British Politics Review

THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

Beauty and despair

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Editorial

Decay, disillusion and the Northern Soul

Northerners more likely to die early from "diseases of despair", wrote The Times on 10 August this year, quoting research published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health. Analysing mortality rates in the North and South of England from 1965 to 2015, Professor Iain Buchan and colleagues find a dramatically widening gap in unexpected deaths over the last two decades. The contrast is particularly profound among young people, where the numbers speak for themselves: more than 2,500 Northerners between 25 and 44 who died in 2015 would have survived if the mortality rate equalled that of southern England.

It has become a commonplace that the North of England has been given a rotten deal in the post-industrial era that emerged from the early 1980s onwards. In the service-based, international economy that is Britain today, little is left of the manufacturing that dominated the country half a century ago. Along with the loss of jobs in the North, the strong sense of place, class and belonging are on the wane too. There is a frightening path from these structural characteristics to the life chances of young people in particular.

The present issue of British Politics Review has been composed against a sombre backdrop, but is not directed at the ills of the North. What we aim to put forward is instead a selection of articles on cultural identity, reflecting the North that was as well as the one that emerges today. Steven Powell discusses the role of the culture and geography of the North in key novels by David Peace; Ole T. Mangen takes us to Orwell and Priestley's accounts of the northern working class in the 1930s, and reflects upon their meaning today. Two other articles celebrate, each in their own way, the heyday that was: Robert Poole reflects upon the role of Northern radicalism in the Peterloo uprising in Manchester in 1819, whereas Arve Hjelseth highlights the fundamental significance of northern clubs to the early decades of English football, a dominance which can still be traced in Manchester and Liverpool. Tony May and Jonathan Tyler critically assess the plans to redress the imbalance between South and North in England through high-speed rail.

Much has been said and written about the general election of 8 June, which was called in haste and which yielded a dramatic campaign and a highly surprising result. For this summer issue of British Politics Review, we have selected four short articles, each of which provides an original perspective on key facets of the election itself.

Øivind Bratberg & Atle L. Wold (editors)

Cover photo: "Coming from the Mill" (1930) by British painter L.S. Lowry (1887-1976). Lowry, who lived and worked in Lancashire, is considered a key conveyer of urban life in North West England. Making the industrial city the centrepiece of his works, he added a highly distinctive style. Two further paintings by Lowry are included in the following pages: "The Fever Van" (p. 6) and "Going to the Match" (p. 11).

The North and Romantic Fatalism in the work of David Peace

by Steven Powell

THIS IS THE NORTH – WE DO WHAT WE WANT' (p.265) shouts a Yorkshire policeman as he throws a troublesome reporter out of the back of a moving vehicle in David Peace's novel *1974*. On one level this now, oft quoted line, was Peace's attempt to transplant the noir sensibility of the classic crime fiction setting of post-war Los Angeles to the northern England he grew up in the late 1970s and early 1980s. On another level "this is the North" is a message to the reader itself, independent of the history of the crime genre Peace writes in, which serves to highlight the unique cultural and political landscape that the north of England holds in the British psyche. In his study *The North: (And Almost Everything in It)* Paul Morley describes how in retrospect, he now understands the enormous influence this northern identity had on him growing up in Greater Manchester:

I did not know it at the time, considering only my relationship to a place on earth because of sporting teams that were, it seemed, close by, but I was living in the heart of something unflagging and contrary that you could call the north. It never occurred to me that this was something I might make a fuss of, because of how I talked, because of where I was (p.122)

At times Morley's enthusiasm for the North and all its achievement borders on cliché. The text wavers perilously close to "it's grim up north" platitudes and images of ashen-faced men wearing flat-caps spouting funny dialects. Affectionate portrayals of the North can easily border on caricature. The "Four Yorkshiremen" comic sketch, originally performed on At Last the 1948 Show but more widely known through the Monty Python version, is structured as a conversation between four self-made Yorkshire businessmen. Sipping fine Burgundy "Chateau de Chasselas" and smoking cigars they contemplate their modest beginnings until the conversation descends into an increasingly absurd argument about which one had the toughest upbringing, "House! You were lucky to live in a house! We used to live in one room, all twenty-six of us, no furniture, half the floor was missing, and we were all huddled together in one corner for fear of falling." The pride and inverted snobbery of each man demands recognition that he had it tougher than any of the others.

While very clearly a send-up there is much in the petty squabbling of the "Four Yorkshiremen" sketch that rings true. For instance, this North is south of Scotland, therefore the North while still British is not particularly Scottish, and with the rise of nationalist politics north of the border this may be an increasingly fractious issue for the future of the United Kingdom. There is no comparable identity either for "the South", in fact the phrase is not in use. Southern England may be more prosperous and just as culturally vibrant, but in many ways the ethnic melting pot of London has debarred a greater sense of regional identity.

As someone who was born in Chester and spent most of my career in Liverpool I have never felt this northern belonging myself. Growing up my family did have it tough but, much like the four Yorkshiremen, I'd struggle to convince you. So how do we understand northern identity and is it fair to say it applies to some northerners and not others? The success of Peace's novels has been instrumental in giving insight into the complexity of northern identity and the difficulty to give a definition to a culture that is often at war with itself.
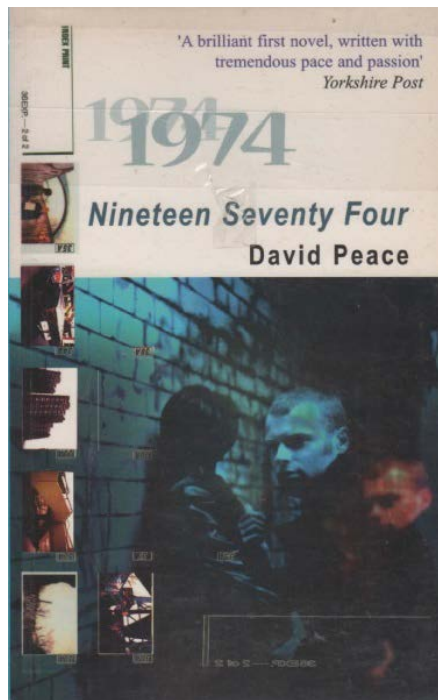
The Damned Utd is told from the first-person perspective of football manager Brian Clough and is largely fictionalised account of Clough's disastrous 44-day spell as manager of Leeds United. After a successful management career at Hartlepool and Derby County the strong-willed Clough arrives at Leeds expecting to impose his iron-discipline on the team but finds himself thwarted at every turn. Gradually the stream-of-consciousness text reflects Clough's increasing frustration. What is darkly amusing about the novel is how the Middlesborough-born Clough comes to hate everything about the Yorkshire club, including the landscape and skies which seem to personally threaten him:

The sun is shining, the sky is blue, but it's still another bloody ugly Yorkshire morning at the arse-end of August (p.234) In the rain and in the sun, under the black and blue, purple and yellow Yorkshire skies (p.241) Under skies. Under bloated skies. Under bloated grey skies. Under bloated grey Yorkshire skies, I walk from the taxi straight up the banking and on to the training ground. (p.225)

Peace's ability to find poetry in the rhythm of northern dialects is one of the factors which has elevated his reputation from a genre to a literary level that other crime writers could only dream of. Much of the poetic nature of his prose and dialogue comes, ironically, from banal repetition. In Peace's novel on the 1984/85 Miner's Strike *GB84* the events surrounding the strike are relayed through a number of perspectives. The character of Peter is one of the striking miners, and his version of events might seem pathetically simplistic if it did not, in fact, expose the bureaucracy of union politics:

I was a delegate from Thurcroft Strike Committee; delegate took his orders from South Yorkshire Panel at Silverwood; South Yorkshire Panel took its orders from Yorkshire Area Strike Co-ordinating Committee at Barnsley, along with other three Yorkshire panels; Strike Co-ordinating Committee took its orders from National Co-ordinating Committee in Sheffield. In theory – Fat fucking chance. It was a mess. (p.118)

Peter hits certain words such as "Yorkshire", "Committee", "Panel" with such gruelling regularity that it becomes every bit as numbing as Brian Clough's "skies", "bloated skies", "bloated grey skies", "bloated grey Yorkshire skies". The image is built up piecemeal with Peace never reversing to edit it into a perfectly formed thought, as though the anger was best preserved in the imperfection of the description.

GB84 did not receive unanimous critical acclaim. One of the most negative reviews, perhaps unsurprisingly came from Sukhdev Sandhu in the Right-of-Centre *Daily Telegraph*:

GB84 is a horrible novel. Dark to the point of being dystopic. Joyless and unremittingly nasty. A bloated profanosaurus that seems even longer than its 460 pages, it is obscene, almost entirely lacking in humour, and repetitive to the point that most readers' eyes will glaze over.

But even Sandhu had to concede that the novel had "a vile and lingering fascination that is not easy to forget." It is the unremittingly candid portrayal of the North that gives the novel its vile fascination. There is little room for humour in the novel when Peace has equal anger and contempt for the Tory government's destruction of the miners, Arthur Scargill's demagogic leadership of the National Union of Miners and the Labour's party's half-hearted support for the strike.

Anger, even when rendered coldly rational, is a key feature of the text and a driving emotion behind the writing. When I saw David Peace speak at the States of Crime conference in Belfast in 2011 he expressed regret at how little he was able to help the striking miners at the time. Perhaps his own worst critic, he also cited the excessive violence in the Red Riding Quartet novels, particularly 1974, as something he misjudged. Covering such grim topics as police corruption against the backdrop of the Yorkshire Ripper murders it is easy to see why Peace feared these four novels might be viewed as exploitative, but the Quartet was met with great critical acclaim as, contrary to his fears, Peace found just the right tone for portraying Yorkshire through historical crime fiction. Peace has been further validated in that since the novels were published there have been ongoing revelations of police corruption in the Hillsborough tragedy, as well as a traumatic series of sexual abuse scandals which came to light when the Leeds born entertainer Jimmy Saville was exposed as a paedophile after his death. These events were more horrific and have been far more damaging to the national psyche than anything Peace could have conjured up even in his more lurid tales.

In his recent novels *Tokyo Year Zero* (2007) and *Occupied City* (2009), Peace has developed the historical noir themes of the Red Riding Quartet but has shifted the setting to post-war Japan, a country he lived in for several years while he worked as a teacher. Peace decided to write about Japan as a consequence of his portrayal of the North becoming counter-productive. As he said in a profile for *Esquire* by Dan Davies:

(It was) Feeding into a mythology which I was actually trying very hard to undo at the same time. I grew up in Yorkshire in the Seventies and it was fucking shit. It is one thing for me to say that, but it was starting to be played into the clichéd perceptions, if you see what I mean. I just felt really that I needed to stop.

Recent events suggest the "cliched perceptions" of the North Peace derided seemed to be on the verge of collapse, but not in a way he would have appreci-

ated. The turbulent British political scene has begun to undermine long-held assumptions about regional identity and party affiliation. Only a handful of Labour MPs campaigned to leave the European Union as the bulk of the parliamentary party voted to remain. Labour voters however could not be bought off. While huge swathes of the North would one time have been classified as Labour heartlands, it was the northern working class town such as Doncaster and Sunderland that ignored the Labour party's official line on the EU and enthusiastically voted to leave the EU. Areas such as these had slowly been won over by Nigel Farage's plain-speaking, anti-Political Correctness United Kingdom Independence Party. Once the referendum was won by the Leave campaign and UKIP, suddenly lacking a sense of purpose, imploded the Conservatives saw a chance to win dozens of northern Labour seats when Theresa May essentially ignored the principle of the Fixed-Term Parliaments Act and called a snap general election. Buoyed by impressive local election result and winning the Teesside mayoralty less than a month before the national poll the Tories were confident in what seemed like a wave of Theresa May mania. In the event, the northern Tory breakthrough did not occur after a last minute surge to Labour helped in no small part by Jeremy Corbyn's perception as a closeted Eurosceptic.

The Tories unleashed a huge amount of money and resources from their formidable election fighting machine, but suffered the embarrassment of losing marginal northern seats they once held. There were a few Conservative gains in the north of England, such as Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland, but broadly speaking the Labour party's political hegemony in this region held fast. Whether trying to appeal to northern voters through David Cameron's "Hug a Hoodie" brand of Caring Conservatism or Theresa May's promises of a Hard Brexit the Tories are still finding it difficult to shake off the legacy of Margaret Thatcher. And this is why it is not uncommon, unfortunately, to find colleagues in the teaching profession in northern colleges drinking tea from "Still Hate Thatcher" mugs.

In *GB84* Margaret Thatcher is a shadowy figure, rarely seen but always spoken of, embodying, in Peace's view, the unapologetic unrestrained capitalism that was sweeping away both the industry and culture of the North he knew as the coda to the narrative makes clear in brutal terms.

They strip us of our language and our lands. Our families and our faith. Our gods and our ways – We are but the matchstick men, with our matchstick hats and clogs – And they shave our heads. Send us to the showers – Put us on their trains. Stick us in their pits – The cage door closes. The cage descends – To cover us with dirt. To leave us underground – In place of strife. In place of fear – Here where she stands at the gates at the head of her tribe and

waits – Triumphant on the mountains of our skulls. Up to her hems in the rivers of our blood – A wreath in one hand. The other between her legs – Her two little princes dancing by their necks from her apron strings, and she looks down at the long march of labour halted here before her and say, Awake! This is England, Your England – and the Year is Zero (p.462)

As with many writers who excel at crime fiction there is something both fatalistic but also Romantic about Peace's sense of time and place. There is the reference to the twee and inoffensive hit song "Matchstick Men and Matchstick Cats and Dogs" which was a tribute to the artist LS Lowry and his work depicting the now-vanishing Industrial England. But this is a conduit for the miners to be lured into a holocaust of "showers", "trains", "pits", "cages", and "dirt" with Thatcher standing over them "Triumphant on the mountains of our skulls".

It would be here, I suggest, and not the Red Riding Quartet, that Peace goes too far in his depiction of the North and who should shoulder the blame for its decline. Thatcher, it is easy to forget, was very popular with large sections of the population including Peace's North. In the 1983 and 1987 General Elections the Tories won seats, such as Newcastle Upon Tyne Central and Manchester Withington, that they could not hope to win today as evidenced by the election results this year. As one of the Yorkshiremen in the Monty Python sketch states, "you try and tell the young people of today that… they won't believe you."

Steven Powell is the author of James Ellroy: Demon Dog of Crime Fiction (2015) published by Palgrave Macmillan. He has edited the anthologies *Conversations with James Ellroy (*2012) and *100 American Crime Writers* (2012). He is currently editing *The Big Somewhere: Essays on James Ellroy's Noir World* for Bloomsbury. He has research interest in British politics and its depiction in popular culture.

This is the place: concepts of the North, from Orwell and Priestley to our time

by Ole T. Mangen

On 27 May this year, in the aftermath of the Manchester bombing, the poet Tony Walsh recited his poem «This Is the Place», a moving account of the characteristics of the place and people that make up the North. The shipyards, the mines and the mills, like in a painting by L. S. Lowry, may have ceased to serve as the national workshop of the world, but the Northern grit is still deeply felt. Roughly 80 years earlier, two eminent writers from separate vantage points vividly described the state of the North and the Northerners in the social turmoil of the 1930s. Their respective accounts have a clear relevance for an understanding of the north of England today.

Perhaps the best known book about the North is George Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier* (Penguin, 1937). On 30 March 1936 George Orwell set out on a two month travel to Lancashire and Yorkshire, commissioned by the left wing publisher Victor Gollancz, to give an account of working-class life in the North and to expose the social injustice so prevalent in the region. Orwell describes the squalor of the places visited in Wigan, Barnsley and Sheffield in Part One of the book while the second part is a stark criticism of the aloof intellectual left in Britain.

Orwell's particular style of writing is a very noticeable element in *The Road to Wigan Pier*. He describes the setting and the people he meets by extensive use of evocative nouns and adjectives, as well as hyperbole and figurative language. At his lodging in Wigan, he observes the full chamber pot under the breakfast table and is distressed by the dirt, smell and vile food. The people working the mills are seen as as living in «a subterranean place where people go creeping round and round, just like black beetles, in an endless muddle of slovened jobs and mean grievances». Against this backdrop of squalor and poverty, he discusses the contrasts between the North and the South. Consider for example this contrastive illustration of social differences: «no educated accent to be heard for months on end in Lancashire, but there can hardly be a town in the South of England where you could throw a brick without hitting the niece of a bishop».

Despite his affiliation to the Left, Orwell asks whether is it ever possible to be really intimate with the working class, acknowledging the challenge posed by his public school background and career as a civil servant for the Foreign Office. He sees the towns in the North as ugly, echoing "the dark Satanic mills" of William Blake. His account is passionate and yet academic in style and ambition. However polemical and abundantly rich in his use of figurative language, Orwell nonetheless insists on this being social history written by a reporter, discussing the housing shortage and rental costs in the mining towns he visited.

The hardship and poverty described by Orwell is also dealt with by J. B. Priestley, a social commentator who was also a renowned novelist and playwright (one of his plays, "An Inspector Calls" (1946), remains a popular and acclaimed drama still regularly performed and read as part of English for the GCSE/A-levels). In the early 1930s, he took on an extensive journey in England. Priestley was responding to a request by the very same Victor Gollancz that "the time is ripe for a book which shall deal faithfully with English industrial life of today".

The title of the book would be *English Journey* (Heinemann, 1934), subtitled «A Rambling, but Truthful Account of What One Man Saw and Heard and Felt and Thought during a Journey through England during the Autumn of the Year 1933. It does describe a journey that takes him all over England, but the larger part of it is spent on the North. Like Orwell, Priestley leans on some of the stereotypes about the Northerners by describing their stocky figures and broad faces. He does not shy away from describing the places as grim, referring to the complete ugliness in parts of industrialised Lancashire. Three years prior to Orwell's visit to the same area, he is equally horrified to see the living condition of the working class.
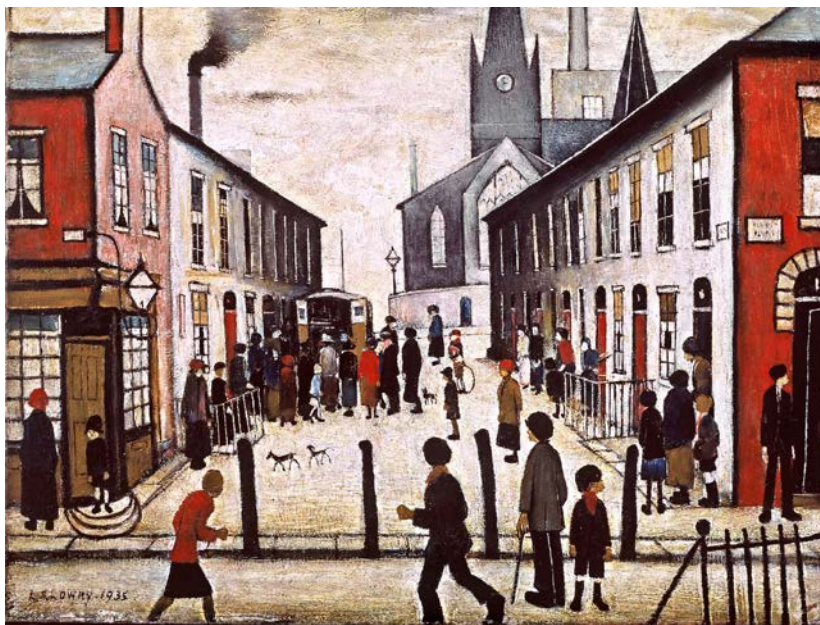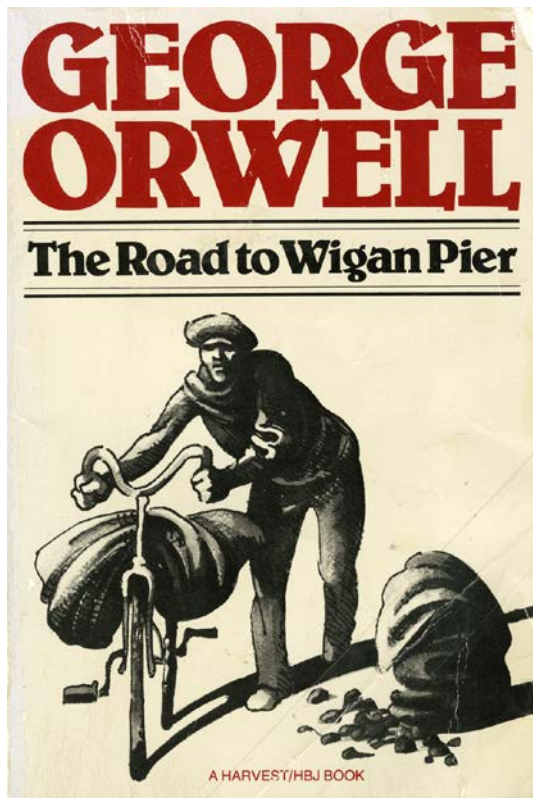
Both Orwell and Priestley convey a bleak, but multifaceted picture of the North in the economic turmoil of the 1930s. Given their different literary styles, Orwell would find something to admire in the meticulous detail of Priestley accounting for the production details of cotton; but he would have needed to add his acerbic wit. Priestley, on the other hand, lacks some of Orwell's analytical flair, but excels in his close encounters with people, Bradford-born as he is. Perhaps as a corollary, he is also on occasion siding with the "vulgar" in a way Orwell cannot bring himself to do.

What the two authors share is an acute awareness of the contrast in wealth and progress between North and South of England. It is a source of anger and distress on the part of both. Here is Priestley: "What had the City done for its old ally, the industrial North? It seemed to have done what the black –moustached glossy gentleman in the old melodramas always did to the innocent village maiden» (p. 327).

Priestley, in his conclusion, insists that social injustice and dehumanising conditions should not be tolerated and evokes an England that should be «too proud (…) to refuse shelter to exiled foreigners». He also stresses the dysfunctional in letting parts of the population fall by the wayside: «all these decent people, good citizens, are being wasted, their manhood and womanhood, their energy and skill, their self-respect». A fitting present-day heir to his work is the filmmaker Ken Loach, who has stood out as a leading director depicting social injustice.

The radio presenter, writer and journalist Stuart Maconie is one of the leading voices concerning the social and cultural outlook of the North today. His book *Pies and Prejudice* (Ebury Press, 2007) is, as he calls it, a Northern travelbook. The sense of the physical space is imminent here, as in everything he writes. He states that he will rediscover the North and, with it, "his inner northerner". This is also a preoccupation with the poet Simon Armitage, who has made use of walks as a means to rediscover and reinterpret the cultural landscape he sees in Yorkshire and Lancashire – see *All Points North* (Penguin, 1999).

Interestingly, Maconie criticises the romantic images used by commentators and columnists to portray the typically English. These are images that are essentially southern and equally biased with regard to class, he argues. The village greens, thatched cottages, spinsters cycling to evensong belong to a specific part of England, the flipside of which is the imperial Britain that used to dominate the world. There is also arguably a lineage to be drawn from leafy English villages to the Brexit debate of today. One argument among Brexiteers is that British foreign policy should reflect a specific, non-European identity that matches the serenity of the Home Counties with Empire and global free trade.

Priestley, in his conclusion, holds out this Old England, as he calls it, as one of the three Englands he has seen on his English journey. And, as if Priestley were posting his blog today, he says: "There are people who believe that in some mysterious way we can all return to this Old England».

The legendary broadcaster and art critic Melvyn Bragg has said that «the North is different to the rest of the country. Different in the head and in the heart.» And if one strives to venture slightly beyond Old Trafford or Anfield, preferably on the Northern Rail network, one would certainly recognise the landscape described by Orwell and Priestley. By reading and enjoying their poignant prose, at the same time lending an ear to their contemporary heirs Maconie, Armitage and Loach, a fuller understanding can be achieved.

After all, as Tony Walsh pointed out: ***This is the place***.

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Peterloo: the English uprising

by Robert Poole

The Peterloo massacre was the bloodiest political event of the nineteenth century on English soil. On Monday 16 August 1819 troops under the authority of the Lancashire and Cheshire magistrates attacked and dispersed a rally of some 60,000 reformers on St Peter's Field, Manchester. Twenty minutes later some 650 people had been injured, many by sabres, many of them women, and fifteen people lay dead or mortally wounded. Independent witnesses were horrified, for there had not been any disturbance to provoke such an attack, but the authorities insisted that a rebellion had been averted.

Waterloo, the final victory of the European allies over imperial France, had been four years earlier; now, at "Peterloo", British troops were turned against their own people. There were Waterloo veterans present on both sides; one of them, the reformer John Lees of Oldham, later died of his injuries. A rally designed to proclaim that its members were citizens instead showed that they were still only subjects. The casualty figures – for England, at least – were shocking, as was the ferocity of the attack.

ST. PETER'S FIELDS
THE PETERLOO MASSACRE

On 16th August 1819 a peaceful rally of 60,000 pro-democracy reformers, men, women and children, was attacked by armed cavalry resulting in 15 deaths and over 600 injuries.

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Because it took place in Manchester, the northern "capital of cotton", the Peterloo massacre has usually been seen as an episode of advanced industrial protest. The commander of the volunteer Manchester Yeomanry Cavalry, which did much of the damage, was a leading cotton master. "There is no term for this but class war," wrote E. P. Thompson in his classic The Making of the English Working Class (1963). Descriptions of Manchester to go with accounts of Peterloo tend to be taken from Engels' Condition of the Working Class in England (1844), although this was published a quarter of a century later, by which time Manchester had grown and changed enormously.

Manchester in 1819 was essentially a warehouse town rather than a factory town, and as the meeting of 16 August took place on a Monday all its factory workers were locked in. The largest contingents by far were handloom weavers, whose numbers were at their peak. Many had marched in from the surrounding districts, for Manchester was at the centre of a great network of industrious villages and small settlements extending for twenty kilometres around, well into the Pennine hills. These places were notable for their vigorous popular culture, their independent religious Methodism (which taught reading, writing and social justice), and their social solidarity. Processions of weavers with their families, dressed in their Sunday best, carrying hand-woven flags and banners with messages of hope, and accompanied by bands of music, flooded into Manchester. They did not protest as ragged victims of the factory system; rather, their very form proclaimed their fitness for political citizenship. While the severe economic distress and unemployment of 1819 certainly fuelled the protests, the main demands of the reformers were political rather than economic, and related to the effects of war more than industrial revolution.

The final victory over Napoleon in 1815 after twenty gruelling years of war had been followed by a massive post-war economic slump, deepened by the demobilisation of troops and the "lost summer" of 1816 which brought near-famine conditions by the following winter. The landed classes had had their 'peace dividend' in the form of the corn laws, which kept corn prices high by preventing imports of grain. The middle classes had rejoiced in the end of the wartime income tax. Working people however continued to pay taxes on essential items like malt, soap, candles and paper, as well as record prices for bread. The regulations protecting their trades had been abolished and their trade unions banned, all by act of parliament. Meanwhile, fundholders continued to gather interest payments on the colossal wartime national debt, and a host of parasitic aristocrats and office-holders drew scandalous salaries for performing purely nominal duties. Radicals had a name for this system: 'old corruption'.

The radicals' solution was political: to give control of parliament back to the people through universal (male) suffrage and so break the power of the "boroughmongers" who had used the war to strengthen their grip on political power and milk the system. Radicals like John Cartwright and Henry Hunt believed this was no more than the restoration of England's "ancient constitution". They were happy to mobilise the people and trust them to reclaim their lost rights. Thomas Paine and
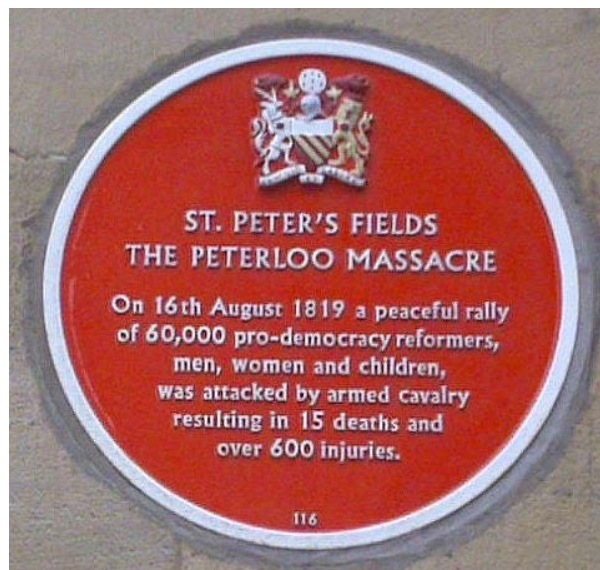
the universal "rights of man" had been popular in the 1790s, but after a generation of war against the kind of universal rights that came out of the end of a French cannon the overwhelming popular demand was now for the return of the "ancient constitution" of England.

A mass petitioning campaign for parliamentary reform in 1816-17 had mustered close to a million signatures on seven hundred local petitions to parliament - maybe one in five adult males, more in the northern manufacturing districts. These had been brusquely rejected by parliament, which had responded instead with emergency legislation and the arrest without trial of dozens of radical activists. The abortive risings of the spring of 1817 – the march of the Manchester "blanketeers" towards London, and the armed conspiracies which followed in Manchester (again), Huddersfield and Nottingham – were essentially attempts to remonstrate with the throne against the actions of government.

The reformers of 1819 rejected both conspiracy and violence and embraced instead an open "mass platform" agitation. The radical Manchester Observer newspaper, which began circulating in the capital, reported the resolutions of one mass meeting after another in the region, appealing to 'the people of England' to stage further mass rallies to reclaim their rights. The constitutional schemes might come from London but the numbers to make them effective would come from the industrial Midlands and North. As petitioning had decisively failed in 1817, various means were devised to seize the constitutional initiative. In Birmingham a mass meeting of would-be citizens appointed a "legislatorial attorney", or unofficial MP, to represent them in parliament. Another in London resolved that without parliamentary reform the people's allegiance to the crown would be dissolved from 1 January 1820. In Manchester, the resolutions would have included a tax strike, by refusing consumption of all taxed goods. It was difficult to find an extra-parliamentary strategy that would not undermine the movement's claim to be constitutional, and open its leaders to prosecution, but the underlying strategy was simple: to make visible the might and determination of the people, and to force the government to back down and grant parliamentary reform for fear of a revolution.

All this collapsed when the Manchester authorities attacked the meeting of 16 August. But in 1831-2 a mass movement similar to that of 1819, this time under middle-class leadership, succeeded in ejecting another high Tory government opposed to parliamentary reform. Further mass meetings, including one of a quarter of a million people in Birmingham, induced the House of Lords to back down and pass the Great Reform Act. The radicals of 1819 had perhaps not been so unrealistic after all. The government had armed

troops at the ready but when it came to the crunch they were not willing to use them. The memory of Peterloo thus contributed to the achievement of reform in 1832.

In her influential book Britons, Linda Colley argued that the wars against France were a triumph for the British monarchy and for a supra-national British identity. This had not existed when at the inauguration of the state of Great Britain in 1707 by the union with Scotland. That union was challenged by the Jacobite risings which came down from Scotland and the North in 1715 and 1745. Forty years was not enough to secure a new higher national identity, which finally took shape through the wartime patriotism of the 1790s. The popular uprising of the post-war years then challenged the British state in the name of the rights of Englishmen and the supposedly ancient English constitution. That challenge too came from the North of England, which suffered severely from the recent slump, and whose interests were particularly badly represented under the existing political system.

This sounds remarkably like what happened in 2016-17, when the electorate first, in a referendum, rejected membership of an unaccountable supra-national state which it had joined some forty years before. Then, in a general election, it handed out a political beating to a government which appeared indifferent to the economic plight of its citizens while taking their loyalty for granted. Once again this feeling was particularly strong in the economically suffering industrial areas of the Midlands and North which felt themselves ignored by a prospering metropolitan elite. It was not so much a matter of left and right as of the binary split of "court" and "country which had lain behind the civil wars of the 1640s.

Taking the long view, it seems that in times of economic and political stress, English populism regenerates itself from old root stock. As long as regional inequalities persist, the roots of this Englishness are as likely to be found in the North as in the South.

Links:
www.peterloomassacre.org

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Football and the North: a tale of class and counter-hegemony

by Arve Hjelseth

Historically, football was a folk sport in Britain. For long periods, it was illegal, as it was labelled as a source of social disorder. It was also seen as useless in terms of the capacity to build character and stamina among the youth, at least compared to sports exercises which could be more easily transformed to, say, soldiering.

Nevertheless, football was organised, formalised and codified in the 19th century by clubs that mainly had their origins in public schools in southern England. These processes led to the establishment of the Football Association (FA) in 1863. The focus had shifted on the part of the ruling classes; a regulated form of football could indeed strengthen the character of boys.

The FA code was strictly amateurist. Football, like any other sport, was classified as leisure. Hence, players should enjoy no economic gains from participating. It is hardly surprising that this made teams from the public schools dominate the game in the early years following the establishment of the FA Cup. The Wanderers, who won the first FA Cup final in 1872, consisted mainly of players from different public schools from the London area or nearby regions, as did all winners until 1882.

In 1883, Blackburn Olympic became the first working class club to win the FA cup. Further, they were the first winners from outside the South of England. The shift was definite and sudden, both in terms of the class connotations of the leading clubs and in terms of their geographical origin. From then onwards to 1930, clubs from southern England managed to win the FA cup on only two occasions (both by Tottenham Hotspur, in 1901 and 1921, respectively).

What had happened? Until 1885, professionalism was strictly prohibited under FA rule. There were, however, strong and well-founded suspicions that both Blackburn Olympics and other Lancashire clubs were in fact at least semi-professional. The legalisation of a highly regulated professional football in 1885 was mostly about accepting a practice that was already well in place. As the old public school clubs remained loyal to amateurism, they were not able to compete.

The rise of the North was accompanied by a continuous search for revenue amongst clubs that recruited both its players and audiences from the working class. Cup tournaments were not well suited for making predictable incomes, especially not when gate receipts became an important source of income, as football gradually turned into mass spectator events. If you are eliminated in the first or second round of different cup tournaments, you run the risk of having no scheduled matches for several months. A league system guarantees a certain numbers of official fixtures each season on a regular basis.

The Football League was established in 1888 and consisted of 12 clubs from the start (in alphabetical order: Accrington, Aston Villa, Blackburn Rovers, Bolton Wanderers, Burnley, Derby County, Everton, Stoke City, Notts County, Preston North End, West Bromwich Albion and Wolverhampton Wanderers). In other words, all clubs were from Lancashire or the Midlands. The stronghold of professional football had moved from the South to the North, and if southern clubs were invited to join, most of them would have declined, as they still rejected professionalism.

Arsenal, by then located in southeast London, was however allowed to join the league as early as 1893. They had turned professional in 1891, which led to the club being excluded from taking part in tournaments in the London area. Still, the dominance of the North in the league was prominent: When Tottenham Hotspur won their first FA Cup in 1901, they had not yet joined the Football League.

The dominance of the North and the Midlands lasted until the 1930s, when Arsenal finally rose to fame by winning five league trophies in the span of eight years. But even after the Second World War, the North has continued to dominate the game, albeit less overwhelmingly than in the first forty years of the league. Of the 71 League trophies won post 1945, only 17 have been won by clubs from southern England. Another interesting point, to which I will briefly return, is that in

southern England, only Portsmouth and Ipswich from outside London have ever won the league.

In this broad perspective, the move of football from the South to the North is about different intertwined processes: First, industrialism became a driving force in the development of British society. Second, football became an important form of Saturday afternoon entertainment among the working classes. Third, it is important to note that labelling the northern clubs as working class does not imply that they were run by the working classes. More often, they were owned and run by local businessmen, while their origins can be traced back to institutions like churches, schools and trade unions.

The local businessmen had a different attitude towards commercialism than the aristocratic ethos that had dominated the FA. While FA stressed the importance of distinguishing between profitable work on the one hand and sports as leisure on the other, the businessmen in the North adopted a modern capitalist spirit that entertainment and sport can be commodified. This paved the way for the development of sport and entertainment as commercial leisure products, and with the gradually improving conditions of the working classes (including reduced working hours on Saturdays), it also found a market.

The stamp of commercialism suggests a relentless pursuit of profit. However, the runners of football clubs in the North were hardly maximising any windfall from their involvement in the club. Matthew Taylor has offered evidence to suggest that compared to other parts of the entertainment industry, such as the music hall, football was significantly less commercialised. Club owners often wanted to offer their communities and cities something to be proud of, rather than making as much money as possible out of it. Football thus became an integral part of a proud civic culture in northern cities.

Following the decline of industrial Britain from the 1970s and onwards, it would be reasonable to assume that the stronghold of football would also move back to the South. But this has only partly been the case. There are examples of industrial cities where the sporting (and financial) difficulties of the leading football clubs can partly be explained by the decline of industry. This may well be the case in cities such as Leeds, Sheffield, Coventry and Sunderland. But on the other hand, Liverpool was the stronghold of English football in the 1980s, when the city went through a disastrous post-industrial decline. Not only was Liverpool FC dominant in Europe, their neighbours Everton won two league championships and one FA Cup in the same period.

This may illustrate the importance of history and tra-dition in football. While London has by far surpassed the northern cities as the economic epicentre of the UK, many northern clubs have continued to compete successfully in football. Club histories in themselves spur new fans to support the clubs, and historical traditions can attract players, managers and fans from around the globe in the modern game. While the wheels of history instantly moved the hegemony from the South to the North in the 1880s, more than a century of history has equipped football with a sense of tradition and leverage that partly outweighs current economic trends.

Another explanation of the fact that the North still competes well in football, is that there are few large cities in southern England outside London. Bristol is the only exception, but footballing traditions have never been particularly strong in the city. Therefore, we should perhaps not be surprised that cities like Liverpool and Manchester have dominated the game even after the decline of industrial Britain. On the contrary, it has also been argued by Stefan Szymanski and Simon Kuper that the second- and third-largest cities in a lot of countries have an advantage to capital cities when it comes to footballing success: Capitals are metropoles where people of a lot of different identities and backgrounds merge. Their identities are often cosmopolitan rather than local. People from other British cities moving to London for education or work often continue to identify more with their geographical origins. This may have given the larger northern cities a competitive advantage: a larger proportion of the population identify with their cities and hence with their football teams. Traditionally, capital clubs have been less successful than what size and economy would suggest – in England as in Germany, Italy and France.

Recent developments, with Chelsea, Arsenal and Tottenham all belonging to the top six teams of English football, may indicate that this is about to change. But while the economic gap between the London area and northern England continues to widen, northern clubs still seem to be able to compete on level terms as one of the few victories to claim against the wealthy South-East.

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High-speed rail and the North: a white elephant?

by Tony May & Jonathan Tyler

High Speed 2 is a planned new high-speed railway that is intended to connect London with the North of England and the Midlands. Already a decade in planning, it will not be complete until the mid-2030s. Phase 1 consists of a line between London and Birmingham and received Parliamentary approval in February 2017. Phase 2 will be the northern sections, comprising lines to Leeds and Manchester and limited connections with the existing railway. The detailed proposals for Phase 2 were published immediately before the parliamentary recess in July 2017. The infrastructure is being designed for 400 km/h, some 80 km/h faster than is typical in other countries, and 18 trains per hour, as compared with a maximum of 14 trains per hour elsewhere. The government claims that the overall scheme will cost £56bn, with a Benefit/Cost Ratio of 2.7, though recent professional assessments suggest that the cost may well be double this, and the demand estimates have been challenged.

The project has its origins in a ministerial challenge in 2003 to show how the economy of the North of England could be boosted by the construction of a high speed line. From that point on, the nature of the solution was specified, though its objectives have differed over time. It was supported from the outset by Labour, who established HS2 Ltd in 2009, and subsequently by both the Conservatives (who saw it as an alternative to expanding Heathrow) and the Liberal Democrats in their 2010 manifestos. Only the Green Party and UKIP continue to oppose it.

The scheme remains controversial on the grounds of need, cost-effectiveness and environmental impact. In 2006 the comprehensive Eddington study into transport investment concluded that Britain already has an effective inter-urban network, with its 200km/h running appropriate for the country's economic geography, and that improvement of urban rail networks merited higher priority. Following a highly critical report by the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee in 2015, the present authors decided to go back to first principles and hold a workshop of experts to consider the needs and alternative solutions. We were advised at that stage that the four principal objectives of HS2 were to increase capacity, improve connectivity, strengthen the economy of the North of England, and contribute to reducing carbon emissions. What follows is a summary of our conclusions.

There is a case for increasing passenger rail capacity on many approaches to London, but the stations potentially relieved by HS2 are among the least crowded, with a current load factor on Virgin West Coast into Euston of under 40%. As a result there are ways of achieving the capacity needed at much lower cost, including longer trains, changing the first/standard class seating balance and more flexible pricing. We also questioned the capacity planned for HS2, which relies on an operating frequency higher than achieved elsewhere and the seamless merging of trains arriving from the conventional network. For freight, HS2 is likely to produce limited relief, while a more comprehensive solution could be implemented for around £5bn.

While there is a need for improved connectivity, it is for connections in the provinces, rather than to London. For example, York to Manchester Airport (126km) and York to London (303 km) both take 1.8h. HS2 itself is not a connected network. There is no through running at London, Birmingham, or Sheffield. Derby and Nottingham are served by a parkway station, while cities like Leicester and Wakefield are bypassed and likely to have reduced services to London. There will be little impact on connectivity within the North or between it and other regions.

The arguments relating to the potential for HS2 to strengthen the economy of the North of England are less clear. Until a decade ago the accepted wisdom was that a line linking two economies would reinforce the stronger one unless the weaker economy offered unique economic outputs. On this basis, HS2 would definitely further strengthen the economy of London at the expense of the Midlands and the North. More recently the concept of agglomeration has been introduced, in which reducing travel time strengthens economic interactions within a conurbation. This principle has been applied to HS2, awwnd accounts for 20% of estimated benefits. However, it appears that much of this is based on commuting from Birmingham to London. Any wider economic benefits will be realised in proximity to the HS2 stations; yet the most impoverished towns in the North are typically 20 to 80km from an HS2 station, and will only benefit if local infrastructure is provided as well. It seems clear that the best way to boost the economy of the North would be to invest in better infrastructure within the North rather than providing faster links to London.

The final objective of reducing carbon emissions can be summarily dismissed. HS2 Ltd's own estimates indicate that HS2 will not be carbon neutral until 2080 at the earliest, whereas the UK's carbon reduction targets are set for 2050.

It is noteworthy that none of these four objectives makes a case for high speed. Indeed, HS2 Ltd's own analysis indicates that an increase in speed from 300 to 360km/h adds 23% to energy costs (and thus carbon emissions) but only saves 3.5 minutes between London and Birmingham. Yet it is this desire to design for 400km/h "because the technology permits it" that adds considerably to the route's environmental damage. The London-Birmingham route alone affects 63 ancient woodland sites, while the designs for Euston involve demolishing much residential property. The recently announced route of Phase 2 involves demolishing houses which have been built so recently that HS2 Ltd were unaware they existed. Few of these local environmental impacts appear in the cost-benefit analysis.

Given the very weak case for investing in HS2, it is interesting to consider how it has gathered such momentum. Fundamentally, it is an example of a failure in option generation. The Eddington report stressed the importance of identifying the essence of a problem, specifying a range of options to address it and then selecting the best-available solution based on careful analysis of costs, benefits, timescales, flexibility and risks. Such an option generation exercise has never been conducted. Had it been, it seems certain that lower cost ways of increasing capacity would have been found, that a network-wide analysis would have focused on those sections where connectivity is weakest, that projects in the North would have been adopted as the best way to regenerate the North, and that climate change considerations would have led to less energy-intensive solutions.

How then has this disappointing outcome come about? To some extent it is an example of the phenomenon that large infrastructure projects gain political status for reasons of party advantage, national prestige and individuals' perfervid convictions – and thus develop a life of their own that excludes challenge on more rational grounds. That factor has been strengthened by three others in the case of HS2.

In 2009 HS2 Limited was established as a government-owned company separate from Network Rail. This was intended to fortify the planning of the line and in particular to underpin the complex process of progressing the necessary legislation, but it had the inevitable effect of weakening the relationships necessary for devising a truly national network. A corporate mindset within HS2 Ltd aggravated this by determining to build a world-class "perfect" railway, regardless of the frictions that might ensue.

A second factor is that the sheer scale of the project encourages design and construction companies to perceive huge contractual opportunities and to silence any doubts about it, while Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester are unlikely to question this government largesse, particularly if they remain free to invest locally. This is not corruption, but it does raise disturbing governance questions about how to facilitate sceptical challenge in such circumstances.

And finally, there is a similar concern about the behaviour of the Conservative government. No wide-ranging public consultation about railway policy has taken place, and Parliamentary scrutiny of the Bill authorising construction of Phase 1 was limited to the details of the route, the land-take and the impact on adjacent communities. Yet government ministers have adopted the position that HS2 is so indisputably of national importance that critiques of it, however well-informed, should be disregarded, on occasions brusquely. They were aided by the acceptance of the northern-regeneration argument by the Labour Party, although a significant number of Members of Parliament from all parties have refused to accept the official line.

The situation now (August 2017) is that preparations are being made to start construction in 2018 and that the process for ordering trains has commenced. The Queen's Speech following the inconclusive 2017 General Election included a commitment to introduce the Bill for the first stretch of Phase 2 (between the West Midlands and Crewe). Most recently, detailed proposals for Phase 2 have been published. These are likely to encounter vociferous opposition from groups that have learned lessons from Phase 1, and a wide range of criticisms continues to be heard. It remains unclear where funds for the scheme will come from, and in a highly volatile economic climate resulting from the UK's decision to leave the European Union it is by no means certain that £56 billion can be afforded. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that HS2 may never be built.

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Jonathan Tyler has worked for the railway industry for over 50 years and is passionately committed to enhancing public transport - particularly by introducing a strategic, integrated timetable for Britain's railway. He began his career as a British Rail Traffic Apprentice, has been an Honorary Fellow in the Universities of Leeds and York and since 1983 has worked as an independent consultant. His researches led him to become an active critic of HS2.

Should the march of the Red Tories ever have been halted?

by Phillip Blond

When summing up the election and what has happened to Theresa May, one of Nietzsche's dictums returns to me again and again: the error most people make is that they make one brave move and then don't make another. All the evidence in the Western world is that voters want transformative change – this is what the 2016 vote for Brexit showed. Instead, the Conservatives produced a raft of bleak manifesto policies and ran a repetitively idiotic campaign, exemplified by the slogan "strong and stable". This makes May a tragic figure and Jeremy Corbyn an intelligent one, and it consigns real, and therefore truly brave, change to the outer rim of possibility.

The first ten pages of the manifesto were an elucidation of a new, post-liberal set of Conservative principles that marked perhaps the most radical and welcome shift in modern Conservatism that we have yet seen. It could hardly have been braver, yet the policies that followed were anything but. If they were big, they were penal and negative; if they were positive, they were small and unlikely to make any difference. They were written as if austerity were a permanent rather than a chosen condition.

So, voting Conservative wouldn't really improve very much at all. I am convinced that a hero wrote the manifesto's first pages and that an epigone of "Osborneconomics" decided to write the rest. If only May had been continuously brave and offered policies in line with her early rhetoric, people would have had something to vote for, rather than against.

In a society that is desperate for change, one longing for a return to an economy and a state that works, Labour's manifesto was the more credible. It was both conventional and transformative, offering solutions to those who voted for and against Brexit. Corbyn eschewed ideology and built a coalition around the problems that people face. He wisely parked Brexit as an issue but managed to suggest to Leavers that Labour was indeed for leaving and to Remainers that he was seeking a soft Brexit. Labour captured a greater share of the educated, the young and the middle class, while retaining much of its working-class support.

By contrast, the Tories, in their pivot to working-class Leavers, increasingly lost their pro-European, middle-class constituency. In addition, May looked less a leader of a new One Nation Tory offer than somebody who would increase the penalties of austerity for her own supporters as well as offering more of the same for everyone else. In a way, austerity was George Osborne's poisoned chalice to May; it had gone so deep into the Tory soul that it became – for a leader who ostensibly wanted to break from it – the unacknowledged core of her 2017 manifesto.

Reasons for May's failure abound. Most are conventional – the poor campaign, facile slogans, presidential in focus but without a personality to suit – and not wrong for that. However, reasons for her prior popularity remain unexplored. Before the election, she had a huge poll lead. What was she doing right? And how did she lose it? To my mind, the current electoral reality is captured by one word: insecurity. The economic insecurity experienced by working-class people over the past generation or two is now being felt by the middle class. Brexit only compounds this and it naturally turns middle-class Remainers towards those politicians who might offer a softer landing.

Second, there is social insecurity, a deep anxiety felt by those who rely on the state and its services, which is basically most of us. The NHS is in systemic crisis. Across much of the country, outside London, state education is largely associated with failure and the squandering of opportunity. There is also the staggering lack of state investment that one feels viscerally in places such as the north of England. Finally, there is deep cultural insecurity for which fears about immigration are a poor proxy.

After she became Prime Minister, what Theresa May initially spoke to was her wish to correct this legacy of the New Labour and Cameron/Osborne years. Her early popularity was based on a promise to address with drive and focus, if not all, then at least some of these concerns. Unfortunately, she never did; the manifesto revealed that she never would. Cultural insecurity aside, Corbyn's Labour spoke to most of this spectrum of concerns.

So where are we now? In some manner, we are back in the old oscillation between a Conservatism that can only govern for the market winners and punishes market losers, and a Labour that only has two answers: more money and the central state. Those of us who have

long argued for a new offer that escapes this market/state fluctuation look to have been eclipsed once more by longer-term trends that seem impossible to break.

However, this type of alternative is no alternative at all. Labour's only answer to insecurity is the hard dictates of the central state, which cannot but fail. Even funding the health service properly will not solve the fundamental problems of systemic mis-design that it faces. Conservatism, by contrast, has to speak at scale and breadth and with deep transformative ambition to the needs of the country as well as avoid the hard polarisations that Brexit will bring. It needs to recognise the scale and nature of the deep, endemic problems that the country faces and that austerity will never solve.

If the Tories are to deny state socialism the keys to Downing Street, they must speak to middle- as well as working-class insecurity. Neither Brexit libertarians nor liberal Conservatism can do this – a Red Toryism brave on policy as well as principle remains the sole answer to Corbyn's agenda.

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The 2017 general election: how votes were split between "open and closed"

by Jon Wheatley

Politics in the United Kingdom and in much of Europe more generally is more complicated than a simple struggle between left and right. While issues of redistribution of wealth and private or public ownership of essential services were critical issues in the general election on 8 June, the election took place in the shadow of last year's vote to leave the European Union. Although Brexit did not dominate the election as some commentators thought it would – and some politicians hoped it would – the UK's future relationship with the EU is one element of a broad set of issues that have created a deep division within society. This division is essentially about the significance of "the other", whether that be a power beyond our borders such as the EU, or a minority within, such as immigrants or Muslims. It is a divide between those whom David Goodhart describes as "from anywhere" and those "from somewhere", between cosmopolitan "citizens of the world" and those who feel neglected and left behind by globalisation and feel that government is more interested in pleasing "outsiders" than its own people. Thus politics is not only shaped by (economic) left versus right, but also by a cultural dimension sometimes referred to as "open against closed".

This election was marked above all by a polarisation of the political parties. In line with Theresa May's comment at last year's Conservative Party Conference that "if you believe you're a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere", since the vote to leave the EU and May's victory in last year's leadership contest, the Conservatives have positioned themselves near the "closed" end of the cultural dimension, drawing in former UKIP supporters, but at the same time have downplayed their position on the economic right by promising to increase the living wage and statutory rights for family care and training. This was a deliberate appeal to Labour's former working class heartlands. At the same time, Labour took a very clear position near the left pole of the economic dimension by pledging to bring essential services back into public hands and increasing public expenditure through higher taxes on the wealthy. Finally, the Liberal Democrats and Greens both positioned themselves at the "open" end of the cultural dimension by calling for a second EU referendum. In Scotland, a rather different dynamic played out, with the critical divide being between those who favour independence and those who prefer the Union with the SNP located at one pole and the UK-wide parties at the other.

According to evidence obtained from data from English users of an online Voting Advice Application called WhoGetsMyVoteUK that ran from 24 May until 8 June and attracted some 100,000 users, a major rift has opened up between supporters of the Labour Party, the Greens

and the Liberal Democrats on the one hand, and Conservative and UKIP supporters on the other. Supporters of the former three parties tend to be economically left-wing and "open", while the supporters of the latter two are generally "closed" in the cultural sense, with quite a significant gap between the "open" and "closed" ends of the spectrum that is a kind of no-mans-land for party supporters.

This is illustrated by the diagram below that shows the positions of users who claim to support these five parties on thirty key policy items that divided both parties and voters. The axes in the diagram were generated from a procedure known as Mokken Scale Analysis that groups together items exhibiting relatively consistent response patterns into dimensions or scales. The (cultural) "open" versus "closed" and (economic) "left" versus "right" dimensions were not defined a priori, but instead emerged from the analysis, with a variety of items on the UK's future relationship with the EU, immigration, foreign aid, LGBT-inclusive sex education and Islam forming the first of these two dimensions and items on reducing economic inequalities, welfare benefits, nationalisation of the railways, private sector involvement in the NHS, zero-hours contracts, tuition fees and fracking forming the second.

Figure 1 (below) shows contour lines that enclose 50% of users who a) identified with a particular party and b) intended to vote for that same party. Five parties are included: the Conservatives, Labour, the Liberal Democrats, UKIP and the Greens. The Scottish National party is not included as WhoGetsMyVote UK used a modified questionnaire for Scotland and the positions of Scottish voters cannot therefore be compared directly.
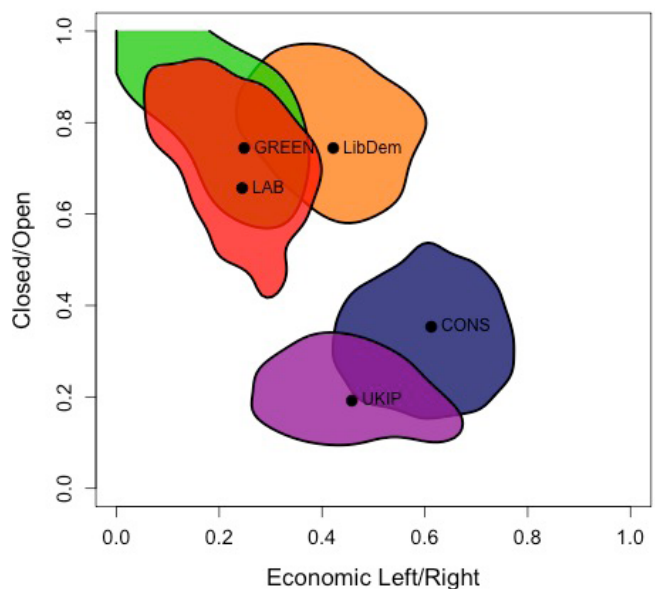
In the end, despite their acceptance of Brexit, Labour managed to gain the support of young, cosmopolitan, "open" voters, eclipsing the Liberal Democrats and Greens, who hoped they could draw on the support of this group, although in those few constituencies in which the Liberal Democrats posed a greater threat to the Conservatives than Labour (such as Oxford West and Abingdon, Twickenham and Bath), these voters proved ready to vote tactically to oust a Tory incumbent. At the same time, the Conservatives picked up the older, more culturally "closed" vote and, as Heath and Goodwin show, even made some headway against Labour in some more working class Northern and Midland constituencies that voted overwhelmingly to leave the EU in last year's referendum. In total, the more "open" parties, i.e. Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the Greens, garnered 51.7% of the vote in England and Wales, while the "closed" parties of the Conservatives and UKIP won 47.0%. The contrast between the policy preferences of these two broad groups can be seen more clearly if we look at the orientations of voters, i.e. those who expressed an intention to vote for each party but did not necessarily identify with that party. Figure 2 (below) shows the orientations of intended party voters with respect to the two dimensions identified. The fact that within each group party voters overlap with one another even more than party supporters, but each group remains very much separate from the other, suggests that within-group tactical voting (often to Labour's advantage) was quite prevalent.

necessarily mean that voters have become more polarised since 2015, it does suggest that each group of parties drew from more distant corners of the ideological spectrum in 2017 than they had done in 2015 and this diversity is exhibited above all in differences along the vertical ("open" versus "closed") axis of the map. In particular, the Conservative Party, as suggested earlier, attracted support from more "closed" voters in 2017 than in 2015.
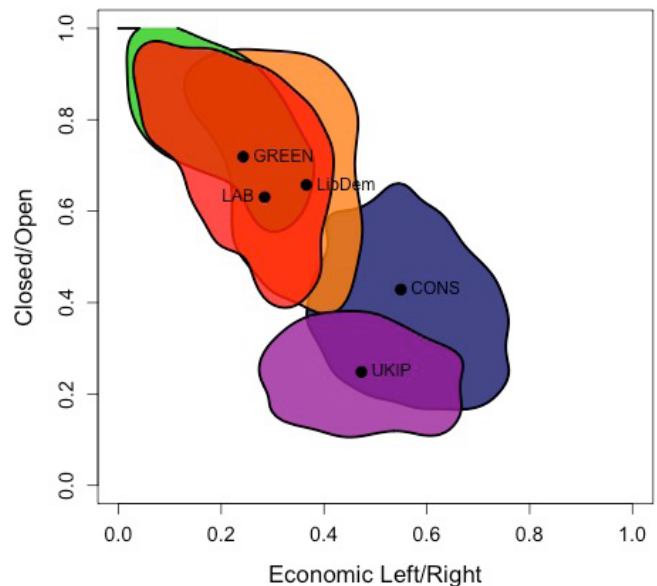
On April 18, when she announced the general election, Theresa May claimed that "The country is coming together, but Westminster is not". Evidence would suggest that both Westminster and the country remain deeply divided. And this division is not so much about "left" versus "right" as about "open" versus "closed".

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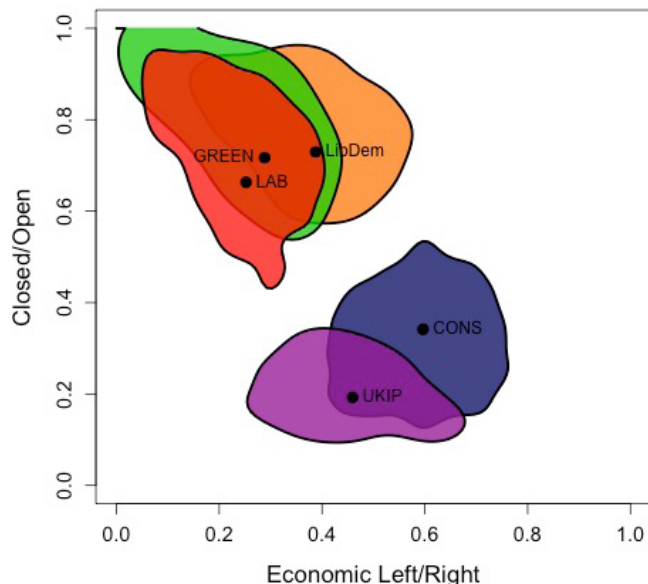
If we now look at groups of voters who claimed to have voted for each of these five parties in 2015, we see a rather different picture. Using the self-reported 2015 vote as the mapping criterion, we see that the gap between the two groups of party voters disappears with Liberal Democrat and Conservative voters overlapping and even Labour and Conservative groups just about touching. The position of each group of 2015 voters are shown in Figure 3 (below). While this does not

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We need to talk about Jeremy: why I was wrong about the 2017 general election

by Ben Worthy

Lots of people are eating humble pie about Jeremy Corbyn. In the 2017 General Election Corbyn was going to destroy the Labour party, lose Wales and lose Bolsover. Yes, yes, I know May technically "won" but anyone who saw Michael Fallon on the TV knows full well who really won and lost. Jeremy Corbyn, the bearded, quasi-Marxist geography teacher and friend of [insert extremist group] deprived May of her majority, stopped her landslide and won the largest increased vote share since 1945. He even swung a near 10,000 vote majority in Canterbury and Canterbury has been Conservative since 1868, apart from a brief Independent Unionist presence 1910-18 (no, I don't know either).

The point, though, is not to eat humble pie but to work out why the humble pie eating is necessary. Now I can argue that I'm not a quants or statistics person. Nor am I an expert in psephology. I am, I could also point out, extraordinarily bad at predicting elections (Listen in to our podcast to hear the wrongness). I wrongly predicted almost every significant political event since 2010:

-Lib-Dems going into Coalition in 2010 ("not going to happen" I scoffed)
-Conservative victory in 2015 ("Don't have the numbers; mathematically impossible" I opined)
-EU referendum of 2016 ("60-40 Remain" I announced just seconds before Sunderland)
-Presidential election 2016 ("Trump's done for" I said sagely after ordering a copy of Clinton's (second) autobiography)

In part it is also the classic problems of a fire station effect and social media echo chambers. You talk and listen to people like you. Fellow lefties, fellow nerds, fellow cynics. But this isn't really enough as an explanation. Here's four reasons I was wrong.

The Polls, the polls. We are obsessed. They shape our thoughts and guide our actions. We forget margins of error and the all-important qualifications that come with them. We are still obsessed despite a growing series of poor performances. In 3 major political contests in the last two years polling has been out or wrong, from the 2015 General Election, to the Brexit referendum and US presidential election. Yet still we interpret, analyse and believe them. We then enmesh ourselves in analysis of polls without stepping back and seeing

them as just one source-and one that has shown to be pretty fallible. YouGov's recent success now also points to the fact that old fashioned polling is out and more complex modelling is in: as the great Stuart Wilks-Heeg put it 'Goodbye polls, hello multilevel regression with post-stratification' (please drop this into casual conversation and impress your friends).

Truisms. Here's a series of truisms about UK elections that Jeremy Corbyn has probably overturned or at least badly dented:
-Campaigns don't matter,
-No one cares about manifestos,
-Older people are all Tories,
-Young people don't turn out
-The press have a decisive influence
-Divided parties don't win elections

The problem, as with polls, is that we hold the rules to be "self-evident truths" rather than things that "normally" but don't "always" happen. Just because you think it, doesn't make it true, as Thom Yorke perhaps once said.

We need to recognise how these "rules" can be bent. Take the example of technology. Andrew Chadwick pointed a year ago to the new 'parties-behaving-like-movements' phenomenon, where old bodies used social media and fluid networks to reach and mobilise voters in new ways. While everyone focused on Conservative Facebook ads, Labour was digitally mobilising, organising and undercutting the power of the traditional media, demolishing several truisms while we looked the other way.

Bias and cynicism. Most academics are left-wing. However, most political scientists, I sense, have been somewhere between unimpressed to hostile towards Corbyn (though I suspect we have many 'shy Corbynites' amongst us). Why the bias? Most of us probably felt he has been a reasonably poor opposition leader by any measure, seemingly unfocused, disorganised and ineffective. For me personally, a red line was his lack of enthusiasm in the Brexit referendum and his later whipping of MPs and Peers over article 50. The only time I felt slightly pulled towards him was when he confessed he didn't know who Ant and Dec were.

Yet I forgot certain things, or at least my bias let me for-

get them. I forgot a politician campaigns in poetry but governs in prose. Corbyn's prose was pretty clunky but his campaigning was, well, Shakespearean, especially when compared with May's approach, which seemed to consist of running around the heath in a lightning storm trying to lose her power (see what I did there?). Abraham Lincoln was once told his Commander in Chief, U.S. Grant, was a drunk. "I can't spare that man"' he answered; "he fights". And so did Corbyn.

I also forgot that politicians and public perceptions of them can change and change very quickly. Look, topically, at how Martin McGuinness and Iain Paisley transformed themselves into doves or how Gordon Brown went from "Stalin to Mr Bean" in a matter of weeks. It's ironic that as the campaign unfolded I was writing about Ken Livingstone, another figure of the Left who, in the 1980s, turned vicious press attacks into a strength and sold Leftist policies as 'common sense' and simple fairness.

Frustratingly, I had glimpsed at how Corbyn could become a powerful anti-elite symbol but then dismissed it (and I want to go on record as being the only academic I know to openly compare Jeremy Corbyn to Charles De Gaulle). I have no such trouble with the Conservatives and have been loudly proclaiming May's total incompetence since I saw her misinterpret article 50 at the largely unreported car-crash of a liaison committee appearance in December 2016.

But it isn't just about bias. It's also cynicism. Studying politics can make you rather pessimistic. Everyone fails, everyone disappoints. For any academic vaguely of the left the last few years have been a series of hammer blows from Miliband's failure to Farage's success, with a great big Trump shaped cherry on top. It was hard to believe someone could again bend the rules and win from the left.

Brexit. Brexit has confused us all and left British Politics in flux. Divided parties, divided countries and referendums, real and threatened, have all clumped into one huge rolling political and constitutional crisis that dare not speak its name. The fault lines run across Scotland, especially across Northern Ireland, and also through the "Two Englands" that Jennings and Stoker have brilliantly mapped. But do people care?

Remember, the election was supposed to be all about Brexit. It was called because (1) those opposed to Brexit (9 Lib-Dem MPs and 55 SNP) could actively sabotage the other (586 MPs) who supported or accepted it and (2) because the EU were plotting to throw the election to Labour ("How's the paranoia meter running?" as Bob Dylan used to say).

Then something odd happened. Brexit stopped being

discussed in the campaign. The Tories offered no further detail than they had in their utterly opaque White Paper that gave us all 14 weeks holiday a year. Labour's Brexit plans would have confused the oracle at Delphi and, even now, I still can't understand whether we would be in the Single Market or out.

But while the parties side-stepped it the voters didn't. We are still awaiting proper analysis and data. So far, it seems, as the great John Curtice put it "Thursday's results revealed that voters had not forgotten about Brexit." So it was, in a sense, the revenge of the Remainers who swung heaviest for Labour with Corbyn capturing even a good chunk, according to YouGov, of 25-44 year old Conservative Remainers. Yet Labour also drew in an anti-establishment UKIP vote up north. It's almost impossible to know what to conclude except, perhaps, that Labour's fudging was masterful as well as infuriating and that May lost not with the dementia tax but with her hard Brexit speech in January. Perhaps.

And so? So what do we do now? There's more mileage in connecting with activists and those who 'do' politics (a few Momentum and Tory workers wouldn't go amiss at conferences) and also in understanding technology and change more generally. I also need to step back from media horse race and prediction game: I'll aim to offer insight without predictions or at least give more wary speculations. Perhaps the best thing that could happen is to open up politics to other disciplines-historians, anthropologists and literature scholars can all offer insights (see this talk by Dr Declan Gilmore-Kavanagh on Boris and Jeremy here). We should certainly sellotape health warnings and margins of error to our heads and keep in mind Martin Luther King's and/or Pliny the Younger's dictum that "it always seems impossible, until it is done".

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Increased diversity in Parliament: the case for centralising candidate nominations

by Maria Sobolewska

The general election on 8 June saw another record breaking increase in the ethnic diversity of Members of Parliament. On that basis, there is reason to ask what led to this increased diversity and what could induce further progress towards a House of Commons that reflects more strongly the ethnic composition of the British electorate.

For those who study ethnic minority representation in Britain, two things stand out in the 2017 election. Firstly, all but one ethnic minority MPs got re-elected. This can be linked to the fact that – especially on the Conservative benches – ethnic minority MPs are now more likely to have safe or winnable majorities, rather than having to defend marginal seats. Secondly, a new batch of 12 ethnic minority MPs continue the trend of the growing ethnic diversity of Westminster. But, what these two new developments have in common is that they are a result of centralisation of party candidate selection.

Comparing elections and interventions. It is rare for political science to benefit from natu-ral experiments, particularly where data from both before and after are available. Yet, the 2017 general election offers such an experiment for parlia-mentary representation of ethnic minorities. The 2015 and 2017 elections were fought very close in time, on the same constituency boundaries, with virtually unchanged electorate in each constituency.

Moreover, the main difference between these two elections was how the candidates were selected. In 2015, the parties knew that the election was coming and thus had time to let the traditional constituency selection process take place. Applicants from a centrally appro-ved list could apply for multiple vacant seats and bar any exceptions - such as when the seat was declared an All Woman Shortlist for Labour - local constituencies could choose relatively freely from the applications made.

In the run-up to the 2017 election, however, both the Conservative Party HQ and Labour's National Executive Committee (NEC) made emergency provisions which largely scaled down local selectors' influence. Conservatives gave short-lists of three applicants to choose from to every marginal, target, and retirement seat and simply nominated candidates for the rest. Labour encouraged 2015 candidates to stand again, but NEC took part in all other selections (and were the only selectors in case of retirement seats). The main parties had made various efforts to increase diversity of their

candidates and MPs in the past, but all these efforts have - with the exception of Liberal Democrats - came from the central party. David Cameron's mission to detoxify and modernise the Conservative party is a case in point: he tried to introduce a central, diverse, list of priority candidates. Although he was unable to force through the scheme as such, his efforts resulted in a heightened awareness of priority candidates from minority backgrounds. As a result, the Conservative minority representation increased from 2 to 11 MPs at the 2010 election, with seven of these new MPs hailing from the failed central list.

The scale of the problem. How serious is the problem of ethnic disadvantage at the stage of selection? Multiple stories of discrimination at the stage of candidate selection emerge from interviews with minority politicians. In 2015, this problem was investigated on a larger scale by the Representative Audit of Britain project, which conducted a survey of all candidates standing on behalf of the main political parties in Britain (including UKIP, Green and regional parties). The data contained 97 ethnic minority candidates from all parties, giving us an unprecedented insight into whether the selection process works fairly.

What the Representative Audit of Britain data show is that the usual selection process disadvantages mino-rities. Looking at figure 1 we see that minority candidates had to – on average – apply for more seats, interview in more seats and contest more shortlists than their white counterparts before they were successfully nominated. And because the data only include candidates, it is likely an under-estimation of the problem. Such a pattern would strongly suggest that ethnicity is a disadvantage and that many more ethnic minority politicians were likely to fail to gain a seat nomination altogether.
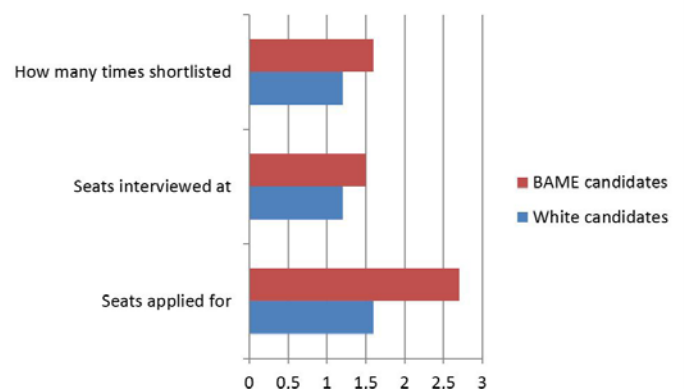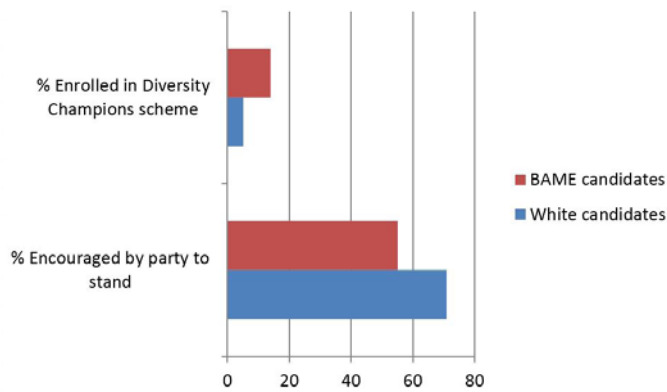

Figure 1: Number of seats applied for, interviewed for and shortlisted for, before successful nomination; by candidate ethnicity (2015 general election)

The second indicator that the usual party selection procedures may be discriminatory is the seeming lack of encouragement for minority candidates. Figure 2 presents data showing that while 71% of white candidates were asked to stand by their party (whether on local, regional or national level), this was true for only 55% of ethnic minority candidates. Although more minority candidates benefitted from being enrolled in Diversity Champions scheme than their white peers, these programmes had a limited reach with overall only 19% of all candidates having taken part. Figure 2: Percentage of candidates who were encouraged by party to stand, and those who benefited from diversity programmes; by candidate ethnicity (2015 general election)

Can this disadvantage be explained by prejudice alone? Obviously there are some alternative explanations to why ethnic minority MPs struggle with the traditional selection procedures. They are on average younger than the white candidates, less experienced and with fewer years of party membership and activism behind them (on average 9.3 years in contrast to 15.5 years of white candidates). They are also less likely to have relevant experience: only 23 per cent were a local councillor, while 40 per cent white candidates have this sort of experience (see Figure 3).
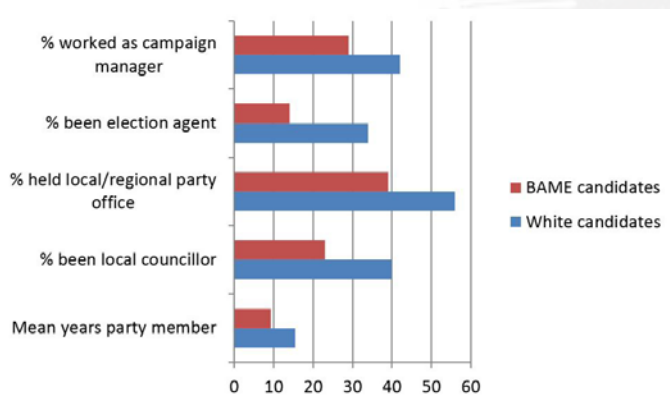
However, given ethnic minority populations as a whole have a younger age profile than the white British population, and has a fairly recent history of immigration, it is unlikely that these disparities in level of experience will close very quickly. To wait for this population to reach comparable levels of political experience to the white British population would certainly stall the nomination and election of more ethnic minority candidates for at least a decade.

What 2017 shows us is that if parties want to continue to improve their ethnic diversity in Westminster, they will likely need to rely on centralised procedures for candidate selection in the future. The election also shows us that they are willing to do so, at least under the particular circumstances of this year: an election following soon after the last one and with limited time for constituency selection processes to run their full course. While local autonomy is for the good for all who cherish a decentralised internal democracy in parties, there is also reason to commend intervention by the respective party HQs if a more diverse House of Commons is a genuine ambition.

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It has been a while since Britain was the "workshop of the world", and the story about the decline of British manufacturing in the post war period is a well-known one. A more conflictual debate concerns the effects of policies pursued by the Thatcher-governments in the 1980s – did they damage Britain's industrial base beyond repair, resulting in a government-induced deindustrialisation of the country, or did Thatcher simply remove the "artificial props" of government subsidies to industries which had long since become uncompetitive? However this may be, it is clear that there still is industrial production taking place in Britain today, and in some sectors, highly advanced production too. In the autumn edition of British Politics Review we ask the question: where does Britain as a manufacturing nation stand today, and how are British industries likely to be affected by Brexit?

The autumn edition of British Politics Review is due to arrive in November 2017.