

Brexit: What Now?

By **Gaby Harris** (@gabyjharris)



I've been trying to think how to express myself following the referendum. Remain or leave, it should have been a democratic process. But it wasn't. Campaigns misrepresented the entire debate, turning it into a political power play between rich white men. Channel 4 televised a show about the debate entitled 'Boris v Dave: the battle for Europe', suggesting we weren't debating the relative merits of being part of a wider European community at all but the relative merits of two self-serving morons. Up and down the country the two men took different approaches to campaigning for their positions, with Boris preferring to show how relatable he can be in a bus, whilst Cameron preferring to show how legitimate his campaign was with organised speeches.

Dirty tactics were evident on both sides in which lower wages on account of immigration were ignored as an issue concerning corporations being enabled to pay next to nothing for people who have no other option but to work for it. Higher taxes and increased austerity were used as threats against leaving. The remain campaign, instead of using logic and reason to explain the benefits of EU membership, largely branded those who wanted to leave as 'racists' and 'idiots', thinking they could shame those they did not consider educated enough to be worthy of voting into staying out of the debate. Let the big men handle it.

But let's think about this for a minute; if you're already in a situation of poverty, civic disengagement and political powerlessness, and those with money and power are forever branding you as racist and stupid, would it seem likely that things would change if nothing changed? A political shift might seem promising. The leave campaign exploited this. The hateful anti-immigration and anti-working class rhetoric which has dominated this debate can only be described as a deliberate attempt to draw attention away from the true issues at stake. We have turned ourselves inside out with contempt and distaste for anyone who dared to think different from us.

In the wake of the results, what upsets me most is reading my Facebook feed. So many people have now taken to congratulating all the idiots on their big win, smugly acknowledging they are right in their views of the uneducated and the stupid, knowing that forever more they can hold them accountable for all the economic disasters that may (or may not) occur. To be clear, I firmly

believed it was better for us to remain in the EU, I am genuinely concerned for my own job prospects and those of my generation. But calling someone stupid doesn't make you any smarter. In a true democracy, people should be able to vote for what they think is best; for what seems right for themselves and their loved ones in a variety of circumstances. If there are concerns of misinformation regarding the referendum and unequal levels of education factoring into the results, then rather using your position of privilege to condemn those you consider less educated than yourself, your time would be better spent lobbying for improved educational services, better and equal access to education and perhaps even active involvement in your community; 'don't be an idiot by voting to leave' is not a convincing political argument.

We need to take stock of what happened and realise that we are not each other's enemies. For, as long as we remain fragmented, the politicians, the media and the powerful will remain unaccountable for their disgusting and hateful actions. The vote has gone the way it has gone and no amount of complaining will change that. But the more we in-fight, the more we are powerless whilst they continue to take actions which hurt us, as a society and as a community. Now we need to call for a general election, we need to run campaigns impartially and fairly, so we as a public can decide who will be in charge of unifying us as we separate from the EU.

June 24th, 2016 | [Brexit](#) | [2 Comments](#)

⌵