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Newsletter of the ECPR Standing Group  
on Extremism & Democracy

# **Newsletter of the ECPR Standing Group on Extremism & Democracy**

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# STANDING GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS

## NEW LOOK

The Standing Group on Extremism & Democracy has a new look. This does not mean that we have changed the goal of the Standing Group, nor that we have changed the way we deliver news and events via our website, newsletter, or social media. Although the ‘nineties feel’ of the old website and newsletter was pleasantly retro, we felt that the Standing Group’s platforms needed to be revamped. We asked graphic designer Valerio Calimici to redesign our website and newsletter, and to make them 2015-proof. We are very happy with the result and we hope that you like it just as much as we do. If you have any comments or suggestions you can, of course, always reach us at [info@extremism-and-democracy.com](mailto:info@extremism-and-democracy.com).

## ECPR GENERAL CONFERENCE, MONTREAL

During the 2015 ECPR General Conference in Montreal (26-29 August), the ECPR Standing Group on Extremism & Democracy will organize a section titled “Populist and Radical Politics: Between Polarisation and Blurring”. The section chairs are Andrea Pirro, Stijn van Kessel and Matthijs Rooduijn. In the call for papers section you can find two invitations to join a panel in this section. If you would like to submit your own panel please contact the section chairs as soon as possible (the deadline for panel and paper proposals is **16 February**).

## KEEP US INFORMED

Please keep us informed of any upcoming conferences or workshops you are organizing, 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 organized 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.

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 then please do contact us. We are always very keen to involve more members in the running of the Standing Group! Email us at: [info@extremism-and-democracy.com](mailto:info@extremism-and-democracy.com).

# CALL FOR PAPERS

## **MIXING AND MATCHING, BLURRING AND EMULATING? THEORIES AND METHODOLOGIES TO EXPLORE RADICAL RIGHT POLITICS BEYOND THE ELECTORAL ARENA**

2015 ECPR General Conference in Montreal (26-29 August 2015)

\*\*\* Deadline for abstract submission: 5 February \*\*\*

Panel organizer: Caterina Froio, University of Paris, [caterina.froio@eui.eu](mailto:caterina.froio@eui.eu)

Discussant: Pietro Castelli Gattinara, University of Leicester, [pcgdz1@le.ac.uk](mailto:pcgdz1@le.ac.uk)

### Abstract

Despite increasing scholarly attention to extreme right-wing parties, we still know little about extra-parliamentary groups of the radical right. Instead, the extreme-right is characterized by a great range of organizations, differing in terms of internal structures, ideological framework, public discourse and strategies of action. Nonpartisan groups may be inspired by classic neonazi or neofascist ideologies, but they often also refer to 'blurred' symbolic repertoires, mixing traditional references with rather unusual ones. Although the 'groupuscular' right is rarely successful in electoral terms, it mobilizes in multiple ways, apparently taking inspiration from the action repertoires of left-wing social movements of the 1990s, and obtaining visibility thanks to showcase protest events, a media-oriented public discourse, and the strategic use of contentious and violent forms of protest.

The panel explores the discourse and practices of different types of radical right organizations. What are the issues that nonpartisan radical right organizations bring forward? To what extent have these groups been inspired by the symbolic repertoires of other political organizations? How do they differ from their more institutionalized right-wing counterparts and what are the patterns of interaction between the two? In addition, since groupuscular right-wing actors do not consider elections their primary arena for contention, the panel looks at how these organizations mobilize in terms of conventional and non-conventional strategies. What explains the preference for specific repertoires of action? Do electoral opportunity structures matter for shaping mobilization strategies? Finally, the panel investigates what strategies have (or have been) most successful. Previous research looked at the 'contagion' effect of extreme right and populist parties over their mainstream counterparts, most notably in terms of electoral agenda setting. What about their agenda setting impact beyond elections? What is the effect of different action repertoires by extreme right groups on media coverage and on the construction of public problems?

We will consider proposals dealing with radical right parties and social movements built on quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods approaches. Comparative contributions (across types of actors and/or countries) and case studies are welcome

## **POLARISATION OR BLURRING IDEOLOGIES? THE RADICAL LEFT DURING THE GREAT RECESSION**

2015 ECPR General Conference in Montreal (26-29 August 2015)

\*\*\* Deadline for abstract submission: 10 February \*\*\*

Panel organizers: Luke March, University of Edinburgh, [l.march@ed.ac.uk](mailto:l.march@ed.ac.uk) and Luis Ramiro, University of Leicester, [lr144@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:lr144@leicester.ac.uk)

### Abstract

This panel is supported by the section chairs and speaks to the concerns of the section on whether radical left parties are becoming agenda-setters, and as such whether they are expanding on their trademark issues and continuing to combat or co-opt issues formerly more common to other parties, in particular the populist radical right. We will explore the claim that some traditional distinctions between radical left and radical right politics are blurring.

We would welcome paper proposals (or offers to chair/discuss) on the following themes:

- a) Ideological and policy change on the radical left as a result of the Great Recession
- b) The emergence of 'left-wing populism' among the radical left
- c) The political impact of radical left ideologies (national and pan-European)
- d) Patterns of competition between radical left and radical right.

We will welcome both theoretical and empirical contributions, comparative or focusing on single case studies, quantitative and/or qualitative.

If you are interested in presenting your work on this panel, please send your paper proposal to both Luke March [l.march@ed.ac.uk](mailto:l.march@ed.ac.uk) and Luis Ramiro [lr144@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:lr144@leicester.ac.uk) no later than **10 February**. We also welcome offers to be chair/discussant.

# REFLECTIONS ON REVENGE: AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE CULTURE AND POLITICS OF VENGEANCE

2/3/4 September 2015, University of Leicester

Confirmed keynote speaker: Philippe Sands QC

*'...the sweetest morsel to the mouth that ever was cooked in hell'*

The taste for revenge, whether morsel or dish served cold, is something people, groups and nations, and even animals desire. Since time immemorial, individuals and communities have done justice by harming those who have harmed them, despite the costs, and the avengers immortalised as heroes and villains. While the hurts and methods for addressing them may differ, blood feuds, the killing of Osama bin Laden, and revenge porn are all motivated by the need to get even.

This interdisciplinary conference will ask who seeks revenge and why, how it is done, how it is justified, how it is represented, how it feels to get revenge or be on the receiving end. This includes revenge starting with the smallest workplace slights, through family disputes and lynch mobs, to political violence, war and terrorism. We invite contributions, including those not in the academic paper format, from any area of biological, human and social sciences, arts and humanities, and more, that are related to topics including but not limited to:

- interpersonal revenge, state revenge, collective punishment
- technologies of revenge
- revenge cultures, blood feuds, and informal justice
- revenge, politics and world history
- revenge, terrorism, armed conflict and retaliation
- the personal and social costs of revenge
- revenge, justice and injustice
- revenge in art, literature and media

This is a multimedia event, and will be contributing to the production of a documentary on revenge by Rex Bloomstein and Justin Temple (RexEntertainment) as well as traditional academic outputs.

Please submit a 250 word abstract via email to [revenge@le.ac.uk](mailto:revenge@le.ac.uk) by April 2nd, 2015.

Further information can be found at:

<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/criminology/research/current-projects/revenge>

# CONFERENCE REPORT

## WEBTALK: “EVERYDAY RACISM IN GERMANY”

By Melanie Wieland (FLMH – Labor für Politik und Kommunikation)  
and Annika Meixner (Federal Agency For Civic Education, bpb)



Civic education has to serve a broad range of target groups, each of them highly diversified and representing different social backgrounds and value systems. This is one of the major challenges we are facing every time we are developing new educational projects and innovative formats. We are all too aware that civic education should speak to all societal groups and should not just happen in civics classes. The German Federal Agency for Civic Education ([www.bpb.de](http://www.bpb.de)), explicitly tasked with fostering a civil society, cannot limit its work to places of formal education. Schools and universities are just some of the many places in which people learn and share their opinions. This fact becomes more evident when we take into account our digital lives and the amount of time most of us spend online and outside of traditional face-to-face learning situations.

How can we as educators address those who do not sign up to our newsletters, order our publications or attend our conferences? How can we find new and more visually appealing ways of reaching an online audience? How can we make access to political discourse easier and more interactive? How can we use the social web to help people engage in discussions of public interest?

These are some of the questions we had to consider when we developed the concept for our series of online Webtalks, which tackle the extreme right and its ideological connections to mainstream political discourse. This contextual focus confronted us with yet another slew of specific questions: how can we talk about xenophobia and prejudice with an audience which may not see issues like racism as a societal problem (yet)? And in talking about these complex issues, can we use a language that is easily understandable but not oversimplifying things; and last but not least: can we make voices heard which are usually being marginalised in the public arena?

Our recent Webtalk on everyday racism ([www.bpb.de/alltagsrassismus](http://www.bpb.de/alltagsrassismus)) was aimed at navigating in between these coordinates. We tackle racism at a time when violence and antipathy towards refugees were (and still are) on the rise in Germany, and the manifold failures in dealing with the racist hate crimes committed by the NSU (National Socialist Underground) were still painfully obvious. In talking about everyday racism we aimed to start a conversation about this topic, instead of simply condemning violent acts against minoritized groups. We wanted to show that a more subtle but highly influential set of exclusionary prejudices are at the roots of a climate of hostility towards “the other”. Those everyday acts of historically rooted cultural, political and personal stereotyping make it appear acceptable to assign different values to different groups of people and to reject that which is considered “not German enough”.

So in our Webtalk, which was livestreamed from a school in Berlin in front of a well-prepared student audience and broadcasted for an interested online viewership, we started by asking: What is racism in general and what is everyday racism in particular? Our expert panel consisted of two people who are engaged in empowerment work for those who are being discriminated against by racist practices: Julius Franklin from the “Initiative Schwarze Menschen in Deutschland” ([www.isdonline.de](http://www.isdonline.de)) and Nuran Yiğit from the “Migrationsrat Berlin Brandenburg” ([www.migrationsrat.de](http://www.migrationsrat.de)). The panel was moderated by the journalist Hadija Haruna ([www.hadija-haruna.de](http://www.hadija-haruna.de)). Yet we wanted to hear not only from these “professional experts” but also invited opinions from our student and online audiences. Asking for feedback via #wokommstdudennher (referring to the othering question: “Where do you come from anyway?!”) on Twitter, Facebook & Co in the lead up and during the livestream, we integrated a variety of user experiences with everyday racism and in so doing we made the event interactive.

# BOOK REVIEW

## POPULISM AND CRISIS POLITICS IN GREECE

Takis S. Pappas (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 162 pp.  
ISBN 9781137410573, £45.00 (hardcover).

Reviewed by Stijn van Kessel

*Loughborough University & PRuF, Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf*

In the past years, Greece has reached the headlines mainly due to its severe financial and economic difficulties, its central role in the Eurozone crisis, and the rise of extreme and radical parties on the 'left' as well as the 'right'. The early national election of January 2015, which saw a large victory for the radical left-wing SYRIZA, attests that the story has yet to come to a conclusion.

This book offers a timely and fascinating insight into Greek politics in the years preceding and during the crisis, and a comprehensive explanation for the failure of the Greek state. Pappas's account is both rich and concise, and the accessible and engaging writing style makes the book a very pleasant read.

The author takes us back to the decades since the fall of the military dictatorship in 1974, and describes the advent of the two-party system, dominated by New Democracy and the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK). After 1981, Pappas argues, both these parties contributed to the bloating of the public sector, the rise of government spending, the mounting of public debt, and the creation of a political system marked by patronage and clientelism. Pappas convincingly argues that the origins of the crisis lie in the politics of patronage and the interlinked polarisation of the party system; the two mechanisms which Pappas identifies as 'the cogs and wheels of Greek populism' (p.45). Following the author: '[i]n a context in which patronage was rampant and there existed a mechanism (polarized two-party politics) for distributing the spoils throughout society, the existence of a myriad short-term, patronage-related, individual rewards outweighed the likelihood of a common collective benefit in the long term' (p. 66). Consequently, '[p]oliticians learned that there was no mileage in reformism, society would only penalize them for it at the ballot box' (p. 132).

The following chapters describe the unfolding of the financial and economic crises, the eruption of social discord and violent unrest, and the eventual collapse of the polarised two-party system in 2012. In the two parliamentary elections of that year, two 'radical populist' parties were electorally successful: the radical right Independent Greeks (ANEL) entered parliament and the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) became a major opposition force on the

'left'. In addition, the 'plainly nondemocratic' neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn won a substantial amount of votes (p. 110). Pappas argues that, rather than supporting the old parties in the centre and facing the certain costs austerity, many Greek voters opted instead for radical and extreme parties, with the (unrealistic) hope to preserve the entitlements enjoyed prior to the crisis (p. 117). The final chapter skilfully brings together the threads of the analysis.

Even though clarity is, generally speaking, one of the strengths of this book, the concept of populism and its role in Greek politics could have been explained in greater detail. Pappas defines populism as 'democratic illiberalism' (p. 7) and argues that, since the coming to power of PASOK in 1981, 'populism permeated Greek politics and produced [...] a 'populist democracy' (p. 8). A 'populist democracy', in turn, is described as 'a democratic subtype in which the party in government and (at least) the major opposition party are both populist' (p. 36). In Pappas's analysis, however, the meaning of populism – and (il)liberalism for that matter – remains somewhat ambiguous.

The author's take on the concept appears consistent with the literature that recognises the incompatibility between populism and liberal democracy (notably in view of populism's impatience with checks and balances, its anti-pluralist character and portrayal of 'the people' as a homogeneous entity). In the introductory chapter, however, a genuine discussion of this literature is lacking, as is an explicit reference to regularly identified (ideational) attributes of populism. One can think of populism's anti-elitist character and appeal to popular sovereignty, attributes which are not directly implied by the definition of populism as 'democratic illiberalism'. Pappas does appear to associate these said characteristics with populism, for instance in his description of PASOK founder Papandreou's narrative, which pitted the 'non-privileged Greek people' against 'the domestic "establishment" and its foreign patrons' (p. 25-6). Yet from the text it remains unclear how these, more ideational, elements relate to populism as defined by the author.

The role of populism as a crucial aspect of the Greek crisis could also have been clarified in greater depth. In particular: how exactly is populism (i.e. 'democratic illiberalism') related to political patronage and polarized bipartism? As its meaning remains somewhat unclear, the reader may in the end wonder whether 'populism' has indeed been a crucial ingredient for the 'economic and state failure, party system collapse, and democratic failings' in Greece (p. 134).

Irrespective of this, Pappas offers a lucid and comprehensive analysis of the Greek crisis, and the characteristics of Greek politics and society more generally. For those seeking to learn about this topic, *Populism and Crisis Politics in Greece* is a must-read.

# PUBLICATIONS ALERT

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