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Transforming the state, challenging the nation: the role of identity politics in the Brexit vote

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**Transforming the state, challenging the nation: the role of
identity politics in the Brexit vote**

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April 24, 2017

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Abstract

British voters have decided to withdraw membership from the European Union (EU). By considering the outcome of Brexit as a moment in time when British voters declared, “this is who we are,” this project asks: What role did identity play in the Brexit vote? What does Brexit tell us about how expressions of identity have been affected by transformations of the state? An internal conflict over what it means to be British has, in part, driven the United Kingdom to leave the EU. Neither British Euroscepticism nor competing notions of Britishness are new. Rather, anxiety over the ability to dictate what Britishness is, and who can be British came to a point of crisis on June 23, 2016. My analysis demonstrates that this crisis was provoked by three points of tension: (1) shifts of sovereignty from member states to the EU, (2) the rise of immigration, and (3) resentment among the British working-class. Ultimately, these three issues contributed to the victory of the New Right vision of identity and the British voters’ decision to leave the EU. Further, I suggest that Brexit raises concerns about the consequences of exclusionary identity politics, as national identity seems to have become a mechanism through which our globalizing world is rejected, and familiarity and homogeneity are favored over difference.

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Preface

This project is the result of an attempt to pull together many interests: to look at international relations, the state and the nation, exclusionary identity politics, and the movements of people. Motivated by a desire to understand the ways in which the local and the distant, the national and the supranational interact with one another, I ended up at June 23, 2016 and Britain's decision to withdraw membership from the European Union. As processes and effects of globalization are having a profound effect on systems of governance, economic exchange, and social interactions, there is a need to examine the transformation the state undergoes when interacting with supranational political communities. Will supranational bodies including the European Union continue to emerge and strengthen? Or, will independence referendums such as Brexit become more popular? There is something that needs to be said about the compatibility of the nation, and thus national identity, in the context of an increasingly globalized world order. If Brexit exemplifies the rejection of a certain kind of identity — supranational, transnational, cosmopolitan — in favor of another, British *national* identity, it is imperative to ask, is the world ready to open borders and minds? Are nationalist, exclusionary politics eradicable?

Chapter 1: The Road to Brexit

On June 23, 2016 over thirty million Britons turned out to the polls, called on to participate in one of the most anticipated and globally significant votes in recent memory. Forty-three years after becoming a member of the European Union (EU), Britain decided it was time to reevaluate its membership status. This was the first independence referendum ever held by a EU member-state, and the consequences of a Brexit vote were unclear. Yet, as the country prepared to make a statement about what it means to be British, the Brexit vote commanded the world's attention; as seventy-two percent of the British electorate filled out the referendum ballot, the rest of the world stood still, anxiously awaiting David Cameron's appearance outside Number 10 Downing Street.¹ And then, all of a sudden, it happened. In a speech that lasted less than eight minutes, former Prime Minister Cameron addressed his constituents, and the world. The people had spoken. Britain would leave the EU.

In many ways, both nations and states across the world today are in conversation with each other more than ever before. Political and national communities are in the throes of complex processes of globalization, building relationships and partnerships across borders in response. Globalization contemplates that, through a series of mechanisms, both the citizens and economies of nations and states around the world become more closely interconnected, and will continue to become more closely interconnected.² This "coming together" of our world is the direct result of trends and processes, at both the national and the international level. As a result, new forms of economic, social and political organization have been produced and the development of global communication, production and exchange has been encouraged.

¹ Lord Ashcroft, "How the United Kingdom Voted on Thursday... and Why," *Lord Ashcroft Polls*, June 24, 2016, <http://lordashcrofthpolls.com/2016/06/how-the-united-kingdom-voted-and-why/>.

² Professor Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (SAGE, 1992); Saskia Sassen, *Globalization and Its Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money* (New Press), 1999), <http://www.amazon.ca/exec/obidos/redirect?tag=citeulike09-20&path=ASIN/1565845188>.

One context in which issues of globalization have been explored is the EU, as it has brought twenty-eight states together “with their respective histories, different cultures, different languages, different political, national, regional and local interests and traditional ideologies, different economic concepts and so forth.”³ Within a union of over two-dozen states, each with its own way of life, there is a need to first acknowledge these stark differences and then to construct commonalities. The EU has therefore simultaneously demanded and necessitated the merger of market economies, the increased malleability of borders, the expansion of communication networks, and the growth of migration. Over the course of its history the EU has itself been transformed from a coalition that monitored the production of coal and steel, into an economic, social and political union. The supranational policies and institutions that have caused this to happen have relied on direct interaction and cooperation between national and supranational bodies of governance and policy. The EU thus offers a useful framework through which to analyze the relationship between identity and transformations of the state, making it an appropriate focus of my research.

Significantly, globalization has not occurred without conflict. In fact, it introduces urgent paradoxes, contradictions that put the local and the distant, the particular and the universal through periods of tension. In some cases, the increasing ease with which corners of the world interact with one another results in the universalization of values and opinions regarding public policy; while in many other cases, the perceived erosion of an imagined national homogeneity catalyzes expressions of xenophobic paranoia: a fear of the other that has contributed to exclusionary identity politics. In this sense, globalization has implicated expressions and understandings of identity. As will be elaborated, this project examines these implications in an

³ Michał Krzyżanowski and Ruth Wodak, “Political Strategies and Language Policies: The European Union Lisbon Strategy and Its Implications for the EU’s Language and Multilingualism Policy,” *Language Policy* 10, no. 2 (May 2011): 115–36, doi:10.1007/s10993-011-9196-5.

effort to clarify how identity manifests in moments of perceived crisis. Although the term identity is used widely and can apply to many different situations, in this context it is used to describe a sense of belonging to a national community — one which has been affected by transformations of the state.

The Brexit vote represents one of such paradox of globalization, reflecting the effects of tensions between competing forms of identity. It demonstrates a reaction against phenomena such as transnationalism and cosmopolitanism — both of which have been perceived as threats to what it means to be British. Building on literature on transformations of the state in the context of globalization, I connect “state” with a set of exclusionary identity politics. The Brexit vote emphasizes how national identity can become a mechanism through which our globalizing world is rejected, allowing familiarity and homogeneity to be favored over difference.

This project asks: What role did identity play in the Brexit vote? What does Brexit tell us about how expressions of identity have been affected by transformations of the state? An ascendancy of New Right Britishness has, in part, driven the United Kingdom (UK) to leave the EU. While neither British Euroscepticism nor competing notions of British national identity are new, recent transformations of the state have triggered latent New Right identity characteristics. My analysis demonstrates that the transformations that contributed to this rise of New Right Britishness include: (1) shifts of sovereignty from member states to the EU, (2) the rise of immigration, and (3) anti-elitist sentiments among the working-class. Importantly, it was the combination and persistence of these three issues that allowed the New Right vision to rise. Consequently, New Right anxiety over the ability to dictate what British national identity is and who can be British came to a point of crisis on June 23, 2016. My discussion of Brexit can therefore be understood as a case study of what can happen when New Right identities prevail.

Significance

This project contributes to the growing body of literature on transformations of the state in the context of globalization. In the 1990s, this literature was characterized by a debate over the potential erasure of the state. While some pointed to the diminishing feasibility of the state as the globalized world's primary unit of governance, others believed that the state would continue to be the primary embodiment of sovereignty.⁴ The academic conversation has since moved beyond this debate. Scholars today have reframed this discussion, focusing on how the interaction between globalization and the state has caused the state to transform.⁵ Brought on by the development of supranational institutions of governance and the merger of market economies, these transformations have redefined state sovereignty and altered notions of national identity.⁶

⁴ J. P. Nettl, "The State as a Conceptual Variable," *World Politics* 20, no. 4 (July 1968): 559–92, doi:10.2307/2009684; Peter Evans, "The Eclipse of the State? Reflections on Stateness in an Era of Globalization," *World Politics* 50, no. 1 (1997): 62–87; Jurgen Habermas, "The European Nation-State and the Pressures of Globalization," *New Left Review*, no. 235 (May 1999): 46; Suzanne Berger, "Globalization and Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 3, no. 1 (June 2000): 43–62, doi:10.1146/annurev.polisci.3.1.43; Martin Wolf, "Will the Nation-State Survive Globalization?," *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 1 (2001): 178, doi:10.2307/20050051; Barry Eichengreen and David Leblang, "Democracy and Globalization," *Economics & Politics* 20, no. 3 (November 2008): 289–334, doi:10.1111/j.1468-0343.2007.00329.x.

⁵ Linda Weiss, "Globalization and National Governance: Antinomy or Interdependence?," *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 5 (December 1999): 59–88, doi:10.1017/S0260210599000595; Arthur A. Stein, "The Great Trilemma: Are Globalization, Democracy, and Sovereignty Compatible?," *International Theory* 8, no. 2 (July 2016): 297–340, doi:10.1017/S1752971916000063.

⁶ Habermas, "The European Nation-State and the Pressures of Globalization"; Stephen Castles, "Migration and Community Formation under Conditions of Globalization," *The International Migration Review* 36, no. 4 (2002): 1143–68; Sheila Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging: The Politics of Identity in a Changing World* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003); Roland Axtmann, "The State of the State: The Model of the Modern State and Its Contemporary Transformation," *International Political Science Review* 25, no. 3 (July 1, 2004): 259–79, doi:10.1177/0192512104043016; Irene Bloemraad, Anna Korteweg, and Gökçe Yurdakul, "Citizenship and Immigration: Multiculturalism, Assimilation, and Challenges to the Nation-State," *Annual Review of Sociology* 34, no. 1 (2008): 153–79, doi:10.1146/annurev.soc.34.040507.134608; Professor of Transnational Anthropology Steven Vertovec and Steven Vertovec, *Transnationalism* (Routledge, 2009); Christina Higgins, *Identity Formation in Globalizing Contexts: Language Learning in the New Millennium* (Walter de Gruyter, 2011); Theresa Kuhn, "Individual Transnationalism, Globalisation and Euroscepticism: An Empirical Test of Deutsch's Transactionalist Theory: Individual Transnationalism, Globalisation and Euroscepticism," *European Journal of Political Research* 50, no. 6 (October 2011): 811–37, doi:10.1111/j.1475-6765.2011.01987.x; Gal Ariely, "Globalisation and the Decline of National Identity? An Exploration across Sixty-Three Countries: Globalisation and the Decline of National Identity," *Nations and Nationalism* 18, no. 3 (July 2012): 461–82, doi:10.1111/j.1469-8129.2011.00532.x; Paul Hirst, Grahame Thompson, and Simon Bromley, *Globalization in Question* (John Wiley & Sons, 2015); Wu Zhicheng, "The Influence of Global Governance upon State Governance," *Social Sciences in China* 37, no. 4 (October 2016): 164–74, doi:10.1080/02529203.2016.1241501.

In this manner, relevant literature outlines a scholarly project rooted in efforts to understand how these transformations have manifested as well as what their broader consequences are.

The significance of this project is its ability to use Brexit as a way to examine consequences of transformations of the state today. My analysis builds on the emerging body of literature on Brexit. Scholarship has begun to comment on the role of migration and a history of British Euroscepticism in the independence referendum.⁷ Academics including Freedon (2017) and Ford and Goodwin (2017) have also connected the Brexit vote to issues of identity and political ideology. I am invested in understanding the intersection between issues of national identity and Euroscepticism, as well as sovereignty, migration and the economy. In this manner, this project expands and combines the thinking presented in new literature, offering a unique perspective on how effects of supranationalism caused Britain to insulate itself, promising to “take back control” from Eastern Europeans migrants and Muslim refugees, and from cosmopolitan elites and an overbearing European Council.

Method

In order to answer my research questions, I begin with a discussion of British Euroscepticism and how competing notions of British national identity have reacted to the ways the EU has both challenged and transformed the sovereignty of its member states. More specifically, I consider why membership to the EU was perceived as a threat to what it means to be British. Subsequently, I examine the role of national identity in relation to three of the most salient issues debated by the Leave and Remain campaigns — sovereignty, immigration and the economy. In order to make the claim that these three issues contributed to the ascendancy of

⁷ Robert Ford and Matthew Goodwin, “A Nation Divided,” *Journal of Democracy*; *Baltimore* 28, no. 1 (January 2017): 17–30; Michael Freedon, “After the Brexit Referendum: Revisiting Populism as an Ideology,” *Journal of Political Ideologies*; *Abingdon* 22, no. 1 (February 2017): 1–11, doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.mcalester.edu/10.1080/13569317.2016.1260813>.

New Right Britishness, I draw on available qualitative data from opinion polls, newspaper articles and campaign speeches. By focusing my research on the role of identity in the context of Brexit I am able to provide a more detailed and comprehensive analysis, with the potential to build on relevant theory about how supranationalism has caused transformations of state sovereignty and national identity. It is important to acknowledge, however, that limiting the number of cases considered makes it more likely that a case may be atypical. What the role of identity in the Brexit vote tells us about how expressions of identity have reacted to transformations of the state may only apply to Britain and British identity. That said, this analysis aims to build on existing theory, not test it. It offers a contemporary moment in time that can be used to elaborate on literature on the role of identity in the context of the growing supranational regime.

Brexit

On Thursday June 23, 2016, Britain voted to withdraw membership from the European Union.⁸ This vote, famously labeled Brexit, was decided by a fifty-two to forty-eight percent margin, with over thirty million Britons turning out to vote.⁹ On a practical level, the vote took place because Prime Minister Cameron promised it would. When Cameron promised an In/Out vote he assumed that the pro-EU Liberal Democrats, his coalition partners in governing Britain since Labour lost office in 2010, would still be around to veto the referendum.¹⁰ After the May 2015 general elections, however, Cameron only had a small overall majority. Instead of stalling until 2017, Cameron recognized that the political climate was moving against him. Issues

⁸ Brian Wheeler and Alex Hunt, "Brexit: All You Need to Know about the UK Leaving the EU," *BBC News*, October 2, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-32810887>.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ White, "What Is Brexit and Why Does It Matter? The EU Referendum Guide for Americans."

surrounding migration and the economy were said to have plagued state sovereignty, calling British national identity and autonomy into question.

In the months leading up to the Brexit vote, fierce debates were brought to the forefront of domestic politics. Both the Leave and Remain campaigns fought to persuade voters as they were asked: “Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?” The two campaigns each presented their views on a wide range of issues, including immigration, state sovereignty, the economy, crime, trade and jobs. Campaign efforts targeted a large population as adult citizens of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland were all able to vote, along with Irish citizens who live in the country, citizens from the Commonwealth countries who reside in the UK, and UK nationals who have lived outside the country for less than fifteen years. By the end of several contentious months, Leave secured the majority vote.

As evidenced by Table 1, the Leave campaign was able to capture the majority of the vote in England and Wales. Remain, however, persevered in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Overall, support for Brexit was most substantial in England. Considering the breakdown of the Brexit vote more closely, it is clear that turnout was generally higher in pro-leave areas.¹¹ Interestingly, public support for Leave closely mapped support for the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), as Euroscepticism appears to have spread across the country. Overall, Leave enjoyed support in areas that tended to be more economically disadvantaged than average, where average levels of education are low and the population is majority white.¹² Likewise, Leave polled well among older voters, and those with less stable employment.¹³

¹¹ Matthew J. Goodwin and Oliver Heath, “The 2016 Referendum, Brexit and the Left Behind: An Aggregate-Level Analysis of the Result,” *The Political Quarterly* 87, no. 3 (July 1, 2016): 323–32, doi:10.1111/1467-923X.12285. 1.

¹² *Ibid.* 4.

¹³ Lord Ashcroft, “How the United Kingdom Voted on Thursday... and Why.”

Focusing more heavily on issues of immigration in the final weeks of its campaign, Leave received its strongest support in the West Midlands (59.3 percent), a typically Eurosceptic, and anti-immigrant region.¹⁴

On the other side, Remain received its strongest support in Gibraltar (95.9 percent). “Of the 50 local authorities where the remain vote was strongest, 39 were in London or Scotland.”¹⁵ Although, at seventy-two percent, the overall turnout for the Brexit vote was the highest it has been since the 1992 general election, turnout was not even across the country. For example, despite the Remain campaign’s targeting of urban, more densely populated areas, turnout in these places tended to fall below the national average.¹⁶

Table 1: Geographical Breakdown of Brexit Vote¹⁷

Country	Leave (percentage of vote)	Remain (percentage of vote)
England	53.4%	46.6%
Wales	52.5%	47.5%
Scotland	38%	62%
Northern Ireland	44.2%	55.8%

Of additional importance is both the age and rural/urban divide. Significantly, the younger the voter, the more likely they were to vote Remain. In fact, seventy-three percent of eighteen to twenty four year olds voted this way.¹⁸ Older voters, however, were overwhelmingly in support of the Leave campaign, with approximately sixty percent voicing their opposition towards the EU. This difference in opinion among age groups has been, in part, connected to a difference in perception about what the EU offers. For younger British citizens, the EU is a

¹⁴ Goodwin and Heath, “The 2016 Referendum, Brexit and the Left Behind.”

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ For a more detailed account of the specific cities in which the Leave and Remain campaigns enjoyed the greatest success, and correlating statistics, please see: Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Jon Kelly, “Brexit: How Much of a Generation Gap Is There?,” *BBC News*, June 24, 2016, sec. Magazine, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-36619342>.

“world of opportunity,” a space in which travel, work and new opportunities are unrestricted.¹⁹

British pensioners, however, remain much more skeptical about the potential influences the EU may have on Britain and the towns in which they have resided their whole lives. Interestingly, this disagreement can also be seen in the geographical divide of the Brexit vote. Urban areas, including London, Manchester and Brighton adamantly backed Remain. The majority of rural communities, however, tended to vote the other way.

The results of the Brexit vote have caused tensions at the subnational level. In Scotland particularly there has been significant outcry.²⁰ In fact, Nicola Sturgeon, Scotland’s First Minister, has said that a second independence referendum in the next two-and-one-half years is highly likely.²¹ In Ireland, things are slightly more complicated. While nationalists want the UK to remain in the EU, unionists generally want to leave.²² Additionally, a Brexit will complicate border issues for Ireland, as EU nationals would no longer enjoy the right to move freely between the Republic of Ireland and the UK. Consequently, this may strain North-South relations. “Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness said the impact in Northern Ireland would be ‘very profound’ and that the whole island of Ireland should now be able to vote on reunification.

As outlined in Table 2, the arguments made by the Leave and Remain campaigns touched on economic, social, political, and judicial issues. Generally, the Leave campaign advocated for a return to complete British sovereignty, while Remain attempted to highlight the advantages, in terms of both domestic and foreign affairs, of continued EU membership. Additionally, Remain

¹⁹ “How Britain’s Old Forced the Young to Leave the E.U.,” *Time*, accessed March 2, 2017, <http://time.com/4381878/brexit-generation-gap-older-younger-voters/>.

²⁰ Peter Foster; Emily Allen, “How Would Brexit Affect Northern Ireland and Scotland?,” *The Telegraph*, 11:02, sec. 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/09/how-would-brexit-affect-northern-ireland-and-scotland/>. ; Wheeler and Hunt, “Brexit: All You Need to Know about the UK Leaving the EU.”

²¹ Allen, “How Would Brexit Affect Northern Ireland and Scotland?” ; Wheeler and Hunt, “Brexit: All You Need to Know about the UK Leaving the EU.”

²² Allen, “How Would Brexit Affect Northern Ireland and Scotland?”

stressed the ways in which the supranational EU institutions support, and do not hinder British national interests.

Table 2: Main arguments presented by Leave and Remain Campaigns on Key Issues²³

Issue	Leave	Remain
Immigration	Freedom of movement protected by the EU inhibits Britain's ability to control immigration	Leaving will not solve the migration crisis but rather bring it to Britain's doorstep because border control will move from Calais, France to Dover
Crime	The European Arrest Warrant allows British citizens to be sent abroad and charged for offenses, often mirror ones	Exit would stop justice being done through the European Arrest Warrant, which holds rapists, murderers and other serious criminals accountable
Trade	Britain's links with the EU are hold back its focuses on emerging markets, namely China and India	44 percent of Britain's exports go to other EU countries
Law	Too many of Britain's laws are made overseas by dictates passed down from Brussels. UK Courts must become sovereign again	The exit campaign has over-exaggerated how many laws are determined by the European Commission. It is better to be a part of the process that shapes EU-wide laws
Jobs	The danger posed to jobs if the UK leaves the EU has been exaggerated. By incentivizing investment through low corporation tax, Britain can flourish like the Scandinavian countries outside the EU have	Around three million jobs are linked to the EU and will be plunged into uncertainty if Britain leaves
Clout	Britain does not need the EU to prosper internationally	In a globalizing world the UK's interests are best protected by remaining part of the EU block
Finance	Capital flight is nonsense, London will remain a leading financial center	Banks would leave the UK and the City of London because of the trading advantages of being inside the EU
Sovereignty	The British Parliament is no longer sovereign and the EU is determined on creating an even closer union	In a globalized world, every country must work together if they want to prosper economically
Defense	Britain may soon be asked to contribute to a EU Army, this would erode the UK's independent military force	European countries are facing threats from ISIS and a resurgent Russia. Working together is the best way to combat these challenges

²³ Ben Riley-Smith, "Leave or Remain in the EU? The Arguments for and against Brexit," *The Telegraph*, June 20, 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/16/leave-or-remain-in-the-eu-the-arguments-for-and-against-brex-it/>. ; John Cassidy, "The Economic Arguments Against Brexit," *The New Yorker*, May 23, 2016, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/john-cassidy/the-economic-arguments-against-brex-it>. ; Larry Elliott Economics editor, "The Progressive Argument for Leaving the EU Is Not Being Heard," *The Guardian*, June 19, 2016, sec. Business, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/jun/19/progressive-argument-for-leaving-eu-is-not-being-heard-referendum-brex-it>.

On March 29, 2016, Britain triggered Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, officially initiating the withdrawal process. While no other member state has ever invoked Article 50, Britain now has two years to negotiate with the EU terms of exit. This two-year time frame can only be extended by unanimous agreement by EU member states. Britain's formal exit is therefore likely to occur on March 29, 2019.²⁴ The activation of Article 50 was initially delayed by an attempt to give Members of Parliament (MPs) a stronger voice in the withdrawal process.²⁵ Many believed this is was necessary because "it has been estimated that while 421 of the 574 constituencies in England and Wales voted to leave the EU, only 148 MPs in England and Wales voted the same way."²⁶ Although May's government rejected such calls saying that its mandate comes from the referendum results, on November 3, 2016, Britain's High Court ruled that Parliament must give approval before exit processes begin.²⁷ The UK Supreme Court affirmed this ruling. Despite the additional vote, Parliament affirmed the referendum results.

The nature of the Brexit is dependent on the outcome of negotiations between Britain and the EU. At the moment, there appear to be two plausible outcomes.

At one extreme, a 'hard' Brexit could involve the UK refusing to compromise on issues like the free movement of people in order to maintain access to the EU single market. At the other end of the scale, a 'soft' Brexit might follow a similar path to Norway, which is a member of the single market and has to accept the free movement of people as a result.²⁸

That said, May has taken a bold stance going into negotiations, making it clear that she is willing to leave the Single Market in order to regain control over immigration and sovereignty in various

²⁴ Wheeler and Hunt, "Brexit: All You Need to Know about the UK Leaving the EU."

²⁵ "Brexit Britain: What Has Actually Happened so Far?," *BBC News*, October 27, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-36956418>.

²⁶ Goodwin and Heath, "The 2016 Referendum, Brexit and the Left Behind." 3.

²⁷ Stephen Castle and Steven Erlanger, "'Brexit' Will Require a Vote in Parliament, U.K. Court Rules," *The New York Times*, November 3, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/04/world/europe/uk-brexit-vote-parliament.html?_r=0.

²⁸ Wheeler and Hunt, "Brexit: All You Need to Know about the UK Leaving the EU."

policy areas.²⁹ The British government has yet to announce a firm position about how the status of EU citizens living within the UK will be affected. In part, this is contingent on trade deals established through the negotiations and if Britons working and residing in other EU countries will now have to apply for visas.³⁰

Importantly, “with nationalism and anti-establishment, anti-immigrant sentiment spreading across Western Europe, the EU leadership in Brussels is anxious to avoid encouraging others in the 28-member bloc to bolt.”³¹ A week before Britain formally triggered Article 50, Michel Barnier, the EU’s chief Brexit negotiator, announced, “when a country leaves the union, there is no punishment. There is no price to pay to leave, but we must settle the accounts. No more, no less. We will not ask the British to pay a single euro for something they have not agreed to as a member.”³² Negotiations between Britain and the EU are therefore likely to include lengthy discussions on Britain’s outstanding financial obligations. It is estimated that the UK’s unpaid bill ranges from 55 to 60 billion euros. Regardless of the outcome of negotiations, the process will be very complicated. As both the EU and Britain have made clear, no detail will be left untouched. If no agreement is reached by March 29, 2019, and no extension has been granted, Britain automatically leaves the EU and all existing agreements cease to apply to the UK.³³

²⁹ “Britain’s Theresa May to Trigger Brexit on March 29,” accessed April 2, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/britain-theresa-trigger-brexit-week-170320114515225.html>.

³⁰ Wheeler and Hunt, “Brexit: All You Need to Know about the UK Leaving the EU.”

³¹ “Britain’s Theresa May to Trigger Brexit on March 29.”

³² Daniel Boffey and Jennifer Rankin, “EU’s Chief Negotiator Challenges Theresa May Directly over Brexit Talks,” *The Guardian*, March 22, 2017, sec. Politics, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/mar/22/eus-chief-negotiator-sets-three-conditions-for-brexit-trade-talks-to-start>.

³³ This discussion of the Brexit negotiations includes all relevant, important information made public by April 1, 2017.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 2: The Literature

This chapter discusses the literature on transformations of the state, including the academic conversation on national identity and sovereignty in the context of globalization and the EU. National identity has transformed and reacted to the growth of the supranational regime. Simultaneously, the roots of traditional national identity — ethnicity, culture and customs — have been stressed, and new, alternative forms of identity have emerged. Additionally, the emergence of supranational institutions and decision-making has changed the ways states assert their sovereignty; they have to take into account the power and influence of supranational bodies. Today, many states, including EU member states, must acknowledge the effects national actions have on the wider, supranational community. Additionally, states are subject to the enforcement of laws and regulations from “above.” Brexit is the most recent example of how expressions of identity have been affected by transformations of the state. This literature provides the academic building blocks necessary to understand the historical and political significance of the Brexit vote.

Chapter 3: British Euroscepticism and National Identity

This chapter contextualizes the Brexit vote. In many ways, the result of Brexit sent shockwaves around world, as it put the fate of economic and political systems in a state of unprecedented precariousness. Despite the fact that the Brexit decision reflects a history both of ambivalence towards the EU and tensions over what British national identity is — a history that helps explain why Brexit occurred in the first place — a Brexit was still largely unexpected. This chapter therefore considers how a deep-seated cynicism towards European integration brought

the UK to the brink of crisis. The independence referendum becomes less of a shocking moment in time, and, rather, the manifestation of a final point of tension in a volatile relationship.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the relationship between Britain and the EU, including when and why Britain's membership began. This overview transitions into a more detailed examination of what animated British Euroscepticism from the 1950s to present day. Subsequently, two notions of British national identity will be considered, the New Right and the New Labour views. It will be argued that the New Right view is more consistent with Eurosceptic, nationalist attitudes, ones that favor Britain's withdrawal from the EU. Lastly, these two notions of Britishness will be put in conversations with subnational identities in order to further highlight the internal competition over identity that has been taking place within the UK, itself a multinational country.

Chapter 4: The Identity Politics of Brexit

Although this project focuses on Brexit as a single case study, my analysis tells a larger story. Considering the Brexit vote as a moment in time when Britain declared "this is who we are," this project examines the role identity played in the decision to leave the EU. While neither British Euroscepticism nor competing notions of Britishness are new, my analysis demonstrates that the rise of New Right Britishness was, in part, provoked by three points of tension: (1) shifts of sovereignty from member states to the EU, (2) the rise of immigration, and (3) anti-elitist sentiments among the British working-class. This analysis draws on opinion polls, newspaper articles and campaign speeches. In doing so it becomes evident that these three issues contributed to the victory of the New Right vision of identity and, ultimately, the British voters' decision to leave the EU. Additionally, this chapter outlines and theorizes how tensions

surrounding national identity contributed to the role each of these issues played in Britain's decision to leave the EU.

Chapter 5: Confronting Exclusionary Identity Politics

Brexit is a consequence of the ascendancy of New Right Britishness. While it is nearly impossible to say what a Brexit means at this point in time, it is clear that in some significant way the British people want to “take back control” of their country. If we understand Brexit to be, in part, a reaction to anxiety over transformations of the state and challenges to the nation, Brexit is at the same time about restoring national homogeneity — one British people no longer threatened by the “other.” Significantly, such anxiety is not unique to Britain. We see it in the United States with the election of Donald Trump, and across much of Europe with the rise of far right extremist movements. I conclude this analysis by suggesting that in order to combat both the rise in “new right” politics and the consequences of such (Brexit), it is necessary to reimagine traditional notions of belonging. Conceptions of membership to both the state and the nation must reflect the globalized nature of present day.

Chapter 2: The Literature

As supranational institutions, including the EU, have developed over the past few decades, the academic conversation on transformations of the state has expanded.³⁴ This relevant body of literature speaks to the ways in which the actions of an individual state are now situated within a larger system of regional and global governance, and under an umbrella of supranational laws and institutions. Scholars have increasingly argued that although states continue to play a crucial role in determining and maintaining their own legal and economic order, supranational institutions are now able to influence state actions in unprecedented ways.³⁵ This chapter outlines this scholarship, focusing specifically on the section of the literature that discusses transformations of national identity and sovereignty. Importantly, the EU plays a major role within this conversation, despite the fact that such statutes may conflict with national legislation, as member states are held accountable to laws and regulations enacted by the European Council.

By examining how academics have written about sovereignty and national identity this literature review demonstrates that: (1) national identity has transformed in response to the growth of supranational bodies. At the same time the roots of traditional national identity — ethnicity, culture and customs — have been stressed and new, alternative forms of identity have emerged. And, (2) that the emergence of supranational institutions has changed the ways states assert their sovereignty; they now have to take into account the power and influence of supranational bodies. Today, EU member states, must acknowledge the effects decisions made at the national level have on the supranational community. The reverse holds true as well. As state are subject to the enforcement of laws and regulations from “above,” policies passed by the EU

³⁴ Lydia Morris, “Globalization, Migration and the Nation-State: The Path to a Post-National Europe?,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 48, no. 2 (1997): 192–209, doi:10.2307/591748. 192.

³⁵ Rodney Bruce Hall and Thomas J. Biersteker, *The Emergence of Private Authority in Global Governance* (Cambridge University Press, 2002). 91-112.

effect domestic affairs. The literature on transformations of the state in the era of globalization provides the academic building blocks necessary to analyze the issues that contributed to ascendancy of New Right Britishness. Britain itself has experienced such transformations.

2.1 Transformations of National Identity

Part I of this literature review outlines the academic conversation on how the era of globalization has challenged national identity. The literature tells us that while some national identities have absorbed European discourse, rebranding themselves as transnational, others have sought to challenge the rise of supranationalism, reinforcing exclusionary criteria for membership to a national community. These two transformations have happened both within states and between them. In this sense, the politics of belonging has become a central aspect of this segment of the academic conversation on transformations of the state.³⁶ This section begins with a conceptualization of national identity. Next, it considers ways national identity has transformed, in general as well as within the EU.

Conceptualizing national identity

Identity is understood to be fluid and multifaceted. The characteristics by which we define ourselves often change over time, and any given community or group may have multiple ways of identifying themselves. That said, Parekh (2000) suggests that identity be conceptualized as “those features and relationships that are constitutive of us and define and distinguish us as certain kinds of persons.”³⁷ Insofar as identity distinguishes us as certain kinds of persons, it also exposes the ways acts of exclusion are inherent to feelings of belonging. Young (1986) suggests that in order to establish a defined group (i.e. a national community), it is necessary to separate

³⁶ Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging*. 36.

³⁷ Bhiku Parekh, “Defining British National Identity,” *Political Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (January 2000): 4. 4.

favorable and unfavorable characteristics. Identity becomes dependent on a set of criteria, borders that distinguish those who belong from those who do not. As will be elaborated below, in Britain, for example, the ability to speak English is a prerequisite to the New Right view of British national identity.

Young further argues that a consequence of identity is that it can be used to suppress heterogeneity.³⁸ The ability to be perceived as British, to exude Britishness, is contingent upon one's embodiment of a specific set of traits and mentalities. Inherently, this means that deviation from the norm, insofar as it is perceived to be a threat to these traits and mentalities, is unacceptable. This self-characterization, however, the pronouncement of the criteria necessary to hold an identity, almost always comes about through rejection of traits one knows one is not. "I am not X, so I must be Y." By defining itself in relation to what it is *not*, identity ensures the continuance of a homogenous "Us." Only Y's can and will be Y's. Additionally, this "Us" must be protected from the Other, from "Them" who are not "Us," and are thus a threat to "Our" identity. Young asserts that it is in this moment that identity opens to a door to hate, fear, intolerance and, ultimately, exclusion.³⁹

National identity applies this description of identity to a specific space and the people inhabiting this space; "national identity is the identity of a political community and refers to the kind of community it is, its central values and commitments, its characteristic ways of talking about and conducting its collective affairs, its organizing principles and so forth."⁴⁰ This echoes Young's thinking that a community is "a group that shares a specific heritage, a common self-

³⁸ Iris Marion Young, "The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference," *Social Theory and Practice* 12, no. 1 (1986): 1–26.4.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 22.

⁴⁰ Parekh, "Defining British National Identity."

identification, a common culture and set of norms.”⁴¹ In this sense, sharing an identity with others entails mutual understanding and affirming of one another. Through doing so, we come to acknowledge that we live in community with those we share an identity with; “persons identify only with some other persons, feel in community only with those, and fear the difference others confront them with because they identify with a different culture, history and point of view on the world.”⁴² This same logic can be applied to a national community, stressing national homogeneity and a need to maintain distance from the “other.” That said, there are many different kinds of nations. For some, belonging is rooted in blood, while for others civic nationalism is stressed. While nations involve the sense of belonging to a national community, this sense of belonging can be more or less inclusive. Racism, ethnic chauvinism and class devaluation are thus at times products of nations and nationalism.

General Transformations of National Identity

The academic conversation on transformations of national identity in the era of globalization was initially characterized by a debate. Some scholars argued that globalization has reduced the extent to which people identify with a national community. Others asserted that the opposite had happened.⁴³ As with the discussion on sovereignty, scholars, over the past decade, have moved beyond this initial dispute. In many ways the nature of the relationship between globalization and national identity depends on how you define both concepts as well as the methods used to examine this interaction. That said, it is evident that priority given to national identity has, to some degree, been altered.⁴⁴ “The spread of transplanetary relations

⁴¹ Young, “The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference.” 12.

⁴² Ibid. 12.

⁴³ Ariely, “Globalisation and the Decline of National Identity?”

⁴⁴ Manuel Castells and Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 2nd ed, Information Age, Economy, Society, and Culture, v. 2 (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Pub, 2004).; Mitchell Young, Eric Zuelow, and Andreas Sturm, eds., *Nationalism in a*

has...furthered a growth of micro-nations on a substate scale, region-nations of a suprastate scale, and transworld national diasporas.”⁴⁵ Processes and effects of globalization have in this sense invited a pluralization of identities, expanding networks of both being and belonging.

In a study that examines how globalization relates to individuals’ feelings towards national identity across sixty-three countries, Ariely (2012) asserts, “higher levels of globalization are related negatively to national identity.”⁴⁶ In this sense, widespread dissemination of ideas and information, as well as an open flow of goods and capital within a nation has caused people to disregard ethnic aspects of national membership. That said, this suggests that as national homogeneity decreases it not only becomes more difficult for a single form of national identity to remain dominant, but the population of this nation may believe it less important that it does so. The value placed on national identity by individuals therefore appears to be open for debate.

Transformations Within the EU

This academic conversation includes a debate on the relationship between a supranational European identity and senses of belonging on the national level. The focus of this literature has been on “the extent to which top-down attempts to socialize EU citizens have succeeded in creating an EU identity,” and, subsequently, on “the competition between national and EU identities.”⁴⁷ The viewpoints presented by academics are divided into two principal arguments:

Global Era: The Persistence of Nations (New York: Routledge, 2007). Ariely, “Globalisation and the Decline of National Identity?”

⁴⁵ Jan Aart Scholte, *Globalization: A Critical Introduction*, 2nd edition (Basingstoke, Hampshire New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). 5.

⁴⁶ Ariely, “Globalisation and the Decline of National Identity?” 476.

⁴⁷ Laura Cram, “Introduction: Banal Europeanism: European Union Identity and National Identities in Synergy,” *Nations & Nationalism* 15, no. 1 (January 2009): 101–8, doi:10.1111/j.1469-8129.2009.00377.x. 104.

(1) “the impact of the EU on national identity [is] a threat” and (2) the impact of the a European identity “reinforce[s] national identities.”⁴⁸

Supranational identity endangers national identity as it challenges the monopoly the nation holds over the concept of identity. This serves as the first critical point of tension between national and supranational identity. In part, this is because “while national symbols are accepted as an evident extension of national narratives, the European symbols, in comparison, tend to appear hollow.”⁴⁹ As EU member states have long, deep national histories, the EU struggles to produce as significant symbols of collectivity. In this sense, the EU’s attempt to generate cultural artifacts has attacked the nation’s claim to identity and senses of belonging. In short, this line of thinking is rooted in the assertion that although the EU is an organization based on the membership of states, European identity seeks to transcend national identity. The extent to which this has been successful, however, is open for debate. In Britain for instance, Britons both embrace and reject Europeanness within their own national identity. That said, due to its ever-expanding geographic boundaries, lofty supranational aims and considerable political power, the EU is competing with the state for people’s loyalty. Consequently, Harris (2011) suggests that the role of the state has given way to the rise of European integration; “the challenges faced by contemporary European societies — security, economy, ecology — can no longer be met by individual states and that it is time to acknowledge the decline of the traditional nation and its monopoly on people’s identity.”⁵⁰

The other side of this debate suggests that although national identity no longer manifests in the same way it used to, the emergence of a European identity is not necessarily a threat. Both European and national identity have effected one another, interacting with and reacting to shifts

⁴⁸ Ibid. 101.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

in sovereignty from the state to EU institutions. At the national level, “national identity has ceased to fulfill the function of social integration; the nation no longer fits into the sphere of the state, providing the latter with an identity and cultural legitimation.”⁵¹ Notions of national identity fall short of encompassing increasingly global perspectives and relationships. This has created space for the emergence of a European identity, reinforcing the idea that identities and the identities people hold on to are fluid, rather than fixed and unchanging.⁵² Delanty (2003) therefore proposes that national identities are simply becoming more cosmopolitan, in a way that supports the rise of a European supranational identity.⁵³

Keating (2004) furthers this conversation, arguing that processes of European integration have “provided incentives to national minority parties to rethink their ideology and policy stance, to adapt to functional change, and to seek a place in the new European architecture.”⁵⁴ In this sense, European discourse and fragments of a European identity have become a part of nationalist movements and identities. Keating asserts that the continuation of European integration and thus the emergence of a European identity *have* had a direct effect on the nation and national identity. This effect, however, has *not* necessarily been negative. Rather, aspects of the nation, including national identity, have been rebuilt through an external projection of the state as “part of a European family.”⁵⁵ Although “at times it looks as though the state itself will disappear...it is precisely [its] ability to externalize problems that allows it to stay together in some form.”⁵⁶ The rise of supranational identity has therefore prompted transformations of national identity, and has not render them obsolete.

⁵¹ Gerard Delanty, “Is There a European Identity?,” *Global Dialogue* 5 (July 2003): 76–86.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Michael Keating, “European Integration and the Nationalities Question,” *Politics & Society* 32, no. 3 (September 1, 2004): 367–88, doi:10.1177/0032329204267295. 369.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 369.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 380.

2.2 State Sovereignty

The contemporary conversation on the relationship between globalization and the state has moved beyond debates over whether or not globalization has undermined the state as a political body.⁵⁷ It is now apparent that juxtaposing globalization and the state is problematic. Doing so perpetuates a “presumption of zero-sum logic, [which has] led many commentators to mis-identify globalization as the major source of policy constraints, to overstate its ‘transformative’ (read ‘weakening’) impact, and to minimize its diverse outcomes.”⁵⁸ This juxtaposition establishes globalization as inherently threatening to the state, eliminating any discussion of nuance in this relationship. Since at least 2000 academics have shifted this conversation, emphasizing that globalization and states coexist; they interact with, and react to, one another. As a result, the discussion on transformations of state sovereignty has been developed.

I have organized this discussion into three categories (1) the emergence of supranational institutions; (2) the loss of state controlled resources, and (3) shifts in value identifications that have prompted greater global governance. These changes all highlight the extent to which political solutions are now being sought beyond the state. States must now acknowledge the effects national actions have on the supranational community as well as adhere to the laws and regulations from “above.” As a member of the EU, a state may be subject to policies that are not directly advantageous or favorable at the domestic level. EU Regulations are, for example, legally binding and must be implemented uniformly across member states.

⁵⁷ For more information, see Michael Smith, “Modernization, Globalization and the Nation-State,” in *Global Politics: Globalization and the Nation-State*, ed. Anthony G. McGrew and Paul Lewis (John Wiley & Sons, 2013).

⁵⁸ Weiss, “Globalization and National Governance.” 60.

Transforming State Sovereignty

Sovereignty, defined by Ruggie (1986) as “the institutionalization of public authority within mutually exclusive jurisdictional domains,” has given the state absolute authority within a territorially defined space.⁵⁹ This has ideally involved the state having complete authority over economic, legal and political affairs. That said, the era of globalization has challenged these traditional manifestations of state sovereignty. Although state sovereignty has never been absolute, states have recognized it in each other. Since the mid-twentieth century this understanding of state sovereignty has been transformed. In the post World War II period, and with the emergence of the United Nations and other international organizations, states began to surrender some of their sovereignty in certain areas. The ECSC, for example, transitioned into the EEC and then the EU over the course of forty years. This transformation is symbolic of the shift in authority awarded to international and now supranational organizations. Each change the EU has undergone has had an affect on state sovereignty; the EEC established the Single Market, creating one market for member states, while the EU has introduced a number of institutions that now hold jurisdiction over issue areas traditionally controlled by the state.

For Habermas (1999), the transformation of state sovereignty has meant, “that a state can no longer...provide its citizens with adequate protection from the external effects of decisions taken by *other* actors, or from the knock-on effects of processes originating beyond its borders.”⁶⁰ Technological developments over the past several decades have, for example, made both international travel and communication increasingly accessible. In this manner, globalization has challenged the state’s ability to control the extent to which its population is subject to outside influences. Given these outside influences, Habermas is principally concerned

⁵⁹ John Gerard Ruggie, “Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity: Toward a Neorealist Synthesis,” ed. Kenneth N. Waltz, *World Politics* 35, no. 2 (1983): 261–85, doi:10.2307/2010273.

⁶⁰ Kenichi Ohmae, *The Borderless World* (New York, 199AD). 49

with how globalization has threatened the state's ability to legitimate its sovereignty. The state is now just one actor within the international community, one actor with sway over what happens within its *own* borders.

The emergence of supranational institutions, including the European Council, is one cause of transformations of state sovereignty. Hirst et al. (2015) argues that this shift has caused states "to function less as all-purpose providers of governance and more as the authors and legitimators of an international 'quasi-polity.'"⁶¹ In this sense, states have become a player in a larger, global system of governance; decision-making has taken on a new supranational character. The European Parliament and European Council, responsible for finalizing EU law, exemplify the extent to which supranational organizations simultaneously demand and depend on state action. In this sense, globalization has both created and shaped the state's relationship to global regulatory entities, effectively diluting the state's claim to absolute sovereignty.⁶²

Much of the conversation on transformations of state sovereignty has been focused on how globalization has undermined the state by reducing "resources under national control for shaping economic outcomes."⁶³ Since 1990 the literature has discussed the extent to which production and exchange in our globalized world has erased national borders and challenged the state from an economic perspective.⁶⁴ Neoliberal policies, for example, have posited the market as universal, making the world dependent on one market, rather than the market simply being *one* aspect of society.⁶⁵ Scholars, including Ohmae (1990), Habermas (1999) and Brown (2015) point toward worldwide flows of capital as well as more integrated markets as examples of

⁶¹ Hirst, Thompson, and Bromley, *Globalization in Question*.

⁶² Aihwa Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty* (Duke University Press, 2006). 75.

⁶³ Berger, "Globalization and Politics." 45.

⁶⁴ Ohmae, *The Borderless World.*; Habermas, "The European Nation-State and the Pressures of Globalization."

⁶⁵ Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (MIT Press, 2015).

changes that now cause the state to be dependent upon the international community for economic stability. Consequently, Habermas has warned: “These factors explain why states no longer constitute nodes endowing the worldwide network of commercial relations with the structure of inter-state or international relations.”⁶⁶

Lastly, as states have lost autonomy, “people’s value identification is no longer limited to the boundaries of a particular country.”⁶⁷ More and more, people have begun to see, understand and empathize beyond borders. Zhicheng (2016) argues that in order for state actors to appease increasingly “globally” oriented constituents, they must establish commonalities between their own values and interests and the values of mankind as a whole.⁶⁸ In this sense, shifts in value identification can be linked to greater importance being placed on global governance. Global governance is understood as the mechanism through which to foster collaboration and cooperation among governments, with the goal of addressing issues that are beyond the ability of states to deal with individually.⁶⁹ Consequently, however, global governance inherently introduces external influences. The state must now navigate a wide range of actors, values, ideals, and economic and political structures.⁷⁰ This can be evidenced in a number of ways, including the establishment of the EU and its governing institutions, both comprised of representatives from the twenty-eight different member states.

Sovereignty Today

In addition to the ways processes and effects of globalization have prompted transformations of state sovereignty overtime, the literature also comments on what state

⁶⁶ Habermas, “The European Nation-State and the Pressures of Globalization.” 48

⁶⁷ Zhicheng, “The Influence of Global Governance upon State Governance.” 166

⁶⁸ Ibid. 166.

⁶⁹ Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security* (Zed Books Ltd., 2014).

⁷⁰ Zhicheng, “The Influence of Global Governance upon State Governance.” 166.

sovereignty looks like today. Scholars including Stein (2016) ask, how, if at all, will it continue to transform? Stein addresses this question by acknowledging the well-understood paradox: “globalization entails cross-border flows and common policies whereas sovereignty implies independent autonomous states.”⁷¹ That said, Stein asserts that although globalization affects the ability of sovereign states to control internal policy outcomes and limits the policy instruments available to governments, international relations remains, in part, the domain of interacting *states*.⁷² In fact, history tells us that great powers have always engaged on an international level, opening borders for both economic and political reasons.

Supranational institutions need individual states to claim legitimacy. The authority of the EU remains dependent on the compliance of individual states. Likewise, states need supranational bodies in order to solve the most pressing global issues of today; it is argued that if “state governance that does not draw on and learn from others it will find it hard to maintain long-term national order and social stability.”⁷³ Although the EU is comprised of twenty-eight individual member states, many laws and regulations are imposed from the supranational level. The EU has complete jurisdiction over areas including commercial policy, competition rules and monetary policy for euro countries. It shares responsibility with member states over a host of other issues, including internal market rules; aspects of social policy; economic, social and territorial cohesion; agriculture; the environment; energy; freedom, security and justice; aspects of public health; and aspects of development cooperation and humanitarian aid.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Stein, “The Great Trilemma.” 302.

⁷² *Ibid.* 305.

⁷³ Zhicheng, “The Influence of Global Governance upon State Governance.” 173.

⁷⁴ “How the EU Works,” *Delegation of the European Union to the United States*, accessed March 31, 2017, <http://www.euintheus.org/who-we-are/how-the-eu-works/>.

In this manner, the ways in which sovereignty is practiced today reflects the constraints that have been placed, not necessarily maliciously, on the autonomy of states.⁷⁵

Looking forward, the literature suggests that while many states have lost the ability to act independently, they remain pivotal institutions. This remains especially true in relation to establishing effective institutions of global governance. Intrastate cooperation and collaboration is dependent on the willingness of individual states to participate and engage with each other in the first place. Supranational bodies remain at the mercy of the state. As will be discussed, the Brexit vote is an exemplarily example of the fragility of the current world order, and the reluctance of some states to participate in supranational institutions and systems. As both representative rule-of-law states and more authoritarian governments are actors in the international system today, international relations are subject to dramatic change.⁷⁶ Future observance of the relationship between globalization and state sovereignty is thus of continued interests to scholars.

Conclusion

The chapter outlines the academic conversation on transformations of national identity and state sovereignty. Significantly, the literature on national identity suggests two opposing transformations. On the one hand, as the EU has attempted to cultivate cultural symbols and establish a supranational identity, some national identities have felt under attack. Consequently, these identities have reacted to the rise of supranationalism in a way that has reinforced exclusionary criteria for membership to a group. On the other hand, other national identities have made room for the inclusion of Europeanness in a national sense of self. Part II of this literature review tells us that state sovereignty has also transformed. The rules and conditions of

⁷⁵ Stein, "The Great Trilemma." 319.

⁷⁶ Hirst, Thompson, and Bromley, *Globalization in Question*.

sovereignty have changed. Supranational institutions, such as the EU, now have the ability to regulate and influence the domestic affairs of member states. While states remain a major regulator and their dissolutions seems highly unlikely, the constituencies that they serve and the policy tools that they use have changed. In addition to the emergence of supranational institutions, these changes have been caused by the loss of state controlled resources, and shifts in value identifications that have prompted far greater global governance.

Chapter 3: British Euroscepticism and National Identity

Internal tension over (1) what it means to be British and (2) over British Euroscepticism, contrary to current claims about their “newness,” have existed for a considerable period of time prior to the Brexit vote. This chapter therefore offers a discussion of both these tensions, contextualizing the Brexit vote in a history of identity crises and Euroscepticism. Significantly, two notions of British national identity will be considered, the New Right and the New Labour views. It will be argued that the New Right view is more consistent with Eurosceptic, nationalist attitudes, ones that favor Britain’s withdrawal from the EU. Lastly, this chapter will examine the New Right and the New Labour view of Britishness as they exist within subnational identities in order to further highlight the internal competition over identity that has been taking place within the UK, itself a multinational country.

Part two of this chapter begins with a more general discussion of the relationship between Britain and the EU. This overview transitions into a more detailed examination of what animated British Euroscepticism from the 1950s to present day. From Churchill to Blair to Brexit, Britain’s history is one of notable reluctance and skepticism towards full economic, political, and social integration into the EU. By providing a brief overview of Britain’s relationship with the EU, the following pages trace the trajectory of this skepticism, a trajectory that ends with the Brexit vote. Considering the ebbs and flows of British Euroscepticism helps explain why Brexit occurred in the first place. The independence referendum becomes less of a shocking moment in time, and, rather, the latest manifestation of a deep-seated cynicism towards European integration.

3.1 British National Identity

It is important to keep in mind that there is a constant shifting of identities within communities at both the local and national level. What it means to be British is not static. It has evolved and changed over time, and the ways in which Britons have seen themselves in relation to Britishness has likewise evolved and changed over time. For example, British imperialism changed British national identity. As the British state expanded geographically, British national identity did as well, reconfiguring itself to embrace new territories. This is evidenced by British appropriation of aspects of Indian culture. Curry, for example, is the national dish of Britain. Significantly, Britain was considered to be at the height of its power during its colonial rule. Therefore, the “inclusive” nature of British national identity at this time could be attributed, in part, to Britain’s ability to dictate the terms of this inclusiveness. British state sovereignty was unchallenged and the nation retained the authority to adopt only specific aspects of other identities. The more Britain flexed its colonial muscles, the more being British has become connected to being a member of a global superpower. In this sense, while the New Right and New Labour views discussed below are not the only ways to think about British national identity today, they are helpful in understanding the issues that led to a fifty-two, forty-eight divide within in the country.

Competing National Identities

Today, two notions of Britishness are in tension with one another. Bhikhu Parekh, political theorist and Labour member of the upper house of the British Parliament, has labeled these two identities the New Right and New Labour views. These labels come from Parekh’s belief that the New Right and New Labour views of Britishness are connected to Britain’s Conservative and New Labour parties, respectfully. Conservative elites, including Enoch Powell

and Margaret Thatcher, have found themselves competing with New Labour representatives, such as Mark Leonard, to spread their preferred version of Britishness.⁷⁷ Importantly, however, other scholars and politicians have referenced similar notions of British national identity without explicitly using Parekh's labels. Rather, two competing forms of Britishness have been discussed more abstractly. That said, this analysis uses Parekh's New Right and New Labour as they adequately acknowledges a politico-social divide that exists through Britain.

The New Right view of Britishness contains both civic and ethnic dimensions. In terms of civic criteria, New Right Britishness stresses that British citizenship, English language proficiency, and parliamentary sovereignty are all necessary.⁷⁸ These aspects of civic identity have been emphasized since the 1707 Act of Union — the act that brought England and Scotland together to form the UK. The Act of Union stipulated that English customs and institutions be favored, and that Scotland adopt English currency, weight and measuring standards, trade regulations, duty on goods, and customs on import and exports.⁷⁹ Additionally, the House of Commons, located in London, has, since 1707, been considered “the personification of the people of Britain; its independence is synonymous with their independence.”⁸⁰ The significance assigned to the House of Commons created a fear of devolution of traditions and power. Consequently, today, parliamentary sovereignty remains a fundamental aspect of New Right Britishness.

⁷⁷ Mark Leonard, *Britain: Renewing Our Identity* (Demos, 1997); Camilla Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁷⁸ Parekh, “Defining British National Identity”; Anthony Heath and James Tilley, “British National Identity and Attitudes towards Immigration,” *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 7, no. 2 (2005): 119–32. 122.

⁷⁹ His Grace James Duke of Queensberry, Her Majesty's High Commissioner for that Kingdom, *The Articles of the Union, As They Pass'd with Amendments in the Parliament of Scotland Together with the Act for Securing the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Church-Government. Which Were Ratify'd by the Touch of the Royal Scepter at Edinburgh, the 16th of January, 1707.* (London, 1707).

⁸⁰ Parekh, “Defining British National Identity.” 9.

The New Right view also stresses ethnic criteria, including a patriotic sense of loyalty to the homeland and a strong sense of a “homogenous ‘we.’”⁸¹ This “we” includes British citizens who speak English, respect British customs and traditions, and defend British parliamentary sovereignty. Enoch Powell took a radical stance on these issues, stating “unless those who did not belong were returned to their ‘proper’ countries, there would be ‘rivers of blood’ in England.”⁸² Although Thatcher and other future proponents of the New Right view have not taken such a drastic position, this conception of Britishness provides room for the fostering of negative attitudes towards immigrants and perceived “others”; this is a part of Britishness that contradicts and conflicts with the *qualified* inclusivity imperialism allowed for.

In terms of Britain’s relationship with Europe, there is disagreement among proponents of the New Right. While Powell adamantly opposed European integration, Thatcher signed the Single European Act. This statute essentially established the Single Market, a hallmark of the EU today. Falling somewhere in between Thatcher and Powell, William Hague (British Conservative politician) argued that “Blair’s project of modernizing Britain relegated Britain to part of the EU and involved Britain giving up its rights to make its own laws, to have its own currency and to set its own interest rates.”⁸³ In this sense, even within the New Right notion of Britishness there are noticeable differences in opinion. This further highlights the logic of a multiplicity of British identities. A fierce sense of attachment to Britain as a territorially bound state only applies to some of these identities, and then only in varying degrees. The relationship between British national identity and the EU will be further elaborated by the discussion of British Euroscepticism below.

⁸¹ Parekh, “Defining British National Identity.” 9.

⁸² Nira Yuval-Davis, “Belonging and the Politics of Belonging,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 40, no. 3 (July 1, 2006): 197–214, doi:10.1080/00313220600769331. 210.

⁸³ Johnson, “The Dilemmas of Ethnic Privilege.” 169.

In contrast, the New Labor view offers a different idea of British national identity. While it also includes important civic and ethnic components, it emphasizes pluralism, inclusivity, and individualism. The rights and liberties of the individual are cherished, and New Labour focuses on justice, multiculturalism, and a forward-looking, multi-ethnic Britain.⁸⁴ New Labour Britishness has therefore noted the importance of tolerance, cultural plurality, and hospitality; Britishness is for everyone, and everyone should be comfortable being British. This has led to the New Labour belief that part of Britain's political power comes from equal partnership with England, Scotland, Wales and, to a certain extent, Northern Ireland.⁸⁵ This introduces a major point of contention with the New Right view, as Blair argues, "it is not parliamentary *sovereignty* but parliamentary *democracy* that is central to British identity"⁸⁶ (emphases added).

To qualify this seemingly idealist identity, the New Labour view of Britishness is exclusionary in its own right. Those who identify with its criteria tend to be Londoners, young urban elites who have branded themselves as "cool."⁸⁷ In this sense, a degree of intolerance can be found within the New Labour view, as it implies that "those citizens who do not display enterprise, creativity and other desired qualities are not fully British."⁸⁸ Problematically, this contradicts New Labour's supposed position that Britishness is for everyone.

Subnational Identities

It is difficult to discuss the aspects or dimensions of a British national identity without acknowledging that Britain itself is multinational. In fact, Kumar (2003) argues that British identity did not even materialize until the Act of Union with Scotland in 1707, which formally

⁸⁴ Leonard, *Britain*. 5.

⁸⁵ Parekh, "Defining British National Identity." 12.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 12.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 12.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 13.

established the united kingdom of Great Britain.⁸⁹ The signing of the Union necessitated the bridging of differences between England and its new sister nation, Scotland. Bringing the nations of the UK together, under one collective identity, was considered a way to increase the prominence and status of the newly formed kingdom. How the subnational identities of the UK have conflicted with and reinforced both the New Right and New Labour conception of Britishness is significant. Interestingly, the age of British imperialism only further propagated a sense of urgency to unite and unify nationals, both those within the UK and in its colonies abroad. It was the goal of imperial Britain to establish an empire of Britons, one people to grow and prosper and become more powerful than rival states. Since 1982, however, it has been noted by scholars that a significant cohort of English, Welsh, Scottish, and northern Irish nationals do not think of themselves as British.⁹⁰ Consequently, the original project of colonial Britain — the creating of a “common transnational ethnicized Britishness” — has been undermined.⁹¹ This rejection of Britishness by inhabitants of the British Isles themselves is considered to be problematic by both the New Right and New Labour views.

England: In many ways England and Britain have been conflated. Today, in both journalistic and academic writing, the words “England” and “Britain,” “English and British” are used interchangeably.⁹² Although up until the end of the nineteenth century, “Britishness” trumped “Englishness,” when Britain’s colonial ventures slowed it became almost a general rule to mark all major events and achievements of national life as English and not British. Additionally, England began to cultivate a distinct English historiography, clarify and code the English language, expand the “great tradition” of English literature, and celebrate a particular

⁸⁹ Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge University Press, 2003). 5.

⁹⁰ Peter James Madgwick and Richard Rose, *The Territorial Dimension in United Kingdom Politics* (Springer, 1982).

⁹¹ Andrew Mycock, “SNP, Identity and Citizenship: Re-Imagining State and Nation,” *National Identities* 14, no. 1 (March 2012): 53–69, doi:10.1080/14608944.2012.657078. 55.

⁹² Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity*. 7.

type of landscape as quintessentially English.⁹³ As England has done so, it has taken in Britain and the British Empire.⁹⁴

There are multiple understandings of Englishness. For older citizens living outside major urban areas, Englishness remains attached to the renewed sense of importance and influence it gained after “subsuming” Britain after the fall of the British Empire. For younger generations, however, English national identity “is an alien phenomenon, invented elsewhere and thankfully kept at bay from English shores.”⁹⁵ This has resulted in a persistent denial about the very existence of nationalism and national identity within England; “so many outsiders and ‘foreigners’ have been involved in the elaboration of it that Englishness is best considered as something made from afar, from outside England.”⁹⁶ In relation to Brexit, “in England, Leave voters (39%) were more than twice as likely as Remain voters (18%) to describe themselves either as “English not British” or “more English than British.” Remain voters were twice as likely as leavers to see themselves as more British than English.”⁹⁷ Here, it is possible to discern New Labour’s idea that Britishness can and must be for everyone. This introduces an interesting dynamic between the prioritization of subnational and national identities with Britain itself — a dynamic that is emblematic of the tensions between national and supranational identity.

Scotland: Unable to define Scottishness through language, religion or race, there is a fierce sense of Scottish statehood; “the lack of clear, ‘objective’ demarcators does not hinder the strength of Scottish identity.”⁹⁸ This has led to the establishment of education and legal systems, civil services, and a “common weal” of Scottish values that are not only separate from Britain’s

⁹³ Ibid. 592.

⁹⁴ Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity*. 9.

⁹⁵ Krishan Kumar, “Nation and Empire: English and British National Identity in Comparative Perspective,” *Theory and Society* 29, no. 5 (n.d.): 575–608, doi:10.1023/A:1026550830748. 576.

⁹⁶ Robert Young, *The Idea of English Ethnicity*, Blackwell Manifestos (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2008).

⁹⁷ Lord Ashcroft, “How the United Kingdom Voted on Thursday... and Why.”

⁹⁸ Atsuko Ichijo, *Scottish Nationalism and the Idea of Europe: Concepts of Europe and the Nation* (Psychology Press, 2004). 18.

but provided an escape from the clutches of Britain.⁹⁹ It is thus unsurprising that “in Scotland, Remain voters (55%) were more likely than Leave voters (46%) to see themselves as “Scottish not British” or “more Scottish than British.”¹⁰⁰

In an attempt to reconnect the Scottish with a sense of loyalty to the UK, political leaders including Gordon Brown and David Cameron have promoted British values and forgotten institutions within Scotland.¹⁰¹ The Scottish National Party (SNP), however, a nationalist and social democratic political party in Scotland that campaigns for Scottish independence, has, labeled such efforts as attempts to “sell” Britain to those outside of England. Consequently, “very few Scots see themselves as primarily British, whereas nearly three-quarters consider themselves ‘mainly’ or ‘only’ Scottish.”¹⁰² Additionally, Scotland has become increasingly open to further European integration, offering a counterbalance to the overwhelming power of England. Despite the fact that the 2014 Scottish independence referendum was voted down, its occurrence makes a bold statement about how Scots see themselves in relation to Britain. In this regard, the imperial project of Britain, one which centuries ago sought to unite England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, is still today unrealized. Within Wales England’s oldest colony, “Welsh consciousness can be found in all ranks of society.”¹⁰³ In this manner Britain is home to a true multiplicity of identities; competing notions of Britishness at both the national and subnational level have continued to undermine the establishment of one cohesive national identity.

⁹⁹ Mycock, “SNP, Identity and Citizenship.” 55.

¹⁰⁰ Lord Ashcroft, “How the United Kingdom Voted on Thursday... and Why.”

¹⁰¹ Mycock, “SNP, Identity and Citizenship.” 53.

¹⁰² Ibid. 53.

¹⁰³ Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity*. 137.

3.2 Britain and the EU

The idea of a European union began with the desire to create a peaceful, united and prosperous Europe.¹⁰⁴ This aspiration can be traced back to the post World War II period. Following the catastrophe of the Second World War there was a push to prevent the reoccurrence of violence among European states. In 1951, this push resulted in France, Germany, Italy the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The ECSC sought to establish a supranational system of governance over Europe's coal and steel industries.¹⁰⁵ The community's decision to reduce direct state control over the production of coal and steel — materials necessary for manufacturing weapons — emphasizes Europe's attempt to avoid a third world war.

In Post War era, Britain took notice of France and Germany's recovering economies.¹⁰⁶ During this regrowth period, known as the Golden Age, France and Germany were more successful than Britain in catching up to states that were less affected financially by the war. In part, France and Germany's recovery was attributed to the development of effective manufacturing markets.¹⁰⁷ Within Britain, the economic stability of neighboring countries increased national support, among both politicians and those suffering financially, for joining the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). Britain initially voted down entry, however, as many Britons did not see themselves as European nor see the European project as worthy of joining. Rather, Britain saw itself more closely connected to the Commonwealth and the United States. The UK was "content for the Europeans, among whom they did not necessarily see

¹⁰⁴ "EUROPA - The History of the European Union," *Europa*, accessed November 2, 2016, https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history_en.

¹⁰⁵ Bloom, "The European Coal and Steel Community Turns 60," *BBC News*, August 10, 2012, <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-19194812>.

¹⁰⁶ Sam Wilson, "Britain and the EU: A Long and Rocky Relationship," *BBC News*, April 1, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-26515129>.

¹⁰⁷ N. F. R. Crafts and Gianni Toniolo, eds., *Economic Growth in Europe since 1945* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996). 133.

themselves, to press ahead with integration.”¹⁰⁸ That said, by 1970 this began to change. Britain began to acknowledge the benefits of being able to influence processes of European integration. If the European Economic Community (EEC) was to become a more formal political union, as former Prime Minister Edward Heath suspected, the UK wanted to voice in decision-making processes. Britain’s final decision to join the EEC in 1973 can therefore be interpreted as a power move, a strategic maneuver made in order to gain greater influence in the region.¹⁰⁹

A History of Euroscepticism

Euroscepticism has been conceptualized in two distinct yet overlapping ways. Hard Euroscepticism is “based on *principled* opposition to the project of European integration as embodied in the EU; in other words, based on the ceding or transfer of powers to supranational institution such as the EU.”¹¹⁰ Soft Euroscepticism, on the other hand, involves “opposition to the EU’s current or future planned trajectory based on the *further* extension of competencies that the EU is planning to make.”¹¹¹ Szczerbiak and Taggart (2008) stipulate that further extension of competencies include: the development of supranational European institutions that would hinder national sovereignty, an increase in the number of EU member states, an increase in EU responsibilities, a change in the balance of authority between the EU and its member states, and a change in EU economic and monetary policy.¹¹² As will be clarified, Brexit exemplifies a moment of *Soft Euroscepticism* insofar as Britain does not fundamentally oppose the European integration project. Rather, it appears to object only to certain aspects of European integration,

¹⁰⁸ “Ever Closer Union? The UK and Europe,” *BBC News*, accessed December 6, 2016, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/uk/2001/uk_and_europe/1945_1957.stm.

¹⁰⁹ Ben Soetendorp, *Foreign Policy in the European Union: History, Theory & Practice* (Routledge, 2014). 30. At this point, the ECSC morphed into the European Economic Community (EEC), which focused primarily on economic and agricultural cooperation.

¹¹⁰ Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart, *Opposing Europe?: The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism: Volume 2: Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives* (OUP Oxford, 2008). 3.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* 3.

¹¹² *Ibid.* 3.

including the growing number and influence of EU institutions. Brexit thus represents a moment in time where Soft Eurosceptics were able to convince a majority of the country that a continued expansion of the EU threatened British national identity. It is important to note that scholars have engaged with the concept of Euroscepticism extensively.¹¹³ Although academics utilize different terminology — hard, soft, right-wing, and left-wing, and frame their discussion in various ways, (i.e., Euroscepticism and political parties, Euroscepticism and the masses) — there is consensus that Euroscepticism is tied to a need to protect and revitalize national identity and sovereignty.¹¹⁴

Although the term Euroscepticism was coined in the 1980s, Eurosceptic sentiments in Britain can be traced back to Winston Churchill. Since the time of his leadership, British foreign policy has prioritized English-speaking peoples and the Empire-Commonwealth over Europe.¹¹⁵ The European element was seen as unnecessary and constrictive to the realization of Britain's global destiny. Since Churchill "Europe has been constructed and perceived as a 'choice' for the British who can apparently be 'in' or 'out' of Europe and more often than not 'semi-detached' from it."¹¹⁶ Through policy initiatives that pushed a pro-Britain narrative, Churchill was able to effectively introduce Eurosceptic sentiments across Britain.

¹¹³ Paul Taggart, "A Touchstone of Dissent: Euroscepticism in Contemporary Western European Party Systems," *European Journal of Political Research* 33, no. 3 (April 1998): 363–88, doi:10.1111/1475-6765.00387. ; Lauren McLaren, "Explaining Mass-Level Euroscepticism: Identity, Interests, and Institutional Distrust," *Acta Politica* 42, no. 2–3 (July 1, 2007): 233–51, doi:10.1057/palgrave.ap.5500191. ; Szczerbiak and Taggart, *Opposing Europe?* ; Catherine E. De Vries and Erica E. Edwards, "Taking Europe To Its Extremes Extremist Parties and Public Euroscepticism," *Party Politics* 15, no. 1 (January 1, 2009): 5–28, doi:10.1177/1354068808097889. ; Hajo G. Boomgaarden et al., "Mapping EU Attitudes: Conceptual and Empirical Dimensions of Euroscepticism and EU Support," *European Union Politics* 12, no. 2 (June 1, 2011): 241–66, doi:10.1177/1465116510395411.

¹¹⁴ McLaren, "Explaining Mass-Level Euroscepticism." ; Szczerbiak and Taggart, *Opposing Europe?* ; Vries and Edwards, "Taking Europe To Its Extremes Extremist Parties and Public Euroscepticism."

¹¹⁵ Oliver Daddow, "Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair and the Eurosceptic Tradition in Britain," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 15, no. 2 (May 1, 2013): 210–27, doi:10.1111/j.1467-856X.2012.00534.x. 213.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* 214.

Since Britain joined the EEC it has been labeled an “awkward partner” of Europe.¹¹⁷ Awkwardness in this sense is rooted in Britain’s ambivalence towards its involvement in the EU. As will be discussed shortly, this ambivalence is evidenced by Britain’s decision neither to use the euro nor to join the Schengen Area. EU citizens living within the Schengen Area — a block of twenty-six countries that have abolished the passport and any other type of border control — enjoy the privilege of unrestricted movement.¹¹⁸ Additionally, Britain has further demonstrated a level of hesitation by more consistently favoring engagement with the EU in moments when doing so appeared to advance national interests. For example, Britain has historically endorsed majority voting on issues considered to be financially beneficial for the UK, but has opposed such voting in other policy areas including foreign affairs and security.¹¹⁹ “[I]n the first case the British leaders considered the application of the voting rule of qualified majority as beneficial to their economy, while in the second case such a development was seen as a threat to national sovereignty.”¹²⁰ This support of majority voting in specific instances reflects Britain favoring its own national interests. In this sense, Britain’s inclusion in an integrated Europe has arguably been spurred by self-interest to regain the economic security it enjoyed before the World Wars.

By the mid 1970s, Euroscepticism in Britain had increased, as there was great debate over the extent to which membership to the EEC would benefit Britain’s economy. In 1975, a divided British Labour government held a leave referendum.¹²¹ This vote was largely driven by

¹¹⁷ Nicholas Startin, “Have We Reached a Tipping Point? The Mainstreaming of Euroscepticism in the UK,” *International Political Science Review* 36, no. 3 (June 1, 2015): 311–23, doi:10.1177/0192512115574126. 312

¹¹⁸ “EUROPA - The History of the European Union.”

¹¹⁹ Soetendorp, *Foreign Policy in the European Union*. 30.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* 31.

¹²¹ Michael White, “What Is Brexit and Why Does It Matter? The EU Referendum Guide for Americans,” *The Guardian*, June 18, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/18/eu-referendum-brexit-explainer-for-americans>.

controversy over membership in the Common Market.¹²² While large corporations and the consumer sector argued that access to the EEC's market would increase revenue and job production, sectors of the Labour Party remained adamant that it would only raise prices and deplete Britain's wealth. In contrast to Brexit, however, on June 5, 1975, 67.2 percent of Britain's eligible voter population chose to remain in the EU.¹²³ As the 'Yes' vote was fairly even across the country, intrastate tensions were kept to a minimum. Despite the majority 'Yes' vote the decision to remain a part of the EU was more of a statement about Britain's continued economic position than it was a ringing endorsement of the EEC.¹²⁴ At the time, Britain was focused on financial growth and the reestablishment of economic stability. In this sense, leaving the EEC was perceived as dangerous. "Thus the 1975 referendum did not, as many then imagined, settle the issue of British membership."¹²⁵ Since then, Eurosceptics in Britain have been calling for another vote, claiming that too much power has been transferred from the British parliament to Brussels.¹²⁶

The outcome of the 1975 referendum provided the public upset necessary to further reinforce the notion of Euroscepticism within Britain. While Margaret Thatcher was in office, "the British attitude towards the EC has turned into a zero-sum game where any British concession in the direction of further integration was seen as another loss of national sovereignty."¹²⁷ Eurosceptics, for example, saw Thatcher's signing of the Single European Act

¹²² Andrew Glencross, "Why a British Referendum on EU Membership Will Not Solve the Europe Question," *International Affairs* 91, no. 2 (March 2015): 303–17, doi:10.1111/1468-2346.12236. 308.

¹²³ Vernon Bogdanor, *The People and the Party System: The Referendum and Electoral Reform in British Politics* (CUP Archive, 1981). 41.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* 45.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* 47.

¹²⁶ Oliver Wright and Charlie Cooper, "What Is Brexit and Why Are We Having an EU Referendum?," *The Independent*, May 22, 2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/what-is-brexit-why-is-there-an-eu-referendum-a7042791.html>.

¹²⁷ Soetendorp, *Foreign Policy in the European Union*. 32.

(SEA), as a threat to national sovereignty, the job market, and general domestic growth.¹²⁸ The SEA expedited the elimination of barriers to free trade among member states, effectively establishing the Single Market. Although Thatcher signed the SEA, she was wary of a European superstate that could subordinate Britain's political system. Thatcher thus fought for a reduction in Britain's overall contributions to the EU's budget and adamantly defended British sovereignty within the EU context.¹²⁹

As contradictory as it may sound, Thatcher was not fundamentally opposed to European integration as a general project. Rather, she supported an integrated Europe, comprised of independent, sovereign states, each with its own customs, traditions and identity. According to Thatcher, member states must reserve the right to change direction if EU policy seems detrimental to national interest. Thatcher's model of support for the EU therefore rejected European federalism that would damage British interest and was based on active cooperation between autonomous member states.¹³⁰ Active cooperation between autonomous member states would allow for a "wider, freer, more flexible Europe...a wider Community in which different countries came together for different purposes on different occasions."¹³¹ Likewise, "[s]he believed that European political cooperation would help reinforce Western Europe's global standing and would strengthen Britain's international position."¹³² Thatcher's involvement with the Single Market Act, however, was interpreted by Eurosceptics as a British commitment to European integration. Although Eurosceptics were unable to lobby for an exit referendum in

¹²⁸ Stephen Wall, *A Stranger in Europe: Britain and the EU from Thatcher to Blair* (OUP Oxford, 2008). 89.

¹²⁹ Startin, "Have We Reached a Tipping Point?" 314.; Soetendorp, *Foreign Policy in the European Union*. 32.

¹³⁰ Soetendorp, *Foreign Policy in the European Union*. 32.

¹³¹ Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, 1st ed (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1993). 726.

¹³² Soetendorp, *Foreign Policy in the European Union*. 33.

1983, this period did allow for the gathering of evidence to convince others of the duplicity of the integration process.¹³³

Following Thatcher's time in office, the Conservative Party was divided between anti- and pro-European proponents. Britain was ready for a peacemaker. John Major was viewed as an ideal compromise candidate, one that would unite the Conservative Party by calming tensions between pro- and anti-European party members, as he sought to "advance the substance of Thatcherism but with gentler style."¹³⁴ Major's attempts to fulfill this role were initially made evident during his tenure as Thatcher's Foreign Secretary. While Thatcher adamantly opposed the establishment of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), not to mention Britain's involvement in it, Major favored an opt-in provision that would allow individual member states to decide whether and when to join.¹³⁵ After being appointed Prime Minister in 1990, Major took a softer approach toward European integration. In doing so, he sought to "bury old differences in Britain between North and South, blue-collar and white-collar, polytechnic and university."¹³⁶ Since World War II, upward class mobility in Britain has stagnated. This exaggerated "very clear strata in [British] society, each with different levels of social, cultural and economic capital."¹³⁷ Major attempted to ease these class tensions by continuing to advocate for opt-in clauses, which would allow member states to consider national interests before adhering to EU policy.

¹³³ Anthony Forster, *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics: Opposition to Europe in the British Conservative and Labour Parties Since 1945* (Taylor & Francis US, 2002). 65.

¹³⁴ E. A. Reitan, *The Thatcher Revolution: Margaret Thatcher, John Major, Tony Blair, and the Transformation of Modern Britain, 1979-2001* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003). 117-118.

¹³⁵ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*. 725.; Single European Act, which expedited the elimination of barriers to free trade among member states effectively establishing the Single Market

¹³⁶ Reitan, *The Thatcher Revolution*. 118.

¹³⁷ David Robson, "How Important Is Social Class in Britain Today?," accessed April 2, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20160406-how-much-does-social-class-matter-in-britain-today>.

Major's role as compromiser, however, did not go unchallenged. During this time, Rupert Murdoch, an Australian-American entrepreneur who enjoyed significant control over large media companies, led the way in creating a climate of fear around European matters that severely tested the leadership qualities of even nominally pro-European prime ministers.¹³⁸ Murdoch's interests in impeding British relations with the EU were rooted in a desire to limit competition and maintain a monopoly over British media. For example, he attacked Major for attempting to forge a more perfect union with the EU. Murdoch's complaints mirror those of Major's critics more generally. Former Thatcher Conservatives believed Major only supported their more Eurosceptic views when the legislation in question was not substantial.¹³⁹ He was portrayed as a flake, defending European integration when the stakes were high, i.e., at the signing of the Treaty of Maastricht, and making Eurosceptic noise only when perceived necessary for holding the party together. Ultimately, Major's failure to reunite the Conservative party led to the end of his time in office.

In 1997, Tony Blair and his New Labour Party won the general election. In many ways, Blair's success during the election can be attributed to Major's shortcomings, specifically his inability to unite the Conservative Party. Upon appointment, Blair pushed pro-European discourse, vocally advocating for a future across the Channel, a Britain encapsulated within Europe.¹⁴⁰ Interestingly, as Blair advocated for British voices to be at the heart of European

¹³⁸ The ways in which Murdoch was able to influence media representations of the EU was dubbed the "Murdoch effect;" British newspapers voiced concerns regarding Britain's future role within the Europe and proved effective at keeping the British public in a permanent state of 'war' with the EU. In this sense, and under the watchful-eye of Murdoch, newspapers including the *Sun*, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* consistently expressed anti-EU sentiments, effectively spreading ideological Euroscepticism. For more information, see: Oliver Daddow, "The UK Media and 'Europe': From Permissive Consensus to Destructive Dissent," *International Affairs* 88, no. 6 (November 1, 2012): 1219–36, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2346.2012.01129.x.

¹³⁹ Holmes Martin, "John Major and Europe: The Failure of a Policy 1990-7," *The Bruges Group*, accessed December 9, 2016, <https://www.brugesgroup.com/media-centre/papers/8-papers/801-john-major-and-europe-the-failure-of-a-policy-1990-7>.

¹⁴⁰ Daddow, "Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair and the Eurosceptic Tradition in Britain."

affairs, public opinion toward membership fluctuated. “At one point there was a swing of 12% in just three months, from a 53%-32% lead for ‘stay’ to 46%-43% in favour of Leave between June and September 2000.”¹⁴¹ Given this fluctuation Blair was forced to reconsider European integration as an electoral liability.¹⁴² The Blair government realized that continuing to publically push a pro-Europe narrative would cause reelection issues. In this manner, while Blair still supported pro-EU policy, such as the Treaty of Amsterdam, he also attempted to depoliticize the European question and to defer the making of conclusive decisions on contentious European issues.¹⁴³ Significantly, the Treaty of Amsterdam transferred certain powers from EU member state governments to the European Parliament. These powers included legislating on immigration, civil and criminal laws and foreign policy.¹⁴⁴ His time in office thus presents an interesting struggle faced by British politician. There is a need to balance both public support of the pursuit of EU integration and ever present expressions of Euroscepticism.

Today, there are many explanations as to why Euroscepticism remains prevalent within Britain. Such explanations are inextricably linked to globalization, and thus transformations of the state. For example, “historic legacy as a world power still resonates and remains an important explanation for the continued belief among many British citizens, including political elites, that Britain is a separate entity and does not need to pursue a European destiny.”¹⁴⁵ This fear of a loss of autonomy to Brussels has reinforced anti-Europe sentiments. Likewise, it has paved the way

¹⁴¹ Caroline Mortimer, “Hungarian PM Viktor Orbán Says ‘All the Terrorists Are Basically Migrants’ in Response to Paris Attacks,” *The Independent*, November 24, 2015, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/hungarian-pm-viktor-orb-n-says-all-the-terrorists-are-basically-migrants-in-response-to-paris-a6746356.html>.

¹⁴² Kai Oppermann, “The Blair Government and Europe: The Policy of Containing the Saliency of European Integration,” *British Politics* 3, no. 2 (2008): 156–82.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ European Parliament, “Treaty of Amsterdam” (1999), <https://www.google.com/search?q=tony+blair+european+integration&hl=en&authuser=0#hl=en&authuser=0&q=treaty+of+amsterdam>.

¹⁴⁵ Startin, “Have We Reached a Tipping Point?”

for Soft Eurosceptics in Britain, as they gained support following the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty (1992), an act that solidified further development of the EU's supranational dimension. In fact, since 1997, Eurobarometer pollsters have found that British support for the EU is not much more than half the EU average.¹⁴⁶

Acknowledging this brief chronology, it is evident that Britain's entire history with the EU reflects a degree of hesitation and skepticism. For instance, in 1999 the Euro replaced the currencies of eleven European countries, culminating the process of economic and monetary union in Europe.¹⁴⁷ The establishment of this monetary union finally realized the initial goals of the EEC laid out in 1971. Likewise, in 2007 the Schengen Area was created, effectively eliminating internal borders in nine of the current ten EU members state.¹⁴⁸ As mentioned, however, Britain never replaced the pound with the euro, and does not participate in the Schengen Area; these decisions were made to appease a Eurosceptic public. This highlights Britain's resistance to EU policy that reduces British autonomy.

In providing a description of British national identity and British Euroscepticism this chapter begs the question, why now? What changed within the UK that led to ascendancy of the New Right version of Britishness? Keeping my discussion focused on the role of British national identity, the following chapter addresses these questions. I examine why a Eurosceptic, yet stable, relationship was brought to a point of crisis, as well as why New Right British identity prevailed in the Brexit vote.

¹⁴⁶ Daddow, "Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair and the Eurosceptic Tradition in Britain." 211.

¹⁴⁷ Carol Bertaut and Murat Iyigun, "The Launch of the Euro," Federal Reserve Bulletin (The Federal Reserve, October 1999), <https://www.google.com/search?q=the+launch+of+the+euro&hl=en&authuser=0>. 655.

¹⁴⁸ Anaïs Faure Atger and Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), *The Abolition of Internal Border Checks in an Enlarged Schengen Area: Freedom of Movement or a Web of Scattered Security Checks?* (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2008). 1.

Chapter 4: The Rise of the New Right

An ascendancy of the New Right version of British national identity has driven the UK to withdraw membership from the EU. As has been discussed, neither British Euroscepticism nor competing notions of Britishness are new. Rather, anxiety over transformations of the state and challenges to the nation has caused Britons to embrace New Right Britishness as opposed to the New Labour view. This rise of the New Right can be attributed to (1) state sovereignty shifting from the UK to the EU, (2) immigration increasing and (3) anti-elitist sentiments persisting among the British working-class. The combination of these three issues, and the extent to which they polarized notions of British national identity, allowed New Right attitudes to prevail in an unprecedented way; the Brexit vote demonstrates that a majority of Britain identifies, at least partially, with New Right Britishness. My analysis focuses on these three issues because they were prominent throughout the Brexit campaign, suggesting that they were exceptionally important in the minds of voters. My discussion of the Brexit vote itself therefore becomes a case study of reactionary politics – a consequence of what can happen when New Right identities prevail.

4.1 Analyzing the Issues in the Brexit Campaign

Sovereignty

The first campaign issue that can be connected to a rise of New Right Britishness is sovereignty. The desire to reclaim a certain level of power and influence on the world stage therefore served as subtext for the Brexit referendum. In this sense, Brexit offered New Right proponents an opportunity to declare: “the UK is not Europe,” it is its own autonomous and

powerful entity, detached from “the economic crises and hotbeds of extremism.”¹⁴⁹ Nigel Farage, the former leader of UKIP, a political party whose views mirror New Right understandings of British national identity, advocated for Britain to reestablish itself as “a proud, patriotic country that has control of its borders, represents itself on the world stage and makes its own laws in our own sovereign Parliament.”¹⁵⁰ Likewise, the Leave campaign itself argued that by withdrawing membership “we regain our seats on international institutions like the World Trade Organisation so we are a more influential force for free trade and international cooperation.”¹⁵¹ Continuing to be a member of the EU would thus further challenged British sovereignty and sense of self. Given the rhetoric of UKIP politicians and the Leave campaign, Britons who hope to restore traditional notions of sovereignty and pursue national projects away from the laws and policies enforced by the EU — laws and policies some Britons believe have undermined the country’s global status — have embraced New Right attitudes.

Strands of British national identity, including the New Right, has been both threatened and reinforced by perceived threats to the country’s status on the world stage. Over the past decade “the identities which arose from Union and Empire which underpinned the idea of Britishness for more than three centuries have been called into question by devolution, by decolonization, by immigration, and by European integration.”¹⁵² As British sovereignty has had to adapt to the influences of supranational governance, the ability of Britain to act in an autonomous and hegemonic manner has diminished. In this sense, a decline of global power has caused a crisis of British identity. This highlights the importance of the role of identity in relation

¹⁴⁹ Shaj Mathew, “Brexit Exposes Britain’s Massive Inferiority Complex,” *New Republic*, June 22, 2016, <https://newrepublic.com/article/134513/brexit-exposes-britains-massive-inferiority-complex>.

¹⁵⁰ “Brexit | ‘Vote Leave, Take Control’? Sovereignty and the Brexit Debate,” *Professor Mark Elliott | Public Law for Everyone*, June 23, 2016, <https://publiclawforeveryone.com/2016/06/23/vote-leave-take-control-sovereignty-and-the-brexit-debate/>.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.* 252.

to issues surrounding a fear of a loss of state sovereignty and power within the international community. The strengthening of EU sovereignty is demonstrated by its ability to dictate the ingredients of chocolate to establish human rights standards. While the infamous thirty year Chocolate War may seem trivial, it highlights the extent to which EU institutions now have the authority to enforce interstate trade. Additionally, in the case of human rights, the European Commission ensures that judgments made by the Court of Justice are recognized in every member state. This has shaped a framework of human rights standards that member states are held accountable to.

Additionally, for those who adhere to the New Right view, “national sovereignty is important because the Conservatives, too, want Britain to be one of the most admired and influential countries in the world.”¹⁵³ The rise of subnational identities has, therefore, threatened what it means to be British. Increasing the power or autonomy of Scotland, Wales or England at the expense of Britain as a united polity is therefore dangerous. In this vein, William Hague, British Conservative politician and proponent of the New Right view, argues that battles over parliament sovereignty represent one point of conflict between the national and subnational identity in the UK. He asserts: “the British people I talked to on my campaign...are uneasy at the current political assault on our institutions, liberties and traditions; and they are alarmed at the rising tide of nationalism in Scotland, Wales and England.”¹⁵⁴

As generations of Britons grew up citizens of a major world power, a perceived loss of state autonomy increased anxiety over losing hold of what it means to be British. In fact, nearly half (forty-nine percent) of Leave voters said the single biggest reason for wanting to leave the

¹⁵³ Johnson, “The Dilemmas of Ethnic Privilege.” 169.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. 169.

EU was “the principle that decisions about the UK should be taken in the UK.”¹⁵⁵ Significantly, during the height of the British Empire, for example, the country was perceived to be at its best *and* it ruled half the world. British influences were widespread and the ambition of establishing a united kingdom was being fulfilled. As one Leave voter commented, “from one canal to another, from the Suez crisis of 1956 through to the Panama Papers 60 years later, the stories of our lives in Britain have largely been a story of just how hard some of us find it to adjust to no longer being top dog.”¹⁵⁶ Being British involved being a member of a country that was taken seriously. Today, however, Britain must adhere to laws and regulations passed down from Brussels. Although many Britons no longer have experience with the British Empire, for generations colonial narratives ran deep. This tradition of national power seems to have reached the eldest generations alive today, as older citizens who overwhelmingly voted “leave.”

Given a national nostalgia for the independence, power and sovereignty Britain enjoyed during its imperial days, the Brexit vote provided an opportunity for proponents of the New Right view to restore what they believe it means to be British. As discussed above, to be British is to belong to a truly global power, one that enjoys absolute parliamentary sovereignty. As membership to the EU has been perceived to undermine such autonomy, Britons have expressed the inability to “recognize our country” and, consequently, to find meaning in the country’s national identity.¹⁵⁷ While Britain’s position at the top of the global order may have been lost, the ascendancy of the New Right suggests a deep desire for it to be regained, as the very essence of

¹⁵⁵ Lord Ashcroft, “How the United Kingdom Voted on Thursday... and Why.”

¹⁵⁶ Sally Tomlinson and Danny Dorling, “Brexit Has Its Roots in the British Empire – so How Do We Explain It to the Young?,” May 9, 2016, <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2016/05/brexit-has-its-roots-british-empire-so-how-do-we-explain-it-young>.

¹⁵⁷ Ben Judah, “England’s Last Gasp of Empire,” *The New York Times*, July 12, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/13/opinion/englands-last-gasp-of-empire.html>.

Britishness hangs in the balance. Brexit thus became an opportunity for the New Right to attempt to reassert its understanding of British national identity.

Immigration

Increased and diversified immigration into Britain has contributed to the rise of New Right Britishness. In order to support this claim this section (1) examines recent increases in immigration to both the EU and UK, (2) briefly considers who, historically, has been both included and excluded from British national identity and (3) analyzes opinion polls and argument made the Leave campaign regarding immigration.

Today, Europe is an immigrant continent; that is, there are more people coming in than leaving. In 2014, 1.6 million citizens of non-member countries immigrated into the EU and 1.3 million people with citizenship in one EU member state moved to another.¹⁵⁸ By January 2015, there were 34.4 million people born outside of the EU member states living within them, while 18.5 million people had moved from EU state of birth to another.¹⁵⁹ As evidenced in Table 3, the number of asylum applications from fifteen countries has more than tripled since 2013. These numbers indicate that there has been a growth of migration into Europe, and EU member states more specifically, over the last several years. Between January 2015 and March 2016, Europe received approximately 1.5 million asylum applications.¹⁶⁰ 2015 therefore marked the largest annual flow of refugees into Europe since 1985, comparable only to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent influx of refugees from East to West.

¹⁵⁸ “Migration and Migrant Population Statistics - Statistics Explained,” *Europa*, May 2016, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ “Migrant Crisis: Migration to Europe Explained in Seven Charts,” *BBC News*, March 4, 2016, sec. Europe, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>.

Table 3: Number of Refugees to Europe 2013-2015¹⁶¹

Citizenship	2013	2014	2015
Syria	49,000	125,000	378,000
Afghanistan	23,000	39,000	193,000
Iraq	9,000	15,000	127,000
Kosovo	18,000	35,000	68,000
Albania	11,000	16,000	67,000
Pakistan	19,000	21,000	47,000
Eritrea	20,000	46,000	46,000
Nigeria	12,000	20,000	31,000
Iran	11,000	10,000	27,000
Somalia	18,000	16,000	21,000
Ukraine	1,000	14,000	21,100
Serbia	15,000	20,000	19,000
Russia	36,000	14,000	19,000
Bangladesh	7,000	10,000	18,000
Gambia	4,000	12,000	13,000
Other	151,000	182,000	230,000
TOTAL	405,000	596,000	1,325,000

As the number of people entering the EU has grown, the demographics of those arriving have become increasingly diverse. For example, Table 3 also shows that since 2013, Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq have become the top three countries contributing to those seeking asylum

¹⁶¹ Connor, “Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015.”

in Europe. This represents a change in demographics, as previously the majority of asylum seekers came from Eastern European countries such as Kosovo and Albania. Across the board, migrants, immigrants and asylum seekers are predominantly young males (seventy-three percent) between the ages of eighteen and thirty-four.¹⁶²

The reasons people migrate to Europe are extensive. Typically they are simultaneously pushed and pulled by a combination of economic, political and social factors. That said, the conflict in Syria remains the biggest driver of migration today. While ongoing violence in Afghanistan and Iraq, abuses in Eritrea and poverty in Kosovo have contributed to migration, Syrians have accounted for almost thirty percent of asylum applications. As will be discussed, as migration into the EU has become more diverse, including significantly more Middle Eastern nationals, the New Right has claimed that the “homogenous we” of British national identity has been threatened.

Like the EU, immigration to the UK has been more extensive and more diverse in the 21st Century than ever before. In 2004 the EU expanded to include ten new countries. These countries were dubbed the A8 (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia); the other two countries are Malta and Cyprus.¹⁶³ Between May 2004 and May 2009, 1.3 million people migrated from A8 countries to Britain. “In the UK, A8 citizens were able to freely and legally take up employment from May 2004 as long as they registered with the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS).”¹⁶⁴ Britain thus saw a great increase in the number of eastern European migrants crossing its borders. Presently, the Poles make up Britain’s largest foreign national group.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ “EU Migration to and from the UK,” *Migration Observatory*, October 31, 2016, <http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/eu-migration-to-and-from-the-uk/>.

¹⁶⁴ “EU Migration to and from the UK.”

The introduction of the A8 was not the first time the UK had experienced increasing and diverse immigration. Between the end of World War II and the turn of the century, approximately three million people from Africa, the Pacific Rim, the Caribbean and the Indian Subcontinent.¹⁶⁵ This influx of migrants began after World War II because faced a labor shortage during the Post War era. Needing workers to revitalize its economy, Britain extended an invitation to hundreds of laborers. Although the country sought to attract white Europeans, large groups of Caribbean descent migrated to the UK. Additionally, until 1968, Britain had a policy of welcoming Commonwealth immigrants.¹⁶⁶ This open-door policy had allowed people from the Commonwealth countries, including India, Pakistan, Australia, Nigeria and many Caribbean Islands, to migrate to Britain. In 1968, however, the British Parliament “deprived UK citizens of Asian origin of the right to enter and live in the country whose citizens they were and remain.”¹⁶⁷ This was seen as a racial measure, a response to increased anxiety among white Britons that New Right ethnic conditions of Britishness were being challenged.

By 2015, inflows of EU nationals migrating to the UK stood at 269,000, up from 264,000 in 2014.¹⁶⁸ Net migration of EU citizens was estimated at 184,000 in 2015, an increase from 174,000 in 2014.¹⁶⁹ Likewise, in 2015 non-EU citizens accounted for forty-four percent of all inflows to the UK.¹⁷⁰ Despite Conservative efforts, the number of people coming to live and

¹⁶⁵ Dr Christina Julios, *Contemporary British Identity: English Language, Migrants and Public Discourse* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2012).

¹⁶⁶ “How Has Immigration Changed Britain since WW2?,” *BBC Timelines*, accessed March 7, 2017, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/timelines/zxm6pv4>.

¹⁶⁷ B. A. Hepple, review of *Review of No Entry. The Background and Implications of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, 1968*, by David Steel, *The International Migration Review* 4, no. 2 (1970): 118–19, doi:10.2307/3092063. 119.

¹⁶⁸ “EU Migration to and from the UK.”

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ “Long-Term International Migration Flows to and from the UK,” *Migration Observatory*, July 5, 2016, <http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/long-term-international-migration-flows-to-and-from-the-uk/>.

work in the UK from the rest of the world not only exceeds those from the EU but it has also increased.

The fear that surrounds migration to Britain today is not new. It has a deep-seated history in the country, reignited over the years by periodic increases in the number of migrants arriving. Looking back to 1945, the perceived fear has been caused by the “implication that something culturally British was being injured, probably fatally.”¹⁷¹ For generations, white Britons have tested migrants, looking for ways to force them to prove their loyalty to Britain. “In the First World War, Jewish men were under severe pressure to join the army to ‘prove’ that they were Britons first and Jews second.”¹⁷² Additionally, proponents of exclusionary notions of British national identity have supported English-language proficiency tests and proof of knowledge of British history. These tests were the result of a national myth established after World War II, a myth that used British resilience during the war to foster a sense of national community. A snapshot was taken of 1945 Britain, the Britain that was a member of the victorious Allied Forces. It is the members of *this* Britain who were at the time and are today welcome and included in understandings of British national identity.

World War II “is taken to evoke the British at their best, the qualities of Churchill’s ‘island race’... It helps construct a sense of nation and nationality that excludes the bulk of post-1945 immigrants.”¹⁷³ Thus, when Black and Asian migrants began arriving in higher numbers in the 1950s and 1960s, Britain had already formed a sense of national identity, one that did not include these newcomers. During this time Enoch Powell was well supported in the late 1960s as he “saw black immigration as destructive of the very existence of Britain.”¹⁷⁴ Powell argued that

¹⁷¹ Paul Ward, *Britishness Since 1870* (Psychology Press, 2004). 125.

¹⁷² *Ibid.* 115.

¹⁷³ Quoted in Ward, *Britishness Since 1870*. 124.

¹⁷⁴ Ward, *Britishness Since 1870*. 113.

Britain “must be mad...to be permitting the annual inflow of some 50,000 dependants, who are for the most part the material of the future growth of immigrant-descended population.”¹⁷⁵ This implies that not only were immigrants viewed negatively, but their children and descendants were as well.

As more people entered Britain since World War II and the EEC transitioned into the EU in 1993, public anxiety over immigration rose.¹⁷⁶ Beginning in the late 1990s, monthly polling data from the IpsosMORI agency showed that people identified immigration as one of the top three most important issues facing the UK; in 2016, it was the issue picked most often by survey respondents.¹⁷⁷ In this sense, opposition to immigration within Britain is a very salient issue. In a public opinion poll from April 2016, seventy-six percent of respondents wanted immigration reduced in general, and seventy-two percent thought that the government was right to impose numerical limit on it.¹⁷⁸ Likewise, while fifty-two percent said that the government should try to reduce immigration by “a lot,” eighty-one percent thought that the government should limit benefits to migrants resident in UK for less than two years.¹⁷⁹ Evidently, voters want the country to control immigration.

As both Muslim refugees and European economic migrants have continued to arrive in the country, their presence has been labeled a threat to national security and economic stability. Significantly, British voters began to identify immigration and border control as among the most

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Somerville, Sriskandarajah, and Latorre, “United Kingdom.”

¹⁷⁷ “UK Public Opinion toward Immigration: Overall Attitudes and Level of Concern,” *Migration Observatory*, accessed January 11, 2017, <http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/uk-public-opinion-toward-immigration-overall-attitudes-and-level-of-concern/>; Somerville, Sriskandarajah, and Latorre, “United Kingdom.”

¹⁷⁸ Lord Andrew Green, “Recent Polls on Immigration,” *Migration Watch UK*, April 7, 2016, <http://www.migrationwatchuk.com/briefing-paper/document/361>.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

important issues facing the country.¹⁸⁰ In a statement given by Boris Johnson, Britain's current Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the politician argued,

People have every right to question why we can't control our borders. We need to answer those concerns by taking back control of those borders. But we must also face the fact that the system has spun out of control. We cannot control the numbers. We cannot control the terms on which people come and how we remove those who abuse our hospitality.¹⁸¹

In this sense, the idea that Brexit was solely about sovereignty and not also xenophobia is a misleading claim. Issues surrounding sovereignty are intrinsically connected to a fear of "others" infiltrating state borders. This suggests that a New Right understanding of immigration, one that portrays immigrants as a formidable challenge to national identity has spread throughout the UK. Migration has triggered exclusionary expressions of British identity — aspects of British identity that can be linked to the New Right tradition and the belief that heterogeneity and diversity are challenges to the national community. Immigration has thus become a scapegoat for the dilution of Britishness.

In response to this perception that rising migration has changed the demographics of Britain, threatening the homogenous "we" that is critical to the country's national identity. According to numerous polls and researchers, the majority of Britain wants to see a reduction in immigration. This statistic included fifty-five percent of Remain voters. The general public's desire for reduced migration can be connected to fears surrounding potential threats to British identity. For example, ninety-five percent of respondents to an April 2016 opinion poll indicated that that it was very important or fairly important for migrants to speak English in order to

¹⁸⁰ Will Somerville, "Brexit: The Role of Migration in the Upcoming EU Referendum," *Migrationpolicy.org*, May 3, 2016, <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/brexit-role-migration-upcoming-eu-referendum>.

¹⁸¹ May 26 and 2016, "Boris Johnson: The Only Way to Take Back Control of Immigration Is to Vote Leave on 23 June," *Vote Leave*, accessed March 26, 2017, [/boris_johnson_the_only_way_to_take_back_control_of_immigration_is_to_vote_leave_on_23_june](http://www.voteleave.com/en/press/boris-johnson-the-only-way-to-take-back-control-of-immigration-is-to-vote-leave-on-23-june).

become “truly British.”¹⁸² Additionally, this same poll illustrates that one of the most important requirements for living in Britain includes a respect for British culture and customs.¹⁸³ In this context, British culture and customs involves the English language, Christian religious life and the English parliamentary system.

A recent increase in support for UKIP further highlights the extent to which the British public has been displeased by contemporary migration trends. UKIP, founded on an anti-EU platform in 1993, received a majority of UK seats in the 2014 European Parliamentary elections. As these elections take place once every five years, UKIP will enjoy significant representation at the EU level through the Brexit negotiation process. Significantly, “70 percent of UKIP supporters identify immigration as the most important issue facing the UK, compared to 45 percent of Conservative voters and just above 25 percent of Labour voters.”¹⁸⁴ In part, emphasis on immigration concerns has been prompted by general questions regarding security. Following the Paris and Brussels attacks of 2015, for example, Leave proponents argued that withdrawing membership from the EU would allow Britain to increase border security and ultimately reduce terrorist threats.¹⁸⁵ Thus, as British membership to the EU protects freedom of movement for EU citizens, UKIP has adamantly supported the Brexit vote.

A key outcome of Brexit would be to give Parliament back control of British borders. In this manner, the government has expressed its unwillingness to compromise with the EU on matters pertaining to immigration. Theresa May has even explicitly stated: “We will have control of our borders, control of our laws.”¹⁸⁶ Returning to the earlier discussion of identity, such

¹⁸² Green, “Recent Polls on Immigration.”

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Somerville, “Brexit.”

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Steven Swinford; Ben Riley-Smith, “Theresa May Signals That Britain Will Leave Single Market so It Can Take Control of Immigration,” *The Telegraph*, 21:57, sec. 2017, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/01/07/theresa-may-unveils-plans-create-shared-society-reform-vision/>.

widespread disapproval of migration can be characterized as British rejection of the migrant “Other.” The New Right within Britain appears to believe that in order to restore and protect the homogeneity and purity of Britain those who lack the necessary traits of Britishness must be excluded from the national community. In this context, those coming from the Middle East, North Africa and within the EU itself are not compatible with what it means to be British.

Anti-elitism and the Economy

This section introduces the third cause of the ascendancy of the New Right: anti-elitist sentiments. Significantly, we live in an era of seething resentment towards elites. From Trump to Sanders, from Syriza in Greece to Podemos in Spain, from the resurgence of the Austrian and Hungarian far right to the rise of the Scottish independence movement, the world is rejecting political elites’ ties to the “establishment.”¹⁸⁷ Within Britain specifically, working-class resentment towards elites has grown over time, perpetuating the sense of a disconnect between the two socio-economic groups’ experiences of Britishness. “How can the less privileged majority relate to someone who is alien to their experiences?”¹⁸⁸ For Britain’s working class, they cannot. Thus, in an act of desperation to protect their inclusion in a British national community, the working-class seems to have embraced the New Right view as it opposes New Labour’s support of cosmopolitan policy, policy enacted by the same elite class that has continued to thrive despite the economic suffering of many. Given such sentiments this section examines how, since 2008, tensions between the working-class and elite have only increased.

Contemporary anti-elitism in Britain can be traced back to the Great Recession and its aftermath. Both caused economic stress for the working-class. In order to revitalize the economy

¹⁸⁷ Owen Jones, “Grieve Now If You Must – but Prepare for the Great Challenges Ahead,” *The Guardian*, June 24, 2016, sec. Opinion, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/24/eu-referendum-working-class-revolt-grieve>.

¹⁸⁸ Mutabazi, “Brexit.”

after 2008 Britain relied on austerity policies. Problematically, however, investors, banks and big corporations disproportionately benefited from such measures. As a result, economic recovery in the UK has been concentrated in large metro areas including London.¹⁸⁹ While middle and upper class professionals have enjoyed economic prosperity since 2009, the working class has experienced stagnant wages, social benefit cuts and increased job competition from immigrants entering the country.¹⁹⁰ “Trade unionism has been neutered, local government is a shadow of its former self and political activism is, for the most part, simply shouting into the wind.”¹⁹¹

In addition to the domestic financial trouble, Britain has had to be patient over the last eight years while many of its major trading partners have scrambled to recover. The eurozone countries experienced large budget deficits, high debt levels, and uncompetitive cost structures.¹⁹² This led to uncertainty regarding the EU’s ability to effectively address periods of economic distress. In fact, eight years later, eurozone countries are still experiencing financial difficulties.¹⁹³ Consequently, Britons began to believe that the EU had stagnated and if Britain remained a member it would too. In this sense, there has been a growing perception that Britain has been collateral damage in the wake of European economic failures. This has reinforced Eurosceptic sentiments and made the New Right’s anti-integration platform increasingly attractive.¹⁹⁴

In response to this slow economic recovery, Britons who reside in northern cities and small towns began to feel as though they live in a very different world with very different views

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Mark Easton, “What Did the Brexit Vote Reveal about the UK?,” *BBC News*, December 23, 2016, sec. UK Politics, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-38301495>.

¹⁹² Peter Dizikes, “3 Questions: The Euro Mess,” *MIT News*, May 11, 2010, <http://news.mit.edu/2010/3q-forbes-euro-0511>.

¹⁹³ Jeremy Warner, “The Euro Has Destroyed the EU and Led Directly to Brexit,” *The Telegraph*, 19:23, sec. 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2016/08/23/the-euro-has-destroyed-the-eu-and-led-directly-to-brexit/>.

¹⁹⁴ Warner, “The Euro Has Destroyed the EU and Led Directly to Brexit.”

than the younger elite voters that predominately live in larger metropolitan areas.¹⁹⁵ Britain's working-class believes that its position within society is being threaten by this growing cohort of young urban elites. Significantly, World War II helped make the working-class in Britain fundamental to the country's stability, as "the stoicism of the people in the blitzed cities and the bravery of a conscript army transformed the position of the working class."¹⁹⁶ The working class became the common people, the backbone of society, "taking up their new and now apparently rightful place in the national community."¹⁹⁷ Given this newly granted position in society, the working class today feels as though young elite politicians have diluted Britishness through enacting cosmopolitan policies. Those who identify more closely with Powellian isolationism have harbored long-standing resentment towards British elites, as it is thought that Thatcher's signing of the Single European Act was the result of a push by Britain's upper class.¹⁹⁸ The product of this resentment was unveiled in 2016, as Brexit became, in part, a working-class rebellion.

As the working-class has experienced alienation caused by elitist policies, their sense of belonging to the British nation has been further undermined by the presence of foreign workers. It is therefore imperative to acknowledge a degree of xenophobia underlying these economic tensions. Increased racism and intolerance directed at migrant workers represents an effort to restore national homogeneity and the *white* British worker's rightful place in the work force — an effort indicative of support for New Right Britishness. In this manner, the resentment felt by the working-class was only furthered by tolerant policies that allowed migrant workers, Muslims

¹⁹⁵ Jones, "Grieve Now If You Must – but Prepare for the Great Challenges Ahead."

¹⁹⁶ Ward, *Britishness Since 1870*. 123.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. 123.

¹⁹⁸ Parekh, "Defining British National Identity." 10.

and other ethnic minorities, and refugees and asylum seekers to enter Britain.¹⁹⁹ Consequently, the working-class's need to preserve its Britishness has resulted in intense racism towards these individuals. Eastern European immigrants, for example, have experienced acts of xenophobia and bullying in both the workplace and at school. A Polish teenager in Cornwall even committed suicide as a result of racist bullying at school just a few weeks before the Brexit vote.²⁰⁰

Likewise, British Chinese workers are worried about the aftermath of Brexit and how their place in society, rights and livelihoods may be negatively affected.²⁰¹

The rise of New Right Britishness was caused, in part, by the perception that political elites do not listen to nor represent the people. Support for the New Right therefore represents an effort to restore a sense of British national identity that favors the socio-economic experiences of the working-class — consequently rejecting the cosmopolitan attitudes of New Labour. Britain's working-class became tired of being called racist, ignorant and backward-looking because it has vocalized concerns about decreasing job security and the moving of employers to city centers. The Brexit vote thus reflects a deep frustration caused by the alienation of the British working class. As the proletariat, or the waged workers, formed the foundations of the Brexit coalition, a vote for Brexit symbolized a vote against the Oxford and Cambridge elite.²⁰²

4.2 Strength of the New Right Tradition

Britain's New Right and New Labour notions of national identity are in tension with one another. On the one hand, the New Labour view attempts to promote plurality, to further connect

¹⁹⁹ Hsiao-Hung Pai, "When They Call Brexit a 'working-Class Revolt', They Mean the White British Working Class," *OpenDemocracy*, July 11, 2016, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/uk/hsiao-hung-pai/when-they-call-brexit-working-class-revolt-they-mean-white-british-working-class>.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² John Harris, "Britain Is in the Midst of a Working-Class Revolt," *The Guardian*, June 17, 2016, sec. Opinion, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/17/britain-working-class-revolt-eu-referendum>; Junior Sabena Mutabazi, "Brexit: The Hijacking of a Working-Class Revolt," *The New Times Rwanda*, June 30, 2016, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2016-06-30/201272/>.

a sense of Britishness with the EU and a set of cosmopolitan policies. Young Britons from urban areas who have propagated this notion of Britishness are less attached to civic criteria of national identity. The New Right has, however, fought back. It has appealed to nostalgic Britons, those who supported Powell and Thatcher's New Right vision for the country. This vision included an autonomous, self-governing UK—a Britain that acknowledged the European integration project but did not directly partake in it.

Although the outcome of the independence referendum was extremely close, the Brexit vote demonstrates that the New Right view of national identity is prevalent throughout the country. Given the civic and ethnic conditions the New Right view advocates for, there is a connection between New Right Britishness and Britain's decision to leave the EU that cannot be ignored. As highlighted by the above discussion, tensions over shifts in state sovereignty, increased immigration and a persistent anti-elitism have allowed New Right views to gain favor among Britons. Whether or not there is explicit understanding of the New Right view, labeled as such, there *is* apparent support for certain conditions of British identity within the county, conditions that have resulted in fifty-two percent of voters checking the Leave box.

Brexit was, in part, about reestablishing the rules and conditions that allow the country to foster a strong sense of self. As made evident by the narrow margin by which Leave won the vote, there is a deep divide within the UK over what it means to be British. While the three issues analyzed in this chapter have existed since before Britain joined the EU, recent events have exacerbated anxieties. Such events have included the continued expansion of the EU, geographically and in the number and scope of institution, the Syrian refugee crisis, and the slow economic recovery of EU member states after the 2008 recession. The culmination of these events, and other like ones, created an exceptional moment in time, one that allowed for New

Right Britishness to rise in such a way that David Cameron had to follow through on this promise to hold an independence referendum.

Conclusion: Confronting Exclusionary Identity Politics

On March 29, 2017 Theresa May gave notice that the people of Britain wish to trigger Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon, officially beginning the formal withdrawal process. The seemingly unlikely break up of Britain and the EU is now a reality. But what has the outcome of the independence referendum told us about the British people? What do we learn about the Brexit vote by considering the role identity played in the decision to leave? I have argued that the country does not agree about whether or not Britishness includes membership to the EU. Focusing on identity and identity politics frames Brexit as the manifestation of or reaction to deep-seated, internal tensions over what it means to be British. This domestic dispute came to a point of crisis on June 23, 2016 because the power and scope of supranational institutions – the EU – had increased, consequently transforming British state sovereignty and challenging British national identity.

Since 1951, a united Europe has evolved from a coal and steel community allied to prevent future violence between European countries, to a socio-political polity. The EU today is a massive consortium of Commissions, Parliaments and Courts, each with a unique authority to dictate what life within Europe looks like. EU Regulations, for example, are binding legislative acts that must be applied in their entirety across member states. Although many EU Directives are largely unenforceable, increasing oversight at the supranational level continues to influence intra-European relationships. For fifty-two percent of the British people, transforming state sovereignty had threatened parliamentary autonomy, strong border control and a traditional working-class. Consequently, this perceived threat was an affront to national identity, and therefore contributed to their decision to vote Leave.

5.1 Turning our Backs

Understanding the reasons why the Brexit vote occurred in the first place, as well as why the Leave campaign was victorious, is crucial to addressing potential consequences. On a practical level, interpreting the economic, political and social grievances of fifty-two percent of the country will inform both policy responses to Brexit and the UK's relationship with the EU moving forward. Problematically, both Britain's decision to leave and the policies that are likely to be passed will have damaging effects, physically and psychologically, on both British citizens and citizens of other nations. What does a Brexit say to British citizens of immigrant descent? And for those who look towards Europe as a place of economic and familial security, what precedent does Brexit set for how refugees and migrants will be treated? As Britain declares "We are British and not European," or "We are British before we are European," such questions loom, demonstrating that both states and national borders are still fundamental to our understanding of political authority and international relations.

Brexit raises concerns about the consequences of exclusionary identity politics and restrictions placed on the freedom of movement. If we understand Brexit to be, in part, a reaction to domestic debates over what it means to be British, it can be argued that Brexit was at the same time about restoring national homogeneity — one British people, no longer threatened by the "other," be it European, Muslim or Cosmopolitan. British national identity, while fundamental to the very existence of the British state and people, is at the same time so fragile it can be compromised by the arrival of an immigrant from another country. As this analysis suggests, however, there are deep issues at stake in regards to the promotion of exclusionary identity politics. What happens when a state feels the need to seal its borders and strictly dictate who belongs and who does not? What happens when the doors are closed and backs are turned on the

world's most vulnerable populations? In both serious and intuitive ways this very well may be a consequence of the Brexit. The “masks” politicians so often hide behind have been removed, and mainstream discourse is now infused with xenophobic rhetoric.

Deep ideological divides about what it means to belong to a nation have driven reactionary politics and invited the proliferation of promises to “make America great again,” and to “take back control” of Britain. While the explicitly racist language used by heads of state may make the consequences of a Brexit or Trump presidency seemingly obvious, such potential outcomes still demand our attention. These mantras introduce dangerous contradictions, discrediting entire national histories founded on generations of immigration and ushering in xenophobic nationalisms. In terms of the refugee crisis that has unfolded over the course of the last two years, exclusionary identity politics and xenophobia ignore the stark realities of “refugeeness.” Instead of acknowledging and then acting on the fact that these refugees are running away from war and persecution and toward the hope of a better life, this vulnerable population has instead been portrayed as a danger to existing social structures, policy, cultural attitudes, and, ultimately, to nationalist ideals.

5.2 Challenging Traditional Notions of Belonging

The era of globalization, of transforming state sovereignty, has demanded the conception of citizenships that achieve both individual equality and the recognition of collective difference. Citizenship, as a component of national identity, has, since antiquity, involved exclusion.²⁰³ That said, the state's ability to strictly dictate who resides within its borders has changed as the

²⁰³ Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging*. 48.

mobility of people has increased.²⁰⁴ This has affected the capacity and willingness of both state and citizen to meet obligations traditionally inherent in modes of citizenship.²⁰⁵ The ability of states to fulfill responsibilities has been weakened, and citizens have new avenues or outlets for protection of rights and facilitation of mobility. In this sense, there are “growing opportunities and rights outside of the sovereign, territorial state,” the EU being one such option.²⁰⁶

In response to the alteration of institutions of power, transforming state sovereignty and the simultaneous expansion and concentration of peoples, technologies, and expressions of thought, citizenship and ways of belonging to the state must change. This has provided the basis for the emergence of global or transnational citizenship — alternative notions of citizenship that take into account that many people now belong at various levels to different societies. In this sense, the challenge is to integrate the global, regional, and local dimensions of belonging into a new political model. It is necessary to devise forms of democratic political participation that transcend state boundaries.²⁰⁷

Transnationalism has become one new mode of belonging, a mode that is removed from traditional ways of belonging to, and thus identifying with, the nation-state. Castles (2002) asserts that transnational communities are groups whose identity is not primarily based on attachment to a specific territory. Rather, transnationalism is, in part, characterized by the creation and maintenance of social fields that cross national boundaries.²⁰⁸ It involves the negotiation of identities at the intersection of a “three-way relationship between their sending

²⁰⁴ Stephen Castles and Alastair Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration: Globalization and the Politics of Belonging* (Psychology Press, 2000). ; Castles, “Migration and Community Formation under Conditions of Globalization.” ; Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul, “Citizenship and Immigration.”

²⁰⁵ Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging*. 52.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 58.

²⁰⁷ Castles and Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration*.

²⁰⁸ Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul, “Citizenship and Immigration.” 167.

state, their host state and their network of fellow transnationals.”²⁰⁹ It therefore presents a powerful challenge to traditional ideas of national belonging, as transnational citizens participate in multiple political communities, typically not identifying with one particular place at any given time.²¹⁰

Global or post national citizenship is an additional framework useful for combating exclusionary identity politics and traditional conceptions of membership to a state. It is largely about taking a risk and pushing beyond the comfort of background, language, or nationality — all which typically shield us from the reality of others. This calls for greater inclusivity as a defining feature of cosmopolitanism, as it suggests that all humans belong to one moral realm or domain, presupposing obligations to each other. Kant’s *Kingdom of Ends* reiterates this description of cosmopolitanism, as it assumes greater inclusivity rooted in hospitality and global peace.²¹¹ Thus, this reality would involve welcoming strangers and maintaining a tolerant civilization.

Of course, the challenge remains how to reconcile the prevalence of the New Right view in Britain with a need to reimagine what belonging looks like. Despite the existence of frameworks for transnational and cosmopolitan citizenship, application and feasibility are in many ways insurmountable challenges not unique to the British people. This project began with the acknowledgement that my decision to analyze the role of identity in the Brexit vote stemmed from an attempt to pull together many interests, to pose questions that force us to reflect on and critique the world we live in. While questions such as, “is the world ready to open borders and minds? Are nationalist, exclusionary politics eradicable?” are certainly loaded they can be answered quite simply. No. The world is not ready to open borders and minds. Nationalist,

²⁰⁹ Higgins, *Identity Formation in Globalizing Contexts*. 21.

²¹⁰ Castles, “Migration and Community Formation under Conditions of Globalization.” 1157.; Higgins, *Identity Formation in Globalizing Contexts*. 23.

²¹¹ Immanuel Kant, Allen W. Wood, and J. B. Schneewind, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Rethinking the Western Tradition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

exclusionary politics are not at this time eradicable. Despite this bleak prognosis, there is comfort in the fact that understandings of belonging seem to be in flux. There is room for both refugees and Britons coming out of the Brexit to conceptualize new ways of claiming membership to both local and distant communities. If not at the level of the state, alternative forms of belonging will be forged on the ground, defying the will of those who seem so determined to turn their backs on human decency.

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