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Migration Research
University of Sheffield

Belonging in a post-Brexit-vote Britain:
researching race, ethnicity and migration in a changing
landscape

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

The University of Sheffield

9th May, 2017

Plenary 1 (10.00 -11.15)

Chair: Dr Majella Kilkey

Brexit and the challenges for Sociology: what ever happened to the Sociology of Migration

Professor Louise Ryan, Professorial Research Fellow, University of Sheffield.

Although many sociologists research and write about migration in all its different guises, is there a Sociology of Migration? In the 1960s John Archer Jackson, then professor of Sociology in Trinity College Dublin, wrote a book entitled Migration, which was a call for a sociology of migration. Since that time, many other notable sociologists including Robert Miles, Annie Phizacklea and more recently Stephen Castles have raised the question of how sociology, as a discipline, can research, understand and theorise migration. Brexit came as a shock to many sociologists, including migration researchers. How can the discipline, rise to this challenge, especially in terms of migration and rising xenophobia? This short plenary talk rises these questions and challenges us to start thinking creatively about these issues.

Pathological Integration: East Europeans, racism and becoming British

Dr Jon Fox, Senior Lecturer in Sociology, University of Bristol.

Immigration, we're told, is a problem, and the immigrants seen to be causing that problem are from East European. They're taking our jobs, clogging up our services, taking – or worse, stealing – our benefits, they're begging, thieving, trafficking, and simply crowding out an already over-crowded country. East Europeans have been pilloried by politicians, vilified by the media, and scorned by the public. The spike in hate crimes following Brexit reminds us that these attacks against East Europeans not infrequently carry racialised under-, and over-tones. This kind of racism is an impediment to integration. But East Europeans are not only the casualties of racism, they are also at other time perpetrators of racism against Britain's more visible minority communities. Racism is not just a barrier to integration, it can also be deployed as a modality of integration to attenuate, and possibly reverse, the status degradations East Europeans have suffered in the UK. The aim of this paper is to show how racism is implicated in integration, both as a barrier to that integration, but also as a facilitator of it. For more than a decade, East Europeans have been quietly integrating into life in the UK. They haven't had much help: integration hasn't featured as a policy priority for EU citizens whose 'free movement' implied a temporariness to their stay and for whom their Europeaness (and whiteness) made integration appear less urgent. But East Europeans are here to stay, and so too is racism. This paper explores the intersection of the two in the case of East Europeans living and working in the UK.

REMAIN/LEAVE: The impact of Brexit depicted in a series of couple portraits

Jeremy Abrahams, Theatre and Portrait Photographer.

Please refer to the flyer in your conference pack.

Panel 1 (11.15 – 12.45 parallel session)

Chair: Dr Julie Walsh

Beyond 'the EU vs non-EU' rhetoric

Muslim men's lives in post-Brexit Britain: Gender, age and generation

Dr Joanne Britton, Lecturer in Sociology, University of Sheffield.

Public attention has been drawn to the involvement of Muslim men in cases of child sexual exploitation. This has arisen as a result of a number of widely reported cases in areas with a significant Muslim population, including Rotherham, a northern English town that is depicted as a failed space of multiculturalism in media and public discourse. The cases have fed into wider political concerns around social cohesion and the apparent failure of Muslim minorities to integrate. They raise the issue of how local people from different ethnic and faith backgrounds continue to live together peacefully in these areas. The paper presents empirical evidence from a research study that explored the impact of the crisis on Muslim men. It argues that both conviviality and increased tensions were notable in the town during the period following the crisis. People from different ethnic backgrounds responded by challenging exclusionary public discourses and sustained far right activity. In contrast, there was a significant increase in hate incidents and crime and general experiences of 'everyday racism'. This included problems faced by local Muslims when experiencing shared spaces, such as the town centre. From the perspective of Muslim male research participants, the crisis presented new opportunities for improved inter-ethnic exchanges and solidarity, while also resulting in a rolling back of multicultural gains. The research findings prompt questions about the future of multicultural conviviality and belonging in post-Brexit Britain, including what is the potential for reduced recognition of specific needs and interests of minorities, including Muslims, at the local, as well as national, level?

Making sense of a divided communities: arts methodologies for social cohesion

Zanib Rasool, PhD researcher, University of Sheffield.

Kate Pahl, Professor of Literacies in Education, University of Sheffield.

"Brexit took us all by surprise, those of us who work directly with communities everyday, saw the lack of tolerance of the 'other', ordinary people with no direct contact with ethnic minority communities started investing in to the Far right narratives and media sensationalism, we felt people's fears. Politicians and policy makers, however, were too far removed and disconnected from community life and were caught off guard. Brexit has opened up a floodgate to racism and further inequalities thus creating segregation and a culture of 'us and them' in already divided and fragmented communities." *Zanib Rasool, researcher, Imagine.*

In this presentation we describe how a community research team has worked to support already fragmented community groups, including women and girls from Muslim communities, and has worked with a school in central Rotherham, to develop ways of making sense of divided communities. We look at the potential of arts methodologies and co-production to develop understandings of different ways of knowing that encompass and make sense of difference. We look specifically at ideas of success and failure in communities, and call on government to listen to 'other' voices that might not be heard in mainstream media.

Transnational Belonging of Asian and Bangladeshi Minority Identities

Dr Rumana Hashem, Post-doctoral Associate, University of East London.

This paper focuses on the implications of Brexit for Identities and belonging. With a reference to Asian, especially South Asian and Bangladeshi transnational activists, and non-EU migrants in Britain, I explore how Brexit enables transnational belonging of minority and marginalised immigrants. While the media representation of Brexit and the populist view of leave suggest that Brexit is nothing but a far right project, I refer to deconstructive sociological analysis (such as, Skey 2016; Yuval-Davis et al. 2016)¹ which shows that Brexit is a 'political project of un/belonging' and the failing of the 'populist politics'. At the same time, I draw on first-hand accounts of Asian/South Asian and Bangladeshi immigrants and leave voters who saw the political project of belonging, that is Brexit, is a way to fix migration discourse, thereby enabling them to form transnational belonging and identities which the peripheral communities found hard to form under the domination of 'White' (EU)-migration in Britain. By way of illustration, the paper sought to illustrate how transnational belonging is possible in the post-Brexit context. I suggest that the boundaries between EU-migrants and Asian and non-EU refugees need to be analysed in the light of intersectionality of class, ethnicity, race and nationality.

Panel 2 (11.15 – 12.45 parallel session) Chair: Dr Gwyneth Lonergan
Kaleidoscope of emotions around Brexit: feelings, memories and attitudes

Unpacking meanings of in/security among LGBT 'Eastern European' migrants in Scotland in the context of Brexit

Dr Ann Gawlewicz, Research Fellow, University of Glasgow (co-authored with F. Stella and M. Flynn).

Drawing upon interviews with LGBT 'Eastern European' migrants in Scotland, this paper looks at experiences and aspirations these migrants articulate as 'a normal life' and analyses them within a broader framework of in/security. It firstly explores how 'a normal life' is equated with both an improved material position in Scotland and more positive experiences around sexuality. It then examines the ways in which the institutional framework in Scotland, in particular the presence of LGBT-affirmative legislation, is seen by participants to have a normalising effect within society,

leading to a broader sense of inclusion and equality. Finally, it considers insecurities that started emerging in response to the political context prior to the EU referendum in the UK. While the fieldwork for this study took place before the Brexit referendum, some participants spoke of uncertainties and anxieties related to their status and the right to stay in the UK permanently. The paper draws upon a larger ESRC-funded research project called Intimate Migrations (PI: Francesca Stella, Co-I: Moya Flynn; www.intimatemigrations.net).

Migrant leisure spaces and community well-being post Brexit

Jaeyeon Choe, Senior Lecturer in Events and Leisure Management, Bournemouth University.

This project draws on an on-going study that focuses on migrants' leisure spaces and community well-being in Dorset and is also focused on building research capacity to respond to policy changes with regard to migrant well-being. While the current focus is on investigating how leisure spaces can help develop migrants' personal/social inclusion and enhance their wellbeing, the project will continue during Brexit negotiations. With community partners who are working with migrants and involved with community leisure related activities and planned collaborative activities, we expect to gain a meaningful insight into migrant leisure spaces and community well-being in post Brexit Dorset. For example, we will organize a participatory art event during Refugee Week (June 2017) and utilise the event as a data collection venue.

With external community partners, we are using a bottom-up approach to develop research questions and tools to help and address current challenges. While previous research indicates that leisure spaces are productive to marginalised and excluded communities and individuals in terms of their well-being, this project will explore how leisure spaces also provide migrants opportunities for developing, expressing and negotiating their personal, social and cultural preferences safely whilst gaining a sense of belonging in a time of social, economic and political flux in the UK.

Using International Surveys to study attitudes towards migration

Dr Aneta Piekut, Sheffield Methods Institute, University of Sheffield.

International surveys are unique sources of data to compare social processes between countries, as well as assess validity of applied measurement tools. Taking European Social Survey as an example, this session will demonstrate how to use international surveys datasets to explore differences in opinions and related individual experiences and socio-political contexts of 20 European societies. Additionally, the issue of comparability of used attitudinal measures will be discussed by looking at the percentage of 'Don't knows' to particular questions measuring anti-immigration attitudes: do the same people across European countries – in terms of socio-demographics and experiences with difference – express non-attitudes?

Belonging pre and post Brexit: strategies employed by migrant families living in a high-leave-vote city.

Dr Julie Walsh, Research Associate, University of Sheffield.

In June 2016, 52% of people voting in the UK chose to leave the EU. Regionally, however, the vote varied dramatically and, in Hull, the vote to leave was 69% . Whilst Hull remains predominantly white British, in recent years the city has experienced a significant demographic shift; the 2001 census showed 3% of people (7308) living in Hull to be born outside the UK, whilst the 2011 census showed this figure to have increased to 10% (25610) (Migration Yorkshire, 2014). By drawing on pre-referendum accounts of migrant families living in Hull, this paper examines the familial strategies migrant families *did* employ to support identity creation in this predominantly white British, post-industrial city. In doing so, discussion highlights how these strategies were supported by the pre-Brexit context and how the success of these strategies is threatened by the current contextual shift: the 'divisive, anti-immigrant and xenophobic rhetoric' of the leave campaign (Stone, 2016) and the uncertain future of EU migrants living in the UK. As the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Hull match those of other high 'leave' vote regions, this paper more broadly examines the impact of Brexit on the everyday lives of migrant families in Hull and similar communities.

Anchoring, re-anchoring and un-anchoring in a post-Brexit-vote Britain

Dr Aleksandra Kazłowska, Lecturer and Research Associate, University of Birmingham.

Drawing on my extensive research with Polish migrant in the UK since 2013 year, including my very recent interviews, I examine changes in the belonging of Polish migrants in a post-Brexit-vote Britain. I use the emergent concept of anchoring to explore how migrants anchor and un-anchor themselves in the UK as a consequence of Brexit. Anchoring is defined as the process of finding significant footholds and points of reference which enable migrants to establish their socio-psychological stability and security as well as function effectively in new life settings. Its added value lies in the fact that it allows for complexity, simultaneity and changeability of anchoring and the reverse processes of un-anchoring to be included while analysing adaptation to change and life in a time of uncertainty and insecurity.

Resilience, reworking and resistance tactics and strategies among EU citizens in post-Brexit Britain

Dr Hazel Baxter-Reid, Lecturer in Human Resource Management, Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh.

The UK electorate's decision to leave the EU has created political, economic and social uncertainty for EU citizens residing in the UK. Within this context, it is worthwhile analysing the extent to which EU migrant workers are developing their mobility power to exit the UK (Smith,

2006). The strategies and tactics migrants employ to cope with potential alterations to their status are also of interest. Alberti (2014: 874) shows that migrant workers' ability to build and develop mobility opportunities is influenced by their 'migratory and employment status, their age, 'race', gender, educational background and the possibility of relying on local and transnational support networks'. Therefore, it is vital to explore these issues in more depth. Furthermore, Katz's (2004) resilience, reworking and resistance framework highlights different levels of mobility: from 'getting by', to navigating and reworking the labour market, and acts of reworking and resistance to challenge existing power relations (Berntsen, 2016). Longitudinal research will be undertaken with EU citizens from a variety of different EU countries, working in low to high skilled employment, living in high leave, remain and 50/50 constituencies. This shall help examine the ways in which tactics and strategies develop over time as the political situation advances.

Panel 4 (13.30 – 15.00 parallel session)

Chair: Dr William J Mason

Children and the youth in the context of Brexit

So near and yet so far: exploring diversity, belonging and identity with Sheffield's primary school children

Dr Sabine Little, University of Sheffield.

This presentation reports on research conducted in two Sheffield primary schools – one inner-city, culturally diverse and multilingual, one rural and 100% "White British". Two classes per school were visited twice each (a total of eight visits), exploring cultural attitudes and experiences through a series of workshops, activities and focus group interviews. Activities included an exploration of languages in the classroom, family literacy practices, and children's narratives around their sense of identity. Each school's findings were shared with the children at the other school, and reactions explored. Findings suggest self-editing and multiple 'ways of being' among plurilingual children, assuming that only English language experiences would be of interest in the school context. In both schools, children were unable to relate to the children's experiences at the "other school", showing a need for increased work in encouraging diversity, acceptance and collaboration among children at that age, against the backdrop of the current rhetoric around Brexit and immigration.

Young people's everyday experiences of nationhood and living with urban diversity

Dr Robin Finlay, Postdoc Researcher, Newcastle University.

In this paper, I will discuss some of the initial findings from a new research project that is exploring young people's everyday experiences of nationhood and living with diversity in Sunderland (England), Newport (Wales) and Dundee (Scotland). Geographical research into lived diversity has almost entirely been located in large multi-ethnic cities. This includes a profusion of

work on superdiversity in London (Neal *et al.*, 2015), Leicester (Clayton, 2012) Bradford (Phillips *et al.*, 2014) and Birmingham (Wilson, 2014; 2015). Significantly, very little is known about multicultural belonging and nationalism in predominantly white preserves and the impact that post-industrialism, austerity and Brexit may have in these localities. Moreover, little attention has been given to the voice of young people and their perspectives on increasing diversity, migration and national belonging. Therefore, the research aims to shed much needed light on how young people negotiate and perceive nationhood and diversity in less ethnically diverse cities such as Sunderland, Newport and Dundee. We intend to examine how the contexts of England, Scotland and Wales may engender distinctive youth perceptions of urban diversity and nationhood. The paper will open out some of the initial findings from fieldwork and further discuss the theory and rationale underpinning the project.

‘Including the Excluded’: rejecting the exclusion of forced migrants from higher education

Rebecca Murray, PhD Researcher, University of Sheffield, and Director Article 26.

This paper will explore the impact of Brexit on students from a forced migrant background currently studying or who aspire to study in higher education. It will outline concerns for the future engagement and access to HE (higher education) for these students, as well as propose an alternative and resistant stance that could be adopted by HEIs (higher education institutions) who want to create and sustain opportunities for forced migrants within their institutions.

The UK post Brexit, has experienced the intensification of an already inhospitable and xenophobic environment, in which forced migrants are subject to an agenda of exclusion from HE. Recent examples of this include attempts to de-register students from a forced migrant background, due to the already risk averse practices of HEI staff responsible for compliance with Home Office regulations, mounting in the current climate.

In this same context HEIs have increasingly been constructed as neoliberal institutions – a critical focus of which is the international student ‘market’ and the associated actual and potential income generation. The increasing exercise of the sovereign power of the state within the HE sector, in regard to Home Office control of the international student population, is evidence of the advancement, as opposed to the roll back of the state. However, even when the state exercise what Foucault described as technologies of domination over HEIs and forced migrant students, there exists the potential for the exercise of resistance within everyday practices to continue and grow the inclusions of these students within HE.

Panel 5 (15.30 – 16.30 Parallel session)

Chair: Dr Joe Turner

British welfare in and beyond the UK

Implications of Brexit for British Pensioners in Spain

Dr Kelly Hall, Lecturer in Social Policy at the University of Birmingham.

The EU referendum has created a huge amount of uncertainty for more than 100,000 British pensioners living in Spain. Most moved there many years (or even decades) ago to enjoy their

retirement with the understanding that they would be able to export their pension and healthcare rights with them. The EU enables free healthcare via reciprocal arrangements existing between member states, as well as annual pension increments and the transfer of some welfare benefits. But since the UK's vote to leave the European Union, these rights are no longer guaranteed and British migrants do not know if they will be able to continue accessing the welfare services upon which they depend. This paper draws on 25 interviews undertaken in February 2017 with older British migrants in Spain and their families to explore Brexit coping and resilience strategies at an individual, family and community level. This includes strategies to remain in Spain and strategies to return to the UK. The paper therefore explores the complexities of Brexit for these migrants and the ways in which it has shaped their identity, sense of belonging and future plans.

Access to social welfare as a facilitator of migrant women's gender roles

Dr Eva Duda-Mikulin, Research Associate, Manchester Met. University.

Polish migration to the UK is one of the most significant social phenomena of recent times. Post 2004, when Poland joined the European Union, many people decided to leave for the UK. Today, approximately one million of Polish migrants live there. A high proportion of those migrants are young persons who are at the start of their adult lives. This paper focuses on migrants' access to welfare in times of new populisms. This is a highly contested issue at the centre of many countries' interests at a time of austerity, particularly in light of the global humanitarian crisis induced by warfare.

Migrants are often perceived as genderless, unburdened by a host of responsibilities concerning the household and/or children. It is argued here that the British welfare state assists Polish migrant women in the accomplishment of their gender roles. Polish women perceive the UK welfare state as subsidising their roles as mothers enabling them to make the choice of starting a family. Polish women value this encouraging environment, which is evidenced by higher birth/fertility rates in the UK compared to Poland. The British welfare state continues to act as a safety net despite the increased negative attention concerning migrants' welfare rights towards what is seen as increasingly scarce resources.

This paper draws on qualitative data from 32: 16 migrants in the UK and 16 return migrants in Poland. The data was thematically analysed.

Life and death across borders***Cross-border caring? Reflections on tissue donation and international cooperation***

Dr Ros Williams, Research Associate, University of Sheffield.

This paper is inspired by one of the central motifs of the Brexit debate in 2016, namely the protection of British borders. I want to sketch out an empirical context that I've been engaged in since 2012 – blood stem cell donation and transplantation (also known as bone marrow, and umbilical cord blood donation). Stem cell transplantations are now a well codified treatment option for blood cancers and a growing number of other malignancies, with around 2000 British patients requiring a transplant each year. In this paper, I seek to draw attention both to biological understandings of somatic borders (that is, the immunological notion of in/compatibility between individual human bodies) and the institutional arrangements that overcome national borders (that is, those that allow biomedical cooperation between countries as providers of both stem cells and of the treatments themselves). Drawing on policy, interviews, and news stories, I look to tell the story of how the permeation of borders in both a corporeal, immunitary sense and in a national, institutional sense, sits at the heart of stem cell transplantation. In so doing, I reflect on the EU's inter-state health policy; what could Brexit mean for the policy of 'Cross-Border care', and how might it affect access to specialist treatments like stem cell transplantation?

Researching deathscape provisions among minorities and migrants in a post-Brexit-vote Britain

Brenda Mathijssen and **Dr Danny McNally**, University of Reading (co-authored with A. Maddrell, Y. Beebeejaun and K. McClymont)

This paper will introduce a new AHRC-ESRC research project which uses participatory and creative methods to investigate how the diverse practices of bodily disposal, mourning and remembrance found within the UK's multicultural society can be respected, enhanced and planned for. The geopolitics of migration and the rights and requirements of migrants are especially topical in contemporary UK and European contexts. This is amplified in a post-Brexit-vote Britain. However, there is limited consideration of this in relation to death, dying, burial and mourning. While sites of bodily disposal and practices of mourning and remembrance are universal, they are negotiated, practiced and ritualised in diverse ways within multicultural societies. Moreover, cemetery, crematoria and remembrance provision tends to be addressed on an ad hoc basis rather than integrated into local authority development plans. Increasing pressure for land combined with a lack of centralised management, contribute to a fragmented approach to planning for burial sites. Given the lack of systematic planning policy for this at national or local levels, we argue that diversity-ready sites are a social, cultural and political necessity for an inclusive and integrated multicultural society. This paper will discuss the use of participatory and creative methods being used to explore these issues as well as some initial

findings on deathscape provision, practice and preferences in four case study towns in England and Wales.

Closing Plenary (16.30 – 17.30)

Chair: Dr Julie Walsh

Race and migration research agendas post-Brexit: identifying and understanding sociological urgencies, priorities and opportunities

Professor Sarah Neale, Department of Sociological Studies, University of Sheffield. Lentin and Titley (2011: 18)* argue that ‘the idea that multiculturalism has run its course is an expedient one, and although it may appear new, it is merely constantly renewed’. This presentation suggests that the UK’s EU 2016 referendum outcome works as a potent exemplar and evidence source in this renewal process in which the failure of multiculturalism is emphasised. While attempts to explain the result through social class, social exclusion, generation, alienation, disaffection, urban and rural geographies, political disenchantment and so forth do circulate these remain more marginal to the dominance of the anti-migration discourse. In this context the leave vote appears to mark a retrenchment of national defensiveness and migration is *the* lens through which interpretations of Brexit take place and drive the profound uncertainties and insecurities around citizenship, status, belonging and identity as well as concerns around discrimination, racial violence and hate crime. It is on this context that the presentation reflects on this being a strange moment to be writing about conviviality and urban multiculturalism. Currently working on the copy edits of the proofs of the monograph from *Living Multiculture*, an interdisciplinary two year (2012-14) ESRC project which explored affective social life and emergent formations of multiculturalism in different place in urban England, which I was PI I use current conjuncture to think through what strike me as the most pertinent and pressing questions for sociological researchers working in the race, ethnicity, migration fields. So for example, can/do conviviality and multiculturalism remain as central or become marginalised as key concepts for understanding the everyday relations of ethnic diversity and cultural difference? To what extent does geography and place demand our attention in any meaningful analysis of how Brexit happened; Does Brexit (re)expose the entanglements of race and migration politics which so explicitly characterised the last quarter of the 20th century and what are the implications of a refocus on concepts of race, social inequality and social class for post Brexit research agendas? The presentation will seek to work through these concerns and suggest that the urgency of thinking again about race - reconnected with social class but informed by the more recent work on conviviality - might present opportunities for sociological research agendas which identify and facilitate dialogic exchange, political mobilisations and the importance of relational concepts in attempts to understand contemporary multicultural relations and social divisions.

*Lentin, A. and Titley, G. (2011) *The Crises of Multiculturalism: Racism in a Neoliberal Age*, London, Zed Books.

That's not my nation... why, how and what to research in a post-Brexit vote Britain

Dr Hannah Lewis, Department of Sociological Studies, University of Sheffield.

The European Union (EU) referendum campaign and resultant vote to leave the EU dramatically highlights an entanglement of immigration and race. Various analyses are emerging about what the vote means for politics, social cohesion and inequalities in UK society. Much less clear is what form any future immigration policy will take. The success of the 'alternative facts' Leave campaign is a direct challenge to evidence based policies, to which many academics researching migration and race overtly aim to contribute. Nevertheless, the futures of EU nationals resident in the UK became one of the highest profile aspects of pre-Article 50 debate in a national discussion which revealed widespread understanding of the devastating effect of insecure status on family, work and health.

The paper will sketch a long but not exhaustive list of priority concerns for a post-Brexit vote migration and race research agenda. It will draw on a recent workshop that brought academics together with statutory and voluntary sector migrant experts in Leeds and Sheffield. Three overarching topic areas emerged: rights, work and cohesion. These issues intertwine multiple aspects of migrant experience and migration management with anxieties about insecurity of a fracturing economy and society in a climate of openly racist and xenophobic national politics.