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Ballots and barricades enhanced: far-right 'movement parties' and movement-electoral interactions

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ABSTRACT. Far-right organisations offer an ideal common ground to bridge the scholarships on social movements and party politics. Indeed, they can be often interpreted as 'movement parties', i.e. hybrid collective actors spurring from the protest arena and translating social movement practices in the arena of party competition. This contribution enhances our understanding of the contemporary far right by focusing on the neglected links between movements and elections within the broader context of contention. The article assesses and refines propositions about such interactions through the adoption of a specific framework, ultimately showing that the Hungarian Jobbik consistently subscribed to the linkage mechanisms discussed.

KEYWORDS: elections, far right, Jobbik, movement parties, social movements

Introduction

The emergence and performance of left-libertarian and contemporary far-right parties are closely knit. Both party families ideally rose from the juncture of '1968' affirmed themselves electorally during the 1980s and virtually turned into permanent fixtures of European politics over the course of the following decades. These organisations have been commonly placed under the 'niche party' umbrella, in part due to their rejection of class-based appeals and their ability to politicise new issues (Meguid 2005). Most importantly, however, they have been both associated to a particular breed of post-war politics, combining elements of party-political activity and social movement organisation – organisational and strategic configurations that have been elsewhere conceptualised as 'movement party' (e.g. Gunther and Diamond 2003; Kitschelt 2006).

Whilst these suggestions have gained early traction in the party politics literature (e.g. Dalton 1988; Ignazi 1992), remarkably little attention has been devoted to the 'social movement' component of at least one side of this functional contention, i.e. the contemporary far right (e.g. Castelli Gattinara and Pirro 2018; Koopmans and Rucht 1996; Minkenberg 2018).[1] It is precisely within the far-right scholarship that new attention has been called to grassroots

mobilisations, and the widening chasm between parties and politics (Mudde 2016). A growing number of contributions try to connect developments in the protest and electoral arenas (e.g. Hutter and Borbáth 2018) within a discipline otherwise characterised by a neat partitioning of work between scholars of social movements, on the one hand, and political parties, on the other (Muis and Immerzeel 2017: 921; Rydgren 2007: 257). Far-right organisations, just like left-libertarian challengers, offer an ideal object of enquiry to reconcile protest and electoral mobilisations. A relevant portion of contemporary far-right parties often originate from the movement sector or uphold activities at the grassroots level, justifying their interpretation as hybrid collective actors operating in multiple arenas (Pirro and Castelli Gattinara 2018). Far-right 'movement parties' ultimately stand out for their attempts 'to apply the organizational and strategic practices of social movements in the arena of party competition' (Kitschelt 2006: 280) and thus are worthy of study in their own right.

The overarching goal of this article is to assess and refine propositions on the 'mechanisms that connect contention to outcomes of interest' (McAdam and Tarrow 2010: 529). The underlying notion behind this endeavour is that shared tools can be deployed for the study of different actors emerging from the movement sector and influencing the electoral arena. In order to address the interpenetration between social movements and political parties, the article refers to a framework that has overall neglected *nativist* collective action (cf. McAdam and Tarrow 2010). Within the context of social movement studies, for instance, political participation has been mostly addressed as 'specific attempts by individuals to stop threatening developments, redress instances of injustice, promote alternative options to the managing of social life and economic activity' (della Porta and Diani 2006: 3) – concerns that could be subsumed under the umbrella of 'progressive politics'. If anything, far-right actors have been seen *in opposition* to these principles and – by means of their emphasis on nativism, authoritarianism, and populism (Mudde 2007) – as interpreters of *illiberal* values. The extra-parliamentary far right – that fluid portion of grassroots activism termed 'uncivil society' – would add to the challenge posed by nativist parties. Far-right parties and movements ostensibly present a 'double threat, one operating within parliaments and the other from the surrounding environment' (Pedahzur and Weinberg 2001: 53). Still, the article contends that the construction of interpretive frames, identities, and/or principles of solidarity pertaining to social movements (della Porta and Diani 2006) is separate from value-specific considerations and hence no sole prerogative of progressive politics. Instances of 'uncivil society' have been notably reported in post-communist countries (Kopecký and Mudde 2003), confirming that nativist movements may undertake party-oriented trajectories over time, irrespective of specific contexts of belonging or legacies at play.

The unravelling of movement-electoral interactions is laying out promising paths for research on the far right (e.g. Hutter 2014). This contribution enhances our understanding of this phenomenon by focusing on neglected links between movements and parties within the broader context of contention

(McAdam and Tarrow 2013). *Inter alia*, elaborating on these linkage mechanisms calls attention to the far right's origins in grassroots mobilisations and their subscription to movement strategies, thus suggesting that the debates on movement-electoral interactions and 'movement parties' are inevitably interrelated. As it will argued further below, the *Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom* (Jobbik) serves as a valuable case study to investigate similar propositions. Incidentally, the article delves into these mechanisms, suggesting that the very same lifecycle of the far right may be punctuated by mobilisations against particular 'adversaries' (e.g. Rucht 2004).

The article is structured as follows: It firstly outlines the theoretical premises of this contribution. It then identifies a turning point in a series of linkage mechanisms between 'ballots and barricades', which are initially applied to instances of far-right mobilisation across post-authoritarian Europe. Drawing on original interviews with high-ranking officials, historical analysis, and content analysis of documents, the article moves a further step forward and focuses on Jobbik's lifecycle, indicating how the Hungarian organisation consistently subscribes to the linkage mechanisms discussed. The article concludes summarising the most important findings, reiterating the value of greater interdisciplinary dialogue between sister fields of enquiry.

The far-right as collective actor

From the perspective of the party politics scholarship, the seminal theories addressing the question of social and political change in advanced industrial democracies either directly or indirectly referred to the critical juncture of '1968'. From realignment and dealignment (Dalton et al. 1984) to the emergence of 'post-materialist' concerns (Inglehart 1977), these theories argued that the changed post-war setting had spurred the emergence of novel forms of aggregation, *de facto* challenging the notion that societal cleavages and party systems had crystallised since the early twentieth century (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Prime interpreters of these changes were parties of the 'new left' that transferred concerns of student, civil rights, and environmentalist movements to the party-political sphere. Whereas shifts in the 'demand side' – e.g. swings in electorates' identifications (or, loosening thereof) – have often remained a prime concern for political scientists, relatively less attention has been devoted to the grassroots component, meso-level arrangements, and the broader theoretical implications of movement-electoral interactions.

On the basis of the political changes outlined above, a number of commentators argued that a 'new populism' emerged in reaction to the 'new politics' of the left-libertarian and environmentalists – essentially representing two faces of the same coin (Taggart 1996). What brought them together – whilst concurrently setting them apart – was the fact that the 'new politics' addressed post-material concerns (Inglehart 1981), whereas 'new populists' articulated a material reaction to the challenges posed by modernisation (e.g. Betz 1994; Ignazi 1992; Minkenberg

2000). Both groups have been considered 'movements of crisis' (Kriesi 1995), which broke through national politics in the 1980s as advocates of new issue-specific stances that set them in opposition to the establishment (e.g. Mudde 2004). Still, movements and movement parties of the left and right have been epistemologically treated as distinct entities, hence curbing the opportunity to address the evolution of the latter through the same tools deployed to study the first. These perspectives prompt to delve deeper into the relationship between protest and electoral politics, theoretically as much as empirically.

As the starting point of this article ideally rests in a series of changes unfolded with '1968', this may question the opportunity to draw comparisons between mobilisations and counter-mobilisations occurred in different places and at different times. Although far-right organisations in post-communist Europe cannot be considered the 'unwanted children' of a post-materialist revolution (Ignazi 1992: 6), both '1968' and '1989' have been interpreted as transformative events of equal significance for the development of far-right organisations (e.g. Minkenberg 2002; Pirro 2015). Neither we should assume that far-right collective actors take on single organisational and ideological responses. It has been noted that the far right directly depends on the idiosyncrasies of its context (Pirro 2014a); hence, its nativist reactions may subscribe to varying repertoires of contention and deliver distinctive frames.

Attempts to bridge social movement theory and studies on political parties can be found in the work of Michael Minkenberg, who has placed equal emphasis on the parliamentary (i.e. parties) and extra-parliamentary (i.e. social movements and subcultural milieus) dimensions of the far right, regarding the relevance of both as dependent upon the cultural and structural opportunities offered by their national contexts (Minkenberg 2003). Interpreting far-right parties, movements, and groups as a single collective actor denotes a collective commitment to nativist principles and organised investments. This particular notion draws attention to the cognitive aspect of collective action – crafting internal self-identification and external recognition from the outside – as well as hands-on agentic aspects. The far right's participation in elections has been ultimately interpreted as a party-specific attempt to win public office; yet their attempt to mobilise public support and offer interpretative frames for particular issues resembled in more than one way the *modus operandi* of social movements (e.g. Minkenberg 2018).

Equally relevant are the contributions of Herbert Kitschelt (1988; Kitschelt and McGann 1995), who initially focused on the libertarian left and subsequently shifted his attention to the far right in Western Europe. Kitschelt (2006) strove to bring these collective actors together under the common conceptual umbrella of 'movement party'. Besides their conceptual location between movement and parties (Gunther and Diamond 2003: 188), movement parties are regarded as fuzzy and transitional organisational arrangements. In other words, their organisation and strategies would depend on investments in formal party structures, aggregation of interests, and forms of external mobilisation (Kitschelt 2006: 280–281).

As far as nativist collective actors are concerned, a relatively small but growing set of studies have tackled the standing divide between the scholarships on social movements and party politics (Castelli Gattinara and Pirro 2018). Whilst some authors focused on the organisation and institutionalisation of far-right movement parties (e.g. Peterson 2015; Pirro and Castelli Gattinara 2018), others have reconciled the study of movements and parties through the analysis of extra-parliamentary actors and grassroots activism (e.g. Albanese et al. 2014; Busher 2015; Caiani et al. 2012; Meadowcroft and Morrow 2017; Molnár 2016; Pirro and Róna 2018). Others have taken yet another route by adopting heuristic devices elaborated within social movement theory – e.g. the 'political opportunity structure' (Kriesi et al. 1995; Tarrow 1994), 'frames' (Snow and Benford 1988), and the dynamic processes subtending them (McAdam et al. 1996) – to analyse far-right organisations (e.g. Diani 1996; Elgenius and Rydgren 2018; Froio and Ganesh 2018; Hutter and Borbáth 2018; Klandermans and Mayer 2005; Klein and Muis 2018; Mikecz 2015; Pytlas 2016; Rydgren 2005; Tipaldou and Uba 2018; Varga 2008). The growing corpus of interdisciplinary research testifies the value of understanding developments in the extra-parliamentary and institutional arenas as interdependent.

As those external elements part of the political opportunity structure can only partly determine mobilisation prospects (Gamson and Meyer 1996), this article factors in agentic features (i.e. movement parties' own mobilisation efforts and framing) in the analysis of the far right. In line with this goal, the article adopts the six linkage mechanisms identified by McAdam and Tarrow (2010), which are first applied to explore developments within the broader far-right galaxy and then the Hungarian Jobbik. Focusing on the Hungarian movement party particularly enhances the understanding of these mechanisms: first, by refining their implications *vis-à-vis* electoral mobilisations and, second, by detecting specific adversaries (Rucht 2004) for the different phases undergone by Jobbik.

In their endeavour, the authors attempted to 'link movement actors to routine political actors in electoral campaigns' (McAdam and Tarrow 2010: 533). These linkage mechanisms can be summarised as: (a) the introduction of new forms of collective action influencing election campaigns; (b) joining electoral coalitions or outright transition towards party organisation; (c) engagement in proactive electoral mobilisation; (d) engagement in reactive electoral mobilisation; (e) polarisation of political parties internally; and (f) shifts in electoral regimes as catalysts of mobilisation and demobilisation (McAdam and Tarrow 2010: 533).

The following section reviews these mechanisms in turn and draws on instances of far-right mobilisation to demonstrate the relevance of this framework beyond progressive milieus. Not all these mechanisms straightforwardly apply to the far right in a necessary or consequential manner. Yet the set of mechanisms that may only partly apply to far-right movements taking the electoral option extend in full to the Hungarian Jobbik, hence substantiating the overall validity of McAdam and Tarrow's framework.

Linkage mechanisms: insights into the contemporary far-right

By introducing new forms of collective action, reference is made to 'transferrable innovations', i.e. movements' use of new repertoires of contention and frames (McAdam and Tarrow 2010: 533). Especially in the early stages of their lifecycles, movement parties (*in fieri*) engage in the elaboration of novel collective action forms and the construction of new frames. Already identified as the central phase in the lifecycle of a movement party (on the 'breakout' of far-right organisations, see Mudde 2007), the definition of the first linkage mechanism seems rather uncontroversial. Given the initial detachment of new contestants from the dynamics of electoral politics, collective actors seek to attract attention through (more or less) contentious activities (e.g. Wright et al. 1990) and mobilise on the basis of issues neglected until that point (e.g. Rydgren 2005).

> Occasionally, often helped by particular precipitating circumstances, dissident groups are able to invent new combinations of identities, tactics, and demands. These creative moments are extremely important, for they may provide the initial sparks that expose regime weakness. (Koopmans 2004: 25)

Especially in their initial stages of mobilisation, far-right collective actors often resort to street demonstrations, riots, and other forms of contention (e.g. DeClair 1999; Shields 2007; Taylor 1982) – repertoires deployed to draw attention to their political claims. At the same time, the contemporary far right has rose to prominence on the basis of the politicisation/mainstreaming of nativist ideals, which helped surpass the biological notion of racism of the 'old/traditional' far right, as well as their more militant and anti-democratic character (e.g. Ignazi 2003; Rydgren 2005). The simple fact of articulating new issues (i.e. immigration, ethnic minorities, and security) may have granted these collective actors the role of 'prophetic' organisations. They have then managed to construct new cleavages, by linking their 'new' ideology to latent traditions and concerns (Lucardie 2000).

Successively, social movements may 'take the electoral option'. By accounting for movements' transformation into political parties, McAdam and Tarrow's attempt to conceptually bridge 'ballots and barricades' comes full circle. Contemporary far-right organisations went however uncharted in their work. Movement-electoral interactions have been nonetheless instrumental to the far right, as testified by the role of *Ordre Nouveau* (ON) and other far-right movements in the establishment of the French *Front National* (FN) in the early 1970s (Ignazi 2003: 90); or the electoral contests disputed by the movement *CasaPound Italia* (CPI) after their establishment in 2003, first as part of the *Movimento Sociale – Fiamma Tricolore* (MS-FT), then as an independent, and lately endorsing the new secretary of the *Lega Nord* (LN, now simply called *Lega*), Matteo Salvini, in his recent electoral endeavours (Albanese et al. 2014; Pirro and Castelli Gattinara 2018: 373).

Taking the electoral option is directly related to two subsequent linkage mechanisms, which involve the engagement in proactive and reactive electoral

mobilisations. Movement parties value elections as a crucial arena for their own growth and/or the attainment of their goals. Hence, they are expected to increase their activity levels (the proactive, *ex ante*, component) and protests (the reactive, *ex post*, component) around election time (McAdam and Tarrow 2010: 533–534). Movement parties, just as social movement organisations, are *active* agents in the elaboration of their repertoires of contention (e.g. Tilly and Tarrow 2007) and the framing of the political context in which they operate.

Through their involvement in campaigning activities, movement parties deploy 'contentious performances' to render their demands and proposals visible. In other words, they use means potentially able to increase the salience of the issues that they advocate. At the same time, they try to mobilise public support by introducing a symbolic component in their activity (e.g. Pytlas 2016). This is achieved by construing elements of the political opportunity structure through a specific and circumstantial elaboration of frames (Goodwin and Jasper 1999). Indeed, frames are particular cognitive devices that help make sense of the situation in which collective actors are immersed (Bateson 1972). As such, they are also liable to change and are generally deployed to explain individual engagement in protest activities, construct collective identities, and create alternative systems of meaning at the public level (Gerhards and Rucht 1992; Snow et al. 1986). Populist movement parties of different ideological persuasions have in recent years catalysed attention to an 'anti-establishment' master frame (e.g. della Porta et al. 2017; Pirro 2018; Kriesi and Pappas 2015). Amidst varying political opportunities, 'political corruption' or the collusion of political and financial elites were bridged to the anti-establishment frame and used by these movement parties as part of their mobilisation efforts – not to mention their own electoral benefit.

Looking more concretely at movement parties of the far right, the *Ľudová Strana – Naše Slovensko* (ĽSNS, since 2015 known as *Kotleba – Ľudová Strana Naše Slovensko*) in Slovakia has mobilised on 'Gypsy terror' and 'Roma criminality', directly drawing upon the prior activities of the *Slovenská Pospolitosť* (SP) movement – with which the ĽSNS maintains direct ideological and organisational continuity (Gyárfášová and Mesežnikov 2015; Milo 2005). Whilst serving a functional proactive component, this strategy also contributed to steal thunder to the more popular *Slovenská Národná Strana* (SNS), which in turn curbed the most contentious aspects of its nativist rhetoric under the leadership of Andrej Danko (Pirro 2015).

Reactive electoral mobilisation is evidently less common in advanced industrial democracies but instances of far-right protesting have occurred nonetheless. The reaction of the *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (FPÖ) in the wake of the Austrian presidential elections of May 2016 would partly fit the theoretical elaboration of this linkage mechanism, although the (successful) contestation by the far right has mainly taken a legal, rather than street-based, form of mobilisation.

Two observations are in order at this stage. The first relates to the distinction between the proactive and reactive components of electoral mobilisation. *Stricto sensu*, movement parties do not simply mobilise proposedly during

campaigns, and reactively, for instance, as a consequence of contested election results. Especially considering the inherent confrontational attitude of numerous far-right organisations, the demarcation line between mobilising efforts and escalating protest is rather blurred in practice. Furthermore, it can be argued that a neat distinction between electoral and more general mobilisation efforts is largely artificial, having far-right organisations practically introduced forms of *constant campaigning* amongst their repertoires. This is not last a result of the far right's ability to establish itself in the former strongholds of parties that have once placed significant emphasis on their presence on the ground (e.g. Diamanti 2009 on the penetration of the LN at the grassroots level).

The second observation refers to the underspecified adversarial component embedded in electoral mobilisation. Perhaps due to the emphasis on an action-oriented notion of campaigning and protesting, McAdam and Tarrow failed to elaborate on the fact that the friend-foe distinction makes up for a significant portion of far-right mobilisation at the party, movement, and subcultural levels. Movement parties, just as social movements, 'emerge and develop through interactions' and 'always engage in a struggle against something or somebody' (Rucht 2004: 199, 210). By paying attention to the relational component subtending movement parties' activities, *different adversaries may punctuate the different phases of the farright's lifecycle*.

The far right indeed demonises 'aliens' and various 'others' – be them enemies ideally or practically located within or without the state. As exhaustively articulated elsewhere (Mudde 2007; Pirro 2015), alien persons, institutions, and ideas are defined mostly by exclusion and identified according to cultural, social, ethnic, religious, and economic principles. Hence, it should not surprise if those theoretical elaborations on diagnostic and prognostic framing referring, respectively, on problem identification and problem solving (Snow and Benford 1988) would equally apply to progressive and anti-modern collective actors. Moreover, one of the core features of far-right's ideology – authoritarianism – explicitly calls for a strictly order society in which infringements of authority should be punished severely (Mudde 2007: 23), *de facto* satisfying the motivational framing that mobilises people to action.

Two final linkage mechanisms straddle movement-electoral interactions: movement/party polarisation and oscillations of electoral regimes. With the first mechanism, reference is made to movements' emerge from political parties and other organisations (Zald and Berger 1978). History abounds with examples of movements breaking off political parties to pursue independent (read, more radical) goals, and the far right is no exception. The story of the contemporary far right is constellated by internal rifts, not only due to processes of moderation or institutionalisation of their organisations of reference but also personal rivalries.

The French FN experienced a split from the *Parti des Forces Nouvelles* (PFN); the PFN represented the ON component that took a confrontational stance on the leadership of Jean-Marie Le Pen (Ignazi 2003: 91). Similar events unfolded in Italy, with the MS-FT fiercely opposing the 'national conservative'

turn of *Alleanza Nazionale* (AN) after the dissolution of the *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (MSI) in 1995 (Ignazi 2003: 49). Another movement party of the Italian far right, *Forza Nuova*, emerged as a dissenting fraction within the MS-FT. Frictions within the SNS in Slovakia emerged under the new leadership of Anna Malíková in 2001. The rift brought expelled members – including long-serving SNS leader Ján Slota – to come together under the more radical *Pravá Slovenská Národná Strana* (PSNS). After some unsuccessful electoral bids, the respective leaders eventually agreed to merge the two parties back into the SNS with Slota as chairman (Pirro 2015: 87). Whilst other examples could be brought to the table, it may be difficult to tell the effects played by internal polarisation from a strong centralising leadership. As far-right movement parties are generally more prone to yield hierarchical structures and strong leaders (Kitschelt 2006), internal splits may be also attributed to personal frictions between prominent figures – an aspect that remains often unspoken and, thus, yet to be tested empirically (on leadership and factionalism, see Carter 2005: Ch. 3).

The final linkage mechanism is admittedly more difficult to reconcile in straightforward terms to (European) movement-party dynamics. In their study, McAdam and Tarrow (2010: 534) suggest that the oscillations of electoral regimes should be directly linked to instances of successful mobilisation in the protest arena. Whilst certainly plausible, there is an aura of over-determination in the considerations of the authors, which seem influenced by general trends in US politics. Social movements and movement parties may be able to draw support on the basis of their ability to (a) mobilise discontent and (b) satisfy an expressive function through the articulation of particular demands and grievances (Wolinetz 1979) but ultimately remain subaltern forces in the electoral arena. Given these premises, it is important to partly detach the fortunes of movement parties from prevailing trends in the mainstream political arena or other structural factors (e.g. Arzheimer and Carter 2006). This is a proviso that seems compelling in the wake of the recent European crises (i.e. the Great Recession, migration crisis, and Brexit) and related crises of political legitimacy, which may boost the fortunes of electoral newcomers and untried alternatives, irrespective of their ties with grassroots movements.

Should it be necessary to argue this further, those European party systems adopting proportional representation or mixed systems have been generally characterised by regular alternation in power, making it difficult to reconcile movement parties' performance with clear-cut left-wing or right-wing dominance. It will suffice to say that *Die Grünen* in Germany have enjoyed some of their best electoral results whilst in opposition (i.e. after 2005) and that the *Vlaams Blok/Vlaams Belang* (VB) in Belgium experienced over a decade of successes amidst substantial ostracism from the political establishment. Moreover, whereas the dominance of *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* (PiS) may signify a nativist turn in Polish society, it is important to note that the consolidation of Jarosław Kaczyński's party is part of a co-optation of far-right stances that has swept away nativist and populist parties over the past decade (Pytlas 2016).

The situational and relational component underpinning 'radicalism' in Central and Eastern Europe should be then taken into serious consideration when assessing broader sociocultural and political trends. Hence, whilst the constellation of (nativist) allies in the institutional sphere can contribute to the diffusion of far-right ideas and violence (Koopmans 1996), it cannot single-handedly determine their fortunes in and out of parliament.

This section set out to highlight the numerous advantages as well as some limits of the mechanisms linking social movements to electoral processes. The effort punctually complemented theory with empirical evidence, suggesting that progressive and anti-modern forces can be fruitfully analysed through shared analytical tools. The following section directly refers to the Hungarian Jobbik, which will reiterate the opportunity to understand a single political experience through the linkage mechanisms outlined by McAdam and Tarrow – an endeavour only partly achieved through the analysis of movement-electoral interactions in the US (2010: 534–537).

Jobbik between 'ballots and barricades'

Jobbik has been one of the most successful far-right organisations contesting elections over the last decade. The movement party has experienced a meteoric rise after the poor showing in the 2006 general elections and surged to archetypal populist radical right party in Central and Eastern Europe (Pirro 2014a: 604). With 19.1 per cent of votes gained in the 2018 general elections, Jobbik currently qualifies as the biggest opposition force in the National Assembly and the second most voted party in Hungary. The social scientific literature has rarely analysed the Hungarian organisation from a social movement perspective (Mikecz 2015; Pirro and Róna 2018; Pirro and Castelli Gattinara 2018).

Jobbik is a relevant case study for students of party politics and social movements alike. First, the Hungarian organisation is a representative example of 'movement party' of the far right. The organisation started out in 1999 as a movement of Christian right-wing students (*Jobboldali Ifjúsági Közösség*), registered as a party in October 2003, contested its first elections in April 2006, and entered the Hungarian parliament in 2010. Whereas these developments may have contributed to the gradual institutionalisation of the organisation, Jobbik would qualify as a movement party for its enhanced propensity to combine electoral representation with extra-institutional mobilisation (Mosca and Quaranta 2017). In particular, the Hungarian movement party allows to assess the validity of those propositions on the mechanisms linking 'ballots and barricades'. The six linkage mechanisms are articulated below, in no strict chronological order, and analysed through two original interviews with high-ranking officials held in Budapest in 2013 and 2016, historical analysis, and content analysis of documents (e.g. della Porta 2014; Mudde 2000; Ritter 2014). The elaboration of these interactions significantly furthers our understanding of protest and electoral arenas as complementary, rather than separate, spheres of contention.

Jobbik took the electoral option and did not abandon it ever since. The *Jobboldali Ifjúsági Közösség* originally served as an umbrella for networks of Catholic and Protestant students drawn from different colleges and universities across the country. The activities of the 'social movement phase' (1999–2003) boiled down to the organisation of demonstrations as well as political and cultural events, later to be connected to the 'Civic Circles' promoted by Fidesz after its first term in government (1998–2002; e.g. Molnár 2016; Greskovits 2017). Grown disillusioned with the state of the Hungarian right – ascribed to its 'inability or unwillingness to represent national values and interests in full' (Jobbik 2008) – the social movement completed its transition to political party on 24 October 2003. The organisation was initially confronted with a dilemma inherent to anti-establishment organisations: changing the system from the outside, as a movement; or from within, as a party (Interview HU2). Given the difficulties faced at the organisational level, however, Jobbik did not field any candidates for the 2004 European elections and instead waited until the 2006 general elections (Jobbik 2010).

Jobbik has introduced new forms of contention that have ostensibly influenced the political process as a whole. The movement party's own contributions to transferrable innovation are manifold and reveal both at the framing and tactical levels. This is clearly the most important linkage mechanism to be considered when analysing the Hungarian organisation. For what it concerns the aspect of framing, Jobbik played a pivotal role in the rejuvenation of the Hungarian far right. Compared to other far-right movements, and especially to the only other electorally relevant far-right party, the *Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja* (MIÉP), Jobbik has de-emphasised the anti-Semitic ideological component and a good portion of those conspiracy theories traditionally part of the Hungarian far-right discourse (Karsai 1999).

Notwithstanding elements of continuity such as radical patriotism, Christianity, and anti-communism – which would justify the *MIÉP–Jobbik A Harmadik Út* alliance at the 2006 general elections – Jobbik has foremost attempted to deliver an anti-globalist, anti-capitalist, and anti-corruption self-image in the early stages of its political activity. Moreover, the 2006 Jobbik manifesto can be legitimately considered the first programmatic document to have denounced a potential migration threat coming from the strategic geopolitical position held by Hungary within the recently enlarged EU (Jobbik 2006). Although the theme proved of little electoral value in Hungary – at least until the politicisation orchestrated by Fidesz in 2015 – Jobbik claims ownership of the issue (Interview HU2).

Jobbik 'introduced very unconventional methods into politics' (Interview HU1). The most important innovation rests in the politicisation and successive mainstreaming of the Roma issue, which has been framed in terms of *cigánybűnözés* (Gypsy crime). The issue, presenting us with a recurrent adversary of Jobbik, was first elaborated in the wake of the 2006 elections. The Roma issue was instrumental in the electoral inroads of the movement party (e.g. Karácsony and Róna 2011; Pirro 2014b) and represented a device

bridging the discursive and tactical spheres of Jobbik. One of the most significant repertoires of contention deployed by the far-right organisation indeed consisted in the patrolling activities of the *Magyar Gárda*, a paramilitary (yet unarmed) organisation established in 2007 to restore 'law and order' in rural areas with a high concentration of Roma minorities (e.g. Tatárszentgyörgy, Nyírkáta, Vásárosnamény). The *Gárda* was however also deployed in 'direct social actions' (e.g. Froio and Castelli Gattinara 2016), as in the case of the overflowing of the Tisza in Spring 2008, when its members were present on the banks, putting sand sacks to contain the river, digging ditches, and taking the water out (Interview HU1). The *Magyar Gárda* gained national and international exposure, until its activities were ruled in breach of the human rights of ethnic minorities and the *Gárda* was disbanded by court ruling in 2009 (24.hu 2009). New militia groups were formed to uphold these activities (*Új Magyar Gárda*, *Szebb Jövőért Magyar Önvédelem*, etc.), though this time maintaining only informal links to Jobbik (Interview HU1); marches and patrolling activities were held in Cegléd, Devecser, Gyöngyöspata, Hajdúhadház, and Miskolc between 2011 and 2012 (e.g. FRA 2013).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that, due to ostracism from the national media, Jobbik has made early and skilful use of the internet and alternative means communication to reach out to members, grassroots activists, and sympathisers (Karl 2017). At a time when Facebook was not yet deemed a mass mobilising tool in Hungarian politics, Jobbik had significantly outnumbered the 'followers' of the ruling party Fidesz, and former chairman Gábor Vona (Jobbik) those of PM Viktor Orbán (Fidesz) (Pirro 2015: 70). The diversified and far-reaching set of extra-parliamentary activities aiming at mobilising younger cohorts (including music concerts and festivals) should also be mentioned as innovative means, precisely in light of the significant and consistent success of Jobbik amongst those aged below 30 (Pirro and Róna 2018; Szabó et al. 2015).

For what it concerns the engagement in proactive and reactive electoral mobilisations, linkage mechanisms cannot be dissociated from the frames and repertoires used by the movement party. First of all, Jobbik has replaced the concept of electoral campaigning with constant campaigning. Its then-leader Gábor Vona embarked on tours of the country every three months to maintain links with the grassroots, and high-ranking officials followed a similar routine (Interview HU2). Whilst this may prompt us to reconsider the concept of mobilisations at times of elections, it is also true that protest events focusing on different themes – e.g. anti-EU (Jobbik 2012a), anti-migration (Jobbik 2015a), anti-TTIP (Jobbik 2016), anti-war (Jobbik 2015b), anti-Zionism (Jobbik 2012b) – have been held irrespective of strict ballot pressure. In a similar fashion, Jobbik has taken the streets to protest against foreign currency-denominated debt:

> When the executors from the banks came to confiscate properties, Jobbik groups took the streets to negotiate and stop them. … We've been pressurising with demonstrations. … We have given political voice to those people battling for their lives. (Interview HU2)

In addition, Jobbik's electoral mobilisation efforts have been punctuated by a series of adversaries – enemies that have not just appeared in, and then waned from, Jobbik's discourse but acquired different salience according to changing circumstances. As perceptively observed elsewhere (Bíró-Nagy and Róna 2013), Jobbik has strategically played the '*cigánybűnözés* card' to report its first significant results at the 2009 European Parliament elections, only to adjust its focus on 'political crime' ahead of the 2010 general elections. Following these cues, it is possible to argue that electoral mobilisation efforts were projected against global capital and the former (anti-national) *nomenklatura* in the run-up to the 2006 general elections; Roma ethnic minorities until the electoral breakthrough of 2009; 'political criminals' from the 2010 general elections campaign; and, also due to a process of programmatic diversification and in line with Jobbik's populist profile, the broad 'political establishment' (above all, the *Magyar Szocialista Párt* [MSZP] and Fidesz) ahead of the 2014 electoral contests.

Jobbik also proves an interesting case in that it delivered a full-fledged instance of reactive electoral mobilisation – an occurrence that McAdam and Tarrow did not consider ordinary within the context of democratic regimes. In the wake of the general elections held in April 2006, PM Ferenc Gyurcsány (MSZP) gave a private speech at a party meeting in Balatonőszöd, in which he admitted to have lied 'in the morning, at noon, and at night' in order to win the elections. The speech was leaked in September and led to grand scale upheavals in major Hungarian cities – particularly in Budapest, where protests erupted in full-blown riots and violence. Unrest lasted over a month, involving different thousands of protesters and listing hundreds of arrests. Far-right groups and movements, hereby including Jobbik members and affiliates, spearheaded anti-government protests, *de facto* giving these reactive mobilisations a strong nationalist imprint (e.g. Molnár 2016; Spiegel 2006).

The movement party's own organisational and institutional trajectory has inevitably raised questions over Jobbik leadership's continued commitment to radical goals. Throughout the 2010–2014 mandate, Fidesz implemented a number of policy proposals originally formulated by Jobbik (Pirro 2015, 2017). As a result, Fidesz has been increasingly perceived as a radical nativist actor, leaving a large space vacant at the centre of the political spectrum. Ahead of the 2014 general elections, Jobbik invested in a '*cukisagkampany*' (cuteness campaign) in order to deliver a more moderate self-image. This strategy was successively formalised through Vona's pledge to transform Jobbik into a centrist people's party (Bíró-Nagy and Boros 2016). A portion of members and grassroots activists disapproved of this course, spurring the rise of more-or-less ephemeral splinters. András Kisgergely, once Jobbik representative, established the *Magyar Hajnal* along the lines of the Greek *Chrysí Avgí*, reclaiming at the same time a Christian national socialist profile and continuity with the disbanded *Magyar Gárda* (HVG 2013). Attila Szabó lists amongst those dissenting activists behind the openly racist and homophobic *Erő és Elszántság* (Guardian 2017), which has drawn upon the support of the

Betyársereg and the Hungarian Identitarian movement (Pirro and Róna 2018). Momentous developments have shaken Jobbik's cadre after the 2018 elections and subsequent resignation of chairman Gábor Vona. László Toroczkai, mayor of Ásotthalom since 2013 and Jobbik vice-president between 2016 and 2018, lost a chairmanship bid to Tamás Sneider in May 2018 and was stripped of his membership after challenging the leadership on programmatic grounds. He eventually established the *Mi Hazánk Mozgalom* with other outgoing Jobbik members pursuing a more radical nationalist platform.

> We have basically moved to the centre. … Our programme hasn't changed, but the way we communicate it – the political marketing – has changed, which also shows that we have grown up; we have stepped into adulthood from our teenage years. It's a move that has caused disputes within the party, of course. … It does cause a lot of conflict within people. … But it appears that it is the way to follow. (Interview HU2)

Finally, when oscillations of electoral regimes are considered, the year 2006 clearly represented a watershed in Hungarian politics. The political and legitimacy crises that followed the leaking of the 'Őszöd speech' severely undermined the credibility of the left bloc (e.g. Molnár 2016: 172; Beissinger and Sasse 2014: 358–360). The decline was sanctioned in the 2010 consultations and opened the way to Fidesz's dominance across three consecutive national elections, on top of Jobbik's own growth and consolidation. Fidesz and Jobbik evidently lied at the core of Hungarian political developments since the late 2000s. Besides signalling public receptiveness to nativist discourses, Jobbik could be qualified as the main driver behind a 'radicalisation of the mainstream' in Hungary (e.g. Minkenberg 2013; Pirro 2015). Indeed, many of Jobbik's policy proposals have been translated into actual legislation by Fidesz during the 2010–2014 term (e.g. Bíró-Nagy et al. 2013; Pirro 2017), thus suggesting that the far right has wielded influence in the political process and actively contributed to a democratic backsliding in the country (e.g. Minkenberg 2015). Whereas Jobbik has already proved to be more than a 'flash in the pan', it is not difficult to assume that the effects released by the movement party – also by way of Fidesz's illiberal turn – are going to withstand for years to come.

Conclusions

Social movement studies and the party politics literature have long suffered from little mutual exchange, almost as if developments in the extra-parliamentary and institutional arenas could unfold independent from each other. Some scholars have nonetheless tried to bridge these disciplines when a series of left-libertarian movements took the electoral option. The attention devoted to new left and Green parties testifies this effort (e.g. Frankland et al. 2008; Poguntke 1993). The contemporary far right, generally appraised as a reaction to the

'post-materialist' turn embodied by the Greens/left-libertarians, has equally resulted in a vast scientific corpus. Unlike the former, however, the far right has been difficult to reconcile with social movement schemata, which have placed at the heart of enquiry progressive, rather than illiberal, forms of contention. Succinctly put, the social movement field had been often 'excessively centered on contemporary western, reformist movement organizations' (McAdam and Tarrow 2010: 529).

A call to overcome these epistemological divides has been implicitly put forward by authors like Kitschelt (2006), who elaborated on the existence of a 'movement party' hybrid bringing together entities belonging to both far-left and far-right camps. The quest of taking social movements and parties under the same analytical roof has not been completely isolated but often suffered from a lack of consistency as well as the absence of precise mechanisms capable of linking the protest and electoral arenas. A significant step forward in this direction was made by McAdam and Tarrow (2010), who singled out linkage mechanisms through which the activity of social movements would permeate the institutional sphere. The article enhanced this framework by translating it to the experience of movement parties of the far right. The value of this research endeavour has been then twofold: on the one hand, it substantiated that, precisely due to their hybrid organisational form and multiple arenas of engagement, the very existence and resilience of movement parties may be more common than usually thought; on the other, it brought theoretical and substantive knowledge in support of similar mechanisms in the case of far-right collective actors.

These mechanisms were then deployed as a toolkit for the study of one of the most successful far-right collective actors of the past decade – the Hungarian Jobbik. First, these linkage mechanisms proved of significant heuristic value in that they helped refine and expand our understanding of far-right activity in different arenas. Jobbik systematically complied with *all* six mechanisms. Especially those mechanisms upon which some reservations were raised – either for their under-specification or difficult applicability – did aptly fit the Hungarian case. Drawing on Jobbik also allowed to elaborate on the role of adversaries and the modes of electoral mobilisation. Its activity in the electoral arena has been indeed punctuated by the identification of foes – an aspect that partly fulfils the strategic purposes of diversification and constant evolution of the movement party. Moreover, the pace and penetration of its campaigning blurred prior assumptions on the mobilisation at times of election.

The lesson drawn from this theoretical and empirical effort shall not be in vain. The article has indeed demonstrated that social movement theory can be fruitfully translated to the analysis of (at least, selected) political organisations, advancing significant insights into the workings of far-right movement parties and movement-electoral interactions. The epistemological divides that have long refrained from interpreting the far right 'as social movement' are indeed largely artificial. Instead, greater communication between different social

scientific streams shall be sought to meet challenges that single theories, hypotheses, or epistemological persuasions often cannot in isolation.

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Note

1 The article refers to 'far right' as an umbrella concept including extreme and radical organisations located on the right end of the ideological spectrum. By 'contemporary far right', reference is made to those organisations emerged across Europe after the post-1945 transitions to democratic rule. Whilst extreme-right organisations oppose democratic principles and aim at subverting the democratic system (e.g. Sartori 1976), radical-right organisations are simply hostile to liberal democratic principles and thus subscribe to the rules of parliamentary democracy (e.g. Mudde 2000).

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