

# *THE COMMON DENOMINATOR OF EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN POLITICS - RADICAL POPULISM*

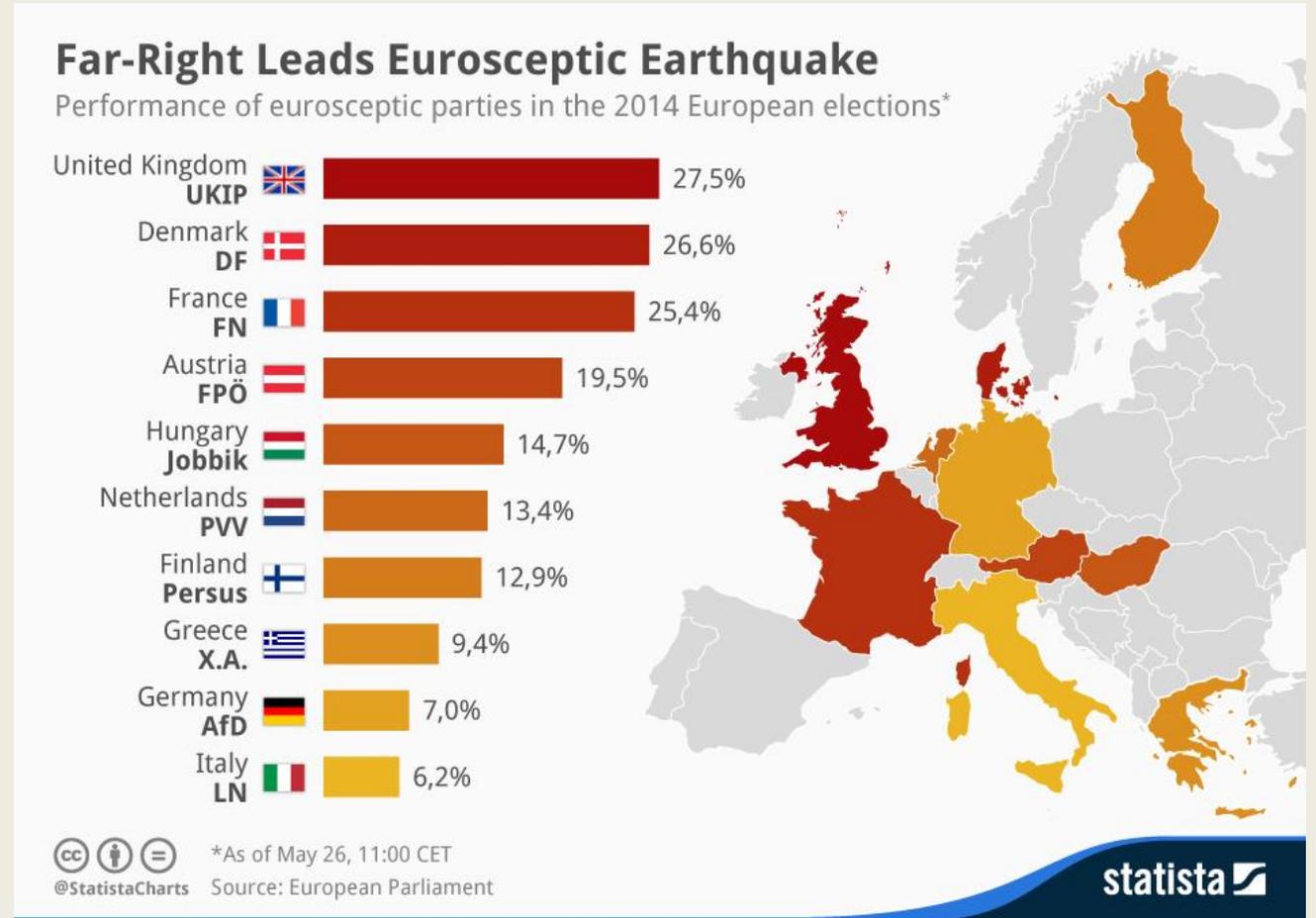
*Karen Umansky  
Tel Aviv University*



**FARAGE MEETS TRUMP**

# *From Europeanisation to Euroscepticism*

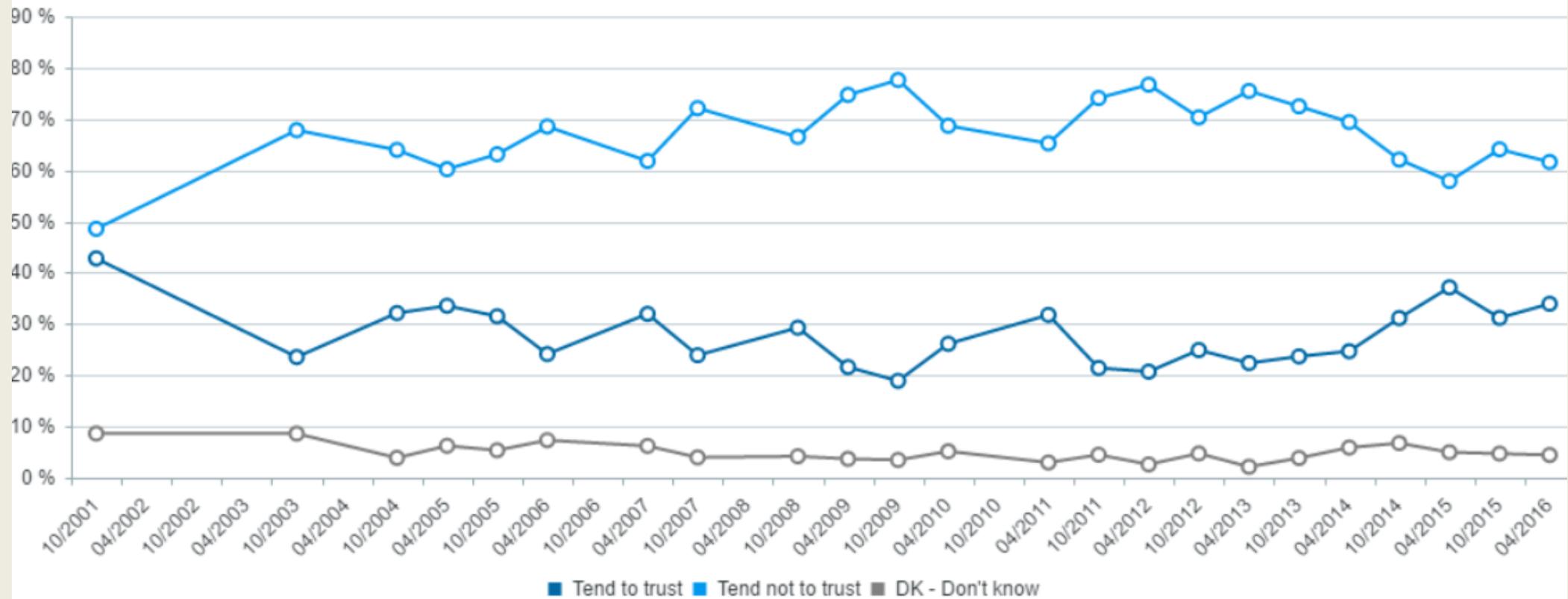
European and national institutions are losing their legitimacy



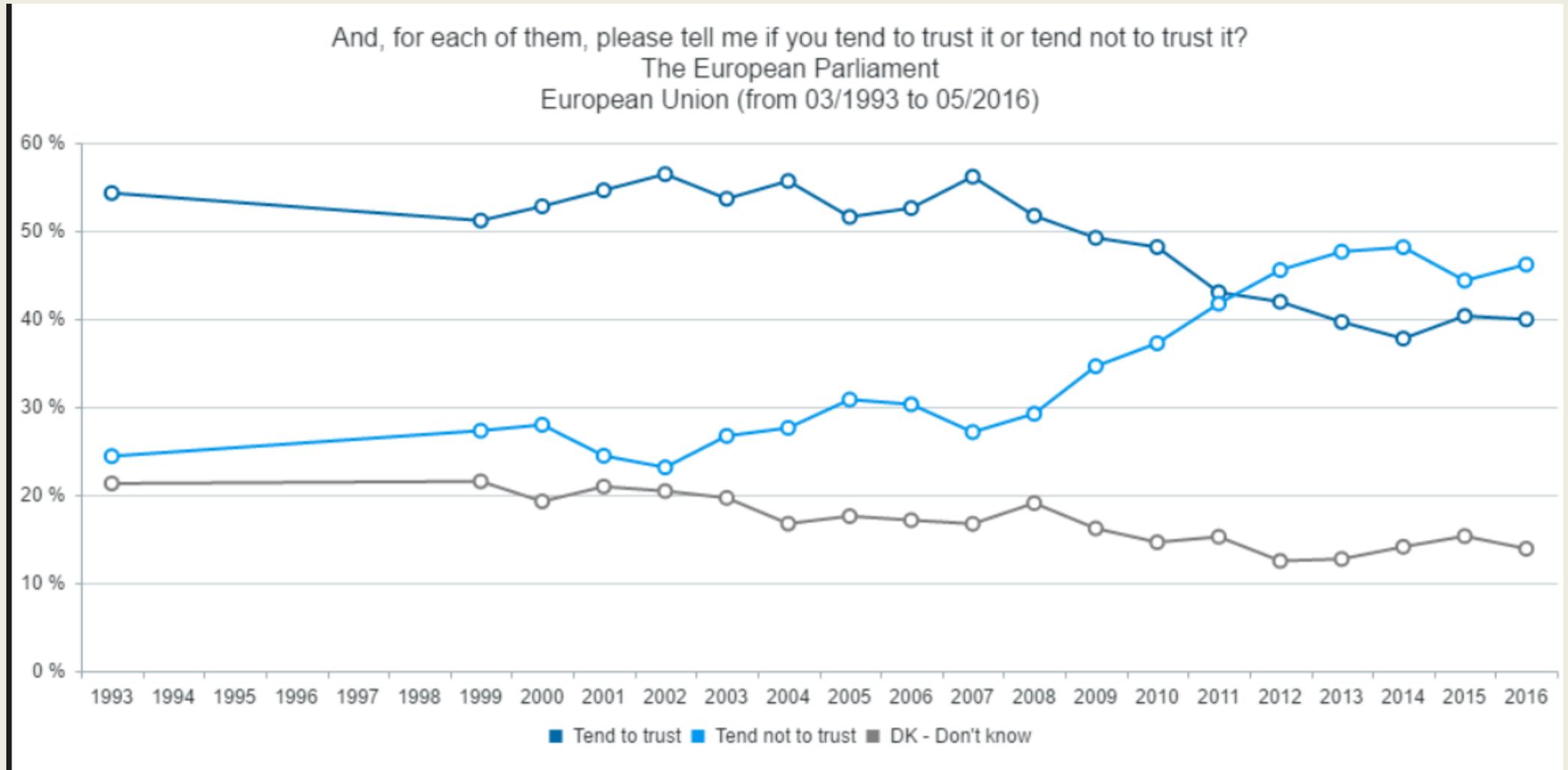
# Political trust - UK

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

The (NATIONALITY) government  
United Kingdom (from 10/2001 to 05/2016)



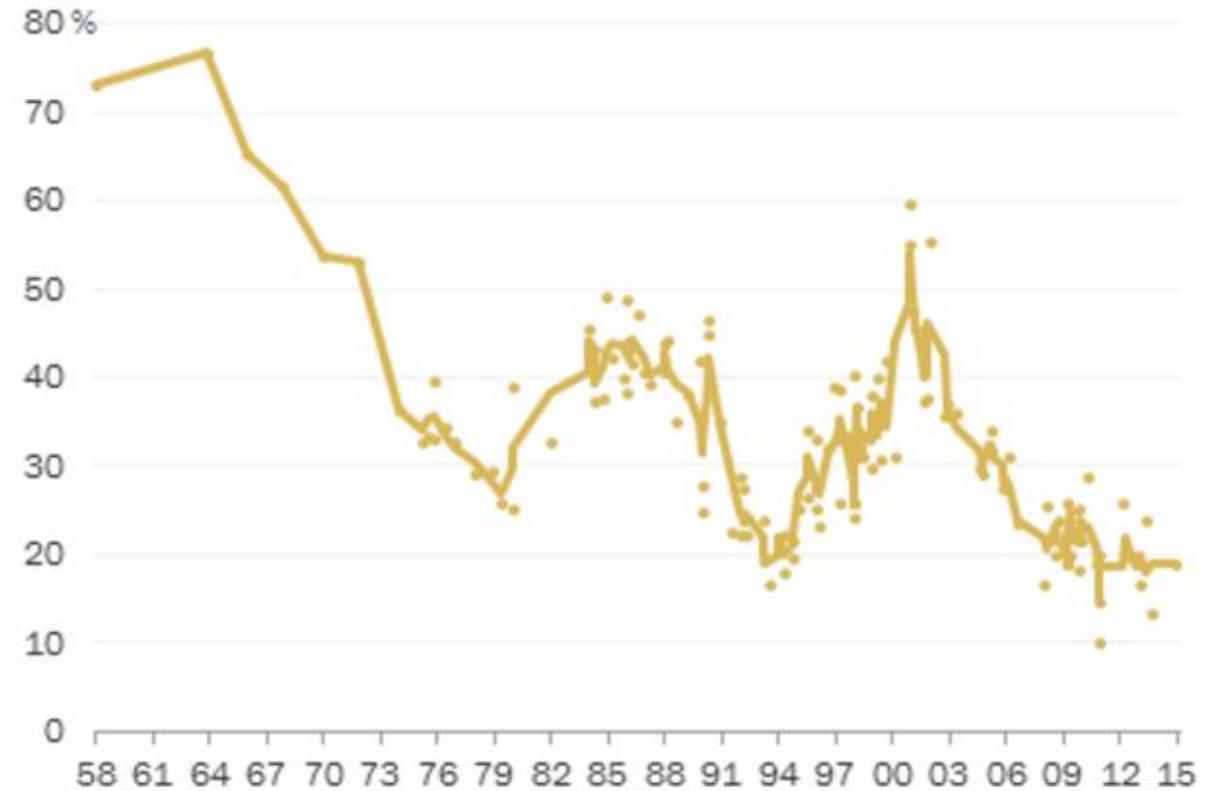
# Political trust in the EU



# Political trust - US

## Public trust in government: 1958-2015

*Trust the federal government to do what is right just about always/most of the time ...*



Survey conducted Aug. 27-Oct. 4, 2015. Q15. Trend sources: Pew Research Center, National Election Studies, Gallup, ABC/Washington Post, CBS/New York Times, and CNN Polls. From 1976-2014 the trend line represents a three-survey moving average.

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# *Why is this happening? Traditional theories*

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

- ***Crisis of Representation***

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

- ***Economic Situation***

When people feel economically secure, their trust in government tends to rise. Economic decline often reduces confidence in government (Bovens and Wille, 2008).

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# Why is this happening? Traditional theories

- ***The Media***

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

- ***Immigration***

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

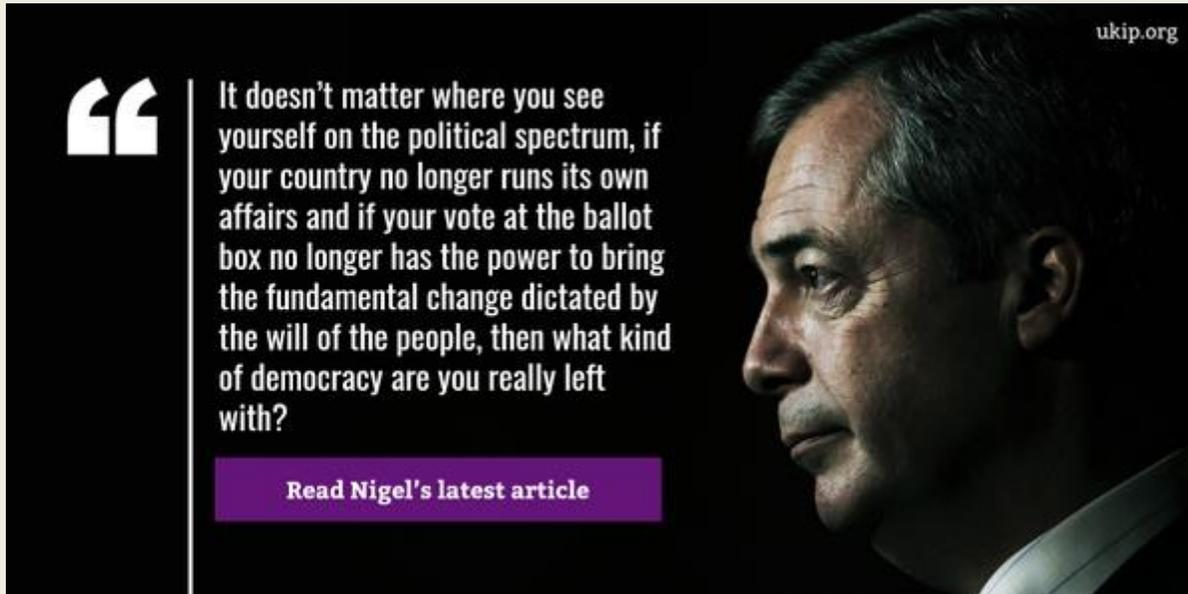
- ***Post-industrial Society***

Scholars argue that the shift to post-materialism (a new mindset, critical and skeptical of political and social authorities ) accounts for citizens' growing lack of confidence in the political system (Huntington, 1975; Inglehart, 1990).

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# Why is this happening?

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



“ It doesn't matter where you see yourself on the political spectrum, if your country no longer runs its own affairs and if your vote at the ballot box no longer has the power to bring the fundamental change dictated by the will of the people, then what kind of democracy are you really left with?

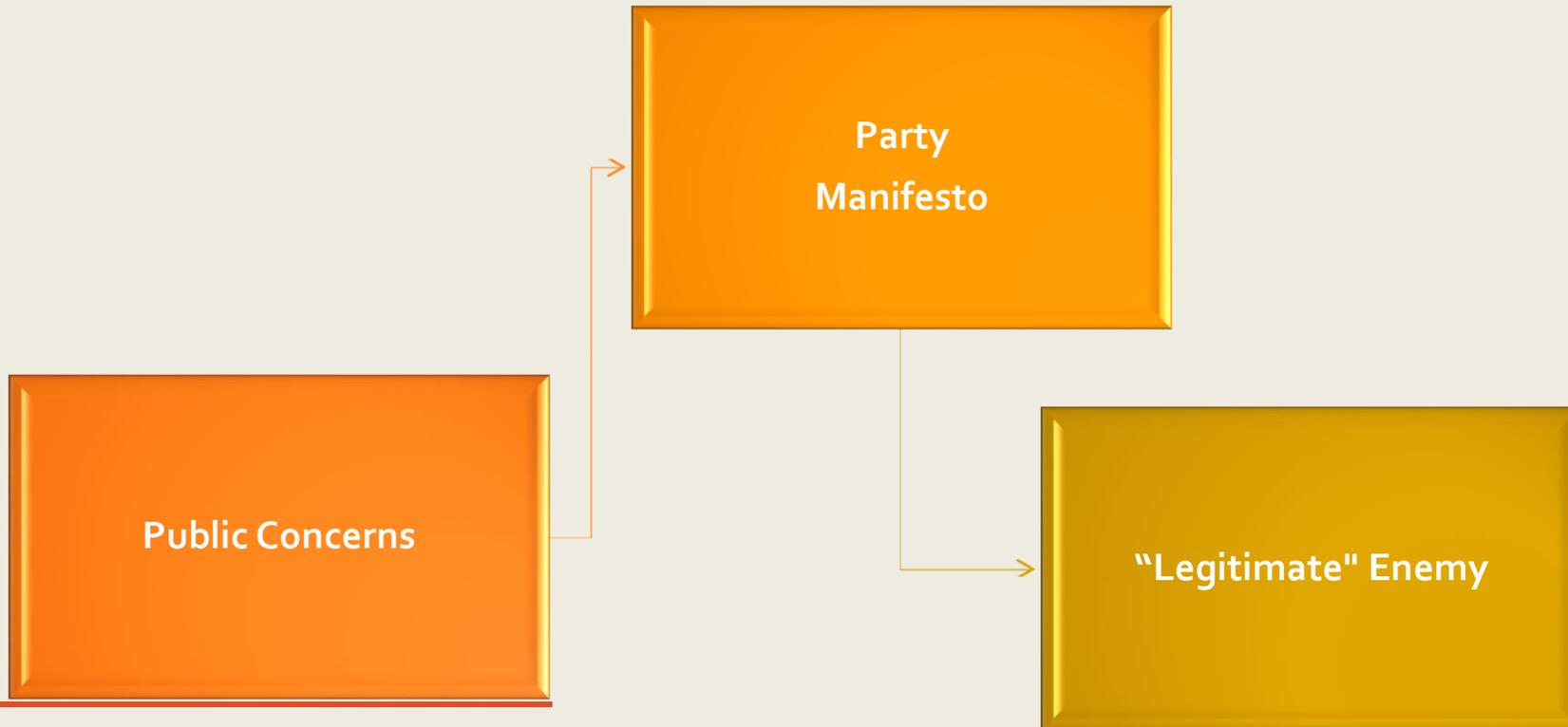
[Read Nigel's latest article](#)

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# *The “legitimate” enemy pattern*

- **“Legitimate” Enemy (LE)** – new radical parties utilize an *enemy* in their political agendas, which becomes “legitimate” when it is held responsible for public concerns, thus legitimizing its existence.



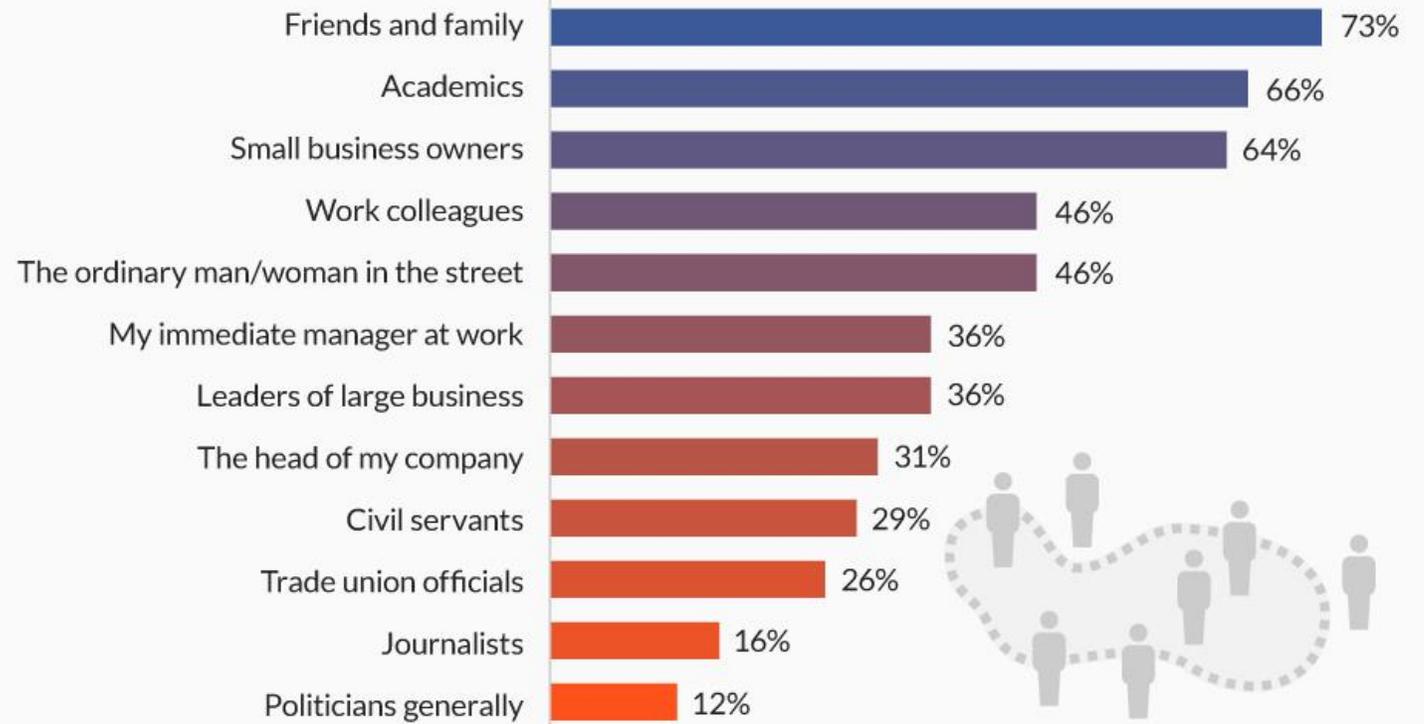
# *Brexit – what happened?*



# *In Family we trust*

## **Brexit issues: family beats politicians for trust**

"Who do you trust on issues relating to the referendum on EU membership?"



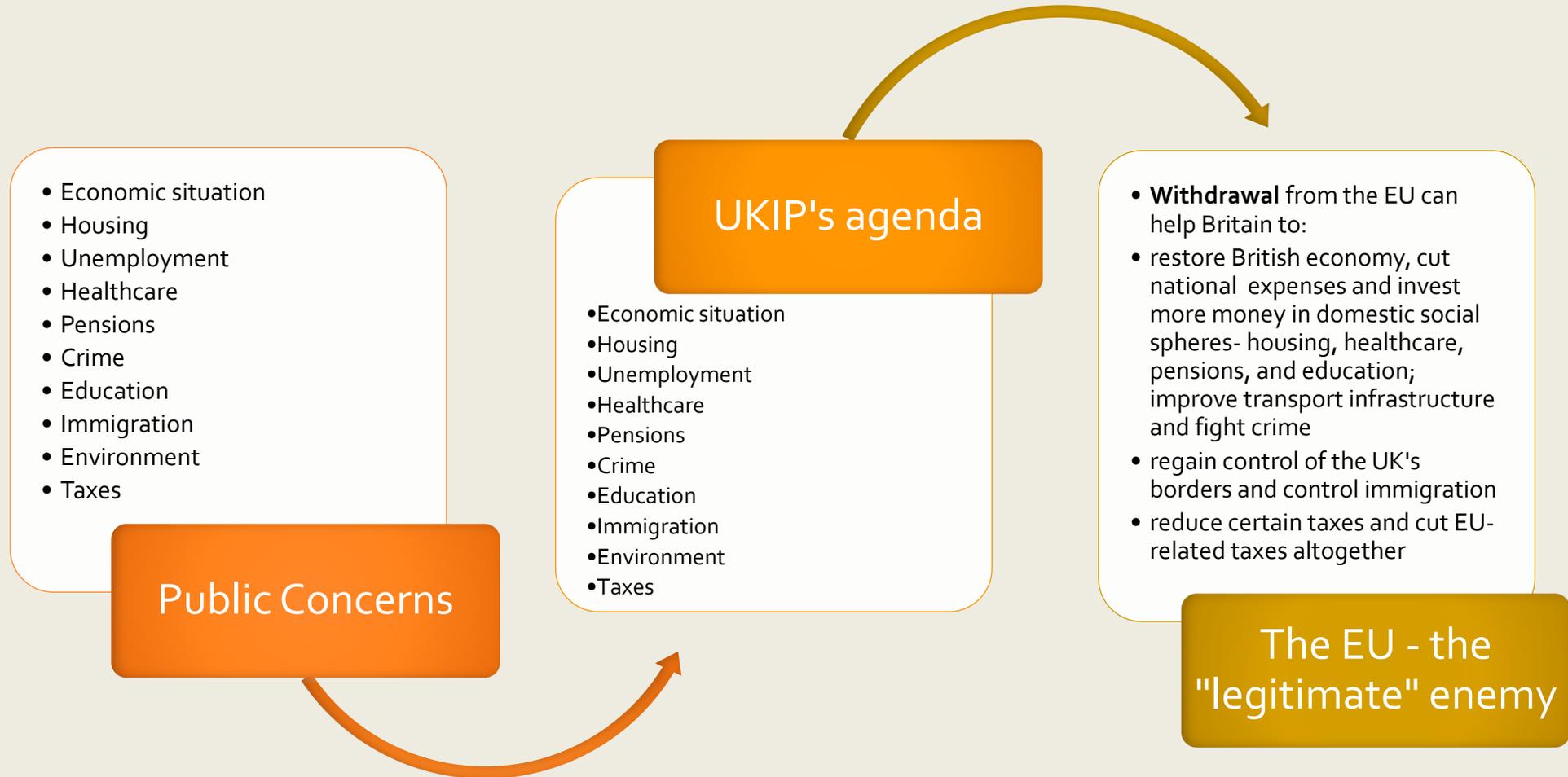
@StatistaCharts Source: Ipsos Mori

**indy100**

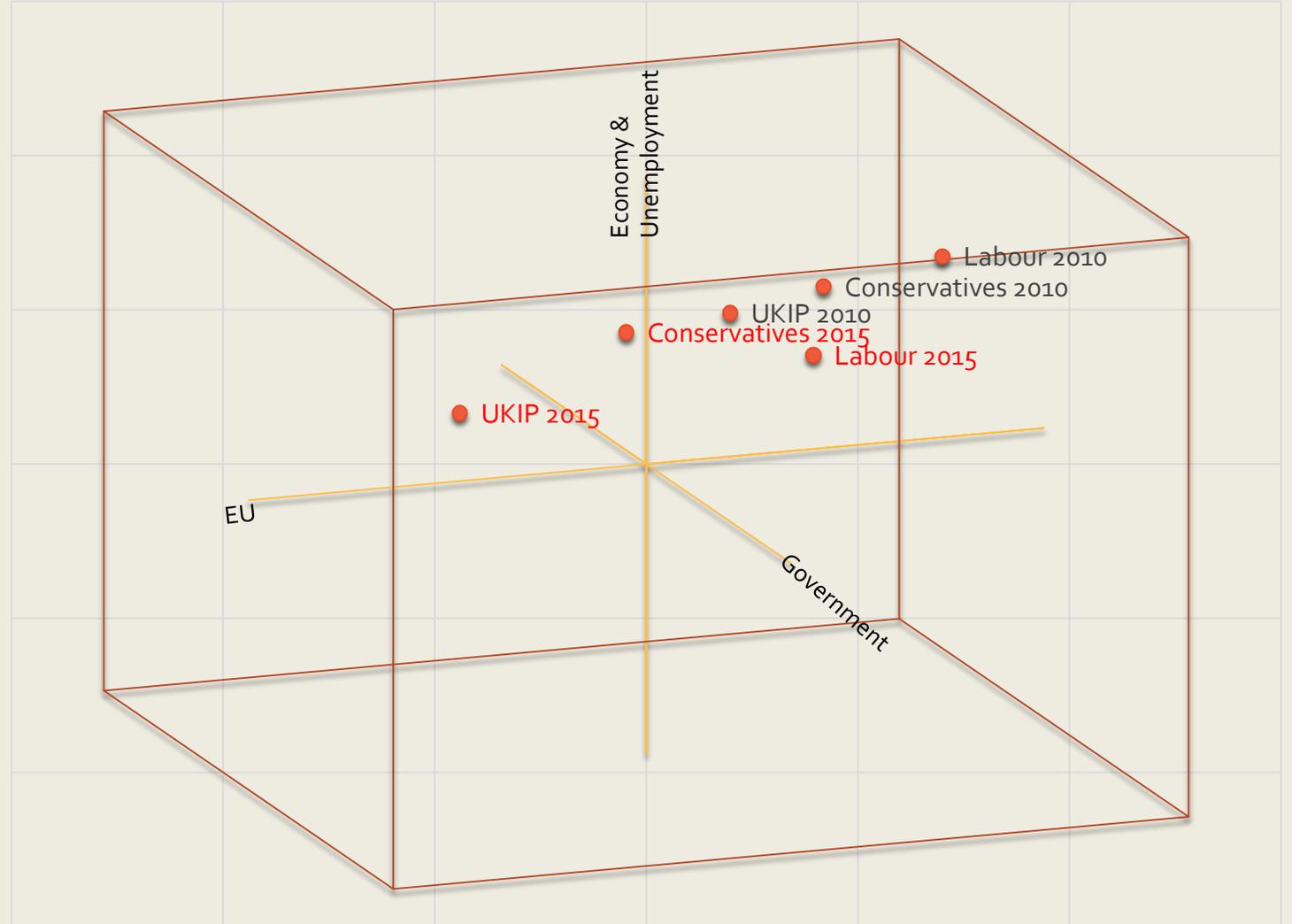
from  
The **INDEPENDENT**

**statista**

# British “legitimate” enemy – the EU



# *Party positions: 2010-2015 UK elections*



# 100-day action plan to Make America Great Again



## “Legitimate” enemies:

- Immigrants

immigration was one of the major concerns

### End Illegal Immigration Act

- Government

dissatisfaction with government was one of the biggest non-economic public concerns (Gallup)

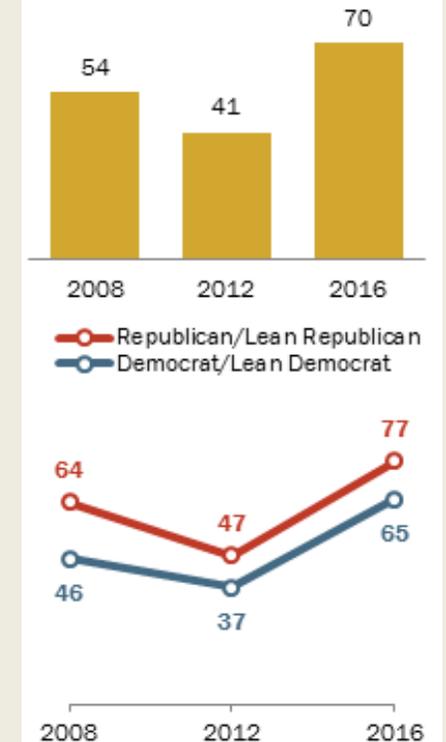
### Clean Up Corruption in Washington Act –

measures to clean up the corruption

and special interest collusion in Washington, DC

## More see immigration as very important to '16 vote

% of registered voters who say immigration is “very important” to their vote ...

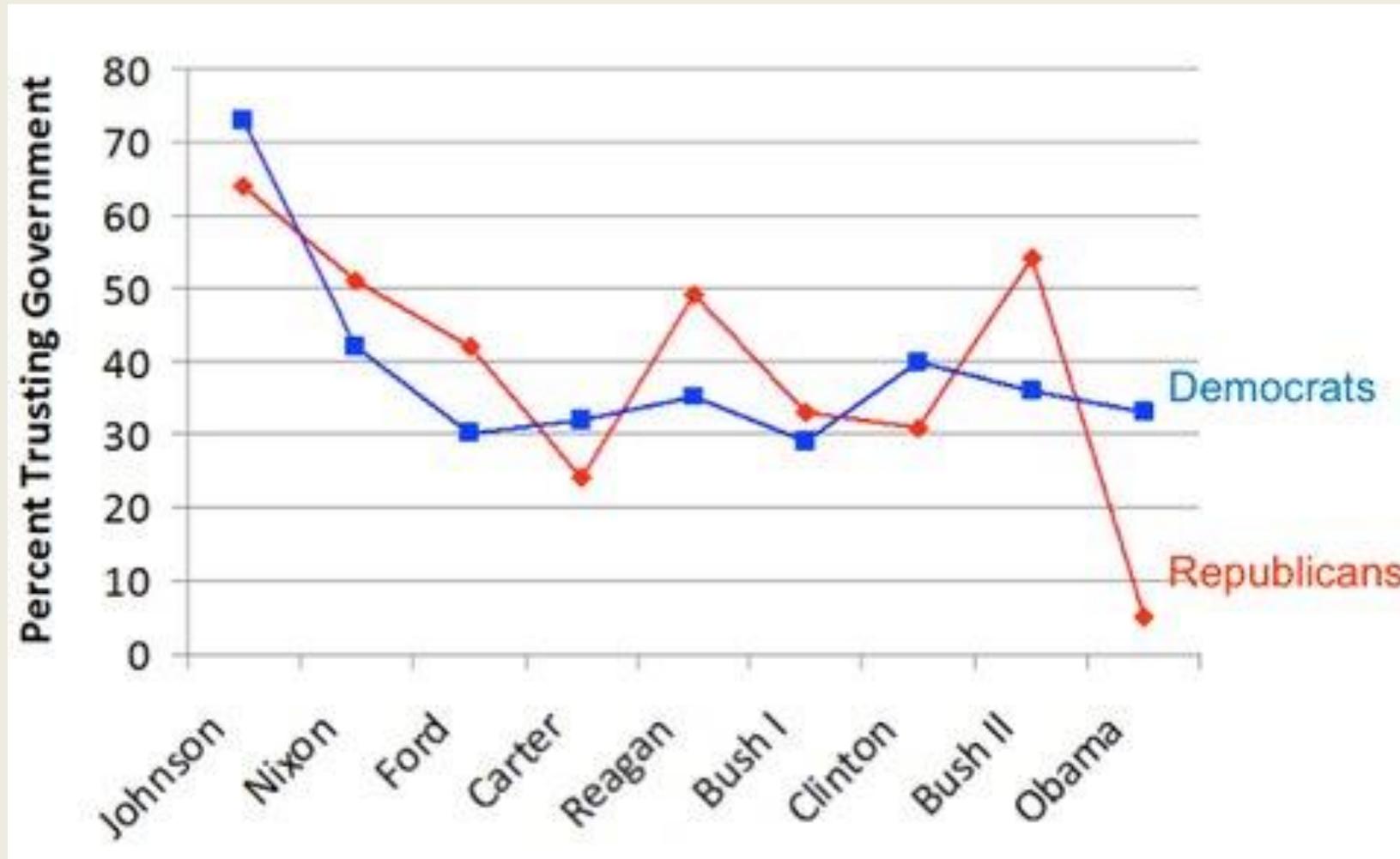


Notes: Based on registered voters. Trends from comparable points in previous election cycles. Q40d.

Source: Survey conducted June 15-26, 2016.

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# *A fertile ground for Government as LE - US*



# *Referendums - the only option?*



- **UK** – 17.4 million people had a different opinion from the ruling parties - Brexit economic consequences are still hard to estimate, but there's a 50/50% chance of recession worse than in 2008.
- **Switzerland** – 12 referendums during 2016 ( a seven-person executive, with a rotating presidency).
- **Italy** – Prime Minister Matteo Renzi had to step down, since the referendum on Dec 4 didn't go his way.

*Is direct democracy the only way to make people feel they have influence?*

# *Additional suggestions*



Understanding of the LE strategy helps design better policies on public engagement – some of the strategies suggested by Goodwin (2011) to combat radical populism can be relevant:

1. **Principle** – “myth-busting” the government/immigrant is not necessarily an enemy.
2. **Engagement** – social networks allow to connect with wider audiences. Democracy 2.0 - participatory consultation with the people , ex.: an online portal.