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THE ANTIESTABLISHMENT CHALLENGE

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In recent decades, and most markedly since the Great Recession that began in 2008, support for traditional political parties has been in decline. Citizens increasingly perceive parties as corrupt entities which, instead of representing the interests of their electorates, behave as "public utilities" and state agents.[1] Indeed, Eurobarometer data from 2019 show that people have less trust in parties, and the representative institutions they control, than in entities such as the police and the army that are neither representative nor electorally accountable. Parties themselves are the least trusted by a wide margin among those civic institutions included in the survey, enjoying the confidence of a dismal 22 percent of survey respondents (see Figure 1). The effects of this disappointment are evident in declining party identification, party membership, and electoral-turnout levels.[2] Among those citizens who still head to the polls, many place their bets on different parties in each election, usually preferring new ones. And these successful new parties largely define themselves in opposition to the political establishment.

As we can see in Figure 2, the share of votes for anti–political-establishment parties[3] has risen sharply since the 1960s, and especially during the last decade. This trend has affected countries all over the world and involved both sides of the political spectrum,[4] though left-wing (socialist) populism has been traditionally more successful in Latin America and right-wing (nativist) populism in Europe. Academics have not been idle, and the last few years have seen a proliferation of publications exploring the causes and consequences of antiestablishment parties' rise. Of the latter, two are generally seen as most important: party-sys-

FIGURE 1—TRUST IN POLITICAL PARTIES AND OTHER STATE INSTITUTIONS IN EUROPE, 2019
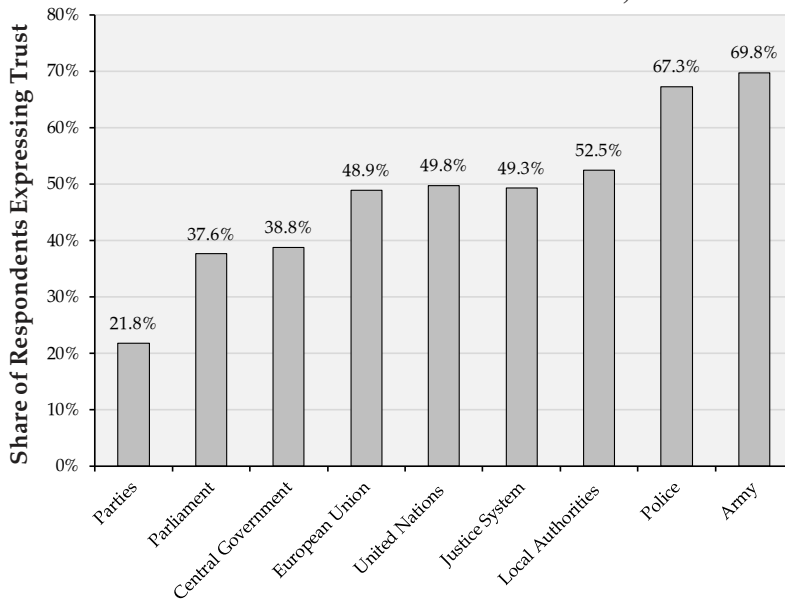
Source: Authors' analysis based on data from Eurobarometer 91.5 (June–July 2019). The vertical axis represents the share of survey respondents who answered that they "tend to trust" the respective institution.

tem change and de-institutionalization on the one hand, and the rise of illiberalism and democratic backsliding on the other. There seems to be a lack of consensus among scholars when it comes to whether these parties' electoral success erodes or strengthens the quality of democracy. One school of thought holds that antiestablishment parties in general, and populist parties in particular, are harmful because they constitute a "perverse inversion of the ideals and procedures of democracy."[5] Another group views populism more as an opportunity than as a threat: These scholars consider the antiestablishment political wave to be a wake-up call that could lead to the "democratization of democracy by permitting the aggregation of the demands of those who belong to politically excluded sectors."[6] Other analysts argue that populism's net effects on democracy are not predetermined, but rather must be assessed empirically. As summarized by Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser: "Depending on its electoral power and the context in which it arises, populism can work as *either* a threat to *or* a corrective for democracy."[7]

Looking at the coin from the other side, our view of antiestablishment parties' impact on democracy will depend on our broader understanding of what constitutes democracy and how it should work.[8] Populism might not necessarily run counter to certain conceptions of democracy without

adjectives. Things change once we look at antiestablishment parties in relation to liberal democracy.

If we define liberal democracy as a political regime which not only respects popular sovereignty and majority rule, but also establishes independent institutions dedicated to safeguarding fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and minority protections, then a clearer negative relationship emerges. Because antiestablishment parties advocate the unconstrained supremacy of the people's will (or the will of a chosen class or race) and fundamentally reject "the notions of pluralism and, therefore, minority rights as well as the 'institutional guarantees' that should protect them,"[9] these political forces—whether populist, fascist, communist, or otherwise defined—are at odds with the liberal component of democracy. Confirming this hypothesis, we found in a recent study of 28 EU countries since the end of the Second World War that, even accounting for other factors (economic, institutional, sociological, and temporal), liberal democracy deteriorates as these parties become more electorally successful. Our results further show that other aspects of democracy (electoral, deliberative and, to a lesser extent, participatory) also suffer. These findings underscore that antiestablishment parties in general, and populist parties in particular, are a real problem for democracy.[10]

Illness or Symptom?

If the rise of antiestablishment parties does indeed threaten democracy, what can be done in response? To answer this question, we need first to understand what factors are driving support for these antiestablishment forces. Scholars have typically identified three main factors: economic downturns (especially the post-2008 recession), social change (the fading of traditional cleavages such as class and religion together with the emergence of new divides over issues of globalization, denationalization, and immigration), and institutional crisis (especially in traditional political parties).

In a recent study examining the more consolidated democracies of Western Europe since 1848,[11] we find that the malfunctioning of traditional political parties—especially in terms of representation and mobilization—has been crucial to antiestablishment parties' electoral success, particularly since 2008. Indeed, the crisis of traditional parties has been even more significant in this regard than social transformations such as globalization and secularization. Contrary to our prior expectations, economic development per se and even the 1929 economic crisis did not act as major determinants of support for antiestablishment political players, but the global post-2008 crisis, which was sociopolitical as well as economic, did play this role. In 1929, mainstream parties were strong, and antiestablishment parties thrived for different reasons (particularly the

aftermath of the First World War and the Russian Revolution). Many of the democracies that collapsed in the interwar period actually did so before the 1929 crash (as in Portugal, Spain, Poland, Italy, San Marino, and Yugoslavia). The recent rise of antiestablishment parties, by contrast, has mostly taken place since 2008 (think of Spain, Greece, Hungary, and Germany). Again, however, it was not the economic crisis per se that produced this effect; instead, it was the impact that the crisis made in an environment of preexisting party weakness. When the Great Recession hit West European democracies that were already under strain due to the dysfunction of mainstream parties, it produced cracks that offered antiestablishment forces an opening onto the political scene.

In other words, the true illness afflicting representative democracies is the crisis of traditional political parties; the rise of antiestablishment parties is merely a symptom. This is important to keep in mind if we are searching for a *cure*. There are a range of options on offer for political establishments seeking to respond, which we term *extirpation, marginalization, accommodation,* and *regeneration*. Only one of these strategies, however, promises to address the underlying democratic ailment: citizens' disenchantment with traditional parties that have failed to adapt to a new social reality, and therefore to represent the interests of their constituents.

Four Remedies, But Only One Cure

Scholars have traditionally considered mainstream parties' strategies toward antiestablishment parties as falling into one of two categories: inclusion and exclusion. The latter umbrella covers rhetorical demonization, erecting a *cordon sanitaire* to shut these parties out of the governing process, and the so-called nuclear option of legal restrictions. The former category encompasses tactics of cooptation and collaboration, which we treat here as part of the same strategy of accommodation.[12] Beyond this dichotomy lies a bolder alternative strategy, which we call regeneration.

Extirpation. Adopting a strategy of extirpation (to be more precise, banning) in response to antiestablishment parties presents three major sets of problems: moral, legal, and practical. Scholars and practitioners alike have debated the moral legitimacy of such measures for many years. Ever since Karl Loewenstein, writing with the Nazi takeover in Germany in mind, introduced the concept of "militant democracy,"[13] rivers of ink have flowed into reflections on the rightfulness of party banning. Some argue that bans are necessary to enable democracies to guard against authoritarian seizures of power along the lines of the Fascist "March on Rome" in 1922 Italy or the Communists' "Victorious February" in Czechoslovakia in 1948. For others, the banning of po-

FIGURE 2—SUPPORT FOR ANTI–POLITICAL-ESTABLISHMENT PARTIES BY DECADE (1900–2019)
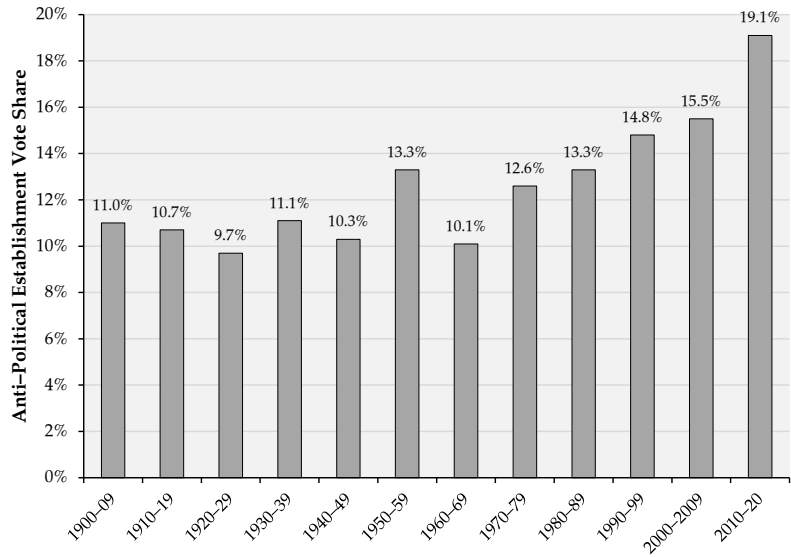
litical parties runs intrinsically counter to the fundamental democratic principles of freedom of expression and association.

Proponents of the latter view argue that in a democracy, all members of the public—including far-right (fascist, nationalist, clerical) and far-left (communist, Bolivarian) political forces—have the right to form a party to achieve their preferred political goals so long as these are pursued in a democratic and nonviolent way. Those who take the opposing perspective counter that the German, Italian, Hungarian, Russian, Turkish, and Venezuelan experiences, to name just a few, show that once extremist parties make it into government, they promptly begin dismantling the democratic system that so generously allowed them to take power in the first place. The result is a slide into totalitarianism, competitive authoritarianism, or, in the best-case scenario, illiberal democracy.

A second set of issues with this approach center on legality: Are party bans in accordance with "legal standards" or international "best practice"? Regarding the first, Article 22 of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights limits any restrictions on freedom of association to those "necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (ordre public), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others." This provision, which has been loosely copied into other legal documents such as the European Convention on Human Rights (Art. 11), has been interpreted differently in different countries.

While most European legislations have at some point deemed it necessary to adopt party bans, in North America this has not been the case.[14] The European Court of Human Rights has on the whole held that while democracies have the right to defend themselves against extremist parties, bans are lawful only when there is plausible evidence that a party's acts and rhetoric put democracy at risk, and not when the party—using legal and democratic means—simply promotes legal or constitutional changes that are compatible with fundamental democratic principles.

Discerning "best practice" when it comes to party bans—can we identify a "model regulation" in this area?—is more complicated. Under some legal systems, parties are banned only on the basis of their acts (as in Spain, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic), while others also allow such actions on the basis of party ideologies (as in Germany and Turkey). There are also differences concerning whether parties can be banned in order to prevent "potential" harms (those stemming, for instance, from antidemocratic or secessionist ideologies) or only in response to "actual" ones (as reflected in undemocratic internal organization, financial opacity, and the like).[15] There is one area of convergence, however: Most European legislations, at least, are in agreement that party bans should be considered an exceptional measure to be "applied only in extreme cases . . . when all less restrictive measures have been deemed inadequate," meaning only those "where the party concerned uses violence or threatens civil peace and the democratic constitutional order of the country."[16]

Party bans, in short, are accepted as legal and morally legitimate in many countries. They are also extremely popular, with this "militant" approach to defending democratic systems enjoying support even among citizens who have more negative attitudes toward democracy.[17] The question remains, however, whether party bans are also effective. Examining European democratic experiences since the end of First World War shows that party bans have succeeded in some cases, but failed in others. In one of the best-known examples of success, both the neo-Nazi Socialist Reich Party and the Communist Party were banned in 1950s Germany, leading to the stabilization of the party system around socialists, liberals, and Christian democrats and the consequent consolidation of democracy. Similarly, bans on both the Communist Party and the far-right Lapua Movement in the early 1930s helped Finland to avoid an authoritarian takeover of the kind that occurred in neighboring Estonia and Latvia.

By contrast, banning proved ineffective in Turkey, the European country with the highest number of bans by far.[18] This case clearly illustrates one of the ways in which party banning might backfire: party re-foundation. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AKP), which won at the ballot box in 2002 and has gradually proceeded to dismantle the country's liberal democracy, came onto the scene as the

more moderate successor to earlier Islamist parties that were judicially dissolved (the Welfare Party and the Virtue Party, banned respectively in 1998 and 2001). In order to be effective, antiestablishment parties need to be continuously banned.

Party bans might also fail due to eventual changes in the law or jurisprudence.[19] This is exactly what happened in Spain with EH Bildu, the most recent successor to the political arm (Batasuna) of the armed Basque-separatist movement known as the ETA. There have been successive attempts at banning this political formation: Batasuna was outlawed in 2003, and EH Bildu's immediate predecessor (called simply Bildu) was banned briefly in 2011 before this decision was overruled by Spain's Constitutional Court. Despite these efforts, as of this writing EH Bildu is the second most important party in the Basque Country parliament. Its success offers a reminder that party bans might, by lending the targeted political forces an aura of martyrdom, end up having the opposite of their intended effect.

Marginalization. A second strategy used against antiestablishment political players aims to eliminate their parties not legally, but psychologically. It consists in marginalizing them by treating them as pariahs, shutting them out from the decision-making process and government formation, and in many cases even refraining from making any references to them. Although some may see this approach as less than fully democratic, especially when the party targeted for discrimination is the largest in parliament (as with Latvia's pro-Russian Harmony Party), when compared to legal bans it seems more in line with the freedoms of expression and association, as well as the principle of representation.

Perhaps the most successful example of this approach comes from interwar Czechoslovakia, where the so-called Pětka (the socialist, agrarian, Christian-democratic, conservative, and nationalist parties), came together and formed wide coalition governments to defend democracy against both communists and German National Socialists. Mainstream parties engaged in a similar exercise during the so-called First Italian Republic (1946–94), directed against communists and neofascist parties.

The main weakness with this strategy is that it may prove too difficult to sustain. Its success hinges on the acquiescence of all systemic parties, including new ones. Even in Italy, the so-called *compromesso storico* in the 1970s (which involved the Communist Party lending its external support to Christian Democratic governments) threatened to put an end to that country's *cordon sanitaire* against the far left. Moreover, even where mainstream parties stick to a policy of marginalization at the national level, their representatives in subnational legislatures may break ranks. This has happened with the Czech Communist Party, the far-right Alternative for Germany, and Spain's radical-right Vox. Such a "partial" approach diminishes the long-term effectiveness of a marginalization strategy.

Parties also differ on the degree of "political discrimination" that should be applied by a marginalization strategy. While some parties hold that any type of collaboration, be it governmental, parliamentary, or electoral, is out of the question, others do not view accepting parliamentary support from antiestablishment parties without granting them any actual presence in the cabinet to be a break in the *cordon sanitaire*. In addition to the abovementioned Italian case, this has happened with the Danish People's Party at the national level and more recently with Vox in some Spanish regions.

Third, marginalization—like party bans—may have a boomerang effect. By presenting antiestablishment parties as "extremist" and their supporters as "wasting" their votes, mainstream parties might enhance the "outsider" status of their antiestablishment rivals, thereby strengthening their supporters' solidarity and encouraging their further radicalization. By exploiting their status as self-declared "martyrs" of democracy, antiestablishment parties might even be able to increase their electoral appeal. Sweden's mainstream parties, for example, have pursued a strategy of marginalization vis-à-vis the populist radical-right Sweden Democrats (SD), with center-right parties going so far as to support a leftist minority government comprising the social-democratic and Green parties. Yet this strategy, far from crushing SD, has coincided with a 12-point rise in its electoral support over the course of just eight years. And the same could be said with regard to other parties that currently compose the ironically named right-populist Identity and Democracy group in the European Parliament.

All in all, with antiestablishment parties on the rise, the cost of discriminatory strategies toward them has proven unsustainable in many countries, and in recent years many have passed from "pariah to power."[20] Recent examples of previously marginalized fringe parties finally gaining access to government are abundant, and these include both right-wing players (the Finns Party, the Popular Orthodox Rally in Greece, the New Flemish Alliance in Belgium, the Progress Party in Norway) and those on the left (the Communist Refoundation Party in Italy, the Self-Defense Party in Poland, the Socialist Left Party in Norway, Podemos in Spain). In Greece and Italy, for instance, populist parties have even gained enough electoral support to form their own coalition governments in cooperation with one another.

Accommodation. A third possible remedy is accommodation. Rather than aiming to wipe these players off the political map, this alternative solution is to accept antiestablishment parties as part of the political landscape while seeking to neutralize them by accommodating their grievances. Mainstream parties, for instance, may take up some of antiestablishment parties' programmatic issues (such as capping immigration or cracking down on corruption),[21] allowing them to influence

policy making from without, or even directly incorporate these parties into government. The reasoning behind this "if you cannot beat them, join them" approach is twofold: On the one hand, it aims to socialize antiestablishment parties into the governing process, and on the other hand it forces them to assume responsibility for the results of the policies adopted (including blame for the eventual failures). In other words, it makes them part of the establishment.

> *The idea behind an accommodation strategy is that once antiestablishment parties are brought in and given a share in the responsibilities of office, they will either be forced to moderate their positions or perhaps will even simply disappear.*

This approach could defuse the threat that these parties pose in several ways. First, one should not forget that the appeal of these parties, especially in the eyes of so-called protest voters, lies to a large degree in their antiestablishment character. By denouncing a corrupt and egoistic caste of elites, antiestablishment parties are able to portray themselves as representing the real nation, the real people which has been left behind amid globalization, cosmopolitanization, secularization, or Europeanization.

The ability of antiestablishment parties to attract voters also owes much to the way these parties, never having held governing responsibilities, are able to present themselves as saviors. With neither a record of governing nor inside knowledge of government affairs, they can propose simple—but, to the uninformed voter, very appealing—solutions to extremely complex problems. Syriza's reaction to Greece's government-debt crisis, including the holding of a 2015 referendum in which voters (ultimately to little avail) rejected EU-imposed austerity measures, is perhaps the most illustrative recent example.

The idea behind an accommodation strategy is that once antiestablishment parties are brought in and given a share in the responsibilities of office, they will either be forced to moderate their positions or perhaps will even simply disappear. Once they become part of the establishment, voters will come to see them as not so different from the mainstream parties they have been denouncing. In addition to stripping antiestablishment players of their aura of purity, giving them a role in government may also eventually show how foolish some of their policy proposals were.

Spain's far-left Podemos may offer a current example. Growing out of the 2011 anti-austerity protest movement known as the Indignados, which had sought to combat corruption, deepen democracy, and put an end to the bipartisan political structure, Podemos was finally incorporated into the national government at the beginning of 2020. Plagued by

scandal (including charges of illegal financing), helpless to fulfill key electoral promises such as labor-market reform, and with the credibility of its political leadership called into question, the party seems to be facing a decline in its electoral fortunes, as the recent regional elections in Galicia and the Basque Country have shown.

When parties protect politicians under scrutiny for corruption instead of expelling or at least suspending them, the rift between parties and voters grows, with damaging long-term repercussions for the stability of the party system as a whole

At a glance, this solution might look more attractive than the previous two. It does not require coordination among the mainstream parties, as would a *cordon sanitaire,* or legislative reform, as would banning. Moreover, it seems more in accordance with core democratic principles such as freedom of expression, power-sharing, and balanced competition. In practice, however, there are several reasons why this approach might prove ill-fated.

First, mainstream parties may prove reluctant to take on the responsibility of taming the antiestablishment lion. Governing with inexperienced and unreliable partners, after all, might backfire and undermine the future electoral prospects of the "tamer." With national elections still three years off, the consequences of the decision by the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) to partner with Podemos remain unclear, but PSOE's showings in the last two regional elections do not give grounds for optimism.

Second, even if there are individual cases in which participation has led to moderation and eventual dissolution or decline (as with Italy's National Alliance and Ukraine's Svoboda), scholars have found that on the whole, "non-ostracised parties have not become more moderate over time [. . . but still are . . .] just as radical as their ostracised cousins."[22] Indeed, history shows that giving antiestablishment parties a role in government does not always end successfully. In some cases, as with the Belgian New Flemish Alliance or the Italian Lega, these parties have eventually opted to abandon their governing positions rather than moderate their ideological stances. In other cases, as with the Austrian Freedom Party or the Finns Party, government participation has led to internal splits and further radicalization of the party. In other instances, it is mainstream parties (such as Poland's Law and Justice) that have ended up reformulating their ideological positions in order to fill the void left by the disappearance of populist junior coalition partners (the League of Polish Families and the Self-Defense Party). Finally, participation in government can, if well played, yield an electoral boost for some antiestablishment parties (as happened with the Swiss People's

Party). In the worst-case scenario, this could represent a path toward seizing power (as in interwar Germany and Italy).

Regeneration. If the abovementioned approaches have had an undistinguished record of success, this may be because they target the symptom (antiestablishment parties) and not the real illness—the crisis of mainstream parties. A truly effective strategy must address the problem at its core.

First, political parties need to invest in building strong organizations. This is not to say that they can turn back the clock and once again become the "mass parties" of decades past, but they must use the new methods at their disposal (such as social media) to revivify their operations in key areas such as education, socialization, and mediation. Parties need a professional structure, socially rooted funding, and clear procedures for resolving conflicts and making decisions.[23] Only by making these investments can parties, especially new ones, survive and thereby contribute to institutionalizing party systems. As we saw with Positive Slovenia, recently created parties might be able to win elections, but without well-developed organizations they will decline and wither away. Similarly, French president Emmanuel Macron's En Marche, which emerged to win both the presidency and the premiership in 2017, fared very poorly in recent local elections. These stories form a clear contrast to those, for instance, of Western Europe's socialist parties, which—traditionally well aware of the importance of organizational strength—have managed to survive in most countries, finding ways to cope with ideological flux and electoral decline.

Second, political parties need to be responsive.[24] As we have already discussed, one of the main problems currently facing representative democracy is a lack of trust in representative and accountable institutions, especially political parties. This is unsurprising, moreover, given the tendency of political leaders to act in ways that contradict their espoused ideologies, for instance by raising taxes or postponing reforms. It is thus not difficult to understand how voters, feeling betrayed, have been abandoning traditional parties for antiestablishment alternatives. This is particularly true in countries where convergence and cartelization among traditional parties have left voters with populist parties as their only real alternative. To give voters a genuine choice, regain trust, and recover their traditional function as mediators between society and state, parties need to pursue policies that are consistent with their electoral promises. In the event that they are not able to fulfil these promises, they must be able to explain to the public what happened. This kind of clear communication has, for instance, redounded to the benefit of Angela Merkel's government in Germany, which has received high marks for its realistic and transparent approach to the global covid-19 crisis.

But political parties also need to be responsible. Customarily, tra-

ditional political parties have been considered more responsible than populist parties, which are distinguished by their tendency to propose simple solutions to complex problems (as illustrated by Syriza's initial reaction to the 2008 economic crisis or by covid-19 responses in Brazil, Mexico, and the Philippines).[25] Yet traditional political parties can also behave irresponsibly when trying to outmaneuver their populist challengers, as we have seen in other government's responses to the Great Recession and to covid-19 as well as in situations such as Brexit or Europe's 2015 migrant crisis. Moreover, more and more traditional parties have engaged in "outbidding," promising more than they can deliver and creating a "catch-22" situation in which irresponsible promises lead to unresponsive governance and so on. The current situation in the Spanish region of Catalonia is perhaps one of the clearest examples.[26]

One important part of responsibility is leading by example. In this regard, it is essential that political parties and their leaders show that they are not above the rule of law. The covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of the example set by political leaders. When political leaders are the first to quarantine or wear masks (as with Canada's Justin Trudeau and Germany's Angela Merkel), this gives a boost to the political trust that is so necessary in an emergency situation.[27] When, on the contrary, parliamentarians do not respect social-distancing guidelines or political leaders fail to quarantine, social confidence is broken, with a cost counted in lives. Similarly, when parties protect politicians under scrutiny for corruption instead of expelling or at least suspending them, the rift between parties and voters grows, with damaging long-term repercussions for the stability of the party system as a whole (as we have seen in the wake of major corruption revelations such as Italy's Tangentopoli affair in the 1990s or, more recently, Spain's protracted Gürtel scandal). Only if political parties use their "scalpel" to cut out the rot will they be able to forestall their own decline and the rise of illiberal alternatives.

In fact, one of the main hobbyhorses for antiestablishment parties is corruption. Populist politicians have seized successfully on this issue in countries as diverse as the United States, the Philippines, Brazil, Italy, Spain, the Czech Republic, and Ukraine. For this reason, it is crucial that political parties become more financially transparent. Voters should be able to find out, preferably in a timely manner, how their money— whether in the form of donations or that of state subsidies—is spent. This is especially important where political parties are publicly funded (a practice that has been shown to foster party and party-system institutionalization, hinder polarization, and combat corruption when implemented through a transparent and liberal system).[28] To this end, the use of new technologies that allow political parties to report their income and spending in a detailed and timely manner is essential for restoring social trust. Doing so will not only deny antiestablishment parties a line

of attack against traditional parties as corrupt and self-interested, but will help mainstream parties to recapture part of their core following. Of course, transparency should not be limited to party finances, but should also extend to internal processes for leadership selection, decision making, and conflict resolution, to name just a few examples.

Political parties should also take a long-term perspective. Currently, one of the main lines of criticism against parties is that they think only of the next election or the next poll. It is true that the proliferation of elections in some regions (for instance, local, regional, presidential, and supranational contests in Europe) has placed parties in near-constant campaign mode.[29] Nonetheless, this is no excuse for party programs to become political weathervanes rather than far-reaching and analytically grounded visions for the future, albeit ones adjustable to changing circumstances. Few things undermine voters' confidence so much as party programs that blow with the wind.

Parties also need to remember that compromise is at the heart of the democratic game. Representative democracy has a better reputation in those countries where political parties have reached agreements on a series of fundamental issues than where legislation is in constant flux as governments change (as is true in much of Latin America and Southern Europe). In the latter type of situation it is much easier for populist parties to thrive. They seize on cultural issues (where compromise is always more difficult) in order to wreak political havoc, as we have seen in Spain, Italy, Greece, Poland, and Hungary.

In this regard, establishment parties must not fall into the populist trap of seeing democracy as a zero-sum game. Mainstream parties should avoid adopting not only the agenda, but also the rhetoric of antiestablishment voices. Only by accepting that everyone has the right to be heard, that government alternation is intrinsic to democracy, and that, in the long term, the party with better policies usually wins will traditional parties be able to improve their electoral prospects and stem the populist tide.

Analysts widely agree that representative democracy is facing a crisis. Our findings not only reinforce this view but also suggest that the rise of antiestablishment parties, far from offering an opportunity, negatively affects every single dimension of democracy. Focusing all our attention on the current populist threat, however, is unlikely to yield a satisfactory solution. Rather, we must turn from the symptom to the underlying illness: the crisis of traditional political parties.

Reactions to the rise of antiestablishment political forces have thus far progressed through four of the "five stages of grief," moving from denial (banning) to anger (*cordon sanitaire*) to bargaining (accommodation) and finally depression, which seems to be the current phase. But if we are going to turn back the populist wave, we need to first accept it for what it is: a symptom of the failure of traditional political parties to represent, mobilize,

and deliver. Scholars and practitioners alike must realize that the first three approaches described above will not solve the problem. Only by working toward their own regeneration can traditional political parties recover citizens' trust, defeat populism, and sustain and revitalize democracy.

NOTES

1. Ingrid van Biezen, "Political Parties as Public Utilities," *Party Politics* 10 (2014): 701–722; Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair, *Democracy and the Cartelization of Political Parties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

2. See Peter Mair, *Ruling the Void: The Hollowing-Out of Western Democracy* (London: Verso, 2013).

3. Amir Abedi, *Anti-Political Establishment Parties: A Comparative Analysis* (London: Routledge, 2004).

4. Cas Mudde, *The Far Right Today* (Cambridge: Polity, 2019).

5. Pierre Rosanvallon, *Counter-Democracy: Politics in an Age of Distrust* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 265.

6. Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2005).

7. Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 79. Italics in original.

8. Nadia Urbinati, "Democracy and Populism," *Constellations* 5 (March 1998): 116.

9. Mudde and Kaltwasser, *Populism,* 81.

10. José Rama Caamaño and Fernando Casal Bértoa, "Are Anti-Political-Establishment Parties a Peril for European Democracy? A Longitudinal Study from 1950 till 2017," *Representation* 56, no. 3 (2020): 387–410.

11. Fernando Casal Bértoa and José Rama, "Party Decline or Social Transformation? Economic, Institutional and Sociological Change and the Rise of Anti-Political-Establishment Parties in Western Europe," *European Political Studies Review* 12 (November 2020): 503–23.

12. Anna-Sophie Heinze, "Strategies of Mainstream Parties Towards Their Right-Wing Populist Challengers: Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland in Comparison", *West European Politics* 41, no. 2 (2018): 287–309.

13. Karl Loewenstein, "Militant Democracy and Fundamental Rights," *American Political Science Review* 31 (June 1937): 417–32 and *American Political Science Review* 31 (August 1937): 638–58.

14. A 1954 attempt to ban the Communist Party in the United States was later deemed unconstitutional.

15. Angela K. Bourne and Fernando Casal Bértoa, "Mapping 'Militant Democracy': Variation in Party Ban Practices in European Democracies (1945–2015)," *European Constitutional Law Review* 13 (June 2017): 221–47.

16. Venice Commission and OSCE / ODIHR, *Guidelines on Political Party Regulation* (Warsaw: OSCE / ODIHR, 2011), 47. See also Venice Commission, *Guidelines on*

Prohibition and Dissolution of Political Parties and Analogous Measures (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2000), 21.

17. Sjifra E. de Leeuw and Angela K. Bourne, "Explaining Citizen Attitudes to Strategies of Democratic Defense in Europe: A Resource in Responses to Contemporary Challenges to Liberal Democracy?" *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, online 16 December 2019.

18. Fernando Casal Bértoa and Angela Bourne "Prescribing Democracy? Party Proscription and Party System Stability in Germany, Spain and Turkey", *European Journal of Political Research*, 56 (2017): 440-465.

19. The German Constitutional Court effectively put an end to "militant democracy" in 2017 when it declined to ban in the extreme-right National Democracy Party (NPD), despite considering this party to have an unconstitutional ideology, as the NPD garnered only 0.4 percent of the vote and therefore did not pose a significant and imminent threat.

20. Sarah L. de Lange, "From Pariah to Power: The Government Participation of Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in West European Democracies," (PhD diss., University of Antwerp, 2008).

21. Tarik Abou-Chadi and Werner Krause, "The Causal Effect of Radical Right Success on Mainstream Parties' Policy Positions: A Regression Discontinuity Approach," *British Journal of Political Science* 50 (July 2020): 829–47.

22. Tjitske Akkerman and Matthijs Rooduijn, "Pariahs or Partners? Inclusion and Exclusion of Radical Right Parties and the Effects on Their Policy Positions," *Political Studies* 63 (December 2015): 1140–57.

23. Nicole Bolleyer, *New Parties in Old Party Systems: Persistence and Decline in Seventeen Democracies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Margit Tavits, *Post-Communist Democracies and Party Organization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

24. Peter Mair, "Representative vs. Responsible Government," in Ingrid van Biezen, ed., *On Parties, Party Systems and Democracy: Selected Writings of Peter Mair* (Colchester: ECPR Press, 2014), 581–96.

25. Mair, *Ruling the Void*.

26. Astrid Barrio and Juan Rodríguez-Teruel, "Reducing the Gap Between Leaders and Voters? Elite Polarization, Outbidding Competition, and the Rise of Secessionism in Catalonia," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 10 (2017): 1776–94.

27. Damien Bol, Marco Giani, André Blais, and Peter John Loewen, "The Effect of COVID-19 Lockdowns on Political Support: Some Good News for Democracy?" *European Journal of Political Research,* online 19 May 2020.

28. Nicole Bolleyer and Saskia P. Ruth, "Elite Investments in Party Institutionalization in New Democracies: A Two-Dimensional Approach," *Journal of Politics* 80 (January 2018): 288–302; Fernando Casal Bértoa, "It's Been Mostly About Money! A Multi-Method Research Approach to the Sources of Institutionalization," *Sociological Methods and Research* 46 (November 2017): 683–714; Calla Hummel, John Gerring and Thomas Burt, "Do Political Finance Reforms Reduce Corruption?" *British Journal of Political Science,* online 30 October 2019. It is perhaps unsurprising that some antiestablishment parties (in Bulgaria, Italy, and Poland, for instance) have made abolishing public party financing one of their programmatic proposals.

29. See Mair, *Ruling the Void*.