

# Brexit and its impact on tourism and security: The View from Texas, USA

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Peter Tarlow

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**By Peter Tarlow. Ph.D.**

Because a number of people asked me to comment on Brexit, I decided to write a short essay on the subject. I originally wrote this piece in Portuguese, but now a few days after the British vote, I have translated it and expanded it as more information begins to emerge. By the time, this short piece is published new information may appear that will contradict what I am about to write. This essay, written on June 27, 2016, then is based on what I know at this point in time. I fully accept responsibility that as time marches on; the realities of Brexit may well have changed.

Despite the lack of data some things are becoming clear and there were a number of signs that were present and few of us chose to see, and that includes me! Only now, once the need has occurred did many of us see the data that were present but unobserved.

Part of this reason for this partial intellectual blindness is that many in the so-called people who form the “intelligentsia” have little contact with the “other people”. In these bubbles often academics and those in the elites principally speak only with each other.

I remember the election of George McGovern versus Nixon where most of my New York academic friends were certain of a McGovern victory. The flaw in their analysis problem was that they only spoke with each other. The results, much to their surprise, were that Nixon won the election with one of the greatest landslides in United States political history. My academic and intellectual friends totally misread the mood of the country.

Added to this collective groupthink is the problem of polling. In theory, polls reflect the statistical mood of those polled, yet more and more people have begun to wonder if polls are now mere instruments to shape public opinion rather than reflect public opinion. All sides now issue polling results with often differing results. The poll then becomes news in and of itself, and thus, instead of reflecting what the public thinks, the poll may be a means to manipulate what the pollster wants the public to think. In this brave new world, facts are no longer facts, but may be mere reflections of political positions

So before we begin our analysis here are a few potential facts

- 1) Assuming the data given to us are correct, Brexit was least supported by younger members of the urban areas. These would have been the people who grew up with the European Union and are most accustomed to an intertwined global world. Because their opinions tend to be media shaped, they have access to a great deal of information yet often suffer from information overload. Having grown up in a non-questioning world of right and wrong short answers, these people often accept what the media say without asking hard questions.
- 2) It appears that many in the United Kingdom harbor, as is true in much of the world, resentments against the academic elites. They tend to see academics as arrogant and manipulative and wonder why academics love the lower classes as long as the lower classes do what the academics and elites want them to do (or think).
- 3) The most highly regulated countries in Europe seem to have dealt the least well with Brexit. Countries such as Greece and Spain may have a more difficult time than other European countries that are less regulated and more innovative.
- 4) Many of those who voted against the European Union association did not necessarily vote against policies but rather where the policies were made. They saw the bureaucrats in Brussels as unelected and not beholden to anyone. If this analysis is true, then their vote was a vote for democracy rather than a vote against any particular group of people or policy.

I want to emphasize that with the passage of time I may repent what I have written. I am not a European and am not physically there. My conclusions are drawn both from historic examples and at a distance. On the other hand at times being at a distance allows us to see the total forest rather than merely the trees

Because at the time of this writing there is still a dearth of data, I will limit my comments to three areas. These are:

- 1) An attempt to analyze where those in favor of staying in the European Union erred
- 2) The European Union's possible future as seen from a distance
- 3) The short term and longer-term consequences of Brexit with special emphasis on issues of security and tourism

Although we may argue that non-Europeans should not become too involved in the eternal affairs of another part of the world, it is worth noting that we live in an interconnected postmodern world in which much of the world revels in commenting about the internal affairs of my country: the United States. If others can comment on our internal affairs than surely “what is good for the goose is good for the gander”. What happens in other parts of the world should also matter to Americans, and we too should try to participate in a worldwide discussion.

Before beginning I remember the words of Shakespeare when he wrote in his play: *Julius Caesar*: "Cry 'Havoc!' and let slip the dogs of war." Shakespeare warns us that change not only involves hope but also dangers, to be on the precipice of change is to look into the depths of darkness with the hope that light shall, at some close or distant point in time, appear. Perhaps that premonition best reflects the post Brexit world.

### **Part 1: An analysis from across the seas**

From Texas, a distance of over 6,000 miles from Europe, the European world seems both similar and different to that of the United State. From a distance, Europe appears to be a continent divided between elites, who control the media and through the media much of public opinion, and a proletariat seeking to hold onto its national soul.

Perhaps we might argue that there are two “Europes” occupying a single piece of land. There is the Europe of elites. They use different names but basically believe in the same policies. They often speak of socialism but use it as a means to maintain the poor in a state of perpetual poverty while railing against that poverty. The European intelligentsia knows how to use key words and ideological manipulations. To compare the rhetoric with government actions is often to feel as if one has entered into the pages of a George Orwell book filled with doublespeak in which lies are presented as facts and truths are declared fictions. In today’s world of mass media, big lies are often convincing, fact checkers are rarely checked, and public opinion is manipulated with social psychology’s best techniques. Rarely does the average person know what to believe or whom to trust. In this new world, there is a sense among many that the more one knows the further one is from truth and reality.

There is also an eternal Europe, people who have lived a life dedicated to the ideals of the nation-state rather than the supra state. Many of these people believe that both elites and the governments they represent have taken advantage of them. They may be

mistaken, but as anyone in tourism science knows, perceptions may be false but they are true in their consequences. These people may not be the proletariat envisioned by Marx or Marxist philosophers, but they are loyal to the country and do not want to be subjected to the whims of others. They most closely resemble the Macabbean freedom fighters of two thousand years ago. These were poor Jews who managed to resist power from Hellenistic internationalist Jewish elites. The Macabbean revolution was the Brexit vote of its day. It fought against those who sought to subsume Israel's independence into a Greek-language common market. The commonalities between modern Britain and ancient Israel are so close as to be astounding.

There also is the issue that the European Union was envisioned not as a political union but as solely an economic union. As is typical of bureaucracies, the bureaucrats in Brussels soon entered into power-creep, expanding their power and transforming what was to be a common currency into a series of supra national regulations. Once again their actions were highly similar to the actions of Antiochus IV resulting some 2,000 years ago in a civil war within Israel.

As in Ancient Israel, internationalism or globalism (then packaged as Hellenism and today as the European Union's post-nationalism or the global economy) has both positive and negative points. Here are a few of them:

#### Positive points

There is no doubt that the supra-Government established in Brussels (but many believe under German economic domination) has succeeded in stopping Europe's periodic march toward outright inter-nation war. On the other hand there are those that argue that Europe is now headed toward a new form of violence, not called war but rather crime and terrorism. Has Europe replaced the old form of war with a new form of under the radar and under reported form of violence?

- 1) Travel in the EU is easier today because of the EU. Visitors need not go through major checkpoints once inside the EU's borders. Additionally, citizens of one EU nation have a right to reside and work in another nation. From a tourism perspective, the use of a common currency and the ability to cross borders is a major benefit to all European Union nations.
- 2) There is a commonality of regulations and often policies. This commonality also makes life a lot simpler for those who travel between countries and from the perspective of tourism, it permits tourism entities to work with a large block of nations rather than having to negotiate on a nation by nation basis.
- 3) The European Union has done a relatively good job in holding Europe's right and left wing extremists in check. Although the continent continues to suffer from both

right and left wing hate groups, their influence has been greatly reduced due to the efforts of the EU.

The European Union also has a number of negatives. Among these are

The EU was envisioned as an economic union, many in the EU never wished nor imagined that they would have to, surrender national sovereignty. The creeping accumulation and transfer of power from local control to a non-elected government in Brussels has sounded the alarm bells among some British and other European citizens that they either act now or lose their independence.

The fact that the European Union has some nations within its sphere that are highly productive while containing others that are less economically viable, might be less important were Europe to have been one nation with one common language and culture. Under the present circumstances, these disparities have led to resentments by both the haves and have-nots and the realization that the separation of economies from political power may prove to be an untenable daydream. For example, the BBC writing on June 27, 2016 speaks of a renewed fear of a Grexit and in referring to the mood in Greece notes:

*“Its people and government are embittered by the imposition of harsh austerity measures by the EU and IMF. Those bailout conditions have brought years of deep recession and high unemployment, but have done little to reduce Greece's huge debt burden. And as a frontline country in the migrant crisis, Greece feels let down by Brussels and EU member states, in its struggle to cope with the arrival of more than a million refugees and migrants over the past 18 months. The anger shows in a pan-European survey **published by the Pew Research Center** earlier this month, in which Greeks top the table in their response to many of the questions asked. For example, 71% of those who took part had an unfavourable view of the EU - far higher than in the UK. More than 90% disapproved of the way the EU was handling economic issues and the migrant crisis.”*

Many in the ruling classes and among those in academic circles have become blind to popular sentiment. Both newspapers and the non-print media have constantly seen their credibility erode as they became more politically oriented. People tend to read/hear what they agree with and intellectual dialogues have all too often become bi-monologues in which both parties try to shout down the other without ever hearing what the other is saying. Often people who hold another viewpoint are classified as “stupid” bringing conversations to their termination rather than permitting a free flowing of ideas.

The academic classes are especially guilty of this single-mindedness turning their profession into politically correct rhetoric rather than pursuits for truth. Due to the universities' lack of free speech and the fact that history has proven all too often that

economists, sociologists, historians, and even psychologists may be wrong, universities have lost a great deal of the credibility with the general public. In fact, some of the turmoil now facing Europe may be a corrective action as a result of academic social engineering.

The public may have reacted to the fact that Europe, despite the fact that no one desires to admit it, is no longer democratic but rather exists as an elite bureaucracy with the façade of democracy. As in the United States, large donors or “pacs” often control candidates, and the public wonders to whom the political parties are responsible and who controls them. Looking at both the US and the EU I am reminded of the time that I lived in Pinochet’s Chile. During Pinochet era we lived with what was called DFL (*Decreto con Fuerza de Ley/Decrees with the Force of Law*). These DFLs do not seem to be very different from many of the executive orders or regulatory decrees that emanate out of Washington or Brussels.

The demographic problem:

There is no doubt that Europe today suffers from a major demographic crisis. In the simplest of terms, there simply are not enough babies being born. Europe’s ruling classes may have seen the immigration crisis occurring in Syria as a way to solve part of this demographic problem.

The argument provided was that refugees would do the work that Europeans chose not to do. The argument is familiar to Americans as this is often the same argument posed by many in the US regarding Mexican immigration: these people are doing the work that the local population chooses not to do. The fact that this is a racist argument seems not to have occurred to many people. Are these people to be a permanent underclass?? If not, what happens when they choose not to assimilate into the host culture and no longer wish to do grunt work?

Historically over the last two thousand years, Europeans have done a poor job of cultural assimilation or bi-culturalism, and no one has been able to explain why Europe will be capable of doing in the present and in the future what it has never succeeded in doing in the past. Today Europe is ever more “Eurabia”. These population shifts have along with a lack of integration and with a state academic decline means that fear has overtaken Europe’s abilities to handle cultural, linguistic and social challenges.

To be just, there is no place in the world without problems and the EU’s problems may be symbolic of the ennui that exists in much of Western society.

## **Parte II: Some of the European Union Challenges**

It is impossible to determine all of the challenges that the future will hold, but at least a few of these challenges should now be visible to the discerning eye. Among these are:

- 1) Margaret Thatcher, the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom predicted that an anti-democratic bureaucracy based on a few strong states such as Germany and many weak states such as Greece, Portugal and Spain was not tenable. Was she wrong? So far the EU has not won popular votes. Its establishments are through surrogates, or via parliamentarians. Although there have been no major continent wide protests, many people in the European Union have quietly expressed second doubts about the EU's ability to survive. Opposing the European Union is considered almost heresy. These doubts are rarely expressed in public, creating a false sense of belief in its viability. These whispers do not mean that the EU will not survive. There is too much at stake for it not to survive. What is needed, however, is a way to allow cultural identities to last while at the same time permitting economic union.
- 2) Europe must seriously address the issue of legal and illegal immigration. The continent is headed toward a kulturkampf (conflict between cultures) that is making European daily life ever more complicated. If Europe fails in weaving these various cultural and ethnic groups into a cultural whole without destroying local cultures then it is headed toward a great deal of trouble. Currently it is hard to see how Europe can maintain an open liberal attitude along side groups that desire only their religious law.

Europe will have to face its historic tendencies toward intolerance and prejudices. Racial and religious prejudices are part of Europe's history, from the Crusades to the Inquisition to Hitler, one cannot study European history without facing a continent rife with prejudice. To its credit the EU has tried to face many of these prejudices, sometimes successfully and at other times in a less successful way. Since Brexit, there has been an increase in hate group activities.

A comparison of France and Portugal serves to illustrate this problem. If we contrast France with Portugal the differences become profound. France has many laws that deal with hate crimes. Yet no matter how hateful the crimes against French Jews, French police never quite seem to be able to find a reason to enforce the law. The result has been a continual emigration from France, especially of young French Jews. Portugal, on the other hand, has taken responsibility for its 500 years of anti-Semitism. It has become clear that Portugal is now an attractive country in which to live. It would be an exaggeration to state that Portugal has solved all of its age-old problems and France is a total failure, Neither of these statement is completely true, but the contrast between the two countries is striking.

### **Part III: Some short and long term consequences for Europe m the tourism**



## **industry and security.**

In the short run most likely nothing much will change. Although there may be political fall out within Great Britain it is important to remember that Great Britain never was fully in the European Union. The British never adopted the euro as their currency and in many ways, the British continue to use Anglo-Saxon common law rather than European code based law.

It may be necessary that some Europeans living in London acquire a British passport, but this should be a relatively easy matter and there are worse things than traveling with two passports.

From a tourism perspective, ease of travel is very important and here is where the tourism industry and the security world may part company. From the perspective of tourism marketers, the more complicated the trans-border procedures the worse it is for the tourism industry. The drop in the cost of travel may help Europe's tourism especially with those tourists who earn in US dollars. The decline in the value of the British pound sterling and the Euro combined with lower fuel costs may increase the number of foreign visitors.

Security professionals, on the other hand, have been highly critical of Europe's open border policy and note that the continent's security has been reduced to the weakest entrance point. When this open border policy is combined with un-vetted immigration, it becomes a security professional's nightmare. The counterpoint to the argument is that although some recent immigrants have caused some problems, statistically the numbers are much less than what we might expect.

In the long run, it is still not possible to determine if other nations may follow Great Britain's example. The European Union's leadership may wish to make the divorce as difficult as possible as a way of dissuading other nations from also invoking article 15.

Russia may also be pleased by a perceived weaker Europe. In reality, this weakness may have no consequences as Europe is already so weak and so dependent on the United States military that European weakness may not matter all that much. What may matter is the United States' continual desire to pay for Europe's defense. From this perspective Europeans may begin to reassess the value of NATO and realize that without the United States they are basically defenseless.

It is still too soon to take into account the impact of the Brexit vote on the US presidential election. In the end, that election may have a lot more to tell us about the world's direction than the Brexit vote.

Needless to say, just a few days after the Brexit vote is still too soon to be able to do an in-depth analysis. If, however, we can reform our academic system, lower the arrogance of elite power groupings and reform the media so that it regains its credibility then we may move from an Orwellian world into one that provides hope for generations still not born. Brexit may herald the end of the EU and the renaissance of democracy, or both or neither of these options. The final verdict will be for history to decide.