MOBILIZING ON THE EXTREME RIGHT. GERMANY, ITALY, AND THE UNITED STATES BY MANUELA CAIANI, DONATELLA DELLA PORTA, AND CLAUDIUS WAGEMANN (OXFORD, OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2012)

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There has been noticeable revival of research into the extreme right over the past decade. This attention has been triggered by a sense of helplessness in relation to the growing power of populist parties in Europe. Correspondingly, most such studies were limited to examining the institutional sphere. Starting points of explanations generally included individual properties (e.g. psychological traits, socio-economic status), or social and economic conditions. Unlike these approaches, the authors examine the extreme right as a social movement, for this reason using concepts and methods developed from the study of social movements. Describing the mobilization of the extreme right, the focus is on mid-level factors (organizational structures, collective action repertoire, and discourses). The main aim of the book is to explain the extreme right as a complex phenomenon, not limited to the institutionalized/political arena.

The authors are well known, qualified experts from the field of the study of social movements. Manuela Caiani is currently associate professor at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa-Florence. She has undertaken research for numerous comparative projects on contentious politics and European integration (with Donatella della Porta: *Social Movements and Europeanisation*. Oxford University Press, 2009) and right-wing extremism in Europe and the United Sates (*The Dark side of the Web: European and American Right-Wing Extremist groups and the Internet*, Ashgate, 2013). Donatella della Porta is a professor of political sciences and sociology at the European University Institute (Florence), and one of the most productive authors in the research of social movements (*Social Movements in Times of Austerity,* Polity, 2015), and political violence

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(*Clandestine Political Violence,* Cambridge University Press, 2013). Claudius Wagemann is a professor at Goethe University (Frankfurt), and an expert on qualitative comparative analysis (with Carsten Q. Schneider: *Set-Theoretic Methods for the Social Sciences. A Guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis and Fuzzy Sets in Social Science,* Cambridge University Press, 2012).

The book consists of eleven chapters, including an introduction and conclusion. The chapters in between discuss the organizational structures, collective action repertoire, and various aspects of extreme right-wing discourses, such as collective identity, old and new forms of racism, anti-modernism, anti-globalization and populism. All of these features are presented in the political context of three countries. Highly praised is the fact that the authors describe in detail the methodological procedures they employ, and sufficiently illustrate their explanations with diagrams and tables. The research methodology is also very sophisticated (Chapter 2). The authors wanted to supplement and synthesize different forms of data collection and analysis, and furthermore to examine phenomena using multiple perspectives (triangulation). The three main research methodologies accord with the theoretical framework (see below). Using network analysis the authors outline inter-organizational and structural characteristics of extreme-right organizations (networks were examined through related website links). Protest event analysis summarizes, on the basis of articles, the activity of the movement from 2000 to 2007 and features of events (participants, recipients, forms of action, etc.). Finally, written organizational documents were analyzed in the form of frame analysis so as to provide insight into communication strategies.

The third chapter outlines the political context of the extreme right. The political opportunity structure (POS) determines the collective action repertoire directly, or through organizational resources and networks which tend towards radicalization in the case of excessive closeness. In addition, discursive opportunities also play an important role in terms of how well the claims of movements are accepted in a wider cultural context. Through the cross-national comparative approach of the research we can examine the POS in three countries. In European countries, legal instruments hinder racist ideas from spreading, while in the US freedom of speech has priority. Overseas it is easier to make radical statements concerning Afro-Americans, immigrants and homosexuals. In contrast, in Germany such statements are censured, both by state institutions and public opinion; accordingly, they are latent on the subcultural level. The situation in Italy lies somewhere between these – here the system is most open, because rightist parties (e.g. Allenza Nazionale) have been present in the Italian parliament for decades (the legislatures of Germany and US exclude right-wing extremism).

In the fourth chapter the authors examine the networking of the extreme right. Use of the internet represents, for social movements, a significant opportunity to reach supporters and obtain assistance despite their typically poor resources and looser organizations, to mobilize, to build contacts with other organizations, to develop the identity of their social movements and their supporters' commitment. In the fourth chapter researchers reference several websites that refer to live on-line activity. However, different political possibilities are variably followed up in *organizational networks.* In the politically more open Italy, we can identify a fragmented and diversified network similar to that of the US, where the space for radical discourse is wider. In turn, German extremist websites are organized in a star-like fashion: they are thick and centralized.

The fifth chapter describes the action repertoires of the radical right. The current state of the POS is reflected in those forms of protest through which social movement actors articulate their claims. The fact that in democratic societies some topics are banned from the political arena and the political elite constrains their exposure to the public, so social movements choose more radical forms of action to get public attention. In general, the protests of social movements (which are disseminated over a wide societal basis and act like an extended network), are non-violent, in contrast to the activities of marginal groups. Extreme right mobilization in Italy involves a wide range of *collective action repertoires*, while in Germany and the US it is characterized by demonstrative forms of action (e.g. street demonstrations and public meetings). The greatest proportion of violence is characteristic of the latter country (21%). A key conclusion is that the level of violence is associated with the degree of discursive openness: it is highest in the US, the most permissive country, and lowest in Germany, where there is nearly complete consensus about the need to condemn extremism. In the case of Italy, the authors state that the approach to institutionalization slightly moderates the extreme forms of action repertoire and encourages the development of division of labor within the movement.

Protests are addressed to power and audience, but these events also serve to strengthen *collective identity* and create a sense of solidarity (Chapter 6). The division of labor here is obvious: movement and subcultural levels are characterized by expressive events in which the focus is on the construction of identity. This contrasts with the goals of political parties whose predominantly political themes stress their institutionalization and embeddedness. How do the activists see themselves? One typical feature is the communitarian tone of their statements and the emphasis that members act for good reasons and are fighting to change society – these topoi appear across countries. Members consider themselves an elite group which practices specified virtues (honesty, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and strength), resists the pressure of globalization, and protects

tradition. Members resolutely fight to protect people and nation, but oppression and contempt afflict them. Nevertheless, there is a noticeable dichotomy between masculine, chauvinistic, xenophobic and violent groups and ideologically oriented political organizations. In the US the key issue is racial, ethnic relations (contrasts between black and white), whereas in European countries the desire for a construction of a collective identity is more ideological.

Right-wing extremism is interested in several discourses (Chapters 7 to 10). The frames are connected to each other, and sometimes refresh or transform old ideas; the anti-modernist view is coupled with a wish to protect *traditional values*. A family-centric, Christian, national identity is a positive element of the movements' rhetoric and constitutes the basis of the envisaged social change; this does not simply serve to promote emotional identification with a specific set of values, but also defines the scope of a personal search for identity. *Migration* is a new threat because it destroys a state's ethnic unity, and the demographic and cultural status quo. These frames emphasize isolation and the "clash of civilizations" instead of the hierarchy of races ('old' racism). Migrants are simultaneously viewed as an economic and cultural danger which is forcing the native white population to defend itself *(nativism)*. Migration embodies the near, ordinary enemy, but *capitalism* and *globalization* are entities which are less obvious, having hidden real motives involving "us" and "them". "Them", who seek to be invisible, are present everywhere, pushing their economic interests through international organizations (IMF, WTO, the World Bank), and political elites are also their servants. And what kind of answers does right-wing extremism supply? They want to restore order, not only in a participatory democratic way, but through the creation of an authoritarian society led by a new elite. *Elitism* is mixed with a black and white perspective of *populism* (the "corrupt elite and spotless people") with strong nationalist and anti-establishment tendencies.

The authors' work emphasizes the appropriateness of social movement studies; their data and conclusions are innovative and important for understanding right-wing extremism. However, as with any research, it has its limits. Online networks are only proxies of inter-organizational relations, newspaper articles about social movement events are selective, and the quantitative analysis of framing is not really relational and dynamic. Aside from these limits, it is very important to understand right-wing movements in the political and discursive context in which they are evolving – with their own dynamics, grass-roots facade, and broad action repertoire – ; more specifically, we should take into consideration the complexity of social movements. This book is strongly recommended to students of social movements and the wider academic audience which is interested in extreme-right politics.