

T15P03 / Europe after Brexit

Topic : T15 / Democracy, Political Regime and Policy Process

Chair : John Fossum (ARENA, University of Oslo)

Second Chair : Russell Solomon (RMIT University)

Third Chair : Graham Wilson (Boston University)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The momentous decision by a small majority of the UK population on June 23, 2016 to say yes to Brexit will likely give the UK the status as the EU's first 'ex-member state'. The process of dissolution has not started yet; it will likely be triggered in early 2017. It is really a matter of two closely related and hard to disentangle processes: on the one hand to organise the UK's exit from the EU, and on the other hand to sort out the UK's future relationship to the EU. The fact that well over 1/7 of all UK law has EU-origins after 40 years' of UK membership in the dynamically integrating EU ensures that this will be a very complex and comprehensive undertaking. For the EU it is also a significant matter. On the one hand is the question of EU complicity in the Brexit decision: is it as some Brexiters have argued a testimony to the EU's failure and therefore only a matter of time until other states will follow Britain's lead? Or is it a domestic matter, a reflection of the fact that the UK has never sorted out its relationship to the EU that has been ambiguous from the very start. It is fair to say that when the UK was in it was never completely in (consider non-membership in Schengen and various opt-outs). Now that it is on its way out it may not be completely out, especially if it wants to have full access to the EU's internal market. For the EU as a constitutional construct when a member state leaves the EU will have to reconstitute itself. This process may be complicated insofar as demands for further popular referenda win through, or if significant divisions emerge inside the EU on the terms of the UK's secession and future relationship. The Brexit saga is very interesting from a social science perspective in the sense that it raises a number of fundamental questions pertaining to political organising, political community and political belonging in a highly interdependent world. The EU has long been seen as a political experiment whose further development and entrenchment has often come as a result of crises. Will Brexit – in a situation when the EU is facing a particularly toxic mixture of other crises – be the straw that breaks the camel's back? Is Brexit a sign of EU dissolution and a return to a Europe of nation-states? Or is there no returning back - neither for the UK, nor for Europe's other nation-states? It could be said that if the EU is divisible, so is the UK. Scotland may yet seek a new referendum to separate from the rest of the UK and (re)enter the EU. If the EU starts to unravel there is no assurance that there will be a return to a Europe of nation-states.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The EU has long been considered a major political experiment in political organisation and political community. The instantiation of Brexit may bring this to a head: will a UK that separates from the EU return to nation-state normality or is that a mere fiction? Is an EU without the UK going to be sustainable? May it even be able to consolidate further? Is it possible to restore sovereignty in a situation of complex interdependence? Does Brexit signal a return to nation-states in Europe, or is that simply a Brexiteers' wet-dream? How to organise the process of dissolution, on both sides? Can such a situation be controlled (and contained)? What are the implications for the many European citizens that live in the UK and the UK citizens that live across the EU?

In this panel we invite papers that focus on Europe after Brexit, broadly speaking. We are interested in papers that broadly speaking examine implications for public policy making in a regional as well as global context given the complex interdependence of states, including implications of Brexit for the EU; the process of separation; the UK's options; and the broader implications for the UK, be it in terms of policy substance or in terms of institutional relations – from financial markets to UK human rights policy.

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Session 1

Wednesday, June 28th 14:00 to 16:00 (Block B 3 - 2)

Brexit and the EU: Constitutive impetus; re-constitutive challenge; or de-constitutive threat?

John Fossum (ARENA, University of Oslo)

Human rights under stress: Brexit and the implications for UK and EU human rights policy

Russell Solomon (RMIT University)

From 'Yuexit' to 'Brexit' and after it: Did the return to Europe of nation-states begin in Yugoslavia in 1991?

Bosko Picula (Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb)

British Foreign Policy after 'Brexit': Implications for Britain's Special Relationship to the US

Kai Oppermann (University of Sussex)

Democracy in Eastern Europe after Brexit

Theodor Tudoroiu (The University of the West Indies)