THE COMMON DENOMINATOR OF EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN POLITICS - RADICAL POPULISM

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From Europeanisation to Euroscepticism

European and national institutions are losing their legitimacy

**Far-Right Leads Eurosceptic Earthquake**
Performance of eurosceptic parties in the 2014 European elections*

- United Kingdom: UKP (27.5%)
- Denmark: DF (26.6%)
- France: FN (25.4%)
- Austria: FPÖ (19.5%)
- Hungary: Jobbik (14.7%)
- Netherlands: PVV (13.4%)
- Finland: Persus (12.9%)
- Greece: X.A. (9.4%)
- Germany: AfD (7.0%)
- Italy: LN (6.2%)

*As of May 26, 11:00 CET
Source: European Parliament
Political trust - UK

I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?

The (NATIONALITY) government
United Kingdom (from 10/2001 to 05/2016)
Political trust in the EU

And, for each of them, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?
The European Parliament
European Union (from 03/1993 to 05/2016)
Political trust - US
Why is this happening? Traditional theories

**Political trust** is defined as the confidence of the citizenry that elected representatives and political institutions do in fact act on its behalf even in the absence of constant scrutiny (Kim Seok-Eun, 2005).

- **Crisis of Representation**
  
The nature of representative democracy and its perceived inability to address people’s needs is often cited as a reason for the erosion of public trust in political institutions (Mishler and Rose, 2001). The less represented a person feels, the lower the level of political trust.

- **Economic Situation**
  
  When people feel economically secure, their trust in government tends to rise. Economic decline often reduces confidence in government (Bovens and Wille, 2008).
Why is this happening? Traditional theories

- **The Media**
  Some argue for a negative correlation between public confidence in political institutions and exposure to media in Western societies (Pharr, 2000).

- **Immigration**
  The issue of immigration is often cited as a reason for decline in political trust, the *perception* that the government has done poorly on the issue of immigration affects political trust (McLaren, 2012).

- **Post-industrial Society**
  Scholars argue that the shift to post-materialism (a new mindset, critical and skeptical of political and social authorities) accounts for citizens’ growing lack of confidence in the political system (Huntington, 1975; Inglehart, 1990).
Why is this happening?

- The decline in public trust in political institutions is correlated with the success of new populist radical parties.
- **Populism** - a by-product of representative democracy - from representative to direct democracy.
- Anti-system protest nature of populism.
- Bring power back to the people!
The “legitimate” enemy pattern

• “Legitimate” Enemy (LE) – new radical parties utilize an enemy in their political agendas, which becomes “legitimate” when it is held responsible for public concerns, thus legitimizing its existence.
Brexit – what happened?
In Family we trust

Brexit issues: family beats politicians for trust
"Who do you trust on issues relating to the referendum on EU membership?"

- Friends and family: 73%
- Academics: 66%
- Small business owners: 64%
- Work colleagues: 46%
- The ordinary man/woman in the street: 46%
- My immediate manager at work: 36%
- Leaders of large business: 36%
- The head of my company: 31%
- Civil servants: 29%
- Trade union officials: 26%
- Journalists: 16%
- Politicians generally: 12%

Source: Ipsos Mori
British “legitimate” enemy – the EU

Public Concerns
- Economic situation
- Housing
- Unemployment
- Healthcare
- Pensions
- Crime
- Education
- Immigration
- Environment
- Taxes

UKIP’s agenda
- Economic situation
- Housing
- Unemployment
- Healthcare
- Pensions
- Crime
- Education
- Immigration
- Environment
- Taxes

The EU - the "legitimate" enemy
- Withdrawal from the EU can help Britain to:
  - restore British economy, cut national expenses and invest more money in domestic social spheres - housing, healthcare, pensions, and education; improve transport infrastructure and fight crime
  - regain control of the UK’s borders and control immigration
  - reduce certain taxes and cut EU-related taxes altogether
Party positions: 2010-2015 UK elections
100-day action plan to Make America Great Again

“Legitimate” enemies:

- Immigrants
  immigration was one of the major concerns
End Illegal Immigration Act

- Government
  dissatisfaction with government was one of the biggest non-economic public concerns (Gallup)
Clean Up Corruption in Washington Act – measures to clean up the corruption and special interest collusion in Washington, DC
A fertile ground for Government as LE - US
Referendums - the only option?

- **UK** – 17.4 million people had a different opinion from the ruling parties - Brexit economic consequences are still hard to estimate, but there’s a 50/50% chance of recession worse than in 2008.

- **Switzerland** – 12 referendums during 2016 (a seven-person executive, with a rotating presidency).

- **Italy** – Prime Minister Matteo Renzi had to step down, since the referendum on Dec 4 didn’t go his way.

*Is direct democracy the only way to make people feel they have influence?*
Understanding of the LE strategy helps design better policies on public engagement – some of the strategies suggested by Goodwin (2011) to combat radical populism can be relevant:

1. **Principle** – “myth-busting” the government/immigrant is not necessarily an enemy.

2. **Engagement** – social networks allow to connect with wider audiences. Democracy 2.0 - participatory consultation with the people, ex.: an online portal.