DEMOS

BRINGING BRITAIN TOGETHER
A MANIFESTO FOR CONSENSUS POLITICS

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INTRODUCTION

General elections are always about distinctiveness and division. It's a competition for the heart and soul of the voters, and the parties inevitably put a shiny gloss on their own promises, while doing down their rivals' ideas at every opportunity. We have come to expect a certain amount of fearmongering and overpromising from our political leaders.

But as the 2019 General Election takes shape, there seems to be an added level of toxicity to the debate, and a new sense of recklessness about the relationship between political campaigns and facts. On the brink of this, our fourth nation-wide vote in five years, a fragile democracy has become a nation in crisis. Three and a half years of political warfare over Brexit have created a nagging feeling that the hyperbole of election time might be more than skin deep: that our country is divided, from top to bottom - divided, and maybe even irreconcilably so.

If we are to have a hope of restoring trust between citizens and the institutions which should serve them, and so renew our democracy's defences against populism, we need a new politics of consensus not division.

This short paper is Demos' contribution to the election debate: calling for a new approach not just to campaigning, but to the way we govern Britain, to help sow unity rather than division, consensus rather than controversy. We call on politicians, during this campaign, to prioritise the long term health of our democracy over their own short term interests. And set out our recommendations for how the next government can move beyond Brexit rage and build a truly United Kingdom once more.

01 WHY POLITICS IS BROKEN

Nations need a 'demos': a collective identity and a shared understanding that enables citizens to come together to decide their future. But everywhere we look, we see disconnection. Communities riven by intolerance. Citizens bombarded with more information than ever before, but less willing to trust any of it. Demand for better public services, but deep reluctance to fund them.

Britain and our allies across the Western world are facing an age of unprecedented change. Global power is shifting away from us, just as our population ages and our public services become unaffordable. Technology is disrupting our economy, our democracy, and our daily lives. International migration, whether by refugees or economic migrants, is higher than it has ever been, and shows no sign of abating. Climate change is a clear and present danger.

Our political system is failing to keep pace. Instead of helping us to form consensus and make decisions about how we want to live in the face of this change, it is tearing us apart. We have an increasingly polarised electorate alternating between apathy and rage. Public trust in experts and the media is at an all time low. Opinions of our systems of governing are at their lowest point in 15 years, worse than even in the aftermath of the MPs' expenses scandal.[1] It is no surprise there seem to be fewer solutions to our problems on the table than ever before.

This section looks at three linked issues that have contributed to the weakening of our political system:

- The rise of social media

- The rise of tribalism and identity politics

- The stagnation of our political institutions

Social Media

Not long ago parties had three or four party political broadcasts to set out their vision for the country, broadcast on channels that everyone watched. The lawyer saw the same broadcast as the care worker, the voter in London saw the same debate as the voter in Clacton or Crewe. Leaflets in different constituencies, or to different voters, might have been targeted to particular area. But the simple cost of production and delivery meant that most people saw broadly similar campaign literature.

Online party political campaigning has changed this entirely. Suddenly, each and every one of us sees a message directed to us and personalised to our interests. It enables a party to cut to the chase – to ensure you have the information that you need to make a decision. Archives of political advertising from the last few years include messages about fishing policy, flood defences, bull fighting and protecting polar bears. These issues might well be important to some of us, but would never have made it into a 3 minute segment on the BBC. This new era talks to a politics that really works for you.

These changes have enormous implications for our democracy. It has led to campaigning that is opaque and nearly impossible to track. It's hard to verify lies or apply standards and expectations and it's impossible to hold the promises and pledges to account. The fast and loose ways in which digital channels have been used, the failure of technology providers to act as custodians of democracy and society, the failure of governments to ensure it is used fairly, transparently and honestly, have all contributed to the problems we're now facing.

But these changes have also had a more fundamental effect. Democracy is not like eBay or

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1   https://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/media/coverage/the-public-think-politics-is-broken-and-are-willing-to-entertain-radical

Amazon. In a world of personalised advertising we all see the shoes we might personally want, and we can make the decision to go out and buy them; with new forms of manufacturing we may soon even be able each to choose different shoes, and get precisely what we want. Democracy is different. We can't all have a different government that suits us: we need to share the same one. Democracy requires cooperation, negotiation and compromise; you have to get the pair of shoes that everyone agreed on rather than the pair you really wanted.

Personalisation exaggerates the personal at the expense of the common ground. It creates a false promise that in a democracy you always get exactly what you want - making compromise much less likely.

The rise of tribalism and identity politics

Politics and identity have always been intricately linked. For many voters, their choice of party was linked to a sense of who they are, be that a member of the working class, an entrepreneur, a public servant, or a revolutionary. And that which is now pejoratively termed "identity politics" has a proud heritage: it was a form of identity politics that brought us civil rights, feminism, gay rights, and with them a generational shift towards individual freedom of which we should all be proud. These changes were one of the greatest forces for good in the latter half of the 20th century, dramatically reducing discrimination and improving the lives of some of our most marginalised people.

People's experiences and identities shape their experiences profoundly, and an inclusive democracy must enable people to bring their full selves to their role as citizens. However, there are risks when the celebration of a group's identity morphs into the rejection of other groups' legitimacy.

The new identity politics has changed the shape and nature of our political parties. Party membership is increasingly based on identification with certain groups or tribes, instead of old, broader allegiances, such as class. Party members - who are often more ideologically extreme than both elected representatives and the wider public - have been handed ever more power too within their parties in a series of reforms. This has had the effect of moving the two major parties towards the political extremes, making compromise increasingly challenging. This is compounded by politicians being increasingly under pressure to follow the demands of their local party members - an inherently unrepresentative group - rather than their constituents as a whole.

The continuing rise of tribalism, particularly among the most politically active in our society, poses risks to our ability to build and sustain that national 'demos': a collective identity that holds diverse groups together in common cause. As Francis Fukuyama has put it:

> *"Democratic societies are fracturing into segments based on ever-narrower identities, threatening the possibility of deliberation and collective action by society as a whole. This is a road that leads only to state breakdown and, ultimately, failure. Unless such liberal democracies can work their way back to more universal understandings of human dignity, they will doom themselves— and the world—to continuing conflict."*[2]

Furthermore: the arguments once used to foreground the importance of identity and lived experience among marginalised groups are now being used to organise against those groups. A central tactic of populist discourse is to build antipathy between an insider group and outsiders who are portrayed as an existential threat to that group's identity. This tactic has been deployed to facilitate the rebirth of white nationalism, and Mens' Rights Activism, closely linked to 'strong man' political campaigns not just in the West, but in the developing world, too.

This can only be overturned by a shift away from group identities as the major dividing lines in political debate. This will inevitably be a balancing act: we cannot and should not seek to erase the diversity of human experience from our political discourse. But the best way to build empathy and understanding between diverse groups is to focus on what unites them as human beings and as citizens in a society. A politics obsessed with our differences will build only enmity.

A political conversation framed around culture, identity and political tribalism is not one that can succeed in building consensus for the transformative policies needed to confront the challenges our society faces.

2   https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/americas/2018-08-14/against-identity-politics-tribalism-francis-fukuyama

Failure of political renewal and reform

The world is changing faster than ever, but our political system has failed to keep pace with these changes. While the industrial revolution helped bring about the birth of modern liberal democracy across the west, our political systems have yet to see any substantial change in the 21st century, despite vast and accelerating technological change.

The transformation of our societies is not limited to the impact of technology, however. We are living through a generational decline in western power; climate change is a looming crisis; our society is ageing; more people than ever before live outside the country of their birth, and the numbers are rising exponentially. It is no wonder many people have a sense that they have lost control of their lives. A more participatory politics - where people have real power to participate in and shape policy making - could help address this, putting people more in charge of their own destiny.

But our major democratic institutions have failed to move in a more participatory direction, despite the success of pioneering participatory initiatives across the world. This means political participation remains marking a ballot paper every few years at a polling station. As Demos warned back in 2005, "without a new level of direct citizen participation the legitimacy of our political institutions will continue to decline".[3] We failed to act; it is no surprise we find ourselves where we do today.

What's more, the importance of local identities has risen as a backlash against globalisation; witness the revival of separatist and regional parties, and the more recent success of hyperlocal independent candidates in local elections. But power is still far too concentrated in London - Britain remains one of the most centralised countries in the developed world. This increases the sense that we are governed by distant elites who are unaccountable to our needs. Matters are made worse by the various systems of local government - too often people simply do not know who their local representatives are.

Our political parties, who remain the gatekeepers of political participation, have also failed to open themselves up to the wider public, as we outlined above. Efforts were made in the last decade to introduce "open primaries", where all electors in a constituency could participate in a party's candidate selection process. But these have since been abandoned.

Digital technology has transformed almost every aspect of our lives, from working to shopping, travelling to dating. It has changed the way political parties campaign, and the ways in which activists work. But the democratic experience of making a choice about who you want to be governed by, and how, remains remarkably untouched by technology: it's still limited to a pencil, an x and a piece of paper.

3   http://www.demos.co.uk/files/everydaydemocracy.pdf , p.18

02 WHERE DOES PUBLIC CONSENSUS LIE

This paper does not counsel despair, however. Yes: our politics is atomising. But there is reason for hope. New Demos research finds that there is far more public consensus on some of the most important issues facing the country than is often presumed. The division and tribalism outlined above are largely confined to the politically active, while the nation as a whole is open to compromise, ambitious for consensus, and willing to give the credit of good intentions even to those who disagree with them.

This section sets out the findings from our new Political Division Index, published alongside this report, which measures public attitudes towards key public policy areas across four measures: how far the public agree or disagree on it, how important a topic is to citizens, what attitude the public has towards those who disagree with them, and how healthy conversations on the topic are perceived to be.

The attitudes of the population tell us that on a wide range of topics - in particular the future of the NHS and climate change policy - there exists a base from which a new, forward-looking public debate can be created that is less divisive, less unhealthy and more likely to result in compromise and consensus. The evidence presented here offers an impetus to pursue this politics.

Findings

Graph 1 sets out our analysis of the ten issues on which we conducted this survey. The full report, Political Division Index, can be downloaded from our website.

Topics are positioned according to how far the public agrees on them (X-axis), and by how healthy and empathetic the conversations on these topics are (Y-axis). Marks are sized by their salience: the larger the mark, the more important the topic in the eyes of British citizens. The colour of the marks are an indication of the overall divisiveness of that topic.

See Graph 1: Index of Political Division on the following page.

GRAPH 1.

INDEX OF POLITICAL DIVISION

Source: Opinium for Demos, 2019

Political Division Index
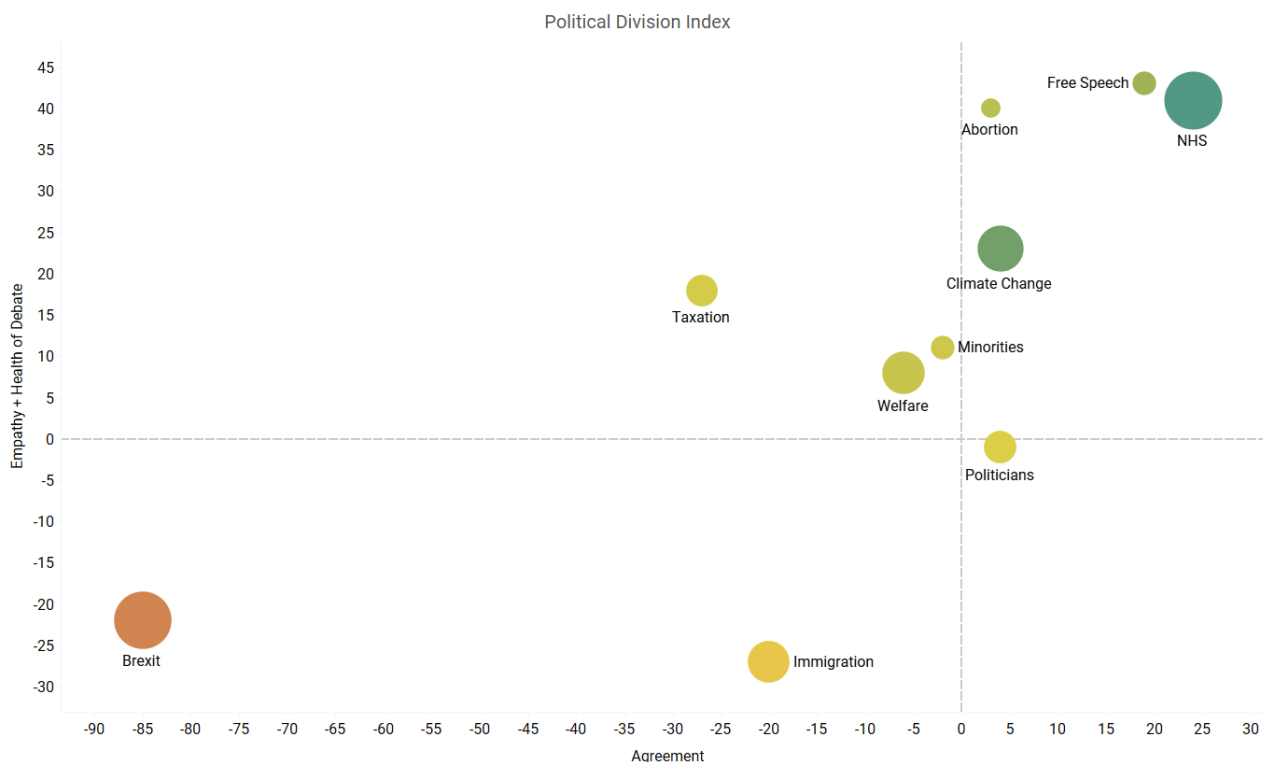
Immigration and Brexit emerge as the primary divisive issues, driven by disagreement among the public and an overall perception of a poor-quality of conversation around the topics.

The two topics are inevitably linked: many claimed the largest motivation for those who voted to leave the EU was curtailing immigration. Interestingly, there was more empathy towards the other side on the topic of Brexit than on immigration, which implies that people may be in a position to lead productive conversations on Brexit outside of conversations around immigration. It also shows that while disagreement is high and the debate toxic, there isn't as much animosity between Leavers and Remainers as some have suggested.

However, the remaining topics appear more likely to form the basis of a healthy national political conversation. The NHS in particular emerges as both of significant political importance and a topic where the foundations of an empathetic and healthy debate can be found. Respondents report having good quality debates about this topic and are open to compromising with those who hold different ideas on the NHS. The perceived importance and conversational health of the debate on climate change is similar.

The results should encourage new efforts for a politics beyond Brexit. They also provide room

for optimism. There is more nuance to the image of a nation torn in half: all other topics are far less divisive than Brexit. It seems probably that, like in the US, British media and government amplify primarily those voices that are divisive while in fact many citizens are open to compromise. The image of a deeply divided Britain likely represents a particular segment of society, rather than the whole population.

THE ROLE OF THE PARTIES

We have seen that, beyond Brexit and immigration, there is a good degree of consensus and healthy debate on many of the major issues issues facing Britain today. It is also important to highlight that - despite their ongoing efforts to discredit one another - amongst the major parties there is also increasingly a good degree of agreement on what are the most important issues facing the country and what is required to address them. The parties all agree that we should increase public expenditure substantially, with infrastructure and the NHS the top priorities. The parties agree that we need to move to a net zero carbon economy. They agree that the country is too centralised, and more power should be devolved.

Of course, the parties differ, but on many issues it

is more over the speed and distance that should be travelled, not the direction the country should go in. The parties do our democracy a disservice by overinflating their criticisms of one another on these areas of broad consensus.

Once the manifestos have been published, Demos will provide an analysis of the detailed policy proposals and identify the areas of common ground and consensus. Our expectation, based on analysis of the 2017 manifestos and recent public policy statements by the parties, is that the areas of broad consensus will include:

- **Decent jobs in every part of the country**

  Britain continues to have an unbalanced economy: we need good jobs in all parts of the UK. This is broad agreement that this will require public investment in skills, infrastructure, research and development and business support, weighted towards those areas that need it most; delegating power to cities and region; effective partnership between government and business at a national and local level.

- **A healthier nation**

  We are now living longer lives, but too many of us are not living healthier lives. The major political parties recognise that this means properly funding the NHS, ensuring it has the staff it needs, strengthening mental health services and addressing new public health challenges, such as obesity and air pollution.

- **Looking after old people and paying for the care they need**

  Old age too often means low quality care at an exorbitant cost. But old people are entitled to quality care. This is broad agreement that this will require a new funding model, a new delivery model designed to achieve quality care for everyone and better trained staff.

- **Tackling climate change**

  The climate change emergency is not just a phrase: preventing catastrophe is a vital national interest and the UK has to play its part in the global effort. This is broad agreement that this will require playing an active role in the international negotiations on climate change, always pushing for the strongest possible measures and whenever possible using our leverage as a major economy and G7 member.

There is also agreement that this will require radically reducing the carbon emissions caused by our own consumption and production, both for its contribution to global totals and for the weight it will give to our contribution to international negotiations.

- **Improving education and training**

  The education system needs to revive stalling social mobility and equip our children and young people for the fourth industrial revolution that is underway. There is agreement that this will require more funding for pupils in early years childcare, schooling and further education, a greater variety of courses and qualifications, particularly in further and adult education but throughout the educational system and more in-work training.

- **Reducing crime**

  It is no secret that crime is on the rise, online and in the real world, and there is a general consensus that more needs to be done to keep people safe. This is broad agreement that this will require effective strategies for particular problems (such as knife crime, domestic abuse, online harms), more resources for policing, sentencing policy that balances effectively its different objectives and prisons that produce lower re-offending rates.

03 BUILDING A COHESIVE DEMOS

We have seen that there is more public and party consensus on many of the major issues than anyone listening to our political discourse could ever anticipate. We conclude this paper with two sets of recommendations.

The first are for the next government, whatever its composition. Government should adopt a new cross-party process for agreeing a long-term policy approach on areas where there is already broad national consensus. It should convene open, deliberative democratic processes where there is national division. And it should take as its core mission the goal of restoring a cohesive demos.

The second set of recommendations are for the election itself, in - perhaps forlorn - hope that good conduct during the next month might lay the groundwork for a more consensual political system once it is over. Parties should be open and transparent about their campaigns, be civil and support their opponents where they agree, and campaign where possible on the big, important issues where the public agree - rather than hyping up tribal divisions on parochial problems.

A better government

The assumption in our political system is that there is a winner, who gets to decide everything, and one or more losers, who get to complain from the sidelines for a few years, until it is their turn. This model can work where parties are able to gather together a majority under a single party flag; since May 2010, we have had only two years of majority government but it remains to be seen whether this will become the norm in the UK again.

If parties continue to be unable to secure a workable majority in the House of Commons, they will need to find ways to work more collaboratively with other parties in order to secure progress. We believe they should move towards this model of collaborative policy making anyway. On December 13th, we will have 650 new members of Parliament, each of whom will have a personal mandate from the voters of their constituency. They all deserve a serious role in shaping the UK's response to the challenges of this century.

The parts of Parliament that have continued to work most effectively during this period of paralysis have been the Select Committees, which work on a cross-party, consensual basis. They provide a model for a future process whereby cross-party consensus can be established, on tackling the nation's long term problems.

Whether it is encouraging pension saving, social care, NHS funding, housing reform, or climate change, long-term policy making on a cross-party basis will be far more effective than the short term cycle of decision-making that fits with our current electoral cycle. Where ministers change role every year, long term consensus is far more important than individual brilliance when it comes to effective delivery.

On each of the six key consensus issues identified above, the new government should establish a cross-party committee to agree the contents of a White Paper setting out plans for government policy over the next 10-20 years. Each of these committees should consult widely with civil society and individual citizens, over a period of six months.

The potential for national consensus building is not as easy to identify on all important issues however. Our Political Division Index flagged Brexit and immigration as just two issues where political and public division remain profound. It is therefore vital that we consider how to build public consensus in these areas, over time.

We believe an open, deliberative process where citizens are put in the driving seat, is an essential component of any strategy to unite the country around a common vision for the future. Politicians often get politically 'stuck': unable to make progress on something where public opinion was out of kilter with their ambitions. In the past, they have tended to refer these challenges to an expert: a Royal Commission, or an Independent Review. Demos recommends that in future, 'stuck' issues should be referred back to citizens, in a deliberative process.

Assuming we leave the European Union on 31 January on the terms identified in the latest Withdrawal Agreement, the government should request an extension of the transition period to 2022. This period should be used to convene a Citizens Assembly to deliberate on the appropriate model for our long term trading relationship with the EU, and a further assembly drawing people together to discuss a long term sustainable approach to immigration both from within the EU and beyond.

These formal assemblies should be combined with digital methods of deliberation, as deployed in Taiwan and other countries. Draft proposals from the assemblies would be released for consultation to the wider public. This open deliberation could be held using an open source deliberation platform such as pol.is, which uses machine learning to help users find and build consensus. The pol.is process is designed to prevent divisive or abusive content from derailing an engagement exercise. Pioneering open policy making in this way will help to build legitimacy in our politics, and set new standards and expectations for future engagement with citizens

Rebuilding a 'demos'

A radical programme of social reunification is needed to bring our country back together, transcending the divides accentuated by the tribal, identity politics of both left and right. This short section sets out a number of specific policy ideas that could be part of this programme: we welcome further suggestions from readers of this report. Clearly, a government should consult widely to build consensus for these and other ideas.

- Schools are our best assets in the effort to build a more connected society. But in too many communities poor children go to one school and middle class kids another. Addressing this requires radical reform of

admissions procedure; for example much wider use of lottery schemes as utilised in Brighton. Private schools - those great 'engines of privilege' - should no longer benefit from tax advantages, and should be encouraged to convert to the state sector as free schools. This would allow them to maintain a significant degree of autonomy whilst ensuring entry is not based on the ability to pay fees.

- Faith of all kinds deserves a vital, special place in our diverse society. But it cannot be allowed to segregate our children and their parents. It's time to ban faith-based admissions. Children spend only about a third of their waking hours at school: there is plenty of time and space for scripture, for practice, and for building bonds within a faith community. If we want more time for faith, let's open state-funded faith education in after-school clubs or during weekends and holidays. But let our children be together to learn the things they all need to know.

- Town twinning could be used domestically to encourage the exchange of ideas and people between places across Britain that wouldn't normally meet. School exchanges between sister towns would provide an opportunity for children to be exposed to people with very different perspectives to their own. MPs would be encouraged to spend time in their constituency's sister town. First-hand exposure to voters in a very different part of the country would surely soften the views of even the most entrenched parliamentarian, likely making for a more civil debate in the Commons.

- We also urgently need a radical renewal of our 'social infrastructure'. As Eric Klinenberg has argued, these institutions are vital for maintaining local social bonds - bonds which can help us overcome division.[4] They allow us to mix, share ideas and be exposed to different opinions, cutting across various group divides. But successive years of local government cuts have degraded our parks, libraries and community centres; these must be restored to their former glory. We must though go beyond restoration: we need a bold programme of extensive new 'social infrastructure' building. This must be on a scale with the local government-led development of our cities in the latter half of the nineteenth century, when unprecedented numbers of communal and

4   Eric Klinenberg (2018), Palaces for the People

public buildings were built by pioneering city leaders such as Joseph Chamberlain in Birmingham.

- To cross the divides of identity politics our political parties must be transformed too. This is because membership of parties is increasingly based on identification with a particular 'tribe' or group, contributing to the polarisation of our politics and weakening the ability of our parties to be representative of the country at large. All major political parties must put this right and take steps towards more open selection processes for candidates. We must also end the practice of barring members of one political party from being members of another. This would reduce the tribalism of politics and increase fluidity across party lines.

Finally, we need to rekindle a shared national identity. For too long progressives have seen patriotism as a dirty word. But as Richard Rorty describes, "national pride is to countries what self-respect is to individuals: a necessary condition for self-improvement."[5] What's more, national identity - built on a civic rather than an ethnic platform - is perhaps the only identity that has the potential to be fully inclusive:

> "You can be a loyal subject of the British Crown, and also English, Scottish, Irish and when it comes to other aspects of belonging. You can be a British Nigerian or a British Pakistani...It is possible to be a British Muslim...as much as a British Jew or Christian".[6]

Only by rebuilding a stronger sense of national identity can we build a common creed that everyone - black or white, male or female, poor or rich - can buy in to. Only then will we transcend the boxes that modern identity politics is so obsessed with putting people into and a cohesive 'demos' be built.

A better election

The fight to repair our broken politics must begin with the current general election campaign. This may sound challenging: already this is turning out to be a bruising election which risks further deepening our already entrenched divisions. Yet it doesn't have to be this way. If political actors began to change their behaviour, we could start to restore health to our democracy today.

Civil campaigning

Below we set out three principles we believe all candidates and campaigners - from canvassers to cabinet members - should strive to adhere to in the upcoming election.

This doesn't mean a banal, bland, boring political debate; far from it. We fully recognise that political positions are - quite rightly - strongly held and that debate can be emotionally-charged. But we need to ensure that the upcoming election is conducted in a respectful, empathetic and civil manner. If not, we risk pushing the country further apart and deepening already entrenched divisions.

TREAT YOUR OPPONENTS WITH RESPECT

All campaigners and candidates should treat their opposition candidates with respect. This means being polite and kind, acknowledging the worthiness of your opponents. A politics of respect in the upcoming election means:

- No personal attacks or name calling.

- Attack policies and ideas, not people.

TREAT YOUR OPPONENTS WITH EMPATHY

Empathy means understanding and sharing other people's emotions. To do this effectively in the upcoming campaign will require you to yourself in your opponent's shoes. Lack of empathy breeds a politics of fear: dividing people into groups and persuading them that they have little in common with others.

A politics of empathy in the upcoming election means:

- Trying to understand why people might come to a different conclusion to you.

- Highlighting the ties that bind us together, instead of dividing us.

5   Richard Rorty (1998), Achieving Our Country
6   Roger Scruton (2017), Where We Are

DISAGREE WITH YOUR OPPONENTS CIVILLY

In democratic politics, disagreement is to be expected - it's normal. That's why that when there is disagreement it's vital this happens in a civil fashion. This means:

- Acknowledging your opponents' right to disagree on a matter - we don't all have to hold the same view.

- Treating people in good faith: presume they disagree with you not because of ulterior motives but, instead, different political principles and priorities.

Transparent campaigning

Political campaigns have digital tools at their fingertips that enable them to be incredibly sophisticated in their voter targeting. Policing and regulating these campaigns is incredibly difficult. While in the short term, we understand why campaigns are lured into the use of micro-targeting tools, we remain concerned about their impact on the long term health of our democracy. We co-signed a letter calling on all the advertising platforms to place a moratorium on political advertising in this campaign, but this call has not been heeded. Unless and until we can properly regulate online digital campaigning, we encourage the parties to take a self-denying ordinance and limit the extent to which they use these tools.

Political parties need to:

1. Be transparent about your data processing activities, including identifying the mechanisms you use to engage with voters (e.g. social media, websites, direct messaging), and how you collect people's data and the sources of this.

2. Be transparent about the companies you use to obtain data and to further process data, including profiling and targeting, such as data brokers and political advertising companies as well as which companies are providing your campaign tools.

3. Provide imprints about the campaigner and sponsorship of all digital ads and other forms of sponsored content and should archive all sponsored messages they run in accessible online databases.

4. Publish a complete, easily accessible and easily understandable list of any campaign groups you have financial or informal collaborative campaigning relationships with, including all third parties and joint campaigners.

5. Make publicly available timely information on your expenditure for online activities, including paid online political advertisements and communications. This should include information regarding which company have assisted you in your online activities, including the amount spent on each companies' services.

6. Adopt and publish data protection policies and carry out and publish data protection audits and impact assessments.

Advertising platforms need to:

1. Create freely accessible public databases of political adverts updated in real-time. They should provide data on each ad's content, cost, target audience, who it reached and how many versions were available. This should be provided through accessible dashboards and in machine-readable formats.

2. Proactively search out and flag potentially political content on their platforms, rather than allow political parties and other campaigners to self-report and voluntarily sign-up to transparency measures.

Consensus campaigning

We need to make sure we spend more time talking about the issues that unite us not those that divide us, with candidates encouraged to support each other where they agree, not try to create false divisions. As identified earlier in this paper, there are a range of issues on which there is broad political agreement both on their importance and what needs to be done. These include:

- Protecting the NHS

- Tackling climate change

- Rebalancing our economy

- Solving the social care crisis

- Reducing crime

- Improving education and training

CONCLUSION

Our goal at Demos is to support citizens of every background and political leaders of every side to develop a new form of democracy: a deliberative, participatory politics where everyone has a meaningful say in the decisions that affect them.

This pamphlet makes the case for a more civil politics where we treat our political opponents, and representatives, with respect. We make the case for a decentralised politics where power lies with local representatives not Whitehall mandarins. And we argue for a better way of using technology, to build a digital politics which unites people of all walks of life, instead of finding new ways to divide us.

Our call in this election, and beyond, is for real reform to our political system. We need to build a new kind of deliberative politics, so our nations and peoples can come together to find collective answers to the big challenges we face.

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