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Newsletter of the ECPR Standing Group  
on Extremism & Democracy



# Newsletter of the ECPR Standing Group on Extremism & Democracy

## e-Extreme Managing Editors

Audrey Gagnon, *University of Ottawa*

Lazaros Karavasilis, *University of Bremen*

Sabine Volk, *University of Tübingen*

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Annika Werner, *University of Southampton*

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 ([ecprextremismanddemocracy@gmail.com](mailto:ecprextremismanddemocracy@gmail.com)).

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# STANDING GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dear *e-Extreme* readers,

We hope you are well, amidst these interesting times, wherever you may be. Read on for the usual mix of announcements, reports, book reviews, and alerts to keep on top of all the recent developments related to ‘extremism and democracy’. In this issue, we are glad to present two book reviews: **Valentina Nava** discusses Francesca Scrinzi’s book *The Racialization of Sexism: Men, Women and Gender in the Populist Radical Right*, while **George Kordas** presents Katherine Kondor and Mark Littler’s *Routledge Handbook of Far-Right Extremism in Europe*.

Moreover, *e-Extreme* includes a section with expert interviews focusing on current developments in politics on the extremes of the political spectrum. In this issue, **Anna-Sophie Heinze** answers our questions on the outcomes of the German elections, with a particular focus on the AfD’s performance. **Johan Farkas** then discusses the alliance between Donald Trump and Big Tech in the United States and its implications for American and European politics.

Please get in touch with your contributions and ideas for the next issue and don’t forget that the ECPR Standing Group on *Extremism & Democracy* has a 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.

Finally, we wish you all a wonderful conference season!

## 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!

## 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:

[ecprextremismanddemocracy@gmail.com](mailto:ecprextremismanddemocracy@gmail.com).

## 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 Caterina Froio (Sciences Po), Andrea L. P. Pirro (Scuola Normale Superiore), and Stijn van Kessel (Queen Mary University of London). 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](mailto:ecprextremismanddemocracy@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!

# UPCOMING EVENTS AND CALLS

## 2025 CONFERENCE OF THE ECPR STANDING GROUP ON EXTREMISM AND DEMOCRACY

Several extreme, populist parties and leaders are either forming governments or are likely to make extensive electoral gains in 2025. This inaugural conference of the Standing Group on *Extremism and Democracy* offers a timely opportunity to discuss ongoing developments and historical patterns.

The conference will take place at Queen Mary, University of London, on June 9-10, 2025. We are excited to announce that Sarah de Lange will be the keynote speaker, and that the conference will feature a roundtable with Kathleen Blee, Tim Bale, Andrej Zaslove, and Tereza Capelos.

For more information: <https://ecpr.eu/Events/322>

## CALL FOR PAPERS FOR A SPECIAL ISSUE ON 'CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF GENDER ORDER AND THE FAR RIGHT'

Special Issue Editors:

Marie Reusch, *Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen*

Viktoria Rösch, *Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences*

Across the globe, we can observe contradictory shifts in the gender order. On the one hand, there has been a shift towards greater gender liberalisation and flexibility. On the other hand, there is evidence of the persistence and re-stabilisation of gender-conservative, anti-feminist, anti-queer and anti-LGBT\* structures (Arguedas-Ramirez 2024, Edström et al. 2024, Scheele/Roth/Winkel 2022, Antić/Radačić 2020, Kuhar/Paternotte 2018). In this context, the (re-)establishment of social justice – not only in relation to gender, but also connected to sexuality, race/ethnicity, class, ability, and age – is challenged. Indeed, we often observe a backlash against equality.

One actor that takes part in contesting the gender order and in shaping its transformation, is the far right. Here we understand it as a spectrum of anti-democratic and anti-pluralist groups, movements, and parties including regressive neoliberal, authoritarian, populist, nationalist, libertarian, fundamentalist, neo-fascist. Worldwide, far-right actors refer to the disruptions in the gender order in a way that serves to advance their anti-feminist, racist political project (cf. Roth/Sauer 2022).

The last years have seen an intensification in gender-sensitive research on the far right. The literature has showed that a gender-sensitive approach is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of far-right extremism (see among others Scrinzi 2024, Leidig 2023, Leidig/Baryarri 2023, Kisoyava et al. 2022, Worth 2021, Blee

2020, Sauer 2020, Dietze/Roth 2020, Geva 2020, Mattheis 2018, Köttig et al. 2017, Farris 2017, Fangen 2003). However, when it comes to the nexus of the gender order and the far right, the literature has thus far has focused on two lines of work. First, work dealing with the gender order within the far right. Second, work analysing how the far right addresses gender in its narratives, programs, and politics. In contrast, we have only begun to understand the complex dynamics, effects and contradictions of the nexus between the transformation of the societal gender order and the contemporary far right. This Special Issue contributes to filling this gap by exploring the role of the far right in the ambivalent transformation and contestation of the gender order.

Since both the transformation of the gender order and the politicisation of gender by far-right actors can be observed globally (e.g. Goetz/Meyer 2023), the endeavor of understanding the far right's part in the ambivalent transformation of the gender order must inevitably have a global focus. This endeavor has to bear in mind heterogeneities of far-right movements and of the different contexts in which they emerge. So far, studies of the far right focus mainly on Europe and the US. De- and postcolonial accounts of the far right in the Global South criticize the epistemic coloniality and orientalism that is a consequence of this methodological Eurocentrism/Westernism (e.g. Kumral 2024; Pinheiro-Machado/Vargas-Maia 2023; Masood/Nisar 2020). Alike, work to understand the nexus between the gender order transformation and the far right in a global perspective has to bear in mind historical path dependencies, regional particularities and ideological continuities in regional gender regimes, and their transformation (Bose 2023, 2015, Pinheiro-Machado/Varga-Maia 2023). By deliberately adopting a global perspective, the special issue wants to transcend the methodological eurocentrism of studies of the far-right and test whether gender is a suitable analytical category for relating and comparing phenomena across different regional developments.

Our main objective is to gather empirical evidence from different disciplines on how the nexus between the far right and the transformation of the gender order manifests in different countries and regions of the world, how it materializes in different cultural, political, economic and religious contexts, how it unfolds on a transnational level, how it intersects with social categories like race, class etc., and how it is discussed in the wider public and conceptualized in scholarship. We also seek contributions with conceptual and theoretical considerations that deepen our understanding of how the contemporary far right is both an actor and a contributor in the transformation of the gender order.

The contributions to the special issue can engage with the following questions and beyond:

- In what ways is the societal gender order in a given country/region the condition for far-right mobilisation successes, strategies, and programs?
- How does the far-right refer to the societal gender order in a given country/region? How do far-right actors politicize or depoliticize certain aspects of the gender order?
- The transformation of the gender order, and the contestations that go along with it, are taking place in numerous fields and arenas: school/education, media, culture, governments/legislative bodies, labor markets, organisation of care work, within private relationships and so on.



Which arenas does the far right choose (not) to enter, and why? And what factors determine their success in these arenas?

- There is some literature on how the topic of gender is adopted and framed by the far right. But how are far-right discourses on gender addressed in contexts like education or jurisdiction? What impact does this have on broader discourses, in school or legislative processes?
- How do far-right actors adopt and build their ideology and program upon gender-conservative and -reactionary attitudes and structures present in the mainstream? How do they radicalize them?
- How do societal gender relations and the concept of gender shape the perception of far-right actors (and their gendered self-presentation) by the state, scholarship, and civil society?
- How does the far right engage internationally in the struggle over the interpretation of gender relations/gender order? How do international networks of the far-right relate to gender? What is the role of social media?
- In discourse, Eurocentric and white accounts of gender and the far right are hegemonic. How do perspectives from other regions of the world or an intersectional or de-/postcolonial analysis (ex. Indelicato/Magalhaes Lopes, 2024; Erel, 2018) challenge this Eurocentric and predominantly white understanding? Which intersectional perspectives help understand the nexus of the gender order and the contemporary far right?
- How does the far right affect lived experiences? How do individuals negatively affected by far-right gender-reactionary and anti-feminist ideologies experience these effects? And how do such attacks reshape the gender order at the everyday level?

### **Submission instructions:**

Abstracts of approximately 600-800 words should be submitted by end of April 2025 to the following email addresses: [marie.reusch@sowi.uni-giessen.de](mailto:marie.reusch@sowi.uni-giessen.de) and [viktoria.roesch@fb4.fra-uas.de](mailto:viktoria.roesch@fb4.fra-uas.de)

All submitted abstracts will be reviewed by the Guest Editors, and feedback will be shared by the end of May 2025. Authors whose abstracts are selected will be invited to submit their full manuscripts. Manuscripts should adhere to the submission guidelines of the *Journal of Gender Studies* and will undergo a double-blind peer review process.

## EXPERT INTERVIEWS

### AFTER THE GERMAN ELECTIONS: THE PERFORMANCE OF THE AfD

Anna-Sophie Heinze

*Trier Institute for Democracy and Party Research, Trier University, Germany*

- 1. With 20,8%, the far-right party AfD doubled its result from 2021, and came in as the second strongest force. How do you explain its electoral success?**

The AfD's election result marks a significant improvement compared to the previous federal election, although the party fell short of its self-imposed target of 25%. As Kai Arzheimer (2018) has explained, far-right electoral success is shaped by various factors at the micro, meso, and macro levels. In this election, three key aspects stood out:

First, on the demand side, the AfD has successfully built a stable core electorate whose populist attitudes and negative attitudes toward immigration align with the party's positions (see, e.g., Lewandowsky and Wagner 2023). A large proportion of these voters can no longer be reached by other parties. If the AfD were no longer on the ballot, most of them would abstain from voting rather than, for example, supporting the CDU.

Second, unlike previous far-right parties in Germany, the AfD has managed to establish a professional party organisation. This includes not only a sophisticated social media strategy, but also effective grassroots mobilisation. Its numerous sub-organisations, such as the youth wing 'Junge Alternative', as well as affiliated associations, publishers, and networks, further bolster its outreach.

Third, the AfD has benefited from the increasing normalisation of far-right positions. Opinion polls show that it is increasingly perceived as a 'normal' party, despite the fact that intelligence services in some eastern German states have classified it as a 'proven right-wing extremist' organisation. During the election campaign, the AfD projected a level of self-confidence that would have been unthinkable in the past. The electoral successes of other far-right parties (such as in Austria) and endorsements from actors like Elon Musk also contributed to its momentum.

- 2. What will be the far right's impact on the German party system and broader role in this new parliamentary term?**

As a result of its election success, the AfD's parliamentary group in the Bundestag has almost doubled in size (from 83 to 152 MPs out of a total of 630). This will shape both its opposition work and its broader party organisation.

First, due to its increased size, the AfD will be able to introduce more parliamentary initiatives. As the largest opposition group, it will have the privilege of responding first to government statements and will also receive more speaking time than other opposition groups. These factors will enable the AfD to exert greater influence on parliamentary debates, both thematically and strategically. This includes, for example, even more room for deliberate provocations and the breaking of taboos, such as using parliament as ‘a stage’ to repeatedly steer debates toward the issue of migration, thereby producing content that the party can repurpose in a distorted manner for its online mobilisation.

Second, the election result provides the AfD with significantly greater financial resources. The increased number of MPs means the party can hire even more staff, creating additional jobs for individuals from the far-right spectrum. This is particularly worrying, as many new AfD MPs have documented extremist views, yet information about parliamentary staff is not publicly accessible.

**3. German parties have officially agreed not to collaborate with the AfD (*cordon sanitaire*). However, there have been various types of collaboration, broadly defined, at different levels of government. To what extent has the far right normalized in the country?**

It is true that the AfD remains largely excluded at all federal levels, and even at the local level, the ‘firewall’ is still alive, as Schroeder et al. (2025) recently put it. Nevertheless, the increasing normalisation of the AfD was a subject of heated debate ahead of the federal election.

These debates intensified particularly in the few weeks before the election, when the CDU, under its party leader and chancellor candidate Friedrich Merz, introduced a purely symbolic motion in the *Bundestag* calling for stricter migration policies. As expected, this resolution passed with the AfD's support – an unprecedented event in the German *Bundestag*. In response, over a million people protested across the country. Many voters feared that Merz might consider cooperating with the AfD after the election.

**4. A surprise winner of the federal election was the Left Party. While it was long unclear if it would even pass the five-percent-threshold and enter parliament, in the end it scored 8,8%. How do you explain its electoral success?**

Indeed, the Left gained momentum in the final weeks before the election, benefiting from several key factors.

First, with its rhetorically strong and young top candidate, Heidi Reichinnek, the Left credibly positioned itself as a clear counterforce to both the AfD and the

CDU's perceived flirtation with the far right following the 'Merz stunt' in the Bundestag described above.

Second, the Left ran a highly effective campaign, both online – where it was among the strongest parties on TikTok – and offline, conducting an intensive door-to-door campaign. Since the departure of the controversial Sahra Wagenknecht and other socioculturally conservative members (who had, among other things, advocated for stricter migration policies), the party was able to sharpen its progressive profile.

Crucially, the Left's focus on social justice resonated particularly well with young voters. Among 18- to 24-year-olds, it emerged as the strongest party, securing 25% of the vote, with a majority of young women supporting it. Many of them joined the party after the election, leading to a record-high membership.

**5. In light of recent developments in your field, what are the questions that researchers of 'Extremism and Democracy' should focus from now on?**

More research should be dedicated to identifying concrete ways to strengthen liberal democracies. While an overwhelming majority of Germans support democracy as the best political system, most are dissatisfied with its functioning – significantly more than the number of AfD voters! This is a troubling trend, particularly in light of demographic change.

Political parties, as central organisations of our democracies, are under increasing pressure to fulfil their functions. They enjoy little trust, especially among younger people, and the core electorate of traditional catch-all parties is steadily shrinking. If only voters aged 60 and above had cast their ballots (a group that makes up over 40% of eligible voters in Germany), the election results would have looked very different – for example, the AfD would have received only 15% of the vote, and the Left just 5%.

Many current developments, such as the increasing volatility and polarisation of party systems, will likely intensify in the coming years. Political parties must take countermeasures in terms of ideology, organisation, and strategy. Research should play a key role in identifying concrete solutions to help parties regain the trust of a broader electorate and reinforce democratic engagement.



## DISCUSSING THE BIG TECH–TRUMP ALLIANCE

John Farkas

*Media Studies, University of Copenhagen, Denmark*

1. **At Trump's second inauguration, we saw the main Silicon Valley players present, images that created rather symbolic connotations. What does the new political alliance between Elon Musk (X), Jeff Bezos (Amazon), Sundar Pichai (Google) and Donald Trump mean?**

I think this was a mask-off moment. For far too long, tech billionaires were given the benefit of doubt across media, academia, and politics. At times, they were even portrayed as benevolent forces of democracy. It should always have been clear that the formation of a billionaire class with near-monopoly control over media and communication was never going to end well. Scholars such as Vincent Mosco, Jill Hills, and Herbert Schiller warned us back in the 1980s and early 1990s. Instead of taking action to prevent this, liberal politicians enabled a historically unprecedented centralisation of monetary, communicative, and infrastructural power up through the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s. Now that key tech leaders are openly aligned with authoritarian forces – what Aurelien Mondon and I call [\*reactionary tech oligarchy\*](#) – I hope we can finally begin to seriously reckon with the failed liberal status quo and discuss democratic alternatives.

2. **Elon Musk plays an important role in the Trump administration. What impact will this have on US domestic and foreign policy?**

I think it is crucial to understand how Elon Musk came to occupy his current position of political power. The role of money in US politics has expanded dramatically following a series of Supreme Court rulings that redefined political spending as protected speech under the First Amendment. This transformation began with *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (FEC)* and *SpeechNow.org v. FEC* in 2010, which established that restrictions on independent campaign expenditures are effectively restrictions on speech, since they inhibit 'people' (i.e. wealthy corporations and individuals) from buying as many ads (i.e. speech) as they want. Later rulings such as *McCutcheon v. FEC* (2014) and *FEC v. Ted Cruz for Senate* (2022) took this logic even further, removing restrictions on aggregate political donations and allowing candidates to repay campaign loans with donations received *after* the election, effectively eroding the boundary between donations and quid pro quo corruption. These cases collectively enshrined a political system in which financial capital is treated as a proxy for political voice, undermining any semblance of equal opportunity for political expression. Under this system, it has become nearly impossible for any candidate to succeed without the backing of billionaires. Elon Musk's unofficial entry into the Trump administration is an escalation of existing trends: Why stop at paying a politician for favours, when you can simply pay to become the political actor yourself and directly change laws and institutions that govern your industries? This sets a dangerous precedent well beyond the current administration.

- 3. Elon Musk's interventions in favour of far-right actors – including the AfD during the German elections, Javier Milei in Argentina, and Giorgia Meloni in Italy – have brought discomfort in the domestic politics of these countries. How would you interpret this strategy?**

Trump and Musk are not singular figures, but key actors in an expanding international reactionary movement. Accordingly, Musk is far from done. He just experienced first-hand how to leverage his wealth and ownership of X (formerly Twitter) to support the election of an authoritarian leader willing to give direct political power in return. It would only be logical for him to continue to pursue similar goals elsewhere, not only because his companies have production and sales across the world, but also because he is not a nationalist. While we should always be careful with historical parallels, I am reminded of Hannah Arendt's arguments in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* about Nazism not being a nationalist ideology and instead advancing what she called a 'supranational approach to politics'. I think Elon Musk and the far-right movements he supports are often misread as being 'simply' nationalists, rather than an international anti-democratic movement.

- 4. How would you assess the impact of the Big Tech–Trump alliance on European far-right politics?**

I think Europe's deep dependence on US tech infrastructure makes European countries vulnerable to foreign interference in our political systems. Beyond direct funding and rhetorical support from tech billionaires like Musk and Thiel, we should also expect to see social media platforms leveraged to support the worldviews of reactionary tech oligarchs, as we have already seen with Musk's many changes to the algorithmic newsfeed on X. On the flip side, I think the Trump administrations' blatant attack on freedom of speech, the rule of law, and existing alliances is making many Europeans think twice about idolizing him.

- 5. In the past few months, we saw a radical turn on behalf of Big Tech, such as embracing toxic masculinity, being "anti-woke" and a general turn away from democratic and LGBTQ+ rights. How can we make sense of this?**

With the US becoming a reactionary tech oligarchy, the relationship between business and politics is increasingly turning into one of quid pro quo arrangements and loyalty in return for judicial immunity and government contracts. Trump has never hidden his deep affection for Putin and his governance increasingly resembles Russian oligarchic rule. Accordingly, while some tech billionaires like Musk, Andreessen, and Thiel are deeply ideologically invested in the international reactionary movement, others align themselves out of self-interest. The outcome, however, is the same, making it vividly clear that their previous rhetorical alignment with liberal democratic values was never sincere.

**6. Lastly, what are the main questions we should ask regarding the current political predicament?**

I believe we must address two primary questions. First, how did liberal politicians from both the centre-left and centre-right enable the formation of a billionaire class with unprecedented control over communication, news, and political debate? And second, how can we build democratic alternatives that dismantle oligarchic control? This includes reimagining digital spaces as public goods - such as a public service internet that breaks with data colonialism - while drawing lessons from historical struggles for civil rights and popular sovereignty. In doing so, we must reject both techno-solutionism and nostalgic appeals to a lost liberal golden age.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### FRANCESCA SCRINZI. "THE RACIALIZATION OF SEXISM: MEN, WOMEN AND GENDER IN THE POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT."

ROUTLEDGE. 2023. 214 PP. £39.99. ISBN: 9781138081529

Valentina Nava

*Laboratoire du Changement Social et Politique, Université Paris Cité, France*

What makes far-right parties increasingly appealing to women, and how do gendered narratives shape their political engagement? Francesca Scrinzi's *The Racialization of Sexism: Men, Women and Gender in the Populist Radical Right* addresses these questions through an intersectional and biographical study of male and female activists within two major populist radical right (PRR) parties: Italy's Lega (formerly Lega Nord) and France's Front National (now Rassemblement National).

Building on her extensive research on gender regimes, far-right activism (Scrinzi 2014b), and the intersections of Catholicism, migration, and national identity (Gallo and Scrinzi 2016; Scrinzi 2008), Scrinzi situates these parties within their broader cultural and ideological contexts. She employs two key analytical frameworks – gender regime, ethnicity regime – and religion, to trace the racialization of sexism in France and Italy, making a crucial contribution to a field that remains underexplored, particularly in the Italian context. While France's secularist tradition has historically justified racist policies through republican values, especially in relation to the Muslim headscarf, Italy's stronger Catholic influence has shaped distinct forms of Islamophobia, reinforcing religion's central role in constructing national identity (Chapter 2: p. 56).

To investigate how gender operates within the LN and FN, Scrinzi draws on a rich empirical foundation, analyzing approximately 100 biographical trajectories (equally divided between men and women) and conducting 24 in-depth interviews with party activists. Her positionality as a northern Italian and white European female academic facilitated access to these groups; however, working within male-dominated and often overtly machista environments also posed challenges. She encountered sexism in various forms, ranging from paternalistic attitudes to explicit sexual innuendos, yet this marginalization may have enabled deeper access to informal party dynamics (Annex 1: p. 189). Interestingly, her affiliation with a Scottish university further eased her entry into the Lega, given the party's appropriation of Padanian mythology and Celtic identity (Annex 1: p. 188).

Scrinzi conceptualizes the *racialization of sexism* by PRR parties as a dual process: on the one hand, it constructs a hypermasculine image of Muslim and migrant men, portraying them as misogynistic and potential rapists; on the other, it frames native women (and, in France, gay men) as victims of immigration in need of protection from either heterosexual native men or the state. Within this



framework, native men are depicted as sexually modern and rightful defenders of women's rights.

The study underscores the complex ways in which far-right women actively engage with racialized sexism. Scrinzi highlights that this process is embedded in affective practices and unfolds within the cognitive and emotional mechanisms of socialization. Through the routine activities of party members, 'gendered and racialized notions of Us and Otherness' are reproduced (Chapter 4: p. 116). This approach aligns with classic ethnicity studies, which emphasize that ethnic identities are fundamentally relational. Within this dynamic, sexism is racialized, and ethnic belonging is constructed in opposition to perceived external threats. By adopting an interactionist framework, Scrinzi positions PRR activism as a *micro-level activity* in which categories of social difference are continuously negotiated and enacted. The notion of *militant career* (Fillieule 2010) further informs the study, illustrating how female activists' cognitive frames evolve through socialization.

An important generational shift emerges from Scrinzi's analysis: the prominence of the discourse of racialized sexism appears as inversely correlated with age, suggesting that younger activists, socialized in a political landscape where racialized sexism has been increasingly instrumentalized to justify exclusionary policies, are more likely to embrace it uncritically. Meanwhile, older activists, while still engaged in far-right politics, exhibit greater awareness of male privilege and often express explicit critiques of sexism within their parties (Chapter 4: p. 102–111).

By situating PRR women's engagement within broader gendered motivational frames, Scrinzi's work highlights how far-right parties strategically mobilize gender politics. This is exemplified by Marine Le Pen's rhetoric portraying the far right as the 'defender of the weakest members of the nation', a nationalist framing that casts female activists as both caregivers within the party and social reproducers of the nation. Such discourses resonate with women's lived experiences of care and protection, reinforcing their political involvement (Chapter 4: p. 102). These findings also lend support to Grzebalska and Zacharenko's (2018) argument that women's support for far-right agendas may represent an alternative model of social mobility and political subjectivation, particularly for those who reject both neoliberal and materialist feminist frameworks.

The study also interrogates the intersection of gender and class in far-right activism. By exploring how social background shapes political engagement, Scrinzi shows that working-class women often participate in party activities primarily to support their husbands' political careers, whereas middle-class women tend to occupy more public, yet symbolically marginal, roles within the movement (Chapter 5: pp. 124–128). In some cases, however, 'PRR activism offers working-class women the opportunity to gain autonomy and socialize outside the family, or even to break out of isolation within the home' (p. 130), while also allowing them to acquire forms of cultural capital, as illustrated by the cases of Geraldina and Teresa. These class-based distinctions generate diverse emotional, social, and material incentives for women's involvement. As their personal and professional trajectories evolve, so too does the nature of their political

engagement (p. 132). It would be equally valuable to examine further how men's political engagement is also shaped by their class background and position within the domestic sphere.

Scrinzi's findings challenge the assumption that far-right activism is exclusively shaped by the 'angry white men' trope. Male activism in PRR parties is shaped by complex, gendered motives that go beyond reinforcing hegemonic masculinity. It can signal a transition into adulthood for younger men, fulfill protector roles for family men, and even involve forms of care within the party (pp. 135-140). These interesting emerging data, drawn from a limited number of interviews, highlight the need for further research on how men's gendered political engagement is shaped across different stages of the life course and between generations.

In conclusion, Scrinzi's important work reinforces the idea that far-right politics should not be dismissed as an extremist deviation but rather understood as an expression of mainstream societal values. By illustrating how PRR gender frames are shaped not in isolation but through interactions with mainstream actors, the study links gender ideologies to broader structures of racism, neoliberalism, and transformations in labor and welfare. While PRR activism is often associated with working-class grievances, Scrinzi's analysis sheds light on middle- and upper-class activists, complicating oversimplified narratives of far-right mobilization as a mere reaction to economic decline and aligning with recent ethnographic research (i.e. Faury 2024). As such, this study makes a significant contribution to the understanding of gendered dynamics within far-right movements and underscores the urgency of analyzing these formations within the broader transformations of gender relations under globalization.

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**Valentina Nava** is a PhD student at the Laboratoire du Changement Social et Politique (LCSP, Université Paris Cité). Her research investigates the mechanisms behind the growing electoral support for *Fratelli d'Italia*. Through an ethnographic approach, she is conducting a monographic study of a region historically rooted in anti-fascist and socialist values, yet now shifting towards the far right. Her work explores the social, economic, and political dynamics that have contributed to the recent electoral success of Giorgia Meloni's party.

## **KATHERINE KONDOR AND MARK LITTLER (Ed.) "THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF FAR-RIGHT EXTREMISM IN EUROPE."**

ROUTLEDGE. 2023. 338 pp. £38.39. ISBN 9781032187983

George Kordas

*Department of Political science and History, Panteion University, Greece*

During the last few years, handbooks have gained significant popularity among academics and publishers due to their format: a specific number of small chapters covering various aspects of a topic. However, focusing on their frequency of appearance, someone will ask, 'Why another topic in this field?' or 'Was not that field covered in a previous publication?'. Unless someone follows a handbook's train of thought, the answer to such questions does not contain the full image. Such is the case of the 'The Routledge Handbook of Far-Right Extremism in Europe', edited by Katherine Kondor and Mark Litter.

Acknowledging that various aspects of the far-right family examined in previous publications, the editors specify their research area (Europe), splitting it geographically into four divisions, and then attempting to offer readers a variety of topics that belong both to the front line of the far-right studies and under-researched – or newly risen – cases. Moreover, editors clarified the significance of referring to 'far-right extremism' across the chapter, as they attempt to offer a more complex overview of 'far-right extremism's' nature based on individuals' visions. Thus, they move beyond the traditional approach to party-focused research that attempts to bring movements and protest politics under the spotlight whilst de-westernising far-right studies.

Beginning with Eastern Europe, Serbia, along with Russia and Ukraine, are the examined countries. Serbia is a perfect example of the ideological fluidity in authoritarian regimes, where crime offers more possibilities than democracy, and political life remains inseparable from extra-parliamentary organisations. The cases of Ukraine and Russia enlighten readers regarding the war between the two countries. Historical legacies are shared by both countries, whilst youth subcultures and street-level activity are more common in Russia than in Ukraine.

Central Europe examines the 'classic' cases of Germany, Austria, and the increasingly popular Hungary and Czech Republic. Germany's classic East-West division is supported by the authors' collected material from conducting

interviews and ethnographic research in different chronological periods, underlining the significance of subnational politics. The study of the Austrian far right is based on the role of historical continuity, drawing from the neo-Nazi memorial commemorations that took place until recently and how they interacted with FPÖ's activity and dynamic during the same period. The Czech case follows a four-period cycle, like other post-communist countries. The interest here lies in the attempt to combine the far right with social movements, a balance defined by the acceptance or not of subcultural aspects. Historical legacies play a crucial role in the Hungarian case, even though they are expressed through their imprint in the society and government and not in smaller intra- or extra-parliamentary groups.

Southern Europe gained prominence after the economic crisis, benefiting the far right. Portugal's newest addition, Chega, is studied regarding its links with social protest movements and extreme right groups. Despite its popularity, the Italian case offers new material regarding the relationship between populist radical and extreme right parties, acknowledging the charismatic personas of Salvini and Meloni. The chapter in Greece highlights how continuity is presented during the far right's marginalisation and how the far right's numerous faces have been diffused in Greek society. Cyprus' understudied case of ELAM reflects the island's geopolitical situation and nationalism, whilst focusing on ELAM's organisational structure, significantly contributing to the literature.

Scandinavian countries consist of a specific target group when examining the far right. Norway's case follows the handbook's main pattern; nevertheless, the authors' contribution is hidden in their combination of primary and secondary sources from the field. Sweden's case examines the links between populist radical right and extreme right actors. Finally, regarding Denmark, the far right's mainstreaming is examined, along with the peculiarity of female leadership in a party family that appeals to be mainly male-dominated.

Western Europe is the last geographical section to be examined. From France's increasing fragmentation to the Dutch's Identitarian, Ireland's discussions of a potential threat, and UK's extra-parliamentary activism, it presents various – more or less active – cases of far-right.

The handbook's epilogue is split into three sub-chapters, covering different issues related to the volume's main topic. Therefore, the chapter that explores the relationship between American and European far-right and activism declares students as its primary target, following a more introductory route to the field. Gender and the far right are an increasingly popular field; hence, the chapter introduces readers to their understanding and challenges. Finally, the concept of misogyny is based on anti-feminist discourse and is used as an idea to explore far-right extremism further.

The current volume offers rich content regarding far-right extremism and mobilisation in several European countries. It covers various cases, avoids repeating more 'traditional' examples, and approaches every country through a different lens. It brings us the most recent events and their effects on far-right parties and groups, whilst in several cases, it has used primary and secondary data to support its findings. Although every country has its significance to be studied,



the volume offers a brief overview of Ukraine and Russia, introducing the reader to the complicated nationalist politics in every country. Moreover, it is one of the first thorough studies of the Portuguese Chega, acknowledging the fluidity of the political scenery across Europe. Finally, by presenting extra-parliamentary organisations in England, the chapter could further clarify the violent riots Great Britain experienced during the previous weeks. The above examples underline volume's ability to interact and communicate with political developments, highlighting similar publications' significance.

However, the most significant part of the Handbook is its epilogue. The choice to split it into three different parts not only offers an overview of specific aspects regarding Europe but mainly offers potential students the opportunity for a smoother introduction to the examined topics, broadening the Handbook's reader population. It is a novelty that moves away from the stricter structure of Handbooks, opening their content to non-academic readers; thus, it avoids a 'wooden' discourse, that could appeal readers.

**George Kordas** is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science and History at the Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences and a scientific associate of its Centre for Political Research. His research focuses on the comparative study of far-right in Southeastern Europe and the study of the far-right's subcultures.

# 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.

- Adrian, K., Komalasari, K., Anugrah, & Weyland, K. (2025). Democracy's resilience to populism's threat: Countering global alarmism. *Mediterranean Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2025.2475629>
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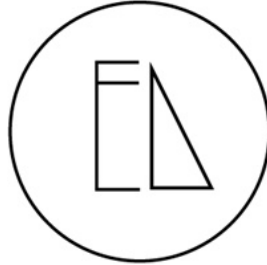


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## **e-EXTREME MANAGING EDITORS**

Audrey Gagnon, *University of Ottawa*  
[agagnon2@uottawa.ca](mailto:agagnon2@uottawa.ca)

Lazaros Karavasilis, *University of Bremen*  
[lkaravas@uni-bremen.de](mailto:lkaravas@uni-bremen.de)

Sabine Volk, *University of Tübingen*  
[sabine.volk@uni-tuebingen.de](mailto:sabine.volk@uni-tuebingen.de)

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<http://standinggroups.ecpr.eu/extremismanddemocracy/>  
[ecprextremismanddemocracy@gmail.com](mailto:ecprextremismanddemocracy@gmail.com)