Hot Reactions: Understanding emotions and values as determinants of illegal and violent political actions

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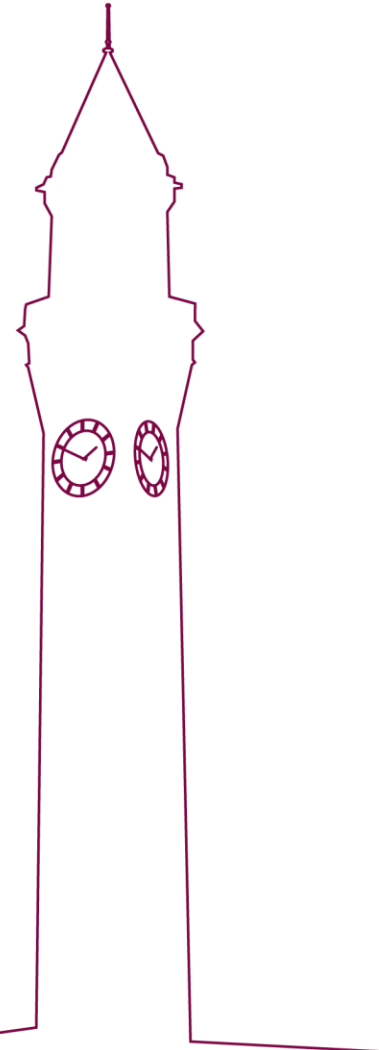
Baseline work

Capelos, T. and Demertzis N (2018) Political Action and Resentful Affectivity in Critical Times, *Humanity and Society* 42(4) 410-433

Capelos and Katsanidou (2018), Reactionary Politics: Explaining the Psychological Roots of Anti Preferences in European Integration and Immigration Debates. *Political Psychology* 36(9)

Capelos, T., Katsanidou, A, and Demertzis, N. (2017)
Back to Black: Values, Ideologies, and the Black Box of Political Radicalization. *Science and Society, 35, 35-68.*
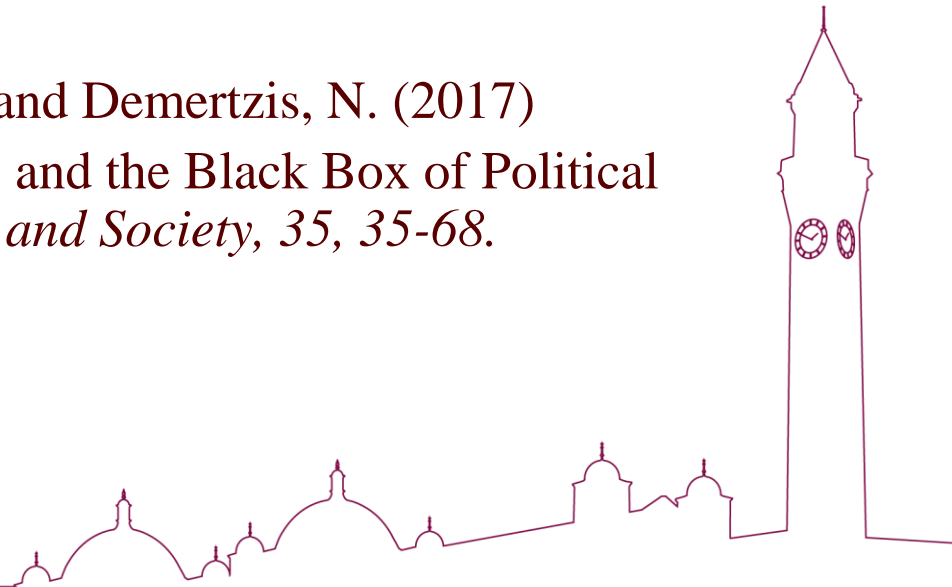
The puzzle of Reactionary orientations

'New wave of political radicalisms', rise of populism

Extreme, anomic is not necessary radical

European Economic Crisis
  – perceptions of social injustice and economic hardship
  – Hostility towards international and national institutions

Higher participation in active political expressions
  – legal, illegal and violent acts of politics
  – Lower opposition against political violence

Reactionism: Cluster concept

Complex political orientation of feeling overwhelmed by the present and want to return to the past (Capelos, Katsanidou, Demerzis 2017; Capelos and Demertzis 2018; Capelos and Katsanidou 2018). Preference for retreat and preoccupation with what is lost.

Conceptual complexity
- Cluster concept: System of values, sentiments, mental attitudes and behaviors
- Does not occupy a particular left-right ideological space
- Promotes change backward, against the new (values)
- Founded on resentful affect (emotions)
- Expressed as mainstream participation, abstention, illegal, violent -and legal-political actions (behaviors)

- Related concepts: Progressivism (progress forward), Radicalism (change forward, Conservatism (resistance to change).

Expression of Reactionism as political preferences

Attitudinal component found in Anti-policies and -phobias

- Anti-Immigration, Anti-EU Integration, Anti-expert sentiment
- Xenophobia, Islamophobia (veiled racism)

Pull and Push factors (towards reaction, away from regular politics): Populist discourses, backward gaze, dissatisfaction and disillusionment; low investment, shared inability and efficacy; frustration; resentment, hate, disgust, anger

- Attracted to 'populist sentiment' / populism (ideology, thin discourse, top-down)
  - Backward gaze is not essential for populism
  - From Left & Right – non directional
    - The Anti Narratives:
      - Anti-globalists, Anti-growth, Anti-immigration, anti-EU, Anti-elite

The Drivers of Reactionism:
Motivational Component found in Values

- Reactionism has a preference for the old, and turning back.
  - inspired by values that respect tradition and conserve the old family and religious norms
- Values on security, tradition, conformity and material wellbeing are activated in situations of deprivation, especially because these situations are beyond personal control.
- Core values are relevant predictors of political intentions and behaviors for average citizens (Kinder, 1988)

The Feeling of Reaction:
Affective component found in Resentful affectivity

Discrete emotion measures are not enough: affect is fluid, situational, relational, ambivalent, contradictory, and dynamically experiences (Capelos and Demertzis 2018).

Resentment: the feeling of someone who: i) judges unworthy the position that someone else has in the social hierarchy, and
ii) thinks that someone else deprives him/her of chances or privileges that he himself could enjoy [anger, anxiety, efficacy]

Ressentiment: chronic reliving of repressed and endless vindictiveness, hostility, envy, and indignation due to the powerlessness of the subject in expressing them, and resulting, at the level of values, in the negation of what is unconsciously desired

Hope and **Efficacy** change motivation into action: reactionary sentiment has to overcome pressure of conservative inertia in actions of others and the self (Wolfe, 1923; McCauley, 2012)
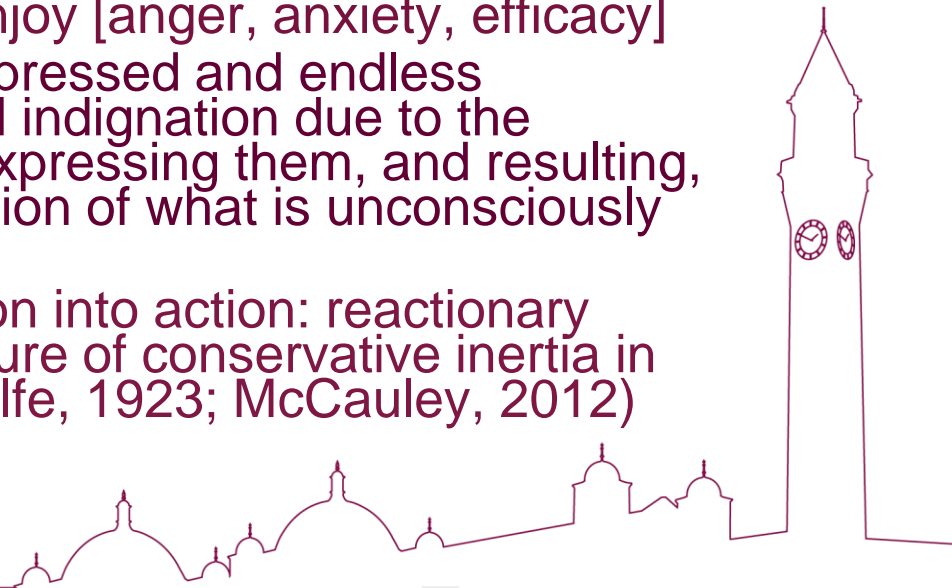
Framework: Examine the Political Styles of Reactionary Affect (Capelos and Demertzis 2018)
Low hope replaced by Nostalgia
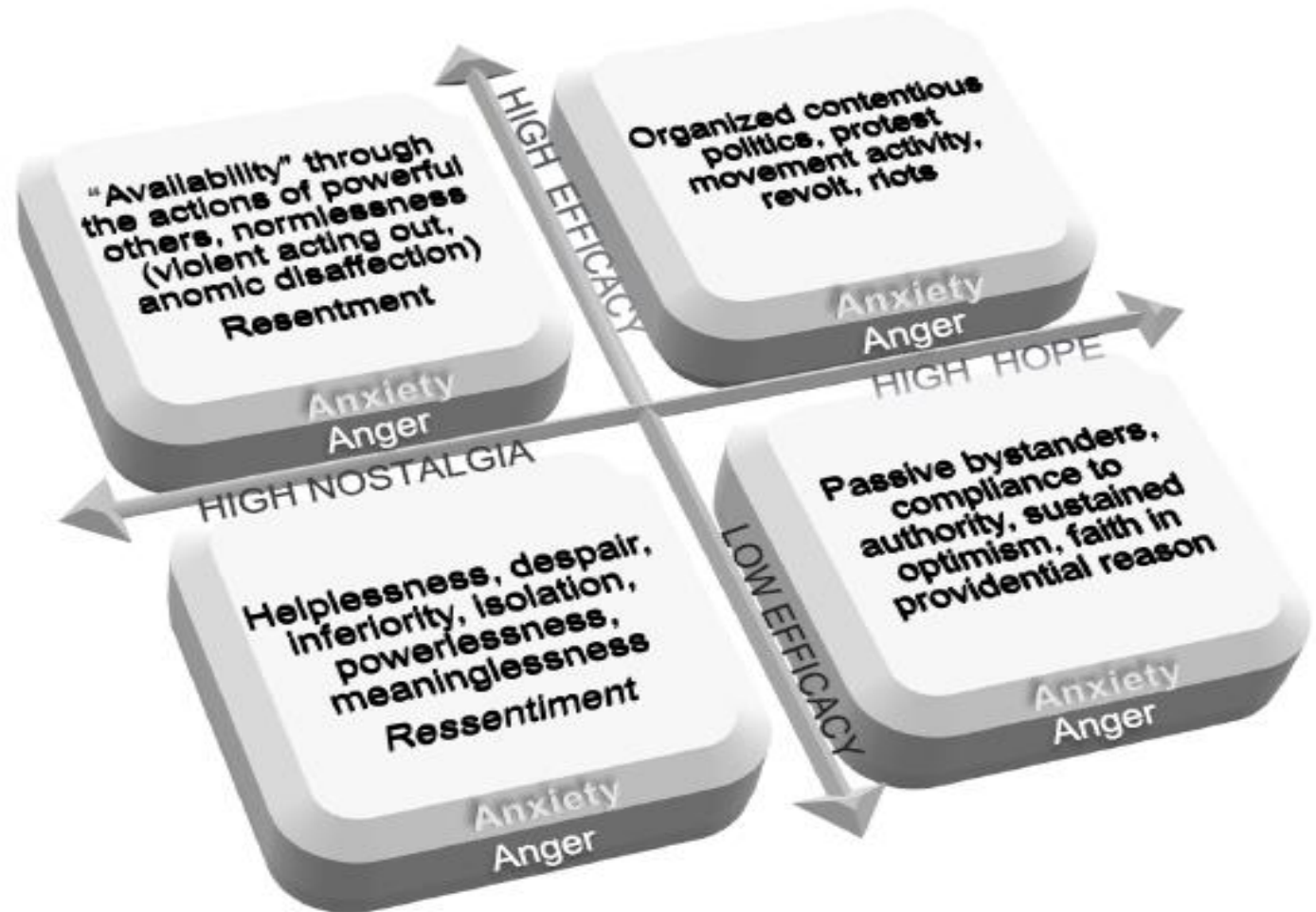
Research Design

Survey Data, January 2015, February 2015 (post election), November 2015, nationally representative sample in Greece, 2557 participants

Data collected for project THALIS, by the Research Center of University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki

Questionnaire delivered via telephone interviews, Random Digit Dial

Behavior measures: intention & history of past action (5 point scales)

Illegal and more risky behaviors (breaking the law by participating in illegal mobilizations, occupations of buildings, obstruction of public transportation or construction, objection to pay ticket for public transport, demonstrate concealing own identity, write on walls, taking law and order into one's own hands)

Violent behaviors (destroying private property, attacking a political actor, burning the national flag, destroying religious symbols, carrying dangerous items in demonstrations with intent to hurt others)

Legal and less costly behaviors (membership of political party or non-party organization, participating in demonstrations regarding economic, social or religious issues)
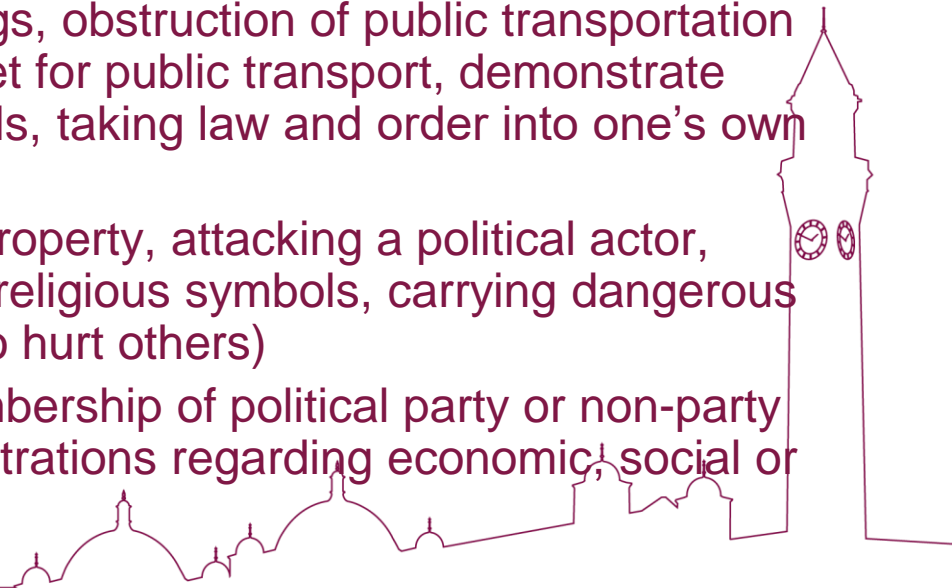
Three levels of engagement

Oppose: No I did not do it and would never do it

Dormant: No I did not do it, but I would do it

Action: Yes I did it

non-violent

Illegal demonstrations
Occupation of buildings
Obstruction of public transport
Obstruction of public works
Refusing to pay ticket -- public transport
Demonstrate with concealed face
Graffiti on walls
Indignanti

Membership -- political party

Membership -- non party organization

Demonstration national/religious issues
Demonstration workers rights
Demonstration social issues

illegal

legal

Destroy public property
Attack political actor
Flag burning
Destroy religious symbols
Take law and order into own hands
Carry objects that can hurt others

(--)

violent

Values

Schwartz (1992) personal value items: 'A person interested in: new ideas; money and expensive possessions, success and recognition, behaving correctly and avoiding what others consider wrong, tradition according to family and religious norms, safety and avoid danger, having a good life, looking after and caring for wellbeing of others, taking risks and being adventurous, looking after the environment and our planet.
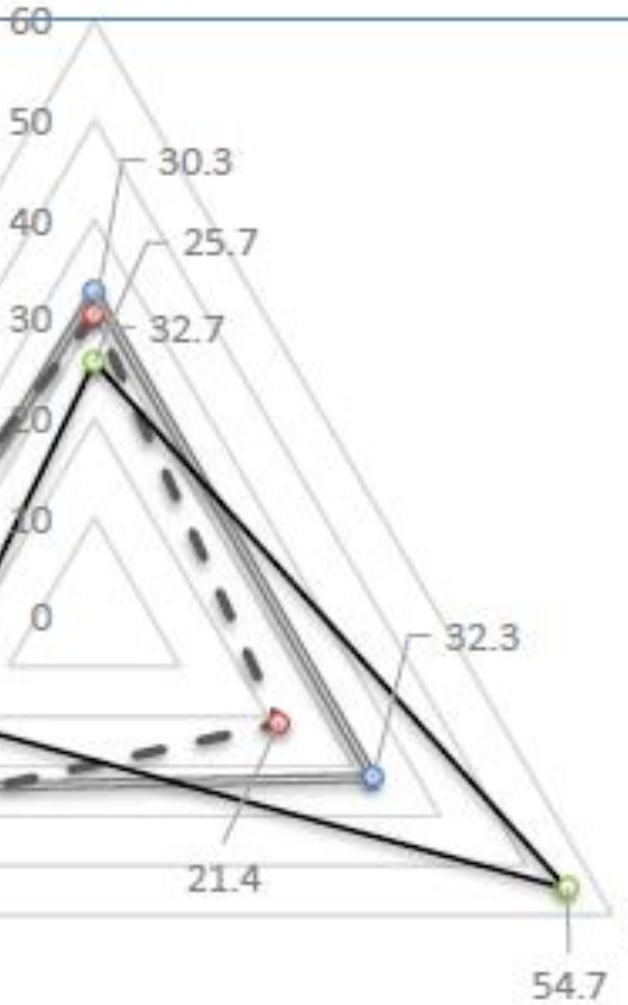
Value Types: Principal Component Analysis

Desire for conservation
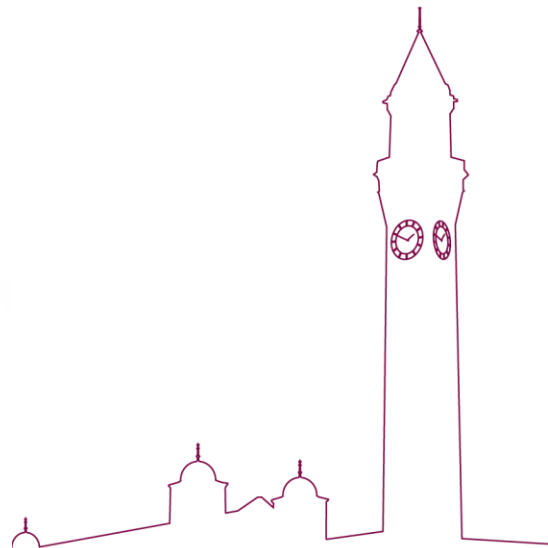
Individual well-being

Desire for new experiences

Anxiety/Fear

30.3
25.7
32.7

32.3

19.6   21.4

Hope
48.3

35

54.7

Anger

Wave 1   Wave 2   Wave 3

Overtime variation of emotionality

Interest

0.7
0.67

Int. Efficacy

0.63
0.55
0.56
0.53

Ideology

0.48
0.46
0.44

0.4
0.3
0.2
0.1
0

0.52
0.53
0.53

Trust Justice

0.38

Ext. Efficacy

0.27
0.3
0.43

0.31
0.31
0.25

0.39
0.4
0.41

Trust Parties

0.33

Social Trust

0.34
0.48

0.54
0.55
0.54

Trust Police

Trust Parliament

⊝ Wave 1   ● Wave 2   ⊝ Wave 3
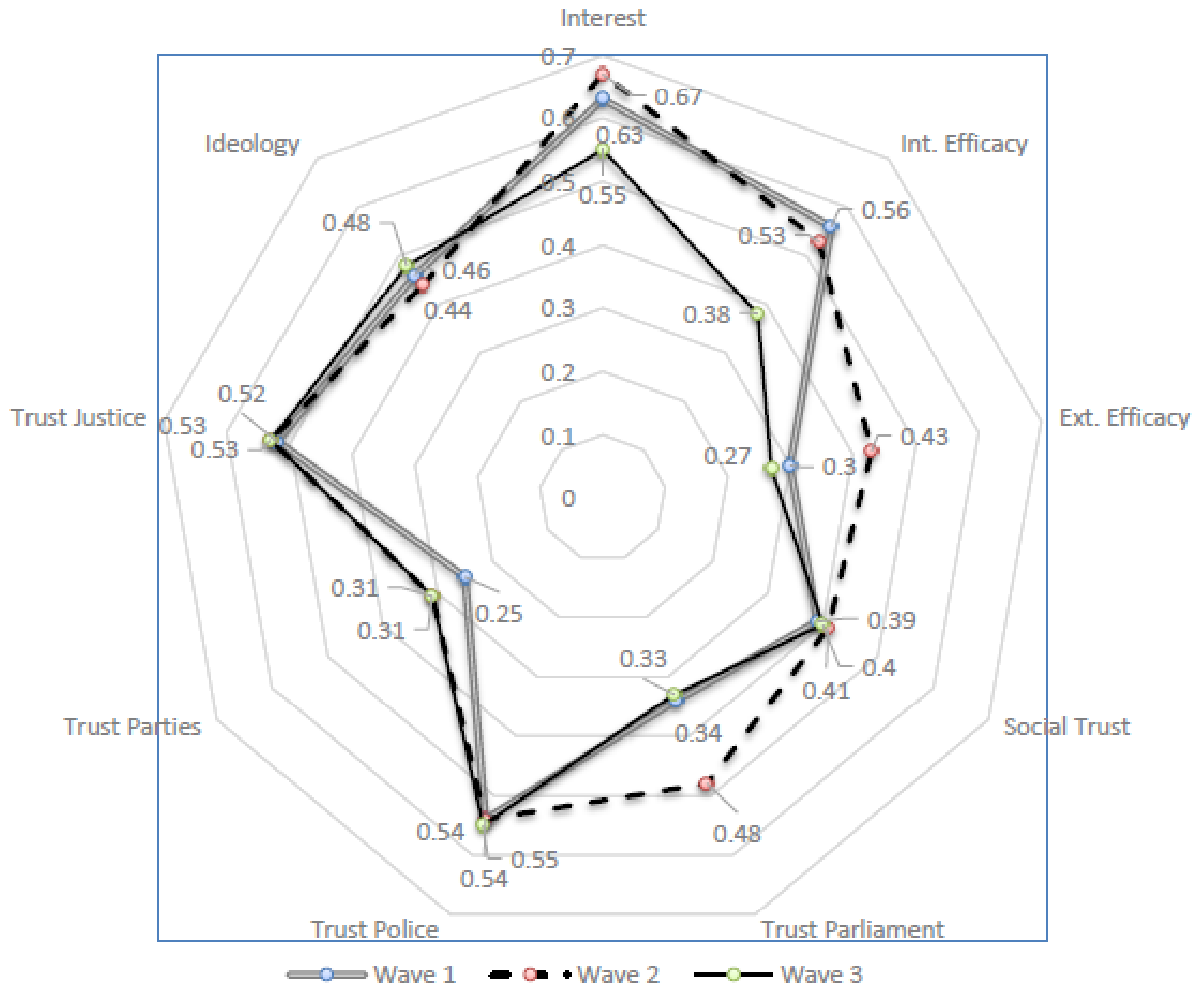
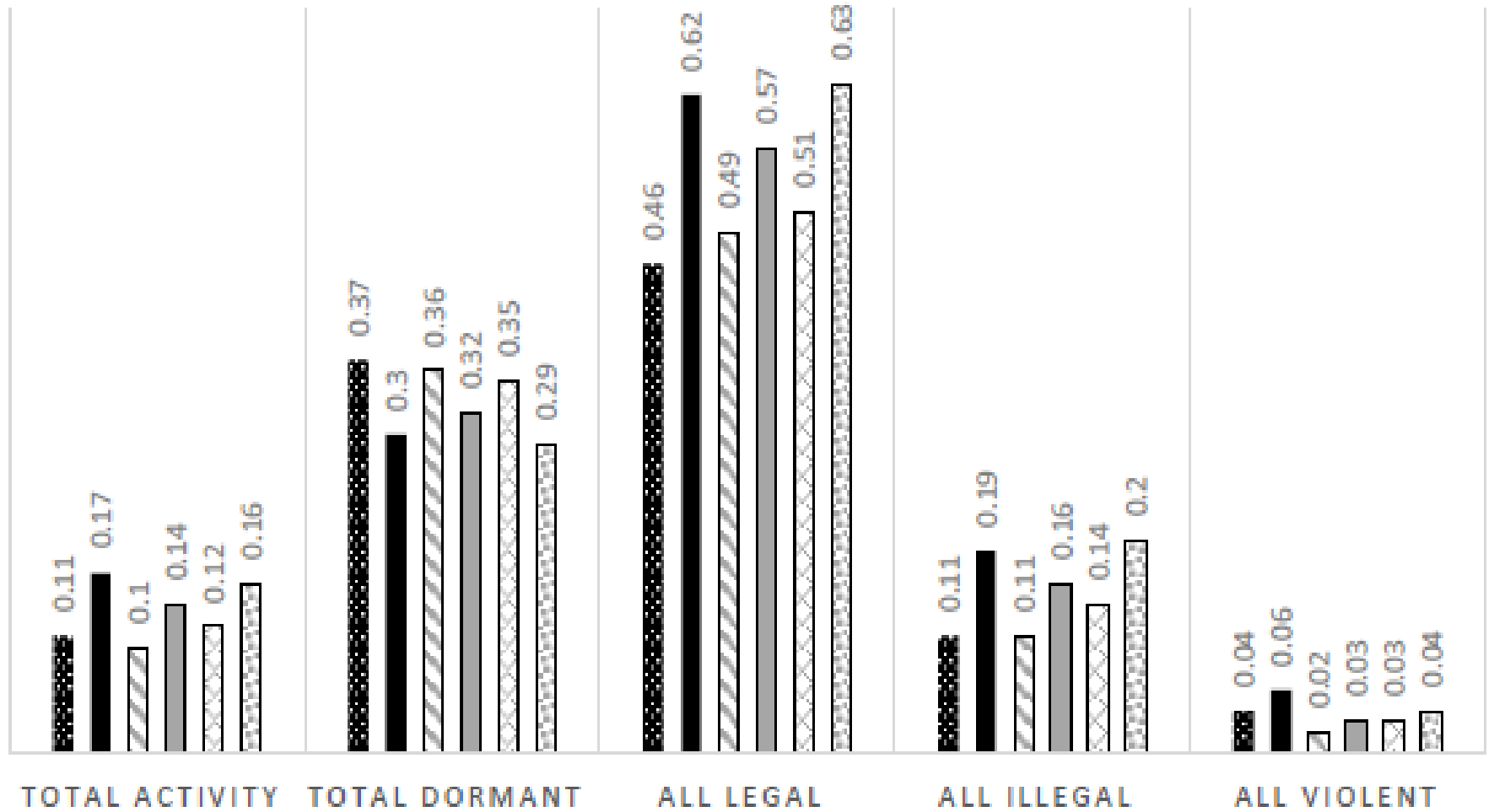|	Anger		Anxiety		Hope	
	Angry & Low Internal Efficacy (N=479)	Angry & High Internal Efficacy (N=390)	Anxious and Low Internal Efficacy (N=365)	Anxious and High Internal Efficacy (N=305)	Hope & Low Internal Efficacy (N=347)	Hope and High Internal Efficacy (N=411)
	Ressentiment-ful citizens	Resentful citizens	*Ressentiment*-ful citizens	Monitorial citizens	Mainstream citizens	Active citizens
Total activity	.11 (.10)[a]	**.17 (.12)**[c]	.10 (.10)[a]	.14 (.12)[b]	.12 (.11)[a]	**.16 (.12)**[c]
Total dormant	**.37 (.12)**[a]	.30 (.13)[b]	**.36 (.13)**[ad]	.32 (.14)[c]	**.35 (.15)**[d]	.29 (.14)[b]
All legal	.46 (.29)[a]	**.62 (.27)**[b]	.49 (.30)[ad]	.57 (.29)[c]	.51 (30)[d]	**.63 (.29)**[b]
All Illegal	.11 (.16)[a]	**.19 (.21)**[be]	.11 (.17)[a]	.16 (.21)[ec]	.14 (.18)[c]	**.20 (.24)**[b]
All violent	.04 (.09)[a]	**.06 (.13)**[b]	.02 (.08)[c]	.03 (.08)[cd]	.03 (.09)[c]	04 (.09)[ad]

Values are means. Different superscripts indicate statistically significant differences at p<.05
Datafrom Waves 1-3. Source: *Thales study*, Konstantinides et. al. 2015.

Legend: Angry LE, Angry HE, Anxious LE, Anxious HE, Hope LW, Hope HE

	Angry LE	Angry HE	Anxious LE	Anxious HE	Hope LW	Hope HE
TOTAL ACTIVITY	0.11	0.17	0.1	0.14	0.12	0.16
TOTAL DORMANT	0.37	0.3	0.36	0.32	0.35	0.29
ALL LEGAL	0.46	0.62	0.49	0.57	0.51	0.63
ALL ILLEGAL	0.11	0.19	0.11	0.16	0.14	0.2
ALL VIOLENT	0.04	0.06	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.04

	Active	Dormant	Legal	Illegal	Violent
Constant	.062 *** (.017)	.374 (.020)	.431 *** (.044)	.172 *** (.030)	.099 *** (.014)
Angry x high efficacy [Resentful citizen]	.029 ** (.009)	-.033 * (.011)	.081 ** (.024)	.023 (.016)	.022 ** (.007)
Angry x low efficacy [*Ressentiment*-ful]	-.010 (.008)	.025 *** (.010)	-.040 + (.023)	.-.029 * (.015)	.013 + (.007)
Hopeful x high efficacy [Active citizen]	.029 ** (.009)	-.046 *** (.011)	.093 *** (.023)	.042 ** (.015)	.003 (.007)
Hopeful x low efficacy [Mainstream citizen]	-.006 (.009)	.009 (.011)	-.006 (.024)	-.016 (.016)	-.007 (.007)
Anxious x high efficacy [Monitorial citizen]	.013 (.009)	-.019+ (.011)	.042 + (.025)	.011 (.016)	-.002 (.008)
Anxious x low efficacy [*Ressentiment*-ful]	-.015 + (.009)	.011 (.011)	-.015 (.024)	-.031 * (.016)	-.005 (.007)
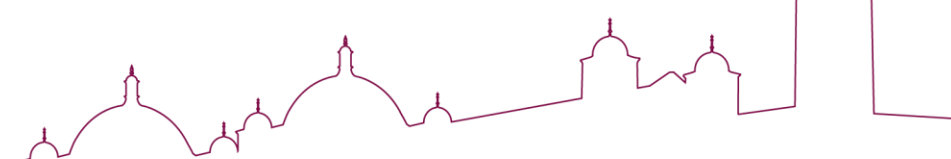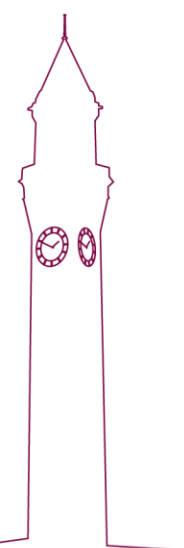
	Active	Dormant	Legal	Illegal	Violent
Desire for Conservation	.102 *** (.011)	-.089 *** (.014)	.092 ** (.031)	.200 *** (.020)	.038 *** (.009)
Desire for New Experiences	-.070*** (.014)	.045 ** (.017)	-.076 * (.037)	-.046 + (.025)	-.010 (.012)
Female	-.019 *** (.004)	.019 *** (.005)	-.023 * (.012)	-.029 *** (.008)	-.013 *** (.004)
Age	.004 * (.002)	.005 ** (.002)	-.005 (.004)	-.021 *** (.003)	-.011 *** (.001)
Education	.014 *** (.002)	-.014 *** (.002)	.029 *** (.004)	.010 ** (.030)	-.003* (.001)
Adj R^2	.125	.108	.068	.114	.050
N	2432	2432	2432	2432	2432

Key points and next steps

- Operationalizing Reactionism: motivations, emotions, actions
- Complex emotional clusters of reactionary engagement that are fluid, transient, situational and relational: respect, curiosity, optimism, disappointment, shame, pride, confusion, despair, anticipation, disgust, pressure, uncertainty, hope mixed with fear, interest combined with suspicion, rage, distrust, sadness, irritation, obligation, stress, ambivalence, humiliation and concern. **Resentment and *Ressentiment*:** Anger, Anxiety, Efficacy
- Three-point approach (oppose, dormant support, action) adds clarity to the process of psychological transformation – distinct triggers from No → Yes, No →Dormant, Dormant→ Yes
- Value determinants point to orientation towards change backwards
- Additional items on hostility, envy, indignation (WVS)

Thank you