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Newsletter of the ECPR Standing Group on Extremism & Democracy

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The *e-Extreme* is the newsletter of the ECPR Standing Group on Extremism & Democracy. For any enquiries about the newsletter and book reviews, please contact the managing editors (extremismanddemocracy@gmail.com).

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STANDING GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS

REGISTER AS AN E&D STANDING GROUP MEMBER

In order to join our Standing Group (always free of charge!), you can join the Extremism & Democracy Standing Group at the click of a button, [via the ECPR website](#). If you have not already done so, please register as a member so that our list is up to date and complete.

In order to join, you will need a MyECPR account, which we assume many of you will already have. If you do not have one, you can [create an account](#) in only a few minutes (and you need not be from an ECPR member institution to do so). If you are from a non-member institution, we will need to accept your application to join, so your membership status (which you can see via your MyECPR account, and on the Standing Group pages when you are logged in to MyECPR) will be 'pending' until we accept you.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch!

NEW WEBSITE URL AND CONTACT ADDRESS

Following changes to the ECPR framework for Standing Groups, we have recently migrated our website to the ECPR platform. The E&D domain will be shortly deactivated. You can now reach us at:

<http://standinggroups.ecpr.eu/extremismanddemocracy/>.

For general information, membership enquiries, announcements, publication alerts, and reviews, contact us at: extremismanddemocracy@gmail.com.

Please, update your bookmarks accordingly!

SECTION ENDORSED AT NEXT ECPR GENERAL CONFERENCE

The ECPR Standing Group on *Extremism & Democracy* is proudly endorsing the Section 'Political Radicalism and Alternatives to Liberal Democracy' at the next ECPR General Conference in Wrocław, 4-7 September 2019.

The Section is chaired by Lenka Bustikova (Arizona State University) and Petra Guasti (Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt). Informal queries about panel and paper proposals should be addressed to the Section Chairs using the following contacts: lenka.bustikova@asu.edu / guasti@soz.uni-frankfurt.de. Panel and paper submissions deadline is 18 February 2019.

For further details, see section below or check the following link: <http://standinggroups.ecpr.eu/extremismanddemocracy/cfp-2019-ecpr-general-conference/>.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND CALLS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

CALL FOR PAPERS: CONSEQUENCES AND MITIGATION OF POPULISM

Conference: 2019 ECPR General Conference

Section: Political Radicalism and Alternatives to Liberal Democracy

Chairs: Lenka Bustikova (Arizona State University) and Petra Guasti (Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)

Location and date: Wrocław, 4-7 September 2019

Deadline for submission: 18 February 2019

For further details: [Conference website](#)

Endorsed by the ECPR Standing Group on Extremism & Democracy.

What is the relationship between political radicalism and democracy? Right-wing and left-wing political radicals are vocal about limitations of liberal democracies. Political extremism, radical contestation that mobilizes opponents of liberal democracy, as well as support for radical parties on the left and on the right, is a double edged-sword. On the one hand, radical actors bring neglected topics out of the shadows. Radical elements of the mainstream can highlight new issues, sometimes by using populist appeals to re-invigorate political agendas of mainstream parties. Some even suggest that radical actors engage in the process of creative destruction: as mainstream parties ossify and run out of creative solutions to new challenges, radical agendas force the mainstream to adapt and innovate.

Naturally, there is a dark side to radical politics. In the absence of cordon sanitaire, extreme right and/or extreme left parties taint public discourse, legitimize vitriolic, hateful political rhetoric and propose simplistic economic solutions to complex problems of contemporary globalized societies. Moreover, the process of mainstreaming of radical agendas leads to the overlap of mainstream and niche parties' platforms so that the boundaries become either blurry or parties end up in a spiral of extremist outbidding. For instance, radical extra-parliamentary groups, pressure groups that hide on social media to advocate hate, radicalized social movements and uncivil society play an important role in the process of destabilizing the vision of Europe as a continent where minority protection is considered to be a cornerstone of political pluralism.

At the same time, movements and parties on the extreme, as well as radicalized mainstream parties, propose alternatives to liberal democracies. Some suggest that liberal democracy advantages minorities at the expense of the majority. Those who (no longer) view liberal democracies as a legitimate form of governance advocate for direct forms of democracy that reconnect politicians with the electorate. Other radical and radicalized movements, parties and politicians seek to enhance majoritarian features of democracies either as a strategic tool to expand executive and legislative power or in order to diminish political pluralism. The rule of experts and technocratic expertise is yet another

alternative that combines exclusionary appeals with a rejection of pluralistic liberal democracies. Polarization and identity politics are powerful tools in the hands of radicals who create divided societies unable to reach consensus and gridlocked on policies.

The Standing Group on *Extremism & Democracy* encourages panel submissions that illuminate the link between both institutionalized and non-institutionalized left/right political extremism and challenges faced by old and new liberal democracies.

The section encourages panel submissions that are methodologically diverse. Preference will be given to panels that mirror the diversity of the ECPR research community in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, rank, location and regional specialization. We welcome panels on the following topics:

- Radical right mobilization and social movements / groups
- Polarization and identity politics
- Uncivil society revisited
- Populism and majoritarianism / direct forms of democracy and elections
- Radical right in office
- Technocratic governments, technocratic populism as alternatives to liberal democracy
- Security threats and radicalization
- Radical right, populism and social media: conspiracies and on-line extremism
- Radicalized mainstream parties

Informal queries about panel and paper proposals should be addressed to Lenka Bustikova (lenka.bustikova@asu.edu) and Petra Guasti (guasti@soz.uni-frankfurt.de).

CALL FOR PAPERS: CONSEQUENCES AND MITIGATION OF POPULISM

Conference: Consequences and Mitigation of Populism

Organisers: Team Populism

Location and date: IE University, Segovia (Spain), 24-26 June 2019

Deadline for submissions: 18 January 2019

Team Populism (populism.byu.edu) invites proposals for papers on the consequences of populism and how these can be mitigated. Papers will be presented at a conference at IE University in Segovia, Spain on 24-26 June 2019. The purpose of the conference is the creation of an edited volume *The Ideational Approach to Populism: Consequences and Mitigation* for submission to the *Anxieties of Democracy* series at Cambridge University Press.

We are committed to a multi- and mixed method approach and wish to present broad evidence coming from multiple methodological paradigms. We thus welcome theoretically and empirically oriented proposals and encourage cross-

country and cross-regional research. However, papers must integrate their arguments with the ideational approach to populism (Hawkins et al. 2018; Mudde 2017). Where practical, authors are encouraged to use publicly available datasets collected by members of Team Populism. Proposals advancing experimental designs should be prepared to present preliminary results at the conference. Where feasible, authors should direct their proposals towards one or more elements of the following framework:

Consequences. The ideational approach considers the impact of populism on all levels of analysis, as well as populism's negative and positive consequences. Individual papers may focus on systemic (international) level consequences, such as foreign policy; state-level consequences, such as democratic norms and institutions, economic and other policy outcomes, and media behavior; consequences for parties or party-systems; and individual-level consequences, such as social polarization and the psychology of populism.

Mitigation. While populism can have beneficial consequences, the ideational approach sees populism having multiple negative consequences and offers ways to mitigate them. Papers here have a clearer policy focus and should center on specific mitigations, such as policy or institutional change; institutional reforms; new communications strategies; civic education; and grassroots activism. Change agents may include international and domestic actors.

Accommodations and meals of guests are covered, and the organizers may cover the airfare of junior scholars. Funding for the conference comes from IE's School for Global and Public Affairs and the Anxieties of Democracy program of the Social Science Research Council.

Proposals of no more than 500 words should be submitted to Nina Wiesehomeier (populism2019@ie.edu). Deadline for submission is 18 January 2019. Accepted authors will be notified by mid-February. Full drafts should be circulated 10 days ahead of the conference.

CALL FOR PAPERS: 5TH PRAGUE POPULISM CONFERENCE

Conference: Current Populism in Europe. What's Next?

Organisers: Institute for International Studies Charles University in Prague, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, and Goethe Institut

Location and date: Goethe Institut, Prague, 27-28 May

Deadline for submissions: 31 January 2019

After four years of the Prague Populism Conference, and 30 years since 1989, the time has come to look at the concept of populism critically and to ask vital, defining questions. Is this concept still appropriate for the description of political parties and their behaviour in Europe or elsewhere? Is there a consensus on what we really mean by this term? How has populism developed and mutated over the past decade, since the economic crisis? What can we expect from the upcoming elections to the European Parliament? Answers to those questions will help us to re-brand the notion of populism in order to keep pace with current political

developments. Within the scope of the 5th Prague Populism Conference, the organisers encourage applicants to submit papers on the following issues:

- Re-branding the concept of populism – the search for a definition.
- Are there any countermeasures to populism - and do we need them?
- Comparative studies of current populist parties and movements in Europe.
- Impact of populism on the elections to the European Parliament.

Confirmed speakers:

Cas Mudde (University of Georgia)

Reinhard Heine (University of Salzburg)

Stijn Van Kessel (Queen Mary University of London)

Submit a conference abstract

Applicants are invited to submit abstracts of up to 300 words and short CVs to populism@fsv.cuni.cz by 31 January 2019. The accepted papers will be announced by 16 February 2019. There is no conference fee for participants.

CALL FOR PAPERS: SPECIAL ISSUE ON GENDER AND POPULISM IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Special Issue: Gender and Populism in the Global South

Editors: Veronica Gregorio (National University of Singapore) & Cleve Arguelles (Australian National University)

Deadline for submissions: 28 February 2019

About the special issue

The rise of populist forces has brought with it a particularly gendered rhetoric that invokes patriarchal norms that attacks women and other gender minorities. This manifests worldwide but most especially in the global south. In the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte's assumption to the presidency is coupled with frequent articulation of misogynistic and sexist discourses in public. In Hungary and Poland, populist parties in power have continuously attempted publicly denounce the "gender ideology". In many places, populism has rolled back progress on gender rights and issues although women and feminist groups like #BabaeAko did not take all of it sitting down. This special issue of the *Review of Women's Studies* on gender and populism seeks to understand how women and the LGBTQ+ communities are faring in populist times. Although populism studies have recently picked up, the relationship between gender and populism remain understudied. As such, the aim of the special issue is to analyze how gendered populism and populist politics challenge and/or reinforce hegemonic gender norms. Since most scholarly research on gender and populism focuses on North America and Western Europe, studies that relate to cases from the global south are especially welcome. This special issue accepts scholarly articles and forms of creative work that can be printed from academics, activists, journalists, advocates, and all those whose works relate to the theme. In particular, those who are working on the following topics are especially invited to contribute:

- What forms of resistance to populism are emerging? How are women's and other gender movements tackling the populist challenge?
- What can gender theories contribute to analyzing and responding to populism? How is this meaningful to research and activism in diverse global south contexts?
- How are gender norms invoked in populist campaigns and mobilizations? How is the trend of gendered populist rhetoric manifest across the global south?
- How can we explain women and other gender minorities who embrace, instead of reject, populist rule? What lessons can be drawn from the female and LGBTQ+ populist publics?

About the journal

The *Review of Women's Studies* is a refereed journal published twice a year by the UP Center for Women's and Gender Studies, University of the Philippines. The journal serves as a forum where ideas on issues and concerns affecting the lives of women, seen from the analytical perspectives of different disciplines, may be exchanged. It encourages and seeks to publish research that employ feminist methodologies and that adhere to the principles of feminist research, bearing in mind the intersectionality of gender, class, religion, age, and education. The *RWS* also features interviews of women through a first-hand account of their experiences to discover and highlight ways in which they have invested their lives with meaning and dignity. Creative works that provide insights into women's consciousness and articulate their experiences are equally welcome. The *RWS* follows the double-blind peer-review process.

Submission instructions

1. Articles must demonstrate a high degree of scholarship, and will undergo a process of review and approval by the special issue editors, the *RWS* editorial board and by selected referees.
2. Articles may be written in English or Filipino. All articles must be accompanied by an abstract of 200 words. Articles in Filipino must be accompanied by a fairly comprehensive abstract in English.
3. All contributions must be original, should have not been published previously, and should not currently be under review for publication elsewhere.
4. Articles must have a maximum of 8,000 words and book/art reviews should be 6,000 words or less. When articles include graphs and tables, the maximum should not exceed 50 manuscript pages. All articles must be submitted in the Microsoft Word .doc/.docx format. The following specifications must be followed as well:
 - Articles should be formatted in A4 paper size.
 - Margins should be 1 inch for all sides.
 - Font should be Times New Roman, font size 12.
 - The article should be accompanied by a cover sheet containing the article title, author's name, two to three lines of biographical data that includes the author's present position and area of work, postal address, email address, and contact number. Repeat the title on the first page of the article. The author's name *should not appear after* the cover page. No identifying

information about the author should be included in the submitted manuscript or the abstract.

5. All articles should use the APA Style in text citation. Please consult the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th edition) regarding notes, references, tables, graphs, diagrams, maps and photographs.
6. When necessary, articles should be accompanied by images and illustrations (captions included) and other relevant media elements that are to be published with the text. These should be in separate files and not embedded in the text. A separate text document file should contain a list of the images' filenames and their corresponding captions. It is the author's responsibility to acquire copyright permissions for work outside of public domain.
7. Articles and other submissions that do not comply with the guidelines will be automatically returned to the author without comments.

All submissions and inquires must be directed to the special issue editors Veronica Gregorio (v.gregorio@u.nus.edu) or Cleve Arguelles (Cleve.Arguelles@anu.edu.au) with "RWS Gender and Populism" in the email subject heading.

Timeline

- Submission deadline for the full paper & other submission types is 28 February 2019
- Target publication date is December 2019

CALL FOR PAPERS: POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY AND POPULISM

Conference: Popular Sovereignty and Populism

Organisers: George Washington Forum on American Ideas, Politics and Institutions at Ohio University

Location and date: Ohio University in Athens (US), 15-16 March 2019

Deadline for submissions: 1 November 2019

JMC's partner program, the George Washington Forum on American Ideas, Politics and Institutions at Ohio University, invites paper proposals for a conference and subsequent edited volume on Popular Sovereignty and Populism. The conference will be held at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio (15–16 March 2019). Previous George Washington Forum conferences have resulted in edited books from the university presses at Cambridge, Oxford, and Virginia.

In his *Considerations on Representative Government*, political theorist John Stuart Mill argues that "the ideally best form of government is that in which the sovereignty, or supreme controlling power in the last resort, is vested in the entire aggregate of the community." Currently, we live in a moment where some exercises of the people's power result in what is often called democratic illiberalism. This conference and volume intend to illuminate the concept of popular sovereignty and its related expression, populism. We are especially interested in the crucial continuities and discontinuities in popular sovereignty that emerge when we study critical moments in political history. These include

(but are not limited to) the theory and practice of popular sovereignty in the Italian Renaissance; seventeenth-century England; revolutionary and federal America; and revolutionary France. Proposals shedding light on the development of modern popular sovereignty, both within and outside the European and Anglo-American traditions, including papers with a primary focus on ancient and medieval politics, will be given full consideration.

Keith Baker (Stanford), Mark Blitz (Claremont McKenna), Michael Braddick (Sheffield), and Catherine Zuckert (Notre Dame) will deliver plenary lectures. The submission deadline for abstracts is 1 November 2018.

The conference organizers welcome proposals from advanced doctoral students and both early career and established scholars in the fields of history, intellectual history, political theory, law, literature, and related disciplines.

Proposals should include a 500-word abstract, a brief (1-2 page) curriculum vitae, and current contact information. Please send proposals to both conference organizers by 1 November 2018.

Dr Chris Barker, Department of Political Science, The American University in Cairo (chris.barker@aucegypt.edu) and Dr Robert G. Ingram, Department of History, Ohio University (ingramr@ohio.edu).

Notifications will be sent by 21 November 2018. Limited financial support is available on a competitive basis for junior faculty members, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students who cannot secure institutional funding. More information is available here: <https://www.jackmillercenter.org/call-for-papers-popular-sovereignty-and-populism/>.

KEEP US INFORMED

Please keep us informed of any upcoming conferences or workshops you are organising, and of any publication or funding opportunities that would be of interest to Standing Group members. We will post all details on our website. Similarly, if you would like to write a report on a conference or workshop that you have organised and have this included in our newsletter, please do let us know.

Please, also tell us of any recent publications of interest to Standing Group members so that we may include them in the 'publications alert' section of our newsletter, and please get in touch if you would like to see a particular book (including your own) reviewed in *e-Extreme*, or if you would like to review a specific book yourself. We are always keen on receiving reviews from junior and senior scholars alike!

Finally, if you would like to get involved in the production of the newsletter, the development of our website, or any of the other activities of the Standing Group, please do get in touch. We are always very keen to involve more and more members in the running of the Standing Group!

BOOK REVIEWS

TJITSKE AKKERMAN, SARAH L. DE LANGE AND MATTHIJS ROODUIJN (EDS.). RADICAL RIGHT-WING POPULIST PARTIES IN WESTERN EUROPE: INTO THE MAINSTREAM? NEW YORK: ROUTLEDGE, 2016. 298 PP., £105.00 HARDBACK. ISBN: 9781138914834

Leonardo Puleo
Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies, Pisa

Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties (RRWPP) are established actors in the Western European political landscape. Their electoral strength went abundantly beyond the electoral *momentum* in the 90's, and nowadays RRWPPs are a stable presence in most of Western European party systems. The book edited by Tjitske Akkerman, Sarah L. de Lange and Matthijs Rooduijn posits in a comparative perspective an overarching question: have the long-lasting involvement of RRWPPs in electoral competition and their government participation brought them to moderate their positions, moving from the margins towards the mainstream? In order to answer this promising research question, the editors set a dynamic theoretical framework (*1st chapter*) able to enlighten the components of *mainstreaming*. The book is thereafter divided into two parts: the first is devoted to a comparative – and quantitative – look at the Western European trends, whilst the second focuses on various case studies. The time-frame of the analysis varies slightly in each chapter according to the data available, ranging from the early 2000s up to the most recent data.

The concept of *mainstream* – so profusely employed in literature – is exhaustively framed. The authors argue that RRWPPs show three features that pull them apart from the *mainstream*: a radical stance - in spatial terms - on their core issues, an emphasis of the socio-cultural issues over the economic ones and a fierce anti-establishment outlook. Consequently, their *mainstreaming* should be led by four dynamics: a softening of their core positions, an increasing attention on economic policies, the normalization of the relations with the other political actors and, finally, an attempt to clean up a reputation often linked with a *quasi-fascist* or *racist* legacy. In any circumstances, this process is not happening in a *vacuum* and it's embedded within the structure of political opportunities, intersecting party goals (Strom 1990).

This theoretical basis represents a coherent framework adopted to evaluate RRWPPs' potential *mainstreaming*. In the second chapter, the trend is observed by

looking at the aggregate dimension of the RRWPPs' supply side. The findings are quite unequivocal: RRWPPs are not moving towards the *mainstream*, indeed, they are neither decreasing their radicalness nor lessening their anti-establishment tone. The dimension of the *nicheness* is partially more blurred; RRWPPs have gradually expanded their political platforms including economic issues. Moreover, looking at possible similarities between RRWPPs and mainstream parties' voters (3rd chapter), the empirical analysis shows that we cannot depict a clear trend of convergence between the two electorates. When a convergence seems to occur however, on the EU integration issue, Rooduijn concludes that it is led by the radicalization of the mainstream parties' voters, rather than to a process of *mainstreaming*.

The second section of the book is devoted to nine case studies belonging to the Western European context, including those RRWPPs having experienced – at least – one electoral breakthrough and for whom participation in office represents in the long run a realistic opportunity. All in all, institutional systems and inter-party dynamics appear to be the main factors able to prevent *mainstreaming* (e.g. FN, UKIP and VB). The authors show how in the case of UKIP the electoral system creates a low coalition potential. In the case of VB the same outcome has been mainly determined by the peculiarity of the inter-party dynamics (*cordon sanitaire*). The FN represents a case in which both institutional and inter-party dynamic contributed to generate a low coalition potential. In such cases, parties prioritized a vote-seeking strategy over an office seeking one. Conversely, an emphasis on office-seeking strategies had characterized the other RRWPPs (FrP, PS, PVV, SVP, FPO) that gained some form of coalition potential and incidental participation in office, while DF and SVP have participated more than once in government. This comparative overview identified that – taken alone - the prolonged participation to the electoral competition does not bring RRWPPs to moderate. A partial exception is represented by UKIP and FN cases, where the electoral system pursued them to winning votes also over the more distant voters. The inclusion-moderation thesis seems to be more relevant when looking at office experiences - yet, further caveats are needed. In those cases, in which RRWPPs were able to preserve a radical stance in their core issues, a partial – but stable – moderation occurred in their peripheral ones (e.g. DF, SVP). However, when the participation in government channelled a pervasive moderation, the *mainstreaming* was highly unstable and prone to be reverted in following elections (e.g. FPO). In a nutshell, the findings of the aggregate-quantitative section of the book are mainly confirmed.

In sum, the volume manages to provide important insights for both specialist scholars and a broader academic audience. Its main contribution is to prove a partially counter-intuitive fact: despite many debates over RRWPPs moderation they are still broadly antithetic to the *mainstream*. The concept of *mainstreaming*, so often under-specified in the literature, is here theoretically grounded and can

serve as a basis for further analysis. The in-depth case studies represent the appropriate completion of the results exposed in the comparative-section, offering a substantial confirmation and clarifying the casual mechanism of the RRRPs transformative trajectories. In this respect the book constitutes an essential update to the important tradition of empirical studies on Radical Right Parties (see Betz 1994; Kitschelt and McGann 1995; Ignazi 2003; Mudde 2007), enlightening the relationship between RRWPPs and other actors within national party systems. However, the continuity with the previous literature can also be considered a limitation of the current work. The efforts in defining RRWPPs are unimaginative and hastily refer to Hans George Betz (1994) and Cas Mudde's (2007) classification. This weakness is epitomized in the difficulties to integrate in the analysis the Italian Northern League, just listed in the introductory framework and then abandoned, or in the hesitations in asserting the controversial belonging of UKIP to the RRWPPs' category.

Overall, the book has accomplished an ambitious scientific mission, providing strong evidence to describe RRWPPs' trajectories within their national party systems during the last fifteen years. This is coupled with a longed-for operationalization and theoretical justification of *mainstreaming* as a process. These two features taken together are more than enough to make the book an essential reading for anyone who wants to explore the developments of radical right parties in contemporary Western Europe.

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Leonardo Puleo is a PhD candidate at Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies and holds a Master's Degree cum laude in International and Diplomatic Sciences, obtained in Forlì (University of Bologna). His main research interests focus on political parties and party systems' change, with a specific focus on emerging parties. The provisional title of his dissertation is: *Converging or Diverging party systems? A strategic oriented comparison of challenger parties in Eastern and Western Europe*.

FEDERICO FINCHELSTEIN. FROM FASCISM TO POPULISM IN HISTORY

BERKELEY: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS, 2017. 256PP., £24.00., HARDCOVER. ISBN: 9780520295193

Margherita de Candia
University of Reading

What's the relationship between fascism and populism? Are the two 'isms' different phenomena or do they share a common gene pool? These and related questions underlie Federico Finchelstein's penetrating book, "From Fascism to Populism in History". Building upon primary sources, historiography, and political theory, the author contends that the two are "genealogically connected" (p. xiii): modern populism developed in post-WWII era on the ashes of fascism, getting rid of its violent and anti-democratic component, but without renouncing to its illiberal dimensions.

The perspective is that of a historian, interested in bridging the gap between historical and theoretical understandings of fascism and populism. Resting on the premise that both must be conceived of as global and transnational phenomena, the study unfolds in three parts.

Chapter I provides a historical and conceptual analysis of fascism, presented as a worldwide phenomenon with distinctive national variants. Here the author persuasively argues that the fundamental difference between fascism and populism lies in the approach toward extreme violence and dictatorship, quintessential to the former but not to the latter. Indeed, while fascism has its heart in the equation between power and political violence (violence that has its ultimate expression in genocide), populism was born out of the "traumatic memory of violence" (p. 24) and of the "dictatorial defeat of fascism" (p. 27). This crucial difference aside, the two phenomena share important traits. Namely the centrality of the triad 'people, leader, nation' (and of their enemies); and the tendency to make up political myths as needed (here the reader's thought goes to today's 'fake news'). Still, for the reason discussed earlier, the two shall not be confused – as the author accuses Laclau's approach of doing (p. 94). While reading difficult in some parts (notably in the section on 'Fascism and historians'), this chapter has the merit of unveiling where populism and fascism touch each other, while at the same time setting the necessary boundaries between the two.

Chapter II focuses on the genesis and subsequent development of modern populism, providing an excursus from Argentinian Perónism to American Trumpism. The analysis is underpinned by a critique of the approach adopted by political science scholarship on the study of populism (Mudde, Kaltwasser and their 'thin' conceptualization of populism are explicitly mentioned in page 130). Notably the author takes issue with the tendency to formulate narrow definitions of populism and with the obsession with ideal-types. These are considered ahistorical, too centred on the Western experience, and short-sighted in their lack of discrimination between left and right populism. On this regard, the author's judgement seems too severe, overlooking the importance of workable definitions to systematic, comparative studies. Furthermore, the way Finchelstein himself

conceives of populism - i.e., an “ideological pendulum” (p. 103) swinging from left to right – indirectly confirms the connotative force of minimal definitions of populism.

Chapter III closes the circle by throwing light on the authoritarian nature of populism. Here the author takes the reader on a captivating journey in time and space, exploring populism in its different manifestations (from Wade’s presidency in Senegal to Berlusconi’s premiership in Italy; from Netanyahu’s government in Israel to Erdoğan’s presidency in Turkey; etc.). These pages reveal the similar script that populists throughout the world seem to follow (from the vilification of the media to the making up of ‘legitimising’ lies), thus persuading the reader that populism is, indeed, a global and transnational phenomenon. The takeaway of this chapter is the latent and inextricable danger to representative democracy posed by populism. Differently from fascism, populism does not demonise democracy and free elections. And yet populism, which remains genealogically tied to fascism, may erode democracy from within. This is a warning that both scholars and other observers alike should appreciate when making sense of contemporary populism. We shall not forget that the step from populism to its dictatorial ancestor is short: as the author cogently points out, populism risks transforming into fascism when ‘the people’ starts to be considered as an ethnically homogenous group, and when the enemy stops being an unidentified whole to become “an identifiable racial or religious foe who is met with political violence” (p. 28).

To conclude, this book must not be read with the lenses usually worn by comparative politics scholars: systematic empirical evidence to back up claims lacks. Still, Finchelstein’s perceptive work stimulates a critical rethinking of both fascism and populism. It cautions us both from conceptual stretching – i.e., labelling as fascism what is not - and from excess of naiveté – i.e., marking as populism what has stopped being such. The reading of this book may therefore contribute to the sharpening of conceptualisations and operationalisations in studies of contemporary populism and extremism, as well as providing us with the conceptual coordinates needed to successfully monitor the state of representative democracy in today’s world.

Margherita de Candia is a Teaching Fellow in Politics and International Relations at the University of Reading. Her research cuts across comparative politics and European studies, with a focus on Italian and British politics. She recently submitted her PhD (King’s College London) on national parties’ multi-level links throughout the EU. Her latest publication (with Edoardo Bressanelli) is *Love, Convenience, or Respectability: Understanding the alliances of the Five Star Movement in the European Parliament* (2018).

KOEN VOSSSEN. THE POWER OF POPULISM: GEERT WILDERS AND THE PARTY FOR FREEDOM IN THE NETHERLANDS

LONDON: ROUTLEDGE, 2016. £36.99, PAPERBACK. ISBN: 9780815348290

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The Power of Populism by Koen Vossen enables the reader to understand how the functioning of the PVV contributed to its success by providing an in-depth analysis of the party. Studying the PVV “from the centre to the periphery” (p. xii) the author takes his readers on a ride through the party’s eventful and ongoing history. Vossen looks at the party and its components from various angles and on various levels, starting with a portrait of the leader and a detailed analysis of the party’s ideology. This is followed by an inventory of the national and international political activities of both the party and its leader Gert Wilders. The last two chapters focus on the party’s unique organizational structure and intra-party dynamics as well as on the demand side, i.e. the voters of the PVV.

The Power of Populism is a convincing book that provides valuable insights to the PVV, which is especially due to Vossen’s careful investigation and the detailed elaborations. The author describes his method as “erklärendes Verstehen” (explanatory understanding) (p. xii). He makes use of a broad array of materials, i.e. statistics, media reports, the auto-biographies of Wilders and his long-term ally Martin Bosma, several other memoirs, primary sources such as parliamentary proceedings and manifestos and – most importantly maybe – interviews with former members. This allows for a very holistic account of the activities and characteristics of the PVV which are then evaluated and put into context by Vossen in a very comprehensible manner.

The book starts with a biographical account on Gert Wilders and portrays his making as the most well-known Dutch politician. Vossen’s fear of the “risk of resorting to amateur psychology” (p.1) remains unwarranted, his well-written description is connected with academic research and to the politics of the PVV well beyond mere speculation. It traces Wilders’ evolution from a liberal critic of the “lethargic culture of compromise” (p. 8) to the nowadays fully-fledged radical-right wing politician. This includes, but is not limited to, (temporary) companions, intellectual stimuli, and his previous political career in the VVD.

The next chapter provides an insightful account on the evolution of the four pillars of the PVV’s ideology: anti-Islamic alarmism, nationalism, populism, and law and order. Vossen connects those four pillars and shows how they underpin each other, hence forming a consistent ideology. He, however, also points out inconsistencies, e.g. the people-centric notion of populism well-established in the theory and Wilders’ often negative stance towards the “ordinary people” (p. 39).

Particularly insightful are chapters 3 and 4 on the political activities and the intra-party dynamics of the PVV. Vossen manages to stress the different components

of the “system PVV” and shows how well they complement each other. Both chapters are exemplary for the author’s easily accessible and enjoyable writing style and especially for his thick and rich descriptions of the substance. In chapter 3, Vossen emphasizes the centrality of parliamentary work for the party by connecting it to Wilders’ activities on European and international level. Additionally, he puts the party’s meteoric rise into context stressing decisive events, most notably in relation to the pivotal moments of the murders of Pim Fortyn and Theo van Gogh. Chapter 4 sheds light on the organisation of the party. In fact, very little is known as the party leadership keeps a secretive veil on its internal mechanisms. The author outlines the important implications of the PVV’s unique party structure, in which Wilders himself remains the single only member. Vossen shows how this structure contributes to the intra-party dynamics in interaction with Wilders’ strict and absolutist style of leadership.

Another important contribution are the insights into Wilders’ hate/love-relationship with the media. Even though he disguises journalists as part of the invidious “left church”, he at the same time knows that the PVV would never have come to success without the vast media coverage it received. Wilders needs the media in order to compensate for his poor party finances, which do not allow for big and expensive campaigns – another direct result from his decision to keep the PVV member-less. And Wilders really is masterful when it comes to media tactics and knows which buttons to press.

Additionally, Vossen also goes into complex matters, e.g. the legal structure of the PVV, and shows how the different characteristics of the party are intertwined. He presents in a very convincing manner how this interaction between the party organization, Wilders’ leadership, and the relationship to the media have shaped the party’s history and continues to impact the party nowadays.

Eventually, the analysis turns to the supply-side of the PVV’s success and describes the characteristics of its voters. In this chapter, Vossen unfortunately deviates from his otherwise very convincing method of an empirically grounded and rich description. While Vossen managed to link all other chapters and their substance with each other presenting an insightful take on the functioning of the PVV, the 5th chapter lacks the clarity and stringency of the previous chapters.

One theoretical angle that could have integrated the book even more in contemporary political science research is Moffitt’s theory of a *populist performance of crisis* (2015). This would have allowed to connect various characteristics and strategies of the PVV and subsume them under one theoretical umbrella. Some of these are quite obvious and well-known, i.e. the anti-Islamic alarmism, anti-elite sentiments or the cry for more law and order polices in order to fight sky-rocketing levels of crime. Other parts of this performance only become visible while reading this book, for instance the way Wilders conditions the party’s candidate of fearing betrayal by other politicians

The book, an extended version of a monograph previously published in Dutch, is not only, but especially valuable for a non-Dutch audience, which might draw mostly on media reporting and less-detailed comparative research when it comes to the PVV and Gert Wilders. Vossen manages to introduce the Dutch context in a detailed yet accessible manner. *The Power of Populism* provides an excellent

example of how enriching and productive a deep engagement with a broad variety of sources is.

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