

Has Populism Changed Local Council Politics?

Does populism impact on the first tier of English politics and the relationships between elected members, officers and the electorate?

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Abstract:

This research project examined the hypothesis that populism affects the way local councillors, councils and their staff are perceived by the public and that an increase in populism has in turn led to an increase in aggressive behaviour towards them by the public and within the organisation.

It aimed to establish whether populism is present at local council level, if there has been an increase over the past five years and whether this correlated with an increase in aggressive behaviour towards council members and staff.

Whilst this research failed to prove the hypothesis, it is recognised that the methods employed may not have been entirely suitable to detect populism in local councils and that more extensive research in this area will be required.

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I dedicate this research to my late father

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In June 2016 Labour MP Jo Cox was shot, stabbed and killed by a right-wing extremist, her murder shocked the UK¹. In 2019 a right-wing extremist killed Conservative German politician Ernst Lübke with a single gunshot.

Polke-Majewski² (2017) reported that abuse of politicians increasingly resulted in physical attack. Whilst fatal attacks are thankfully the exception, violent crime has been recorded against politicians at all levels from MPs down to small town mayors.³ The language used in political debate and the press also has become more aggressive in tone. In autumn 2019, Brendon Cox⁴ criticised the language used in parliament which he believed to lead to death threats aimed at members of parliament and a “bear pit of polarisation”.

When considering the subject for this dissertation the author observed very acrimonious and disparaging behaviour towards local councillors. Councillors and their staff were referred to as “you up there”, their moral integrity as well as their legitimacy in taking decisions that affect the wider community were questioned. Racial slurs and allegations of corruption were made on social media and in person. The angry members of the public evidently perceived the council representatives as a morally corrupt elite, whilst they represented the “morally pure” people. Members of the public

¹ Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn was shot and killed in 2002, in 2015 the Cologne mayoral candidate narrowly survived being stabbed whilst campaigning for the elections.

² Karsten Polke-Majewski, Ressortleiter Investigatives und Daten, ZEIT ONLINE und DIE ZEIT

³ In 2017 the mayor of Altena was attacked with a knife and wounded (Blasius et al 2017)

⁴ Jo Cox’s widower

iterated that the council, its members and its staff were meant to know and do what they, the people, wanted.

Were these people asserting their democratic right, demanding to be heard, and engaging with local politics? Or were they using unpopular local council decisions as an excuse to harass and bully public servants in an attempt to get what they wanted, regardless of its benefit to the wider community? Was this behaviour a reflection of the populist notion of “We, the people know better than anyone, the problems and issues affecting” the local town (Churcher 2020)?

This study explores the hypothesis that populism affects the way local councillors, councils and their staff are perceived by the public and that an increase in populism has in turn led to an increase in aggressive behaviour towards them by the public and within the organisation.

It seeks to explore populism and define it. It asks if populism is present in local councils and whether it is an integral part of the “local” in local councils; that they are meant to be “populist” by nature. It establishes if populism is present and finally if there is a correlation between populist politics and aggressive behaviour at a local level. The following chapters will attempt to answer these questions.

A literature review will research, analyse and critically evaluate the literature on populism and define the term as used in this dissertation. A methodology will reflect on and justify the research strategy and methods used, link research aims to the questions, address any ethics issues and critically review the sampling, response rates and replicability. The results and analysis chapter will present and critically analyse the data and review the findings in light

of the literature reviewed in the earlier chapter. The concluding chapter will summarise the key points, reflect on the research as undertaken and recommend further action.

Chapter 2: Literature review

The University of Edinburgh's Institute for Academic Development (2020) defines a literature review as "a piece of academic writing demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the academic literature on a specific topic placed in context." and stresses that the material will also need to be critically evaluated.

This literature review aims to establish what current literature says about a definition of "populism" and clarify what it is not and what its relation is to liberal democracy. It critically reviews literature on measuring populism and what has been written about its role in local councils.

What is populism and what is not?

Populism has become a buzz word (see Edwards 2020:1) in political literature as highlighted by Tormey (2018:260). No longer are populist actors operating on the side-lines or in countries with an, as yet, unsecured democratic tradition, such as Hungary. The result of the Brexit referendum as well as the election of Donald Trump took political commentators by surprise, Austria narrowly avoided having a populist president and in France Marine Le Pen entered the French parliament; populism has entered the mainstream.

But populism is by no means a new phenomenon. Müller⁵ (2017:7) quotes Ionescu and Gellner (1969) "A spectre is haunting the world: populism." So, the problem, if indeed it is one, is not new, what has changed, is that it has moved centre stage.

Attempts in the late sixties to define the phenomenon of "populism" failed (Müller, 2017:7). Collier (2001:11814) states "The populist label has been attached to such a wide variety of political movements (right and left, from above and from below) that it is hard to stabilize any core meaning that can work rigorously as an analytical concept." In her short article she identifies no fewer than ten constituent components of populism (ibid.). Multiple authors echo this view amongst them Mudde, Müller and Kaltwasser, calling it a "notoriously vague term" (Canovan⁶ 1999:3).

Even today clear-cut definitions are not always forthcoming and as Mudde (2004:542) states in "public debate there are two dominant interpretations of the term populism, both are highly charged and negative." One being the interpretation that populism is the "the politics of the Stammtisch (the pub), i.e. a highly emotional and simplistic discourse that is directed at the 'gut feelings' of the people", the other the politics of "opportunistic policies with the aim of (quickly) pleasing the people/voters – and so 'buying' their support – rather than looking (rationally) for the 'best option'".(ibid.). But whilst these are common traits in populism, on their own they fail to describe the phenomenon with the kind of rigor required in academic debate. Indeed, as numerous authors point out (Mudde, Müller, March), demagoguery and opportunism are traits of most

⁵ Jan-Werner Mueller. -Professor of Politics at Princeton University

⁶ Margaret Canovan (1939-2018) Keele University

mainstream parties, particularly at election time and not exclusive to the populist discourse, and as March⁷ (2017a:284) points out “demoticism (closeness to ordinary people) (...) is necessary but by no means sufficient for populism”.

Instead Mudde (2004:543) argues that populism is “an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people.” Müller (2017:29), however, claims that rather than a general will in Rousseau’s sense of the phrase - requiring actual participation of citizens –populists “can divine the proper will of the people on the basis of what it means” to be of the people. “What might initially have looked like a claim by populists to represent the will turns out to be a claim to represent something like a symbolic substance” (ibid:29). In other words, the populist “will of the people” does not have any basis in empirical representation but is rather a construct of what “the real will of the people” should be in the perception of the populist leader.

In his summary Müller (2017:40) states that “populism is not a matter of a specific psychological cast, a particular class, or simplistic policies.” He elaborates on the Mudde concept when he defines populism as an ideology where it is the populists and only them who represent the will of the only homogenous people which is contrasted with the actions of the homogenous, morally corrupt elite (Müller, 2017:40).

⁷ Luke March is Professor of Post-Soviet and Comparative Politics and Deputy Director of the Princess Dashkova Russia Centre at the University of Edinburgh

Mudde's definition of populism is the currently most widely accepted one. He defines populism as a "thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic camps, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite," and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people. (Mudde 2017:5-6) which attributes moral rather than empirical values to either side of the perceived divide.

Populism – opportunity for change or threat to liberal democracy?

Mudde⁸ (2004:541) refers to the plentiful contemporary publications on the subject of populism and states that most "are of an alarming nature, as these 'new populists' are generally seen as a threat to liberal democracy." Müller (2017:11) describes populism as "something like a permanent shadow of modern representative democracy, and a constant peril." Repucci (2020) concedes that "Democracy and Pluralism are under Assault". And Thorney (2018:260) considers "the atmosphere surrounding the term" to be "negative and contentious".

There are some other voices, though, that perceive populism as an opportunity for better democracy. Müller (2017:11) points out that in some the American literature frequently equates populism with grassroots political reform, ascribing a very different meaning to the term than European scholars.

⁸ Cas Mudde - Professor of International Affairs at the School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Georgia

Dzur and Hendricks (2018:334) write “populist movements seek to modify or alter the practices and conventions of representative government by offering democracy-enhancing and trust-building organizational forms and political practices”, yet in European politics this would likely be labelled as engagement or community governance rather than populism. The European political discourse in the main perceives populism as a threat to (liberal) democracy itself.

However, one prominent European voice, at least, sees the new populism as an opportunity, Ernesto Laclau⁹ (1935-2014) who was a, professor of political theory at the University of Essex (Hancox 2015) turns a common critique of populism on its head. His writings inspired the left-wing populist movements in Greece and Spain. He asks “‘is not the “vagueness” of populist discourses the consequence of social reality itself being, in some situations, vague and undetermined?’ And in that case, ‘wouldn’t populism be, rather than a clumsy political and ideological operation, a performative act endowed with a rationality of its own - that is to say, in some situations, vagueness is a precondition to constructing relevant political meanings?’” (Laclau 2005:18) Laclau perceives the phenomenon of populism as an opportunity to “deepen existing democratic institutions and practices” (Tormey 2018:263). Populism has over time been described in a number of terms. Laclau (2005:18) identifies that the “the trademark of populism” is the “special emphasis on a political logic” that aims to gain majorities and that employs simplification and imprecision to this end “which,

⁹Ernesto Laclau (1935-2014) - Professor of Political Theory at the University of Essex

as such, is a necessary ingredient of politics tout court.” In his view the simplification of political issues is the strength of populism which allows it to access a wide base of the population.

But most observers consider populism’s oversimplification as one of its distinguishing characteristics which disregards the complexities of modern society. Dahrendorf¹⁰ considers oversimplification the essence of populism when he states “Populismus ist einfach, Demokratie ist komplex” (2007:3). He considers populism the conscious effort to simplify complex issues, when the explanation of complex issues in understandable terms, should be a key responsibility of democratic political leadership. (2007:4).

Mudde (2004:542) attempts to define the undefinable, as he puts it. He distinguishes between two common interpretations of the term populism. The first echo’s Dahrendorf’s “populism is simple, democracy is complex” statement when he says that “(p)opulists aim to crush the Gordian knots of modern politics with the sword of alleged simple solutions’.” The second common understanding interprets populism as “opportunistic policies with the aim of (quickly) pleasing the people/voters – and so ‘buying’ their support – rather than looking (rationally) for the ‘best option’”. (ibid). Mudde, however dismisses both, as these strategies are commonly used by politicians of all backgrounds in order to win elections. By themselves neither constitute populism.

Foa and Mounk (2016:13) in their widely received article “The Danger of Deconsolidation” challenge perceived wisdom, namely that supporters of populist politics represent lower economic classes and

¹⁰ Ralf Gustav Dahrendorf, (1929-2009) former director of the London School of Economics and Political Science

are of above average age. They assert that the “trend toward openness to nondemocratic alternatives is especially strong among citizens who are both young and rich” and come to the conclusion (2017:5) that “citizens are not just dissatisfied with the performance of particular governments; they are increasingly critical of liberal democracy itself”.

Norris (2017:15), however, contests their findings and maintains that the age bias towards populist authoritarianism lies with the older generation and that “the key reason driving the generation gap concerns cultural values, not income differences” (2017:16). In any case, Foa and Mounk recalibrated the common image of the disenfranchised older generation supporting populist actors by showing that populism also attracts a younger upwardly mobile clientele.

Dahrendorf highlights the role governance rather than government plays in the rise of populism. Increasingly complex political processes are confusing. Political decisions taken by non-elected agents, according to Dahrendorf, create institutional gaps, spaces without democratic institutions, spaces where the bacillus of populism grows, gaps of trust in institutions of democracy, participation, knowledge and information which are exploited by populist actors. (2007:96) This view is further differentiated by Müller. Populism merely appears to close the gap left behind by complex governance structures; “populism is actually not really a cry for more political participation let alone for the realization of direct democracy”, it does not close the gap (2017:96). Populism replaces unelected governance structures with a universal, uniform and unproven “will of the people”. Within the populist logic, whatever is perceived as the will of the people, thus is the will of the people, without any need for

further mobilization, participation or empirical research. It is a means to less not more meaningful engagement in the political process. According to Tormey, what sets populism apart from mainstream politics, is how it questions the value of “business as usual” in politics. “It is a politics that arises out of a sense of crisis – in turn feeding the idea that democracy is not working, that it is afflicted with disillusionment, alienation, and disengagement.” (Tormey, 2015:266). For Tormey populism is tied to a political event rather than a continuous phenomenon. (Ibid), in his view it is “a phenomenon that is a product of democracy, but one which also acts upon democracy in ways that may be negative or positive” (Ibid). Müller (2017:43) finds that populists once in power will frame any situation as a crisis, requiring crisis management rather than long term, multi-agency solutions which will in turn legitimise populist governance, eroding liberal values and institutions in its cause. Or as Galston (2018:13) put it: “In short, populism plunges democratic societies into an endless series of moralized zerosum conflicts; it threatens the rights of minorities; and it enables overbearing leaders to dismantle the checkpoints on the road to autocracy.”

Populism at a local level

In the literature populism is predominately seen as a national or at least regional phenomenon. Is there any evidence of populism at a local level? Are local councils by their very nature populist?

The National Association of local Councils (2020) states that in England with “over 30% of the country parished” there are 10,000 local councils represented by 100,000 councillors. There is widespread grassroots electable representation in local councils.

Local councillors frequently (officially) do not represent a political party. Furthermore, an increasing majority of seats on local councils

are returned uncontested (see Willett¹¹ 2019 and Dixon, Lowe and Sewell 2019), meaning that fewer candidates stand for election than there are vacancies. The resulting vacancies frequently remain unfilled, leaving a democratic vacuum with increasing parts of the electorate insufficiently represented.

At a local level, populist actors often stand as independents¹² avoiding a clearly defined political association with a known populist party. Angenendt (2015:131) states that the "construction of a homogenous identity" is "a core element of populism" and "incompatible with liberal democracy" and a pluralist society. She describes that there is also a tendency for decisions at a local level to be taken in a factual rather than a partisan manner (ibid. 135). Jones (2020) observes that in "parish council elections, the role of 'party' is deemed far less important. In all other tiers of government election, party labels tend to be better known than the individual candidates. Candidates stand for election on party manifestos." Not so in local councils. There are no manifestos or speeches that could be analysed. Candidates are elected – if indeed there are elections –

¹¹ Dr Joanie Willett, Senior Lecturer (Education and Research) – Exeter University

¹² The Nottingham Independent Party was founded by former UKIP supporter – and candidate – in time for the 2019 elections. (Sandeman 2019), Peter MacFadyen (2020), formerly of Frome Town Council, states "We found the former are often individuals who have fallen out with the Political Party of which they were a member, wither because their politics became too extreme and/or did not fit with the party mandate, or for personal reasons. From this position (although nominal independent) they tend to follow the ideology and vote with the Party they left. Others are 'independent' at the parish/Town level, but stand for a party at district and/or County level..... they profess to be independent, but still retain all the trappings of their party.

Independent groups often came together around a single issue – the 'anti by-pass party' in effect... and once the event has passed, they fell apart as there was no common ideology or ways of Working."

often without their political views being known to the electorate or on a single issue ticket.

Whilst parliamentary speeches are being recorded and published and many higher tier local authorities broadcast their meetings, the minutes of parish council meetings are not meant to record verbatim speeches of councillors (see Clayden 2018:66) and very rarely do. Therefore, determining whether a local councillor holds populist views may be difficult to ascertain.

There appears, as yet, to be no literature or research on populism and its effects on local councils, whether in the UK or in Europe.

How to measure populism?

Empirical evidence is needed to verify the presence of populism, it needs to be measured. How populism is measured depends to a large degree on the definition for populism used as a basis for the analysis. Aslanidis (2017:2) summarises the various approaches. Amongst others Mudde, Rooduijn, Pauwels and March have set out to measure populism. What all studies attempting to measure populism have in common is that they analyse text, be it written or spoken. Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011) employ classical content analysis as well as computer-based content analysis. They selected for analysis political party manifestoes over a space of three elections from a wide spectrum of parties from the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands. In the classical content analysis "the manifestos were analysed by extensively trained coders by means of a codebook." (ibid. 2011:1274). Rooduijn and Pauwels base their research on the Mudde definition of populism. Aslanidis (2017) employs clause-based semantic text analysis. All methods look for specific words or phrases in text or transcribed speech. What the various text analysis studies have in common is their finding that the

“usual suspects” i.e. political movements that are commonly understood to be populist, irrespective whether they are associated with left or right wing policies, are consistently scored most populist, though populist elements can be found within all parties.

However, merely looking for the presence of known populist parties in local councils is unlikely to give a clear picture. Many local councils do not have any members who (officially) represent a political party. Furthermore, an increasing majority of seats on local councils are returned uncontested. This means that to become a local councillor, candidates are not required to communicate their political aims to the electorate which leaves no obvious way of assessing whether they may be populists or not.

This literature review has critically analysed current literature on populism. It has established a definition of the term for the purpose of this thesis, clarified what populism is not. It has supported the notion that populism poses a risk to liberal democracy by eroding its institutions and values.. It analysed methods of measuring populism and appraised their suitability in a local council context. This literature review has shown that there is as yet no comprehensive study on populism at a grassroots local council level.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This methodology sets out the rationale for the research strategy and methods chosen, it describes the process of data collection and reflects critically on the process.

This research was conducted during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic.

The restrictions imposed on individuals and organisations to contain

the spread and impact of the disease by limiting interpersonal contact and travel greatly influenced the methods chosen. It may also have resulted in a lower than anticipated response rate when parish council staff and members were perhaps pre-occupied with more vital considerations.

The aim of this research was to review types of populist politics in English and other, particularly European, politics emerging within the past decade¹³ and to review how populism is expressed in English politics by critically reviewing the literature. Despite a thorough search of the academic literature, no articles could be found that investigated populism on a local council level.

Furthermore, it aimed to establish if populism was a cause or contributing factor to (what appears to be) a surge in bullying and aggressive behaviour towards local council representatives. To this end the research conducted needed to establish

- a) If populism is an ideology of influence in local council politics
- b) Whether there has been an increase in bullying and harassment in the past 5 years and
- c) If populism is perceived to be a contributing factor by those who experienced and observed bullying, harassment and aggressive behaviour in local councils.

¹³ It was felt that including the populism in the United States of America would shift the focus too far away from the UK and local government and make this research less relevant to the local council sector in England.

Methods Rationale

Research measuring populism in national or regional political institutions or parties utilise recorded speeches of political actors or written material, usually in the form of party manifestos. Researchers use highly skilled coders or (expensive) specialist software (Rooduijn and Pauwels, 2011:1274) to count carefully coded words or phrases in either written or spoken transcribed language. This standardised approach provides reliable comparable data. For the purposes of this research it must be noted that suitable written sources barely exist at a local council level. Furthermore, the sophisticated software or highly trained coders are not available to this research.

Denscombe (2014:164) advocates

rather than trying to look for a method that is superior to all others in any absolute sense, it is better to look for a method that works best in practice for the specific purposes of the investigation. When it comes to choosing a method, in other words, researchers should base their decision on the criterion of 'usefulness'. Researchers should ask themselves which method is best suited to the task at hand and operate on the premise that, when choosing a method for the collection of data, it is a matter of 'horses for courses'.

In other words, the researcher should find the research methods best suited to the specific research situation.

Strictly limited financial, personnel and time resources meant by a process of elimination that the most suitable research method in this instance was a survey. Denscombe (2014:9) distinguishes between five technologies of distribution: postal, face-to-face, telephone, Internet and social networking sites.

At the time of devising the survey and gaining ethics approval England was in the middle of the Covid-19 epidemic and in “lockdown” making face-to-face data collection at a suitable event, for instance, illegal.

Using the postal service would have had cost implication (Denscombe 2014:33) beyond the research budget.¹⁴ It would also have been a method prone to mistakes (Denscombe 2014:251) when manually inputting large volume of data by hand as well as being very time consuming.

Hence the questionnaire was distributed by email at no additional cost to the researcher or the research subject and accessible at home and or from an office. It also made distribution to council members easier for the officers.

During the Covid-19 pandemic all local councils were faced with an unprecedented volume of information distributed by email. The survey was distributed via the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) county associations (CALC). Not all CALCs forwarded the questionnaire to their member councils (Burnham, 2020). Out of 39 CALCs only 10 confirmed receipt and only seven confirmed forwarding the questionnaire to member councils. This resulted in a high proportion of non-contact non-response bias. However, responses received are broadly representative of the size of councils as a whole (Department for Communities and Local Government 2020:18) with more than 80% of respondents representing councils of 5000 electors or fewer.

¹⁴ With more people working from home during the pandemic, post was frequently redirected, people were reluctant to receive post and go to the post box which would have led to an added complication.

The second part of the research aimed to gather qualitative data answering the question if populism was thought to be a contributing factor to the bullying and harassment in local councils by those who experienced and observed it. Interviewees had to be chosen from those research subjects who had

- a) Agreed to be interviewed and
- b) Had experienced or observed bullying and harassment in local council settings.

Denscombe (2014:185-6) points out that there must be a reason why "interview" would be chosen over "questionnaire", the information collected should justify the use of a more costly and time-consuming method. He continues (ibid. 286)

The "time and effort put into conducting interviews are best rewarded when the research wants to explore complex and subtle phenomena – things such as:

- Opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences" ...

Rather than merely counting instances of aggressive behaviour within local councils, interviews allowed the researcher to explore the emotions and detailed experiences of those affected in detail and ask for their opinions as to the underlying causes.

Research Ethics

Before embarking on any real-life research involving human data subjects, a Preliminary Ethics Review and an Application to Gain Ethics Approval for Research Activities Undergraduate/Postgraduate Taught Students were carried out and approved. Both documents are appended.

Neither email addresses nor names were collected of the respondents, unless they freely agreed to provide these to receive feedback and/or to participate in interviews.

Harris and Nolan (2016:7) stress that “dignity, rights, safety and well-being of participants must be the primary consideration in any research study. Research should be initiated and continued only if the anticipated benefits justify the risks involved.” This research was considered low risk.

Emails, names and addresses provided were processed as personal data under the Data Protection Act 2018 and stored securely. Any quotations from both the questionnaires and the interviews were anonymised so they could not be traced back.

Method description

The research consists of two parts.

1. An online survey collecting qualitative and quantitative data
2. A series of interviews with semi-scripted questions collecting qualitative data.

The online survey was conducted using a paid for online survey platform collecting data from both senior staff and elected members in order to “measure some aspect of a social phenomenon (...)and gather facts” (Denscombe 2014:4).

Only one survey was designed which used skip page logic to separate the answers from the two groups. Whilst questions were similar, there were subtle differences to address the different roles and how they may influence and be influenced by populism.¹⁵

The online survey seeks to gather data on the following research questions as informed by the literature review. Populism in the

¹⁵ Full list of questions available in Appendix 1

context of this survey was defined “as a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic camps, “the pure people” versus “the corrupt elite,” and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people. (Mudde 2017:5-6).

Research Aims and Questions

The questionnaire was designed in such a way that multiple questions would provide answers to the research aims. Table 1 shows the relationship between research aims and research questions.

	Research Aims	Survey questions
a)	Presence of representatives of known populist organisations.	5, 6, 18, 19, 20
b)	Likelihood of ability to know the will of all the electorate (size of community)	4, 17, 24, 27
c)	Claims to represent the electorate as a whole, as a uniform “people”.	7, 8, 9,10, 11, 14, 21, 22, 24, 28, 29
d)	Claims to be representative of the electorate as a whole, as a uniform “people”.	8, 11, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29
e)	Anti-elitism as expressed in the rejection of officer=expert advice	8, 12, 13, 25, 26,
f)	Anti-elitism as expressed in the reliance of information gleaned from social media and local press as opposed to source material and officer reports.	8, 12, 13, 14, 31, 25, 26,
g)	Signs of unprofessional or even violent conduct at meetings.	9, 12, 14, 15, 30
h)	Indication of change in past 5 years.	14, 15, 16, 30, 31, 32, 33
	Enabling questions	1, 2, 3, 34, 35, 36

Table 1 Research Aims

The survey was carefully designed as not to encourage participation bias, particularly by clerks. The terms “bullying” and “harassment” which are widely discussed amongst clerks were avoided at the beginning of the questionnaire for this reason.

Qualitative research questions

The questionnaire encouraged to narrate the respondent’s own experience with populism in local councils. Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011:1283) analysed the use of language in their research to gauge populism and assigned certain words/phrases as indicators of possible populism. This list¹⁶ was used to identify populist language in the long text answers and the interviews.

The freeform answers given in question 35 did not necessarily describe particular examples of populism in local councils. This may indicate that the question was ambiguous in its nature and therefore misinterpreted or that respondents simply wanted to give their views on populism.

Method of distribution

The questionnaire was distributed via NALC county branches. It had been considered to distribute the questionnaire via the SLCC officer’s network, but NALC represents the Councils rather than the officers whilst disseminating information via officers thus both groups could be targeted with one email. The Society of Local Council Clerks in some areas represents less than 50% of all clerks (Langdon, R 2020) whilst NALC (2019) represents 85% of all local councils in England. With an estimated research population size of officers and

¹⁶ Appendix 4

councillors¹⁷ 85,000 the sample 239 completed surveys result in 6.6% margin of error at a 95% confidence level.¹⁸ The relatively low reply rate may have had a number of reasons:

1. The Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on local council meetings and communication¹⁹
2. Covid-19 action prioritised over answering questionnaires
3. The summer breaks
4. The lack of circulation (non-contact bias) by CALCs.

The interviews were held using the internet software ZOOM which allowed the meetings to be recorded with the explicit permission of the subjects. During the Covid-19 pandemic face to face interviews would have been difficult to conduct. However, it also meant that more and more people became regular users of video conferencing platforms which made them more at ease with the technology. They were conducted as one-to-one interviews which had a number of advantages including making it easier to transcribe the interviews, the researcher only had "one person's ideas to grasp and interrogate, and one person to guide through the interview agenda. (Denscombe 2014:187), ten names, six officers and four councillors) were chosen at random²⁰ from those respondents to the questionnaire who had

¹⁷ Assuming an average of 9 councillors for each of the 8658 English councils represented by NALC.

¹⁸ A total of 369 questionnaires were started but only 249 were completed. The subjects typically stopped answering questions once they became a little more detailed.

¹⁹ In private conversations a lot of clerks reported that councillors stopped engaging with their officers at the height of the pandemic.

²⁰ Names drawn from a bowl by a third party.

- a) Agreed to be interviewed and
- b) Had experienced or observed bullying and harassment in local council settings.

One respondent subsequently declined to take part leaving nine interviewees.

The questions asked at interview were semi structured. Johnson (2013:113) identifies the strengths of semi-structured interviews as being personal, (potentially) rich in data, allowing for probing and clarification and the potential to veer off script. Amongst others she lists the limitations as time consuming to conduct and analyse, no counts, potential bias.

The researcher was acutely aware of her potential bias as a professional in the field she was researching and endeavoured to take every precaution to prevent/address such bias.

The interviews were conducted using a video conferencing platform as face to face interviews would have proven difficult under Covid 19 social distancing rules. In contrast to telephone interviews this allowed the interviewer and interviewee to see one another making the interviews more personal and generating trust.

The researcher did not have access to sophisticated and costly qualitative data analysis software as recommended by Denscombe (2014:113 + 280). All coding and analysis was either done by hand or using simple search facility for written text.

The first questions to all interviewees were identical ensuring that ethical procedures would be followed, and consent was obtained recording the interview. The next questions then aimed to clarify and elaborate on the replies in the survey before asking questions to gather information on opinions, feelings and experiences, to hear about complex issues and be party to privileged information utilising

the strengths of the interview method as described by Denscombe (2014:186).

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

This chapter will systematically and critically report on the findings of both the survey and the interviews. It will present the key data gathered and then compare the findings with the hypotheses that an increase in populism has led to an increase in aggressive behaviour in public life at a local council level.

For populism, “as a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic camps, “the pure people” versus “the corrupt elite,” and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people” (Mudde 2017:5-6) to be present the following conditions must be met:

- A world view that separates a community into two groups one being the righteous and pure people and the other the morally corrupt elite.
- Each group is conceived to be homogenous with no possible overlap.
- The democratic “will of the people” is always the view brought forward by the populist actor without empirical evidence.

Survey

The survey was circulated to 39 CALCs in England. It collected 368 replies in two collectors. Out of these 128 replies were rated as

incomplete²¹. Of these 65% were councillors who failed to complete the survey. They commonly failed to answer questions beyond the fourth or fifth question and therefore did not supply sufficient information to allow for cross referencing. Incomplete replies have therefore been disregarded and only completed²² surveys were analysed.

Out of the 239 consistent and complete replies 58% came from officers and 42% from councillors. Despite there being significantly more councillors than officers, a much lower proportion replied and of those a larger proportion failed to complete the survey.

Einarsen et al. (2003:15) define bullying at work thus:

Bullying at work means harassing, offending, socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone's work tasks. In order for the label bullying (or mobbing) to be applied to a particular activity, interaction or process it has to occur repeatedly and regularly (e.g. weekly) and over a period of time (e.g. about six months). Bullying is an escalated process in the course of which the person confronted ends up in an inferior position and becomes the target of systematic negative social acts.

²¹ Four respondents did not consent to their survey data being used for this research and their survey was terminated.

²² It was not necessary to reply to all questions to return a complete questionnaire, as not all questions were compulsory.

Whilst ACAS (2018)²³ defines it as “behaviour from a person or group that's unwanted and makes” the victim “feel uncomfortable, including feeling:

- frightened ('intimidated')
- less respected or put down ('degraded')”
- (...) “made fun of” (...) ('humiliated')” or
- “upset (insulted or 'offended')”

Crucially the ACAS definition does not stipulate that the unwanted behaviour must occur over a period of time to constitute bullying but that it may be a one-off event.

The Equality Act 2010 s26 (1) defines harassment as an act “violating the dignity of person B or “creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment by person A engaging in “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic”. These protected characteristics are listed in as “age; disability; gender reassignment; race; religion or belief; sex (and) sexual orientation”

The survey did not ask participants to gauge whether any “harassment, bullying or intimidation” observed in the past five years against these definitions. Applying a deeper level of assessment was going to be achieved in the interviews.

In their 2011 study Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011:1279) concluded that the “usual suspects were the most populist” but they “also demonstrated that even mainstream parties might sometimes adhere to populist appeals.” Therefore, it was necessary to look for other indicators of populism than mere party politics. Furthermore, political

²³ Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service

parties are not necessarily represented at a local level. Fewer than 25% of the councils represented in this survey had representatives of political parties. In the England "the usual suspects" are UKIP, Brexit Party and BNP. In this survey UKIP was represented on three councils, there were no Brexit Party or BNP representatives. Officers of these three councils reported incidents of harassment and bullying, but none agreed to be interviewed or gave details of the incidents. Thus, no conclusions can be drawn on whether there is a link between the membership of a known populist party and aggressive behaviour towards staff and elected members at local councils.

Populism "is mainly the specific set of ideas that considers society to be separated between two groups: the people versus the elite, and at the same time argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people" (Edwards, B. Kaltwasser, C R (2018)). Therefore, populist councillors would consider themselves representatives of a homogenous "we", irrespective of how realistic this claim is, and they would be less likely to base their decision making on an "elite" or "expert" officer's report, but more likely to base it on personal informal encounters and local (social) media.

Out of those who did not consider themselves to be "broadly representative of the electorate"²⁴ a disproportionately²⁵ high 71% represented communities of 1001-5000 electorate. They were

²⁴ The author acknowledges the fact that no single individual will be totally representative of an electorate.

²⁵ Whole survey 43%

significantly less likely to ask the electorate for its views or to use surveys and slightly less likely to use social media to research local need than those considering themselves representative. This group was statistically just as likely to believe they know what the electorate wants because they are “one of them” as the other group, as shown in Table 2 below. Only 3% of councillors made decisions because they “know what is good for them”.

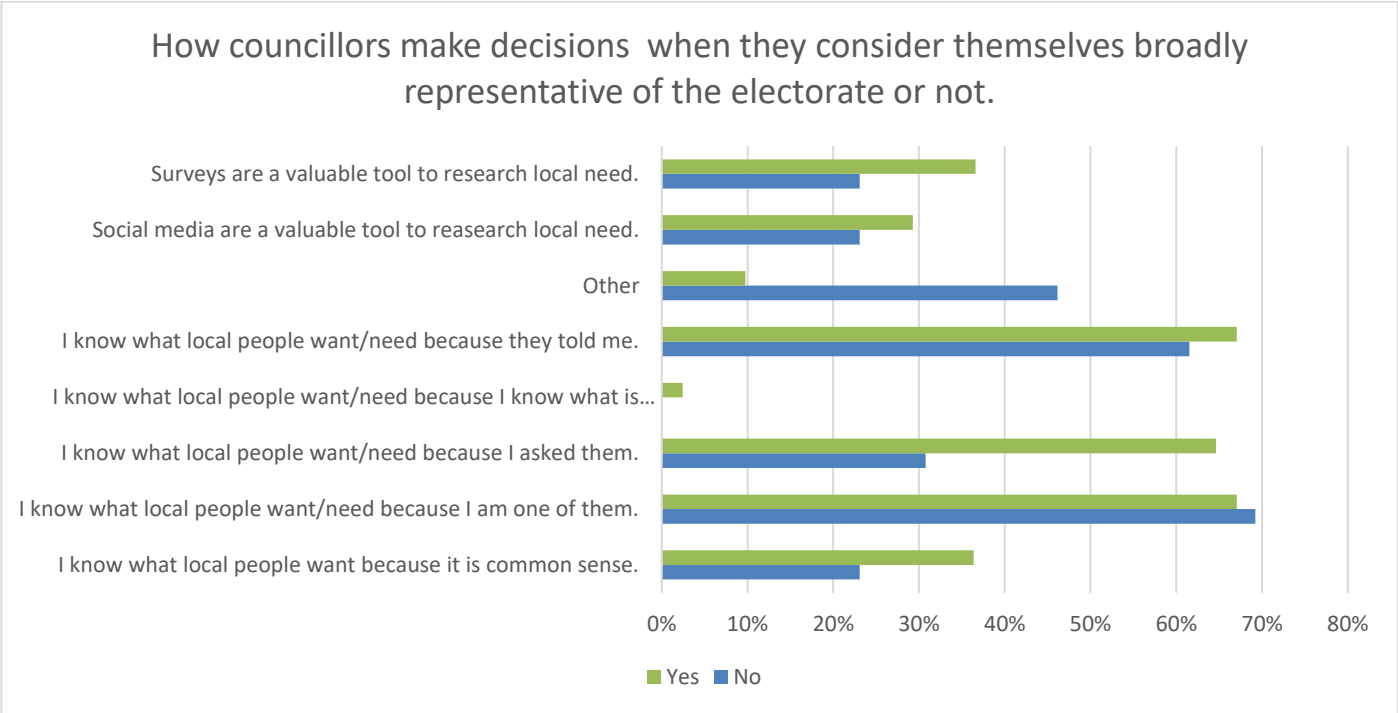


Table 2 Basis of Decision Making

However, closeness to the electorate and perceived knowledge of its needs does not in itself indicate populism as March (2017a:284) points out, but merely demoticism. Being close to the electorate does not ascribe moral corruption to anybody with an opposing view.

Significantly, when it comes to voting on contentious issues the majority in both groups, 60% and 64% respectively, claim to vote

based on their own judgment, those who considered themselves to be representative of the electorate were more than twice as likely, 32% versus 14%, to vote “reflecting what I perceive to be the opinion of the electorate”.

For populism to be present, however, a distinct anti-elitism needs to be present as well as the notion that “the will of the people” is exercised.

As table 2 below shows, councillors and staff agree that officer reports and background papers are the most relied upon basis for decisionmaking. If anti-elitism were prevalent, then the “elitist” experts’ advice in both officers’ reports and background papers would be less significant to the decisionmaking process and social media and press reports, both local and national, would be expected to play a greater role as well as the informal interactions with “real people”. Those councillors who considered themselves less representative of the local electorate tended to take local social media more into account than others.

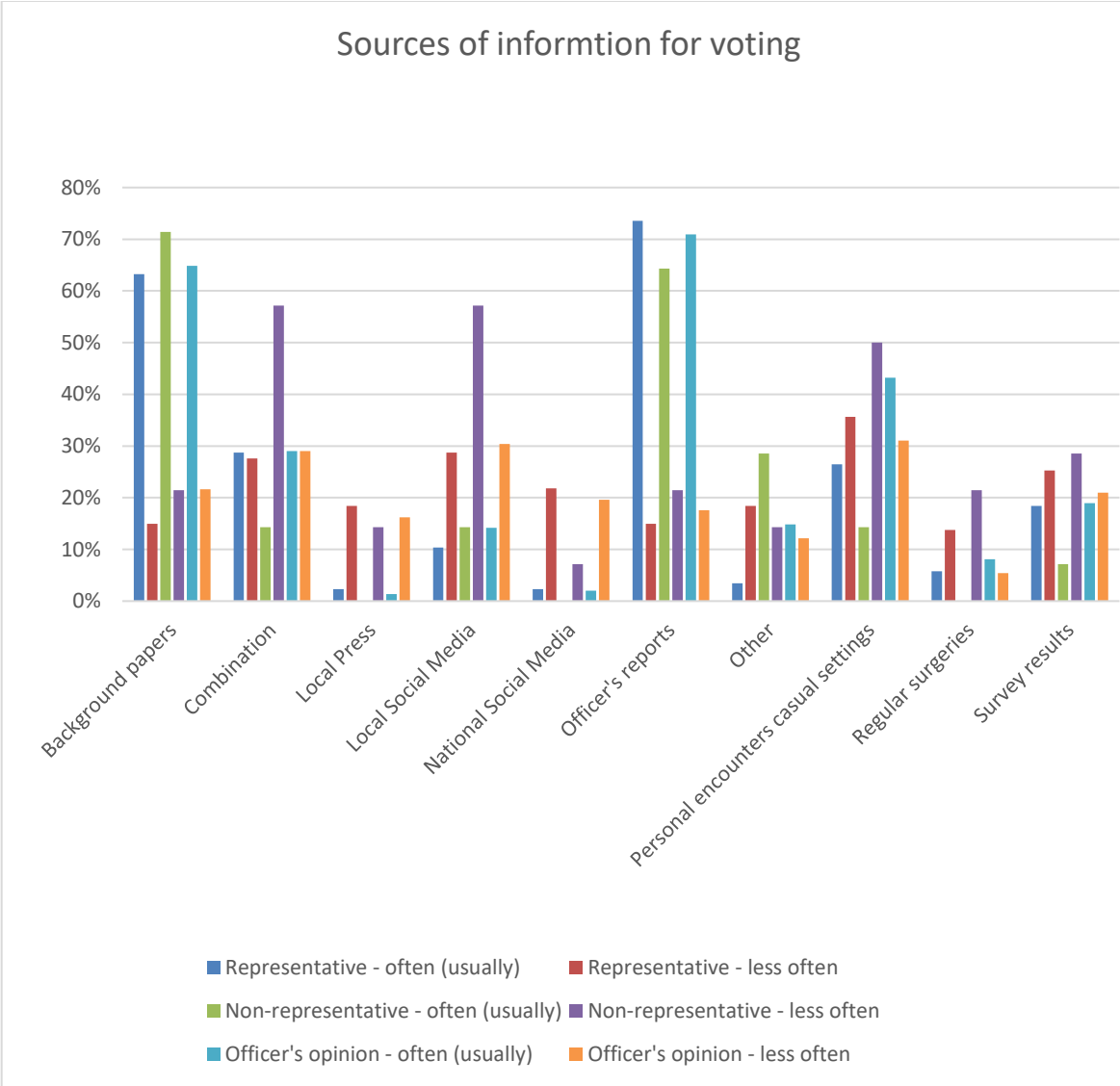


Table 3 Sources of Information for Voting

Staff and councillors were asked whether the political climate had changed over the past five years. This was to capture the much reported “rise in populism” in England since the Conservative Party’s manifesto pledge for a European Referendum in the 2015 election.

More than 40% of all respondents²⁶ had perceived no change in the political climate. In both groups just over 30% perceived an increase in engagement of the electorate in a reasonable fashion whilst respectively 8% and 12% thought the electorate had become more unreasonable. Both groups (11% and 17%) had perceived an increase in aggressive behaviour towards their group whilst less than 3% report a decrease of aggressive behaviour towards either group. Both staff and councillors report resignations due to bullying, harassment and intimidation. Members of the public and (other) members of the council are the most frequently named as sources of this unwanted behaviour.

²⁶ Table 3

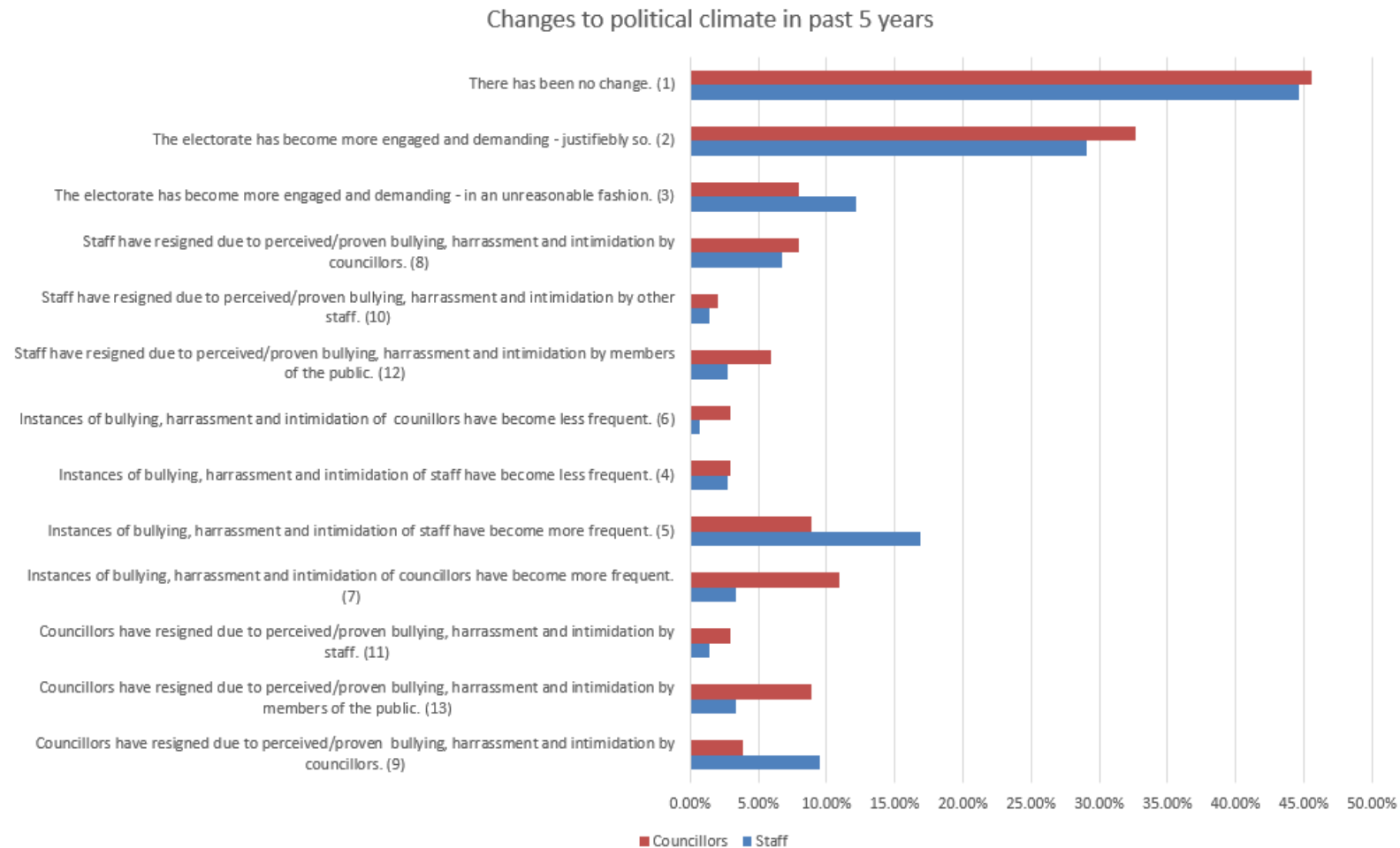


Table 4 Changes in Political Climate

The questionnaire offered the opportunity to narrate the interviewees' experience of populism in local councils. A non-academic definition of populism²⁷ was offered as a guide.

55 individuals completed this part of the questionnaire. Out of these 17 mentioned populis* somewhere in their reply.

Very few of the replies actually described their experience of populism in local councils, however, opting instead for offering their opinions why or why not populism was present or not or appropriate or not on a local level.

One contributor considered themselves a "supporter of populism as opposed to its opposite." With our "evolving Liberal (capital L) Democracy (...) under attack and our hard fought for freedoms are at risk." This person considered populism the saviour of liberal democracy, rather than a threat to is like Mudde, Müller or Mounk. At this local level the terms "populism" and "engagement with the electorate" were used interchangeably. Some individuals considered populism as something that paid attention only to the few and ignored the "silent majority" which is the opposite to the academic understanding of the term. Some contrasted populism, with party politics, implying that populism would be preferable. Other contributors offered their own definition of the term populism and their understanding what it meant for politics as a whole proving they had clearly read about the subject but not were supplying examples of it in their local community.

Out of the 55 replies to this question only two described incidents where a populist approach at a local level had resulted in an officer or member of the council being bullied, harassed or intimidated. One speaks of "Many councillors were very fearful of the attacks on them personally, which can have repercussions in a small town." Sadly,

²⁷ The definition offered was: "A political approach that strives to appeal to ordinary people who feel that their concerns are disregarded by established elite groups."

neither of these individual contributors had agreed to be interviewed. Roodduijn and Pauwels (2011:1283) analysed the use of language in political publication in order to measure populism and assigned certain words/phrases as indicators of possible populism. This list²⁸ was used to identify populist language in the long text answers and the interviews. Out of the sixteen words/phrases Roodduijn and Pauwels had identified as indicators only two were used in the replies.

The phrase “elit*” was used by four respondents. Two declared there was no elitism at their council. One reported that the council was being accused of elitism on social media but that this lacked any basis in fact and the fourth reported about an “established elite group” of “a bunch of stale pale males” who were replaced at election time by a more diverse group of councillors more representative of the general population. None of these answers are in their own right indicators of anti-elitism that in combination with other factors would point towards the presence of populism. The context of the statements identified the reported behaviour as demotism.

The phrase “truth” was used only once by a person describing bullying which consisted of spreading “mis-truths” about a councillor. From the description of the incident there is not enough contextual evidence to ascertain all elements of the populism were present. This person did not agree to be interviewed so no further evidence could be gathered.

The incidents that were described fell into the following categories:

- Aggressive behaviour from members of the public towards councillors
- Aggressive behaviour from members of the public towards council staff.
- Aggressive behaviour from councillors towards other councillors
- Aggressive behaviour from councillors towards council staff.

²⁸ Appendix 4

The questionnaire did not show any evidence of aggressive behaviour from staff towards other staff or councillors.

Interviews

Out of the 78 individuals who had agreed to be interviewed 44 had indicated that they had witnessed aggressive behaviour in the form of bullying, harassment or intimidation towards members of staff or councillors a total of 9 were eventually interviewed.

After the initial questions which concerned ethics and housekeeping the interview focused on the aggressive behaviour that had been experienced. Care was taken in the interviews to look at the language used by the person displaying the aggressive behaviour.

The recordings of the interviews were reviewed for the language used and cross referenced with the directory used by Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011:1274). None of the language indicated that the actors held any populist views. The contextual analysis of the interviews showed that individual councillors and individual members of staff were, in the opinion of the interviewee unjustifiably, accused of elitism, taking sides, bigotry, lying and other wrongdoing. In one the term elite was used in a speculative way to describe a councillor in that councillors believe they are an elite who's knowledge and understanding is superior to the Clerk (understood to be "clerical assistant" or even "secretary").

The incidents that were described fell into the following categories:

- Aggressive behaviour from members of the public towards councillors
- Aggressive behaviour from members of the public towards council staff.
- Aggressive behaviour from councillors towards other councillors
- Aggressive behaviour from councillors towards council staff.
- Aggressive behaviour from a member of staff towards a councillor.

This last incident described in one of the interviews was somewhat unusual as the bullying was directed from a member of staff towards a councillor. In this particular instance the senior member of staff and the chairman bullied a member over health and safety concerns apparently in an attempt to cover up a poor H&S regime.

None of the behaviour described constituted harassment as defined by the Equality Act 2010 as the “unwanted conduct” was not “related to a relevant protected characteristic” (ibid s.26 (1) a). All the behaviour described fulfilled the criteria for bullying as set out by ACAS but not all the behaviour continued for more than six months as required under the criteria defined by Einarsen et al. (2003:15).

None of the interviewees reported a general increase – or decrease – of aggressive behaviour in the past five years that could be traced back to a “change in the political climate as described amongst others by Polke-Majewski (2017) or even a “Populist Zeitgeist” as Mudde (2004).

To summarise, none of the interviews indicated that bullying, harassment or intimidating behaviour was initiated or contributed to by populist actors within the local council or the local community.

Survey and Interviews combined

The findings of the survey are reflected by the findings of the interviews. Asking more probing questions about the observed behaviour did not highlight populism as a possible motive for the unwanted behaviour. Neither the survey nor the interviews highlighted any significance of populism in local council decision making, hence no correlation between populism and aggressive behaviour towards local council actors could be established.

In the in-depth interviews three of the interviewees alleged that those who became victims of unwanted behaviour were targeted because of their sex. It was alleged that the male perpetrators targeted the person because they were female and would not likely have done so had they been male. The interviews therefore not only gave examples

of bullying but also of harassment where a person was targeted because of their protected characteristics.

Where the interviewees had been the ones affected by bullying, harassment and aggressive behaviour they described how it made them feel “churned up inside”, “close to tears”, “having a mental breakdown”, being “signed off sick” and it undermining their reputation affecting their efficiency at work and having an impact on their personal lives. None of the persons interviewed alleged that the unwanted behaviour occurred because of an underlying populist ideology, that had marked out the victim as a member of a “corrupt elite” which ignored the will of “the people”.

Every interviewee spoke about the various roles not being understood. Members of the public and councillors were reported failing to understand the role of the Clerk as the Proper Officer within the institution of the parish council under the law, more akin to the role of the Chief Executive in another organisation than a filing clerk, club secretary or minute taker. In some of the instances described the unwanted behaviour was triggered by a conflict of ideas and values or interpretation of legal and procedural processes.

One interviewee reported that an individual councillor was trying to persuade others to remove the role of the Clerk altogether.

Members of the Council and the public also frequently misunderstood the role of the parish or town councillor believing them to be more powerful than they are in law as an individual.

Chapter 5. Conclusion and recommendations

The aim of this research was to review populist politics in English and other, particularly European, politics emerging within the past decade and to review how populism is expressed in English politics. Using Mudde’s (2017:5-6) definition of populism the survey was designed to identify populism in local councils. Whilst the majority of councillors

considered themselves representative of the community they represent – most live within the council boundaries they represent and are active members of their communities, their closeness to “the people” of their electorate is one defined by place in a very basic sense. Their closeness to the people is not defined by antagonistic moral judgements of others. Their closeness to the people was shown to be empirical rather than an ideological construct.

It aimed to establish if populism was a cause or contributing factor to a surge in bullying, harassment and other aggressive behaviour towards local council representatives and if such behaviour had been linked populist rhetoric. To this end the research conducted needed to establish

- a) If populism was an ideology of influence in local council politics
- b) Whether there had been an increase in bullying, harassment and aggressive behaviour in the past 5 years and
- c) If populism was perceived to be a contributing factor by those affected.

Both councillors and staff reported an increase in bullying and aggressive behaviour within local councils but in the absence of any reliable evidence that populism – rather than demotism- was even present in local councils, populism had to be excluded as a contributing factor to this increase.

Up to a third of those who completed the questionnaire had witnessed or been subject to bullying, harassment and aggressive behaviour at a local council level. Reliable statistics that would allow a direct comparison with other sectors (Office of National Statistics 2020) are not available, but the incidence rate appears unacceptably high. It can but not have a detrimental effect on the successful, efficient and representative running of local councils. With both councillors and staff resigning as a result of aggressive behaviour, this must have an effect in a sector struggling to fill vacancies. It will in time undermine the foundations of the institution of our democracy that are local councils and herewith damage democracy itself.

This research utilised Roodduijn and Pauwels directory for computer-based content analysis to identify traces of populism in the answers given in both the questionnaire and the interviews. It is possible that this may have been too blunt a tool to detect populism, rather than demoticism, in local councils. The language indicating schisms at a local level appears to be more nuanced than the directory allowed to detect.

Within the village or small town setting of a local council what constitutes the "real people" and the "corrupt elite" in a populist world view may be defined in different, more local terms and may even require detailed knowledge of the local geography, and therefore a different vocabulary to a national study.

The research relied on testimony of those who had observed and interpreted certain behaviours. Memory changes over time, and the Covid-19 epidemic may have affected the recollection over time further. If overt behaviour could have been observed first-hand, without the filter of a third party by the researcher, maybe subtle indicators of populism could have been detected that those involved were unable to see whilst in the middle of it. Repeated observations in the same setting could have confirmed that the incident was not just a singular event but part of a possibly populist pattern. Such a long term study, however, would exceed the limited resources available to a single undergraduate student.

Whilst this research has failed to provide evidence that populism exists at local council level and that it has a correlation to the evident bullying, harassment and aggressive behaviour within these settings, this does not mean that populism does not exist in town and parish councils. The tools used to detect and measure populism at a local level may simply have been unsuitable ones.

The undermining of local council officers and attempts to remove their office altogether, could be signs of populism at work on a local scale. It may be the local expression of the erosion of liberal values and institutions observed when populists are in power at a national level.

There is no reason to assume that the people who work and represent in local councils are not representative of the electorate as a whole.

Recommendation

Therefore, in order to establish if populism is a cause or contributing factor to a surge in bullying, harassment and other aggressive behaviour towards local council representatives further research utilising more sophisticated methods will be required. Rather than relying on individuals to recall past incidents alone, a mixed methods approach incorporating continued observations over time, ideally several years, should be employed.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey

Welcome to My Survey

Thank you for participating in my survey. By doing so you help me to gather the necessary data to complete my dissertation. I hope it will also give me new insights into the role populism plays in local councils - if indeed it does play one. Lexico.com defines populism as a political approach that strives to appeal to ordinary people who feel that their concerns are disregarded by established elite groups. I hope you will find this survey easy to complete and that it will make you think. Depending on the answers you are giving you will never be required to answer any more than 20 questions, even if the progress bar may tell you differently. Thank you in advance for giving up your time.

Consent

Dear colleague or councillor,

I am a student in my final year of the Community Governance course at De Montfort University in Leicester. I am also a parish council clerk. For my final year research project I am looking into the impact of populism on local councils. There has been an increase in both right- and left-wing populism on a national level in England. This study is looking to ascertain whether this has been reflected at a local – town and parish – level and if any impact any such changes may have had. For the purposes of this study I am looking at changes over a period of the past 5 years.

The questionnaire below is designed to gauge the impact – if any – of populism on local councils and their relationship with the electorate.

This questionnaire will not collect your email address unless you provide it, so your answers will be anonymous.

The questionnaire on average take no more than 5 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary.

The information you provide is confidential, except that anonymised quotes may be used.

The information gained will only be used for the research and, will not be used for any other purpose.

There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

Thank you for your

cooperation. Belina Boyer

FdA PSLCC

p2541620@my365.dmu.ac.uk

1. I agree with the use of my responses for research purposes as outlined above.

☐

No

☐

Yes

Consent (2)

* 2. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes from my response for research and publication purposes

☐

No

☐

Yes

Officer or councillor?

Some of you may be both councillors and officers - clerks, chief officers, deputies - serving different councils. Or you may be serving several councils in the same role. As you progress through the questions, please answer them only in one role associated to one particular local council.

* 3. What is your current/most recent role?

- ☐ Officer - Clerk, Chief Officer, Deputy
- ☐ Councillor for a local council (parish or town)
- ☐ Former Officer - no longer serving this particular council
- ☐ Former Councillor - no longer serving this particular council

Officers

* 4. What is the approximate size of your community's electorate?

- ☐ 500 or less
- ☐ 501-1000
- ☐ 1001-5000
- ☐ 5001+10,000
- ☐ more than 10,000

* 5. Are any members of your council representatives of political parties?

- ☐ Yes, all of
- ☐ yes, some of
- ☐ None of the councillors represent any particular
- ☐ None of the councillors officially represent any particular party but some are known to be party members.
- ☐ Other (please

6. If you answered "Yes" above, which political parties are represented?

- ☐ Conservative (including local conservatives as in Conservatives
- ☐ Labour ((including local Labour as in Labour for.. and Co-
- ☐ Liberal Democrats (including local liberals as in Liberal Democrats
- ☐ The Green
- ☐
- ☐ Brexit
- ☐ Independent (not organised in a
- ☐ Independent (organised in a group such as Independents
- ☐ Other (please

7. On major and/or contentious issues Councillors usually vote

- ☐ along political party
- ☐ reflecting what they perceive to be the opinion of the
- ☐ according to their personal
- ☐ Other (please

* 8. How often do councillors make their decisions based on

	Often (Usually)	Less Often	Infrequently	Hardly ever
Officer's reports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Background papers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regular surgeries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Survey results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local press reports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal encounters casual settings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social media posts from residents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National social media or press	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A combination of the above	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

* 9. Please tick all that apply: Council decisions are usually made

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> unanim | <input type="checkbox"/> without a predictable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> with a clear | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> with the casting vote of the | |

Other (please

10. Please tick all that apply: The council is broadly representative of the electorate's

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Socio-economic | <input type="checkbox"/> Et |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Averag | <input type="checkbox"/> Edu |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please | |

* 11. Please tick all that apply: For the council to better reflect the electorate, it will need to have more members

- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> who are 50 or |
| <input type="checkbox"/> who are |
| <input type="checkbox"/> who's family income is above |
| <input type="checkbox"/> who hold educational and vocational qualifications above level 2 (GCSE equivalent) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> are from the majority ethnic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please |

* 12. Council debates most often are

- | |
|---|
| <input type="radio"/> harmo |
| <input type="radio"/> characterised by lively but factual |
| <input type="radio"/> ignore the views of the |
| <input type="radio"/> get personal and |
| <input type="radio"/> Other (please |

* 13. Which of these statements, if any, do you consider to be true?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Councillors generally value my expertise. | <input type="radio"/> Some councillors appear to believe I favour "the other side". |
| <input type="radio"/> Some councillors appear to find my expertise suspect. | <input type="radio"/> Some councillors accuse me of elitism. |

☐ Councillors generally believe I am impartial and balanced in my approach.

14. In the last five years the council meetings have become more

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> harmo | <input type="radio"/> In tune with the views of the |
| <input type="radio"/> full of lively but factual | <input type="radio"/> personal and |
| <input type="radio"/> ignorant of the views of the | <input type="radio"/> |

Other (please

* 15. In the past five years have you or a leading member of staff been subjected to harassment , bullying or intimidation from

- ☐ othe
- ☐ a member of the
- ☐ a member of the
- ☐ an anonymous member of the
- ☐ none of the
- ☐
- ☐ Other (please

* 16. In your opinion, has the local political climate changed?

- ☐ There has been no change.
- ☐ The electorate has become more engaged and demanding - justifiably so.
- ☐ The electorate has become more engaged and demanding - in an unreasonable fashion.
- ☐ Instances of bullying, harassment and intimidation of staff have become less frequent.
- ☐ Instances of bullying, harassment and intimidation of staff have become more frequent.
- ☐ Instances of bullying, harassment and intimidation of councillors have become less frequent.
- ☐ Instances of bullying, harassment and intimidation of councillors have become more frequent.
- ☐ Staff have resigned due to perceived/proven bullying, harassment and intimidation by councillors.
- ☐ Councillors have resigned due to perceived/proven bullying, harassment and intimidation by councillors.
- ☐ Staff have resigned due to perceived/proven bullying, harassment and intimidation by other staff.
- ☐ Councillors have resigned due to perceived/proven bullying, harassment and intimidation by staff.
- ☐ Staff have resigned due to perceived/proven bullying, harassment and intimidation by members of the public.
- ☐

Councillors have resigned due to perceived/proven bullying, harassment and intimidation by members of the public.

6. Councillors

* 17. What is the approximate size of your community's electorate?

- ☐ 500 or less
- ☐ 501-1000
- ☐ 1001-5000 ☐
- 5001+10,000 ☐
- more than 10,000

* 18. Are any members of your council representatives of political parties?

- ☐ Yes, all of
- ☐ yes, some of
- ☐ None of the councillors represent any particular
- ☐ None of the councillors officially represent any particular party but some are known to be party members.
- ☐ Other (please

19. If you answered "Yes" above, which political parties are represented?

- ☐ Conservative (including local conservatives as in Conservatives
- ☐ Labour ((including local Labour as in Labour for.. and Co-
- ☐ Liberal Democrats (including local liberals as in Liberal Democrats
- ☐ The Green
- ☐
- ☐ Brexit
- ☐ Independent (not organised in a
- ☐ Independent (organised in a group such as Independents
- ☐ Other (please

20. If you answered "Yes" above, which political party do you represent?

- ☐ Conservative (including local conservatives as in Conservatives
- ☐ Labour ((including local Labour as in Labour for.. and Co-
- ☐ Liberal Democrats (including local liberals as in Liberal Democrats
- ☐ The Green
- ☐
- ☐ Brexit
- ☐ Independent (not organised in a
- ☐ Independent (organised in a group such as Independents
- ☐ None of the
- ☐ Other (please

* 21. On major and/or contentious issues Councillors usually vote

- ☐ along political party
- ☐ reflecting what they perceive to be the opinion of the
- ☐ according to their personal
- ☐ Other (please

* 22. On major and/or contentious issues I personally usually vote

- ☐ along political party
- ☐ reflecting what I perceive to be the opinion of the
- ☐ according to my personal
- ☐ to support a particular
- ☐ to vote against a particular person because I do not agree with their views in general.
- ☐ Other (please

* 23. How often do councillors make their decisions based on

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> unanim | <input type="checkbox"/> without a predictable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> with a clear | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> with the casting vote of the | |

Other (please

	Often (Usually)	Less Often	Infrequently	Hardly ever
Officer's reports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Background papers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regular surgeries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Survey results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local press reports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal encounters casual settings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social media posts from residents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National social media or press	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A combination of the above	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 24. Please tick all that apply: The council is broadly representative of the electorate's

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Socio-economic | <input type="checkbox"/> Et |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Averag | <input type="checkbox"/> Edu |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please | |

* 25. Please tick all that apply: Council decisions are usually made

26. Please tick all that apply. How do you decide how to vote?

- ☐ I know what local people want/need because they told
- ☐ I know what local people want/need because I am one of
- ☐ I know what local people want/need because I asked
- ☐ I know what local people want because it is common
- ☐ Social media are a valuable tool to research local
- ☐ Surveys are a valuable tool to research local
- ☐ I know what local people want/need because i know what is good for them.
- ☐

Other (please

* 27. I am broadly representative of my electorate

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

* 28. I am in office because I have been

☐ elected by a wide margin. ☐

elected by a narrow margin.

☐ elected unopposed.

☐ co-opted. ☐

other

- ☐ who are 50 or
- ☐ who are
- ☐ who's family income is above
- ☐ who hold educational and vocational qualifications above level 2 (GCSE equivalent)
- ☐ are from the majority ethnic
- ☐

Other (please

* 29. Please tick all that apply: For the council to better reflect the electorate, it will need to have more members

30. Council debates most often are

- ☐ harmo
- ☐ characterised by lively but factual
- ☐ ignore the views of the
- ☐ get personal and
- ☐ Other (please

* 31. In the last five years the council meetings have become more

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> harmo | <input type="radio"/> personal and |
| <input type="radio"/> full of lively but factual | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> ignorant of the views of the | |

Other (please

* 32. In the past five years have you or another councillor been subjected to harassment, bullying or intimidation from

- ☐
- ☐ a member of the
- ☐ a member of the
- ☐ an anonymous member of the
- ☐ none of the
- ☐ Other (please

33. In your opinion, has the local political climate changed?

- ☐ There has been no change.
- ☐ The electorate has become more engaged and demanding - justifiably so.
- ☐ The electorate has become more engaged and demanding - in an unreasonable fashion.
- ☐ Instances of bullying, harrassment and intimidation of staff have become less frequent.
- ☐ Instances of bullying, harrassment and intimidation of staff have become more frequent.
- ☐ Instances of bullying, harrassment and intimidation of counillors have become less frequent.
- ☐ Instances of bullying, harrassment and intimidation of councillors have become more frequent.
- ☐ Staff have resigned due to perceived/proven bullying, harrassment and intimidation by councillors.
- ☐ Councillors have resigned due to perceived/proven bullying, harrassment and intimidation by councillors.
- ☐ Staff have resigned due to perceived/proven bullying, harrassment and intimidation by other staff.
- ☐ Councillors have resigned due to perceived/proven bullying, harrassment and intimidation by staff.
- ☐ Staff have resigned due to perceived/proven bullying, harrassment and intimidation by members of the public.
- ☐ Councillors have resigned due to perceived/proven bullying, harrassment and intimidation by members of the public.

Further questions - nearly there

Would you like to participate in further research? Some further research will be conducted with willing volunteers. Interview will be conducted either by phone or some form of video call.

34. I am willing to be contacted to answer a few more in-depth questions about in relation to the answers given above. I understand that any of my statements or quotes will only be published in an anonymous way. My personal details will not be shared with third parties. Any interview will either be by phone or an agreed type of video call at an agreed time.

Name

Council

Country

Email Address

Phone Number

35. Populism in local councils - my story

Here is your opportunity to describe your experience of populism in local councils.

Lexico.com defines populism thus: " A political approach that strives to appeal to ordinary people who feel that their concerns are disregarded by established elite groups."

36. Finally - yes really. Please enter your email address below if you would like a copy of the final survey.

Thank you.

Thank you for your patience answering my questions. Without your help I am unable to conduct the research that is a requirement for my degree. I hope you found the survey interesting, writing the questions certainly made me think.

Best wishes

Belina Boyer

Disqualifying Page

Thank you for starting this survey. Unfortunatley, without your explicit consent, I will not be able to use your data in my research. You are therefore not required to progress any further.

Appendix 2: Research Participant Information Sheet

Research Participant Information Sheet

Title of Project: Populism- the road to regeneration or destruction of local English politics

Name of Researcher: Belina Boyer

Invitation paragraph

You have been invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with friends and relatives if you wish to. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part or not. Thank you for reading this.

What is the research about?

This research asks whether there is a link between populist politics and aggressive and bullying behaviour towards local council representatives.

It aims to:

To review types of populist politics in English (but also German and Spanish politics) emerging within the past decade

To review how populism is expressed in English politics

To research if populism is a cause /contributing factor to (what appears to be) a surge in bullying and aggressive behaviour towards local council representatives.

This research is part of a dissertation to be submitted in partial completion of a Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Community Governance awarded by De Montford University.

What does the study / participation involve?

Participants may be asked to take part in one of the following:

BAL FREC: Preliminary Ethics Review Form (UG/PG and PGR Students)

July 2019

- a) Reply to an online survey
- b) Participate in an interview conducted via telephone or a video conferencing platform

Participation will be on a voluntary basis. Participants may withdraw at any time.

Who is doing the research?

Belina Boyer

Community Governance Student

De Montfort University.

If you have any concerns about this research, for any reason and at any time, you may contact my supervisor Johnathan Bourne. His contact details are provided at the end of this information sheet.

Who is funding the research?

This research is funded by the researcher and no external funding has been received.

Why have I been chosen?

- You have been asked to participate in this study because you are or have until recently been a representative of a local council, either as an officer or as a member.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

I am interested in taking part, what do I do next?

Belina Boyer

07772973411

BAL FREC: Preliminary Ethics Review Form (UG/PG and PGR Students)

July 2019

What if I agree to take part and then change my mind?

You can withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason.

Data provided cannot be withdrawn but will remain anonymous

What happens to the information I provide?

- a) The research data will be used to create a report to form part of a dissertation as part of a degree in Community Governance.
- b) Any data will be kept on dual layer password protected cloud storage and accessed via a password protected computer.
- c) Any quotations will be anonymised.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept on a password protected database and is strictly confidential. You will be given an ID code which will be used instead of your name. Any identifiable information you may give will be removed and anonymized.

Raw data is kept for 5 years after a study has been completed and then destroyed.

The study supervisor will also have access to the data

Members of the faculty human research ethics committee may require access to check that the study has been conducted in accordance with the approval.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

Results this research study will be used to create a report. Participants can receive a copy of the report on request.

What if something goes wrong?

If you are harmed by taking part in this research project, there are no special compensation arrangements. If you are harmed due to someone's negligence, then you may have grounds for a legal action, but you may have to pay for it. Regardless of this, if you wish to complain, or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, the normal University complaints mechanisms should be available to you.

Who can I complain to?

If you have a complaint regarding anything to do with this study, you can initially approach the lead investigator. If this achieves no satisfactory outcome, you should then contact the Administrator for the Faculty Research Ethics Committee, Research & Innovation Office, Faculty of Business and Law, De Montfort University, The Gateway, Leicester, LE1 9BH or BALResearchEthics@dmu.ac.uk.

You can also complain to the research supervisor:

Johnathan Bourne

johnathan.bourne@slcc.co.uk

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is funded by the researcher who is also organising, and no external funding has been received.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and approved by the SLCC's CG Teaching Team.

Contact for Further Information

Belina Boyer

P2541620@my365.dmu.ac.uk

Thank you for taking part in this study.

27/05/2020

Appendix 3: Semi-Scripted Interview questions

Semi Scripted Interview Questions

- Can you please confirm that you received the Research Participant Information Sheet? It was sent with the email inviting you for an interview.
- Do you still agree to participate in the interview?
- Do you agree to this interview being recorded on ZOOM. The recording will not be shared unless asked by the University to provide evidence of the interviews taking place.
- Questions to clarify answers given in the survey.
- In the survey you stated that you had observed (an) incidence(s) of bullying, harassment or intimidating behaviour. Can you please describe what happened?
- Can you recall the sort of language that was used? Where there any particular words that you noted?
- If personally affected: How did that make you feel?
- How did that make the other person feel?
- What action did the Council take – if any?
- Ask about impact on council.
-

Any other observations

Look out for the following terms:

CORE

elit*

consensus*

referend*

corrupt*

propagand*

politici*

deceit

BAL FREC: Preliminary Ethics Review Form (UG/PG and PGR Students)

July 2019

deceive

betray*

shame*

scandal*

truth*

CONTEXT

dishonest*

ruling*

Appendix 4: Roodduijn and Pauwels list of Dictionary for computer-based content analysis

Roodduijn and Pauwels (2011:1283) list of Dictionary for computer-based content analysis

CORE

elit*

consensus*

referend*

corrupt*

propagand*

politici*

deceit

deceive

betray*

shame*

scandal*

truth*

CONTEXT

dishonest*

ruling*

Appendix 5: Preliminary Ethics Review

Preliminary Ethics Review for Taught Students (undergraduate/Postgraduate/PGRs)

NOTE: To be completed before collecting any data.

Applicant Name:	Belina Boyer	Supervisor Name:	Johnathan Bourne		
Email Address:	belinaboyer@outlook.com	Start Date:	01/06/2020	End Date:	30/09/2020
Course and Module Title:	Community Governance Research Project SLCC3004				
Project Title:	Populism- the road to regeneration or destruction of local English politics				

Ethical Considerations	Y E S	N O
Will your research involve interviewing or surveying individuals, groups or organisations?	Y e s	
Will your research involve the administration of a questionnaire?	Y e s	
Will your research involve the observation of human behaviour?		N o
Will your research involve the gathering of information about human beings (and organisations) through interfering in normal physiological and/or psychological processes?		N o
Will your research involve researching <u>and</u> identifying specific illegal activities <i>that are previously unknown to the authorities</i> (such as the police)?		N o
Will your research involve visiting pornographic websites or ones that might be associated with radicalisation or terrorist/extremist organisations or groups		N o
Will your research involve re-use of primary data originally related to any of the research activities mentioned above?		N o

If you answered **NO** to **ALL** questions, ethical approval is not required. Please now sign this form and pass to your supervisor **with your research proposal- then once signed proceed to NEXT STEPS below** (if you have ticked 'yes' to one or more question also see NEXT STEPS below)

~~I declare that I have answered 'NO' to all above questions. As such, the research that I will undertake does not require ethical approval.~~

I understand that should my project brief change in such a way that I would answer 'YES' to any of the above questions, then I must seek ethical approval before undertaking any data collection.			
Signature of Applicant:	Belina Boyer	Date:	17/05/2020
I declare that the research student named above will be working under my supervision and that the work that he or she will undertake does not require ethical approval.			
Signature of Supervisor (If known, otherwise Module/Programme Leader):		Date:	

NEXT STEPS!

FOR PHD STUDENTS! If you answered **No** to **all** the questions above please now send the signed form to BALResearchEthics@dmu.ac.uk However, if you answered **YES** to one or more questions, you must now submit an application for ethical approval to The Faculty Research Ethics Committee **via your Supervisor or Programme Leader**. Please refer to <http://dmu.ac.uk/research/ethics-and-governance/faculty-specific-procedures/business-and-law-ethics-procedures.aspx>

FOR POSTGRAD TAUGHT (MASTERS) AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS! If you have answered **No** to all the questions please ask your supervisor where the forms are to be stored (e.g. Blackboard). However, if you have answered **YES** to one or more questions above, an ethical application is required. Please refer to <http://dmu.ac.uk/research/ethics-and-governance/faculty-specific-procedures/business-and-law-ethics-procedures.aspx>

Appendix 6: Application to Gain Ethics Approval for Research Activities Undergraduate/Postgraduate Taught Students



Faculty of Business and Law

Application to Gain Ethics Approval for Research Activities

Students should complete this form in consultation with their supervisors.

Form to be completed electronically only and uploaded to the module on Blackboard in line with module leader's advice (manually completed forms not accepted). Please **submit through Turnitin (Note for Supervisors: when providing a location for submission on Blackboard it is suggested to a) turn off originality setting; b) not request generation of similarity reports; c) ask for no submission to any other repository)**

Please also see footnotes on Page 12

SECTION 1. Applicant
Please complete all sections
Last Name: Boyer
First Name: Belina
Student number: p2541620
DMU Email address: p2541620@my365.dmu.ac.uk

Programme of Study (Course title) Community Governance
Module (name): Community Governance Research Project Module (code): SLCC 3004
Supervisor's Name: Johnathan Bourne
Co-Applicants Name(s) if applicable: N/A

SECTION 2. The Research	
2a Title:	Populism- the road to regeneration or destruction of local English politics
2b Start Date:	ASAP
2c End Date:	30/09/2020
2d Research Question(s) or aim(s)	To identify whether or not populism plays a significant role in local council politics and whether or not it poses a threat to local democracy.

2e

Please provide a description (in your own words) of your research and the methods you will use to gather data – (please note if you are employing more than one method of data collection you need only complete one ethics application form but ensure here you provide full details of both proposed methods)

IMPORTANT: Please include the following details in your description of what you are planning to do

The questionnaire will be sent to council Associations of NALC and Branch Secretaries of SLCC in England

It will only be circulated amongst current and previous local council members and clerks.

Data will be collected by an electronic survey accessed via an email link distributed by a trusted source (see above) on a known survey platform.

The survey will collect quantitative as well as qualitative data which will not allow the individual to be identified (unless they chose to be identified for further interviews).

The data collated will only be shared in anonymised format in the research report. All quotes will be anonymous.

At the age of 50+ I am a responsible adult. I will be liaising with other professional officers and members who I would be liaising with on many other occasions in my professional life. I will not be meeting face to face with any of the contributors as under current legislation and social distancing rules this would not be permissible. I do not anticipate any particular risks for the health and well-being to either myself or the other officers to result from this.

Individuals will be given the choice to participate in socially distanced interviews – using one online platform as preferred by the interviewee or alternatively by phone. If the interviewee feels more confident in “old technology”, telephone interviews will be considered. Face-to-face interviews, even with social distancing and after travel restrictions may have been lifted are not anticipated.

The project is not funded by a third party. All costs will be carried by the researcher and are anticipated to stay below £100 for both survey and interviews..

Data will only be collected within the UK. No email addresses, names, places of work or similar personal identifiers will not be collected unless volunteered for further interviews.

Volunteers for further interviews will be chosen at random with interviews semi scripted. The script will be developed following the analysis of the survey data.

SECTION 3. Conflict of Interest

	Yes	No
3a Do you have any connection with the external organisation(s) being researched? Such as through personal, financial or family connections If 'Yes' please give details If you are employed by the external organisation please advise if you will receive any financial or in-kind benefits or		no

<p>payments for undertaking the research from the organisation</p>		
<p>SECTION 4. Research Ethics and the Protection of Participants' Interests <i>NB. Participants should suffer no harm as a result of participation in the research</i></p>		
<p>4.1 Please provide details here as to whether participation by those in your sample will be Participation will be entirely voluntary and based on informed consent</p> <p>4.2 Please also provide details as to <i>how</i> your participants' identities will be protected with regard to The survey will not be collecting personal data as defined by the Data Protection Act 2018 (unless volunteered for further interview) Clerks and councillors will be replying to the questionnaires in their professional/elected member capacity. In that capacity some of their personal data will already be in the public domain. The research report will not contain any personal data nor will any personal data collected be shared with third parties. They are not anticipated to divulge any personal data which would not already be in the public domain due to their office. The researcher will not have access to personal or professional email addresses unless given voluntarily. Data will be difficult if not impossible to trace back to the originator. It is not anticipated that the questions asked could cause any type of harm to the individuals being surveyed. However, should the interviewees display any signs of personal trauma, the interviewer will be able to signpost suitable counselling services. Any data will be kept on dual layer password protected cloud storage and accessed via a password protected computer.</p> <p>4.3 What steps you will undertake to avoid/minimise emotional harm or upset to those taking part</p>		

The survey does not ask deeply emotional or value related questions. No such harm is anticipated.

It is not anticipated that any significant emotional harm or upset will be caused by the interview though speaking about past events can have cathartic properties.

Populist parties and their actors are currently not considered to be of an extremist nature in the UK.

SECTION 5. Sensitive Research

If your research topic is concerned with the following 'sensitive research' areas: illegal activities, including the collection of source data, e.g. access to web sites normally prohibited on university servers, or extremism and radicalisation please complete the questions below. (For more information see <http://www.dmu.ac.uk/research/ethics-and-governance/sensitive-research.aspx>)

	Yes	No

<p>5a Does the intended research include research into illegal activitiesⁱ that are previously unknown to the law enforcement agencies? (This may include, but is not limited to, research into hate crimeⁱⁱ, theft, fraud, or harmful and illegal cultural practicesⁱⁱⁱ,</p> <p><i>Please note: the university does not permit any crime to be committed for research purposes, such as accessing images of paedophilia or child abuse, unless special permission has been granted by the Home Office.</i></p>	5a	No
<p>5b Does the research involve deception? Are the participants fully informed of the nature of the research? If not, why not?</p>	5b	No
<p>5c Will the research require the use of sites usually prohibited on university computers (e.g. pornography or the sites of these prohibited organisations)?^{iv}</p>	5c	No
<p>Does the intended research fit into any of the following categories? If you are unsure as to whether your research will involve any of these categories in 5d to 5h you are advised to answer 'Yes'</p> <p>5d Terrorism, extremism, terrorist or extremist organisations or groups, extremist ideologies, radicalisation^v, de-radicalisation^{vi}</p> <p>5e Has the research been Commissioned by the military or GCHQ</p> <p>5f Has the research been Commissioned under an EU / US security call or similar</p> <p>5g Does the research involve the viewing, usage or transfer of sensitive personal data as defined by relevant Data Protection Regulations</p>	Yes	No
	5d	No
	5e	No
	5f	No
	5g	No
	5h	No

5h Does the research involve the acquisition of security clearances (including the Official Secrets Act)		
SECTION 6. Accessing Websites		
	Yes	No
<p>6a Will your research involve visits to websites that might be associated with radicalisation or terrorist/extremist organisations or groups?</p> <p><i>If you answer 'Yes' to Q6a you are advised that such sites may be subject to surveillance by the police and accessing those sites might lead to police enquiries. It is strongly recommended that you use your university network address, once you have received ethical approval, which will ensure these activities are flagged as a legitimate part of your research. Whilst acquiring ethical approval for this project and adhering to University guidance on accessing websites and storing related materials securely will allow the University to verify the legitimacy of you accessing these websites, it cannot guarantee legal protection.</i></p> <p>6b</p> <p>Please acknowledge that you understand this risk by putting an 'X' in the 'I Agree' box.</p> <div> <div>I A g r e e</div> <div></div> </div>		No
SECTION 7. Storage and Transmission of Research Materials		

	Yes	No
<p>7.1 Does your research involve the downloading and storage on a computer of any materials relating to extremism or radicalisation (for example, records, statements or other documents)?</p> <p><i>If you answered 'Yes' to Q7.1, you should request a secure file share from ITMS to be created for your project, with access restricted to you, or if absolutely necessary, any internal co-investigator(s). The research materials should not be kept on a personal computer, and all online research in this area should be done on university servers^{vii}. Physical data should be scanned and uploaded to the password-protected server; where this is not possible, it should be kept in a locked filing cabinet or similar on university premises.</i></p> <p><i>You will need to agree to store all materials relevant to Section 7.1, as well as any other materials related to your research project in accordance with this advice in order to gain ethical approval.</i></p> <p>Please confirm you will store <i>all</i> research documents in accordance with this advice by putting an 'X' in the 'I Agree' box.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> I Agree <input type="checkbox"/> </p>		No
<p>7.2 Might your research involve the electronic transmission of such materials to project Co-Investigators? Yes/No</p> <p>NO</p> <p>Note: The Terrorism Act (2006) and the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015) outlaw the dissemination of terrorist publications if the individual concerned has the intention to encourage or induce others. Publications disseminated for the purposes of an approved and clearly defined research project should not amount to an offence, because the requisite intention is unlikely to be present. However, you are advised to exercise caution and avoid dissemination of raw research materials where possible. You will need to agree to only transmit these materials to Co-Investigators after they have been password-protected and that you will only use 'Zend^{viii}', which encrypts materials in transmission.</p>		

Please confirm you understand the risks in disseminating publications and that you will only transmit these materials to collaborators after they have been password-protected and via '[Zend](#)'. (see footnote at end of form)

**I
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ee**

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Section 8. Additional Questions

	Yes	No
8.1 Are you specifically recruiting (as participants) pregnant women		no
8.2 Will persons from any of the following groups be participating in the study		
8.3 Adults without capacity to consent		no
8.4 Those with learning disabilities		• no
8.5 Prisoners		• no
8.6 Adults at risk If yes please give details of a) the protection procedures you propose to adopt should there be any evidence of or suspicion of harm (physical, emotional or sexual) to adults at risk. Include a referral protocol, identifying what to do and who should be contacted. b) of how you propose to ensure the well-being of adults at risk, particularly with respect to ensuring that they do not feel pressured to take part in the research and that they are free to withdraw from the study without any prejudice to themselves at anytime. You should indicate how you intend to ascertain that person's views and wishes.		• no
8.7 Young offenders (16-21 years)		no

8.8 Those who would be considered to have a particular dependent relationship with the researcher (e.g. those in care homes, students, employees, colleagues)		no
8.9 Will you be recruiting (as participants) or have direct contact with any children under the age of 18? If yes, a) please give details of the child protection procedures you propose to adopt should there be any evidence of or suspicion of harm (physical, emotional or sexual) to a child/young person. Include a referral protocol identifying what to do and who should be contacted. b) Please give details of how you propose to ensure the well-being of the child/young person, particularly with respect to ensuring that they do not feel pressured to take part in the research and that they are free to withdraw from the study without any prejudice to themselves at any time		no
If you have answered yes to ANY question in Section 8 please give details a) of any staff or students who will have contact with adults at risk and/or will have contact with young people (under the age of 18) b) of current Disclosure and Barring check for you (and also for those staff or students named above at a)		

•

SECTION 9. Codes of Ethics

Which Code of Research Ethics will be adhered to during the course of your research?

Examples of Codes can be found at <http://www.dmu.ac.uk/research/ethics-and-governance/faculty-specific-procedures/business-and-law-ethics-procedures.aspx>

Name: Code of Conduct October
2019

Web address:
<https://www.mrs.org.uk/pdf/MRS-Code-of-Conduct-2019.pdf>

SECTION 10. Supporting Documents

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (all documents should have a version number and date)

Compulsory

PLEASE TICK AGAINST EACH ONE THAT YOU ARE SUBMITTING WITH THE APPLICATION FORM

Appendix A (for all applicants)

☒ Research proposal (may help the supervisor understand your ethics application)

For those whose research involves human participants (Appendices B, C and D required)

Appendix B

☒ Data Collection tools (e.g draft interview schedule, survey questionnaire)

Appendix C

☒ Participant information sheet (see submission guidelines for example)

Appendix D



Consent form (see submission guidelines for example)

IMPORTANT!!!!

**PLEASE MERGE ALL OF THE ABOVE FORMS
WITH THIS ETHICS APPLICATION FORM SO
THAT YOU ARE SUBMITTING A SINGLE
DOCUMENT TO BLACKBOARD (ATTACH THESE
FORMS TO THE BACK OF THIS ETHICS
APPLICATION FORM)**

SECTION 11. Declaration and Signatures

I confirm that I have read the **Responsibilities of the Researcher** guidelines at <http://www.dmu.ac.uk/research/ethics-and-governance/responsibilities-of-the-researcher.aspx> and I will comply with them.

I have considered my own personal safety and if/when my ethics application is authorised a separate Risk Assessment will / will not be completed (please delete as appropriate). See Section 13

11a Signature of Applicant	Belina Boyer	Date: 17/05/20 20
11b Signature of workplace supervisor (if applicable)	*Support/ non-support (please give reasons for non-support) Johnathan Bourne	Date: 26/05/20 20

Please upload to the relevant module on Blackboard.

MODULE LEADER ONLY:

(Note for Supervisors: when providing a location for submission on Blackboard it is suggested to (a) turn off originality setting; (b) not request generation of similarity reports; and (c) to ask for no submission to any other repository). You might also wish to create your own rubric and grading to reflect both risk level and application outcome

Supervisor and Module Leader to each review ethics application (unless the Supervisor and Module Leader is one and the same person- in which case the Supervisor and the Programme Leader should review the application. However, if the

Supervisor, the Module Leader, and the Programme Leader are all one and the same person, then the Supervisor needs to find an academic colleague to also review the form).

Once each has reviewed the application, please sign Section 11e and scan the form and upload to Blackboard (or if preferred use a digital signature and upload to Blackboard).

Note: if the other Reviewer does not have access to that particular module on Blackboard, the application form once authorised etc (and signed) should be forwarded to the supervisor by email for them to upload on Blackboard.

In medium and high risk case please send email to Dave Walsh (dave.walsh@dmu.ac.uk) to advise of medium and high risk cases with student name/module code for that application to be authorised

11c Risk Level Assessment

I determine the risk level of this application to be;

Please refer to FREC Ethics Guidelines (Pages 9-11) at:

<http://dmu.ac.uk/research/ethics-and-governance/faculty-specific-procedures/business-and-law-ethics-procedures.aspx>


Note for Supervisor: For MEDIUM and HIGH risk applications, please notify FREC of the Module name, number and student name by emailing:

BALResearchEthics@dmu.ac.uk

Low risk cases should be logged and filed.

Low Risk	X	Medium Risk		High Risk	
11 d Please confirm that the applicant has addressed each of the following issues to your satisfaction (if applicable).			Yes	No	N/A

The study design is appropriate and within ethical parameters	Yes		
The research questions are clear and within ethical parameters	Yes		
Recruitment method is explicit, fair, free from duress and data protection is not breached	Yes		
Sample and sampling method is appropriate and ethical			N/A
Participants are fully informed about the research in writing	Yes		
Participation is voluntary with informed consent?	Yes		
Vulnerable people have additional interventions to ensure informed consent (e.g. parents, guardians, carers, advocates etc)			N/A
Participants are given details of how to complain	Yes		
DMU consent form template has been used	Yes		
Data will be stored securely, and for the appropriate duration	Yes		
Permission has been, or will be, sought from external host organisation (where applicable) or good reasons given where it has not been sought			N/A
Confidentiality, anonymity and privacy will be ensured and maintained	Yes		
Possible adverse outcomes to participants are identified and suggestions to minimise or deal with these are presented	Yes		
Risks to the researcher are identified and suggestions to minimise or deal with these are presented (in the laboratory or off campus)	Yes		
Do the procedures identified necessitate formal assessment by another ethical committee? If yes, which one?		No	

SECTION 11e. Outcome of review		Please tick one box only
I recommend this study is given ethical approval (no changes required)		X
I do not support this application (please give reasons)		
I recommend the applicant addresses the changes listed below and the resubmission is re-reviewed by a Reviewer or the Chair – N/A		
Please list the <u>specific changes</u> the applicant must make to obtain ethical approval Nil		
Please write any additional comment you may have (optional) Nil		
Name.....Dominic Stapleton..... (1st Reviewer) Signed	Name...Elisabeth Skinner..... (2 nd Reviewer)  Signed... ..	

(1 st Reviewer)..... <i>Donna Stapleton</i> Date.....27/05/2020.....	(2 nd Reviewer) Date.....28.05.2020.....
--	--

SECTION 12. Faculty Research Ethics Committee (For Medium and High-Risk Cases Only)

For applications identified as **Medium** or **High Risk** to be reviewed by FREC.

Faculty Research Ethics Committee

Approval /Rejection/Referral (please delete which does not apply)

*This is the final approval from the BAL faculty Research Ethics Committee that this Ethical Approval application has been approved as outlined in the application.

* This Ethics application is rejected for the following reasons

* This Ethics application is referred back to applicant

* This Ethics application is referred to FREC/UREC for further consideration

Comments (if applicable)

Medium Risk cases

BAL FREC Reviewer Name.....

BAL FREC Signature..... (then send ethics application to
BALResearchEthics@dmu.ac.uk

High Risk Cases

BAL FREC Chair's Name:.....

BAL FREC Chair's Signature:.....

Date:

SECTION 13. HEALTH AND SAFETY – FOR THE APPLICANT AFTER AUTHORISATION!

Are you planning to undertake your research off- campus?

Yes/No (please delete as appropriate)

If yes, if you are planning to undertake research off-campus then you must contact Tracey Lee-Adams by sending her a copy of this AUTHORISED ethics application form explaining to her that you propose to undertake research off-campus and as such you recognise that a risk assessment is required

(Tracey's email address is TLee-Adams@dmu.ac.uk).

In most cases it is anticipated that Tracey will send you a signed risk assessment form advising you how to remain safe and well while undertaking your research. In exceptional cases Tracey will meet with you to assess risks.

Once you have received your authorised risk assessment from Tracey please attach it your authorised ethics application.

Footnotes

ⁱ **Illegal activities** incorporates **any illegal activity**; for example, trespassing, theft, or online piracy.

ⁱⁱ **Hate Crimes** are those committed against someone because of their disability, gender-identity, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.

-
- iii **Harmful and illegal cultural practices:** these include violence against women and girls, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, child sexual exploitation and honour-based violence.
- iv **Accessing prohibited websites:** You will need to seek permission from ITMS; advice on how to gain permission is available from the [ITMS helpdesk](#).
- v **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism
- vi **De-radicalisation** usually refers to activity aimed at a person who supports terrorism and in some cases has engaged in terrorist related activity, which is intended to effect cognitive and/or behavioural change leading to a new outlook on terrorism and/or disengagement from it.
- vii **Secure File Share:** You will need to ask ITMS to create a Secure File Share for your project, with access restricted to yourself, or if absolutely necessary, any internal co-investigator(s). Advice is available from the [ITMS helpdesk](#).
- viii **Zend:** advice on using Zend is available from the [ITMS helpdesk](#).

**IMPORTANT: A COPY OF THIS COMPLETED AND
AUTHORISED ETHICS APPLICATION IS
RECOMMENDED TO BE SUBMITTED WITH THE
DISSERTATION/INDEPENDENT STUDY/PROJECT AS
AN APPENDIX ITEM**

Additional forms (such as participation information sheet, consent form, interview questions/questionnaire to be copied and pasted here to enable all forms to be merged into one document