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The articles in this issue were all commissioned in the immediate aftermath of the UK's Brexit referendum result in June 2017 and the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States in November 2017 to present a rapid sociological response to the challenges and questions posed by these tumultuous events. Ostensibly these are two very different kinds of political events. The Brexit referendum in the UK was an unprecedented popular vote on Britain's membership of the European Union, whereas Trump was elected as a Republican candidate during the usual cycle of presidential elections. Notwithstanding the prominence of politicians such as Nigel Farage or Boris Johnson, Brexit was not focused around specific individual leaders, whereas the figure of Trump himself looms indelibly large in the American case.   Brexit will have be bound to have huge long term constitutional implications for the UK, whereas Trump's victory might have less fundamental consequences.

And yet, there is also a clear sense of resonances between these two political events. Some of these resonances are superficial. Both were 'radically unexpected'. The media, political institutions, and what might be termed 'public opinion' – at least of the liberal commentariat –was shocked by the unexpected results. They thus both speak to what might be termed the collapse of a certain kind of 'liberal political rationality', in which the political 'rules of the game' were well established and could lead to generally predictable outcomes within normally expected limits. Both Trump and Brexit can be seen to mark the eruption of new kinds of social forces, previously excluded, into the political arena in powerful, visceral, and protean ways. Racism, xenophobia, sexism, elitism, marginality – issues which had previously been shooed away from the formal political arena, even though they continued to bubble ferociously in the political sidelines – erupted with remarkable force. The term 'populism' has sometimes been used to label and define this moment, but this is currently a loosely defined, and possibly inappropriate tool for this purpose – as several of the papers in this issue discuss.

It is for these reasons that we approached leading sociologists and political scientists in the USA and Europe to offer contributions to make sense of Brexit and Trump. We present these papers to our audiences as analytical and methodological resources to think with. However, we do this not in the spirit of hyperbole or to dramatically announce the arrival of a new social and political order. As we have already indicated above, this kind of reflection abounds in the media, but is not what we seek to re-produce here. In fact, the tenor of these papers is nuanced, looking to unravel the longer term processes, ambivalences and complexities in the Brexit/Trump phenomenon. The papers thus seek to avoid sensationalism in order to provide a nuanced and rounded readings. .

This having been said, contributors insist on the urgency of their inquiries and the need for sociology to reflect carefully on how these events speak to the need to renew our sociological imagination and drive in the about . All of the best sociology is passionate, engaged, and committed, but the stakes involved in championing contemporary sociology needs to change significantly in response to recent events. The papers of this special issue are therefore seeking to recharge the sociological agenda to better equip us to critically diagnose early 21st century social change.

In elaborating this argument, we pull out three key issues which run through different of the papers, and which we think lay the platform for further sociological work in the future.

1: The intersections of the social and political.

It hardly needs underscoring that sociology has always been fundamentally concerned with politics, and in particular in expanding the boundaries of the political to extend the range of actors and issues which can be seen to have political efficacy. The history of sociology has therefore been fundamentally concerned with recognising the agency of subaltern groups, and in exposing forms of (sometimes oblique and indirect) domination . This is a heritage of which we are immensely proud. Yet, whilst recognising this point, it is clear that there has been a separation of the concerns of sociologists and political sciences in recent decades which has limited the extent of inter-disciplinary engagement regarding the broader social dynamics which feed into formal political alignments and mobilisation. These have left sociologists somewhat poorly placed to address formal political processes and they have largely left this floor for the political scientists to command.

This trend can be traced to a number of factors. Within sociology, we can detect a shift from the concerns around inequalities of race, gender class, status and party, which classical sociologists (such as Marx, Weber, Dubois, etc) placed at the heart of their analysis, to a focus on extending political analyses of a broad range of social and cultural processes. Georg Simmel (or Gabriel Tarde) might be seen as the underpinning force for this more 'quietist' sociology, where the emphasis is drawing out the more opaque political forces underpinning what appear to be routine aspects of social life. We might see the recent intellectual currents influenced by Foucault and Latour – who have become major theoretical forces in sociology in recent decades, more so in Europe - as following in this current. Here, what can be seen as mundane 'socio-cultural-technical' arrangements ranging from schools, prisons, scientific laboratories and the like are made amenable to analysis by a focus on how power becomes mobilised through networks, technologies, and interactions. This current of work has rightly been highly significant, but the cost has been to distract the sociological gaze from the arena of formal political mobilisation, which has attracted decreasing attention over recent decades. Perhaps a striking 'limit case' is the significance of the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu, who more than any other major figure sought to keep the classical focus on the social-political dialectic in view, but whose work could also lead into a more specialised sociology of lifestyles which could appear rather specialised and arcane (see the discussion in Atkinson 2015). As a result of these shifts, the contribution of sociologists to debates in psephology and party mobilisation has withered nearly to the point of extinction (with some brave and occasional exceptions such as the work of Anthony Heath in the UK or Michael Hout or Jeff Manza in the US). 'Political sociology' as a sub-field is stronger in the US than in the UK, but even in the US has lost considerable authority.

By contrast, political scientists have focused extensively on formal political mobilisation, but with an increasingly limited recognition of the wider sociological factors which may be implicated in political alignments. The classic age of Seymour Martin Lipset, Stein Rokkan, Juan Linz, Reinhart Bendix, Barrington Moore, in which sociology and politics intertwined is now long gone. Instead, weaker or stronger versions of political institutionalism prevails, which generally avers that political mechanisms (such as electoral systems, party structures, or forms of leadership) are the key drivers of political change, so endorsing a kind of

circularity in which the autonomy of formal politics from wider social considerations is both taken for granted but also re-emphasised.

This uneasy separation of sociology from politics can, indeed, be seen as reflecting an important trend of recent decades that political agents of different kinds – parties, interest groups, media organisations - were apparently more skilful at shaping the political agenda so that a certain kind of political predictability could prevail, with deeply contentious issues largely being kept away from the formal political arena.

It is, however, precisely this neat world which has been blown apart by the Brexit/Trump moments, in which the 'political establishments' were found wanting, being unable to contain strongly held critical voices who were intent on challenging political orthodoxy. One sign of this is the uncertainty of the opinion polling industry in being able to accurately predict election results. Indeed, we might remind ourselves that the Brexit referendum was only conducted because of the election of a Conservative government in 2015 which had not been forecast by pollsters. In the context of declining response rates, and the rise of digital platforms, the political 'establishment' appears to have been seriously challenged.

From another perspective, and at least on the face of it, voters for Brexit and Trump were drawn from groups who felt marginalised, undermined, and unrepresented by formal political forces, and wanted to make their point against what was generally seen as a political establishment (see, in the British case, Evans and Tilley 2017). These new forces articulated powerful concerns around issues of class and economic inequality; race, ethnicity and immigration; nationalism; gender, sexuality and family; and locality and belonging which had to a significant degree been marginalised by powerful political actors. And with this development, the need to fully engage sociological and political analyses is once more fully underscored.

 It is in this spirit that we have brought together sociologists and political scientists in these pages, to seek to forge tools which can better understand both the range of social forces at play, and their mediation by political agencies and structures. It is thus instructive that political scientists such as Peter Hall are returning to sociological concepts of status, whilst sociologists such as Michael McQuarrie focus on the dynamics of political alignments, or

that Patrick LeGales is collaborating with political scientist Desmond King to develop a conception of the state as driven by competing imperatives.

2: The new politics of economic inequality

It is hardly original to note that a powerful language of inequality informs the Brexit/Trump phenomenon. The language of 'left behinds', 'elites', racial inequalities, and even the question of class looms large in any quick perusal of commentary on these election results. This chimes very strongly with the high profile work of economists such as Thomas Piketty (2014) and Joe Stigltiz (2013) which has placed inequality back into the centre of social scientific analysis. Trump and Brexit appear to be an indication that inequality is indeed spilling over into the political realm, and that we need to address this relationship more fully, especially as it intersect with questions of recognition (Lamont 2017).

This is a striking turnaround from views about 'class dealignment' which dominated debates during the 1980s and 1990s. Brexit and Trump cannot be understood in isolation from the dramatic increase in economic inequality which has been evident in both the USA and UK in recent years, and is indeed much more marked than in other developed nations.

In some quarters, the reassertion of economic inequality has led to the view that the power of 'identity politics' has run its course, and that issues of redistribution have reasserted their priority. Numerous papers in this special issue rehearse this crucial question, with respect to gender, racism, and class, and in every case show that there is no simple eclipse of identity politics, but rather that questions of identity are bound up with the reconfiguration of economic inequality, so that identity politics gains increasing traction. McCall and Orloff discuss this with respect to gender in the US, insisting on the need for better intersectional analysis.

As part of this move, we need to be clear that rapid rise of economic inequality is not simply about the revival of class as an overarching 'master variable' but rather it is about the re-making of class, and its intersections with gender, race and ethnicity. The papers in this issue, need a different, more intersectional and more modulated approach to class in order to adequately comprehend these recent developments. Hitherto, the term 'populism' has

been used to capture the new dynamics at work, but this is at best an umbrella term which suggests the need for unpacking, and several papers here suggest more nuanced approaches which repudiate the view that Brexit and Trump can simply be reduced to a populist backlash from those who have lost out.

From the 1950s to the early 2000s sociological approaches to class were beset by understanding the boundaries between middle and working classes (see the discussion in Savage et al 2015). These two classes were seen as two largest classes, and were also characterised by very different cultural and political worldviews: blue collar and upper status white collar; relatively uneducated and well educated, and so on (see for instance Butler and Savage 1995). This way of conceptualising class was enshrined in the most influential models of class, whether originating from John Goldthorpe (e.g. 1980), or Erik Olin Wright (1985; 1996). By contrast, studies of elites were marginal within sociology (see the discussion in Savage and Williams 2008), whilst the analysis of poverty was discomfited by concerns with the underclass concept, and also tended to be articulated in racialized ways. Gurminder Bhambra's paper offers an important argument about how traditional appeals to class miss fundamental features of contemporary mobilisation, especially questions of race.

The Brexit/Trump moment indicates that class is now operating in different kinds of modalities, in which the boundary between middle and working class captures only part of the stakes at play. Of particular visibility is a new anti-elite politics, in which popular mobilization targets very high earners, political establishments, liberal professionals and the like. The way that forms of anti-establishment discourse shapes political sentiment is discussed by Flemmen and Savage. What is also needed is a better understanding of political mobilisation amongst a group which is often too crudely characterised as the 'left behinds'. Lisa Mckenzie offers a powerful ethnographic study of the extent to which poor Britons feel marginalised and excluded by political forces. Lamont, Park and Ayala-Hurtado consider how Trump's political rhetoric appealed to the American working class in search of recognition. This emphasis on the stretching out of economic inequality into the cultural realm, is a vital agenda for future sociological analysis, as these essays testify.

3: Dystopic globalisation: nationalism, xenophobia, and racism

Since the 1990s, the sociological agenda has been dominated by theories of globalisation, which in the hands of Giddens and Beck (in sociology), presaged a world shorn of the traditional infrastructure of modernity – notably the nation state – and a politics of risk, insecurity and instability. The powerful critique of 'methodological nationalism' (e.g.Urry 2003; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002) has led to a strong interest in diaspora processes, which has cross fertilised with research on race, ethnicity and immigration. However, we can also detect a powerful bifurcation between (often quantitative) forms of sociology which continue to analyse and compare national societies as if they are self-contained entities and forms of sociology influenced by the 'mobility paradigm' which have little to say about the ongoing significance of nations.

This separation has been highly unfortunate. Since the early 2000s, it has become increasingly clear that powerful globalising forces have not led to a homogeneous global social space, but have in fact intensified nationalism, often as a mechanism mobilised against global flows, but also – as in the case of Brexit – dismantling European institutional forms which seek to regulate and even forestall global capital flows. Understanding sociologically how nations are not an historical throwback, but can operate in powerful new ways as a result of globalising processes, is a key challenge of our time. The work of development economists offers a vital platform for this thinking. Branko Milanovic's (2016) foundational work inking together survey data on income inequality across most of the world's nations shows how the convergence of economic prosperity between the advanced and developing nations, allied to the relative loss of income from the middle and working classes in the developed nations who are falling behind relative to the rising middle classes in emerging nations, gives a very different understanding of the power of nationalism today. During the Fordist years, the nation state offered a powerful vehicle for working and middle classes in the developed nations to prosper, tucked as they were behind trade and tariff boundaries. However, in more globalising conditions, it is these middle and low income earners in the US and Europe who have experienced relative loss.

With a few exceptions, sociologists have been slow to recognise how the nation state is being reconfigured in this context, and how this reconfiguration involves novel modes of state making, rather than re-invention of older forms, as well as new forms of both elite and

popular political mobilisation. This is the focus of the paper by King and Le Gales which insists that state-making processes have not been dismantled, but rather have been redirected in the context of global neo-liberal capitalism. This theme is also taken up in by Bart Bonikowski who elaborates on the analytical differences which need to be made between nationalism, authoritarianism and populism, and by Flemmen and Savage who draw out the different registers in which the advantaged and disadvantaged Britons narrate nationality.

The questions of race, immigration, and xenophobia loom large in this new sensitivity towards the nation state, as the papers by Larry Bobo as well as Bhambra bring out with great force. Given the instabilities in the structuring of the national and social 'body', the racialized immigrant becomes a highly-charged figure. Overt appeals to racist political discourses, largely formally abandoned in recent decades (even though informally still highly potent) have become live and powerful forces. In criticising the 'post-race' view of American politics, Bobo reasserts the importance of race in American society and politics. The precise way that racist appeals play out is complex, and it is necessary to avoid simplistic interpretations of white backlash. Lamont et al show how Trump's political discourse deploys innovative boundary definitions. Flemmen and Savage resist the idea that the 'left behind' disenfranchised Britons are strongly racist, and argue instead that it is economically advantaged populations who are more likely to articulate these views. As with class, therefore, the challenge is to recognise the multiple ways that racism and nationalism can play out, and how there is no necessary populist backlash.

The challenges to the nation state are also implicated in the striking emergence of geographical divisions, were discussed in several papers (see notably McQuarrie, King & Le Gales, and McKenzie). In both UK and the US, there is a dramatic accentuation of a political divide between big metropolises and older industrial cities provinces, which are also bound up with powerful economic and social divides. This reassertion of the 'urban-rural' divide, which comes after generations of urban sociologist have proclaimed, in Lefebvrian vein, that spatial differentiation is declining, appears to be a fundamental feature of the new political landscape

Conclusion

We hope that the papers here will be important reference points for sociologists as we seek to make sense of our current challenges. Above all, what they represent is an insistence that we need t think outside our specialist areas, in order to fully recognise the intersectionalities and links between social and political processes. This vision, of course, has long been central to the sociological imagination, though tendencies towards professionalism and research specialisation has sometimes led away from fully following through on this need. We hope that the papers in this special issue will therefore provoke wider engagement and debate. But we also offer these papers as offering critical resources as we seek to forge a better, more hopeful future.

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