

3. The political party of ethnic Poles in Lithuania.
4. The former Palikot movement.

Sources:

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Carvalho, Joao:

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One of the most consequential and most topical issues in political science today centres on the extreme right and immigration. With the political and economic crisis in Europe now receding, the issue has gained importance, and numerous scholars are now exploring the influence of extreme parties on national political systems. The topic of immigration itself has aroused great interest both in the academic world and among the general public in the Europe of the new millennium.

Many authors have highlighted the problematic notion that mainstream parties are co-opting the extreme right. This has mainly been interpreted as a bi-dimensional political process, but an understanding from the comparative perspective has been lacking. How these co-option processes occur must be determined to initially grasp the impact challenger parties have on the political system

and to understand how the mainstream parties develop formal and informal co-option strategies to face these challengers.

Joao Carvalho's monograph, *Impact of Extreme Right Parties on Immigration Policy: Comparing Britain, France and Italy*, published by Routledge in 2014, aims to fill the gap in the literature created by the lack of a systematic analysis of extreme right parties within their political systems and to contribute to our understanding of this political process. Carvalho is a postdoctoral researcher in the Governance, Competitiveness and Public Policies Research Centre at the University of Aveiro in Portugal. The book is the outcome of a long-term research project developed at the University of Sheffield. Carvalho's comparative analysis focuses on the political impact of the leading extreme right parties in Western Europe. He analyzes the approach to immigration policy taken by the British National Party in the United Kingdom, the National Front in France, and Lega Nord in Italy between 2001 and 2009, hypothesizing that these extreme right parties have had a significant impact on immigration politics and policy in the 2000s.

In his second chapter, Carvalho explains that his research methodology is based upon a surprising mixture of two different strands of research: studies of extreme right parties, and studies of immigration. The author justifies this mixed approach relatively well and illustrates its indispensability for subsequently evaluating the impact of extreme right parties on immigration policy. Carvalho clearly defines the party family of extreme right parties using a combination of spatial and ideological approaches closely connected to Sartori's concept of the anti-system party. He goes further to suggest a single typology for extreme right parties, inspired by Elisabeth Carter's classification into five main party types: neo-Nazi; neo-fascist; authoritarian xenophobic; neoliberal xenophobic; and neoliberal populist.

The third chapter justifies the selection of the UK, France, and Italy as the most appropriate case studies, to be analyzed in terms of their key variables, such as the electoral system, the evolution of selected parties, and immigration experiences. Carvalho's main argument for choosing these parties is that these three cases possess similar dependent variables in the form of the countries' liberal character, their EU membership, and bipolar patterns of interparty competition. This argument might be considered ambiguous, given that these variables are also applicable to other European countries, such as Spain and Germany. The author did not further specify the chosen examples. In addition, Carvalho's description of the Italian electoral system is flawed. He refers to a new mixed electoral law as 'scorporo', when it was in fact titled 'Mattarellum' – 'scorporo' referred only to a vote counting mechanism (p. 32). He also incorrectly describes the political context of the Lega Nord: Domenico Comino was not president of the Piedmont region, but the party secretary of that region (p. 40); Lodi lies south of Milan, not to its north (p. 41); and the *Partito Democratico* was formed from *La Margerita* and the Democrats of the Left, not from *Sinistra Democratica*, which was in fact a dissident group opposed to unification (p. 153). These inaccuracies may be attributable to the lack of an Italian language bibliography for the analysis of the Lega Nord. The author's minimal orientation in Italian issues is also documented by frequent misspellings, particularly in the names of political parties (Alleanza Nazionale, Democrazia Critiana, Union di Centro, etc.).

The book's research timeframe is also less than convincing. The author chose the 2001–2009 time period, which would be adequate had the book been published at the end of this period. As it is, five years have intervened; leaving the conclusions it draws open to the threat of having been stripped of relevance. The major portion of the book, Chapters 4,

5 and 6, contains a thorough analysis of the way three selected parties have impacted immigration politics and policy in this century. In analysing the BNP, Carvalho perfectly captures the complex development of British immigration policy under the Labour governments and validly concludes that the BNP's contagion factor with the British public was low and had little impact on the development of immigration policy as a whole. Because of the timeframe he has imposed upon himself, Carvalho sidesteps the rising importance of UKIP as a direct rival to the BNP on immigration and security issues. The only explanation he offers is banal: that the party's threat to mainstream parties is trivial, prompting them not to engage with the BNP.

The most accurate part of the book is the analysis of FN's impact on immigration politics and policy in France. The author provides a satisfying description of the National Front's changing fortunes in the French political system, starting with the presidential elections of 2002, when the French electorate underwent a 'Lepenisation of minds', and President Chirac ostracized FN and ignored the immigration issue. Carvalho appropriately attributes FN's modest political decline in the ensuing period to the presidency of Nicolas Sarkozy, who informally co-opted FN's approach to immigration. He also notes that during the same period, FN shifted its immigration stance toward centre-right, whilst French mainstream parties, particularly UMP, shifted theirs rightwards. Carvalho concludes that extreme right parties have had a highly significant impact on interparty competition in France, as well as on the salience of the immigration issue among the broader public, in contradistinction to what has happened in the UK. He also makes the insightful observation that the substantial threat posed by FN to the mainstream parties and its impact on immigration politics are in fact due to those mainstream parties' own agendas.

In his third comparative study, the author analyzes the impact of Lega Nord. For various reasons, the Italian party stands apart from the other two parties in the comparison. Carvalho notes these differences and thereby unwittingly questions the value of the entire comparison. Unlike the British and French extreme right parties, Lega Nord was long part of Berlusconi's government. That gave it the opportunity to directly influence immigration policy, proof of which is the 2002 Bossi-Fini law. It is impractical for this reason to compare the party with others that have missed such an opportunity. Another difference lies in the perception of the immigration threat by Italian voters. Carvalho shows these voters did not perceive the issue as the most pressing, nor did they consider Umberto Bossi, Lega Nord's leader, the 'right man' to handle immigration. Only after Bossi's return to political life after recovering his health in 2005, and after the failed devolution referendum of 2006, did LN become a 'classic' xenophobic authoritarian party of the extreme right heavily invested in the immigration issue. This is counter to what had happened with the BNP and FN, both of which underwent a different type of change in this same period. Nevertheless, Carvalho draws an interesting conclusion from his analysis of the Lega Nord. He demonstrates the high level of consensus between LN and the mainstream centre-right parties on immigration policy. He also reveals the direct impact LN has had on the development of Italian immigration policy, rightly gauging it disproportionate in light of the party's fragile position within the government and its relatively weak pull in the general elections of four to eight percent. As the most visible example of this disparity, Carvalho cites the automatic deportation of immigrants to Libya as a policy gap between the highly restrictive rhetoric championed by LN and the government's failure to criminalize irregular immigration.

In the final chapter, Carvalho summarizes the study by presenting a comparative analysis of the selected parties and how they have impacted the three comparative criteria: interparty competition, public attitudes, and the development of immigration policy. He demonstrates that the extreme right parties have had a limited impact on mass attitudes restricted to their core voters and closely connected to the agenda of the mainstream parties. Carvalho also details the varying levels of importance immigration has assumed in interparty competition in selected elections in the period of analysis. He ends by suggesting potential avenues for forthcoming research devoted to the interaction of extreme right and mainstream parties on immigration, and calls for immigration policy to be explored from a structural and agency perspective.

In conclusion, Carvalho's book forms an important contribution to the literature of extreme right parties and immigration. It includes a detailed analysis of selected parties and how their ideas on immigration have evolved in this century, including abundant explanatory graphs and tables. Despite minor shortcomings, the book provides an understanding of the dynamics of development of extreme right parties' positions on immigration. I believe its main benefit lies in the fact that it brings research on political parties within the compass of immigration politics. The mixed research methodology may offer a new perspective. Although current developments on the extreme right are beyond the book's reach, it may still be a useful tool for comparative studies of extreme right parties, particularly from a methodological standpoint.

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