

Brexit Populism: The Thick (and Thin) of It

MARIUS GUDERJAN AND ADRIAN WILDING*

Abstract

On 24 June 2016, a narrow majority of citizens of the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union, a decision which has exposed deep divisions in British society. This article analyses the extent to which the campaign to leave the EU and its aftermath can be explained in terms of existing definitions of 'populism'. It distinguishes between a 'thin' and 'thick' ideology of populism. Whereas the 'thin' ideology refers to a specific political method or style, one which claims to represent the 'true people' against a ruling elite, the 'thick' ideology focuses on substantial ideological elements, e.g. authoritarian and nationalist worldviews. The paper demonstrates that the Brexit campaign has been dominated by exclusive, right-wing populist ideas. In order to understand the appeal of populist parties and movements in the UK, the paper explores the multi-layered factors that have led to widespread support for the anti-European and anti-immigration politics. It argues that a mix of economic, political and cultural disenfranchisement is a root cause of the vote for Brexit. In this light, the Brexit rhetoric of 'taking back control' can be interpreted as a (problematic) attempt to overcome disenfranchisement.

Keywords: United Kingdom; Brexit; UKIP; populism; disenfranchisement; ideology

DOI: 10.5817/PC2018-1-64

1. Introduction

In Britain in 2015, a decision was taken by the newly elected Conservative government to hold a referendum which would ask the British electorate '[s]hould the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?' Two possible answers were offered: Remain or Leave. What was intended as a referendum on the value of Britain's role in the European project quickly became something else: from the start of referendum campaigning, widespread publicity was given to voices (particularly from UKIP – the UK Independence Party) calling for tight controls on immigration and even for the repatriation of migrants and refugees. Wide-ranging and rational debate on issues of democracy, sovereignty, identity, solidarity and the economic costs and benefits of EU

* Centre for British Studies, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Mohrenstrasse 60, 10117 Berlin, Germany. E-mail: marius.guderjan@hu-berlin.de (Dr Marius Guderjan), Adrian.Wilding@web.de (Dr Adrian Wilding).

membership was side-lined in favour of a single issue: immigration. The referendum result, announced on 24 June 2016, shocked many – pollsters included – with a majority (albeit a narrow one) voting for the United Kingdom to leave the EU. The result sent shockwaves around Europe and the rest of the world and forced the resignation of Prime Minister David Cameron who had campaigned for Remain. Cameron's successor, Theresa May, has since shown her intention to push through a 'hard' Brexit to 'deliver on the will of the people' (see BBC 2017).

'Brexit-Britain', we argue, is a dramatic example of the cultural, social, political, economic and legal impacts which *populism* can have upon national populations. Populist ideas and political strategies are having momentous and often worrying real-world effects, for instance in the documented rise of xenophobic attacks since the referendum and in evidence of EU nationals in the UK being blocked from applying for jobs and buying properties (Travis 2017). While populism is a notoriously difficult concept to define (we attempt a definition below) and one that is hard to distinguish from features typical of competitive democracies (Decker 2006: 25), the current UK Government has clearly allowed (or even encouraged) a serious 'spill-over' of populist mind-sets into a traditionally tolerant and long-standing liberal democracy (Freedon 2017).

Though Brexit Britain seems like a new and worrying political landscape, we must immediately admit that British Euroscepticism – which is at the heart of the current populist nexus – has a long history: from the outset, the UK only reluctantly committed to the European project, and its relationship to its continental partners has always been a rocky one. Nevertheless, while Eurosceptics long sat on the political sidelines, we now see a conscious policy 'cross-dressing' of Eurosceptic ideas by the main Westminster parties and the sharing of populist rhetoric and policies. For some analysts (e.g. Decker 2006; Flinders 2015; Baker, Schnapper 2015; Guderjan 2016), populism is a result of deeper 'anti-political' trends: politicians responding to declining popularity and increasing public cynicism seek desperately to gain support by 'reconnecting' with 'the public'. However, rather than a general rejection of political engagement, 'anti-politics' can actually denote a turn to unconventional forms of political participation (Flinders 2017: 35). The theory of 'anti-politics' as a cause of populism certainly finds resonance in the British case: numerous studies (e.g. Stoker 2011; Flinders 2012; Brandenburg, Johns 2014; Gilbert 2015; Leach 2015; Jennings et al. 2016; Seyd 2016) confirm that a large number of Britons feel alienated from mainstream politics, feel disempowered by the current democratic structure, and seem in part to be turning to populist movements to express their frustration.

Populism is clearly a value-laden concept. As Moffit and Tormey (2014: 382) suggest, 'the concept of populism has become so widely used – and usually in a derogatory manner to denigrate any political personality we do not like – that it has lost its analytical value and has become meaningless.' One key problem with the concept is that it seems to imply there is a normality within democratic systems which populism destabilises (Moffit, Tormey 2014: 382). Indeed, if populism is used to name any political movement, party or personality deviating from the democratic norm, no matter how wide that deviation, it becomes not merely an arbitrary concept but may even downplay the specificity of the far right-wing movements which are the predominant form populism takes today (Knöbl 2017). Wolfgang Knöbl (2017) argues that current debates present populism as an irritating deviation from

a stable, well-functioning parliamentary democracy; in methodological terms this results in a kind of functionalism that may allow critical analysis of the exception but not of the norm. It should not be surprising that in the 1950s Edward Shils was already writing about political entrepreneurs mobilising against established American institutions and elites—this was the heyday of a functionalist thinking that studied protest movements as dysfunctional threats to an American politics taken to be ‘the best of all possible worlds’.

While we do not argue for the existence of a normality in democratic politics and suspect a ‘disruption’ of UK politics encompasses a far wider phenomenon than the campaigning during the Brexit referendum, we still want to understand the nature of populism and the reasons behind the shrill and prejudiced voices that have come to the fore. For this purpose, it is important to look at both the strategic, methodological, ideological, and normative characteristics of Brexit populism. Further, we seek to explain the appeal, expectations and consequences which populist politics has for its supporters.

2. The ‘thin’ ideology of Brexit populism

For various scholars (Mudde 2007; Jagers, Walgrave 2007: 322; Stanley 2008; Freedon 2017), populism is at best a ‘thin’ ideology that lacks core values and thus is not primarily analysable in terms of its contents. As their ideas and aims serve pragmatic purposes to mobilise support rather than forming cohesive ideological visions, populists tend to be like chameleons and populism is more a movement than an ideology (Canovan 1999: 3; Taggart 2004: 274; Freedon 2017: 2ff.). Laclau (2005: 152), for instance, argues that to call movements or ideologies populist ‘would involve differentiating that attribute from other characterisations at the same defining level, such as ‘fascist’, ‘liberal’, ‘communist’, etc.’ Considering the wide range of different political movements and politicians that have been labelled populist, it is clear that populism rests not on foundational philosophies and theories but depends on its relationship to other ideologies – which we will discuss later. It is thus reasonable to speak of populism as a ‘political communication style of political actors that refers to the people’ (Jagers, Walgrave 2007: 322), one that can be exploited by parties and media from across the political spectrum. In political terms it is facilitated by the erosion of traditional party and class alignments, the decline of ideological cleavages, the rise of anti-politics and a simplification of political discourse, fostering an ‘us-versus-them’ mentality. The populist method shares common stylistic elements that are not in themselves populist but *become so* in combination with other ideas (Moffit, Tormey 2014: 391). Drawing upon the existing literature on populism, we can identify five elements which are characteristic of the populist method.

First, scholars commonly agree that a primary feature of populism is its appeal to ‘the people’ against the ‘elites’, against the political ‘establishment’, against a political ‘caste’ that has supposedly ‘let the people down’ and lost its legitimacy. Populist politicians often present themselves as ‘outsiders’ who nevertheless know what ‘the people’ want, tending to deny the knowledge of experts, bureaucrats, technocrats, representatives and journalists (Canovan 1999: 3; Taggart 2004: 273; Jun 2006: 240; Meyer 2006: 81; Moffit, Tormey 2014: 391;

Löwy 2014; Müller 2016). ‘There is no populism without discursive construction of an enemy: the ancien régime, the oligarchy, the Establishment or whatever’ (Laclau 2005: 157). Appealing to the people over parliamentary sovereignty and political institutions (Canovan 1999: 2; Leach 2015: 197), populists provide an ‘anti-elite discourse in the name of the sovereign People’ (Aslanidis 2015: 9). Populists claim ‘that they – and only they – properly represent the authentic, proper, and morally pure people’ (Müller 2015: 83).

Second, populism thrives on the perception of crisis, exploiting fears of economic recession, immigration, moral decay and social injustice, and presents itself as a remedial agent for change and renewal (Taggart 2004: 275; Moffit, Tormey 2014: 391). Populism addresses emotions, anxieties and fears and may involve ‘the fabrication of threats from every corner’ (Freeden 2017: 6).

Third, in contrast to the complexity of modern governance which entails ‘compromise, conciliation, uncertainty’ (Crick 1992: 165), populists are utilitarian and urgently action-oriented (Moffit, Tormey 2014: 392; Freedon 2017: 10). Instead of seeking consensus, they over-simplify and emotionalise political issues to provoke enmity, distrust and prejudice (Meyer 2006: 81).

Fourth, populists are effective in using drastically simplified communication and adopting a ‘tabloid style’ (Canovan 1999: 5). Against a background of increasing ‘stylistic’ and ‘mediatisation’ of politics, populism is particularly effective in attracting support through *performance* (Jun 2006: 233ff.; Meyer 2006: 83ff.; Moffit, Tormey 2014: 381ff.). In order to cultivate a ‘*Volksnähe*’, populists often appear before the cameras in mundane or quotidian situations so as to seem ‘one of us.’ They rely on easily transmitted and persuasive rhetorical tropes, such as political incorrectness, colloquialisms, and disruption to distinguish themselves from the perceived unemotional, rational and technocratic language of the political mainstream (Moffit, Tormey 2014: 392–393; Freedon 2017: 10).

Fifth and consequently, populist movements are often re-active, short-lived and dependent on charismatic leaders (Taggart 2004: 276; Decker 2006: 18). Thriving in opposition, they risk losing their outsider status and struggle once entering political office, since this requires self-discipline, compromise and a comprehensive political programme (Leach 2015: 200; Judis 2016; Freedon 2017: 9). This characteristic is perhaps the most controversial. Müller (2016: 52) argues that any hope that populists in power will ‘self-destruct’ is wishful thinking: populists in government, he argues, ‘will seek to establish a new populist constitution’ on the basis of their own self-interested interpretation of the *vox populi* – an idea that should worry any democrat. Indeed, there is evidence of sustained, long-term populist success, for example Victor Orbán’s government in Hungary.

Each of these five characteristics of populism, we suggest, came to the fore to varying degrees in the Brexit campaign and its aftermath. To illustrate this point we take one striking example: Nigel Farage’s victory speech in the early morning hours of 24 June 2016:

This, if the predictions now are right, this will be a victory for real people, a victory for ordinary people, a victory for decent people. We have fought against the multinationals, we have fought against the big merchant banks, we have fought against big politics, we have fought against lies, corruption and deceit. And today honesty, decency and belief in nation, I think now is going to win. And we will have done it without having to fight, without

a single bullet being fired, we'd have done it by damned hard work on the ground. [...] And we'll have done it not just for ourselves, we'll have done it for the whole of Europe. I hope this victory brings down this failed project and leads us to a Europe of sovereign nation states, trading together, being friends together, cooperating together, and let's get rid of the flag, the anthem, Brussels, and all that has gone wrong.

Farage pitches 'the real, ordinary and decent people' against immoral political and economic elites by performing an emotionalising rhetoric – a charismatic leader presenting himself as close to the people and as an agent for change and renewal. Farage's words illustrate Laclau's argument that there is no 'original popular identity' but that populist discourse itself constructs or 'summons' a people (2005: 162). And just as populist discourse summons a people, so it usually summons an 'enemy'. Three groups in particular have supposedly 'betrayed' the British 'people': a 'metropolitan-cosmopolitan elite', a 'European elite' (Brussels bureaucrats, Angela Merkel, etc.), and 'immigrants' who are ostensibly 'taking' jobs and housing and becoming a 'burden' on welfare and public services (Clarke, Newman 2017: 107). Here lies another indicator of populism: its drastic simplification of complex political issues and an intensified use of rhetoric, misleading information and even disinformation. The referendum campaign showed the power of a political debate permeated by half-truths and so-called 'fake news', whose rapid spread is clearly aided and abetted by new social media. The data-targeting company Cambridge Analytica, who reportedly seeded anti-EU 'news' on Facebook during the Referendum (Cadwalladr 2017), are now under investigation for their role in the Trump election campaign and 'irregularities' during the recently annulled presidential election in Kenya (Bright 2017). Yet populist disinformation need not be the preserve of shadowy organisations. The Leave campaign's blatant claim, plastered on the side of a bus, that the UK 'sends the EU £350 million a week', money that could be used to fund the National Health Service, proved a highly salient issue with voters. Yet shortly after their win, Leave campaigners distanced themselves from the claim, along with their promises to stem immigration, indicating something of the uses of disinformation.

Though populist movements and parties are not necessarily short-lived but can also be adopted by the established parties, the current state of UKIP support seems to confirm their single-issue, transient nature. Now that Brexit has become legislation, UKIP has achieved its *raison d'être* and this – along with Prime Minister Theresa May's hard stance on Brexit – may well explain why UKIP voters switched in large numbers to the Conservatives at UK local elections in May this year, and lost over 10% of their votes and their only parliamentary seat in the 2017 General Election. As a vehicle for populist anger, UKIP has served its purpose now that Brexit populism has become mainstream.

Though the outcome of the EU referendum was already an effect of populist politics, populism has shaped debate about the *kind* of Brexit the government wants. With Theresa May pursuing a 'hard' Brexit, hoping to take Britain out of the Single Market in order to stop Freedom of Movement, Eurosceptic populists may have already been highly successful in achieving their ambitions. A look at May's speech at the Conservative Party conference in October 2016 shows how far she has adopted a populist approach:

But change has got to come too because of the quiet revolution that took place in our country just three months ago – a revolution in which millions of our fellow citizens stood up and said they were not prepared to be ignored any more.

It was about a sense – deep, profound and let's face it often justified – that many people have today that the world works well for a privileged few, but not for them. It was a vote not just to change Britain's relationship with the European Union, but to call for a change in the way our country works – and the people for whom it works – forever.

But today, too many people in positions of power behave as though they have more in common with international elites than with the people down the road, the people they employ, the people they pass in the street. But if you believe you're a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere. You don't understand what the very word 'citizenship' means.

Just listen to the way a lot of politicians and commentators talk about the public. They find your patriotism distasteful, your concerns about immigration parochial, your views about crime illiberal, your attachment to your job security inconvenient.

May, like Farage, draws upon a populist repertoire and drastically simplifies the issues around Brexit into an us-versus-them divide. In a contradiction that is typical of populists, she inveighs against both a liberal press and commentariat as well as the very elites who traditionally support her Party.

On other occasions, Theresa May has reinforced polarisation to support the legitimacy of her political mandate, following the logic that 'no action of a populist government can be questioned' because they 'act on behalf of the 'true people' (Müller 2015: 85–86). May has increasingly taken the position that her Conservative party will be the only true representative of the 'people's will' in the coming Brexit negotiations. As she puts it, 'While others seek to tie our negotiating hands, the Government will get on with the job of delivering the decision of the British people. (...) The result was clear. It was legitimate. MPs and peers who regret the referendum result need to accept what the people decided.' Already during Brexit campaigning there were various accusations in the pro-Conservative press that Remainers were intent on manipulating the vote, see for instance Harry Cole (2016) in the Sun; Mark Reynolds (2016) in the Express. For May, those who think Brexit misguided, now stigmatised as 'Remoaners', are de-legitimised by their minority status. In a curious paradox of populism, they cease to count as 'the people'. Worryingly for those who prize the checks and balances associated with the British constitution's separation of powers, May has questioned the traditional right of both the legislative and the judiciary to have their say on such a momentous issue: in late 2016, prominent members of the current UK government sought to block parliamentary debate on the terms of Brexit, citing the direct democracy of the referendum over the very representative system that elected them.

3. The 'thick' ideology of Brexit populism

For all their analytic value in capturing the tropes employed in the EU Referendum, the five elements of populism listed above tell us relatively little about the *content* of populist

ideology; they capture at most a set of techniques or methods or a repertoire upon which politicians from across the political spectrum draw. In this sense Freedman (2017: 2) is right to call populism a 'thin-centred ideology', since it lacks a comprehensive vision for 'the full spectrum of socio-political problems that the grand ideological families have customarily sought to provide.' Populists themselves typically adopt a narrow or single-issue focus or borrow from 'other ideologies to thicken [their politics] out' (see also Mudde 2007). Without such 'thickening out' populism itself is 'colourless and can be of the left and of the right' (Jagers, Walgrave 2007: 323; cf. March 2016: 298).

For many commentators, anti-elitism and appeals to 'the people' are features that single out populist ideology (see e.g. March 2016: 287ff.; Müller 2016: 3-4). 'Without reference to the people, populism is simply unthinkable' (Jagers, Walgrave 2007: 323). Yet the people have – in theory – always been at the heart of politics, in which case populism embodies 'the logic of the political' as such (Moffitt, Tormey 2014: 384). But if 'populism' is to a greater or lesser degree a feature of all political discourse, what then is its analytical value? Furthermore, not just popular sovereignty but anti-elitism would normally be considered a 'healthy' element of democracy at large. There is hardly any party or politician who does not appeal to the people against the elites, so that 'no political movement will be entirely exempt from populism, because none will fail to interpellate to some extent the 'people' against an enemy' (Laclau 2005: 163).

It is clearly necessary to fill out this thin and abstract understanding of populism with more content and so get a better grasp of such phenomena as Brexit Britain. Several candidates for such content offer themselves. One is the notion that populist ideology is a call for *sovereignty* of the people in decision-making. As Vittori (2017: 144) puts it, 'populists advocate an unmediated relationship between those who represent and those who are represented. This feature implies superseding the Burkean concept of representation, and, consequently, using the tools of direct democracy, such as national-level, popular referenda; internal referenda within the party, and widespread use of primary elections for the selection of candidates.' We should not be too quick to dismiss the idea of there being a popular will for more participation and more say in politics. There are occasions where 'grass roots mobilisation generate formidable power, bringing down a regime; more rarely, they sometimes manage to make a fresh start and to lay the foundations of a lasting political community' (Canovan 2004: 251). Yet the call for greater political participation is frequently found across the political spectrum and so tells us little about the specific nature of Brexit populism: 'populist' appeals to direct democracy have also typified left-wing social movements such as Occupy or the Indignados and are echoed in the 'carneavalesque' politics of Spain's Podemos (MacMillan 2017). This apparently 'thicker' notion of populism falls back into a rather thin and undifferentiated notion which fails to distinguish the political left and right.

A second candidate may be found in the distinction between 'inclusive' and 'exclusive' populists. According to Filc (2011: 223), whereas 'inclusive' populists seek to overcome social domination by a small but powerful elite, 'exclusive' populists understand 'the people' as an ethnically or culturally homogeneous group whose identity is threatened by the dominated (especially minorities) themselves. This distinction has the merit of chiming with common-sense understandings of a left-right political spectrum: while both left- and right-wing populists present themselves as fighting for the people against an elite, the right

mobilises not only ‘upwards’ but more often ‘downwards’, stigmatising social groups (usually of a lower status) such as ethnic or religious minorities and immigrants (Judis 2016). Correspondingly, left populism can be said to be more concerned with social and economic issues and right populism with ethnic identity (March 2016: 285–286). Opposition to multiculturalism and appeals to a distinct British national and cultural ‘identity’ are clearly central to UKIP ideology (in this they share certain ideas of smaller right-wing parties like the British National Party (BNP) (March 2016: 293ff.)).

To this extent, exclusive or right-wing populism tends to be illiberal since it challenges ‘a commitment to humanist ideals concerning free individual flourishing, social reform based on mutual assistance as expressed in welfare state legislation, the active promotion of the needs and identities of diverse social groups, and a generous helping of tolerance’ (Freedon 2017: 1; see also Pappas 2016).

Certainly, Brexit populism often displays an illiberal face, particularly on such issues as nationalism, immigration, crime and taxes. In this sense we can employ a further ‘thick’ concept, namely ‘authoritarian populism’, as characteristic of the present moment. ‘Authoritarian populism’, a term first coined by Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques (1983), sought to describe a tendency towards a more coercive, disciplinary politics that emerged in the UK under Margaret Thatcher. As a concept it has had a notable afterlife in the social sciences, even cropping up in a recent Europe-wide poll by YouGov (Twyman 2016). Authoritarian populism is particularly relevant to Brexit in its discursive element: a rhetoric of ‘law and order’ and of privileging ‘security’ over freedom are key parts of its ideological lexicon; these often translate into calls for constraints on immigration and involve a normalisation of xenophobic and discriminatory language along with the mainstreaming of a more repressive and disciplinary political culture. What YouGov record as a strikingly high level of authoritarian populism in the UK seems to confirm existing studies which indicate that in recent years, while British society has become more heterogeneous, the country has seen a marked growth in peripheral nationalism (Leach 2015: 198ff.).

That said, immigration has long been a salient concern for the British public. What is novel in the present conjuncture is the success which a relatively small right-wing party (UKIP) has had in taking control of the immigration issue, traditionally a key Conservative policy, and putting it at the centre of political debate (Dennison, Goodwin 2015). In the Brexit referendum, the cross-party *Leave* campaign all but adopted UKIP policy, nurturing and exploiting a hostile climate for immigrants particularly from Eastern Europe and the Middle-East, but also non-white communities who have lived in the UK for generations. Labour MP Jo Cox, murdered by a right-wing extremist in the run-up to the Referendum, was not only a passionate supporter of the Remain campaign and of rights for asylum-seekers but also the representative of an ethnically diverse constituency. An hour before Cox’s death, UKIP leader Nigel Farage had launched the infamous *Breaking Point* poster that warned of a stream of Syrian refugees and demanding ‘we must break free of the EU and take back control of our borders’.

It would be misleading, however, to reduce Brexit populism to a simple ‘native vs. immigrant’ divide. Older generations of British immigrants also tend statistically to support quotas on further immigration (the so-called ‘draw-bridge’ mentality). Nonetheless, the Manichean character of populism has real-world effects and since the referendum many UK

immigrants now report feeling acutely aware of their outsider status. Shortly after the vote, throughout England, there were numerous reports of verbal abuse against immigrants, xenophobic social media commentary, anti-migrant leaflets and a number of physical attacks on Muslims, and members of the black and Asian community. In the first week after the referendum, the police reported 331 hate crimes, five times the weekly average (Parveen, Sherwood 2016).

These facts cast much doubt on populists' claim to be straightforwardly on the side of 'the people' and to champion participation and direct democracy. It seems more realistic to say that here a particular 'public' is being 'summoned' for exclusive and discriminatory purposes. Indeed, right-wing populist politicians seem to promote participation and direct democracy not as ends in themselves but rather as a means to the end of advancing their particular agenda. 'Right-wing populism is *not* a grassroots phenomenon,' Freedon (2017: 3) argues, neither is it a deliberative or inclusive exercise. Müller (2015: 86) concurs:

Yes, there are populists who demand more referenda – but only as a means to confirm what they have identified as the morally correct will already, not because they wish for the people to participate continuously in politics, or because they want some number of ordinary people to have a say in government (as proposals for selecting representatives by lot, for instance, would suggest). Populists view the people as essentially passive, once the proper popular will aimed at the proper common good has been ascertained.

In this light Low (2016), who analysed post-referendum polls and demographic trends, may be justified in suggesting that 'Brexit is not the will of the people. It never has been.' This is a conclusion which forces us to radically rethink the meaning of the Referendum and the set of events it has unleashed.

The germ of truth in populism is that politics, particularly in Britain, often *is* an elite vocation. The falsehood consists in the populists' claim that they are able and willing to remedy this. Nigel Farage arguably symbolises a continuation of elitism by other means. The irony of Brexit is that the campaign to leave the EU was built upon a demand to 'take back control' of developments, for instance migration, that have irrevocably escaped national and even EU sovereignty. Given the now global scale of these developments, Freedon (2017: 5) seems right to doubt whether Brexit will in fact empower 'the people': '[w]hen Brexit populists repetitively voiced their mantra 'take back control', it was 'control' on their terms, not on the terms of those whose concerns they claimed to express, concerns that rankle at a much more fundamental level than the fear of immigration and the obsession with sovereignty'.

4. Brexit populism and disenfranchisement

According to Laclau (2005: 156), populism arises when the institutional system is unable to meet the plurality of demands within a society. The populist promise to fight the establishment and to satisfy the various (and often contradictory) needs of voters who feel frustrated and neglected has a powerful appeal that binds people together (Seyd 2014). It is certainly

true that British citizens feel constrained by an unequal distribution of life chances, generating a social division between economic ‘winners’ and a ruling minority on the one hand, and globalisation’s ‘losers’ on the other (Mishra 2016). However, Brexit populism cannot be explained solely by economic factors, as large parts of the middle class also voted to leave the EU (Williams 2017). Clarke and Newman (2017: 102) instead see Brexit as ‘a critical moment in a wider conjuncture’ that ‘condenses a range of conditions and causes’.

How should we grasp this ‘wider conjuncture’? In our view, the turn towards populist strategies and discourse in the UK and Europe results from a widespread *political, economic* and *cultural disenfranchisement*. By *disenfranchisement* we understand a multi-faceted phenomenon that encompasses alienation, powerlessness, fragmentation, uncertainty and even *Entmündigung*; in the context of this paper, *disenfranchisement* may best be understood as a constellation of disintegrative dynamics which operates at both a national and international level and has degraded traditional working and living conditions, has dismantled long-standing social welfare regimes, and has disrupted traditional social alignments, orientations and values. As a recent study by the Bertelsmann Foundation (de Vries, Hoffmann 2016) concurs, it is above all anxiety about globalisation and economic well-being that drives people away from the ‘political mainstream’.

4.1. Economic disenfranchisement

The Brexit referendum brought to light deep economic cleavages and a widespread sense of English voters feeling ‘left behind’ by the opportunities of globalisation, international trade and the European Single Market (Guderjan 2016: 14–15). Moreover, the referendum saw statistically significant correlations between educational attainment, poverty, unemployment and likelihood of voting Brexit: some of the poorest areas of England displayed particularly high support for leaving the EU (cf. Darvas 2016; Goodwin, Heath 2016: 325). Jennings and Stoker (2017: 7) reveal ‘a striking pattern where places subject to relative decline in recent decades tended to vote Leave in highest numbers. In contrast, areas of relative growth tended to vote Remain’. Such *economic disenfranchisement* results from an increasing gap between the rich and the poor, a ‘squeeze’ of the middle class, and a reduction in public welfare. Though people may not necessarily be directly affected by a loss of income or employment, they may still feel disadvantaged in comparison to their expectations or other social groups (Decker 2006: 14).

In the UK, poverty strikes ethnic minorities, children, persons with disabilities and single parents particularly hard. It is not only people without employment but the ‘working poor’ who suffer deprivation, since a low (and sometimes circumvented) national minimum wage and the prevalence of ‘zero-hours contracts’ creates a precarious class of people who may be in work but are unable to make ends meet. These trends have been exacerbated by austerity policies which the Conservative government have implemented since the 2008 financial crisis. Despite the Conservative government’s flagship policy of encouraging greater individual and community involvement in decision-making – the so-called ‘Big Society’ – their parallel implementation of austerity and privatisation policies has constrained people’s capacities to participate in social, political and cultural processes (see e.g. Clarke

and Newman 2017; Morelli 2014; Mackay 2014; Stedman 2015; Wilding 2014). After the Brexit referendum, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2016) released a review expressing 'serious concern about the impact of regressive policies on the enjoyment of economic and social rights in the UK.' Indeed, the Committee concluded that 'austerity measures and social security reform breach the UK's international human rights obligations.' Nevertheless, the correlation between economic anxiety and right-wing attitudes is not universally valid. Even though, according to a Bertelsmann Foundation study, people who perceive globalisation as a threat have, on average, a lower income, a lower level of education, are older and are more likely to support right-wing populist parties, only 32% of UKIP supporters feel economically anxious (de Vries, Hoffmann 2016). Also in Scotland, even in areas of poverty and high unemployment we find clear majorities for Remain (BBC 2016). We therefore need to augment a solely economic explanation of Brexit populism.

4.2. Political disenfranchisement

The feeling of economic and social insecurity produces *political disenfranchisement* and a loss of democratic control and representation (Decker 2006: 14). It has been argued that the referendum was an uninformed 'protest vote' (Darvas 2016), or an instance of unfocused rebellion. Yet, in the UK, there has been a long-term decline in trust in politicians and mainstream parties and in turnout at general elections, and at the same time a measured increase in cynicism towards parliaments and politicians, phenomena collectively known as 'anti-politics' (Stoker 2011; Flinders 2015; Leach 2015). It is often said that *political disappointment* is a 'pathology of modern politics' (Seyd 2016: 327), caused by changing social conditions, an evolution of the tools of communication and information, and rising levels of education. Political disappointment occurs when expectations of what politics should achieve fail to match reality. Though citizens may expect too much from politicians, who themselves are constrained by unforeseeable events and by global economic and political structures, popular cynicism towards politicians must be taken seriously, since it can lead citizens to feel powerless, apathetic and marginalised, negatively affecting their political behaviour (Seyd 2016: 328ff.).

Gilbert (2015: 39–40) suggests that a 'very real sense of democratic and political disenfranchisement... finds expression in one of two ways: as simple apathy and non-participation; or as organised opposition to UK membership of the EU and support for the virtual ending of mass immigration.' In the UK, *political disenfranchisement* is undoubtedly exacerbated by the Westminster model of democracy with its adversarial competition rather than consensus (Lijphart 2012; Baker, Schnapper 2015: 95; Sturm 2015: 65), which makes British politics 'country-dividing' rather than 'country-uniting' (King 2001). The democratic understanding in British politics is, moreover, a limited one, based on a top-down view in which governments are decisive rather than responsive. Citizens who believe their actions have a real impact are more likely to participate in political processes, whereas a general distrust tends on average to lead to disengagement (Dermody et al. 2010: 422ff.; Schiffman et al. 2010: 370ff.). As argued elsewhere (Guderjan 2016: 19), the vote to leave the EU was driven primarily by domestic rather than foreign politics. For a large number of voters (EU

referendum turnout was 72%), many of whom did not usually vote in elections (2015 general election turnout was only 66.1%), the Brexit referendum was a unique opportunity to give the political establishment ‘a kick’.

4.3. Cultural disenfranchisement

In the age of globalisation, societies are becoming more heterogeneous and multi-cultural and differences in lifestyles and values more visible. At the same time, traditional social ties are weakening, evoking a perceived loss of identity among parts of the population (Decker 2006: 14). As Goodwin and Heath (2016: 325) argue: ‘turnout in the heart-lands of Brexit was often higher than average, indicating perhaps that it was citizens who have long felt excluded from the mainstream consensus who used the referendum to voice their distinctive views not only about Britain’s EU membership but about a wider array of perceived threats to their national identity, values and ways of life.’

The division between a young, cosmopolitan, educated – typically urban – population with socially liberal, pluralistic attitudes and older, white, rural (or suburban) cohorts with nostalgic, socially conservative and even authoritarian mind-sets, has often been thematised in the context of the Brexit referendum (cf. Guderjan 2016; Goodwin, Heath 2016: 325; Jennings, Stoker 2017: 4). Clearly, these cultural tensions cannot be separated from an analysis of structural inequalities (cf. Jennings, Stoker 2017). However, while support for right-wing populists is often to be found among working class voters or those parts of the middle class who feel threatened by social decline, populist sentiment comes from various social strata (Knöbl 2017). In fact, many Leave voters were ‘middle class’, among them affluent people from rural southern England who have in many ways ‘benefited’ from a globalised economy (Williams 2016). As Clarke and Newman (2017: 106) put it:

It is important to add a rather different problematization to the class/culture imagery of Brexit, troubling the assumption that the middle classes were characterized by a cosmopolitan liberalism that prompted them to vote Remain. (...) Brexit was supported by this traditional(ist) middle class in the suburbs, small towns, and shires that remained resolutely ‘non-cosmopolitan’ and were apparently consumed by immigration anxiety (despite such spaces not being occupied by many migrants).

Existing studies (e.g. Carey 2002; Luedtke 2005; McLaren 2006; Hooghe, Marks 2009) confirm that the perceived threat to people’s identity by immigration and European integration corresponds with anti-EU sentiments, nationalism and exclusive populism. As Goodwin and Milazzo (2017: 45) have found: ‘[c]onsistent with the emerging literature, therefore, we find that those who voted for Brexit were significantly more hostile towards immigration and anxious about its perceived effects on the economy, culture and the welfare state.’ Clarke and Newman (2017: 109) suggest that this ‘immigration anxiety’ stems from a ‘sense of loss’ which relates not merely to material well-being but to symbolic status and the ‘psychic privilege’ associated with white, patriarchal authority. In other words, we are dealing here more with self-perceptions and ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson 1991)

than with economic or political realities: it is by no means necessarily the case that these individuals or groups are really 'left behind'. Nevertheless, an analysis of cultural self-understandings can, we suggest, shed much light on the turn to xenophobic politics. That, for instance, xenophobia might involve a symptomatic reaction to perceived loss of privilege can help explain the Leave campaign's counterfactual appeal to a unitary 'British identity': here a belief in a *Leitkultur* seems to be a rear-guard action against cultural diversification.

Standing back, we note that the Brexit referendum has uncovered not only a widespread *political* and *economic disenfranchisement* but also cultural cleavages in British society between people with international, outward-looking, cosmopolitan views and those who orientate themselves strongly towards a 'British' (or more often 'English') nation that – so it is believed – could regain its former glory if it were not 'being held back' by outside forces.

5. Conclusion

Our paper has discussed the communication style and ideological substance behind the recent rise of populist politics in the UK. We have argued that Brexit populism is only superficially to be understood as mobilising 'the people' against the ruling elites but, more worryingly, is characterised by a right-wing, authoritarian ideology which has emboldened and enabled the spread of xenophobic views amongst the British population. Brexit populism is directed above all against minority groups in society. A detailed study of the British press in 2016 by Kings College London found that 'coverage of immigration more than tripled over the course of the [EU Referendum] campaign, rising faster than any other political issue' and that 'coverage of the effects of immigration was overwhelmingly negative. Migrants were blamed for many of Britain's economic and social problems – most notably for putting unsustainable pressure on public services' (Moore, Ramsay 2017: 8–9). What the report's authors call an 'acrimonious and divisive' press campaign (Moore, Ramsay 2017: 10) has continued since the vote: various Conservative MPs who voted for Parliament to have a say in the future Brexit trade deal with the EU received death threats after being branded 'Brexit mutineers' by the broadsheet *Daily Telegraph* (see Swinford 2017).

Our paper has not set out to condemn populism out of hand but to underline the threat it presents to pluralist societies when it occurs in combination with exclusive worldviews that deny the rights of other societal groups and opinions to exist. While the UK has in the past served as a model for openness, liberalism and multiculturalism, this image has come under threat in the course of the referendum (cf. Guderjan 2016: 17). We have put forward a possible explanation of these trends, namely that Brexit populism can be understood as a result of widespread *economic, political and cultural disenfranchisement* that has long-standing socio-economic causes but which has been exacerbated by recent Conservative-imposed austerity policies. And we have suggested that Brexit populism is not simply a protest vote designed to give the elite a 'kick' but must be understood as the perversion of a genuine desire to 'take back control' from economic, political and cultural structures which, over decades, have disempowered individuals and evoked a sense of injustice. Seen

in this light, populists' claims may have legitimate (though distorted) grounds which need to be answered with substantial arguments (cf. Seyd 2014). The populist promise to fight the establishment and to satisfy the various (and often contradictory) needs of neglected voters has a powerful and unifying appeal. Understanding the vote for Brexit in a social scientific manner involves taking voters' concerns seriously, though not simply at face value.

Meanwhile, as the legal, political and economic difficulties of leaving the EU become more and more evident, various polls show growing public reservation towards Brexit, particularly to the 'hard' version of it being pursued by the Conservative government (NatCen 2017). As the electorate comes to realise that Brexit may not be the panacea they were led to believe, *economic, political and cultural disenfranchisement* may only become further entrenched. The realities of protracted EU exit negotiations conducted at arm's length in Brussels, the Conservatives' attempted power-grab (so-called 'Henry VIII laws') under the guise of the 'Withdrawal Bill', the Government's attempts to secure a trade deal with America and to cement the UK's highly unequal 'special relationship', along with the wider background of an ineluctably globalised and interconnected modern society, all point to the contradictions in the notion of 'taking back control' when pursued under existing social, economic and political conditions. We remain sceptical that the democratic deficit for which populists claim to have the remedy will be solved by the current machinations of the main British political parties.

True, other developments give more cause for optimism. As if trying to atone for their absence from the Referendum, young voters turned out in large numbers for the 2017 General election, voting predominantly for Labour, and asking questions of political scientists' diagnosis of 'anti-politics'. Is the tide of non-participation turning, or is 2017 just a 'blip'? Could it be that putting clear ideological water between the two major parties has re-energized politics? Certainly, the forces of conservatism seem now to be on the back foot: an election called by Prime Minister May to give her Government a greater mandate in Brexit negotiations has led to a humiliating loss of her parliamentary majority. Internal Conservative Party rivalry, particularly between the pro- and anti-EU wings, is resurfacing. It may be too soon to say we have witnessed 'peak populism' (Kellner 2017) but it is undeniable that, at a nationwide level, the very issues which should have been discussed *before* the Referendum are now finally being discussed.

Uncertain too is the fate of the partly-devolved administrations of Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland in Brexit negotiations. The border issue between the two halves of Ireland may prove a stumbling block and Brexit may boost the cause of Scottish Independence. The case of Scotland is particularly relevant, with some commentators assuming the Scottish National Party (SNP) to be a populist party along UKIP lines (see e.g. Flinders 2015). Certainly, its ideology features populist elements (e.g. emotionalising national identity and history and evoking an outsider status vis-à-vis a dominant Westminster elite). Since the EU referendum was announced, however, Scotland has generated a quite different and decidedly more inclusive and cosmopolitan debate on Europe, on cultural identity, and on migration. To this extent, one misreads Scottish nationalism when one assumes it to be straightforwardly insular, tribal and backward-looking. It is, as McGarvey and Stewart (2016: 62) put it, 'less about the cultural superiority traditionally associated with nationalist movements, and far more to do with political empowerment. It has forged a tenet of

what has since come to be known as ‘civic’ nationalism – a diverse and forward-thinking ideology, premised on the vision of Scotland as an open and equal society’ (cf. Leach 2015: 159ff.). And beyond party politics in Scotland, a wider ‘Radical Independence Campaign’ has emerged which, since 2014, has mobilised grassroots support to a surprising degree, calling for far greater democratic accountability, participation and self-determination. Might such a civic-minded, cosmopolitan and participatory politics offer an antidote to Brexit populism and really deliver on people’s desire to take back control?

References:

- Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities*. New York: Verso.
- Aslanidis, Paris. 2015. ‘Is Populism an Ideology? A refutation and a new perspective.’ *Political Studies* 64, no. 1, 88–104.
- Baker, David and Schnapper, Pauline. 2015. *Britain and the Crisis of the European Union*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- BBC. 2016. ‘EU Referendum: Scotland backs Remain as UK votes Leave.’ *bbc.com*. 24th June 2016 (<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-36599102>).
- BBC. 2017. ‘May ‘delivering on will of the people.’ *bbc.com*. 2nd June 2017 (<http://www.bbc.com/news/av/election-2017-40140983/may-delivering-on-will-of-the-people>).
- Brandenburg, Heinz and Johns, Robert. 2014. ‘The Declining Representativeness of the British Party System, and Why It Matters.’ *Political Studies* 62, no. 4, 704–725.
- Bright, Sam. 2017. ‘After Trump, “big data” firm Cambridge Analytica is now working in Kenya.’ *bbc.com*. 3rd August 2017 (<http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-40792078>).
- Cadwalladr, Carole. 2017. ‘The Great British Brexit Robbery: how our democracy was hijacked.’ *theguardian.com*. 17th May 2017 (<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/may/07/the-great-british-brexite-robbery-hijacked-democracy>).
- Canovan, Margaret. 1999. ‘Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy.’ *Political Studies* 47, no. 1, 2–16.
- Canovan, Margaret. 2004. ‘Populism for Political Theorists?’ *Journal of Political Ideologies* 9, no. 3, 241–252.
- Carey, Sean. 2002. ‘Undivided Loyalties: Is National Identity an Obstacle to European Integration?’ *European Union Politics* 3, no. 4, 387–413.
- Clarke, John and Newman, Janet. 2017. ‘People in this country have had enough of experts’: Brexit and the paradoxes of populism.’ *Critical Policy Studies* 11, no. 1, 101–116.
- Cole, Harry. 2016. ‘EU rule breach? Government accused of manipulating the EU referendum vote by ‘letting’ Remain campaigners raid contacts book.’ *thesun.co.uk*. 13th June 2016 (<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/1277384/government-accused-of-manipulating-the-eu-referendum-vote-by-letting-remain-campaigners-raid-contacts-book/>).
- Crick, Bernard. 1992. *In Defence of Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Darvas, Zsolt. 2016. *High Inequality and Poverty Helped Trigger the Brexit Vote*. Blogs.lse.ac.uk. 31st August 2016 (<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2016/08/31/brexit-should-be-a-wake-up-call-in-the-fight-against-inequality/>).
- Decker, Frank. 2006. *Populismus: Gefahr für die Demokratie oder nützliches Korrektiv?* Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Dermody, Janine and Hamner-Lloyd, Stuart and Scullion, Richard. 2010. ‘Young People and Voting Behaviour: Alienated youth and (or) an interested and critical citizenry?’ *European Journal of Marketing* 44, no. 3–4, 421–435.

- Dennison, James and Goodwin, Matthew. 2015. 'Immigration, Issue Ownership and the Rise of UKIP' *Parliamentary Affairs* 68, no. 1, 168–187.
- Filc, Dani. 2011. 'Post-populism: explaining neo-liberal populism through the habitus.' *Journal of Political Ideologies* 16, no. 2, 221–238.
- Flinders Matthew. 2012. *Defending Politics: Why Democracy Matters in the Twenty-First Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press,
- Flinders Matthew. 2015. 'The General Rejection? Political Disengagement, Disaffected Democrats and 'Doing Politics' Differently.' *Parliamentary Affairs* 68, no. 1, 241–254.
- Flinders, Matthew. 2017. 'What Kind of Democracy is This? Politics in a Changing World.' *Political Insight* 8, no. 2, 34–37.
- Freeden, Michael. 2017. 'After the Brexit Referendum: revisiting populism as an ideology.' *Journal of Political Ideologies* 22, no. 1, 1–11.
- Gilbert, Jeremy. 2015. 'Disaffected Consent: That Post-Democratic Feeling.' *Soundings: A Journal of Politics and Culture* 60, 29–41.
- Goodwin, Matthew and Heath, Oliver. 2017. 'The 2016 Referendum, Brexit and the Left Behind: An Aggregate-level Analysis of the Result.' *Political Quarterly* 87, no. 3, 323–332.
- Goodwin, Matthew and Milazzo, Caitlin. 2017. 'Taking back control? Investigating the role of immigration in the 2016 vote for Brexit.' *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 19, no. 3, 450–464.
- Guderjan, Marius, ed. 2016. *The Future of the UK: Between internal and external divisions*. Berlin: Centre for British Studies.
- Hall, Stuart and Jacques, Martin, ed. 1983. *The Politics of Thatcherism*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Hooghe, Liesbet and Marks, Gary. 2009. 'A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus.' *British Journal of Political Science* 39, no. 1, 1–23.
- Jagers, Jan and Walgrave, Stefaan. 2007. 'Populism as political communication style: An empirical study of political parties' discourse in Belgium.' *European Journal of Political Research* 46, no. 3, 319–345.
- Jennings, Will and Stoker, Gerry. 2017. 'The Tilting of Britain's Political Axis?' *Political Insight* 8, no. 3, 4–7.
- Jennings, Will and Stoker, Gerry and Twyman, Joe. 2016. 'The Dimensions and Impact of Political Discontent in Britain.' *Parliamentary Affairs* 69, no. 4, 876–900.
- Judis, John. 2016. 'Us vs Them: the birth of populism.' *theguardian.com*. 13rd October 2016 (<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/oct/13/birth-of-populism-donald-trump>).
- Jun, Uwe. 2006. 'Populismus als Regierungsstil in westeuropäischen Parteiendemokratien: Deutschland, Frankreich und Großbritannien.' In: *Populismus: Gefahr für die Demokratie oder nützliches Korrektiv?* Ed. Frank Decker. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 233–254.
- Kellner, Peter. 2017. *Peak Populism, Perhaps*. [carnegieeurope.eu](http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/68183?lang=en). 6th March 2017 (<http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/68183?lang=en>).
- King, Anthony. 2001. *Does the United Kingdom Still Have a Constitution?* London: Sweet and Maxwell.
- Knöbl, Wolfgang. 2017. 'Und täglich grüßt der Populismus.' *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 26 June 2017.
- Laclau, Ernesto. 2005. 'Populism: What's in a name?.' In: *Ernesto Laclau: Post-Marxism, Populism and Critique*. Ed. David Howarth. London: Taylor and Francis, 2014, 152–164.
- Leach, Robert. 2015. *Political Ideology in Britain*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lijphart, Arend. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Low, Adrian. 2016. *Brexit is not the will of the British people – it never has been*. [Blogs.lse.ac.uk](http://blogs.lse.ac.uk). 24th October 2016 (<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2016/10/24/brexit-is-not-the-will-of-the-british-people-it-never-has-been/>).
- Luedtke, Adam. 2005. 'European integration, public opinion and immigration policy: Testing the impact of national identity.' *European Union Politics* 6, no. 1, 83–112.
- Mackay, Hugh. 2014. 'Sociological Perspectives on Austerity.' *Conference of the Berlin-Britain Research Network*, 25th September 2014. Berlin, Germany.

- MacMillan, Catherine. 2017. 'Welcome to the carnival? Podemos, populism and Bakhtin's carnivalesque.' *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 25, no. 2, 258–273.
- McGarvey, Neil and Stewart, Fraser. 2016. 'European, not British? Scottish Nationalism and the EU Referendum.' In: *The Future of the UK: Between Internal and External Divisions*. Ed. Marius Guderjan. Berlin: Centre for British Studies, 59–70.
- McLaren, Lauren. 2006. *Identity, Interests and Attitudes to European Integration*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Meyer, Thomas. 2006. 'Populismus und Medien.' In: *Populismus: Gefahr für die Demokratie oder nützliches Korrektiv?* Ed. Frank Decker. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Mishra, Pankaj. 2016. 'Welcome to the Age of Anger.' *theguardian.com*. 8th December 2016 (<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/dec/08/welcome-age-anger-brexite-trump>).
- Moffit, Benjamin and Tormey, Simon. 2014. 'Rethinking Populism: Politics, Mediatisation and Political Style.' *Political Studies* 6, no. 2, 381–397.
- Morelli, Carlo. 2014. 'Contextualising Inequality and Household Poverty Within the Context of Scottish Devolution: An Inequality-focused Approach.' *Conference of the Berlin-Britain Research Network*, 25th September 2014. Berlin, Germany.
- Moore, Martin and Ramsay, Gordon. 2017. *UK media coverage of the 2016 EU Referendum campaign*. The Policy Institute at Kings College London (<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/policy-institute/CMCP/UK-media-coverage-of-the-2016-EU-Referendum-campaign.pdf>).
- Mudde, Cas. 2007. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Müller, Jan-Werner. 2015. 'Parsing Populism – Who is and who is not a populist these days?' *Juncture* 22, no. 2, 80–89.
- Müller, Jan-Werner. 2016. *Was ist Populismus? – Ein Essay*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. / *What is Populism?* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- NatCen. 2017. *In hindsight, do you think Britain was right or wrong to vote to leave the EU?* What UK Thinks – EU (<https://whatukthinks.org/eu/questions/in-highsight-do-you-think-britain-was-right-or-wrong-to-vote-to-leave-the-eu/>).
- Pappas, Takis. 2016. 'Distinguishing liberal democracy's challengers.' *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 4, 22–36.
- Parveen, Nazia and Sherwood, Harriet. 2016. 'Police log fivefold rise in race-hate complaints since Brexit result.' *theguardian.com*. 30th June 2016 (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/30/police-report-fivefold-increase-race-hate-crimes-since-brexite-result>).
- Reynolds, Mark. 2016. 'BBC is yet to accept Brexit is mainstream' EU vote coverage is BIASED, blasts watchdog.' *express.co.uk*. 18th May 2016 (<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/671271/BBC-poll-watchdog-Remain-campaign-Leave-Brexite-News-watch>).
- Schiffman, Leon and Thelen, Shawn and Sherman, Elaine. 2010. 'Interpersonal and political trust: modelling levels of citizens' trust.' *European Journal of Marketing* 44, no. 3–4, 369–381.
- Seyd, Benjamin. 2014. *Das vertraute Gespenst – Ernesto Laclau zum Populismus*. *Theorieblog.de*. 27th May 2015 (<https://www.theorieblog.de/index.php/2014/05/das-vertraute-gespenst-ernesto-laclau-populismus/>).
- Seyd, Benjamin. 2016. 'Exploring Political Disappointment.' *Parliamentary Affairs* 69, no. 2, 327–347.
- Stanley, Ben. 2008. 'The thin ideology of populism.' *Journal of Political Ideologies* 13, no. 1, 95–110.
- Stedman, Gesa. 2015. 'Benefits Street – Representations of Poverty and Austerity in the UK Today.' *Conference of the Berlin-Britain Research Network*, 3rd September 2014. Berlin, Germany.
- Stoker, Gerry. 2011. 'Anti-Politics in Britain.' In: *Developments in British Politics* 9. Eds. Richard Hefferman, Philip Cowley and Colin Hay. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 152–173.
- Sturm, Roland. 2015. *Die britische Westminsterdemokratie: Parlament, Regierung und Verfassungswandel*. Baden-Baden: Nomos.
- Swinford, Steven. 2017. 'The Brexit mutineers: At least 15 Tory MPs rebel against leave date with threat to join forces with Labour.' *telegraph.co.uk*. 3rd January 2018 (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/11/14/nearly-20-tory-mps-threaten-rebel-against-brexite-date-brutal/>).

- Taggart, Paul. 2004. 'Populism and representative politics in contemporary Europe.' *Journal of Political Ideologies* 9, no. 3, 269–288.
- Travis, Alan. 2017. 'No Europeans need apply: evidence mounts of discrimination in UK.' *theguardian.com*. 11th September 2017 (<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/sep/11/no-europeans-need-apply-growing-evidence-discrimination-uk-brexite>).
- Twyman, Joe. 2016. *Trump, Brexit, Front National, AfD: branches of the same tree*. *yougov.co.uk*. 16th November 2016 (<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2016/11/16/trump-brexite-front-national-afd-branches-same-tree/>).
- Vittori, Davide. 2017. 'Podemos and the Five-star Movement: populist, nationalist or what?' *Contemporary Italian Politics* 9, no. 2, 142–161.
- Vries, Catherine de and Hoffmann, Isabell. 2016. *Fear Not Values. Public opinion and the populist vote in Europe*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung.
- Wilding, Adrian. 2014. 'Alternatives to Austerity: What the Social Movements Tell Us.' *Conference of the Berlin-Britain Research Network*, 3rd September 2014. Berlin, Germany.
- Williams, Zoe. 2016. 'Think the north and the poor caused Brexit? Think again.' *theguardian.com*. 7th August 2016 (<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/aug/07/north-poor-brexite-myths>).