eEXTREME

Newsletter of the ECPR Standing Group
on Extremism & Democracy

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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 (extremismanddemocracy@gmail.com).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STANDING GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dear *e-Extreme* readers,

We hope you are well, 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'.

Please do get in touch with your contributions and ideas. In the meantime, take care.

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!

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW

Your Standing Group membership is due for renewal this year. The current membership year will end on 30 September, and the renewal option is now available on the ECPR website.

How to renew? When you are logged in to your My ECPR account, visit 'My Groups' (https://ecpr.eu/MyEcpr/MyGroups.aspx) and click 'Renew Membership' next to 'Extremism and Democracy'. If you do not renew by 30 September, your membership will be discontinued.

CALL FOR REVIEWERS

e-Extreme is now offering scholars the opportunity to review articles! If you want to share your review of the latest published 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: extremismanddemocracy@gmail.com.

E&D ROUTLEDGE BOOK SERIES

The Routledge Book Series in *Extremism and Democracy*, which publishes work that lies within the Standing Group's academic scope, covers academic studies within the broad fields of 'extremism' and 'democracy', with volumes focusing on adjacent concepts such as populism, radicalism, and ideological/religious fundamentalism. These topics have been considered largely in isolation by scholars interested in the study of political parties, elections, social movements, activism, and radicalisation in democratic settings. Since its establishment in 1999, the series has encompassed both influential contributions to the discipline and informative accounts for public debate. Works will seek to problematise the role of extremism, broadly defined, within an ever-globalising world, and/or the way social and political actors can respond to these challenges without undermining democratic credentials.

The series was originally founded by Roger Eatwell (University of Bath) and Cas Mudde (University of Georgia) in 1999. The editorial team now comprises Caterina Froio (Sciences Po), Andrea L. P. Pirro (Scuola Normale Superiore), and Stijn van Kessel (Queen Mary University of London). The editors strongly encourage ideas or suggestions for new volumes in the book series, both from established academics and early career researchers.

To discuss any ideas or suggestions for new volumes in this book series, please contact the editors at: extremismanddemocracy@gmail.com.

KEEP US INFORMED

Please keep us informed of any upcoming conferences or workshops you are organising, and of any publication or funding opportunities that would be of interest to Standing Group members. We will post all details on our website. Similarly, if you would like to write a report on a conference or workshop that you have organised and have this included in our newsletter, please do let us know.

Please, also tell us of any recent publications of interest to Standing Group members so that we may include them in the 'publications alert' section of our newsletter, and please get in touch if you would like to see a particular book (including your own) reviewed in *e-Extreme*, or if you would like to review a specific book yourself. We are always keen on receiving reviews from junior and senior scholars alike!

Finally, if you would like to get involved in the production of the newsletter, the development of our website, or any of the other activities of the Standing Group, please do get in touch. We are always very keen to involve more and more members in the running of the Standing Group!

UPCOMING EVENTS

EXTREMISM & DEMOCRACY AT THE ECPR GENERAL CONFERENCE 2021

The Section *Radicalism, Populism, Extremism: Threat or Corrective for Democracy?*, chaired by Anna-Sophie Heinze (University of Trier) and Manès Weisskircher (TU Dresden), has been accepted to the 2021 ECPR General Conference, 30 August – 3 September 2021.

Recent years saw a proliferation in the number of studies explicitly focusing on radicalism, populism and extremism. Their insights have become increasingly relevant to a broader political science audience – first and foremost to scholars of democracy and its supposed crisis. Ever more urgent reflections on 'how democracies die' and the rise of 'illiberal democracies' have considered the strength and actions of radical, populist and extremist actors as key explanatory variables. Also, in what are still considered to be stable and prospering democracies, significant shares of the electorate have turned to political parties which aggressively promote the exclusion of minorities and other illiberal aims. These developments reflect the ongoing debate in our subfield about whether radicalism, populism and extremism have gone mainstream as key part of the contemporary Zeitgeist.

In addition to the crisis of democracy, the Covid-19 pandemic constitutes a major break in the functioning of societies around the world: governments have taken strong measures to contain the virus, which has raised the question of how to balance individual freedom, public health and economic activity. Some radical and populist actors in government have been accused of taking advantage of the pandemic, enforcing policies through emergency legislation and undermining the power of parliaments. In stark contrast, many radical, populist and extremist parties in opposition have struggled to attract attention in this 'hour of the executive'. Moreover, harsh opposition to government measures have also motivated some old and new – and often quite heterogeneous – forces to march on the streets, where they frequently articulated a hostility to science and conspiracy theories about the pandemic, sometimes including antisemitic tropes.

While many observers have raised alarm about the rise of radicalism, populism and extremism, some actors have also been described as political innovators, who do not contribute to democratic backsliding, but may in fact act as a corrective to an unresponsive political mainstream or 'undemocratic liberalism' in general. Their improvements may include the representation of opinions which were previously neglected in political competition, the promotion of institutional reform

such as direct democracy, or the demand for a more equal distribution of income and wealth.

These developments point to the ongoing relevance of many of the classical questions in our subfield, including but not limited to whether radical, populist or extremist actors represent a threat or a corrective to liberal democracy. As 2020 most certainly does not mark 'the end of populism', it makes its study ever more urgent. The unique situation caused by the pandemic, together with an observed democratic decline in various contexts, underlines the need to study the diversity within and the impact of such actors worldwide.

List of panels:

P037: Beyond the electoral paradigm: Perspectives on the mobilisation strategies of the far right
Monday 11:00 - 12:45 (30/08/2021)
Chair: Andrea L. P. Pirro
Co-Chair: Pietro Castelli Gattinara
Discussant: Sarah de Lange

P093: Democracy and crisis: Anti-democratic consequences
Monday 13:15 - 15:00 (30/08/2021)
Chair: Reinhard Heinisch
Co-Chair: Andrej Zaslove
Discussant: Robert Huber

P121: Effective responses or mainstreaming of the far right?
Monday 15:15 - 17:00 (30/08/2021)
Chair: Anna-Sophie Heinze
Discussant: Léonie de Jonge

P152: Far-right activism in the protest arena: Street and online mobilization
Tuesday 09:00 - 10:45 (31/08/2021)
Chair: Manès Weisskircher
Discussant: Pietro Castelli Gattinara

P263: Mobilising around Europe: Pro and anti-EU social movement activism
Tuesday 13:00 - 14:45 (31/08/2021)
Chair: Stijn van Kessel
Co-Chair: Adam Fagan
Discussant: Adam Fagan

P278: New perspectives on populist radical right party organizations
Tuesday 09:00 - 10:45 (31/08/2021)
Chair: Bartek Pytlas
Discussant: Reinhard Heinisch

P280: New strategies of the far right
Tuesday 15:15 - 17:00 (31/08/2021)
Chair: Marta Lorimer
Discussant: Marta Lorimer

P299: Platforms, identity and mobilisation – The far-right online
Wednesday 10:30 - 12:15 (01/09/2021)
Chair: Greta Sophie Jasser
Co-Chair: Antonia Vaughan
Discussant: Julia Rone

P335: Populist rhetoric: Language as strategy?
Wednesday 12:45 - 14:30 (01/09/2021)
Chair: Ofra Klein
Discussant: Jakob Schwörer

P349: Reaching out to close the borders: Understanding mobilization against migration across Europe
Thursday 14:30 - 16:15 (02/09/2021)
Chair: Kristian Berg Harpviken
Discussant: Adam Fagan

P371: Right-wing populist party organisation across Europe: The survival of the mass-party?
Tuesday 15:15 - 17:00 (31/08/2021)
Chair: Judith Sijstermans
Co-Chair: Stijn van Kessel
Discussant: Sarah de Lange

P467: What drives populism, radicalism, and extremism?
Wednesday 15:15 - 17:00 (01/09/2021)
Chair: Petra Guasti
Discussant: Mattia Zulianello

P410: The Covid-19 pandemic: Changes in populist radical right discourse?
Thursday 10:15 - 12:00 (02/09/2021)
Chair: Caterina Froio
Discussant: Stijn van Kessel

P411: The cultural side of populism: Culture, music, and emotions in populist times
Thursday 12:30 - 14:15 (02/09/2021)
Chair: Enrico Padoan
Co-Chair: Manuela Caiani
Discussant: Enrico Padoan

P422: The influence of movement parties on democratic quality
Friday 09:00 - 10:45 (03/09/2021)
Chair: Fred Paxton
Co-Chair: Lorenzo Mosca
Discussant: Martin Brusis

P429: The political attitudes and electoral preferences of secure and insecure workers: Examining the social bases of party competition, and of radical-left and radical-right parties
Friday 11:00 - 12:45 (03/09/2021)
Chair: Luis Ramiro
Co-Chair: Raul Gomez
Discussant: Laura Morales

SECTION MEETING AT ECPR CONFERENCE

In addition to the above panels, please note the *Extremism & Democracy* Standing Group will be holding its business meeting on **Thursday, 2 September at 16:15-17:00.** All conference attendants are welcome to join.

BOOK REVIEWS

PAOLO COSSARINI AND FERNANDO VALLESPÍN (EDS.)
POPULISM AND PASSIONS, DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY AFTER AUSTERITY
ROUTLEDGE, 2019. 196 PP. £34.99. ISBN 9780815383796

Patrick Sawyer
Higher School of Economics

The global rise of populism, and its highly emotional style, has brought the study of passion back to the forefront of social science research. Within a discipline dominated by theoretical premises that humans are ultimately rational creatures, new revelations are revealing the limitations of the explanatory power of 20th-century theories of rational choice for 21st-century politics. In Populism and Passions, Cossarini and Vallespin argue that the social sciences are undergoing a paradigm shift away from purely rationalist theories, and towards an "affective turn" that accepts the non-rational side of human behavior and seeks to reconcile the emotional with the rational in explaining social phenomena. Maldonado's chapter introduces the ongoing "affective turn" in the social sciences, referring to the multidisciplinary project of neurologists, psychologists, and economists whose research has led them to conclude that humans are something other than "autonomous and reasonable" individuals. Instead, "cognitive biases and emotional influences" serve a mediating role for human behavior that recalls the conclusions of the many behavioral economists who claim that rationality is "bounded".

Nicolas Demertzis bridges this discussion with the topic of populism, revealing the lack of attention given to the study of emotions in populist movements, and investigates three common emotional features related to populism; nostalgia, anger, and resentment. Linking back to Taggart's concept of "the heartland", nostalgia compensates for current difficulties and retains a sense of continuity in one's identity. The "power emotion", anger, is a reaction to perceived outsiders that should be held accountable for dangerous, threatening, or otherwise negative situations. Finally, resentment, or indignation, links anger with a sense of justice, and pushes the individual to right the wrongs perceived to be at fault for their deprivation. In Benjamin Moffitt's chapter, this discussion of affect converges with that of the "populist style" of politics, which is more effective at reaching out to voters through emotional appeals, and its opposite, the "technocratic" style. Moffitt argues that the populist style consists of three necessary and

sufficient components: appeals to "the people" against "the elite", a tendency to 'break the rules' of mainstream politics", and performances that emphasize crises, breakdown, and threats to the people, which all appeal to voters through the emotions they elicit.

Emmy Eklundh's contribution touches on the usage of emotional appeals in the left-wing populist party Podemos. As collective identities are not pre-determined by the individual, but are constantly made and remade, Eklundh argues, it falls upon the role of affect to provide meaning to empty-signifiers such as "the people", producing a collective identity based on group commonalities. The case of Podemos is then used to demonstrate the way in which Iglesias and the party embody both the rational and emotional sides as a co-constitutive process and argue that in attempting to avoid the political ineffectiveness of the Indignados, Podemos are moving towards a more rationalistic view of politics which uses emotions more as a tool than a constituting factor of their political identity. Similarly, Cossarini also discusses the "boundary problem", related to the way which the source of democratic authority, "the people", is constituted. "The people" as such is a historically-contingent abstraction that constitutes different parts of the popular strata, and at its core, is formed by collective sentiments held in common. To employ this symbol is not simply a call for popular sovereignty, but an effort to bring a "people" into existence by choosing a leader to speak on its behalf and its right to compete for power; thus, this inevitable part of democratic life can also carry a democratizing promise by bringing the frustrations, demands, and identities of citizens back into the political system.

Moving to specific cases of this democratizing promise, Paulina Tambakaki's chapter invites the reader to ponder whether populist discourse can help "reignite" affect for democracy by mobilizing excluded groups from the process of representation; taking the case of Syriza during the Greek debt crisis, she argues that the focus on constructing a discourse centered around 'equality' as directly opposed to 'austerity' allowed the party to position itself in direct opposition to the dominant order and encourage the people to become reengaged in the democratic process. In Óscar García Agustín's investigation of the role of emotions in two Danish left-wing populist parties, the Red Green Alliance (RGA) and The Alternative, the author argues that emotions can play a positive role in politics as demonstrated by the way in which they can be used to great effect to recreate a sense of identity, community, belonging, and hope in voters necessary for the development of a more participatory political system, a supportive welfare state, and an environmentally-sustainable economy.

The next two chapters move towards a discussion of the role of emotions within the current context of the crisis of representation haunting many liberal democracies. Jason Glynos and Aurelien Mondon's chapter provides insightful commentary on the "Populist Hype", characterized by an

equally emotional response to the rise of new challengers emerging from the populist right; this is manifested in their tendency to exaggerate their significance, describe their rise in apocalyptic terms while ignoring larger systemic problems, and the tendency to interpret their rise as one homogenous movement without consideration of important national contextual factors. Simon Tormey's chapter takes the position that the ongoing mainstreaming of populism as a concept only benefits the elites who use the label of 'populism' to lump political alternatives of all ideological backgrounds together into a single basket, characterizing them all as fundamentally undemocratic movements. The author points out that several arguments made against the populists, that they are anti-pluralistic, represent a 'the people' in a crude majoritarian way, and they are led by charismatic strong-men, as unfair characterisations that not only unfairly malign all populists in the same way, but also miss out on key aspects of democratic politics in the modern era which lead them to be successful.

In the final chapter by Fernando Vallespin and Máriam Bascuñán, the authors develop upon the importance of the transformation of the public sphere from media democracy to digital democracy, characterised by the widespread expression of "post-truth" politics. With the decline in traditional news outlets and the democratizing structure of online information sources that increasingly competes for the attention of audiences with traditional news sources and other online outlets, this has provided for the development of online collectives that form a "people" by delineating themselves from others. This increasingly polarized and trivialized communicative structure reinforces the proliferation of alternative narratives by providing content that the user "feels" is true, something that populist candidates such as Donald Trump gain from. The authors argue that ultimately, if democracy is ever to regain its footing, populist parties, which provoke intense emotions, yet are likely to burn out in a short period of time, should occupy less of our attention, and instead focus on rediscovering the "common world".

This book provides an original discussion that paints a different picture of the role of emotions in populist movements, anti-populist responses, and democratic politics more broadly than what mainstream observers tend to perceive, casting the irrational features of affect in a more positive light. In this respect, the authors were clearly successful, though, to some extent, if the emotional side of cognitive processes have generally been viewed as a negative feature of democratic politics, in many cases the authors of this book seem to have swung far in the opposite direction almost as if to overcompensate for the lack of prior discussion. This somewhat optimistic take can be seen in the many cases of left populist attempts to promote feelings of "community", "solidarity", and "hope" that serve to create a "people" based on principles of inclusion, without much discussion of negative sentiments, such as hatred, fear, or racial resentment, that can serve as the basis for exclusionary conceptions of "the people". Nonetheless, the text

makes a huge contribution to current research on populism, forcing us to rethink the vital role of affect, challenging the preconception of the damage that the irrational side of human cognition can do to the state of democracy, and providing a convincing argument as to why, instead, it may be pivotal for solving the current "crisis of representation".

Patrick Sawyer is a doctoral candidate at HSE University (National Research University Higher School of Economics), in Moscow, Russia and lecturer in the Department of Social Sciences. His research interests include populism, radicalism, conspiracism, and political protest.

VITTORIO EMANUELE PARSI
THE WRECKING OF THE LIBERAL WORLD ORDER
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2021. 325 PP. €103.99. ISBN 978-3-030-72043-8

Valerio Alfonso Bruno
Centre for the Analysis of the Radical Right (CARR), Center for European Futures (CEF), Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Milan, Italy)

Vittorio Emanuele Parsi's latest work, *The Wrecking of the Liberal World Order* starts from the discouraging consideration that the Liberal World Order (LWO) today is in a severe crisis and argues that since the 1980s it has been gradually replaced by what Parsi defines as the 'Neoliberal Global Order'. It asks what can help us make sense of this current state of the liberal global order and its identity crisis?

The book, without underplaying external and internal factors, ranging from the presence of competing illiberal projects advocated by China or Russia to the emergent populist and technocratic dynamics within liberal democracies, adds a third factor into its analysis to explain the wrecking of the LWO. It contends that the departure from the original path of the LWO—the complex balance between market, democracy and sovereignty—has been the main cause of the shipwreck. The LWO was born at the end of WWII as a project aiming to harmonise state sovereignty with the market, through the promotion of liberal democracy domestically and of free trade and economic cooperation internationally.

In a constant dialogue with Ikenberry's recent work, *A World Safe For Democracy* (2020), The Wrecking of the LWO continuously moves along three different temporal horizons: (1) from the origins of the LWO to 2000, (2) from the beginning of the current century to the eve of the Trump presidency (2000- 2015) and (3) finally from the "*MAGA presidency*" to current days, in order to include the Covid-19 pandemic and Biden presidency (2016- early 2021).

Already in the first chapter of the book Parsi identifies the main weakness undermining the global order: exactly as the luxury passenger liner *Titanic* sunk in 1912, the LWO's mistake was to hubristically consider itself "unsinkable". Paradoxically enough, liberal democracy has suffered a similar misunderstanding, considered to be standing at the "end of the history" as prophesied in the controversial title of Fukuyama's famous book (1992). In the second chapter, Parsi considers at length the very specific dynamics and conditions behind the origins of the LWO and follows to analyse its expansion and its following "betrayal", covering overall the period between 1945 and 2000. The author then discusses with efficacy the three "broken promises" that the LWO was ultimately unable to fulfil: a safer, fairer and richer world. The first three chapters of *The Wrecking of the Liberal World Order* represent the theoretical core of the work, with Parsi thoroughly analysing the premises that have allowed the LWO to first thrive and then to gradually break the "pact between Democracy and Market" in the 1980s, inebriated by a state of dangerous overconfidence. At this point, the LWO has already moved into a "Neoliberal Global Order", even if many of its most stunt supporters seemed unaware of what was happening.

The fourth chapter of the book proceeds to the days of the Trump presidency and focuses on the decline of US leadership in LWO, accelerated under Donald Trump presidency, and rise of the main challengers to the *status quo*, i.e. China and Russia. The two countries represent different kinds of "threats" to the US leadership and have started common initiatives aiming at counterbalancing the liberal order (or what remains of it), such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In this vast chapter, Parsi includes a thorough analysis of the processes of military and technological modernization of the two countries, their new projection capabilities and strategies.

The following three chapters (from five to seven) concern the internal dynamics and threats to the LWO, covering the early decades of the 21st century up to the Trump presidency. In chapter five, the author analyses the role of non-state actors' threats, the return of security as a source of legitimacy for State action, Jihadist terrorism and Islamist radicalization, and the War on Terror dynamics that changed the Mediterranean Sea. In chapter six, the focus is on the turn that has moved the US from a reluctant rule-maker (already under Barack Obama) to a revisionist power under the presidency of Donald Trump, as epitomized by the slogan *Make America Great Again* which confirmed a long-term trend. Chapter seven then deals with the internal threats to liberal democracies by phenomena such as populisms—in particular populist radical-right parties—and technocratic oligarchies; both of which are capable of undermining the political sphere from within.

Finally, the last two chapters of the book deal with the multiple challenges awaiting both Europe and the European Union and their roles with respect to possibly relaunching and updating the liberal international order. It also analyses the impact that recent ground-breaking events such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the election of Joe Biden as 46th US President may have on the Neoliberal Global Order, which may well represent the last wake up call to put the LWO back on track.

In conclusion, the biggest contribution of Vittorio Emanuele Parsi's *The Wrecking of the Liberal World Order* to current IR scholarship lies exactly in the consideration that, while focusing on external and internal threats to the LWO is crucial, it is not sufficient to explain its current status and contemplate ways to possibly relaunch it. As already mentioned, both external illiberal competitors like China and Russia or internal menaces, as populist radical right parties and technocratic oligarchies, cannot on their own explain the transformation of the Liberal Order into a Neoliberal one. Parsi's important merit, deeply influenced by the readings and insights of economists such as Thomas Piketty, Mariana Mazzucato, Dani Rodrik, Branko Milanovic and Francesco Saraceno, and in concert with G. John Ikenberry's research, is to create an original but sound synthesis between IR and international political economy to make sense of the current identity crisis of the LWO, in particular the relationship between Democracy and the Market.

In conclusion, the penetrating theoretical insights and original approach proposed in the book authored by Vittorio Emanuele Parsi, including the emphasis on the LWO's unique and historically contingent emergence after WWII, and its fragile balance between Market and Democracy that allowed it to thrive, make *The Wrecking of the Liberal World Order* an important contribution to all students and scholars—as well as practitioners—who are interested in the ongoing debate over the post-war liberal order.

Valerio Alfonso Bruno is Senior Fellow at the Centre for Analysis of the Radical Right (CARR), where he is deputy head of the Populism Research Unit and Fellow at the Center for European Futures. Bruno is assistant to the Chair of International Relations at the Catholic University of Milan and cooperates with the Observatoire de la Finance in Geneva. Bruno is currently working on a monograph on the populist radical right in Italy between 2018 and 2020, co-authored with J.F. Downes and A. Scopelliti, for Ibidem-Verlag/Columbia University Press.

References
Fukuyama, Francis. *The End of History and the Last Man*. Free Press, 1992.
Ikenberry, G. John. *A world safe for democracy: Liberal internationalism and the crises of global order*. Yale University Press, 2020.

CHRISTOPHER J. BICKERTON AND CARLO INVERNIZZI ACCETTI
TECHNOPOPULISM: THE NEW LOGIC OF DEMOCRATIC POPULISM
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2021. 256 PP. £75. ISBN 9780198807766

Florian Hartleb
Catholic University Eichstätt, Germany

The topic of "how democracies end" has received much attention in both the media and academia amidst recent crises. Liberal democracies have been shaken by the rise of right-wing populist movements. In contemporary populist discourse all over the world, from Brazil to India, so-called 'post-truth' politics have challenged existing objective standards for truth (Hartleb 2021). Yet while populism has received a lot of scholarly attention as a "stand-alone phenomenon", there has been little connection to a phenomenon with similar causes: technocracy. As with populism, in the technocratic model of politics there is a similar tendency to opt-out from traditional party politics, not just with an anti-elitist stance, but with further authority handed over to experts. New examples of this "nebulous category" in political science have recently arisen in countries such as Italy (with Mario Draghi, former President of European Central Bank as the new Prime Minister), the Czech Republic and Greece. Is the technocratic model following the same trajectory as the populist model: 'from the margins to the mainstream'? Are populism and technocracy two sides of the same coin or at least closely related to one other? In times of crisis do both play the role of non-partisan caretakers and represent the "outsider"?

The joint venture between Bickerton and Accetti is the first monograph devoted to the concept of technopopulism. The term was first coined by Arthur Lipow and Patrick Seyd in a 1995 article entitled "*Political Parties and the Challenge to Democracy: From Steam Engines to Technopopulism*". As with the blooming of populism studies at the end of the 1990s, the term has now firmly entered the academic debate. The book has five main chapters; a debate regarding the concept, the description of its varied forms, an exploration of its roots, and a discussion of the consequences. The book argues that populists have embraced the language of science and expertise. Populism and technocracy should be understood as the "main structuring poles of contemporary democratic politics", "modes of political action" and "constitutive elements of a new political grammar" (p. 2), inside and outside of democratic settings. As a consequence, politics has transformed from being grounded in ideological competition toward a new logic based on common interests and solution-oriented policies. As a result, the authors observe "the unbearable lightness of (recent) politics" (p. 10).

This approach leads to a new perspective on contemporary (populist) politics beyond the recent preoccupation with Trump. They analyse examples such as New Labour, The Five Star Movement and Emmanuel Macron´s La République En Marche. In so doing the book delivers a broad perspective and challenges the identification of populism solely on the ideological extremes (and typically on the right-wing). The authors discuss the concrete internal and external consequences of technopopulism such as increasing conflict, democratic discontent and authoritarianism. Another point is the rise of identity politics in a European Union which is increasingly shaken by crises and offers little space for (revolutionary) political alternatives. Citizens in a number of supposedly consolidated democracies in North America and Western Europe have not only grown more critical of their political leaders but have also become more cynical about the value of democracy as a political system itself.

After reading this well-structured and innovative book, its argument appeared obviously evident in contemporary politics: political competition in advanced democratic states today is increasingly ordered around appeals to both "the people" and to competence and expertise. The authors conclude with some reflections on the coronavirus crisis, and how it might introduce a more substantive, ideologically derived form of political debate. This is shown by the contestation between nation states over the appropriate response to the crisis from the European Union. Yet, "rather than any definitive move towards Europeanisation or nationalism, we see the same gap between national attitudes and pan-European policy-making" (p. 217). The duo´s work gives a lot of grounding for further research – with the likelihood that further empirical examples will arise in the next decade. The pandemic has made the digital surveillance state much more effective. "Technopopulism" could become a new cornerstone in debates regarding "remedies" for the ills of democracies and counterstrategies against dictatorships. Can technopopulists represent a socially progressive and reformist agenda? The book has merit in not following the recent (often repetitive and circular) debates on populism, but rather developing a new path, and one which is worth following.

Florian Hartleb gained his doctorate from Chemnitz University of Technology in 2004 on the topic of right- and left-wing populism. Currently, he lectures at the Catholic University of Eichstätt and the University of Police Saxony-Anhalt. His recent publications include *Lone Wolves. The New Terrorism of Single Right-Wing Actors* (Springer 2020) and Materalizations of Populism in Today´s Politics: Global Perspectives, in: Barbara Christophe et al. (eds.): *The Politics of Authenticity and Populist Discourses, Media and Education in Brazil, India and Ukraine* (Palgrave Macmillan 2021).

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.

Abou-Chadi, T. & Kurer, T. (2021) Economic Risk within the Household and Voting for the Radical Right. *World Politics, 73,* 482-511.

Ackermann, K., Braun, D., Fatke, M. & Fawzi, N. (2021) Direct democracy, political support and populism-attitudinal patterns in the German Bundeslander. *Regional and Federal Studies.*

Afonso, A. (2021) Correlates of aggregate support for the radical right in Portugal. *Research & Politics, 8.*

Ahlstrom-Vij, K. (2021) Do We Live in a 'Post-Truth' Era? *Political Studies.*

Allen, T. J. & Goodman, S. W. (2021) Individual- and party-level determinants of far-right support among women in Western Europe. *European Political Science Review, 13,* 135-150.

Alptekin, H. (2021) Tracking terrorism and counter-terrorism: Introducing the Turkey terrorism incidents database. *Mediterranean Politics.*

Aron, H. & Superti, C. (2021) Protest at the ballot box: From blank vote to populism. *Party Politics.*

Avigur-Eshel, A. & Filc, D. (2021) Not Merely Ideological: The Political Economy of Populism in Government. *Swiss Political Science Review, 27,* 506-526.

Badano, G. & Nuti, A. (2021) Public Reason, Partisanship and the Containment of the Populist Radical Right. *Political Studies.*

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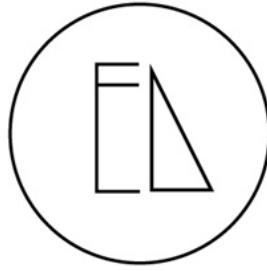
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