

Paper prepared for the
6th Euroacademia International Conference
The European Union and the Politicization of Europe

11 – 12 December 2017

Florence, Italy

This paper is a draft

Please do not cite or distribute

Antidotes to Brexit and Nationalist Populism: Social Europe and Transformative Change

Andrew Ryder

Abstract

The article gives an overview of the key cultural and structural factors behind nationalist populism and the decision to leave the European Union as a result of the referendum staged in Britain in 2016. The article seeks to identify socio-economic and cultural changes that might counter nationalist populism in Britain through a renewed Social Europe and role for civil society. The paper also considers how conceptions of liberal and radical democracy, whilst ostensibly in opposition to each other, might be fused.

Keywords:

- Populism
- Securitisation
- Social Europe
- Pluralism
- Radical Democracy

Introduction

Through the lens of Foucault and his notion of hegemonic power and the habitus of twenty first century Britain we can understand and witness in the Brexit debate the subtle manipulation of public thought on identity and nationhood. Brexit should be perceived as a shaper of identity, a frame used to interpret the past and present. In dealing with the crisis and challenges Brexit represents elite political actors are articulating interpretations which manipulate facets of national identity and history and play upon issues which arouse fear and anxiety in the public psyche (Adler-Nissen et al, 2017).ⁱ One prominent frame of the Brexiteers is centred on a British exceptionalism, monoculturalism and rejection of forms of collectivity and solidarity

which are perceived to impinge upon tradition, sovereignty and the freedom of markets.

To understand but also challenge Brexit warrants a deep socio-economic analysis of the structure of society (critical consciousness) and the need for transformative change. The marketization of society and the faltering of neoliberalism, especially in the wake of the financial crisis in 2008, are central phenomena in the emergence of nationalism in the Brexit debate. Brexit nationalism though is a sham rebellion which in effect wraps the flag around an even more neoliberal worldview and which will undermine further, perhaps irrevocably, what Polanyi (1944) ⁱⁱ described as the 'Double Movement' the push for social protection against laissez-fair marketization.

An effective counter-foil to nationalist populism can only emerge if the vision of European supra-nationalism and cosmopolitanism is rekindled through the fusion of pluralism and radical democracy. Pluralism (liberal democracy) seeks to maintain democracy through specialised institutions and protections which safeguard fundamental and minority rights and incorporate forms of representative democracy rather than direct. In contrast proponents of radical democracy such as Laclau and Mouffe (1985) ⁱⁱⁱ argue for a process of repoliticisation where important socio-economic issues, ignored by the elitism and vested interests of pluralism, are allowed to come to the fore through forms of more direct democracy which give agency to excluded sections of society, which can be viewed as a form of populism. The paper will seek to outline a vision of a rekindled European Project and the antidote to Brexit and nationalist populism through a fusion of pluralism and radical democracy and a renewed Social Europe which raises social protection and well-being. The paper draws upon my forthcoming book *Britain and Europe at a Crossroads: The Politics of Anxiety and the Future of Radical Democracy* (Policy Press).

Brexit should be seen as a populist phenomenon, which can be defined as a political discourse which places an emphasis on the will of the people often set in contrast to a distant self-interested elite which the populists hope to usurp from a position of hegemony. Despite such democratic pretensions nationalist populists often place at the centre of their mobilisation a strong and charismatic leader in the Weberian sense who invokes emotive discourse which manipulates and plays upon

traditionalist notions of national identity and forms of nativism which target vulnerable 'outsider groups' (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017) ^{iv}

In the 1980s far-right parties like the French National Front made clear that the stigma of being associated with fascism could be overcome by adopting a frame that combined nativism with populism which shaped perceptions of 'the nation' and 'the people'. Since then we have seen in many countries radical right populist movements emulate such stratagems. 2016 witnessed something of a seismic shift akin perhaps to 1848 (the year of nationalist uprisings) in the sense that within a short timeframe the election of a populist president in the USA and the referendum decision by the UK to leave the EU constituted forms of upheaval which challenged longstanding certainties and assumptions. Stretching far beyond the borders of the countries concerned. These events need to be placed in the context of a surge in nationalist populism as evidenced by the emergence of authoritarian populist leaders in Hungary, Russia, India and Turkey with countries like France and Italy susceptible to the allure of populism. Added to this mainstream political parties have shadowed the populist phenomenon tailoring their policy and rhetoric to reflect populist sentiments and even hosting such movements (Mudde, 2010) ^v. Nationalist populism presents a serious challenge to conceptions of social justice, liberal democracy and the European project, and it is imperative that the champions of such concepts not only understand the root causes of nationalist populism but also identify remedies. This is a key aim of the paper.

Economic Considerations

The vision of a liberal Europe, a zone of free trade and flexible labour markets has undermined the European social model distracting the EU from social democratic values (Giddens, 2013) ^{vi}. The adoption of a common EU monetary and controlled fiscal and budgetary regime coupled with laissez-faire approaches has constrained the scope for economic maneuverability for member states and has eroded the capacity of states to intervene and redistribute, powers which hitherto had been crucial in nurturing social citizenship and national loyalties and cohesion. This situation was compounded by the financial economic crisis of 2008 and austerity

policies which have done much to fuel populist phenomenon such as Brexit. Many in lower income groups feel anxious and insecure, as Piketty notes neoliberal forms of capitalism have created growing inequality and a 21st century underclass open to political agendas that promise fundamental change^{vii}. In the Brexit result there was a clear correlation between income and levels of prosperity in given areas and support for Brexit, unsurprisingly therefore the poorest regions of Britain such as the North East voted leave. Brexiteers like Nigel Farage, the then leader of the UK Independence Party (UKIP), were astute to target traditional Labour supporting areas, in particular those experiencing economic decline (Shipman, 2016)^{viii}.

In the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2008, European centre-right parties have taken on a more overtly Eurosceptic and xenophobic tone, in this remodelling of the centre right new political detours are being mapped. These new detours initially might appear to be in contradiction with globalisation as reflected by sentiments which favour a retreat into the nation state and opposition to free movement of labour but the fusion of neoliberalism and nationalist populism seems to be a relatively simple form of political merger, facilitating further downsizing and dilution of social protections (Fekete, 2016)^{ix}. In this environment greater emphasis is being placed on the 'new neoliberal turn' which can be characterised as having a propensity towards greater competitiveness, downward wage harmonisation and deregulation. However, such a stance will invariably aggravate existing discontents and there is likely to be a strong counter-reaction leading to further social and political dissent.

Decision makers have been slow to realise the political consequences of economic decline and austerity. Britain under the premiership of Cameron introduced extensive cutbacks to public spending which impacted profoundly on the welfare budget and low-income groups. Within the EU structural and regional funds have not been able to address economic disparities and these were compounded by the financial restrictions of the Stability and Growth Pact promoted by German Chancellor Angela Merkel to bolster the Eurozone which according to critics has accentuated the problems of the financial crisis through austerity policies (Avis, 2014)^x. France under the leadership of President Francois Hollande did seek to secure a relaxation of this

approach in favour of Keynesian fiscal stimulus but was over-ruled by Germany which wished to keep a focus on debt reduction and maintain the limitations of the Stability and Growth Pact. Underfinanced 'placebo' programmes, such as the Juncker (President of the European Commission) investment plan have also been met with criticism in some quarters, the notion that a €21 billion EU investment can achieve a leverage effect worth €315bn has been derided (Bosch, 2017) ^{xi}.

Bolder alternatives to current policy trends might come about via the concept of 'Social Europe' which stresses the value of increasing labour market participation, places much more emphasis on active welfare state measures, introduces supply-side efforts at job creation, seeks measures to provide security other than life-time job tenure and prioritises efforts to combat social exclusion (Seikel, 2016) ^{xii}. The Confederation of German Trade Unions has called for a European-style Marshall Plan. A rekindling of the European project with a reinvigorated vision of 'Social Europe' may stave off the disintegration that some fear will befall the European Union (EU) in the wake of Brexit and ongoing Eurozone crisis (Soros, 2016) ^{xiii}. Such calls are evidenced in the work of DiEM25 a pan-European, cross-border movement which believes that the EU is disintegrating as reflected in misanthropy, xenophobia and toxic nationalism but wishes to promote solidarity in the EU. DiEM25 is now campaigning for a European New Deal (Varoufakis, 2017) ^{xiv}.

Securitisation and Migration

Securitisation describes how power elites are able to use speech acts to play upon or construct perceptions of insecurity and fear and thus mobilise and frame thought and action to the level of priority, an 'emergency politics' which sets aside the normal process of decision making (Waever, 1995) ^{xv}. The framing of a political problem in terms of extraordinary measures, survival and urgency takes the politics of security beyond the boundaries of normal politics, securitization is thus a unique phenomenon where through speech acts (utterance) we construct an issue as a matter of security. Such speech acts are produced intersubjectively where politics is a collective production of meanings: the illocutionary act of securitization is not

completed by the securitizing actor alone but can only be understood in relation to its intersubjectively defined context (Wæver, 2002) ^{xvi}

Ceyhan and Tsoukala (2002) note the rhetorical framing of securitisation centres on the socio-economic axis, where for example migration is referred to as the cause of unemployment, rise of the informal economy and crisis of the welfare state ^{xvii}. Secondly the security factor is linked to the loss of control narrative associated with the issue of sovereignty, borders and both internal and external security. The third factor is linked to identity where migrants are seen as a threat to national identity and demographic equilibrium. Finally, there is the political axis, where anti-immigrant, racist and xenophobic discourses are articulated. These dimensions have clearly been evident in the Brexit debate, where an 'us' and 'them' lens has been utilised in the identification of an existential threat and has been directed at issues such as immigration but also social security (welfare provision and questions of costs and whether perceived outsiders are at an advantage). In the context of Brexit issues such as immigration and the threat to British/English identity and social security and cohesion are reflected through debates on sovereignty and economic nationalism and can be termed 'Populist Nationalism'.

Prominent in the Brexit referendum were the rhetoric and communication strategy of the Vote Leave campaign which claimed that hordes of Turkish migrants would enter the UK if it stayed in the EU and foreign rapists and criminals would not be deported because of EU legislation. Fears and concerns for the NHS were notoriously harnessed by the Leave campaign with the promise to divert a saved 350 million pounds a week from an EU departure to the NHS. UKIP went even further proclaiming Islamist extremism was a real threat to our life and of course there was the infamous billboard showing a long winding queue of migrants 'Breaking Point: the EU has failed us' and 'we must take back control of our borders' (Oliver, 2016) ^{xviii}. Public opposition to migration was not just framed in the referendum campaign but had taken hold in the years prior where even mainstream politicians joined the chorus of critical voices against migration. Prime Minister Cameron had promised to get migration down into the tens of thousands, an implausible promise which Cameron must have realised was unattainable (MacShane, 2017). ^{xix}

Foucault (2003) describes the politics of risk as legitimising technologies of power, structural arguments are also evident in Balzacq's (2005) conception of securitization which stresses the centrality of non-discursive power structures^{xx}. Balzacq's Bourdieusian view on politics highlights the importance of habitus related to the specific structures of security environments. Balzacq contends the speech act within securitisation is a sustained strategic practice aimed at convincing a target audience to accept a frame/outlook, based on what it knows about the world. By invoking Foucault and his notion of hegemonic power and coupled with the habitus of twenty first century Britain we can witness in the Brexit debate the subtle manipulation of public thought on identity and nationhood to further an agenda premised on achieving a new neoliberal order and the consolidation of power by existing economic, cultural and political elites. As Wæver (2002) notes securitization is a practice of governmentality in the construction of the modern state. Fear equals an increase in securitization and facilitates successful securitization^{xxi}.

A key argument coming predominantly from the political right is that freedom of movement and east European migrants arriving in the UK leads to the loss of jobs and presents a financial burden but evidence suggests otherwise indicating that such migrants make a positive contribution to the economy, tax revenue and service delivery in areas like health care (Andor, 2014)^{xxii}. It should be noted though that some voices on the left argue that free movement of labour aids the neoliberal economy by depressing wage rates, whilst others are alarmed at the nativism that such migration prompts leading to the rise of radical right parties propelled by a strong anti-immigrant stance which in some cases is leading to traditional left parties haemorrhaging electoral support (Chakraborty, 2016)^{xxiii}. However, it can be argued that such restrictions on migration would undermine Social Europe and indeed is at odds with progressive political sentiments which advocate robust anti-discrimination policies and measures to counteract the economic manipulation of migrants and wage protections and thus oppose restrictive immigration policies (Global Unions, 2013)^{xxiv}

A Social Europe would seek to elevate the socio-economic condition of more impoverished parts of Central Eastern Europe through robust redistributive policies and targeting in regions and economic sectors suffering from skills shortages as a

consequence of migration. Such funding might create incentives for workers to stay in their home countries or be replaced through extensive training programmes. In migrant receiving countries where services and the availability of accommodation is under pressure due to migration, often poorer inner-city areas, it would be of value if the EU could make specific funds available to alleviate such pressures, which are major contributory factors to the undermining of community cohesion. Thus, employment and social standards should be protected not by restrictions but by the enforcement of rights and greater targeted financial support for areas affected by migration.

Cultural Backlash

An important point regarding the Brexit result was the correlation between demographics and the vote to leave the EU especially in terms of age, education and income. Those aged over 60 or those without a university education or professional/middle income occupation were more likely to vote leave (Shipman, 2016)^{xxv}. Some of this sentiment could be said to represent a ‘cultural backlash’ against progressive values by groups in society who feel left behind and who are at odds with what they perceive as a form of political tyranny which castigates their more traditional and nativist outlooks as reactive. During the referendum the leave campaign were adept at identifying these feelings and playing upon these sentiments by invoking fears and opposition to traits of modernity. In the wake of the referendum many were taken by surprise at the deep well of hostility that existed to migrants and was unleashed by the referendum as reflected not just in the level of support for leave but also the stark increase in xenophobia after the referendum. Ricœur’s (1981) argues that speech acts and discourse leave “a trace” contributing to the [intersubjective] emergence of patterns which form human action^{xxvi}. In the wake of Brexit the UK has witnessed a rise in xenophobia and attacks on migrant groups. According to the National Police Chiefs’ Council there was a 49% rise in incidents of hate crime to 1,863 in the last week in July 2016 when compared with the previous year. The week after the referendum saw a record 58% increase in recorded incidents to 1,787 (Travis, 2016)^{xxvii}.

New cultural norms such as acceptance of LGBT groups and diversity which are prevalent among the intelligentsia and young may not have permeated as deeply to other strata of society. As Ignazi (1992) notes cultural resistance to progressive values can be construed as a silent counter revolution^{xxviii}. Fascism in the 30s and McCarthyism in the 50s were reactions to modernity, indeed the contemporary manifestation of populism may represent a similar reaction to modernity in its apparent rejection of cosmopolitanism and progressive values^{xxix}. Brexit can be seen as a cleavage between cosmopolitans and nationalists (Delanty, 2017)^{xxx}

The solidity and strength of the cultural backlash should not really come as a great surprise given the reactionary nature of large sections of the British media. The politics of fear can be interpreted through the notion of ‘moral panic’ as devised by Cohen (1971) where groups or norms are classified as being outside the accepted parameters of convention and demonised^{xxxi}. The media has been a major instigator in such moral panics and has targeted in particular migrants, a discourse which numerous politicians have sought to surf. We should not though discount the power of the politics of ‘fear of fear’, in which fear can work as a counter-practice against processes of securitization. It can be viewed as a core part of liberal theory and practice which counters and thwarts a shift toward ‘security’ in its more extreme manifestations (Williams, 2011)^{xxxii}. Such desuritisation warrants a number of reforms and cultural changes.

The EU needs to greatly develop its prowess in public relations articulating an ideal of Europe that can resonate with the alienated and win them over to the European Project. Such a campaign needs to highlight the social protections that can/could stem from membership of the EU. In part, as argued above the EU is hamstrung in articulating such arguments by the current vacuum in redistributive economic and social policies. At the centre of counter-arguments to the cultural backlash of populism it is important to bring to the fore notions of national and European ‘inclusive citizenship’ (Kabeer, 2005) which centre on justice as articulated in terms of when it is fair for people to be treated the same and when it is fair that they should be treated differently^{xxxiii}. In addition, such notions of citizenship see recognition as being framed in terms of the intrinsic worth of all human beings, but also recognition of and respect for their differences facilitated through forms of intercultural dialogue.

Self-determination is part of this formula, allowing people the ability to exercise some degree of control over their lives. Inclusive citizenship encompasses solidarity and a cosmopolitan worldview, that prompt unity with others in their claims for justice and recognition (Lister, 2007) ^{xxxiv}. Such a sea change in notions of citizenship though would warrant corresponding reforms in the function and culture of political institutions and forms of ‘constitutional patriotism’, the support which human rights law and social protections can mobilise, a point which is elaborated upon in the next section.

Constitutional Patriotism

Habermas (1994) has been instrumental in popularizing the concept of ‘constitutional patriotism’, a political attachment by society which focuses on the norms, the values and, more indirectly, the procedures of a liberal democratic constitution^{xxxv}. The fragility of these characteristics within British society were evidenced in Brexit but it should be noted the challenges to constitutional patriotism predate the referendum result.

The term ‘Dog whistle politics’ entered the political lexicon in 2005 and was defined by the Economist (2005) as “putting out a message that, like a high-pitched dog-whistle only fully audible to those at whom it is directly aimed”^{xxxvi} Rhetoric which communicates codes targeted at certain sections of the electorate and is designed to mobilise and arouse emotive passions often centred on identity is as old as politics itself. However, such tactics can be said to have become something of an artform in the sense of its reach and location as a central dynamic of a campaign with the entrance of the Australian political strategist Sir Lynton Crosby into British politics. Crosby’s first foray into the political scene in Britain was steering the strategy of the Conservative general election campaign in 2005 in a controversial campaign centred around migration and attacks on Gypsy and Traveller unauthorised developments (Ryder, 2017) ^{xxxvii}. The campaign approach of ‘project fear’ was felt to have helped the ‘remain’ campaign win in the Scottish referendum in 2014 where fears about the

Scottish economy and future relationship with the British currency were effectively exploited¹ (Shipman, 2016) ^{xxxviii}.

The 2016 London Mayoral campaign of the Conservative candidate Zac Goldsmith, which was advised by Crosby, was felt by critics to have sought to manipulate Islamophobia by raising fears with reference to the Muslim faith of the Labour candidate and eventual victor Sadiq Khan (Parkinson, 2017) ^{xxxix}. However, Goldsmith's defeat was not a turning point reflecting the public's rejection of such political tactics as London is a liberal and cosmopolitan city less inclined to be swayed by such demagoguery, such a campaign though may have worked in other more monocultural parts of the country. In their strategizing for the EU referendum campaign Cameron and Osborne failed to appreciate that given the volatility of British politics emotions and anger towards migrants and other such grievances could be unscrupulously manipulated especially if their opponents were prepared to reach lower depths than them in terms of rhetoric and emotive codes. Cameron and Osborne both felt that they could win by modelling their campaign on their Scottish referendum strategy and focusing on economic fears in a campaign labelled by its opponents as 'project fear', but this was not able to trump the potency of xenophobia and fear of migration of the leave campaign in what was termed 'project hate' (Shipman, 2016) ^{xl}.

It is evident that 'dog whistle politics' in the last decade may have left Britain susceptible to irrationalism and nativism driving the thoughts and actions of the body politic. In order to minimise such tendencies serious consideration needs to be given to the validity of referendums, a form of democratic expression that might be highly vulnerable to populist bandwagons. However, it may not be referendums themselves which are a problem but the political culture which forms the context of such a poll. It may even be the case that in a political culture that nurtures more reasonable and balanced debate that referendums may in fact be instrumental in reviving democracy at the national and supra-national level. At the time of pledging a referendum such a culture did not exist and Cameron clearly did not appreciate the profound risks of a referendum in the 2015 manifesto pledge in which he sought to appease Eurosceptic

¹ Crosby's controversial electoral tactics were to play an important role in Cameron's victory in the 2015 General Election where he unexpectedly secured a majority

Conservative backbench MPs but also minimise support for UKIP. Prior to the 2015 General Election Cameron may not have expected to stage a referendum given that he thought the chances of another Coalition Government were high and that the Liberals would not have supported a referendum. That in itself may suggest that the UK may benefit from a political culture that enables greater consensus and deliberation. Britain traditionally has preferred what can be described as the Westminster model, a more centralised form of political governance as opposed to the continental model, where forms of proportional representation, have a greater tendency to produce coalition government leading to a greater emphasis on consensus building and deliberation. In contrast the Westminster system is centred on first-past-the post voting that can enable a Government like that of Cameron's in 2015 to win a small working majority in parliament despite only receiving 37 percent of the vote. Given the major opposition parties were opposed to a referendum Cameron would have been thwarted in his attempt to hold a referendum in a political system based on proportional representation.

Another important area of reform in the British political system may warrant limitations and greater regulation of how campaigns and parties attract funding. The leave campaign relied heavily on large donations from entrepreneurs like Aaron Banks, in fact 61 percent of the funds for the Brexit campaign was provided by five rich individuals (MacShane, 2017) ^{xii}. It has been reported that in the run-up to the referendum the biggest donation in British political history was made in the form of an estimated £9m in cash, loans and services to pro-Brexit causes (Harding, 2017) ^{xiii}. Banks is currently under investigation by the Electoral Commission to see whether offences were committed, in relation to donations and/or loans made to campaigners and whether his campaign firm 'Better For The Country Ltd' was the true source of donations made to referendum campaigners in its name, or if it was acting as an agent (Merrick, 2017) ^{xiii}. A Labour MP, Ben Bradshaw has called on the government to investigate the possible role played by "dark money" in the EU referendum². Speaking in parliament, Ben Bradshaw said there was "widespread

² Open Democracy has published a report 'How did Arron Banks afford Brexit? - 19 October 2017' which raises serious questions as to how Banks had the financial resources to make such large donations <https://www.opendemocracy.net/uk/brexitinc/adam-ramsay/how-did-arron-banks-afford-brexit>

concern over foreign and particularly Russian interference in western democracies” (Harding, 2017) ^{xliv}.

In the wake of the Brexit vote it was reported that Cambridge Analytica had assisted the unofficial Leave.EU campaign, the then UKIP leader Nigel Farage and Aaron Banks were prominent figures in this group ³. Leave.EU's former communications director, Andy Wigmore confirmed the involvement of Cambridge Analytica to the Observer newspaper and Banks credited the company's technology with advancing the Brexit cause. However, Banks later said that Leave.EU had merely had discussions about possibly contracting Cambridge Analytica but did not do so because the Electoral Commission (EC) designated a different group as the official Leave campaign. Cambridge Analytica denies that it was ever involved in the EU referendum campaign, and has lodged a legal complaint against the Observer (BBC, 2017) ^{xlv}. The UK's privacy watchdog, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), is currently investigating the use of data analytics in the referendum (BBC, 2017) ^{xlvi}.

Cambridge Analytica is involved in mining data and data analysis with strategic communication for the electoral process. The subtle use of social media to develop psychological profiles of voters and mobilisation through targeted messages has been claimed to constitute something akin to psychological warfare in terms of the public mood changes it seeks to prompt (Cadwallader, 2017) ^{xlvii}. Cambridge Analytica is said to have played an invaluable role in the election of US president Donald Trump. Whether or not Cambridge Analytica was involved in the referendum campaign it can be said that more broadly the leave and unofficial leave campaigns were adept at online profiling, targeting and messaging through social media. Perhaps most significantly Banks hired Gerry Gunster a US referendum strategist expert at gathering polling data and data modelling upon which Banks and his associates (the self-styled bad boys of Brexit) designed an array of messages

³ Vote Leave was the official leave campaign meaning it was designated by the Electoral Commission as the official campaign in favour of leaving the European Union for the referendum on EU membership. It was founded by political strategists Matthew Elliot and Dominic Cummings as a cross-party campaign but was dominated by Conservatives.

designed to attract the attention and support of targeted sections of the electorate but also arouse controversy which often was instrumental in steering the wider debate and consuming valuable media airtime^{xlviii}. Trump in the primaries and presidential contest had himself honed his political statements to court controversy and generate free publicity through inflaming political furores played out through the media (Shipman, 2016). A case can be made for such practices constituting a new Orwellian dimension to speech acts and securitisation and one which may need more stringent regulation but should also prompt a wider debate about how political discussion is framed in modern society.

Of particular relevance to how political debate is conducted we need to consider the role of the media. In Britain the bulk of the newspapers are controlled by a small handful of rich and powerful media tycoons of which Rupert Murdoch owner of the Sun and Times is the most prominent. The bulk of the printed media not only vociferously supported Brexit but was also instrumental in securitising a range of issues which were played out in the media. In a democracy there are sensitive considerations as to how far media regulation can intervene. However, a strong case could be made for limitations on the number of media outlets one individual can own and stricter limits over their access to and influence over elected centres of power. In tandem with media reform greater consideration will need to be given to the role of civic education in schools, a greater understanding by the electorate of how political and socio-economic processes work may equip them more effectively to dismiss the worst excesses of populist politicians and the media.

In terms of changes in approaches to governance the EU also has to consider more fundamental reform to its practices. Brexit should probably be viewed as a product of the distant and bureaucratic reputation the EU has built for itself leading to low turnouts in EU elections and growing Eurosceptic movements across Europe. The EU has in effect been an elite-driven enterprise attracting low levels of popular support. The oft commented on disconnection between the EU and populaces is in part born out of the fact that EU political elites have sought to create a disunited European political community through supranational institutions which insulate them

from national popular demands, and is a major attribute in the current crisis of confidence in the EU (Giddens, 2013)^{xlix}.

Habermas (2010) who has been alarmed at the lack of deliberation surrounding the response to the financial crisis by power elites in Europe has advocated a careful balance between central power and community decision makingⁱ. For Habermas (1984) a key dynamic in this strategy is deliberative democracy, which he defined as one which can facilitate communicative action and new social movements, creating consensus and mutual understandingⁱⁱ. Deliberative democracy involves citizens and their representatives actively debating about problems and solutions in an environment which is conducive to reflection and a mutual willingness to understand the values, perspectives, and interests of others, providing the possibility of citizens reframing their interests and perspectives in light of a joint search for common interests and mutually acceptable solutions.

The French president Emmanuel Macron may have initiated a process that could lead to greater democratic reform within the EU in his recent pledge to lead a “rebuilding” of the EU in which he warned that “sovereignty, democracy and trust are in danger” and that European citizens no longer understand the project. According to Macron the solution lays in grounding the EU more deeply in cooperation and solidarity and an integrated eurozone with its own financial minister, parliament and a standalone budget to head off future crises (Chrisafis and Smith, 2017)ⁱⁱⁱ. Further integration as Macron envisages may not be feasible without EU leaders placing a much stronger emphasis on employment and social protection. However, it can be argued that a lack of critique of neoliberalism as well as bureaucratic dimension of the EU has created a vacuum which eurosceptic populists have filled, thus Macron’s ‘centrist ‘third way’ approach to politics may not be best positioned to answer the full range of nationalist populist challenges facing Europe. If the European project reasserted its credibility by strengthening its social foundations, then EU critics would have less basis for their arguments. Greater integration may only come about when the European Project has been rekindled when social rights take precedence over the competition rules of the single market. In terms of reform to prompt greater ‘buy in to the European Project the transferal of greater power to the

European Parliament and direct election of the president of the council and commission might have great value in nurturing greater allegiance to the EU.

With reference to a strengthened constitutional patriotism reinforcing norms and values to withstand the reactive populist pressures and forces, as witnessed in Brexit, then a renewed civil society may be a prerequisite. Traditionally civil society has been a bridge and even mediator between Government and communities but recession and austerity has greatly weakened this sector in Britain despite the promises of Cameron to place civil society at the centre of his political programme in 2010 as part of his 'Big Society' agenda. Freire (1971) saw outsider catalysts as being pivotal in helping marginalised communities understand the nature and cause of localised oppressions and exclusion and linking that understanding to wider societal trends and support for forms of transformative change ^{liii}. Grassroots based civil society can constitute the outsider catalyst Freire envisages however not only has civil society in the UK been weakened by dwindling resources, as noted above, but few donors provide the resources to enable civil society to work organically to promote a transformative agenda, instead community organisations often find themselves tied to narrow donor led service agendas which nurture forms of managerialism leading to disconnection from the communities they seek to serve (Ryder, 2017) ^{liv}. Possibly the EU referendum result might have been different if there had been a stronger and more vibrant network of grassroots orientated civil society groups, particularly in those marginalised communities that voted heavily to leave.

The EU promotes the concept of community-led local development (European Commission, 2014) to describe an approach that turns traditional "top down" development policy on its head enabling local people to take the reins and form a local partnership that designs and implements an integrated development strategy, but many feel civil society is under-used and valued ^{lv}. In order to stem the impact of reactive populist forces that have fuelled phenomenon like Brexit new means may need to be found to reinvigorate civil society and its connections with centres of decision making at a national and European level. The EU could make an important contribution by reducing the current excessive forms of bureaucracy in grant applications and administrative requirements of servicing grants and giving grantees

much more scope and flexibility in the use of resources. Giddens (2013, 46) may be right to denounce the “toxic effect” of Brussels patronage which creates a strong pressure on civil society to conform to commission thinking^{lvi}.

Conclusion

In March 2017 the British Government triggered article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty which is a two year process for a member state to leave the EU. At the time of writing negotiations are moving slowly and there is a fear that Britain may end up with what has been termed as ‘hard brexit’, a complete rupture with the EU and single market. In a process of negotiation where bluff and counter-bluff are invariably played out it is difficult to precisely define the direction of these talks but it seems evident that the Government will not be steering Britain into a ‘soft brexit’ where Britain retains membership of the single market and customs’ union, as is the case in Norway. Sections of the cabinet and backbench Conservative MPs are actively agitating for ‘hard brexit’ in pursuit of a free market utopia which opponents argue threatens to conclusively shatter some of the conventions for cooperation and human rights advancement and forms of social protectionism laid down in the post-war period (MacShane, 2017)

Kuhn (1962) defines paradigm change as where the anomalies of an established and dominant paradigm are exposed through critique and the paradigm’s seeming inability to meet present challenges, when no credible responses arises, a crisis of confidence can appear in the now vulnerable paradigm; this is called the revolutionary phase^{lvii}. Then, if the old model cannot adapt, it is replaced with a new conceptual worldview, whose assumptions remain sovereign for some period of time, at least until the cycle repeats itself. Brexit can be perceived as a paradigm shift whereby society and political discourse is in a state of flux out of which a new orthodoxy might emerge. This paradigm shift is fuelled by the contradictions and inherent flaws of neoliberalism but populist nationalism and the new neoliberal turn, envisaged by some proponents of Brexit, may not forge a new and longstanding hegemony as it will fail to address the structural faults of the present neoliberal system.

In that phase the arguments made by those who want to leave the EU will no doubt be re-articulated but there will also be a counter-discourse by forces opposed Britain's exit or a Hard Brexit. Will these counter Brexit arguments resonate with the public? Will they be able to counter the pro-Brexit camp's arguments which play upon identity and xenophobia? The answer to these questions will provide important insights as to the cultural and social direction of Britain in the twenty first century, this article has sought to identify key arguments that can be mobilised in such a counter-narrative.

It will be evident to the reader that the paper is advocating the democratisation of the British political system through the reform of existing institutions within a policy framework that advocates a radical shift away from neoliberalism. However, in tandem with reforming institutions the paper has argued for a greater role for a renewed civil society and scope for some forms of direct democracy – the paper thus advocates fusing liberal and radical conceptions of democracy and social change to achieve transformative change

Dr Andrew Ryder

Associate Professor Corvinus University Budapest

Associate Fellow – University of Birmingham

ⁱ Adler-Nissen, R, Galpin, C and Rosamond, B (2017) Performing Brexit: How a post-Brexit world is imagined outside the United Kingdom, *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 2017, Vol. 19(3) 573–591

ⁱⁱ Polanyi, K (1944) *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* – Beacon Books

ⁱⁱⁱ Laclau and Mouffe (1985)

^{iv} Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017

^v Mudde, C (2010) *The Populist Radical Right: A Pathological Normalcy* - Online publication date: 20 October 2010

^{vi} Giddens, A (2013) *What Future for Europe?* John Wiley & Sons

^{vii} Piketty, T (2014). *Capital*. Cambridge, MA: Bellnap Press

^{viii} Shipman, T (2016) *All Out War: The Full Story of How Brexit Sank Britain's Political Class*, Harper Collins, London

^{ix} Fekete, L (2016) *Flying the flag for neoliberalism – Race and Class* September 2016

^x Avis, J (2014) *Comfort Radicalism and NEETs: A conservative praxis* - *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, Volume 24, Issue 3

- ^{xi} Bosch, G (2017) After Brexit: Prioritising A Social Europe
<https://www.socialeurope.eu/brexit-prioritising-social-europe>
- ^{xii} Seikel, D (2016) A Social and Democratic Europe? Obstacles and Perspectives for Action – Working Paper 207 Hans Bockler Stiftung
http://www.boeckler.de/pdf/p_wsi_wp_207.pdf
- ^{xiii} Soros, G (2013) How to save the European Union
<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2013/apr/09/eurozone-crisis-germany-eurobonds>
- ^{xiv} Varoufakis, Y (2017) A New Deal to Save Europe
<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/new-deal-for-europe-by-yanis-varoufakis-2017-01>
- ^{xv} Wæver O (1995) Securitization and desecuritization. In: Lipschutz RD (ed.) On Security. New York: Columbia University Press, 46–86.
- ^{xvi} Wæver O (2002) Security: A conceptual history for international relations. Paper presented at the annual conference of the British International Studies Association, London School of Economics and Political Science, 16–18 December.
- ^{xvii} Ceyhan, A and Tsoukala, A (2002) The Securitization of Migration in Western Societies: Ambivalent Discourses and Policies in *Alternatives* Vol 27, Issue 1_suppl, pp. 21 – 39
- ^{xviii} Oliver, C (2016) Unleashing Demons: The Inside Story of Brexit
- ^{xix} MacShane, D (2017) Brexit, No Exit: Why (in the End) Britain Won't Leave Europe. London: Taurus
- ^{xx} Balzacq T (2005) The three faces of securitization: Political agency, audience and context. *European Journal of International Relations* 11(2): 171–201.
- ^{xxi} *ibid*
- ^{xxii} Andor, L (2014) Labour Mobility in the European Union – The Inconvenient Truth
 Lecture at University of Bristol, 10 February 2014
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-14-115_en.htm
- ^{xxiii} Chakraborty, A (2016) Wolfgang Streeck: the German economist calling time on capitalism – Guardian 9th December 2016
- ^{xxiv} Global Unions (2013) The UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development must deliver on a rights- based approach to migration
- ^{xxv} *ibid*
- ^{xxvi} Ricoeur, P (1981) *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ^{xxvii} Travis, A (2016) Lasting rise in hate crime after EU referendum, figures show – Guardian 7th September 2016
- ^{xxviii} Pierre Ignazi. 1992. 'The silent counter-revolution: hypotheses on the emergence of extreme right-wing parties in Europe.' *European Journal of Political Research* 22:3–34; Pierre Ignazi. 2003. *Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- ^{xxix} Inglehart, R.F and Norris, P (2016) (Trump, Brexit, and the rise of Populism: Economic have-nots and cultural backlash – Harvard Kennedy School
- ^{xxx} Delanty G (2017) A divided nation in a divided Europe: Emerging cleavages and the crisis of European integration. In: Outhwaite W (ed.) *Brexit: Sociological Responses*. London: Anthem Press, pp.111–126.
- ^{xxxi} Cohen, S (2016) Folk Devils and Moral Panics. Notes and References. Appendix. The Creation of/16 Mods and Rockers. London. MacGibbon & Kee
- ^{xxxii} Williams, M.C (2011) Securitization and the liberalism of fear - *Security Dialogue* 42(4-5) 453–463
- ^{xxxiii} Kabeer, N. 2005. "Introduction: the search for inclusive citizenship". In *Inclusive Citizenship*, Edited by: Kabeer, N. London & New York: Sage.
- ^{xxxiv} Lister, R. (2007) Inclusive Citizenship: Realising the Potential. *Citizenship Studies*, 11 (1), pp. 49-61
- ^{xxxv} Habermas, J (1994) *Citizenship and National Identity*, in Steenbergen Bart Van (editor), the Condition of Citizenship, SAGE Publications
- ^{xxxvi} Economist (2005) High pitch, low politics - Dog-whistle politics can take you only so far
<http://www.economist.com/node/3789210>
- ^{xxxvii} Ryder, A (2017) Sites of Resistance
- ^{xxxviii} *ibid*
- ^{xxxix} Parkinson, H (2017) Lynton Crosby isn't a genius – and five other lessons the election taught us
- ^{xl} *ibid*

xli *ibid*

xlii Harding, L (2017) MP calls for inquiry into Arron Banks and 'dark money' in EU referendum
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/oct/19/mp-calls-for-inquiry-into-arron-banks-and-dark-money-in-eu-referendum>

xliii Merrick, R (2017) Arron Banks: Key Ukip donor faces investigation for allegedly breaking finance rules during Brexit referendum

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/arron-banks-brexit-referendum-finance-rules-break-investigation-ukip-donor-leave-eu-a8031086.html>

xliiv *ibid*

xliv BBC 2017

<http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-40792078>

xlvi BBC2017

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-39171324>

xlvii The Observer - The great British Brexit robbery: how our democracy

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/may/07/the-great-british-brexit-robbery-hijacked-democracy-was-hijacked>

xlviii Banks, A (2016) *The Bad Boys of Brexit: Tales of Mischief, Mayhem & Guerrilla Warfare in the EU*

xlix *ibid*

¹ Habermas, J. (2010) 'Germany and the Euro-Crisis'. *The Nation*, June 9.

<http://www.thenation.com/article/germany-and-euro-crisis#>

^{li} Habermas, J. (1984) *The Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. Thomas McCarthy. Boston: Beacon Press.

^{lii} Emmanuel Macron calls for solidarity as he vows to lead EU rebuild

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/07/emmanuel-macron-calls-for-solidarity-as-he-vows-to-lead-eu-rebuild>

^{liii} Freire, P. (1971) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

^{liiv} *ibid*

^{liv} European Commission (2014) - *Community-Led Local Development* (European Commission Factsheet)

^{lvi} *ibid*

^{lvii} Kuhn, T (1962) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press