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SYMPOSIUM – REVIEW/3

EVERYDAY EUROPE: IMMIGRATION, TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY AND THE "WICKED PROBLEM" OF BREXIT.

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Introduction

Scholars and students interested in migration and mobility in Europe will be familiar with the landmark studies of Adrian Favell and Ettore Recchi; both single-authored and jointly produced[1]. *Eurostars and Eurocities* (Favell 2008) and *Mobile Europe* (Recchi 2015) have been arguably their most significant individual contributions to the ongoing phenomenon of free movement within Europe. Without wishing to typecast these two books, they were written at a time of broadly enhanced and celebrated intra-European migration. With their latest book *Everyday Europe*, Recchi and Favell (Recchi, Favell et al. 2019)[2] join forces to produce yet another landmark statement, this time at a juncture

1 A full list of the publications of the two authors is impossible here: for the most significant see Favell (2008, 2014), Recchi (2013, 2015), Recchi and Favell (2009).

2 For the sake of conciseness, I reference *Everyday Europe* in this paper as Recchi and Favell (2019) since they were the leaders of the EUCROSS project, of which this book is the principal outcome, and they coordinated the editing and production of the book. However, I very much appreciate the democratic way that the cover and the title page list all 16 authors who contributed to the book, and I cite it here and in the

when "Europe has become a continent of gloom" (Favell and Recchi, 2019, p. 1) characterised by a decade of economic retrenchment, increasingly "dissensual politics", and a lurch towards right-wing populism founded on nationalism and anti-immigration rhetoric.

In my contribution to this review symposium, I aim to do two things. First, I record my impressions of the book, highlighting what, for me, are its most significant and interesting findings. Inevitably, this will be a subjective and partial account, given the richness and variety of the book's contents. I pick a number of key findings in the book to reflect on the changing nature of what the authors call "social transnationalism" from the unique perspective of "Brexiting Britain". This links to the second part of my essay, which is a more direct interpretation of the dynamics of Brexit. I do this in full admission that part of the motive for doing so is a kind of personal catharsis, to unload some of the frustrations that have dogged me every day since that fateful vote on 23 June 2016. However, in an attempt to give this part of the paper some theoretical originality, I frame the ongoing Brexit process as a "wicked problem".

Everyday Europe: highlights and issues for debate

It is worth starting off with a recital of the full title of the EU 7th Framework EUCROSS project on which this book is solidly based: "The Europeanisation of Everyday Life: Cross-Border Practices and Transnational Identities among EU and Third-Country Citizens". Like most EU-funded projects, it is not truly pan-European in that the empirics of the project's data collection, carried out in the early 2010s, were limited to the seven partner countries: Denmark, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain, the United Kingdom and Turkey. Of these countries, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK can be regarded, in transnational migration terms, as "mature" countries of immigration (less so Italy and Spain), whilst Romania and Turkey are two well-chosen examples of countries with widespread "labour diaspora" populations present in several European countries – Turkey since the "guestworker" migrations of the 1960s and 1970s, Romania mainly since EU accession in 2007.

In order to understand the mechanics of data collection beyond the briefest of statements given in the opening chapter, it is necessary to turn to the methodological appendix (Pötzschke, Braun, Ciornei and Apaydin 2019). This is where I started my reading of the book. Two research instruments underpin the analysis. The first is the EUCROSS

reference list at the end of the paper in its full form (Recchi, Favell, Apaydin, Barbulescu, Braun, Ciornei, Cunningham, Díez Medrano, Duru, Hanquinet, Pötzschke, Reimer, Salamońska, Savage, Solgaard Jensen and Varela 2019), as well as referencing all the individual chapters.

quantitative survey: a computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) administered to quota-samples of 1000 resident "national" respondents in each of the six EU partner countries, plus a further 250 "migrant" respondents from each of Romania and Turkey resident in each of the other five countries (excepting Turks in Spain, whose number is too small). The total CATI questionnaires collected are thus an impressive N=8500. The second research instrument is the semi-structured qualitative interview survey called EUMEAN, aimed at exploring in more detail the "meaning" of the participants' cross-border mobilities and activities. For this latter survey, quota-samples were specified of 10 "nationals" per country for each subsample of the survey, hence 60 across the six EU countries, plus 50 Romanian and 50 Turkish respondents in their five host countries, for a total N of 160 interviews. Taken together, EUCROSS and EUMEAN represent a robust, complementary research design generating a mass of data which form the empirical backbone of the book.

I raise three questions about the methods used. First, the CATI survey and interview narratives are all based on individuals' responses, and I wonder whether a small part of the huge research effort could have been directed to organising some focus groups. By virtue of their creative group dynamics, focus groups can yield insightful, co-created narrative and discussion material. Second, I am troubled by the low acceptance rates for the CATI survey: from a low of 9% (hence 91% refusal rate) for the UK to a more reasonable 38% for Romania. This makes me concerned at the possibility of bias in the self-selection of respondents, although I am partially reassured by what is described as "post-stratification" of three key socio-demographic variables to match national population census distributions. For the EUMEAN narrative interviews, a more explicit bias was deliberately introduced, by which a number of EUCROSS respondents were purposively selected for follow-up face-to-face interviews on the basis of their high levels of physical and virtual mobility. As long as this positive transnational selectivity is recognised, the narrative extracts included in the three chapters that use them must be regarded as purely illustrative rather than representative. This leads to my third critique, which is that surprisingly little weight is given to the interview narratives, which are under-utilised compared to the exhaustive quantitative analysis of the CATI data.

I now proceed to more substantive comments on the book's wide-ranging contents and key findings. Once again, selectivity prevails; indeed, blatant cherry-picking. I try to identify one or two key highlights from each chapter which I think are particularly important, and which provide links to the second part of this review paper, on the "Brexit turn" in the UK. The book consists of eight chapters, plus a chapter-length Introduction and a similar-length Epilogue; in effect ten chapters.

In the Introduction, Favell and Recchi (2019, p. 2) set out the dilemma which frames the book: "the disconnect between European society and European politics". This has been mounting since the global financial crisis of 2008 and is characterised by the growing power of populist and nationalist political forces; yet the "social transnationalism" of "everyday Europe" proceeds apace. But here too lies another contradiction, which I believe lies at the heart of the diagnosis of the conflict over Brexit. Cross-border contacts of every kind – travel, tourism, second homes, study abroad, business and conference visits, migration, diversified consumption of international food and music – are expanding fast if not exponentially. Cheaper and more efficient communication infrastructure – budget airlines, low-cost coach travel, high-speed trains, lowered telephone and WiFi charges – has been a major facilitator of this everyday transnationalism. Such cross-border contacts are emphasised and normalised in some accounts: a broad range of European society is now incessantly traversing European and international borders. But, and here comes the contradiction: are we all "mobile" and "European" now? No we are not. Those who live in and experience the social isolation of run-down urban estates and semi-subsistence rural peripheries have a different "worldview", one that is localised, deprived and alienated. What I wish to highlight here is that (access to) mobility in all its forms – geographical, social, imaginative – is the new inequality. To be fair, Favell and Recchi acknowledge up front (2019, p. 3) the reality that the major dimensions of social transnationalism are not evenly distributed, but to my mind these inequalities need greater emphasis and exploration. So, in the EUMEAN interviews, instead of selecting only those who exhibit the top-quartile scores on the "transnationalism index", why not probe the everyday lives of those with low scores?

Chapter 1, on "cartographies of social transnationalism" (Savage, Cunningham, Reimer and Favell 2019), opens up a discussion on what is arguably *the* foundational concept of the book. Building on the definitive text of Mau (2010), social transnationalism is "transnationalism from below" and is shown to be surprisingly widespread; according to Mau, half of all Germans spend holidays abroad (but, of course, half do not), and a similar proportion maintain regular connections with at least one friend or relative living abroad. This sets the context for the EUCROSS survey data on social transnationalism with revealing graphs and maps comparing the "performance" of respondents from the six EU countries. In terms of self-declared "familiarity with foreign countries", the countries divide themselves in two: a northern group (Germany, Denmark and the UK) where 30–40% of respondents are familiar with two or more countries, and a southern group (Romania, Italy and Spain) where the corresponding share is only 15–20%. Whilst these figures do not support the common Brexit-related view of Britain as insular and inward-looking, what is different about the UK is its greater familiarity and connectivity to a diversity of non-European locations, above all the "Anglophone diaspora" of the

United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. According to Savage et al. (2019, p. 42), this indicates a peculiarly British cosmopolitanism of post-imperial whiteness (see also Savage, Wright and Gayo-Cal 2010). Not that the cosmopolitan reach of other EU countries is any less "white", since their connections are mostly with other European countries based on geographical proximity and patterns of mobility and holiday-making. As expected, and across the board in all countries, "close connections" and "familiarity" with other countries are strongly correlated with higher education and better economic status.

The chapter closes with a revealing table on how these indicators of social transnationalism are reflected in identification with being "European" and being a "world citizen". The British data stand out from the rest: 40% of UK respondents felt themselves to be "neither European nor a citizen of the world" (cf. 24% for the six EU countries as a group and only 12% for Spain); and 23% of UK respondents felt themselves to be a "citizen of the world but not European" (cf. 14% for all countries and only 6–7% for Denmark and Germany). Meanwhile, only 27% of the British felt themselves to be "European *and* a citizen of the world" (cf. 46% for all countries and 66% for Spain), and finally only 10% of British respondents saw themselves as "European and *not* citizens of the world" (cf. 16% for all countries and 27% for Denmark and Germany).

Chapter 2 (Salamońska and Recchi 2019) furthers the exploration of social transnationalism by analysing in more detail the social structure of cross-border practices. I found this a more rigorous and grounded discussion, given the vagueness through which the prior chapter approached social transnationalism using the notions of "familiarity with foreign countries" or "having close connections" in other countries. This chapter, then, is about specific types of cross-border mobility as recorded by EUCROSS survey respondents, drawing a distinction common in the "mobilities" literature (Recchi 2015; Urry 2007) between physical, corporeal mobilities, and virtual and imaginative mobilities. The range of mobilities fed into the analysis included experiences of migration; recent tourist trips abroad; communication with family/friends abroad via phone and email; communication via web-based social media to family/friends abroad; international money transfers; shopping abroad; and following TV in a foreign language. The analysis is performed for the six EU countries' respondent nationals plus Romanian and Turkish migrants. On a country-by-country basis, the UK respondents are not out of line with their fellow-EU nationals for any of the cross-border practices listed. They were, however, more likely to have communicated via social-media networks with friends and relatives abroad (presumably in the "Anglophone diaspora"), and they were less likely to watch foreign-language TV – two results which are arguably in line with "Brexit" tendencies. When the EU-nationals sample is subject to logistic regression analysis,

some interesting and significant social-structural relationships emerge, which reinforce my earlier point about inequality in access to various mobilities. The result is crystal-clear (Salamońska and Recchi 2019, p. 73): "There is no form of mobility in which the probability of tertiary-educated respondents does not exceed that of the least educated very significantly" (meaning at least $p< 0.01$, and in most cases $p< 0.001$). Economic well-being is only highly significant ($p< 0.001$) for frequency of travel to the EU. When the regression analysis is switched to the Romanian and Turkish migrant samples, the strength of these two significant findings is reversed: the effect of education is milder (since these are predominantly labour-migrant populations), but socioeconomic status has a bigger effect on all transnational practices than it does for the nationals, where the effect is limited to travel.

Food and music enter the discussion in Chapter 3 (Hanquinet and Savage 2019): a more cultural exploration of social transnationalism. My musical knowledge is probably more limited than most people's, but I wonder to what extent EUCROSS respondents can judge the differences between the musical genres they are asked to "like" or "dislike" on a five-point scale – classical, jazz, pop, rock, metal, hip hop, traditional from the country of residence, traditional from Europe, and world music. It comes as no surprise to learn that the Germans and Italians are the greatest admirers of classical music, given the national origins of so many world-famous composers, but other distinctions are baffling and not so easy to explain.

On the culinary front respondents were asked to nominate the three "foreign" cuisines they liked best out of the following: French, Italian, Spanish[3], North-Central Europe, Nordic-Baltic, Southern European[4], Anglo-Saxon, Turkish, Mexican, Asian, South American/Caribbean, and African. Once again, one questions respondents' familiarity with some of these food categories. All nationalities rate Italian food as their favourite (52% overall, 64% in Germany down to 43% in the UK), except the British whose most frequently liked cuisine is Asian (65%). Chicken tikka masala (actually, an "anglicised" Indian dish) has evidently replaced fish and chips (or pizza) as Britain's national favourite. This is a simple indication of Britain's enduring link with its former colonial empire, but also a reflection of the long history of South Asian migration to Britain. As expected, culinary preferences also vary by age and education. French cuisine is favoured more by older respondents; Asian by younger consumers; Italian is liked by all ages. On the education variable, preference for all foreign food correlates strongly with years of education. These are unique data, even if they hold few surprises.

3 Which inexplicably includes "Maltese" (in reality closer to Italian).
4 In reality Southeast European and Balkan.

Chapter 4 (Pötzschke and Braun 2019) is one of the most interesting in the emerging light of Brexit: it develops further the EUCROSS data on scales and layers of identification which were fleetingly introduced at the end of Chapter 1. Part of the rationale for the (to most European observers) surprising decision of the UK population to vote to leave the EU could be "explained" if, compared to other EU countries, the British could be shown to have a lower identification with Europe – and this is precisely what this chapter does, albeit this is not the main question which it sets out to answer[5]. The key dependent variable – identification with different geographic entities – is measured by a five-point-scale response to five statements about "feeling a citizen of" i) the town where I live, ii) the region where I live, iii) the country of residence, iv) Europe, and v) the world. In Table 1, I re-work some of the data from the authors' Table 4.1 to draw out the British pattern more clearly. Across the board, the average level of identification, for all countries and all geographic scales, is 4.0, rather high. British citizens' level of identification with Europe (2.9) is the only score in the table which is below 3.0. The rest of the data are self-explanatory, but it is worth noting that the mean British identification score for all geographic entities, 3.7, is the lowest of the six countries. Across all countries, the "country of residence" identification score is pre-eminent, although Spain is a slight exception. The subsequent multivariate analysis of the influence of various transnational practices on the level of European identification confirms that the UK is in an outlier position, first because of its weak European identity, but also because it is the country where, at the individual level, the experience of transnational practices makes the most significant contribution to "feeling European".

Table 1. Scales of identification amongst the national populations of six EU countries

	City	*Region*	*Country of residence*	*Europe*	*World*	*Average*
British	3.9	3.8	4.3	2.9	3.4	3.7
Danes	4.4	4.5	4.8	3.9	3.4	4.2
Germans	4.0	3.9	4.3	4.0	3.4	3.9
Italians	3.9	3.9	4.3	3.8	3.8	3.9
Romanians	4.3	4.3	4.6	3.8	4.0	4.2
Spanish	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.2
Average	4.1	4.1	4.4	3.8	3.7	4.0

Source: EUCROSS data in Pötzschke and Braun (2019, p. 125).

5 The key research question framing the chapter is about whether, and which aspects of, transnationalism affect identification – first amongst the general population, and second amongst migrants.

Chapter 5 (Diez Medrano, Ciornei and Apaydin 2019) moves the discussion from identity to solidarity, and investigates how EUCROSS participants respond to three scenarios: a general question about the aim of solidarity between peoples in the EU, and two more specific references, one to the economic crisis and the other to help on the occasion of a natural disaster in another EU country. Across all three dimensions, respondent answers are calibrated from 1 = least supportive of solidarity aims or actions, to 5 = most supportive. And once again the "Eurosceptic Brits" perform according to type, with the lowest scores of all six countries on the general solidarity aim (3.8, compared to Germany 4.4, Spain and Italy 4.6) and the natural disaster scenario (0.8, compared to 0.9 or above for the other countries), and the second lowest score concerning the economic crisis scenario (3.2, following Germany 3.1 – which was the main country which contributed to the Greek "bail-out"). When the multivariate analysis kicks in, the strongest correlations with solidarity are not transnational experiences but more general cosmopolitan outlooks reflected in progressive, tolerant views, feelings of belonging to Europe, and leftist political ideology.

Chapter 6 (Favell, Solgaard Jensen and Reimer 2019) brings in the EUMEAN narrative interview data in order to appreciate, at a more qualitative level, how "everyday transnationalism", especially cross-border mobility, is experienced and interpreted. It is also designed to respond to the wider question, which I emphasised earlier, about the inequalities of mobility, and the idea that the benefits of European integration are mostly enjoyed by the elites and the upper classes – as a number of other important studies have indicated (Beckfield 2006; Fligstein 2008; Kuhn 2015). A further question which arises is whether the wider inequalities in wealth, mobility and political power that exist in the EU generate mistrust, alienation and hostility to the European project on the part of "ordinary" citizens (de Vries 2018). In my view, the data presented in the chapter are insufficient to answer these questions. Most of the chapter consists of country-by-country summaries of key points in which one or a couple of interview quotes are used to illustrate the discussion. But the analysis needs more fleshing out, and it is disappointing that so little of the narrative material collected (60 interviews of average length 80 minutes) is used. Nevertheless, the findings outlined in this chapter do draw out some interesting patterns and contradictions, which I deliberately view through a Brexit lens.

In terms of an aggregated "transnationalism index" generated from EUCROSS data (range 0–18), the British are as equally transnational as the Danes and Germans (scoring 5.9, 6.0 and 5.8 respectively), and more transnational than the Southern Europeans (Italy 3.7, Spain 3.4)[6.] This North–South contrast within Europe is likely to be strongly linked to

6 In Favell et al.'s chapter, the Romanian data is omitted, as this is a relatively new member-state and therefore not comparative, within the themes addressed in this chapter, to the five older EU members.

differences in wealth, which enables frequent cross-border travel and contact (Favell et al. 2019, pp. 172–173, citing Kuhn 2015). In terms of the additive "cosmopolitan index" which measures five cultural variables (food, music and literature; being a citizen of the world; positive view of ethnic diversity; and two solidarity measures relating to debt and disaster relief; scale 0–5), the UK again scores about average (3.2, compared to Denmark and Germany 3.0, Italy 3.7 and Spain 3.9). So, on the one hand, it seems that Britain "sits right in the middle of the distribution of many European core values" (Favell et al. 2019, p. 189). On the other hand, there are distinct nuances amongst the British regarding these characteristics: a greater openness to other parts of the world beyond Europe, and negative comments about "European immigrants" set within a broader narrative of Euroscepticism. In conclusion, Favell et al. (2019, p. 190) observe a "growing differentiation within the UK, which is mixed up with people's thoughts about the EU, the European region and the UK's place in the globe: a contradictory mix".

Skipping over Chapters 7 and 8, respectively on Romanian and Turkish migrants[7], some of these issues surrounding the complexity of social transnationalism and the ambivalent and "exiting" status of the UK within Europe are picked up by Recchi (2019) in his extended Epilogue to the book. Recchi's concluding essay is arguably more negative than the mainstream narrative of the book would indicate: he describes his take on the current situation of Europe as "a glass three-quarters empty". Some of this pessimism reflects a general "Eurogloom" that is signalled right up front by the editors of the book (Favell and Recchi 2019, p. 1), whilst the outcome of the 2016 Brexit referendum, which Recchi correctly predicted[8], is undoubtedly the single most dramatic manifestation not only of a critical divide in British identity politics, but also of a wider EU malaise variously labelled in the book as Euroscepticism, Eurocrisis or Eurosclerosis.

7 This is not to dismiss the importance of these chapters; quite the contrary, as they are amongst the most analytically insightful and detailed in the volume. These are the only chapters to fully adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining descriptive statistics, regression analyses, and narrative interviews. The Romanian chapter is especially wide-ranging in its scope and analytical methods, as it focuses on the only country in the seven-country study where both nationals (living in Romania) and migrants (living in five EU countries) are surveyed, enabling a three-way comparison between migrants, non-migrants and returnees (Barbulescu, Ciornei and Varela 2019). Romanians have been the most numerous intra-EU migrants in recent decades, accounting for almost half of the 7 million Central and East European citizens registered as living in another EU country. Turks, on the other hand, are the most numerous non-EU migrant group living in Europe and are present in large numbers in several "Western" EU countries. The Turks in Europe are revealed to be amongst the most transnational of all the groups surveyed in this book, an achievement no doubt linked to their history of migration and their multiple mobility links to "home" (Duru, Favell and Varela 2019). But they are also revealed to be very heterogenous across the five EU countries surveyed, which limits the chapter's ability to make meaningful generalisations.

8 Ettore Recchi: personal communication.

Faced by the (for most observers) shock result of the Brexit vote, along with a trend to subtly restrict free movement and welfare rights in other EU countries in recent years, as well as an increase in nationality- and race-based discrimination during the 2010s, Recchi poses the question (2019, p. 257): "Are we heading towards a fusion or a fission of European societies?" The answer – by no means straightforward – is provided by making reference to four key societal dimensions: borders, inequality, social norms and practices, and a sense of European identification. The results indicate, on balance, a move towards fission. This comes as a result of emergent borderings in the wake of terrorist attacks in several European cities and the Syrian refugee crisis, persistent and growing socio-economic and geographical inequalities, significant differences between Europeans in their behaviours and identifications, and a re-emergence of nationalistic, even neo-fascist populism in many countries. And yet, as Favell and Recchi (2019, pp. 24–25) report in their introduction, many young Europeans take for granted the "banal" transnationalism of frequent cross-border travel, study-abroad opportunities, foreign holidays in the sun or in the mountains, and are open to the possibility of international careers. For those with higher education, this pattern has become pretty much the norm, as it has for many young workers from the Central and East European accession countries who want to get better-paid jobs in the "West". Of course, anti-social blemishes remain, like the young Bulgarian football supporters who directed fascist salutes, racist abuse and monkey chants at England's black players during a recent international match in Sofia (14 October 2019). Not only in Bulgaria, but in many other countries of Europe, the "kick racism out of football" campaign has a long way to go. For the rest, what I would call the "easy" or "pragmatic" transnationalism of young Europeans, more based on everyday life than idealistic principles, will probably prevail but perhaps take on a more global scale of social responsibility, challenging inequality and militarism, and pursuing concerns and activism over global environmental change and the future of the planet (Favell and Recchi 2019, p. 25).

A view from "Brexiting Britain"

From the above review of *Everyday Europe*, the following can be distilled about the "positionality" of the UK within Europe with regard to various dimensions of social transnationalism. On some measures, the UK's scores are similar to those of the other EU countries surveyed: this is especially the case with quantifiable cross-border practices including tourism, travel, familiarity with other countries, and communications with friends and relatives abroad. Often the UK's results are aligned to those of Denmark and Germany, the other two rich, Northern EU countries in the sample group. Culturally too

there are similarities, although I picked out two notable differences: a greater preference for Asian food, linked to histories of colonialism and migration; and a lower propensity to watch foreign-language TV, which could reflect lack of familiarity with foreign languages and the lack of availability of foreign-language TV channels. It is also the case that, compared to other EU countries, a greater share of the UK's transnational connections are not with Europe but with countries in the "global Anglosphere" such as the USA, Australia and Canada.

Where the UK differed most from other countries is in the general field of identification. We saw that the British had a significantly lower sense of "Europeanness" compared to the other five EU countries surveyed in the book, as well as lower scores on "solidarity" with EU countries according to various scenarios such as debt repayment or help in the event of natural disaster. More so than other countries in the surveyed group, in the UK individuals' "performance" on the solidarity/Euroscepticism continuum was more strongly related to having had transnational experiences. This indicates a greater degree of polarisation of the UK's population between those who are "connected" to Europe via physical and virtual cross-border practices and a pro-EU identification, and those who are disconnected, Eurosceptic, and perhaps more oriented to a post-imperial Anglosphere of contacts, imaginaries and identifications. This difference was revealingly summed up by the outspoken Nigel Farage, during his time as leader of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). In a speech during the 2015 general election campaign, he said:

> I have to confess I do have a slight preference: I do think, naturally, that people from India and Australia are in some ways more likely to speak English, understand common law and have a connection to this country than some people that come perhaps from countries that haven't fully recovered from being behind the Iron Curtain[9].

This quote offers an effective link between some of the indicative findings from *Everyday Europe* summarised above and my focus in the rest of this paper on Brexit, the immediate origins of which lie precisely in the 2015 general election. Prime Minister Cameron made it a re-election manifesto pledge to hold a referendum on remaining in or leaving the EU. He did so in order to counter the electoral rise of UKIP under Farage

9 As reported in *The Guardian,* 22 April 2015 (see Mason 2015). Subsequently Farage quit UKIP to found the Brexit Party, a single-issue party committed to leaving the EU. Unable to win a seat in any of the recent general elections, Farage has been a long-standing Member of the European Parliament (MEP), ironically the only place where his voice could be heard as an elected politician. As leader of the Brexit Party he was a prominent figure in British political debate, at least up until the December 2019 General Election, alternating episodes of intense media exposure with periods of relative obscurity.

and the long-running destabilising threat pose by the Eurosceptic right wing of the Conservative Party.

The referendum was formally announced in February 2016 and the date fixed for 23 June 2016. Immigration quickly became the lightening-rod for the pro-Leave campaign, ruthlessly pushed and manipulated by Farage, the Eurosceptic "Tories" and their supporting tabloid newspapers, notably the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Express* and the *Sun*, which screamed front-page anti-immigration headlines on a regular basis throughout the campaign, exaggerating numbers and stoking fears about "mass immigration" from the EU. Previously "invisible" and identifying themselves as "European citizens" and "free movers" with every right to live and work in Britain, the 3.2 million EU citizens suddenly became "visibilised" as "immigrants" and hence a "problem" to be "solved" by the UK leaving the EU, which would enable the country to regain full control over its borders and sovereignty. What was not given sufficient emphasis in the political/media debate leading up to the referendum (but has become somewhat more evident since), was the huge economic contribution that EU migrants made to the British economy, at all skill levels from university research, finance and business, and the National Health Service, to lower-skilled jobs in the construction industry, hotels and restaurants, and agricultural work. Such pro-immigration arguments were largely silenced because of the toxic nature of the topic of immigration in the political sphere, and self-censored by the Conservative Party's parallel commitment, already in place for several years and codified in successive election pledges, to reduce annual net migration to the "tens of thousands" (i.e. below 100,000). Theresa May, the first post-referendum prime minister, was directly implicated here – when Home Secretary, she introduced the so-called "hostile environment for immigrants" in 2012.

The referendum result – 52% voted "Leave", 48% "Remain" – confounded most of the poll predictions and was met with astonishment across Europe, where many saw it as a collective act of national self-harm. Scotland voted by a large majority (62%) for "Remain", and Northern Ireland also had a majority "Remain" result (56%); in Wales there was a small margin in favour of "Leave". This confirms Stephen Haseler's (2017) thesis that the referendum result and the wider Europhobia that lay behind it was the product of a specifically *English* crisis of identity. The EUCROSS survey did not disaggregate the UK sample, but this issue was cogently argued by Nicholas Boyle writing in the *Irish Times*:

> Brexit is a collective English mental breakdown, English people living on the dreams of Empire never learned to see others as equals. (…) The question Brexit raises is not one of economics or politics, but of national psychology (Boyle 2018).

Beyond the geographical divisions between the "nations" of the UK, the referendum result also revealed a population sharply divided on other indicators, including a widespread anger at the "politics of austerity" put in place to reduce the national debt which had soared in the wake of the global economic crisis. People were also angry at what they saw as the widening income and power divide between the wealthy business and political class located in London and the South-East and the "have-nots" distributed across the country but particularly concentrated in the North and the Midlands. Demography and education also influenced how people voted in the referendum, with high correlations between voting "Remain" and higher levels of education, and between voting "Leave" and older age (Picascia, Romano and Capineri 2016).

This leads me to suggest that there are two ways to interpret the success of the "Leave" campaign. One is that this is some kind of "natural" progression: a "restoration" of the UK's rightful place as a globally connected independent political entity, free from the trammels of the EU and its bureaucratic rules, able to control its own destiny and to choose its own trading partners and which kinds of migrants to admit. In this way, the four decades and more of EU membership were a kind of historical aberration, particularly as the EU has deepened its integration amongst its constituent members and become a more powerful supranational political force since the time that the UK joined in 1973.

The other interpretation is to see the referendum result as a spectacular own goal, which started from the Cameron-inspired defensive move against the two-pronged attack from UKIP and the anti-European Tory hardliners, but ended up with manifold unintended consequences. This is the line of argument that I now pursue. Extrapolating from the literature on so-called "wicked problems", which I briefly review below, I see the referendum as a "wicked event" which opened a Pandora's Box of fissures and hatreds, with multiple unintended consequences. These ruptures and antagonisms cut across social class, political parties, geography, race and identity within the UK and beyond. Even though the reality of Brexit has at last been secured, these divisions will endure, probably for a long time.

At many levels, the decision to hold the referendum was a huge strategic mistake: first, because it produced the outcome that the Cameron centrist faction of the Conservative Party did not anticipate; second, because it subsumed under a simple binary choice a wide range of complex issues and possible outcomes (mainly related to the fact that it was never made clear what "Leave" would actually entail); and third because the result produced a social and political cleavage which probably cannot be repaired, even after Brexit has happened. In retrospect one can only wonder: were there not other ways in which the pro- and anti-European tensions within the Conservative Party could have

been resolved? Or was the Europhobic feeding frenzy stoked by UKIP and its offshoot Brexit Party and the publicity given to the media-savvy soundbites of Farage always going to lead to some kind of crunch-point? Hence, the "wicked event" of the referendum has led to the chimera of finding a "satisfactory solution" to the long-running political horror-show of Brexit; a "wicked problem" that the UK population, as well as the rest of the EU, has been suffering for the past three and a half years, and will need to continue to endure for the "transition period" to the end of 2020.

What is meant, exactly, by a "wicked problem"? In essence, it is a problem which is difficult or impossible to solve because of its complex interdependencies, inherent contradictions and shifting nature. The use of the word "wicked" does not denote evil, but resistance to solution. Wicked problems are commonly seen to exist within planning and policy studies, organisational management, engineering, the environment, and political and social systems. Those which are especially intractable and exist on a global scale, such as global climate change, are sometimes called "super wicked problems" (Lazarus 2009; Levin, Chambers, Bernstein and Auld 2012). Most of the literature on wicked problems pays homage to the foundational paper of Rittel and Webber (1973), which sets out ten defining characteristics. These have been added to, amalgamated and modified by subsequent writings (e.g. Camillus 2008; Conklin 2007; Head and Alford 2015; Ney and Verweij 2015). What follows below draws mainly on Rittel and Webber (1973), but with some modifications to reflect the specific nature of the Brexit process.

First, *there is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem*; as a result, *every wicked problem is essentially unique*. Here, I combine two of Rittel and Webber's ten criteria. There are so many factors and conditions, all embedded in a complex and shifting social and political context, that no two wicked problems are alike. Brexit fits this definitional criterion perfectly; there is no precedent, no parallel, and hence no solution by analogy[10]. Rittel and Webber (1973, p. 160) specify that many of the societal problems that planners and politicians grapple with are inherently "wicked" because of their social complexity and disagreement amongst multiple stakeholders and factions. This is in contrast with "tame" problems which are more technical and thus solvable by linear logic and standard, tested procedures.

Second, *every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another (set of) problem(s)*. Whilst an "ordinary" or a "tame" problem is self-contained, a wicked problem is complexly entwined with other problems, many of which have other root causes. Again, Brexit is a perfect exemplar of this condition. It is, above all, a symptom and an

10 Greenland (2017 population 56,000) voted 53% to withdraw from the EU in a referendum of 1982 following a dispute over the EU's Common Fisheries Policy (which also helps to explain why Norway and Iceland stay outside the EU). Greenland joined the EU in 1973 as a constituent part of Denmark, but gained autonomy in 1979.

outcome of a historical struggle that the UK, and especially England, has with its position and role in the world throughout the postwar era. This struggle manifests itself in polarised opinions regarding the country's geopolitical identity as "European", or as still linked to the Commonwealth and vestiges of "Empire", or as part of the Atlantic axis via the "special relationship" with the United States (Bhambra 2017). Some of the EUCROSS data reinforce this ambivalence.

The issue of Brexit also became conflated with emotive and instrumentalised conflicts over immigration. To a large extent, the "Leave" campaign was a proxy movement against the rise of immigration following EU enlargement. Especially in the declining industrial towns of the West Midlands and North of England, where the effects of austerity were most keenly felt amongst working-class voters, and in the rural towns of Eastern England where the influx of East European workers to take up jobs in agricultural field work and in processing plants changed the make-up of the population, immigrants were scapegoated for a range of other "problems" which were evident or perceived, such as pressure on housing, schools and health services, or rising unemployment and lack of jobs for "native" workers.

Despite now being a done deal, the Brexit process is ongoing and continues to create problems for the future. For a time, the apparent replacement of the long-standing duopoly of Labour and Conservative (both divided over Brexit) with the two "tribes" of "Leave" and "Remain", appeared to re-map the political landscape of Britain. In the months leading up to the 12 December 2019 General Election, called by Boris Johnson to break the logjam over Brexit, other political parties threatened the traditional binary divide, notably the temporarily resurgent Liberal Democrats (the most pro-Remain party, committed to cancelling Brexit by boldly revoking Article 50), and the newly-founded, Farage-led Brexit Party (wanting a "no-deal" exit from the EU). But the Lib-Dems performed disappointingly in the election and the Brexit Party, by not fielding candidates in safe "Tory" seats, were complicit allies in the Conservative victory. Purged of their more outspoken "Remainer" members who were controversially expelled from the Party by Johnson, the Conservatives scored a stunning victory, and the path to clinching Brexit was assured.

On the economic front, it is clear that the protracted uncertainty over the Brexit negotiations has had and will continue to have profound consequences. These include the difficulty of industries and businesses to forward-plan (hence many investments have been put on hold), a fall in the value of the pound (making imports more expensive), and shortages of migrant labour in key sectors such as agriculture, hotels and catering, and the National Health Service. On the broader political front there are concerns that Brexit

will ultimately lead to the break-up of the United Kingdom through a Scottish Independence Referendum (followed by Scotland remaining in or rejoining the EU) and, less imminently, the reconstitution of a United Ireland. All of which illustrates further defining features of "wicked problems" according to Rittel and Webber (1973): policies to confront such problems have *no stopping rule* and discount the future irrationally.

A third key feature of wicked problems is that their always difficult *solutions are not "true" or "false", or "right or "wrong", only "better" or "worse"*. It seems to be in the nature of wicked problems that they result in more "losers" than "winners". On this last point EU Brexit chief negotiator Michel Barnier opined on 22 October 2019 that "Brexit is a lose-lose. No-one, not even Mr. Farage, has been able to show me any proof of the added value of Brexit"; whilst earlier in the year, on 6 February, European Council President Donald Tusk famously declared that there was "a special place in hell for those who backed Brexit without a plan"[11]. An irony of Brexit, which only emphasises its internal lack of logic and "wickedness", is that many of those who voted for it in the peripheral regions of the UK affected by austerity, industrial decline and economic restructuring are precisely those who will likely be more negatively affected by the impact of Brexit. And yet, these were the voters and constituencies which, in significant numbers, switched from Labour to Conservative in the recent General Election, seduced by the simple campaign slogan to "Get Brexit Done". In the past, these "pro-Brexit" regions have received substantial economic support from EU Structural Funds, which will be lost in the more open, deregulated economy of a post-Brexit future.

Another set of "losers" from Brexit are the 3.2 million EU nationals residing in the UK (as well as the 1 million UK nationals living elsewhere in the EU), whose identity and rights as "EU citizens" and "free movers" are about to be lost. In research which I carried out with University of Sussex colleagues Aija Lulle and Laura Moroșanu on young EU migrants in Britain, in which 60 participants were interviewed both before and after the referendum, several consistent messages came through[12]. These included a sense of being "victimised" during the build-up to the referendum, a subsequent awareness of no longer feeling welcome in Britain, and a prevailing uncertainty over their future in the country. For many, especially those planning to stay long-term, the referendum result and, now, the reality of Brexit, constitute a rupture in their lives. Whilst some interviewees were planning to hasten their return "home" (or move to another EU country), those committed to staying, for financial, career, lifestyle or personal reasons, were having to

11 Reports in The Guardian, 7 February 2019 and 23 October 2019.

12 Research funded by the EU Horizon 2020 project "YMOBILITY", 2015-2018, grant no. 649491. For examples of this research see Lulle, Moroșanu and King (2018); Lulle, King, Dvorakova and Szkludarek (2019); Mazzilli and King (2018).

contemplate the bureaucratic challenges of applying for the new "settled status" or, ultimately, citizenship. According to our research, EU migrants in the UK also felt a change in the "atmosphere", which has become more nationalistic, with rising levels of verbal abuse in the streets and workplace, and hate speech in the public sphere.

A fourth cluster of three linked criteria for the specification of a wicked problem relate to issues of stakeholder conflict and responsibility. These arise not from the original formulation of Rittel and Webber (1973) but from subsequent elaborations by Camillus (2008), Conklin (2007) and Levin et al. (2012). Firstly, *those responsible for solving the problem are also those who created it*. The Conservative Party, which called the referendum, has been at the forefront of efforts to try to implement the "will of the people" and "deliver Brexit". For more than three years, successive Conservative prime ministers – David Cameron (who resigned immediately after the referendum), Theresa May and Boris Johnson – failed to achieve this and had to ask the EU for repeated postponements of the "exit" date, most recently to 31 January 2020. Initially, the Conservative Party lost its parliamentary majority in the snap election called by Theresa May in June 2017, resulting in a "hung parliament" unable to push Brexit "over the line". Following May's resignation, Johnson assumed the role of prime minister in July 2019, voicing more vigorously to "get Brexit done". As a consequence of the December 2019 election, Brexit is the new reality.

The other two issues follow on from what has been said above*: stakeholders have radically different worldviews and different frames for understanding the problem*; and any solution to the wicked problem of Brexit *requires a great number of people to change their mindset or behaviour*.

That different worldviews frame the problem of Brexit is obvious. Even within the Conservative Party there are members of parliament (MPs) who are broadly pro-European and others – the so-called (and misnamed) European Research Group – who are ardent anti-EU ideologues. A consolidated view in the Labour Party was compromised by the fact that many Labour MPs who themselves voted "Remain" represent constituencies in the North of England which voted massively – more than 70% – in favour of "Leave". Because of this conflict, many lost their seats in the December 2019 election. As primary stakeholders with the ultimate collective responsibility for decision-making, MPs had divided loyalties: should they vote according to their own view of the UK's relationship with the EU; should they align with their constituents' majority vote in the referendum; or should they follow their Party's line on Brexit? Should they put their country first (taking into consideration the economic evidence on the negative impact of Brexit); or their Party; or their own careers in the election? Should they follow their

conscience, beliefs and instincts; or should they vote "holding their noses" to achieve a particular collective outcome?

Finally, there is a set of issues surrounding the difficulty, if not impossibility, of finding a satisfactory solution, and the constraints of time and resources when confronting wicked problems. These criteria are as follows. *In seeking a solution to a wicked problem, there is no opportunity to learn by trial and error, as every attempt creates its own effects*. And secondly, *the constraints that the problem is subject to and the resources required to solve it change over time*. These statements, too, ring true in the case of Brexit. Any solution proposed created new problems. All the "Leave" scenarios ("hard" vs "soft" Brexit, or a "clean break" with "no deal") were calculated to have negative economic implications and are in fact only the first step along the tortuous path of re-negotiating trading, migration, and other relations with Europe and other world regions. Revoking Article 50 and "cancelling" Brexit would have been a rejection of plebiscite democracy, with obvious political and social ramifications. And a new referendum – a "people's vote" – would have risked reinforcing existing divisions and potentially creating new ones. Thus, the "solutions" tend to create their own new lives and may turn out to be worse than the symptoms of the original problem. So, in the case of Brexit, the solution, whatever it turns out to be over the coming months of negotiation and transition, becomes the (new) problem. Which is an interesting twist on one of Rittel and Webber's more intriguing statements: "The formulation of a wicked problem *is* the problem!" (1973, p. 161, their emphasis). Meantime, "immigration", the dominant discursive trope during the original Brexit debate, has faded into the background as an "issue" (except in terms of the new labour shortages noted above), with trade deals and the thorny problem of the Irish border (between the Republic and Northern Ireland) becoming the main topics of debate once the real negotiations start.

Conclusion

What I have tried to do in this review paper and "think piece" is to provide a sympathetic and occasionally critical summary of *Everyday Europe*, hopefully doing justice to the contributions of all of its authors, if not all of its multiple findings. Reflecting my own research interests, I have stressed the role of migration and other human mobility forms, the issue of European identity, and the inequalities that seem to underpin everything, and need more exposure. I have taken an unashamedly UK-centred vision of the book, in order to highlight this country's complex positionality within the EU and the distinctiveness of its performance on some of the cross-border practices and indices of identification. These enabled me, in the second half of the paper, to make some analytical links to the major social and political issue which has convulsed the UK (and the EU) over

the past three-plus years: the saga of Brexit. But I want to close this piece with all guns blazing. "The people" were wrong. They were duped, lied to, manipulated and browbeaten by the insidious rhetoric of fear about immigration, including an "invasion" of 80 million Turks about to join the EU. The cynical and aggressive mass targeting of "receptive" consumers of online media propagated an extraordinary melange of lies and half-truths over which there was no regulatory control. If this is the new model of political discourse and electioneering, where truth has no value, then I fear for our democratic future.

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