

The problems of the future will cross borders, so the solutions should too.

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Populism successfully marries the real grievances of those for whom our global system has not delivered with the anxieties of those whose historical privilege is being eroded. Over the past few years we have seen that the result is a powerful coalition which can command widespread electoral support and exert a significant (perhaps disproportionate) influence on the political discourse.

But over time it is inevitable that this coalition will fragment. One cannot simultaneously provide redress to the losers of historical injustice and protect the primacy of the winners. It does not however follow that populism is therefore a short-term phenomenon: repeated cycles of dissolution and outrage are just as likely an outcome: one which has historically led to increases in identity-based violence.

Fake news, and the increasing ideological selectivity of news consumers, has led to a fragmentation of the polis into an overlapping and competing set of ideologically divided poleis. This makes it harder to find common understanding: which depends on shared underlying assumptions.

It also leads to a greater tolerance of radical (and frequently intolerant) ideas and makes it easier for would-be perpetrators of identity-based violence to find validation and allies. At the same time, it allows those historically excluded by the mainstream discourse to find an audience for their truths, facilitating solidarity and protection.

Climate change will require the mass movement of populations around the earth. This will place national boundaries under unprecedented strain. Atrocities have already resulted as a consequence of attempts to maintain 20th century notions of national sovereignty and boundaries in a world where far greater flexibility will be required.

At the same time, the concept of nationality has never been weaker, as identities become fuzzier due to the transnational reach of capital and culture and the lack of regard for borders shown by digital information. Yet if Westphalian notions of the state are dying then they are doing so very noisily; is this nationalism's backlash, its death rattle, or the start of its recovery? And either way what will the consequences be for identity-based violence?

Our global system is far from innocent in the creation of these problems. As they cross borders, so too must the solutions, and so that same global system will be integral to protection from identity-based violence in the future, as it has been in the past. But systems, by their very nature, represent the interests of the powerful, and identity-based violence is at its most dangerous when waged by the strong against the weak.

How, then, do we manufacture political will to persuade our global system to act against its own interests and radically redistribute power? And/or can protection be performed more effectively in the presence of our current inequalities?