

'Right-wing extremism is taking new and often surprising forms across the globe. *CasaPound Italia* is a brilliant exposition of how extremists can penetrate into the practices of daily life. A must-read for scholars, activists, and all those concerned about the spread of far-right ideas into contemporary politics'.

— *Kathleen Blee, University of Pittsburgh, USA*

'While scholars of contentious politics have mainly focused on progressive social movements, this in-depth analysis brilliantly applies the main concepts and hypotheses developed in that field of studies to the mobilization and communication of the extreme right in Italy. Based on very rich empirical material, the research points at how the adoption of a hybridization strategy allowed the ideas of CasaPound Italia into the political'.

— *Donatella Della Porta, Scuola Normale Superiore, Italy*

'How does a relatively small far right group, with little electoral support, attract international media attention and influence national politics? This book does not only provide the first systematic analysis of a prime example of such a group, CasaPound Italia, it also introduces a theoretical framework that can help us understand disproportionate successes of other (far right) groups'.

— *Cas Mudde, University of Georgia*

'Based on a historical and ethnographic approach, this book captures the essence of CasaPound Italia: hybridization. A unique mix of party politics and street protest, ideology and pop culture, left-progressiveness and nativism, CPI makes fascism entertaining and attractive, way beyond the traditional extreme right circles. A must-read'.

— *Nonna Mayer, Sciences Po, CEE, CNRS, France*



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CASAPOUND ITALIA

In 2003, the occupation of a state-owned building in Rome led to the emergence of a new extreme-right youth movement: CasaPound Italia (CPI). Its members described themselves as 'Fascists of the Third Millennium', and were unabashed about their admiration for Benito Mussolini. Over the next 15 years, they would take to the street, contest national elections, open over a hundred centres across Italy, and capture the attention of the Italian public. While CPI can count only on a few thousand votes, it enjoys disproportionate attention in public debates from the media. So what exactly is CasaPound? How can we explain the high profile achieved by such a nostalgic group with no electoral support?

In this book, Caterina Froio, Pietro Castelli Gattinara, Giorgia Bulli and Matteo Albanese explore CasaPound Italia and its particular political strategy combining the organization and style of both political parties and social movements and bringing together extreme-right ideas and pop-culture symbols. They contend that this strategy of *hybridization* allowed a fringe organization like CasaPound to consolidate its position within the Italian far-right milieu, but also, crucially, to make extreme-right ideas routine in public debates. The authors illustrate this argument drawing on unique empirical material gathered during five years of research, including several months of overt observation at concerts and events, face-to-face interviews, and the qualitative and quantitative analysis of online and offline campaigns.

By describing how hybridization grants extremist groups the leeway to expand their reach and penetrate mainstream political debates, this book is core reading for anyone concerned about the nature and growth of far-right politics in contemporary democracies. Providing a fresh insight as to how contemporary extreme-right groups organize to capture public attention, this study will also be of interest to students, scholars and activists interested in the complex relationship between party competition and street protest more generally.

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Giorgia Bulli and Matteo Albanese*

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Translation</i>
AN	Alleanza Nazionale	National Alliance (Italy)
AvNa	Avanguardia Nazionale	National Vanguard (Italy)
BLU	Blocco Lavoratori Unitario	United Workers' Bloc (Italy)
BS	Blocco Studentesco	Student Bloc (Italy)
CPI	CasaPound/CasaPound Italia	The House of Pound (Italy)
CM	CasaMontag	The House of Montag (Italy)
DSA	Direct Social Actions	
ECB	European Central Bank	European Central Bank
EDL	English Defence League	English Defence League (United Kingdom)
EU	European Union	European Union
FdI	Fratelli d'Italia	Brothers of Italy (Italy)
FI	Forza Italia	Go Italy (Italy)
FN/RN	Front National/Rassemblement National	National Front/National Rally (France)
FzNv	Forza Nuova	New Force (Italy)
FT	Fiamma Tricolore	Tricolour Flame (Italy)
GD	Χρυσή Αυγή/Chrysi Avgí	Golden Dawn (Greece)
GRE	Gruppi di Ricerca Ecologica	Groups of Environmental Research (Italy)
GRECE	Groupement de Recherche et d'Études pour la Civilisation Européenne	Research and Study Group for European Civilization (France)
IPN	Il Primato Nazionale	The National Primacy (Italy)
LI	Les Identitaires	The Identitarians (France)
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
LN	Lega Nord/Lega	Northern League/League (Italy)

(Continued)

(Cont.)

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Translation</i>
MSI	Movimento Sociale Italiano	Italian Social Movement (Italy)
MS-FT	Movimento Sociale-Fiamma Tricolore	Social Movement – Tricolour Flame (Italy)
M5S	Movimento 5 Stelle	Five Star Movement (Italy)
NA	National Action	National Action (United Kingdom)
NAR	Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari	Armed Revolutionary Cores (Italy)
ND	Nouvelle Droite	New Right (France)
NDE	Nuova Destra	New Right (Italy)
ON	Ordine Nuovo	New Order (Italy)
PD	Partito Democratico	Democratic Party (Italy)
PDL	Il Popolo della Libertà	The People of Freedom (Italy)
PEGIDA	Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes	Patriotic Europeans Against the Islam- isation of the Occident (Germany)
PNF	Partito Nazionale Fascista	National Fascist Party (Italy)
RRPP	Radical right populist party	
RSI	Repubblica Sociale Italiana/ Repubblica di Salò	Italian Social Republic
Sol.Id.	Solidarité Identités	Solidarity Identity (Italy)
TP	Terza Posizione	Third Position (Italy)
ZZA	ZetaZeroAlfa	Zed Zero Alpha (Italy)

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This book is the result of a research project that started on the morning of 13 December 2011, when Gianluca Casseri, a 50-year-old accountant and sympathizer of CasaPound, drove to a crowded street market in Florence. There, he shot at a group of Senegalese market traders, killing Samb Modou and Diop Mor, before turning the gun on himself. Five days later, we joined twenty thousand people in the streets of the city to say no to racism. At that time, all of us lived in Florence, and all of us studied far-right politics and right-wing extremism, albeit from different angles. But none of us knew much about CasaPound. We knew it was a fringe group. We knew it claimed inspiration from historical Fascism. And we knew it operated by borrowing left-wing clothes. But none of us had an idea about what CasaPound really was on the ‘inside’.

One of the first persons with whom we discussed this project was Hanspeter Kriesi, whose comments the theory of this book owes much: ‘Why do you do this? They are *irrelevant*.’ This pushed us to scratch our heads and start thinking what ‘irrelevance’ meant. The reason we studied CasaPound was not because we thought that Fascism was about to win elections or to come back. Rather, we wanted to explore how a group with no electoral support and inspired by ‘old’ ideas does politics at a time when the role of ideologies and conventional forms of political activism are dissolving. This took us on a long journey of over five years, during which we travelled across Italy, from north to south, and got to know places, people and ideas distant from our usual political horizons. We hung out at the headquarters, parking lots, concerts, bookstores, squats and demonstrations to study CPI and its activists: their ideas, fantasies, activities, clothing and music tastes. In this respect, we are thankful to the members of CPI who accepted to participate in our study, agreed to talk with us and let us enter their world. This work owes a lot to the insights provided by the interviewees (those who accepted being recorded and those who refused), but it

has also benefited from the many exchanges with colleagues and friends who supported us during the writing.

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1

CASAPOUND ITALIA: HYBRIDIZATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY EXTREME RIGHT¹

The reference to Fascism is fundamental. We do not put fasces everywhere and we will not always quote Mussolini but if you have not read *The Doctrine of Fascism* and you come here [to CPI], you are out of place. You can go around and put up CPI's posters, but you are doing it wrong. The link with Fascism is total.

Simone di Stefano, deputy president of CPI, Rome 2012

As shown by the above quote, CasaPound Italia (CPI) makes no secret of its appreciation of Benito Mussolini's regime. Since its birth on 26 December 2003 with the occupation of a state-owned building in Rome, this fringe group rapidly expanded to other parts of Italy acquiring national relevance and eventually running for general elections. In the last five years alone, the CPI opened 94 new local chapters. While it still constitutes a marginal electoral force in Italy, it has been successful in penetrating mainstream public debates, receiving disproportionate attention by mass media and commentators, surfing on the journalist-invented nickname of its members: the 'Fascists of the Third Millennium'.² The visibility of CPI in the media, the recognizability of its symbols, campaigns, and brand among large audiences are unprecedented for a fringe group so openly inspired by historical Fascism.

This is at odds with the findings of most literature on the far right, according to which contemporary far-right organizations had to dissociate themselves from historical Fascism and Nazism to avoid marginalization in post-World War II democracies. Open nostalgia for non-democratic regimes and outmoded forms of activism, in fact, usually relegates far-right groups to the margins of political systems and to (few) extreme supporters. This is why most of these groups chose to move beyond inter-war ideologies and extremist codes in search of

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credibility and broader support (Mudde 2016a; Von Beyme 1988). How to explain, then, the high profile achieved by the openly nostalgic CasaPound?

This study contends that CPI gained high-profile public attention through *hybridization*, resulting from the strategic combination of organizational features and activities inspired by different political cultures, institutional party politics, and non-institutional contentious politics. At first sight, in fact, CPI looks no different from other post-war extremist ‘groupuscules’ in Europe (Griffin 2003). But a closer look at its internal workings and external mobilization shows that several crucial elements set it apart from classic models of extreme-right organization and activism. Since its origin, CPI has exhibited references to Mussolini, but also to Gramsci, Marx, and Che Guevara. It mobilized the iconography of historical Fascism but did not use traditional symbols like the fasces or the tricoloured flame. It has called for law and order policies, but also resorted to the practice of squatting to promote an agenda of housing rights. It has campaigned against Islam but refused theories of a ‘Clash of Civilizations’. It praised Vladimir Putin and the Russian philosopher Aleksandr Dugin but criticized Donald Trump and Steve Bannon. It has heavily invested in the youth subcultural milieu, but renovated the aesthetic stereotype of the male skinhead with combat boots and swastikas (Fielitz and Laloire 2016; Koch 2017). In short, several features, references, and activities of CPI are hybrid in nature. They build on the tradition of inter-war and post-war Italian Fascism but aim at renewing the style of extreme-right politics to make it more acceptable in public debates.

Specifically, *hybridization* refers to the strategy by which a group combines references drawn from different political cultures, as well as organizational structures and repertoires inspired by different types of collective actors. For CPI, hybridization stems from the juxtaposition of left-wing themes, extreme-right ideas, and pop-culture symbols, as well as from the combination of the internal structures, repertoires of action, and communication of both political parties and social movements.

As we shall show, two main logics drive this hybridization strategy: the *need to find resources* and the *need for recognizability*. On the one hand, hybridization means that resources can be supplied from multiple venues, which is fundamental for fringe groups that cannot rely on state funding alone. Specifically, the double investment in electoral campaigning and extra-institutional mobilization responds to the need to gather money, staff, and members, which are necessary for survival and to sustain its internal structure and everyday activities. On the other hand, hybridization ensures the recognizability of a group amongst its competitors, which is crucial as the nativist scene becomes more and more crowded. In a context of media-centred politics, fringe organizations thus use hybrid imagery and communication styles to build their own ‘brand’ of stylized ideas, idioms, and practices.

For CPI, therefore, hybridization represents a double strategic asset, which allowed the group to gather the resources necessary to strengthen its organization and achieve special recognizability in the crowded milieu of the Italian far

right. Hybrid symbols and unconventional repertoires of mobilization and communication (often synthesized in CPI's notion of 'non-compliant' politics, *politica non conforme*) contributed to create a CasaPound political 'brand' which was necessary to reach beyond the restricted public of nostalgic fans of Mussolini and extremist activists.

Our analysis will show that the outcomes of hybridization are more complex than the simple achievement of electoral 'success' or 'failure'. In fact, at the time of writing (April 2019), hybridization has granted CasaPound a high-profile position in Italian public debates, but very little electoral support. If CPI has been successful in attaining public recognizability and in attracting the attention of the media, it has failed to transform this visibility into votes. Because of its hybrid strategy, CPI risks appearing too moderate for extremist supporters, and too extremist for radical and moderate right-wing audiences.

The broader implication of our findings is that hybridization has an impact on how democratic societies relate to the extreme right. In fact, the combination of activities, resources, and protest tactics mediated from different political cultures, and from both political parties and social movements, may help to expand the reach of these groups and the diffusion of their ideas beyond fringe milieus. The changes brought by hybridization have an impact on the reasons why people (and especially youth) develop sympathy for or engage in extreme-right organizations but also on the ways in which extreme-right ideas become accepted among non-extremist audiences. The notion of hybridization advanced in this volume helps to make sense of some of these important changes in contemporary extreme-right politics.

By focusing on the notion of hybridization we do not wish to suggest that this phenomenon represents a novelty for far-right politics. Previous studies have suggested that both historical and post-war Fascism have been shaped by dynamic forms of cross-fertilization, or by the subsequent re-contextualization and the re-adaptation of a wide spectrum of ideas, discourses, and political experiments (see for a discussion Costa Pinto and Kallis 2014). In this respect, the notion of hybridization allows exploring how contemporary extreme-right actors perceive and operationalize different mass ideologies, organizational paradigms, and mobilization practices in their everyday political action.

This book provides the first comprehensive study of the politics of CasaPound in Italy. The approach is entirely multidisciplinary, bringing together expertise from the academic fields of political science, sociology, and contemporary history. In so doing, the volume intends to contribute to existing knowledge on extremism and democracy in two main ways. First, the book provides a theoretical framework to tackle the 'complex heterogeneity' of far-right politics at large (Mudde 2016b: 618). While there is a vast literature explaining how far-right parties succeed in elections and how right-wing movements mobilize on the street, the interconnections between these two phenomena have remained largely unexplored. The need to combine insights from party politics and social movement studies seems rather compelling in this field of research, as most far-right

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actors engage simultaneously in the protest and electoral arena (Castelli Gattinara and Pirro 2019; Pirro 2019). Second, the book offers a time-sensitive account of the changes and challenges of contemporary extreme-right politics. It shows that, today, the extreme right does not necessarily coincide with marginalized old-style ideals and stereotyped violent practices. Rather, extremist groups increasingly try to ‘drift into the mainstream’, their ideas becoming routine in national public debates (Bail 2015: 10). Overall, therefore, the volume could provide a blueprint for future research on hybrid strategies of nativist collective actors and their impact on democracy, further contributing to the study of the complex relationship between party competition and street protest, and thus the interconnections between fringe groups and mainstream politics.

1.1 Studying CasaPound in the European far-right context

Writing yet another book on the far right can be risky as there is no shortage of literature on the topic. A quick look at Kai Arzheimer’s bibliography on the *Extreme/Radical Right in Western Europe*³ reveals that this is one of the most prolific fields in political science and sociology, counting more than 170 peer-reviewed articles in just the last three years (for an overview see Hainsworth 2016). In related disciplines, such as history (Mammone 2015; Mammone et al. 2013), political communication (Aalberg et al. 2016; Ellinas 2010), and more recently international relations (Liang 2016), the situation is not much different.

This impressive scholarly attention, however, has overwhelmingly concerned certain aspects of far-right politics, whereas others attracted less interest. While much is known about the ideology and electoral fortunes of far-right parties, non-electoral aspects of right-wing activity are, overall, still under-studied (Virchow 2016; Pirro and Castelli Gattinara 2018). Similarly, despite much scholarly knowledge on contextual and individual factors driving electoral support for the far right, little is known about the internal workings and developments of these organizations, especially the less established and extremist ones. By studying the ‘internal supply side’ of CasaPound Italia and its external mobilization, this book aims to redress some of these theoretical and empirical lacunae. To this end, we start by presenting the ideology of CPI and its organizational configuration in the context of the multiple variants of contemporary far-right politics in Europe.

In this respect, it is hard to classify CPI due to its unconventional way of doing politics. Indeed, while journalists picked on the aesthetic side and addressed CPI militants as ‘hipsters’ (The Guardian 2018) and its ideology as ‘glamorous fascism’ (Torrisi 2018), scholars are divided about the nature of CPI politics. Some have claimed that CPI represents a genuine transformation (if not an evolution) of traditional extreme-right politics (Di Nunzio and Toscano 2011; Rosati 2018). Others, instead, suggest that the new image is only deceptive, a façade used strategically to increase the attractiveness of historical Fascism for broader audiences and youth (Cammelli 2017; Koch 2013, 2017). Besides ideological factors,

however, very little attention has been paid to the way in which the group organizes to sustain mobilization, and communicates with the external world. To contribute to this debate, the next sections justify the authors' choice to consider CPI as an extreme-right organization engaging simultaneously in the social movement and electoral arena.

1.1.1 How to distinguish extreme and radical variants of far-right politics

Several designations are used to qualify different types of far-right actors. Acknowledging these differences is necessary not only to recognize that the far right is more heterogeneous than usually assumed, but also to define specific collective actors, in the present case CasaPound, with respect to the vast ideological and organizational spectrum of far-right politics. Actors located at the 'right' end of the political spectrum have in fact been alternatively labelled as extreme right, populist right, neo-fascist right, post-fascist right, and radical right (Mudde 1996). While these different labels have been pinned to groups displaying substantially different worldviews, scholars have also recognized a set of common ideological traits. In this respect, the umbrella concept of 'far-right politics' is used to recognize standing differences within the political right while also including several of its ideological and organizational variants.

Varieties of far-right politics are thus defined by three core ideological features: the relationships with (representative) democracy, nativism, and authoritarianism. The democratic element informs the distinction between so-called 'radical' and 'extreme' variants of the far right, as we discuss below. Nativism and authoritarianism refer to two core far-right beliefs: respectively, that nation states shall be inhabited only by native people; and that societies must be strictly ordered and any infringement severely sanctioned (Mudde 2007: 18–23).

The differentiation between 'radical' and 'extreme' right-wing organizations ultimately rests on their hostile or oppositional attitude towards constitutional democratic principles. Extreme-right organizations, in fact, reject even the minimum core features of democracy: popular sovereignty and majority rule (Mudde 2007: 138–56). On the contrary, radical right organizations oppose liberal democracy but accept popular sovereignty and the minimal procedural rules of parliamentary democracy. The most important ideology for the extreme right is fascism, a patchwork of ideas that took different forms (Mudde 2000; Costa Pinto and Kallis 2014). Defining fascism across its subsequent historical variations and contextual re-adaptations certainly goes beyond the scope of this volume. For the purposes of this study, instead, we are only interested in pinning down some of the core characteristics of Italian Fascism (which we refer to as historical Fascism or Fascism with a capital 'F') that we deem important to understand contemporary CPI's politics.

In the vast literature dealing with this subject, classic Italian Fascism is addressed as a nationalist ideology rooted on the glorification of the figure of the leader

as the embodiment of the nation and of the state (see Payne 1996; Griffin and Feldman 2004). In historical Fascism, the state was not just a formal legal institution, but an ethical and mystic entity that requires devotion and full submission (see Gentile 2008). Accordingly, historical Fascism rejected democracy and party politics and it aimed at creating a new man who would be free from class struggle (Paxton 2004; Mudde 2019). Fascism calls for a ‘third way’ beyond socialism and liberalism and it believes in violence as a regenerating force for the nation and the state, and on the prominence of actions over words (Eatwell 2011).

Another important variant of fascism is German fascism that is better known as Nazism or National Socialism. It shares some characteristics with Italian Fascism but also crucial differences (see for an overview Kallis 2000). If Fascism is characterized by vitalism, Nazism is driven by Nihilism. Furthermore, if Fascists believe that the state is the main entity, Nazis believe that it is race. Nazis believe that there are different races and that the Aryan race is superior. As such, they consider that the superior race (*Übermenschen*, superhumans) has the right to dominate and exterminate the inferior one (*Untermenschen*, subhumans). Nazism sees Jews as physically and morally inferior but economically powerful and politically influent and it claims that Jews infect the Aryan race. While Fascism does not give to race the same relevance as Nazism does, in 1938 Mussolini openly supported racism by endorsing the ‘Manifesto of Race’ and passing the ‘racial laws’. (Neo-)fascist, (neo-)Nazi, fundamentalist, or supremacist extreme-right groups thus openly refer to these variants of fascism and they advocate for the instauration of non-democratic regimes. They believe in a system ruled by individuals who possess special leadership characteristics and are thus naturally different from the rest of the ‘people’. In this sense, the *Duce* and the *Führer* are a direct embodiment, rather than the representatives, of the will of the people (Eatwell 2002, 2018).

Radical right groups, instead, seek to obtain the support of (a majority of) the people by criticizing crucial aspects of liberal democracy. Notably, they target pluralism and minority rights and defend a ‘monist’ vision of society (Rydgren 2007: 243). In this respect, as we shall see, CPI’s ideology cannot be located completely outside the legal boundary of democratic electoral competition in Italy, despite being strongly indebted to the ideas of historical Fascism.

The second core ideological feature of the far right is nativism. Just like democratic values, nativism too can be articulated in multiple ways (Bar-On 2018; Brubaker 2017). Some organizations privilege biological interpretations positing that specific ethnic groups are genetically superior to others (e.g. white supremacism or racial nationalism). Most radical right parties, instead, reject racial hierarchies, but posit that the mixing of ethnic groups creates insurmountable cultural problems. These positions, often referred to as ‘ethnocentric nationalism’ (Rydgren 2008; Taguieff 1985), draw on cultural racism and on distortions of dominant conceptions of citizenship and liberal values (Froio 2018; Halikiopoulou et al. 2013). With respect to nativism, as we shall see, CPI takes inspiration from

both strands, advocating a predominantly cultural interpretation of the native people that is not immune to biological understandings of race.

The third feature of far-right ideology is authoritarianism. Some organizations believe that a strictly ordered society can be achieved only within a non-democratic regime, either authoritarian or totalitarian (see Linz 1985). Others simply display authoritarian attitudes: this includes the uncritical glorification of authority figures of the in-group, and the predisposition towards punishing any behaviour considered ‘deviant’ from the far right’s moral standards (Adorno et al. 1969: 228; Ignazi 1992). Both interpretations however see order and punishment as the crucial conditions to keep society together. As we shall discuss, CPI’s authoritarianism combines both elements. On the one hand, the group is openly nostalgic for the Italian fascist regime. On the other, it advocates ‘law and order’ measures punishing deviant behaviour within the democratic constitutional and legal system.

Overall, we contend that CPI ought to be considered as an ideologically ‘extreme’-right group (Cammelli 2017; Koch, 2013). In fact, its political campaigns focus on specific features of liberal democracy such as pluralism and the protection of minorities, and thus articulate authoritarian and nativist values within the legal boundaries of the Italian constitution. At the same time, however, the importance of Mussolini’s Fascism for the group’s ideology makes it barely compatible at all with liberal democratic principles in general.

1.1.2 How to identify the organizational variants of the far right

These various breeds of the far right often differ also in terms of their internal organization and main political goals. Still, there is no one-to-one correspondence between a group’s ideological profile and its preferred mode of doing politics. While most of the established far-right parties belong to the populist radical right category, there are also examples of electorally successful extreme-right actors, such as the Greek *Χρυσή Αυγή* (Golden Dawn, GD). Conversely, while most street activism pertains to extremist right-wing groups, there is no shortage of radical right social movements, as illustrated by the cases of *Les Identitaires* (the Identitarians, LI) in France and PEGIDA in Germany.

Organizational configurations of the far right thus notably include political parties that run for elections and that are primarily oriented towards office and policy seeking. Many of these parties were ‘new’ to their party systems when they first emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, but are now established in terms of electoral support and (increasingly) access to office. In addition, scholars identified far-right social movements, social movement organizations, and grassroots groups aiming at influencing politics and policy with informal means, protest actions, the mobilization of citizens and/or intellectual activities. In between these two organizational configurations, some researchers have also looked at far-right ‘movement parties’ (Castelli Gattinara and Pirro 2019). Movement parties are able to transpose contentious politics into the electoral arena by upholding the

structures, procedures, and practices of both parties and social movements to influence policy-making (Kitschelt 2006). Movement parties engage in both contentious and electoral politics. As we shall illustrate, CPI can be considered as a movement-party organization, since it opted to engage in electoral politics only in recent times and approached electoral campaigns as part of a broader political and cultural project implying unconventional tactics and non-institutional mobilization.

In addition to the above varieties of organizational configurations, far-right collective actors also pursue different, and at times complementary, goals. Specifically, the literature distinguishes between electoral and cultural goals (Bar-On 2012; Hirsch-Hoefler and Mudde 2013). While these two aims are not mutually exclusive, far-right organizations often have to choose between the one and the other as a primary venue of their action. In general, the more established groups tend to be oriented towards election-related rewards: policies and political offices but also acquiring financial resources and personnel from participation in electoral campaigns and state institutions. Conversely, fringe groups pay little attention to electoral competition and election-related payoffs and aim at creating political consensus mostly through contentious actions, or cultural and intellectual activities. While many right-wing movements are quite action-oriented, a specific breed of so-called ‘Gramscians of the Right’ believes in the power of ideas over action (Hirsch-Hoefler and Mudde 2013: 5). These actors mobilize mostly outside any electoral process, engaging in agitprop campaigns through magazines and newspapers, promoting music and cultural events and campaigning extensively on the internet. CPI takes inspiration from influential far-right movements like the French *Nouvelle Droite* (New Right, ND),⁴ and engages extensively in creating consensus through cultural and intellectual activities, but it also sustains action-oriented politics and occasional participation in the electoral arena. Indeed, previous studies suggested that this hybrid model of political action operates through a mix of ‘social movement imaginaries and repertoires’ and ‘ventures in electoral politics’ (Zúquete 2018: 62).

1.2 The argument

The principal contribution of this book is to explain how CPI achieved such a high profile in Italian public debates despite no electoral support and its explicit extremist references. In the volume public debate is defined as the open debate about ideas relevant to politics (Bennett and Entman 2001: 3). One of the most important spaces in which the debate is carried out is the media (Roggeband and Vliegenthart, 2007: 525; Rooduijn 2014: 727).

We contend that the specific, hybrid, way, in which the group organizes internally and mobilizes externally, has been crucial for its fortunes. Hybrid features, in fact, represent a strategic asset for CPI to exploit the emotional bias of the mass media and its appetite for sensational, simplified, and controversial news stories (Bail 2015; Ellinas 2010; Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2012). Media coverage, in turn, gives a fringe organization like CPI the visibility necessary to

consolidate its position within the far-right milieu, but also to routinize its extreme-right ideas in the public sphere, thus contributing to radicalizing mainstream debates.

As noted earlier, we refrain from making a simplistic distinction between the ‘success’ and ‘failure’ of CPI (Amenta et al. 2010; Bosi et al. 2015; Bosi and Uba 2009). While most party politics’ literature focuses only on electoral performances (see Eatwell 2016; Mudde 2007), analyses of social movements consider the various outcomes that protest activities may have on the political and cultural domains (Giugni 2008). Separately, we argue, these two approaches are unable to account for how a group like CPI could acquire prominence in the public sphere despite its poor electoral scores and fringe extremist ideas. In this study, therefore, we combine party politics and social movement perspectives to look at the high profile of CPI in terms of both the electoral and non-electoral outcomes of hybridization.

To do so, we examine the internal workings and external mobilization of CasaPound Italia. Notably, we look at how CPI organizes, recruits personnel and activists to sustain mobilization and reach a wider public without downplaying extreme ideas and practices. This is in line with internal supply-side interpretations of far-right success, suggesting that the internal workings of a group critically shape its external mobilization and impact (Mudde 2007).⁵ Specifically, factors such as a group’s ideology, its leadership, the way in which it defines internal democracy, and the way in which it organizes locally, are deemed crucial in determining the nature and intensity of its street mobilization, and the extent of its success in the polls (Carter 2005; Heinisch and Mazzoleni 2016; Taggart 1995). This does not imply that *agency* is considered more important than, or disconnected from, *context*. Rather, it implies recognizing that a group’s organizational choices and mobilization strategies also depend on political and discursive opportunities at the contextual level (Kriesi 1989; McAdam et al. 1996; Mudde 2007: 256–76; Tarrow 1996).

Our central claim is that the high profile of CPI stems, at least to a certain extent, from the specific way in which the group organizes, mobilizes, and communicates – which we analyse in terms of the notion of *hybridization*. We defined hybridization as the strategy by which a group combines: a) ideas and symbols inspired by different political cultures, and b) the organizational features and forms of mobilization of political parties and social movements. More specifically, this study considers five crucial aspects of CasaPound’s politics: the group’s ideology, its internal structure, activism, mobilization, and communication.

A first, crucial dimension of hybridization concerns the *ideology* of extreme-right groups. As we shall show, CasaPound adopts from historical Fascism a set of normative ideas about the nature of man and the organization of society (Sainsbury 1980: 8), and then articulates these selectively to address themes borrowed from other political cultures or emerging from topical events. In this respect, CPI differs from electorally successful radical right parties, who have

(at least openly) detached themselves from inter-war ideologies (Mudde 2007: 32–60) and endorsed more liberal (yet always restrictive) positions on the cultural issues that they ‘own’ (Petrocik 1996), notably immigration and integration (Halikiopoulou et al. 2013). On the contrary, CPI has not moved away from traditional ideologies. Rather, it uses elements from historical Fascism and post-war right-wing extremism to interpret contemporary events and advance new demands that might resonate with, and radicalize, the political mainstream (Bail 2015). Notably, *ethnopluralism* allows the group to attain a coherent worldview across different themes, while also avoiding appearing anachronistic (and explicitly racist or anti-democratic). Hybridization thus helps extreme-right actors like CPI to cope with the public stigmatization of historical Fascism and Nazism, and the decreasing importance of ideological conflict in contemporary politics (Mair 2008).

The *internal structure* refers to a group’s organizational configuration (Art 2011; Carter 2005; Heinisch and Mazzoleni 2016) – the machinery, procedures, and mechanisms driving its internal working. As we shall show, the hybrid internal structure of CPI combines the organizational aspects of institutionalized political parties (Scarrow et al. 2017), and those helping to sustain the collective action of social movements (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Olson 1965). Political parties are normally configured as hierarchically and territorially structured organizations resting on a set of intermediate bodies that regulate decision-making, and on a body of formal rules that determine selection of the leadership, access to membership, and political engagement (Panebianco 1988; Poguntke et al. 2016). Social movements, instead, are organized horizontally and feature predominantly informal rules concerning recruitment, decision-making, and activism (Della Porta and Diani 2009). By looking at the internal structure of CPI, our study argues that these two organizational configurations can coexist and contribute to the high profile of the group. Hybridization enables CasaPound to uphold specific features of the party model alongside the seemingly looser structures and procedures of social movements (Pirro and Castelli Gattinara 2018), facilitating the drawing of financial resources and personnel from different venues.

Activism refers to the participation of individuals within a political group, or the enduring investment in a collective struggle that goes beyond the simple act of casting a vote (Polletta and Jasper 2001). In this context, the hybrid strategy of CPI implies various ways to promote activism. This includes conventional and unconventional modes of participation and hybrid imageries aimed at crafting a collective identity and influencing politics. The formal political participation that is normally associated with political parties includes lobbying, electing representatives, and contacting the news media (see Norris et al. 2005). Alternative and informal participation, instead, includes social movements promoting protest, online networking, and subcultural or counter-cultural activities (Fantasia 1988). Our study shows that the high profile achieved by CasaPound partly rests on a blurring of the distinction between party and social movement models of participation, and the styles of extreme-right, left-progressive and

pop culture. Combining conventional and unconventional modes of activism, symbols and imageries, in fact, hybridization contributed to supporting the engagement of individuals in CPI and to consolidating the group's identity.

Another crucial dimension of hybridization is *external mobilization*, consisting of a repertoire used by collective actors to advance their demands in public arenas (Tilly 1978). Notably, the CasaPound strategy of mobilization implies engagement in both the electoral and the grassroots arena. On the one hand, CPI is similar to political parties that normally participate in the democratic process by fielding their candidates, and is therefore geared towards elections (Kitschelt 2006: 279); on the other hand, CPI is similar to social movements, as it uses protest and disruption to pursue its collective goals (Della Porta and Diani 2009: 13–16). In this respect, CasaPound's external mobilization shows that the repertoires of collective action adopted from social movements, and of electoral participation usually associated with political parties, may be complementary rather than alternatives to one another. This unconventional mix of agitprop actions, campaigning, and contentious demonstrations contributes to ensure a high-profile media coverage in both the protest and electoral arenas.

Finally, by *political communication* we refer to the way in which a group interacts with its members and the outside world, including public officials and the media, as well as other individuals. CPI's political communication is intended to convey the idea of continuity with the most iconic features of historical Fascism, alongside a renewal of extreme-right symbolism and imagery. Due to the growing importance of the media in electoral competition, political parties have professionalized their strategies, adopting 'media codes' of personalization and dramatization (Altheide and Snow 1979; Ellinas 2010; Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999). Studies on the visibility of social movements, moreover, suggested that media coverage is linked to the organization of highly spectacular events (Castelli Gattinara and Froio 2018; Wouters 2013), the diffusion of information through old and new media (Bouron 2017; Froio and Ganesh 2019), and the creation of alternative platforms (Mattoni 2016). In this respect, CasaPound has developed a semi-professional communication apparatus to seize the attention of the mainstream media, but has also broken away from the usual communication style of political parties, through agitprop operations, sensationalistic actions, and sustained activism in the digital environment.

Building on these five crucial aspects of CPI's politics, this volume focuses on hybridization as a strategy deployed by extreme-right actors to avoid marginalization and achieve a high profile in the public sphere. We argue that CPI sets out hybrid strategies to trigger the interest of external observers and the media, with the goal of reaching beyond the restricted political space that is generally available to fringe political groups. In other words, CPI seeks to diffuse its messages among mainstream audiences through the strategic combination of left-wing issues, extreme-right ideas, and pop culture. At the same time, it seeks to make extremist politics mainstream by juxtaposing the communication activities and repertoires of institutional parties and protest movements.

1.3 Research design

Studying how extreme-right groups achieve attention in public debates presents formidable methodological challenges. Whereas the Appendices offer more details about the data and methods used to study hybridization in CPI's politics, this section focuses on three crucial elements in the research design of the volume. First, we describe the case selection strategy; then, we present how we gauge CPI's profile in public debates, internal supply-side and external mobilization factors, presenting data sources and methods. Taken together, these choices allowed us to observe CasaPound's politics over a time span ranging from the foundation of the group in December 2003 until the latest Italian general election in March 2018.

1.3.1 Case selection: why CasaPound Italia?

We focus on CPI as a deviant case study (Seawright and Gerring 2008). The group's extreme-right political beliefs and poor electoral support are at odds with the high profile that CPI currently enjoys in Italian public debates. Unlike CPI, in fact, most far-right organizations in Europe either gave up their direct links with inter-war ideologies (to get legitimation), or stuck to these while accepting that they would then be viewed as an outcast and play a minimal role. Even the extreme-right Golden Dawn, which is often described as neo-Nazi by pundits and political opponents, has repeatedly denied any official connection to National Socialism. On the contrary, groups that have failed to take a distance from either Fascism or Nazism have generally been relegated to underground roles, often incurring legal sanctions or proscription as with National Action (NA) in the United Kingdom.

In this respect, we consider that CasaPound represents a deviation from the norm, as one would expect similar groups to be either more cautious in claiming inspiration from historical Fascism or enjoy less political leeway in accessing public debates. By focusing on CasaPound's politics over the past 15 years, this study sets out to uncover the hybridization strategies that allowed it to succeed where others had failed. The volume builds on a broad empirical base, which allows us to address how CPI's profile in public debates relates to internal supply-side and external mobilization factors: ideology, organization, activism, mobilization, and communication strategies. Both are addressed by means of different data types and mixed-methods techniques for analysis (Della Porta and Keating 2008).

1.3.2 Gauging CasaPound's profile in public debates

To gauge CPI's profile in public debates in Italy, we consider two main indicators accounting for the group's visibility. We follow classic approaches and study the content of public debates through articles in quality newspapers (see Rooduijn 2014). Although quality newspapers are not the only media venue where public debates take shape – for instance, there are also TV and radio programmes,

magazines and tabloids and sources generated by movements themselves – quality newspapers are designed to be for most people a ‘forum for the articulation of multiple ideas in an attempt to promote public debate on salient issues’ (Day and Golan 2005: 62).⁶ Additionally, quality media sources are of utmost importance because of their wide distribution and status. Furthermore, while newspaper circulation has declined in established democracies mostly to the benefit of new media they still serve as major channel for public debates and act as core agenda-setters (Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2012). This is particularly relevant when observing the relationship between media contents and visibility of collective actors (Koopmans and Statham 1999). To measure the visibility of CasaPound in the media, we use a Political Claims Analysis (PCA) and coded all the claims by CPI that were reported in the quality paper *Il Corriere della Sera* in the period 2004–2015, based on an ad hoc codebook (see Appendix 3). To account for possible media bias, we then applied the same coding scheme to all online press releases published by CPI between 2009 and 2015 and scraped automatically from the official website of the group. As public debates increasingly take shape on the internet and in online fora, we also collected indicators of CPI’s online visibility. We use the number of Facebook followers of CPI’s official pages and website traffic statistics from *SimilarWeb*.

1.3.3 Studying the internal supply-side and external mobilization

To study how CPI’s internal-supply side and external mobilization factors relate to its visibility in public debates, we use data derived from party manifestos and literature, official campaign and online material, books, face-to-face interviews, and fieldwork notes. Data collection started in 2012 and then continued intermittently until April 2019. The dataset was assembled in an archive including fieldwork notes and pictures collected during open participant observation of three core events organized by CPI and at numerous other informal meetings. The archive also features CPI’s internal literature (listed in the Appendix 2), the music and lyrics of CPI’s official band *ZetaZeroAlfa* (ZZA), campaign material and election manifestos, online press releases and social media content from Facebook, as well as the recording of 17 face-to-face interviews with leaders and activists in six Italian cities.⁷ The material collected during interviews and open participant observation was analysed through qualitative text analyses, looking at the presentation and discussion of aspects and issues that we deemed of relevance, and reporting illustrative quotes from interviews and texts. To limit the risk of subjective interpretations in the qualitative data analysis we structured the discussion of this material to be rooted in the five aspects of CPI’s politics (related to internal-supply side and external mobilization) illustrated above and discussed in detail in the empirical chapters.

A first set of data facilitated examination of CPI’s *ideology*, but also its themes and policy proposals. This material includes ‘party literature’ (Mudde 2000: 22), such as the books and comment pieces published by CPI leaders, notably in the group’s newspaper *Il Primato Nazionale* (The National Primacy, IPN), available online and offline. Furthermore, considering the importance of music in the

diffusion of ideas (Eyerman 2002; Kahn-Harris 2007) and in the far-right milieu (Teitelbaum 2017), we also analysed the lyrics of CPI's official band ZZA. We retrieved CasaPound's policy suggestions from official documents, notably party manifestos presented ahead of the 2013 and 2018 Italian general elections (e.g. Budge and McDonald 2006; Laver 2014). We follow a standard content analytical approach (Laver et al. 2003), using the quasi-sentence coding scheme developed by the Comparative Agendas Project (CAP) to study policy attention⁸ (see Appendix 4 for further details).⁹ We then use descriptive statistics to map the importance of the different policy issues in the group's electoral supply, and to measure change over time.

When needed, we integrated this data with other propaganda material (flyers and advertisements for public events available on CPI's website and Facebook pages). This material provides information about CPI's *internal structure*, such as the territorial distribution of the headquarters, size of membership, and details about decision-making procedures and the administration of group activities. To examine the territorial distribution of CPI's chapters we use official data on the location of headquarters and other offices available on the group's website. Each entry was associated to a geolocation, which enabled the creation of map charts, highlighting the presence of CPI in Italian regional capitals, and changes over the time between a first observation (when data are available) in 2013 and in 2018.¹⁰ We use data from the Ministry of the Interior on CPI's electoral results for the general elections (<https://elezionistorico.interno.gov.it>).

To study the *collective identity* of the group we mostly used face-to-face interviews, and gathered visual and written material from open participant observation during CPI's public and private events.¹¹ The fieldwork lasted from January to September 2012; it covered CPI's territorial units in Florence, Milan, Naples, Rome, Turin, and Verona. Access to fieldwork was negotiated in late 2011, when we got in touch with CPI's national leaders. Conscious that our fieldwork would take place in an environment where we would be both the object and the source of suspicion (see Russell Hochschild 2016) and that a rapid internet search would be sufficient to find out who we are and what we do, we decided to present ourselves as researchers and to openly describe the nature of our proposed research. The selection of the venues for fieldwork followed a double logic: on the one hand, we chose territorial chapters in different geographic contexts in the north, in the centre, and in the south of Italy; on the other, we sought variation in their longevity.

In addition, we were also formally invited to attend three public events organized by CasaPound: the national festival '*Direzione Rivoluzione*' (Direction Revolution, September 2012), the demonstration '*Italia in Marcia*' (Italy on the Move, November 2012), and the congress '*Mediterraneo Solidale*' (Mediterranean Solidarity, September 2015). This was complemented by occasional observations at public events organized by CPI between 2013 and 2017, including conferences, art exhibitions, demonstrations, and concerts. While numerous conversations, informal interviews, and exchanges with CPI militants took place during the fieldwork but could not be recorded, we were allowed to hold and register 17 face-to-face interviews. These involved three high-ranking national officials,

who formally spoke on behalf of CPI, the local secretaries of the five territorial headquarters that we visited, and a number of other activists who accepted to participate in the study individually. From a sociodemographic perspective, 15 of our interviewees were men and 2 women, aged mostly between 17 and 35. The interaction, even informal, with activists allowed observation of socialization and organizational practices within the group, as well as the processes of formation of collective identities that promote and sustain involvement in CPI through interpersonal relations, shared symbols and codes (Brewer and Gardner 1996; O'Reilly 2005).

We used established techniques in the field of social movement studies to account for the nature and intensity of CPI's *external mobilization*, distinguishing different tactics using Political Claims Analysis (Hutter 2014; Kiouisis et al. 2006; Koopmans and Rucht 2002; Koopmans and Statham 1999) as detailed in Appendix 3. Furthermore, we studied CPI's *political communication* combining data from the interviews, from CPI's official website, and the Facebook accounts of CPI and its leaders and candidates. In doing so, we explored the group's activity in media environments, the content of its online campaigns, and style of its communication on social networks. Online interactions with other organizations are addressed by data on mutual reactions on Facebook collected and analysed by the website *Patriaindipendente*.

1.4 Outline of the book

The argument of the book is built through eight chapters. The present chapter presented the puzzle of the study, the main argument, and the design used to address it. Chapter 2 introduces the reader to the history and background of CasaPound, while also locating the group in the context of the Italian far right. Subsequently, five empirical chapters address hybridization in ideology, internal structure, activism, mobilization, and political communication, with the goal of uncovering their impact on the attention and visibility acquired by CPI over the years. The volume then concludes with a chapter where these separate factors are brought together to assess how hybridization relates to the high profile of CPI in the Italian public sphere, thinking about possible implications for research on change and continuity in contemporary extreme-right politics.

Notes

- 1 The book expands and updates material from Albanese et al. (2014), reproduced with permission. While the volume is the result of the joint work of the four authors, different authors have been in charge of the various chapters: Chapter 1 (Caterina Froio and Pietro Castelli Gattinara); Chapter 2 (Pietro Castelli Gattinara); Chapter 3 (Matteo Albanese, Caterina Froio, Pietro Castelli Gattinara); Chapter 4 (Caterina Froio and Pietro Castelli Gattinara); Chapter 5 (Caterina Froio); Chapter 6 (Pietro Castelli Gattinara); Chapter 7 (Giorgia Bulli, Caterina Froio, Pietro Castelli Gattinara); Chapter 8 (Caterina Froio and Pietro Castelli Gattinara).

- 2 The expression first appeared in an article titled *Il Fascismo del Terzo Millennio riparte dalla lotta per la Casa* [Third Millennium Fascism restarts from housing], published by the newspaper *Il Giornale* in July 2004.
- 3 See: Kai Arzheimer, 'The Eclectic, Erratic Bibliography on the Extreme Right in Western Europe', available at: www.kai-arzheimer.com/extreme-right-western-europe-bibliography (accessed 10/09/2018).
- 4 The *Nouvelle Droite* (New Right) was a neo-conservative French intellectual movement. It was born in the late 1960s around the cultural association GRECE (*Groupe-ment de Recherche et d'Études pour la Civilisation Européenne*) and the writer Alain de Benoist. The *Nouvelle Droite* is known for its 'ethnopluralist' ideological doctrine (see section 3.1) and its attempts to re-elaborate from a right-wing perspective themes considered typical of the left-wing culture (Taguieff 1998; Bar-On 2012; Capra Casadio 2014).
- 5 Demand-side explanations, in fact, have been used to examine voting behaviour and citizens' attitudes, recognizing the individual characteristics breeding far-right support. External supply-side explanations focus instead on the environment where the far right operates, and single out the contextual drivers of far-right support (Arzheimer 2009).
- 6 Moreover, we limit the analysis to quality newspapers because these have been found to report more extensively on political matters than other types of outlet (Druckman and Parkin 2005).
- 7 In addressing this broad wealth of raw data, we were aware that different types of sources convey distinct information. While interviews with activists may not be representative of CasaPound's official stances, information that is representative of formal group positions was provided by party programmes, interviews with high-ranking officials, and the 'party literature'.
- 8 We integrated the original topic list with the category 'Ideology'. This accounts for quasi-sentences that did not have a specific policy content, but referred to general ideological beliefs and/or commemorations of historic events. We also broadened the scope of the CAP category 'Government operations' to include quasi-sentences focusing on the (dis)functioning of democratic institutions, and political accountability of parties and their leaders.
- 9 See the codebook of the CAP project (Baumgartner et al. 2019), available at: <https://www.comparativeagendas.net/pages/master-codebook> (accessed on 14/08/2017).
- 10 We thank Flavia Albanese (Iuav University of Venice) and Prof. Marco Cremaschi (Sciences Po CEE) for their precious assistance with the maps.
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NOTES

Chapter 1

- 1 The book expands and updates material from Albanese et al. (2014), reproduced with permission. While the volume is the result of the joint work of the four authors, different authors have been in charge of the various chapters: Chapter 1 (Caterina Froio and Pietro Castelli Gattinara); Chapter 2 (Pietro Castelli Gattinara); Chapter 3 (Matteo Albanese, Caterina Froio, Pietro Castelli Gattinara); Chapter 4 (Caterina Froio and Pietro Castelli Gattinara); Chapter 5 (Caterina Froio); Chapter 6 (Pietro Castelli Gattinara); Chapter 7 (Giorgia Bulli, Caterina Froio, Pietro Castelli Gattinara); Chapter 8 (Caterina Froio and Pietro Castelli Gattinara).
- 2 The expression first appeared in an article titled *Il Fascismo del Terzo Millennio riparte dalla lotta per la Casa* [Third Millennium Fascism restarts from housing], published by the newspaper *Il Giornale* in July 2004.
- 3 See: Kai Arzheimer, 'The Eclectic, Erratic Bibliography on the Extreme Right in Western Europe', available at: www.kai-arzheimer.com/extreme-right-western-europe-bibliography (accessed 10/09/2018).
- 4 The *Nouvelle Droite* (New Right) was a neo-conservative French intellectual movement. It was born in the late 1960s around the cultural association GRECE (*Groupe-ment de Recherche et d'Études pour la Civilisation Européenne*) and the writer Alain de Benoist. The *Nouvelle Droite* is known for its 'ethnopluralist' ideological doctrine (see section 3.1) and its attempts to re-elaborate from a right-wing perspective themes considered typical of the left-wing culture (Taguieff 1998; Bar-On 2012; Capra Casadio 2014).
- 5 Demand-side explanations, in fact, have been used to examine voting behaviour and citizens' attitudes, recognizing the individual characteristics breeding far-right support. External supply-side explanations focus instead on the environment where the far right operates, and single out the contextual drivers of far-right support (Arzheimer 2009).
- 6 Moreover, we limit the analysis to quality newspapers because these have been found to report more extensively on political matters than other types of outlet (Druckman and Parkin 2005).

- 7 In addressing this broad wealth of raw data, we were aware that different types of sources convey distinct information. While interviews with activists may not be representative of CasaPound's official stances, information that is representative of formal group positions was provided by party programmes, interviews with high-ranking officials, and the 'party literature'.
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Chapter 2

- 1 The 'Third Position' perspective reflected the opposition to both capitalism and socialism, and therefore to the political left and right (Ferraresi 1995; Griffin 2003).
- 2 The name refers to Guy Montag, the protagonist of Ray Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451* (1953).
- 3 Interviews no. 1b, 1c, 1d, 19/04/2012.
- 4 Interview no. 1b, 19/04/2012.
- 5 This was the idea expressed by an official who, when narrating the beginnings of CasaPound in his own city, told us that the local office was established due to his own personal efforts: 'I borrowed a sum of money to open the office – which has existed for three years, this is our fourth year. That was because I wanted to live like a warrior, to assault the trench. The problem was that I owed large debts that I could not repay. I then asked Gianluca for help. I called him and he brought the ZetaZeroAlfa here. The comrades and I worked hard, rented the largest club in the area – 600 people attended! – earned money and paid back the outstanding debts!' (Interview no. 3a of 01/06/2012).
- 6 Interview no. 5b of 28/06/2012.

Chapter 3

- 1 Giulio Cesare Andrea Evola, better known as the Baron Julius Evola (1898–1974) was an Italian philosopher, writer and esotericist. His writings have often been referred to by far-right groups.
- 2 Alain de Benoist (b. 1943) is a writer and one of the founders of the *Nouvelle Droite* in France.
- 3 Interview no. 2b of 27/04/2012.
- 4 Interview no. 2b of 27/04/2012.
- 5 Interview no. 2a of 27/04/2012.

- 6 Dominique Venner (1935–2013) was a historian and writer close to the French *Nouvelle Droite*, and the editor of two renowned Europe-wide historical magazines. In 2013, he took his life by shooting himself in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, in a gesture of protest against the decline of Western society and its founding values (which Venner, despite being openly pagan, traced back to the pre-Christian societies of Northern Europe).
- 7 Interview no. 1a of 30/03/2012.
- 8 Interview no. 3a of 01/06/2012.
- 9 See <http://espresso.repubblica.it/palazzo/2012/02/08/news/roma-casapound-spiazza-tutti-1.40175><http://espresso.repubblica.it/palazzo/2012/02/08/news/roma-casapound-spiazza-tutti-1.40175> (accessed 10/09/2019).
- 10 See https://napoli.repubblica.it/cronaca/2013/01/24/news/arrestati_estremisti_di_destra_c_anche_la_figlia_di_un_ex_senatore-51175878/ (accessed 10/09/2019).
- 11 See the interview with Simone di Stefano at: <https://www.lospecialegiornale.it/2018/04/03/migranti-israele-casapound/> (accessed 10/09/2019).
- 12 Benito Mussolini seized power officially on the 29 October 1922 and stayed in office until the end of the regime that took place formally on 25 July 1943. From the time of the German occupation in 1943 until 1945, Mussolini led the Italian Social Republic (*Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, RSI) also known as the Republic of Salò.
- 13 Alessandro Pavolini (1903–1945) was an Italian journalist and writer who served as minister for Popular Culture and secretary of the Republican Fascist Party.
- 14 *Giovane Europa* (Young Europe) was a movement founded in Belgium in 1962 by Jean Thiriart. Its tendencies were neo-fascist, despite eclectic variations in its thought. The organization's central idea was the construction of a united, non-federal Europe, outside the two blocs of the Cold War. Such an idea attracted a few young people in Italy, who criticized the MSI's line as conservative.
- 15 The *Nuova Destra* (New Right) was an intellectual far right movement formed in Italy during the 1970s, inspired by the French *Nouvelle Droite* and developed through the journal *Diorama Letterario*, edited by Marco Tarchi. The *Nuova Destra* came into being during the first Hobbit Camp (1977), an event organized by the minority component of the MSI headed by Pino Rauti. Between 1977 and 1981, the *Nuova Destra* organized a series of youth summer camps named Hobbit Camps, from Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* characters (Revelli 1985). For an overview of the origins of the *Nuova Destra* and of the Hobbit Camps phenomenon, see Tarchi 2010; Capra Casadio 2014.
- 16 The imagery of historical Fascism's supporters as inhabitants of the 'sewers' derives from the notorious anti-fascist slogan ('fascist scum, go back to the sewers') which inspired the name of the satiric journal founded by Marco Tarchi in 1974, *La Voce della Fogna* (The Voice of the Sewer).
- 17 Interview no. 2b of 27/04/2012.
- 18 Interview no. 2b of 27/04/2012.
- 19 While the 'movement' phase of historical Fascism lasted from 1920 to 1925, from 1926 onwards it developed into a regime. The transition was symbolically marked by the approval of the *Leggi Fascistissime* (the 'most fascist' laws), introducing strict government control over the press and abolishing the right to strike. In 1928, Mussolini's government passed a new electoral law which guaranteed de facto the victory of a single party, the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* (National Fascist Party, PNF). In 1939, the government created the Grand Council of Fascism which formally suppressed democratic electoral competition.
- 20 Interview no. 5b of 28/06/2012.
- 21 Interview no. 2b of 27/04/2012.
- 22 The Charter of Labour (1927) was a piece of legislation introduced by Benito Mussolini to regulate the labour market. It recognized private initiative as the most efficient to strengthen the economy.

- 23 The Verona Manifesto (1943) was an 18-point document that outlined the policy agenda of the Italian Social Republic, the RSI. It recognized private property.
- 24 Interview no. 2b of 27/04/2012.
- 25 Interview no. 2b of 27/04/2012.
- 26 Interview no. 2b of 27/04/2012.
- 27 ‘We don’t like the “right-wing” label very much, but it’s a word you need to use ... How else to explain where I am more or less positioned to someone that doesn’t understand?’. Interview no. 2 of 27/04/2012.
- 28 Interview no. 2c of 27/04/2012.
- 29 Interview no. 1a of 30/03/2012. Nazi-Maoism was a minor post-war intellectual movement on the neo-fascist right of the 1960s and 1970s. The first organization to adopt these positions in Italy was *Giovane Europa*, which abandoned rather hastily the right-wing label, even though it included within its ranks many dissidents and political exiles from the MSI and its youth organizations. In the documents of the time, the claim of equal distance from the Left and the Right was presented as the natural evolution of the socialist roots of historical Fascism. Towards the end of the 1960s, *Giovane Europa* sought a convergence with fringes on the far left, especially those inspired by Maoism, and called for a common opposition to both American and Soviet imperialism (Carioti 2011).
- 30 Interview no. 2b of 27/04/2012. References to ‘neither left nor right’ recur systematically in all the interviews conducted by the authors.
- 31 Historical Fascism claimed to represent the overcoming of the class contradiction and of the democratic resolution of conflicts – in other words, it proposed an *organic* vision of the state (see Gentile 1929). In this respect, historical Fascism envisaged the social and political organization of the state in emulation of the functioning of a biological body: just as a human body needs a brain to work, a brain without body is, to all intents and purposes, useless. In the Fascist state, the leader represented the *brain*, whose guiding function would be useless without the support of the *body*, i.e. the nation.
- 32 Interview no. 2b of 27/04/2012.
- 33 Notably through the magazine *Dimensione Ambiente*.
- 34 Interview no. 2c of 27/04/2012.
- 35 Interview no. 2c of 27/04/2012.
- 36 Interview no. 2c of 27/04/2012.
- 37 Interview no. 2c of 27/04/2012.
- 38 Interview no. 2b of 27/04/2012.
- 39 See the website of the organization, at: www.esfsyria.org/ (accessed 18/04/2019).

Chapter 4

- 1 In 2017, a journalistic investigation by the magazine *L'Espresso* reported that CPI uses its funds for purposes that go beyond its everyday political goals (*L'Espresso* 2017).
- 2 In the past, this was done on a website related to CPI called the *Ideodromo* and through a blog called *Vivamafarka* which, however, are no longer active.
- 3 Interview no. 3a of 01/06/2012.
- 4 Interview no. 3a of 01/06/2012.
- 5 Interview no. 3a of 01/06/2012.
- 6 Interview no. 2b of 27/04/2012.
- 7 Interview no. 1b of 19/04/2012.
- 8 In the city of Florence on 13 December 2011, Gianluca Casseri, a CPI sympathizer, shot dead two market traders from Senegal, Samb Modou and Mor Diop, before committing suicide. The video of Gianluca Iannone’s interview on TV is available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPIYIFqR2CE (accessed 24/07/2013).
- 9 The expression ‘Soldier, Brother, Friend’ was used by an activist during interview no. 3a of 1/06/2012.

- 10 Interview no. 1b of 19/04/2012.
- 11 Interview no. 2c of 27/04/2012.
- 12 Interview no. 1b of 19/04/2012.
- 13 Interview no. 2b of 27/04/2012.
- 14 Interview no. 1b of 19/04/2012.
- 15 It was not possible to find reliable figures for the number of CasaPound members (beyond those provided by CPI itself). During fieldwork, we were told that CPI had 10,000 registered members but this figure could not be verified.
- 16 Interview no. 6a of 20/09/2012.
- 17 Interview no. 2b of 27/04/2012.
- 18 Interview no. 5c of 26/06/2012.
- 19 Interview no. 2c of 27/04/2012.
- 20 Interview no. 5a of 26/06/2012.
- 21 Interview no. 1c of 19/04/2012.
- 22 Interview no. 5b of 26/06/2012.
- 23 Interview no. 2c of 27/04/2012.
- 24 Interview no. 5c of 26/06/2012.
- 25 Interview no. 1b of 19/04/2012.
- 26 Interview no. 2c of 27/04/2012.
- 27 Interview no. 2c of 27/04/2012.
- 28 Interview no. 2c of 27/04/2012.
- 29 Interview no. 2c of 27/04/2012.
- 30 Interview no. 2d of 27/04/2012.
- 31 While the reality may be more complex than the simplification we have adopted, we use the term 'sex' for men, women and transsexuals to refer to biological distinctions and 'gender' to refer to social constructs not biologically linked to sexes but shaped by social structures, norms and institutions. The gendered dimension of CPI's ideology is examined in Chapter 3.
- 32 The law mentions a number of mechanisms making sure that each party or coalition does not have more than 60 per cent of candidates of the same sex.
- 33 Interview no. 5b of 28/06/2012.
- 34 Interview no. 5b of 28/06/2012.
- 35 Interview no. 6b of 20/09/2012.
- 36 Interview no. 5b of 28/06/2012.
- 37 Interview no. 5b of 28/06/2012.
- 38 Interview no. 5b of 28/06/2012.
- 39 As confirmed by the information and security policy report issued by the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers in 2008 (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri 2008).
- 40 Literally the curved ends of a stadium, where the most fanatical supporters (*ultras*) stand.
- 41 Interview no. 3a of 1/06/2012.
- 42 This is also the title of a song by ZZA.
- 43 Interview no. 1b of 19/04/2012.

Chapter 5

- 1 Until 1923, the *squadristi* or blackshirts were a para-military wing of the National Fascist Party (PNF). Subsequently, they became a volunteer militia of the Kingdom of Italy (De Felice 1995).
- 2 Interview no. 3a of 01/06/2012.
- 3 Interview no. 3a of 01/06/2012.
- 4 For instance, the round-table discussion on civil rights in which Anna Paola Concia, member of the Democratic Party and LGBT activist, took part (see Concia 2009).
- 5 Interview no. 2c of 27/04/2012.

- 6 Interview no. 2c of 27/04/2012.
- 7 Interview no. 3a of 01/06/2012.
- 8 Interview no. 2d of 27/04/2012.
- 9 Interview no. 3a of 01/06/2012.
- 10 Interview no. 2c of 27/04/2012.

Chapter 6

- 1 The 2019 European Parliament elections confirmed this trend, as CPI obtained just 0.3 per cent of the vote, corresponding to fewer than 90,000 preferences. At the local elections that took place on the same day, however, CPI elected 63 local council members, mainly in small towns in Lombardy and Piedmont.
- 2 CPI's electoral programme in fact kept the same title (*Una Nazione*, 'A Nation'), but the 2018 document is slightly longer than in 2013 (21 pages vs 17 pages; and 6,359 words vs 5,749 words, corresponding to 304 vs 252 quasi-sentences).
- 3 *Equitalia* is the Italian public agency in charge of tax collection.
- 4 Interview no. 3a of 01/06/2012.
- 5 This was further confirmed by Simone Di Stefano in a 2014 TV interview for the local broadcaster *Retesole*, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_BvGiNUSWc (accessed 20/12/2018).
- 6 Interview no. 1b of 19/04/2012.
- 7 Interview no. 2b of 27/04/2012.
- 8 This was recorded by the authors during CPI's national festival 'Direzione – Rivoluzione', Rome, 20–23 September 2012.
- 9 Statement by Simone Di Stefano during a TV interview for the local broadcaster *Retesole*, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QJ98YfPS2o> (accessed 15/01/2019).

Chapter 7

- 1 The website of the publisher is: <https://altafortedizioni.it/chi-siamo/> (accessed 16/12/2018).
- 2 In April 2019, CPI could count on 39,000 Twitter followers, Simone Di Stefano had 28,000 followers, whereas Gianluca Iannone only 1,800.
- 3 Interestingly, CPI's motto on Twitter is still 'Destra, sinistra ... oppure CasaPound' (Right, left ... or CasaPound).
- 4 In particular, well-known figures of the intellectual far-right milieu like the philosopher Diego Fusaro (*Il Secolo d'Italia* 2014) or the art critic and politician Vittorio Sgarbi (*Il Secolo Nuovo* 2012).
- 5 See for example the case of the opening of the new seat in the city of Parma (*Gazzetta di Parma* 2016).
- 6 The event had extensive coverage by the local and the national press. The ANPI (National Association of Italian Partisans) called for a counter mobilization, with a march taking place during the opening day of the meeting.
- 7 The statement was made on the Italian TV show *Piazza Pulita*, aired on 4 November 2014 at the studios of La7. The video is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBIIRurWrG4> (accessed 20/05/2017).
- 8 On traditional media (TV and radio), candidates and parties are granted equal treatment under the *par condicio* law (Law no. 28 of 2000).

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- 1 For a similar approach see Hänggli and Kriesi's work on input–output strategies of agenda building (2010).

- 2 Newspaper data were gathered using the *Factiva* database. Mainstream quality papers report more extensively on political matters than other outlets (Druckman and Parkin 2005). While the tone and the logics of information production may change according to the political orientation of a newspaper, there is no significant difference in the likelihood of coverage (Koopmans 2004) as demonstrated in other publications using both centre-right and centre-left oriented quality newspapers (Bouron and Froio 2016; Castelli Gattinara and Froio 2018a).
- 3 Claims-making as a form of political behaviour implies ‘the purposive and public articulation of political demands, calls to action, proposals, criticisms, or physical attacks, which, actually or potentially, affect the interests or integrity of the claimants and/or other collective actors’ (Koopmans et al. 2005).

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