



REIMAGINE  
EUROPA

# ***Future4Citizens*** Project

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2022 - 2024

**Erika Staël von Holstein**  
*Chief Executive*



*« Aujourd'hui, nous vivons dans notre continent morcelé et fragilisé. Nous avons eu la chance offerte pas nos carrières de bien connaître les Etats-Unis d'Amérique, puis la Chine, devenus les hyperpuissances d'aujourd'hui et de demain. Nous sommes conscients de l'impérieuse obligation qu'a notre Europe de s'intégrer pour se retrouver à niveau égal avec ces deux géants.*

*Nous sommes dans une nouvelle phase de l'intégration européenne, celle de la génération nouvelle, plus active, plus inventive et plus solidaire, que nous voyons entrer dans la vie publique.*

*Il s'agit de créer un large espace, apaisé et libre, où vous pourrez tenter votre chance et organiser votre vie, dans le décor d'une des civilisations les plus captivantes et les plus variées que l'humanité ait produites.*

*Ce projet vous appartient. Pour le mener à bien, il vous faudra abandonner beaucoup de vos pensées négatives, telles que les préjugés politiques, l'égoïsme individuel, la peur du changement, et croire à la force du grand espoir qui se présente à vous de bâtir une des grandes civilisations du XXIe siècle, appuyée sur les fondements de notre histoire.*

*Nous vous demandons de réussir. »*

**Valéry Giscard d'Estaing & Helmut Schmidt**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



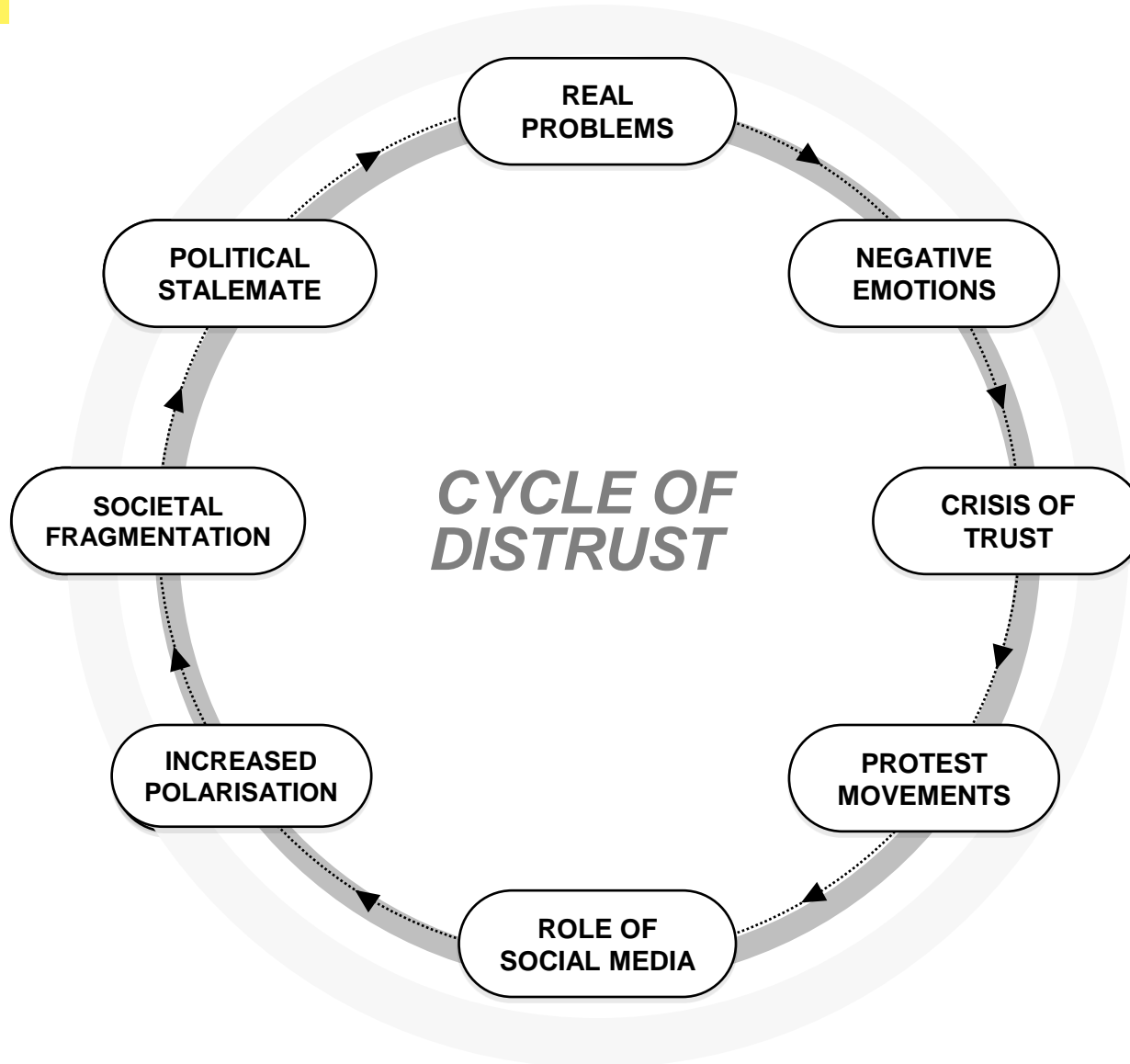
Polarisation, social fragmentation, disaffection and a crisis of trust are just some of the words that characterize the past years. This is not a European but a global trend.

Since its launch in 2017, Re-Imagine Europa has worked to better understand why this is happening and to develop a systemic approach to reverse the existing trends.

With the European elections looming and predictions of real-world challenges for 2023 (inflation, increasing energy and food prices), for the first time in history there is a real risk of destructive political forces taking over.

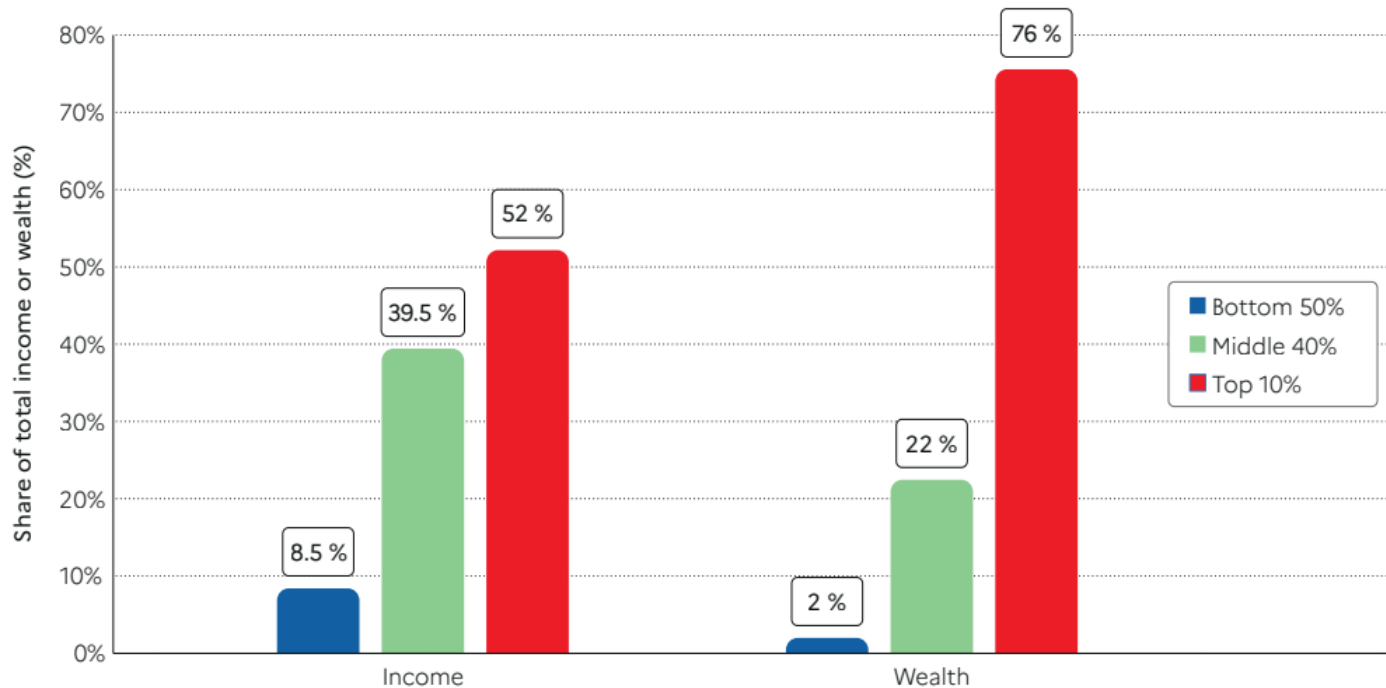
We need to develop a "vaccine against anger", move away from binary 'yes/no' positions that divide, and find a constructive way forward that can start addressing the current crisis of trust.

# WHY



## a. REAL PROBLEMS /1

**Figure 1** Global income and wealth inequality, 2021

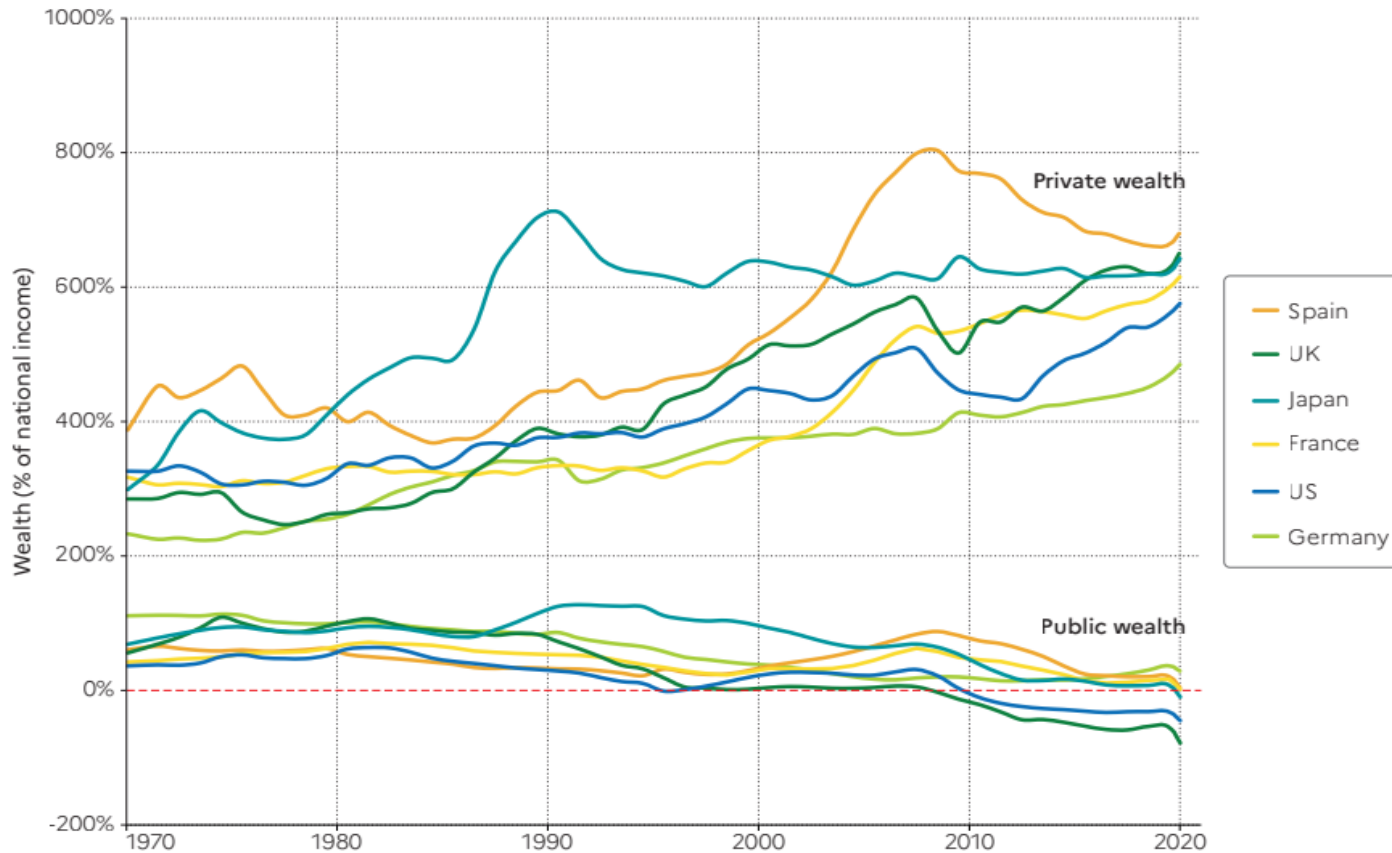


**Interpretation:** The global bottom 50% captures 8.5% of total income measured at Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). The global bottom 50% owns 2% of wealth (at Purchasing Power Parity). The global top 10% owns 76% of total Household wealth and captures 52% of total income in 2021. Note that top wealth holders are not necessarily top income holders. Incomes are measured after the operation of pension and unemployment systems and before taxes and transfers. **Sources and series:** [wir2022.wid.world/methodology](https://www.wir2022.wid.world/methodology).



## a. REAL PROBLEMS /2

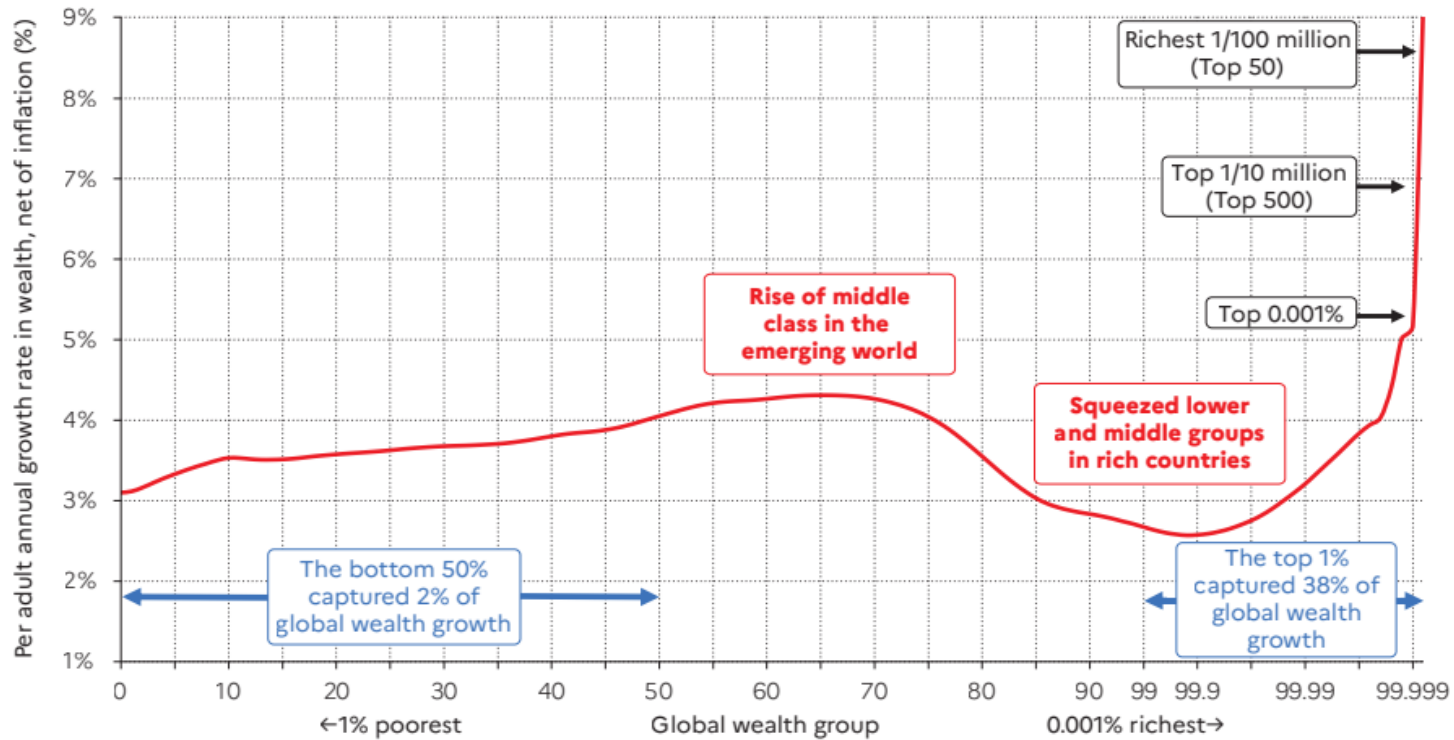
**Figure 8** The rise of private wealth and the decline of public wealth in rich countries, 1970-2020



**Interpretation:** In UK, public wealth dropped from 60% of national income in 1970 to -106% in 2020. Public wealth is the sum of all financial and non-financial assets, net of debts, held by governments. **Sources and series:** [wir2022.wid.world/methodology](http://wir2022.wid.world/methodology), Bauluz et al. (2021) and updates.

# a. REAL PROBLEMS /3

**Figure 9** Average annual wealth growth rate, 1995-2021



**Interpretation:** Growth rates among the poorest half of the population were between 3% and 4% per year, between 1995 and 2021. Since this group started from very low wealth levels, its absolute levels of growth remained very low. The poorest half of the world population only captured 2.3% of overall wealth growth since 1995. The top 1% benefited from high growth rates (3% to 9% per year). This group captured 38% of total wealth growth between 1995 and 2021. Net household wealth is equal to the sum of financial assets (e.g. equity or bonds) and non-financial assets (e.g. housing or land) owned by individuals, net of their debts. **Sources and series:** [wir2022.wid.world/methodology](https://wir2022.wid.world/methodology), Bauluz et al. (2021) and updates



## b. NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

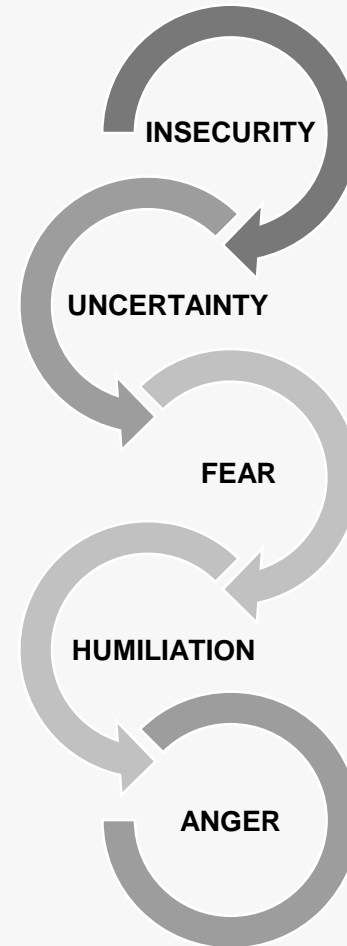
As debates become increasingly emotional, policymakers and scientists alike have had to accept that in the battle of heart and mind of the human being, **narratives will consistently outperform data in the ability to influence human thinking and motivate human action.**

Emotions and feelings determine the way we act and react to reality.

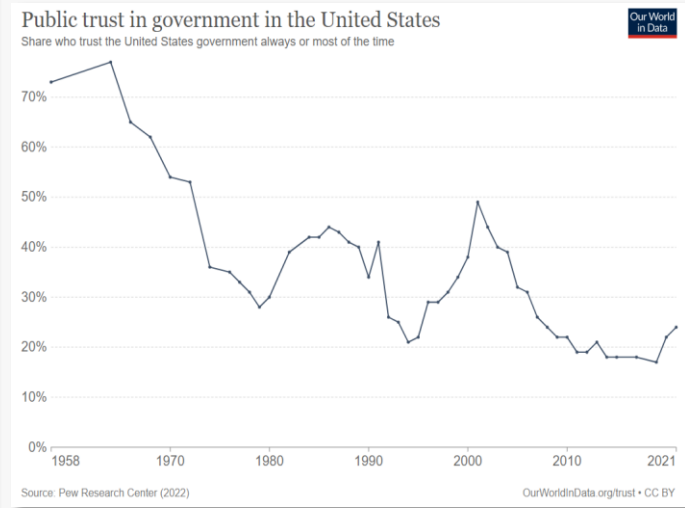
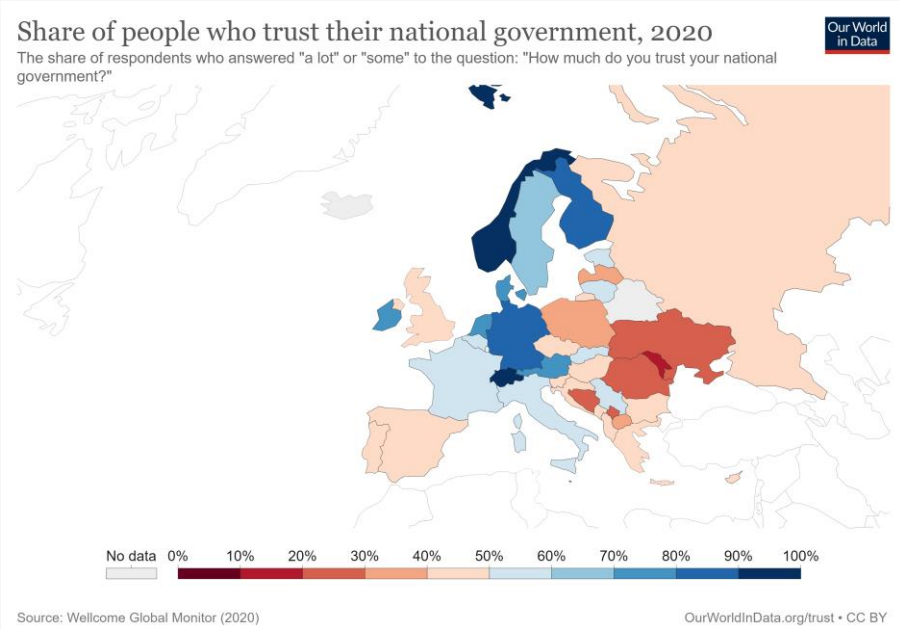


***Rational thought is value-based.***

*- George Lakoff, Cognitive Linguist and Philosopher*



# c. CRISIS OF TRUST



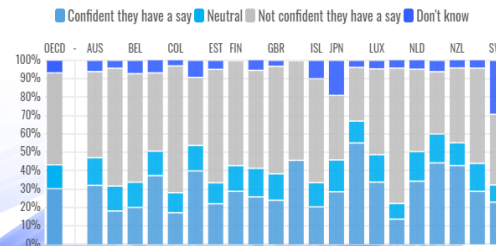
**The emergence of new political entities does form part of a wider and more profound movement of mass rebellion against the established order."**

- Manuel Castells, *Rupture: The Crisis of Liberal Democracy*

## Few people see opportunities to participate in policy making

Half say the political system does not let them have a say in decision making

Share of respondents reporting different levels of confidence that the political system lets them have a say in government decision making (0-10 scale), 2021



# d. PROTEST MOVEMENTS



For France's Yellow Vest protesters, the fight goes on



... BBC

Covid: Conspiracy and untruths drive Europe's Covid protests



NEWS

Spain: Violence erupts after peaceful Catalan independence rally

The violent unrest in Barcelona is the first major incident since the city was rocked by days of rioting. Earlier, 350,000 independence supporters rallied peacefully in the regional capital.



'Biggest, most united' protest yet planned over cost-of-living crisis

Comment



Aaron Tinney

Wednesday 17 Aug 2022 3:52 pm

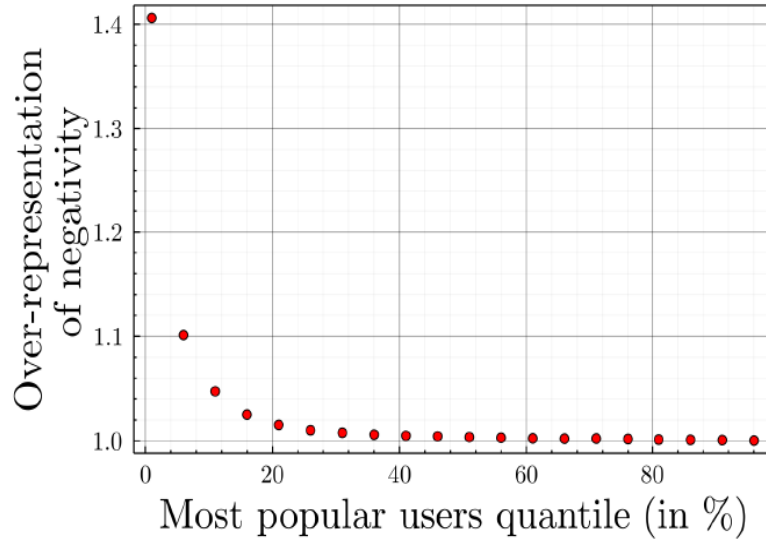


2.5k  
SHARES



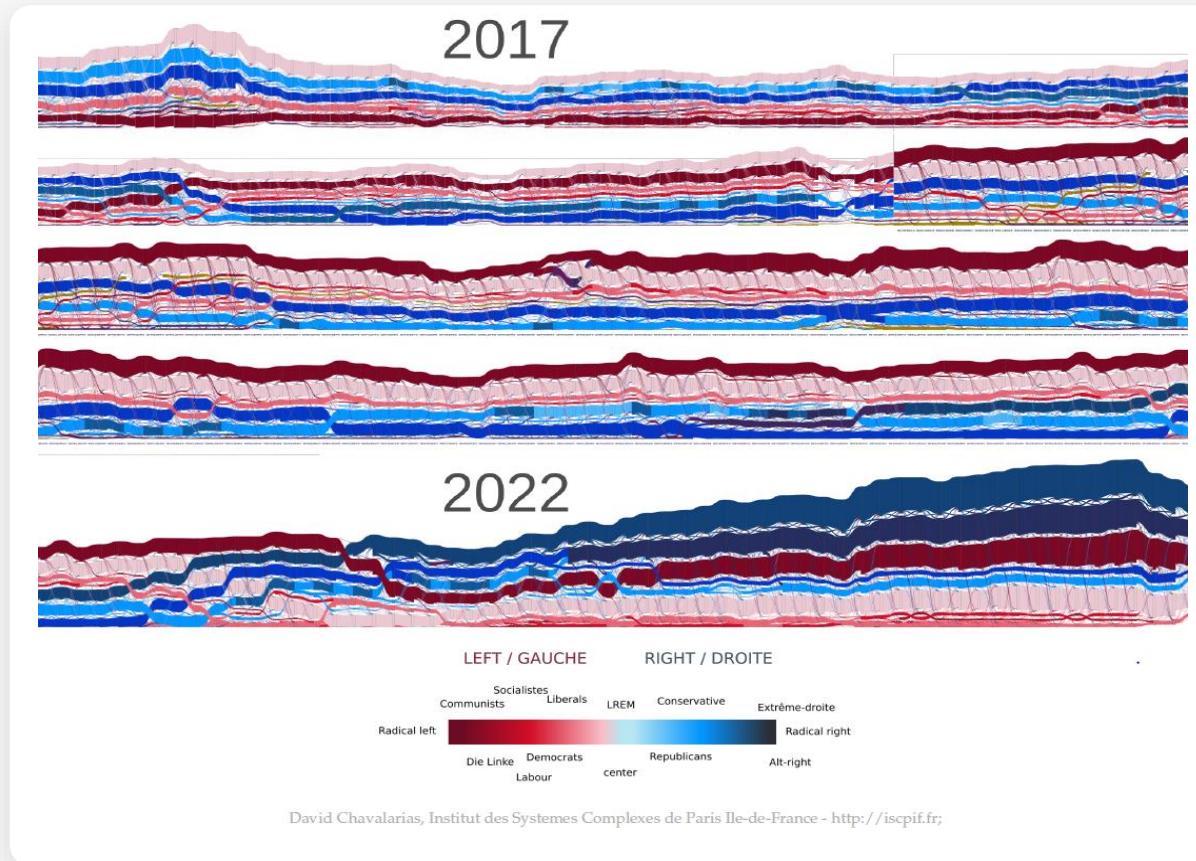
# e. ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Over-connectivity of negative people in synthetic graphs, Bouchaud, Panahi, Chavalarias (forthcoming)





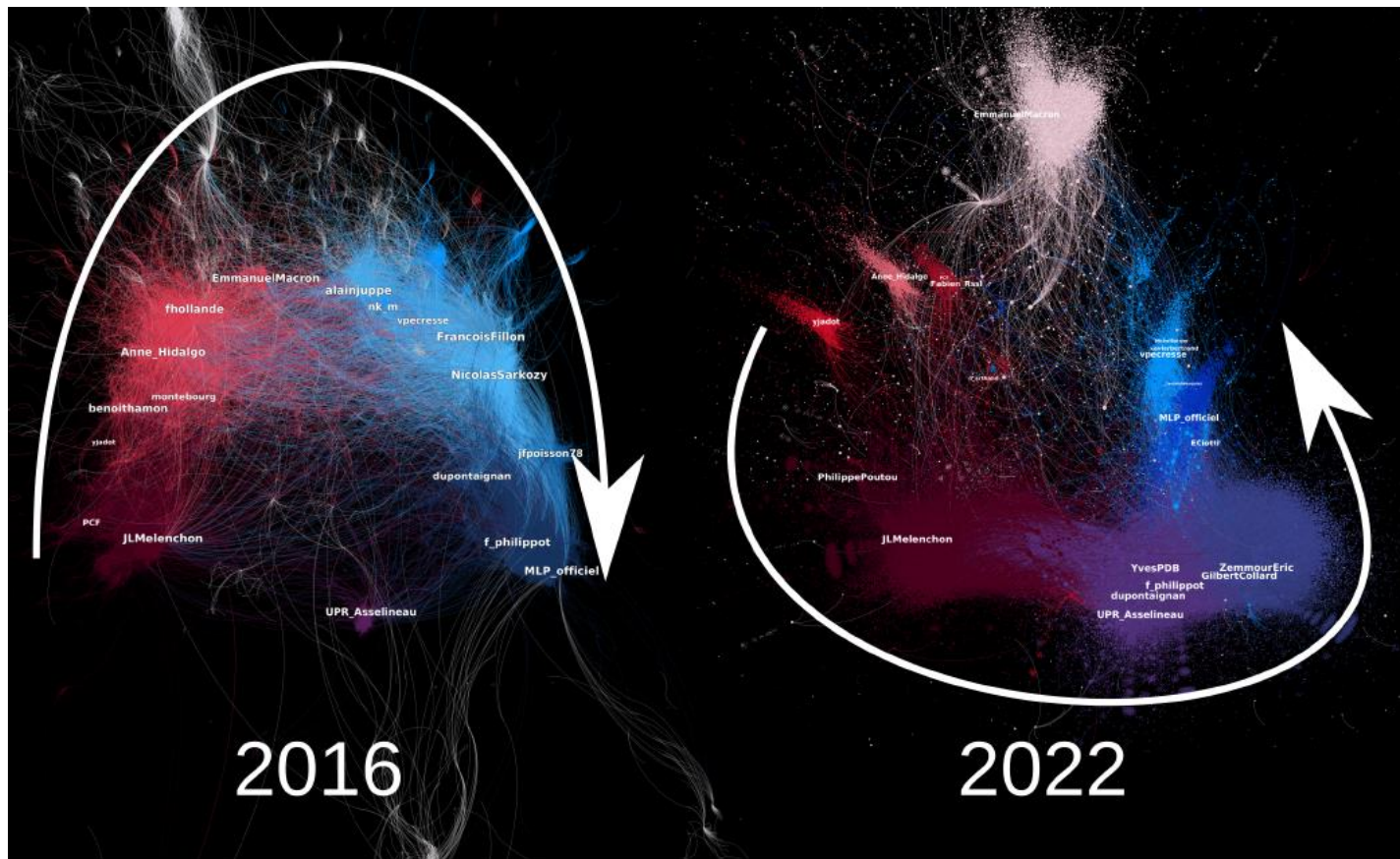
## f. INCREASED POLARISATION



***The flow of information and debates on social media maybe to a large degree understood as a competition of narratives.”***

- Professor Andrzej Nowak

## g. SOCIAL FRAGMENTATION



Evolution of information on Twitter in France: circulation and quality




# ***h. POLITICAL STALEMATE***

 The New York Times

## **Crisis in Draghi Government Dismays Italians**

The prime minister's success in expanding Italy's influence left many disbelieving that part of his coalition would knock the country back...

 Financial Times

## **Portugal's political crisis threatens government's stability**

 Times Now


**UK political crisis: Boris Johnson refuses to step down despite mass resignations**

## **Giorgia Meloni: a return to Mussolini's Italy?**

People are more scared during a crisis, allowing the politics or fear to work, and swing voters towards far-right extremists in particular.

## **How Italy's far-right swing will sway the world | Mint**

Italy has elected an ultra-conservative government, soon after the election in Sweden that saw an anti-immigration party making gains.

 Al Jazeera

## **'A real crisis of democracy': France enters a political deadlock**

"Macron lost a lot of supporters which shows that it is a crisis of the heart," Philippe Marlière, professor of French and European politics...

## **Politics latest news: Liz Truss accused of 'inept madness' in Tory backlash to market turmoil**

 Reuters

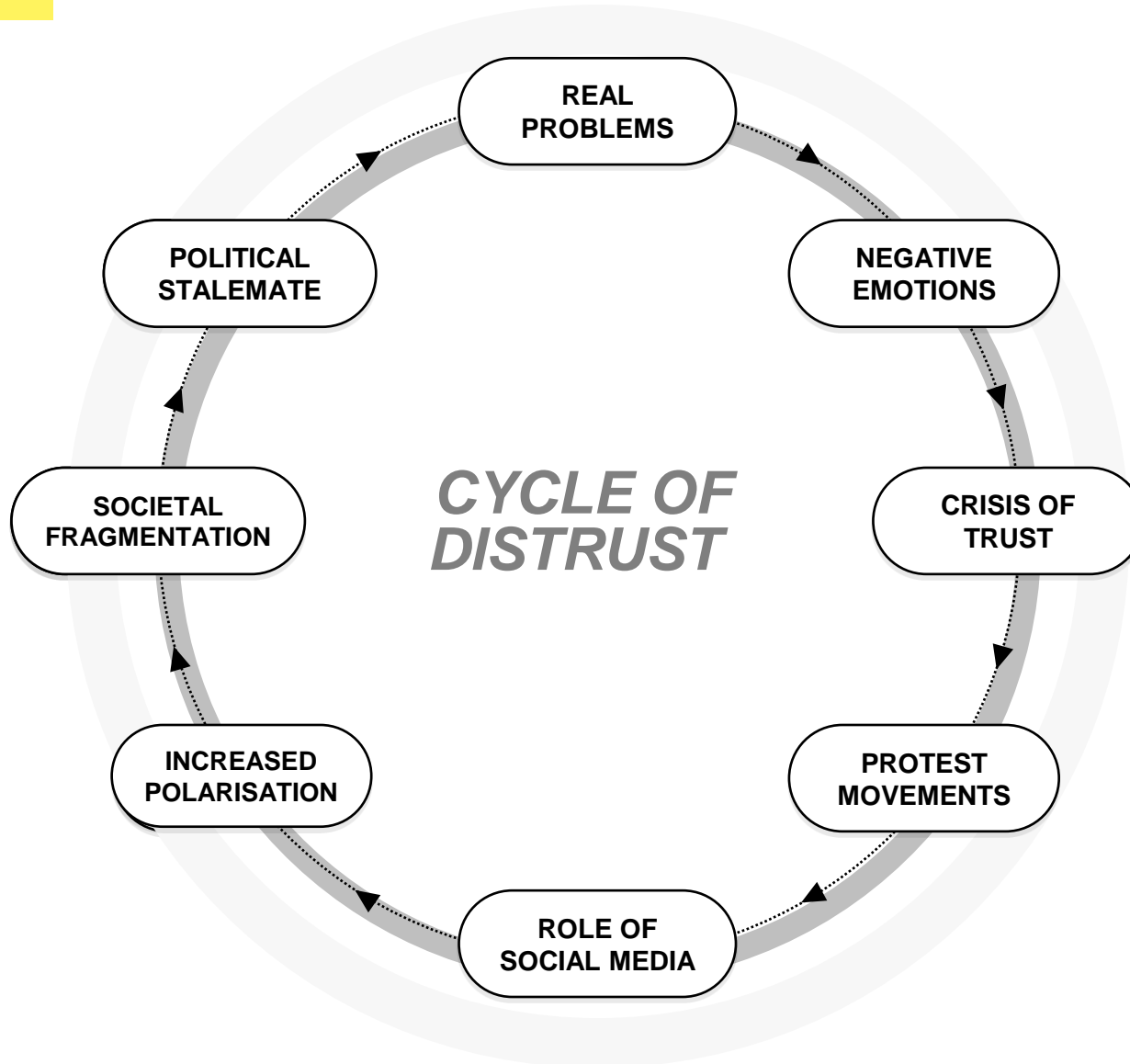
## **Swedish election puts anti-immigration Sweden Democrats ...**

"For Sweden, a new political era awaits." ... while surging inflation and the energy crisis have increasingly taken centre-stage.

## **Meloni's win cements 'normalisation of far-right' in Europe**

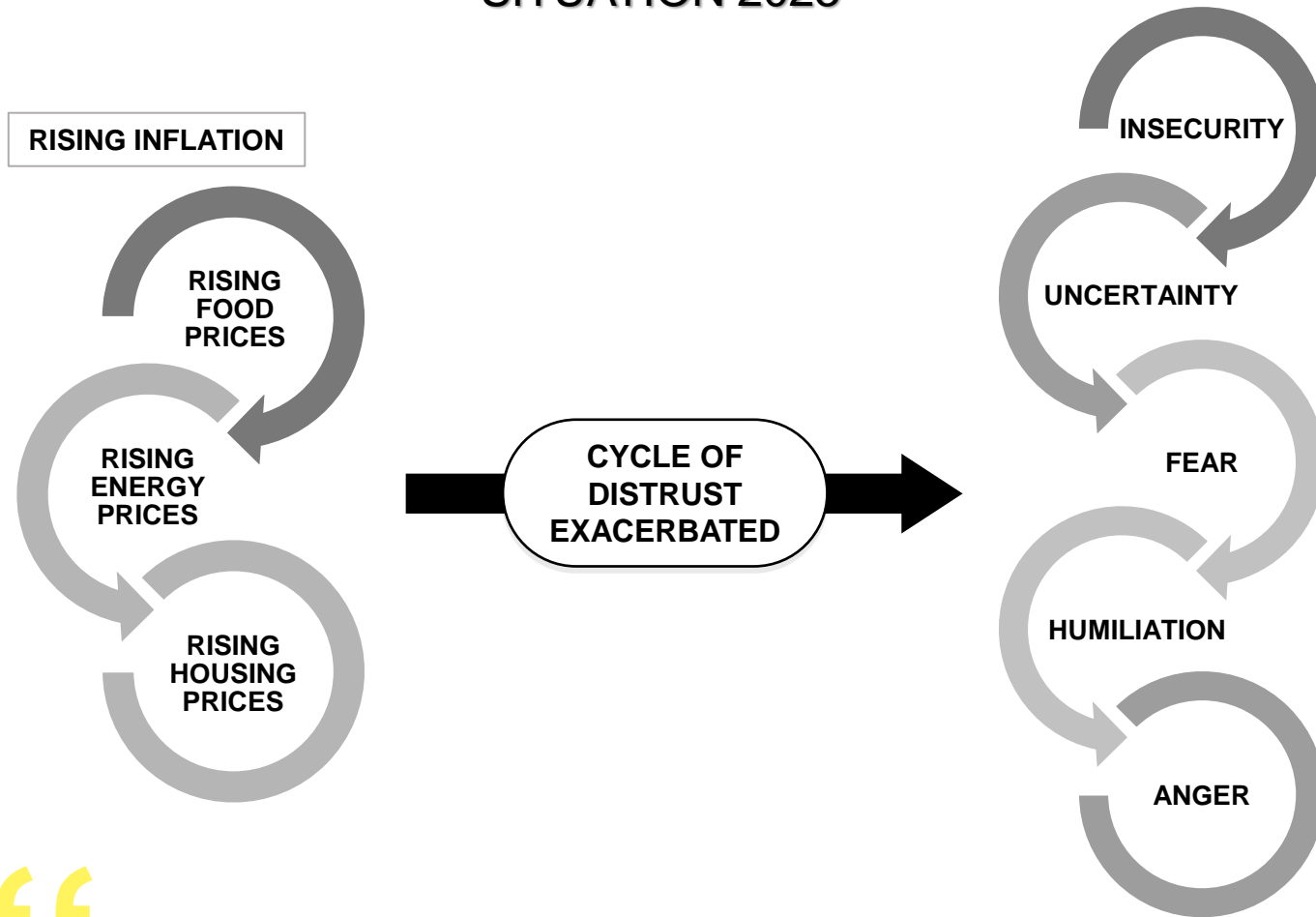
The Five Star Movement triggered the political crisis that led to early ... In Sweden's elections earlier in September, the far-right Sweden...

# AND THE CYCLE CONTINUES...



# PROBLEMS AHEAD OF NEXT EU ELECTIONS

## SITUATION 2023



***We are not thinking machines that feel, we are feeling machines that think.”***

*- Antonio Damasio, Professor of Neuroscience, Psychology, Philosophy and Neurology. Global expert on emotions.*

# WHAT



***Crisis of trust is at the basis of today's difficult situation”***

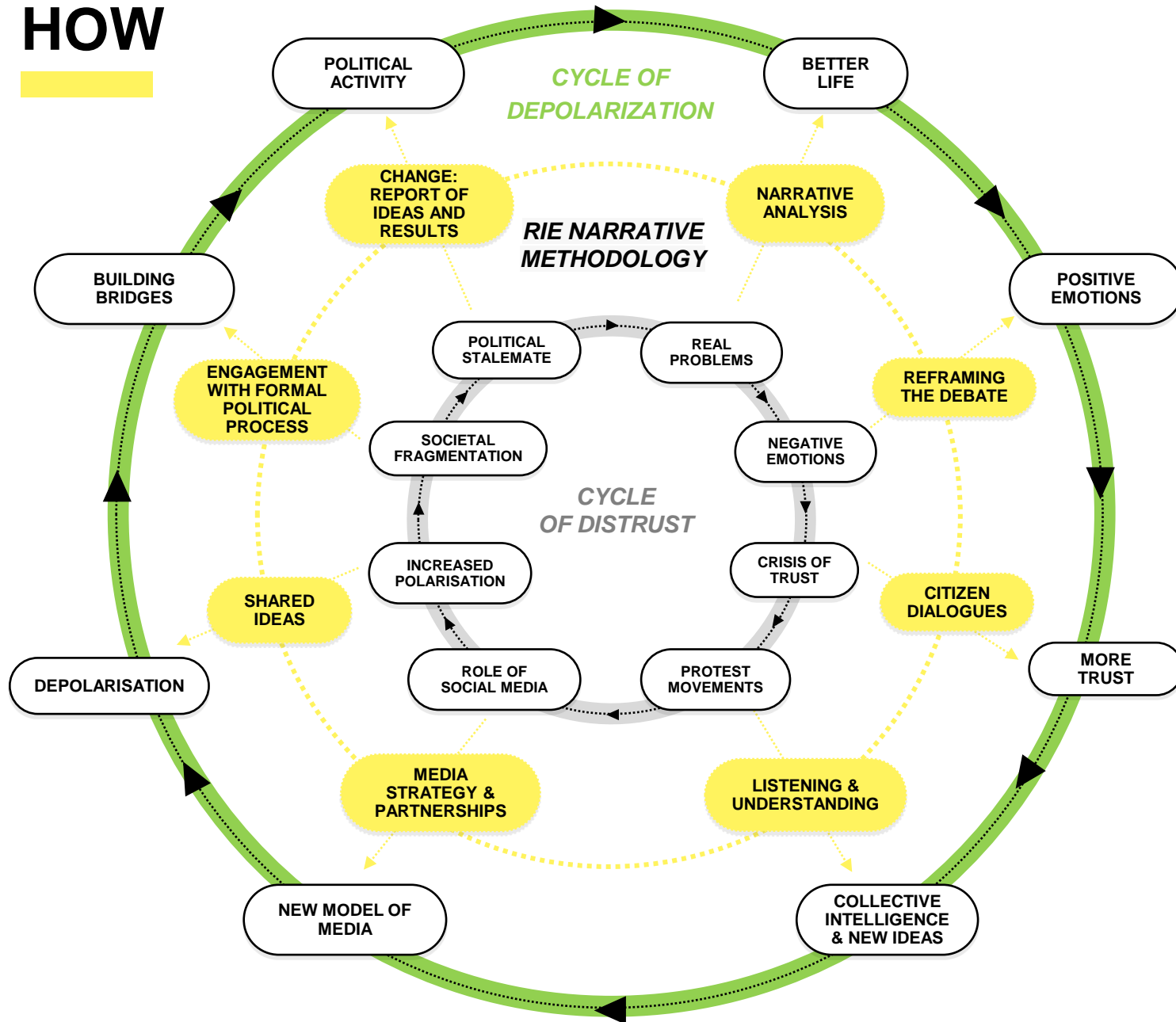
*- Professor Manuel Castells*



***We need a vaccine against anger”***

*- Professor Antonio Damasio*

# HOW



# RIE NARRATIVE METHODOLOGY /1

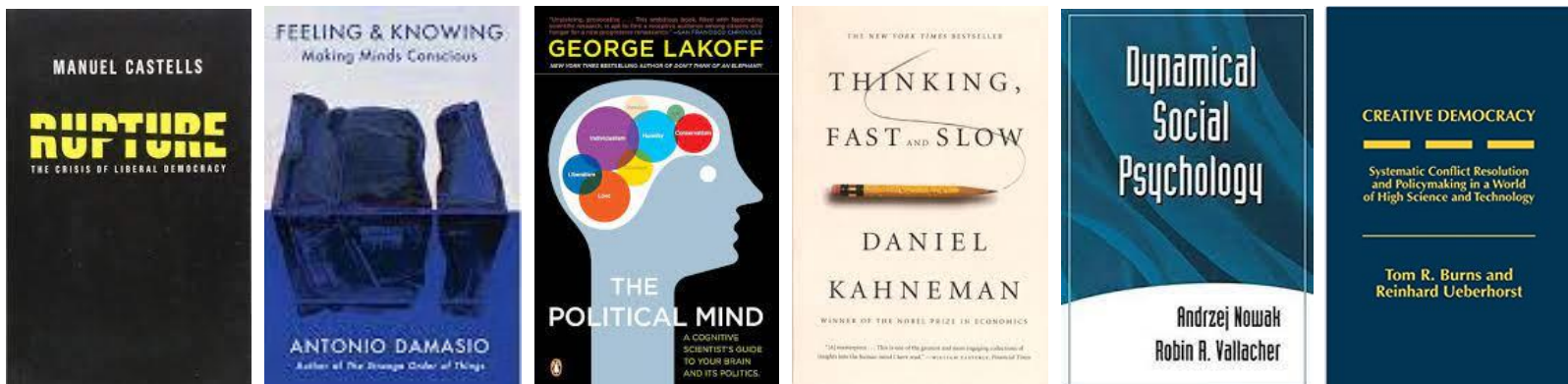
Based on insights from leading thinkers from behavioural science, philosophy, psychology, sociology and neuroscience, RIE has developed a methodology to reverse the cycle of distrust to start depolarising debates.

This is not a silver bullet.

The RIE Narrative Methodology is a process with numerous actions and multipliers to **address the different nodes of the cycle of distrust and reverse the effects to create a cycle of depolarization and trust-building.**

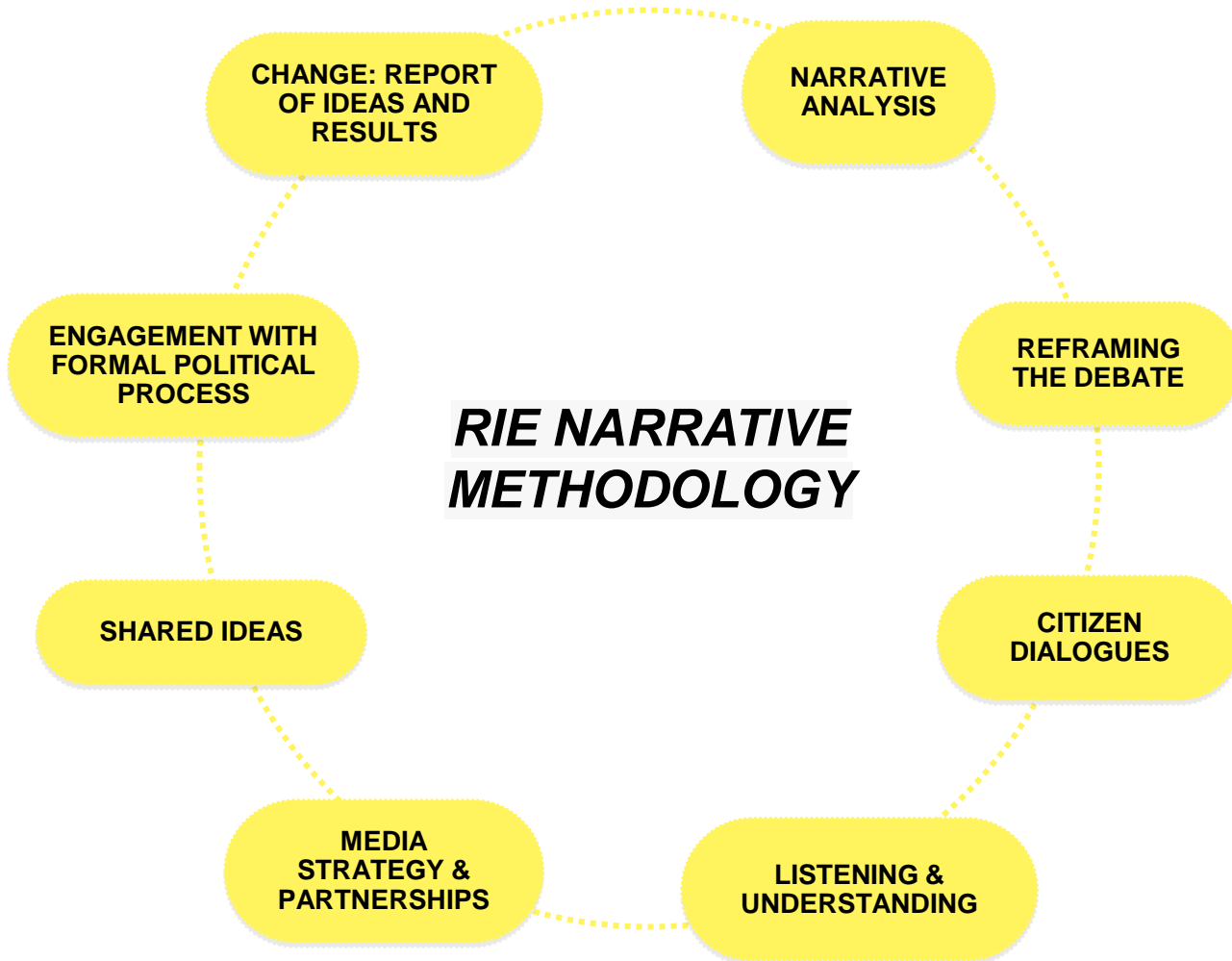
As any process, it is based on continuous action to maintain the positive cycle.

The methodology has been tested with positive results in a variety of areas within RIE.

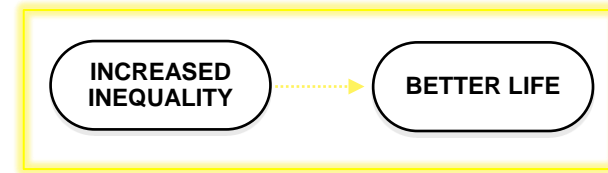




# RIE NARRATIVE METHODOLOGY /2



## a.1 NARRATIVE ANALYSIS



Narratives are at the core of how we understand reality. They define values and roles and often disguise deeper concerns or beliefs.

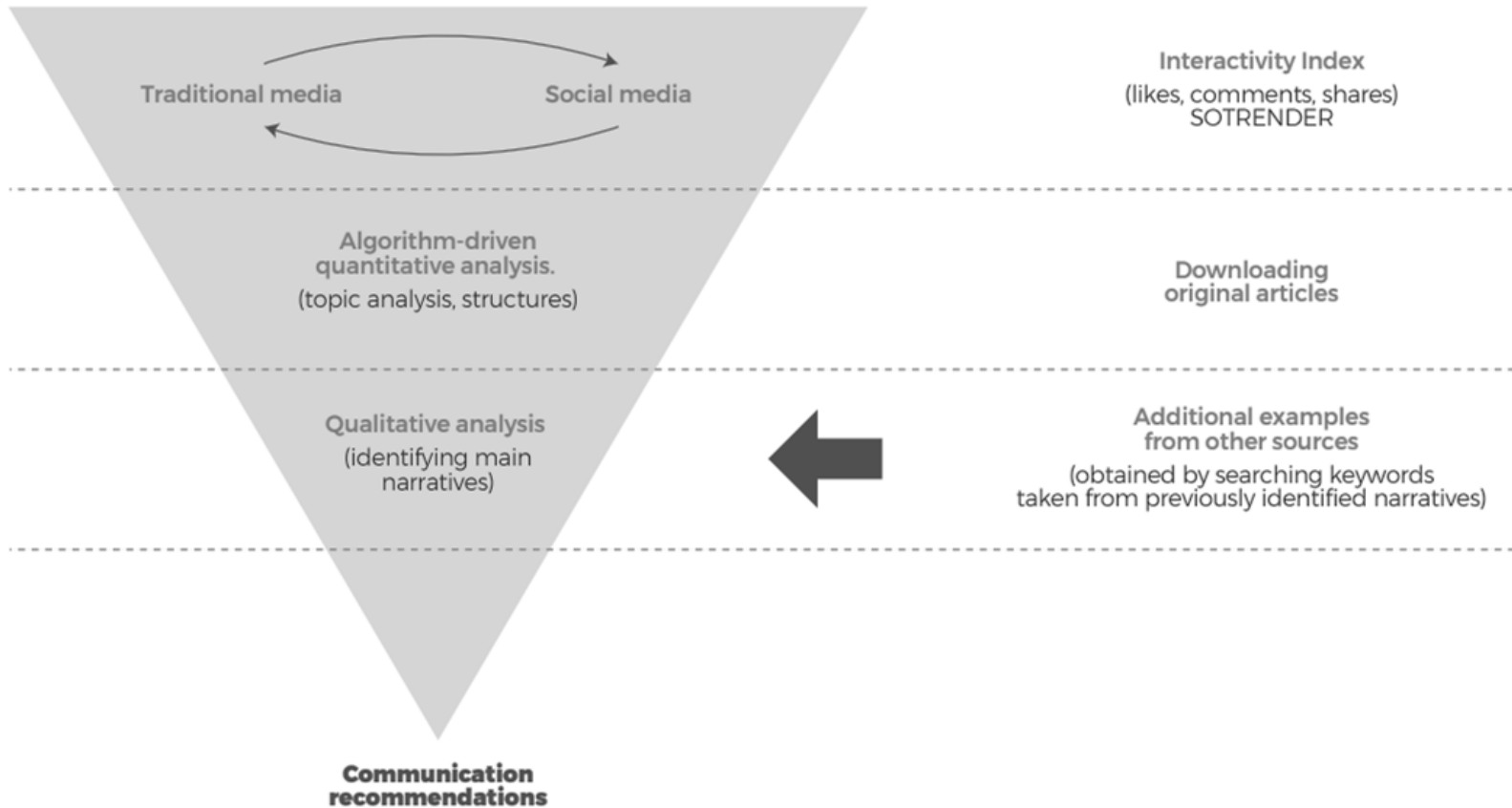
To better understand what it is people are REALLY concerned about, **a narrative analysis is essential**. Developed by Professor Andrzej Nowak (Chief Narrative Scientist at RIE) and Professor Marcin Napiórkowski (Contemporary Mythologies Scholar at RIE), the methodology includes both a **quantitative and qualitative analysis** of millions of media posts across Europe – including traditional media as well as public content on social media – in order to map what Europeans are currently saying and feeling and what their real concerns are.



***Each narrative may potentially highlight different aspects of the problem and bring new elements to a nuanced solution.”***

*- Professor Marcin Napiórkowski & Professor Andrzej Nowak*

# a.2 NARRATIVE ANALYSIS



## ***b. REFRAMING THE DEBATE***

Need to move away from binary 'yes/no' debate that exacerbates polarisation and the cycle of distrust.

Understanding what people really care about is fundamental to reframing the debate towards constructive issues and away from symbolic issues that divide.

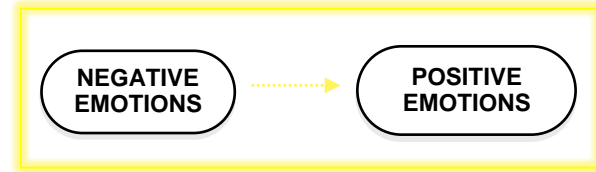
Examples:

- Immigration (Spain – VOX voters)
- Vaccines (5 Star Movement)
- US Trump voters

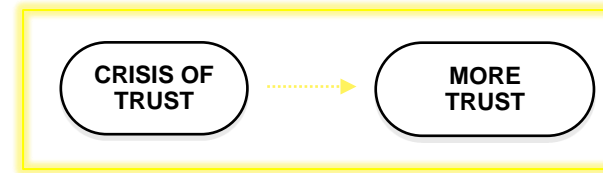


***Language disguises thought.”***

*- Ludwig Wittgenstein*



## c. CITIZEN DIALOGUES



Increasingly, people do not feel that their leaders listen to their ideas or take their concerns seriously. **Engaging people in meaningful conversations about their future is key to re-establish trust** as shown by the positive feedback of citizens engaged in the COFOE.

Starting from Spring 2023, RIE will organise **Citizen Dialogues across different cities of the 27 EU Member States** to bring together citizens and communities at local level **to build new ecosystems of narratives**. Working with local Strategic Partners and using the methodology designed with the support of a network of experts from RIE and *The Value Web*, the idea is to tune them into thinking about current challenges in the debate **around the future we want**.



***To enable dialogue, and constructively search for shared solutions we need both a new framework that allows different narratives to coexist, as well as new narratives that reflect the current reality.”***

*- Professor Marcin Napiórkowski & Professor Andrzej Nowak*

# 'CITIZEN DIALOGUES' FORMAT

Format designed by experts of RIE and *The Value Web* – a global network of professional facilitators – to create a **neutral space for open and positive debate** and learn how we can build on each other's ideas for a better future.

- 2-day event, including physical workshops and other interactive sessions, held in local language
- Approximately 150-200 selected participants in each country, in person
- Larger reach out of volunteer participants for online sessions

## Event might include:

- Inspirational talks or presentations to engage the participants and stimulate discussions
- Engaging and original working sessions for participants
- Game or artistic sessions to encourage participation and boost participants' imagination



# 'CITIZEN DIALOGUES' STRUCTURE

## DAY 1:

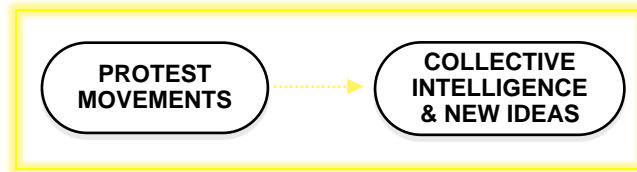
- Showcasing of values, objectives and priorities based on the preliminary study/analysis of narratives to bring people together
- Possibly interactive dinner

## DAY 2:

- Based on known objectives and shared values emerged on Day 1, identification of innovative ideas and suggestions and consequent design of proposals that could lead towards future, desired scenarios (e.g., innovative taxation/fiscal system etc.)
- Support from EU experts in the actual translation of suggested ideas into concrete and feasible proposals



## d. LISTENING & UNDERSTANDING



For the process to be successful it is imperative that it is meaningful, and that ideas and positions are listened to and considered without trying to influence the debate or impose pre-prepared solutions.

All stakeholders and actors involved, whether organizations or individuals, need to feel **ownership of the process** and that their **effort and input are valued**.



“

***Since the mechanisms for understanding reality are mostly unconscious, understanding of understanding itself becomes a political necessity.”***

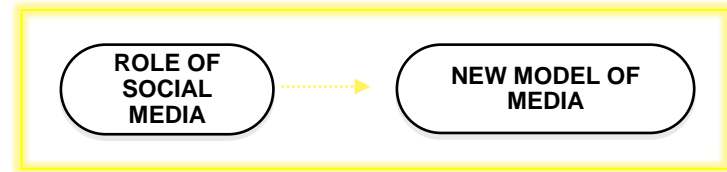
*- George Lakoff, The Political Mind: Why You Can't Understand 21st-Century American Politics with an 18th-Century Brain*

## e.1 MEDIA STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS

- Collaboration with **traditional media** at national level throughout the Citizen Dialogues.
- This will be **enhanced also by their digital streaming**, for which anyone can freely sign up to participate online so that the accessibility of the activities is ensured. The developed methodology of the Citizen Dialogues will be adapted and applied online.

Having both offline and online activities will also allow to **compare the results of the two versions**, and to **measure the effectiveness of each environment**.

**Local partners play a fundamental role to ensure the correct reach out of attendees both for physical and online sessions.**



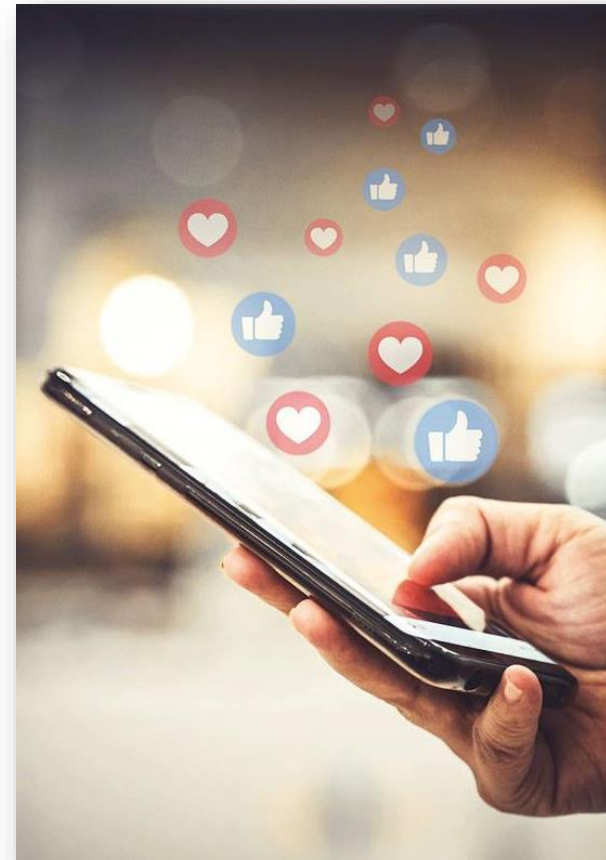
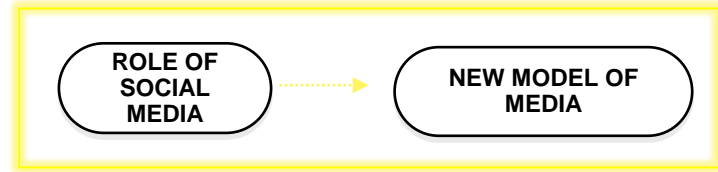
## e.2 SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Social media play a fundamental role in framing any type of debate in society today.

Working with leading experts from this world, RIE will develop a targeted social media campaign with the aim of reframing the debate around key issues.

The campaign will target an international audience of people aged **between 18 and 26 years old**.

Working with local media partners in each EU country, the objective is to **create momentum, strengthen awareness and increase reach**.



## f. SHARED IDEAS

INCREASED  
POLARISATION

DEPOLARISATION

People do not trust old solutions or that the current framework will help them in their concerns.

Therefore, to overcome modern challenges, we need to come up with new ideas that people can believe in.

This **new narrative ecosystem will lay the ground for new, shared ideas to emerge.** Ideas that go beyond existing stalemates and come with real, innovative but concrete solutions.

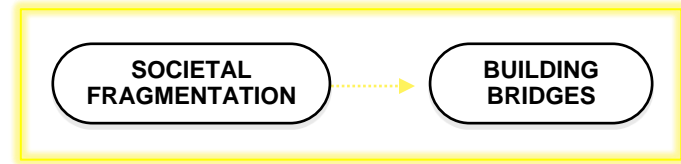


***Narrative plausibility is a key factor responsible for accepting or rejecting certain ideas, news items or new information.***

*- Quote from Mechanisms that Shape Social Media Report*



## ***g. ENGAGE WITH FORMAL POLITICAL PROCESS***



For the process to be meaningful, it needs to lead to actual results.

Working closely with the leading **European political foundations, political groups and organisations** will be a key element to ensure agency to the process.

Support of **the European institutions and key representatives of national governments** will also be pivotal.



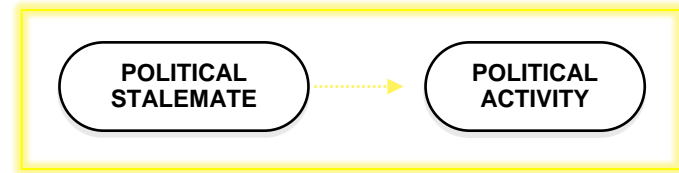


## ***h. CHANGE: Report on 'What Europeans Dream for their Future'***

In an evermore divided continent with coalition governments being the new normal, it is imperative to **get citizen support for real political action**.

RIE will collect, analyse and present the results of the **insights and feedback from EU citizens** throughout the activities in order to **evaluate the impact** of the project and **fine-tune its methodology**.

These will be built into a **final report** which will be **delivered in February 2024 and presented** to leading representatives of the European institutions, including the EP President Ms. Roberta Metsola.





## **METHODOLOGY APPLICABILITY & LONG-LASTEDNESS**

The developed **methodology can be replicated and adapted to specific contexts**, and so translated into future Re-Imagine Europa's related activities, as well as into shaping its overall agenda to further engage citizens meaningfully in challenging times.

The goal is to maintain the project's methodology as a **permanent and innovative exercise**.





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EVERY  
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**Thank you for  
your time!**

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