eEXTREME

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

NEW EDITORIAL BOARD

This issue welcomes a new editorial team for e-Extreme. *The new managing editors are: Fred Paxton, who is pursuing a PhD at the European University Institute with a project on populist radical right parties in local government, and Patricia Rodi, PhD candidate at Queen Mary University of London researching the mainstreaming of populism in Western Europe. Patricia has already served as book review editor for the* e-Extreme, *and our publication has thrived in no small part thanks to her initiative.*

Dear *e-Extreme* readers,

We hope you're well, wherever you may be - whether locked down or gradually getting back to normal life. Read on for the usual mix of announcements, reports, reviews and alerts to keep on top of all the recent developments related to 'extremism and democracy'.

As the new editors of *e-Extreme*, we would like to thank our outgoing editors Caterina Froio, Andrea Pirro, and Stijn van Kessel. They have invested significant efforts in recent years to advance the profile of *e-Extreme* and the Standing Group on *Extremism & Democracy* as a whole. We are honoured to take on this responsibility and build on the legacy that previous editors have established over the past 21 years.

We are also happy to welcome Harry Edwards as our new book review liaison. Harry is a Politics and International Relations graduate from the University of Greenwich with an interest in behavioural political science and the populist exploitation of political culture. If you want to review a book for *e-Extreme*, please get in touch with him at: harryedwardsedu@gmail.com. Harry will arrange the delivery of a complimentary copy of the book. We look forward to receiving reviews of the latest offerings in the field of populism, extremism and radicalism.

This issue of *e-Extreme* introduces a new feature: the symposium. In this section, researchers can share their emerging research into a burning issue. We're delighted to share with you a selection of articles on the relationship between radical/extremist politics and the Coronavirus pandemic. Marc-André Argentino (Arizona State University) shows how misinformation from QAnon conspiracy theorists is contributing to an 'infodemic' in the US. With an analysis of Twitter data,

Beatriz Buarque (University of Manchester) outlines the anti-Semitic conspiracy theories regarding the pandemic that are circulating online. Annie Kelly (University of East Anglia) considers the effect of our enclosure during the crisis and asks: who goes Alt-Right in a lockdown? Moving from the internet to political parties, Ofra Klein (European University Institute) shows how far-right politicians in Europe have taken advantage of the pandemic. And Sabine Volk (JU Kraków) looks at the reactions of the German far-right to the crisis: both from the AfD party and the Pegida movement. We hope you enjoy these perspectives on the current crisis and you feel inspired to continue the conversation.

Since the last issue, we have also witnessed a global wave of protests following the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. The protests have sought to raise the broader issue of racial inequality in societies across the world. These events are sure to be relevant to many in the *Extremism & Democracy* Standing Group, whether as a research subject or on a more personal level. As editors of *e-Extreme*, we are committed to ensuring that all voices are welcomed and heard in the magazine, and so contribute to a community free from racism and discrimination.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all the reviewers, authors and members of the *Extremism & Democracy* scholarly community. Your enthusiasm to contribute is the DNA of the Standing Group, and what has made it so successful over the years. We aim to further develop the magazine as a collective project and a place for our community to advance the field together.

Fred

Patricia

REGISTER AS AN E&D STANDING GROUP MEMBER

You can join the ECPR Standing Group on *Extremism & Democracy* always free of charge and 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.

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

CALL FOR REVIEWERS

e-Extreme is now offering scholars the opportunity to review articles! If you want to share your review of the latest published articles in the field of populism, extremism and radicalism and have it published in *e-Extreme*, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us via: extremismanddemocracy@gmail.com.

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!

CALLS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

CONFIRMED PANELS AT ECPR GENERAL CONFERENCE 2020

The Section endorsed by the Standing Group on *Extremism & Democracy*, entitled 'Populism, Radicalism and Extremism: At the Margins and into the Mainstream' will take place at the next ECPR General Conference, to be held virtually (24-28 August). The section is chaired by Pietro Castelli Gattinara (University of Oslo), Léonie de Jonge (University of Groningen), and Ofra Klein (European University Institute). Following the decision to offer the General Conference as an online event, with reduced registration fees, about a third of the panels and papers that were originally accepted had to be withdrawn. Despite the inconvenience caused by the move online, the Section will still host 12 full panels (plus one panel co-organised with the Standing Group on *Participation and Mobilisation*). Further info on the panels can be found on the ECPR website.

P075 Coping with Radical Populist Competition in European Party Systems; European Politics Extremism Populism Party Systems
Chair: Ofra Klein (European University Institute)
Discussant: Léonie de Jonge (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen)

P136 Falling Short—Exploring Why Our Theories and Measure So Often Fail to Account for Populist and Extremist Voters
Chair: Annika Werner (Australian National University)
Discussant: Robert A. Huber (Universität Salzburg)

P165 Hybrid Media Systems and the Far-Right – Infrastructures, Practices, and Connections Across Borders
Chair: Annett Heft (Freie Universität Berlin)
Discussant: Julia Rone (University of Cambridge)

P169 Ideology, Stories and Messages: Understanding Populist Radical Narratives
Chair: Léonie de Jonge (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen)
Discussant: Ofra Klein (European University Institute)

P225 Mapping the Complex Relationship Between Voters and Parties to Explain Differences in Radical Party Performance Based on New Theorizing, New Data, and New Methods
Chair: Reinhard Heinisch (Universität Salzburg)
Discussant: Fabian Habersack (Universität Salzburg)

P236 Mobilizing Worldviews: The Visual Repertoires of the Far Right
Chair and discussant: Maik Fielitz (Universität Hamburg)

P255 No Supply Without Demand: The Role of Populist Attitudes and its Translation into Different Aspects of Politics
Chair: Pietro Castelli Gattinara (University of Oslo)
Discussant: Sarah de Lange (University of Amsterdam)

P332 Radical Politics in and Beyond the Media Sphere
Chair: Ofra Klein (European University Institute)
Discussant: Pietro Castelli Gattinara – University of Oslo)

P384 The (In)evitable Success of Radical Right Parties: Explaining Variance Across Contexts
Chair: Léonie de Jonge (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen)
Co-Chair: Luca Manucci (Institute of Social and Political Sciences - University of Lisbon)
Discussant: Annika Werner (Australian National University)

P397 The Far Right Beyond Electoral Politics
Chair: Léonie de Jonge (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen)
Discussant: Pietro Castelli Gattinara (University of Oslo)

P445 United in Misogyny: Male Supremacy, the Far-Right, and the Mainstream
Chair: Susanne Reinhardt (Freie Universität Berlin)
Co-Chair: Greta Sophie Jasser (Leuphana Universität Lüneburg)

P461 Youth and Local Level Populism and Radicalism
Chair: Léonie de Jonge (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen)
Discussant: Fred Paxton (European University Institute)

P137 Far-Right Political Participation and Digital Media
Chair: Greta Sophie Jasser (Leuphana Universität Lüneburg)
Co-Chair: Eviane Leidig (Universitetet i Oslo)
Discussant: Bharath Ganesh (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen)

CALL FOR PAPERS: BEYOND THE POPULIST HYPE

Workshop: Beyond the Populist Hype
Location and date: University of Aberdeen, Scotland, UK, 14-15 January 2021

Deadline for abstract: 12 July 2020

This workshop seeks to bring together scholars working on populism or related themes to reflect on their own work and its relation to populist hype. Following Glynos and Mondon (2016), the term refers to an inflationary use of the label populism, across scholarly, mass media and political arenas, simplifying and homogenizing an array of politicians, parties, and movements, whether as populist or anti-populist. In light of the recent populist hype surrounding the surprise elections of Trump, Duterte, and Brexit to name but a few, we invite critical reflections on the way populism is utilized in politics, media, and academia.

Three sets of questions for the workshop are suggested, but welcome any other proposals:

- How can we justify our particular scholarly uses of "populism" in the light of the hype surrounding it? Can populism still be a productive analytical concept especially compared to related concepts such as democracy, technocracy, and liberalism?
- What impact has the populist hype had on both academic debate and political discourse? For example, has the populist hype led scholars and other commentators to rally around the political status quo? Did it distract attention from other political projects such as the climate movement, feminism or decolonization?
- What happens after the hype subsides? Does populism become normalized and fundamentally change politics? Or does the political system instead tame populism?

Keynotes will include: Aurelien Mondon (University of Bath), Bice Maiguashca (University of Exeter), Christopher Bickerton (University of Cambridge)

Further info can be found on the University of Aberdeen website.

WEBINAR: RADPOL2020 CONFERENCE

Location and date: Online, 18 June, 25 June & 2 July 2020

RADPol2020 conference "Radicalisation in Central and Eastern Europe – trends, challenges and opportunities to counteract", is a joint initiative of three European projects MINDb4ACT, CHAMPIONs and BRAVE funded under the H2020 and ISF-P European Commission Programmes. The main organiser is the Polish Platform for Homeland Security – Partner of the MINDb4ACT project, while the

Department of Education and Science of the Marshal Office of the Wielkopolska Region in Poznan is a co-organizer of the conference.

Due to COVID-19 outbreak the conference will be held as online formula, namely three live webinars and four experts' panels will take place on 18th June 2020; 25th June 2020 and 2nd July 2020. Please save these three Thursdays with RAD-Pol!

The conference aims to continue a dialogue on trends in various forms of radicalisation in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the challenges they bring. The goal is also to exchange experiences, good practices in counteracting this phenomenon, present the latest research results and the essence of multi-agency cooperation in this field.

The conference is addressed to a wide range of practitioners involved in monitoring, preventing and counteracting radicalisation at various levels throughout Europe – Law Enforcement Agencies, local and central administration, policy-makers, public institutions (e.g. social welfare, courts, probation office), researchers, the non-governmental sector and other entities interested in this topic, such as partners of international projects in this field.

Further info can be found on the Polish Platform for Homeland Security website.

SYMPOSIUM
RADICAL POLITICS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

QANON CONSPIRACY THEORIES ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ARE A PUBLIC HEALTH THREAT

Marc-André Argentino
Arizona State University

First there was the pandemic, then came the "infodemic".

Some of the most popular and dangerous conspiracy theories about the coronavirus stem from QAnon. For months now, QAnon proponents have downplayed the severity of the crisis, amplified medical disinformation, and have been originators of hoaxes. They have also threatened to commit acts of violence.

QAnon conspiracy theorists believe a deep state cabal of global elites is responsible for all the evil in the world. They also believe those same elites are seeking to bring down Trump, who they see as the world's only hope to defeat the deep state. QAnon has now brought the same conspiracy mentality to the coronavirus crisis.

A central component of QAnon is the crowdsourcing of narratives. This bottom-up approach provides a fluid and ever changing ideology. For instance, QAnon community influencers on Twitter promoted Miracle Mineral Supplement as a way of preventing COVID-19. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration had previously issued a warning about the dangerous and potentially life threatening side effects of the supplement.

In January, QAnon was amplifying narratives on 8kun, Facebook and Telegram about a false theory that Asians were more susceptible to the coronavirus and that white people were immune to COVID-19. Not only are there racist undertones associated with this disinformation, it also minimizes the threat posed by the virus.

From February until the second week of March, QAnon followed the lead of Trump in downplaying the threat of the virus as a "hoax". The QAnon community said those warning about the pandemic threat were trying to detract from U.S. domestic politics, stop Trump rallies and remove all the economic gains they contended had occurred during the Trump presidency.

The QAnon view of the pandemic changed after the WHO upgraded COVID-19 to pandemic status and the U.S. announced it was closing its borders to Europe.

Suddenly, the pandemic was something to celebrate, interpreted as a cover for the Trump administration's secret plan to arrest deep state agents.

Evangelicals within the QAnon movement viewed the pandemic as the promised coming of the Kingdom of God on Earth. David Hayes, who is better known in the QAnon community as Praying Medic , said in a March 14 livestream that there was no reason to be concerned about COVID-19. Hayes reassured his viewers that they may not be affected by the disease because this was "spiritual warfare" — only those who have not been chosen by God will be affected by the disease.

The person known as Q, didn't post anything online about COVID-19 until March 23. In his first post, Q pushed a conspiracy theory with racial undertones about COVID-19 being a Chinese bioweapon and that the virus release was a joint venture between China and the Democrats to stop Trump's re-election by destroying the economy.

The QAnon conspiracies have created an environment of complacency among its followers who aren't taking the risks posed by the virus seriously. They further downplayed the threat when they played a key role in promoting the Plandemic video. In another instance, right-wing media figures were spreading an "empty hospital" conspiracy. A QAnon account originally launched the #FilmYourHospital hashtag. This was amplified by QAnon influencers such as DeAnna Lorraine Tesoriero and Liz Crokin and picked up by mainstream right-wing media figures promoting COVID trutherism to a wider audience.

The FBI once called conspiracy theories spread by QAnon and others a "potential domestic terrorism threat." It's time to call the infodemic a public health threat.

Read more

Marc-André Argentino is a PhD candidate in the Individualized Program (INDI) at Concordia University, Montreal. Marc-André is an associate fellow at the Global Network on Extremism & Technology and an associate researcher at the Centre d'Expertise et de Formation sur les Intégrismes Religieux, les Idéologie Politique et la Radicalisation.

HOW THE PANDEMIC IS BEING USED TO LEGITIMISE ANTI-SEMITISM THROUGH CONSPIRACY THEORIES

Beatriz Buarque
University of Manchester

Throughout history, Jews have frequently been blamed for the spread of diseases. Although these narratives have been debunked, moments of uncertainty in a

network society seem to have provided a fertile terrain for the revival of such anti-Semitic discourses. A search on Twitter for the words "Jewish" and "coronavirus" from 20 March 20th to 3 April 2020 revealed the existence of ten different types of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories that have been associating the COVID19 with the Jewish community.

Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories regarding Covid19 on Twitter
Search for "Jewish" and "coronavirus" between 20 March – 3 April 2020

Covid19 was created by Jews for purposes of profit or surveillance	160
Covid19 is part of a Jewish plot to terminate those unable to work	16
Covid19 is a hoax produced by Jewish media	9
Jewish organisations invented anti-white coronavirus conspiracy theory	6
Covid19 is part of a Jewish plan to control Mecca	3
Covid19 is punishment from God against the Jews	3
Covid19 is a Jewish strategy of revenge for the Holocaust	1
Covid19 is a hoax created by Jewish mothers	1
Covid19 has been used by Jewish Pornhub to decimate the Italian birth rate	1

In all 207 tweets, Jews are blamed for either the fabrication or the spread of the virus that has already killed hundreds of thousands all over the world. Nearly 80% of the anti-Semitic tweets (164) were written as if they were news. This is an old strategy used to legitimise anti-Semitism that is now available to anyone with a social media profile. Among those anti-Semitic tweets that imitate news, five have neo-Nazi websites as source.

Another tactic to legitimise anti-Semitism was identified during this observation of Twitter. Besides the attempt to legitimise anti-Semitism through conspiracy theories constructed as if they were news, attempts at legitimisation were also made through religious authoritative speakers – that is, individuals who have been using their authority to spread anti-Semitic conspiracy theories as truth, but with religious tones. Among the tweets analysed, three mentioned the video in which the American pastor Rick Wiles says God is spreading the virus in synagogues as a punishment for the fact Jews deny Jesus as his son. Although many people criticized the pastor for his anti-Semitic message, dozens of others praised him, retweeting its video.

Although this study relies on a small sample, its findings are worrying. In two weeks, conspiracy theories associating Jews with the pandemic have proliferated in the internet and two techniques have been deployed to legitimise anti-Semitism (either as journalistic or divine truth). Such techniques must not be overlooked, having contributed to the legitimisation of anti-Semitism in the past. What might their impact be in a society in which anyone can reproduce narratives as if they were truth?

Read more

Beatriz Buarque is a PhD researcher (Politics - University of Manchester) investigating the massification of hate speech and CEO/founder of the NGO Words Heal the World. Her efforts to tackle extremism and hate speech have been recently recognized by the Luxembourg Peace Prize 2020 (Outstanding Peace Organisation: Words Heal the World).

WHO GOES ALT-RIGHT IN A LOCKDOWN?

Annie Kelly
University of East Anglia

The outside world is closing its doors, and the internet, as a result, is feeling the pressure. The mobile network Vodafone reported a 50 percent surge in internet usage in March, and all over the world internet companies are being forced to deal with the extra demand generated by self-isolation. Much of the world is, for an undetermined amount of the future, going permanently online. Beyond the much more immediate and pressing threat of the virus, there is something disconcerting about this for anyone who studies radicalization and the internet.

"Radicalization" is an imperfect term, since to many it implies a linear escalation from simply irrational views to dangerously extremist ones. But radicalization is often built out of very real and understandable dissatisfactions. Moreover isolation can be a strong contributing factor, as can personal uncertainty and political instability – both of which will be widespread in any society facing a rising deathrate, extreme unemployment and extensive governmental failures. And it is my fear, as a researcher of far right and antifeminist digital spaces, that ongoing mass anxiety and material depression will combine with the contemporary digital landscape in an ugly fashion.

The internet is frequently where people go to feel differently to how they do. This is relatively uncontroversial when we accept that how they feel is, for example, bored, and the content they seek out is a silly cat video. But both our emotions and the digital content we seek out are usually much more complicated than that, and this only intensifies when many people face what can only be regarded as an existential threat.

It is hard to make predictions for how this might play out in a pandemic situation. But it's worth noting that secular societies struggle with providing mechanisms to resolve feelings of guilt. The contemporary radical right has been particularly successful where it has encouraged its followers to redirect any societal guilt they

might feel about past historical wrongs or current states of injustice into rage at those groups who would make them feel guilty: women, people of colour, Jews.

In a pandemic situation it may be possible, for instance, that we see a mass-phenomenon of survivor's guilt at the end of this. What could happen as a result is we are subsequently bombarded with tempting offers to redirect our guilt into anger at those who were most affected, who serve as a reminder of our relative good luck: immigrants, the elderly, the poor, the disabled, even the dead. These ideas could even be promoted by those in power, who will no doubt be grateful for the transference of accountability. In some places, we can already see these forces mobilizing — see, for instance, see, for instance, arguments on the far-right that discussions of Chinese culpability for the virus are being suppressed in the name of "political correctness," or that there are groups "intentionally" spreading the virus, who must be punished.

The seemingly anarchic, democratic state of affairs on the internet can be one of its chief joys – but it is also frequently an illusion. Advertisers, after all, are keenly aware of how to utilise it to their benefit. So too, increasingly, are politicians and governments. As we enter the age of isolation, we need to be aware of how far right actors will attempt to exploit this unprecedented situation — and we need to be prepared for the fact it may very well work.

Read more

Annie Kelly is a PhD student at the University of East Anglia researching the impact of digital cultures on antifeminism and the far right.

HOW IS THE FAR-RIGHT CAPITALIZING ON COVID-19?

Ofra Klein
European University Institute

Far-right politicians are taking advantage of COVID19. This is not surprising, as the crisis fits well with far-right views.
The virus is used to express the far-right's xenophobic discourse. Xenophobia, or the fear towards a cultural other, plays a central role in the far-right's discourse about the emergence and containment of the virus. Where Matteo Salvini linked

border control to difficulties of containing the virus, Victor Orban used the first coronavirus patient in the country, an Iranian student, as an opportunity to frame COVID as a consequence of migration.

The crisis also feeds into populist sentiment. In Belgium, Dries Van Langehove tweeted "every extra cent in the budget should now go to the health and economic crisis. Our people must come first, more than ever before". He posted this with an image of the Minister for Asylum and Migration Maggie De Block in front of a group of male "migrants", with a statement that De Block asked for an additional €42 million for accommodating asylum seekers. This type of discourse is especially appealing in the current crisis where the working-class sections of society – the nurses, teachers, police, cleaners and supermarket personnel – keep society running when everything else seems to be falling apart. In their discourse, far-right leaders describe themselves as the protectors of these working-class people. Dutch politician Geert Wilders frequently tweets in outrage about the enormous cuts that have been made by the ruling elite in the sectors that are now needed the most.

COVID19 also has given the far-right the opportunity to criticize the way the political elite and experts deal with the crisis. In the Netherlands, Mark Rutte's decision to stick to a herd immunity approach has created outrage on the far-right. Rutte's decision was based on information by the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM). Far-right leaders Thierry Baudet and Geert Wilders expressed distrust in the institute, which in an earlier stage of the crisis made incorrect statements, by downplaying its contagious threat and arguing that it was unlikely for the disease to appear in the Netherlands.

Finally, the idea of a complete lockdown fits well with the authoritarian tendency of the far-right. Hungary´s emergency law, which has allowed Viktor Orbán to rule without limits, was praised by Salvini as the appropriate response to contain the virus. A tough, total lockdown seems to have proven successful, which may help to legitimize some far-right discourse. The harsh approach taken against the virus in China is an illustrative example: after 2 months of lockdown, they reported in mid-March to have no new domestic cases.

With countries locking down their borders as a necessary intervention to deal with the virus, the European unity is under ever more pressure. The uncertainty about the virus makes for a perfect storm, which plays well into the hands of the far-right.

Read more

Ofra Klein is a PhD researcher at the European University Institute, where she writes her dissertation about far-right online mobilisation. She was a visiting PhD researcher at the Weizenbaum Institute and Sciences Po.

FAR RIGHT REACTIONS TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN GERMANY

Sabine Volk
JU Kraków & FATIGUE project

The COVID-19 pandemic puts the German far right in a situation of despair, revealing its lack of coordination, social responsibility, and ability to act. The response amongst far right actors has been ambiguous, oscillating between calls for the proclamation of a legal state of emergency and the outright disrespect of the preventive healthcare measures. In the course of the crisis, the German far right mainly pushed for a quick end of the coronavirus measures, claiming the role of chief protector of both the German economy and the constitution, in particular of the civil rights and freedoms outlined in the Grundgesetz.

Just as rapidly as the crisis unfolded, the German far right's parliamentary arm, the Alternative for Germany (AfD), made a 180-degree turn in its positioning. Whereas the AfD's co-leader Alice Weidel initially recognized the gravity of the situation, and a position paper published in early April encouraged social distancing practices, national and regional party factions continued to gather in the parliaments in order to push for a 'state of catastrophe', disrespecting the social distancing rules. At the same time, party members, mostly associated with the AfD's dissolving extremist faction The Wing, spread conspiracy theories related to the origin of the Corona crisis and the aims of the lockdown.

Germany's largest far-right street movement, the Dresden-based Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident (PEGIDA), initially was reluctant to suspend its regular street demonstrations. Only later in spring 2020, the group adapted by taking up livestreamed 'virtual marches' to replace the weekly protest ritual. Simultaneously, PEGIDA called upon its supporters to 'gather spontaneously' to demonstrate for their civil rights and freedoms. As substantial segments of the elderly supporters belong to risk groups, such calls for public gatherings potentially put their health at risk. PEGIDA has thus broken with its self-image of being more responsible representatives of 'the people' than the government.

Some of the even more extreme segments of Germany's far right scene reappeared on the streets in the context of the crisis. One example is Pro Chemnitz which received international attention in the course of the xenophobic riots in the eastern German city of Chemnitz in the summer of 2018. Having failed to mobilize after the riots, the group recently organized street demonstrations against the restrictions of civil freedoms together with representatives of the AfD and the National Democratic Party (NPD). These illegal demonstrations were set up as decentralized gatherings, creating difficulties for the police to dissolve them.

Finally, critics of the coronavirus measures merged into broad and unexpected coalitions in the course of the crisis, with a strong presence of far right actors. Across Germany, a movement of neo-Nazis, Identitarians, conspiracy theorists, 'anti-vaxxers', and mystics took to the streets to protest against the 'Corona-regime'. The largest events with several thousands participants took place in Stuttgart, Munich, and Berlin. The German Grundgesetz was a frequent symbol in these protest events. After years of emphasizing the peaceful collaboration, the German far right has become critical of the police.

Read more. This research is part of a project that has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 765224.

Sabine Volk is a doctoral candidate at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków, and a Fellow in the EU Horizon2020 project "Delayed Transformational Fatigue in Central and Eastern Europe: Responding to the Rise of Illiberalism/Populism (FATIGUE)". Her PhD explores far-right populist politics of memory and the ritualisation of counter-hegemonic protest in eastern Germany. As a Doctoral Fellow at the Centre for the Analysis of the Radical Right (CARR), she regularly blogs about her experiences in the field on openDemocracy, LSE Europp Blog, and populism-europe.com.

BOOK REVIEWS

JEFF SPARROW. FASCISTS AMONG US: ONLINE HATE AND THE CHRISTCHURCH MASSACRE

SCRIBE PUBLICATIONS, 2019. 160 PP. £9.99 (PAPERBACK). ISBN:978-1-912854-69-1

Dr Steven Woodbridge
Kingston University, London

On 15th March, 2019, two consecutive mass shootings were carried out during Friday Prayer at Mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. Fifty-one people were killed and forty-nine injured. The tragic events immediately made news headlines around the world. The perpetrator of these crimes was Brenton Tarrant, a 28-year old Australian from Grafton, New South Wales. He was arrested shortly afterwards, intercepted by local police as he made his way to a third Mosque to continue his killing spree. The self-styled white supremacist at first denied being the killer. However, in March, 2020, Tarrant suddenly dropped his original 'not guilty' plea and, in a hastily arranged hearing at the Christchurch high court, where he appeared by video link from his Auckland prison cell, he admitted carrying out the killings.

This short but nevertheless richly detailed book by the award-winning writer and broadcaster Jeff Sparrow was one of the first studies to examine what he calls the massacre's 'fascist roots', and what the murderous episode both represents and threatens in the context of the 'new politics' of the twenty-first century. Sparrow's main objective is to provide a history of fascism and the contemporary far right (which he deems 'fascisms old and new'), and to demonstrate how today's new generation of media-savvy fascists have adapted their ideas and tactics to the internet and, especially, to the maximisation of instant publicity via 'heroic' individual acts.

Tarrant (referred to as 'Person X' in the book, as it was published within months of the massacre and before Tarrant admitted his crimes in 2020) had live-streamed the first shooting on Facebook, and had evidently been planning the massacre carefully beforehand, possibly for at least two years in advance. Just prior to the shootings, he published a 74-page 'personal' manifesto online and, with barely minutes to go before he embarked on what Prime Minister Jacinda Ardem called 'one of New Zealand's darkest days', Tarrant e-mailed the manifesto to over thirty recipients, including the PM's office and various newspaper and TV outlets. Copies of the live-streamed video were quickly re-posted on numerous

social media sites, often by far right sympathisers, despite the attempts of the authorities to prevent this. Within hours, if not minutes, the publicity and revulsion surrounding the massacre became global news. Copies of the manifesto were shared by journalists seeking to understand what had occurred and by the 'usual suspects' among far right activist networks.

It is Sparrow's analysis of the manifesto that makes *Fascists Among Us* so useful, together with his incisive discussion of the potential longer-term impact of Tarrant's actions, which could possibly serve as a kind of strategic blueprint and role-model for other far right activists across the world who view terror as a legitimate political tool (indeed, there is already persuasive evidence that this has happened over the last year in the USA, UK and Germany). Sparrow notes that in the immediate aftermath of the killings carried out by Tarrant, while a number of far right leaders voiced concern that the extreme violence employed would hurt their cause, other activists, 'particularly those attuned to the online environment', expressed enthusiasm for the public impact Tarrant's massacre had created and the consequent 'dialogue' favourable to the far right's perspective.

On the manifesto itself, to which Tarrant had given the title 'The Great Replacement', Sparrow provides some cogent summary of the various ideas and rhetorical embellishments that went into the document. As Sparrow points out, Tarrant's manifesto 'makes his philosophy entirely clear'. At the outset, Tarrant asked himself rhetorically: 'Are you a fascist?' 'Yes', was his response, and he added: 'For once, the person that will be called a fascist, is an actual fascist'. Elsewhere in the manifesto, Tarrant also made it plain that he considered the British fascist leader Sir Oswald Mosley to be 'the person from history closest to my own beliefs'.

However, Tarrant did not just cite the 'classical' fascism of the past to explain his 2019 worldview. He also described himself as a 'regular white man', inspired by the acts of the far right mass-murderer Anders Breivik in Norway in 2011. Indeed, at the heart of the manifesto was the demographically nonsensical idea of 'The Great Replacement', which has become an increasingly popular theme shared by far right ideologues across the globe: the pessimistic and inherently racist idea that, as a result of the policies supposedly pursued by the ruling political and economic elites, white European culture will be destroyed by the 'mass migration' of non-white non-Europeans, who can breed faster, leading to the ultimate replacement of European and Western civilisation with 'alien' values and peoples. Tarrant appears to have wanted to provoke a 'race war' in the present to somehow disrupt this process; he gave notice that the aim of his attack was to (as he put it) 'incite violence, retaliation and further divide between the European people and the invaders currently occupying European soil'.

Displaying sound awareness of the scholarly debates over the possible differences and continuities between interwar fascism and today's far right, Sparrow conveys

interesting points about how core fascist ideas have been re-attuned to the extreme right's views on society today. Sparrow reminds us, for example, that Mosley's career straddled both the pre-war and post-war eras and, in this sense, 'provides an ideal illustration of the evolution of twentieth-century fascism'. As he notes - on its own - Mosley's career does little to explain the reverence in which Tarrant evidently holds him. Yet the fascist leader's post-1945 focus on anxieties arising from new immigration from the developing world, and his presentation of 'Europeanism' as an expansive category, 'a political ideal as much as a geographical identification', were echoed in Tarrant's own writings about defending 'our lands' against 'invaders'.

Sparrow's study is shaped by the journalist's instinct for what constitutes the first draft of history, and does not claim to be an academic study as such. Nevertheless, what the book still offers is a high-quality form of journalism, one that shows thoughtful understanding of the main theories in the historiography. All in all, the book contains valuable reflections on the way the extreme right has fully embraced social media and is now disturbingly adept at employing the shock value of individual acts of terror as a mass political propaganda tool. As Sparrow rightly argues, the Christchurch killings have made the need for analysis and understanding of this online fascist culture even more urgent.

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LUCA MANNUCCI. POPULISM AND COLLECTIVE MEMORIES: COMPARING FASCIST LEGACIES IN WESTERN EUROPE
ROUTLEDGE, 2020. 246 PP. £115 (HARDBACK). ISBN: 9780367225179

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In times in which parallelisms with the 1930s are often recalled in the public debate to explain the electoral success of right-wing populist parties, the study carried out by Luca Mannucci in his book *Populism and collective memories* is a compelling addition to the study of populism as it untangles the relationship between countries fascist past and populism.

The book investigates why populism thrives in some Western European countries while it does not in others and what is the role played by the collective memories of the fascist past in determining different levels of acceptability of populism. The first interesting novelty of Mannucci's work is the focus on the *social acceptability*, the legitimacy, of populist discourses rather than the electoral fortunes of populist parties. By adopting a long-term historical approach, Mannucci analyses the social acceptability of populism in eight Western European countries and how it relates to the levels of stigma that each country attaches to its fascist past.

The analysis unfolds in four steps. First, a content analysis of parties' manifestos, from the 1970s to nowadays, is carried out in order to assess the presence of populist statements and the levels of social acceptability of populism in each country. Here lies another important novelty. Since the analysis aims to identify the presence of populist statements in all parties' manifestos, it is not limited to those parties that are usually deemed to be populist. By doing so, the author finds that populism was present since the 1970s among countries and across parties of both the left and the right.

Second, based on secondary sources, the author attributed to each of the eight countries a different type of collective memory of their fascist past. To this past correspond different levels of stigma. Mannucci ideated a typology of collective memory that has four ideal-types: culpabilization, heroization, cancellation, and victimization. Countries, such as Germany, which have a collective memory based on culpabilization, show very high levels of stigma towards fascism, while countries, such as Austria and Italy, whose memory is based on victimization, have very low levels of stigma.

Third, the author tests, through a fuzzy set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fQCA), whether the most common explanations for the success of populism advanced in the literature can explain the social acceptability of populism. Through this analysis, the author found that the four most common explanations - high corruption, low accountability and responsiveness, high ideological convergences of the political system, and poor economic performance – do not explain the social acceptability of populism in a consistent way.

Finally, the author adds to the model a fifth condition, the level of stigma attached to the countries' fascist past. The study shows that, after introducing the level of stigmatization, the model does help better explaining the different level of acceptability of populism – especially right-wing populism – but is still not able to explain the social acceptability of left-wing populism.

The main strength, as well as novel contribution, of Mannucci's work lies in the adoption of a historical perspective to the study of populism, with the idea that

populism can be considered more or less legitimate depending on historical and cultural reasons specific to each country. By investigating, in a systematic and comparative way, the effect that legacies of a fascist past have on the political culture of a country and how this shape the acceptability of an illiberal idea of power, Mannucci further advances our understanding of populism across countries. Moreover, by widening the focus of the research beyond the electoral results of populist parties, this work sheds light on the long-term evolution of populism. In fact, it shows how populism was present among parties across the whole political left-right spectrum for a longer period of time than the last 20 years, the one that is the most studied and researched.

Beyond these important contributions, however, there is a weakness in Mannucci's book that should be noted. While the theory devised and tested by the author as proved to be solid in explaining the social acceptability of right-wing populism, it does not explain the social acceptability of left-wing populism. Although the link between fascism and populism – the same illiberal idea of power – is well discussed and theoretically grounded, this link is weak when it comes to the explanation of populism beyond its right-wing declination. Even though the author acknowledged that by extending the study to different countries and broadening the scope of the study to Eastern Europe, this link could be further explored for the case of left-wing populism, the work still lacks a deeper elaboration as to why the theory cannot explain the social acceptability of left-wing populism.

This book provides a great contribution to the literature on populism. What distinguishes *Populism and collective memory* from other works on the topic is the rigorous comparative and long-term analysis of populism across Western European countries and its focus beyond electoral dynamics. These features, along with the theoretical clarity and methodological soundness, make this book of great value for scholars and students of populism.

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BENJAMIN BIARD, LAURENT BERNHARD AND HANS-GEORG BETZ (EDS). DO THEY MAKE A DIFFERENCE? THE POLICY INFLUENCE OF RADICAL RIGHT POPULIST PARTIES IN WESTERN EUROPE

ECPR PRESS/ROWAN & LITTLEFIELD, 2019, 310 PP., £60 (HARDBACK), ISBN: 9781785523298

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Biard, Bernhard and Betz (eds) (2019) seek to better understand the policy influence of Radical Right Populist Parties (RRPP) by asking the question *'Do They Make a Difference?'*. To address this question, the volume includes thoughtful insights from authors on different areas of policy, levels of governance and RRPP's position in various countries. In order to undertake the research question, Biard, Bernhard and Betz (2019) divide the volume into three sections; RRPP outside of power; in power and a third section comparing contrasting cases. In doing so, it helps to grasp the positions that RRPP's hold in different countries. The aim of the volume is to further understand the conditions that enable RRPP to exert influence, with influence broadly defined as '*One actor induces other actors to act in some way they would not otherwise act* (Dahl, 1973:40). Throughout the volume, RRPP is generally framed as influence based on direct and indirect impact. RRPP influence is also a result of mainstream party strategies, which are situated between the poles of a *cordon sanitaire* (ignoring or demarcating and confronting) on the one side and *contagion* (co-option and collaboration) on the other.

The first section focuses on an empirical discussion of RRPP outside of power. Zobel, Minkenberg and Carvalho investigate examples of RRPP outside of power in Germany and France. In Chapter Two (pp. 13-36) Zobel and Minkenberg highlight the varied effect of a *cordon sanitaire.* As RRPP become more successful, keeping the *cordon sanitaire* in place gets increasingly harder. Importantly this chapter emphasises that the strategy of co-optation is not just limited to positions, but also in regards to how the issue is framed. Chapter Three (pp. 37-55) sees Carvalho explore the *Front National's* influence on immigration through the use of process tracing, and concludes that Hollande was under pressure from Marine Le Pen's result. In both Chapter Two and Three, the authors come to the conclusion that RRPP can have an influence without being in government.

The second section is devoted to discussing RRPP in power. In Chapter Four (pp. 57-78), Blanc-Noël discusses the case of Denmark and Finland, and highlights that holding a position of supporter of a minority government seems ideal for RRPP. Chapter Five (pp. 79-94) by Christiansen, Bjerregaard and Thomsen explores the different roles of the Danish People's Party, to which they point out that DPP made a policy deal, which ensured concession in the immigration area, yet having

to accept EU membership. In Chapter Six (pp. 95-122) Bouillaud explores the influence of the Northern League in Italy and suggests that their influence depends on the policy area. Paxton in Chapter Seven (pp. 123-144) examines the conception of populism as a performance of crisis and concludes that not only do RRPP react to crisis, they can also create a sense of security crisis. In Chapter Eight (pp. 145-164), Hafez and Heinisch apply the case of the Austrian Freedom Party to discuss their impact on agenda-setting, policy implementation, and political discourse. Importantly, they emphasise that unpreparedness for government impedes the FPÖ influence. This section shows that RRPP in power have mixed results when it comes to their overall influence on policy. This depends on the conditions, policy area but also any concessions the RRPP make before entering into a coalition government.

The third section of the volume presents readers with a comparison of different case studies, with Biard (pp. 165-184) analysing RRPP in Switzerland, France and Belgium. He discusses the constraints of the electoral system and that a *cordon sanitaire* does severely limit the direct influence of RRPP, but not completely. Chapter Ten sees Chueri (pp. 185-222) discuss RRPPs' influence on immigrants' entitlement to social rights and suggests RRPP do have a direct influence in this area. Wenzelburger and König in Chapter Eleven (pp. 223-250) analyse law and order policies and emphasise that a change in mainstream party tone does not always mean policy change. Finally, Chapter Twelve (pp. 251-271) sees Philipp Lutz explore RRPP influence on migration policy. He suggests that RRPP influence is limited to integration policies, with no effects found on admission or control policies. Similar to the second section, the conclusion is that RRPP's influence varies depending on the conditions and the policy area.

For such a wide-ranging topic, and a variety of different RRPP to cover, this volume covers an impressive range of topics including immigration, law and order policies, welfare chauvinism, as well as European integration. Most notably, the book achieves this in a manner which is engaging and easy to follow. The volume makes some valuable contributions to the debate on the policy influence of RRPP, further challenging the notion that party's only compete on position. Important conclusions arise from this volume include the emphasis that RRPP influence varies depending on the country, as well as the position within or outside government. The general perspective appears to highlight that being in government does pose more constraints to RRPP. The arguments of this book feeds into academic debates on the extent of RRPP influence and in what areas.

Notwithstanding the book's strengths, the volume edited by Biard, Bernhard and Betz is not without faults. The editors rightly recognise that more research needs to be conducted to further understand the indirect policy influence of RRPP. Given that the volume acknowledges that the causal mechanisms for indirect policy influence are diverse, more focus could have been on the variations between

RRPP. Despite this small observation, the volume effectively highlights that RRPP do make a difference, but that it depends on the conditions of party competition within different countries. Therefore, further research is needed on party characteristics, and the conditions that aid or hinder RRPP's influence.

Stephanie Luke is a PhD researcher at the University of York. Her thesis examines the impact of far-right political parties on the positions of the centre-left and centre-right, on the question of Europe. Her research interests include the far right and Euroscepticism.

REINHARD HEINISCH, EMANUELE MASSETTI, OSCAR MAZZOLENI. THE PEOPLE AND THE NATION POPULISM AND ETHNO-TERRITORIAL POLITICS IN EUROPE.
ROUTLEDGE, 2019. 298 PP. £29.99 (PAPERBACK). ISBN: 9781138578029

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The collective volume *The People and the Nation: Populism and Ethno-Territorial Politics in Europe*, edited by Reinhard Heinisch, Emanuele Massetti and Oscar Mazzoleni, provides a rich understanding of the populist phenomenon. With a distinctive focus upon the territorial dimension of populism across Western and Eastern Europe, it provides new approaches for its study. The front imagery shows the protest banner with the phrase: "Wir Sind das Volk" ("We are the People"); the themes of populist discourses and mobilisation are central to each of the chapters.

The book consists of 13 chapters and, according to the editors, its main attempt is to boost the interdisciplinarity in the research of populism, by featuring its relations with sub-state nationalism and regionalism, and putting emphasis especially on the territorial dimension. In the introductory chapter, the editors specify what they attempt to investigate: the role of the territorial dimension in populist mobilisation and the interaction between populist discourses and regionalist and state-nationalist claims. Their subsequent step presents their conceptualisation of populism, regionalism, state-nationalism and Euroscepticism.

Having covered the literature review, the editors to the case studies. The first chapter deals with regional populism in the UK. It focuses on the creation, electoral participation and the ideological shift to the left of the Welsh Plaid Cymru and the Scottish National Party, showing the development of populist discourses in these two regionalist parties. The following chapter contains a content analysis of the policy positions of three Belgian parties, between 2010 and 2015. By

focusing mainly on electoral manifestos and membership magazines (supply and demand-side), van Haute acknowledges the peculiarity of the Belgian case, while examining the extent of populist discourse on the Belgian ethno-territorial parties.

Oscar Mazzoleni's and Carlo Ruzza's work regarding the Italian and Swiss Leagues brings both regionalism and nationalism into the study of populism. By applying an actor-centred approach in their research, they offer us the capability to understand the Leagues' behaviour when the populist discourse is mixed with national, statewide claims. Regionalism, as the volume's editors have explained in their introductory chapter, has a secessionist and an autonomist dimension. The secessionist dimension has sparked the interest of Astrid Barrio, Oscar Barbera and Juan Rodriguez-Teruel, in their chapter about populism and Catalan Secessionism. As the authors explain, the dissatisfaction with the Spanish government has driven regionalist parties to adopt populism. That shift in the Catalan politics has been mirrored not only in the parties' discourse but also in the transformation of collective actions and institutional behaviours.

Hans-Georg Betz's and Fabian Habersack's contribution focuses on the case of AfD in East Germany. More specifically, by accepting AfD as a radical right-wing populist party, they want to understand how and why the party has achieved much more in the eastern parts of Germany. The authors argument is directed at the "emotional injuries" Eastern Germans have suffered and their feeling of inferiority with respect to Western Germans. The Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) could not be absent from such a volume. Reinhard Heinisch examines it by focusing on its most important political leader's – Jorg Haider – region, Carinthia. The policies of the regional party in Carinthia are shown to affect its policies at the national level. By sketching the party's regional profile, Heinisch emphasises not only the region's historical and geographical divisions but also its role on the radicalisation of FPO's discourse and the rise of Haider in Austrian politics. Gilles Ivaldi and Jerome Dutozia's chapter about territorialisation in the case of the French Front National concludes the West European case studies. Their interest centres on how the Front National territorialises its strategies, according to the cultural and socio-economic conflicts. The authors apply a most different systems design, analysing in a comparative perspective two separate French regions, with a strong presence of the party.

The first chapter for Eastern Europe in the volume focuses on Poland. According to its author, Magdalena Solska, the significance here lies in the clash between progressive regionalist populism and conservative nationalist populism. The Silesian Regional Party has achieved not only the combination of its traditional ethno-regionalist claims with statewide policy positions but also the highlighting of an apparently new centre-periphery cleavage in the Polish state. Marko Kukec's contribution regarding the regionalist populism in Croatia brings to light how

populism can be employed when there is regional differentiation in a country, both at societal and elite levels. The regional party of Slavonia, a split from HDZ, invests in the region's history of martyrdom, in parallel with an anti-elitist discourse, to boost its regionalist character.

The Hungarian shift to the right from Fidesz government and the country's dominant right-wing populist parties represent the focus of Edina Szocsik's chapter. More specifically, Szocsik highlights the ethnic minority politics and the competition between Fidesz and Jobbik, during the period 2010-2014, with an extra focus on Jobbik's effect on Fidesz's policies, both withinin and beyond the Hungarian borders. The Serbian case is the focus of the volume's last chapter. Bojan Vranic highlights the connection between populism and ethno-nationalism in a state firmly based on historical myths. The core of those myths remains Kosovo; thus, Vranic focuses on the territorial claims made by the three main Serbian parties in their party manifestos. In the concluding chapter, the volume's editors summarise their contributions through this volume.

To conclude, this work succeeds in identifying the relationship between populism and regionalism and highlights the importance of this approach for both Western and Eastern Europe. The volume's qualitative orientation allows us to delve deeply into the research questions that the editors pose in their introductory chapter.

George Kordas is a PhD Candidate and scientific associate of the Centre for Political Research at Panteion University, Athens. His research interests relate to the comparative study of far-right parties in South and Eastern Europe, with an emphasis in the Balkans and the influence of far-right parties on the process of European integration.

PUBLICATIONS ALERT

Our publication alert is based on a semi-automated search and can never be complete. Therefore, please tell us about any **recent** publications of interest to Standing Group members so that we may include them in our newsletter.

Abou-Chadi, T., Green-Pedersen, C. & Mortensen, P. B. (2020) Parties' policy adjustments in response to changes in issue saliency. *West European Politics*, 43, 749-771.

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Acha, O. (2020) From Marxist to Post-Marxist Populism: Ernesto Laclau's Trajectory within the National Left and Beyond. *Historical Materialism-Research in Critical Marxist Theory*, 28, 183-214.

Adami, A. (2020) Visual Analysis and Right Wing (Populist) Groups. *Partecipazione e Conflitto*, 13, 315-336.

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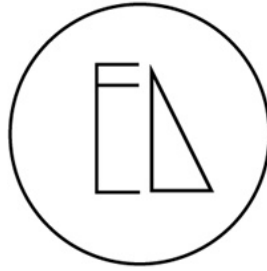
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