After Brexit

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We invited a range of contributors to reflect on the European referendum results - its specific implications for particular places and communities and its wider ramifications for the future of British politics.

The quest for a 'better' sense

Marina Prentoulis

Theresa May's recent 'hard' Brexit rhetoric and determination to trigger article 50 by March 2017 are in sharp contrast to Phillip Hammond's attempt to 'soften' the economic implications of Brexit by keeping open the possibility of access to the single market. This only serves to highlight the impossibility of determining the precise content of the Brexit vote.

But the divisions inside government are dwarfed by the scale of the deep divisions within British society that have been brought to the forefront by the referendum campaign: divisions between England and Scotland; between the Tory shires and the cities; generational divisions; and, perhaps most importantly, divisions between those who have benefited from globalisation and those who have been left behind.

However the framing of the referendum, from its inception and throughout the campaigning period, as a confrontation between the concerns of the right and those of the ultra-right allowed very little space for the articulation of more progressive

visions. All that we are now left with appears to be the choice between clamping down on immigration or staying in the single market. This is hardly surprising given that, during the campaign, the Remain right focused on the economic benefits of EU membership, while the Leave right and ultra-right focused on concerns over EU migration, which they portrayed as the primary cause of all evils in British society.

The left split between those who, despite the shortcomings of the EU, still aspired to a social and socialist future beyond national borders, and those who managed to imagine the retreat to national frontiers as a step towards a future socialist paradise. The Labour right's case was, broadly speaking, the same as that of the Remain right as a whole. The Brexit left was apparently happy with the conservative demand for a return to 'national sovereignty', and the promise that a Brexit vote would give back control to British people, wresting it from the unelected, undemocratic elites of the EU, who were indifferent to the peoples of Europe, but would now be permanently stopped from meddling into British affairs. The remain left had to advance a more nuanced argument, reminding voters that for the past thirty years the neoliberal course of British domestic and international politics has, without any discernible outside prompting, played a leading role in isolating working-class communities at home, and promoting a neoliberal agenda within the EU.

Referendums and democracy

Although the referendum was driven by a conservative agenda designed to advantage internal factions within the Tory party, and to address the threat to the party from UKIP, it has now been elevated to the status of a democratic landmark: it represents the moment that, finally, the British people spoke out. It was a 'once in a lifetime opportunity', and must be respected for ever more.

In fact referendums have become a staple of modern democracy, and are a far from rare commodity, especially on issues related to the European Union. Referendums have been held over a range of issues including membership in the EEC (as when Greenland rejected membership and left in 1985), ratification of the Maastricht and the Lisbon Treaties; the enlargement of the European Union; the European Constitution; and, more recently, on European migrant quotas.

The status of referendums, however, is usually determined according to the constitution of each country. And in a number of constitutions they are not necessarily

regarded as binding. The Swedish constitution, for example, does provide for binding referendums, but most referendums that have been held there have been consultative rather than binding. Britain, with no written constitution, has to legally clarify the status of the 2016 referendum, and there is currently a legal race on to solve the matter before the triggering of Article 50. But if it is decided that the government has the right to trigger formal Brexit talks without the authority of parliament, a government with a very small parliamentary majority, and no spelled-out plan of what 'Brexit' really means, will be given free rein to decide the country's future relationship with the EU - and potentially the unity or otherwise of the 'United Kingdom'.

The notion of the referendum as a democratic mandate that trumps all other processes can be criticised on many different grounds. Not the least of these is that confusion over complex policy issues reduced to 'yes' or 'no' answers - though such simplicities may allow voters to voice their disenchantment with the political elites - also opens the door for confusion over the consequences of any vote. According to the Electoral Commission: 'Any referendum question must be as clear as possible so that voters understand the important choice they are being asked to make'. Although the main concern of the Commission is the wording of the referendum question, concerns over the quality of the pre-referendum campaign and information over policy implications are even more important in determining how democratic the vote is. This was far from the case with the 2016 referendum: it was an exemplary case of confusion. There was no concrete proposal about what the terms of Brexit would be, and because of this campaigners could make any promise they chose about what the result would mean. This opened the way to a highly misleading campaign. (Who can forget the Brexit bus promise of more money for the NHS, dropped as soon as the vote was won?)

There are, however, democratic concerns beyond the specificities of the referendum campaign. One of these concerns the nature of the public sphere. For many political theorists a precondition of democracy is an informed public, able to decide on common matters. For those aspiring to a deliberative model of democracy, rational argumentation is the cornerstone for arriving at a conception of collective interests. On the question of Europe (as so many others), British public life does not measure up to this aspiration. Informed public debate on European issues has been almost non-existent. Both the mainstream media and, though to a lesser extent, social media (despite its promise of potential pluralisation) have consistently

reported EU issues through an adversarial frame: 'Us' (the British) versus 'Them' (the Europeans/EU); and they have concealed the UK's role in EU politics, where it has followed the same neoliberal agenda that dominates domestic politics. Furthermore, other kinds of EU stories rarely meet 'newsworthiness' criteria, resulting in an almost complete absence of any information on EU debates. This is in stark contrast to many other EU countries, where what happens at the European parliament and within its other bodies is reported on within a less Manichean framework.

The deliberative model of democracy is itself open to criticism. It takes little account of the emotional, cultural and symbolic aspects of debate, and many of its advocates assume that a consensus can be arrived at once reason has been applied. Perhaps one positive result of the EU referendum is that it may herald a recognition that the period of consensual politics has come to an end; and that spaces are needed for a more agonistic politics if we are to revive and radicalise democracy - less reliant on 'rationality' and more sensitive to symbolic meanings.

Political leadership after Brexit

Another problem that remains after the referendum is the question of contemporary political leadership. Too often the immediate response of politicians of both left and right, including Theresa May, is to give the public 'what it wants', as long as this is framed as respecting the 'democratic mandate' of the people. This approach avoids a key responsibility for political leaders, especially on the left, namely to seek to shape public opinion, and to engage in the battle over what is deemed to be common sense. We are currently witnessing the endorsement of some of the most xenophobic aspects of public opinion by political leaders who shy away from this role. This matters less if political leadership is regarded solely as a question of translating the views expressed in focus groups, polling and referendum results into policies sufficiently palatable to the public to win an election. If, however, political leadership also involves ideological leadership, and efforts to transform popular consciousness, this approach leaves a lot to be desired. Before any positive change can happen, the battle has to be taken onto the terrain of ideas: dominant common sense has to be challenged, and ways of perceiving the world organised by decades of neoliberalism and Murdoch's media have to be shaped into a coherent, socialist, 'better sense'.

Theresa May has to some extent succeeded in mobilising nostalgia for a national

caring community in combination with latent xenophobia in order to put forward a new conservative vision that is potentially more powerful than Thatcherism: a 'protective state' that will look after the 'ordinary people' with the correct nationality and culture. Meanwhile Jeremy Corbyn has tried to challenge the division between 'our people' and the 'others', and talked of the contribution of migrants and migration, but the Labour Party is a long way from offering a coherent vision with an affective appeal that can match May's. This is partly because the Labour Party is only just emerging from yet another leadership contest, itself testimony to its deep internal divisions; partly because emphasis is being placed primarily on the new economic programme; and partly because of the difficulties (though by no means insuperable) of supporting an EU shaped by a neoliberal agenda. But, whatever the reasons for current failings, it is clear that resistance to Theresa May's discourse must be stepped up.

We can still be cautiously optimistic on some counts. One is the demand for 'progressive alliances' by some members of the Labour shadow cabinet, the Greens, the SNP and others. Although the possibility of a pre-electoral alliance would depend on a series of trade-offs between parties and may prove difficult, putting forward a common progressive discourse has long been overdue. Such an alliance could challenge the more reactionary aspects of the Brexit negotiations through resistance to the Tories' dystopic vision of Britain's role in the world (focused solely on its own interests and the maximisation of the profits of the 1%); while joint campaigning against the new conservatism of Teresa May could potentially generate more widespread resistance at the grassroots level. A second reason for optimism is a little-noticed motion that was passed at the Labour Party conference, which gives the opportunity for a Brexit debate at the party's National Policy Forum. This may save the party from sleepwalking away from any role in the projected negotiations - talks in which one of the partners doesn't even know what is negotiating for. And it may also rescue the opposition from playing second fiddle in the national debate.

Right back where we started from
Roshi Naidoo

This year's vote to leave the European Union became a flashpoint for a virulent racism that many naively believed to have been banished. During and after the campaign, discourses of class circulated and interacted in particular ways with the

politics of race and racism, and the term 'the white working class' gained traction - and in so doing served to divorce the middle and upper classes, as well as business and the state, from the unpleasant national picture that was emerging. It was also invoked as a shorthand explanation for why Remain had lost.

Lynsey Hanley, writing in the *Guardian*, notes that in recent years politicians have avoided the term 'working class', using instead such phrases as 'hard-working families', or 'ordinary voters', 'for fear of alienating both middle-class voters and "aspirational" working-class voters'.[1] At a pro-EU event before the referendum, listening to a Labour MP fielding audience questions about why it had been so hard to persuade 'ordinary people' that austerity policies and the demands of the neoliberal market - rather than Eastern Europeans, immigrants, asylum seekers, Muslims and/or generations of black Britons - were the root cause of their poverty, insecurity, lack of public services, trouble accessing health care, etc, I heard a familiar riff: his response was that the party, and politicians generally, had been afraid to talk about immigration. The 'people' cited here are, of course, not simply people, but that increasingly mythologised group, 'the white working class'; and the return of this term into common political parlance legitimises three things. First, that immigrants *are* inherently a problem; second, that the 'white working class' is a distinct entity from 'black' and 'ethnic' working classes; and, third, that it is the white working class, and not all people at the bottom of the labour market, who bear the brunt of the economic effects of the savage dismantling of the public sector.

The phrase 'not being afraid to talk about immigration' is similarly loaded. Sadly, it does not imply a failure to talk about austerity and the years of neglect that have left great swathes of the population - across 'races' - forgotten, isolated, jobless, hopeless, and, importantly, powerless. Rather, it implies a failure to speak to an undercurrent of racism and a cultural dislocation - figured in this narrative as being caused by the presence of difference, rather than by a loss of identity linked to economic insecurity. When politicians and commentators darkly invoke this alleged fear, it is code for 'we must speak to the concerns of white working-class racists'. It is code for 'we have become too politically correct and lost the common touch'. It is code for the acceptability of recasting whiteness as beleaguered and under threat from the 'other'.

Someone in the audience at the event in question pointed out that no one *seems* afraid to talk about immigration - on the contrary, it was the most dominant topic in the run-up to the referendum. One doesn't need a media studies degree to connect the

hysterical headlines of the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express* about immigrant benefit scroungers with people voting to leave the EU and/or abusing 'foreigners' on the street. What the Labour Party has in fact failed to do in the last twenty years is to talk about immigration in the context of international solidarity between workers as they all battle the same global economic forces that take their jobs, cut their wages, force them to move to look for work and displace them through wars and land and asset grabs. But this is not what is meant by 'not being afraid to talk about immigration'.

Another strategy for commentators of all political colours has been to insist that people expressing concern about immigration must not be dismissed as racists, and to scold those who do this as elitist. Often this is prefaced with personal stories of 'ordinary people' (white working-class) by a middle-class interlocutor, casting themselves in the role of a brave teller of truths. Once again class and race operate in familiar ways to frame the landscape of conflict. The working classes can be simultaneously patronised and fetishised by a middle-class translator who also performs the function of placing himself outside of the power relations of race and racism. He becomes the signifier for a metropolitan elite, himself *au fait* with difference but magnanimously reaching out to the working classes who can never achieve this.

Leave voters have been unhelpfully portrayed as being ignorant, small-minded bigots, but does the call to speak 'honestly' about immigration challenge or confirm this characterisation? Of course there are complex reasons for the Leave vote, and complex reasons why people feel threatened by immigration; but to assert so confidently that there is no connection between racism and anti-immigration sentiment is to reach a dangerous, head-in-the-sand conclusion, and one not supported by evidence, either historical or contemporary. Leave represented, in part, an anti-politics and rejection of authority, and this is a space into which the far right have historically moved, with promises of making people feel powerful. Those who take that anti-politics view are not necessarily of the far right, but we shouldn't underestimate the seductive power of discourses that start with talking 'honestly' about outsiders and end in fascism. The task is, therefore, not to make more promises about controlling immigration, but to make politics relevant and inclusive.

The IPPR report, *Alien Nation? - New perspectives on the white working class and disengagement in Britain* (published in October 2014) notes: 'classifying the white working class solely in terms of their heightened concerns about immigration or

hostility to ethnic diversity is overly simplistic'; and 'white working-class attitudes to race are as nuanced as those of other socio-economic groups. Survey data shows that generational differences tend to be more significant than class, and that concerns about migration are increasingly shared across different ethnic groups'.[2] In a similar vein, a number of labour historians have critiqued this tendency to collapse the terms 'white' and 'working-class' into each other, drawing attention to histories of popular resistance that show the limitations of using unambiguous racialised class distinctions.[3]

An abstract figure of a 'disenfranchised, white working-class person' can be mobilised in a variety of politically convenient ways: attitudes can be attributed to him (the figure is usually imagined as a him) that suit the arguments the left want to make about the impact of neoliberalism, political disengagement and despair, or, equally, that suit arguments from the centre and right about social cohesion or intolerable foreigners. A more mature, joined-up social, economic and political response could also help with the media's incredulity that some 'ethnic minorities' also voted Leave. This claim to speak to the concerns of the white working classes by engaging in 'race talk' while ignoring the economics of poverty and social inequality is connected to, and helps enable, a range of unfounded positions. It insultingly homogenises this group as, at best, miraculously unconnected to people of different backgrounds to themselves, and, at worst, a bunch of racists; it eradicates the complex historical connections between different working-class communities; and it allows those who are patently not working-class to dissociate themselves from visible racism, and by extension from white supremacy, ethnocentrism and the more subtle violences inflicted on minorities.

This last point may be particularly important. As Akwugo Emejulu notes: 'To only understand racism as localised, reactionary inter-personal violence is to misunderstand what Britain (and indeed Europe) is and the power relations that maintain and legitimise racial hierarchy'.[4] We need to invite those who are outraged by violence to see the connections between deeply ingrained British racism in its more institutionalised, polite and ubiquitous forms and all the physical attacks and verbal abuse. Does the invocation of an irredeemably racist white working class help draw the eye away from the context that feeds the nasty, visceral rage on the streets? And does it subtly construct them as too stupid to help, and thereby allow politicians to ignore the myriad reasons why a chance to vote on *anything* was seized

upon as an opportunity for some sort of visibility and power?

The Leave campaign was typified by myth-making, by 'feelings' about a return to an ordered past, and by a reliance on the 'post-factual' - all of which would appear to have direct implications for the domains where the enlightened middle and upper classes hold power (the media, arts and heritage, education, local and national politics, and other spheres where national culture is built and nurtured). The different 'feelings' people had about the EU, and the flight from fact and reason for the most reactionary elements of our society (who were given endless airtime in so many unchallenged vox pops on the news), could be understood as indicating that those who were urging us to 'get our country back' were not just talking about 'foreigners', but about all the things that make them uncomfortable and angry, ranging from gay marriage to feminism, from health and safety regulations to the censoring of jokes about disability; such feelings come with a visceral hatred of all the things that undermine what is imagined as having been homogeneous and stable in the 1950s. But, as Bill Schwarz says: 'Memories … are organised in the present'.[5]

There is a connection between the *heimat* of Brexit talk, ugly racism and some of the national stories told through our institutions.[6] One of the features of the recent attacks has been that anyone deemed 'other' has been told to 'go home' - which points to our inability to move on from 'tolerance' and 'inclusion' to a basic understanding of British cultural heterogeneity. This is not just a problem caused by the reactionary right; it also results from the failure of liberals and the progressive left to really mainstream the politics of 'race' as the politics of presence. It is also interesting that a heritage culture that is so obsessed with commemorating the Second World War has not managed to beat into our collective national skull the history of anti-semitism in Europe, an understanding of which might reasonably be expected to mean that, as soon as asylum seekers are dehumanised and scapegoated, the historical connections would be made, and people would stop the brutality in its tracks. Rather than claiming to provide a voice for the disenfranchised, silenced, white working classes, positioned as having no option but to turn their ire and impotence on 'others', those in power may want to reflect on their own role in recent events. It might be easier to blame an underclass for lighting the match than to take responsibility for having brought the firewood.

It has been such a demoralising time - if we are on our way back to the 1950s,

this summer has felt like a stopover in the 1970s. But if we are back where we started from, perhaps we should embrace the nostalgia, and also remember class solidarity, and how to resist the tactics of 'divide and rule'.

Notes

1. L. Hanley, 'Out of it', *Guardian*, 27.9.16.

2. P. Griffith and A. Glennie (eds), 'Alien nation? New perspectives on the white working class and disengagement in Britain', IPPR, October 2014.

3. D. Featherstone, 'Harry O'Connell, maritime labour and the racialised politics of place', *Race & Class* 2016, Vol 57(3).

4. A. Emejulu, 'On the Hideous Whiteness Of Brexit: "Let us be honest about our past and our present if we truly seek to dismantle white supremacy"', 28.6.16: www.versobooks.com/blogs/2733-on-the-hideous-whiteness-of-brexit-let-us-be-honest-about-our-past-and-our-present-if-we-truly-seek-to-dismantle-white-supremacy.

5. B. Schwarz, *Memories of Empire, Volume 1 - The White Man's World*, Oxford University Press 2011, p9.

6. R. Naidoo, 'All that we are - heritage inside out and upside down', in *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 2016 Vol 22 (7).

The NHS and the elderly middle class

Danny Dorling

On 23 June 2016, on the same day the EU referendum was held, the UK's Office for National Statistics released its latest annual mortality figures. An unprecedented rise in mortality was reported. Some 52,400 more deaths were recorded in the year to June 2015 than in the same period a year before. In normal times we expect mortality to fall and health to improve, but death rates in England and Wales rose overall by 9 per cent during this period. Within this there was a 3 per cent increase for those aged 55-74; 5 per cent for those aged 75-70; 7 per cent for those aged 80-

84; 10 per cent for those aged 85-89; and 12 per cent for those aged 90+.

The decline in the health of the elderly across the UK was mainly attributed (by the authorities) to increases in dementia and Alzheimer's, with influenza being suggested as a contributory factor. However it became clear when the size of the mortality rise was revealed that austerity had played a major role in the rapid worsening of overall UK public health. It was those with long-term care needs whose rates of mortality had increased most. (A decline in overall health has also been shown in a number of other recent statistics, such as self reported health.)

In the light of the interest shown during the referendum debate on NHS health spending, perhaps we ought to consider whether Leave won, not mainly due to the fear of others, but because many people, and especially the old, had had enough of their lives becoming rapidly worse as measured through the most important of all the measures of quality of life - health. On 14 November 2016 the BBC announced the news that dementia had become the leading cause of death in the UK, but they did not explain that part of the reason for this was the bringing forward of deaths of people with dementia, or that care has become more inadequate as a result of funding cuts.

The outcome of the EU referendum has been unfairly blamed on the working class in the North of England. In fact, because of differential turnout and the size of the denominator population, most people who voted Leave lived in the South of England. Furthermore, according to Michael Ashcroft's final poll, of all those who voted for Leave, 59 per cent were middle class (A, B or C1), and 41 per cent were working-class (C2, D or E). The proportion of Leave voters who were of the lowest two social classes (D and E) was just 24 per cent. This is partly because the middle class is so large, and they turn out more to vote: the middle class constituted two thirds of all those who voted. As is usual, people in poor areas were most likely not to vote at all. Turnout among the young was also low, as is also usual, but there are very wide variations in the estimates of turnout by age from various polls. We have a much better idea about turnout by area as turnout figures are reported by the returning officers.

The vote for leave in the North was not especially high. It was highest in the East of England (see table below). There was remarkably confused reporting about this after the vote because of Southern prejudices about northern towns and because Sunderland reports its votes first. There are many false assumptions that still need to be corrected. For example Wales voted almost identically to the average vote for the UK as a whole.

These figures are based on an exit poll of 12,370 voters published on 24 June by Lord Ashcroft, which turned out to be remarkably accurate after the event. When weighted by social class and region it predicted the final result to within 0.1 per cent of the actual result. The British people, it would appear, can accurately tell pollsters what they have done immediately after they have done it, but not before. The key geographical results are shown below, with areas where people were most keen to leave uppermost in the table. In only three areas, containing just 20 per cent of voters, did a majority choose to 'Remain'.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from this, but my suggestion here is that the elderly (mostly white) middle class were a crucial demographic for the Leave side: they were much more likely to turn out, and much more likely than working-class people to live to the very much older ages most keen on leaving.

The initial confusion about who had voted to Leave is not unlike the confusion there was for years over who had voted in greatest numbers for the Nazi party in

Leave voters in the UK regions

Region	Sample	National %	Leave %	Leavers
East Midlands	894	7%	57%	510
Eastern Region	1113	9%	57%	634
Wales	631	5%	56%	353
Yorkshire & Humber	1129	9%	55%	621
West Midlands	988	8%	55%	543
North East	589	5%	54%	318
North West	1445	12%	53%	766
South East	1851	15%	53%	981
South West	1186	10%	53%	629
Northern Ireland	170	1%	48%	82
London	1284	10%	44%	565
Scotland	1090	9%	38%	414
UK	12370	100%	52%	6416

Source: exit poll of 12,370 voters published on 24 June by Lord Ashcroft

1930s Germany. Again the middle classes were key, but again that was not realised until later. However, in 1930s Germany it was the young middle class who voted for right-wing populism, whereas now it is the old, so these are very different kinds of nationalism - and the old are possibly less frightening as they will be around for fewer years! Furthermore the Brexit vote in the UK and the later Trump victory in the USA were events that took place after years of rising inequalities in what were, by 2016, the two most unequal larger countries of all the affluent countries of the world. Given that most people in these countries have no seen real improvements in living standards for many years we should not be so surprised when a narrow majority vote for 'anything but a continuation of the status quo'.

How else could people in the UK say that they wanted something other than the life they had, apart from voting to leave? But what matters most to the elderly middle class, particularly their health, is now expected to worsen. This is partly because some elderly UK emigrants to the rest of Europe will begin to return and make more demands on the health service. But it is also because our health service will continue to be underfunded, and we will lose the care and health staff who are citizens of the European mainland.

Preventing extremism

Ash Ghadiali

In July 2005, just days after the 7/7 terror attacks, Tony Blair called a delegation of senior Muslim community leaders to 10 Downing Street, in what appeared a gesture towards a show of national unity. He was seeking confirmation of the position that these bombings were neither a consequence of British foreign policy, nor an expression of Islam, but rather the product of an extremist ideology that all present were invested in defeating. He also wanted the people gathered to acknowledge that it was from their Muslim community that the problem had arisen; and the business that he charged them with was to take responsibility for finding out why, so that, collectively, a solution could be achieved.

Designated as the Preventing Violent Extremism Taskforce, the group reported back within weeks with a list of four factors that its members had agreed on as the underlying causes of extremism. Largely social and economic, they included

inequality, deprivation and discrimination, but there was also foreign policy, that moot point of the political that was meant to remain off the agenda. Shortly after, Blair called a press conference in which, at length, and suggesting the full support of this taskforce, he proceeded to jettison their recommendations altogether, outlining instead a bold new approach to counter-extremism, founded on the institutionalisation of a distinction between moderate and radical Islam. One, he said, could be found compatible with British values, the other could not.

In a sense that moment marked the end of an illusion. Central to New Labour's rise to power had been a new narrative of nation - crassly spun out as 'Cool Britannia', and in Robin Cook's ode to tikka masala, but a narrative, nevertheless, that lay in stark distinction to the racist overtones of a Conservative Party that had never really demonstrated itself at ease with Britain's multicultural reality. The Conservatives were a party where people still believed that your citizenship could be linked to the international cricket team you supported. New Labour's modernisers, for all their faults, had promised better, not least when, very soon after they came to power, they put in place an inquiry into the Metropolitan Police's handling of the murder of Stephen Lawrence. The resulting Macpherson Report, published in 1999, would recognise, momentously, the truth of the institutional racism that is a daily fact of life for black British citizens.

The writing had been on the wall, though, from very early on. The 2002 Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act, for example, had established the idea that your Britishness could now be filtered through a Citizenship Test (much like a school exam), and the test was finally introduced in November 2005, just as the Blair government's new counter-extremism measures were coming into effect.

So Blair's impulse, that July, to seek counsel from and co-operation with Muslim leaders, could be seen as the last gasp of the multicultural vision that had helped launch him into power eight years before. After this he reverted to the old tactic of exploiting the idea of Britain, Britishness and British values to help steer a tricky political course - and this is very much part of the legacy that we are still dealing with today …

Because what is a British value exactly? Who gets to be the judge of that? And over who?

These are the questions that Labour governments struggled to define over the

next five years, as most members of the taskforce that had been convened after 7/7 (including the Muslim Council of Britain, the organisation effectively placed at the head of it) responded passionately against the logic of this new approach. They argued that it would only alienate British Muslims further, that it would feed the causes of extremism at the root.

Thereafter, relations between the government and organisations like the MCB became increasingly strained until, in 2009, shortly after the Gaza war of December 2008 to January 2010, communication channels were severed entirely (by the government).

Instead, under the PREVENT strategy, generous funding was made available to Muslim community organisations ready to accept the government's programme of counter-extremism, based on the notion of a defence of British values. This was part of a bid to establish a new Muslim leadership for the nation. But the same logic also began to reflect itself in the rhetoric and organisational strategy of Britain's far-right. Tommy Robinson, for example, who founded the English Defence League in 2009, has described how he was inspired to do so by the sight of Muslim 'extremists' protesting in Luton against the war in Afghanistan. The story of Britishness at odds with an enemy within was itself beginning to evolve from an apparently moderate to a more extremist form.

Then came the election of 2010. Labour fell, the coalition government was formed, and under the leadership of David Cameron this question of Britishness - of what constitutes a British value - began to assume greater clarity: just months into his premiership Cameron expounded his theory that it was multiculturalism itself that had failed, that the practice of state multiculturalism had led to segregation when what we needed was integration. Cameron delivered this message, at an intergovernmental security conference in Munich, at precisely the same time as the EDL was on the march again in Luton; and, when asked by a news reporter to comment on David Cameron's speech, Robinson was ebullient, telling him: 'David Cameron is saying what we're saying … 'cos he knows where his base is'.

It's important to recognise that the spike in racially motivated hate crime that followed the Brexit referendum this summer is part of a continuous trend that, carried by the twin phenomenon of an emboldened far right, has seen hate crime in Britain rise year-on-year since 2010. It was this story, in fact, that Jo Cox MP had been preparing to present in the House of Commons, when, just days before the EU

referendum, she was murdered outside her constituency surgery in Birstall.

What she was planning to tell us was that 2015 had seen an 80 per cent rise in anti-Muslim attacks across Britain, that it was a cause for serious concern that her native Yorkshire was becoming a 'hot-bed of far-right activity'. When, weeks later, her murderer identified himself in court with the phrase, 'death to traitors, freedom for Britain', he was effectively articulating the radical edge of a narrative that pits loyalty to Britain at odds with the multicultural values that Jo Cox was working to defend.

It's important to recognise, too, that this is a narrative that has been on the ascendant for more than a decade now. And it is one to which successive British governments have helped lend an air of respectability. When David Cameron tells us, for example, as he did in July 2015 in front of an audience of Asian school children in Birmingham, that 'our values are so great that we should want to enforce them for all', isn't he speaking precisely of a kind of nationalism that doesn't readily embrace difference at all, one that proudly, even forcefully, imposes itself on otherness and others?

And what exactly is it that Teresa May is referring to when she speaks, as she has done in relation to the Citizenship Test, of a focus on the 'values and principles at the heart of being British'? According to an IPSOS Mori poll commissioned by Channel 4, seven out of ten British citizens consistently fail that test. The dominant narrative of nation that is embodied in the test, and in all the other dreams of homogeneity, is a fantasy. Its logic points inexorably towards a kind of anti-nation, one that seeks to discriminate where it should attempt to unify. It's a path that points ineluctably towards violence.

Sadly, this narrative was the domain of both camps during the Brexit referendum - as visible in the insignia of Remain's 'Britain Stronger In' posters as in Leave's 'Boiling Point' campaign. Little wonder then that a festival of violence was what followed. The referendum campaign was, in many ways, a celebration of a vision of Britain and Britishness that doesn't add up; it was predicated on a broken promise - and one which invariably breeds an irrational response.

We urgently need new narratives of nation, better ones. We need stories that awaken us to the cause of our collectivity rather than relying on the empire's old tactics of divide and rule. In July 2005, sent away to consider where to start on tackling extremism within its own community, a delegation of Muslim leaders came

back with the suggestion of addressing four factors that, if taken seriously, might have helped to forge a more cohesive society. As we seek to stand up now to the problem of an extremism that expresses itself within the language of our national identity, those four factors - inequality, discrimination, deprivation and foreign policy - might be worth another look.

Refugee solidarity in the everyday

Teresa Piacentini

Brexit means Brexit means go home. That seems to be the dominant message of the new conservative government under Theresa May, which is reinforcing this interpretation with a stream of proposed polices that range from the requirement that employers list foreign workers, to passport checks on pregnant women in maternity hospitals, and changes to the school census that require the collection of data on pupils' country of birth and nationality. None of this should really come as a surprise: Theresa May as Home Secretary focused on creating a 'hostile environment' for irregular immigration, as characterised by the dog-whistling politics of campaigns such as the notorious Go Home vans. A rampant xenophobia in both pre- and post-Brexit UK has focused on immigration as the main social, cultural and economic threat to all aspects of British life. There has been an increase in post-Brexit racism, hate crimes and street hostility, particularly against Eastern European nationals but also against BME people, especially in England. People are being targeted for looking and sounding 'foreign' (a side effect of which is that notions of whiteness are becoming unsettled by processes of racialisation not seen in the UK for decades).

The 'immigration question' plays out quite differently north and south of the border. In the independence referendum of 2014 immigrants in Scotland had the right to vote, and played a role as 'privileged stakeholders' (unlike in the Europe referendum, or general election). And immigration simply did not feature in the independence debates: the dominant story was about the sovereignty of the pound and the economy. Moreover, in Scotland the cataclysmic concerns around immigration that were such a feature of the Euroreferendum in England failed to garner support; instead the need for immigration was recognised and emphasised, as

a way of shoring up the Scottish economy and boosting skills, especially in the north east and remote rural areas. This is a tale of two referendums: the independence referendum in Scotland was empowering, and immigrants were active participants, while the Brexit referendum south of the border was vilifying, and turned immigrants into passive 'bystanders' and objects of political debate. The UKIP-led anti-immigration turn that has been co-opted by Westminster politics was nowhere near as intense in Scotland; the issue simply failed to have the same salience with the Scottish electorate, where every region returned a remain majority.

Brexit did not occur in a political vacuum. In May, at the height of the referendum campaign, the UK government passed into law the Immigration Act 2016, arguably the UK's most regressive and punitive legislation on immigration to date, but there was very little public protest at its draconian measures. At the same time, paradoxically, a groundswell of support for refugees was growing across the UK and Europe, in response to the humanitarian crisis along the 'migrant trail' from the Middle East to Calais. This mainly took the form of a DIY 'refugees welcome' solidarity movement, which has centred on various forms of direct action: hundreds of people loaded cars and vans with supplies for makeshift refugee camps, to help for a few days or even months; there were many fundraising activities for people on this trail; and there were lobbies and public demonstrations of support. Curiously, this movement remains for the large part disconnected from the conditions of asylum seekers and refugees already 'here' in the UK. This disconnect is an interesting anomaly and raises, to my mind, the issue of hierarchies of 'refugeeness', framed around which refugee (and for that matter asylum seeker and migrant) lives matter most. In order to effect meaningful structural change the 'refugees welcome' solidarity must extend to people already seeking asylum in the UK, and take into account the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers who have been racialised as undeserving 'economic migrants'. Recent solidarity actions in Glasgow suggest a way of thinking through this.

Glasgow has a long tradition of asylum advocacy and mobilisation, particularly after 2000, when the government instituted its policy of distributing asylum seekers across the country, and the city became the largest dispersal site in the UK. Examples of powerful DIY activism include activism against dawn raids in dispersal neighbourhoods across the city; the famous 'Glasgow Girls' campaign at Drumchapel High School on behalf of their disappearing fellow students; the Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees; and the Unity Centre, which gives practical support and

solidarity to all asylum seekers and other migrants in Scotland. These have resulted in substantial changes to the treatment of asylum seekers in Scotland, including an end to dawn raids and an amnesty that means young people who are studying cannot be detained.

'Domopolitics' is a useful concept in thinking about xenophobia. It refers to an ideology that sees the state as a home (in contrast to classical liberalism's metaphor of the economy as a household), thereby setting up an opposition between the domestic and the international, and encouraging a view of the state as a closed secure space, with guests by invitation only, and doors locked at night. It also has a second articulation: one where 'incomers' have to be filtered, screened, controlled and domesticated, and this is rationalised as a series of necessary security measures in the name of a particular conception of home.[1] In the early years of dispersal this logic of 'domopolitics' prevailed in Glasgow. But support for asylum seekers grew out of everyday encounters in new places of home between dispersed asylum seekers and 'locals'. Over time, the high-rise flats that embodied this logic of protecting 'our resources' from the uninvited other produced important spaces for everyday encounters at bus-stops, post offices, local shops, schools and churches, all of which are vital to the creation of social connections, sharing of knowledge and practices of rooting in. The physicality of the dispersal neighbourhoods engendered this process: the social geography of asylum brought about a kind of 'thrown-togetherness', different people sharing local spaces and experiencing everyday encounters. In these new patterns and places of belonging, locals and newly settling residents began to mirror each other: 'us', 'we', 'our home', 'just like us', 'we belong', 'we are from here'. Solidarity through thrown-togetherness in the everyday was embedded in an understanding of home that interrupts the domopolitical; that suggests a notion of home that extends beyond citizenship, territory and security.

Since the mid- to late-2000s much has changed: Glasgow City Council's demolition programme has largely targeted the high-rise flats of the dispersal areas, decanting and relocating many to new areas. Demolition has meant not only the disappearance of buildings, but also the points of everyday encounters where the social is produced and reproduced. Moreover, in today's political context of austerity and local material decline, in the face of fear of the ever more present migrant other, a logic of domopolitics seems to be increasingly understood as common sense. Amidst all of this, we need new points of interruption, new forms of everyday

encounter to challenge everyday bordering, which might translate into a positive political and civic response here in the UK.[2]

One project that has emerged from the 'refugees welcome' solidarity movement and performs an important bridging function between refugees 'there' and 'here' is 'Refuweegee' (a play on a slang term for a Glaswegian - symbolising the forging of being 'new' with being 'native'). The project organises a number of activities, including providing new arrivals with community-built essentials packs; a 'letters fae the locals' writing campaign to encourage messages of friendship and welcome and connections between people; and fundraising and awareness promoting work. Refuweegee and its precursors in the Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees and anti-dawn raid activism have in common their DIY-ness; their focus on practical support for asylum seekers in the city; their work on advocacy for change; and their message of friendship across difference. They are founded on principles of sameness and difference and offer a conceptualisation of being in Glasgow that is framed around a 'city identity'. They represent acts of interruption to the domopolitical discourses of belonging that dominate in the UK in policy, legislation and public mood.

What takes Refuweegee beyond the limits of much 'refugees welcome' solidarity is its bridging function; it connects with asylum seekers 'here', and confronts everyday bordering through the re-making of everyday encounters with others already 'here'. At its heart are efforts to make processes of cohabitation and interaction an ordinary feature of urban multiculture in Glasgow, reaching beyond home and belonging as defined by citizenship and immigration status.

Refuweegee should not, however, be used to consolidate the myth that there is no racism in Scotland (Satnam Virdee discussed this illusion in *Soundings* 62). It is not a refugee-ified retelling of the story that 'We're a' Jock Tamson's bairns'. Racism is part of Scotland's past and present, and a focus on post-Brexit racism as a new phenomenon risks erasing people's long endured experiences of, and resistance to, everyday and institutionalised racism and anti-immigrant sentiment. You don't have to travel far to hear stories lamenting the declining neighbourhood, austerity nostalgia for a bygone era, and the transformation of the city as a whole; and the Commonwealth Games, gentrification and the demolished high-rise flats all feature in those stories. Migration also features strongly in these tales of the transformed city. These stories forge meaning in everyday life, and reflect how differences and changes are talked about at a micro level. As a result, stories of domopolitics circulate as a

common sense of our time.

One way of countering this is to scaffold solidarity around an idea of a new hybrid identity - as Refuweegee does. Refuweegee can be seen as a part of an 'our area' semantic system, which Les Back has identified as one that allows for acknowledgement and rejection of difference, thus providing a powerful means of producing solidarity across difference: our area, our city, *we're all fae somewhere* … But central to this latest incarnation of grass roots activism is the connecting of 'there' and 'here' together in innovative and interesting ways. This bridging approach, I suggest, is vital in providing one way through the anomalies of Brexit and immigration, and offers an alternative logic that can become part of a wider story about home. And, in the tradition of Glaswegian asylum advocacy and activism, it is important to think of these kinds of activism as offering resources of hope, and as moments of interruption, and of disturbance and resistance: they offer ways of being political and contesting belonging on the basis of citizenship, home and territory.

Notes

1. W. Walters, 'Secure Borders, Safe Haven, Domopolitics', *Citizenship Studies*, 8(3), 2004.

2. For more on every day borders see Don Flynn, 'Frontier anxiety: living with the stress of the every-day border', *Soundings* 61, winter 2015.

Unanswered questions

Richard Corbett

Brexit has many potential implications, but among them is a need to define national policies on subjects previously dealt with jointly with our partners at European level.

First and foremost are the sectors in which we jointly operate common rules for the common market. The EU deal was that a continent-wide free market was balanced by having rules for that market on workers' rights, environmental standards, consumer protection and fair competition, and a common system for intervening in sectors traditionally subsidised by governments, notably agriculture.

It also involved a policy to help less prosperous regions.

Second, we currently participate in policies where, by pooling resources at European level and avoiding duplication, joint EU spending is more effective than national spending. A prime example here is our collaborative research programmes. But it's not just about spending money: we co-operate on fighting transnational crime, managing aviation routes, sharing out fish stocks, and checking the safety of chemicals and medicines. Many other pragmatic co-operative efforts take place at EU level.

Third, there are areas where we act jointly with respect to the rest of the world. This gives us more clout in trade deals, overseas development aid, climate change negotiations and even peacekeeping operations.

In all these areas, we now face the prospect of the UK having to take unilateral decisions. But how different will they be? Some of the main questions are sketched out below.

Common rules for the common market

In this area, much depends on what Brexit really means. Two contradictory visions were offered by the Leave campaign in the referendum: 'Soft Brexit' - staying at least in the single market, which requires respecting its rules; and 'Hard Brexit' - leaving the single market, with no direct applicability of its rules, meaning that most things we sell to our main export market would face a tariff barrier and regulatory hurdles, costing market share and, ultimately, many jobs

Under the 'soft' option, much single market legislation would stay in place. We would also make some kind of financial contribution. From an economic point of view this is the least damaging option, but from a democratic and sovereignty point of view it is the worst: we would still be following the rules, but have given up our say on them.

Under the 'hard' option, we would have no direct legal obligation to follow EU rules, but, in practice, we might often choose to. This might happen because there is no particular reason to diverge, especially where that might leave us, for instance, as the only country in Europe not following a common standard on air passenger rights or roaming charges. Or it might happen because the EU norm has become a de facto global standard, as with the REACH legislation on chemicals. Or it might

even happen because the EU has insisted on it as part of our agreement with them on other matters. As with the 'soft' option, however, we would in practice have to follow any future changes to those rules without having a say on them.

The extent to which the Conservative government will seek to weaken workers' rights, environmental standards and consumer protection is as yet unclear. The right wing of the party has made no secret of its view of Brexit as a 'liberation' from 'red tape'. A weakening of such standards seems highly likely - and indeed some oppose the 'soft Brexit' option for this very reason.

A further question remains with regard to farming. How can we secure the continued ability of the UK farming sector to export to the EU without facing tariffs or quotas? Does it not require a subsidy regime identical to that of the CAP? If British farmers have a lower level of subsidy than their competitors, how will they compete? If they have a higher level, how will they be allowed to sell in the single market?

Pooled resources

Will the UK seek to continue to participate in the European Arrest Warrant, in the European Chemicals Agency, the European Medicines Agency, the European 'open skies' aviation arrangement, the European trademark system and patent court, the European Environment Agency and all the other useful cooperative frameworks we have built up?

If we are leaving the EU, can we actually continue to participate in these frameworks? Perhaps - but we will have to bargain to get in, and possibly even then only as an observer, certainly paying our whack, and, as an outsider, with less influence on the actual management and policy decisions involved. This obviously brings significant disadvantages, but (for the bulk of these polled resources, if not for all) being outside the frameworks will have still greater disadvantages.

Joint action for more clout in the world

Here, Britain will be hoping that nimbleness of unilateral action will outweigh the clout of acting together. That is not always likely. And first will come the difficult problem of extricating Britain - and working out its share of liabilities - on a host

of commitments that it has already entered into. Examples include our share of the EU's climate change commitments entered into in Paris, and our share of multiannual aid commitments to developing countries - some of which are part of trade deals with those countries.

At this stage, there are many more questions than answers. And the number of questions grows by the day. We are some way from having a complete inventory of the matters that will need to be settled, let alone a government negotiating objective on each one, or a strategy.

Ireland: borders and borderlines

Cian O'Callaghan and Mary Gilmartin

The troubled history of Derry-Londonderry is still visible in the city. A map on the riverside directs visitors to the Bloody Sunday Memorial and the H Block Monument, while the Peace Bridge, opened in 2011, physically and symbolically links the largely unionist 'Waterside' with the largely nationalist 'Cityside'. One of the outcomes of the peace process has been to dismantle many of the hard borders that used to divide communities both within the North and between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in the South. On an average weekend the city is filled with pedestrians from both sides of the border. The easy movement between these jurisdictions is now an everyday reality for these communities. The Peace Bridge became a focal point for events during the City of Culture Celebrations in 2013, the River Foyle thus becoming 'a route rather than barrier - a place where events occur rather than a liminal space between two sides of the city'.[1] On either side of the bridge there is a plaque recognising the support of European Regional Development Fund. It is one of many visible signs of EU involvement in the recent development of the city.

The political border between the North and the South represents the most obvious residual impact of Ireland's status as a post-colony; and even though the South has experienced considerable economic growth since the 1990s, the legacies of under-development are evident in a weak indigenous industry sector and comparatively poor (by European standards) public infrastructure and service provision. The economic policy developed by the Irish state over the last thirty years can be seen, in part, as a response to these limitations. The Irish state has positioned

itself as a strategic economic border between the US and Europe, seeking to attract US multinationals through a low corporate tax rate, an English-speaking workforce and the promise of access to European markets. In this capacity, it has also gained a reputation as a borderline tax haven.

With Brexit, there comes the possibility that these borders will be redrawn in a variety of ways. Firstly, the global political upheaval of Brexit may challenge the already fragile political-economic trajectory of the Irish state post-crisis. Secondly, new regional inequalities created by the crisis may be further exacerbated, particularly for communities in border regions. Thirdly, Brexit has potential implications for migrants who have moved between Ireland and Britain, and could radically revise the border between the North and South. Finally, Brexit threatens to undermine certain advances made by the Northern Ireland peace process.

Economic borders and the neoliberal state project

A range of possible outcomes involving the realignment of political and economic powers following Brexit could destabilise the South of Ireland's position within the European and global economy. While initial media and political discussion on Brexit myopically focused on how Ireland could capitalise by luring finance and technology companies from London to Dublin, more serious concerns soon emerged about the stability of Ireland's economic position in an EU without the UK. Towards the end of June 2016, the Irish government published a 'contingency plan' on the implications of Brexit for Ireland. Outlining political, economic and governance implications, the plan demonstrates the continued significance of the UK's relationship to Ireland.

Ireland's economy is highly dependent on retaining the current geopolitical status quo. Its (partial and uneven) economic recovery and its position within the global economy are highly dependent on a specific articulation of relational geographies comprising the UK, the US and Europe. This means that a change of the magnitude of Brexit has serious implications. The loss of the UK as a strong ally could weaken Ireland's position within the EU. Similarly, Britain leaving the EU common market could negatively impact on Ireland's economy, in that the UK remains the country's largest trading partner. A report published in November by the Irish Department of Finance suggested that Brexit could cause 'negative consequences for [Ireland's] employment, wages and the public finances lasting for at least 10 years', and shrink

the Irish economy by 4 per cent.[2]

Ireland's precarious position is not simply fiscal, however, but relates more fundamentally to the way the Irish state positions itself within the global economy. This can be seen in the recent controversy over the EU's ruling that Apple should pay Ireland €13 billion in uncollected tax revenue, and the decision by the Fine Gael-led minority government to appeal this ruling. Although anti-austerity parties have suggested that the government use the money to address homelessness and health-service crises, others have argued that the EU ruling signals an international challenge to Ireland's position as a strategic node intersecting the US and the Europe.

Uneven development and regional inequality

Since the crash, a new landscape of regional inequalities has emerged across the island of Ireland, and some of the areas most affected are those in the border regions.

As Dave Featherstone suggested in a recent article in *Soundings*, this kind of regional inequality is a 'product of political decisions and strategies', in this case resulting from the economic trajectory of the Celtic Tiger years, which created a landscape of uneven development in the South.[3] During the first phase of the Celtic Tiger expansion in the 1990s, growth was export-led, mainly due to the rapid influx of foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country, primarily from US multinational companies. FDI was mainly clustered in urban areas, thus limiting the geographical spread of the benefits of the boom. Moreover, new high-tech sectors left a crucial employment gap for low-skilled workers. The property bubble took over as the main driver of economic growth during the 2000s, and temporarily staved off crisis on both of these fronts by spreading employment in construction. But since the bubble burst, the major drivers of economic recovery have been in the areas of FDI that were not so heavily hit by the crisis, namely the urban areas, while areas heavily reliant on the bubble economy of construction and consumer services have seen little in the way of economic rebound. Thus the crisis (and government responses to it) have created new regional inequalities.

Brexit threatens to further exacerbate the situation for communities on both sides of the border. According to the 2011 Census, 14,800 persons regularly commuted between the jurisdictions for either study or work, and the numbers travelling for consumption or leisure are presumably much higher. And Brexit may

also have implications for cross-border agreements around shared services, such as the memorandum of understanding between Newry and Dundalk created in 2010.[4] Moreover, EU funding has been of paramount importance for investment in economic and social infrastructures in border communities, through organisations like InterTradeIreland and the Centre for Cross-Border Studies.

In regions already suffering economically and socially from the crisis, the impact of Brexit could put further strain on already depressed communities.

Migration and citizenship

Brexit also has potential implications for the significant numbers of migrants who have moved between Ireland and Britain. In 2011 there were 112,259 UK nationals living in the Republic of Ireland: it was the second-largest immigrant group. In 2014 there were around 331,000 Irish nationals living in the UK: it was the third-largest immigrant group. Numbers are even higher if we consider country of birth. Approximately 230,000 Irish residents in 2011 were born in either England, Scotland or Wales, while around 383,000 UK residents in 2014 were born in Ireland. These figures indicate the long established free movement of people between Ireland and Britain. For people from Ireland in particular, Britain has long been a place of opportunity and escape.

This easy mobility between Ireland and Britain has been made possible by the Common Travel Area, which allows free movement of citizens between the two states. It predates the European Union, and has existed in some form since 1922, when the Irish Free State was established. Since 1949, Irish citizens have not been considered 'foreign' in the UK, and UK citizens are not considered 'non-nationals' in Ireland. This means that Irish people living in Britain and people from the UK living in Ireland have more political, social and economic rights than other immigrants.[5] But Brexit means that all of these rights, and the right to free movement, are now in question. Special measures will be needed to protect both the Common Travel Area and the privileged status of Irish and UK nationals. Yet, there has been limited discussion of this issue.

For UK voters, immigration was a key issue in the Brexit debate, and many saw the decision to leave the EU as a way of limiting future immigration and restricting the rights of immigrants. If this issue comes under scrutiny, will the special treatment

afforded to Irish immigrants in Britain become an easy target for anti-immigrant politicians and activists? And what of British immigrants in Ireland? Will there be the political will to protect their rights and privileges, or will these also be targeted? These questions have not been at the forefront of public statements about how Brexit will be negotiated, but they are causing ongoing anxiety for British citizens living in Ireland and Irish citizens living in Britain.

Brexit has also shown us how porous these categories of national identity can be. People from Northern Ireland, in most instances, continue to be entitled to Irish citizenship. And since the Brexit vote, there has been a significant increase in the number of British people applying for Irish citizenship, mostly on the basis of having an Irish ancestor. These new citizenship formations are evidence of the links and connections between Ireland and Britain that - post-Brexit - continue to stretch across space and time.

The peace process

The Good Friday Agreement signed on 10 April 1998 marked a major watershed in the long-running peace process in the North. Though it was not a panacea for a range of recalcitrant social and economic issues, it nevertheless improved life immeasurably for communities in the North. In less direct ways, the peace process has also been a key element of the political and economic trajectory of the South. Denis O'Hearn, for example, notes how the Celtic Tiger tag was 'half jokingly' assigned to Ireland in a Morgan Stanley report that coincided with the IRA cease-fire in 1994.[6] Ireland's economic fortunes during the 1990s and 2000s were, if not dependent on, certainly enabled by the cessation of conflict. Moreover, key political figures such as former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern were centrally involved in the negotiations around the peace process, and it is viewed as a key component of his political legacy. But, in quite practical ways, Brexit threatens some of the advances made by the peace process.

After Brexit, the land border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland will become an EU external border; and the EU and some member states have recently been devoting considerable resources to securitising external borders. Frontex, the EU's external border agency established in 2004, has become more active in recent years in policing external land and sea borders. In addition,

individual states in the EU have been building hard borders, such as the razor wire fences along the Hungarian border. Given these trends, there would surely be pressure to securitise this new EU external border. However, there is considerable concern about the possibility of the re-establishment of a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. One proposal floated by the Conservative government in the UK has been to push Britain's immigration controls back to Irish ports and airports, in lieu of re-establishing a hard border between the North and South. This would mean that individuals entering Ireland could be subject to British immigration controls. This elicited much public derision, but the response from the political class was not unfavourable. Enda Kenny, the Irish Taoiseach, has repeatedly insisted that there will not be a return to a hard border, because of fears for the peace process, and establishing British immigration controls at Irish borders was seen as one potential solution. This will need to be negotiated not just with the UK but also with the EU.

Conclusion

For a number of reasons, the island of Ireland is very vulnerable to the potential upheavals Brexit might cause. A renegotiation of the now soft border could have highly problematic outcomes for the communities living on either side, while the withdrawal of EU funding could also seriously undermine community and social infrastructures. The prospect of Brexit also focuses attention on the increasingly precarious political-economic conjuncture in the South, and is a challenge to its fragile economic recovery, based as it is on the continuation of global status. The potential transformations wrought by Brexit have the potential to make material conditions worse for many sections of the population across the island. Where these events will lead remains to be seen.

Notes

1. McDermott, Nic Craith and Strani, cited in P. Boland, B. Murtagh and P. Shirlow, 'Fashioning a City of Culture: "life and place changing" or "12 month party"?', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 2016.

2. E. Burke-Kenedy, 'Brexit effect expected to shrink economy by nearly 4 per cent', *Irish Times*, 7.11. 16: http://www.irishtimes.com/business/economy/brexit-effect-expected-to-shrink-economy-by-nearly-4-1.2856850.

3. D. Featherstone, 'Contested spaces of hegemony: left alliances after the crisis', *Soundings*, 63, summer 2016.

4. http://www.newryandmourne.gov.uk/documents/Memorandumofunderstanding-finalVer8-24.9.10.pdf

5. C. Keena, 'Brexit may not impact common travel area, expert claims', *Irish Times*, 6.7.16.

6. D. O'Hearn, *Inside the Celtic Tiger: The Irish Economy and the Asian Model*, Pluto Press 1998, p1.

The Digital Divide: #PostRefRacism Versus #Gohome

Rooham Jamali

As more of us live more of our lives online, what happens there matters. Social media now constitute a major public space (although indeed one that is privately owned). This is a new digital commons, where the debate of the day is often thrashed out. All this was very apparent during the EU referendum campaign. Online as well as offline there was a very vibrant - and often quite nasty - political debate.

The past fifteen years had already seen immigration become a concern and an important political issue in the United Kingdom. In 2012, about 60 per cent of people living in the UK viewed the rate of immigrants settling in the UK with disapproval, and a large majority of them wanted immigration levels to be reduced.[1] 'Migration in the News', a report published in 2013 by the Oxford Migration Observatory, found that 'illegal' was the most common word used alongside the word 'immigrant' in mainstream print-based media.[2] However, many commentators have argued that the EU referendum marks a new departure, and was even more divisive than anyone had expected.

In this article, I take a look at some of the broad contours of the digital debate through looking on Twitter - which, for several reasons, is a good place to conduct such an analysis. Although it is by no means a representative sample of UK citizens,

After Brexit

Twitter does have 313 million users, and during the Brexit campaign it became what Irfan Chaudhry has described as a 'digital soapbox', where users could tweet thoughts, values and opinions. Millions of tweets were posted about the EU referendum over the weeks leading up to the vote. In addition, the structure of Twitter is such that it allows researchers to collect very large volumes of data in a reasonably easy and structured way that is amenable to analysis.

Below, I set out some of the results of a Twitter study carried out by the Centre for Analysis of Social Media at Demos. It can be seen from this that Twitter was used as a platform for various sorts of xenophobic, anti-immigration, anti-Polish and anti-Islam language over the period. But negative language was only half the story. Although this is something that is often overlooked by the media, Twitter was also a forum for a very significant amount of solidarity, supportive language, and explicitly anti-xenophobic language.

During the referendum period, the Centre for Analysis of Social Media conducted several data collection efforts aimed at measuring and understanding how the Twittersphere was behaving. Between 19 June and 1 July, 16,151 tweets were collected that had a term or a hashtag related to xenophobia (a full list of terms and hashtags can be found in the annex); and between 22 and 30 June 258,553 tweets were collected containing the words 'migrant', 'migrants', 'immigrant', 'immigrants', 'refugee' and 'refugees' (out of these 40,225 had a keyword in relation to Brexit).[3] Out of the 16,151 that included a xenophobic term or hashtag, there was a total of 5,484 derogatory tweets, of which 707 were posted on the day of the referendum itself.

Some examples of hostile Tweets:

> Our lives have changed forever! It's not Irish, Italian or any other immigrant problem it's a Muslim problem! 99 per cent of terrorist are Muslim!

> Europe & Britain will be destroyed if we don't stop immigrants from 3rd world nations invad EU is a failing political project with a currency that has caused economic misery.

However, a large majority of the activity collected between 19 June to 1 July containing xenophobic and anti-immigrant terms was made up of people using these

terms and hashtags in order to take on the attitudes reflected in these words. There were approximately 10,671 supportive tweets in this dataset, and 3,549 supportive tweets on the referendum day itself, in contrast to the comparatively smaller number of derogatory tweets.

So, while the Twittersphere expressed xenophobic views, at the same time it served as a platform for a significant amount of solidarity and support for immigrants. In the overall results during the run-up to the vote, between 27 May and 2 June, we found that 28 per cent of tweets in relation to the EU referendum were judged to be pro-Brexit and focused on immigration. But the number of supportive tweets was greater than those which were anti-immigrant. Those against immigrants used words such as 'out' (698 times), 'deport' (686 times), 'bloody' (415 times) and 'leave' (662 times); supportive words included 'safetypin' (1,434 times), 'solidarity' (501 times) and 'welcome' (98 times).

Out of these, the term 'safetypin' was used the most.[4] Wearing a safety pin as a sign that the wearer supported keeping people safe was a very successful initiative that was launched on Twitter and really took off in the offline world.

Twitter was also seen supporting the Polish community, exploding with the hashtag #polishvermin where users were either reporting incidents of hate crime online or providing solidarity with Poles in the UK. Unfortunately no numbers are available to suggest the extent or significance of this: only illustrations are available. A few examples of tweets promoting solidarity included:

> I voted Leave, nothing to do with Polish
>
> 140,000 Polish stayed after WWII, a huge benefit to Britain and fit in well.
> #PolishVermin
>
> Who started this #PolishVermin bollocks? #Polish people R awesome and contribute greatly to the UK.
> #RacismMustFall

Along with the Polish community, the Muslim community also suffered, both online and offline. Indeed many of the online reports of Islamophobia gave accounts

of offline hate crimes. Although this trend emerged long before the referendum (in 2015 there was a 326 per cent rise of reported Islamophobic incidents, from 146 to 437), there was a spike in such incidents during the campaign. One man was recorded in an interview by Channel 4 saying that he had voted for Brexit 'to keep the Muslims out';[5] while hashtags such as '#deportallMuslims', '#BanIslam', '#F**kIslam', '#Muzrat' and '#endIslam' began to surface on Twitter.

Our main conclusion was that although a lot of the rhetoric used during the EU referendum campaign was derogatory - racist, xenophobic and of an anti-immigrant nature - it is important to recognise that a very large number of people were supportive, and expressively against racism and xenophobia, as was expressed, for example in the launch of #safetypin and #postrefracism which campaigned to report and discourage hate crime.

Names have not been provided of Twitter users for the tweets quoted for ethical reasons.

Annex: Words/Hashtags used to collect Tweets that could be related to xenophobia

Hashtags

#BanIslam
#DeportallMuslims
#fuckislam
#IslamIsTheProblem
#NeverIslam
#NoIslam
#NoMoreRefugees
#PolishVermin
#sendthemback
#Stopimmigration
#Whitegenocide
#whitepride
#whiterevolution
#defendEurope
#EndIslam
#Getoutwevotedleave
#MakeBritainwhiteagain
#NojobsinUKforEU
#NoMoreMigrants
#Polesgohome
#refugeesnotwelcome
#sendthemhome
#StopTheInvasion
#whitepower
#whiteresistance

Other terms

anti-immigrant, anti-immigration, curry munching, dirty pack, golliwog, illegals, immigrants go home, Londonistan, migrants go home, muscat, muzrat, muzzrat, musrats, muzzle, rag head, Rapeugee, Rapefugee, refugees go home.

Notes

1. 'British Social Attitudes 29', NatCen Social Research: www.bsa29.natcen.ac.uk/media/13421/bsa29_full_report.pdf.

2. 'Migration in the News', Oxford Migration Observatory, 2013.

3. Demos, 'Brexit, The Digital Aftermath': www.demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Dispatches-Brexit-Demos.pdf

4. Ibid.

5. Muslim Council of Britain, 'Hate Incidents After European Referendum Results: A Compilation': http://www.mcb.org.uk/post-referendum-hate-crimes/.

The need for a left internationalist trade policy

Nick Dearden

Trade is the lynchpin of the global economic system. What we trade, how we trade it and with whom is central to understanding economic power. And it is at the centre of the political and economic crisis now gripping European and American politics. My argument is that, unless the left can develop a model to replace corporate globalisation that resonates with the many people currently marginalised by neoliberalism, we face a dark future.

While few people directly cited trade in Britain's EU referendum campaign, the issues that dominated it - immigration, deindustrialisation, public services, financial power and inequality - all directly relate to the global trade system we live under. Trade will also be at the centre of the Brexit negotiations over the next few years.

The type of deals Britain signs will dictate much of what happens to our

economy. And, although left-wing forces have been working hard to defeat mega corporate trade deals like TTIP (the Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership between the US and EU), it is still the right that leads the debate on trade.

The widespread capitulation of social democracy to neoliberalism in the 1990s is the main reason that today's left lacks a clearly articulated alternative which could resonate with potential supporters - whether in the internationalist remain camp or the protectionist leave camp. We urgently need a clear left strategy and vision for a trade system which promotes more democratic public services, improves social and environmental protection, and at the same time preserves and expands free movement of people and a genuine regional and international cooperation.

A short history of trade deals

Resistance to the free trade deals of the 1990s began with the Zapatistas on New Year's Day 1994; they were rightly concerned that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) - which came into force that day - would wipe out peasant farmers, and force them into sweatshops along the US border. The anti-globalisation movement (or, more correctly, the anti-neoliberal globalisation movement) went on to bring together western liberals, socialists, anarchists, environmentalists and feminists in a diverse movement which allied with countries in the global South in an attempt to reinvent an internationalist democratic left politics. At the centre of the struggle was the issue of 'free trade' - that universal 'good' that became a vehicle for the limitless expansion of corporate power into every corner of our lives.

The movement had a number of successes, including the abandonment of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment in 1998, and the great difficulties encountered by those attempting to 'reform' the World Trade Organisation's rules that began in Doha in 2001. It has drawn attention to the machinations of corporate globalisation, and shone a light on the institutions that have been created to govern the world economy (the G8, WTO, IMF, World Bank). What's more, it did this while remaining outward-looking, and driven by a sense of international solidarity, something which is, in practice, missing from most of today's left. But social democrats didn't listen. Their conversion to neoliberalism, especially acute under Clinton and Blair, led the centre-left to see free trade not simply as a necessary evil but as a key mechanism for making the poor richer.

In the end big business gave up on the WTO as a space to 'get things done'. Not just the pink tide governments of Latin America, but also China and India proved hostile to a neoliberal agenda dominated by the west. So a new strategy was adopted, based on regional trade deals - a series of four massive deals is currently on the international negotiating table, deals that seek to incorporate all the policies big business has been seeking for the last twenty years, locking together to cover vast swathes of the world.

The Transpacific Partnership (TPP) covers Pacific Rim countries from the US, Japan and Australia to Vietnam, Chile and Peru. The Transatlantic Partnership (TTIP) comprises the US and EU. CETA (which has now been signed by the EU Council but faces obstacles in ratification by individual member states) covers the EU and Canada. And the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) covers fifty countries - from the US and EU to Pakistan and Costa Rica, and deals with the 'services' sector - from finance to transport to energy to education. Importantly, these deals were intended to lock together, and to do so around China, Russia and India.

Taken together, this has been the biggest corporate offensive since the heyday of the anti-globalisation movement. And the core of these deals wasn't simply the removal of tariffs and quotas. Rather, it harked back to the more ambitious agenda which had been unsuccessfully pursued at the WTO fifteen years earlier. Overcoming democratic laws and regulations was at the centre of the agenda.

The kinds of laws and policies international businesses dislike include laws against antibiotic usage in meat production, or minimum wage legislation, or the use of procurement budgets to stimulate local business, or rules that undermine the creation of dangerous financial derivatives. From the perspective of transnational capital, these rules are simply impediments to its ability to generate greater profits. They mean that business has to operate different standards in different places. From a big business point of view, local differences should be swept away - they simply represent disguised protectionism. (One of the aims of the EU at its foundation was to establish a trading area within which all countries signed up to a basic level of social and workers' rights, which made a level playing field for trading - though the dominance of neoliberalism in recent decades has meant a constant pressure to drive down these standards.)

Some of the deals on public services employ mechanisms known as 'standstill' and 'ratchet' clauses, which effectively dictate that any moves a government makes with regard to the public sector have to be in the direction of more liberalisation (making

rules at least as advantageous to transnational capital as to, say, a local business).

In a nutshell, these corporate trade deals try to look at every aspect of society as if the only thing that mattered was the interests of capital. They do so by giving business a 'right' to be involved in writing legislation and challenging 'unnecessary' regulatory burdens on them. Their rules are also enforceable - unlike those in most environmental and human rights treaties. Enforceability is helped by allowing foreign capital special legal mechanisms to sue governments for laws which damage their 'investment'.

These mechanisms, which already exist in many bilateral trade agreements, have allowed big business to sue governments for putting cigarettes in plain packaging, for raising the minimum wage, for applying better health and safety standards to coal-fired power stations, and much besides. In the last fifteen years a legal industry has grown up pushing the limits of what's possible under these corporate courts, in particular through stretching the often used rule of 'indirect expropriation of assets' to mean virtually anything a corporation doesn't like.

These deals have been carried out behind closed doors. They have not been the subject of public debate, and there has been little to no public information about them, except what we have managed to glean from WikiLeaks. While the European Parliament *can* stop such deals on our behalf, they do not have the power to amend them, and they have never, to date, actually halted such a deal. To cap it all, no government can realistically withdraw after they are signed, as they include sunset clauses of twenty years - far beyond the lifetime of most governments.

TTIP and other treaties

Trade deals are notoriously dry subjects, and the narrative of 'trade means growth means jobs' is a strong one. But over the last two years there has been an enormous outpouring of concern about TTIP. This has built a campaign that has significantly held up a group of deals that were supposed to be signed and sealed by now. In Europe, one year on from the campaign being launched, a record-breaking 3.2 million people had signed up to stop TTIP and CETA, and there are now hundreds of 'TTIP-free' local authorities right across Europe.

But here's the really significant difference with the earlier days of the anti-

globalisation movement: the battle against these trade agreements has reached the highest levels of politics. In the 1990s, when we fought trade deals we won concessions, but our concerns didn't become central to the trade debate, which was more interested in cutting taxes and providing cheap goods. But in the US election, free-trader Clinton had to express her own doubts about TPP and TTIP, standing as she did between firm opponents to the left (Saunders) and right (Trump).

The results of the US election mean there is little future for the corporate trade offensive. CETA will probably 'provisionally' come into force in 2017, but it then needs to run the gauntlet of every parliament in Europe - and some of them have pledged to stop it in its current form. TTIP now appears dead - sacrificed by German and French social democrats in order to save CETA, and to improve their electoral chances in 2017. In the US Trump has said he will stop TPP.

The trade campaigns were a left-wing initiative. But their potential popularity has been recognised by the far right. Thus UKIP quickly moved from tacit support of TTIP to all-out opposition, recognising the impact it could have on the EU referendum. They were right - while it was not major factor in the vote, TTIP was used among certain audiences to help the Brexit case. In continental Europe, virtually all far right parties have joined the anti-TTIP bandwagon.

Although many of us who opposed TTIP argued passionately that remaining inside the EU was the best way to defeat it - through thereby preventing free-trade fundamentalists from taking full control of Britain - there are undoubtedly similarities in the movement against TTIP and the votes for Brexit and for Trump. All are a reaction to the way that the free trade agenda, in its widest sense, has empowered corporations at the expense of people and democracy. Each may herald the demise of neoliberalism.

But the progressive potential of this moment can only be fulfilled if the left can lay out a real alternative which definitively breaks with social democracy's embrace of neoliberalism. If the left fails, the far right will fill the space with their own project for economic nationalism, based on hyper-protectionism and the sort of 'beggar-my-neighbour' trade policies that grew up in the 1930s.

The post-Brexit political vacuum in Britain has been filled with a hybrid response which combines both adherence to extreme free trade and deregulation and a form of political nationalism and clamp down on migration. In the US, Trump's strategy

is similarly hybrid. He is in favour of deregulation and privatisation. But he also believes in a right-wing protectionism which would stack the rules of the game even further in favour of US interests, and help to economically offload domestic economic problems onto other countries. Trump believes in ripping up multilateral trade agreements - including NAFTA - and replacing them with bilateral trade deals. But, as bad as these deals are, Trump's strategy gives the US even more power in negotiations. Trade becomes more and more 'war by other means'.

This may well be popular with some domestic groups, especially skilled workers, as it is apparently to be accompanied by massive infrastructure investments and planned industrial strategy - both of which should be part of any sensible economic policy. But in Trump's hands, it could well simply cement the state-corporate nexus, as well as raising international tensions. Meanwhile the momentum behind a hard Brexit is building. This is the surest route to the so-called 'Singapore option', turning Britain into an offshore haven for capital, a financial trading centre which can only survive by out-competing everyone else through lower regulation and lower wages. Britain's international relations would be a series of ultra-free trade deals which would see the global south producing everything we consume, paid for by the speculation and rent which form the basis of our economy.

What's the alternative?

To date, the left has failed to make a dent in the debate. Unless it can begin to do so fast, our constitution will be rewritten by probably the most right-wing government in modern British history, who will deregulate, privatise and liberalise, while keeping a good portion of the working class on board with anti-immigrant policies. In the US, Trump will combine similar policies on migration with elements of deregulation but elements of right-wing protectionism.

In the short term there is little option for the left but to go for a 'damage limitation' option, and to campaign to remain in the single market through joining the European Economic Area. There are big problems here, in that it risks replaying the EU referendum debate - with those arguing for this option perceived as being on the same side as much of the business community, and undoubtedly being accused of trying to undermine the referendum. UKIP will have a field day.

Of course, damage limitation won't solve the long-term lack of alternatives that

drove so many people to vote Brexit. A radical economic programme must also be developed that makes a fundamental challenge to neoliberalism. Outside Spain, the European left has not undertaken this work since the 1980s. As part of this programme we need to review the whole basis of international trading.

We must build an alternative path that stresses that trade is a tool of wider social objectives and not an end in itself. So, as a first step, we need to argue that all trade deals should be subject to environmental, human rights and workers' rights commitments. This should be explicitly argued for as a better way of enforcing a level playing field than the abolition of all safeguards. We should be arguing for standards in trading countries to demonstrably increase over the lifetime of any deal. The whole goal of trade deals should be to promote equal development and fair distribution of the wealth that is produced.

Fairtrade has proved that products made in better conditions can find a market, but we could go further, and argue that trade should be made easier for those that produce in decent conditions, or - even better - produce in cooperatives and collectives. And we should campaign against trade that compromises the food security of nations, for instance by incentivising the growth of export crops over food necessary for local sustenance.

We also should argue for special corporate courts to be scrapped, and replaced with mechanisms that allow individual citizens whose rights are impinged by foreign corporations to achieve restitution - if necessary at an international level. This would be easier to achieve if an international treaty to control transnational corporations were agreed, something currently being pushed by Ecuador at the UN - and consistently opposed by the UK.

But even the best form of trade doesn't make up for a good industrial strategy or the development of more democratic public services. So forms of protection have a vital place in modern economics. The key here is to avoid protecting your own industry, agriculture or services in a way that sinks your neighbour's economy or creates disincentives for innovation.

Alternative trade systems do exist, though they are nowhere near sufficiently developed. The 'pink tide' governments in Latin America developed an alternative trade system known as ALBA, specifically based on principles of solidarity, redistribution of wealth, and cooperation.[1] Venezuela's oil-for-doctors programme

is one small example, and even Livingstone's London got in on the act with cheaper fuel to power public transport. The potential for an international solidarity economy is huge, and well-crafted trade rules can help bring this about. In so doing, we also fight xenophobia and insularity.

There is significant work to do to develop these models, and just as much work in building alliances which can convey this to an increasingly insular public. When people's experience of globalisation is simply unemployment, commodification and marginalisation, it's easy to jump on a nationalist agenda, especially when it depicts itself as anti-establishment.

Despite one of the biggest victories on trade for many years in the probable defeat of TTIP, the left has - post-Brexit and now post-Trump - lost most of its ground on the economic debate. Our task is to develop economic models which are open, international, collaborative *and* local and democratic. We urgently need to develop a clear and compelling vision for international economics that taps into the concerns of those who voted for Brexit, while preserving the internationalist outlook of those on the left who wanted to remain. Such models are the only hope we have of preventing a further decline into nationalism, based on a fear of the foreigner.

Notes

1. For more on this see Marina Prentoulis, 'From the EU to Latin America: left populism and regional integration', in *Soundings* 63.

Marina Prentoulis is Senior Lecturer in Media and Politics, University of East Anglia, and a spokesperson of the 'Another Europe is Possible' campaign.

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