

<b>Institution:</b> University of Nottingham
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 21
<b>Title of case study:</b> Using evidence-based understanding to refine policy responses to the rise of right-wing extremism
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Based on knowledge exchange with international agencies and think-tanks, briefings to politicians, workshops with local government and police authorities, and a full-time secondment within central (UK) government, Dr Matthew Goodwin's distinctive work has become a crucial part of changing attitudes and influencing policy for dealing with the rise of right-wing extremism in the UK, and elsewhere. As one of the most-followed political scientists in the UK, Goodwin has used extensive social and traditional media engagement to bring this ground-breaking work to the attention of the wider public. One senior Government Minister reflects that Goodwin has <b>'helped to develop government policy to counter the far right'</b>, and <b>'provided government with a substantial evidence base which continues to change and inform policy'</b>. [source 1]</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Prior to Goodwin's research, little was known about individual and community-level drivers of public support for right-wing extremism. Owing to the emergence of specific groups and isolated acts of violence, this topic has become more salient to policy and practitioner communities, and in 2011 the UK's national 'Prevent' strategy noted how policy makers' understanding of 'how people become involved' in right-wing extremism was inevitably less developed than for other forms of extremism. The same year saw the Home Affairs Committee on Violent Radicalisation (see Section 4) conclude that agencies only paid 'lip service' to right-wing extremism.</p> <p>Goodwin addressed this gap directly by undertaking a series of distinct projects that drew on a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to examine: (i) extreme right party voters; (ii) extreme right members and activists; and (iii) extreme right movements, including their internal organization, ideology and surrounding public opinion climate.</p> <p>The research broke new ground by employing life-history interviews with supporters, qualitative textual analysis, the compilation of unique datasets on extreme right party members and voters, and sophisticated analysis of individual and contextual conditions that tend to drive this support. Specifically, the research investigated: (a) the social profile of self-identified supporters of extreme right-wing parties, such as the British National Party (BNP); (b) their beliefs and attitudes, and key motives for support; (c) the role of local contextual conditions at the ward, local authority and constituency levels, exploring for example the relationship between support and levels of economic deprivation, ethnic diversity and education; and (d) the organizational and ideological evolution of specific groups like the BNP, English Defence League, National Front, and other smaller groups. Critical research insights to emerge from the research were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supporters share a distinct social profile and background, tending to be middle-aged or elderly working class men, with low levels of education, who read tabloid newspapers and occupy economically insecure positions (publications #1, #2, #3, #4).</li> <li>2. Supporters reside in distinct types of areas, being heavily concentrated in northern England, the West Midlands and outer-London and in local authority areas characterized by high rates of deprivation and ethnic diversity, and who are in close proximity to large Muslim communities of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage (#1, #2, #3, #4).</li> <li>3. Political parties and social movements on the extreme right-wing offer particular and defined narratives that amplify initial grievances into broader 'vocabularies of motive' that sustain the commitment of followers, and compel them to action, and have often pursued relatively competent and targeted strategies at the community-level (#2, #4, #5).</li> <li>4. Members and activists exhibit an identifiable belief system and 'motivational vocabularies', which are anchored in perceived threats to the native (ethnic) group, feelings of collective</li> </ol>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

efficacy and a sense of moral obligation, challenging the notion that they are simply reactive protestors (#2).

In summary, the research provides unique insight into the profile of extreme right supporters, their key grievances and issues of concern and the impact of their surrounding environment. Goodwin was the lead author or contributed equally to co-authored research.

### 3. References to the research

1. 'Anti-immigrant, politically disaffected or still racist after all? Examining the attitudinal drivers of extreme right support in Britain in the 2009 European elections', *European Journal of Political Research* (2011) 50 (3), 418-440 (with David Cutts and Robert Ford) [peer-reviewed journal].
2. *New British Fascism: Rise of the British National Party* (London, Routledge, 2011) [established academic press]. Described as 'one of the most challenging and in-depth studies of the BNP' by Baroness Warsi, Minister for Faith, endorsed by David Blunkett MP and reviewed in the *Guardian* (27.07.2011).
3. *Right Response: Understanding and Countering Populist Extremism*. A Chatham House Report (London: Chatham House, 2011) [peer reviewed]. Official project page viewed 4,500 times; report translated into German and shared with members of British, German, Swedish, Bulgarian, Hungarian and European Parliaments. Launched by Head of the European Commission representation in the UK, Jonathan Scheele, and Labour Member of Parliament Jon Cruddas.
4. 'Extreme right foot soldiers, legacy effects and deprivation: A contextual analysis of the leaked British National Party (BNP) membership list', *Party Politics* (published online May 2012) (with Robert Ford and David Cutts) [peer-reviewed journal].
5. 'Forever a false dawn? Explaining the electoral collapse of the British National Party (BNP)', *Parliamentary Affairs* (published online March 2013) [peer-reviewed journal].

All are available on request.

### 4. Details of the impact

Goodwin's ground-breaking research into the profile and motivations of right-wing extremists has not only improved understanding at a crucial time for responding to the emergence of new specific groups and isolated acts of violence, but helped change attitudes and behaviour through training, informed policy thinking and development at local community and government level in the UK, and internationally.

#### International Knowledge Exchange

Between 2010 and August 2013, Goodwin was approached and engaged by over 80 non-academic bodies who invited him to share his research in workshop format and engage in robust dialogue. In North America these include the National Intelligence Council, Central Intelligence Agency and Eurasia Group think-tank. In Europe they include the Council of Europe, European Parliament, Open Society Foundation and think tanks such as the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (Cidob), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Kreisky Forum.

#### Influencing UK Government policy

Increasingly Goodwin has come to influence central government on the issues surrounding the rise of the extreme right in Britain. He has presented his research in workshop format to the Home Office, Government for Wales and many others (below). He contributed to the UK Government's Foresight Project on *Future Identities*. Dr Lucy Mason, the Joint Deputy Head of Foresight, notes that it 'is among the **most downloaded Foresight reports ever**, with more than 5,500 downloads since launch' and '**informed several strands of work in parts of Government**'. [2]

Other activity which helped to disseminate his work to UK government include his oral evidence to the Home Affairs Committee on violent radicalisation in 2011; his project on right-wing extremism for the Welsh Government in 2012; and his presentations to Members of the European Parliament in 2012-2013, with one MEP describing Goodwin's research as 'valuable to our work', and 'has

helped **influence our work** and perspective on the rise of the extreme right in Britain, as well as on a European scale'.[3]

From 2010, Goodwin was **asked to write briefings** for Ministers Sayeeda Warsi, Oliver Letwin, Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg and All Party Parliamentary Group on Islamophobia. In 2011, this led to **Goodwin's appointment to the cross-government working group** on anti-Muslim hatred, responsible for allocating resources to tackle anti-Muslim prejudice. After reviewing survey data on extremism for the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), the Department then supported Goodwin's successful bid for a six-month full-time ESRC Knowledge Exchange secondment to DCLG, from September 2012 until January 2013 (ES/J020907/1). Goodwin was **at the heart of central government**, working with the Tackling Extremism team on his core area of research, convening a series of closed workshops designed to trigger new thinking, dozens of one-to-one meetings, writing submissions for Ministers, organizing a conference for over 70 policy-makers and a 'master-class' for over 30 policy-makers at the Home Office.

Claire Gipson, **Head of Prevent Strategy** at the Home Office states: 'It is fair to say that Dr Goodwin's engagement with government on far right and EDL [English Defence League] issues has **contributed directly to policy thinking and development**', while the Team Leader of the Tackling Extremism division at DCLG notes: 'It is clear that the work Dr Goodwin did with us...**significantly accelerated and deepened our thinking**, ensuring that it is more rooted in the latest evidence', and 'his ability to provide evidence and analytical input....were also valuable'.[4]

Such views are mirrored by the National Domestic Extremism Unit, who note that Goodwin's 'research has greatly strengthened our understanding of the EDL [English Defence League]...and has covered gaps in our knowledge in a way that, as a police unit, we would find difficult to replicate'. In addition to her comments in Section 1, Baroness Warsi notes that Goodwin 'significantly impacted on the public debate' while 'changing our approach to tackling Islamophobia'.[5]. From February until July 2013 this extensive engagement continued under the University of Nottingham's Hermes Fellowship programme, funding two days per week of further knowledge exchange activity.

#### Influencing local government and community activity

Between 2010 and 2013 Goodwin engaged with 50-100 policy officers at dozens of workshops organized by the south-west Counter Terrorism Unit and Birmingham, Burnley, Camden, Leicester, Rochdale, Rotherham, Swindon, Tameside and Wigan councils. One Community Cohesion policy officer from Wrexham Council reflects on one workshop with 91 delegates in 2011 as follows: 'By addressing our knowledge gap **this work has enabled us to develop our local approach to intelligence gathering**'. Another in Burnley reflects: 'We **made use of points and analyses from his research** in our management of government funded programmes on community cohesion and preventing violent extremism, including a leadership skills training programme for young people, and...through the Burnley Good Relations Programme'.

After a more detailed project in Tameside that mapped local support for right-wing extremism an officer notes how Goodwin 'addressed a gap in our existing knowledge base and **has been significant in shaping our work in local communities**'. A period of extensive engagement with the Greater Manchester police Counter-Terrorism Unit produced similar reflections:

Initially, we drew on Dr Goodwin's studies and research **but it was soon realised that collaboration with him would have a significant impact on our ability to change attitudes and behaviour in the groups we most wanted to influence**. Consequently, we worked together for two years both producing training materials for teachers and lecturers, and delivering conferences and training seminars. It would be accurate to describe both Dr Goodwin's research...and his personal involvement as **critical in the success of our projects, which have subsequently influenced work in this area beyond Manchester to a regional and national level**.

## Impact case study (REF3b)

Non-governmental bodies also underscore this influence. The Community Security Trust states that this research 'has **significantly enhanced our knowledge** of these areas of extremist politics, and is **highly regarded**'. Kelly Simcock, Programme Manager for the Foundation for Peace and Co-Chair of the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) Prevent working group similarly notes: '**Dr Goodwin's work has certainly changed our understanding of the far right and impacted our approach to the work we deliver**'. [6]

Extensive media coverage

In addition to the specific impact with policymakers and stakeholders detailed above, the work has been brought to the attention of the wider public via extensive media engagement. Between March 2009 and May 2013 Goodwin appeared in 146 articles in 15 countries, 78 per cent of which referenced his research on right-wing extremism. This includes one-on-one interviews in the *Economist*, *Newsnight* and *The Guardian* and, in 2012, his address to over 50 international journalists who work on extremism-related issues at a Thomson Reuters Foundation workshop in Istanbul. [7] The Assistant Editor of the *New Statesman* credits Goodwin for his '**accessible presentation of ideas, backed by serious empirical research**', while his prominence is reflected in over 6,000 Twitter followers, making him one of the most followed political scientists in the UK. [8]

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

- [1] Testimonial by Baroness Warsi, Senior Minister for Faith and Communities, is available on file.
- [2] Testimonial by Dr Lucy Mason, Joint Deputy Head of Foresight is available on file. Details of the project and report are available here: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/foresight/our-work/policy-futures/identity>
- [3] House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, Roots of Violent Radicalisation, Nineteenth Report of Session 2010-12. The report, including Dr Goodwin's evidence, is available here: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmhaff/1446/1446.pdf>. [Testimonial by Claude Moraes Member of the European Parliament](#)
- [4] Testimonials by Head of Prevent, UK Government and Home Office, Claire Gipson and Team Leader, Tackling Extremism, Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) are available on file.
- [5] Testimonial by Sergeant Nick Parke, National Domestic Extremism Unit and Baroness Warsi, Senior Minister for Faith and Communities is available on file.
- [6] All of these individual testimonials, and others, are available on file.
- [7] A complete list of Goodwin's media engagement is available on file. Examples include: *Tea with the Economist* interview (July 30 2011); *Newsnight* interview with Jeremy Paxman on English Defence League (October 12 2009); Interview with Baroness Warsi about Islamophobia and extremism, *Daily Politics/BBC News* (23 April 2013); Dr Matthew Goodwin profile interview, *Guardian*: 'How can divisions between communities be closed?' (28 June 2011); 'A rightist harnesses British discontent', *New York Times* (10 June 2009); 'Life after Griffin', *Prospect* (24 June 2010); 'The far right has the same violent intent as al-Qaeda', *The Times* (25 July 2011); 'Affluent backbone of the far-right', *Daily Telegraph* (7 March 2013); and numerous articles for the Guardian Comment is Free (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/profile/matthew-goodwin>)
- [8] Testimonial from Daniel Trilling, Assistant Editor of the *New Statesman* is available on file. As of September 25 2013, Goodwin had 6,249 followers on Twitter, @GoodwinMJ.