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## The far right as social movement

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### ABSTRACT

The literature on the far right is trying to connect with social movement studies. Scholars from different social scientific backgrounds are increasingly acknowledging that extra-parliamentary grassroots activism is part of the alliance and conflict structure of nativist collective actors. The recent rise in far-right street politics – or, precisely, its re-emergence with seemingly different clothes – should encourage the study of the inter-relations between party and non-party collective actors. As a case in point, the far right not only includes political parties geared towards elections and public office but also social movements or ‘networks of networks’ that aim to mobilise public support, and a conglomeration of subcultural groups and groupuscules. By putting forward a three-part metric to analyse mobilisation factors at the macro, meso, and micro levels, this piece and the Special Issue it introduces bring the (inter-)relations between far-right parties, movements, and subcultures frontstage, and elaborate on nativist collective action across different arenas of contention.

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### Introduction

The contentious politics of nativism have gained new impetus in recent years. The demonstrations orchestrated by *Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes* (PEGIDA), the rise of anti-immigrant vigilante groups and citizen street patrols (e.g. the Soldiers of Odin), and the swift spread of the Identitarian movement, demonstrate how grassroots activism has acquired own standing in contemporary far-right politics. Nativism, as a radical and exclusionary form of nationalism, represents the ideological common ground for far-right parties and movements in that it rejects ‘alien’ persons and ideas from their conception of the nation state (Mudde 2007: 19). Confronted with a relevant real-world

phenomenon, we seek to elaborate on how the paradigms of social movement studies can help us expand on a predominantly party-centred discipline. Building upon three decades of scholarly research on far-right politics in Europe, this piece – and the Special Issue it introduces – brings attention to the non-party sector of the far right (Veugelers and Menard 2018). In particular, it illustrates the progressive hybridisation of party and movement practices (Pirro and Castelli Gattinara forthcoming), and it investigates online as well as offline interactions between political parties contesting elections and social movements mobilising in the streets. As we shall discuss, this also implies going beyond an exclusive focus on either the ‘extreme’ or the ‘radical’ variant of the contemporary political right, appraising the composite phenomenon of nativist mobilisation in Europe as ‘far-right’ politics.

The consolidation of a new ‘ethnopluralist’ paradigm has attracted considerable academic attention. The contemporary far right has progressively turned into a legitimate player by replacing their biological racism with notions of incompatibility based on cultural difference (Rydgren 2005). According to ethnopluralism, the mixing of different ethnicities would lead to the cultural extinction of the native group (Minkenberg 1997). Parties subscribing to these tenets have made inroads into European party systems since the 1980s (von Beyme 1988), at times causing concern among segments of the political establishment, while also joining or providing support to government coalitions in countries as different as Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, and Switzerland.<sup>1</sup> Pressured by the electoral gains of the far right, the scholarship has made significant progress in identifying its ideological makeup, and disentangling demand-side and supply-side factors underlying its performance at the polls (e.g. Kitschelt with McGann 1995; Pirro 2014a).

In more recent years, the whole of Europe has seen a resurgence of far-right street politics, not only by small, and at times violent, extreme-right organisations but also increasingly so under the initiative of radical-right grassroots groups engaging in extra-parliamentary politics. While anti-refugee violence is not new in Europe (Koopmans 1996; Koopmans and Olzak 2004), the so-called migration crisis triggered a new wave of xenophobic violence and social unrest against refugees (Benček and Strasheim 2016; Castelli Gattinara 2018). In 2016 alone, German authorities reported

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<sup>1</sup>It is a moot point whether ever-radical parties like Fidesz in Hungary and Law and Justice in Poland are to be considered themselves nativist actors single-handedly holding power in respective countries (e.g. Pirro 2016).

hundreds of injured asylum seekers in over 3500 attacks perpetrated against migrants and the places offering them shelter.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, asylum facilities came under attack 25 times during 2015 in Austria, including instances of arson and migrants being shot at with air rifles.<sup>3</sup> In February 2018, a 28-year-old far-right activist went on a shooting rampage in Macerata, a small town in central Italy, wounding five men and one woman of African origin.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, radical-right non-party organisations, such as the English Defence League or PEGIDA (e.g. Busher 2015), have gained media exposure for their engagement in extra-parliamentary politics and protest, albeit often with limited mobilisation capacity (Mudde 2016b).<sup>5</sup>

In this regard, Cas Mudde has lately spoken of a widening chasm between far-right parties and politics (Mudde 2016a) – and we believe that the re-emergence of grassroots politics as a relevant space of far-right contention testifies the value of our effort. Contemporary far-right politics, in fact, deliver a variegated milieu within which we can distinguish between political parties geared towards elections and public office, social movements or ‘networks of networks’ that aim to mobilise public opinion, and a conglomeration of groups within the subcultural environment (Griffin 2003; Minkenberg 2003; Klandermans and Mayer 2005; Caiani *et al.* 2012). In light of the constraints that these collective actors often experience in the public sphere, it is difficult to neglect the central role that the worldwide web has come to reach. Indeed, far-right networks often form and operate online, and the online realm seems to offer crucial resources to organise, mobilise, and connect with one another, facilitating the progressive integration of radical parties, extremist movements, and subcultural groups.

Extant research has acknowledged these crucial distinctions, and yet made very little empirical and theoretical effort for understanding the non-electoral articulations of far-right politics. Most notably, while recognising the far-right phenomenon as part of a larger mobilisation process,

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<sup>2</sup>Cullen, S. and Cullinane, S. (2017) ‘Germany: Thousands of migrants targeted in attacks last year’, *CNN*, February 27, <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/02/27/europe/germany-attacks-on-migrants/index.html> (accessed 27/03/2018).

<sup>3</sup>‘25 attacks on refugee facilities last year in Austria’, *The Local*, March 29, 2016, [www.thelocal.at/20160329/25-attacks-on-refugee-facilities-last-year-in-austria](http://www.thelocal.at/20160329/25-attacks-on-refugee-facilities-last-year-in-austria) (accessed 27/03/2018).

<sup>4</sup>Castelli Gattinara, P. and O’Connor, F. (2018) ‘An Italian neo-fascist shot 6 immigrants. So why won’t Italy’s political parties condemn xenophobia?’, February 9, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/02/09/an-italian-neo-fascist-shot-6-migrants-how-does-this-play-into-the-upcoming-elections/?utm\\_term=.6b9df410ce54](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/02/09/an-italian-neo-fascist-shot-6-migrants-how-does-this-play-into-the-upcoming-elections/?utm_term=.6b9df410ce54) (accessed 27/03/2018).

<sup>5</sup>Virchow, F. (2017) ‘Pegida: Germany’s anti-Islamic street movement’, *Oxford Research Group*, January 16, 2017, <https://sustainablesecurity.org/2017/01/16/pegida-germanys-anti-islamic-street-movement/> (accessed 20/03/2018).

few studies have actually followed suit and approached it within models transcending institutional politics. Understood in terms of a longer historical cycle, the far right can be indeed appraised as a social movement constituting a collective challenge ‘by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities’ (Tarrow 1998: 3). Accordingly, we suggest an approach that moves beyond the electoral manifestations of far-right politics and conceptualises the interaction of the people with their environment, in terms of movement organisations and in relation to their wider societal contexts. Overall, this implies understanding far-right politics in its complexity, recognising the distinctiveness of various forms of political engagement, and accounting for the interaction – and possible overlap – between the spheres of action in which nativist collective actors engage.

### Heterogeneity in far-right politics

Far-right collective actors are more heterogeneous than usually assumed and display a considerable degree of diversity despite – or beyond – a comparable ideological profile (e.g. Mudde 2000; Pirro 2014b). It is not by chance that we refer to the ‘far right’ as the broader galaxy of nativist actors including extreme and radical organisations. We thus denote far-right collective actors as those political parties, social movements, and groups located on the ‘right’ end of the ideological left–right continuum. While referring to the far right as an umbrella concept including extreme-right and radical-right variants, we remain aware of standing differences within this category. Accordingly, we differentiate between explicitly anti-democratic actors (i.e. the neo-fascist, neo-Nazi, fundamentalist, and/or supremacist ‘extreme right’) and those who at least comply by the minimal procedural rules of parliamentary democracy (as with the majority of ‘radical right’ parties represented in parliaments across Europe). In essence, the extreme right operates in direct opposition to the democratic constitutional order, whereas the radical right bears more of a strained relationship with the tenets of liberal democracy, instead of democracy per se (e.g. Mudde 2007).

We do not aspire to meddle in overly conceptual debates, but would actually use ascertained differences between (and within) extreme- and radical-right collective actors to suggest that there is no one-to-one correspondence between their relationship with democracy and their organisational/strategic profiles. If the anti-democratic character of some far-right organisations had been conducive to poor performances

at the polls (e.g. Carter 2005), we argue that a social movement profile is no sole prerogative of extremist and militant actors (cf. Minkenberg 2002; Mudde 2005). The perception that social movement activity may be a sub-optimal configuration for those – generally, extremist – parties that failed to make it into representative institutions is not only part of an electoralist bias, but also factually inaccurate. Archetypal and successful far-right parties like the French *Front National* (National Front, FN) have clear roots in the movement sector (e.g. Shields 2007). Other collective actors, like the *Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom* (Movement for a Better Hungary, Jobbik), bear similar origins and uphold activities in both the protest and electoral arena to this day (Pirro and Castelli Gattinara forthcoming). Of course, we are not suggesting that far-right parties necessarily spring from movements; to the contrary. We rather contend that the activity in multiple arenas of contestation is *non-mutually exclusive* – and, in all likelihood, the result of contingent and strategic considerations on available opportunities. The social movement perspective we advocate here is thus a plea for a broader understanding of this phenomenon beyond its most visible electoral articulations.

As far as electoral performance is concerned, far-right parties continue to garner substantial support in local and national elections. This is confirmed not only in countries with consolidated nativist political presence and relevance, such as France, Austria, and the Netherlands (Mudde 2016b) but also in those that did not deliver significant far-right forces until very recently, such as Germany, Greece, and the UK. In post-communist Europe, moreover, the rise and consolidation of the far right has decidedly contributed to shift the balance of contention towards nativist territories (Pirro 2015). The radicalisation of discourses and policy-making – the so-called illiberal turn – of mainstream parties like Fidesz in Hungary or Law and Justice (PiS) in Poland can be at least interpreted as an attempt to respond to far-right competitors and woo their voters. Such developments, although dictated by electoral considerations, hint at the effects that nativist collective actors can release in the political process.

At the same time, we note that the protest arena has seen an upsurge in both extreme- and radical-right mobilisations, especially in response to the European refugee crisis, which evidences continuities with the realm of party politics (Mudde 2016a). This particular conjuncture seems to have sparked more attention to migration, as well as further diversification among groups and people engaged in the broader far-right network. Contemporary anti-refugee mobilisations had taken on a number of forms,

ranging from direct confrontational actions challenging the opening of refugee centres to institutional activities by established political parties, through grassroots activities aimed at mobilising the citizenry (Castelli Gattinara 2018). Research on anti-immigrant protest revealed the very composite nature of PEGIDA's support base in Germany (Bulli 2017), and shed light on how far-right activists have used this group's 'brand' to mobilise online and at the transnational level (Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016).

Finally, the subcultural environment still represents a relevant space for the far-right milieu, as exemplified by the myriad of counter-cultural and anti-systemic *groupuscules* aimed at overcoming the decadence of liberal democracy across Europe, as well as embryonic political movements pursuing meta-political, ideological, or activist ends (Griffin 2003). Although small groups, political sects, and affiliated organisations have long existed in the far-right non-party sector (Veugelers and Menard 2018), research is pointing at new developments in this area. These would include the 'counter-jihad' movement, configuring the transnational network of Islamophobic individuals and groups that have contributed to bridge mainstream and radical politics, both online and offline (Mudde 2016b: 612; Froio forthcoming). New forms of networked identity-based mobilisations have also emerged with the *Soldiers of Odin*, a street-patrol collective originated in Finland, which rapidly extended to other Scandinavian countries (and beyond) due to traction garnered on social media (Bjørge and Gjelsvik forthcoming). In a similar fashion, the Identitarian Movement, which emerged from the organisational effort of the French Generation Identity, helped revive ideologies and strategies *à la Nouvelle Droite* (New Right), and a distinctive brand of intellectual and confrontational protest at the transnational level (Virchow 2015; Castelli Gattinara 2018). Identitarians in fact dismiss both revolutionary and parliamentary tactics to achieve change, and privilege a highly mediatised form of intellectual activism aimed at shaping ideas through media, expressive culture, and online propaganda (Castelli Gattinara and Froio 2018).

Against a backdrop of organisational heterogeneity, however, connections within the far-right galaxy are varied. To begin with, political parties and movements in this area seem to be characterised by a high level of reciprocal influence, so much so that their anti-elitist and xenophobic agendas, which generally develop independently, ultimately come to affect one another (Bulli 2017). There are also organisational overlaps between far-right parties and social movements; if political parties have for long time sponsored parallel organisations with the goal

of disseminating their messages among society (Ignazi 1989; Igounet 2014), grassroots movements similarly organise as networks of campaign-specific and voluntary groups (Albanese *et al.* 2014). Furthermore, the tenets of the *Nouvelle Right* are taken up by radical-right parties interested in combating ethno-religious diversity within the electoral battlefield, as well as movements and cultural groups engaged in meta-political projects aimed at subverting left-liberal values and multiculturalism (Veugelers and Menard 2018).

It should not surprise, then, if the way in which far-right parties emerge, organise, and mobilise public support has been frequently likened to that of a social movement (Minkenberg 2003; Kitschelt 2006; Kriesi *et al.* 2012). Far-right collective actors are part of a large mobilisation process by which they managed to politicise issues previously neglected by mainstream parties (e.g. immigration, minority issues, 'law and order', welfare chauvinism; see Ignazi 1992; Meguid 2005; Pirro 2014b). In this respect, the far right has been read through the lens of those economic and cultural grievances brought about by the process of globalisation. This side of the 'anti-globalisation' story became visible across different territorial levels and political arenas, and in multiple mobilisation forms (Kriesi *et al.* 2008, 2012). While the far right's ability to attract 'losers of globalisation' has been called into question (e.g. Minkenberg 2000; Mudde 2007), their framing of globalisation is certainly comparable to other social movements (e.g. Zaslove 2008). Indeed, the far right has been interpreted as an 'anti-modern' response to the politics of '1968' and, thus, as a nativist and authoritarian 'counter-revolution' (Ignazi 1992; Minkenberg 2000). The same 'counter-revolutionary' dynamic would hold for post-communist Europe, whereby the far right is mainly perceived as a phenomenon reacting to the transformations of '1989' (Minkenberg 2002; Pirro 2015). As a result, nativist collective actors are rightfully seen to bridge the conceptual space between movements and parties (Gunther and Diamond 2003: 188). What is more, they have been often seen to put on 'movement party' clothes and resort to contentious as well as conventional politics, engaging both within and outside the institutional arena (Kitschelt 2006; Pirro and Castelli Gattinara forthcoming).

This notwithstanding, our knowledge of right-wing activism across different arenas of engagement is limited, to say the least. On the one hand, the majority of social movement studies is concerned with left-wing and/or progressive mobilisations, so that a number of concepts from this scholarship are nearly synonyms of progressive movements



(Blee 2007). On the other, social movement dynamics are still largely neglected in research on the far right, to the point that Jens Rydgren has referred to ‘a rather strict division of labor between scholars studying the new social movements and scholars studying the new radical right’ (Rydgren 2007: 257). Apart from a few exceptions, the recent rise in far-right street politics has not been matched by an increase in the scholarly interest for non-party organisations and grassroots politics (Meadowcroft and Morrow 2016; Castelli Gattinara and Froio 2018).

Exceptions have been at best circumscribed, though – in our view – valuable and promising. The same concepts of ‘political opportunity structure’ (e.g. Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi 2004) and ‘framing’ (e.g. Snow and Benford 1988), developed within social movement studies, have proven useful to address fundamental questions underlying far-right emergence and success (e.g. Rydgren 2005; Arzheimer and Carter 2006). Similarly, scholars seem to be increasingly interested in disentangling the relationship between electoral and protest arenas, which has strong implications for the study of far-right party and grassroots politics (Hutter and Kriesi 2013; Hutter 2014). So far, however, notions pertaining to the ‘hybrid’ nature of these actors, their simultaneous participation in the arenas of electoral and protest politics, and the alliance and conflict structures in which they are embedded, have been repeated without serious empirical enquiry. In response to this research gap, we believe that social movement studies ought to extend the research scope beyond left-progressive mobilisations, also addressing the movement politics of right-wing actors. Concomitantly, we contend that the interaction between parliamentary and extra-parliamentary politics represents an indispensable way forward for far-right scholarship, not only for pluralist and interdisciplinary persuasions but also for the empirical analysis of this phenomenon.

### **Far-right collective action across multiple levels of analysis**

The intersections of social movement dynamics and far-right politics are complex, and there is a pressing need to offer an innovative and interdisciplinary outlook on their multiple configurations and arenas of mobilisation. The specific modalities of far-right mobilisation across Europe highlight the value of reducing the admittedly artificial space between social movement paradigms and models of party competition. Looking at nativist politics from a social movement vantage point means accounting for the purposive, collective, and dynamic factors of participation in

collective action. As noted by Klandermans and Mayer (2005: 7), this would entail looking at members of far-right organisations as ‘movement activists’, at their structures as ‘movement organisations’, and at contemporary far-right politics ‘as a cycle in a longer trajectory’.

We refrain from categorical understandings of far-right collective action across different arenas. Put differently, collective action in the protest and/or electoral arena does not represent an inherent trade-off; it simply responds to different mobilisation purposes and needs. The action repertoires of archetypal nativist collective actors already show that privileging party survival over (movement) founding principles is *not a zero-sum game* (cf. Panebianco 1988). We, therefore, put forward a three-part metric according to which it is possible to analyse far-right political parties, social movements, and subcultural groups – considered either together or in isolation. Specifically, we suggest to elaborate on the conceptual, theoretical, and empirical underpinnings of far-right politics by delving into mobilisation factors at the macro (e.g. the socio-political context, political, and discursive opportunities), meso (e.g. organisational dynamics, choices, and strategies), and micro levels (e.g. individual motivations, life histories and experiences, and activism).

At the macro level, it is possible to unravel contemporary far-right collective action in the protest and electoral arenas. Proponents of the political process approach have rightfully suggested movement activities to be understood in relation to their broader political context and institutional setting (see e.g. Kriesi 2004; McAdam and Tarrow 2010). Far-right collective action is part of its sociocultural and political setting. The analysis of the contentious politics of nativism must be aware of those contextual idiosyncrasies upon which the far-right may thrive, and that may be shaped, in return, by collective action at the party-political, social movement, or subcultural level. One of the fruitful attempts at establishing dialogue along similar lines emphasised the importance of spatial as well as issue competition in favouring the interaction between the electoral and protest fields (Kriesi *et al.* 2008). While spatial metaphors, models, and toolkits played an important role in the assessment of far-right impact and performance (Kitschelt and McGann 1995; Carter 2005; Pirro 2015), social movement scholars used these to suggest that mobilisation in the protest arena might depend upon the political space vacated by other parties in the system (Giugni *et al.* 2005; Koopmans *et al.* 2005). Such a perspective highlights the challenges faced by far-right collective actors upon entering the political arena, as well as the (external)

constraints they are confronted with, when transitioning from grassroots milieus to the electoral arena.

By looking at the meso level, the focus of attention is on the organisation (i.e. internal structure) and the strategic choices of far-right collective actors. To date, research on the ‘internal supply side’ of the far right has made only slow progress in tackling organisational aspects, and specifically elaborate on its internal governance (Heinisch and Mazzoleni 2016). Other relevant questions have then remained largely unaddressed, most notably those pertaining movement-like arrangements outside the institutional arena or levels of intra-party democracy. Evidence coming from recent comparative work suggests that far-right ‘movement parties’ might subscribe to different decision-making processes, and yet preserve repertoires of action proper to social movements, notwithstanding their electoral performance and, thus, their levels of institutionalisation and/or professionalisation (Pirro and Castelli Gattinara forthcoming). Concentrating on this level of analysis also sheds light on the identification of allies and opponents of the far right in the electoral and protest arenas, and among society at large. These aspects account for the extent to which social movements and political parties can influence mutual preferences, most notably in terms of alliances, networks, and repertoires of discursive and protest action. Hanspeter Kriesi and colleagues (Kriesi *et al.* 2012; Hutter 2014) suggested that movement-party relations for the political right follow a different logic than the left, in that the far right alternatively turns to electoral and protest mobilisations, but generally does not engage in both forms of action at the same time. Studies on far-right violence have linked it to the electoral strength of far-right parties, and more specifically to the politicisation of issues that represent the primary breeding ground for far-right mobilisation outside the institutional arena, most notably immigration (Giugni *et al.* 2005). Focusing on meso-level factors helps addressing questions concerning internal organisation and strategic choice, thus looking at the ‘production structure’ (Rucht 1999) of far-right movements. Notwithstanding the lower prospects for mobilisation of protest compared to progressive movements, they might still exert considerable influence on political parties and public debates (McAdam and Kloos 2014).

Finally, a micro-level approach places the activism and repertoires of action of individual far-rightists at the core of investigation, for instance, looking at their motivations in terms of instrumentality, identity, and ideology (Klandermans and Mayer 2005). This approach acknowledges that the survival and success of far-right parties does not exclusively

depend on their electoral success and media savviness but also on the participation of activists. As there are multiple ways for individuals to partake in nativist politics, there are also multiple explanations for why parties, social movements, and subcultural groups opt for specific recruitment and participation strategies. By venturing down this last route, our research agenda would concern the meaning of far-right activism across different contexts; this seems an essential step to address participation beyond the simple acts of voting or paying membership dues to a political party. Furthermore, a similar approach would ultimately transcend macro-societal perspectives, and bring back the focus on individual and psychological factors in far-right militancy and ideology. On the one hand, a focus on micro-level factors might shed light on the processes subtending the production of far-right frames, and specifically of different articulations of nativist narratives (Blee 2002). On the other, the link between the individual experiences of activists and the institutionalisation of far-right collective actors represents one of the most intriguing frontiers of enquiry into individual-agent relationship. We consider these three foci on macro, meso, and micro levels equally worthwhile and instrumental in gaining a better grasp of the contentious politics of nativism.

### **This Special Issue**

The contributions included in this Special Issue move the agenda of the far-right scholarship in new directions. They tackle the discursive, organisational, and strategic complexity of contemporary far-right mobilisation in ways that have been neglected so far. In particular, they single out collective action logics and dynamics of contention that proved admittedly hard to address based on approaches exclusively concerned with party-political and electoral dynamics. Collectively, they corroborate the value of interdisciplinary persuasions, and make a strong case for greater theoretical and methodological pluralism in the social sciences. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including process tracing, discourse analysis, interviewing, and content and network analysis, not only allow for a richer outlook on far-right collective action but also for nuanced insights into its complexity and ramifications. Finally, most of these studies either directly or indirectly advance prospects for comparative analysis of far-right politics. Far-right collective actors are in fact analysed and compared over time and across national contexts, as well as in terms of why and how they mobilise across different arenas. The Special Issue delineates multiple pathways through which

scholars of the far right can use social movement theory, its methods, and approaches to study contemporary nativist politics. We are convinced that the contributions included here offer a novel point of departure for inter-sectional studies on parties and movements, as well as contentious politics at large.

The Special Issue examines a broad set of far-right phenomena, ranging from (populist) radical right actors (also) represented in institutions to more extremist movements and groups engaged in grassroots politics. While sharing the ambition of straddling the space between party politics and grassroots mobilisations, the articles included here present different approaches to attain this goal. Michael Minkenberg qualifies the interpenetration between far-right parties and movements by looking at the contentious politics of nativism in Eastern and Western Europe. Swen Hutter and Endre Borbáth address the dynamics of contention across the protest-electoral divide, comparing challengers of the left and right. Caterina Froio and Barath Ganesh maintain a focus on the online sphere, and study how social media facilitate the construction of linkages between radical parties, extremist movements, and subcultural groups on a specific set of contentious issues. Along somewhat similar lines, Ofra Klein and Jasper Muis engage in a cross-national and within-country analysis of nativist issues, as articulated across social media by various far-right collective actors. Sofia Tipaldou and Katrin Uba delve into the Greek and Russian cases, exploring how specific opportunities affect the different pathways to mobilisation of far-right collective actors. The article by Gabriella Elgenius and Jens Rydgren looks at the *Sverigedemokraterna* (Sweden Democrats, SD) and draws significant continuities between contemporary ethno-nationalist frames and the historical legacy of reactionary conservatism. Finally, with their contribution, Andrea Pirro and Dániel Róna present novel insights into the grassroots politics of the Hungarian Jobbik, with a particular emphasis on youth participation.

Together, the studies included in this Special Issue push forward the agenda of far-right research, moving it towards new directions. They identify continuities and discontinuities in far-right politics across arenas of engagement; advance comparative knowledge on contemporary far-right parties, movements, and activists; and show the value of methodological pluralism in the study of nativist and radical politics. In so doing, they set new standards to analyse mobilisation factors at the macro, meso, and micro levels, and open up to the complexities of the far right 'as social movement'.

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## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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