
AVAILABLE ON DEMAND

Demand for Right-Wing Extremism is on the rise in Europe

Short summary of the latest results

An analysis by Political Capital Institute
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POLITICAL CAPITAL
POLICY RESEARCH & CONSULTING INSTITUTE

Political Capital have set up a new website: derexindex.eu where you can find country-specific analyses and an interactive online analytic surface where it is possible to calculate DEREK Index for given countries and timeframe.

Key findings

- **Clearly rising anti-establishment and, within that, anti-EU attitudes in most member states leave parties agitating against the European Union in a strong position** – it is revealed in Political Capital's most recent data on Demand for Right Wing Extremism Index (DEREX), measuring social demand for far-right ideologies.
- Aside from prejudice and xenophobia, lately popular support for the far right seem to be mostly driven by **a widespread disaffection with the European Union and representative democracy in general**. Compared to the earliest DEREK data of the first three waves (2002–2007) of The European Social Survey, the most recent data of the last three waves (2008–2013) shows that **in the past few years the rate of those strongly opposing the establishment's political institutions increased in 18 out of 29 European (mainly EU) countries** from an earlier average of 17 to 25%. The number of voters expressing extreme distrust of the European Parliament (EP) also shows a clearly rising trend. **In 24 out of 29 European countries the number of those with absolutely no confidence in the EP has increased**¹.
- In line with this, the more successful populist, Euro-reject parties in the last few years have shifted their platform's central pillar from anti-immigration in 2009's EP election to anti-EU in 2014's EP election². Consequently, there is a substitution of migration as a cultural group-threat with a more systematic cross-country Euro-reject stance in which the rejection of the European establishment serves as a common cause for the effects of migration on the economic hardships of the majority.
- Compared to a decade ago, anti-establishment attitudes have increased significantly in Spain, Portugal, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Italy, Cyprus, and Greece (in the latter jumping from one fourth to two thirds of the population in just one decade).

What does it project for the results of the EP elections?

- **Even without a full-scale alliance in the EP, the representation of anti-European right-wing forces in the EP may increase substantially: based on Votewatch's latest forecast³, the percentage of their mandates may go from 8 to 18.** In a number of countries (France, Great Britain, Denmark) these parties may even finish at the first place and some others (Netherlands, Hungary, Austria) can come as second. **Quite conceivably, led by Marine Le Pen the EP may see the formation of a pro-Russian⁴ and anti-EU group.**

¹ In one country that indicator remained stable, while in four others it declined slightly - all the latter being Scandinavian countries.

² See our flash report: Changing Enemies of the Western far-right: from Immigrants to Europe - http://riskandforecast.com/post/flash-report/changing-enemies-of-the-western-far-right-from-immigrants-to-europe_807.html

³ <http://www.electio2014.eu/pollsandsenarios/polls>

⁴ See our earlier report: The Russian Connection - http://www.riskandforecast.com/useruploads/files/pc_flash_report_russian_connection.pdf

- If we take into consideration eurosceptic right-wing (ECR) and also resurgent left-wing forces (GUE-NGL) – who has no immediate intention to ‘shut down’ the EU immediately, although opposed to its preservation in its current form – the percentage of MEPs rather hostile to the Union could rise to 30% from the current 20%.
- At the same time; is also important not to overdramatize the situation: despite the rise of anti-EU sentiments and the parties that exploit them, **in the next EP the pro-European forces may still have around 70 percent of the mandates. If the “doomsday” sentiment will dominate the post-election discourses, it can only help the anti-European forces to achieve their goals**, because the EU could really become a top-heavy and ‘lame-duck’ organization, matching the description of Euro-sceptics.

About DEREK Index – who are attitude radicals?

Demand for Right-Wing Extremism Index (DEREX⁵) measures the size of the group in a given country susceptible to far-right ideologies and political messages. A country’s DEREX score is determined by the rate of respondents who belong to at least three of the four categories (prejudices, anti-establishment attitudes, right-wing value orientation and fear, distrust and pessimism) all at once. Using these strict criteria, the DEREX Index examines the percentage of people (the “attitude radicals”) whose radical views could destabilize a country’s democratic political system and free-market economy – if these views continue to gain credence.

The DEREX Index makes it possible to track changes in social phenomena that threaten to radicalize a society. High demand for right-wing extremism poses a broad array of risks:

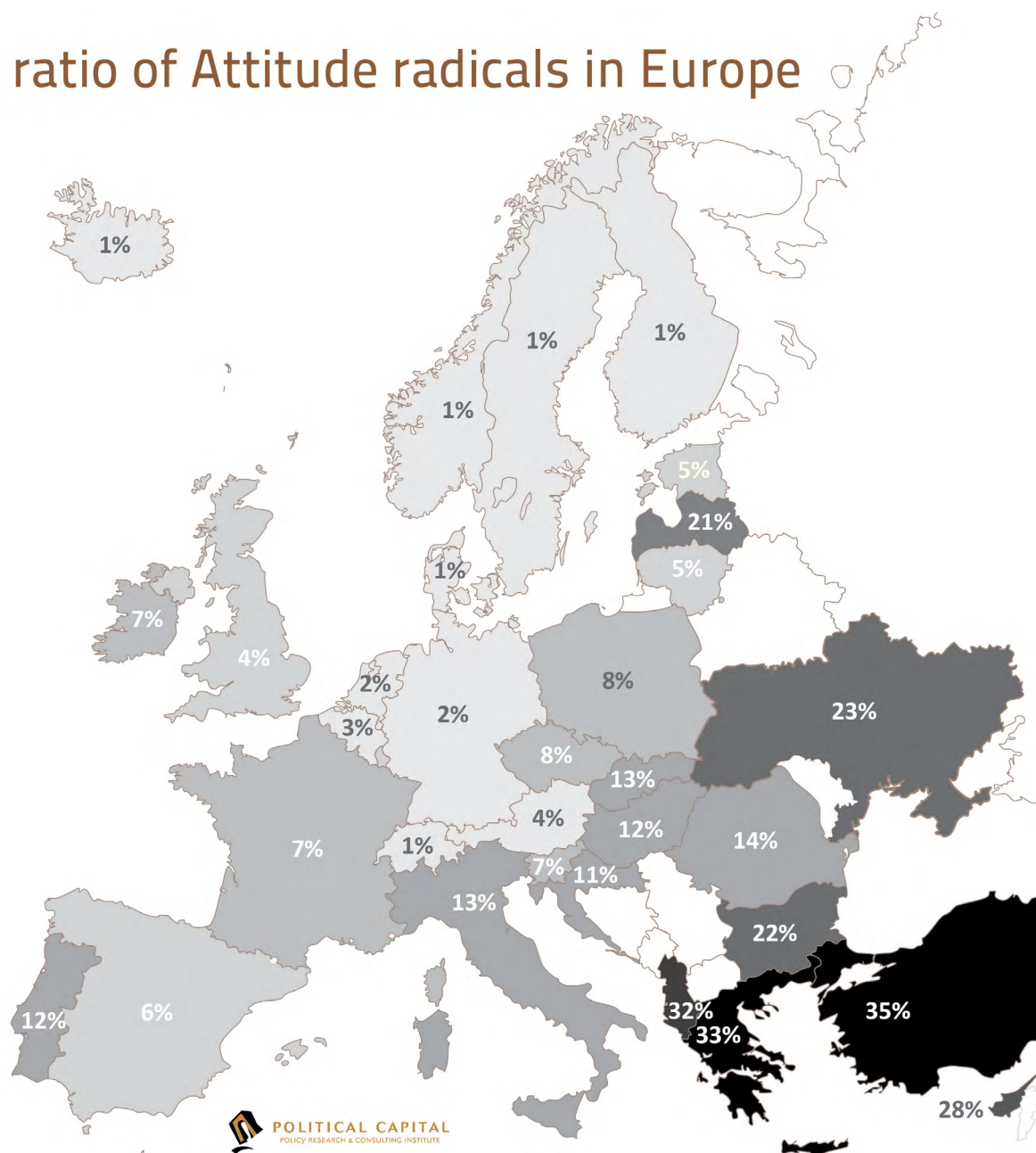
- Low levels of trust can render the democratic system unable to function.
- Anti-elitism and economic protectionism can destroy the investment climate.
- Xenophobia and aggressive nationalism can endanger both domestic and regional peace.

The differentiation between the “political radicalism” (the radical right forces and organizations) and “attitude radicalism” (the radical tendencies in the public opinion) is an important focal point of our approach. It means that DEREX index does not reflect party preferences and the group under review (“attitude radicals”) is not identical with the far-right’s electoral base; yet there is a partial overlapping between the two sets. The vast majority of those susceptible to far-right ideologies supports moderate parties or do not vote. The political relevance of the group under review lies in the fact that

- based on their attitudes they may be susceptible to messages coming from the far-right, i.e., they can be “seduced” by far-right political forces and
- under pressure to meet the demands of the attitude radicals in their own camp, moderate political forces may shift towards a more radical position.

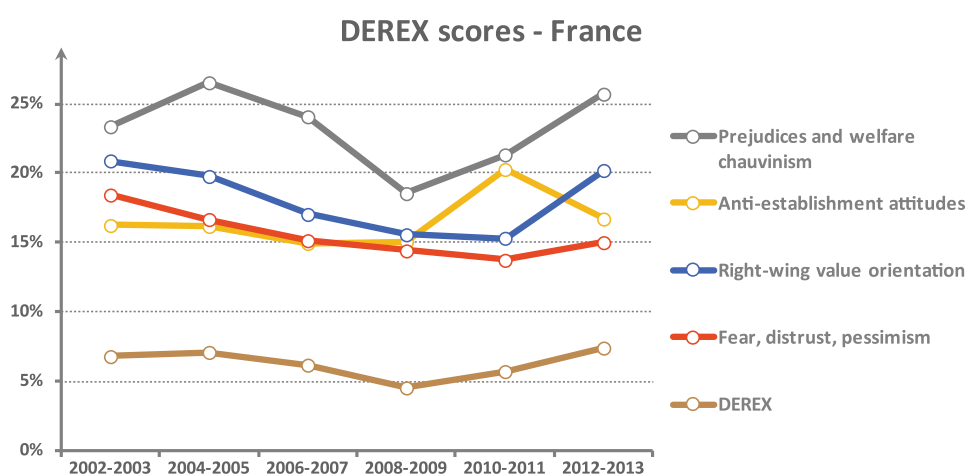
⁵ The word „demand” refers to the social receptivity of the ideas of the radical right. The distinction between the „supply” (party) and the „demand” (voter) side of right-wing extremism is quite typical in the academic literature of the field.(E.g. Norris, Pippa (2005): Radical Right. Voters and Parties in the Electoral Market. Cambridge University Press).

The ratio of Attitude radicals in Europe



Western Europe: rise in demand in the most important countries

In France the rate of attitude radicals reached the nadir by the end of 2008 with 4.5%. However since then its DEREX value has steadily increased (see the graph below). By the first half of 2013 7% of the population was susceptible to an extreme right ideology. Prejudice has also shown a similar increase; **one in four French citizens interviewed admitted entertaining extremely intolerant views of specific minority groups.** However, it is important to note that neither DEREX nor the level of prejudice has set a new record and returned to the highest levels measured to date between 2004 and 2008. In other words, society's increasing susceptibility explains the spectacular rise of the National Front only in part and it is more likely due to the party's softening ideology.



In Great Britain, in the past few years right-wing value orientation and prejudice increased by a few percentage points. Although until 2010 anti-establishment attitudes increased steadily, by the time of the most recent survey in 2013 it dropped back again, and extreme distrust in the European Parliament has held above 20%. The stabilization of DEREX at a relatively low level is also contributed to the fact that on the supply side BNP's extremist views have lost some of their appeal. At the same time, less radical UKIP appealing to sentiments against foreign workers and opposition to EU membership has a good chance of capturing first or second place at the upcoming EP election.

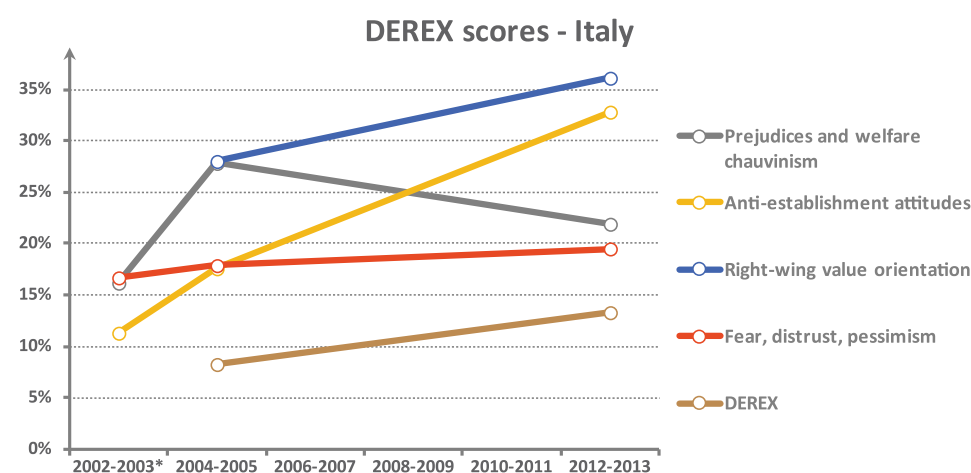
In the Netherlands, between 2009 and 2013 prejudice, anti-establishment attitudes and right-wing value orientation, all increased, but only marginally. We don't know yet how much PVV can capitalize on this, as the exit polls suggests worse [performance](#) than previously expected.

East and South most exposed

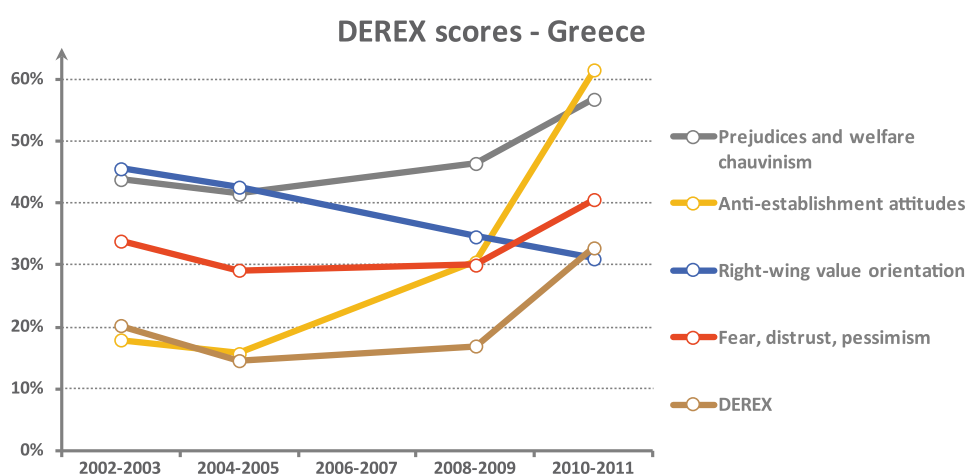
These attitudes threatening the stability of democracies (especially strong prejudices and anti-establishment sentiments) are the most prevalent in the Eastern and Southern peripheries of the continent (see the map above). While the far-right may be resurgent in many Western countries, on the whole those societies are less susceptible to ideologies promoting total exclusion and radical social change. Not unexpectedly, far-right parties in Western Europe have become less prejudiced:

for instance, not long ago a candidate of Algerian descent, former civil rights activists and founder of the Reporters Without Borders was fielded by the National Front and elected mayor⁶. Although these parties oppose the European Union, they firmly reject all forms of cooperation with East and Central European forces they regularly described as neo-Nazi, including Hungarian Jobbik, Bulgarian Ataka and Greek Golden Dawn.

Italy In the last seven years⁷ the rate of attitude radicals increased from 8 to 13%. The largest increase is found among those opposed to the establishment; **one third of the Italian population is mistrustful of political institutions.** In both Spain and Portugal (where no far-right parties could have capitalize on this) anti-establishment attitudes increased sharply (to 33% and 41%, respectively). Simultaneously, between 2007 and 2013 the DEREK value also doubled. In Portugal 12 and in Spain 6% of the adult population is susceptible to ideologies typically associated with the far right.



In member states located in the eastern Mediterranean basin these trends are even more pronounced. In the past few years DEREK values rose sharply in both Cyprus and Greece. Extremist Golden Dawn's guaranteed seat in the EP indicates that the supply managed to exploit opportunities offered by social development.



⁶ <http://www.france24.com/en/20140331-former-human-rights-defender-wins-french-far-right-election-coup/>

⁷ After 2006, the country participated in the ESS public-opinion survey only in the second half of 2013.

Hungary

In 2009, the year of Jobbik's dramatic entrée, in respect to the rate of attitude-extremists (a combination of prejudice, anti-establishment attitudes and authoritarianism) Hungary clearly stood out in the region (with 21%, while in other 'Visegrád' countries the rate was under 10%). By now the gap has narrowed significantly. **In the past few years, in Slovakia the number of attitude-extremists increased, jumping from 6 to 13% in respect to prejudice and preference for authoritarianism.** It is maybe no accident that last year former neo-Nazi Marian Kotleba did extremely well at local municipal elections. While Poland and the Czech Republic are catching up (8% each) – which predicts a possible rise of the far-right players for the coming years – they remain in the middle between West and East Europe. As we demonstrated two years ago, in Hungary a hectic shift in faith in political institutions is closely tied to a change in political preferences, a finding supported by recent DEREK data. 25% of Hungarians interviewed at the end of 2012 and early 2013 held extreme anti-establishment attitudes, up 4% from rates measured two years earlier. **In the sub-indexes the number of those strongly dissatisfied with the government's performance increased sharply (from 13 to 24%) as did, but not in this extent. The number of those extremely distrustful of the EP (10 to 14%),** which is probably related to the country's 'freedom fight' waged against the EU in the past three years.

A large segment of the Hungarian population (45%) expresses extremely intolerant views about minority groups. Based on the latest available data coming from 27 European states, Hungary has produced the fifth highest value, which means that despite a slight improvement, Hungary is still in the extremely chauvinistic group of countries.

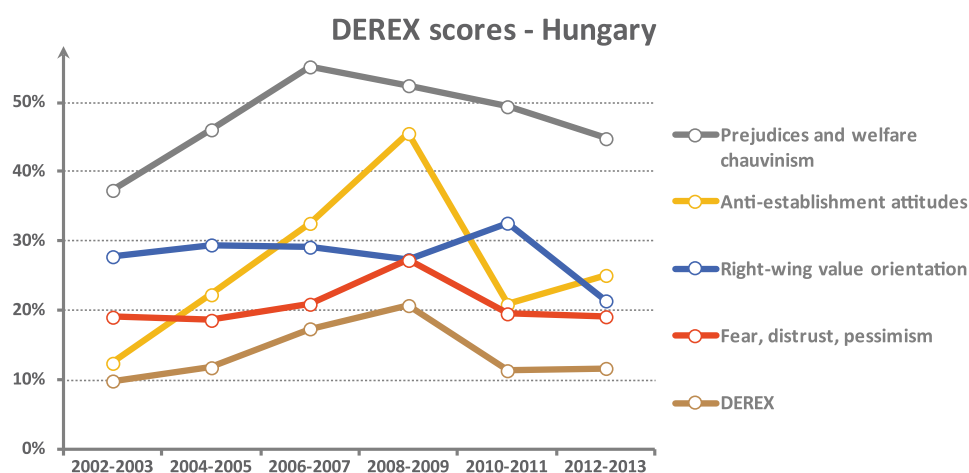
Prejudice and welfare-chauvinism sub-index values (based on 2012/2013 data collection)

Kosovo	65%	Ireland	23%
Cyprus	65%	Italy	22%
Albania	55%	Belgium	20%
Ukraine	49%	Poland	18%
Hungary	45%	Spain	18%
Portugal	40%	Finland	16%
Lithuania	39%	Netherlands	15%
Estonia	39%	Denmark	13%
Slovakia	39%	Switzerland	11%
Czech Republic	32%	Germany	11%
Bulgaria	31%	Norway	8%
United Kingdom	27%	Iceland	7%
France	26%	Sweden	4%
Slovenia	25%		

In the past two years the number of those strongly distrustful of others, extremely dissatisfied with their own life and having a dismal view of the financial prospects of the country and their own household has shown no significant change. Close to one fifth of the population is strongly characterized by fear, distrust and pessimism, which means that Hungary is in the fourth worst position in respect to all the European countries surveyed.

A significant drop has been found in respect to extreme right-wing value orientation (a drop from 33 to 21%). This may be explained by a number of developments, supported in part by Tárki's Values 2013 study published in the fall of 2013: the number of those positioning themselves on the far right, expressing strong support for traditions and a regime of law and order has declined. In other words, a shift to the political right since 2010 and Fidesz' attempts at indoctrination have failed to reshape Hungarian social values. And this could carry an important message for the left: the adoption of Fidesz and Jobbik ideology (e.g., pushing law and order) may not be the most effective means of offering a political alternative to the right.

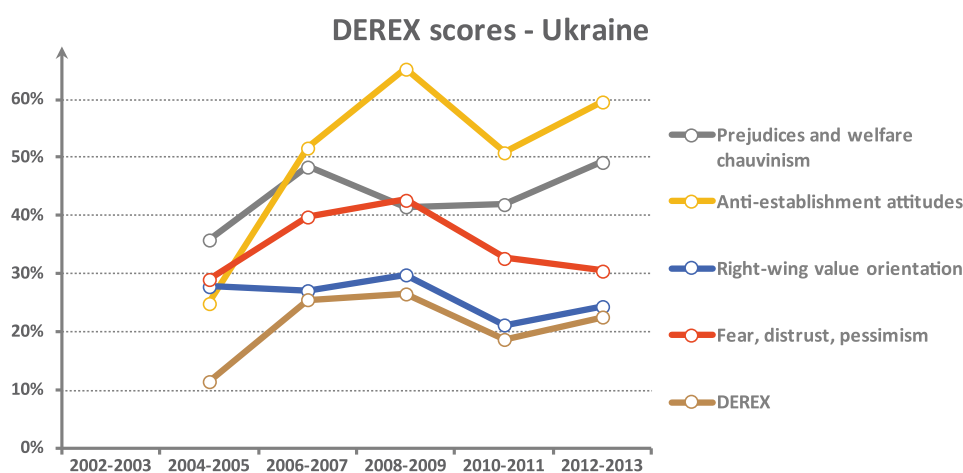
On the whole, between 2010 and 2013 the number of attitude-extremists increased slightly in Hungary. 12% of the adult population can be considered susceptible to far-right ideologies. However, this still doesn't mean that this cohort should be seen as a solid block of far-right voters. At the time of the survey 65% of these people had no preference for any of the parties.



Not surprisingly, the majority of the voters holding extreme views are found in the Jobbik camp. The only exception is when it comes to anti-establishment attitudes where, in the last few years, this indicator has been the highest among leftist sympathizers - presumably because of their opposition to the Fidesz regime. Accordingly, the stability of the Orbán-regime is illusory in the sense that it rests on the governing parties' two-thirds parliamentary majority won thanks to a new election system and the weakness of the opposition. Political tensions remain locked up in the deep social strata, which bodes ill for a much-touted consolidation by the current political regime. Most likely the governing party is also aware of this and, for this very reason, it builds its policy of permanent 'state of emergency' on stabilizing its political dominance and to make sure it can change the institutional system, including the basic law, as it sees fit. Under these **circumstances, instead of outstanding issues being resolved with the help of legitimate institutions, everything comes under the sway of a dominant political force.**

Ukraine

Recent developments have focused attention on Ukraine where the nationalist Svoboda party (and Pravyi Sektor) has played an active role in the process that erupted following the rejection of the EU partnership and cooperation agreement, and at the same time pro-Russian extremists intensified their activities as well, especially in the Eastern part of the country. The popular mood is well illustrated by the rise of the attitude radicals: **following a decline in 2011, by the summer of 2013 the demand for right-wing extremism increased again.** The rate of those holding strong anti-establishment attitudes jumped to 60%, and every other Ukrainian can be described as being extremely prejudiced. Not surprisingly, the rate of attitude-radicals rose to 23%.



Methodology

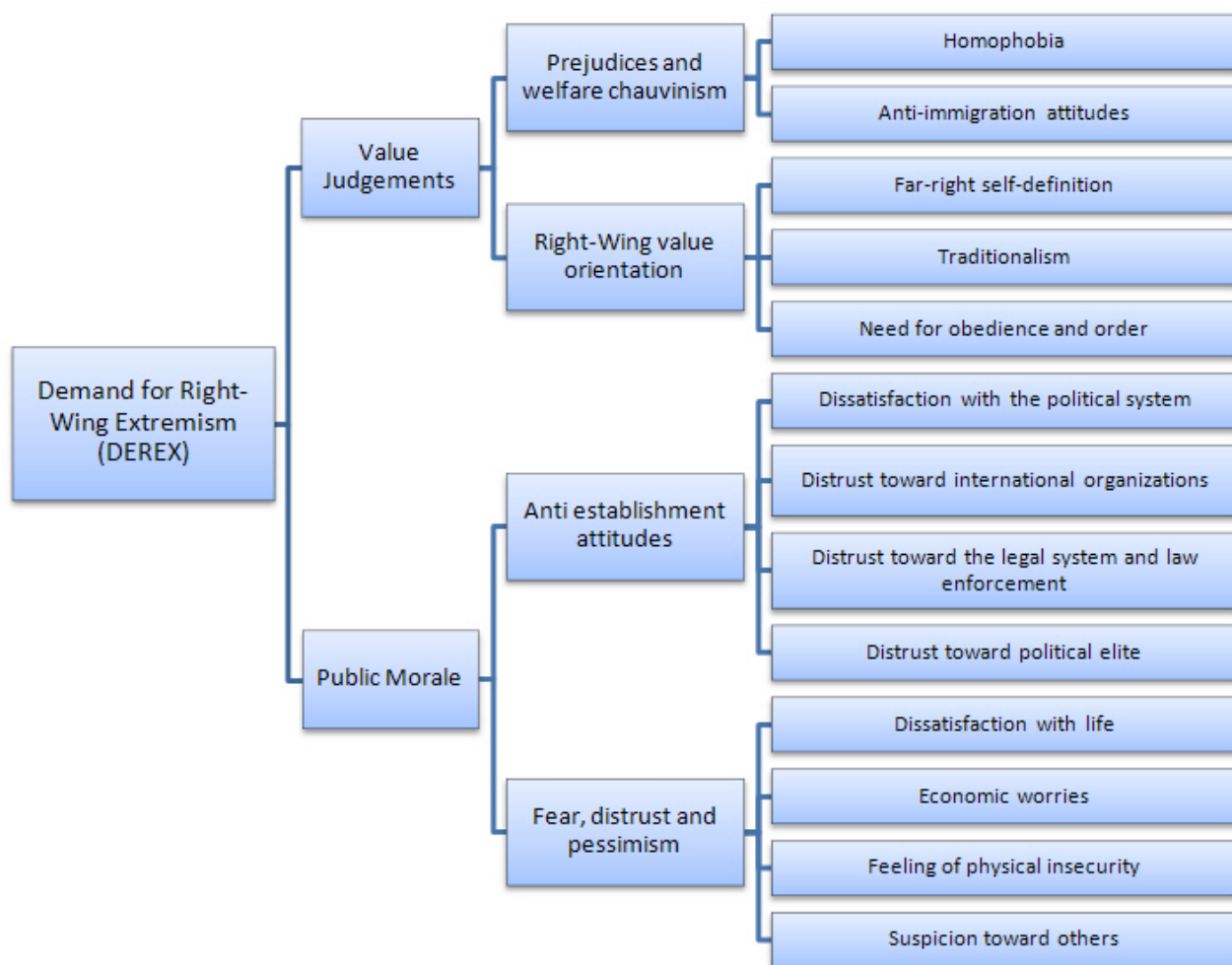
Political Capital Institute designed the Demand for Right-Wing Extremism (DEREX) Index using its own theoretical model and data from the European Social Survey (ESS), a biannual study that tracks changes in societal attitudes and values in 33 countries in Europe and the Middle East. Political Capital developed the model, chose the questions, determined subject groupings and set the criteria over the course of roughly one year. We took both inductive and deductive approaches to constructing the DEREX Index. We began with a theoretical model, relying on the ESS questionnaire and correlations between variables to create the sub-indices.

We developed the methodology in four steps: 1) Building the theoretical model; 2) choosing the appropriate questions to include from the ESS survey; 3) deciding how to qualify the respondents' answers to the survey questions; and 4) assigning numerical values to the answers, which allowed us to calculate scores for DEREX and its sub-indices. At the end of the process we also tested the model's reliability and validity.

We divided demand for right-wing extremism into four basic categories. We took care to ensure that these four categories describe the concept of "the far-right," both in the language of previous academic studies on the far-right and everyday language.

These are: (1) Prejudice and welfare chauvinism; (2) Anti-establishment attitudes; (3) Right-wing value orientation; (4) Fear, distrust and pessimism.

The following hierarchy shows how the 29 questions of ESS are grouped into the different DEREK levels.



Right-wing extremism is therefore defined by these four qualities; however, we define an individual as a potential right-wing extremist if his answers to the ESS survey questions evince attitudes and ideas that meet the criteria for at least three of the four categories.

Our definition of right-wing extremism is thus based upon both ideological and psychological elements. The first three sub-indices (prejudice and welfare chauvinism, right-wing value orientation and anti-establishment attitudes) are inherent parts of extreme right-wing ideology according to practically every author who studied the subject. The fourth (fear, distrust and pessimism) includes emotional factors that typically fuel the first three components, according to previous research. Right-wing extremism is therefore defined by these four qualities; however, we define an individual as a potential right-wing extremist if his answers to the ESS survey questions evince attitudes and ideas that meet the criteria for at least three of the four categories.

Please find a more detailed description of the methodology in one of our previous reports: http://www.riskandforecast.com/useruploads/files/derex_study.pdf

And on our website: derexindex.eu