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REVIEW ARTICLE

The Far Right Is Already Here. Now What?

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David Broder, *Mussolini's Grandchildren: Fascism in Contemporary Italy*. London: Pluto Press, 2023. Pp. 248. £17.00 ISBN: 9780745348025.

Matteo Albanese, *The Transnational Making of Italian Neofascism*. London: Routledge, 2025. Pp. 162. $190.00. ISBN: 9781032805658.

Brian Griffith and Amy King, eds., *Where Monsters Are Born: Documenting a Fascist Revival in the Streets of Rome, 2018–2019*. https://www.wheremonstersareborn.com/. Created 2025.

Agnieszka Pasieka, *Living Right: Far-Right Youth Activists in Contemporary Europe*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2024. Pp. 304. £30.00. ISBN: 9780691258423.

Félicien Faury, *Des électeurs ordinaires. Enquête sur la normalisation de l'extrême droite*. Paris: Seuil, 2024. €22.00. ISBN: 9782021518948.

The field of far-right studies has risen to prominence since the 1990s, developing from a marginal academic niche into a significant area of political analysis. This trajectory is best illustrated in Cas Mudde's assessment, as he remembers how during the 1990s the study of the far right was considered secondary at best within academia in general and political science in particular. Today, Mudde argues, hundreds of PhD students and thousands of MA and undergraduate students work on the topic, and there are even some (albeit few) academic positions explicitly seeking expertise in this area. Mudde also notes a shift in academic consensus: while many scholars in the 1990s saw the far right as marginal and destined for the dustbin of history, it is now among the most vibrant political forces globally, electorally and politically successful, and adept at mobilising supporters in new ways.[1]

Mudde adeptly captured the main transformations in the field and how the recent context has reshaped the nature of the literature itself. If in the 1990s, scholars had to justify the relevance of studying the far right, today few question the need for robust academic infrastructure to address this phenomenon, given its complex causes, consequences and forms. The five works at the heart of this review exemplify this new stage in far-right studies, one marked by not only thematic expansion but also multidisciplinarity and innovative formats that go beyond the traditional academic article. Podcasts, interactive platforms and collaborative networks now complement books and journal articles, reflecting an effort to adapt to a rapidly changing political and scholarly landscape. The far right is no longer a peripheral subject; it occupies positions of power in many countries, and academics can

[1]Cas Mudde, 'From the Margins to the Mainstream: A Personal Reflection on Three Decades of Studying and Teaching Far-Right Politics', *Journal of Right-Wing Studies* 2, no. 1 (2024): 139–51.

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now devote their energies to creatively explaining the new dynamics without the burden of justifying why their work is relevant. Each of these projects offers a distinct approach to meeting that challenge.

In this context of change, though, some things do remain unaltered: indeed, three of the five studies are focused on Italy, proof that the transalpine country still exerts a great deal of fascination within the field. Although there is no explicit mention of traditional arguments that presented Italy as a laboratory of ideas, there is little doubt that the political developments there continue to catch the attention of scholars of the far right. Of course, this is a completely legitimate choice, and one that I personally share since I have devoted many years to the study of Italy's history of the twentieth century.[2] Furthermore, all these projects use the Italian case to transcend borders and analyse a phenomenon that is transnational in nature, as we will see in the coming pages.

Beginning with David Broder's *Mussolini's Grandchildren*, we are confronted with a penetrating analysis of the evolution of Italian post-fascism from the aftermath of the Second World War to the rise of Giorgia Meloni's *Fratelli d'Italia* [Brothers of Italy]. Far from treating fascism as a relic of the past, Broder traces its genealogy to demonstrate how its ideological residues have been repackaged and mainstreamed within contemporary Italian politics. His central argument is that the far right's normalisation was not a sudden rupture but a gradual process, rooted in the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI), founded in 1946 by veterans of Mussolini's Salò Republic. This party, which defined itself as 'fascists in a democracy', oscillated between radical identitarianism and pragmatic attempts at institutional insertion, maintaining ties with violent networks while seeking legitimacy through alliances with Christian Democrats during the Cold War.

Broder's long-durée approach is one of the book's greatest strengths. By tracing developments across decades, he reveals the continuity of fascist legacies and the adaptive strategies that allowed them to survive. His mastery of the field is evident: the book draws on extensive secondary literature and media sources, though the absence of a bibliography at the end of the book is a notable omission. Broder provides a concise yet rich account of the MSI's trajectory after 1945, highlighting the blurred boundaries between the party and extremist elements and emphasising memory politics and commemorations as key to understanding genealogies of the far right. While the narrative is primarily Italian, the author does not ignore the transnational dimension, referencing links to the United States and the French *Organisation Armée Secrete* (OAS), though at times this perspective could have been more fully integrated.

The genealogy Broder reconstructs pivots on critical turning points: the MSI's marginalisation in the post-war Republic, its ambiguous stance during the Years of Lead and its breakthrough in the 1990s amid the collapse of Italy's mass parties during Tangentopoli. The Fiuggi Congress of 1995 marked a watershed, dissolving the MSI into Alleanza Nazionale and proclaiming adherence to liberal democracy. Yet this transformation was fraught with contradictions. Gianfranco Fini's leadership sought to consign fascism to history without a genuine reckoning with the regime's crimes, framing anti-fascism as an outdated ideology rather than a democratic foundation. This rhetoric of 'pacification' relativised historical responsibility, enabling the party to present itself as a victim of exclusion and violence even as it honoured figures from the Salò Republic. Broder insightfully shows how this strategy normalised far-right actors within the political mainstream while hollowing out Italy's anti-fascist consensus.

The book situates *Fratelli d'Italia* within this continuum. Founded in 2012 by cadres disillusioned with Fini's concessions, Meloni's party claims the legacy of Alleanza Nazionale while rejecting its anti-fascist overtures. Broder demonstrates how *Fratelli d'Italia* fuses neo-fascist traditions with broader currents of nationalist identity politics and transnational conservatism, drawing inspiration

[2]Matteo Albanese and Pablo del Hierro, *Transnational Fascism in the Twentieth Century: Spain, Italy and the Global Neo-Fascist Network* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); Pablo del Hierro, 'The Role of the Banca Nazionale Del Lavoro (BNL) in Fascist Italy's Economic Strategy towards Franco's Spain, 1936–43', *Modern Italy* (2025): 1–20.

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from Hungary's Fidesz, Poland's Law and Justice and US culture wars. Its discourse blends civilisational rhetoric with conspiracy theories such as the 'Great Replacement', framing immigration as an existential threat and promoting policies like border militarisation and opposition to *ius soli*. This identitarian agenda is coupled with cultural revisionism: the party champions commemorations of the foibe massacres, equating them with the Holocaust, while marginalising Liberation Day and erasing fascist culpability from public memory.[3]

The book also explores the porous boundaries between institutional politics and militant subcultures. Groups such as CasaPound and Lealtà Azione, with their 'hipster fascist' aesthetics and social outreach initiatives, act as reservoirs of ideology and activism for the parliamentary right. Broder documents how these networks infiltrate local administrations, exploit memory laws and normalise extremist symbols under the guise of cultural heritage. This dynamic underscores the fragility of Italy's constitutional safeguards against fascist resurgence, as legal ambiguities and political opportunism enable the far right to thrive.

Mussolini's Grandchildren is more than a national case study; it illuminates broader trends in Western democracies, where the erosion of anti-fascist consensus, the collapse of class-based parties and the rise of identity-driven populism have created fertile ground for illiberal politics. Broder dismantles the comforting myth that fascism was buried in 1945, revealing instead its adaptive capacity: a tradition that has shed its totalitarian ambitions but retained its core logic of exclusion, hierarchy and national rebirth. In doing so, the book offers a sobering reminder that the struggle over historical memory is inseparable from the battle for democracy in the present.

If the book has weaknesses, they lie in the uneven integration of the transnational dimension (sometimes done a bit superficially) and a tendency to privilege memory politics over deeper ideological analysis. For instance, the discussion of the 1995 Fiuggi transition could have referenced parallel processes in Europe, such as Jörg Haider's *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (FPÖ) or José María Aznar's *Partido Popular* (PP), which Fini himself considered as a model of how to depart from the party's problematic links with the Francoist regime. Nonetheless, Broder's work remains a major contribution: rigorous, accessible and urgently relevant.

Matteo Albanese's *The Transnational Making of Italian Neofascism* in a way represents a very significant complement to Broder's book. It is a sharp and unsettling account of how fascism endured beyond its apparent defeat in 1945 by reinventing itself across borders. Albanese indeed demonstrates that neo-fascism was never a purely Italian phenomenon; it was sustained by international networks of militants, sympathetic regimes and Cold War geopolitics that provided both refuge and opportunity. Unlike in Broder's book, the transnational perspective is at the very core and is used to dismantle the notion of neo-fascism as a merely national project, revealing it instead as a dynamic, adaptive mentality that thrived on ideological continuity and global circulation.

The book opens with the clandestine escape routes (also known as ratlines) that allowed former fascists and Nazis to flee Allied prosecution and find refuge in Italy, Spain, Latin America or the Middle East. These routes were more than logistical lifelines; they became the first nodes of a transnational web that carried not only people but also ideas: anti-communism, racial hierarchies and myths of national rebirth. Albanese shows how these ideological currents were repackaged for new contexts, ensuring continuity even in exile. From these beginnings emerged a network that would shape the evolution of neo-fascism for decades.

Like in Broder's book, central to the narrative is the MSI, which Albanese presents as a party oscillating between parliamentary respectability and subversive activism. This duality is striking: neofascists learned to operate within democratic institutions while simultaneously plotting coups and cultivating ties to violent networks. Cold War imperatives and anti-communist hysteria allowed these

[3]The Foibe massacres refers to episodes of ethnic cleansing, mass killings and deportations carried out during and immediately after the Second World War in the Julian March territories, mainly by Yugoslav partisans against local Italians and others perceived as opponents of the new Yugoslav regime. More about the issue in Filippo Focardi, *Nel cantiere della memoria. Fascismo, resistenza, Shoah, foibe* (Rome: Viella, 2020).

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actors to gain tacit support from segments of the state, positioning themselves as defenders of order even as they undermined democratic norms. This strategic ambiguity, radical enough to mobilise militants, moderate enough to appear legitimate, anticipates the normalisation tactics of today's far right.

Albanese's trans-temporal lens is the book's greatest strength. He traces ideological exchanges across space but also across time, showing how racism, antisemitism and anti-communism evolved over the years. These discourses circulated through conferences, publications and personal networks, creating a shared political culture that could migrate and mutate. This longitudinal framework is invaluable for understanding contemporary illiberal movements: authoritarianism does not vanish with regime collapse; it adapts, embeds itself in democratic systems and waits for opportunity.

Although Albanese does not provide a formal definition of neo-fascism, the book offers valuable insights into its nature. Neo-fascism emerges as a political culture, sharing elements with fascism yet born in a different context, and seeking to resolve the 'problem' posed by mass democracy and modernity. Albanese identifies two phases: one during the Cold War, exploiting its contradictions, and another after 1991, marked by neo-nationalism. This movement was paradoxical: opposed to globalisation yet operating globally, targeting cosmopolitanism and liberal equality as its true enemies. Its vision was of a culturally homogeneous community, rejecting plurality and equality in favour of hierarchical order.

The book's main limitation lies in its brevity. At 162 pages, some dimensions, such as gender, grassroots mobilisation and comparative cases beyond the Italian–Spanish axis, receive less attention than they merit. Editorial issues also detract from the reading experience: the absence of a bibliography, small font size, occasional typos and overly long paragraphs make the text less reader friendly. Certain points, such as the Palladin network, a neo-fascist organisation founded in 1970 in Spain by the infamous Otto Skorzeny, lack clear sourcing, and the conclusion feels abrupt, leaving questions about the impact of the Nouvelle Droite on Italian neo-fascism partly unanswered.

This, however, does not diminish the relevance of a book that successfully situates neo-fascism within the broader history of the second half of the twentieth century. The author connects it to key events and debates, offering analytical perspectives on motivations and strategies. The book conveys the complexity of the neo-fascist camp, distinguishing between strategy and tactics and revealing a dynamic space of internal debates and bitter choices. Albanese's proposed chronology for understanding Italian neo-fascism is thought-provoking and convincing.

The books from Albanese and Broder can be interpreted as two sides of the same coin, or two different ways of approaching the same object of study. They both address the transnational dimension of the phenomenon and the long chronological arch of Italy's far right. Broder uses a more divulgative tone, more descriptive and informative, whereas Albanese provides more theoretical and conceptual depth. Albanese focuses more on transnationalism and the ideological core of neo-fascism, whereas Broder is more interested in memory and certain facts, with the transnational dimension being less consistently applied. The book by Broder can be read by a wider readership, whereas Albanese targets a more specialised audience. Furthermore, the two books feel like more than historical monographs; they are a warning. Fascism's afterlife was not a marginal curiosity but a structured, adaptive project that thrived on international solidarities and ideological continuity. For anyone grappling with the resurgence of far-right politics today, the lesson is clear: authoritarianism migrates, rebrands and persists. Understanding its transnational past is indispensable for resisting its transnational future. In other words, both books are complementary, even more if we link them to the third project discussed here: *Where Monsters Are Born: Documenting a Fascist Revival in the Streets of Rome, 2018–2019*, led by Brian J. Griffith and Amy King.

Where Monsters Are Born is an original and thought-provoking project that combines scholarly rigour with public engagement. It connects with the previous two books in the subject matter, the resurgence of neo-fascist activism in contemporary Italy, but it innovates with the method: a

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curated archive of street ephemera collected from Rome between October 2018 and July 2019, including posters, stickers, handbills and banners produced by both neo-fascists and anti-fascists. This hybrid format (part virtual archive, part physical exhibition, part teaching resource) offers a visual representation of the legacies of fascism that textual analysis alone cannot convey.

In an era saturated with competing narratives and deliberate distortions of the past, particularly by far-right actors, the project's reliance on primary sources is crucial. These materials, stripped from the streets and contextualised online, remind us that historical interpretation begins with evidence. Griffith and King's approach treats viewers as responsible, critical citizens: rather than prescribing conclusions, the project equips users with tools to interpret symbols, slogans and strategies for themselves. This pedagogical stance, trusting audiences to make sense of what they see, feels especially urgent today, when democratic resilience depends on informed engagement.

The materials are carefully chosen and richly annotated. Each item is catalogued by size, location and affiliated organisation, and often accompanied by historical background, electoral data and iconographic analysis. This level of contextualisation ensures that viewers do not encounter these fragments in isolation but understand their place within broader networks of far-right mobilisation. The website's accessible design and open access format make it suitable for scholars, educators and general audiences concerned about the rise of illiberal politics. While the language is in English, limiting its immediate impact on Italian public discourse, the clarity and navigability of the platform enhance its global relevance.

The project's interventionist dimension (physically removing propaganda from public spaces) raises important methodological questions about preservation, amplification and ethics. Griffith and King acknowledge the activist impulse behind their work, echoing Timothy Snyder's call to 'remove the signs of hate'.[4] Yet by archiving and digitising these materials, the project paradoxically extends their reach. This tension is not a flaw but a productive provocation, inviting reflection on the responsibilities of scholars documenting extremist movements.

Where Monsters Are Born clearly complements the works of Matteo Albanese and David Broder in exemplary fashion. If Albanese provides the conceptual architecture of transnational neo-fascism and Broder narrates its political normalisation, Griffith and King offer the visual evidence, the street-level textures of ideology in action. Together, these projects form a triad: theory, narrative and image. For anyone seeking to understand how fascism's legacies persist and mutate, this combination feels indispensable.

This leads to the third monograph analysed in this review, which moves away from Italy as the main focus but remains equally creative while reiterating the relevance of transnationalism. Agnieszka Pasieka's *Living Right: Far-Right Youth Activists in Contemporary Europe* is a daring, meticulously argued ethnography that compels readers to reconsider how far-right youth movements are organised, experienced and justified from within. Based on multi-sited fieldwork conducted between 2016 and 2022 with organisations such as Lealtà Azione in Italy, Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny in Poland and, partially, the Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement in Hungary and Slovakia, Pasieka insists that far-right activism is not reducible to irrational extremism or simple resentment with the system. It is, rather, a moral project. That claim, pursued with methodological rigour and theoretical clarity, turns the book into a study of 'ethical communities': of how loyalty, sacrifice and coherence become ethical currencies; of how young militants narrate their lives as purposeful, communal and righteous; and of how political identity is cultivated through everyday practices of care, remembrance and discipline.

The language of 'ethical communities' is Pasieka's central conceptual innovation. By foregrounding the moral grammars that animate activism, she shows that far-right organising is lived as an ethical vocation. Activists cast themselves as guardians of threatened values and traditions, and they judge conduct (both theirs and that of others) by standards of loyalty and self-sacrifice rather than by

[4]Timothy Snyder, *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century* (Bodley Head, London: Crown, 2017), 17.

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liberal ideals of autonomy and pluralism. This reframing clarifies why these movements offer powerful appeals to young people: they promise comradery, purpose, a coherent narrative of self, and a future that feels redeemable through disciplined action. The book's elaboration of 'moral–political subjectivities' draws a tight link between the affective and the institutional, revealing how the moral imagination furnishes both belonging and legitimacy.

Memory and historical references are crucial components of this moral construction. Figures such as Corneliu Codreanu, leader of the Romanian 'Iron Guard', and Léon Degrelle, founder of the Belgian fascist party 'Rex', are recruited as examples of virtue and martial courage, forming a selective ethical pantheon that authorises present commitments. Pasieka carefully shows that this is not mere nostalgia; it is a strategic engagement with the past that provides tools for identity formation, continuity and moral legitimation. Yet this manoeuvre can make the expert reader uncomfortable, especially when thinking about non-specialists approaching it. Codreanu and Degrelle's violent legacies are bracketed, reframed or denied by activists who know their writings well enough to quote them verbatim. As a result, their history might appear as a curated resource rather than a constraining archive. As a historian who has studied Léon Degrelle's biography in depth, I found certain passages difficult to read, not because of the writing, but because knowing the extent of the heinous crimes he committed during the war makes it unsettling to see him appear without fuller contextualisation. The chapter opens with a far-right activist reciting Degrelle from memory, and part of me wished the narrative had paused to remind readers that Degrelle remained an unrepentant fascist until his death in 1994, whose actions caused immense suffering. Making his true legacy explicit at that moment would have strengthened the account and prevented any inadvertent softening of who he was and what he represented. Although there is undeniable interest in seeing how cherry-picking and invention operate as identity work, at points I wished for a more explicit confrontation with the moral tension between how militants valorise such figures while disavowing the crimes through which their reputations were made, particularly for readers without deep familiarity with inter-war fascism and its actors.

A major contribution of the book is that Pasieka is able to situate these ethnographic materials within debates on liberalism, neoliberalism and populism, showing how far-right actors articulate their politics as a response to the failures of liberal democracy: economic precarity, cultural disorientation and perceived moral decay. The rhetoric many activists deploy braids anti-capitalist affect with nationalist protectionism, echoing fascism's self-styled 'third way'. A particularly insightful thread is her analysis of welfare initiatives (for example food distribution and localised charity framed for 'native' citizens) presented as acts of solidarity while functioning as exclusionary infrastructures of recruitment and boundary-policing. This is a carefully crafted strategy, a moral economy that binds insiders through obligation and gratitude while hardening ethical lines against outsiders. Rather than treating this as contradiction, Pasieka reads it as constitutive of far-right moral worlds: the promise of a coherent life is inseparable from the policing of the community's borders.

Methodologically, *Living Right* is as provocative and daring as enriching. Pasieka confronts anthropology's reluctance to study the 'repugnant other', arguing that understanding is a precondition for critique and that refusal can reproduce the silences through which domination persists. Her reflexivity neither sensationalises nor sanitises. It stages paradoxes: intellectualism alongside brute force, communitarian ideals alongside hierarchical gender norms. The book's attention to activists' own categories and narratives gives readers a sense of the world from inside without capitulation to its premises. At the same time, the ethical dilemmas of fieldwork (how to observe without normalising, how to understand without endorsing) remain, perhaps inevitably, unresolved in practice. Pasieka's candour on this point is a strength, and it sets an agenda for future ethnographies in similarly fraught terrains.

Another strength of the book is, once again, its transnational lens. Despite ultra-nationalist commitments, activists cultivate pan-European networks, speak across languages (often in English) and participate in shared commemorative calendars. Pasieka documents travel, hospitality, rites of remembrance and the exchange of tactical know-how, making supranational cooperation appear

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ordinary rather than exceptional. The paradox of 'transnational nationalism' is handled with subtlety: bonds forged through a mutual rejection of liberalism and a shared moral vocabulary often feel more compelling than those with compatriots who embrace the liberal project. This is not an anomaly but a contemporary iteration of a long-standing transnationalism within the far right. Seeing how militants reconcile ultra-nationalist ideology with cross-border solidarity is one of the book's most persuasive achievements.

Pasieka's conceptual choices are judicious and pragmatic. The preference for the umbrella term 'far right', complemented by the specific deployment of 'radical nationalism', avoids becoming trapped in interminable definitional battles while preserving analytical precision. 'Fascism' appears carefully, with attention to emic terms and local taxonomies. For readers fatigued by conceptual skirmishes that produce little consensus, this approach is refreshing. The clear early description of the three core groups and the reasoning behind their selection provides a solid scaffold for the rest of the analysis, making the book both teachable and comparably rigorous.

From a historian's perspective, approaching such a rich ethnographic study brings its own challenges and forces us to address certain biases: the desire for more sustained contextualisation when ethically charged figures are invoked; the caution against sloppy analogies made by interviewees that flatten any historical nuances; and the insistence that the far right be analysed in connection with social movements studies. Pasieka deals with these issues by resisting reductionist narratives and showing that many militants are neither passive nor irrational. They read, travel, learn and intervene strategically in the political system around them. The book's portrayal of diversity and heterogeneity across organisations, national contexts and personal trajectories helps dissolve caricature without romanticising.

Finally, the prose itself is a pleasure to read. The structure is elegant, the chapter titles compelling without being gimmicky and the conclusions that close each chapter recentre the argument and guide the reader through complex conceptual terrain. Pasieka's writing achieves that rare balance in ethnography: theory with texture, scenes that carry ideas and analysis that respects the messiness of life without losing its thread.

In sum, *Living Right* is a landmark contribution to the anthropology of the far right. It integrates ethnographic detail with theoretical depth and it documents how contemporary militants appropriate the past to authorise the present. Its limits are best read as invitations for further work rather than as flaws that undercut its achievements. Most importantly, the book answers a crucial question of our time: the growing appeal of fascist idealism for young people lies not simply in ideology but in the moral imagination that promises coherence, comradery and consequence, even as it binds those promises to exclusion. The task for scholars, the book suggests, is to understand these moral worlds precisely so that critique can be sharp, responsible and empirically grounded.

Last but not least, there is Félicien Faury's *Des électeurs ordinaires. Enquête sur la normalisation de l'extrême droite*. Félicien Faury's book offers a compelling account of how support for Marine Le Pen's *Rassemblement National* (RN) becomes woven into the fabric of everyday life. Like Agnieszka Pasieka, Faury departs from the premise that understanding the far right requires more than analysing party strategies or media narratives; it demands attention to the motivations and reasoning of those who sustain its electoral base. Unlike Pasieka, however, his focus is not on militants but rather ordinary voters, the individuals whose routine participation enables the party's ascent to power. He argues that while studying the evolution of political camps and transformations in public discourse is important, these approaches alone cannot explain the far right's normalisation. To grasp this phenomenon, we must understand how voters interpret their circumstances, how they make sense of social conflicts and how they articulate grievances in moral terms.

Faury situates the RN's growing popularity in the interplay of everyday sociability, economic frustration and racialised common sense. His choice of field site, the Provence region centred around Marseille, underscores this orientation. This area has long been fertile terrain for the far right, also because many 'pieds noirs' settled there, yet Faury's interest lies less in historical narratives and more

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in the lived present: the mundane spaces where impressions circulate and political preferences take shape.[5] Although he acknowledges the region's historical significance, including antecedents such as Tixier-Vignancourt's presence, the book does not develop an extended analysis of memory politics or explore how selective readings of national history legitimise RN positions. Instead, the emphasis remains on contemporary moral reasoning and social interaction.

Unlike the studies of Albanese and Broder that use Italy to trace transnational networks of far-right ideas, Faury's work remains tightly focused on France and French voters. This narrow scope allows for finely grained ethnographic description even if it limits engagement with comparative patterns across Europe. The result is still a robust portrait of normalisation at the national scale rather than an exploration of how similar logics travel or adapt elsewhere.

Methodologically, Faury adopts a sustained immersive approach (with some similarities to Pasieka's): fifteen months embedded in a southeastern neighbourhood historically associated with the Front National, combined with thirty in-depth interviews and careful observation of routine interactions. He situates opinions in lived contexts (households, workplaces, associations, friendship networks and informal spaces where people debate taxes, security and immigration). One of the book's principal strengths lies in its qualitative rigour: it restores density to what surveys typically treat as discrete variables by showing how citizens weave disparate concerns into a moral economy of deservingness and belonging. Rather than cataloguing attitudes in isolation, Faury reconstructs the stories, comparisons and resentments through which those attitudes become convincing and actionable.

At the heart of the book is an argument against the neat separation of 'economic' motives from 'cultural' ones. Faury demonstrates how perceptions of unjust redistribution, who pays and who benefits, slide into judgements about illegitimate recipients. In this account, the figure of the 'foreigner' crystallises anxieties about welfare, taxation and public goods: an imagined beneficiary who evades duties while absorbing resources. This racialised reasoning anchors political preferences in a moral narrative where unequal protection and unequal distribution appear both intelligible and justified. The analysis thereby challenges reassuring portrayals of RN voters as simply 'angry but not fascist', misdirected protestors who will return to mainstream options if offered better information. For Faury, aversion towards ethno-racial minorities is not an incidental excess but a constitutive link that binds disparate motives and gives the RN's platform coherence in local moral worlds. A related strand of the argument concerns space and residence. In plain terms, ordinary voters feel caught between spaces they admire but cannot afford and spaces they disdain but cannot avoid. This is connected to a racialisation of the perceived space understood as a defensive posture.

One of the book's virtues is its refusal to pathologise or sanitise. Like Pasieka, Faury neither caricatures his interlocutors nor excuses their words; he treats them seriously and records their arguments as they are made. Echoing insights from cultural studies, he shows that far-right appeals do not rely simply on duping naïve subjects; rather, they meet real experiences with interpretations that feel apt and practicable. Much like Pasieka's approach to militants, Faury is able to show how people turn material squeeze into claims about desert, reciprocity and recognition. This shift clarifies why informational campaigns alone rarely erode the far right's appeal: voters are not simply misinformed; they inhabit moral frameworks that make certain interpretations coherent and compelling.

At the same time, the book is conceptually less ambitious than Pasieka's in several respects. First, it does not explicitly situate the RN within broader theoretical debates (far right, neo-fascism, populism, illiberalism) or engage with how these categories help and hinder explanation. Second, 'normalisation' remains more a working description than a problematised concept; the reader receives limited

[5]More about this connection with the 'pieds noirs', understood as an ethno-cultural group of people of French and other European descent who were born in Algeria during the period of French colonial rule from 1830 to 1962, in Jean-Jacques Jordi, *De l'exode à l'exil: Rapatriés et pieds-noirs en France: l'exemple marseillais 1954–1992* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000).

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guidance on what counts as normalisation, how it proceeds and how it might be measured or compared across contexts. Third, the analysis of gender is suggestive but underdeveloped: we learn enough to suspect that views on feminism and women's roles are powerful organising beliefs, yet these themes seldom receive systematic treatment. Finally, although many RN voters are disillusioned with France's liberal institutions, there is no sustained discussion of liberalism as a doctrinal framework, a set of practices or a lived horizon that shapes grievance and aspiration. Future work on the subject at hand would benefit from comparative expansion across regions and countries, conceptual development of key categories, closer engagement with theories of liberalism and democracy and systematic attention to gender and memory politics.

Be that as it may, there is little doubt that *Des électeurs ordinaires* remains an empirical, lucid and well-written study that rejects simplifications. The far right's rise is not reducible to misinformation, nor to a single grievance, nor to the supposed moral failings of 'ignorant' voters. It is a political form tailored to the grain of everyday life under inequality and under strain from diminished public services. In this regard, Faury's analysis carries practical implications. He suggests that moral denunciation or technocratic debunking, on their own, are unlikely to dislodge the far right's hold. Instead, interventions must address perceived grievances substantively (improving material conditions and service quality) while cultivating counter-affects: recognition, solidarity and believable horizons of shared improvement that displace racialised blame. In policy terms, this points to an agenda that pairs redistributive measures with initiatives designed to rebuild trust in institutions and to widen the circles of belonging. The book is therefore a necessary reading for politicians so that they are able to break existing clichés and take the problem seriously.

Taken together, these five projects signal the remarkable maturity of far-right studies as a field, freer, more creative and deeply attuned to its civic responsibility. Each work confronts the global surge of far-right parties with rigour and imagination, treating the threat not as a passing anomaly but as a structural challenge to democratic societies. They share a commitment to listening carefully, abandoning clichés and analysing arguments without condescension, recognising that audiences deserve to be treated as adults rather than as passive recipients of counter-propaganda. Across diverse methods (historical reconstruction, transnational mapping, visual archiving, ethnographic immersion and sociological inquiry), these studies probe why ideas once relegated to the dustbin of history have regained traction among militants and voters. Crucially, most authors converge on a vital insight: the far right cannot be understood in isolation. Its networks are transnational and trans-temporal, circulating across borders and decades, adapting to new contexts while preserving core logics of exclusion and hierarchy. Comprehending how these ideas travel through time and space is indispensable if democratic societies are to anticipate and resist the challenges posed by illiberal politics today.

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