



Democratic stress, the populist signal and extremist threat

A call for a new mainstream
statecraft and contact democracy

By Anthony Painter
with additional research and contributions from Claudia Chwalisz

Published in 2013 by Policy Network

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Design and layout: Alan Hunt
Printed by: John Drewe

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Acknowledgements

The Policy Network 'populism, extremism and the mainstream' project was given tremendous support and trust throughout from the Barrow Cadbury Trust. Ayesha Saran warrants a special mention.

Claudia Chwalisz was absolutely indispensable in supporting this report. Her research, clarity of thought, and overall contribution was intrinsic throughout the process and the report bears her stamp. Michael McTernan kept the project on track organisationally and intellectually. Olaf Cramme, Lord Liddle, Patrick Diamond and Katherine Roberts at Policy Network were critical throughout the process on every level.

Advice and support was generously given to the report's main author by Michael Kenny, Tim Bale, Matthew Goodwin, Will Somerville, Péter Krekó, Nick Lowles, Ruth Smeeth, Erin Saltman, and Vidhya Ramalingam. We would also like to thank all of the attendees at the three events that supported the research and, of course, all those who spoke at the events. The two events in London and the event in Amsterdam were critically important for the project. Special thanks should go to the Wiardi Beckman Stichting and René Cuperus in particular who ensured that the Amsterdam event was a success in every way.

About the project

The Policy Network project on populism, extremism and the mainstream has over the past 12 months considered the features of identity politics and populist movements in the modern European context and how parties – of the left and right – have responded to their different manifestations. It has investigated campaigns, policies and political approaches that have resisted and defeated the antagonistic and corrosive aspects of identity politics and populism – and considered where mainstream politics has failed.

The project has been generously supported by the Barrow Cadbury Trust. www.bctrust.org.uk

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Executive Summary

- The rise of the populist radical right is one of the most significant features of western democracies in the last quarter of a century. As a 'challenger brand' within democracy but against liberal democracy, this suggests that the system may be under some 'stress'.
- Populism is a democratic argument that seeks to change the way democracy functions. It is a threat within democracy to the culture and norms of *liberal* democracy as it functions. In other words, right wing populism does not seek to replace democracy; it seeks to change it.
- It is not about being 'popular' as the term is commonly (mis)used in the media or politics. Margaret Canovan distinguishes the 'redemptive' and 'pragmatic' sides of democracy. Populism reaches more for the former – a pure and non-bounded 'will of the people'. Populism is expressive and emotive; it rejects the institutional checks and balances of liberal democracy. The political mainstream is ultimately about pragmatism, balance and institutional interplay.
- The rise of the populist radical right is a 'signal' of the failure of mainstream democracy to meet the needs and desires of citizens perturbed by social, cultural, economic and political change.
- Populists have gained a footing in democratic systems in a number of different forms. They include the Tea Party in US, the People's Party in Denmark, PVV in the Netherlands, the Front National in France, Fidesz in Hungary, the SVP in Switzerland, the FPÖ in Austria, and UKIP in the UK.
- Populism as the representation of a body of democratic needs and desires is entirely legitimate. If needs and anxieties are not expressed within the democratic system then there is a threat of greater extremism. Extremism has a casual and periodic engagement with democracy, but that is simply one route it pursues. It values itself as a movement and as a pure expression of an ideology. It is associated with a politics of hate and tolerance of violence.
- However, populism is not necessarily benign. It creates simplicities where real outcomes in public policy need complexities to be acknowledged. It can further corrode trust and hamper the ability of mainstream parties to form winning and governing coalitions. The rhetoric of the populist radical right can impact upon the welfare of minorities and may even, in some circumstances, justify extremist thought and action. This report has an ambivalence about populism at its heart. As two academic researchers in this field express, populism is a 'threat and corrective to (liberal) democracy'.
- Real 'demand' exists for a populist radical right but the ability to convert that 'demand' into political power depends on the interplay of populist and mainstream forces.
- Strategies at the disposal of mainstream democratic parties are numerous and are analysed in the report as falling into three main categories: 'hold', 'defuse' and 'adopt'. The first involves seeking to avoid the threat of populism, the second aims to minimise the impact of populist anxieties, and the third moves towards the populist position. However, all these strategies have limitations. Instead, three sequential and concurring

strategies are recommended: acknowledge the issues that drive potential support for the populist radical right; develop a comprehensive new statecraft involving an expression of national vision, major public policy interventions in jobs, welfare and housing at a local and national level, along with building a new 'contact democracy'.

- 'Contact democracy' where local needs are met, new voters are mobilised into mainstream democracy, hate and extremism is challenged, support for community life is extended, and social capital is developed within communities is a crucial component of the 'new statecraft'. This is not simply through political parties – which have to fundamentally change nonetheless - but through community organisations, campaigns and local authorities.
- In conclusion, there is a call for a comprehensive response from the political mainstream: statecraft and contact democracy. Mainstream parties have hold of the ball for now. The difference in this environment is that if they drop it there are others to pick it up - populist parties of the right and perhaps, in the future, of the left too. Democracy is stressed - can the mainstream relieve that stress and govern wisely? That is a key question for European and US politics in the coming years.

Introduction

The most successful new family of parties in Europe over the last quarter of a century has been the populist radical right. In country after country, new right wing populist parties have established themselves as significant players for office, power, and public voice. This advance should not be overstated. Only in Switzerland and arguably Hungary have these populists become leading contenders for office. Nonetheless, across Europe the populist radical right has become a permanent feature of the political landscape. The argument of this report is that this phenomenon - the populist right as a challenger brand within and to liberal democracy - says something very significant about the state of modern democracy and requires a robust response from the political mainstream.

It should be stated at the outset that populism is not intrinsically a radical right phenomenon though there are definite affinities with cultural concerns of the right. The most striking populist movement in the world today is in fact that of the now departed Hugo Chavez, whose leftist nationalist movement, '*chavismo*', swept to power in Venezuela, changing its democracy in the process. Nonetheless, in more established western democracies, it is the right-wing variant that has been more significant. In a sense, this is predicated upon a series of structural changes in western societies that have loosened the class basis prevalent in the last century's politics. Left-wing populism would tend to fit more within this traditional socio-economic dynamic of party competition. Right-wing populism challenges this socio-economic dynamic of party competition and the notion of democracy to which it corresponds. The populist radical right has reacted to the cultural, social and democratic anxieties of the time in a way that a left populism has not been able to. In turn, that has opened up space for the populist radical

right family of parties to become further established.

The rise of the populist radical right is a *signal*. It comes as mainstream politics faces *stresses* that question its legitimacy - the ability to respond to people's political needs and desires. This signal sits alongside the decline of trust in the political mainstream - defined as parties who sit comfortably within the pragmatic, pluralistic and institutionally bounded traditions of western liberal democracy. Underneath these stresses sit structural dynamics that have arisen through economic, social, and cultural change. Where mainstream parties found themselves sitting comfortably on settled class, ideology, faith and/or and patriotic tectonic plates in the post-war era of universal suffrage, suddenly they seem to have slipped onto a fault-line. Now the space of political conflict is not only contested, the very rules on which it is based are under question.

Straight away, this discussion runs into problems of definition and the tendency for a variety of terms to be used interchangeably. It is important to be clear about meaning before any substantive analysis can proceed. The basis of this project has been that there are three distinct approaches to politics which are consequential in terms of real world outcomes: the mainstream, populism and extremism. The immediate complication is that the latter two terms here are often fused together and hyphenated or even used interchangeably. This is unhelpful. Populism is a democratic argument that seeks to change the way democracy functions. It is a threat within democracy to the culture and norms of *liberal* democracy as it functions. In other words, right wing populism does not seek to replace democracy; it seeks to change it into a populist, direct, expressive form of democracy instead of an institutionally bounded liberal democracy. This basic insight is essential in understanding how

mainstream parties might respond - and the nature of the threat that the populist radical right in particular poses.

The analyses of Paul Taggart, Cas Mudde/ Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, and Margaret Canovan are important in appreciating the core characteristics of populism. Mudde and Kaltwasser defines it as follows:

*"A thin-centred ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, the 'pure people' and the 'corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people."*¹

Taggart points to the importance of a conception of 'heartland' in populist politics.² Heartland is essentially an 'idealised' notion of a morally pure people. The elasticity of this concept is useful as populism itself is extremely elastic. Margaret Canovan distinguishes the 'redemptive' and 'pragmatic' sides of democracy. The former is expressive and emotive; the latter is about process, balance and institutional interplay. Western democracies are pragmatic: representative and liberal as well as democratic. Populists want a more redemptive politics where the will of the morally pure majority is enacted - without much if any obstacle.

While populists seek to make a moral virtue out of simplicity, the mainstream acknowledges complexity. The two 'styles' of politics are connected through their democratic essence. Indeed, Cas Mudde refers to the populist right wing as a 'pathological normalcy'.³ However, their

expectations from democracy vary. The content of the populist right wing has to be separated from its basis form. Nationalism, immigration concerns, cultural anxiety, and economic protection are attached to populism in different ways in different contexts. These ideas, issues and motivations can also be pursued through the mainstream or even the extreme. For example, nationalism has been seen in the paramilitary form within Basque separatism, in populist form through the Flemish Vlaams Blok or mainstream form through the Scottish National Party's civic and plural nationalism. While particular anxieties such as that surrounding cultural change do have a magnetic attraction to right-wing populism, they nonetheless have to be distinguished from that particular political style.

In fact, it is the mainstream's inability to cope with a variety of issues, economic anxieties and cultural attachments that has created an opening for a populist argument. This fact is circumstantial: it is mainstream failure.

The moral disdain that populists have for the mainstream is reciprocated. In fact, moral segregation has been one of the primary responses of the mainstream to the populist radical right. There is no better political strategy than assigning your threat moral illegitimacy - if it works. The problem is that it has not really worked. There is 'demand' for parties that focus on culture, immigration, economic change, nationhood, perceived legal and political favouritism towards minority groups, the perceived threat of Islam to 'western values', EU 'threats to national sovereignty' and Eurozone impositions, and, as has been seen in the case of the Tea Party in the US, a fear of the intrusive state. The problem that mainstream political actors now face is that moral isolation has

¹ Mudde, Cas and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. 2012. "Populism and (liberal) democracy: a framework for analysis." In Mudde, Cas and Kaltwasser, Cristóbal Rovira, eds. *Populism in Europe and the Americas: threat or corrective for democracy?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. P. 8

² Taggart, P. 2000. *Populism*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

³ Mudde, Cas. 2008. "The Populist Radical Right: A Pathological Normalcy." In Malmö University, Willy Brandt Series of Working Papers in International Migration and Ethnic Relations. March 2007. Malmö, SE.

not been successful and they are in danger of seeming disdainful of the real concerns to which the populist radical right responds.

To acknowledge that these issues are real concerns is not to accept the arguments proffered by the populist radical right - far from it. It is rather that the moral condemnation form of politics is inadequate and counter-productive. The mainstream further undermines itself. We are beyond the initial birth stage of the populist radical right. In some cases it has reached puberty.

Moreover, populism serves an important function. Mainstream parties may dislike the arguments and style of populism but the alternative is much worse: extremism. If western democracies cannot cope with expressive as well as pragmatic politics then there are less democratic avenues available through which real anxieties can be expressed. The defining strategy of extremism is a casual and periodic engagement with democracy, but that is simply one route it pursues. It values itself as a movement and as a pure expression of an ideology. The ideology is transcendent. Therefore, whatever means to protect and advance the ideology - whether ethnic nationalism, religious radicalism or revolutionary communism - is legitimate in the eyes of the extremist. Street marches, persecution, hatred, inflammatory pamphleteering, violence and terrorism are just some of the methods of extremists. This is a highly dangerous and toxic form of political action. It poses a major threat to security and well-being.

Populism may be pluralistic democracy's ugly sibling; extremism is populism's harmful cousin. To a certain extent, the populist radical right and the extreme right are fishing in the same pond of angst and anxiety as academic surveys of their respective supporters have shown, but they pursue their cause in a different fashion.

However, this does not mean that populism is benign. The populist style of dealing with contentious issues is, in fact, highly problematic.

Democracy in complex societies is not a simple affair. There are trade-offs, conflicts, interests, protections, challenges, as well as the unseen, unforeseen and unforeseeable. Expressive democracy glosses over these challenges. Representative democracy, though imperfect, attempts to reconcile them, while populism attempts to ignore them. For example, the UK has a commitment to a European single market. Such a market requires common regulations. To achieve these common regulations it is necessary not only to pool sovereignty in EU institutions, but to accept that too often national vetoes will create insurmountable obstacles to agreeing these common regulations. As a centre-right mainstream Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, notwithstanding her rhetorical flourishes, understood these trade-offs between the national interest and formal national power. Anti-EU populism rejects such complexity. As in the case of nationalism, euroscepticism is not intrinsically populist - there are substantive arguments that acknowledge trade-offs but come to a different conclusion.

While content and 'style' are not inextricably linked, 'style' does tend to influence content, leading to potentially significant and unacknowledged negative impacts. Populism has consequences for economic well-being, the functions of democracy, foreign and international relationships, and the relationship of different groups, cultures, regions and nationhood. The concern is substantive as well as political.

The impact of the populist radical right on the mainstream centre-left and centre-right varies in accordance with political systems. In majoritarian democracies such

as the UK, it is likely to create a greater electoral headache for the centre-right than the centre-left - at least while it is centre-right votes that are drifting to UKIP as is currently the case. However, in consensual political systems on the continent, the dilemma is greater for the centre-left. When support leaks from the centre-right to the populist right in a consensus it produces parliamentary seats. The populist right is a more likely coalition partner for centre-right liberal or conservative parties than it is for the centre-left. Therefore, "losing votes to the populist radical right is worse [for social democratic parties] than losing votes to, say, green or more radical left parties, because the former - unlike the latter - tend to help centre-right parties into government."⁴

There is a broader impact point here, also. A central charge of populists is that liberal democratic institutions and the elites who occupy them are morally corrupted and antagonistic towards the interests and virtue of 'the people'. The centre-left mainstream relies on state action to achieve its goals of collective provision to a greater extent than is the case with the centre-right. It is difficult to call on collective action if the legitimacy of the institutions and those who occupy them are questioned. The success of the populist radical right has coincided with some loss of faith in traditional welfare institutions, for example. Centre-right parties also question these institutions - the impact of the populist radical right should not be overstated.

Populist rhetoric has a wider potential impact as well. Its tendency to group and stereotype particular communities, indulge in conspiracy theory, and refuse to compromise is also found within an

extremist mode of political action. While the relationship between populism and extremism is a complex one and the evidence base is shallow, it is difficult to conclude that these elements are conducive to harmonious community relations and mutual understanding. Indeed, there are cases, such as in the US with the Tea Party, where a swelling populism has been accompanied by rising extremism - such as the growth of right-wing militia groups. Populist arguments from both political actors and the media create a sense of crisis and dramatise conflict - often in an untruthful fashion. While bringing this into the democratic space may be healthier than leaving it lingering beyond its borders, that does not mean it is without risks and consequences. The absence of evidence for a strong intrinsic link between populism and extremism does not mean that it does not exist.

Therefore, the debate about how the mainstream contends with populism and the dark shadow of extremism in the distance matters not simply for politics, but because of the real world consequences that could occur should the political mainstream - on the left and the right - fail to adapt. The rise of populism as an established part of the landscape of western democracies is a signal of mainstream failure, evidenced by a decline in trust/engagement with formal politics and an increase in 'people' versus 'the elites' issues. The mainstream will have to think deeply about how it conducts its politics in the future; its unquestioned position of dominance is under threat.

This final report of the six month 'populism, extremism and the mainstream' Policy Network/Barrow Cadbury Trust analyses the nature of change, the relationship between three political 'styles' and outlooks, possible strategic responses, and case studies of how the significant new challenges facing western democracies

⁴ Bale, T. C. Green-Pedersen, A. Krouwel, K. R. Luther and N. Sitter. 2010. "If You Can't Beat Them, Join Them? Explaining Social Democratic Responses to the Challenge from the Populist Radical Right in Western Europe." *Political Studies* 58: 410-26.

have been met both within and outside the party system. It concludes that a new approach based around statecraft is required. Statecraft - the way parties acquire and hold on to power whilst governing effectively - means re-engineering political parties to confront new organisational challenges, providing real and comprehensive governing agendas that tackle major challenges head-on, and acknowledging shifting cultural anxieties. An important component of this statecraft is an enhanced engagement within communities - as case after case we encountered during the course of our research demonstrated. This is at the heart of our call for a 'contact democracy'. What is required is an appreciation of the nature of democratic stress, an understanding of the nature of the threat and alternative to the mainstream, and the resolve to respond. Without such analysis, the failure will begin to move from the temporary to the permanent. Stress then becomes crisis. The consequences can be immense - socially, culturally, and economically.

It is no longer sensible simply to demonise populist forces. Mainstream parties need to demonstrate that they can be trusted more than populists in a political environment where there is a lower level of natural support for any given party. Politics becomes a more complex game in such an environment. Mainstream parties have hold of the ball for now. The difference in this environment is that if they drop it there are others to pick it up - populist parties of the right and perhaps, in the future, of the left too. Democracy is stressed - can the mainstream relieve that stress and govern wisely? That is a key question for European and US politics in the coming years. Mainstream failure to respond adequately has an impact on individual and collective welfare in a situation of democratic stress.

1. Stress and crisis

Mainstream parties have been the mainstays of liberal democracy since universal suffrage. In fact, they are intrinsically linked to the system - when they struggle to maintain support, it is one signal that there is conflict between the system and voters. It is perhaps even a tautology that mainstream parties are intrinsically bound with the institutions of liberal democracy. They contest policy and ideological positions but they are not seeking to shift from a system of representative, liberal democracy to a more majoritarian, direct, people's democracy as an alternative.

The notions of 'crisis' and 'stress' are important in understanding the degree of challenge there is within the system to the *rules of the democratic game* as opposed to the conflict of ideas, leaders and policies.

It is important to understand the distinction between crisis and stress. 'Crisis' occurs when a political system is no longer legitimate. In other words, it can no longer complete the tasks that are set for it. This is one aspect of what the sociologist Jurgen Habermas calls 'legitimation crisis'.⁵ Even in the context of severe austerity, Eurozone-imposed external rules and debt unsustainability, European democracies have avoided this crisis point. There are a couple of near exceptions of course. Greece and Italy, certainly on a temporary basis, have faced democratic crises or at least extreme stresses. Their democracies have shown to be incapable of responding to the complexities instigated by the Eurozone crisis. While both have moved beyond technocratic administrations, the degree to which this is sustainable remains to be seen. However, in the main, European democracies face stresses rather than crises.

Stress is a different state for a democracy to find itself in. It involves challenges to the system and the elites who are elected to govern it that go beyond simply alternative governing choices within the system. It involves the rise of new populist parties or movements and extreme parties, organisations, or forces of protest that challenge the rules of the democratic game. Violence may occur but not to a system or even government-toppling extent. Stress occurs when the democratic system can still function but new political, cultural and economic forces create challenges that mainstream parties find difficult to confront. Either they find it difficult to react to these forces without sundering their existing coalitions of support or they cannot move towards them without changing their own identity: they are pragmatically or ideologically constrained. However, they can still govern. Stress is actually the normal state for democracies - new forces and challenges continually arise. When stress becomes so severe that democracies become 'ungovernable' as is the case in Greece and Italy, or the UK in the late 1970s, then a country has entered a state of crisis.

Liberal democracy is constrained. It is akin to what Robert Dahl describes as 'polyarchy'.⁶ Therefore, it has free, fair, equal and contested elections at its core, but the ability of the majority to constrain the rights of a minority is limited. Constraints are institutional: legally and constitutionally guaranteed basic freedoms - of expression, association, etc - are underpinned by the rule of law. Protection of minorities also means that an interested minority can get their way against a disinterested majority. Political elites could be seen as one such minority, though only one of many. This ensures a pluralistic quality

⁵ Habermas, J. 1975. Legitimation Crisis. Translated by Thomas McCarthy. Boston: Beacon Press.

⁶ Dahl, Robert A. 2000. A Preface to Democratic Theory (expanded edition). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

to liberal democracy. In this sense, it is a case of 'minorities rule'.⁷ This is the system to which the political mainstream is wedded, defined by and definitive of.

Dahl exhibits scepticism of majority rule - though he doesn't discount it as a threat to pluralistic democracy. In fact, he very much fears an authoritarian alternative. Joseph Schumpeter has a rather more elite-driven notion of democracy:

"The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote."⁸

Democracy becomes a competitive pursuit for power (profit) by leaders/parties (firms) elected by voters (consumers). It is not difficult to see a threat to the system itself in Schumpeter's formulation. If there were a strongly held real or perceived 'general will' and that happened to impinge upon the rights of a minority view, then an enterprising political leader might decide to meet that demand. In modern democracies constrained to a varying degree by international treaties, judicial review, coalition formation, separation of powers between branches and levels of government, super-majorities and protections from constitutional principles and human rights, demands for action can become frustrated. This is precisely what we have seen: on immigration; rights for prisoners, migrants and minorities; social values in the case of conservative America in particular; terrorism; access to welfare systems; and national sovereignty. In all of these areas the 'popular will' has been frustrated not by policy or ideology but by the institutions of liberal democracy themselves. This is where populist

parties have the opportunity to step in - by turning 'the people' against the system.

In a sense, this is turning Schumpeter's notion of democratic elitism in on itself. New entrepreneurs from within and from outside the party system spot the market opportunity for popular desires that are not catered for. These new forces challenge the system itself and are not simply new alternatives within the mainstream party system. So the Tea Party proposes a radical reduction of the role of the federal government in the US political system. The FPÖ challenged the authority of Austrian courts with respect to upholding minority rights. UKIP demands a UK withdrawal from the EU. The Front National drives an anti-Islamic and anti-Gypsy agenda in France. Geert Wilders' PVV - following in the footsteps of Pim Fortuyn - also confronts fears over the growth of Islam and its purported incompatibility with Dutch values. Viktor Orbán's Fidesz re-wrote the Hungarian constitution to give the executive more authority over the courts and to safeguard traditional family values. Underlying the growth of all these populist movements is a series of root causes of stress that come to bear on liberal democracy and its mainstream party systems. They are socio-economic, cultural and political in nature.

7 Krouse, Richard W. 1982. "Polyarchy and Participation: The changing democratic theory of Robert A Dahl." *Polity* (14)3: 441-463.

8 Schumpeter, Joseph, A. 2010. *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*. Oxford: Routledge.

2. The underlying causes of democratic 'stress'

1. Socio-economic change and stress

The way in which social class finds communal and political expression has changed over recent decades. The degree to which communities are settled around significant industrial or agricultural forms has changed; media and technology have loosened communal ties and facilitated greater liberalism and tribalism in equal measure; and a more educated society has led to the questioning of traditional social norms. The solidarity of class action has been difficult to sustain and the attachment to parties of particular classes - though still notable - has weakened considerably. People therefore pursue other objectives through their political action - whether searching for leadership/competence or an expression of identity and values. Space has opened up for new parties and movements to step in where working class, faith-grounded or bourgeois parties once stood. Environmental, parochial, nationalist, lifestyle, and personality driven parties have been some of the forms that have emerged. Most successful, however, have been the populist radical right - only green or nationalist parties are even close.

Economic change has been driven by shifts in global comparative advantage and stresses in international credit and production systems. Countries are faced with a choice between costly withdrawal from the system or a diminished capability of managing economic change. People care more about *their job, their employer, their community, their nation* than general economic welfare. When democracy is incapable of meeting these needs then there is a reaction. Moreover, one aspect of the globalisation of economic life is increasing migration flows - one that presents a visible aspect of change, consequently creating a great deal of anxiety.

It is important to note that the emergence of populism and the presence of extremism

occur in a number of different economic contexts. Indeed, some of the most successful populist parties such as the FPÖ in Austria, the PVV in the Netherlands and the Front National in France enjoyed their greatest successes in advance of the current fraught economic context. While the Greek extreme right party, Golden Dawn, has achieved some limited political success, there has been no such movement and democratic breakthrough for the Spanish extreme right despite, for example, both nations facing extremely negative economic conditions. It is difficult to conclude that economic circumstance is a primary driver of populism and extremism. It is rather more about the way in which it interacts with already present tensions and anxieties. In this regard, the force of cultural identity is crucial.

2. Cultural identity

In his memoir, *Joseph Anton*, Salman Rushdie writes on the battle over the publication of *The Satanic Verses* as follows:

*"In this new world, in the dialectics of the world beyond the communism-capitalism confrontation, it would be clear that culture could be primary too. The culture of central Europe was asserting itself against Russianness to unmake the Soviet Union. And ideology, as Ayatollah Khomeini and his cohorts were insisting, could certainly be primary. The wars of ideology and culture were moving to the centre of the stage."*⁹

The Rushdie affair was a signal of the strength of feelings of cultural attachment. There is no logical reason why someone's economic position should definitively be their primary motivation for political expression. Their perception of values, nation and identity can be equally as strong. As the forces of class politics - trade unions, mass industry and agriculture, the 'mass party', and the clubs, churches, societies and communities that underpinned them all - weakened, other

⁹ Rushdie, Salman. 2012. *Joseph Anton*. London: Jonathan Cape. P. 110.

forms of political and democratic expression became more significant. While these expressions of cultural identity would not necessarily become attached to the populist style of politics or even extremism, given the constraints inherent in liberal democracy, there was certainly a good chance they would.

One particularly ugly aspect of this phenomenon has been the reaction to the USA's first African American President, Barack Obama. The 'Birther movement', which seeks to deny the President's citizenship and consequent eligibility for presidential office, has been one reaction. This movement flows through right-wing media discourse, online blogs and chat-rooms, Tea Party conspiracy theory, but also into Republican mainstream discourse, most notably through the presidential nomination candidacy of Donald Trump. Alongside this, research by the Southern Poverty Law Center has found that the number of anti-government 'Patriot' groups has shot up from 149 in 2008 to 1,274 in 2012.¹⁰ Cultural identity anxieties - and the conspiracy theories which can accompany them - flow through mainstream media and political discourse into the populist radical right and into the extremes. In certain forms and discourses they can become a populist challenge and even a security threat.

Technology interacts with cultural change in a way that can reinforce fear, hatred and prejudice. The formation of on-line bubbles and tribes reflecting and amplifying anxieties without challenge is becoming a feature across the political spectrum. This is a more interactive and extreme version of what happens when people consume their own prejudices (whether left or right) in the particular news media to which they expose themselves. Echo chambers can be low-level, dip in and out, interest focused or they can be dangerous and corrosive. The

dynamic and interactive nature of online and social media can make fears and hatred more toxic - in a political sense in the case of certain modes of populism or in a security sense in the case of extremism.

3. Political change

If the functioning of liberal democracy as a set of constraints on the popular will contains the seeds of a populist reaction, then further constraints are likely to create further opportunities. The major constitutional development over the last few decades has been the expansion of the EU's *acquis communautaire* and the growth of supranational decision-making. A European level demos and popularly accessible democratic system has not and perhaps could not hope to keep up with these major constitutional changes. Perhaps the most consequential aspect of this has been the freedom of movement of labour which has meant that significant anxieties are difficult to respond to in a clear fashion. It is not simply through the actions of the EU that national sovereignty has been brought into question, but through the European Court of Human Rights, which has also sometimes been seen to be against popular national notions of human rights and justice. These constraints are often viewed as disempowering and provoke questions about national and popular sovereignty.

Changes in the forms and structure of party competition also create new openings. The emergence of the 'catch all' party which sought to move beyond its traditional base was an early evolutionary change.¹¹ Overtime and in interaction with social and cultural change, the traditional base can begin to be detached from the party and either cease to vote or become attracted to other parties. Strategic necessity becomes a weakness overtime. Parties can become cartels, deeply embedded in the system collusively. This was the case in Austria, for example, as the SPÖ

¹⁰ Potok, Mark. 2012. "For the Radical Right, Obama Victory Brings Fury and Fear." Extremis Project. <http://extremisproject.org/2012/11/for-the-radical-right-obama-victory-brings-fury-and-fear/>.

¹¹ Kirchheimer, O. 1966. "The transformation of the Western European party systems." In LaPalombara, J. and Weiner, M, eds. Political parties and Political Development. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

and ÖVP held power continuously, ruling in coalition together for almost two-thirds of the post-1945 period. Media-focused parties - so-called electoral professional parties¹² - with centralised control and micro-targeted messages can become hollowed out and distant from the communities they serve. New organisational forms, strategies, and techniques can pit the short against the long term and leave a trail of distrust, disinterest and thin commitment in their wake. Trust in liberal democratic institutions has been eroded as a consequence. For example, the Edelman Trust Barometer finds seven out of nine European countries featured have 'trust in government' levels below 40 percent and seven have 'no trust in government leaders at all' levels of 50 percent or more.¹³

As we will see, this 'elite' politics combines with cultural and socio-economic change to create new opportunities for populist and extremist actors. The former - in its radical right form - has been the most successful new party of families in Western Europe. Extremists, on the other hand, have the potential to create a real threat to physical and emotional well-being.

All of this plays out differently in varying systems of liberal democracy - consensual or majoritarian.¹⁴ Consensual systems defined by greater institutional checks and balances and/or proportional voting systems provide more opportunities for new parties to form and become challengers for office. In Austria, the Netherlands and Switzerland, populist parties have not only won seats in legislative assemblies, but have taken part in government too. An exception amongst consensual democracies is the US where the two party system, as a result of a majoritarian electoral system, has fought off or consumed contenders; new forces

tend to challenge, merge and adapt to one of the two main parties. In majoritarian systems, new parties can form but find it difficult to secure a parliamentary footing. However, in the case of UKIP in the UK for example, European parliamentary elections have ironically provided an alternative route where the blockages of the domestic political system are considerable for smaller parties.

While populism is not the only plausible response to socio-economic, cultural and political change, it does have certain resources that are to its advantage. Within each of these 'stresses' on liberal democracy lies opportunities for a populist political, ideological and rhetorical attack: the 'general will' thwarted; 'elites' mendacity; the people and their heartland jeopardised; the 'other' posing a threat, and 'arrogant' and 'aloof' liberal democracy either incapable or unwilling to respond adequately. These arguments can become highly charged, hate-filled and flirtatious with threatening and violent action - extremism feeds off similar anxieties. The nature of both the populist and extremist responses to democratic stress will now be explored further.

¹² Panebianco, A. 1988. Political parties: organisation and power. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹³ "2012 Edelman Trust Barometer: Global Deck." Edelman Insights. <http://www.slideshare.net/EdelmanInsights/2012-edelman-trust-barometer-global-deck>

¹⁴ Lijphart, A. 1984. Democracies: patterns of majoritarian and consensus government in twenty-one countries. Yale: Yale University Press.

3. Populist response to democratic 'stress'

Inevitably perhaps, faced with these democratic stresses, the political mainstream has proven to be inadequate in the task of eradicating conflict and meeting a wide range of individualised expectations. There are a number of possible responses to this: (1) people reject the system in a revolutionary or 'beyond the ballot box' fashion; (2) new forces arise within the mainstream to challenge the establishment, and (3) people become disinterested in the democratic process. All of these three courses can be seen. The first is an extremist or revolutionary response - its impact has been very marginal. The second has been witnessed in the case of localist, civic nationalist, green, idealist and lifestyle parties. Such parties have had a greater impact on Western European consensual democracies or where, as in the case of civic nationalists, they have been able to gather concentrations of local support in majoritarian democracies. Populists pursue a different logic in response to stresses: they turn one element (democracy) against another (liberalism) and seek to change democracy from *within the* system. They do this in a particular way.

In an article entitled "Trust the People!" Margaret Canovan argues that democracy has a pragmatic and a redemptive aspect. The former as we have seen in the earlier discussion on the meanings of democracy is characterised by checks and balances, separation of powers, pluralism and institutional counter-weight. As Canovan writes:

*"Inherent in modern democracy, in tension with its pragmatic face, is faith in secular redemption: the promise of a better world through action by the sovereign people."*¹⁵

It is to this 'voice of the people' or 'general will' that populism makes its appeal. What is notable about this political 'style', however, is the ways in which it makes its appeal. Paul Taggart has tracked the historical development of populism from which he has drawn some essential characteristics. He points out, very importantly, that populism is not simply about 'attempting to be popular'.¹⁶ Should that be a defining characteristic then any politician becomes a populist as elections approach. It is worth adding that nor is populism simply about making majoritarian appeals to 'the people'. As we shall see, however, populism is umbilically linked to the political mainstream through concepts such as 'the people', democratic voice, and the will of the majority. There is something more particular about this style of political action.

Taggart's concept of populism accords with the redemptive versus pragmatic tension within democracy well. It is against the institutions of representative democracy, a celebration of an idealised 'heartland' and its people, and has a chameleonic nature: taking on board ideas and ideologies as it sees fit given its particular as opposed to universal nature. Moreover, it rises as a response to 'crisis'.¹⁷ The argument of this report is that 'stress' is a sufficient condition for the occurrence of populism and, in economically, politically and culturally changing societies, 'stress' is a normal condition. Populism will ebb and flow in accordance with the degree to which there is a sense of stress within representative democracy.

This fact links in well with Cas Mudde's characterisation of the populist radical right as a 'pathological normalcy.' He critiques Erwin Scheuch and Hans Klingemann on the 'normal pathology' thesis, which sees the populist radical right as alien to the values of western democracy, yet persisting within it - hence the 'normal' adjective. Instead,

¹⁵ Canovan, M. 1999. "Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy." *Political Studies* 47(1): 11.

¹⁶ Taggart, P. 2000. *Populism*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

¹⁷ *ibid*: 5.

Mudde sees the populist radical right as a radicalisation of mainstream values: nativism, authoritarianism and populism. 'Nativism' is:

*"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 nation-state's homogeneity."*¹⁸

Both on the mainstream left and right there are expressions of milder versions of this outlook. Social democracy is dependent on some notion of citizenship no matter how porous, which requires 'a people' to be citizens. The centre-right espouses confident themes of patriotism and national virtue which have an implicitly nativist tinge to them. Anxiety about immigration, integration, nationhood, sovereignty and globalisation appear across the mainstream also. As Margaret Canovan puts it in her work on nationhood:

*"The discourses of democracy, social justice and liberalism all in their different ways presuppose the existence not just of a state, but of a political community."*¹⁹

Mudde defines populism as:

*"A thin-centred ideology that considers society to be separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, the 'pure people' and the 'corrupt elite', an which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* of the people."*

There is some overlap with Taggart here. The notion of 'the (morally) pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite' is an important one. In the case of the populist radical right, the 'corrupt' elite is seen as taking advantage of 'the people' to perpetuate their own

agendas. In another sense, the elites can be seen as not taking enough initiative to protect the 'pure people' from 'others', a dominant theme of the populist anti-Islamic discourse. The process is seen as a corrupting one: culturally, ideologically and politically.

Indeed, Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser question the degree to which populism is a 'threat or corrective for democracy'.²⁰ Paul Taggart's analysis of the historical development of populism shows that it can often be corrective as anxious voices are brought into the democratic process. This applies as much to poor agricultural workers who were attracted to the People's Party in the 1890s and the culturally and economically alienated who are attracted to the Tea Party in modern day America. The People's Party was subsumed within the Democratic Party over time, just as the Tea Party has interacted with the Republican Party. Both parties changed in accordance with absorption and interaction. The Democratic Party of the New Deal responded quite clearly to the concerns of the People's Party demographic. At one point, it is worth remembering, Franklin D Roosevelt even threatened the independence of the Supreme Court. Without absorbing the Tea Party, the Republicans have shifted towards its agenda - and away from the mainstream - as primaries have become a battle between mainstream Republicanism and Tea Party radicalism.

Whatever one may think of the particular arguments, ideas, values and conflicts that are being expressed, there is a strong case that it is better that they are expressed within, rather than outside, the democratic system. Some viewpoints may well be antagonistic, stereotyping, immersed in conspiracy theory, but there are alternative spaces where they could reside other than the democratic space. If these ideas and

¹⁸ Mudde, Cas. 2008. "The Populist Radical Right: A Pathological Normalcy." In Malmö University, Willy Brandt Series of Working Papers in International Migration and Ethnic Relations. March 2007. Malmö, SE.

¹⁹ Canovan, M. 1996. *Nationhood and political theory*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

²⁰ Mudde, C. and C. R. Kaltwasser. 2012. "Populism and (liberal) democracy: a framework for analysis." In Mudde, Cas and Kaltwasser, Cristóbal Rovira, eds. *Populism in Europe and the Americas: threat or corrective for democracy?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

thoughts, many of them more popular than many centrists might like to concede, find their way into the territory of the extreme with its hatred and even violent potential then the harm could be greater. Given some of the ideas of the populist radical right, it may be that engaging with a populist is preferable to engaging with an extremist: the far lesser of two evils.

On the 'threat' side, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser distinguish between consolidated and unconsolidated democracies. Consolidated democracies have thus far largely ridden out any populist threat to democracy with checks and balances. The exceptions are perhaps Hungary under Fidesz and, arguably, Italy under Silvio Berlusconi where legal systems were brought under tighter control of the executive. Unconsolidated democracies experiencing change through populist forces could include the Egyptian constitution as it is shifted in the direction of a Muslim Brotherhood world-view backed by plebiscite.

The impacts on democratic politics have been in the field of party competition as mainstream parties, to a greater or lesser extent, have shifted to respond to any populist threat to their electoral base. Tjitske Akkerman has systematically analysed the impact of the populist far right on the governance agendas of centre-right parties. She found that centre-right parties in a group of eight European countries have shifted towards the populist radical right on issues to do with immigration and asylum (they have kept their distance on anti-Islamic positions which suggests that there is a toxic zone into which mainstream parties are reluctant to travel). Occasionally, populist radical right parties were able to exert influence in coalition - the Danish People's Party and the FPÖ have both been able to pressure their centre-right partners at various times.²¹

-While populism can appeal to a 'silent majority' and bring them into the political

process, it also has a number of potential weaknesses. As a 'redemptive' as opposed to 'pragmatic' ideology or style, it may lack the ability to spot trade-offs and contradictions in its political positions. The modern policy-making environment is multi-tiered and highly complex: slogan-led policy-making has deficiencies in this context. Secondly, it adopts an overtly moral outlook on the world seeking to de-legitimise mainstream democracy. In return, it is often a mainstream tactic to toxify populist forces. Forging consensus around policy solutions in this environment becomes fraught. Finally, populism - in its radical right form - has a disregard for minority rights. The potential to do harm by espousing a certain rhetoric, changing a legal framework, or creating adverse economic conditions for specific groups is considerable. For all those who value the protection of minority rights, this will be a cause for concern.

The argument of this report is that Mudde's notion of the populist radical right as a 'pathological normalcy' is a useful one. Mudde, Taggart and Canovan have all provided valuable insight into populism as a phenomenon. Populism is one response to democratic 'stress' - and a significant one. It is not going away anytime soon and, in fact, we are seeing new populist forces - such as UKIP in the UK - emerge all the time. Before looking at some of the aspects of demand for populism, it is important to consider its harmful cousin - extremism - and how they may be distinguished as well as the nature and strength of their relationship. It will then be important to consider the 'demand' for these political standpoints as well as the strategies that mainstream parties may adopt in confronting populist and/or extreme arguments.

²¹ Akkerman, T. 2012. "Populist radical right parties in Western Europe: how do mainstream parties react and to what effect?" Paper submitted to Policy Network Amsterdam conference, November 2012. Also see Akkerman, T. & S.L. de Lange. 2012. "Radical right parties in office. Incumbency records and the electoral cost of governing." *Government and Opposition* 47(4): 574-596 and Akkerman, T. 2012. "The impact of radical right parties in government. A comparative analysis of immigration and integration policies in nine countries (1996-2010)." *West European Politics* 35(3): 511-529.

CASE STUDY**THE POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT IN THE UK:
THE CASE OF THE UK'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EU**

The conventional political reaction to UKIP has been to interpret its recent success in building greater support through the prism of the UK's European Union (EU) membership. A second place finish for UKIP in the 2009 European elections with 13 seats won only served to emphasise this point. David Cameron's decision to commit to an 'in-out' referendum on the UK's EU membership in 2017 following renegotiated Treaty terms is widely, and correctly, seen as a response to euroscepticism both within his own party and as a result of recent increases in UKIP support. Intra-party challenges have made his command of his parliamentary party fraught, while the extra-party challenge of UKIP threatens a number of Conservative marginal seats without the corresponding coalition opportunities available in PR systems.

Looking at the nature of populist parties over the last ten years or so, it is difficult to conclude that David Cameron's current position on granting a referendum while campaigning positively for continued membership is one that resolves both the intra- and extra-party dilemmas he is facing. Cameron is facing a challenge to shift to a more eurosceptic position in four main directions: (i) Conservative parliamentary and wider party eurosceptics; (ii) UKIP; (iii) eurosceptic media; and (iv) voters who switch allegiance between the Conservatives, UKIP and no voting in response to a bundle of issues including the EU. Before looking at each of these actors in turn, it is necessary to consider UKIP in the context of the definitions of populism presented above.

Looking at key elements of populism - 'the people' versus 'the elite', a sense of 'crisis', thin ideology, the competition of the general will with the institutional checks and balances of liberal democracy, and the notion of a 'heartland' - it is easy to see that euroscepticism could quite easily become a populist cause. Indeed, that is precisely the mode of discourse adopted by the UK Independence Party. European and national political elites are seen as conspiring against the will of the people to manage their own affairs. The sense of crisis in the context of the Eurozone challenges is palpable. UK membership of the EEC is seen as a historic betrayal of a heartland of traders, fishermen and entrepreneurs with ways of life that were trampled upon by EU regulation and common policies in areas such as fisheries and the free movement of people. Occasionally neo-liberal (on regulation) but other times nationalistic (on immigration), UKIP's is a thin ideology. Institutional barriers such as qualified majority voting are seen as impediments to UKIP's view of democracy. This is clearly a populist radical right party.

David Cameron's European policy as a mainstream centre-right response - in part to the populist radical right - is likely to have a particular trajectory over the coming years and may end up fortifying UKIP. Here is the potential impact on the different groups identified above:

1. The Tory eurosceptic right and eurosceptics in the wider Conservative party. The simple fact is that this group sees an 'in-out' referendum not as a means of gauging the general will, but a means by which the UK can terminate its current relationship with the EU. David Cameron's commitment to hold an 'in-out' referendum should he win the 2015 election and re-open EU treaty negotiations would mean that he will face a shopping list of demands for renegotiation, which he will in all likelihood fail to deliver. His intra-party eurosceptics will then demand that he campaigns for 'out'. Should he refuse to do so, it is likely that some of them will leave the party and either campaign as independents or join UKIP. This will strengthen UKIP as the only reliable political home for eurosceptics.

2. UKIP. Likewise UKIP will focus quite clearly on campaigning for 'out'. The binary nature of the referendum will place them at an advantage in gathering even more 'out' supporters. They will receive a very high profile, likely to enhance their cause and hurt both Labour and the Conservatives. However, if there is an 'in-out' referendum it means (in all likelihood) that a Conservative government has been elected in 2015. If the leader is in favour of 'in', then the party will be split and UKIP will be able to project a clear and uncompromising voice. A defeat for the referendum would be expected to mean that much of this new support pretty quickly evaporates, but will it all? In other words, we could expect a UKIP bounce, but when it falls, it may not fall all the way to ground. Moreover, the notion that the issue is resolved once a referendum has occurred does not follow history. The 1975 referendum did not resolve the issue of EEC membership for the Labour party. Indeed, the party's hostility to EEC membership in the early 1980s was one of the motivating issues behind the split away of the Social Democratic Party in 1981.

3. The eurosceptic media. Faced with a Conservative party that is divided, the eurosceptic elements of the media will begin to make ever warmer noises about UKIP. They may withhold full endorsement but they will improve the party's brand amongst their readerships. This will mean that in common with many populist radical right parties across Europe, UKIP's incentive will be to maintain the clarity/purity of its position rather than compromise with the mainstream.

4. UKIP supporters and considerers. Following a recent large-scale survey of UKIP supporters by the Conservative peer, Lord Ashcroft, he concluded:

*"Many of those who are drawn to voting UKIP recognise the willful simplicity of the party's rhetoric: that we could cut taxes, increase defence spending and balance the budget all at once, and cut crime and improve access to the NHS, if only we left EU and clamped down on immigration. For some of them, this simplicity does not matter. They have effectively disengaged from the hard choices inherent in the democratic process, though they still want formally to take part in it."*²²

These are voters who are attracted to a populist radical right cause, of which the EU is just one element - an element linked to deeper issues of cultural anxiety, political

²² Ashcroft, Michael. 2012. "The UKIP threat is not about Europe." Lord Ashcroft Polls. <http://lordashcrofthpolls.com/2012/12/the-UKIP-threat-is-not-about-europe/>.

antipathy and concerns about nationhood. Faced with a centre-left party which, despite recent attempts to address these issues, still projects a metropolitan image, and a centre-right party seeking to 'modernise' in many ways on issues of social liberalism and diversity, these voters feel less part of the political mainstream. The question is the degree to which they give up on the mainstream altogether and seek a populist radical right alternative even though this may benefit their least favoured party in the context of a majoritarian democracy. However, Lord Ashcroft's research shows clearly that these anxieties are unlikely to be resolved through an 'in-out' EU referendum alone. Indeed, these anxieties may be provoked and exacerbated.

As a strategy to minimise the space for the UK's populist radical right party, David Cameron's EU referendum pledge is likely to be a misguided one. It may split away a portion of his party, threaten his own leadership, give profile to a populist party that he cannot or will not match, boost the brand image of UKIP in the eurosceptic media, and fail to address the real underlying anxieties of voters who are attracted to UKIP. It is a considerable opportunity for UKIP as they are given the spotlight in a way they have not been able to secure in their entire history. They will appear in the media as equals with the three major parties: Labour, Conservative and the Liberal Democrats. Whether it can take advantage of the opportunity and hold onto any bounce it secures is another matter and depends on leadership, strategy and organisation. However, there is little reason to suppose that the referendum will remove some of the underlying demand for a party of UKIP's nature.

4. Extremism and populism

Right-wing extremists are conflict theorists par excellence. For them, where ethnic groups come into contact with one another, hate and violence is not only inevitable, but also desirable.

Conflict theory holds that conflict will result from ethnic mobility and white intolerance is greatest where the size of the nonwhite population presents a challenge to the economic interests and dominant social and political position of whites.²³ Green, Stolovitch and Wong have found that the ethnic elements of conflict are more significant than the socio-economic impacts in their study of ethnic mobility in New York City.²⁴ However, conflict theory seems very weak as a general rule as it is time and place contingent. Any initial conflict can weaken considerably as the notion of the 'group' itself changes and ethnic boundaries blur and disintegrate.

This is the essence of contact theory. Sturgis, Jackson and Brunton-Smith have found a very different result looking at communities in London.²⁵ They find that, once socio-economic deprivation is taken into account, more ethnically diverse neighbourhoods have *more* social cohesion. The more contact there is, in terms of social interaction, then not only is conflict reduced, but cohesion increases. This finding was further reinforced by Saggat and Sommerville who conclude that lower social cohesion and trust is correlated with deprivation rather than diversity.²⁶ This will have implications for strategies for combating extremism. For this reason, cohesion through contact is disregarded in

the right-wing extremist universe. Contact is instead seen as first a recipe for conflict and violence, then dilution and, at the very extreme end of the spectrum, almost as a form of cultural genocide. The extreme right universe is one where group conflict is natural, desirable and necessary. Evidence to the contrary is treated as an irrelevance.

Both the populist and extreme radical right subscribe to some notion of conflict as inevitable. This explains a similar intensity of concern for supporters of both populist and extremist parties when it comes to attitudes towards political elites and anti-immigration hostility (many of these attitudes are seen within the political mainstream too, but with a lower degree of intensity). Robert Ford, Matthew Goodwin and David Cutts argue on the basis of empirical analysis that the UK's right wing populist party, UKIP, and its extreme right party, the British National Party (BNP) are:

*"not simply mobilizing a diverse array of voters disconnected from mainstream politics but are recruiting electorates that share several key attitudinal features, in particular populism and anti-immigrant hostility."*²⁷

There are two differences between the populist and extremist strategies. Firstly, populists operate within the sphere of democratic politics. They see changing the nature of democracy as their main target; their goal is to purify and re-moralise what they perceive as a corrupt system. Extremists, on the other hand, take a more instrumental view of democracy: it either serves their purpose or it does not.

Therefore, they enter democratic space and depart from it at intervals depending on the degree to which it serves their purpose. Some former extreme parties such as the Swedish Democrats see their

²³ Blalock, Hubert M. 1967. *Toward a Theory of Minority Group Relations*. City?: Wiley.

²⁴ Green, D., D.Z. Stolovitch and J.S. Wong. 1998. "Defended Neighborhoods, Integration and Racially Motivated Crime." *American Journal of Sociology*, 104(2): 372-403.

²⁵ Sturgis, P., J. Jackson, and I. Brunton-Smith. 2011. "Ethnic diversity and the social cohesion of neighbourhoods: The case of London." 6th ECPR General Conference. Reykjavik.

²⁶ Saggat, S. and W. Somerville. 2012. "Building a British model of integration in an era of immigration: policy lessons for Government." *Transatlantic Council on Migration and Migration Policy Institute*.

²⁷ Ford, R., M. Goodwin, and D. Cutts. 2011. "Strategic Eurosceptics and Polite Xenophobes: Support for the United Kingdom Independence Party in the 2009 European Parliament Elections." *European Journal of Political Science* 51(2): 204-234.

interests as served by democracy and often change in the process and start to leave their extremism behind. The French Front National has also trodden this path. Others attempt to enter the democratic space but ultimately fail, such as the UK's BNP. Some parties, such as Hungary's Jobbik, exist both within and beyond democracy. Street protests, persecution of minorities and competition for office co-exist in a 'one foot in, one foot out' model of extremism. The English Defence League (EDL), with its association with the British Freedom Party, has also unsuccessfully experimented with democracy, reverting to a sectarian street protest model. A key distinction between the populist and extreme right is not pro-versus anti-democracy, but something more nuanced: change within the system over conditional engagement with the system as a tool of mobilisation.

The second distinguishing feature of right-wing extremism is a tolerance and even acceptance of violence. Alongside this, extremists mobilise hatred for particular groups defined by their race, ethnicity, religion, migration status or nationality. Attitudes towards violence is a clear distinguishing element between populist and extremist actors. However, the deployment of the politics of hate can be fuzzy. There are populist voices such as Geert Wilders of the PVV who has been seen to espouse the politics of hate - notwithstanding failure to convict him under Dutch anti-hate laws - with anti-Islam rhetoric that has not spilt over into advocating a politics of violence. While it is definitive of extremism that there is acceptance and even advocacy of violence, the politics of hate is less respectful of the extremist/populist boundary.

While the populist radical right and the extreme right appeal to many of the same attitudes with the exception of tolerance of violence, the degree to which they interact and support one another is much less clear. Indeed, they may even be inversely related in many circumstances. For example, the

Dutch PVV is one of the more successful populist radical right parties in Europe, but its relative success has not been accompanied by a growth in extremism. Conversely, the emergence of the Tea Party in the US has been correlated with the growth of militia groups, and even some horrific cases of extremist violence, such as the massacre of six people by Wade Michael Page in Oak Creek, Wisconsin.

It is clear that the relationship between the populist radical right and the extreme right is a contextual and contingent one. From a security as well as a political perspective, there is a need for a much better understanding of political discourses in the mainstream media, politics, its populist corollaries and how that impacts any rise in extremist politics and potential for violence. This is further compounded by the interplay of 'extremisms' as, for example, far-right and Islamic extremist groups fuel one another in a process Roger Eatwell has described as 'cumulative extremism'.²⁸

Having seen different approaches of populism and extremism to advancing their political case in a context of democracy under stress - the 'supply' side - it is worth taking a look at things from the other end. The 'demand' side - attitudes, demographics, and anxieties - are the context in which all political movements and parties operate. The report will then analyse the various strategic responses that mainstream political actors can adopt to weaken the 'demand' and opportunity for populists and extremists.

²⁸ Eatwell, R. 2006. "Community cohesion and cumulative extremism in contemporary Britain." *The Political Quarterly* 77(2):204-216.

5. The 'demand' for populism and extremism

Populist radical right and extreme right parties have been able to tap into a public appetite for the politics of identity, concern with the performance and process of representative democracy, and, in more recent times, anxiety induced by economic stress. In explaining the success of the populist radical right in particular, it is necessary to understand the dimensions of this context. None of this is deterministic: it is opportunity rather than destiny. Mainstream parties, for example, may have found a way of meeting this demand. However, when looking at modern European attitudes, it becomes quite clear how it is that the populist radical right has been able to become the most successful new party family in the last two decades or so.

A combination of anxiety over change, economic strife, cultural angst, mistrust in the ability and competence of governments (including in their management of borders), concerns over free-riding upon generous European welfare states, and, amongst a minority group of voters, a basic displeasure of growing diversity are all evident. As the analysis of a variety of data will show, there is perhaps a hardcore minority of voters for whom there is little that can be done to persuade them that there is a robust mainstream response to their concerns. This proportion varies from country to country. Beyond this minority, there is a softer

'reluctant radical' or 'latent hostile' group that is open to some persuasion.

However, there are attractions towards the populist radical right for this group. Finally, there is a much wider group who have a lesser degree of anxiety but who could drift toward the populist right if a successful mainstream response is lacking - these can be termed 'identity ambivalents'. When we analyse mainstream strategic responses to these demands for a populist radical right, the measure of their success is the degree to which: (1) they marginalise the outwardly hostile groups; (2) they limit the pool of potential demand for the populist radical right; and (3) they meet the anxieties of the mainstream majority - many of which are shared with the soft or hard right.

Zick, Kupper, and Hovermann of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung looked at cross border comparisons of attitudes towards race, immigration, values and culture.²⁹ On questions of immigration and culture, deep concerns are evident (see table 1 below).

It should be noted that the same data also shows some positive attitudes towards immigration and Muslims. For example, well over half of respondents in all the countries mentioned above agree that 'immigrants enrich our culture.' In none of the countries do more than 30 percent believe that 'the majority of Muslims find terrorism justifiable.' Nonetheless, the data above

TABLE 1

| | D | GB | F | NL | I | PT | PL | HU |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| There are too many immigrants in [country] | 50 | 62.2 | 40.3 | 46 | 62.5 | 59.6 | 27.1 | 58.7 |
| Immigrants are a strain on our welfare system | 40.8 | 60.2 | 54.7 | 20.3 | 31.7 | 42.5 | 45.8 | 77.2 |
| There are too many Muslims in [country] | 46.1 | 44.7 | 36.2 | 41.5 | 49.7 | 27.1 | 47.1 | 60.7 |
| The Muslim culture fits well into [country/Europe] | 16.6 | 39 | 48.8 | 38.7 | 27.4 | 50.1 | 19 | 30.2 |

D=Germany; GB=UK; F=France; NL=Netherlands; I=Italy; PT=Portugal; PL=Poland; HU=Hungary.

Source: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/do/07908-20110311.pdf>

²⁹ Zick, A. et al. 2011. "Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination: A European Report." Berlin: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

show that populist and/or extremist parties of the right have an opportunity to tap into anxiety around immigration, welfare, Islam, as well as the concerns about the body politic that were identified earlier.

Péter Krekó of Political Capital in Budapest has developed an index of 'demand for right-wing extremism' - DEREK. It accumulates attitudes that are likely to provide an opportunity for the extreme right across four dimensions: prejudice/welfare chauvinism; right-wing value orientation; anti-establishment attitudes; and fear, distrust and pessimism (The DEREK structure is shown in the Annex). Table 2 (on the following page) shows the breakdown between Central/ Eastern Europe and Western Europe.

If we take the DEREK value as a useful proxy for demand for right-wing extremism and the separate right-wing value/anxiety dimensions as a potential demand for populism then interesting relationships start to emerge between these demands and the growth of populist and extreme right-wing parties. The most successful extremes have been in Central/Eastern Europe in the shape of Jobbik provoking anti-Roma sentiment³⁰ and Golden Dawn in Greece. This is consistent with the DEREK data. In northern and western Europe, it has been populist parties that have been more adept at tapping into drivers of 'demand' for far right representation, driven by prejudice, anti-establishment attitudes, traditional right-wing values or economic/physical fear. Attitudes to conflict and violence would also be a useful addition to this data set.

Consistently, when voters' attitudes and behaviours are researched, the potential for populist and extremist right support is clear. In 2011, the organisation behind the Hope not Hate campaign commissioned the polling company, Populus, to undertake a large-scale survey of English attitudes

into economic anxiety, nation, attitudes to immigration, Muslims and other minorities, and optimism, nostalgia and pessimism. Using cluster analysis, Populus grouped the English population into six 'identity tribes' ranging from very liberal attitudes on the left to a group in 'active enmity' on the right. Chart 1 (on the following page) shows how the resulting *Fear and Hope* report recorded the breakdown of the 'tribes'.

UKIP support has, up until recently, been concentrated amongst the 'latent hostiles.' However, there is little doubt that it has the potential to sway some of the cultural integrationists who are more likely to support the Conservatives. They may even be able to pick off more of those in 'active enmity' as the British far-right fragments and turns in on itself. All these elements are contingent. The point is that the populist radical right does have a potential constituency. This is further underlined by the work of Counterpoint on 'reluctant' and 'potential' radicals.³¹ Table 3 (on the following page) shows the breakdown between the mainstream, 'reluctant' and 'potential' radicals, based upon elections surveys and strengths of attachment to populist parties.

Where there are established populist or extreme right parties, the mainstream is smaller in these countries. This is in all likelihood due to an interaction between the 'demand' side and the success of the 'supply' side. Unsurprisingly, Hungary is at one end of the spectrum and Germany, with its cultural aversion to extremism, is at the other end of the spectrum. Both the *Fear and Hope* Report and the 'Reluctant radical' analyses show that there is space on the right in Western European societies in which populists can operate.

One important caveat on the demand side is the apparently more widespread acceptance

³⁰ Karacsony, Gergely and Daniel Rona. 2012. "Reasons behind the rise of the Hungarian radical right." *Journal of East European and Asian Studies* 2(1): 61-92

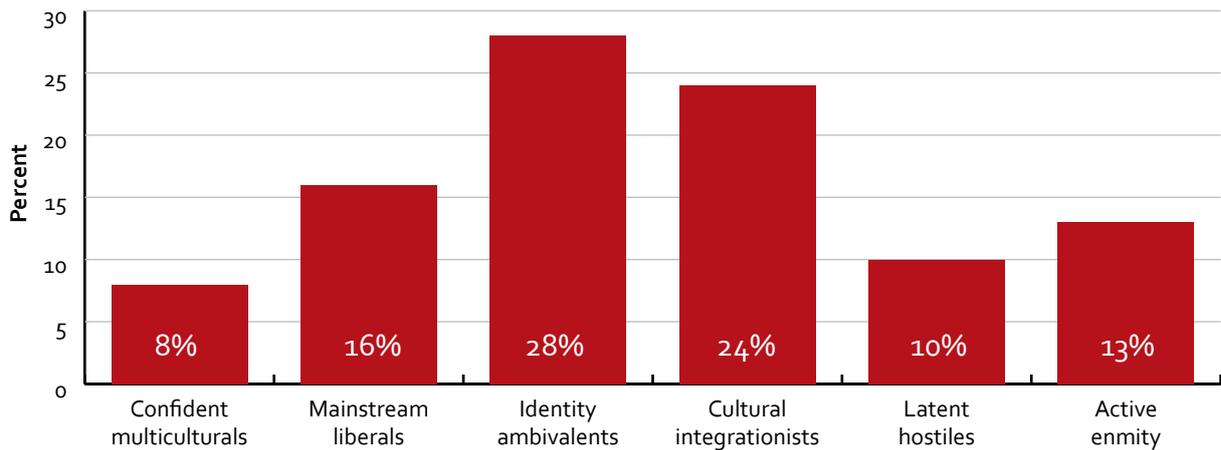
³¹ Fieschi, C. et al. 2012. "Recapturing the Reluctant Radical: how to win back Europe's populist vote." Counterpoint.

TABLE 2

| | DEREX | Prejudices | Anti-establishment attitudes | Right-wing Orientation | Fear |
|------------------------|-------|------------|------------------------------|------------------------|------|
| Central/Eastern Europe | 8% | 26% | 25% | 28% | 16% |
| Western Europe | 4% | 20% | 16% | 14% | 9% |

Source: 'Strategies Against Right-Wing Extremism in Western and Eastern Europe' - presentation to Policy Network seminar November 2012.

CHART 1



Source: "The New Tribes of British Identity Politics." 2012. Fear and Hope. <http://www.fearandhope.org.uk/>

TABLE 3

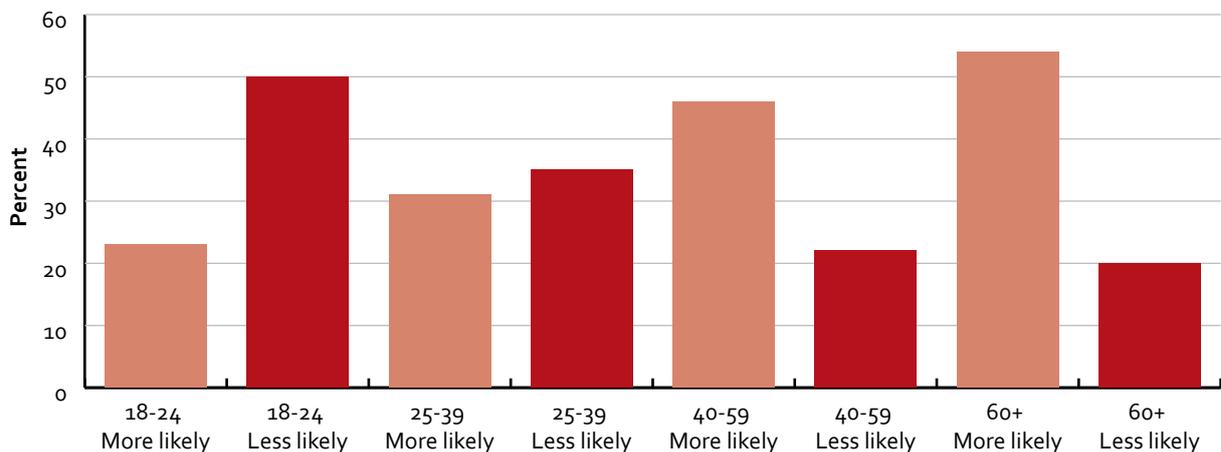
| | D | DK | FN | F | HU | NL | NO | SW |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Mainstream | 91.2 | 86.3 | 81.4 | 84.2 | 66.3 | 80.7 | 82.9 | 85.5 |
| Potential radical | 8.2 | 3.6 | 14 | 12.3 | 25.7 | 8.1 | 3.4 | 1.2 |
| Reluctant radical | 0.1 | 5 | 2.1 | 0.8 | 5.4 | 5.6 | 6.2 | 1.4 |

D=Germany; DK=Denmark; FN=Finland; F=France; HU=Hungary; NL=Netherlands; NO=Norway; SW=Sweden

Source: Counterpoint data <https://www.smashwords.com/books/download/238093/1/latest/0/0/recapturing-the-reluctant-radical-how-to-win-back-europes-populist-vote-by-catherine-fieschi-marley-morris-and-lila-caballero.pdf>

CHART 2

Would you be more or less likely to vote for a party that promised to stop all immigration into the UK?



Source: Extremis Project/YouGov extremism poll 19th-20th August 2012.

of and adherence to notions of liberalism and pragmatism amongst younger voters. A recent poll by Extremis Project/YouGov shows the age impact on attitudes towards populist radical right themes very clearly (see chart 2).

It is clear from this data that attitudes to immigration shift quite markedly between the cohorts under 40 years old and those over. It remains to be seen whether this is an age or cohort effect. Contact theory would suggest the latter: these age groups were raised, educated and work in a more fluid and diverse Britain. However, populism will be able to shift its focus from immigration to other issues, i.e. welfare dependency or cultural friction, in response to any generational shift that occurs; neither demand nor supply is static.

Party competition will heavily influence the degree to which different voter 'tribes' are attracted to the mainstream, populism or, in the event of catastrophic failure, the extreme. Party strategy - in organisational, electoral and governance terms - is critical, but the strategic choices are neither simple nor clear. It is important to look at a variety of strategies - both in terms of what has worked and what might work. The populist signal and the extremist threat emerge from liberal democracies under stress. How can mainstream parties respond?

6. Mainstream party strategies to cope with democratic stress

There are two broad approaches for mainstream parties and political movements to cope with the populist radical right: outcompeting them or reducing 'demand' for populism. A strong strategy would combine both: address the anxieties that create the opportunity for populist and extremist parties to emerge and gain support, while outcompeting the parties themselves.

In the short term at least, it is easier to resist the threat from populist parties in majoritarian political systems. It is difficult for such parties to gain a foothold. However, once they reach a critical mass, they can severely dent the support of mainstream parties of both the right and left. For example, UKIP took more votes away from Labour in the 2009 European elections but has taken many more potential votes away from the Conservatives since 2010 by a factor of 37%-3%.³² Incumbency matters, but what is most striking is that the majority of UKIP voters have backed neither of the two main parties in the previous election.

The other risk in majoritarian systems is that a populist force attaches itself to a mainstream party, dragging it away from a majoritarian position - on the left and the right. The most obvious example is the Tea Party and its impact on the Republican Party in the US. It contributed to the Republicans' failure to win a majority in the Senate in 2010 and made it more difficult for Mitt Romney to pass through the presidential primary as a moderate. Whether populist parties and forces meet a support threshold or function with a mainstream party, they pose a threat to the mainstream - even if they do not become strong forces from a parliamentary or governmental perspective.

In consensual systems, the risk to the mainstream is one of representation and coalition formation. Support, even with aggregate thresholds in place, is fairly quickly converted into parliamentary representation. As soon as this occurs, coalition formation is impacted and the mainstream party may become weakened. Tjitske Akkerman has systematically analysed the party positions of a number of liberal, Conservative/Christian democratic, social democratic and populist radical right parties in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, UK and Switzerland. Liberal parties such as the Dutch VVD have co-opted the positions of populist radical right parties on immigration, social rights and asylum, while avoiding their anti-Islamic stances. However, some populist parties have moved even *further* to the right including the Swiss SVP, Austrian FPÖ, while the Dutch PVV and Flemish Vlaams Blok (VB) have remained at a far-right pole.³³

What follows are eight potential strategic responses that mainstream parties can deploy in response to the populist radical right. They are not exhaustive, but are illustrative. Bale *et al.* break down strategic responses into three categories: hold; adopt, and defuse. A *hold* strategy involves staying the course and avoiding a substantive strategic response to the populist radical right: cordon sanitaire, tentative engagement and 'return to the roots' broadly fall into this category. *Defuse* involves attempts to decrease the salience of populist radical right issues. Triangulation, re-framing and left populism fall into this category. The third category is *adopt*: absorption is an example of this strategic response. Statecraft and contact democracy are the substantive approaches that have yet to be tried. They do not seem to fall easily within the hold-defuse-adopt typology. Nor have they been comprehensively attempted. Table 4 details strategic responses of centre-left and centre-

³² Ford, R. 2013. "UKIP's rise is not just a problem for the conservatives – they are emerging as the party of choice for disaffected and angry voters from all parties." LSE Politics and Policy blog.

³³ Akkerman, T. 2012. "Immigration policy and electoral competition in Western Europe. A fine-grained analysis of party positions over the past two decades." Party Politics 19(1):1-23.

TABLE 4

| | Conservative/ liberal strategy | Social democrat internal debate | Other left/ green parties' response | Outcome: social democratic party strategy |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|
| DK 1980s | Defuse | United | Hold | Hold |
| DK 1990s | Adopt | Divided | Hold | Defuse |
| DK 2000s | Adopt | Divided | Hold | Adopt |
| NL 2000 | Adopt | Divided | Hold | Defuse/hold/adopt |
| NL mid-2000s | Defuse | Divided | Hold/Adopt | Defuse |
| N 1970s | Defuse | United | Defuse | Defuse |
| N 2000s | Defuse | United | Defuse | Defuse |
| AT mid-1980s-mid 1990s | Defuse | United | Hold | Hold/defuse |
| AT mid-1990s-2000s | Adopt | Divided | Hold | Hold/adopt |

Note: DK=Denmark, NL=Netherlands, N=Norway, AT=Austria

Source: Bale, Green-Pedersen, Krouwel, Luther, and Sitter, *If you can't beat them join them? Explaining social democratic responses to the challenge from the populist radical right in Western Europe*. *Political Studies*: 2010 Vol 58, p.421

right parties in Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Austria within the Bale *et al.* typology.

This typology gives good means to describe responses. What follows is an analysis of the merits of eight (or so) mainstream strategic responses to the rise of the populist radical right in Western European democracies and the US.

A. Cordon Sanitaire

The cordon sanitaire strategy is described by Sarah de Lange and Tjitske Akkerman in the context of the Flemish party system as follows:

*"[Established parties] have agreed not to cooperate with the [Vlaams Blok(VB)] in the electoral arena (no electoral cartels, no joint press conferences or declarations towards the press), in the parliamentary arena (no joint legislative activities or voting agreements, no support for resolutions introduced by the VB), or the executive arena (no governmental coalitions)."*³⁴

³⁴ de Lange, Sarah L. and T. Akkerman. 2012. "Populist parties in Belgium: a case of hegemonic liberal democracy?" In Mudde, Cas and Kaltwasser, Cristóbal Rovira, eds. *Populism in Europe and the Americas: threat or corrective for democracy?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

In the case of the populist nationalist anti-immigrant, francophone and elite VB, this strategy worked. A competitor, but more moderate nationalist party, the N-VA (New Flemish Alliance), has overtaken the party in popularity. In the recent Antwerp elections, VB fell from 33.5 percent to 10.2 percent of the vote; its stronghold was breached. Cordon sanitaire clearly has its uses when it comes to marginalising parties and bears some resemblance to the 'no shared platform' approach adopted by mainstream parties towards the BNP in the UK.

Therefore, this strategy in one of containment and does have its uses - particularly where extremist parties are the target. It has several drawbacks, however:

1. Despite its successful deployment in Belgium, it often does not work. A similar approach has been attempted towards the Front National in France, yet they still remain a significant minority party.
2. While a cordon sanitaire may quarantine parties, it does not quarantine issues. Flemish nationalism is, if anything, stronger than ever. The Front National's agenda on immigration, minority

communities and Islam has been flirted with by the UMP in France.

3. In the context of a moralisation of politics, which is one feature of populism, the very act of quarantine can justify the pariah party's narrative. It can leave the mainstream exposed as incapable of dealing with real concerns, playing to the notion of a distant, self-interested elite.

4. It can backfire. The minister-presidents of the German federal states are seeking a ban of the far-right NPD. In so doing, they could end up amplifying the party and its cause as Kai Arzheimer has argued.³⁵

5. No shared platform does not mean 'no platform'. Once a party has reached a certain level of strength and has elected representatives, it is impossible to deny it a public platform. Moreover, as Nick Lowles, Director of Hope not Hate, has argued, while some barriers to a platform can and should still be enforced, social media, community and street campaigns provide an alternative platform that cannot be denied.³⁶ Cordon sanitaire has an aspect of 'out of sight, out of mind' that is unrealistic and harmful - potentially leaving extreme arguments and parties unanswered.

Cordon sanitaire is often mainstream parties' first resort when faced with extreme or populist parties. The weakness of the strategy is that it does not normally work. Where it could be appropriate is fencing off extremism with its tendency towards hatred and tolerance of violence. However, if between 10 and 20 percent of the electorate are attracted to the populist radical right to some degree, the cordon sanitaire will quickly become inoperable. Instead, mainstream parties find themselves absorbing many

of the positions of the populist right while competing with the parties themselves - absorption in other words.

B. Absorption

Absorption works in two ways: either a populist party is co-opted to a cause or their issues are co-opted. Tim Bale has described the ÖVP (People's Party) led Schüssel Cabinet I of 2000-03 as 'unceremonious cannibalism.'³⁷ The ÖVP co-opted 50 percent of the populist right Freedom Party's (FPÖ) 1999 support in the 2002 election. Immigration policy was toughened up and the tensions of office - including responsibility for a tough fiscal policy - weighed heavily on the FPÖ's internal unity.³⁸ After a new coalition was formed following weeks of protracted negotiation in 2003, the FPÖ split in two with leader Jorg Haider forming a new right party - the BZÖ. Absorption was a seemingly successful strategy.

Yet, by 2008, the FPÖ had gained 13 seats and increased its vote by 6.5% (the BZÖ similarly increased its support and representation). Ahead of the 2013 legislative elections, opinion polls show the FPÖ still in a strong third place. Like non-populist third parties, coalition can be toxic as the smallest party for populists. In addition, their 'moral' purity of vision quickly crashes into governing reality. However, once on the outside they can recover more critical and uncompromising positions - a moral car wash. Absorption can therefore only work in the medium term where the populist party is metaphorically strangled to death in office.

From the perspective of the mainstream party absorbing either the populist party or its issues, there are other significant drawbacks

³⁵ Arzheimer, Kai. 2013. "Why trying to ban the NPD is a stupid idea." Extremis Project. <http://extremisproject.org/2013/01/why-trying-to-ban-the-npd-is-a-stupid-idea/>.

³⁶ Lowles, Nick. 2013. "Why 'No Platform' means something different today." Hope Not Hate. <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/blog/article/2410/why-no-platform-means-something-different-today>.

³⁷ Bale, T. 2003. "Cinderella and her ugly sisters: the mainstream and extreme right in Europe's bipolarising party systems." *West European Politics*. 26(3): 67-90.

³⁸ Fallend, F. 2012. "Populism in government: the case of Austria (2000-2007)." In Mudde, Cas and Kaltwasser, Cristóbal Rovira, eds. *Populism in Europe and the Americas: threat or corrective for democracy?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

to this strategy. First, mainstream parties can only go so far before they are too removed from their comfort zone. The research referred to by Tjitske Akkerman shows that populist radical right parties have been able to shunt right without paying an electoral price: this applies to both the FPÖ and the Swiss People’s Party (SVP).³⁹ What she has also found is that mainstream parties are uncomfortable with the anti-Islam positions of the populist radical right. A party can lose to the left what it gains by shifting to the right (and vice versa). It has, in many ways, a similar drawback to triangulation.

C. Triangulation and re-framing

Triangulation is a strategy that involves taking traditional solutions to solve an opponent’s ‘owned’ concerns - social democratic ends through conservative means or vice versa. It involves adopting a new, synthesised and transcendent policy approach in order to please both existing supporters and those of the opponent. One example of the centre-left achieving this goal in the debate over identity and cultural anxiety, for example, is to re-cast the problem as one of economic policy and social investment instead of one of cultural relations. Additionally, a centre-left party may agree to some tightening of immigration rules. The centre-right, as seen in the cases of the Dutch VVD and Austrian ÖVP, have tried triangulation alongside absorption as strategies. They can fit comfortably together: it is no coincidence that triangulation strategy often goes alongside a ‘big tent’ approach.

Re-framing as outlined by the psychologist George Lakoff is in many ways less substantive in policy terms than triangulation. It is more concerned with presenting an argument in a way that has cognitive appeal. The human mind is conditioned to respond to narrative, metaphor, and empathy. ‘Liberals’ (in the American context) should try to rely on

facts and evidence and instead condition voters to think in their way.⁴⁰ In this mode, the way to marginalise populist radical right parties could be to dramatise the harm they do to minorities and perhaps the wider consequences to human life of more restrictive policies.

There are draw-backs to both triangulation (meeting voters where they are) and re-framing (bringing voters to your positions). The major issue with triangulation is that on these populist issues, it is very difficult to find a bridging policy between two mutually-exclusive positions. The following is the UK Labour party’s supporters’ attitudes on two populist attitude statements:

TABLE 5

| | Labour 2010 - more likely | Labour 2010 - less likely | Labour 2012 - more likely | Labour 2012 - less likely |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Stop all immigration | 36 | 31 | 32 | 36 |
| Reduce number of Muslims/ presence of Islam in society | 34 | 25 | 29 | 31 |

Source: Extremis Project/YouGov

It is very difficult to see how Labour can triangulate either to a more populist right or mainstream liberal position given this split in *its* own supporters. More widely, it is hoping to win voters who are more concerned about immigration, welfare, and culture, but it is difficult to know how this can be achieved without alienating many of its current supporters - and they have become *more* rather than less liberal since the last General Election. Moreover, the very act of being seen to triangulate in this way would play into the moral accusations of a populist radical right party. The Conservatives face

³⁹ Akkerman, T. 2012. “Immigration policy and electoral competition in Western Europe. A fine-grained analysis of party positions over the past two decades.” *Party Politics* 19(1): 1-23.

⁴⁰ Lakoff, G. 2009. *The Political Mind: why you can’t understand 21st Century politics with an 18th Century brain.* New York: Penguin.

a similar dilemma between their current support, which is fairly hardline on questions of immigration and culture, and the younger/black and minority ethnic voters who it wants to attract, but who are more pragmatic.

Re-framing is an unconvincing way around this tricky dilemma. Firstly, the 'framing space' of politics is competitive so the challenges to your 'frame' will be considerable. Secondly, no matter how talented a communicator a mainstream party may have at their disposal, if they do not address anxieties head-on by talking about cultural as well as social and economic matters, they risk irrelevance. Having said this, there are 'economic' elections and 'cultural' elections. At certain times, such as the current context, economic questions can 'crowd-out' cultural questions. Much of this is exogenous and depends on people's most pressing concern given economic and political circumstances at the time. Therefore, it might be a case of ensuring relevance and sequencing the economic and cultural arguments to coincide with the political moment. The problem comes when trying to fight with an economic frame in a cultural moment. That is the risk of over-ambitious re-framing.

Re-framing sometimes offers a good communication manual for politicians, but as an antidote to populism, with its own powerful imagery and story, it will fall short. Indeed, a combination of triangulation and / or re-framing could fall between two stools and play into populist hands: 'unprincipled politics' mixed with a misdiagnosis of the political challenge.

D. Return to roots and Left populism

For the centre-left, there is the alternative strategy of adopting a class-based populism instead of the more cultural populist narratives of the populist radical right. In a sense, this is fighting fire with fire. In some respects, in the context of economic crisis and austerity, it is quite surprising that a stronger left-wing populism has not yet emerged.

There have been populist-esque movements such as 15M in Spain, Occupy in the US and UK, J14 in Israel, and UK Uncut. They all relied on a sense of crisis, juxtaposed a 'pure' people with a corrupt elite (Occupy's 'we are the 99%' is quintessential populism) and sought to drive change through expressive 'will of the people' rather than representative politics. In the electoral space, Syriza in Greece and perhaps the Dutch Socialist Party are currently the closest equivalent to left populist parties within western democracies. At a local level, there has been a flickering of left-wing populism. For example, the web and social media amplified a successful campaign of Respect in Bradford West with its connection to unseen social networks in the Islamic community in particular, showing how quickly new political forces can connect where the mainstream is perceived to have failed.⁴¹ Nonetheless, left populism has been hitherto significantly less successful than the populist radical right.

The problems with the mainstream left adopting a more populist stance are threefold. Firstly, a return to 'pure' left roots strategy is often based on attempting to win back lost working class support. However, much of this support has left as it no longer feels that its anxieties around culture, immigration and welfare are being met by the mainstream centre-left. An appeal to it on the basis of an economic class populism probably will not work. Secondly, western societies have changed and are now far more pluralistic. To make an appeal on what is a sectional ground ignores this basic fact.

Finally, should this strategy succeed in electoral terms then it would face one of the major draw-backs of populism: governing reality. Of course, mainstream left parties need to have a convincing argument on inequality, jobs, housing, public services and economic growth. However, populist

⁴¹ See Baston, L. 2013. "There was more to George Galloway's triumph in the Bradford West by-election than celebrity politics." LSE Politics and Policy Blog. <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/archives/30220>.

or even populist-light promises made in opposition have a habit of backfiring in office. Francois Hollande, the Socialist French President, fell into precisely this trap. Though it would be inaccurate to describe him as a populist, his promise for an 'end to austerity' in his campaign drifted towards a light populism. Following the election, he then implemented an austerity budget in office, leaving his approval ratings after six months at historic lows for a French President as a result. Pragmatic politics takes its revenge on expressive politics when faced with real and tough choices in office. Furthermore, betrayal not only plays into the hands of mainstream opponents, it confirms the moral arguments of the populists. A left version of populism becomes more likely as austerity deepens and persists. It offers few ultimate long-term solutions to the stresses of democracy.

E. Acknowledgement/tentative engagement

The range of cultural issues and anxieties presented by the populist radical right as well as the questions for traditional liberal democracy pose a serious political challenge to the mainstream. When faced with thorny issues about immigration, culture, citizenship and democracy, the temptation - especially for the centre-left mainstream - has been to evade these issues. The centre-right has often tended to drift towards the populist radical right out of political expediency - notably the case in the Netherlands, Hungary, France, Austria, and even the UK. When there has been engagement with these concerns, the centre-left has tended to adopt a largely ineffective re-framing approach. A strategy of acknowledging concerns and careful engagement is a first step to substantively meeting voters and their concerns where they are, as opposed to where the mainstream party wants them to be.

Essentially, this strategy is a holding position and can only work in the short term. It involves more than just talking about the

issues of the populist radical right. It requires acknowledgement that the concerns and angst of voters in more anxious and even hostile parts of the electorate are real. It does not, however, mean following the policy, rhetoric or approaches of the populist radical right - that would be contagion.⁴² It is simply a tentative engagement with these voters and their concerns which are not necessarily the natural territory of the mainstream party.

This strategy has been adopted by UK Labour leader Ed Miliband as he has sought in a series of speeches to engage with Englishness, the EU, immigration, and cultural anxieties and conflict without offering strong solutions or policies in response. Given the see-saw effect we saw in the analysis on triangulation, it is an entirely sensible holding position. However, something more comprehensive will ultimately be required if it is not to be seen as merely paying lip-service. Here statecraft comes in to the picture.

F. Statecraft

Jim Bulpitt defined statecraft as:

"The art of winning elections and, above all, achieving a necessary degree of competence in office."

This is achieved across four dimensions: party management; developing a winning electoral strategy; political argument hegemony and governing competence. Jim Buller and Toby James add a further dimension to statecraft: bending the rules of the game.⁴³ It is an elite level theory and places party leadership in the critical democratic position. In the context of democratic stress, the response to new cultural, economic and political challenges becomes critical. The statecraft strategy

⁴² Norris, P. 2005. Radical right: voters and parties in the electoral market. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴³ The statecraft approach is summarised and updated in Dr Jim Buller and Dr Toby James, Structure, Agency and the assessment of political leaders: the case of Gordon Brown's statecraft. http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2160378

requires a fundamental approach on political, electoral and governance levels. Ultimately, as the mainstream's ability to govern and meet democratic expectations is questioned, the best medium-term strategy requires a demonstration that the mainstream can still answer the demands and needs of people in the context of democratic stress.

In response to democratic stress, a mainstream centre-left or -right statecraft could have a number of facets:

1. Accept that people's anxieties are cultural as well as economic. Do not leave thorny issues - such as on-street grooming - to populists or extremists. Ensure they are dealt with in the democratic mainstream.
2. Present a national vision that can transcend these cultural anxieties; do not accept the inevitability of cultural conflict and the potential harm that implies. For example, when Nicolas Sarkozy launched a debate on national identity, the French left refused to respond. Not only should they have participated, they should have been ahead of this debate.
3. Be honest about what can and cannot be managed in terms of immigration without causing harm to people's incomes, future growth, public services and particular industries. Manage what can be managed; be honest about what is less manageable.
4. Rapid local change can be disconcerting without active management. Ensure that communities facing such change are able to adapt public services, housing and local employment to the changes.
5. Engage with concerns about contribution and access to welfare - this perhaps more than anything else is corrosive of trust in public institutions.
6. Appreciate how a lack of market power can accentuate anxieties and address

them through training, advice and guidance, job brokerage and support for wages.

7. Play to mainstream democratic strengths: persuasively articulate the importance of pragmatic governance in defence of individual and national interest.
8. Appreciate the sources of distrust in representative politics - professionalisation, nepotism, corruption, lack of real diversity, insiderdom. Take real steps to demonstrate that mainstream democracy is opening up and confronting its weaknesses. Centralised, closed and 'guild-like' parties are a disaster in this regard - which is exactly what many mainstream parties have become.
9. Insist that political institutions should be more accessible - where democracy, policy action and services can be localised, they should be.
10. Embrace contact democracy - in contradiction to a groupist multiculturalist approach - on a local level, even if the benefits are not easily quantified. Meaningful contact between the mainstream party and those it represents is critical for building trust. Moreover, community mobilisation that creates one-to-one contact will reduce tensions over time. Support should be given to groups and campaigns that enable this.

The statecraft approach relies on a blend of party change, transparent and fearless engagement, practical institution building, supporting groups and campaigns that create more meaningful local contact within communities and democratic change. It is an elitist approach with democratic ends. It combines organisation, governance, ideology, policy and electoral competition. It is comprehensive and difficult, though not impossible to pull off. It requires engaging directly with

the sources and tensions of 'democratic stress.'

An important element of statecraft is public policy. It should be said that while the anger, sense of betrayal, feeling of unfairness, frustration at the lack of transparency and apparent lack of strong management competence on border control in response to cultural and economic change is significant, the policy levers can at first glance seem weak. For example, complete border management requires withdrawal from the EU. The notion that one nation can control not only its comparative economic advantage, but also its distribution within the nation, is fanciful to say the least. Equally, control of the internal movement and settlement of people takes the state in an authoritarian direction. Modern statecraft is clear and transparent about its limitations as well as its potentially impactful interventions. These caveats are important. If they are not acknowledged, then trust is undermined and statecraft is fatally wounded early in its lifespan. The commitment of David Cameron's Conservatives to reducing net migration to the 'tens of thousands' without the significant ability to control that flow is one example of how trust can be hampered from the outset. As a consequence, the Conservative lead on immigration has already declined from 28 percent when the party came into office, to 13 percent by the end of January 2013.⁴⁴

However, three potential areas of note do present opportunities to 'pull levers' both in a local and national context in ways that address some of the underlying concerns about change, fairness and opportunity:

1. Jobs. The rules of access here are critical: enforcement of minimum wages;

introduction of living wages; and support both in and out of work for individuals to help them develop and transition skills whilst also helping smooth the move from one job to another.

2. Welfare. The contributory principle is one which accords with a reciprocal moral sense. Linking access to key welfare resources to work or wider social contribution is one means of responding to this sense. In the context of immigration, including intra-EU migration, there is further scope for looking at the rules of access to benefits and housing on the basis of time-based contribution.

3. Housing. Lack of access to affordable, high quality housing in good communities is one of the issues likely to tip beneficial contact into a situation of conflict. Supply is a fundamental issue but so is distribution and access based to a greater extent on contribution. Regulation of the private housing market is also important to give people a greater sense of stability, improve quality and increase transparency over costs. Public intervention may be necessary not only to enhance supply of affordable housing, but to allow people to accumulate equity in their home over time to further reinforce the asset security of those in marginal situations.

Despite the elite characteristic of this strategy, it relies on grassroots action and organisation to succeed. Just as the Obama '08 campaign was top-down *and* bottom-up, Europe's mainstream parties need to pursue a similar strategic approach and extend it into a governing ethos. Many of the groups that support this strategy lie outside of formal party politics. Many already exist and are flourishing. It is worth reviewing a number of successful examples of groups that have provoked positive change in a wide variety of contexts.

⁴⁴ See YouGov issue tracker [http://d25d25065fb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/lxmy80hvo3/YG-Archives-Pol-Trackers-Issues\(1\)-290113.pdf](http://d25d25065fb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/lxmy80hvo3/YG-Archives-Pol-Trackers-Issues(1)-290113.pdf).

7. Contact democracy as a strategic response

As previously mentioned, Sturgis, Jackson, and Brunton-Smith's study on ethnic diversity and social cohesion in London neighbourhoods⁴⁵ presents a compelling empirical case countering conflict theory,⁴⁶ suggesting that racial and ethnic diversity decreases prejudice and stereotyping when individuals of different ethnic groups are brought into direct contact with one another.

Another recent study by Clive Lennox has similar findings, concluding that the formation of ethnically diverse and racially integrated neighbourhoods would make it more difficult for far-right parties to gain support as white individuals seem to be more tolerant of minorities when they have more exposure to them.⁴⁷ It has also been found that contact with one group, such as immigrants, reduces a person's prejudices not only to that group, but to others as well, such as religious minorities or homosexuals⁴⁸ – two other groups that tend to be the victims of far right and extremist persecution. Zick, Kupper and Hovermann also conclude that there is a relationship between contact with immigrants and levels of prejudice, finding that prejudices are more widespread amongst those who have little contact with immigrants.⁴⁹ It is the notion of positive *contact* that lies at the heart of attempts to reduce conflict through community level campaigns and organising - with some notable successes.

We will consider eight case studies from different countries to suggest that there is more than one specific method of contact democracy that can be successful at combating populists and extremists - whilst generating greater trust between individuals in different perceived groups. Although there is variation in the objectives and strategies pursued by these grassroots movements, campaigns, and groups, the common thread is that they have all succeeded in engaging citizens in political dialogue and participation.

Furthermore, they have encouraged a unifying identity politics to counteract the false divisions between groups exacerbated by 'us' versus 'them' rhetoric, which can breed hate and violence and potentially lead to extremism. Building trust amongst members in civil society to enhance social relations is one of the ways that these organisations are helping relieve some of the 'stresses' currently imposed on liberal democracy. Mainstream parties need to engage more directly with an increasingly fragmented electorate. Democratic structures have been slow to respond to the challenge as Harris Beider has found in his research into white working-class communities. He finds:

"There was a sense that government was not listening to the concerns of white working-class communities and not interested in engagement."⁵⁰

As argued in the section on statecraft, democratic institutions have to be devolved and responsive to local communities if trust is to be restored. Equally, there is an important role for organisations that work within those communities to bring them into closer contact. Mainstream parties need to support and work alongside them if they are to drain some demand for the populist radical right and extremism whilst restoring trust in public institutions: working *with* the people, not just *for* the people. The following are

⁴⁵ Sturgis, P., J. Jackson, and I. Brunton-Smith. 2011. "Ethnic diversity and the social cohesion of neighbourhoods: The case of London." In 6th ECPR General Conference. Reykjavik.

⁴⁶ Hewstone, M. 2009. "Living apart, living together? The role of intergroup contact in social integration." Proceedings of the British Academy 162: 243-300. As cited in Sturgis, P., J. Jackson, and I. Brunton-Smith. 2011. Ethnic diversity and the social cohesion of neighbourhoods: The case of London. In 6th ECPR General Conference, Reykjavik.

⁴⁷ Lennox, Clive. 2012. "Racial integration, ethnic diversity, and prejudice: empirical evidence from a study of the British National Party." Oxford Economic Papers 64(3): 395-416.

⁴⁸ Pettigrew, T. F. 2009. "Secondary Transfer Effect of Contact: Do Intergroup Contact Effects Spread to Noncontacted Outgroups? Social Psychology 40: 55-65. As cited in Zick, Andreas, Beate Kupper and Andreas Hovermann. 2011. "Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination: A European Report." Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Beider, H. 2011. "Community Cohesion: the views of white working-class communities." Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

examples of campaigns and organisations that have put this into practice.

Hope Not Hate, United Kingdom - mobilising anti-hate forces, education and creating community resilience and unity

The aforementioned Lennox study on racial integration, ethnic diversity and prejudice is based on empirical evidence from the British National Party (BNP). One of its conclusions is that whites were more likely to sign up to the far right party when living in areas sparsely populated by non-whites, leading to the argument that as a result of less interaction with individuals of diverse ethnic backgrounds, whites living in these areas are less informed about ethnic minorities.⁵¹ The study also found evidence that the BNP has fewer members in communities where the non-white population is equally dispersed between numerous ethnic groups, where there is a higher incidence of mixed-race relationships, and where levels of education tend to be higher. There is therefore an argument that BNP support is based upon stereotyping and misunderstanding, as its members believe the BNP's hate-creating stories due to lack information about or direct contact with, other ethnic groups.

Hope Not Hate is a campaigning organisation fighting against the racism and fascism espoused by the BNP and the English Defence League (EDL) amongst others. The non-partisan group works on a local level to campaign against these and other far-right groups. They focus their efforts in neighbourhoods where these far-right parties are gaining support, challenging their claims, as well as positively mobilising individuals opposed to racism to provide a positive alternative. In these constituencies, Hope Not Hate produces and distributes informative leaflets and community newspapers, opposing the BNP 'on the doorstep' and building local networks of

activists. They often target their materials at particular groups such as women voters who have a greater aversion to hate literature. Given that many BNP supporters tend to have little direct contact with individuals of different ethnic backgrounds and little knowledge about ethnic minorities, Hope Not Hate's focus on education has been effective at directly lowering the party's level of support.

In the recent 2012 Manchester Central, Corby, and Rotherham parliamentary by-elections, Hope Not Hate was the leading anti-far right campaign group. They distributed 16,800 leaflets in Manchester Central, where the BNP ended up polling only 2.7 per cent. The by-election campaign was also a chance for the group to activate their network in preparation for the 2014 European elections – 76 individuals indicated that they wanted to join the Hope Not Hate campaign. In Corby, the group distributed 5,000 leaflets, concentrating their efforts in a ward where the BNP has been particularly active. The BNP polled a mere 2.7 per cent in Corby as well. In Rotherham, the far right had their best chances of doing well – the BNP recently had two councillors in the constituency, polled 10.3 per cent in the 2010 General Election. Hope Not Hate printed and distributed 20,000 copies of a tabloid newspaper that confronted the issues of the far right and offered a positive alternative to them. The BNP ended up polling 8.5 per cent – higher than in the other constituencies but still lower than their result at the last General Election. The Hope Not Hate campaigns in all three areas undoubtedly had an impact on the BNP's election results. Additionally, the group has also helped establish local activist networks that can campaign at future elections and ensure that these sorts of results remain the norm.

Although the BNP has been in decline in recent years, Hope Not Hate emphasises the importance of not becoming complacent, as the factors underlying the party's rise (high levels of immigration, increasing

⁵¹ Lennox, C. 2012. "Racial integration, ethnic diversity, and prejudice: empirical evidence from a study of the British National Party." *Oxford Economic Papers* 64(3): 395-416.

perceptions of identity conflict, and the declining strength of cultural and institutional bonds between citizens and mainstream parties)⁵² are still present. Additionally, based upon the evidence put forth by Sturgis *et al.* and Lennox's respective studies, a continued focus on education and disseminating information remains essential. Hope not Hate have also begun to organise events to bring communities closer together such as street parties catered with cuisines from a range of ethnic groups. On the electoral, educational and community contact levels, Hope not Hate has secured a considerable impact on lessening the demand for and impact of extremism.

Citizens for a Better Arizona, Mesa Moving Forward, and the Campaign for Arizona's Future, United States - challenging harsh laws and re-vitalising, energising democracy in the process

Dominated by a Republican state senator and Sheriff advocating for tough anti-immigration measures for years, the case of Arizona demonstrates how community organising can achieve the short-term goals of political campaigning as well as the long-term objective of citizen engagement in the political process. There are numerous civic organisations who have worked together to try and counteract Arizona's anti-immigrant state law, Senate Bill 1070, put forward by former Republican State Senator Russell Pearce and backed heavily by Sheriff Joe Arpaio. The law gives police the right to stop people they suspect are in the country illegally and check their immigration status, and also requires police to determine the immigration status of anyone who is arrested or detained when there is "reasonable suspicion" that they are not legal residents of the US, subjecting people of colour to racial profiling. In response, the Latino community in Arizona has come together for two separate but related goals

that have long-term implications for citizens' active future participation in the political process. Citizens for a Better Arizona (CBA), Mesa Moving Forward (MMF), and the Campaign for Arizona's Future (CAF) have engaged Latinos in campaigns against Russell Pearce and Sheriff Arpaio's re-elections, resulting in many Latinos – a relatively unengaged demographic in the past – registering to vote for the first time and becoming actively involved in politics. First, CBA and MMF, two grassroots community groups focused on projects that "promote civic accountability, public discourse and political advocacy," ran a very successful campaign to end the 'reign' of Arizona Senate President Russell Pearce, the Republican lawmaker who was the chief individual behind SB 1070. CBA canvassers and volunteers went door to door, encouraging individuals to fill out their ballots and offering to deliver them for the county elections. They also targeted Independents and Hispanics, encouraging them to request Republican ballots since they are permitted to do so in Republican primaries. This move alone led to an estimated additional 2,000 votes made in favour of Pearce's rival for the GOP nomination. In addition, CBA members reminded voters that election day was approaching, offered to provide free lifts to the polls, and left information on people's doorsteps about why Russell Pearce should not be re-elected. The campaign achieved its stated goal, as Pearce's rival defeated him with 53 per cent of the vote.

Similarly, the Campaign for Arizona's Future launched the Adios Arpaio initiative against Arpaio's re-election for Sheriff, with strong support from both the Latino and labour communities, particularly youth, trade unionists, and progressive activists. It enlisted 20 paid staff and 400 volunteers to target individuals who were not likely to vote, helping register 35,000 new voters – of which over 21,500 were Latino. These new voters are now also on the country's Permanent Early Voting List,

⁵² Goodwin, M and Ford, R. 2010. "Angry White Men: Individual and Contextual Predictors of Support for the British National Party." *Political Studies* 58(1): 1-25.

meaning that for each election, a ballot will automatically be mailed to them about 26 days prior to the election. Like CBA and MMF, Adios Arpaio members encouraged individuals to fill out their ballots and offered to deliver them. Despite the fact that Arpaio was re-elected, though with only 50.7 per cent of the vote (down from 55 per cent in 2008), the long-lasting impact of the campaign is most important when measuring its success. With thousands of new voters registered and on the Permanent Early Voting List, future get-out-the-vote campaigns already have a much stronger foundation to build upon.

Looking at Arizona's grassroots community organising, it is not only the explicit outcomes of whether or not these campaigns succeeded in removing Pearce and Arpaio from power that are significant, but also their long-term implications for engaging previously excluded marginal groups in political participation.

United We Dream, United States- mobilising new voters to secure policy change

Along similar lines of the Arizona case study, United We Dream is a national-level organisation that has effectively mobilised the Latino migrant community (both legal and illegal) to come together and put pressure on Obama's administration to pass the Dream Act. Founded in 2009 by local groups, they have since banded as one united force composed mostly of young people who are bound by the shared identity of being a 'Dreamer.'

They were behind door-knocking campaigns led by those migrants not entitled to vote, mobilising many Latinos who could vote to go to the polls in 2012, playing no small part in Obama's re-election victory. As a result, one of the first items on his agenda is a bill that will legalise 11 million immigrants in the US, finally offering those who came to the country as children the chance to formally

become citizens. Compared to when the bill failed in 2007, the overwhelming energy is now on the side supporting amnesty for illegal immigrants as a result of the Dreamers' efforts. Although it was a major disappointment to have the Act fail in 2010 by just five votes, it is clear that the organisation had an impact in helping shift consensus in a positive direction. Over the past few years, the 'Dreamers' have been working to achieve their goal through a series of negotiations, public 'coming-out' affairs where young people have declared their status, and a number of street protests. After the 2010 'no' vote, the organisation also shifted its focus on to Obama, who could stop deportations because of his executive powers.

Looking at United We Dream's endeavours over the course of 2012, there is a clear timeline that highlights their determination and the strategies they pursued on the path to achieving their ultimate goal. In April, they organised a meeting with White House officials where the organisation's director for advocacy, Lorella Praeli, confronted the president's senior advisor and domestic policy advisor, putting forth a challenge to the president to issue an order that would protect illegal immigrants from deportation. One month later, the group's leaders presented President Obama with a letter signed by 90 immigration law professors that specified the legal precedents he would be able to act under for instigating a deportation deferral program. In June, Obama issued the 'deferred action for childhood arrivals' program, which provided two-year deferrals. Since this moment of success, the Dreamers have nonetheless continued their efforts. They have organised legal clinics to aid immigrants in applying for deferrals and work permits. These clinics ultimately had a dual effect, as those who came to them were recruited by the Dreamers to mobilise voters ahead of

the presidential elections in battleground states.⁵³

Their strategies have been effective at gaining momentum for the movement, increasing participation numbers and encouraging individuals towards activism. This is grassroots contact democracy at its best. The public events where migrants reveal their status have also removed some of the fear of deportation, and have drawn the Dreamers even closer. The group also operates on an individual, grassroots level by telling their personal stories to anyone and everyone. This was one of the most effective methods for voter mobilising this past November. Additionally, peaceful sit-ins and demonstrations have helped United We Dream generate publicity for the movement, increasing their support and in the process have placed mounting pressure for the Dream Act to be pushed through Congress. Results have also been seen at the state level, where Republican Senator Marco Rubio in Florida has prepared a new bill that will allow young migrants to gain visas in response to the organisation's campaign.

United We Dream has recognised the importance of having a strong online presence, with a well-designed website that is easy to access and an active social media presence on both Twitter and Facebook. Since they target young people in particular, it is undoubtedly an effective way of engaging and mobilising their core demographic who are more attuned to the potential power of online campaigning, as was also evidenced in both of Obama's presidential election campaigns. The theme of individuals with personal stories coming together to form a larger narrative is reflected on their site as well, and the group also hosts events to help immigrants with their applications as well as a webinar series that has a more educative element, explaining the new immigration policy.

Despite being a nation-wide campaign, it is a great example of community organising as many efforts are still made on a local level, and the campaign uses the power of personal stories to build a notion of shared identity. The United We Dream movement has demonstrated the success of combining targeted action at officials, demonstrations to raise awareness, mobilisation campaigns to 'get out the vote,' and a strong online presence for pursuing and achieving their goals. Furthermore, it has engaged and empowered a community of 'Dreamers' – Latino immigrants – that had for years been disenfranchised from the political process in the United States.

Bunt Statt Braun, Germany - Dismantling and diluting prejudice

Anti-immigrant and racist attitudes remain a prevalent problem in Germany. A long-term study on intolerance, prejudice and discrimination by Zick *et al.* found that 50 per cent of respondents in Germany believe that "there are too many foreigners living" in the country, with just under 30 cent holding the view that foreigners should be sent back to their home countries in times of job scarcity. 51.9 per cent of respondents also agreed with the notion that it is necessary to protect their culture from the influence of other cultures.⁵⁴ Bunt Statt Braun ("colourful instead of brown") is a non-partisan, community-based citizens' initiative in the town of Rostock, working actively to counter these tendencies that can lead to populist far right and extremist support in society. Having arisen as a reaction to a Neo-Nazi arson attack on a house hosting Roma asylum seekers and Vietnamese contract workers in a Rostock suburb in 1992, the organisation has since sought to promote cultural and political tolerance of all nations and ideologies and fights the use of violence.

⁵³ Preston, Julia. "Young Immigrants Say It's Obama's Time to Act." *New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/01/us/dream-act-gives-young-immigrants-a-political-voice.html>.

⁵⁴ Zick, Andreas et al. 2011. "Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination: A European Report." Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

On the level of community engagement, Bunt Statt Braun's projects have been numerous and diverse, with the dual objective of education and cohesion-building. They have run culture nights, executed educational programmes such as "Youth for Tolerance and Democracy – against extremism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism," developed an SOS sticker system, whereby community members can put stickers on their doors to signal to others that they are willing to offer emergency aid, and they have organised film nights, podium discussions, international cooking courses in local schools, as well as various exhibitions. These initiatives have encouraged youth and adolescents to learn about other cultures, building social cohesion from a young age. The sticker programme has shown solidarity with the victims of racist attacks, demonstrating that they are not tolerated by society. As an aggregate, Bunt Statt Braun have organised the sorts of events that encourage *inclusive* community-building. They have therefore been able to have meaningful political impact in Rostock. The tensions surrounding the idea of multiculturalism and change are one of the political driving forces of the extreme right; by focusing on embracing multicultural diversity and building a strong civil society on a local level, an organisation such as Bunt Statt Braun is able to counteract the negativity emanating from the far right.

Never Again, Poland - tracking and education about extremism and building awareness of prejudice through culture, sport and political engagement

The 'Never Again' association in Poland demonstrates the success of community organising focused on education to prevent and dismantle ethnic and racial prejudices. Its objectives are met through a number of strategies: the publication of a magazine; cooperation with the media, researchers, parliamentary groups, and other international organisations, as well as leading a number

of projects and campaigns to engage citizens directly. By taking on these different approaches to address the challenge from more than one angle, Never Again shows how effective a grassroots organisation can be at engaging the community and working to combat some of the underlying causes that lead to extreme right party support. Coalition-building with other groups of similar goals and interests has shown to be a successful model.

It is worth considering some of Never Again's initiatives in greater detail. The group monitors racism and discrimination on the ground via "the Brown Book," a document of racist and xenophobic incidences and crimes committed in Poland. More than 400 entries were published in 2010 alone, such as unidentified perpetrators attempting to firebomb a synagogue, or football fans throwing bananas at a black player of Czarni Zagan FC. Racism and anti-Semitism remain to be serious problems in Poland, as evidenced by the sheer number of incidences that were documented.

Furthermore, by providing information to journalists and researchers covering issues related to extremism, Never Again has assisted in writing more than 3,000 national and international press articles and books, as well as TV and radio broadcasts. In doing so, it has undoubtedly had an impact on informing the public and helping raise awareness. Additionally, the organisation's cooperation with the Parliamentary Committee on Ethnic Minorities has helped influence legislation on topics of racism and xenophobia, such as incorporating a ban on racist and neo-Nazi activities into Poland's constitution.

Besides working together with the media and parliamentary groups, Never Again has also been collaborating on a research project with a Potsdam-based association called 'Victim's Perspective' since 2008. Together they have been exploring different methods for monitoring violence based on extremist

right-wing motivations in Poland and Germany, as well as non-governmental help for victims of such attacks. Additionally, the project has a secondary goal of establishing better transnational cooperation between victim support initiatives in the two countries.

Another key to Never Again's success has been its collaboration with international organisations and networks that share similar goals, including Football Against Racism in Europe (FARE), UNITED for Intercultural Action, and the International Network against Cyber Hate (INACH) amongst others. By working together with other groups, Never Again has been able to amplify the impact it would otherwise have alone. For example, collectively with the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) and FARE, Never Again set up the East Europe Monitoring centre in 2009, documenting racism and xenophobia across the region, and they implemented the Respect Diversity programme before and during the 2012 European Football Championships in Poland and Ukraine, planning and executing educational and awareness-raising activities. Given that in many European countries, especially those in Eastern Europe, football players face regular abuse and are the subjects of racist chanting and barracking, anti-racist football groups have been an integral part in helping disintegrate the historic infiltration of footballer support groups by the far right.⁵⁵ Together, Never Again, UEFA, and FARE created 2,500 'inclusivity zones' at the championships – public areas that were designated as being open and accessible to everyone, regardless of ethnic background, gender, disability, or sexual orientation. 80,000 police were given discrimination training to be able to easily identify racist remarks or actions, and the 'Respect Diversity' campaign was given a 30 second television advertisement slot during half time in all countries to

promote its message. National team captains reaffirmed their stances against racism and encouraged intercultural dialogue between fans before the start of the final games, followed by supporters producing choreographed displays before kick off with the word 'Respect' to highlight the importance of the fight against racism. Additionally, UEFA promoted 'Respect Diversity' through a jersey exchange initiative featuring football celebrities as campaign ambassadors, connecting players and fans. In combination, all of these efforts before and during the 2012 European Football Championships helped spread awareness and have left a longer lasting impact in the entire region.

One lesson to extrapolate from the 'Never Again' case study is that mainstream parties do not necessarily have to work alone in engaging the community; cooperating with other organisations that share similar values and objectives can also be effective. In doing so, Never Again has been able to have an impact in terms of educating citizens and raising awareness, engaging the community, especially youth, in its projects, thereby building social cohesion, and effectuating positive changes in legislation that make it more difficult for extreme right parties to establish themselves and gain support.

Expo, Sweden - using education in schools and workplaces to combat racism and xenophobia

The education efforts of Expo, a non-profit, privately-owned research foundation established in 1995, have been considerable. Its goal is to study anti-democratic, right-wing extremist and racist inclinations in Scandinavian society. The foundation runs Expo magazine, which publishes editorial and opinion-forming work on these phenomena, and runs events to more actively connect with the community.

⁵⁵ Fekete, L. 2011. "Pedlars of Hate: the violent impact of the European far right." Institute of Race Relations.

Since it was founded, Expo has had an influential impact on Swedish politics. It has published numerous reports for the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia on issues such as the migrants, minorities and employment. Recently, in November 2010, the foundation received labour union support for the project "Stop racism in schools," aimed at educating children about racism and xenophobia. Like a number of the other community organising initiatives, Expo recognises the importance of involving youth in its efforts of building a unified and tolerant civic society. Additionally, since the beginning of 2012, Expo foundation and Vepsen, a Norwegian association with similar goals, have developed a cooperative relationship to exchange information, ideas, and experiences in a joint endeavour to fight racism and intolerance in Scandinavia.

Expo foundation also organises regular events – lectures about anti-racism, xenophobia and the extreme right, demonstrations, report launches, as well as journalism training. Many of the lectures are held at schools and workplaces, encouraging youth to attend and challenging them to become actively involved in the fight against antagonistic identity politics.

Since the far right Swedish Democrats have recently made gains in the polls, Daniel Poohl, editor of Expo magazine, has expressed that there is frustration in Sweden that something is happening which needs to be dealt with, but the mainstream parties are not addressing the issues. Community engagement by non-partisan groups cannot prevent the rise of the populist far right on its own – there needs to be partisan community organising in combination with the strategies of acknowledgement and statecraft to tackle all of the underlying causes of populist support.

Amsterdam West Council, the Netherlands - 'Do what is needed': local mainstream engagement as a means of rebuilding trust in democratic institutions

Looking beyond the case studies of successful community organising and engagement by non-partisan and independent civil society groups, Amsterdam West council is an example of how mainstream parties in government can use a similar approach of local, grassroots involvement with the community to successfully recover trust in public institutions. Its cooperative model offers a practical example of how local councils can respond to their communities directly, reducing antipathy, and leading to better social cohesion, client satisfaction, and citizen participation.

Amsterdam West is one of seven city districts, comprised of 22 neighbourhoods ranging from the very wealthy to the very poor and representing 177 different nationalities, of which the Moroccan community is the largest. A number of years ago, the neighbourhood was suffering from a disconnect between its citizens and its public institutions. Frustration with government- and market-provided services in the district as well as dismay at growing crime, vandalism and disorder was growing and provoking distrust in politics as a whole. In response, the council ended many of their projects and assembled a team of frontline professionals who set up their office in an empty house in the main square.

'Do what is needed' became the council's new approach as they began working more closely alongside the community, addressing their needs as they arose, solving practical problems, and inviting parents, children, and community members to join. Do-it-yourself initiatives were started where a number of public and market-led services had failed or disappeared, such as 'Connect,' 'The Book Store,' and 'Buurtzorg.'

The first of these is a training programme for young men initiated by a group of local Moroccan men and youth in response to high crime rates and poor prospects for the youth in the Kolenkit district. The 'Connect' programme aims to provide 'community safety guards' in the area by allowing youth to gain work experience in groups with the police. It developed into the largest service provider in Kolenkit, also offering youth work, female empowerment training, and care for young disabled people. The initiative is now subsidised by the Amsterdam West council and works together with the local mosques. Most recently, they have established a 'hate crime team,' responsible for intervening in confrontations and sensitive disputes that occur in the area.

'The Book Store' initiative was started by two local artists as a response to the Amsterdam housing crisis. Getting in touch with one of the biggest housing associations, they inquired if they could use one of the empty apartment blocks in Kolenkit that was ready to be knocked down. The artists and locals renovated the building, making it liveable and filling it with art, and now rent it out for almost nothing. A similar project was set up in Amsterdam Hogeschool, where students are able to rent a place for free in return for doing community work.

Finally, Buurtzorg is a homecare organisation set up by a local nurse who was upset by low client and employee satisfaction and how traditional organisations were overseen by alienated managers concerned most about technical financial targets. As a result, he established a new organisation where district nurses and district healthworkers themselves are given a great deal of autonomy, with every team responsible for its own clientele. When the objectives were changed to focus on client autonomy and satisfaction, the results were amazing – not only did client and employee satisfaction increase dramatically, but it also became a cheaper operation. Given its success,

Buurtzorg now has 250 teams all over the Netherlands.

All of these do-it-yourself initiatives have developed as a result of having to deal with budget constraints and in response to dissatisfaction with both government and market-provided services. Consequently, these shifts have had an impact on the council's agenda, moving it closer to one that is much more community-led. The larger impact of this change is that the role of local civil servants has become one of facilitator or mediator rather than policymaker or welfare service provider. The local administration provides back-up for the community-led initiatives and is there to protect public space and make sure that no initiatives exclude individuals of certain religious groups, sexual preference, or other discriminative criteria.

Amsterdam West council adopted the principles of co-operative government to counter growing cynicism and restore trust in the PvdA, the Dutch Labour Party, who had traditionally done well in the area but whose support was falling as people began feeling alienated from the district's public institutions – the police, youth care, housing associations, and education. Amsterdam West council illustrates that there is a strong demand for local political leadership, for more open politics with approachable and accountable politicians who can help generate greater social cohesion in their neighbourhoods.

Projects that respond to citizens' needs and develop solutions together with the community recover people's faith in the ability of political institutions to be responsive and effectuate positive change. The PvdA was able to gain the most council seats at the 2010 district elections, but the most important outcome of its efforts was the renewed sense of community instilled by responsive government. The case of Amsterdam West shows that local politicians working closely with local mutual initiatives can

have a very positive effect on community engagement and can offer a viable response to the populist agenda. The critical thing is to engage on issues in order to develop wider political trust in mainstream parties to meet the needs of citizens and their local communities.

Newham Borough Council, London - Local 'statecraft' - using local powers to build community 'resilience'

In its strategy paper, *Quid pro Quo not status quo*, Newham Borough Council, the second most deprived local authority in the UK, has presented a bold new agenda to build what it terms 'community resilience.' This has a number of substantive strands. It involves direct interventions in the housing and jobs markets by the local authority. It has established welfare to work programmes, strong enforcement of the minimum wage and a partnership with the local further education college to establish a skills centre to provide local residents with market-ready capabilities. In the housing market, it is investing in new high-quality housing, it regulates private landlords to enforce standards, and has introduced the contributory principle into housing allocations. It expresses this latter policy as follows:

*"We will now give priority for social housing to those in work or contributing through activity like foster caring, creating the right incentives for people to improve their personal situation."*⁵⁶

These policies help address fairness concerns with the borough. It supports the integration of the local community through the promotion of an 'English language first' policy. It supported scores of street parties to coincide with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012 with one condition: they had to be parties organised for the whole

community and not for particular groups. In order to facilitate better contact democracy, power has been devolved to local councillors and community hubs - in an echo of Amsterdam West.

The outcome of this approach - one that could be replicated elsewhere - is to align local services and housing with reciprocal notions of welfare and to facilitate community resilience and responsiveness. In many ways, Newham serves not simply as a model for other local authorities but for a national party too. When considering statecraft, it is about aligning public policy with improving real outcomes in housing, jobs, integration and democratic responsiveness as well meeting people's expectations and contributory notions of fairness and justice. It is a comprehensive approach that is making a difference to people's lives but also hints on how the political mainstream can deploy statecraft and contact democracy to buttress mainstream resilience against populism and even extremism.

These case studies highlight the necessity of mainstream parties incorporating contact democracy into their agendas. Their *objectives* of education, political mobilisation/activism, improving services and policy outcomes, and building social cohesion should be the shared goals of mainstream parties. The *strategies* used to achieve these goals should also overlap: informative magazines and publications; active campaigns (both directly in the political sphere such as Hope Not Hate's campaign against the BNP, as well as educational campaigns targeting youth such as Expo's "Stop racism in schools"), and events including lectures, workshops, and community gatherings that bridge ethnic and cultural divisions and create inclusive bonds between groups. Finally, the positive *outcomes* of the grassroots groups, movements, and campaigns discussed should encourage mainstream parties to follow or encourage

⁵⁶ <http://www.newham.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/835AAB4A-E651-4497-AAD8-D40D4A9934AB/0/Whyweneedawelfarestatethatbuildsresilience.pdf>

similar pursuits. They include the development of activist networks, the involvement of new groups in political dialogue and participatory politics, as well as the rebuilding of trust in politicians, public institutions, and representative liberal democracy more generally. Overall, they also work at establishing a unifying politics to counteract the antagonism of the populist radical or extreme right; responsible for creating divides, breeding hate, and leaving open the potential for violence if exploited by extremists.

In addition to acknowledging the issues articulated by the populist radical right parties, tentatively engaging with them, and developing a comprehensive policy, governance, and political response for the long-term, mainstream parties need to also organise and engage at the local community level. By doing so, they will be able to combat some of the underlying causes of support for the populist radical right and extremist forces and help relieve some of the tensions causing stress on liberal democracy.

Conclusion - a renewed mainstream statecraft and 'contact democracy'

Europe's mainstream parties have adopted a proprietorial towards democracy for too long. Fissures are now opening up out of which populists and extremists have emerged. At the time of going to press, Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement – with its *Grillismo* - had just secured a quarter of the vote in the Italian election and now leads in the polls. The ruling Danish social democrats had fallen behind the populist radical right People's Party in an opinion poll for the first time ever. UKIP had just come from nowhere to beat the Conservatives into third place in a parliamentary by-election in the Eastleigh constituency. And yet populists are routinely dismissed as 'protest' parties, clowns, buffoons, flashes in the pan. In fact, Europe's populists – of different kinds – are challenger brands that the established party brands ignore at their peril.

While the true nature of Grillo's Five Star Movement is not yet entirely clear, it does emphasise some of the ways in which modern politics is changing. His central argument is against Italy's elite politics and media. This anti-elitism and bottom-up people's politics approach naturally becomes an anti-EU attitude. Celebrity, rallies, social media and hundreds of spontaneous meet-ups where Grillo's ideas are debated drive the movement. Its manifesto was deliberately thin as what coheres the movement is an ethos and sense rather than a doctrine. Apart from reform of politics and the media, its main focus was the environment and, somewhat quixotically, healthy living. What this approach means for immigration, the economy, or foreign policy is not entirely clear. What is evident is that the Five Star Movement has mastered a viral form of contact democracy. It remains to be seen whether it endures,

but the early signs are that we are seeing yet another new form of populism.

Mainstream parties have yet to find a convincing response to the populist radical right either in Europe or in the US. And now new technology and organisation are instigating more political innovation. Pluralistic, fragmented and frustrated electorates create many openings. Some will thrive and some will nose-dive. The biggest mistake that the mainstream is making is dismissal of what is now an established part of modern, liberal democracy. Populism is a rejection of functioning democracy and its mainstream parties – it is not simply a superficial 'protest'. The contact approach of the Five Star Movement, as much as that of Obama '08, suggests the ways in which mainstream parties will need to embrace contact democracy. This suggests the old, closed models of the mainstream political party will need to be radically opened up. Hitherto, new forms of political contact have simply been grafted onto the old, closed, tired way of doing things. Paint has been applied over a rusting chassis with an unreliable engine. The result is closed, elite driven parties that push out core activist-focused messages through social media while sharing the spoils of policy influence and status for a close and politically nepotistic group.

Deep organisational and cultural transformation is necessary for Europe's old political guard. It will not be sufficient. They will have to show that they are also up to the task of governance in complicated times. This is where statecraft comes in. The challenges are immense: manage economic threat; respond to fiscal unsustainability; reform welfare; provide for an ageing society; maintain global competitiveness; secure energy and manage climate change; improve the education and skills base; and manage

migration flows while providing for a vibrant yet coherent society. The mainstream has to both connect with society and demonstrate governing capacity. Populists are less likely to face this latter challenge. So for the political mainstream it is a matter of statecraft *and* contact democracy. Perhaps another Italian politician points a way forward. The young Democratic Party Mayor of Florence, Matteo Renzi, almost stole his party's leadership in primaries ahead of the Italian election. He traveled around Italy in a camper van plugging his programme of political, state, educational, healthcare, and fiscal reform and pushed a socially liberal agenda. Again, at the time of writing, he is the most popular choice for Italian Prime Minister – 28 percent favour him with 14 percent favouring his party leader, Pier Luigi Bersani, and Beppe Grillo is in third place with 13 percent. Perhaps his youth is part of this phenomenon in a country that is in desperate need of economic and political renewal. Whatever becomes of Renzi – he is just one individual – it underlines a broader message to Europe's mainstream political parties – change or risk your mainstream status.

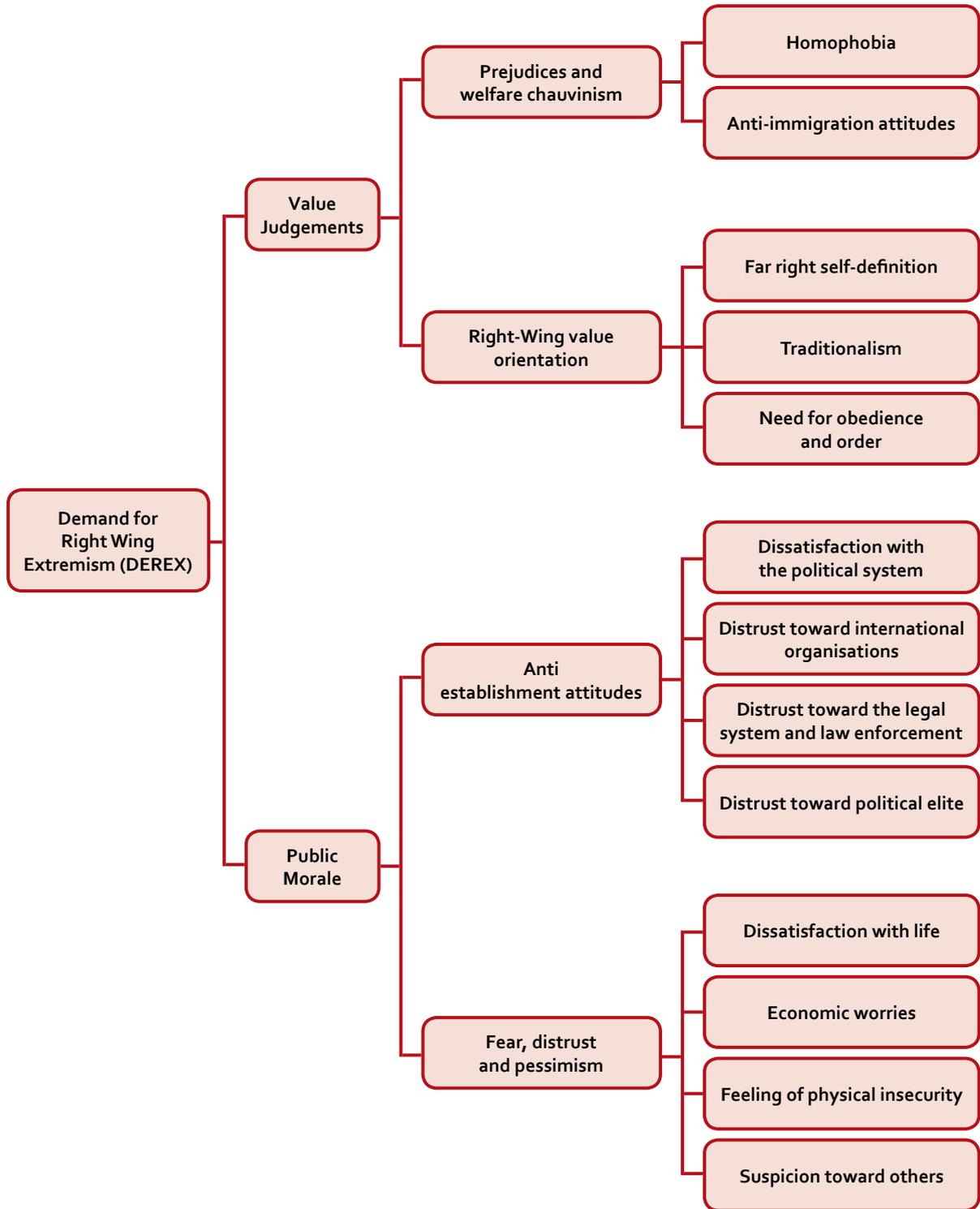
Britain's majoritarian democracy perhaps protects the mainstream to a greater extent than elsewhere. There we can expect disengagement instead of defection if there is no change. It is not improbable that the next election could be won with a party securing only 35 percent of the vote or so. That will be a very unstable situation indeed as the mandate to govern will be weak and anger is likely to swell. Different political systems create different incentives and impacts, but the underlying forces of political change recur.

A rethink is necessary, and soon. The risk is that deeply damaging political parties and movements can gain traction in a situation of democratic stress. A

complacent response could mean that stress becomes intensified. That is a wholly irresponsible response. The populist signal is clear. The extremist threat is mostly contained for now. And yet, democratic stress is evident. The problem is that if this situation persists, or indeed worsens, then the social, cultural and economic consequences could be severe. Mainstream parties face a huge burden of responsibility to change.

Annex

The DEREK structure



Source: "DEREX." 2010. Political Capital. http://www.riskandforecast.com/post/in-depth-analysis/back-by-popular-demand_411.html



www.policy-network.net



www.bctrust.org.uk