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Kommentare (0)

Trouble on the Far-Right – European challenge, national actors, local practices



This is the first article in our series *Trouble on the-Far-Right*. For more information on the series, please click [here](#).

by Maik Fielitz and Laura Lotte Laloire

Europe is in trouble. Far right politics is spreading all over the place and its actors and discourses become increasingly influential at various levels: Parties from the far right achieved successes in French, Austrian and Slovakian elections. Far right movement organizations in Germany and Italy mobilized thousands of people to the streets. In Sweden and Great Britain, vigilante and terrorist groups wage armed struggle. And last but not least, 'illiberal models of democracy' in Poland and Hungary demonstrate the far right's capacity to transform politics on the European level.

The causes for the rightward shift discussed in the media and academia are manifold: the economic crisis, the diversification of European societies as a consequence of the influx of migrants and refugees, post-democratic technocratization of European austerity politics as well as a diffuse disenchantment with liberal democracy. Beyond these rather general grievances, **strategies** and **practices** of far right actors remain largely neglected or restricted to scholarly and activist debates. This blog series aims to bridge the gap of public interest and academic research and provides a forum for scholars, journalists and practitioners alike to exchange central insights from their work.

Defining the far right broadly as a political space whose actors base their ideology and action on the inequality of human beings and combine the supremacy of a particular nation, race or 'civilization' with ambitions for an authoritarian transformation of values and styles of government, this blog series will discuss contemporary developments in the European far right with regard to three current issues:

The first is the **growing diversification** of far right activism and changing interaction of its actors through new forms of coalition building, mobilization and communication technology. The research on the far right has traditionally a strong focus on party politics. However, far right activism assumes increasingly hybrid forms and yields new actors which imply different relations to the institutional framework of liberal democracy. Hence, complex dynamics emerge in the far right with regard to means and strategies and establish new forms of claims making.

Second, we will consider the **blurring distinction between mainstream and far right** in various European societies with the diverse ramifications. On the one hand, several major parties and established actors turned to the right with regard to the migration debate and facilitated a radicalization of the political mainstream. On the other hand, far right figures and movements gained public credibility in the political landscape. This trend provided for spaces and political opportunities for more radical forces that strive to

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escalate social and political conflicts.

The third topic is the mutual fertilization processes with regard to discourse, ideology and practice at the **transnational level**. Despite the nationalist consensus, far right activism is long since compatible with global – and in particular European – concepts of politics ranging from new right ideas of ethno-pluralism to racial ideologies of white supremacists and neo-Nazis. These approaches manifest in international alliances as well as in transnationally mobilized demonstrations and subcultural events. Reinforced by similar problem perceptions and increased exchange, new forms of transnational collaboration appeared but remain largely understudied or misunderstood.

Overview on the upcoming contributions

Trouble on the Far Right will convene succinct analyses on far right activism and politics. In times of social unrest and continuous restructuring of European politics the accounts may broaden the perspective on a subject that is emotionally discussed but hardly understood among European publics. The pan-European approach aims not only to identify parallels and differences of mobilization efforts and electoral performance but also points to the fact that the ideological corpus, interconnections and organizational structures of the far right have far surpassed national boundaries and demand a transnational response. The following questions set the framework for an interdisciplinary debate in the coming weeks:

- Which manifestations challenge the political systems and civil societies in Europe?
- Which new forms of mobilization can be detected? How have patterns of mobilization changed recently? Which national peculiarities are apparent?
- How do transnational developments influence far right activism locally and regionally?
- How do parties and movements from the far right influence the political climate and mainstream parties?
- How do authorities, parties and civil society respond to the far right challenge?

Scholarly debate on far right politics is far from consensus on the use of concepts, terminologies and methodologies. Quite often they provoke conflict on the normative basis of research, the instruments of empirical inquiry and the relationship to the research object. As long as these discussions are ongoing, we as conveners aim to offer a pluralist framework that allows different approaches to reflect on their work. Thus, opinions and estimations will inevitably diverge on different levels. This being said, we are convinced that disagreements are productive to provide new perspectives on contentious issues and enhance our understanding on far right phenomena. Consequently, we hope to stimulate discussions in our comments section on the pointed analysis between the respective authors and interested readers.



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 Tags: **civil society, EU, Far-right politics, mobilization**

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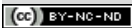
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