Prima Europa: The Populist Radical Right in Liberal Democratic Europe

Andrew Michels, Xavier University

For the practitioners of liberal democracy in Western Europe, there is a great concern for the rising tide of unrefined politics. There are those who would like to see strongmen in power, those who wish to see a layman talk politics, or those who do not care for politics whatsoever and wish to see political order devolve into nothingness. Curiosity has taken us in regards to a new form of politics within Europe: populism.

Populism is not new to the continent, as charismatic authoritarians strong-armed electorates and politicians to yield power unto themselves with nary a care for the tradition of republicanism or representative democracy. Regardless, there is a shift in how individuals in Europe are voting, or at least a show that there are trends in which some Europeans are voting for politicians who do not espouse the values commonly held in post-war Europe.

Let us look at the upcoming elections, referenda, and results in liberal democratic Europe for now. In the United Kingdom, the campaign to allow the country to leave the European Union won by a decent margin. Such campaigns were not to have been thought of as successful in a modern liberal democratic order, where interconnectedness allows for commerce to excel. In Austria, a far-right candidate relying on populist tactics had almost won his election.[1] In France, Marine LePen of the National Front has advanced to the next round of voting with a fifth of the votes.[2] The Dutch parliamentary elections gave many voters scares as a Geert Wilder's Party for Freedom lost handily.[3] It is not as if these events are separate nor the benefactors of the results are of different minds.

The examples of the UK, Austria, France; and the Netherlands, far-right parties are taking countries by storm. While some do not retain formal political powers (i.e. United Kingdom Independence Party, or UKIP), they do exert a considerable amount of influence upon the systems they exist in. For the EU Referendum in the UK, UKIP had

[1]   Murphy, Francois, and Kirsti Knolle. "Austrians roundly reject far right in presidential election." Reuters. December 04, 2016. Accessed April 05, 2017. http://www.reuters.com/article/us-austria-election-idUSKBN13S0W0.

[2]   Rubin, Alissa J. "Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen Advance in French Election." The New York Times. April 23, 2017. Accessed April 26, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/23/world/europe/emmanuel-macron-marine-le-pen-france-election.html.

[3]   Roberts, Elizabeth. "Dutch election: Rutte's victory is official." CNN. March 21, 2017. Accessed April 05, 2017. http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/21/europe/dutch-election-official-result/.

achieved its single most important goal without having to win a seat in parliament. While the Dutch parliament is in the control of the Conservative Party, there still exists the far-right faction. With the French Presidential elections looming, there is a fear far-right parties are not to be stopped on the continent. While the discussion thus far has been on populism, it is strange to only focus on far-right parties. In the European context, these parties with electoral or policy successes rely on populist methods and practice. However, we need to define what populism is in this context in order to move on.

According to Rooduijn, Mattjis. "Populism is a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite", and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people."[4] Without the European context, the simplification of political arguments into us-versus-them renders politics into a popularity contest of sorts. The framing of the argument assists populists attaining their electoral successes while simultaneously undermining current policy. When using the definition in historical contexts, such as the Interwar Period, we can also use the rise of fascism to correspond to the contemporary far-right movements in Europe. However, these newer movements are not necessarily exclusive to the far-right. Both leftist and right wing groups have been more populistic in nature over the past few decades.[5] Despite this, there is a greater appearance of threat from far-right populists than far-left populists simply due to the policy successes that have been had in recent years. This should not exclude the potential threat far-left populism should have in Europe, but we are merely focusing on far-right populism due to historical precedence. For Europe to struggle with thoughts of fascism in the 21st century (especially Western liberal democratic Europe) raises some concerns.

The European populist radical right (PRR) has several elements creating the identity it is known by. Rooduijn notates the blend of nativism, authoritarianism, and populism in PRR movements.[6] Nativism, which is a type of nationalism, is cultivated through the desire to maintain certain cultural standards prevalent throughout a particular area. While nationalism is applied at large, nativism is narrowed and strives to create the us-versus-them framing when engaging in discourse. More specifically, nativists see themselves as "the good people" whereas other who are undesirable in

---

[4]   Rooduijn, Mattjis. 2014 "The mesmerising message: the diffusion of populism in public debates in Western European media." Political Studies Vol 62, Issue 4: p276-744. International Political Science Abstracts, EBSCOhost (accessed February 15, 2017).

[5]   Florida, Richard. "The Real Roots of Populism." CityLab. March 21, 2017. Accessed April 05, 2017. https://www.citylab.com/politics/2017/03/what-is-really-behind-the-populist-surge/519921/?utm_source=SFFB.

[6]   Rooduijn, Matthijs. "Vox populismus: a populist radical right attitude among the public?." *Nations & Nationalism* 20, no. 1 (January 2014): 80-92. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost (accessed November 20, 2016).

their worldview are known as "dangerous".[7] It is important to make the distinction between nationalism and nativism when dealing with PRR. Nativism is a smaller cultural grouping whereas nationalism is blanked over what is declared the nation. In some cases, nationalism tends to be progressive or liberal, whereas nativism is parochial and conservative. Additionally, race tends to not be a factor (or is not always one) in the nativist case. For instance, the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands classifies certain religious groups as the dangerous other more so than Arabs or North Africans.[8]

The second element prevailing in PRR is authoritarianism. Such parties are not inherently anti-democratic or are illiberal, but have a strong belief in authoritarians who seek to uphold the law by any means. Law and order are vital when voting on a candidate or referendum. This may seem contradictory as these authoritarians are held to the will of the people.[9] However, it is a trait of populist movements to support strongmen or authoritarians. This leads into the last element of PRR: populism.

The nature of populism is clearly seen in the rhetoric that is produced from it. Us-versus-them is a common narrative, with the people being "good" and the elites (or other group) being "bad" or against the will of the people. [10] Often the enemies portrayed can range from academics, politicians, journalists, or bankers; all of whom are considered elites or controllers of their respective domains. [11] Whomever the targets may be, populist movements are inherently anti-establish and seek to dismantle institutions, but only those perceived as being elite or unjust to the "good" people. As a subsection of populism, often a leader appears within these movements who wields great charismatic powers. Such charisma is demonstrated in the communication of the ideas through persuasive discourse, often focusing on issues that are salient and relevant to the cause.[12]

It is also important to note that such groups rely on a type of self-selection in which individuals will align themselves if they match with the party ideology. In a study conducted by Bakker, Rooduijn and Schumacher, the "agreeableness" is only applicable to the far-right parties who engage in populist methods.[13] The populist radical right is found in both the United States and Europe, thus the phenomena is not isolated to

---

7   Rooduijn, Matthijs. 82.

8   Ibid, 82.

9   Ibid.

10   Ibid.

11   Bakker, Bert N., Matthijs Rooduijn, and Gijs Schumacher. ""The psychological roots of populist voting: Evidence from the United States, the Netherlands and Germany." European Journal Of Political Research 55, no. 2 (May 2016): 302-320. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost (accessed November 21, 2016).

12   Bakker, Bert et al. 304.

13   Bakker, Bert et al. 302-320.

Europe. However, as mentioned previously, the prevalence of PRR in Europe is worrisome due to the political history and current developments.

With PRR consisting of populism, authoritarianism, and nativism as core traits, there are additional characteristics of the European Populist Radical Right. Perhaps the most unifying element is the heartland ideology. As Taggart states: "The heartland is a construction of the good life derived retrospectively from a romanticized conception of life as it has been lived."[14] The heartland is a populist version of utopia. While utopia is literally "nowhere," the heartland is more reminiscent and nostalgic. Additionally, the heartland is a condition that can be (at least theoretically) returned to and the current state of the nation being done away with. Most importantly is the unitary nature of the heartland.[15] The heartland is a simplistic and unchanging concept in the populist zeitgeist, as it reinforces the narrative of "the good people" versus the "evil people" and keeps playing into nativism. The heartland in the United States looks like the frequently romanticized 1950s, whereas the European version is not necessarily the same.

While some Europeans may fondly look back on the golden years, the concept of the heartland is more closely associated with Euroskepticism, or skepticism for the European Union. On a larger scale, populism is at odds with globalization; in Europe, it is distilled as various movements at odds with the European Union. For the PRR, the European Union is the antithesis of the heartland and strikes at the very core of their philosophies. On the trait of nativism, the European Union's generally lenient policy on immigration has created a hostile environment for any sort of nativist ways to proceed uninhibited.[16] While the immigration situation (be it forcible or not) may have been somewhat minor in the past, it has undoubtedly skyrocketed and is now a great concern for many European countries alike.

The other part of Euroskepticism deals with the specific policies enacted by the EU, or rather, the inaction of the EU in certain regions. Euroskepticism is the culmination of anti-elite attitudes in tandem with ineffectual governing of subregions by the European body. Such inability to bring promises to neglected regions has resulted in cynicism for the European government.[17] Voters and citizens who are disaffected often blame the elites within the European government who are deaf to the qualms of the

---

[14] Taggart, Paul. 2004. "Populism and representative politics in contemporary Europe." Journal Of Political Ideologies 9, no. 3: 269-288. International Political Science Abstracts, EBSCOhost (accessed February 15, 2017).

[15] Taggart. 278.

[16] Taggart, 279.

[17] Pollock, Gary, Tom Brock, and Mark Ellison. "Populism, Ideology and Contradiction: Mapping Young People's Political Views." Sociological Review 63, (December 2, 2015): 141-166. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost (accessed November 20, 2016).

people. Pollock et al. notes in a study of young people in Europe that cynicism is a strong indicator when measuring populist tendencies.[18] While not conclusive, the research does suggest younger people are tending to respond to local problems than regional or even national ones. Such is in the case of Poland, where political parties are using economic downturn as a rallying cry for better governance. Poland, being a post-socialist country, suffers from the usual bouts with populism in an emerging democracy.

What is interesting about Poland as a study for populism is the interplay between religion (Catholicism), nationalism (Polish identity), and peasantism or rural life.[19] Bulzalka focuses on the aspects of "post-peasantism" in Poland, which is the changing demographics of Poland and the changing economic landscape within Europe at large. The life as a farmer in Poland no longer yields the same benefits as it once did and can not possibly deliver the same economic opportunities like the urban worker. In this sense, the heartland had been destroyed by modernity and farmers have been left behind.

The Catholic church, which is incredibly prominent in Polish society, feeds into the populist narratives. Buzalka notes "...the preeminence and defense of the patriarchal family and a rigid moral order, the complicated obsession with the nation, and the beliefs about the role of 'the people' and their traditions."[20] Bulzalka goes further into the amalgam of populism and religion in Poland. "In the time of crisis and insecurity, religious leaders and populists address their assistance predominantly to those who are in need, usually the 'losers' in economic transformations. Many religious leaders and populists share the safeguarding of tradition, for a fear arises from the loss of the traditional character of a people, their national identity, and their pre-industrial moral purity."[21]

There is a clear similarity between the church's role in soothing the pains of economic growth and of populists. Populists are political opportunists in this situation in the sense they take advantage of shifting economic conditions in order to benefit themselves at the polls. As Buzalka claims: "People's insecurity fuels the nostalgic imagination of a similar nature. The combination of the two types of practices, identity narratives and memories related to the recent peasant past - determined by continuity and rupture - causes a particularly 'populist' way of doing and perceiving politics in south-east Poland and in other parts of Eastern Europe as well."[22] The nostalgic desire

---

[18] Pollock et al. 159.

[19] Buzalka, Juraj. 2008. "Europeanisation and post-peasant populism in Eastern Europe." Europe-Asia
      Studies 60, no. 5: 757-771. International Political Science Abstracts, EBSCOhost (accessed February 15, 2017).

[20] Buzalka, 761.

[21] Ibid, 762.

[22] Ibid, 769.

for the heartland, be it a farmhouse on acres of land or the nuclear family, is quite strong in populists throughout the world (at the very least, in Eastern Europe).

Regardless of the variation in narratives, the want to return to a "simpler time" or "the good ol' days" seems to be a common mark amongst such movements. While some groups may not be religiously motivated, they are nativist motivated and this is the core concept of European populist radical right. While there is not strong enough evidence at the moment to draw direct conclusions, there is a ground upon which we can assert that the nativist causes within European PRR are based in unequal economic gains or inability to adapt to new economic conditions.

Populist Radical Right Groups in Context
Far-right groups who operate with the populist rhetoric and agenda exist throughout liberal democratic Europe. As a whole, they are quite similar in how they frame arguments, promote themselves, and attract certain groups. However, there are differing ideological positions taken by these various groups. The National Front of France will be propagating a certain agenda that works for French voters, whereas the Dutch Party for Freedom would be using a different one. A given country can have wildly different perceptions of these groups, even if they are seen as outsiders. While it may seem convenient to simplify them and paint with broad strokes, breaking their platforms and rhetoric down can give us better insight.

Front National (FN) - France
Perhaps the most talked of the PRR groups recently is also one of the oldest ones in Europe. Front National was established in 1972 by Jean-Marie Le Pen. Originally, the party was much more verbose and controversial than it has been since his daughter, Marine Le Pen, took over the party leadership.[23] The elder Le Pen's party was that of anti-Semitism and holocaust denial, whereas the current party is more easy to digest. FN has become more a response to two things: internal strain on current systems incapable of adapting quickly and external economic forces beyond the control of France proper. Reynie says, "It concerns population aging and its consequences. These include welfare states that are becoming harder to afford, immigration, and the ethnocultural recomposition of societies, with Islam emerging as a key issue. The second is external and relates to economic, technological, and cultural globalization."[24] While these are issues liberal democratic Europe is dealing with, FN has shifted the political landscape of France in its favor.

---

[23] Branford, Marysia Nowak & Becky. "France elections: What makes Marine Le Pen far right?" BBC News. February 10, 2017. Accessed April 26, 2017. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38321401.

[24] Reynie, Dominique. "'Heritage Populism' and France's National Front." *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 4 (October 19, 2016): 47-57. *Academic Search Complete,* EBSCO*host* (accessed April 26, 2017)

In the 2007 French Presidential elections, Marine Le Pen was able to get Sarkozy's UMP to pick up some of its political views.[25] At this time, right-wing parties (FN as the lead) forced UMP (a center-right party) to addresses the issue of identity in France. The economic recession had not been in full swing, but there were still plenty of issues to be had. Le Pen had commented there was a loss of "blood and soil" by Sarkozy.[26] She had successfully shifted discussion away from economic policy over to emotional and ideological stances. UMP had retained the rhetoric used in the 2007 for the 2012 election. While FN was not as successful in those years, it had made nativism an acceptable position to have a French voter. The populist radical right, in this case, had become normalized and less embarrassing.[27]

This is not exclusive to Sarkozy either. In November 2015, Le Pen state the link between immigration and militant Islam after a terrorist attack in Paris.[28] Part of her statement included "expel foreigners who preach hatred on our soul." This language has been repeated by both President Hollande (of the Socialist Party) and François Fillon of the Republicans (a major opponent of Le Pen). The furthering normalization of FN is included in their shifting political positions as well. While once a party critical of the expansive government, it has been embraced under Marine Le Pen with a few conditions. Such conditions are inherently nativist with policies for providing social welfare for only French families, maintaining the French language and culture; and deporting illegal immigrants.[29] While populist radical right parties are distrustful of the government and tend to be fringe groups, FN has mobilized itself into a movement on the cusp of securing a presidential victory. Win or lose, the party has made a name for itself and is by no means unpopular or seen as the loner it once was.

UK Independence Party (UKIP) - United Kingdom
The black sheep of the PRR parties for two reasons: it is a single issue party, and had achieved its prime goal without electoral victory. UKIP had its begins with the Maastricht Treaty in 1991 with people who opposed the European Union.[30] In 1993, the party was officially founded and sought general election success. However, it was not until 1999 did the party see any gains in the House of Commons and not until

---

[25] Mondon, Aurelien. "The Front National in the Twenty-First Century: From Pariah to Republican Democratic Contender?." *Modern & Contemporary France* 22, no. 3 (July 2014): 301-320. *Academic Search Complete,* EBSCO*host* (accessed April 26, 2017).

[26] Mondon, 305.

[27] Ibid, 306.

[28] "France elections: What makes Marine Le Pen far right?"

[29] "What does France's National Front stand for?" France 24. May 28, 2014. Accessed April 26, 2017. http://www.france24.com/en/20140528-france-national-front-policy-eu.

[30] Hunt, Alex. "UKIP: The Story of the UK Independence Party's Rise." *BBC News*. BBC, 21 Nov. 2014. Web. 27 Apr. 2017.

2014 did the party come to national prominence. As the name would imply, the party is built upon members seeking a United Kingdom separated from the European Union. But UKIP is not about its electoral successes in the European Parliament or its attempts at the House of Commons, but the success of the Brexit vote which has made the party a powerful political force in the UK.

UKIP has all the makings of a populist radical right party. It is nativist, Euroskeptical, and repeating the Us-vs-Them narrative. Nigel Farage, leader of UKIP, often talks about the restriction on immigration, putting EU funds back into the National Health System, and keeping Britain independent from foreign control.[31] While other parties may be able to expound upon certain policies, UKIP was able complete their core ideological objective without taking Parliament. The British version of populist radical right, from a general overview, appears to be in line with many sentiments expressed by the population historically. The United Kingdom has typically been outside of the European sphere and an anomaly when it is compared with its other European counterparts. The British Isles are rather untainted by the waves of crises that have hit the continent time and time again.

By campaigning on one issue, the party was able to persuade a population of voters to abandon the EU and pursue a more independent option.[32] The British, having been independent from most of Europe, felt no real obligation to the system imposed on them. It was Farage's party that had persuaded them to vote contrary to the facts. For instance, Farage is a politician who cultivates an everyday-man personality and makes statements along the lines of "we need to restrict immigration to protect British jobs".[33] His portrayal of himself as the common man and the appeal to nativism only combines with the already present distrust in foreign entities. He has appealed to the denominator most afflicted by the changing economic situation, that being those who still believe in the Heartland.[34]

Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV) - Netherlands
The Netherlands, home of the Treaty of Maastricht, is no stranger to the populist radical right. The Party for Freedom (translated to English) did not win the electoral victory it had hoped in March 2016[35] but is nevertheless attempting to secure its power in the country. Geert Wilders, the leader of PVV, began his party in 2004 after breaking

---

[31] "UKIP: The Story of the UK Independence Party's Rise."

[32] Goodwin, Matthew J., and Oliver Heath. "The 2016 Referendum, Brexit and the Left Behind: An Aggregate-level Analysis of the Result." *Political Quarterly* 87, no. 3 (July 2016): 323-332. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCO*host* (accessed April 27, 2017).

[33] "UKIP: The Story of the UK Independence Party's Rise."

[34] Goodwin and Heath, 331.

[35] "Dutch election: Rutte's victory is official."

with the center right People's Party (VVD).[36] Much like FN and UKIP, Wilders's party pushes for Euroskepticism and restriction on immigration. Similar to Nigel Farage, Wilders cultivates his own anti-establishment personality despite himself being the third-longest sitting member of in the lower house of the Dutch parliament.[37]

Unlike FN and UKIP, the party platform and rhetoric is extremely anti-Islamic. Wilders has stated his intention to ban immigration from Muslim countries, ban the Quran, shut down mosques and Islamic schools.[38] However, Wilders is known for supporting LGBT and women's rights at the same time as denouncing Islam. The rhetoric is not completely within the right-wing norms, but still has a nativist agenda. Additionally, the party accounts for 20 seats in the lower house of the Dutch parliament, whereas others either have no seats or very few.[39] The electoral success of PVV has made them a part of the establishment and lends legitimacy to their cause. It is not clear if PVV is going to gain momentum into the next general election, but the progress made since 2004 is enough to turn heads and make contingency plans for the Dutch parties.

Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPO) - Austria
Similar to PVV in terms of electoral success, the Freedom Party of Austria had found itself in a great position in the presidential election. The FPO, along with the Greens, were able to beat out the center-right and center-left establishment parties in the first round of voting.[40] However, FPO candidate Norbert Hofer lost to the Green candidate Alexander Van der Bellen 53.3% to 46.7%.[41] While the office of the presidency is largely ceremonial in Austria[42], the president is allowed to intervene in the formation of a government and dismiss government. In a victory for the FPO, this could have had big implications in the parliamentary elections.

What is important to note about the party is its origins are directly related to fascism, as it had been a refuge for former Nazis.[43] The party was originally oriented around center-right economic liberalism, but changed in the 1980s with Jörg Haider as its leader. FPO adopted populist rhetoric and an anti-immigration platform. In 2000, it

---

[36] Serhan, Yasmeen. "Geert Wilders's Moment." The Atlantic. March 06, 2017. Accessed April 27, 2017. https://www.theatlantic.com/news/archive/2017/03/geert-wilders-netherlands/518415/.

[37] Serhan, "Geert Wilders's Moment."

[38] Ibid.

[39] "Dutch election: Rutte's victory is official."

[40] Misik, Robert. "Opinion | The Freedom Party's Second Chance in Austria." The New York Times. December 01, 2016. Accessed April 27, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/01/opinion/the-freedom-partys-second-chance-in-austria.html.

[41] "Austrians roundly reject far right in presidential election."

[42] "Opinion | The Freedom Party's Second Chance in Austria."

[43] Ibid.

became a part of the government coalition helping legitimize itself as a viable political alternative. With the results of the presidential election, FPO is seeking to take the parliament by 2018; as roughly one third of Austrian voters support the party.[44]

The success of the FPO, as to be expected, comes from the politicians who portray themselves as a "man of the people" or make the party out to be anti-establishment.[45] The platform contains anti-Islamic sentiments, anti-globalism, Euroskepticism, and anti-elitist rhetoric. However, most concerning of all (ironically) is the anti-Semitism that is prevalent throughout the discourse of the party members.[46] At times, certain party members have been questioned on whether or not they are Holocaust deniers. Responses have typically non-affirmations, vague, or outright avoid answering the question.[47] In some cases, politicians from FPO have openly criticized Jews (often using language to indicate their opponents as such) and have been met with strong electoral victories in certain states.[48] Anti-Semitism is prevalent to a degree in many populist radical right parties, Front National being led by the anti-Semitic Jean-Marie Le Pen from 1972 until 2011. While the FPO has not made statement denying the Holocaust, their members using vague language when talking about the subject certainly raises questions.

Conclusions

The core traits in populist radical right parties involve populist tactics, authoritarian rhetoric or positions, and nativism. Several parties in Europe express these traits in multiple forms and through discourse by various media. Of the groups elaborated upon, populism and nativism seem to be the most important of the core traits in gaining an electoral victory. Leaders of PRR will frame the narrative to make themselves appear as anti-establishment and anti-elitist despite being long-time career politicians, inheritor of a political dynasty, or even an elite unto themselves. The rhetoric used by these politicians focus on the native aspects of their respective countries. Often more times than not, targeting the EU for its lax immigration policies and social welfare rile up the sentiments of voters whom these populists tend to target. Their targets primarily people disaffected by elite-dominated politics or those who have been left behind in the economic growth experienced only within cities. As the cities become wealthier, the gap between the urbanites and rural folk grows. The urban

---

[44] "Austrians roundly reject far right in presidential election."

[45] "Opinion | The Freedom Party's Second Chance in Austria."

[46] Stoegner, Karin. "'We are the new Jews!' and 'The Jewish Lobby' - antisemitism and the construction of a national identity by the Austrian Freedom Party." *Nations & Nationalism* 22, no. 3 (July 2016): 484-504. *Academic Search Complete,* EBSCO*host* (accessed April 27, 2017).

[47] Stoengner, 491.

[48] Ibid, 500.

centers, being the core of economic and cultural power in a country, lends itself to the whims of the elite as they are centers of the nation.

Populists are taking these negative sentiments and putting the blame onto a different situation. While we are seeing immigrants and Muslims being brought out as the cause for societal decline, this is most certainly not the case. They are scapegoats for the populist narrative which can contain almost anything which can complete it. Elites, bankers, Muslims, Jews, politicians, etc; anything to pit the good people (being the populist radical right) against the bad people (anyone who fits the description) when they threaten the Heartland. Front National had a slogan in the past that said: France for French! There is an integral part in this Heartland which is not tangible because it does not exist. The populist radical right is chasing after an imagined place which isn't attainable because it is based off of the romanticized perceptions of a previous time period. What might be most important to realize is PRR has not popped up overnight. These movements have been slow and steady develop into full-fledged movements, beginning even in the wake of World War II and only coming to relevance at the turn of the 21st century.

To say that PRR is a threat to the stability of Europe is wrong, but is simultaneously truthful. The transfusion of rhetoric from PRR groups to mainstream centrist parties have lent a stronger connection with those in relative economic deprivation. While the fury at the pulpit may have intensified, the policies undertaken can still be moderate. The highlighting by populists of the elite dominating in the political sphere s may unwittingly generate pressure by mainstream parties to become more inclusive of who joins the ranks. While this might be wishful thinking, there is still that eerie threat that lingers. UKIP has successfully pushed for a UK withdrawal from the EU with many other countries considering the debate. Plenty of PRR groups still espouse anti-Semitic rhetoric; even more are calling for action to be taken against Muslims, most of which don't seem too far removed from tactics used by the Nazis. In any case, the liberal democratic system has remained what it has been for decades now - democratic. So long as these populist radical right groups are engaging in the democratic process, there ought to be no fear in their rise to electoral success. While PRR might consist of populism, nativism; and authoritarianism, the final trait always seems to be the weakest as populists seem to enjoy the spectacle of elections. Despite the agenda some may have planned, the general will of the people will decide their fate.