

<b>Institution:</b> University of Kent		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 19: Politics and International Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Influencing Centre-Left Party and Think Tank Understandings of Postliberal Politics in the UK, France, and Australia		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Adrian Pabst	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Professor of Politics	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 1 September 2009 – present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 1 January 2015 to 31 July 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Professor Pabst's research on postliberalism has generated new thinking within centre-left parties and think tanks. His ideas on the common good and virtue have changed the understanding of both parties and think tanks about why socio-economic liberalism is in crisis and what constructive alternatives are available.</p> <p>Pabst's work focuses on 'operationalising' the common good and virtue in policy terms to help provide an ethical framework for politicians and policy-makers beyond individual rights or collective utility. His widely published proposals about strengthening mutual arrangements based on reciprocal obligations have been adopted nationally and internationally – including sustained collaborations with the Labour Party (UK, Australia), the new French party <i>Refondation</i>, and London-based think tanks (St Paul's Institute; Common Good Foundation).</p>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Since <b>2014</b>, Pabst's research has helped to provide centre-left parties and think tanks with a new narrative and fresh policy proposals in a radically changed context dominated by the opposition between liberalism and populism. The work charts a path beyond this and other binaries by showing that postliberalism offers resources for novel policy ideas in times when ideologies are in question and events such as the 2016 Brexit vote or the COVID-19 pandemic expose deep flaws in the dominant economic model. Far from being anti-liberal, postliberal politics seeks to complement liberalism and correct its extreme effects: growing wealth inequality, a sense of powerlessness, and the devaluation of certain professions and identities.</p> <p>Pabst developed a novel critique of the limits of liberalism and outlined available alternatives focused on virtue and the common good. The works was published in three monographs [<b>R1</b>, <b>R5</b>, <b>R6</b>] in <b>2016</b> and <b>2019</b>, seven journal articles (e.g. [<b>R3</b>] in <b>2017</b>) and an edited collection [<b>R1</b>] in <b>2015</b>. Pabst also transposed the main ideas into media essays and policy reports (e.g. [<b>R4</b>] in <b>2018</b>). The research has put the terms 'postliberalism' and 'politics of virtue' in the common lexicon of politicians and policy-makers, including Jon Cruddas MP, Lisa Nandy MP, and Rachel Reeves MP. As demonstrated in section 4, Pabst's research has influenced their thinking about why the excesses of socio-economic liberalism leave people without decent jobs, a political voice, and a sense of belonging.</p> <p>The key findings of Pabst's research are threefold. First, Pabst established a new critique of contemporary liberalism, showing that many liberal policies such as financial liberalisation and austerity brought about a concentration of wealth, a centralisation of power, and, crucially, a</p>		

commodification of everyday existence [R2, R3]. Contemporary liberalism offers more opportunities and freedoms for individuals, but the benefits accrue disproportionately to what Pabst terms a novel 'oligarchy' composed of 'old elites' and 'new classes' – global finance, tech platforms, and a managerial class clustered in metropolitan hubs. A key insight of Pabst's work is that economic and social liberalism reinforce each other by promoting individualism, which privileges transactions and private autonomy over relationships and attachment to people and place [R4, R5]. Pabst's critique has helped to change think-tank and political party understandings of the limits of liberalism and postliberal alternatives, including post-COVID-19.

Secondly, the postliberal politics developed by Pabst combines freedom with security by pursuing economic justice and social cohesion [R4, R5] underpinned by the common good and virtue. One way to foster economic justice is through a better balance of the interests of capital, labour, and the communities within which they are embedded. An example Pabst focused on is greater economic democracy anchored in workers' representation on company boards or new worker organisations in the 'gig economy'. Greater social cohesion involves tackling loneliness and isolation by rebuilding civic ties – for instance, by creating mutuals that provide adult social care rather than the impersonal mechanisms of the central state or the free market. Pabst identified that this promotes the common good, which combines individual fulfilment with mutual flourishing; for example, being recognised for one's role, talents, and contribution to society through paid or unpaid work [R2, R4]. The common good is a richer conception of justice than individual rights or collective utility alone – it seeks to re-value citizenship and dignity, both of which are vital to a healthy democracy [R5].

Thirdly, the conception of the common good developed by Pabst has established a new postliberal political and policy platform, including concrete policy ideas concerning the free movement of capital and people [R4]. Examples include:

- Focusing capital allocation on regional and social funding needs, by establishing regional banks and building civic institutions (e.g. stronger professional associations and trade unions);
- Reconnecting financial and commercial activity with a social and ecological purpose, by rewriting company law and strengthening the social license of businesses;
- Creating a national civic service for people of all ages to strengthen the meaning of citizenship.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[R1] Geary, Ian, and Pabst, Adrian (eds.) (2015). *Blue Labour: Forging a New Politics*. London: I.B. Tauris, 304pp. ISBN: 9781784534912. <http://kar.kent.ac.uk/51955/>

[R2] Milbank, John, and Pabst, Adrian (2016). *The Politics of Virtue: Post-liberalism and the Human Future*. London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 385pp. ISBN: 9781783486496. <http://kar.kent.ac.uk/51954/>

French translation (2018): *La politique de la vertu: post-libéralisme et l'avenir human*. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 520pp. ISBN: 9782220092539. <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/76651/>

[R3] Pabst, Adrian (2017). 'Postliberalism: The New Centre Ground of British Politics', *Political Quarterly*, 88:2. ISSN: 1467-923X. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12363>

[R4] Pabst, Adrian (2018). *A Common Good Approach to Free Movement and Capital, with a foreword by Rachel Reeves MP* (Policy Report). ISBN: 978-1-5272-2118-5. [http://www.stpaulsinstitute.org.uk/assets/images/sp\\_commongoodapproachtofreemovement.pdf](http://www.stpaulsinstitute.org.uk/assets/images/sp_commongoodapproachtofreemovement.pdf),

[R5] Pabst, Adrian (2019). *The Demons of Liberal Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 171pp. ISBN: 978-1-5095-2845-5. <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/68812/>

[R6] Pabst, Adrian (2019). *Story of Our Country: Labor's Vision for Australia*. Sydney: Kapunda Press, 220pp. ISBN: 9781925826593. <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/76652/>

#### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Pabst's research has challenged established norms in centre-left thinking through his sustained cooperation with Labour politicians (UK, Australia) and *Refondation*, a new political movement in France. The work has also generated new projects with two think tanks: St Paul's Institute (London) and the Common Good Foundation (London).

##### Informing UK Labour Politicians' Thinking, Policy Ideas, and Resources

The work with politicians from the UK Labour Party (membership of about 500,000) has been the most extensive example of impact. Since 2015, Pabst's research [R1, R2] has informed the thinking of Blue Labour, a group of politicians and advisers within the Party. Lord Glasman, a co-founder, writes:

'His 2016 book *The Politics of Virtue: Post-liberalism and the Human Future* (co-written with John Milbank) has shaped Blue Labour's work in two respects. One is the understanding of the liberal consensus at the heart of British politics for over forty years. [...] Pabst's specific contribution has been to analyse liberalism's fusion of market with state power at the expense of intermediary institutions such as burial societies, cooperatives, guilds, universities and faith communities.' [a]

Since 2015, Pabst's research has also underpinned Blue Labour policy ideas on how to strengthen vocational training by transforming certain universities into vocational colleges and how to establish a National Civic Service aimed at nurturing a stronger sense of civic obligations. Glasman writes:

'The other impact [Pabst's] research has generated is in terms of Blue Labour's constructive alternative to liberalism. Adrian's work on post-liberal politics has helped to put the common good and virtue at the heart of Blue Labour's political and policy platform. [...] Virtue is as central to human beings as vice, and politics can encourage more virtuous behaviour through incentives and rewards, as Adrian's work also shows – including a civic service to learn a sense of mutual obligations.' [a]

In addition, since early 2017, Pabst has worked closely with Labour politicians as part of a new initiative called 'Labour Together', whose vice-chairs include Lisa Nandy MP and Jon Cruddas MP.

Pabst's research on economic justice [R4, R5] has informed the work of Jonathan Rutherford, a Labour Together adviser who was speechwriter to Rachel Reeves MP and Lisa Nandy MP. Rutherford drew on Pabst's ideas for Reeves' 2018 essay 'Everyday Economy'. Furthermore, Nandy's 2019 Clement Attlee Lecture on regulating tech platforms directly references Pabst's research on how to bring about greater economic democracy [b]. Both texts help to shape the Labour Party's economic policy platform. As Rutherford writes:

'Adrian's research has played a significant role in shaping a new kind of politics for Labour in response to the new political period we are now in. Based on his book, *The Politics of Virtue: Post-liberalism and the Human Future* (2016), he has been one of the foremost exponents of the idea of Post-Liberalism which is influencing political debates on both the centre left and the centre right. He has also been a pioneer of new ways of thinking about geopolitics and of a fusion of political philosophy and virtue ethics. Adrian's influence in the field of political ethics, political economy and geopolitics draws on his research and scholarship such that he presents a consistent intellectual approach and is one of the few people able to articulate a consistent and rounded understanding of the state of our politics, economy and society and how the country might find a way through its current predicament [...]. Adrian is currently contributing his research to Labour's programme of Resources for National Renewal.' [c]

On postliberal politics, Pabst's work contributed to a series of policy seminars (2017-19) organised by Labour Together and hosted by Jon Cruddas MP, who said that the research 'stands as a signature contribution in the emerging debates around post-liberalism' [d]. These seminars influenced Labour MPs, Peers, and policy advisers on how to develop a common good politics and economics. As Cruddas writes:

'It is Pabst's focus on virtue and the common that is so distinctive – showing how practices of virtue offer exciting ideas about how to moralise the market and reclaim democracy. His work has made an important contribution to the activities of Labour Together, an initiative I was the Vice-Chair of – including regular discussions with MPs and the publication of pamphlets such as my colleague Rachel Reeves' *Everyday Economy*. Pabst has continued to develop some compelling policy ideas. They are making their way into speeches by Labour politicians (such as my colleague Lisa Nandy, the other Vice-Chair of Labour Together who referenced Pabst in her 2019 Attlee Lecture) and will continue to be a resource for new thinking.' [e]

### **Influencing *Refondation's* Political Outlook and Policy Ideas**

Pabst's research has also influenced *Refondation*, a new centre-left postliberal movement in France with thousands of members. Published in April 2018, the French translation of *The Politics of Virtue* [R2] is credited by the party leadership as a major influence on the party's political outlook [f]. Pabst contributed to the party's programme launched in October 2018, especially on virtue and the common good as the ethical ends of politics. His ideas are referenced in party documents and speeches. According to *Refondation's* President Patrick Tivollier and the party's General Secretary Dominique Mounier:

'Adrian's work has helped *Refondation* to understand how economic liberalism and social liberalism reinforce each other and leave society more fragmented. One key aspect that *Refondation* has learned from his 2016 book *The Politics of Virtue: Postliberalism and the Human Future* (French translation published in 2018) is that virtue and the common good offer resources for concrete policy proposals: more compassion in health and social care, more wisdom in education, more social purpose in business and more solidarity in the delivery of public services. Adrian's intervention at a *Refondation* seminar in November 2018 in Lens on social reforms set out these ideas and they have contributed to *Refondation's* policy platform.' [f]

### **Contributing to Australian Labor's Analysis about Its Electoral Defeat and Future Direction**

Pabst has also worked with senior members of the Australian Labor Party (membership of about 55,000). They have cited his book *Story of Our Country: Labor's Vision for Australia* as a source for better understanding the reasons for the party's defeat in the May 2019 elections. The Party's president Wayne Swan said that 'there are a wealth of ideas in this book' [g], and Mark Butler MP, the Shadow Minister for Climate Change, has described it as making an important contribution to 'a full-throated discussion' about Labor's direction after the election and a 'policy and campaign review [that] must be ruthless and unsparing' [g].

### **Shaping UK Think Tanks' Strategy and Policy Development**

Since 2017, the work has also generated impact in close cooperation with two think-tanks. First, in 2017-18, Pabst's research gave rise to a new programme entitled Democracy and the Common Good, which Pabst established together with the St Paul's Institute, an independent think tank linked to St Paul's Cathedral. According to the chair of the Advisory Council:

'In the case of St Paul's Institute, together with the former Director Barbara Ridpath, I worked closely with Pabst on a new programme entitled "Democracy and the Common Good". A key insight from Pabst that had a significant influence on the development of this novel series was that the common good and virtue are practices, not abstract theories, and that as such they are resources for new policy proposals. Drawing directly on his research, Pabst wrote a report for the

Institute that not only formulated new policy ideas but also allowed the Institute to have traction with politicians (2 Labour and 2 Conservative MPs), policy makers (senior people from regulators and businesses) and the media (an edition of the BBC's global philosopher programme led by Michael Sandel). Since then the series has led to more work with a variety of stakeholders, including public debates hosted by the Bishop of London.' [h]

Pabst's pamphlet [R4], with a foreword by Rachel Reeves MP, was launched at a private roundtable with politicians and policy-makers and at a public event in St Paul's Cathedral by the BBC's global philosopher Michael Sandel [i]. The *New Statesman's* editor, Jason Cowley, has linked this work to the postliberal turn in British politics and the importance of an ethical framework for political decisions and policymaking:

'Pabst, in association with the institute and others, is seeking nothing less than to remoralise politics. A *New Statesman* contributor, he is interested in questions of virtue and justice, and in how we might achieve personal fulfilment while meeting our obligations to one another and wider society.' [j]

Pabst's ideas have also shaped the work of the Common Good Foundation and led to his appointment as Trustee in 2017. In 2018-20, his research underpinned a series of seminars on Common Good Economics co-hosted by Lord Glasman and Andy Haldane (chief economist, Bank of England). Pabst's ideas on strengthening vocational colleges and building a national development bank are cited in a policy programme co-written by them [a].

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[a] Testimonial from Blue Labour co-founder.

[b] First Labour MP reference to Pabst's research.

[https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/lisa-nandy-lecture\\_uk\\_5ccc5824e4b0e4d75731c888](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/lisa-nandy-lecture_uk_5ccc5824e4b0e4d75731c888).

[c] Testimonial from Labour Together adviser.

[d] Second Labour MP reference to Pabst's research.

<https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/books-in-brief-the-politics-of-virtue>

[e] Testimonial from the second Labour MP.

[f] Testimonial from senior officials of *Refondation*.

[g] Speech by senior figure in the Australian Labor Party; and speech by a Shadow Minister of the Australian Labor Party.

<https://www.alp.org.au/national-president-media/principles-matter-values-matter/>

<https://markbutler.net.au/news/speeches/our-country-book-launch/>

[h] Testimonial from the Chair of the Advisory Council of St Paul's Institute.

[i] St Paul's Institute video.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=foQXv99A9aw&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=foQXv99A9aw&feature=emb_title)

Further references to St Paul's Institute programme on Democracy and the Common Good:

<http://bishopoflondon.org/news/read-the-bishop-of-londons-speech-at-st-pauls-cathedral-debate-that-asks-who-is-welcome-here/>:

<https://www.stpauls.co.uk/history-collections/the-collections/arts-programme/am-i-my-brothers-keeper-a-refugee-tent-installation>

[j] Reference to Pabst's impact by Editor of the *New Statesman*.

<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2018/03/fighting-back-against-facebook-search-common-good-and-life-john-gray-s-desert>