Special Issue Article

Political Studies Association | politics

Between civilisation, race, and nation: Transnational dimensions of far-right activism in post-Brexit Britain

Politics
1–19

DOI: 10.1177/02633957251380256
journals.sagepub.com/home/pol
Sage

Rafal Soborski, Michał P Garapich and Anna Jochymek
London Metropolitan University, UK

Abstract

Immigrants are usually studied as targets of the far right, not as participants in it. Addressing this gap, the article examines Polish immigrants' involvement in Britain's far-right politics, drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and interviews conducted between 2023 and 2025. It explores how far-right actors stretch categories of 'nativeness' to include some immigrants, justifying this through civilisational or racial arguments depending on ideological profile and proximity to political mainstream, both logics ultimately fulfilling similar exclusionary functions. Moving from this general dynamic to the empirical cases, the article shows how Polish nationalist myths, reinterpreted and fused with British radical-right narratives, support civilisationist strategies of incorporation, while transnational appeals to whiteness underpin extreme-right cooperation and claims to equality with 'native' activists. The study demonstrates that immigrants' engagement with the far right must be understood relationally, challenging assumptions that their political participation is uniformly democratic, and broadening debates on immigrant activism and the far right.

Keywords

civilisationism, transnational far right, political activism of migrants, white supremacism

Received: 14th March 2025; Revised version received: 2th September 2025; Accepted: 4th September 2025

Introduction

In 2018, a British anti-racist advocacy group, Hope-not-Hate, published a report on Polish influences on Britain's far-right scene. 'A Polish connection' – it stated – is 'a fascist 'must have' item because, when it comes to money and muscle [. . .] Polish fascists domiciled in the UK provide access to both' (Hope-not-Hate, 2018). Polish-British far-right connections have also been noted by the media (BBC, 2018; Siddique, 2018), other NGOs

Corresponding author:
Rafal Soborski, Centre for Global Diversities and Inequalities, School of Social Sciences and Professions, London Metropolitan University, London N7 8DB, UK.
Email: rafal.soborski@gmail.com

monitoring radicalisation (Faith Matters, 2017) and Polish communities themselves as well as attracting the interest of the British authorities, with a small number of individuals of Polish origin convicted over terrorism offences (BBC, 2019, 2020, 2024). At the same time, academic research on this phenomenon has lagged behind – surprisingly, considering the public nature of the political opening towards Polish immigrants by segments of the British far right.[1]

The gap in scholarship concerns also the broader rapprochement between the far right and some immigrants, in Europe and elsewhere, reflecting prevailing assumptions about the immigrants as either politically passive, or as engaged in ineluctably emancipatory struggles (e.g. Martiniello and Lafleur, 2009; Peró, 2007), rather than as agentic actors whose political alignments are not predetermined and may be at odds with progressive agendas. While there are useful insights from the growing literature on immigrants' voting patterns in origin and/or residence countries (e.g. Finn, 2020; Gherghina and Tseng, 2016; Umpierrez de Reguero and Finn, 2023; Umpierrez de Reguero and Jakobson, 2023) as well as an incipient strand of research on far-right parties' engagement with immigrant and minority groups (e.g. Spies et al., 2022) – with Jakobson's conceptualisation of 'sidestreaming' (this issue) offering a useful tool to make sense of the phenomenon – immigrants' direct activist participation on the far right has been rarely considered. Exceptions include studies of mainly historical cases (e.g. Ochsner and Roesel, 2020; Persian, 2023) explained through the perspective of 'long-distance nationalism' (Anderson, 1998) which, albeit influential and valuable, assumes that mobilisation is determined by, and aimed predominantly at, the origin country, leaving the residence country's context in empirical limbo. What we show using the case of Polish immigrants in Britain is that it is possible for transnational activists, even in nationalist movements, to keep both origin and residence country in view, with ideological and activist patterns evolving through cross-border exchanges.

There are several reasons to use the case of Polish nationalists in Britain to demonstrate how the far right engages with selected groups of immigrants. Poles are now one of Britain's largest and most well-established minorities. Prior to Poland's accession to the EU in 2004, Poles living in Britain were mainly WW2 refugees who had fled Poland at the beginning of the war or had been mobilized as part of an army which reached Britain after a long march from the Soviet Union. Polish nationals made a significant contribution to the Allied war effort, playing a vital role in the Battle of Britain. With Poland becoming part of the communist bloc after WW2, most of those Poles remained in Britain as political émigrés creating a dense network of diasporic institutions, including the Polish government in exile, and cultivating a militaristic ethos, which has also served as an important symbolic resource for the huge post-2004 wave of Polish arrivals benefiting from the free movement of labour following the eastwards enlargement of the European Union (Soborski et al., 2025). Recent developments, especially Brexit, have reduced and partly reversed these flows, and the number of Poles in Britain has come down from over 1 million in 2017 to around 700,000 in 2021 – still a very significant number (Office for National Statistics, 2021).

Implications of the Polish immigration to the United Kingdom have been studied extensively,[2] including Poles' interactions with Britain's culturally diverse localities. As with other Central and Eastern European immigrants in Western Europe, research shows that a vast majority of Poles living in Britain do not sympathize with the far right (Szulecki et al., 2022) and amongst those who do, only a tiny fraction is politically active. Scholars have also highlighted prejudice and discrimination that the Polish minority and other

CEE immigrants have themselves endured, notably following Brexit (Rzepnikowska, 2018; Sime et al., 2022). At the same time, other contributions identified racialized perceptions of the British society held by some Poles living in the country (Fox and Mogilnicka, 2019; Garapich, 2016; Nowicka, 2018; Nowicka and Krzyżowski, 2017; Ryan, 2010; Soborski et al., 2025) and the 'integration-through-racism' strategy (Garapich et al., 2024) that they sometimes pursue to position themselves in proximity of the white British, with a small number becoming hostile to other immigrants to the point of direct participation in far-right politics.

This article looks at two instances of Polish immigrants' involvement with Britain's far right, covering the cleavage under this umbrella category into 'radical' and 'extreme' right which differ by degree of distance from the political mainstream and democratic principles (Mudde, 2019). The first case concerns Polish supporters and members of the radical-right party, Reform UK, and the second one revolves around the English Division of the Polish extreme-right organisation, National Rebirth of Poland (NOP). Although both reveal some practical factors that make British–Polish far-right connections mutually beneficial, we place special emphasis on emerging discursive and symbolic dimensions of this cooperation. We examine the civilisationist turn (Brubaker, 2017) underpinning it in the case of Polish members of Reform, as well as transnationally constructed white supremacism increasingly supplementing and sometimes trumping traditional nationalism in ideologies of extreme-right organisations like the NOP (Beirich, 2023). While emphasizing connections between the two discourses, we explain ideological and strategic factors that push the actors discussed towards more civilisationist or more racist positions.

We also interrogate the positionality of Polish immigrants in the respective organisational and ideological contexts, their impact within those spaces, and their own interpretations of it. As we argue, the civilisationist extension of the 'natives' category to include some immigrants – European, Christian, etc. – provides a 'discursive opportunity' (Koopmans and Olzak, 2004), for incorporation of tropes from Polish nationalism into British far-right discursive strategies. In this process, Polish political myths – where political myth is understood as 'an ideologically marked narrative, which purports to give a true account of a set of past, present, or predicted political events, which is accepted as valid in its essentials by a social group' (Flood, 2002: 44) – are adapted to serve not only Polish immigrants but also to appeal to British nationalists who decode them in light of their own political priorities. On the other hand, explicit racism of the NOP and its British counterparts allows Polish extreme-right immigrant activists to claim a special place in Britain's social hierarchy through invoking shared whiteness, though this is often supplemented with civilisationist references. Again, we highlight similar functions of civilisationism and racism in constructing ethnic hierarchies and divisions, privileging some groups and excluding others.

Our argument unfolds as follows. We begin by shedding light on the far right's transnational shift and its ideological manifestations through civilisationism and white supremacism. Then, following an overview of our methodology and data, we proceed with the two cases drawing on first-hand accounts coming from activists in Reform and the NOP. We conclude by reflecting on the article's implications for the broader fields of study of far-right discourses, immigrant political engagement and transnational activism, as well as adding some thoughts on what the Polish–British far-right connections tell us about post-Brexit Britain.

Transnational reconfigurations of the far right

The emerging alignment between segments of the far right and some immigrants is part of broader transnational processes affecting far-right politics. Transnational studies is a growing field focused on connections and networks that, albeit related to the 'national' in various ways (Verdery, 1998), unfold across territorial and supraterritorial spaces without using the nation-state as primary reference (Wimmer and Schiller, 2003). When it comes to studies of the far right, research has focused on the transnational shift within far-right ideologies (e.g. Hermansson et al., 2020), their transnational sources of inspiration (e.g. Gozalishvili, 2024), historical instances of cross-border cooperation between far-right movements (e.g. Bauerkämper and Rossollinski-Liebe, 2017) as well as some more recent cases (e.g. Macklin, 2013; Pasieka, 2021, 2024), especially online (e.g. Froio and Ganesh, 2019; Liang, 2023), and the perception of the degree of transnationalisation and assessment of its benefits and drawbacks by the actors involved (e.g. Fangen and Weisskircher, 2024). However, while a consensus is emerging among scholars that studying the far right requires a transnational lens (e.g. Alcalde, 2020; Campos, 2023; Durham and Power, 2016), participation of immigrants – transnational actors if there ever was one – in far-right organisations still seems paradoxical.

Along with its authoritarianism and populism, the far right is defined by nativism, an ideology which 'holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ('the nation') and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state' (Mudde, 2019: 27). Given the significance of nativism in it, how do far-right organisations justify their selective opening to some immigrants? One answer points to the necessity of ideological responsiveness to societal changes, with capacity to evolve constituting a prerequisite for any ideology's continued relevance (see, for example, Freeden, 2005). As far-right ideologies bend to external pressures, such as the rise of transnational relations, including increased international migration, their delineations of in- and out-groups shift so that, just like the more legalistic concept of the 'citizen' (Schnaudt et al., 2021), the 'native' category is also subject to reinterpretation depending on changing contexts and political interests.

One such reinterpretation stems from the far-right discourse of 'civilizationism', which divides the world into supranational cultural blocs – Western, Islamic, etc. – and assumes an inevitable clash between them (Huntington, 1993). Civilisationism extends membership in the 'native' group according to broad criteria revolving especially around religion but also shared historical experiences. There is now an extensive literature on civilisationism as a far-right 'metatheoretical' perspective (e.g. Taguieff, 1993), an elite counter-hegemonic project (e.g. Stewart, 2020), a paradigm in international relations challenging liberal internationalism (e.g. Bettiza et al., 2023) and a discourse of far-right parties (e.g. Brubaker, 2017). Other studies examine the nexus between civilisationism and white supremacy (e.g. Maher et al., 2021), as well as between civilisational and national identities (e.g. Cerrone, 2023), or compare different variants of civilisationism either within one would-be civilisational bloc (e.g. Brubaker, 2017) or globally (e.g. Yilmaz and Morieson, 2022). What these approaches share is their focus on 'official' ideological output by far-right leaders, parties or party intellectuals. More diffuse civilisationist tropes evident in everyday thinking of ordinary sympathizers or rank-and-file activists have not been given comparable attention due, in part at least, to the rarity of ethnographic approaches in this field (but see Thorleifsson, 2021).

Another conceptual development, simultaneous and complementary to the shift towards civilisationism, is the activation of the discourse of biological racism framed in terms of racial solidarity of white supremacists across countries and continents (on this, see, for example, Beirich, 2023; Caniglia et al., 2020; Geary et al., 2020a). White supremacy movements have now acquired a robustly transnational dimension phrasing their 'worldly ideology' (Geary et al., 2020b: 21) in terms of a worldwide struggle. Transnationalisation of white supremacy goes back to at least the 1970s (Burke, 2020) but has accelerated exponentially in recent decades. As Beirich (2023) writes,

> White supremacists are aligned in terms of ideology in a way that has never existed before. The slogan 'white power worldwide' is indicative of how they view their identity, a much different conception than slogans of earlier movements such as 'Deutschland Uber Alles'.

Following the next section, which covers the methodology of this study, we use the case of Polish members of Reform to explore their everyday narratives of civilisationism and then the extreme-right NOP and its British allies to shed light on activist constructions of transnational white supremacy. While highlighting the respective discourses' association with different types of political actors we identify parallels in their lines of reasoning and the latter's overlapping political functions.

Methodology

This article stems from our broader research project on transnationalisation of the far right in Polish-British social spaces.[3] This needs to be introduced briefly as it provides context and methodological frames for our data and discussion here. The project relies on a multi-sited ethnographic investigation encompassing a diverse range of political environments, including political parties and activist networks of various nature and degree of formalisation. Research sites include London, Slough, Bristol, Birmingham, and Leeds in Britain, and Warsaw, Kraków, Białystok, and Lublin in Poland. As of August 2025, over 70 in-depth interviews have been carried out, with data currently undergoing thematic coding using NVivo. Out of this number, long-term engagement has been sustained with over 20 participants, allowing for rich informal exchanges and ongoing observation of selected structures. In addition, more than 30 ethnographic reports have been produced from a wide spectrum of events – including far-right demonstrations, historical commemorations, religious ceremonies, music concerts, MMA galas etc. – capturing both public and semi-private forms of political expression.

While we have interviewed several British leaders who had interacted politically with Poles, our focus has been primarily on Polish far-right activists, particularly from the post-2004 migration wave, although key figures from earlier cohorts are also included. The respondents represent a diverse range of backgrounds, experiences, and positionalities, which complicates any attempt to characterize the group. Nevertheless, certain patterns are identifiable. For example, the picture is extremely unbalanced in terms of gender reflecting the fact that the far right is a notoriously masculine space. While women are present, our assessment, confirmed by other scholars (e.g. Gozalishvili, 2024: 4), is that they are harder to convince to be interviewed, and so we have just seven women in the sample. The majority of our respondents tend to be self-employed in construction, as drivers, or delivery- and handymen. However, there are a few activists in leadership positions who hold tertiary education. Ideological commitment is evident across the sample,

but the articulation and intensity of these beliefs differ: from structured, doctrinal convictions to more fluid, affect-driven engagements.

For the specific purpose of this article, we draw on interviews with four Polish members of Reform and five NOP activists. For each organisation we also interviewed a British leader with prior interactions with Polish activists. Three of the Reform respondents were men, one was a woman, three were born in Britain to Polish post-WW2 refugees but consider themselves Polish and emphasize this as determining their identity and political views. The fourth Reform respondent and all NOP interviewees, including one female respondent, are post-2004 immigrants from Poland. As with the rest of our project, respondents were usually contacted via social media and then, through snowballing, some of them put us in touch with and 'recommended' to other activists.

Interviews, each lasting around three hours, were conducted in public spaces (cafes, etc.) and followed strict safety protocols, including real-time tracking of the interviewer's location and regular updates via instant messaging apps in case of interviews conducted individually. Prior to interviews, the respondents were provided with a detailed description of the project and general outlines of the interviews and asked to sign a consent form with further explanation of how the data was going to be used and anonymized. They rarely asked about our own political views but when they did, we did not deceive them. The interviews passed respectfully, and at no point, neither during nor after the interviews, did any of us feel any threat. Two of us were also guest attendees at Reform 2024 conference in Birmingham where we talked with several delegates about their perceptions of Poland and the Polish minority in Britain. This was possible as two respondents offered to invite us. As with all our project activities, our participation at the conference was overt, we introduced ourselves in the same way as we did to our interviewees, namely as researchers studying Polish immigrants' political engagement on the right-wing spectrum in Britain, from mainstream right (we reached out to Polish members and MPs of the Conservative party, though with limited success) to the far right and including the extreme right.

The interviews followed a broad narrative-biographical format aimed at mapping the respondents' biographies and, for post-2004 arrivals, migration paths in relation to their political beliefs and activism. We were particularly attentive to how Polish immigrants sympathizing with the far right adapted their views to the British context in light of their immigrant status. As we were interested in Polish–British interactions, the interviews focused on the development of mutual ties, probing the exchange of ideas and resources but also some tensions emerging during transnational cooperation. In what follows we apply close reading qualitative analysis of semantics, rhetoric, and argumentation to tropes and narratives emerging from interviews (and some primary material) and positing a transnational identity bringing Poles and Brits together whether based on a shared civilisation or whiteness.

Reform UK and its Polish civilisationists

This article looks at the grassroots level of transnational far-right civilisationism by drawing on our ethnographic engagement and interviews with members of Reform which is now the second-largest party in Britain in terms of membership and the main challenger of the ruling Labour Party (Mitchell and Devlin, 2024). Reform denies having a far-right identity but, following Cas Mudde and Hope-not-Hate, it fits the criteria (Hope-not-Hate, 2024), specifically of the radical-right segment. Reform's founder, Nigel Farage, has been known for his anti-Muslim comments (e.g. Adu, 2024; Farage, 2016) and the dominant party line is compatible with right-wing civilisationist assumptions (Allegretti, 2025).

Civilisationism featured strongly in what we heard from our Polish respondents, Reform members; their articulation of it was mediated through Polish nationalist mythology and adapted to their own positioning as an especially deserving minority group. In addition to symbols and narratives associated with WW2 and Polish participation in the Battle of Britain, they invoked a more distant history and the idea of Poland as 'Bulwark of Christendom' with the 1683 Battle of Vienna – where an army led by a Polish king defeated the Ottomans preventing, in a far-right interpretation, Islamization of Europe – as an earlier episode in the continuing mission of Poles as defenders of the West. The civilisationist combination of Polish and British nationalist themes seemed familiar and appealing also to other (non-Polish) Reform members we spoke with, especially in the oft-cited context of contemporary Poland's relatively homogenous ethno-religious make-up, traditional values and conservative legal arrangements, as well as fast economic growth and overall sense of developmental success over the last two decades.

This civilisationist alignment is of mutual advantage to both sides. On one hand, Polish members and supporters of Reform blend Polish and British civilisationist tropes to back their claim to a special place in the ethnic hierarchy of Britain. On the other hand, Brits may invoke the cultural proximity of Poles to appeal to them as potential allies and to justify their own prejudices against other minorities, particularly Muslims, on civilisationist grounds. To get a British perspective, we interviewed Brian,[4] a British far-right activist and media personality with connections to Reform's leader, Nigel Farage and deeper knowledge of high-level right-wing politics in Britain. He told us,

> From my experience of Poles, they come from a 99 percent white European Catholic country, Poland, that has a history, a very unfortunate history, of foreign domination, so I think there's sort of like innate understanding that national identity is a very fragile and precious thing. And then they come to the UK expecting the Queen, fish and chips, and then what they actually end up finding is this anarchic, multicultural hellhole that's sold as a utopia but doesn't really work. And they're like 'well, it's very alien, this isn't the Britain that I thought I was coming to live in'. And I particularly don't want this to come to Poland. One of the Poles that I spoke to, I can remember saying, 'look, I've come to your country to earn a wage, to go home eventually and build a house. But I can see that you've got problems here. I don't want this to come to Poland, but I feel like I'm obligated to help you guys try and push back against it'.

While this account emphasizes Poland's historical specificity through the prism of the country's suffering, it also brings back memories of Britain's halcyon days – 'the Queen, fish and chips' – prior to EU membership and the arrival of 'anarchic' multiculturalism, while ringing a warning for Poland not to follow suit. It also conceives of resistance to the invasion of 'alien culture' as a shared struggle in which Poles in Britain should play an active part.

As if fulfilling this expectation, in the 2024 parliamentary elections, Reform had candidates who emphasized their Polish roots. One candidate's official party biography drew attention to Polish national virtues while bringing to the fore another protagonist of Polish nationalist mythology, the patriotic land-owning classes on eastern borderland of pre-WW2 Poland:

> My father's family were very privileged in pre-war Poland but with this came a sense of duty and responsibility which meant looking after those who worked for them. This sense of duty and honourable behaviour was engrained into me from an early age.[5]

We interviewed Polish Reform members about how their Polish identity is perceived by Brits. The answers stressed cultural proximity between the two nations and British appreciation of the Polish contribution to the fight against the Nazis, especially the role of the Polish pilots in the Battle of Britain:

> Researcher: Your emphasis on your Polish roots, do you think it was an asset for you?
>
> Jerzy, Reform member: Oh, absolutely. Yeah, yeah, yeah! So it was always perceived well by the Brits and [. . .] as time has gone on [. . .] the wartime credits, I think that they built up.

Furthermore, we probed the balance of moral indebtedness between the British 'hosts' and the offspring of Polish refugees and soldiers. While one Reform member (Jan) expressed gratitude to Britain for welcoming his parents who had escaped communist Poland, another (Anna) placed Poland, quite assertively, on a higher moral ground. Asked if 'Britain owes Poland anything for the Polish Spitfire[6] fighters', she said,

> Oh my God, yeah! Yeah, definitely [. . .] I met a 30-year-old graduate lawyer . . .. very arrogant [. . .] And he said to me, we're talking about the war and everything, he said 'oh, you, you old people,' he said 'you're always talking about the war, you're fossils'. And I. . . I blew my top. I said 'right,' I said, ' you've obviously been half-educated,' I said, 'but because of those fossils and my dad, who was even more of a fossil,' I said, 'you wouldn't have the luxury of standing there, being able to say that' [. . .] I don't want to use the right-wing thing, but I'm definitely to the right because of my Polish roots, because of my dad and what he fought for.

WW2 references – if the Polacy [Poles] hadn't been here during WW2, what would have happened, especially the Battle of Britain? (Jerzy) – are intertwined in our respondents' accounts with assertions of Poland's historical position as defender against Islam both in past centuries and now, with Poland's 'special operation' on its border with Belarus stopping migrants brought there from the Middle East by the Belarusian authorities in 2021:

> When that idiot from Belarus was trying to import all those people from, from Arabic countries, and tried to infiltrate through the border, the first thing they [Poles] did was put up two lots of barbed wire and a fence. So, you come across that, you're dead. That's the end of it. And they understood that, and they all went back. So that to me was . . . I felt that we made a contribution and we were part of that [. . .] but people don't understand the history of all of this stuff, the history of all that nobody knows about. Nobody knows about, you know, Battle of Warsaw, for example. What happened there? Nobody knows about the Battle of Vienna. Nobody knows about all this stuff. (Jerzy)

In such accounts, Poles epitomize Western values and are contrasted with other minorities living in Britain as in this firm declaration by Jan: *I am a culturalist, yeah. There are certain cultures, ways of behaviour or values that I don't want*. Our interviews brought to the fore the civilisationist view of the Western and, especially, British culture as fundamentally open and hence superior to others but also uniquely vulnerable – *I think all Brits, Welsh and Scots as well, are, um . . . are tolerant to the point where they're going to tolerate themselves out of existence* (Jan) – as well as echoes of the 'great replacement' conspiracy theory (Camus, 2018) with the demographic and civilisationist arguments intertwined into one narrative where the tolerance and democracy of the West are used against it by hostile others growing in numbers and power: *So, they* [Muslims] *decided*

now [. . .] the infiltration is better done by democracy. So: 'we have enough kids, we vote ourselves into power and then we change everything from within'. So it's a Trojan horse thing (Jerzy); *the West will collapse [. . .] it could well be that immigration becomes the thing that eventually makes it collapse* (Jan).

As radical-right parties try to refute the charges of racism by using the civilisationist discourse, so do our respondents – *Why is it racist to . . . to worry about your country being invaded? That's what it is!* (Anna) – and Polish history may also be mobilized to reject such accusations:

> I said, well, you know, 'please don't call me a fascist because I'm the daughter of a person who fought against fascism. So please go and get your definition of fascist'. I always say when someone says 'you're a fascist [. . .] or racist': 'Can you tell me why are you calling me a racist? What do you think? I don't like what? Someone's colour?' (Anna)

Whereas our respondents' accounts revolved largely around Polish diaspora's historical merits as well as evoking a shared European history and culture, a more mundane narrative can also be identified centring on hard work as a quality shared by different generations of Poles in Britain:

> Most of them [Polish WW2 refugees in Britain] did very, very well really, because they were hardworking. As today, you know, Polacy over here are hardworking people. They're always renowned for being hardworking. And so, it's something in the culture and in the psyche. (Jerzy)

A similar assessment comes from a Polish individual whose video statement in support of Reform has been widely shared on social media. Speaking in English, he emphasizes the stereotype of a hardworking, no-nonsense Pole who, unlike immigrants from other countries, understands and loves Britain:

> Some people are surprised that me and my Polish friends are voting Reform UK. Answer is quite simple: we came here legally, we love English people, we wanted to stay here and we want life of English people to be better by us coming here, by contributing to the society by helping you make this a better country. What has been happening recently with immigration is not right [. . .] You cannot just jump on the boat, come here, get a hotel for free, get access to NHS and make English people's life difficult [. . .] British people have the right to choose who comes here, it's their country. I didn't come here to change it; I came here to help you maintain it or even make it a little bit better by working hard. Thank you, you welcomed me and I'm gonna return the favour by voting Reform UK.[7]

Narratives revolving around hard work have also been used as legitimation- and identity-reinforcement strategy in different contexts by other immigrants (e.g. Iacovetta, 1992; Jakobson et al., 2024; Kremer, 2016; McAreavey, 2017). What is unique in the case of Polish Reform supporters is the merging of the themes of common-sense and purportedly superior work ethic with emphasis on Polish heroism, something we heard a lot not only from our Polish interviewees but also from Reform conference delegates. In fact, some combination of these tropes was almost an inevitable conversation starter following personal and professional introductions concerning our work. As noted earlier, our research visit there was conducted overtly, but aside from one Polish member and one key organizer, it did not raise suspicion from our interlocutors. In a way, this is indicative of the assumptions held in the party's ranks about Poles as naturally inclined towards the right.

Interestingly, a Reform video clip aiming to debunk the party's association with bigotry and xenophobia in some quarters of public opinion in Britain does not feature any Poles among the ethnic minority candidates shown to assert Reform's openness.[8] We interpret this omission as evidence of Poles gaining an increasingly invisible, hence privileged, place in the party, as opposed to the tokenized non-white individuals in the clip. The match between Polish nationalist mythology and British civilisationism has conveniently concealed the importance of whiteness in this case (Fox et al., 2015; Kalmar, 2023). But whiteness turns out to be a primary symbolic resource mobilized explicitly by extreme-right groups. The next section focuses on migrant extremists prioritizing whiteness as levelling the ground between the 'natives' and the immigrants.

The National Rebirth of Poland – Division England: Transnationalizing white supremacy

The National Rebirth of Poland or NOP (*Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski*) was created in 1981 in Warsaw and for the remaining years of the Polish People's Republic operated underground. It registered as a party in 1992 with candidates standing in a number of Polish elections. It has not been electorally successful but used campaigning for shock-value PR, with slogans such as 'Fascism? We are worse!' (Dziennik, 2007). The NOP is a member of the neofascist International Third Position movement (Shaffer, 2018) whose prominent figures, Derek Holland and Roberto Fiore, sit on the editorial board of the NOP's journal *Szczerbiec* (Shafir, 2003: 185). The NOP represents an extreme version of anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial, and its members have been involved in anti-Roma, anti-immigrant, and homophobic violence in Poland (Kornak, 2009). This extremism pervades the NOP's political communication, for example in its official programmatic document 'Reawakening Racial Separatism' (Grzesica-Wolczyńska, 2016), motivated by what the NOP sees as 'care for the development of the white race [. . .] counteracting the pathological domination of races antagonistic to the white race'. The document asserts 'the primacy of the white race, as the one that in the past was the carrier of civilizational achievements and the propagator of progress'. However, while whiteness is brought to the fore here, it is intertwined with civilisationist tropes, evidencing elective affinities between white supremacism and civilisationism, as in this passage:

> The ideological struggle takes place at the level of antagonistic religious worlds [. . .] Zionism (quasi religion), or Islam are on the offensive against the indigenous population of the Old Continent, aiming to destroy the entire order of white man's civilization (Grzesica-Wolczyńska, 2016)

The case of the NOP's Division England and its interactions with British extreme-right organisations, including the now proscribed National Action, illustrates how these ideas adapt and manifest themselves politically in a transnational migratory context. Long-established on the international white supremacy scene, the NOP had direct relations with the British National Party already in the 1990s, but the first NOP online post concerning its activity in England is from December 2010 (Lewandowski, 2010), and the period of especially intensive transnational cooperation falls between 2014 and 2020, with Hope-not-Hate reporting 'Without a hint of irony, one of the most active far-right groups in the United Kingdom is the Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski' (Hope-not-Hate, n.d.). NOP activists supported BNP protests 'against coloured immigration' (NOP, 2013), co-organized, with the

National Front, 'Marches for the White Europe' (NOP, 2017) and, with London Forum, 'Protests against the Jewish Terror' (NOP, 2015), attended BNP conferences as guest speakers as well as organizing their own events. In another twist to far-right transnationalism, in the course of 2014, Polish NOP activists in England, ran several solidarity campaigns to support imprisoned Greek activists of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party (NOP, 2014).

The thread of racial bond bringing together all white, non-Jewish Europeans runs through the online posts of the NOP's Division England as with their commemoration of the Remembrance Day, under the slogan 'no more brotherly wars' (NOP, 2018). One of the latest (June 2020) posts is titled 'Stop the black plague':

> All over the world, the post-African savagery – with the support of leftist and liberal degenerates – robs, destroys, kills and maims innocent people [. . .] The first mass resistance to black terror took place on June 13 in London. Veterans, fans, nationalists took to the streets – including activists of local structures of the National Rebirth of Poland [. . .] to defend not only the city, but symbolically the whole of Europe from barbarity (NOP, 2020).

While the NOP's transnational engagements in Britain were facilitated by their earlier contacts with British neofascists and grounded in a shared belief in white supremacy, we should add that more mundane reasons for cooperation were also significant. Some of the NOP's main partners, such as National Action, were lacking in membership and resources and hence were on a quest for 'money and muscles' as Hope-not-Hate put it. However, NOP activists, unlike most of our Reform respondents, were fresh arrivals, most of them young and looking to establish social connections in a new environment.

It was the perceived quality of NOP human or activist capital which ensured their immersion into the British extreme right. There is a definite sense of pride in the Polish activists' accounts of the impact they had on the Brits, as exemplified by this post, which evokes, in a different form, tropes of Polish diasporic nationalism articulated by Reform's Polish members:

> The NOP England Division's activity also had a refreshing effect on our British colleagues. Polish nationalists, who were thrown abroad by fate, through their example, commitment and courage to come out with nationalist postulates (which is the norm in Poland), have a refreshing effect on the strongly politically polarized British national circles. Because while it is true that we will never 'give up the land where we come from,' if we do appear somewhere, then it is always decisively, radically and with a kick (NOP, 2014).

While this self-affirming description comes from Polish activists, we got a similar assessment from Allan, then a leading figure on the British extreme-right scene, and the NOP's main British contact who facilitated the group's links with the National Action and the BNP. Allan remembers the NOP as a recognisable group – dedicated, disciplined, uniformly dressed in paramilitary clothes, not rowdy, not intoxicated during demos (which, he said, was a problem among the British) and ideologically committed. NOP activists also gave the British extreme right an aura of international importance:

> A lot of British people used to invite them because [. . .] it made it seem like a larger event to have international speakers. You know, if I could get one speaker from Poland and I can get another speaker from Germany, suddenly it seems like this event is not just people in London complaining about something. Suddenly it seems like it's a European wide event. You know, it's like a business, you know what I mean? It's like being on LinkedIn.

On the other hand, for NOP activists, their high profile within the British circles meant that the English Division rose in importance also in Poland, especially after they had set up an adjusted membership fee reflecting higher earnings in the United Kingdom. Overall, according to our respondents, their status within the NOP was elevated due to their contribution to strengthening the international outlook of the organisation. This effort included bringing National Action activists to Poland – for a shooting range and other joint activities. On the other hands, Poles also found employment opportunities in Britain through these networks – for example, NOP activists were hired as doorman security at BNP and National Front events, or at London Forum conferences.

The NOP's integration into the British far-right scene is thus a case of several ideological and practical processes intertwined in complex ways. Ideologically, the two sides' adherence to transnational white supremacy helped to overcome the seeming impossibility of cooperation between nationalists from different countries. As one NOP activist told us,

> It wasn't like nationalists from different countries hated each other. Because that's what it might seem like, right? That nationalism focuses on 'my country,' right, 'me'? But no, it absolutely wasn't like that [. . .] We learned from each other by talking, meeting, and discussing things. We talked about what needs to be changed here, what needs to be changed there. How did we solve this, how did we solve that? We talked about each other's heroes. (Meg)

Still, the NOP's engagement with British extreme-right politics was not free from contradictions. Although praised by British counterparts for their discipline and commitment, NOP activists told us that British politics was not their primary concern. According to them, their struggle was for white supremacy and what they perceived as 'Western culture' with Poland at its core. Their nationality and interpretation of Polish history sometimes put them in a delicate position, as when being together with a group of English neo-Nazis who chose to perform the Nazi salute in public. NOP activists refused to do the same, even though they did not object to the British doing so: *I have never given the Nazi salute, but if they* [the British] *want to do it, let them* (Andrzej). Such contradictions illustrate what Brouwer calls the 'pan-fascist paradox' (Brouwer, 2022). On the one hand, NOP activists did take part in many actions together with British activists. On the other, they told us that they did not intend to engage with British politics, that *this is their* [British activists'] *country, we are only interested in Poland* (Andrzej). Some also expressed suspicion towards the British refusal to engage in, as they said, *cleaning Britain with Polish hands* (Andrzej).

At the same time, building bridges based on racial solidarity was very important to the Polish white supremacists in the NOP Division England, and several political initiatives materialized to achieve this. One of them, the NOP's White Rescue action, consisted in providing help to white homeless individuals (Worley, 2016) creating the opportunity to integrate with Brits through shared whiteness: *Focusing on white people, we also had help from English right-wing groups. We often did these actions together. Members of National Action sometimes joined us. So, at that time, we simply organized a joint collection* (Meg). Importantly, White Rescue emerged as a result of the activists migrating to Britain, it had no precedence in the NOP's repertoire in Poland, it was invented specifically to connect with other British white supremacists: *This was about pure racism. Not about some immigrants doing this or that, but white people doing something together* (Adam). In this case, the racial camaraderie of Polish and British activists created a sense of an egalitarian bond in place of a hierarchical one – 'immigrant' vs 'native' – invoking race helped to contest the immigrant label, a good example of whiteness 'revealing itself' in political action.

From our interviews it was clear that NOP activists in Britain were proud of what they called the 'golden branch'. However, with the passage of time, it became apparent that their prominence was potentially an incentive for more Polish activists to move to the United Kingdom. Regardless of the transnational shift in white supremacy ideologies, they do not view migration, even between 'white' countries as desirable, but rather as a matter of sometimes sad necessity (e.g. Gąsiorek, n.d.). While in NOP discourse, it is the 'system' forcing migration that is to blame, rather than individual migrants, it would have been paradoxical for the NOP to be part of that. Faced with the 'pan-fascist paradox', the activists decided to drop 'Division England' from the name – as Andrzej said, *There is only one NOP.* Following this, NOP activism in Britain started to decline but the activists who left due to personal and professional pressures are adamant that there was no causal link there, merely a coincidence.

Discussion and conclusion

Far-right nationalists leading migratory lives seem to represent a contradiction and so do far-right organisations that recruit immigrants. The dilemma for both sides is how to reconcile a transnational *modus operandi* with nationalist commitments. We used Polish involvement in the radical-right party, Reform, and transnational activism of the extreme-right NOP to explore two discursive strategies – civilisationism and transnational white supremacism – as complementing traditional nationalism of the far right to make it relevant, in the eye of its beholders, in a changing world. Along with identifying some general differences and similarities between the two far-right discourses, we also explored their capacity to absorb ideational flows from abroad, such as Polish nationalist themes transmitted by Polish immigrants and adapted for the British context. We also discussed the scope and limits of transnational activism as well as contributing pioneering insights to studies of immigrants' political engagement by focusing on its far-right dimension, which thus far received little scholarly attention.

As for the distinction between civilisationism and white supremacism, it is a porous one but broadly corresponds to long-standing debates on the relationship between ethnicity and race. Scholarship has highlighted that ethnicity tends to be framed as a cultural and socially embedded source of identity, while race is constructed as a biologized and immutable category (Brubaker, 2009; Cornell and Hartmann, 2007). We demonstrated one of several ways that this distinction matters politically: because the concept of ethnicity carries no explicit biological referent, civilisationist discourses can advance exclusionary claims while disclaiming overt racism, which remains taboo in liberal-democratic contexts but persists on their political margins (Taguieff, 2001). Ideological differences between Reform and the NOP shaped what we heard from our respondents. Reform interviewees emphasized cultural barriers to belonging – implying the possibility of assimilation – whereas NOP activists articulated a biologized discourse of race as fixed, thereby grounding their claim to a privileged position within Britain's extreme-right politics.

The discursive variation is also related to the different positions of the two organisations vis-à-vis political mainstream. Radical-right parties contesting elections disavow biological racism in public communication and instead reify ethnic divisions through idioms of culture, religion, and civilisation. Conversely, Western extreme-right organisations, which reject the existing political system altogether, wear the badge of white supremacism with pride, though – as we have seen – they may fuse and reinforce it with civilisationist themes. Reform is a rising political party, enjoying both significant public support and media attention, with

prospects of becoming a party of government. Evidence of any racial prejudice would incur significant political costs for the party, something that some Reform politicians learnt before the 2024 national elections (Morton, 2024; Torr et al., 2024). Civilisationism allows to navigate this territory reconciling nativism with 'official antiracism' (Martin, 2013: 59). On the other hand, white supremacy movements, like the NOP, operate outside liberal-democratic constraints. As we made clear using some of its official communication, the NOP thrives on transgressing the boundaries of political acceptability. The organisation and, for the most part, its activists whom we interviewed, speak without euphemisms, indifferent to electoral or mainstream public relations pressures.

Although distinct as analytical categories, in practice civilisationism and white supremacism operate not as alternatives but as complementary strategies. The civilisationist discourse – ostensibly cultural rather than biological – may itself function as a euphemistic form of racism (Maher et al., 2021: 310) – non-colour coded 'xenoracism' (Fekete, 2009) rooted in the 'differentialist' (Maher et al., 2021) or 'identitarianist' (Zúquete, 2018) turn of the right. While it moves away from fixed biological hierarchies, civilisationism denies the possibility of conviviality of different groups assuming both the inevitability of conflict and, at least implicitly, cultural superiority of the 'natives' (Martin, 2013: 60). These two types of far-right discursive strategies are part of one dialectic where exclusionary ideologies and the very categories of civilisation and race are continuously negotiated.

Migrant actors may play a role in these negotiations, supplying ideological energy across borders and helping in transnational constructions of nativism and otherness. The case of Polish activists in Britain exemplifies this through discursive adaptations they make to reconcile their nationalist loyalties and migratory positioning. Their embrace of far-right politics in Britain offers some Polish immigrants, especially the more recent arrivals, a sense of entry into the national body politic while displacing civilisational or racial vulnerability onto Muslims or black Britons or other immigrants. In this way, they assert belonging together with the 'natives', not despite transnationalism, but through it, resolving the apparent contradiction of migrant nationalism.

At the same time, this is a two-way process, with Polish far-right activism in Britain responding to demand from sections of British politics. Polish nationalism resonates with some broadly shared civilisationist themes and 'global visions of whiteness' (Geary et al., 2020b: 2) as it becomes glocalized (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2006) into new settings. Polish nationalist mythology offers Brits a rich pool of symbols and tropes that can be invoked to bolster '*Powellite* nostalgia' (Melhuish, 2023: 2) for imperial past and the by-gone era of a globally dominant Britain as well as reinforcing the unequal, increasingly oligarchic, social relations in the United Kingdom (Mondon, 2022). In that sense, Poles in the British far right make politically meaningful claims to a particular vision of Britishness in its white and Christian incarnation, with military symbolism as a key pillar supporting it. Our data shows that this is not about straightforward transplantation of nationalism from Poland to Britain, but rather a mutual connectivity and feedback loop, symbolic as well as practical.

These ideological synergies and organisational connections make our case study particularly valuable for understanding the evolution of the far right in transnational spaces and the role of immigrants within it. This also speaks more broadly to the study of immigrant political engagement. Much existing research assumes immigrants' participation is either limited or oriented towards pro-democratic and inclusionary projects in host societies. Our findings complicate this view by showing that immigrants can also contribute to exclusionary politics, sometimes reinforcing hierarchies that disadvantage other minorities. Comparative research can assess how far the patterns we have identified in this case – strategic stretching

of nativism, glocalized nationalist myths, and transnational appeals to whiteness – apply across other political contexts.

Altogether, this brings us to the scope and limits of nationalist transnationalism. Some have argued that it is ultimately always home, local politics that drives ideological outlook and practice of far-right activism (Pasieka, 2021). What we show is that there are radicalisation spaces that do both – Polish activists reproduce Polish nationalism transnationally through engagement with British politics using a glocalized repertoire of Polish nationalist symbolism and contributing to the British society's own difficult conversation with itself when it comes to racism, immigration, and the far right. Future studies might further interrogate how these dynamics unfold in other European contexts. What remains clear is that migration does not always simply challenge the far right; it can also reinforce its most exclusionary tendencies.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the ESRC for their support of the project from which this article is derived. We would also like to thank Mari-Liis Jakobson, Sebastián Umpierrez de Reguero, Niels Spierings, and other organizers and participants of the ECPR Workshop: 'Populism and Minorities' (University of Lüneburg, 25–28 March 2024) and the Network on Migrant Inclusion Workshop 'Rapprochement of nativist populism and migrantized voters' (Radboud University, 12–13 November 2024) for the opportunity to present and discuss our research findings. We are also grateful to two anonymous reviewers for their thorough and constructive feedback on the earlier versions of this article. Last but not least, our thanks for their time and invaluable insights go to the respondents who agreed to talk with us.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The authors disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This article is part of a research project funded by Economic and Social Research Council grant (ES/W010151/1).

ORCID iDs

Rafal Soborski https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2090-3656

Michał P Garapich https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0248-6780

Anna Jochymek https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6105-127X

Notes

1. See, for example, this 2016 video by the then Britain First leader, Jayda Fransen.
2. Website run by Anne White at UCL contains a large collection of publications on various aspects of this migration: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/people/anne-white/ssees/research/polish-migration.
3. Funded by Economic and Social Research Council grant ES/W010151/2.
4. Names of this and other respondents have been changed.
5. https://www.reformparty.uk/hertford-and-stortford-constituency, authors' archives.
6. Spitfire was a single-seat fighter aircraft used by the Royal Air Force during WW2.
7. https://x.com/i/status/1804092152789582143
8. https://x.com/MayuranReform/status/1805214286207152288

References

Adu A (2024) Nigel Farage under fire after saying Muslims do not share British values. *The Guardian*, 26 May. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/politics/article/2024/may/26/nigel-farage-under-fire-said-muslims-not-share-british-values

Alcalde A (2020) The transnational consensus: Fascism and Nazism in current research. *Contemporary European History* 29(2): 243–252.

Allegretti A (2025) Nigel Farage: Britons must have more children to save Judeo-Christian culture. *The Times*, 18 February. Available at: https://www.thetimes.com/uk/politics/article/nigel-farage-britons-must-have-more-children-to-save-judeo-christian-culture-nkq60pjwl

Anderson B (1998) *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World*. Verso Books.

Bauerkämper A and Rossollinski-Liebe G (2017) *Fascism without Borders: Transnational Connections and Cooperation between Movements and Regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945*. Berghahn.

BBC (2018) Polish embassy 'funded far-right speakers'. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06c3yt7

BBC (2019) Teenage neo-Nazis jailed over terror offences. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-48672929

BBC (2020) Luton far-right extremist jailed for having explosives. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-55063243

BBC (2024) Far-right extremist jailed for 12 years for terrorist offenses. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c0en8jg9r29o

Beirich H (2023) White supremacy as a global movement. In: Snow DA, Della Porta D, McAdam D, et al. (eds) *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*. Wiley.

Bettiza G, Bolton D and Lewis D (2023) Civilizationism and the ideological contestation of the liberal international order. *International Studies Review* 25(2): 1–28.

Brouwer A (2022) The pan-fascist paradox: How does a nationalist-minded fascist think transnationally? *Fascism* 11(1): 1–30.

Brubaker R (2009) Ethnicity, race, and nationalism. *Annual Review of Sociology* 35: 21–42.

Brubaker R (2017) Between nationalism and civilizationism: The European populist moment in comparative perspective. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40: 1191–1226.

Burke K (2020) 'It's a white fight and we've got to win it': Culture, violence, and the transatlantic far right since the 1970s. In: Geary D, Schofield C, Sutton J (eds) *Global White Nationalism: From Apartheid to Trump*. Manchester University Press, 262-300.

Campos RDE (2023) The international turn in far-right studies: A critical assessment. *Millennium* 51(3): 892–919.

Camus R (2018) *You Will Not Replace Us!* Self-published.

Caniglia M, Winkler L and Métais S (2020) The rise of the right-wing violent extremism threat in Germany and its transnational character. *European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center*. Available at: http://www.esisc.org/publications/analyses/the-rise-of-the-right-wing-violent-extremism-threat-in-germany-and-its-transnational-character

Cerrone J (2023) Reconciling national and supranational identities: Civilizationism in European far-right discourse. *Perspectives on Politics* 21(3): 951–966.

Cornell S and Hartmann D (2007) *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World*. 2nd ed. Pine Forge Press.

Durham M and Power M (eds) (2016) *New Perspectives on the Transnational Right*. Springer.

Dziennik (2007) Kandydaci do parlamentu: Jesteśmy gorsi niż faszyści. Available at: https://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/polityka/artykuly/61045,kandydaci-do-parlamentu-jestesmy-gorsi-niz-faszysci.html

Faith Matters (2017) From antisemitism to anti-Muslim racism: The evolving face of the far-right in Poland. Available at: https://www.faith-matters.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Poland%20Report.pdf

Fangen K and Weisskircher M (2024) Reaching out beyond the national border? How far-right actors in Germany and Norway evaluate transnationalism. *Nations and Nationalism* 30(4): 683–699.

Farage N (2016) Pan-European migrant rape story response highlights the continent's unconditional surrender. *Breitbart*. Available at: https://www.breitbart.com/europe/2016/01/08/2728817/

Fekete L (2009) *A Suitable Enemy: Racism, Migration and Islamophobia in Europe*. Pluto Press.

Finn V (2020) Migrant voting: Here, there, in both countries, or nowhere. *Citizenship Studies* 24(6): 730–750.

Flood CG (2002) *Political Myth. A Theoretical Introduction*. Routledge.

Fox JE and Mogilnicka M (2019) Pathological integration, or, how East Europeans use racism to become British. *The British Journal of Sociology* 70(1): 5–23.

Fox JE, Moroşanu L and Szilassy E (2015) Denying discrimination: Status, 'race', and the whitening of Britain's new Europeans. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 41(5): 729–748.
Freeden M (2005) *Liberal Languages*. Princeton University Press.
Froio C and Ganesh B (2019) The transnationalization of far-right discourse on Twitter: Issues and actors that cross borders in Western European democracies. *European Societies* 21(4): 513–539.
Garapich MP (2016) *London's Polish Borders: Transnationalizing Class and Ethnicity among Polish Migrants in London*. Ibidem-Verlag.
Garapich MP, Jochymek A and Soborski R (2024) Immigrants in the transnational far right: Integration through racisms and negotiating white supremacy in a migratory context. *International Migration Review* 58(4): 2012–2039.
Gąsiorek A (n.d.) Mit Emigracji Kierunki. Available at: https://www.kierunki.info.pl/mit-emigracji/
Geary D, Schofield C and Sutton J (2020a) (eds) *Global White Nationalism: From Apartheid to Trump*. Manchester University Press.
Geary D, Schofield C and Sutton J (2020b) Introduction: Toward a global history of white nationalism. In: *Global White Nationalism: From Apartheid to Trump*. Manchester University Press, pp.1–27.
Gherghina S and Tseng H-K (2016) Voting home or abroad? Comparing migrants' electoral participation in countries of origin and of residence. *Nationalities Papers* 44(3): 456–472.
Giulianotti R and Robertson R (2006) Glocalization, globalization and migration: The case of Scottish football supporters in North America. *International Sociology* 21(2): 171–198.
Gozalishvili N (2024) Decoding transnationalism within the Georgian far right: 'The good, the bad and the ugly'. *Nations and Nationalism*, 1–24.
Grzesica-Wolczyńska K (2016) Przebudzenie separatyzmu rasowego. *Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski*. Available at: https://www.nop.org.pl/2016/02/22/przebudzenie-separatyzmu-rasowego/
Hermansson P, Lawrance D, Mulhall J, et al. (2020) *The International Alt-right: Fascism for the 21St Century?* Routledge.
Hope-not-Hate (2018) Polish extremists active in the UK. Available at: https://hopenothate.org.uk/research-old/state-of-hate-2018/violence/polish-extremists
Hope-not-Hate (2024) Reform UK is far right: Here's why. Available at: https://hopenothate.org.uk/2024/09/24/reform-uk-are-far-right-heres-why/
Hope-not-Hate (n.d.) New blood. Available at: https://hopenothate.org.uk/research-old/investigations/new-blood
Huntington S (1993) The clash of civilizations? *Foreign Affairs* 72(3): 22–49.
Iacovetta F (1992) *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto*. McGill-Queen's Press.
Jakobson ML, Sipinen J and Taimla K (2024) Are Estonians the true Finns? Homeland and residence country perspectives on support for the populist radical right. *International Migration*.
Kalmar I (2023) Race, racialization, and the East of the European Union: An introduction. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 49(6): 1465–1480.
Koopmans R and Olzak S (2004) Discursive opportunities and the evolution of right-wing violence in Germany. *American Journal of Sociology* 110: 198–230.
Kornak M (2009) *Brunatna Księga 1987-2009*. Stowarzyszenie Nigdy Więcej.
Kremer M (2016) Earned citizenship: Labour migrants' views on the welfare state. *Journal of Social Policy* 45(3): 395–415.
Lewandowski M (2010) NOP w bitwie o Anglię (reportaż z pola walki). Available at: https://www.nop.org.pl/2010/12/19/nop-w-bitwie-o-anglie-reportaz-z-pola-walki/
Liang CS (2023) Far-right contagion: the global challenge of transnational extremist networks. In: *Handbook of Security Science*. Springer, pp.1001–1037.
McAreavey R (2017) Migrant identities in a new immigration destination: revealing the limitations of the 'hard working' migrant identity. *Population, Space and Place* 23(6): e2044.
Macklin G (2013) Transnational networking on the far right: The case of Britain and Germany. *West European Politics* 36(1): 176–198.
Maher H, Gunaydin E and McSwiney J (2021) Western civilizationism and white supremacy: the Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation. *Patterns of Prejudice* 55(4): 309–330.
Martin P (2013) Racism, differentialism, and antiracism in everyday ideology: A mixed-methods study in Britain. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 71: 57–73.
Martiniello M and Lafleur J (2009) *The Transnational Political Participation of Immigrants. A Transatlantic Perspective*. Routledge.

Melhuish F (2023) Powellite nostalgia and racialised nationalist narratives: Connecting Global Britain and Little England. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*.

Mitchell A and Devlin K (2024) Labour 'lacks coherent story' and is leaving door open to Nigel Farage's Reform, warn top pollsters. *The Independent 31/12*. Available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/starmer-labour-nigel-farage-reform-b2667863.html

Mondon A (2022) Populism, public opinion, and the mainstreaming of the far right: The 'immigration issue' and the construction of a reactionary 'people'. *Politics* 45(1): 19–36.

Morton B (2024) Reform drops three candidates over offensive comments. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c727xz2kkgjo

Mudde C (2019) *The Far Right Today*. Polity Press.

NOP (2013) NOP Division England w obronie greckich nacjonalistów. Available at: https://www.nop.org.pl/2013/10/08/nop-division-england-w-obronie-greckich-nacjonalistow/

NOP (2014) Londyn: Manifestacja NOP w obronie greckich nacjonalistów. Available at: https://www.nop.org.pl/2014/11/30/londyn-manifestacja-nop-w-obronie-greckich-nacjonalistow/

NOP (2015) Londyn: Przeciwko żydowskiemu terrorowi. Available at: https://www.nop.org.pl/2015/07/07/londyn-przeciwko-zydowskiemu-terrorowi/

NOP (2017) Londyn: Razem dla Białej Europy. Available at: https://www.nop.org.pl/2017/11/18/londyn-razem-dla-bialej-europy/

NOP (2018) Londyn: No more brother wars! Available at: https://www.nop.org.pl/2018/11/21/londyn-no-more-brother-wars/

NOP (2020) Wielka Brytania: Czarna zaraza stop! Available at: https://www.nop.org.pl/2020/06/14/wielka-brytania-czarna-zaraza-stop/

Nowicka M (2018) 'I don't mean to sound racist but . . .' Transforming racism in transnational Europe. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41(5): 824–841.

Nowicka M and Krzyżowski Ł (2017) The social distance of poles to other minorities: a study of four cities in Germany and Britain. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 43(3): 359–378.

Ochsner C and Roesel F (2020) Migrating extremists. *The Economic Journal* 130(628): 1135–1172.

Office for National Statistics (2021) Population by Country of Birth and Nationality. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/datasets/populationoftheunitedkingdombycountryofbirthandnationality

Pasieka A (2021) Introduction to the Special section: National, European, transnational: Far-right activism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. *East European Politics and Societies* 35(4): 863–875.

Pasieka A (2024) *Living Right. Far Right Youth Activists in Contemporary Europe*. Princeton University Press.

Peró D (2007) Anthropological perspectives on migrants' political engagements. *Centre on Migration, Policy and Society* Working Paper. University of Oxford.

Persian J (2023) *Fascists in Exile: Post-war Displaced Persons in Australia*. Routledge.

Ryan L (2010) Becoming Polish in London: Negotiating ethnicity through migration. *Social Identities* 16(3): 359–376.

Rzepnikowska A (2018) Racism and xenophobia experienced by Polish migrants in the UK before and after Brexit vote. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 45(1): 61–77.

Schnaudt C, van Deth JW, Zorell C, et al. (2021) Revisiting norms of citizenship in times of democratic change. *Politics* 44(3): 352–369.

Shaffer R (2018) Pan-European thought in British fascism: The international third position and the alliance for peace and freedom. *Patterns of Prejudice* 52(1): 78–99.

Shafir M (2003) Varieties of antisemitism in post-communist East Central Europe: Motivations and political discourse. In: Andor E and Kovács A (eds) *Jewish Studies at the Central European University 2002-2003*. Central European University Press, pp.175–210.

Siddique H (2018) Polish schools in UK warned over far-right connections. *The Guardian*, 6 April. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/apr/06/polish-saturday-language-schools-uk-warned-over-far-right-connections/

Sime D, Tyrrell N, Käkelä E and Moskal M (2022) Performing whiteness: Central and Eastern European young people's experiences of xenophobia and racialisation in the UK post-Brexit. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 48(19): 4527–4546.

Soborski R, Garapich MP and Jochymek A (2025) Home-making through deathscapes or how to circumvent the contradictions of nationalism: The case of Polish far-right activists in Britain. *Nations and Nationalism*.

Spies DC, Mayer SJ, Elis J and Goerres A (2022) Why do immigrants support an anti-immigrant party? Russian-Germans and the Alternative for Germany. *West European Politics* 46(2): 275–299.

Stewart B (2020) The rise of far-right civilizationism. *Critical Sociology* 46(7–8): 1207–1220.
Szulecki K, Erdal MB and Stanley B (2022) *External Voting. the Patterns and Drivers of Central European Migrants' Homeland Electoral Participation*. Palgrave MacMillan.
Taguieff PA (1993) From race to culture: The new right's view of European identity. *Télos 98*– 99: 99125.
Taguieff PA (2001) *The Force of Prejudice: On Racism and Its Doubles*. University of Minnesota Press.
Thorleifsson C (2021) In pursuit of purity: populist nationalism and the racialization of difference. *Identities* 28(2): 186–202.
Torr G, Barnes L and Hare S (2024) Reform UK candidate made 'low IQ' comments about minorities. *BBC*. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cgxxjzn738go
Umpierrez de Reguero S and Finn V (2023) Migrants' intention to vote in two countries, one country, or neither. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 34(3): 466–489.
Umpierrez de Reguero S and Jakobson ML (2023) Explaining support for populists among external voters: Between home and host country. *European Political Science* 22: 119–142.
Verdery K (1998) Transnationalism, nationalism, citizenship, and property: Eastern Europe since 1989. *American Ethnologist* 25(2): 291–306.
Wimmer A and Schiller NG (2003) Methodological nationalism, the social sciences, and the study of migration: An essay in historical epistemology. *International Migration Review* 37(3): 576–610.
Worley W (2016) Neo Nazis in Glasgow set up 'whites-only' soup kitchen. *The Independent*, 2009. Available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/neo-nazi-soup-kitchen-glasgow-whites-only-national-action-a7318331.html
Yilmaz I and Morieson N (2022) Civilizational populism around the world. *Populism and Politics*, 31 July.
Zúquete JP (2018) *The Identitarians: The Movement against Globalism and Islam in Europe*. University of Notre Dame Press.

Author biography

Rafal Soborski is a Professor of International Politics at Richmond American University London and Senior Research Fellow at London Metropolitan University, Centre for Global Diversities and Inequalities. His research interests revolve around globalization, ideology, social movements, the far right and the paradox of immigrants becoming supporters and activists of far-right groups in their countries of residence. Rafal is the author of two monographs: *Ideology in a Global Age: Continuity and Change* (Palgrave) and *Ideology and the Future of Progressive Social Movements* (Rowman & Littlefield) and has published articles in world-leading journals, such as *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Nations and Nationalism*, *International Migration Review*, *Journal of Political Ideologies* and others.

Michał P Garapich is an Anthropologist and a Professor at London Metropolitan University, Centre for Global Diversities and Inequalities. He has researched and published extensively on issues related to migration from Poland, nationalism, ethnic identity, homelessness and intimate ethnography.

Anna Jochymek is an Artist and Ethnographer, currently serving as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Metropolitan University London. She is involved in a pioneering interdisciplinary study funded by the ESRC, which explores the everyday transnationalism of right-wing politics, with a specific focus on Polish immigrants joining far-right groups in Britain.