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on Extremism & Democracy

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 (ecprextremismdemocracy@gmail.com).

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STANDING GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dear *e-Extreme* readers,

We hope this issue finds you in good health and high spirits, wherever you may be. 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.

This *e-Extreme* features two expert interviews on the topic of transphobia and trans misogyny: one interview on anti-trans movements by **Fran Amery**, and one on trans panic and the far right with **Celestine S. Kunkeler**.

Moreover, we are happy to provide two book reviews: **Esmee Bakker** discusses Cynthia Miller-Idriss's book *Man Up: The New Misogyny and the Rise of Violent Extremism*, while **Aleš Michal** reviews the book by Daniele Albertazzi et al., *Populist Radical Right Parties in Action: The Survival of the Mass Party*.

Please get in touch with your contributions and ideas for the next issue and do not forget that the ECPR Standing Group on *Extremism & Democracy* has an official Bluesky account ([@ecpr-ead.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/ecpr-ead.bsky.social)) where you can follow us for the latest news and updates, calls for papers, and must-read publications.

Wishing you a wonderful summer semester!

MESSAGE FROM THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE E&D STEERING COMMITTEE

We are happy to introduce ourselves as the new steering committee of the ECPR Extremism & Democracy Standing Group: Larissa Böckmann (University of Amsterdam / Université Libre de Bruxelles), Javier Sajuria (Queen Mary University of London), and Teresa Völker (WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Free University of Berlin). We are very glad to be on board and would like to thank you for your trust and support. In the coming years, we hope to help grow this friendly and intellectually vibrant community by organizing engaging events, strengthening networking and mentoring opportunities — especially for junior scholars — and increasing the group’s visibility and outreach.

We are very much looking forward to working with you!

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 (<https://ecpr.eu/Groups>). 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 you are accepted.

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

E&D ROUTLEDGE BOOK SERIES

The Routledge Book Series in *Extremism and Democracy*, which publishes work that lies within the Standing Group’s academic scope, covers academic studies within the broad fields of ‘extremism’ and ‘democracy’, with volumes focusing on adjacent concepts such as populism, radicalism, and ideological/religious fundamentalism. These topics have been considered largely in isolation by scholars interested in the study of political parties, elections, social movements, activism, and radicalisation in democratic settings. Since its establishment in 1999, the series has encompassed both influential contributions to the discipline and informative accounts for public debate. Works will seek to problematise the role of extremism, broadly defined, within an ever-globalising world, and/or the way social and political actors can respond to these challenges without undermining democratic credentials.

The series was originally founded by Roger Eatwell (University of Bath) and Cas Mudde (University of Georgia) in 1999. The editorial team now comprises Andrea

L. P. Pirro (Scuola Normale Superiore) and Léonie de Jonge (University of Tübingen). The editors strongly encourage ideas or suggestions for new volumes in the book series, both from established academics and early career researchers.

To discuss any ideas or suggestions for new volumes in this book series, please contact the editors at: ecprextremismanddemocracy@gmail.com.

CALL FOR REVIEWERS

e-Extreme is offering scholars the opportunity to review books and articles! If you want to share your review of the latest published books or 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 our email address.

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!

UPCOMING EVENTS AND CALLS

SAVE THE DATE: E&D BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 2027

In 2027, the Standing Group on Extremism & Democracy will organize the second edition of the biannual E&D conference in collaboration with *Erasmus University Rotterdam*. The CfP will be published soon—for now please do save the date!

Date: May 20-21, 2027

Place: Rotterdam

REACTIONARY POLITICS RESEARCH NETWORK WORKING PAPER SERIES

Managing Editors: Emmy Eklundh, Anthony Kelly, Julius Schneider, Lazaros Karavasilis, Daniel Balinhas, Lenon Maschette

ISSN: 2979-1510

The Reactionary Politics Working Papers series aims to publish cutting-edge scholarship and commentary on reactionary politics, broadly defined. The series is truly interdisciplinary and reflects the RPRN tenet that reactionary politics can only be understood if approached beyond disciplinary silos. The RPRN publishes academic research in multiple stages, from early thoughts to fully-researched projects.

The Reactionary Politics Working Papers series is focused on encouraging innovative and critical research that challenges the limitations, biases, and blind spots of mainstream academia. Rather than protecting established approaches within the social and political sciences, we seek to support research that contends with the inherent ambivalence and complexity of reactionary politics. With this approach, we endeavour to connect with researchers' lived experiences in a way that recognises their social and political struggles, while working to overcome embedded obstacles in academia.

We are also conscious that traditional academic publishing comes with a range of barriers, and therefore want to keep as low of a threshold as possible to letting scholars share research with our audience. Similarly, we want to provide a space for authors to express their research in their own terms, consistent with the ethos underlying the RPRN, thereby subverting dominant publishing and disciplinary logics. In so doing, we aim to foster academic dialogue, constructive horizontal criticism, and interdisciplinary rigour by giving the opportunity to researchers to share and discuss their work in progress within a safe and supportive environment.

To this end, the RPRN employs an open-open-open approach: we are open to a range of formats in submission, as long as they are consistent. We employ an open

peer review process, to ensure that there is respectful dialogue between authors and reviewers. We are fully open access and will never create impediments to reading or publishing.

For more information visit our website (<https://reacpol.net/workingpapers/>) and send your working papers at workingpapers@reacpol.net

CALL FOR PAPERS: SPECIAL ISSUE OF TOTALITARISMUS UND DEMOKRATIE / TOTALITARIANISM AND DEMOCRACY

Political Representation and Forms of Oppression of Marginalized Groups

Political representation lies at the normative core of democratic systems. Yet across the globe, democratic institutions are under growing pressure. Processes of democratic erosion and (re-) autocratization not only reshape institutional arrangements and checks and balances; they also transform the conditions under which political inclusion and exclusion operate. Marginalized groups increasingly move to the center of political conflict, becoming symbolically instrumentalized, legally restricted, or discursively delegitimized. Against this backdrop, this special issue invites contributions that engage with the following questions:

- Who is rendered politically visible and who remains systematically excluded?
- Under what institutional, societal, or discursive conditions does substantive representation succeed, and when does it remain merely symbolic?
- How do political actors mobilize and politicize minorities in party competition, including in conflicts among social democratic, conservative, radical left and right, or extremist parties?
- In what ways do strategies of exclusion, stigmatization, and legal restriction contribute to democratic backsliding or authoritarian consolidation?
- How are marginalized groups positioned within broader regime transformations, including processes of illiberalization and (re)autocratization?

Contributions may range from historical analyses of the criminal prosecution of homosexual individuals to research on LGBTQ+ political representation, party competition on the left and the radical right, and transnational cooperation among extreme and radical right actors. We also welcome studies on gender politics, migration and citizenship, ethnic and religious minorities, discursive delegitimization, legal repression, and the symbolic politics of inclusion and exclusion. Both historical and contemporary, empirical and theoretical, single-case and comparative approaches are encouraged.

Journal Information: Totalitarismus und Demokratie / Totalitarianism and Democracy is a peer-reviewed academic journal published by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht in cooperation with the Hannah-Arendt-Institut für

Totalitarismusforschung (HAIT) at TU Dresden. The journal provides a forum for interdisciplinary scholarship on totalitarianism, democracy, regime transformation, and political extremism. Submissions are welcome in both German and English.

Submission Details: Prospective contributors are invited to submit an abstract of 600 words, accompanied by a short biographical note of approximately 100 words. Full manuscripts should be approximately 8000-9000 words in length. The deadline for abstract submissions is May 31, 2026, and authors will be notified of acceptance by June 15, 2026. Completed manuscripts will be due by September 30, 2026 with publication planned for spring 2027.

Abstracts and inquiries: jakub.wondreys@mailbox.tu-dresden.de

DVPW WORKING GROUP ON POPULISM – ANNUAL CONFERENCE

In collaboration with the Institute for Research on Far-Right Extremism (IRex), Tübingen

Populism on the Far Right: Concepts and Critiques, University of Tübingen, 23-24

September 2026 (hybrid event)

The 2026 [annual conference](#) of the [DVPW Working Group on Populism](#), organized in collaboration with the [Institute for Research on Far Right Extremism \(IRex\) at the University of Tübingen](#), specifically with the [Research Unit on Political Actors and Ideologies](#), led by [Léonie de Jonge](#), responds to the continued salience of far-right actors, parties, movements, and discourses across democratic and authoritarian settings alike. Over the past decade, research on the far right has frequently intersected with the concept of populism. Many influential studies have analysed far-right mobilization through the lens of populism, while others have questioned whether populism remains an analytically useful or normatively desirable concept for understanding contemporary far-right politics. Debates persist over whether populism clarifies, obscures, normalizes, or depoliticizes exclusionary and authoritarian projects. Against this backdrop, we invite contributions that critically examine the relationship between populism and the far right. We welcome theoretical, conceptual, empirical, historical, comparative, and methodological perspectives that engage with the promises and limits of the populism concept in research on the far right.

Possible themes include, but are not limited to:

- Normative and ethical questions of terminology: Does labelling far-right actors as “populist” risk sanitizing racism, antisemitism, misogyny, authoritarianism, or political violence? Under what conditions is the term analytically illuminating, and when might it be misleading?

- Comparative and global perspectives: How does the populism-far right nexus vary across regions, regime types, and historical contexts? What can be learned from comparisons beyond Europe and North America?
- Gender, sexuality, and anti-feminist politics: How are gendered narratives mobilized within populist discourses of the far right? What roles do anti-feminism, opposition to LGBTQ+ rights, “family values”, masculinism, and moral panic play in constructing “the people” and defining internal or external enemies?

We invite submissions of **abstracts of max. 250 words**, alongside with **institutional affiliation** and a **biographical note** before **15 June 2026** to: populismus@dvpw.de

Acceptance decisions will be communicated shortly after the submission deadline.

We aim for a broad range of contributions from scholars at all career stages and from adjacent disciplines. We welcome both completed research and work in progress. Membership in the German Political Science Association (DVPW) is not required.

This is planned as a hybrid event; participants may choose if they wish to take part online or offline. We would like to apologize that participants must cover travel and accommodation costs themselves. The workshop itself is free of charge and coffee breaks will be provided.

We look forward to welcoming participants to Tübingen in September 2026! Sabine Volk (local host), Vlad Budejca, Teresa Jopson, Seongcheol Kim, Sami Soda Co-convenors of the DVPW Working Group on Populism, Contact: populismus@dvpw.de

EXPERT INTERVIEWS

ORGANISED TRANSPHOBIA

FRAN AMERY, University of Bath

1. What is organised transphobia?

[Aurelien Mondon and I](#) have defined it as ‘a top-down movement that relies on prominent platforms and privileged access to shaping public discourse to divert attention away from the real struggle most women and LGBTQ+ people are facing conjointly, but also from the deeply reactionary and threatening nature of transphobia.’ We wanted to channel attention away from questions of whether individuals’ intentions are bigoted or not and towards the organised campaigning forces working to erode trans rights and acceptance around the world. It was also important for us to stress that these are top-down, elite-driven movements, not the grassroots outpouring of ordinary people’s (or ordinary women’s) ‘concerns’ that they are often portrayed as being.

In my view, this term is more accurate than ‘trans-exclusionary radical feminist’ (‘TERF’) or ‘gender critical’. ‘TERF’ is no longer adequate to describe these movements as a whole, which have changed considerably from (one of) their roots in pockets of radical feminist organising. ‘Gender critical’ is often the preferred nomenclature of the groups themselves, but it is a sanitising term [meant to make anti-trans politics appear innocuous](#), and misleadingly implies that trans movements and (pro-)trans feminisms are never themselves critical of ‘gender’.

2. Who are the key actors involved in organised transphobia movements?

Organised transphobia movements should be understood as coalitional – one of the reasons why ‘TERF’ is not fully accurate to describe them. Some of the actors involved are radical feminists, yes (but many radical feminists oppose transphobia). But these coalitions also have significant involvement from moderate and centrist actors, including liberal feminists. This includes many actors who enjoy significant platforms in the liberal press (notably the Guardian and New York Times), who have played a substantial role in mainstreaming transphobia and marketing it to a wider audience.

We also can’t underestimate the role played by right-wing actors, perhaps most prominently the transnational Christian far right. It’s been known for years now, for example, that ‘separating the T from LGB’ [is a deliberate strategy being pursued](#) by anti-LGBTQ Christian organisations, [which have also provided funding to anti-trans feminist groups](#).

3. What are the primary objectives of these movements?

While these movements have sometimes claimed that they simply seek to defend (for example) women's spaces or women's sports from the 'overreaches' of trans rights advocacy, in practice the cancellation of proposed reforms to trans rights (such as to the UK's Gender Recognition Act) has not appeased them. Rather, they have only gained momentum, quickly moving from 'defending' the status quo to actively attacking trans people's existing protections. As Leah Owen has put it, anti-trans activists and policymakers are seeking to dismantle ['the social, legal, and institutional infrastructure that trans people depend on to exist as trans people.'](#) This supplies them with a broad range of targets: including trans healthcare, sports, institutional trans inclusion policies, anti-discrimination law, gendered spaces such as public toilets, trans-inclusive curricula, and school guidance.

This is neither a secret nor a particularly fringe goal. For example, Helen Joyce, a former journalist with The Economist whose book *Trans: When Ideology Meets Reality* was published by a 'big five' publishing house, has called explicitly for minimising the number of people who transition, stating that each one is a ['huge problem for a sane world'](#).

4. Why is there a strong focus on non-gender-neutral bathrooms?

Many anti-trans feminist campaigners are more concerned with spaces such as women's prisons or refuges, for example, than they are with bathrooms. But bathrooms have become a prominent focus due to their ability to connect with the lived experience of most people. Almost all of us use public or workplace bathrooms regularly in our day-to-day lives. They are also the site at which we most frequently experience the 'sorting' of our bodies into differently gendered spaces. This sorting process is typically taken for granted: most of us dutifully file into the room with the 'correct' symbol on the door and never question this.

This creates opportunities for anti-trans campaigners to represent trans existence as somehow jeopardising a supposedly universal 'common sense' and shared lived reality concerning which bodies belong where. Bodies that are 'out of place' may then be portrayed at best as ludicrous, and at worst as sinister and threatening. This becomes a tool for mobilisation and recruitment, by conjuring up imagery of scary, deviant 'males' intruding into spaces where they 'don't belong' ([despite evidence](#) that trans-inclusive bathroom regulations do not make bathrooms less safe). Ideas about what is 'common sense' often tend to skew towards conservatism, which allows anti-trans campaigners to recruit across ideological boundaries, drawing feminists, conservatives, and far-right actors into the coalition.

5. How do anti-trans movements manifest across different contexts?

While in contexts such as the UK, anti-trans movements have involved prominent feminist actors, in most parts of the world, they have been more straightforwardly conservative, with feminists only playing a minor role, if any. Key players have

been the 'anti-gender' movements that have sprung up worldwide to oppose what they call 'gender ideology', a slippery concept usually referring to some combination of reproductive rights, gender equality policy, LGBTQ+ rights and university gender studies programmes. While until recently transphobia was an overlooked aspect of anti-gender politics, it has in fact been core to these movements right from their origins [in Vatican warnings about the dangers of feminism and 'gender theory'](#) and the writings of Catholic activists such as Dale O'Leary.

6. What issues should scholars of Extremism & Democracy prioritize in future research?

It would be great to see more research on anti-gender, antifeminist and anti-LGBTQ politics that not only seriously engages with the matter of transphobia but also engages with trans studies and transfeminism. The latter fields have so far been neglected in research on anti-gender movements, which has, as a result, tended to de-prioritise transphobia or even fail to see it in the data.

Dr. Fran Amery is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Politics, Language & International Studies at the University of Bath. You can learn more about her work [here](#) and [follow her on Bluesky](#).

THE CURRENT TRANS PANIC AND ITS HISTORICAL ROOTS

CELESTINE S. KUNKELER, Independent Researcher

1. What is trans panic?

Trans panic describes the current political moment we find ourselves in, where transgender and gender diverse people are demonised and attacked by politicians, media, and other actors, in the service of a variety of largely, but not exclusively, reactionary and right-wing agendas. Focused on trans women and children in particular, trans panic provides an opportunity for ideological mobilisation against gender non-conformity, diversity, queerness, feminism, and other progressive agendas.

The current trans panic feeds off the sharp increase in trans visibility in the 2010s, when public awareness of and discourse around trans people proliferated, even if this did not necessarily manifestly improve trans and gender diverse people's social and legal standing. Mobilisation against trans people has grown exponentially since the early 2020s, with a coordinated explosion of hostile reporting in right-wing anglophone media, and corresponding efforts from politicians to curtail trans rights and recognition, as well as the spread of dedicated anti-trans activist groups.

The sexualising vilification of trans women as predatory, perverts, 'men in dresses', or potential rapists has been a hallmark of this panic, alongside the supposed 'indoctrination' of children (through education around gender and sexuality in schools) as a form of 'grooming'—denying the reality of trans children. As such the panic leans heavily on conservative tropes of threats against (cis) women and (cis) children, and reactionary imaginaries of sexual degeneracy.

Trans misogyny – the demonisation and abjection of trans women and trans femininity – is thus central to trans panic's logic, so that while many gender diverse groups are affected, the spotlight is on trans women as the target that best embodies reactionary anxieties (and fantasies) around gender and sexuality. Trans femininity is construed as deceptive and predatory, justifying even lethal violence in 'retaliation'. As such, trans panic can be seen as an episodic mobilisation against trans and gender diverse people, significantly facilitated by established trans misogynistic structures, firmly entrenched in society and mainstream culture.

2. What are the historical roots of trans panic?

The roots of trans panic run deep, and include psychiatric and biological ideas dating to the 19th Century that explained gender non-conformity as socially dangerous; colonial practices of gendered administration and exploitation; and pre-modern trans misogyny.

In contemporary history the current transphobic political moment is often traced back to the 1970s, with the emergence in the United States of what is now typically labelled trans-exclusionary radical feminism (TERF). One of the many debates that was then playing out in the second wave feminist movement was around the status of trans women, in which a minority of radical feminists, primarily associated with the ex-Catholic theologian and feminist scholar Mary Daly (1928-2010) and her PhD student Janice Raymond (1943-), attacked transsexuality with particular vigour. Raymond's methodologically and ethically questionable PhD research, published as *The Transsexual Empire*, retains its claim to inventing or at least entrenching some of the most dangerous trans misogynistic tropes, finishing with an eliminationist call to solve 'the problem of transsexualism' by 'morally mandating it out of existence'.

More recently historians have pointed to the persecution of trans people in Nazi Germany. The early German transvestite community – the term transsexual did not come into use until the postwar era – had gained a great deal in visibility during the more permissive years of the Weimar Republic, especially in Berlin, when they were especially associated with the gay Jewish reformer Magnus Hirschfeld (1868-1935) and the Institute for Sexual Science (Institut für Sexualwissenschaft). During the Nazi regime the institute was promptly shuttered in May 1933, and many trans people caught up in the Nazi persecution of 'immorality', typically as 'homosexuals' or sex workers.

However, Nazi attacks on trans people as manifestations of a much broader notion of sexualised 'immorality' derived from already established understandings of gender transition as symptomatic of 'degeneration'. In the 19th Century sexologists theorised sexual inversion as a way of understanding what would later become [homo- and transsexuality](#), with Richard von Krafft-Ebing's (1840-1902) seminal *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) providing numerous case studies of trans patients. The result was necessarily pathologising, especially as sexologists were strongly influenced by degeneration theory, which had gained growing acceptance since the 1850s. In the contemporary evolutionary paradigm, this posited progressive sexual dimorphism as a corollary of civilisation, and the imagined 'mixing up' of sexual characteristics as 'primitive', and by extension a sign of degeneration when found in 'civilised' (read white) nations, i.e. a form of reverse evolution.

Degeneration theory encouraged the development of the sexological category of transvestism and later transsexuality as socio-biologically dangerous, a hereditarily and socially transmittable manifestation associated with promiscuity and prostitution, racialised as primitive. For evidence, sexologists cited academic work mired in [racism and colonialism](#), such as the anthropology of colonised peoples that marveled over 'man-women' and 'woman-men' in 'primitive' cultures. Historians contributed their bit, adducing gender diversity in the ancient world such as the Scythian Enarei as evidence of gender diversity's 'primitivism'. Such logics had very real consequences for gender diverse people already at the time, such as the hijra in colonial India, who became the target of British administrators for 'extermination' in the second half of the 19th Century, as explored by historian Jessica Hinchy. This trans-feminised group trans misogynistically portrayed as perverted, predatory, filthy, and a danger to

children; a remnant of primitive Indian culture destined for extinction, according to the colonists' evolutionary gender logic.

3. How does trans panic relate to the far right?

From its history, we can see that trans panic serves a range of reactionary ends, tied up with the history of colonialism, racist evolutionary theory, and anti-feminism. Transphobia fundamentally serves traditional, hierarchical, and patriarchal values. The ability to transition – socially, legally, somatically – undermines the stability of gendered social divisions, so that the reification of those divisions serves both anti-trans and anti-feminist politics. Cisness is at the very core of far-right ideology, meaning the naturalisation of gendered and sexual difference as inborn and immutable, a biologised idea of social destiny that justifies patriarchy and male supremacist politics. This was already explored quite explicitly by the fascist philosopher Julius Evola (1898-1974) in his 1934 *Rivolta contro il mondo moderno*: 'a being is a man or a woman in a physical way only because a being is either masculine or feminine in a transcendental way; sexual differentiation, far from being an irrelevant factor in relation to the spirit, is the sign that points to a particular vocation and to a distinctive [dharma](#)'.

Not only reactionary, trans panic also serves authoritarian ends, promoting state intervention into the private sphere. The centrality of so-called 'bathroom bans' in trans panic discourse is instructive in this regard, justifying an invasive apparatus to verify intimate 'sex', demanding identification for access to essential public services, and coercively regulating the dress and appearance of those who would use the women's bathroom in particular. Transness concerns fundamental private matters – bodies, medicine, surgical status, dress, identification – but is de facto not externally verifiable; hence it is inevitable that anti-trans politics push the state to aggressively intrude into subjects' private lives. As the extreme proliferation of anti-trans legislation in the US demonstrates, it constitutes the state's seizure of power in new (and sometimes old, historical) areas of medicine, education, identification, social behaviour, access to public space, and even modes of dress.

4. To what extent is trans panic a global phenomenon?

Given its structural basis, historical roots, especially in colonialism, and the transnational nature of the far right, it naturally has global reach. With the spread of the related anti-gender movement, strong in Central- and South America, as well as the Catholic Church and Evangelical movements, trans panic is heavily promoted by transphobic actors there. In Brazil, murders of travesti and trans women escalated acutely during the military dictatorship of the 1970s and 80s, but remain among the highest in the world today.

In China a transphobic feminism has taken root in recent years, while forms of queer feminism have been driven offline and underground by the state. This anti-trans feminism is at least partially cultivated by, rather bizarrely, connections to

the UK's so-called 'gender-critical' scene, and anti-trans billionaire JK Rowling, whose transphobic comments are routinely translated into Chinese, and disseminated by anti-trans feminists there. The vociferously transphobic second Trump administration in the US is also lending international weight to trans panic politics, with both example and coercion through the threat of withholding foreign aid. Trans panic politics are taking rather different shape in India on the other hand, where currently the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 is being proposed, which looks to sharply curtail what forms of trans expression are recognised and supported. Aside from mandating medical procedures, it looks to reduce recognition primarily to groups associated with Hinduism, such as hijra, kinner, and jogta, so that it not only delegitimises other forms of trans personhood, but also serves a particular Hindu nationalist agenda.

My point with these select examples is that, while trans panic can be understood as global, it is by no means uniform, has a variable character and impact, and is unpredictably shaped by both transnational influences and national histories and conditions. Its service to violent, authoritarian, and reactionary agendas does seem quite consistent, however.

5. What are the consequences?

The facilitation of authoritarianism is probably one of the most important and obvious results of this trans panic, as I've explained above. It also works towards the biologisation of citizenship, as demonstrated by last year's Supreme Court judgment in the UK in the case *For Women Scotland Ltd v. the Scottish Ministers*. This invented an undefined 'biological sex' – we must suppose its precise meaning to be a matter of imagined 'common sense' – as a whole new category in British law by which trans people could be excluded from social and state provisions, and legal protections. This has sparked attempts by anti-trans groups such as Sex Matters to reinterpret the 2010 Equality Act, by which protection against gendered forms of discrimination is premised on this idea of biology, rather than on which social groups de facto experience discrimination. Likewise, access to sex-segregated public services and spaces then depends on this spurious notion of biology, rather than actual need.

Such an entrenchment of cisness, that naturalisation of gendered difference, undermines not just trans but all queer and women's rights. It results in increased harassment of people who do not conform to cis-heteronormative standards, with butch women becoming particular targets of bathroom harassment. Meanwhile, transphobic policy and legislation masquerade as 'women's rights', prevailing over measures that could materially improve women's lives, such as increased support for social services, effective rape prevention strategies, or the decriminalisation of sex work.

The escalation of hate crimes and murderous violence is, in some ways, only the tip of the iceberg for how trans panic affects trans and gender diverse people. The denial of trans healthcare, including medication and surgery; restrictions on access to public spaces and services, whether domestic violence shelters or

bathrooms; the withdrawal of legal recognition; all serve to marginalise and abject, through the deliberate imposition of denial and neglect, to the point of death. Trans panic organises a social ostracism that immiserates and pushes trans people into poverty and the informal economy, where we are more sharply exposed to transphobic and especially trans misogynistic structures that sharply decrease our lifespans.

6. What issues should scholars of Extremism & Democracy prioritise in their future research?

I would suggest that there is a need for greater understanding of how transphobic logics, and especially the logics of cisness, function within particular ideologies such as fascism. For instance, what broader purpose does the dehumanisation of trans women serve for patriarchal far-right projects? How does the naturalisation and biologisation of sex/gender serve broader projects of hierarchisation and exclusion, including white supremacy? I think a better understanding of colonial legacies would be particularly important to understand these issues, as they point to how anti-democratic movements have typically sought to preserve the materially entangled hierarchies of value in class, race, and sex/gender.

There is also an urgent need to pay attention to the increasing securitisation of trans people, inherent to their construction as predatory, but which appears to currently be escalating, especially in the United States. Viral shooter conspiracy theories, which seek to speciously pin blame for especially mass killings on trans women in particular, have proliferated online in recent years and have found traction among influential and powerful political actors. This fairly recent escalation can present a very dangerous new threat to trans people, but also echoes tropes in popular culture that associate trans femininity with serial killers and ‘dangerous’ mental illness.

Lastly, I think we need analyses of the libidinal investments that are at work in trans panic. Trans people are heavily sexualised in their dehumanisation, and have historically, and continue to be, associated with (and over-represented in) sex work. The fact that the current trans panic coincides with unprecedented levels of consumption of pornography featuring trans actors requires more scholarly consideration, especially in the context of transphobia’s entanglement with hostility to sex workers. As said, anti-trans politics touches on the most private and intimate parts of people’s lives—that is not only true of those who are victimised by it, but also its perpetrators.

Dr. Celestine S. Kunkeler is an independent researcher. You can [follow them on Bluesky](#).

Note that some key insights from this interview derive from the forthcoming edited volume (Routledge) *Trans Panic, Anti-Gender Mobilisations, and the Far Right*, edited by Celestine S. Kunkeler, Iris B. Segers, Audrey Gagnon, Katherine Kondor and Greta Jasser.

BOOK REVIEWS

DANIELE ALBERTAZZI ET AL., “POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT PARTIES IN ACTION: THE SURVIVAL OF THE MASS PARTY.”

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. 2025. PP. 177 ISBN: 9780192899736

Aleš Michal, *Institute of Political Studies, Charles University, Prague*

The book *Populist Radical Right Parties in Action*, co-written by experts on European populism and party politics, addresses a particularly relevant yet still underexplored topic. While much of the existing scholarship focuses on the ideological foundations and communication strategies of populist radical right parties (PRRPs), this work turns attention to their organizational bases and internal dynamics. At its centre, the book poses a fundamental question: have PRRPs – as is often claimed – abandoned the “classic” model of the mass party in favour of business-firm or other highly personalistic forms of organization? The answer, which runs through the entire work like a red thread, is clear: they have not. In fact, the opposite appears to be true. Drawing on four in-depth case studies, the authors convincingly demonstrate that we should not be misled by the layers of political marketing that frequently present personalistic leaders to the forefront. PRRPs across Europe depend heavily on committed activists – at both national and local levels – who live and breathe the party, view it as their community (at times even as a family), and are willing to work tirelessly for its success.

Populist Radical Right Parties in Action smoothly follows the previous work of authors’ collective, well-known for their expertise on radical right and political parties. The entire work arises from concepts that authors have been working with for a long time. Daniele Albertazzi and Stijn van Kessel focus on radical right and its confrontation with the world of modern new parties. Their joint expertise connects a requisite link between studying party organization and its survival strategies and ideological roots. Together with these two scholars, Adrian Favero, Niko Hatakka, Judith Sijstermans and Mattia Zulianello, respected by far not only in their countries yet serving as prominent radical right scholars of the European level, fulfil the conceptual boundaries by specific empirical analyses. By doing so, all of them establish on their previous articles and book chapters aimed at radical right faces in their countries.

The book is structured as follows. At the beginning, it works with the conceptual framework on mass parties and ways how radical right implement their principles in practice. In this part, authors provide in-depth conceptualization and discussion about organizational as well as ideological foundations. In the empirical sections, there are presented results through answers to leading questions, which are formulated as titles of each chapter.

First and foremost, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Action* debunks several entrenched myths about mass parties. It stresses (especially in Chapter 1) that the

defining criterion has not – indeed, has never – been the number of members “on paper”. Instead, the mass party represents a principle anchored in a clearly defined ideology – something that PRRPs still possess. At the same time, the authors emphasize that what truly matters is the nature of the relationship between party elites and the grassroots, rather than the mere formal status of membership. Albertazzi et al. are not substantially revising the work of Maurice Duverger or other theorists; instead, they draw attention to ideas originally proposed by these scholars that have since been frequently misinterpreted. Most importantly, the book offers a substantial contribution to understanding the developmental model as such: the evolution from cadre parties to more contemporary types should not be seen as linear as same as that it is useful to regard the single types of parties as ideal types.

This analytical framework is then fleshed out with specific substance through the analysis of four case studies – Italy’s Lega, Finland’s Finns, Belgium’s Flemish Interest, and the Swiss People’s Party. It is reasonable to challenge the selectivity of this sample, as such concerns can always serve as a counterargument. The authors attempt to clarify their choices by setting out explicit criteria. The question remains, however, to what extent it is still a limiting factor that at least two of the four selected parties have a genetic code oriented toward local interests, and to what extent this explains their firm embeddedness in society. Above all, nevertheless, the case of Finns party serves here as something like of a reference category, suggesting that “massness” can indeed be complex and broadly applicable. Moreover, the authors’ argument is reinforced by the fact that both Lega and Vlaams Belang are expanding their reach. This demonstrates that the ideology of the radical right and the surge of these parties are not incompatible, as seen in Chapters 2 and 3.

The greatest added value of the monograph lies in its empirical section. A large number of interviews were conducted with members of various levels of the parties, which makes it possible to draw robust conclusions about perceptions of internal organization, relationships among actors, and party dynamics. It is highly instructive to see the wide range of motivations and incentives that can mobilize individuals to become politically engaged in parties. Likewise, it is interesting to observe how much importance they attach to top-down communication within the party and whether they feel a disconnect between the elites and the reality “on the ground”. The respondents’ answers, however, must be interpreted carefully within context: the debate about offline vs online activities is undoubtedly influenced not only by the general trend of shifting organizational work online but also by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. And alongside this, the usual caveats for interpreting this type of data apply: they reveal what people think and how they perceive social reality, which does not necessarily have to reflect objective reality. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that the authors overlook this dimension – the internal functioning of all cases is described in detail in Chapter 3.

To conclude, the analysis of the four case studies substantially enriches the debate on PRRPs as well as on mass parties more generally. It does so above all by breaking the association of this party family with the notion of the charismatic leader who sees the party merely as a personal vehicle, has no need for members, pays for everything, decides alone, and does not bother with developing a

coherent ideology. In other words, Europe is not simply full of politicians like Geert Wilders or Andrej Babiš: the world of PRRPs is far more diverse than it might appear at first glance. Simultaneously, the book builds on what Heinisch & Mazzoleni (2016) - whose work the authors praise - has developed elsewhere. It demonstrates that PRRPs, often strategically and instrumentally, adopt a mass-party structure based on active members (and we would need more research distinguishing active from passive members) who interact with one another, work for the party, and at the same time expect certain benefits in return. This constitutes a form of social contract that has by no means lost its value today. For this reason, as the authors themselves argue, it is too early to dismiss the mass party as an organism that still persists. In a Europe that has succumbed to simplified notions of marketing-driven, ideologically hollow actors who promote no authentic ideology - and has forgotten that there are still radical right politicians willing to advance their ideas with the help of an army of volunteers - this is a crucial reminder.

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CYNTHIA MILLER-IDRISS, “MAN UP: THE NEW MISOGYNY & THE RISE OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM.”

Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2025. Pp. 344 ISBN:9780691257549 \$29.95

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‘Violent misogyny, stalking, harassment, and abuse of women or the LGBTQ+community is a constant detail in reports of mass shootings or terrorist attacks, although it is barely acknowledged and even more rarely analyzed’ (Miller-Idriss, 2025, p.5). This observation serves as a crucial starting point for examining how gendered hatred underpins much of extremist violence yet remains largely invisible in public and academic discourse.

Why do we have such a blindspot to the misogynist foundations of extremist hate? How can we overcome it? And what could we see if we approached sex and gender as primary organizing frameworks that mobilize extreme violence (xiii)? These are the central questions posed by Cynthia Miller-Idriss in her latest book *Man Up: The New Misogyny & The Rise of Violent Extremism*. Moving away from strict supply-side dynamics, the book approaches these questions from a novel perspective and centralises how expressions of misogyny in the mainstream enable the mobilization of far-right violence. The justification for this narrative arc is convincingly argued: in order to be able to counteract violent extremism, we need first to understand its roots.

The book is organised into three parts: causes, consequences, and conclusions. The first part identifies the aforementioned blindspot of misogyny in violent extremism research, while simultaneously positioning the book’s central questions and aims in the context of rising (online) misogyny and far-right violence. Moreover, it provides necessary definitions of the concepts of patriarchy, sexism, misogyny, the far right and violent extremism, and presents a careful state-of-the-field review on gender and political violence.

The second part counts as the empirical heart of the book. Across five chapters, Miller-Idriss outlines five different strategies of misogynist enforcement. Chapter 2, the first empirical chapter, outlines the strategy of Containment, which captures how acts of casual sexism, such as gendered slurs and gender policing, can translate into more violent worldviews. Chapter 3 subsequently focusses on Punishment, that is the various ways that violations of patriarchal gender norms may be met with (sexual) violence. Chapter 4 centres around Exploitation, highlighting how (sexually) exploitative tactics, including sex trafficking, can further violent extremist movements financially, strategically, as well as ideologically. The chapter also foregrounds domestic and intimate partner violence as “red flags” for potential radicalisation. Captured by the term Erasure, Chapter 5 details how legislative action and knowledge erasure serve to uphold the patriarchal order and normalise harassment. Finally, Chapter 6, entitled Enabling, reminds readers that misogyny is not a trait exclusive to men, but that

its pervasiveness in today's society rests on the active engagement of men and women alike. The chapter reinstates women's growing prominence in various forms of far-right and white supremacist action, as previously demonstrated by, among others, Blee (1991), Meret (2015), and Leidig (2023), and details the different, increasingly violent, ways in which women actively recruit, create and maintain far-right patriarchal norms.

The third part of the book sums up its conclusions: (1) misogyny serves as both a predictor and a catalyst of extremist violence, it (2) acts as a connective tissue that reinforces different forms of (extremist) hate, and (3) surges in violent misogyny ought, consequently, to be understood in the context of patriarchal defense. The conclusion also reinstates the importance of the 'ordinary and everyday forms of sexism and misogyny' that are embedded in everyday life in creating fertile ground for violent beliefs and actions to flourish (pp.186-188).

This conclusion comes with a wider implication. If extremist violence is, at least in part, driven by developments in the mainstream, we must pay closer attention to these everyday places and spaces, and the various ways in which they can become embedded with (precursors of) far-right beliefs. While Miller-Idriss highlights a couple important examples in the book – online gaming, meme cultures and self-help forums – the book's findings underline the importance of expanding our knowledge about everyday expressions of far-right extremism.

Furthermore, the book raises the question to what extent, and in what ways, misogyny also informs non-violent and/or institutionalised forms of far-right action. To what extent can the 'enforcement strategies' outlined by Miller-Idriss be applied to the platforms of far-right protest movements? And political parties? And what would this mean for the way we understand their position in the far-right ecosystem more broadly? Do they, for example, act as producers of misogynist rhetoric, or rather absorb attitudes from the mainstream? Rather than serving as a critique, these questions provide a productive opening for further research.

Finally, Miller-Idriss provides a selection of actionable suggestions for prevention and intervention. In this sense, the book makes two central contributions: First, *Man Up: The New Misogyny & The Rise of Violent Extremism* provides a considerable conceptual contribution. By providing readers with a novel vocabulary that not only acknowledges extremism's gendered dimension, but centres everyday forms of casual sexism and misogyny's fundamental role in processes of radicalisation, the empirical section formulates an important contribution to the creation of '[...] a conceptual framework for the far right that seriously engages efforts that rely on or build support for misogyny, homophobia and transphobia, and gender and sexual essentialism', as proposed by Blee (2020, p.427). Although the boundaries between the respective strategies outlined by Miller-Idriss are occasionally fuzzy, their significant overlap also demonstrates that misogynist tactics do not exist in isolation but rather bolster one another and ultimately serve to uphold the same patriarchal system that can motivate acts of violence. Second, by offering suggestions for intervention for policymakers, civil society, and individual actors, the book provides an important contribution to the pressing question: 'what can we do?'. This question is not trivial, but of critical importance well beyond academic circles. In particular, Miller-Idriss' approach

highlights that we cannot combat rising violence without confronting the gendered harms in our everyday lives (p.209).

To sum up, the book achieves its aim of centring the attention on the generally under-highlighted gendered foundations of the modern far right and its violent outcomes. The analysis convincingly highlights how misogyny and its reinforcement strategies are woven into the fabric of everyday life, thereby acting as key enabling forces behind extremist violence. While raising questions about how misogyny informs the more institutionalised variants of far-right politics, Miller-Idriss' framework functions as an important conceptual tool in overcoming our gendered blindspot. Therefore, *Man Up: The New Misogyny & The Rise of Violent Extremism* is essential reading for researchers of (violent) extremism, especially those committed to understanding the mobilising principles of the contemporary far right, and its embeddedness in our everyday lives and culture. Due to its clear and approachable writing style, the book is accessible to a broad audience that reaches well beyond academic circles.

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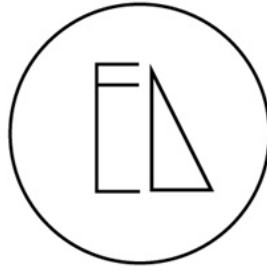
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