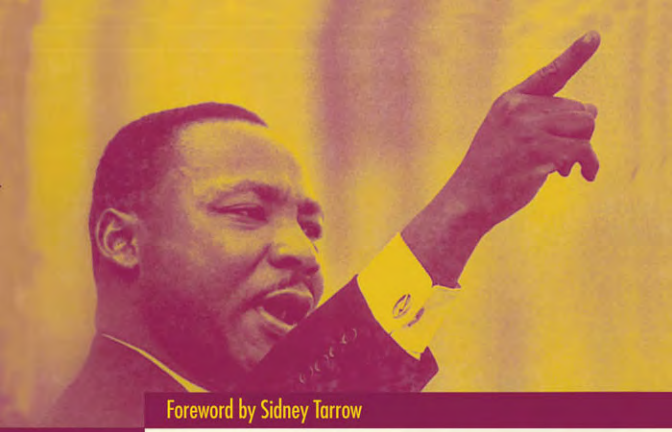

Foreword by Sidney Tarrow

HOW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS MATTER

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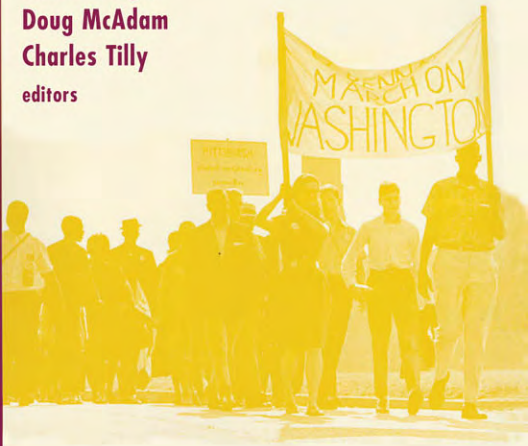

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Ethnic and Civic Conceptions of Nationhood and the Differential Success of the Extreme Right in Germany and Italy

Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham

Common Histories, Divergent Presents

Since the beginning of the 1980s, Western Europe has seen a resurgence of xenophobic and extreme-right mobilization, in the form of violent attacks on immigrant groups, neo-Nazi demonstrations, and the rise of extreme-right political parties. Though a lot of comparative work on these phenomena is available, much of it consists of edited volumes bringing together collections of single-country case studies (e.g., Baumgartl and Favell 1995; Merkl and Weinberg 1993; Hainsworth 1992). Truly comparative studies are few and far between, and so far there has been no systematic comparison of Italy and Germany.

This omission is surprising, if one considers that these are the two countries that, in the interbellum, witnessed the rise to totalitarian state power of fascist movements, which still function, implicitly or explicitly, as role models and ideological reference points for the present-day extreme right. In spite of the historical parallel, the recent histories of Germany and Italy could hardly be more divergent, if we consider the strength and electoral success of the contemporary extreme right. In Italy, the Alleanza Nazionale (AN), a direct heir of prewar fascism, gained 13.5% of the vote in the 1994 national elections. Another party based on a movement with strong ethnocentric—though not fascist—tendencies, the Lega Nord, achieved a further 8.4%. After the elections, both parties entered a coalition government with Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia. Although this governing coalition lasted only eight months, it constituted a historic landmark in the sense that it represented

the first time in postwar Europe that the extreme right has attained governmental power. In the 1996 election, the significant presence of the AN (15.7%) and Lega Nord (10.1%) on the political landscape of the Second Republic was underlined, while a neofascist splinter group from the AN, MS-Fiamma, gained a further 0.9%.

In contrast, the German extreme right, despite a few limited successes in federal state and European elections, has not come close to entering the national Parliament. With 2.1% and 1.9% in the 1990 and 1994 elections, respectively, the German Republikaner—the most important of Germany's three extreme-right parties—is one of the weaker extreme-right political parties in Europe. This holds in comparison not only with its Italian counterparts but also with the French Front National (which numbered 15% in the 1995 presidential elections), the Flemish Vlaams Blok (which won 7.8% of the Belgian votes in 1995 and almost twice that percentage in Flanders), and the Austrian Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (which totaled 22.1% in 1995). Moreover, while in Italy the extreme right has gained acceptance as a coalition partner and has moved from a position of "challenger" to one of "member" of the political system (Tilly 1978; Gamson 1990), in Germany it remains completely marginalized. None of the established political parties in Germany has been willing to enter coalitions or other forms of cooperation with the extreme right, even at the local or regional level. The three parties of the extreme right, the Republikaner, the Deutsche Volksunion, and the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands are officially branded "enemies of the constitution" and are routinely monitored by the internal security agencies, and their leaders and members have been subjected to various types of repression.

Thus, in terms of "acceptance" (one of the two fundamental types of social movement outcomes distinguished by Gamson [1990]), Italy and Germany are situated at opposite poles. As our discussion will show, however, this is not necessarily true for substantive policy outcomes ("new advantages," in Gamson's terminology). In fact, German foreign and immigration politics have been, at least until very recently, more restrictive and closer to the demands of the extreme right than has been the case in Italy.

In our view, the reasons for these differential outcomes can be related to the different configurations of ethnic and political foundations of citizenship and nationhood, and recent developments concerning the balance between the civic and ethnic components in the two countries. Many scholars (e.g., Gabriel 1996) have attributed the rise of the contemporary European extreme right to two main sources: the rise of xenophobic claims based on ethnic-nationalist conceptions of citizenship; and the crisis of legitimacy in

established institutions for political representation (best captured by the German term *Politikverdrossenheit*). These two developments have tended to be treated independently. However, if one considers them from the perspective of the competitive tensions between ethnic and civic conceptions of citizenship and nationhood that have accompanied the nation-state—and Italy and Germany in particular—ever since its formation, they become two sides of the same coin. In this view, the rise of the extreme right is as much (or even more) a result of the crisis of the political community as a basis for national identities, as it is a result of the politicization of ethnic boundaries arising from increased immigration and cultural heterogeneity.

Opportunity and Discourse: A Theoretical Model

To analyze how the competition between ethnic and civic conceptions of citizenship and national identity influences the chances for the mobilization and success of the extreme right, we propose to combine two recent theoretical strands in social movement research. The first strand is centered on the concept of political opportunity structure (POS) and stresses the facilitating or constraining role played by institutional structures and power configurations (McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1994; Kriesi et al. 1995). Reacting to the earlier internal focus on social movement resources and strategies, the political opportunity model emphasizes the role played by the wider political context in which social movements operate. The model has been successfully applied both in longitudinal single-country studies (Tarrow 1989; Duyvendak 1995; Koopmans 1995) and in cross-national comparisons (Kitschelt 1986; Rucht 1994; Kriesi et al. 1995). However, it shares an important weakness with the resource mobilization model, namely, an inability to deal adequately with the discursive content of social movement mobilization. Thus, many aspects of political opportunity structure that have been proposed are "contentless" in the sense that they apply to social movements regardless of their goals, ideologies, and discourse. Factors such as the instability of political alignments, electoral volatility, and the institutional makeup of the political system may explain why opportunities for social movements in general are greater at some times than at others, and why social movements use more radical strategies in some polities than in others. However, the POS model has difficulty in dealing with the common finding that opportunity structures do not facilitate and constrain all movements to the same degree and in the same way. Of course, more elaborated versions of the political opportunity model have tried to deal with this finding by differentiating between movement types and policy arenas and by incorporating elements of political culture

such as prevailing elite strategies and cleavage structures (Rucht 1994; Kriesi et al. 1995).

In extending itself so, however, the political opportunity model, to an important extent, has already exceeded its conceptual limits and moved into the domain of the framing perspective, a second strand of theory, which has concentrated on the discursive aspect of mobilization. In this view, the chances for the mobilization and success of social movements are determined by the ability of those movements to develop interpretive "frames" that can effectively link a movement and its cause to the interests, perceptions, and ideologies of potential constituencies (Snow et al. 1986). The framing model, however, has difficulty in explaining why some frames fail while others succeed in convincing the public, and why similar frames have differential impacts in different political contexts. Here as well, proposals have been made to overcome the problem, in this case by trying to link success to the degree of correspondence ("resonance," "commensurability," or "fidelity") of specific frames with external factors. To the extent that such an anchotage of frames is sought in objective problems and events, this effort allies the framing perspective with traditional grievance perspectives (for a critique, see Koopmans and Duyvendak 1995).[1] More fruitful in our view is the alternative focus on the fit between social movement frames and the wider political culture of a particular society (Snow and Benford 1992; Diani 1996).

This step involves introducing opportunity structures into the framing model. As such, there is nothing wrong with the broadening of perspectives that has taken place within the political opportunity and framing approaches. We think, however, that the convergence of the two perspectives needs to be conceptually acknowledged. Of course, the perspectives have not become identical. The political opportunity model still has its own domain, where it is concerned with institutional structures, power relations, or the strategic stance of potential alliance partners, about which the framing perspective has little to say. Conversely, the opportunity model is unable to account for the ways in which social movements mobilize symbolic resources to advance their cause—which is the particular strength of the framing perspective. Between the two domains, a common ground has developed where both perspectives refer to political-cultural or symbolic external constraints and facilitators of social movement mobilization. We propose to denote this set of variables by the term *discursive opportunity structure,* which may be seen as determining which ideas are considered "sensible," which constructions of reality are seen as "realistic," and which claims are held as "legitimate" within a certain polity at a specific time.

In the following sections, we analyze the effects of the structural level of opportunities on the chances for the mobilization and success of extreme-right political parties.[2] Regarding discursive opportunities, we focus on the strength of ethnic and civic conceptions of citizenship and national identity. Departing from a definition of the extreme right as a social movement that mobilizes an ethnic-cultural framing of national identity against the idea of the nation as a political or civic community, we derive the following hypotheses: the resonance of the extreme-right frame, and consequently its chances of mobilization and success, will be greater (1) the more the dominant discourse on national identity and citizenship corresponds to and legitimizes the ethnic-cultural ideal-type of national identity, and (2) the less the dominant conception of the nation is grounded in and legitimized by civic-political elements.[3]

This relatively simple model becomes more complicated once we introduce institutional opportunities. A first factor to be taken into account is the accessibility of the polity to extreme-right parties or, formulated in alternative conceptual terms, the balance between repression and facilitation. This leads us to the hypothesis that (3) the impact of the extreme right is likely to be greater, the more its access to the polity is facilitated and the less it is subject to repressive constraints. Second, we should acknowledge that challengers not only oppose the members of the polity but also compete with them. In addition to exerting repression, members of the polity may prevent a challenger's access to the polity by preemptively taking up some of its demands. Thus, (4) the mobilization opportunities of the extreme right will be more limited, the more ethnic-cultural conceptions of national identity are integrated into the programs and policies of the members of the polity. Paradoxically, this is most likely to be the case when hypothesis 1 applies, that is, when ethnic-cultural elements are an integral part of a nation's conception of nationhood and citizenship. In social movement literature, the degree of coherence and stability of the political elite has often been emphasized as a crucial factor influencing a challenger's opportunities to mobilize and to achieve success. This leads us to our final hypothesis: (5) the chances for the mobilization and success of the extreme right will be enhanced when the political elite is divided and political alignments are unstable, and in particular when the division and instability are related to questions of national identity, most clearly when they are caused by a legitimacy crisis of the civic-political basis of the polity. Before applying these hypotheses, we first discuss the distinction between ethnic and civic conceptions of nationhood and citizenship with respect to its relevance for explaining the mobilization and success of the extreme right.

National Identity as a Contested Discourse: Competing Civic and Ethnic Variants for Nationhood

It has been well established by studies of nationalism that the institutional apparatus of the state is a vehicle used by the political elite for "nation building." In the realm of culture, the state exerted authority over traditional institutions. This involved the establishment of a state education system and a dominant religion and language that were designed to enforce the principle of national unity (Hobsbawm 1990; Gellner 1983; Anderson 1983).

Collective identities of nationhood that have been constructed in this nation-building process combine elements of two broadly defined ideal-types: ethnic nationalism, which asserts the unity of "the people" on the basis of cultural belonging to a presumed or real primordial identity, or ethnic group; and civic nationalism, which asserts the unity of "the people" on the universal ideal of a political community of equal citizens. National identities define a "contract" for membership within a community. In this sense, political culture is a "civil religion" that defines the duties of citizenship and the basis for inclusion and exclusion. As collective identity constructions, ethnic nationalism and civic nationalism imply two different basic ideal-types of relationships that bind a state and its citizens. Ethnic nationalism includes and excludes its "people" on the basis of a shared primordial belonging to an original *ethnie.* Civic nationalism includes and excludes its "people" on the basis of a shared belonging to a political community of universal political and legal rights.

In the postwar period, it has been common to equate nationalism with the civic variant, but, as the recent revival of nationalist movements has indicated, this association obscures the complex basis of national identities that by necessity retain elements of the ethnic variant. Particular historical variants of nationalism can be seen as collective identities that have been constructed by a symbiosis of ethnic and civic nationalism (Smith 1995).

Taking a cross-national comparative perspective within Europe, we see that ethnic nationalism has found its most prominent expression in German culture, whereas civic nationalism is most prominently expressed in the revolutionary tradition of French republicanism. However, it would be wrong simply to equate the outcomes of ethnic nationalism with an undemocratic, culturally exclusive, and expansionist state, and those of civic nationalism with a democratic, culturally inclusive, and nonexpansionist state. In recent times, the relatively peaceful ethnic nationalism of the Czech movement stands as a counterexample to that of the Serbs in the former Yugoslavia. Conversely, the historical example of French nationalism under Bonaparte

demonstrates how the universalizing impulse of civic nationalism translates into an expansionist strategy. The different versions of nationalism that exist between countries and across time can be seen as combinations or "mixtures" of civic and ethnic codes. The civic and ethnic codes are the dimensions that actors use to construct specific variants of nationalism as collective identities. Hence, a dominant variant of nationalism, whether ethnic or civic, is an ideology of the ruling class or elite that is embedded in the agency of the state.

Historically different versions of nationalism have emerged within the nation-states of Europe, dependent upon the different class alignments, conflicts, and compromises that have "made nations" and have redefined the basis of citizenship. As a collective identity, the dominant variant of nationalism that is embodied within a nation-state remains open to cultural challenges from counterdiscourses that are carried by the mobilization of social movements. National identity is, thus, a contested field of political discourse (Gamson 1988, 1992) where a dominant discourse—which combines ethnic and civic elements—competes with other "challenger" variants that are carried by social movements. Social movements may draw upon resources of identity and countercodes to challenge the dominant conception of nationhood and the framework of citizenship obligations it entails. For example, at a time of the collapse of a political regime, by defeat in war or through internal crisis, there are opportunities for the "challenger" discourses of social movements to stimulate processes of "frame alignment" within the dominant discourse on nationalism.[4] However, opportunities for movements to introduce frame alignment are not necessarily reserved for such dramatic occurrences, nor do the frames of challengers necessarily translate into their intended outcomes. Another example of frame alignment within a dominant variant of civic nationalism is provided by the establishment of the social welfare state, which can be seen as an outcome of the challenge by the social democratic movement of the working class. The challenge of social reformism introduced a process of frame alignment into the dominant discourse on national citizenship by incorporating the "belonging" of the working classes into a new definition of the ideals of the political community. Within a civic nationalism based on more social rights in addition to political and legal rights, the working classes could be expected to identify more with the political culture of national citizenship than with the cultural bonds of class (Marshall 1950). The challenge of social democracy extended the basis of civic nationalism by redefining the contractual basis for citizenship within the political community and by establishing the social welfare state.

Even in the extreme example of social revolution and the overthrow of a

political regime, it is not often the case that a dominant discourse on nationalism, whether relatively more ethnic- or more civic-defined, is replaced completely by a challenger variant. National traditions for political culture have proven to be resistant to the dynamics of social change. The establishment of the Weimar Republic in Germany after the Great War did not eradicate ethnic nationalism as the basis for national identity. On the contrary, the German variant of National Socialism was able to radicalize the ethnic nationalism of the Weimar Republic to its logical extreme by founding a fascist totalitarian state with an official policy for exterminating other *ethnies.* By comparison, Italian Fascism drew on a tradition of ethnic nationalism that was less strongly embedded and produced a more state-corporatist and less xenophobic variant of fascism.

A civic conception of the nation was forcibly imposed by the Western Allied forces on the defeated nations of ethnic nationalism, both in founding the Federal Republic of Germany and, to a lesser extent, the Italian First Republic. In postwar Western Europe, the dominance of civic nationalism has been institutionalized in the polity of the liberal democratic state and in the political discourses that provide it with legitimacy. Ethnic nationalism has become a challenger discourse that is carried by the ethnocentric and antisystemic critiques of extreme right movements.

The history of different variants of nationalism teaches us that as a cultural resource for identity, a model of national citizenship is deeply embedded in the structure of social relationships within a society, and that this gives it an enduring potentiality to resist transformation into its other variant. A state and its challengers disagree but share the same culture and political context for collective action. The collective action of challengers is constructed from the same set of cultural traditions and "tools" as its opponent (Swidler 1986), so that even on the rare occasions when a political regime is overthrown or collapses, its successors establish the national unity of the polity with reference to the same cultural framework as their predecessors. The cultural traditions that, as founding myths and collective identities, "make societies into nations" have an enduring quality that influences the potential of social movements to mobilize against a state. To explain the potential for successful outcomes by extreme-right mobilization, we argue that it is necessary to analyze the cultural opportunities provided by the discourse on nationalism, in addition to the institutional opportunities provided by the political system.

Scholars applying an international comparative approach to immigration policies and the legal status of ethnic minorities have identified different national traditions or models for citizenship rights (Brubaker 1992; Castles

and Miller 1993; Kleger and D'Amato 1995; Rex 1996a; Bovenkerk, Miles, and Verbunt 1990). These differences show that despite the dominance of civic nationalism, traditions of ethnic nationalism are still an important variable in defining the political culture (and hence the discursive opportunity structure) of a nation-state. In West Germany the state definition of citizenship has retained a strong ethnic component. Membership in the political community and full citizenship rights are derived on the basis of ethnicity. German national identity is based not on the principle of territory or birthright, but on a foundation myth of the original ethnic community. This identity translates into a state policy that does not recognize the legitimacy of non-Germanic ties of cultural identity and is highly exclusive in the distribution of citizenship rights. In contrast, the French tradition of national identity has been strongly tied to the republican foundation myth, where citizenship is a territorial birthright that guarantees equality of membership in the political community regardless of ethnic origin. However, French civic culture is also "exclusive" in its refusal to accept the legitimacy of loyalties other than allegiance to the republic. French nationalism has traditionally denied political space to cultural difference. This was demonstrated by the famous refusal of a headmaster to allow a Muslim girl to wear a "head-scarf" in a state school (Husbands 1994).

In contrast to Germany and France, the cultural pluralism of Dutch and British nationalism has permitted the relative integration of ethnic communities to rights of citizenship. In the Dutch model for *verzuiling* (pillarization), the legitimacy of cultural difference based on religious, ethnic, or kinship ties is institutionally recognized by the division of the political community into different "pillars" of cultural groups. In contrast, the British tradition for cultural pluralism is based on a separation of the political community and the cultural realm into different spheres of action. Religion and kinship are relegated to private matters for individual conscience. However, even in this multicultural variant the authority of the state sponsors a preferred version of the civic culture, as British Muslims discovered when the state refused to act against Salman Rushdie on the basis of blasphemy laws (Rex 1996a).

Italy provides a southern European variant to these cases of national identities. Its geographical and political location has "made" a country that is the recipient of contrasting cultures and conflicting identities. The collective identity of the nation is best characterized as Catholic and Mediterranean (Ginsborg 1995). Primordial and familial identities have remained strong and divisive, as is expressed in the national divide between north and south and in communal rivalries between regions, localities, and even

neighborhoods. Membership in the Catholic community and attachment to the family as the natural order of society have taken historical precedence over the establishment of a political community as a focus for Italian identity. Civic beliefs have remained subordinate to familial identities in the cultural sphere, and patron-client relationships have monopolized the state. The "ethnic" components of identity are strong in the sense that social relationships are based on communal and familial identities, but weak (except for the Fascist period) in defining the nation as the primary unit of collective identity.[5] This combination of a relatively weak national identity and a commitment to citizenship has produced a state that until recently has not addressed issues of cultural difference. Paradoxically, the Catholic dominance of the cultural realm provides a culture that is tolerant of ethnic difference in a paternalistic sense, but the strength of communal and familial bonding maintains a propensity toward intolerance for the culturally different.

Recent debates on citizenship have identified a crisis in the national identities of European states. This crisis has been attributed to the integration of Europe as supranational state (Rex 1996b) and the "individualization" processes of modernity that fragment identity. For example, Billig's "banal nationalism" thesis (1995) sees contemporary nationalism as an ideology that has fragmented into a cultural discourse, a politics of identity. Another example is Delantey (1996), who distinguishes "old nationalism," which defined itself in opposition to other nation-states as the "significant other," from a "new nationalism," which he claims is an ideology for exclusion rather than inclusion, which opposes welfare state "multiculturalism," and which defines itself in opposition to immigrants as the "significant other."

Instead of contrasting "new" with "old" nationalism, we argue for the analytic utility of the distinction between ethnic and civic nationalism as a means for defining the cultural opportunities for the extreme right that exist in a national context. This avoids the risk of inflating the recent wave of xenophobia into a new theory of nationalism and opens the way for empirical analysis. Within our framework, the extreme right is a challenger that mobilizes a set of ethnocentric claims against the concept of civic nationalism embodied in the liberal democratic state. Explaining the differential success of the extreme right in postwar Italy and Germany requires that we analyze the national cases of cultural discourses on national identity (as discursive opportunities) and their interplay with institutional opportunities for gaining access to the political system over time.

Germany: The Extreme Right as an Influential Outsider

In the postwar history of the German extreme right, three mobilization phases can be distinguished. Already during the period of Allied occupation,

a number of ethnic nationalist parties were founded that were supported by a mixture of former National Socialists and Germans who had fled or had been expelled from the former German territories in Eastern Europe (the so-called *Vertriebenen*). In the first elections to the West German Parliament in 1949, these parties together received more than 10% of the vote. Their program included opposition to the Allies' reeducation and denazification policies, nonrecognition of the postwar German borders, and attention to the more material interests, such as employment and housing, of the *Vertriebenen.* After the lifting of the Allied party-licensing system in 1949, a more explicitly national socialist party emerged in the form of the Sozialistische Reichspartei. In 1951, it entered the state parliaments of Bremen and Lower Saxony, in the latter case with 11% of the vote and absolute majorities in thirty-five communities (Winkler 1994: 71). Its rise, however, abruptly ended in 1952 when the party was banned and dissolved by the Federal Constitutional Court, on the grounds that its program was "hostile to the constitution." Other nationalist parties continued to play a role, but they gradually lost support and did not survive into the 1960s. The reasons for this development were twofold. First, the entrance criteria for the national Parliament were twice made more restrictive during the 1950s, with the explicit aim of removing the smaller right-wing competitors from the political scene. While originally parties had to gain at least 5% of the vote in one of the federal states, since 1957 5% of the national vote has been required. Second, the Christian Democratic Parties (CDU and CSU) succeeded in integrating many of the demands and personnel of the national conservative parties and of the organizations of *Vertriebenen.*

Not least among the reasons for this integrative capacity was the *Wirtschaftswunder,* the remarkable economic recovery that was achieved under Christian Democratic rule. Although, as Almond and Verba's cross-national study of political culture (1963) showed, the Germans had not become convinced democrats and although many of them still longed for the authoritarian past, at least democracy and the social market economy had proved to "work." In addition, the ethnic nationalist conception of national identity, unlike many other features of prewar German politics, continued to be strongly anchored in citizenship legislation as well as in the discourse and programs of the major parties, including, in this period, the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Within the context of the cold war and a divided Germany, it was ideologically unthinkable to change the ethnic conception of citizenship that defined East Germans and "ethnic Germans" from other East European countries as part of the German nation represented by the West German state (Brubaker 1992: 168–71). Even "revanchist" sentiments could be integrated into mainstream politics, since, legitimated by

anticommunism, Germany did not recognize the postwar borders until the reunification treaty of 1990 with the Allied powers.

The gradual containment of ethnic nationalist parties in the 1950s followed a pattern that, to an important extent, has remained typical since then: a strategy of preemption with regard to those actors and demands which can be integrated with the ethnic nationalist elements in mainstream political culture, combined with a strategy of repression with regard to those (more explicitly neo-Nazi or antidemocratic) demands and actors which go beyond these limits. Conversely, mobilization opportunities for the extreme right arose when the integrative capacities of mainstream politics declined. This became evident during the second extreme-right mobilization phase that is associated with the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD). Founded in 1964, the party succeeded between 1966 and 1968 in entering seven state parliaments, scoring up to 10% of the vote. This was the period of the so-called Grand Coalition between the CDU/CSU and the SPD, whose centrist policies, in the virtual absence of a parliamentary opposition, created room for new competitors on both the left and the right. As a result of the CDU/CSU's alliance with the SPD—which it had portrayed as a bedfellow of communism only a few years before—and the coalition's first cautious steps toward a normalization of relations with Eastern Europe and the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the Christian Democrats were no longer capable of containing the extreme-right challenge. In addition, the still-weak development of a civic basis for national identity became evident through the impact of the recession of 1966–1967, the limited objective extent of which bore no relation to the crisis it caused in the national consciousness. Again, however, the heyday of the extreme right did not last long. After the collapse of the Grand Coalition, the NPD failed to jump the 5% hurdle (reaching only 4.3%) and subsequently disappeared from all state parliaments. Now in the opposition, the CDU/CSU shifted back to the right and, alongside the organizations of *Vertriebenen,* stood at the forefront of massive demonstrations against the Brandt government's *Ostpolitik* of reconciliation with the East.

In the 1980s, dissatisfaction with the established conservatives' *Ostpolitik* significantly contributed to the emergence of the Republikaner as the main carrier of the third wave of extreme-right party mobilization. The party was founded in 1983 by a dissident group that split off from the CSU in protest at the substantial financial assistance that had been given by CSU leader and Bavarian prime minister Franz-Josef Strauß to the GDR regime. The first notable success of the Republikaner was in the Bavarian elections of 1986, in which it scored 3% of the vote. In 1989, it entered the Berlin state parlia-

ment (7.5%) and the European Parliament (7.1%). Another extreme-right party, the Deutsche Volksunion (DVU), which had split off from the NPD in the 1970s, achieved some success in the 1987 elections in Bremen (3.4%).

However, these successes could not be repeated in the 1990 national elections just after reunification, when the extreme-right parties together scored a meager 2.4%. Again, it was the successful appropriation of the nationalist cause by the established right that was detrimental to the mobilization opportunities of the extreme right. Helmut Kohl's swift appropriation of the East German demonstrators' slogan *Wir sind ein Volk!* robbed the extreme right of one of its central themes, and most of its potential supporters rallied behind Kohl and his party as champions of the reunification of the nation.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the continuing relevance of ethnic elements for German national identity was demonstrated in the remarkably different ways in which the country's political elite dealt with two immigration waves. The breakdown of the Eastern European communist regimes set in motion the massive movement of people, driven mainly by economic motives, from these countries to Western Europe, and predominantly to Germany. Some of them came as asylum seekers; others came on the basis of the special provisions in the German constitution for ethnic German *Aussiedler* (resettlers), descendants of German-speaking people who, often centuries ago, migrated to Eastern Europe and the Balkans. These members of the German "imagined community," regardless of the fact that many of them did not even speak German, had an automatic right to German citizenship and received extensive financial and social support to help them integrate into German society. The influx of asylum seekers, on the contrary, was greeted with open hostility by leading Christian Democrats, who started a media campaign to restrict the constitutional right to political asylum. However, this demand met with fierce opposition from the liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP) and the SPD, as well as the Christian Democrat left wing. This conflict within the political elite brought the extreme right renewed opportunities for mobilization, this time not only in the form of electoral successes for the Republikaner and the DVU in several state elections, but also in the form of an unprecedented wave of violence against foreigners, and asylum seekers in particular.

This wave of mobilization had a remarkably strong impact on the further course of the asylum debate among the established parties and on successive restrictions of the rights of asylum seekers. Time series analyses have shown that increases in the level of extreme-right violence led to an intensification of the asylum debate, followed by the adoption of new restrictive

legislation (see Koopmans 1996a, 1996c). A first wave of violence starting in September 1991 after large-scale antiforeigner riots in the Saxon town of Hoyerswerda was followed by a decision of the federal government and the *Länder* to tighten and speed up the procedures for asylum applications. One year later, similar riots in Rostock spurred a second wave of violence, which was followed in December 1992 by an agreement among the major parties to change the constitution much along the lines of the original demand of the Christian Democrats' right wing. These successes of the German extreme right thus show that violence can be a fruitful strategy for social movements, a conclusion that supports the findings of Piven and Cloward (1977) and Gamson (1990).

However, the closing of ranks among the political elite and the severe restriction of the constitutional right to asylum once more sealed the fate of the extreme right. After the new asylum legislation went into force in July 1993, the level of extreme-right violence strongly declined, although it remained at a higher level than in the 1980s. The extreme-right parties likewise lost ground, and in the national elections of 1994 they were again reduced to marginal proportions (1.9%). Apart from preemption (or substantive success), increased repression also played a role in explaining this decline (see Koopmans 1996b). Almost simultaneously with the restriction of the right to asylum, the most important extraparliamentary organizations of the extreme right were banned, and new legislation prohibiting the display of neo-Nazi symbols was adopted. In addition, the extreme-right parties were subjected to increased surveillance by the internal security services, and active members were threatened with exclusion from public service employment.

Again, from the point of view of movement outcomes, the picture is ambiguous. As a result of the strong ethnic component in the German discourse and institutional practice of citizenship and national identity, the ethnic-nationalist demands of the extreme right had a considerable impact on the content of immigration and foreign politics, through a mixture of preemption and responses to actual mobilization. At the same time, the political opportunity structure for the access of the extreme right to the polity was closed and repressive. To put it in Gamson's terms, while the German extreme right has been quite successful in gaining *new advantages*—and preventing the loss of existing advantages tied to Germany's ethnic conception of citizenship—it has not even come close to gaining *acceptance* as a legitimate actor within the political system.

There is one further element that contributes to the explanation of the relative weakness of the German extreme right that sheds a more positive

light on the German political culture and that stands in contrast to the Italian situation. Over the course of West Germany's development, an important civic-political component of national identity has grown up next to—and in mostly latent opposition to—the ethnic-cultural tradition. If one compares recent public opinion data to those from the 1950s, Germany, or at least its western part, has experienced a shift in political culture that, in the light of the country's history, has a revolutionary quality. Levels of satisfaction with democracy and support for its institutions, as well as levels of political participation and interest now, can stand a comparison with those in the classical liberal democracies (see Klingemann and Fuchs 1995). While in the 1950s the large majority of respondents who were asked to name "the best period in German history" still mentioned the authoritarian empire or even the Third Reich, and the economic system and "national traits" *(Volkseigenschaften)* were mentioned as the main sources of "national pride," there is now wide support for the liberal democracy of the Federal Republic as the best system Germany has ever had (Greiffenhagen 1984). Thus, a new, civic form of national identification has developed, which has been labeled *Verfassungspatriotismus* (constitutional patriotism). Although more recently, as in most European countries, dissatisfaction with the political system and especially with the political parties has risen somewhat, *Politikverdrossenheit* in Germany is comparatively limited and not nearly as widespread as in countries such as Belgium, Austria, or—as we will see—Italy.

All this, however, is clearly more true for the former West Germany than for the eastern part of the country, whose inhabitants have hardly any experience with democracy and where dissatisfaction with the political system is more widespread as a result of the social and economic dislocations accompanying the process of unification. This is certainly one of the reasons for the greater virulence of extreme-right violence in the East. On the party-political level, however, the extreme right has not so far succeeded in making important inroads among the East German electorate. Rather, antisystemic critique is channeled by the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the successor party to the East German Communist Party, which takes a clear pro-foreigner stance rooted in the traditions of socialist antifascism and internationalism. How stable this incorporation of antisystemic sentiments by the extreme left will be is an open question. It is not unthinkable that a prolongation of the economic crisis in the former East Germany will offer opportunities for the extreme right to capture part of this potential.

Nevertheless, for the moment we may conclude that while the ethnic-cultural components of national identity offer discursive opportunities to some of the ethnocentric ideas of the extreme right, the strong identification

of the large majority of the German people *and* the political elite with the democratic political system has erected a strong barrier against that part of extreme-right discourse which is directed against liberal democracy. If there is room for an extreme right in Germany, it would be one that combines a strong identification with democracy inasfar as it applies to ethnic Germans, with an exclusive strategy with regard to people of foreign origin. The point, of course, is that, if one can still call this an extreme right, Germany has it already: the program described in the previous sentence is pretty much institutional practice and is part and parcel of the politics of the established conservatives.

Italy: The Surprising March of the Extreme Right through the Institutions

In 1994, the extreme right achieved a level of electoral success in Italy that was unprecedented in the European context. The Movimento Sociale Italiano–Destra Nazionale (MSI-DN) and the Lega Nord (Northern League) became the first parties of the extreme right to be democratically elected and to serve as junior partners in a coalition government. Rather than dismissing these events as Italian exceptionalism, we argue that the factors that produced such unusually successful outcomes—gaining "acceptance" for the extreme right—shed light on the general conditions that influence the potential for political mobilization by this type of collective actor. The following discussion refers to three historical phases of extreme-right mobilization in postwar Italy: the period of the First Republic; the collapse of the First Republic and the 1994 elections; and the period of the emergent Second Republic after the 1994 election.

The civic basis of the political culture of the First Republic has long been in disrepute with political scientists, comprehensively failing the tests of civic culture theorists, who have labeled it as moved by alienation or irrational beliefs or as oriented toward objects that at present do not exist (La Palombara 1965; Almond and Verba 1963). This one-sided view of Italian political culture fails to explain the enduring character of the political system of the First Republic and the reason why, despite a continuously unrivaled high level of dissatisfaction with democracy in Europe,[6] successive electorates continued to grant sufficient legitimacy to the practices of the political system. One structural factor accounting for the stability of the political system despite this "legitimacy gap" is economic success and a growing standard of living. After the economic crisis of 1974–75, Italy's gross domestic product (GDP) grew by more than 50 percent between 1976 and 1990, six percentage points above the average of the European member states (Ginsborg 1996: 21). Indeed, in longitudinal opinion data on the levels of overall

life satisfaction, Italians register levels of satisfaction similar to the rest of Europe (Morlino and Tarchi 1996: 49).

The paradox of the survival of the political system despite a permanent legitimacy gap is partly explained by the relationship between the Christian-Democratic (DC)-dominated state and its citizens. The clientelistic structuring of relationships within a state monopolized by a center-party identity meant that people defined their interests in the parties and not the state. Even supporters of the ruling parties were able to blame the nation-state, on a civic basis, for its overall lack of provision, while remaining faithful to party allegiance. These factors relativize the claim of civic culture theorists that Italian political culture was "irrational," and enable us to identify a southern European or Mediterranean variant for civic values.

It is worth mentioning that, compared to Germany, the official morality expressed in the constitution of the First Republic was a legitimate expression of a tradition for resistance to fascism. Whereas German *Verfassungspatriotismus* was a later development, it was an ever-present though subordinate cultural code in the Italian First Republic that was kept alive by prominent intellectuals of the "resistance generation" (Ginsborg 1996).

The First Republic, dominated for forty-five years by the Christian Democrats, systematically excluded the ideological poles of left and right from the process of internal party bargaining that formed the many coalition governments. The power of the DC was consolidated by a series of ad hoc strategies for preemption against the excluded poles of left and right and an ideology that promoted national unity by shifting from antifascism to anti-communism. At the national level there were few institutional opportunities for the MSI, though there were limited chances at the local level of politics. The strict proportional basis of the Italian electoral system meant that the MSI retained a permanent presence in the Parliament and Senate and was able to exert influence at the debate and committee levels of policy making.[7] From 1953 to 1994, the MSI, drawing its membership, lineage, and heritage from the Fascist Salo Republic, gained between 4.5% and 8.7% of the vote at national elections. This achievement was on the basis of a set of policies that were explicitly neofascist: ethnic nationalism; the authority principle; law and order; demand for an extended role of the state as the organizing principle for society; capital punishment and military deployment to enforce public order; and a rejection of the pluralism of party politics in the liberal democratic state. The ideological opponents of the MSI were clearly defined on the basis of the historical cleavage between fascism and communism. The presence of a large Communist Party (PCI) made the internal "threat of communism" a galvanizing identity for the MSI during the cold-war period.

Whereas institutional opportunities for exerting power were highly restricted, the political demands of the MSI were preempted by the fervent cold-war anticommunism of the Christian Democrats and the lack of legitimacy for a "failed" fascist model for society. The postwar success of the DC was based on a strong law-and-order platform. Indeed, the inability of the MSI to organize the mobilization of the *Fronte dell'Uomo Qualunque,* a populist, antipolitical movement that enjoyed a brief success in the immediate postwar period, was due to the preemptive tactics of the DC (Tarchi 1996). The retention of political power at the ideological center by the DC created a political space on the right that the MSI was able to fill only in times of political crisis. It is not by chance that the peak of electoral support for the MSI occurred in 1972, in the wake of protests and strikes by students and trade unions. In the 1970s and early 1980s, intense spirals of extraparliamentary mobilization, violent clashes between youths, and organized street violence were characteristic of the conflict between left and right radicals (della Porta 1992). While undoubtedly linked to the right-wing activists in these waves of violent mobilization, and later to the terrorists pursuing a "strategy of tension," the parliamentary wing of the MSI initiated an "entryist" strategy from the 1970s onward. It adopted the veneer of a rhetoric of liberal pluralism and attempted to work within the political framework, while retaining explicit links to the cultural heritage of fascism committed to the overthrow of liberal democracy (Griffin 1996). Nonetheless, the ruling powers of the "partycratic" state remained unconvinced of the MSI's liberal democratic credentials. If it is judged by the political bargaining power of its organizational resources in the political system, the MSI was an irrelevance. Throughout the First Republic, the MSI existed as a marginalized outpost for ideologically motivated radicals who were committed to the ideals of Italian fascism. The success of the preemptive strategies of Christian Democracy reduced the framing potential of the MSI's political ideology to a ghetto of "nostalgia for fascism."[8]

Systematic exclusion and cultural alienation from the governing political framework limited opportunities for the MSI to develop the credentials of a New Right, even when the integrative capacity of the centrist partycratic state was challenged in the 1980s by waves of social protest (della Porta 1996). However, one protest actor that did emerge in this period, an antisystemic challenger to the state and an important carrier of ethnic codes of identity, was the set of northern regionalist movements.

In the early stage of their development, the regional protest movements, such as the Liga Veneta, expressed an "ethnolocal" collective identity against the central economic power of the state. Their demand for economic au-

tonomy attributed an ethnic basis to the territorial idea of belonging (Diamanti 1993; D'Amato and Schieder 1995). They "imagined" a local community joined by primordial ties in opposition to the civic identity of the Italian state. Under Umberto Bossi's leadership, the Lega Lombarda contrasted the supposedly hardworking and productive qualities of the Lombardy people with the corrupt central state and southern Italians, who were stigmatized by the pejorative term *terrone* and branded as lazy and dependent. This ethnocentric basis for an antisystemic challenge fed off the tradition of racism and discrimination against southern Italians and also translated into intolerance against the cultural otherness of immigrants and homosexuals.[9] The thematization of the ethnic difference of immigrants by the Lega Lombarda coincided with the first wave of violence and intolerance against foreigners in Italy.[10]

In time, these relatively autonomous expressions of local belonging were extended to a more politically strategic formulation, where the region was defined as a "community of interests." The territorial boundaries for inclusion in the political community were extended to the whole of the north of Italy with the formation of the Northern League in 1990. This formula provided the basis for the electoral success of the League in 1992, when it gained 25.5% of the vote in the Veneto region and 23.6% of the vote in Lombardy. The League waged a campaign against the penetration of the central state into the local economy and society. It advocated federalism by threatening secession and attacked the corrupt and clientelist basis of the partycratic system.

It is beyond our scope to analyze the factors that caused the collapse of the First Republic. However, the collapse of the partycratic regime may be seen as the outcome of the inability of a state formed on the logic of patronage and internal division of resources to find a legitimate basis for regulating conflicts over social redistribution (Statham 1996a, 1996b). Domestic public spending was out of control, exacerbated by the corrupt and profligate excesses of the political elite during the economic boom of the 1980s, and in September 1992 the lira crashed. Italy's status in Europe seemed threatened by its almost certain exclusion from the European Monetary Union (Ginsborg 1996). The integrative capacities of the partycratic state, which had survived despite the long-standing legitimacy gap of a weak civic culture, finally gave way. The collapse of the First Republic became ritualized into a national spectacle by the televised *tangentopoli* trials of corrupt politicians, public servants, and businesspeople. By mid-1993, 447 members of Parliament were being investigated for bribes totaling L 620 billion, 90 percent of which was

allegedly paid to the ruling Christian Democratic and Socialist (PSI) Parties (Statham 1996b).

In addition to the institutional opportunities that the collapse of the First Republic presented to the League and the MSI, the cleavage and uncertainty within a political culture that had been dominated for so long by Christian-Democratic hegemony offered discursive opportunities for challengers to introduce frame alignment processes into the dominant representations for political ideas. After the void in political culture caused by the collapse of the state, a rare period of competition emerged between the prospective challengers to fill the identity gap on the right of the political spectrum.

Paradoxically, the MSI had defined its interests within the survival of the political system that had excluded it in the postwar period. In 1993, the MSI unsuccessfully opposed the changes in the electoral system that were proposed by the referendum movement, fearing the ignominy of disappearance in a move away from strictly proportional representation. Changes in Italian political culture, in particular the collapse of communism and the reformation of the PCI into a democratic party, reduced the antisystemic neofascist challenge of the MSI to the anachronistic qualities of a cult. In contrast to the League, the challenger claims of the MSI had little relevance to the structural and institutional crisis. Even when the MSI stood in the 1994 election under the label Alleanza Nationale, its policies were nothing new—they had a clear fascist heritage: a form of presidentialism based on direct referenda instead of Parliament; a tutelary role for the state in the national economy; and an internationally negotiated unification to bring Fiume, Istria, and Dalmatia back to Italy. The challenge of the League, in contrast, offered a more radical critique of the failings of the nation-state. The League's policies advocated a federalist and a neoliberal approach to society, the economy, and government by stressing local autonomy for fiscal measures and direct participation in democratic processes (Sznajder 1995).

The institutional opportunities for the League and the MSI to succeed in elections and to gain access to government were provided by Silvio Berlusconi's attempt to regroup a center-right from the debris of Christian Democracy. He achieved this by making electoral pacts with the two extreme-right challengers. Berlusconi's Forza Italia party was designed and marketed like a commercial product through his television network within a few weeks (Statham 1996a, 1996b). In the March 1994 election, Forza Italia gained 21% of the vote, the Alleanza Nazionale 13.5%, and the Northern League 8.4%, to form the first government of the Second Republic. By forming these two alliances, Berlusconi regrouped the center-right in a strategy

designed to keep out the left and to promote market interests. A side effect of this strategy was to make the extreme-right "challengers" into "members" of the political system. In Gamson's terms, they gained "acceptance," and they would have the potential to exert real power.

Berlusconi's establishment of the "pole for good government" alliance with the MSI was a co-optative strategy for appropriating the political identity resources of national solidarity and a commitment to law and order and the family. By historical irony, the political exclusion of the MSI meant that it could claim to be the one party that had kept "clean hands" in the First Republic. Berlusconi's public recognition of the MSI as a legitimate coalition partner was the factor that enabled the organization to leave the ghetto of isolation within Italian political culture. Under the strong leadership of Gianfranco Fini, the MSI declared an era of "postfascism" at the Fiuggi Conference in 1995 and attempted to define a mainstream future role in the political system.[11]

Berlusconi's "Pole for Freedom" alliance with the League was co-optative with regard to the neoliberal economic critique of the state but preemptive with regard to the threat of secession or northern autonomy. The nationalism of the MSI, which achieved high electoral support in the south of Italy, is the ideological opponent of the northern separatism of the League. Berlusconi's attempt to consolidate the center-right by dealing with these two different and ideologically opposed extreme-right challengers, was successful at the election but proved unmanageable in office, when the League's defection brought down the government after eight months.

The electoral success of the MSI and the Lega in 1994, compared to other challengers for replacing the Christian Democracy on the right, can be attributed to the institutional opportunities provided by the coalition with Berlusconi.[12] Once the League and the MSI (under its new form, Alleanza Nazionale) had become members of the political system in the emergent Second Republic, the potential for them to exert influence over policy decisions increased. This has become an especially important factor with regard to political issues for which the two parties are able to mobilize the types of ethnocentric claims that were taboo in the political culture of the First Republic. In particular, the mobilization of the League and the MSI has contributed to making the presence of immigrants into a political issue concerning the citizenship rights of inclusion and exclusion for the culturally different. Previously, the Italian state tended to treat the presence of illegal immigrants in the labor market as a technical matter requiring better administrative regulation.

In 1995, the League blatantly politicized immigration as a social problem

at the national level by refusing to pass the budget for Dini's technocratic government unless highly restrictive measures were brought in against immigrants.[13] Seeking to profit from a hostile climate toward immigrants, which was sparked by the high media profile of the rape of an Italian woman by two illegal immigrants, the League and the MSI were both active in mobilizing local communities in Milan, Florence, and Turin against immigrant quarters and settlements of nomads. At the national level, the League utilized the precarious balance of power at the time of the technocratic government to challenge the existing policy norms for immigrants. Under the Martelli Law of 1990, Italian immigration policy had followed a logic of social integration. These policy norms were contested by the League with claims that stigmatized the illegal immigrants present in Italy as "criminals."[14] The League's demands included that clandestine immigrants be expelled and immediately accompanied to the border; that those caught trying to reenter be given a prison sentence of up to three years; and that the state have the power to administer a prison sentence of up to six months for people who refused to show documentation. The Dini Decree (n. 489, November 18, 1995) did not accede to all of the League's demands, but it nonetheless introduced by far the most restrictive policy measures to date against immigrants.

This example shows that the relative shift from challenger to member status has given the extreme right a greater potential for thematizing issues of cultural difference into political conflicts over citizenship rights. It is on topics such as immigration that the League and the MSI have come closest to the ideal of receiving a "full response" to their political demands. The demands of the extreme right do not translate directly into policy outcomes, but its ability to mobilize the public through movement networks and to achieve media attention for these contentious topics sets a public agenda to which other political actors are forced to respond. In the Italian case, one likely outcome of the politicization of immigration is a greater social and cultural exclusion of immigrants and ethnic minorities. This occurs in a society that has previously exhibited a tolerance of foreigners relative to other European countries. It is worth noting that the framing that has been carried into Italian culture through the immigration debate distinguishes between Italians and *extracomunitari.* In the 1990s, "extracommunitarian" has become a pejorative category for those who are excluded from membership in the national community, whereas the weak civic culture of Italian citizenship is bolstered as an identity by reference to citizenship within the European Union. The demands of the League were an important supplier of the "cultural tools" for this frame alignment in the national conception of citizenship.

Conclusion

In our view, these two case studies confirm the usefulness of analytically distinguishing between the realm of symbolic interaction and the strategic interaction between challengers and members of a polity. Political opportunities, in the narrow institutional sense, are certainly important for explaining the mobilization success of the Italian extreme right, and its acceptance as a partner in government, within the context of the collapse of Italy's traditional party system. Likewise, the failure of the German extreme right to penetrate the political system can be related to the restrictive hurdles in the electoral system and the repression that confronts its organizations and activists. Nonetheless, using only this approach, we would have missed an important part of the picture. The introduction of the notion of a discursive opportunity structure within the symbolic realm has enabled us to account for the reason why, despite its exclusion from the polity, the German extreme right has had a considerable impact on official politics. This influence occurred more often through the mechanism of preemption rather than as a result of the pressure of actual mobilization. Similarly, the less conducive discursive opportunities for ethnic nationalist challengers in Italy help explain why the impact of the participation of the Alleanza Nazionale, the heir of prewar fascism, in government has remained relatively limited in substantive terms. In the context of the recent immigration debate, it was the ethnic regionalist challenge of the Northern League that was able to gain the most impact from the combination of discursive and institutional opportunities. We may relate such different combinations of discursive and institutional opportunities to the four types of outcomes distinguished by Gamson (1990: 29), as shown in figure 1.

If discursive and institutional opportunities are not available, the challenger will find no support for its ideas and demands, nor will it be able to gain access to the polity. Though not necessarily leading to the challenger's collapse, as suggested by Gamson's label, the movement will at least be confined to an existence in the cultural and political margins. Where discursive opportunities are available but the political system is closed, the challenger will be able to exert some influence on the public discourse but cannot establish itself as an active participant in the political game (as is the case in Germany). The most likely strategy followed by the political elite in this case will be preemption by taking up those demands and frames of the challenger which do not conflict with dominant interests and cultural codes, while simultaneously excluding or even repressing the challenger as a collective actor. In the opposite situation, with institutional opportunities available but

Figure 1. Relation between discursive and institutional opportunities and movement outcomes

Institutional Opportunity Structure	Discursive Opportunity Structure: *Open*	Discursive Opportunity Structure: *Closed*
Open	Full response	Co-optation
Closed	Preemption	Collapse/ marginalization

with unfavorable discursive opportunities, the most likely response will be co-optation. This elite strategy gives some access to the polity to those elements of the movement which are willing to adhere to the prevailing rules of the game, but this leads to few substantive concessions. Full response, in which the challenger gets both access and concessions, can be achieved only when opportunities are available in both the institutional and the discursive realms. In the 1990s, the situation of the Italian extreme right has at times come close to this ideal combination of opportunities—for example, in the case of the Northern League at the time of the political debate on immigration. However, the limited overall impact on official politics even when the Alleanza Nazionale and the League were members of the government shows that there were important co-optative elements, too.

To summarize, both discursive and institutional opportunities are necessary, but, on their own, they are insufficient preconditions for a truly successful challenge. An open discursive opportunity structure may give rise to a counterculture and may diffuse sentiments of dissatisfaction within the population, which may in turn have some effect on the strategies of the political elite, but this process will benefit a challenging social movement only when combined with opportunities on the institutional level. Conversely, an opening up of institutional opportunities, for instance, in the form of a political crisis, will increase the chances of success for those challengers which can build on available discursive opportunities. These opportunities are a necessary precondition for a challenger, so that its frames and collective actions may figure as a credible and legitimate alternative to the established political order.

Apart from these general theoretical points, a number of conclusions

can be drawn from our discussion regarding the ways in which a further increase in the strength and influence of the extreme right in European politics might be prevented. In our view, the most adequate response does not lie in the strategic realm of repression or exclusion from the polity. As the German case shows, the extreme right can have a damaging impact on the relation between indigenous and immigrant communities without having direct access to the polity. A more important and effective strategy for European policy makers would be to strengthen the civic bases for national identity and citizenship and to withstand the temptation to revive ethnic cultural definitions of nationhood. Unfortunately, many European countries have recently been confronted with corruption scandals and evidence of governmental incompetence, Italy being perhaps the most notorious, but certainly not the only, example. Such developments, of course, are not suited to strengthening the idea of the nation as a political community, and it is therefore no coincidence that the extreme right has been most successful in those countries where the political system has been discredited most (e.g., Italy, Belgium, Austria, and France). In addition, the continuing breakdown of the welfare state threatens to lead to the development of an underclass with minimal social citizenship rights. Again, the probable outcome of such a process is a strengthening of ethnic-nationalist sources of collective identity that fill the void created by the erosion of civic-political mechanisms of inclusion.

Questions like these will most likely become more relevant for the construction of conceptions of European identity and citizenship, which currently lags far behind the process of European integration on the economic level. At present, the oligarchic decision-making structures within the EU, its closure to citizens' direct participation and influence, and the underdevelopment of a social component accompanying economic integration are hardly suited to stimulate the development of a civic-political sense of European identity. Instead, policies aimed at preventing immigration from outside the EU have heralded the advent of "Fortress Europe" and the differentiation, within each of the individual countries, between two classes of foreigners with different citizenship rights ("extracommunitarians," in contradistinction to those from other EU countries). In the long term, such developments threaten to promote an ethnic definition of the imagined community of "Union-Europeans" with the latent potential for translating into chauvinist sentiments and discrimination at the national and local levels.

Notes

1. The limitations of such attempts can easily be demonstrated for the case at hand. If the correspondence of the ethnonationalist frame of the extreme right with objective threats to the ethnic integrity of the nation were important, we would expect the

extreme right to be strong where the influx and size of the foreign population is large, that is, in Germany (with 7.6% foreigners in 1992) and not in Italy (with only 0.9% foreigners in 1992; Eurostat 1994: 8).

2. The detailed explanation of other forms of extreme-right mobilization, which often take the form of violence against ethnic minorities and immigrants, would require a separate study, in which the presence or absence of strong extreme-right parties would be one of the explanatory variables (see Koopmans 1996d).

3. These two hypotheses are formulated separately since, as we argue in the next section, conceptions of nationhood are usually a mixture of ethnic and civic elements that do not necessarily relate to each other in a zero-sum way. Note also that we use a broad conception of social movements, which may include conventional party activities as well as unorganized violence. In this view, the distinctive view of a social movement is its position as a challenging outsider vis-à-vis the political system—a position that is often, but not necessarily, linked to a reliance on extra-institutional forms of mobilization.

4. Here we take on the notion of "frame alignment" proposed by Diani (1996). The traditional notion of frame alignment (Snow et al. 1986; Tarrow 1994) defines the linking process from the values of a movement organization to the culture of potential constituents. Diani proposes instead that the concept of frame alignment be limited to "the integration of mobilizing messages with dominant representations of the political environment." This definition is preferable for our present purpose, as it locates the outcomes of framing processes within the context of political culture, which is defined as an interactive field rather than the property of one collective actor.

5. The observation 'We have made Italy; now we must make Italians' by the statesman Massimo d'Azeglio 135 years ago has been an often-repeated and resonant self-criticism within Italian political culture (Griffin 1997).

6. Between 1973 and 1993, the percentage of Italians who were rather dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the working of democracy was always more than 24% higher than the percentage in other EC countries (Morlino and Tarchi 1996: 47). In the 1987 Eurobarometer poll 27, only 30.7% of Italians responded that they were very or fairly satisfied with the functioning of democracy in their country, which was the lowest percentage among the twelve member states. In contrast, West Germany ranked second only to Luxembourg, with 78% of West Germans expressing satisfaction with democracy (Flickinger and Studlar 1992: 9).

7. The presence in Parliament did provide a limited potential for disruptive influence. For example, Veugelers (1994: 42) notes that the MSI, acting with the PRI, tabled more than sixty amendments in Parliament in an initial attempt to disrupt the passage of the proposed law on immigration in 1989.

8. The position of the neofascist MSI in the First Republic is well characterized by the titles of two studies: *Il polo escluso,* "The excluded pole" (Ignazi 1989); and *Cinquant'anni di nostalgia,* "Fifty years of nostalgia" (Tarchi 1995).

9. According to official figures, levels of racist violence against immigrants has been low in Italy compared to other European countries. This fact has contributed to the official myth that, as a country with a tradition of emigration, Italians are tolerant of mi-

grants (Balbo and Manconi 1992). However, there has been a long history in the north of Italy of incidents of discrimination and xenophobic violence committed against southern Italian migrants, which somewhat discredits this myth. As recently as 1989, a southern immigrant was beaten to death by nortberners (Ford 1991: 67).

10. The official figures of the Ministry of the Intetior, based on police records for acts of violence and intolerance against foreigners, indicate a clear peak in 1990 (OECD 1995). The "late" appearance of waves of xenophobic mobilization against immigrants in Italy can be attributed to the relatively low numbers of foreign immigrants—1.4% of the population, compared to 8.2% in Germany, 6.4% in France, and 3.3% in the United Kingdom in 1990 (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development 1992: 131)—and the relatively late influx of immigrants compared to northern European countries. Italy became a country of net immigration for the first time only in the 1980s.

11. Griffin's excellent analysis of the Fiuggi text (1996) identifies how a reference to fascist heritage is combined with a prognosis of the Italian crisis in the organization's ideological shift from the MSI to the AN. The transformation of the MSI has been at the level of political identity and not organizational structure and personnel, which have remained largely unchanged (Ignazi 1995). Also, the values of its members have been shown to differ considerably from tbose of its electoral supporters (Baldini and Vignati 1996; Tarchi 1996).

12. The failure of a party such as La Rete, which was formed on the civic basis of public morality against the corruption of the state and the Mafia, indicates that the demise of the First Republic was a case of regime collapse tather than the outcome of a cballenge by a social movement. The *tangentopoli* crusade was carried by a small counter-elite of magistrates. The inability of La Rete to transform this challenge into a viable political movement bears testimony to the weak civic basis of Italian culture.

13. The League brought down Berlusconi's government and reverted to an anti-systemic critique after eight months in 1994. The Berlusconi government was replaced by a technocratic government that was supported effectively by the left alliance and the League. This gave the League considerable bargaining power to influence legislation.

14. The clandestine status of so many immigrants in Italy was due to the administrative and policy failings of a state that had accepted the benefits of migrant labor without defining the rights of migrants. In this sense the presence of illegal immigrants was officially accepted as normal in the First Republic and was considered a problem only insofar as it required better regulation.