

EEXTREME

October 2026

Volume 27

Number 2



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 Helsinki*

Book Review Liaison

Ghita Bordieri, *University of Milano-Bicocca*

E&D Steering Committee

Léonie de Jonge, *University of Tübingen*

Daphne Halikiopoulou, *University of York*

Annika Werner, *University of Southampton*

Larissa Böckmann, *University of Amsterdam / Université Libre de Bruxelles*

Javier Sajuria, *Queen Mary University of London*

Teresa Völker, *WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Free University of Berlin*

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).

Copyright © 2026 by the ECPR Standing Group on *Extremism & Democracy*.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, in any form or by any means, electronic, photocopying, or otherwise, without permission in writing from the ECPR Standing Group on *Extremism & Democracy*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Standing Group announcements	4
Upcoming events and calls.....	7
Expert interview	10
Book reviews.....	14
Publications alert	24
Contacts	24

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 an expert interview on the legal and practical restrictions to public protest by the Orbán regime in Hungary by **Eszter Kirs**.

Moreover, we are happy to provide not one, not two, but three book reviews! **Gijs Lambrechts** discusses Imogen Richards's book *The Aesthetic Politics of Far-Right Environmentalism*; **Lazaros Karavasilis** brings into conversation Alberto Toscano's *Late Fascism: Race, Capitalism and the Politics of Crisis*, and Dagmar Herzog's *The New Fascist Body*; and **Claire Parsons** discusses Marc-André Argentino and Amarnath Amarasingam's book *Contemporary Far-Right Culture*.

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 start of the semester!

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

CFP: E&D BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 2027

Building on the inaugural conference held at Queen Mary University of London in June 2025, the ECPR Standing Group on Extremism and Democracy brings scholars together at **Erasmus University Rotterdam** for its second conference.

The Conference provides an **interdisciplinary forum** for scholars examining the changing relationship between democracy, radical politics, extremism, political violence, populism, and democratic resilience in contemporary societies.

Across the world, democracies are confronting profound political and societal transformations. Democratic backsliding, ideological polarisation, political violence, and declining trust in institutions increasingly challenge democratic governance. At the same time, populist parties, radical political movements, extremist organisations, and anti-system actors have become more visible in electoral politics, civil society, and digital spaces. These developments are accompanied by rapid technological change, as social media platforms, artificial intelligence, and other digital technologies reshape political communication, mobilisation, radicalisation, and democratic contestation.

The second edition of the Conference explores these developments from an interdisciplinary perspective, bringing together scholars from political science, public policy, sociology, media and communication, history, law, criminology, and related disciplines.

The Conference is organised around ten thematic sections. While its theme highlights the relationship between democracy and digital society, it retains the Standing Group's broad substantive focus on how radical politics, extremism, political violence, and democratic change shape political actors, institutions, societies, and public debates across different ideological and geographical contexts.

Join us to share your research, exchange perspectives, and contribute to debates on democracy in a changing digital society.

Further information on the conference, paper and panel submissions here:
<https://ecpr.eu/Events/372>

SAVE THE DATE: HEPP7 CONFERENCE 2027

The Seventh Helsinki Conference on Emotions, Populism and Polarisation (HEPP7) will be held on 14–16 June 2027 at the University of Helsinki and online. As with previous HEPP conferences, HEPP7 will be fully hybrid.

The CfP will be published soon:

<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/conferences/emotions-populism-and-polarised-politics-media-and-culture>

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH ETHICS SURVEY

Dear colleagues,

We would hereby like to kindly request your participation in the survey **Evaluating Risk: Comparing ethics review boards' and researchers perception and understanding of the risk of online violent extremism research**, which aims to assess and compare how ethics committees and researchers categorise risk levels in research on online violent extremism (OVE).

You are invited to participate in this survey if you are a researcher who studies online violent extremism working at a university in the **United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, or Ireland**.

In this 40-minute survey, you will be presented with short research proposal vignettes that represent common methodological approaches in online violent extremism research and will be asked to briefly assess them.

Please note, if you completed our previous survey, *Evaluating Risk: Ethics review boards' perception and understanding of the risk of online violent extremism research*, in your capacity as an ethics reviewer, you are unable to participate in this survey. Thank you for your contribution.

To complete the survey please follow this link to the Survey or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
https://soton.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_29lvs7ukeRfEueW

We would highly value and appreciate your time and participation in this survey projects. You are also welcome to forward this request to relevant colleagues who study online violent extremism. Alternatively, you may contact a member of the research team, and we can send the survey to them directly.

Thank you in advance, and please do not hesitate to contact us in case you have any questions.

Kind regards,

Ashton Kingdon (University of Southampton), a.r.kingdon@soton.ac.uk
Nicola Mathieson (University of Liverpool), nicola.mathieson@liverpool.ac.uk
Audrey Gagnon (University of Ottawa), agagnon2@uottawa.ca

CFP: OPEN PANELS AT IPSA 2027

The 2027 IPSA World Congress will be take place in Rome from 24-28 July 2027 in collaboration with LUISS Guido Carli and the Società Italiana di Scienza Politica (SISP).

We invite paper submissions for these open panels:

- “The Digital Reactionary: Contention, Ideology and Emerging Technologies” by Lazaros Karavasilis, part of the track “GL09 Politics and Political Science in times of AI”, chaired by Dr John Ishiyama and Dr Valentina Reda
- “Transnational dimensions of far-right contention”, convened by Sabine Volk, part of the track “LOC10 Populist and Far-Right Politics in Europe and Beyond”, chaired by Marianna Griffini and Marta Lorimer

Submit your paper proposals here: <https://wc2027.ipsa.org/wc/home>

EXPERT INTERVIEW

RESTRICTION TO PROTEST IN HUNGARY

ESZTER KIRS, Cornivus University of Budapest

1. In which ways and on which legal grounds did the authoritarian government restrict the right to protest in your context?

In Hungary, the Orbán regime, like modern autocracies in general, relied heavily on autocratic legalism. In this system, as Kim Lane Scheppele [put it](#), electoral mandates, constitutional and legal change are used in the service of an illiberal agenda. The problem did not lie only in legislation itself, but also in the politicized application of the law. The arbitrary and systematic use of petty-offense and criminal law to repress protests appeared in its late stage, around 2022. In addition, the government employed propaganda aimed at discrediting protesters, as well as administrative and informal forms of repression, such as setting administrative barriers to protest actions and exerting pressure through self-censoring employers.

In 2025, the infamous ban of the Pride march, based on changes to the Fundamental Law and the 2018 Act LV on the Right of Assembly, drew a loud echo in international public discourse. It was rooted in previous discriminatory legislation, a Russian-style propaganda law, Act LXXIX of 2021, which was widely criticized by [international institutions](#) and [civil society organizations](#) as violating the rule of law and international legal obligations on equal treatment and freedom of expression. It outlawed any depiction or discussion of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations. It prohibited access of individuals under 18 years of age to any content that would propagate or portray divergence from self-identity corresponding to sex at birth, sex change, or homosexuality. The [2025 Pride ban](#) was related to this prohibition. In 2025, the two-thirds majority of Orbán amended Act LV of 2018 on the Right of Assembly, prohibiting assemblies that might display a “substantial element” of any content prohibited by the 2021 propaganda law. The amendments [violated fundamental freedoms](#) of not only members of the LGBTQIA+ community but also those of any individual organizing or attending a protest.

What is less known to the international public is the systematic use of petty offense and criminal law against pro-Pride and, in general, pro-democracy protesters. Hundreds of petty offense proceedings were launched against protesters in 2025. Lawyers representing protesters, whom I interviewed for my current research, saw this phenomenon, along with systematic ID checks of protesters, as a new way to dissolve peaceful assemblies. The message spread among people that protesting resulted in ID checks and fines easily. Unlike petty offenses, criminal proceedings were not launched *en masse*, but they were publicly and immediately communicated by the police. Prosecution services seemed to be the “masters of life and death” in these cases. They pressed charges in all cases involving pro-Pride protesters, even though video footage clearly proved the lack

of violent acts in a case where protesters allegedly committed violence against a public official, and despite the lack of traffic on a bridge where protesters were accused of disrupting public services. Prosecution services also manipulated procedural rules to pressure protesters facing criminal proceedings.

After a few pro-Pride protests, the number of participants in weekly protests dropped significantly. The deterrent effect seemed to be achieved. However, not permanently, as wonderfully demonstrated by the great turnout at the 2025 Pride, which turned into a massive anti-government protest.

2. To what extent do such restrictions to protest constitute a transnational trend according to your observations? Has the far right in your context “learned” from previous/contemporary authoritarian leaders?

The Orbán regime used the playbook of modern autocracies. The undemocratic governing party, the FIDESZ, [“ruling by cheating”](#), hacking democratic and legal institutions, hollowing them out from within, turned the parliament into a legislative factory, identifying the parliamentary majority with popular will, distorted the electoral laws for its own benefits (this strategy proved to be a double-edged sword in the end), captured public institutions, monopolized mass media, and disseminated populist governmental propaganda. In legislation, it applied the usual illiberal tools of constitution-making, fast-track legislation, declaring emergencies and governing by decrees, restrictions on general debate in parliament, and sanctioning unorthodox, performative, demonstrative acts by opposition political parties. Lots of Hungarians in dissent generally assumed that illiberal practices were imported from Putin due to the Orbán government's political servility towards Russia, but the Hungarian autocratic government had plenty of examples to follow in the global sphere of modern autocracy.

3. How do restrictions to protest relate to broader authoritarian projects e.g. the implementation of a nativist and patriarchal social order?

In the process of autocratization, the concentration of political power must be justified. This is largely facilitated by [populist and nativist rhetoric](#) and the [identification of enemies](#). Framing dissenting citizens and organizations as enemies helps maintain the imagined political community of the illiberal government and justify extraordinary measures. In the governmental propaganda of the Orbán regime, this imaginary community was the nation and “real Hungarians” against foreign enemies and internal traitors.

The Orbán government largely contributed to the polarization of society through its hate-mongering propaganda. It has framed political opponents, dissenting members of civil society, and minority groups as agents serving the interests of post-Communist or international liberal elites. Key targets included George Soros, the European Union, [migrants](#), domestic socialist and liberal political parties, opposition politicians, civil society organizations, journalists, protest movements, and the [LGBTQIA+ community](#). At the center of this [“soft conspiracy theory”](#) stood Orbán, portrayed as the charismatic leader protecting the independence and freedom of the authentic Hungarian people. This nativist conception of society excluded and stigmatized certain vulnerable social groups,

including migrants, Roma, and the LGBTQIA+ community. Pro-democracy and pro-autonomy protesters were also targeted. The media's agenda-setting role in shaping the public agenda has been examined through [quantitative research](#). Since 2011, the government-dependent Hungarian media have systematically used [marginalization techniques](#) in their coverage of protests, including ridiculing the events, emphasizing protesters' unacceptable behavior, downplaying their arguments related to public affairs, or depicting protesters as puppets of internal and external enemies serving their anti-governmental agenda. Protesters were depicted as non-autonomous, aggressive, or decadent individuals serving the interests of opposition political parties or foreign actors. Their legitimacy as citizens collectively expressing their government-critical opinions was challenged in the eyes of the broader public. This, in turn, could negatively affect the ability of protests to fulfill their social function as tools of democracy.

4. How have protesters dealt with these restrictions? Have they stopped protesting or did they find creative ways to continue the protest action?

Pro-democracy protesters did not shy away from expressing their critical views on the streets. Even in the late stage of the Orbán regime, the systematic use of petty offense and criminal law did not achieve a lasting chilling effect. The 2025 Pride ban drew a strong response from abroad and within the borders, with [EU member states](#), [NGOs](#), [academics](#), and citizens voicing opposition to the country's radicalizing autocratization. The moral collapse of the regime, economic decline, the appearance of a potent political rival (the current Prime Minister and his party, the TISZA), and critical voices within law enforcement resulted in mass mobilization for governmental change. March-June 2025 was a protest-intensive period, with weekly assemblies attended by hundreds and, at major events, thousands of protesters, providing a constant presence of resistance on [the streets of Budapest](#) primarily. Pro-Pride and pro-democracy protesters of Hungary acted as constitutionalists resisting an autocrat, who already threatened them with the force of criminal law. Through repression, citizens were [trained as constitutionalists](#), learning about their fundamental rights and institutional and performative ways to advocate for them.

Looking back over the last 16 years, several protest movements have demonstrated strong resistance to lawfare and government smear campaigns. They applied not only communication and creative action strategies to encourage public support and trigger solidarity, but also, in some cases, litigation strategies, such as the [2020 FreeSZFE movement](#). Beyond administrative cases, trials were triggered in cases of defamatory media reports, and for the protection of professors on strike. Protesters turned to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Fundamental Rights and the Constitutional Court to seek protection of their fundamental rights and autonomy. In vain, though, due to the politically captured nature of these institutions. Members of the FreeSZFE community did not initiate legal proceedings based on high expectations of a positive outcome. They were not naive. As [research](#) demonstrates, participation in protests can have a catalyzing effect, empowering participants to use institutional strategies and claim formal justice, regardless of the outcome of legal proceedings. They acted on a deep belief in their truth, and they made it visible to the broader public

through creative performances (e.g., their constitutional complaint was filed not by their lawyer, but by the Goddess of truth and justice, blindfolded [Iustitia, played by an acting student](#) who was part of the protest community). Their collective actions thus carried important symbolic force.

5. What issues and analytical lenses should scholars of Extremism & Democracy further investigate in the future?

Regarding the efficient use of peaceful assemblies in democracies in decline, two perspectives should be explored more broadly. The politicized and systematic application of law, including petty offense law, against protesters, which is not visible at the forefront as overt physical violence, but can have a broad chilling effect. Furthermore, the impact of marginalization techniques targeting protesters and disseminated through mass media should be analyzed in terms of how they hollow out the social function of protests.

Dr Eszter Kirs is an Associate professor at Corvinus University of Budapest. Her previous research findings on Hungarian pro-democracy protest movements can be found, among others, in the [Journal of Youth Studies](#), the [Journal of Illiberalism Studies](#), or the [European Politics and Society](#). Her current research, supported by the János Bolyai Research Scholarship of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, focuses on the politicized use of petty offense and criminal law against protesters and on movement lawyering under the Orbán regime.

BOOK REVIEWS

IMOGEN RICHARDS., "THE AESTHETIC POLITICS OF FAR-RIGHT ENVIRONMENTALISM."

PALGRAVE MACMILLIAN. 2025. PP. 173 ISBN: 978-3-031-98180-7

Gijs Lambrechts, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

When you scroll past images of flower meadows, classical statues, and rustic farmhouses on social media, you probably do not think of far-right politics. That is exactly the point. In *The Aesthetic Politics of Far-right Environmentalism*, Imogen Richards shows how contemporary far-right movements draw on environmental imagery, nature symbolism, and ecological rhetoric to give deeply rooted ethnonationalist and authoritarian agendas emotional and cultural resonance. The book is compact but rich in substance, and it forces us to look differently at seemingly innocent visual culture and the political work it can do.

The book is structured across six chapters that move from theory to case study and back again. The first chapter lays out the analytical framework, introducing Benjamin's and Rancière's theories of political aesthetics and the book's methodology. The second establishes a typology of far-right environmentalism, distinguishing ecofascism, green nationalism, and accelerationism, and tracing their intellectual roots through Malthus, Hardin, and early eugenicist ecology. Chapters three to five apply this framework to specific cases: ecofascism and trolling in online subcultures such as CasaPound Italia and the tradwife movement (Chapter 3), green nationalism in parties such as the AfD and the Alliance for Peace and Freedom (Chapter 4), and fashwave and schizowave aesthetics and white supremacist music (Chapter 5). The final chapter draws these threads together, situating far-right environmental aesthetics within the material structures of global capitalism and climate-driven displacement. I discuss five lessons I take away from this book.

Lesson 1: Beauty is not innocent, and it is not just a cover story

The thread running through the entire book is that beauty can be a political weapon. Richards builds her analysis around Walter Benjamin's warning about the "aestheticisation of politics" (Chapter 1): the process by which fascism offers people not political emancipation but an aesthetic experience, in Benjamin's own words, "a chance to express themselves" (Benjamin, 1936, p. 15). She combines this with Jacques Rancière's concept of the "distribution of the sensible" (Rancière, 2013), the idea that power structures determine what we see, hear, and accept as normal. This theoretical combination works well, and it does more than expose a hidden message behind a polished Instagram post of a woman in a flower garden, or a nostalgic neon-lit image of a Greek statue. Following Richards, the aesthetic surface is not a decorative wrapper placed over a separate ideological "real" message; it is one of the primary ways ideology is felt, enjoyed, and reproduced. The strength of the book lies in teaching us to decode this aesthetic layer rather than simply strip it away, treating it as itself the site where political belonging and exclusion are experienced.

Lesson 2: "Green" is not always progressive

One of the most confronting insights is that environmentalism is not inherently emancipatory. Richards identifies three ideological strands within far-right ecological thinking: ecofascism, green nationalism, and accelerationism (Chapter 2). Ecofascism ties nature conservation to racial ideology and population control, with roots in the Social Darwinism of Malthus and Hardin's "lifeboat ethics." Green nationalism, more widespread among parties such as the AfD in Germany and the Swiss Democrats, presents nature as an extension of national identity and migrants as threats to the landscape (Chapter 4). Accelerationism welcomes ecological collapse as a catalyst for a new, purified order. What unites these variants is not so much a denial that climate change is a global, structural problem, but a different account of its structural causes: one that blames the erosion of borders, migration, and the loss of ethnic and racial homogeneity for ecological decline, rather than colonial histories and unequal resource use. Richards points out that wealthy nations are responsible for 74% of excess resource use worldwide, a fact that is systematically erased in far-right climate discourse in favour of this alternative narrative. The typology Richards develops here builds on and extends earlier work by, among many others, Forchtner (2019) and Lubarda (2023), but adds a distinctly aesthetic dimension that those accounts largely leave aside.

Lesson 3: Trolling is not a joke but a craft

Particularly refreshing is the way Richards takes memes, trolling, and digital subcultures seriously as political aesthetics (Chapter 3). She analyses how movements like CasaPound Italia treat environmental engagement, such as tree planting, as a performative act of identity and belonging that enacts an idealised vision of national rebirth, while rejecting climate science altogether. She also shows how the tradwife movement on platforms like Reddit and Tumblr presents an idealised life of self-sufficiency and domesticity, complete with "cottagecore" aesthetics, while that very life depends entirely on the digital infrastructure and global supply chains it claims to reject. Richards traces this reliance down to the rare earth minerals and exploitative Global South labour that sustain the platforms these movements depend on, laying the contradiction bare without moralising about it.

Lesson 4: Nostalgia is a dangerous political tool

The book contains a strong chapter on fashwave and schizowave, digital aesthetic subgenres that combine 1980s synthwave visuals (neon grids, retro cosmic imagery) with white supremacist iconography (Chapter 5). Richards draws on the concept of "anemoia," nostalgia for a past never personally experienced (Cantinelli, 2024), to explain why these images are so effective. For audiences already receptive to these narratives, the imagery evokes a vague longing for cultural greatness and racial purity, without viewers necessarily being able to pinpoint exactly what is being referenced. Combined with music, from Nazi propaganda songs to contemporary neofolk and metal, these media create a sense of community and meaning that feeds on the alienation many young men experience under neoliberalism. This is a careful analysis that shows far-right propaganda is not always loud and hateful. Sometimes it sounds like a melancholic synthesiser.

Lesson 5: The structure is the problem, not just the message

Perhaps the most important lesson of the book is that far-right environmental aesthetics cannot be understood apart from the material structures within which they operate (Chapter 6). Building on the contradictions traced in earlier chapters, Richards argues that this structural embeddedness is not a side note to the analysis, but its starting point: the movements she studies cannot be understood through their imagery and rhetoric alone, but only by situating that imagery within the same neoliberal systems it claims to reject. The book closes with a call for future research into effective counter-narratives, to prevent legitimate ecological concerns from being captured by reactionary forces. As Hughes, Jones, and Amarasingam (2022) have shown in their work on the far right/ecology nexus in online spaces, the digital terrain is where these ideologies increasingly take root, and Richards demonstrates convincingly that we need to understand the aesthetics, not just the arguments.

Final thoughts

Richards' book is part of a growing branch within the study of far-right environmental politics that pays closer attention to the visual and cultural dimensions of these movements. Forchtner's edited volume *Visualising Far-Right Environments* (2023) marked an important step in that direction, bringing together scholars working on the imagery and visual rhetoric of far-right ecologism across different national contexts. Richards' monograph pushes this agenda further by offering a sustained, book-length analysis grounded in political aesthetics theory, moving from description of what the far right shows us to an explanation of how and why these images work politically.

The book does leave me with one question, which I would frame more as curiosity than criticism. Richards is very effective at diagnosing how the far right appropriates environmental aesthetics, but the book says relatively little about what this means for progressive politics and the left more broadly. If the far right has become so skilled at making ecological themes emotionally compelling, what does that imply for green and left movements trying to mobilise around the same issues? Are there lessons here about the aesthetics of climate communication that progressive actors are currently missing? Richards hints at this in her concluding chapter when she calls for counter-narratives, but a more developed reflection on what effective counter aesthetics might look like would have strengthened the book's practical relevance. That said, this is perhaps a book waiting to be written rather than a gap in this one.

These reservations aside, for anyone working at the intersection of environment, media, and political radicalisation, this is essential reading. At a time when the climate debate is increasingly polarised, this book teaches us to look more carefully at how far-right aesthetics work on us politically, and not just at who produces them.

References

- Benjamin, Walter. 1936. 'L'œuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproduction mécanisée.' *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 5 (1): 40–68. <https://doi.org/10.5840/zfs193651130>.
- Cantinelli, L. 2024. 'Anemoia and the Vaporwave Phenomenon: The "New" Aesthetic of an Imagined Nostalgia.' *Imaginaires* 26: 132–151. <https://doi.org/10.34929/imaginaires.vi26.57>.
- Forchtner, Bernhard. 2019. *The Far Right and the Environment: Politics, Discourse and Communication*. Routledge.
- Forchtner, Bernhard, ed. 2023. *Visualising Far-Right Environments: Communication and the Politics of Nature*. Global Studies of the Far Right. Manchester University Press.
- Hughes, Brian, Dave Jones, and Amarnath Amarasingam. 2022. 'Ecofascism: An Examination of the Far-Right/Ecology Nexus in the Online Space'. *Terrorism and Political Violence* 34 (5): 997–1023. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2022.2069932>.
- Lubarda, Balša. 2023. *Far-Right Ecologism: Environmental Politics and the Far Right in Hungary and Poland*. Taylor & Francis.
- Rancière, Jacques. 2013. *The Politics of Aesthetics*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Gijs Lambrechts is a PhD candidate at the Department of Communication Studies, Vrije Universiteit Brussel. His research focuses on environmental discourses of far-right parties in Belgium and the Netherlands. His work is supported by the Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek – Vlaanderen (FWO) under Grant FWOTM1329.

ALBERTO TOSCANO, "LATE FASCISM: RACE, CAPITALISM AND THE POLITICS OF CRISIS."

VERSO BOOKS, 2023. Pp. 224 ISBN:9781839760204

&

DAGMAR HERZOG, "THE NEW FASCIST BODY."

WIRKLICHKEIT BOOKS, 2025. Pp. 112 ISBN: 978-3-948200-20-6

*Lazaros Karavasilis, Institute for Research on Far-Right Extremism (IRex),
University of Tübingen; Digital Transitions & Society Research Unit (DIGITS),
University of Nicosia*

Contemporary developments in the far-right political landscape have sparked debates about its transformation amid a globalised, interconnected context in which far-right actors influence and are influenced by one another, regardless of their geographical positionality. Indeed, figures such as Donald Trump, Javier Milei, and until very recently Viktor Orbán have contributed significantly to the diffusion of far-right ideas and agendas on a global scale that surpass the confines of the political arena and are further propagated in the material and digital aspects of civil society, as well as in the corporate world. However, this is not a unilateral move: the constant fluctuation of these ideas is occurring among all the mentioned actors simultaneously and at an alarming rate, prompting the need to explore the characteristics and meaning of this far-right transformation for both academic and political purposes.

A few years ago, Alberto Toscano wrote a book titled 'Late Fascism', clearly alluding to the transformations of so-called late capitalism. Toscano takes a more radical turn in understanding and explaining the contemporary far-right through the analytical lens of fascism, a term that politicians, academics, and journalists alike have thrown around in abundance since the 1960s–1970s and onwards. In an attempt to reconceptualise the term, Toscano re-inscribes fascism as part and parcel of capitalism's history, an intrinsic connection that can take different forms depending on capitalism's shifts in time, which in turn reflect on the form that fascism takes. Through the seven chapters of the book, Toscano debates how fascism is used as a concept, how fascism uses concepts such as 'freedom', 'race', 'nation', etc. and how fascism reflects capitalism's contradictions, being itself a very contradictory concept, abstract and specific at the same time. Each of the chapters in the book reflects one aspect of Toscano's understanding of fascism: Fascism in connection to time and temporality, moving beyond its interwar particularity-oriented understanding; its internationalised approach with examples of black critique on fascism; the broader theoretical debates on fascism and how the latter inverts ideas such as 'freedom'; the fascism-capitalism relationship explored via their mutual abstractions; fascism's transmutability; Furio Jesi's theory on fascism; and lastly fascism and its connection to eros.

It is fascism's contradictions that Toscano doubles down on as a defining feature that allows us to re-interpret fascism within the capitalist-democratic nexus and highlight its ambivalent nature both with capitalism and democracy. In fact, Toscano delves deeper and deconstructs the established notion of liberalism's and fascism's oppositional relationship, exploring further the common elements that they feature as they are both different protractions of capitalism. Read as such, fascist traits can also be found in neoliberalism and its own authoritarian turn in the past decade and for Toscano, have flourished to define contemporary (late) fascism itself, an amalgamation of contradictions (e.g. being anti-state and pro-state at the same time), negations (anti-Islam, anti-communism) and affirmations (tradition, race, nation). His argument (at times convoluted and more theoretically leaning than it should) brings forth an important aspect: the malleability and transversality of fascism as a concept and as a phenomenon that supersedes period framing and transmutes according to the historical, political, and economic context of the time. It also brings forth a question: if the analytical lens of fascism can be used in such a capacity, do the analytical labels of 'far-right' and 'radical right' still matter or are they inscribed as expressions of late fascism? At the moment, there is no clear answer.

Following similar thoughts on the contemporary far right, Dagmar Herzog's recent book focuses on exploring a core aspect that has often been overshadowed: the issue of the body and fascism's obsession with it. In a short essay-like endeavour consisting of three chapters (post-modern fascism; the promise of pleasure in Nazi Germany; and the longing of a smart Volk), Herzog brings the body to the forefront of contemporary fascism as the nexus of reactionary eroticism, pleasure, aggression, immigration and racism and one of the manifestations of fascism's contradictions. Basing her research heavily on the German far-right party Alternative for Germany (AfD) and far-right movements, Herzog proceeds into an in-depth examination of the body in fascism and at the same time creates a historicity of it, via the connection with Nazism and its own understanding of the body.

Like Toscano, Herzog presents the contradictions of fascism regarding the body by highlighting key elements of the Nazi period and disproving the established perception of Nazism's oppressive view of the body, featuring sexual conservatism and openness at the same time, depending on the context and the constituency. The aforementioned historicity comes easily to mind if we consider that one of AfD's leaders today is Alice Weidel, a lesbian in a partnership with a Sri Lankan woman advocating in favour of LGBTQ+ rights and in favour of the traditional family model at the same time. As Herzog most accurately presents, fascism has a continuum in time, and it is materialised today through discourses, narratives and fantasies that involve both the individual aspect of the body (sexual relations, ableism, racism) but also the body politic, i.e. the idolised construction of the nation through the 'master race' signifier. Verified by Toscano himself, who provides the afterword to this book, fascism today understands the body both in terms of reclaiming what was lost (male fantasies) and libidinally investing in a faux-nostalgia of the past, tied to specific economic and political contexts.

The discussion between the two books also affirms the contradictory nature of contemporary fascism. Toscano's thorough investigation and Herzog's theme-focused insight offer a new understanding of the concept, exceeding the

traditional historical context of fascism and allowing its revision in the light of late capitalism's transformations and in its expressions in the form of contemporary far-right actors. At the same time, they provide the opportunity to contemplate the analytical utility of fascism as a concept, by acknowledging its contradictions and exploring how they materialise in contemporary far-right politics.

Lazaros Karavasilis is a Research Associate at the Institute for Research on Far-Right Extremism (IRex), University of Tübingen and at the Digital Transitions & Society Research Unit (DIGITS), University of Nicosia, and a visiting researcher at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Hasselt in Belgium. He received his PhD from the University of Loughborough in England, on *Populism and Others -Isms: left- and right-wing populism in Greece and Germany* and specialises in issues related to theoretical and empirical manifestations of populism, discourse analysis, left and right radical parties, the far right, and theories of accelerationism.

MARC-ANDRÉ ARGENTINO AND AMARNATH AMARASINGAM., "CONTEMPORARY FAR-RIGHT CULTURE."

ROUTLEDGE. 2025. PP. 327 ISBN: 978-1-032-54569-1

Claire Parsons, University of Ottawa, Canada

Marc-André Argentino and Amarnath Amarasingam's edited collection *Contemporary Far-Right Culture* offers a wide-ranging, high-level overview of the cultural trends that underlie the far-right movement. At 327 pages, the book flies through sixteen different cultural niches within far-right extremist movements and not only identifies what makes them part of the far-right movement, but what makes them so effective. Argentino and Amarasingam's new book fills a simple gap in the field, combining several aspects of far-right culture into a singular and accessible book that provides students new to the field with a foundation to work from. In this task, it is extremely (pun intended) successful.

The book covers more than just the radical white supremacist and fascist ideas that underlie the far-right movement and its corresponding offshoots and militias, expanding to Trad Wife culture in India and evangelical Christian masculinity. Of course, it does still discuss the more widespread and understood themes of traditional gender roles, militarism, and historical nostalgia. In an act to push the boundaries of the field, commentary on linguistics, cultural style, and deep-seated paranoia amongst far-right members of varying contingents also appear. In being an introduction to the field, the book elevates the conversation on the far-right by extending beyond the cursory evaluation of online radicalization and expands it to include the fiction and white power music that dominated the late 1990s skinhead era. Within this, the book creates a linear explanation for multiple generations of far-right movements, implicitly casting aside the bias that far-right groups are a recent issue. The book does not abandon the online and takes for granted the research before it, but instead creates a microcosm of narratives as to how social media developed radicalization and retained engagement with far-right content, normalizing it in the contemporary political context. It touches upon both the loose TikTok regulation of the present and the Wild West nature of the various 'chan' social media sites that pre-date it. In sum, I found that the book left no stone unturned in terms of where far-right culture has woven itself into the media consumption of the average person. As part of a widespread recruitment and engagement, the authors are right to point out that the power of the far-right movement has always been its ability to become relevant in whatever cultural sphere they deem necessary for its success.

The book itself is successful in its goal as a foundational and comprehensive overview of the field. As discussed above, the key achievement of the book is that it spends its time cross-cutting several eras of the movement while also finding the time to accent what it is about these pieces of cultural media that makes it radical and attractive to its demographic. It could run the risk of running long, but each author confines their work to twenty to thirty pages focusing on the results of their studies, rather than the research that came before it or the methodology that led to their findings. This is not at all to say that the book is

neglectful of method, theory, or previous research, in fact the methodology is presented in an accessible way to the average reader. However, *Contemporary Far-Right Culture* never deviates from its task of informing the reader about what it is that makes the movement tick. It is clear in its aims, underlining what upstart researchers should look for in their own work by identifying with clarity the signs and symbols of the far-right. A secondary strength is the clear and well-rounded argument across the authors that the far-right has had little capacity to invent a culture of its own, instead preferring to co-opt from other internet trends, genres and styles. Take for instance the co-optation of the formerly beloved internet meme Pepe the Frog or the Fashwave's lackluster emulation of the potential nuance of vaporwave. The far-right holds strong to the fashion and "masculine domination" of President Kennedy against his wife Jackie Onassis. The authors all make a deliberate point to state that none of these co-optations are unique or interesting in their own right, instead being merely interesting for their mystique and application to hateful, rage-inducing, messages. My interpretation is frankly that the intersection of these two strengths, that the far-right has touched every single aspect of culture, art and music but that they are terribly bad at it, takes the venom out of the amount of cultural impact they propagate in an attempt to win the very cultural war they invented.

The book does leave certain things to be desired for future editions. The first and most striking is that with all the focus on internet culture, there is no examination into what makes memes so effective for the far-right. Memes as a format are simply assumed to be the baseline for all internet content, but the authors do not feature any thoughts as to why memes themselves are able to radicalize an audience over longer-form content, speeches, books, or even music. Several of the chapters focus on platforms but do not examine what it is about the content on those platforms, with TikTok and the 'chan' family all focusing on short-form videos and photos, that makes them so mesmerising. While it is uncommon for cultural reviews to discuss the mechanisms of propagation, how the far-right decides to mobilize their messaging is within itself cultural. It matters where the far-right targets their media and whom they are pursuing with each post.

The book also lacks a conclusion, which is a shame due to the effectiveness of the brief introduction which lays out some of those key assumptions and definitions of those who study extremism. A conclusion could have drawn to the forefront the points I have made concerning the book's strengths. Currently, the arguments of the book feel more implicit than they do explicit which would have benefited it as an introductory text for students entering the field and looking to get familiar with far-right culture, dog whistles, and explicit themes and psychology. The book covers so much and does not draw the many threads into a final narrative yarn.

Despite these shortcomings, would I recommend this book? Absolutely. In fact, I could see many of its chapters assigned in introductory classes to the far-right as well as acting as a staple for the seasoned researcher. My only caveat is that culture, especially online, changes rapidly, and the far-right has proven extremely flexible and malleable in its ability to fit itself into cultural cornerstones. It serves its purpose for researchers in the contemporary world and I would, without hesitation, pick up a second volume once the beast shapeshifts once more.

Claire Parsons is a PhD Student at the University of Ottawa. Her research interests pertain to military affairs, far-Right radicalization, and counterterrorism with her Master's Major Research Project focusing on reducing the recruitment and retention of far-right radicals, white supremacists, and neo-Nazis into the Canadian Armed Forces.

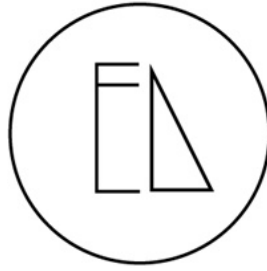
PUBLICATIONS ALERT

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.

- Adams, James; Andrews, Josephine; Davis, Braeden; and Federice, Alexa. 2026. "Who attacks whom? How populism and Euroscepticism drive cross-national conflict between European party elites." *EUROPEAN UNION POLITICS*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/14651165261450532>
- Akintayo, Joshua. 2026. "Where the far-right is not: critical terrorism studies and the epistemological limits of far-right extremism in non-Western contexts." *CRITICAL STUDIES ON TERRORISM*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2026.2699557>
- Aspinall, Kian. 2026. "The Grammar of Race: British Fascism, Racial Nationalism and the Rise of Reform UK." *POLITICAL QUARTERLY*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-923x.70110>
- Baldino, Daniel. 2026. "Before ideology: affective atmospheres and the perceptual organisation of extremist violence." *BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES OF TERRORISM AND POLITICAL AGGRESSION*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19434472.2026.2708296>
- Bulli, Giorgia. 2026. "The Limits of Populism: Origins, Development, and External Environment of Fratelli d'Italia and Alternative Fur Deutschland." *POPULISM*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/25888072-BJA10086>
- Calvo, Esther Mary L. 2026. "(De)polarizing words: How elite rhetoric shapes affective polarization toward the radical right." *PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsag019>
- Calvo-Rodriguez, Alvaro. 2026. "When does rejection of homosexuality matter? Gendered opportunity structures and radical-right support." *WEST EUROPEAN POLITICS*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2026.2716338>
- Colin, Mathieu; and Hely, Perrine. 2026. "Brothers in Hate? Hybridization, Convergences and Divisions Between Neo-Nazi Accelerationism and Radical Islam in the Context of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *TERRORISM AND POLITICAL VIOLENCES*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2026.2670407>
- Crulli, Mirko; and Piccolino, Gianluca. 2026. "Culture Trumps Class and Place: How the Populist Radical Right Thrives on Sociocultural Conflicts in Western Europe." *GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/gov.2026.10054>
- Cure, Fatih. 2026. "Territorialising populism: how regional contexts shape political discourse." *ZEITSCHRIFT FUR VERGLEICHENDE POLITIKWISSENSCHAFT*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12286-026-00662-5>

- Dalle Mulle, Emmanuel; Abts, Koen; Froio, Caterina; and Kessel, Stijn van. 2026. "A Joint Venture? The Ideological Foundations of the Populist Radical Right's Economic Agenda Beyond Welfare Policies." *SWISS POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/spsr.70044>
- El Bulbeisi, Sarah. 2026. "Between taboo and demonisation: anti-Palestinian racism and Palestinian subjectivities in Germany." *CRITICAL STUDIES ON TERRORISM*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2026.2675104>
- Gaudino, Ugo. 2026. "Pre-crime and terrorism prevention without a P/CVE strategy: another Italian exceptionalism?" *CRITICAL STUDIES ON SECURITY*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2026.2692734>
- Griffini, Marianna; and Mazzoleni, Oscar. 2026. "Produce and reproduce! Understanding multidimensionality in contemporary radical right populist ideology." *JOURNAL OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13569317.2026.2671673>
- Hollifield, James F.; and Wilson, J. Matthew. 2026. "Immigration, anomie, and national populism in the European Union." *FRONTIERS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2026.1846381>
- Ibad, Javid. 2026. "Foreign and defence policy views of the Dutch far-right parties ahead of 2025 Dutch general elections." *STUDIA EUROPAEA*. <https://doi.org/10.24193/subbeuropaea.2026.1.12>
- Ibad, Javid. 2026. "Varying trajectories of mainstream right radicalization (MRR) in contemporary European democracies." *STUDIA EUROPAEA*. <https://doi.org/10.24193/subbeuropaea.2026.1.06>
- Islam, Md Sahidul; and Mostofa, Shafi Md. 2026. "Framing Terrorism in Bangladesh: Examining Western-Centric Influences and the Case for a Postcolonial Approach." *POLITICS & POLICY*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/polp.70143>
- Jormfeldt, Johanna; and Wangmar, Erik. 2026. "A Half-Century Analysis of Female Representation and the Rise of Populist Radical Right in Nordic Parliaments." *REPRESENTATION*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2026.2720465>
- Letki, Natalia; Dinesen, Peter Thisted; Walentek, Dawid; and Liebe, Ulf. 2026. "Have populist right supporters' views on refugee policy radicalized under the Ukrainian crisis? Evidence from a three-wave survey experiment." *PARTY POLITICS*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/13540688261454258>
- Mazzoleni, Oscar. 2026. "Populism and the Ambivalences of Brothers of Italy. An Introduction." *POPULISM*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/25888072-BJA10098>
- Odmalm, Pontus. 2026. "The more policy positions change, the more they stay the same: mainstream party strategies on the issue of immigration." *COMPARATIVE EUROPEAN POLITICS*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/s41295-026-00493-4>
- Pirisi, Stefano. 2026. "The emergence of 'radicalisation' within terrorism studies: a bibliometric analysis." *CRITICAL STUDIES ON TERRORISM*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2026.2686518>
- Sacca, Flaminia; Massidda, Luca. 2026. "Giorgia and Her Brothers Italian Case Study in Right-wing Populism, Leadership Styles, and Gender Issues." *POPULISM*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/25888072-BJA10087>
- Schmidt, Leonhard; and Castanho Silva, Bruno. 2026. "Populism, radicalism, and protest mobilization by parties in Europe." *EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF POLITICAL RESEARCH*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1475676526101686>

- Schworer, Jakob; Johansson, Joakim. 2026. "Politics and Religion in Secular Societies: The Prominence and Framing of Religion in Nordic Election Campaigns." *SCANDINAVIAN POLITICAL STUDIES*.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-9477.70046>
- Sharma, Nandita. 2026. "Go back to where you come from: the national re-making of racist borders." *CITIZENSHIP STUDIES*.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2026.2688380>
- Solano, Lorien Gomez; Boado, Ismael Seijo; and Anton-Mellon, Joan. 2026. "The radical right in Catalonia: Comparative analysis of the ideology of Vox Catalonia and Aliança Catalana from an historical perspective." *REVISTA ESPANOLA DE CIENCIA POLITICA-RECP*.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.21308/recp.71.03>
- Thesen, Gunnar. 2026. "Reporters lurking at the back-door: Political news, mainstream party policy shifts and radical right party success." *PARTY POLITICS*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/13540688251366835>
- Tornberg, Petter. 2026. "It's Not Polarization; It's the Radicalization of the Political Right." *PERSPECTIVES ON POLITICS*.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1537592726105246>
- Tresch, Anke; and Rennwald, Line. 2026. "Explaining the Populist Radical Right's Success in the 2023 Swiss National Elections: A Reference Group Perspective " *SWISS POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW*.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/spsr.70036>
- Vittonetto, Francesco. 2026. "The online transnationalisation of populist radical right publics." *EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF POLITICAL RESEARCH*.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1475676526101571>
- Yon, Rachel; Hummel, Kristina; and Milton, Daniel. 2026. "Where are the women? Gender bias in media coverage of American extremists." *BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES OF TERRORISM AND POLITICAL AGGRESSION*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19434472.2026.2665151>
- Zaslove, Andrej; Huber, Robert A.; Meijers, and Maurits J. 2026. "The state of populism: Introducing the 2023 wave of the Populism and political parties expert survey." *PARTY POLITICS*.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/13540688251361813>



e-EXTREME MANAGING EDITORS

Audrey Gagnon, *University of Ottawa*
agagnon2@uottawa.ca

Lazaros Karavasilis, *University of Bremen*
lkaravas@uni-bremen.de

Sabine Volk, *University of Helsinki*
sabine.volk@uni-tuebingen.de

E&D STEERING COMMITTEE

Léonie de Jonge, *University of Tübingen*
Daphne Halikiopoulou, *University of York*
Annika Werner, *University of Southampton*
Larissa Böckmann, *University of Amsterdam / Université Libre de Bruxelles*
Javier Sajuria, *Queen Mary University of London*
Teresa Völker, *WZB Berlin Social Science Center / Free University of Berlin*

<http://standinggroups.ecpr.eu/extremismanddemocracy/>
ecprextremismanddemocracy@gmail.com