This book results from an extensive research project on the role and impact of the radical right in post-communist Eastern Europe that started in 2016 and was funded by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation (Grant No. 10.16.2.003PO). The research was conducted at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder) with the core team including Michael Minkenberg as principal investigator, and Zsuzsanna Végh and Anca Florian as researchers. The project aimed to assess the extent to which the operation of the radical right across Eastern Europe can negatively impact on the quality of democracy in this region. More specifically, the research concentrated on institutional and party politics such as cordon sanitaire arrangements, the positions and policy-making of radical right and mainstream parties on issues of identity politics, and those pertaining to national and ethnic minorities, refugees, and asylum-seekers. The empirical focus covers three sets of countries (Bulgaria and Slovakia; Romania, Hungary, and Poland; and Czech Republic and Estonia) which are investigated with a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches (“mixed methods”) in the time span from the beginning of the new century and the final preparations of the countries’ EU accession until the so-called “refugee crisis” (2000–2016).

Some parts of the project have already seen the light of day; early versions of Chapter 3 were presented at the Friedrich Ebert Foundation’s and the Southern Poverty Law Center’s 15th International Workshop on Right-wing Extremism in New Orleans in 2018 and at the 2018 General Conference of the European Consortium of Political Research (ECPR) in Hamburg. The revision of the ECPR conference paper appeared in International Political Science Review 2021, vol. 42(5), pp. 649–71 (co-authored with Anca Florian and Malisa Zobel). Findings from Chapter 4 were presented at the 2022 ECPR General Conference in Innsbruck, and an early version of Chapter 5 was discussed in late 2019 at Columbia University’s Comparative Politics Seminar in New York. The initial conclusions fed into a conference concluding the research phase of the project, which took place in Cluj, Romania, in July 2019 in cooperation with the Babeş-Bolyai University and with the
participation of leading experts from the field of radical right research in Eastern Europe.

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Michael Minkenberg and Zsuzsanna Végh