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e-Extreme

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Extremism and Democracy**

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The *e-Extreme* is the newsletter of the ECPR Standing Group on Extremism and Democracy and is published quarterly. For any enquiries about the newsletter, please contact the managing editor ad interim, Elisabeth Carter. For enquiries regarding book reviews please contact editor Sarah de Lange.

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Standing Group Announcements

Visit the website

Please visit our website for details of forthcoming conferences and workshops: www.extremism-and-democracy.com
Also, remember that the website contains a database that enables members to browse and search for other members by research interests, as well as by name. If you would like to update your own details please just email us at: info@extremism-and-democracy.com Please also encourage colleagues and PhD students to join the Standing Group.

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

Conference Reports

Analysing the Far-Right: Recent and forthcoming events by the Radicalism and New Media Research Group at the University of Northampton

Since its inception in late 2009, the Radicalism and New Media Research Group (www.radicalism-mew-media.org) at the University of Northampton has been keen to develop a public-facing approach to academic activity. Moreover, it has allowed our School of Social Science's expertise in the contemporary British far-right to develop new partners among those encountering such extremism on a day-to-day basis. The idea behind our approach to scholarship is to create a unique intellectual space where debate can engage a wide range of practitioners, providing a forum for such professionals to interact, exchange ideas and learn from each other.

One of our most fruitful relationships has been an ongoing association with the publisher of *Searchlight*, Gerry Gable, who launched the *Lone Wolves: Myth or Reality*? report at our most recent international symposium on 15 April 2011, titled *Think Global, Hate Local: England's Far Right in Focus*. The event itself attracted a diverse audience from police, probation, local and national government, anti-fascist campaigners, as well as academics working in this field. Presentations were equally diverse. The day kicked off with a keynote address on the BNP's election performance in 2010 by Professor Nigel Copsey. His detailed analysis was followed by scrutiny of internet freedoms by Professor Raphael Cohen-Almagor of the University of Hull, as well as my own discussion on Colin Jordan's neo-Nazi writings. Afternoon panels shifted focus away from academia, and began with a set of presentations from core *Searchlight* writers, comprising further discussion on the financial crisis facing the BNP (Sonia Gable), the social composition of the English Defence League (Matthew Collins), and the British far-right's links to European groups (Graeme Atkinson). Finally, a panel of representatives from the National Coordinator for Domestic Extremism (NCDE) detailed a number of relevant policing issues regarding the EDL, and the wide range of social pressures generated by their demonstrations. Many of these presentations were podcasted and are now available at the following address: www.backdoorbroadcasting.net/2011/04/think-global-hate-local/.

Looking to the future, our next conference will be a two-day event, on the 22 and 23 of September 2011: *Populist Racism in Britain and Europe since 1945*. With keynote talks from Hans-Georg Betz, Aristotle Kallis and Fiyaz Mughal OBE, this conference will once again create dialogue among a range of delegates, ranging from local and national government, to policing, to statutory services, to charities as well as academia. Its focus on popular and populist prejudices, and the pragmatic approaches to dealing with them, will complement our work to date in scrutinizing the far-right in Britain, Europe and the US. Details can be found on our website, www.radicalism-new-media.org

Dr Paul Jackson, Coordinator, Radicalism and New Media, University of Northampton
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Processes of Radicalization and De-Radicalization
Center for Interdisciplinary Research (ZiF), Bielefeld, April 6-8, 2011
Funded by the Volkswagen-Foundation

The conference 'Processes of Radicalization and De-Radicalization' took place at the Center for Interdisciplinary Reasearch (ZiF), Bielefeld, on April 6-8, 2011. The event was hosted by the *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, in cooperation with Donatella della Porta (EUI, Florence) and Gary LaFree (START, University of Maryland), and in collaboration with the Working Group 'Orders of Violence in the German Association for Political Science' (DVPW). It was organized by Lorenzo Bosi (EUI, Florence), Chares Demetriou (University of Cyprus), Stefan Malthaner (Bielefeld University), André Bank (GIGA, Hamburg), Teresa Koloma Beck (University or Marburg), and Alex Veit (University of Bremen).

The conference brought together distinguished scholars and younger scientists from various disciplines, including sociology, political science, anthropology, psychology, history, international relations, area studies, as well as from different countries (United States, the Netherlands, Turkey, Israel, the United Kingdom, Italy, Greece, Switzerland, Denmark, Ireland, France, Spain, Russia, and Germany). Approaching the subject from their own disciplinary perspective, these scholars explored the complex interactions between the social, political, and cultural environment (macro level), the role of organizational dynamics of armed groups (meso level), and individual life experiences (micro level) in radicalization and de-radicalization processes. An important common thread throughout all conference presentations was that the subjects of analysis were indeed processes, that is, complicated and context-dependent sets of dynamics.

The conference aimed at developing a comprehensive understanding of processes of radicalization and de-radicalization by approaching the topic in an interdisciplinary way and from an internationally and historically comparative perspective. It explicitly sought to go beyond the common focus on Islamist terrorism and included case studies and comparative works on a broad range of violent phenomena and theoretical contributions on numerous important aspects. The combination of keynote-talks in plenary sessions and smaller panel sessions gave the event a common framework of guiding concepts and questions but also offered opportunities for intensive discussion about the problems of studying political violence and terrorism forms of action, both theoretical and methodological, as well as a constructive discussion about the future of the subject.

Two major publications will come out of this conference. One special issue will be edited by Donatella Della Porta and Gary La Free for the *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* (2012). A second work will be published as a co-edited book by Lorenzo Bosi, Chares Demetriou and Stefan Malthaner for Ashgate in the Mobilization series.

Lorenzo Bosi and Stefan Malthaner

Book Reviews

Aversion and Accommodation: Political Change and Urban Regime Analysis in Dutch Local Government: Rotterdam 1998-2008
By Julien van Ostaaijen (Delft: Eburon, 2010), 270 p., ISBN 978-9059723689

Reviewed by Sarah L. de Lange
University of Amsterdam

Since the mid-1990s a number of radical right parties, such as the *Freiheitliches Partei Österreichs*, the *Lega Nord*, and the *Lijst Pim Fortuyn*, have assumed office, while other radical right parties (e.g. the *Dansk Folkeparti* and the *Partij voor de Vrijheid*) have become supporters of minority governments. The government participation of these parties has sparked a lively debate about the impact of radical right parties on, for example, the government agenda and policy-making. However, it has proven difficult to carefully assess the impact of these parties, given the low number of radical right parties that have assumed office and the short periods for which they have been part of government coalitions. It should be noted though that many radical right parties have been in power at the local level, even in countries where they are treated as pariahs at the national level. Few studies have examined the (policy) influence of radical right parties at the local level. Some attention has been devoted to the achievements of the *Front National* mayors in Marignane, Orange, Toulon and Vitrolles and to the role played by various radical right parties in regional executives.

Julien van Ostaaijen contributes to this literature with a detailed study of the impact of *Leefbaar Rotterdam* (Liveable Rotterdam), a local chapter of the *Lijst Pim Fortuyn* that received a third of the votes in the 2002 municipal elections in the harbor city Rotterdam. In his book *Aversion and Accommodation: Political Change in Dutch Local Government: Rotterdam 1998-2008* he examines the extent to which *Leefbaar Rotterdam* managed to realize four goals formulated in the manifesto it presented for the 2002 municipal elections, namely 1) less crime and improved safety, 2) more restrictive immigration and integration policies, 3) greater accountability of civil servants and politicians, and 4) more input of citizens in the policy-making process. Given that the party was invited to join the municipal executive by the Christian Democrats and Liberals, it had ample opportunity to bring about the desired policy changes.

On the basis of extensive research – Van Ostaaijen attended meetings of the municipal council, conducted over a hundred interviews with civil servants, local politicians and representatives from local organizations, occupied a desk at one of the municipal agencies for two years and systematically analyzed media coverage, official documents and websites – he concludes that *Leefbaar Rotterdam* realized most of the goals it had formulated. With regard to safety policy, for example, Van Ostaaijen observes that crime and related questions were placed higher on the agenda, a policy of 'zero tolerance' was developed and more attention was devoted to both prevention and repression. Also in the domain of immigration and integration policy he sees a clear shift in focus, with the downsides of immigration being discussed more publicly than before the emergence of *Leefbaar Rotterdam*.

At the same time Van Ostaaijen notes that the policy changes desired by *Leefbaar Rotterdam* could only be implemented because they were supported by a broad coalition of actors, including the mayor of Rotterdam, the police, and public prosecutors. This coalition had sufficient resources to bring about the desired changes (e.g. financial and organizational

resources, as well as political skills of the members of the municipal executive) and managed to cooperate on the basis of negotiations and trust. It is remarkable that these factors facilitated cooperation, because the aldermen of *Leefbaar Rotterdam* had no experience in politics and the party's representatives were initially treated as pariahs because of their fierce anti-establishment rhetoric. Van Ostaaijen also observes that *Leefbaar Rotterdam* greatly benefited from the fact that many of the changes it desired had already been discussed (sometimes behind closed doors) before the party gained power. In other words, considerable continuity exists in the agenda executed before, during, and after *Leefbaar Rotterdam* was part of the municipal executive.

Van Ostaaijen's study has a number of merits. Most importantly, it introduces an innovative framework to examine the impact of radical right parties on policy-making. In order to analyze how *Leefbaar Rotterdam* has changed the policy-making process in general, and immigration and safety policies in particular, Van Ostaaijen uses an approach often referred to as 'urban regime analysis'. This approach to the study policy-making at the local level is rarely used by political scientists and examines the ways in which changes in agendas, coalitions, resources, and schemes of cooperation enable actors to bring about policy change. One of the main advantages of this approach is that it looks at the role of various types of actors in the policy-making process, such civil servants, politicians, private parties and representatives of societal organizations. Van Ostaaijen is therefore able to uncover the role played by, for example, mayor Opstelten of the liberal *Partij voor Vrijheid and Democratie* and various municipal agencies in creating a city in which 'every citizens feel safe'. At the same time the approach does not seem completely suited to analyze the way in which parties cooperate in multiparty systems, as it fails to pick up on a number of strategic (dis)incentives parties have for forming and maintaining executive coalitions. Perhaps insights from the literature on coalition formation could have been integrated in the framework to analyze these incentives. Van Ostaaijen's study is nevertheless a must read for those interested in the impact of radical right parties in the Netherlands and offers some important insights into the way in which this impact can be analyzed empirically.

Venezuela's Chavismo and Populism in Comparative Perspective
Kirk A. Hawkins (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 290 p., ISBN 978-0521765039.

Reviewed by Matthijs Rooduijn
University of Amsterdam

There are only few books that succeed in being conceptually innovative, methodologically solid, empirically fascinating, and, on top of that, also well written. *Venezuela's Chavismo and Populism in Comparative Perspective*, written by Kirk A. Hawkins, is such a book. The aim of Hawkins' book is to understand the rise of Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez and his ideas, often referred to as Chavismo. The main argument presented in the book is that Chavismo can best be qualified as a form of populism. Hawkins defines populism as a discourse 'that perceives history as a Manichean struggle between Good and Evil, one in which the side of the Good is "the will of the people," [...] while the side of Evil is a conspiring elite that has subverted this will' (p. 5) and he identifies citizens' concerns about widespread corruption as the most important *cause* for the rise of Chavismo and therefore of Venezuelan populism. Some other factors – such as economic decline and globalization – matter too, but only in combination with this perceived corruption. Hawkins pays a lot of attention to the *consequences* of populism as well. Analyzing the so-called 'Bolivarian Circles' (a sort of neighborhood committees that operated relatively independently from the official party organization), he concludes that, as a result of the populist discourse, the practical organization of Chavismo is movement-like, weakly institutionalized, highly isolated from the rest of civil society and strongly attached to the leader (p. 193).

Let me focus more specifically on one of the key components of the book, namely Hawkins' definition of the concept of populism and the way in which he employs it in his analyses. Hawkins sees populism as an ideational phenomenon: a set of ideas that could best be defined as a discourse. The way in which Hawkins conceptualizes and operationalizes this populist discourse is, in my opinion, one of the best and most innovative aspects of the book. Hawkins manages to find middle ground between the behavioralists, who see a discourse merely as a language to express ideas, and the postmodernists, who argue that language cannot be seen as a mere reflection of thoughts and that ideas influence language and language influences ideas (pp. 29-33). To my knowledge, Hawkins is one of the first scholars to systematically address this complex conceptual issue without remaining vague about the empirical implications. He develops a creative and solid measurement of the populist discourse by means of a content analysis method he calls 'holistic grading'. The method allows him to understand the deeper meaning of political texts and therefore to capture the essence of the populist discourse rather well.

Yet, although I maintain that Hawkins' definition and measurement of populism are the best and the most innovative parts of the book, there is also an aspect of his conceptual argument that I find problematic. Hawkins treats the terms 'discourse' and 'worldview' as synonyms (p. 10). I am not sure whether this is a good idea. I agree with Hawkins that we should conceive of populism as a discourse – i.e. as a set of ideas that is expressed in, and formed by, language. This does not mean, however, that a political discourse necessarily expresses a deeply rooted worldview. Politicians can also employ a discourse more strategically, in order to gain votes. If that is the case, the discourse still consists of a set of ideas, but it is used instrumentally and is not part of a deeply rooted worldview. I would therefore argue that a discourse *could* express a worldview, but this need not necessarily be the case. Moreover, the use of the term 'worldview' can lead to analytical problems, because it is extremely difficult to assess empirically whether a discourse represents a worldview or not. In my opinion, it would therefore be better to describe populism simply as a discourse,

a term that already accounts for the fact that ideas and language are intertwined, and leave open whether this discourse represents a sincere worldview, or whether it is employed more strategically.

This conceptual issue is, however, only a minor point in a study that inspired me significantly. Hawkins succeeds in combining a thorough case study of Chavismo with a systematic comparison of populism across cases and over time. Anyone who is interested in Chavismo, and/or populism, and/or the question how to combine a qualitative case study with a quantitative comparison across cases, should definitely read this book.

Historical Legacies and the Radical Right in Post-Cold War Central and Eastern Europe
By Minkenberg, Michael (ed.) (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2010), 240 p., ISBN 978-3838201245

Reviewed by Peter Ucen
International Republican Institute

Each chapter in this publication represents a very interesting piece of scholarship, and together, the texts form a volume that examines the role of historical legacies in influencing the emergence and success of the radical right in post-communist Europe. The success of the volume is somewhat influenced by two different issues, however: the under-conceptualization of the 'legacy' and the lack of consensus among the authors on how their stated research target – the radical right – should be defined.

The editor of the collection, Michael Minkenberg, – in addition to admitting that 'the concept of legacy is rather slippery' (p.16) – suggests that the main conclusion of the book should be that 'the radical right seems to be less a true executor of the "Leninist extinction" (Jowitt), but a beneficiary of Leninism in that it is able to profitably carry on some of the Leninist legacies – or is facilitated by them – in post-dictatorial setting' (p.24). He acknowledges that this finding 'may only be a little piece in the larger puzzle of the role of legacies in the post-1989 political transformation' (p.25). This is, in my opinion, a very accurate assessment. The legacy – omnipresent in the analysis as it should be, and under-conceptualised as it probably ought not to be – represents only a small problem, however, compared to the issue of what the object of analysis in this book is – i.e. whether we are talking about the radical right, or the extreme right, and whether all contributors are on the same wavelength as concerns their understanding of this notion.

It is rather frustrating to see authors use terms such as "radical right," "extreme right" and "far right" indiscriminately and interchangeably so as to describe the researched phenomenon. This would be more excusable in the 1990s perhaps, but today one would expect an attempt at a clear definition and at delimiting the various groups of parties in question. The editor provides – suggests, but does not impose – his notion of the radical right. This merits closer scrutiny, both in terms of its wording and of its context.

Minkenberg's introduction highlights the 'extraordinary relevance of history and geography' (p.11) in the case of East Central European politics, and especially in the case of the radical right. He also asserts that 'the Central and East European radical right is particularly susceptible to historical legacies' (p.17) and that 'it seems that in contrast to its Western European counterpart, whether it is catching up or not, the Central and Eastern European radical right is particularly conditioned by the force of history, that of histories of state socialism and of pre-socialist (non-democratic) experiences can be seen as major factors in shaping both the contents and the opportunities of the radical right in these new or emerging democracies' (pp.16-17). The radical right in the region is presented as a sort of sui generis phenomenon when it is stated that 'regardless of different approaches, all contributions show that within the radical right, a peculiar "syncretic construct" (Tismaneanu) has emerged in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989, which is derived from both pre-communist and communist legacies' (p.11).

Along with the (substantiated) insistence on history as the source of difference for the post-Communist radical right vis-à-vis its western counterparts, Minkenberg also challenges Mudde (2007) for failing to take 'the relevance of the East-West divide for the radical right' into account. It is not difficult to understand Mudde's motivations if "the East-West divide" has indeed been belittled in his recent work in an effort to justify the laboriously constructed – and badly needed – notion of the Europe-wide family of the

populist radical right. Similarly, one has to look with a sympathetic eye to Minkenberg's discomfort and his effort to keep the focus on the level where the legacy effect does not vanish – which is supposedly Mudde's case – and the 'different "pasts" or legacies account for variation of radical right success, or of radical right formations' (p.18). The question is whether Minkenberg's presented notion of the radical right corroborates his endeavour to look into the differences within the assumed radical right family and inquires into the nature of this heterogeneity.

Thus, for the book's editor, the radical right – Minkenberg, unlike other contributors, refrains from using the expression "extreme right" – is to be defined by 'the core political program or ideology … [which] is a populist and romantic ultranationalism. More specifically, the radical right is involved in an effort to construct the idea of nation and national belonging by radicalizing ethnic, religious, lingual, other cultural and political criteria of inclusion and exclusion, that is to condense the idea of nation into an image of extreme collective homogeneity and to bring about a congruence between the state and the nation in the exclusionary terms' (p.17). But the characteristics included in this rather long definition are relevant for any nationalist politics. It could – and indeed should – be argued that the true difference between the (populist) radical right and *any* nationalist rests exactly in those 'other cultural and political criteria of inclusion and exclusion' – the reason for which Mudde's approach is certainly more appropriate.

Except for providing a general definition of nationalism rather than of the radical right, Minkenberg also adds further confusion by (rightly) admitting that the radical right is no mortal enemy of democracy and thus elaborating that 'as the main criterion is not the opposition to democracy, this concept of the radical right is rather inclusive in that it covers more extreme variants of openly anti-democratic or fascist movements and parties, as well as the more vaguely defined currents of right-wing populism, or religiously based nationalism' (p.17). This is exceedingly confusing! Does Minkenberg subscribe to the notion of the radical right including – in terms of others – populist radical right, non-populist radical right, other right-wing populism(s), other forms of right-wing nationalism (and "Euroscepticism") as well as Fascism and other notions of politics denying the legitimacy of democracy? It is not entirely clear from the wording but it does not contribute to the clarity of the argument at all. It suggests that Minkenberg's notion of the radical right is too inclusive to – paradoxically – allow for a meaningful inquiry into the nature of the observed differences within the members of the class. Simply, if one wants to look for legitimate differences between the members of the party family and inquire into the nature of such heterogeneity, one should first adequately delimit the family and define viable criteria for membership. Another problem is that none of the chapter-authors seems to react – or refer – in any way to the notion provided by the editor. They either run with a definition of their own – the identification of the radical right with any type of right-wing nationalism seems to be a trend – or without any at all.

To illustrate some of these issues, it is useful to see how Bustikova and Kitschelt take Kitschelt's well-know three types of the Communist regimes – patrimonial, bureaucratic-authoritarian, and national-accommodative – and treat them as legacies. For that sake, they also define legacies as 'deep, durable causes [that affect the potential for radical right wing politics across the post-communist region]' (p.29). This is the only conceptualization of legacy in the book apart from when Beichelt, talking about Jowitt, characterizes his achievement as the establishment of 'a causal link between cultural elements of the past and institutional elements of the present' (p.94), which, perhaps, could be a working definition of legacy for this or any future book. As for this chapter, while the treatment of the topic is rich and methodologically inspiring, it reads more like an extended research or monograph proposal and the elaborate set of arguments leads to several conclusions pertaining to the effect of individual regime types on the emergence and success of the

radical right after communism. The authors define the radical right as characterized by 'two ideological components: nationalism and cultural conservatism' (p.32). What is potentially bothering is the introduction of the notion of the radical right's "nearby competitors" or "near radical right parties", suggesting the *de facto* extension of the class of the radical right to cover the widest possible range of forms of nationalism, nativism, and cultural conservatism. A look at the tables on pages 43 and 44 and the parties within them is very revealing in this respect.

In the following chapter, John Ishiyama asks the question 'how do historical legacies help explain why extreme right wing voters support the successors to the formerly dominant communist parties?' (p.63). Regardless of his conclusions, the most serious objection to his endeavour is that what he is in reality doing is explaining why some nationalist voters cast their vote for the former Communist parties. That said, Ishiyama's notion of the 'extreme right wing voter' seems to be rather problematic. For him, and 'for the purposes of this paper, the extreme right wing voter in post communist politics is conceptualized as a voter who is highly nationalistic, hostile to minority rights, and highly sceptical regarding European integration' (p.67). For others, however, these may well be the characteristics of any nationalist/nativist voter, including a potential radical right one. Therefore, something is clearly missing from the author's approach to properly delimiting the prospective radical right voter. Furthermore, Ishiyama uses the terms 'extreme' and 'radical' interchangeably and his attempt to define things on page 66 only confuse matters further.

Beichelt's chapter on Russia also adds to the confusion surrounding the concepts employed. The author treats the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) as one of the proponents of radical right politics. The party is characterised as the 'social' variant of the Russian radical right which complements its 'imperial' counterpart exemplified by Zhirinovski's Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR). Many would vehemently disagree with an analysis that suggests the Communist party is a right wing party. Even though Beichelt claims that 'whereas the LDPR thus presents a rather clear case for a right-wing populist party, the CPRF's programmatic emphasis rests on different mix of socialist and nationalist elements' (106-7), he referring to the CPRF as a radical right party. This all suggests that Beichelt has radical nationalism in mind even though he insists on using the term 'radical right'"

De Lange and Guerra seem to have used the pretext of the 'legacy explaining something' to give a nice and useful case study of a distinct and exceptional party – the League of Polish Families (LPR). It came as a refreshing surprise that they actually dealt with an undeniably radical right party, and the welcome bonus was that they have chosen a party that, concept-wise, is different and importantwise. The authors describe the nature of the LPR's nativism well. This includes a strong cultural element (religious identity) as well as an ethnic component (who belongs to the Polish nation and who does not) to the definition. 'Catholic identity is crucial for definition of Polishness' (p.138), they assert. In an attempt to make the piece pertinent for a comparative analysis, the authors also draw attention to what could have been – had there been a proper conclusion – one of the main findings of this book, namely that a prominent place of religious faith in the definitional criteria of 'nationality' is the feature that distinguishes several post communist radical right parties from their western counterparts.

In the last case study Frusetta and Glont deal with the radical right in two Balkan countries: Bulgarian and Romania. They inquire into the question as to what extent these parties – the Greater Romania Party (PRM) and the National Union Attack (Ataka) - draw on the legacy of indigenous interwar fascism in their respective countries. They arrive at the conclusion that the legacy of historic domestic fascism is overshadowed by legacies originating in the Communist era and that these latter legacies define the way in which the radical right sees the Fascist reference as a "usable past". On their way to this conclusion

they provide a fascinating excursion into the history of home-grown interbellum Fascism and authoritarianism in the Balkans. The chapter also provides – although without directly referring to it – an additional argument for the claim that if there is a difference between Western and Eastern radical right parties, one of its most prominent sources would be religion. It substantively defines (or perhaps modifies?) the authoritarian element of the nativist – authoritarian – populist triad, which is at the core of the ideology of the populist radical right (Mudde 2007).

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