

# **Social Movements and Policy Outcomes: How Right-wing Grassroots groups Influence Foreign Policy**

Panel Chairs:

Sofia Tipaldou, University of Manchester, [sofia.tipaldou@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:sofia.tipaldou@manchester.ac.uk)

Ioannis Galariotis, European University Institute, [jgalariotis@gmail.com](mailto:jgalariotis@gmail.com)

Abstract:

A large number of far-right parties were initially formed as grassroots movements, made up by activists rather than professional politicians. These groups differ from others in the broadly defined far right label in that they maintain their grassroots activities and adopt violent practices. While we would expect such movements to remain in the fringes of the political system because of their anti-democratic ideology and practices, recent elections across Europe have shown otherwise. In countries such as e.g. Greece, Ukraine, Hungary, Germany, Bulgaria and Sweden these groups have managed not only to institutionalize (to gain regular access to policy-makers), but also to enter as parties their countries' respective parliaments.

Literature on the rise and consolidation of the far right largely focuses on parties and electoral politics, often grouping together all groups under the 'far right' label. The main focus is either on the causes of success of these parties, or their possible contagion effect on policies such as immigration. The distinctive character of far right social movements and their impact on policies beyond immigration is under-theorised. This is particularly true of foreign policy, which despite being closely related to the core far right ideological doctrine of nationalism remains under-researched. For instance, nationalism has been researched as a factor that influences individual policy preferences that can shape public opinion and, thus, have an impact on foreign policy. Or as a factor that influences the elites that decide over foreign policy or the rising groups that threaten the elites. Elites use nationalism to define the lines between "the people" and the enemy (be it external or internal), while rising groups use nationalism to promote their populist claims against the elites and in favour of "the nation". Foreign policy can also be shaped by a collective trauma, like in the case of post-colonial states, or develop through antagonisms with their neighbours, in both cases activating a given society's nationalist reflexes. Scholarship on international relations, however, researches mostly states, elites and individuals or masses, without including these actors that stand between individuals and elites and that are specialized into transforming grievances and emotions into activism, i.e. social movements; and while few studies focus on the ways in which international organizations have adjusted their strategies in order to cope with the critique from social movements more broadly, there is no research that addresses the outcomes of far right movements on foreign policy.

This Panel aims to fill this gap by bridging literature on international relations, comparative politics and social movements. It addresses the extent to which the entrenchment of far right social movements influence foreign policy debates in a comparative manner. The panel is open to contributions on one or more case studies, from both democratic and non-democratic settings, and encourages its participants to introduce new methodological approaches that will advance our understanding of social movement outcomes on foreign policy.

If you have a Paper you think might fit in this Panel, please contact both the Panel Chairs before 31 January with the following information:

- Title of the paper (no more than 20 words)
- Abstract of the paper (no more than 250 words)
- Author's (and if applicable co-author's) email address as registered in their MyECPR account
- 3–5 keywords