



CHATHAM HOUSE

Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE

T: +44 (0)20 7957 5700 E: contact@chathamhouse.org

F: +44 (0)20 7957 5710 www.chathamhouse.org

Charity Registration Number: 208223

Transcript

From Voting to Violence? New Evidence on Far Right Supporters

Dr Matthew Goodwin

Associate Fellow, Europe Programme, Chatham House

Jon Cruddas MP

Member of Parliament for Dagenham and Rainham

Professor Jocelyn Evans

Salford University

Nick Lowles

Hope Not Hate Campaign

Chair: Dr Robin Niblett

Director, Chatham House

8 March 2012

The views expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of Chatham House, its staff, associates or Council. Chatham House is independent and owes no allegiance to any government or to any political body. It does not take institutional positions on policy issues. This document is issued on the understanding that if any extract is used, the author(s)/ speaker(s) and Chatham House should be credited, preferably with the date of the publication or details of the event. Where this document refers to or reports statements made by speakers at an event every effort has been made to provide a fair representation of their views and opinions, but the ultimate responsibility for accuracy lies with this document's author(s). The published text of speeches and presentations may differ from delivery.

Robin Niblett:

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Chatham House. Thanks very much for joining us this evening. I'm Robin Niblett, Director of the Institute. And it's my great pleasure to welcome you here for this meeting, where we will be discussing a survey that's been undertaken with the support of the British Academy, entitled 'From Voting to Violence? New Evidence on Far Right Supporters' being put together by Dr Matthew Goodwin, Professor Jocelyn Evans and colleagues, perhaps. But certainly the two of you, I know.

And what we're going to do is take an opportunity to hear in a minute some of the key results from Matthew. And then have an opportunity for discussion with the panel, which I'll introduce properly once we get going in the discussion.

Chatham House has been doing work now for the last couple of years, really, a year and a half, two years, on the rise of populist extremism, in particular in Europe. And our key partner in this has been Matt Goodwin, who's a lecturer at Nottingham University in the Politics and International Relations area. He's written extensively, I'm not going to quote all his books, principally on the rise of far right groups in the UK. And he was the lead author of the report that we did which came out towards the end of last year, entitled ['Right Response: Understanding and Countering Populist Extremism in Europe'](#).

And between that and the study he's been doing now, the research he continues to undertake at Nottingham University and with us, we're thinking about doing, and planning to do a little later on this year, some survey work on responses that governments have undertaken, in particular at the local level, on countering the rise of populist extremist groups in their midst. And trying to get a sense of what some of the best practice is in the response base by governments. And that's something that we'll look forward to sharing with you and other members and interested parties of Chatham House.

But for the moment, what I want to do is give a chance to Matt to introduce the results. Then I'll invite our other panellists to come up and join us on the stage and give them a chance to make some comments and thoughts and then engage you in any comments you might have thereafter. So, Matt, delighted to have you with us again. Look forward to your comments and insights.

Matthew Goodwin:

[First two minutes of speech missing owing to audio recording error]

...but as reflected in the attacks in Norway last year, the discovery of a violent neo-Nazi cell in Germany, the murder of two Senegalese street traders in Italy, there is beyond the ballot box another school of thought within the far right. It argues that violence, or what they would call direct action, is the only way of curtailing immigration and rapidly expanding Muslim communities and that after 30 years of far right parties attempting to rally support through elections, the time has come for a different approach.

But what do we actually know about far right supporters and their views towards violence? A simple reality is that over much of the past ten years we focussed only on one form of violent extremism. Even if it is waning, religious based forms of extremism, or AQ-inspired terrorism, remain the dominant security challenge, but in the aftermath of Norway, many have in my view quite rightly asked, have we got the balance to countering violent extremism right?

It's within this context that Jocelyn and I undertook this survey. And we wanted to look beyond the alarmist headlines and really launch an academic exploration into a corner of the far right that has remained in the dark. Working with YouGov we've put together a large sample of individuals who self-identify with the far right. And these individuals are to the right of the Conservatives. We're exploring their social profile, their attitudes and their views towards violence.

And one of the problems in terms of research in this area is that we've often just asked supporters of the far right standard questions, questions that we'd ask other citizens about immigration or what some of their core concerns are. We haven't really asked them about beliefs and narratives that we know from past research are quite prominent within far right groups.

The world of the far right is one that offers quite a distinct set of narratives to its followers. They emphasise a perceived threat from Islam, and rapidly growing Muslim communities. They argue there's a fast approaching clash of civilisations between Islam and Western states. They encourage their supporters to prepare for this clash.

And they argue that Britain will soon descend into a race war or a civil war as soon as City X or City Y becomes majority Muslim. They encourage their supporters to take urgent and radical action to protect their loved ones from these threats. They might not advocate violence, but I would argue that they deliver narratives that would justify violence under certain conditions.

So what did we find? Before presenting the results, I'm going to put out a few caveats. This is an exploration. It's not a definitive study. Our sample is likely

to contain bias and for this reason I'm going to warn all the journalists in the room to try and avoid sweeping generalisations. We are not talking about the far right generally. We are talking about a large sample of far right identifiers. But, that said, in the research world this is essentially the equivalent of taking the first step into an area that is under-researched and poorly understood.

First, in terms of their social profile, we now know, and we've known for some time, who supports the far right across Europe. We know they tend to be middle aged or elderly working class men who lack qualifications and are pessimistic about their lives and their future prospects. And we find the same, no surprises: a clear bias towards men; an ageing profile within the BNP and UKIP suggesting that both are going to struggle over the longer term; a far more working class base for the BNP; and UKIP recruiting far more heavily among professionals and managers.

And we find that unsurprisingly, there are high levels of dissatisfaction among these supporters. Unlike many other surveys, we also asked them about the extent to which they had ever served in the armed forces and whether they'd been involved. And we find that one out of every five BNP supporters in our sample, one out of every four UKIP supporters claims they had served in the armed forces. This is not necessarily telling us anything that surprising or anything that we did not already know.

So what are their attitudes towards immigration? Well, both the BNP and UKIP supporters that we surveyed are deeply pessimistic about immigration and its effects. That again is not surprising. What is surprising are the levels of intensity among our BNP group – 97% reject the suggestion that Britain is benefiting from diversity. 74% view immigration as the main cause of crime. And quite a sizeable 40% are rejecting the notion that there is no difference in levels of intelligence between white and black citizens.

UKIP supporters are also concerned about these issues, but less so than those on the extreme right wing. But still in both groups, we find majorities that are deeply sceptical about Britain's benefiting from diversity. They are almost unanimous in their support that immigrants who break the law should leave the country. And majorities associate immigrants as being the main cause of crime. Again, nothing perhaps that we didn't already suspect.

We then probed their attitudes towards Muslims and Islam. Now perhaps like no other issue, the modern far right is focussing on Islam and settled Muslim communities as a way to rally support. What is actually striking here is that over three quarters of our BNP group not only disagree with the suggestion

that Islam is non-threatening, but they disagree strongly. They appear absolutely convinced that Islam is posing a danger to the West.

Support among UKIP is lower, but actually higher than we might expect. Almost two thirds of the UKIP group similarly felt strongly that Islam is posing a danger to the West. In fact, fewer than one out of every ten BNP and UKIP supporter backed the notion that Islam is not threatening.

But here's the real meat of the survey. Asking questions about violence is notoriously difficult. Asking people, 'Would you stockpile explosives? Would you commit violence?' is unlikely to provide any real insight. So what we're looking for here are patterns or indications of a possible endorsement and by comparing these responses. What we are not suggesting is that supporters of UKIP or indeed the far right are dangerous. Or that parties like UKIP and BNP are advocating violence. But we do think that in this case UKIP offers a useful point of comparison, given that it advocates quite a few policies that the BNP also advocates.

We first wanted to probe whether far right followers view actions, such as preparing for conflict, as a justifiable course of action when defending their national way of life. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, those who affiliate with the BNP are more likely than those who affiliate with the more moderate radical right brand of UKIP, do consider preparing for conflict as a justifiable strategy. In fact, almost half of our BNP sample considered this action justifiable. Slightly over one fifth took the view that this pre-emptive action was always justifiable, perhaps hinting at an inner core who are more willing to back violence. And I'll come back to that.

We then took this upper level and asked them about the extent to which they think armed conflict is a justifiable course of action when defending the national way of life. Again, while a majority of UKIP supporters almost go out of their way to reject this, those who align themselves with the BNP are the most likely to view armed conflict as a justifiable course of action. Over half of the BNP group are considering armed conflict justifiable to defend the national way of life, whether rarely, sometimes or always. And again we can see this rump of supporters, this tranche of BNP supporters who are viewing armed conflict as always justifiable.

We then wanted to tap this belief within the far right that past research suggests exists, that many of these supporters are anticipating British society descending into an apocalyptic-style clash of civilisations. We're linking violence here explicitly with the notion of defending their group from threats. And we can see that over three fifths of our BNP group agree that violence

may be needed; one third strongly agreeing with this notion. These results are not telling us whether BNP supporters are more likely than other citizens to engage in violence, but they do suggest quite strongly that large numbers of our BNP respondents share a belief that violence will be needed in the future to defend their group.

To what extent do these supporters believe that violence is largely inevitable? And not just violence generally, but violence between different ethnic, racial and religious groups? Would-be lone wolves like Robert Cottage in the UK and actual perpetrators like Anders Breivik displayed a heavy preoccupation with the idea that Europe or Britain will descend into a clash of civilisations, and among our BNP supporters, the belief in the inevitability of inter-group violence appears relatively widespread. Almost 60% strongly agreeing that Britain will descend into inter-group violence. UKIP to a lesser degree, but nonetheless I find these levels quite striking.

Going back to the inner tranche that we were hinting at. We then wanted to disaggregate supporters based on their level of affiliation. Is it the case that those who are closest to the core of the far right are more likely to endorse violence? This is an idea that we've long thought about, but never really tested. Is it the case, for example, that those who are in the inner sanctum of the far right – the members, the identifiers – are more likely to back these notions than periphery supporters like voters or potential voters?

And all we're doing here is presenting the mean positions of these supporters on a scale from -2 to +2. The closer you are to +2, the more likely you are to agree with these suggestions, to strongly agree with these suggestions. Members and past members are the most likely to strongly agree that violence will be needed to protect their group, that violence between different ethnic, racial and religious groups is inevitable. They're more likely than their UKIP counterparts and they're more likely than their voting and potential voting counterparts.

Some evidence that those who pass through the party or who are active in the party, who are reading the literature, attending the events, who are embedded in the internal culture of the far right, are more likely to endorse these notions. Similarly, it's the members, those that are passed through the party or who are in the party, who are more likely than their periphery supporters to view preparing for conflict between groups and armed conflict as a justifiable course of action.

We're not there yet, but I think this is some pretty convincing evidence that we need to look a lot closer, and actually that radicalisation process within the far

right and how it changes the views and attitudes of those involved. In order to get onto the discussion, let me just make some concluding remarks.

It's important not to exaggerate the threat from the far right in terms of violence and terrorism. Across Europe it is well below AQ-inspired terrorism and violent separatist terror. Not all supporters of the far right endorse violence. But this exploration does shed light on the views of a very large sample of far right supporters. And we think there's enough evidence here, enough evidence of a pattern, to make pursuing this research worthwhile.

The finding that significant numbers of citizens who affiliate openly and unprompted with the far right, both anticipate violence and endorse preparing for that violence, I find that quite striking, given that this is a party that has renounced violence, and we are in a modern Western liberal democracy. This evidence of a more hostile inner core again is something that needs to be pursued. Large numbers of BNP members in our sample appear wholly convinced that British society will descend into violence between different groups and back the notion of preparing for that conflict.

So I'll leave it there, Robin, and we can have a discussion.

ROBIN NIBLETT:

Thank you very much, and thanks for giving us a lot to... I've been jotting down little bits and pieces there to be able to follow through on. I thought what I'd do is just quickly introduce who we've got on the panel and then we can dig into particular issues. On my right, John Cruddas, MP since 2001 for Dagenham and Rainham. He's been particularly well known for taking on the BNP in East London. Before working for the Labour Party, he studied at University of Warwick where he got his PhD. He's been involved in the trade union movement for some time as well. And is currently the secretary of the London group of Labour MPs.

Next is Nick Lowles, who is an anti-fascist activist blogger. He co-ordinates the online campaign 'Hope Not Hate', which was launched in 2005. And again, a frequent commentator and writer on these topics.

Professor Jocelyn Evans is Matt's collaborator on this study, on this survey that we've just gone through. Professor of Politics at the University of Salford in Manchester. And has analysed a lot of voting across Europe, not just in the UK. I know in particular in France, but other parts of Europe as well. And has authored a number of books in this area. You can find out more about them

both in the context of this report and through their other work that they've undertaken.

What I wanted to do is give a first chance to Jocelyn to maybe pick up one or two points that you think Matt may have missed or any points you wanted to highlight or emphasise. You are not allowed to disagree with him, I'm afraid, because your name is on the report as well. But just give us a couple of points that you thought weren't there. Try to keep this maybe to five minutes with each of our panellists because then we can have time for conversation here with the audience. So let me turn it over to you first, Jocelyn, if you want to throw a couple of points in.

Jocelyn Evans:

Thanks Robin. No, I mean in terms of anything that Matt missed, as usual I think Matt has represented our report and our findings in exemplary manner. There's nothing significant that he's left out. There are a couple of things I would like to just expand on, because for me I think these are particularly interesting, looking at the BNP case in particular.

Before I do that, I would just like to say thanks to the guys at YouGov who I'm sort of looking around the room, because I've met them virtually but I've never met them face to face. Over there I see [inaudible] and [inaudible] in particular. Because the survey data that we used gave us an opportunity that I've not seen before using UK data. As Robin says, I've worked more comparatively... I work on European politics a lot as well as some work on UK politics.

Breaking down different supporters by their type of support, from members through to people who identify with a party, in other words for them that party exemplifies politics, through to the voters and then people who might consider voting for the party but haven't done so. That is a fascinating breakdown of different types of support for parties which you very rarely get the chance to look at. And to be able to do that in the case of the far right is a pretty unique opportunity for researchers like me. So as I said, YouGov, I think their survey that they allowed us to do was fantastic.

What I find most striking about this is the BNP breakdown, moving from the members and the past members, as Matt said. In terms of those scores, I mean average scores on scales don't necessarily leap out at you in a striking fashion. But what those scores tell me is, compared to other parties, other countries I've looked at, the BNP core membership really has an extremely

distinct profile even from its voters in a way that you don't see in the UKIP case.

The UKIP case, the BNP case to start with, we bundle them all together and say, on average where do they lie on these particular positions? When you look at UKIP in terms of the breakdown, they're much of a muchness, there's a few small changes by voters and by members. BNP, consistently across everything we ask, a lot of the tables that we didn't put up, and you'll see in the report, that difference comes out time and time again. There is clearly something going on, and I mean Nick and John are probably much better to talk about this on the ground, but there's something going on in terms of the BNP and how it socialises its members, in a way that it doesn't socialise its voters.

If we're comparing that with UKIP – this is my second point – I think what I would point out that's particularly of interest is we know the BNP electorally is not performing to the levels it was expecting to, it was hoping to and certainly had done in the past couple of years. Electorally it seems to be somewhat of a spent force. When you look at the positions of their voters, they could quite reasonably and easily move to UKIP in terms of some of the core issue positions on immigration, on law and order, on Europe – we didn't test Europe specifically, but – on those type of issues, there's not much to choose between the BNP voter and a UKIP voter.

But that then leaves a BNP core bereft of electoral support. And in terms of the suggestions and the concerns, and I think in terms of looking at this in terms of what it suggests for the future, that is a party which has seen the electoral route disappear to it, and then that prompts the question, well what are the alternatives? And I mean in terms of some comments we've already had today in some media coverage, BNP spokesmen said precisely that, as they put it, being locked out of the electoral system, it could well be that some people turn to other more radical forms of action. It confirms what we're seeing within our survey.

The last thing I want to say, and then I'll hand over to Nick, is in terms of the next steps. We are conscious and I would like to underline in the way that Matt already has done very clearly, that this is an exploratory study. This is not claiming to be a representative sample of each of these different types of supporters or indeed of these party supporters. This is a micro study of these two groups. So we're not drawing, we're not extrapolating to the populations of these supporters.

But what we do need to do, and what I'd like to be looking into doing next is find, well okay, on these sorts of questions, where does the national position lie? I mean if we ask across Britain, a sample of British voters, where do they lie? And my suspicions are they will be quite close in some cases to the UKIP position. But that's obviously just speculation on my part. What I want to see is the actual data to be able to do that. Because then we can start to array people on this spectrum and get a more clear and robust view of exactly where BNP and the other parties lie in respect to those national population [sic].

Robin Niblett:

Thank you very much. That's I think a very helpful addition, especially this point about what happens when BNP potentially loses, if it loses, a political route out and what that means for policy choices that need to be taken.

I think it would be good to come back to, when we do, this comparative effort between BNP and UKIP. We did the report on the rise of populist extremism, you could almost say that UKIP was seen as being in a populist space and BNP may be an extremist space. And yet here we have a study that in a way is looking for linkages and similarities and, as you just pointed out, potential roots for crossover politically within the voting space if not within the membership space. And a lot of people have views on those issues, maybe when we come to the Q&A.

And let me also endorse... a pleasure working with YouGov, because we've done a lot of work with them on UK attitudes to foreign policy, international affairs and the ability to break data down the way that's been done here I think becomes especially useful, and it's something they specialise in. Nick, maybe you'd like to say a word or two here just your impressions on the paper and the report and how it looks to you.

Nick Lowles:

Thanks. Before I start, I'd just say obviously I've got a vested interest and I've got to declare that because I am an activist and we campaign against the far right and the BNP and obviously this study is an independent study, but I'd just like to say I think this is really welcome and I think the more we understand about the extreme right, be it the BNP, be it UKIP, be it EDL, the easier it is for groups like ourselves to campaign against them. I think to look at public policy, stuff that comes out of it. So first of all, I just want to say that.

I think on the one hand, I'm not surprised by some of the results and at the same time I am surprised. I mean the kind of levels of attitudes towards violence and everything I think actually is quite shockingly high. And I think that it does emphasise again, and I know this came out in a Home Affairs Select Committee report at the end of January, that actually government has probably underestimated and not done enough to kind of look at the extreme right in Britain. And I think the results in this survey should be cause for concern.

Obviously the fact that people are thinking about these things doesn't mean that they are going to do it, but I think especially at a time when we are seeing the current kind of political decline of the BNP, and the rise of groups like the English Defence League, we are seeing an increase in violence and I think that the more some of these activists and these far right groups believe that there isn't a kind of parliamentary road to fascism, they will look to other groups. And we are starting to see the rise of more extreme groups coming out from the collapse of the BNP.

The two points I'd just like to make, because I think there are some challenges for public policy and also some issues around policing here. And I think that the study touches on some of these things, and I think that there's obviously more work to be done.

One is cause and effect. Because I think that we have long argued, and we have been frustrated that – and I don't think the government or the police have properly understood this – I think the impact of kind of propaganda and while the people who might write it might not want to carry stuff out, there are going to be people out there who do. And that actually to me, it seems to be fairly common sense that if you're continually writing about race war, reading about race war, there's going to be some people who then go and carry it out.

And I give the example of Robert Cottage – who there was a picture of in one of the slides – who was a BNP member up in Pendle, who was convicted a couple of years ago for stockpiling explosives for bombs and stuff. And his argument in court, and he was a man in his 50s, his argument in court was that he genuinely believed what he was being told, that the race war was coming. And he decided to do something about it and prepare for it.

So I think the cause and effect and also the kind of socialising factor, I think that's the other key issue. And I think the politicisation process that people go through, and obviously we're looking at a core of BNP members or a core of UKIP members who hold these more extreme views. And I'd be interested to know, did they have those extreme views when they got involved in these

groups? Or the process of being involved, and the socialisation process, did that move them to more extreme views?

And I think there's some interesting case studies here. One is of David Copeland, the London nail bomber who I did a book about. If you look at how he got involved in the BNP first of all, you know, he was someone who felt inadequate, he felt alone. And being involved in the BNP made him feel better and superior. And the process of being involved took him on the journey where in the end he decided that the BNP and the National Socialist Movement weren't hard line enough, and he went towards a bombing strategy.

And I think the other interesting cases at the moment, we've got a man called John 'Snowy' Shaw, who's a leader of a kind of rival faction in the English Defence League. He hadn't been involved in politics. He got involved in a protest in Dudley where he got onto a roof with an Israeli flag. Then gradually got more involved, started linking up with the Loyalist Paramilitaries. Then started going on about Jewish conspiracies. And he's gone on a process where he's advocating all sorts of things now. And the process of being involved takes people on a journey.

So I think more work needs to be done, but I really do think this is a really good first step.

Robin Niblett:

Thanks, Nick. And clearly there's... the attitude to violence is one of the most shocking and dramatic parts of the results. It would be interesting when we get into the Q&A to look at this connection between the conception that you believe Islam poses a danger to the West, which had a lot of support across all of the spectrum, then what you did use from it. So if that's your starting point, then from there, you can go in all sorts of directions. So that maybe is a point we want to come back to.

John, you were involved here and were on this stage actually when we launched the 'Right Response' paper, and I remember you made a very interesting point then, when you noted that groups like BNP and others had really demonstrated a remarkably powerful capacity to organise locally in a way that many of the traditional political parties hadn't. Part of what, in a way, you had others have had to counter with is this ability to organise. I think you were saying a minute ago that becoming members can involve a socialisation process. These are groups that have really thought about how you create a

sense of belonging at a very local community level. It's very hard then to break apart. So that's an idea that struck me from your comments then and seems to be echoing again a little bit in the comments we just heard from Nick and others. That or any other comments you'd like to make at this stage.

John Cruddas:

Well I'll just make a couple. I think you're seeing incrementally the development of a really substantial body of work now through Chatham House with Matthew's work, Jocelyn's work, with an earlier report Nick did on fear and hope. Some of the other stuff around the IPPR which has recently come out on Englishness around issues of identity and belonging and nationhood.

And what is interesting is what it begins to reveal isn't shocking to me. But it is, if you see politics as essentially an exercise of rational choice theory, rather than a more visceral series of emotional connections. And that's what I think this is beginning to reveal and tap into and explore in a really interesting way. Because that rupture between the laws of politics as calibrated by a sort of shrinking gene pool versus what is, as all empirical evidence suggests is, on the move.

And this is, in the context is, we just move away from a positive sum economic environment, all of that, into a shrinking fiscal framework which will be dominated by a series of culture wars around identity, religion, even welfare, race, Europe, nationhood, Scotland. It seems to me, it's moving into the terrain that you're beginning to chart now.

And that's profoundly worrying, but we'd better get equipped to deal with it. And navigate a different series of political tools, or a different type of equipment to deal with it. Because the laws as calibrated in this Borough just offer diminishing returns in just dealing with this stuff. How do you account for, if you are... the notion of being a progressive, if you want, you move to altered states of progressiveness. Whereas people's worldview is one of a profound sense of loss, alienation, a less benign take on globalisation, should we politely put it. Which is refracted through issues of race and identity and tribe. That's what we're beginning to get into.

But that didn't fall out of the sky. And the danger is that you assume, the politicians assume that this is just the residualised space of a few, which we're moving forwards away from. Rather, it looks like maybe we're moving into this zone rather than moving away from it.

So I find it a really useful wakeup call. I'd be really interested in taking this further in terms of tapping into some of the fears underneath it around a sense of loss, victimhood, home, country. Because my sense is this is what this is all about, really. And a sense of a modern enemy which is, I find, profoundly troubling. But very much on the move.

And it will be, and you can see it. Actually I think you can see it in a bit of a revolving door on the outer edges of different political parties now, I'll going no further than that. And you can see different... for example, is there not a perspective English nationalist faction developing on part of the modern Conservative Party? I don't know.

Might be, which is trying to sort of confront some of these things, in the positive space to choke off the space within which more extreme elements might inhabit. What does that mean? What does it mean, cumulatively for Labour? Which has historically performed a role of choking off some of these sentiments in terms of mainstream democratic political forces. To me, this is the new political centre ground, basically. And we'd better get used to it. And learn what needs to be done.

And I think it's beginning to be acknowledged in the Home Office. The report on extremism, it's beginning to say that you cannot just be in denial and swerve around this and hope it just goes away, given the forces of history. And that's why I think we've just got to all seek to try and learn how to create a route map through it.

Actually, this is a good time to do it because of the collateral damage to the BNP electorally over the last period, as the EDL moves into a more militia type of politics, there is a period of transition that should allow us to confront this stuff rather than run from it under the assumption that less talk is better. So paradoxically, it's a good time to start talking about this, because there's a combination of political forces that mean that imminent threat in terms of a political breakthrough might not necessarily be there, which means that we have a bit of space to really confront it.

Robin Niblett:

If the political breakthrough has not taken place for these parties but the emotions and drivers are as strong as I think Jocelyn and Matt's work seems to be demonstrating, then the risk is, and you've said yourself, that those instincts then get adopted by others or brought into other types of parties.

Look at France, again we could be comparative on these points with some other parts of Europe.

You've raised a very important point here. You raised, John, the whole issue of we're entering a period of fiscal contraction, perhaps a highlighting and a heightening therefore of the kind of tensions around nationhood, sense of loss, alienation, social division and fraction.

Matt, I know when we did the first study, you've always wanted to sort of separate out the economic driver part from this from the worldview, the fear of immigration, the points about the clash with Islam. To you these two things have been quite separate, yes? How do you take the point that John was mentioning that one may drive the other? In other words, that a lot of the feelings you pointed out here, that your research and Jocelyn's research have demonstrated about fears of Islam, of immigration, are they going to be compounded by this economic environment, just inevitably? Or are these two separate tracks that are running side by side?

Matthew Goodwin:

Well, I'll keep it brief just so we can let the audience in as well. I mean one of the conventional wisdoms that the rise of these parties, it's essentially all about scarce resources and people feeling as though their jobs and social housing are under threat. I always like to remind those people that these parties were on the move during a period of relative economic stability and affluence, long before the financial crisis or the recession kicked in.

I think John is absolutely right. I think the economic grievances play a part and to say they don't is wrong. But I think a lot of what we're seeing now and a lot of what's coming out of the evidence base is that this is foremost about a feeling that a way of life, a national culture, a set of values, even if people can't quite explain what those values are, are somehow threatened. Whether by immigration, whether by rising diversity.

And what I don't think we've quite yet got to grips yet is just how important anti-Muslim prejudice is now to these parties. It's absolutely key to their narrative. It provides them with a completely different frame that allows them to hold the flag of Israel while claiming to speak for the defence of women's rights or homosexuality.

And we have not, I don't feel like, in terms of the evidence and also policy and practice, we've not kept up with the speed at which the far right has developed a new frame. And that frame is very powerful. As we saw in the

most extreme case, in terms of Breivik. His primary concern was not immigration, it was settled Muslim communities.