[MUSIC PLAYING]

KAREN FOLEY: Hello, and welcome to *The Student Hub Live.* I'm Karen Foley, and I'm very excited about this mini event that we've got planned for you today. For the next two hours, I have invited a range of guests from the Open University to come and talk about the referendum. And we're going to have a post-referendum discussion. And we're going to be looking at it from lots and lots of different angles.

I have Richard Heffernan joining us. He is involved in politics and international studies. I have Jonquil Lowe who specialises in personal finance from economics. Matt Staples, again, from politics, and Kesi Mahendran who will be talking about psychological issues and the way that this can impact on our identity. So lots of different things out there.

But let me first explain to you how this works. So hopefully, you will be in the Watch and Engage option. And if you aren't in that option, you'll be missing out on all of the chat and of the interactive widgets, because we're going to be asking you to vote a lot during the next two hours. So we're very keen to hear your views. If you are in the live stream only, you will just see a video. And there may be a chat box there. But come back to the website. That is studenthublive.kmi.open.ac.uk.

And you can select the Watch and Engage. Now if you aren't an Open University student, or you've forgotten your details, you sign in there with your OUCU, your Open University Computer Username. So the traditional way that you would access your normal student home page is the way to get into this platform. Just pop that in with your password.

If you don't have one of those, you can request a free, quick-and-easy-to-get Open University visitor account. Use your email and the password that you'll generate from that, and you can then click on the Watch and Engage and come and join us. But there are other ways that you can interact also. So we'll be feeding your questions from the chat. But you can also engage with us on Twitter. The hashtag is #studenthublive16. Our handle is @studenthublive. And you can email us, which is studenthub@open.ac.uk.

Now, how are we going to feed all of this in to this interactive discussion we're going to be having today? Well, I have HJ on our social media desk who is going to collating all of this.

Welcome to the studio, HJ.

HJ: Ah, thank you. I'm really excited to be here. I think we can have a really good discussion. So we've got lots of people in the chat. And you can let us know your thoughts and views and comments. We want to hear everything that you're thinking. And we'll put them live to different guests today. We've also got some widgets, as well, to the left. And they're filling up quite nicely.

Most people here voted, and most people weren't happy about the outcome. So I'm sure that will make for an interesting discussion. So it's definitely heating up in the chat. Actually, I'm going to move the Chat-O-Meter 'cause I think we are getting some good chat. Let's put it up there.

KAREN FOLEY: Wonderful.

HJ: But yeah, Friday Thinker's very well. So if you are on the faculty Facebook page for social sciences, hop over there. And Richard's been chatting to everyone this morning and will be after as well about all these different issues. So yes, we're very excited here and ready to go in the chat.

KAREN FOLEY: Wonderful. Now I like your boards that you've got. Do you want to talk us through any of them, or are they going to come in as we're talking?

HJ: I think we'll come in-- I mean, some of the main things we've got on the board are these maps which show the areas which many voted to leave and remain. And I definitely found that interesting. I mean, we can see from some of the maps that Scotland, northern islands, they were very much remain. But then England and Wales, they went for-- the majority went for the leave vote there. But it's also interesting looking at the differences between metropolitan areas and more rural areas. So I think that's something that Matt Staples is going to look at with us later.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. Well, thank you very much for that. And as you say, this event-- we've got Richard Heffernan here. So if you are on the Friday Thinker, I'm sorry, but he's going to be with us for the next few hours. So I hope to join some students from social sciences. We've had various emails already, and I'll be going through those in a second.

But one of the questions people asked was why have you just invited people from social sciences? And it's a very good question. And the answer is we only have two hours-- because

there is obviously a lot of ways that this whole outcome is impacting higher education in the university. Richard, without further ado, I'd like to welcome you to the studio. Now it's been a busy week, hasn't it for you?

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Busy for most citizens, I suspect, trying to get to grips with the result and the fallout in political terms and also spending two days catching up with sleep. One of the problems is we count our referenda or our election results overnight, which means everybody stays up. And then, politicians and citizens have to make decisions based upon the outcome of a referenda or an election on the basis of having no sleep, which is not the most optimal way of making decisions.

Maybe that's just my age. So catching up with sleep, trying to make sense of what's happened-- the fallout from the referenda, the political consequences. Yesterday, I had to charge my iPhone up three times because I just spent all day following news. You don't want to turn off from the news because something will happen that you need to know about.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, it's very fast-paced, isn't it?

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: I mean, today we're on the 1st of July. And if you're watching real-time, then it will be the 1st of July. Otherwise, things will be on catch up. But things have been changing by the minute, let alone hour.

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Yes. I mean, it's a little quieter today. Michael Gove is formally declaring his candidacy. And nobody's resigned from the Labour frontbench today of any significance. I suspect there's nobody left to resign from the Labour frontbench.

[KAREN CHUCKLES]

And a little bit of calm and a little bit of serenity is setting in, which is what we need, actually. We are far too excited. We're far too feeble an environment. We need to have some calm judicious space in which we can think about what's going to happen as a result of the people's decision. And it's going to take two years, plus, to leave the European Union, if that is what happens on the basis of people's choice. We don't need to panic. The sky hasn't fallen down. The Earth hasn't come to an end. We don't need Bruce Willis to come and rescue us in a white

t-shirt just yet.

KAREN FOLEY: Not just yet. Now Richard, we've got a tiny problem with your microphone and which we're just trying to sort out at the moment. Nothing to do with you, but I apologise for people at home who may not be able to hear Richard. So I'm just going to spend a minute just going through a couple of things while we sort that out, because I don't want to do lose some of what you have to say, Richard.

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: I don't do sign language.

[LAUGHS]

KAREN FOLEY: No, exactly. This is one of the downfalls. So we've have some emails already that have come in. And I just wanted to say thank you for that. I particularly like the one that Melody sent to us. She said, "I just wanted to say thank you for organising the July the 1st event so quickly. I'm an OU student."

She is of Dutch-American citizenship. "And my British friends in the 10,205-- British here, to be specific-- in Berlin, Germany are completely distraught over the outcome of the referendum. We are confused, scared, lost, uncertain of our futures and wondering about what democracy is. As far as our group is concerned, there's nearly half a nation of voices that is not included in this life decision." She goes on to say, "We also blame the media, such as *The Sun* for, yet again, irresponsible public influences."

So she's looking forward to the session. I hope you've joined us. And we've also had some other questions about-- and these are very, very common, in fact-- about the implications of Brexit for education in the UK. There is a frequently asked questions section and our Vice Chancellor has responded to those. So we'll cover a little bit of those in a short minute. HJ, are there many questions that are coming up in the chat so far?

HJ: Yeah, I think one interesting point has come up from Dren. He says, "I think the referendum has expose the fact that we as citizens do and are not prepared to make such important decisions." And he says, "Democracy is impotent if its subjects are passive and uninformed."

What we've been talking about on the chat just a little bit is whether or not this decision should have been left to the people. Or whether it shows just how many times the view of the general populace differs from the views of Parliament and the fact that it seems like the majority of

MPs disagree with the outcome of this vote as well.

So it's interesting to think, as well, whether or not Parliament is dragging its heels a bit in dealing with this situation because it doesn't want to accept the outcome as well. A lot of interesting stuff in the chat. So I want to see everyone keep it coming. Really interesting.

KAREN FOLEY: Wonderful. I wonder if those people have been engaging with the Friday Thinker. Richard, your question was is having a referendum a good way of deciding public policy? What an interesting question, and there's been lot of chat there.

What we don't want to do within this session is talk about rights or wrongs, et cetera, because it's sort of beyond the academic agreement of the scope of this discussion. But your question about whether this is a good thing or not-- what's been some of the feedback that people have been discussing with you for this question on the Friday Thinker?

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Well, we don't have a tradition in Britain of referenda. We've had three national referenda in the history of our country-- one in 1975, on should we stay in the European Union, then on common market, which we joined two years previously.

We had one very recently on whether we should change the electoral system by which we elect the House of Commons, and last week, whether we should leave the European Union. And on each occasion, those questions were prompted by disagreement within the political class.

The Labour Party was divided on the question of Europe in the 1970s, so they put it to referenda. The governing parties disagreed on electoral reform in the last coalition. And the Tories have been split asunder on Europe since the 1990s, if not before.

So in each occasion, it's like punting. You kick the ball away to allow the public to decide. And the public will decide a referenda. It's the choice they make. There is a large majority in Parliament to stay in the European Union. There is a narrow majority in the country. And now, it's incumbent upon Parliament to enact the will of the citizens, which is to accept the result of the referenda.

There were proposals. Some people signed a petition calling for the referenda to be re-run. Well, you can't re-run England versus Iceland-- the football match that England lost with ignominy last week. That's not possible. And it's not possible to revisit a referenda by means

other than having another referenda, which may be possible. So in the process of moving forward, Parliament has been told by the people that it needs to progress to exit. And that's what will happen under the new government, which will emerge once the prime minister is elected to replace David Cameron on the 9th of September.

KAREN FOLEY: We've got some widgets, Richard. And I'm going to share those with you. The people at home have been voting. So let's first look at was the outcome what you wanted, in terms of the votes. We have 4% saying yes and 96% saying no. We have some other questions as well. Did you vote? And 88% of people did vote. Indeed, it was a 72% turn out, wasn't it?

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Yes.

KAREN FOLEY: And the other question we asked was how did you feel about the outcome. And these are some words that you can see on the screen that people have selected about various issues that this is raising. So I'll leave that up just for a second so that people can see some of the things that have come up. Things like shocked, worried, disappointed, gutted, shift in politics, disadvantageous, angry, scared-- a lot of very emotional words. And indeed, it was a very emotional reaction, wasn't it Richard?

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Yes, and it would be remiss of us to assume that that is illustrative of a broader public opinion. Today a poll suggested the 7% of people who voted to leave have had buyer's remorse, and 3% of remainers would've voted differently. And, of course, we can do all of these things. We can always re-examine our assumptions.

I mean, the more middle-class, professional, better-educated you are, the more likely you are to vote to remain, particularly if you live in a metropolitan area. The younger you are, you're more likely to vote remain. The older you are, the less educated, the more blue collar, the less metro-central you are, the more likely you are to vote to leave. So it is a tale of two countries.

And we are a divided country. I mean, that has become plain as a result, not just on the question of Europe, but the types of people making decisions. It really is London and Scotland and Northern Ireland versus the rest. And so people have different opinions according-- there's a lot of uncertainty. I mean, even remainers and Brexitiers have a sense of uncertainty, which has been compounded by the political disarray this week in terms of the divisions within the political class and the defenestration of the prime minister and the upcoming defenestration of the leader of the opposition.

Very few people are left standing-- the destruction of Boris Johnson's political career yesterday, in terms of his ambitions to be prime minister. So a great deal of uncertainty, and that feeds in to these kind of notions of disappointment and worry. There are a lot of people feeling happy. Let's not forget that. A lot of people are pleased with the result.

A lot of people endorsed the decision. And we now need to move forward to bridge the gap, which is a matter for the [INAUDIBLE] class, not just us as citizens to see how we take forward the country in terms of moving toward some form of renegotiation of our relationship with the European Union, which may mean leaving or having some associate member in some form.

There's more love for the European Union this week among some people than ever before in the history of the institution. Before everybody campaigned to stay for it in terms of frightening people or arguing Project Fear to say what would be terrible if we left. Nobody made a case to say was a wonderful thing, that we should be very pleased we're in. There's more love for it these days, this week. But I'm not sure that will last much longer.

KAREN FOLEY: Thank you. That's a really clear summary, as much as we can get, in terms of the complexities of some of the issues. What we're going to do now is we're going to look at various perspectives on this. And I like to start-- since you're here, and since you're leading all of this-- to talk to you about some of the main issues that have arisen.

And one of the first questions I wanted to ask was about power and the influence of the Prime Minister. So obviously, a very emotional response, but you are studying this academically. You're involved in British politics and also the way that British politics interacts with the global political landscape.

So what is this to say about the influence of the Prime Minister? You raised a point on the Friday Thinker earlier about the extent to which it was quite a narrow margin-- the 52% - 48% a very high turn out. Yet that isn't necessarily mirrored by the House of Commons. So what does it say about the influence of the Prime Minister?

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Well, the Prime Minister found himself, last Thursday, being one person with one vote, which he cast early. And he spent a lot of time persuading people to follow his lead, which is to remain in Europe. He told Angela Merkel at a European Council meeting in the fall of 2015 that he was a winner and that he could win the referenda. And he proved he couldn't and didn't.

And that led to him resigning or declaring his intention to leave the office, which he will vacate sometime around the 9th of September. So it's a dramatic fall from grace for David Cameron, who has been party leader for 11 years, prime minister for six-- reelected as prime minister indirectly as recently as last year, last May, with a majority conservative government.

So his fall from grace is an indication of the fact that all men are mortal. And all politicians are, perhaps, more mortal than most. And nobody thought that he would go quite that quickly. There were moves afoot in the Conservative party keep him. But he decided, quite reasonably, that having recommended one course of action that was rejected by a majority of the British people, however marginal the majority, this required him to leave. And he's gone.

And what was quite extraordinary is that his resignation was second item of news in the news agenda that morning on Friday, given the enormity of the referenda decision. So he spectated the process just as much as most. And I suspect he thought he would win. As HJ said, a lot of people expected that they would be--

KAREN FOLEY: So the press or the politicians. [LAUGHS]

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: No, I think the press were divided. The pollsters misled us, as they tend to do these days. There's an argument about what we need to do about regulating pollsters and their practise of politics coming up to an electoral choice.

I think Cameron was confident that he would win, was worried that he wouldn't, and found out that he didn't. And now, he's gone. And as Enoch Powell once said, all political careers, unless they end in happy mid-juncture, end in failure. And Cameron's has ended in failure. And his legacy is not going to be good. He's presided over us coming out, it seems, of the European Union, which was something he didn't support and has called into question the future of the union with the possibility that Scotland may leave. These are not good legacies for somebody who wanted neither of those things to happen.

KAREN FOLEY: We asked our audience were they impressed by the way that politicians handled the referendum. That's have a look at what they said. 100%. [LAUGHS] Well, this is quite clear. 100% said no.

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Yeah, I think probably a majority in the country would agree that it wasn't their finest hour. I mean, politicians are trained to mislead us, to persuade us to support their case. So therefore, that encourages them to be selective, shall we say, in the choices that they make. So the idea

that you get a disinterated politician who says on the one hand, you should do this. On the one hand, you should do the other, and wiser counsel should prevail-- is not, sadly, the way that politics works.

They're trying to persuade you to do something. And therefore, they use all sorts of means-- fair and foul-- mostly, it has to be said in this referenda-- foul in order to get the result that they wanted. Project Fear on one side, and the remain campaign did not say that the EU is brilliant. But they said it would be terrible if we leave, which is a serious point worth making. The leave campaign said that it would be wonderful and everything would be fine if we left.

The truth lies between those two extremes, and we will find out how in the coming years as we negotiate our exit. So yes, all politicians mislead. I mean, that's the nature of the beast, sadly. And experts are prayed in aid to make a case. And therefore, you get the judgement where people think that the outcome of the campaign was unfair, particularly if you don't like the result. You tend to think the campaign was even particularly more unfair than it perhaps was.

KAREN FOLEY: We've got another widget here which we asked people to vote on. And this is a different question with a different outcome. Were you pleased by the way that the media reported the referendum? And here, we have 81% saying no. The media have, as you say, an influence and are getting quite a lot of flack for the way-- what's your opinion about the way that they reported this?

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Well, it's very complex. Social scientists find it difficult to disentangle media effects from other effects upon our lives as political citizens. There are some people who say that the media influences what people think and, therefore, determines how they vote. My own view is that that is grossly overstated. Most citizens come to some decision about a voting intention by [INAUDIBLE] of inchoate forms based upon their own preferences.

Now the media does influence the agenda. It tells us not I think what we should think, but it influences what it is we should be thinking about and the stories we should be discussing. So it has a huge influence in that regard. And it is also able to reinforce opinion. So if you are determined remainer, and you read *The Guardian,* you become more of a remainer. If you are determined leave person and you read *The Daily Mail,* but not the *Mail on Sunday,* which advocated a remain vote, you become more of a person determined to leave. So reinforcement is a key feature.

An agenda setting is very important. But I don't think it manipulates citizens in the way that it

takes people to vote against their own interests or preferences. It's a real distinction. You have to ask yourself why a citizen in a poorly performing, left-behind town in the north of England voted to leave and somebody in a metropolitan, doing-very-well a borough of London voted to remain. This is not down to media reporting of a campaign.

KAREN FOLEY: No, no. There are clearly a lot more issues. But isn't it interesting that, in terms of newspapers taking sides, *The Daily Mail* is one example where the weekly paper differed in terms of what it was advocating compared to the Sunday. Surely, that must be confusing for people who identify with a brand with some of the issues that are being raised by those papers.

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: I guess so. I mean, but they are two different newspapers. Paul Dacre, who edits the Monday to Saturday *Daily Mail* has a different political view to Geordie Greig who edits the *Sunday* newspaper.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, but do you think the readers, necessarily-- do you think they understand that?

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: I think they probably-- yes. *Sunday* says vote to stay. *The Daily* said vote to leave. Citizens can make up their mind about that. I don't think people are particularly influenced. *The Sun,* in its heyday, when it was very influential, sold four million copies a day, read by 10 million people-- in 1992, told everyone to vote conservative and told every reader the Labour party was the devil incarnate. Some 33% of *Sun* readers voted Labour according to an authoritative pole at that election.

So they're not swayed. Maybe a marginal error, there's a marginal influence. People are persuaded if they're unsure. The less social capital they have, the more open to influence they can be. But I genuinely think the majority of citizens in Hartlepool just as much as in Hampstead are able to make a deliberation based upon what they perceive to be in their interests. And the media plays a part of providing them with information, not in terms of instruction.

I genuinely don't think that that is the case, that they there instructed what to do by a newspaper. Liberals read *The Guardian,* which day in day out, campaigns quite vociferously for a remain vote and casts leave people as people that aren't sensible people. I read *The Guardian* every day. It never ever influences the way I vote or what I think about things.

KAREN FOLEY: Very refreshing, isn't it, that different take? HJ, how's the chat going? And do we have any questions or comments or feedback that we can add to this discussion?

HJ: I think the main comments we're talking about in the chat is about the vacuum of leadership that we have in the country at the moment. Some people think it was a mistake for Cameron to step down. He should've stayed where he is and led us out of this. But some people are also worried that this is now creating a distraction from us actually entering the process where we're negotiating with the European Union our exit as well. So there's a lot of interesting stuff on that point.

Some people are talking about how divided the nation is and, you said, about having these affluent metropolitan areas mainly voting remain and these left-behind areas mainly voting leave. We're also interested, in the chat, about how this shows, perhaps, the benefits of globalisation haven't been spread evenly across society.

And only a select few have actually benefited from globalisation and in this extent, that our relationship with the EU, such as with free movement, the educational programmes and these sorts of things. So a lot of interesting stuff going on here. Remember, you can also tweet us as well @studenthublive if you want to put your thoughts in there.

KAREN FOLEY: Thank you very much for that-- very interesting. And welcome to people who are just joining us. This is a live, interactive session. We're spending the next couple of hours discussing the outcome of the referendum and the implications of that for us all. So you can engage with us on the chat box. And if you are in the watch only, do come into the Watch and Engage so you can see some of that chat that HJ has been filling us in on.

So Richard, I'd like to turn to this idea which you raised, really, on the Friday Thinker about referenda as a way of deciding things. There have been very few in the UK, as you pointed out earlier. Should we have more? Is this a good way of actually deciding?

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: No, I don't think they are in terms of a very contested issue such as Europe. It's hard to see, though, how you would progress on that issue. If you have a technical question, such as should you have a London mayor, then a referenda is a sensible way of proceeding-- or Scottish Parliament or a Welsh Assembly. We've had these in the past. We have a mayor of Bristol. You ask the citizens their preference. So I think for constitutional questions, I think they are good and to be encouraged.

On public policy matters, they're slightly more problematic. I mean, I'm of the mind that David Cameron would've been better advised to have asked people in a referenda should we ask for

reform within the European Union. And I suspect, then, 90% would have voted yes. And then that gave him a mandate to go into the European Council and to negotiate a better opt out, a better deal for Britain.

And he chose not to do that large because he thought he could win the referenda, because hitherto, he's a very lucky politician. He'd, you know, a Midas touch politician. Even if he only won narrowly, as in the case of becoming prime minister in 2010 and also winning the Scottish referenda. So on public policy matters, if the country's divided, it won't be united by the result. But the result is binding.

And now, what Parliament needs to do is to progress towards renegotiating our terms of membership of the European Union by engaging in leaving. But also because I think the country wants to have some relationship with Europe of some kind, largely through trade and cooperation-- seeing if we can achieve that. But that involves a partnership with Europe. And the Europeans may not wish to allow us to stay in any form.

So that's part of the uncertainty that folks are talking about in terms of their attitude towards what's happening. So it is difficult. Europe is a contentious question. Not very many people are happy with it. And on the basis of probabilities, the majority decided they should recommend Parliament that it leave. And Parliament is bound to enact that decision unless there's a second referenda, which I don't think is possible at this stage.

KAREN FOLEY: There's been a massive fallout as a result of this decision to have a referendum. And we asked people at home what they felt the consequences of that were. And I'm going to show that now on the screen. So a lot of various things that are impacting in a number of ways. And it will be very interesting if we looked at which issues are political because there are so many here that relate to things like higher education, research funding, the economy, misunderstandings, economic fall outs, future change, racist-- I mean, there are a lot of things that don't necessarily relate to politics, and yet, this political act has really had an impact in so many wider areas.

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Yes, but from 1066 to 1973 we survived fairly well outside of the European Union. So it's a little period of time that we've been inside. As I said, the sky hasn't fallen. It may crumble over time. Who knows? We can get-- the pound fell, and is still trading low. But the FTSE is back up. There are economic consequences.

We need, as HJ said, to have a government in place and for negotiations to begin.

Unfortunately, modern politics means that you can't change a prime minister overnight because they've democratised the process by which party members choose the party leader who becomes prime minister. And so we have to have a balance of Tory MPs and then of the Tory membership because there's a Tory prime minister.

In 1940 in May, Chamberlain was replaced by Churchill overnight. Had we had to wait until September for Churchill to be elected by the Tory party rank and file, Hitler may have successfully invaded, which would not have been helpful. So there are consequences for democratisation in terms of choosing party leaders, so we have to wait 'til Theresa May, one assumes, becomes prime minister and assumedly, perhaps, hopefully, with Michael Gove as the minister in charge of Brexit. Who knows? We have to wait to see.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, it's a massive change. And especially one that's going to happen in quite a-- well, I mean, the actual change is predicted to happen over quite a while. But there is an immediacy here. And in a very unstable political context, what are some of the implications there?

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Well, I mean, again, I don't want to sound complacent. But there are no immediate changes. We are exactly the same as we were last week. There is a process of significant change negotiated over a two-year period. Once Article 50 declaring our intention to leave is delivered to the European Council, then a two-year process kicks in by which our exit is negotiated. How do we want to operate with Europe? And how do Europe want to operate with us? So all of these questions can be unpacked and discussed and altered.

But as of now, nothing has changed. Nothing has changed, other than intention to leave. Is like two people have decided to get divorced, but they haven't called in the lawyers. They haven't divided up their goods and chattels. They haven't discussed where the children live. They just decided that's what they're going to do. And therefore, things will change gradually and slowly. And most people who divorce make sure that they do so carefully and properly.

Most people are sensible enough to divorce amicably and to make sure that children are cared for. So all of these questions are ones that are in the gift of the political class once we know the prime minister is in the new government. With the new leader of the opposition, if there is to be a change there, then we can carefully and consistently negotiate with our European partners to progress towards leaving. So just a little bit of calmness and wise counsel needs to kick in, I think.

KAREN FOLEY: I saw a post on Facebook. And it said, can I come out now? Is everyone still a politician? Because politics has become so front-of-mind for people, people are questioning the way that we do politics, the way that some of our voting systems or even working. So what are some of the things that you think, in terms of academic study of politics, what are some of the key concerns that are really going to matter in terms of the future, now, for the British political system?

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: I think one of the interesting things if I took out of the election last week is that it reinforced for me a long-held belief that there is a chasm between the political class and those that they represent. Turnout has been declining dramatically in British politics from a post-war average of 75%, we last had that in 1992. When Blair won his landslide in 1997, turnout fell to 70%, down to 59%, up to 61%. Now, knocking around 65%, 66%, 72% last week, 85% in the Scottish referenda. So actually, when there's a referendum, more people engage. More people participate. 36% voted for the conservative-- 36.9% voted for the conservative majority. 35% gave Blair his third term in office, and Brown too.

So there's been a disengagement from the political class, particularly on the Labour side of the aisle. I mean, Jeremy Corbyn has got a lot of stick, much of it deserved for his poor leadership and his inability to campaign effectively for the Labour's position, which was to remain. But the saintly Alan Johnson, who everybody has a high regard for, he's a member for Hull. He campaigned to remain. Hull voted 60/40 to leave. Hartlepool voted 70/30 to leave. Hartlepool is represented by the uber-Blairite, Peter Mandelson, in Parliament for a number of years.

So the citizens are turning away from the political class and rejecting their advice. And they're not doing so simply because *The Sun* or *The Star* or *The Daily Mail* is telling them what to do and what to think, because they don't think that politics represents them. And they don't think that the argument that politicians make are meaningful or useful.

So when they're empowered, as they were empowered, whether we like it or not, whether we agree with the decision or not, when citizens are empowered as they were last Thursday, I had the same vote that David Cameron had, as did everybody. We went and voted, and we decided by a small majority to leave. And now the political class have to take notice of that.

Because often-- if you think-- what is campaigning? How did David Cameron campaign in the election? David campaigned by just talking to cameras in front of audiences of hand-picked people, all of whom are his supporters. They don't talk to ordinary people. They don't engage

with ordinary subjects. They don't live in the way that people do. And therefore, they have a disregard-- however well-meaning and nice they may be-- between them and the public. And that is a serious problem for representative politics.

KAREN FOLEY: There's some chat on the social media desk.

HJ: Yes, we've got some really brilliant chat coming on here. We're up to red on the Chat-O-Meter, which, I think, is probably a good reflection and, perhaps, more accurate than some of the polls out there on this referendum. But I think it's really interesting a lot of people picked up what Richard said in the chat about the differences between politicians and common people, as it were.

People are chatting about whether or not people actually voted for leave or they voted against the political class. They disagreed with the elites in Parliament telling them what they think they should do. And they decided, well, we're not going to listen to them because what good have you done us so far? And also picking up on some of the disconnect between politicians in the European Union to common, ordinary voters.

We look at one of our former EU commissioners, Baroness Ashton, who never got elected into public office in her life, yet managed to get onto that very powerful body within the EU. So it's a lot of interesting stuff in the chat. And I think one of our main focuses at the moment is talking about the disconnect between ordinary voters and politicians. And, perhaps, that why, in this referendum, there was high turnout compared to when we have a general election, is that people get to directly choose-- not leave it and hands all of these elites as they see them.

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: People like Cathy Ashton [INAUDIBLE] and tells us what to think. And her husband, Peter Kellner, who's the past president of YouGov measures what we think and tells us what it is we've been thinking about. So I mean, there's always going to be hierarchies and elites. That's a part of human society.

And, you know, politics is a profession like most things. If we're not going to have referendas, we had to have a representative democracy. We send people to empower them to take decisions on our behalf, because all 60 million of us can't turn up in Parliament. Although, most of us will be asked if we want to be in the shadow cabinet because there aren't enough MPs on the Labour side to be in that august body.

So we have to give them, but they need to be linked to us. And at the moment, there's a

chasm. They represent largely themselves. They're more representative, I have to say, of people who live around me in North London than they are of people who live in Hartlepool. We prioritise the interests of Hampstead over Hull. And we shouldn't do that. We need to listen carefully to what both people say-- sets of people-- and respond accordingly.

But politics, now, is a profession. It's an elite cast. It's above society. And that is dangerous. And we need to think about ways in which we can bridge that gap by making Parliament more representative of the people. And I think that requires, ultimately, electoral reform. That means that you can't have a majority 50% of the seats in the House of Commons on the basis of 36% of the vote.

14 million people voted for UKIP last year. 14% of people voted for UKIP last year. They got one vote, one MP who doesn't like UKIP, and he's kind of declared himself virtually independent. So there's under-representation. And if you get that then it means people will vote to give the buggers a kicking, which they did last Thursday. But I do think they voted largely on the question of Europe first, because I don't think they're that motivated out of spite to vote against what the political class say.

KAREN FOLEY: Thank you, Richard Heffernan. That's a fantastic point to leave on. I'm going to let you get back to your Friday Thinker question on the social sciences Facebook page at the Open University, where you're talking about is having a referendum a good way of deciding public policy. And then, I'd like you to come back a bit later and tell us how that's going. And we'll pick up any other points from the chat. So thank you very much, Richard Heffernan.

Our next guest is Jonquil Lowe. Now, Jonquil is a lecturer in personal finance. And the economy is one of the key things that has come up on the widget when we asked you about some of the consequences of this referendum outcome. So Jonquil, welcome to the studio. Thank you for joining me today.

So tell us then, from an economic perspective, I mean, you also have had a very busy week with lots of articles in the conversation, et cetera. And economists are often wheeled out at this point to talk about things. Now, this was an interesting one because it's very rare that economists will agree on something, isn't it? So can you tell us a little bit about that perspective and your take on it, because you really specialise in personal finance and the impact of some of these decisions on people's pockets.

JONQUIL LOWE: Yes, OK, well, you're right. It's very rare for economists to agree. And all by one group were

agreed ahead of the referendum that this was going to be bad news for the economy. I think they're looking definitely short-term, medium-term, further out than that, we can't really say. The big problem is trade. Obviously, leaving the EU is going to affect how we trade. And at the moment, we just don't know what kind of agreements are going to be struck. So there are essentially three options which you may have heard bounded around as the kind of Norway option, the Switzerland option, and so on.

So the Norway option is that, OK, we're not a part of the European Union and the therefore direct member of the single market, but we could just be a member of the European economic area. Now the problem with that is that we still have to accept an awful lot of the European regulation. And we would still have to accept free movement of labour. And we would still make a substantial-- perhaps, not quite so large-- contribution to EU programmes and budgets.

So we don't really save very much in terms of getting some money back for the country if we go down that route. And on that key issue of immigration, the government would be very unlikely to be able to tackle that. I mean, the EU have been fairly strong over the last couple of days in saying you can't have la carte Europe. You will have to just-- if you want to have that kind of relationship with us, that access to the single market, then you're still going to have to accept things like the free movement of labour.

KAREN FOLEY: Thank you, Jonquil. HJ, I'd like to find out-- we've obviously changed topic here. What's happening in the chat? I mean, we asked our audience earlier the extent to which the economy was important. And, in fact, there'll be a widget coming up on your screens now that will relate to some of the things that Jonquil's talking about. How is this conversation shifting?

HJ: I think what's coming up and I'm seeing here is that a lot of people were concerned about well, what happens next? A lot of their campaigns had differing views. What would happen in the event of a Brexit vote? There wasn't one clear strategy of what would happen after. Jonquil's talking about the Norway option.

Some people are talking about Switzerland. Some people are scared that we're just going to come to the end of the two years once Article 50 is activated and just be left in the lurch and face serious economic impact from that. So it's interesting to see people's fears around this uncertainty and their thoughts on these different options. What's the point in voting to leave if we have to adapt all these rules and regulations if we take the Norway style vote. Some

people are saying we voted to disconnect the political institution rather than from the economic union. So I think that's a very interesting point in particular that's coming up there.

KAREN FOLEY: Thank you. So again, people are really talking about economics on a very broad scale here. And yet, there's so-- I'd like to turn, later, to personal finance and how it can impact on an individual level. But before we do that, some of these other options-- you mentioned the Switzerland option.

JONQUIL LOWE: Yes, OK. So what Switzerland has done-- it hasn't gone down the full Norway route. But it's negotiated its own free trade agreements with Europe. However, as part of that, in order to get more or less tariff-free trade with Europe, it has had to accept the regulations and the free movement of labour. Now quite recently, Switzerland has said it doesn't want to take more immigrants. And at the moment, its agreement with Europe is uncertain. It's subject to re-negotiation because the EU is really quite firm that if you want to have free access to our market, then you have to accept our conditions. And one of them is this free movement of labour. So that's the Swiss option.

Sometimes, the Canada option is put on the table. As an example, with Canada again, it's a free trade trade agreement direct with Europe. And it doesn't impose many obligations on Canada, but they do still have tariffs. And, of course, what we're not talking about here is it's not just about whether there are extra taxes on trying to sell your goods into Europe, but it's also the kind of friction there as well.

So being outside Europe means that there's lots of paperwork in order to get your exports into Europe. So there's a kind of friction there is well-- slows down trade, makes trade more expensive. Firms here will have to employ more people to be able to handle all that documentation and so on. So there are options, but they're definitely damaging to the economy.

And businesses are very worried. Some have taken an immediate hit because we've seen the pound drop quite dramatically. So the fall in the pound, what that does is it increases the price of imports. So any firms which are importing their inputs-- oil. You know, most firms are-- most businesses are users of energy. So we're seeing a rise in that as the pound falls. So there are immediate hits for industry at the moment with rising costs.

Having said that, low pound-- good for exports. So provided we can take advantage of that, and the advantage isn't completely wiped out by higher tariffs, that might be a good aspect.

But at the moment, it's all still too uncertain. And the uncertainty, I'm afraid, is going to continue, particularly, as we've been told, well, we can't even begin to negotiate the trade agreements until we've gone ahead with Article 50. And so the clock, then, is ticking on that two-year period.

KAREN FOLEY: So you'll be in a very interesting academic prediction time, looking at what might happen, some of the implications of some of those trade agreements on a national level. But there's also the impact on people as individuals. And one of the ideas, I think, that's come to the foreground, really, is how this might impact on every single person. We've seen different areas voting differently. People are considering different options. Even different generations who are more concerned about pensions, for example, or savings. So there are very different things. From a personal finance perspective, what are some of the big issues that this fallout has had?

JONQUIL LOWE: Well, if economic growth is lower than it would've been, then, obviously, people will not be quite as well off as they would have been, which is not to say they'll be necessary worse off than they are now. However, there is an interesting dynamic going on here. If you look at the GDP if the country and the share that goes to labour-- so to working people-- there has, over the last 20 years or so, been a downward trend.

So the share of the national cake that's going to workers has been falling by about 0.3% a year. But this has been happening over a longish period, so over a couple of decades, it's now down by about six percentage points. And if you delve into that further, the share of 99% of workers has fallen, while the share of 1% has gone up by 20%.

So when we say people may be worse off than they would have been, maybe we're not talking about everybody being worse off, because it's only a very small proportion that seemed to have been benefiting from growth. And, you know, that may be one reason behind the way people have voted. As Richard was saying, people feel that they're being left out of the economic growth. So why would they support capitalist market model?

KAREN FOLEY: Which leads us on to this idea of inequality, doesn't it?

JONQUIL LOWE: It does.

KAREN FOLEY: And we asked our audience did concerns about income and wealth and equality influence the way you voted? 78% of them said yes. Very high-- you've got a picture of the sorts of people

who are engaging in our chat room at the moment. Do you think that's a common thing? Is that what you would expect from the general population?

JONQUIL LOWE: Well, we do have a very divided population. We've talked about income wealth being very-- becoming more divided as time goes on. But we've also got a lot of intergenerational tensions. So the older generation who were more inclined to vote to leave Europe have, on the whole, had the benefit of free education when they were younger.

They've had more job stability. They've had defined benefit pensions, so salary-related pensions. They're approaching retirement in a fairly secure way. A lot own their own homes. And so they're sitting on a valuable asset. So broadly speaking, they are financially quite comfortable. I mean, obviously, there are differences within a group-- but just talking about the group as a whole.

You compare that with the younger generation. They are having to pay a lot to their education. They're getting onto the housing market much later. They're struggling because house prices are so high. Their jobs tend to be more insecure. Even if they have a degree, they're not confident that they can get a job that's actually going to pay them more.

On the other hand, they are a generation that enjoy a higher standard of living than the older generation did when they were their age. You know, so it's not all against the younger generation. But they are, in many ways, being shut out of the things that the older generation just took for granted. So we have got this intergenerational tension there with inequality between the opportunities that each generation is facing.

KAREN FOLEY: This idea of inequality relating to income and wealth-- inequality is obviously a lot more broad than that. How tangible, how related do you think people view inequality in terms of personal finance, in terms of economics? I mean, clearly, being rich or poor will have a huge level of inequality. But there's a lot more to it than that.

JONQUIL LOWE: Yes, I mean, I think you are seeing now great swathes of the country feeling that the country is being run for somebody else-- not for them. And they're just disengaging from it and saying, well, why should we support this form of capitalism which seems to just deliver more and more wealth to the owners of capital, basically? And it feels to ordinary people, I think, as if they're being left behind.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, absolutely. For the last couple of minutes, I'd like to turn to the impact on students. And

we've had quite a few questions. Ina White has sent us a few questions on email asking what are the implications for Brexit for education in the UK? How is it likely to affect university fees? And how is Brexit going to effect OU students specifically?

Now, I mentioned earlier-- and welcome to those of you who are just joining-- that there's a frequently asked questions section on the Open University's website. And our vice chancellor has made a statement. I really like this quote, actually, which, I think, sums up the position. "Our values are to be inclusive, innovative, and responsive. By holding true to those values and calmly thinking our way through this unprecedented situation, we can hold steady and play our part."

And there are questions there about what this means for students. There's no immediate impact on students the we're expecting. However, the Open University are very committed to lobbying and considering that role of fees and access to higher education and will continue to do so. Equally, no immediate changes to funding.

Although, of course, there is this issue in terms of grants and the Economic, Social Research Council provide a lot of grants. And so that may have an impact on higher education. It's very early to say. But what would some of your key areas be, Jonquil, in terms of how this might affect students and individuals even?

JONQUIL LOWE: Well, I think it's really far too early to know how it might affect students who want to come to the UK to study or UK students who may want to go abroad to study. We just don't know. And it could be that there is no impact.

Student loans-- well, we do have a risk now that the fall in the exchange rate may push up prices a bit. That's going to impact on student loan costs because the interest is linked to inflation. So, you know, there is a possible negative impact there. Research funding is an interesting one because part of the money that we get back from Europe is in the form of support for various programmes.

And part of it, you're right, is for research funding. So we, presumably, by leaving, will lose that source of funding, whether the government says, OK from what we've saved by being outside Europe, we will put that money into research. We don't know. That would be in the gift of government. So really, it's so hard to say anything on those issues. We just don't know at the moment.

KAREN FOLEY: Thank you very much, Jonquil Lowe. That's been a really useful insight. And it's great to see economics have such a relevance, I think, for individuals. But also so interesting that we're thinking beyond our individual perspective and how this might impact higher education more broadly as well as some of the more general trends, I guess, that we're going to see facing us. It will be very interesting to see what happens. And I follow a lot of your pieces on the conversation, so I'll be watching that with interest.

And we've also got some sections on the website under the Resources page so you might find of interest, including some of Jonquil's writings. So Jonquil Lowe, thank you very much. Our next guest is going to be Matt Staples. But before we introduce Matt, HJ, there's a lot of chats going on-- and welcome, by the way, as well, to other people who are popping in and joining us in this two-hour special.

And if you are in the watch only and you want to see what HJ is talking about with people in the chat, then come along to the Watch and Engage, which you can get to by visiting the website, studenthublive.kmi.open.ac.uk. Click on Watch and Engage. Use your normal way that you would access your student homepage with your Open University Computer Username and password. And then, wam bam, you're in there with the chat. HJ, what's going on?

HJ: I think going from Jonquil's discussion with you there I think Dren came and made a very good point. He said, "The free movement of people in labour is an intrinsic part of globalisation. You can't have all the advantages of a single market without free movement of people. The UK thinks it's special in this regard," which I thought was a very interesting comment, given that we are seeing economies being more interconnected, whereas a lot of people would see this is a step back for the UK. And we also talked about personal finance implications, as well, for people. Kate said her husband is Spanish, and he has a Ph.D. But he's finding that difficult at the moment find work. And she thinks that's probably related to all the uncertainty around EU citizens working in the UK and what fees or arrangements might be. Katrina, one of our OU academics, was concerned about research funding as well. She said one of her colleague's jobs depends on this research funding. And some people were mentioning about how people they know in business have lost deals recently straight after the referendum on Friday. One person said that a business deal of their husband's fell through. So we are seeing the immediate impact. It will be interesting to see whether all this uncertainty can be sorted in enough time to negate the impact. And I think, really, uncertainty is the big issue for a lot of people at the moment.

KAREN FOLEY: Thank you. And if you aren't in the chat and you are still in the Watch and Engage and you'd like to have your say, don't forget that you can also tweet. And our hashtag is #studenthublive16, and our handle is @studenthub. So I'd like to welcome Matt Staples. Now, Matt is a lecturer in politics. Hello, Matt.

MATT STAPLES: Hi there. How are you?

KAREN FOLEY: Good, thank you. And you?

MATT STAPLES: Very well. Very well.

KAREN FOLEY: Good, good. So you're module chair of DD102, Introducing the Social Sciences. And you're interested in grassroots political activism and social movements and how these respond to and connect and influence mainstream politics. So we heard from Richard Heffernan this morning about some of the issues going on. Can you tell us where are things from your perspective? And I see you've brought a wonderful big map here as well.

MATT STAPLES: Yes, I saw HJ's got the maps up there. I mean, they've been widely--

KAREN FOLEY: You've got a bigger one.

MATT STAPLES: Yeah, I've got a bigger one. That's right, yeah. They've been widely used over the past week. Just to illustrate, I think, some of the interesting facts and trends the way people voted in the UK. I'm mean, there's stark differences. Richard eluded to some of those.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

MATT STAPLES: One of the big things is you're starting to see quite big differences between southern England and northern England. That's, perhaps, something that Richard didn't bring up so much.

KAREN FOLEY: Let me hold the map up for people while we go through that because you've gone to all this effort to print out a rather more equal map than others.

MATT STAPLES: That's right. I mean, it's interesting for a variety of reasons. There's been quite a lot of research recently about the rise of UKIP, the UK Independence Party. What's interesting about this is you'll see the areas that UKIP did very well in over the past two or three years, primarily voting to leave, as you would expect.

But you're also seeing areas in southern England that are primarily better educated, I have to

say, richer, more mixed as areas, as well, with high levels of immigration already voting to stay. Whereas areas of a less mix of lower levels of migration and actually, the areas that are more economically depressed voting to leave, which is quite interesting. And there's a lot of research about why that is. And there's starting to be talk of a kind of cosmopolitan versus non-cosmopolitan political culture in the UK, which actually--

KAREN FOLEY: Can you say what you mean by that?

MATT STAPLES: Yeah. I mean, during the '60s, there was an academic called Alfred Verber, and he spoke about deference politics in UK. And there's a guy called Aaron Lijphart, who spoke about fact that you've got homogeneous political cultures that are primarily left and right. We're now seeing that left and right binary collapse to a degree. You have a political system that's still based on the conservatives or labour.

But that's now complicated by nationalist politics in Northern Ireland and Wales and Scotland. But even in England, you're seeing the collapse of that with UKIP, which is quite interesting. And also, you're seeing the collapse of-- well, they're being two labours and two conservative parties, effectively-- one in the cities and one outside the cities. And for example, labour, you've got a metropolitan London, Manchester, Leeds, to a degree, Bristol. You've got a very cosmopolitan labour culture, which is primarily liberal.

And then outside of that, in some of the old industrial heartlands-- people spoke about Sunderland going leave, for example. Sunderland is a good example of that. Newcastle only just staying remain. And so there's a real divide now within labour between a slightly more conservative working class white labour as opposed to a more metropolitan, cosmopolitan, more liberal, more mixed labour.

And again, you're seeing it with the conservatives as well. You note around London, huge areas of southern England, which is conservative voting-- voting remain. But those are people who are connected to the metropolis, as it were-- connected to London. And again, you'll then see a very rural conservatism that's quite conservative. And these are the places that actually have much more conservative values generally speaking.

They're less keen on migration. Some of the moral issues that we've been debating within UK for the last few years, for example, gay marriage. You know, lots of issues actually. And so the divides are much more complicated now then just between labour and conservatism. Actually, it's devised between cosmopolitan and a non-cosmopolitan. And that may slightly derogatory

the non-cosmopolitan. They're just terms academics use, basically. And their [INAUDIBLE] that don't reflect the differences within specific places. But it's starting to be quite interesting and complicate the political picture.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, we've opened up the map, Richard, now, so let us know where you are. That would be very interesting. Matt, how are social scientists-- can I put this down for a second?

MATT STAPLES: Yeah, of course you can.

KAREN FOLEY: How are social scientists using some of this data? Because we all-- I mean, I don't know anybody who hasn't looked at that map and thought, oh, maybe I do or don't agree with the way that people around me have voted. You've spoken about how there isn't necessarily a correlation between a government and a area in terms of how that voting has turned out.

So how are social scientists taking some of this data when there are so many more complexities that it just-- I mean, you mentioned urban and rural, et cetera. But there are so many more complexities. What are social scientists doing? And how does that, then, impact on the individual thinking what are these people like around me and who are my neighbours?

MATT STAPLES: Yeah, no, indeed. I mean, there will be a lot of work going at the moment, including in our department basically, analysing individual results. And from those individual results within council areas, we are starting to build up an overall picture of trends across the country. It's quite early to say, basically, what it's making, I think, it's asking us to cause questions about the political process in the country.

We're moving from a process where the deference politics of there being a simple stratification between left and right-- that's becoming very problematic. And policy making is becoming problematic. I think when parties are so divided themselves, when you've got such strong wings within parties, political parties are, by nature, coalition to different interests.

But there are such differences now that it starts to make a lot of political analysts think the parties might split. And this might have been a catalyst, actually, for this process to start. There's been a lot of work over the past few days looking at the fissures within the labour party, for example, and whether this may have caused or may have started to cause a split within the labour party.

And, again, if the referendum would have been a different result, I think we could have

potentially seen a split within the conservative party, with more Brexit conservative MPs possibly going over to UKIP because they were unhappy with the result. That's now been stalled because they got the result they wanted. But I think it throws up into the air a lot of the political certainties that we were dealing with before, basically. And so in terms of public policy and how we see that developing, it will be really interesting over the next few years, yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. So tell us in the chat where you are right now in terms of the map. And also you might like to say something about how you feel in terms of who's around you and the way that the outcome went for your area locally. So it's a very hot topic, now, politics, and everyone's getting involved with it, which is great.

You're interested in lobbying and activism from an individual perspective. There have been so many lately. And people are getting a lot more involved in politics. This idea, I mean, it was a very high turn out in terms of the vote comparatively. People are engaging a lot more in politics. What are some of the big areas that you think people can actually influence in terms of activism?

MATT STAPLES: Well, I think everything, really. I mean, as I say, Aaron Lijphart, an academic who's still practicing, he's Dutch-American. He works in America. And he focuses on the idea of mass as opposed to elite political cultures. And increasingly, we're moving from an elite political culture where people can't feel their influencing things to mass political culture, where, actually, people joining the labour party to influence who becomes labour leader in thousands.

So that was a big shock last year, massive shock-- moving from a Blairite political party to a very left wing political leadership is quite interesting in a whole variety of areas, actually. One of things interests me is you've got nationalist movements in Scotland and to an extent, in Northern Ireland, less so in Wales, actually. But political identities and nationalist movements in those countries reflecting the fact that actually there are multiple political identities that people are more comfortable with-- being Scottish, being British, being European, being Northern Irish, being Irish, being British, being European.

There's much more cognizance and acceptance of actually-- you could have different political identities. And that's one of the reasons I think those areas voted remain because they're more comfortable with that. Whereas people in England often identify as British and actually struggle to go beyond that or their English-ness as a political identity is becoming increasingly prevalent, but also Wales, actually, because its attachment to England. And also because

devolution in Wales, I think, has been much more tentative, actually.

And so people are quite happy to be Welsh, quite happy to be British. But, again, struggling to go beyond that, to have a sense of being European as well. And so you're seeing the fragmentation of activism but increasing activism in a whole variety of different ways. You know, UKIP and people actually saying, you saw the flotilla of fisherman from Hastings go up the-- you know, that sort of great acts of political activism, basically-- very good example of that and an English consciousness starting to develop.

And so you're seeing lots of different acts-- the repertoire of actions that people feel they can engage with in terms of political activism. One of my interests is fair trade. But just in this context, you have the flotilla. You had people doing quite wacky things to get over a political viewpoint. And actually, this one the few opportunities of people had-- as Richard said earlier, one person, one vote-- to actually feel their vote counted because within the political system that we have, often they feel it doesn't.

KAREN FOLEY: Yes, absolutely.

MATT STAPLES: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: I'm going to take a quick trip to the social media desk. And when I come back, I'm going to ask you about some of the areas of activism that you think are going well or that could actually have more of an impact than others and maybe some that aren't so effective. HJ, what's happening on the chat?

HJ: I think we're having a lot of conversation about where people live and about geography and how that's impacted people's votes as well. So Michelle said, "Kent voted to leave because of Operation Stack." So that's when they fill up the motorway with lorries waiting to go across the channel or the other way.

But I think Elizabeth came up with a really great point, because we have the stereotype of and leave voter seem to come about of not being as well informed or not being educated. But she said, "Better educated, as in more qualifications, doesn't always mean more informed," which I think is a very interesting point that she's come up with as well.

KAREN FOLEY: That's a very interesting idea because like this categorisation in terms of local and national levels, we're also seeing massive stereotypes in terms of how people choose to vote. So going back to this question, then, about effective activism-- what you think is doing well? We've seen

a lovely demonstration outside Parliament with people singing. There's been lots of things going on. What could have an impact?

MATT STAPLES: Well, in a very media-driven world, I think acts that attract the media work, basically. And, again, I think Nigel Farage has been incredibly good, incredibly clever in terms of the way he's put across a particular type of vision of what England could be using the pub for press conferences, engaging with fisheries, which is quite iconic, kind of emblematic, kind of picture of Britain being a seafaring nation, basically. Pictures of farmers, as well, engaging with the rurals as an opposite to the cosmopolitan city.

So getting to the heart of what English or British identity is. So that kind of thing has been very, very well done, I think, actually. In terms of the campaign, I think the leave campaign was much more successful, actually. And they uses, for example, one of the big things about the leave campaign was they used a lot of American lobbyists and political strategists, actually. And they focused on keywords and key phrases. So taking back control was the iconic emblem of that campaign. It was very effective. It doesn't mean very much, but--

KAREN FOLEY: It almost felt a bit like brain washing during some of those debates. It was very much presented out there, like you say, in a very American political way.

MATT STAPLES: It doesn't mean very much in itself. One of the interesting things I think about the whole campaign is control will go back to Westminster. But then I hear a lot in terms of the vox box of people outside-- Northern England, Wales, southwest-- they don't want Westminster. And so but ultimately, without Europe to blame, will, then, Westminster get blamed? Because that's where sovereignty will now be held. And that's quite interesting as well, I think, actually.

KAREN FOLEY: No, it's very interesting. I'm talking, next, to Kesi about identity. And I wonder from a political perspective, this whole idea about British-ness, and you saying about all the icons. And the NHS was one key one. And so there was this very subtle thing about we love some of the things that we hold very dear. How much of it was about leaving the EU or about being British and a part of national identity that people felt a need to support and assert?

MATT STAPLES: Yeah, very much so. It was. I mean, as Richard said ultimately it was a decision about leaving. And as one of the commentators on the internet said, I have absolutely no doubt at all that people very well informed across the country, actually. It's often the most politically disadvantage places where people are most informed because their daily lives are so

fundamentally linked to issues of economic deprivation.

So the port cities of Hearth, of Sunderland, actually, the poorer you are, the more real these issues come to pass. And actually, I'm [INAUDIBLE] in north London, you know, a fairly middle class place. Lots of people around me would remain because they're doing very well. So yeah, that was quite interesting, actually.

KAREN FOLEY: I'm going to ask you the same question I asked to Richard Heffernan and, in fact, one of the ones that he's talking about on the Friday Thinker. And that question is is referendum a good way of deciding public policy? You mentioned earlier that people felt that this vote was something that they could actually influence. So the vote counted, which is, perhaps, why we had such a good turn out. So people have voted on things. Do you think it is a good way of deciding public policy?

MATT STAPLES: Yes and no. What interests me, again, because people are going to be giving power back to Westminster. And actually, one of the continual things I keep on hearing in a lot of the work the National Centre for Social Research does, economical social research-- they say people are not happy with Westminster.

So they voted for something that actually they don't want either , which is quite interesting. And it's dissipated to an extent. But people spoke about the Europe of the regions. And actually, regions have more power now than they might have in a place where sovereignty is going back to Westminster. And so that's quite interesting.

KAREN FOLEY: And so that's quite childlike. So they're saying, well, if I can't have what I want, I'll have something I don't want.

MATT STAPLES: Yeah, that's right. But I understand why. And I think we have to respect the decision. Ultimately, issue is national importance when they are so cataclysmic, basically. I mean, this is a huge moment in British political culture and in global political culture, actually, because Britain will be an isolated-- still very strong economically and politically-- but an isolated actor now. And it'll have to stand on its own two feet in a whole variety of different ways-- at the UN, in global affairs.

But, I think, ultimately, I think people do have to have a say. What it says to me, though, is if we're doing it for this now, you have to raise the question of whether we should be doing it again when we know what we're going to get out of Europe because, again, that's a big

question. And as I say, it's fairly oxymoronic where we're saying, actually, that's it now. It's back to Parliament. Well, we couldn't let Parliament decide whether we stay or go.

Yeah, so I would also compare the way we treat the referendum with the way referendums are treated in the rest of Europe, where, for example, there was a decision in Ireland. There was a referendum one way. And then, because the decision wasn't the way it was supposed to be, they had another referendum a year later. And that's quite interesting, yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: It is, and indeed the media are playing very much on that whole thing, aren't they? So yeah, but again, we see people very much engaged with politics on this grassroots level. And that's a very exciting time.

MATT STAPLES: I think it potentially is. I think in terms of the party system, I think it will increase pressure on the party system and the political structures of First Pass the Post because you're getting a fragmentation of politics. UKIP won't go away now. They talk of it transforming itself into a different political party. We've got the rise of nationalism, obviously, in the three Celtic nations but also in England as well.

And you've got the rise of the greens, who did very well at the general election and are doing very well in counsel seats. And I can see the potential for liberal Democrats. They've been gathering new members rapidly-- 15,000 new members in four days, which is incredible. So I can see them coming back. And so we're going to have a very much more diverse political system, a party system.

KAREN FOLEY: So in a roundabout way, people are going to have more of a say because they're going to be lobbying, and they're going to be expressing those views on a very local level. So yeah, very exciting times. It's not quite as categorical as in or out of Europe. It seems to matter so much more in terms of your local neighbourhood.

MATT STAPLES: Yeah, very much so. And that's good for political activism. It's good to me as a researcher. But I think is good for people to feel they actually really have a say now, which I think is important, actually. In political activism, each person, as a political actor has had a vote in the referendum. But they can extend those political acts to their locality.

KAREN FOLEY: Matt Staples, thank you so much for joining us. That's been really, really insightful. We're going to that Kesi Mahendran in the studio next. And she's going to be talking about identity-- so from an identity perspective how some of these areas that Matt's been talking about matter

to us and, perhaps, how they might have influenced some of our voting. HJ, there's a lot going on on the chat. What are people talking about?

HJ: It is hard to keep up. So if you're having trouble-- a bit like me-- keeping up with the chat, there's a little pin icon at the top right that you can just press down. And it means you can scroll through it yourself rather than keep jumping through. But I think we very much like looking at the map. The more interested lot of people were saying how some areas which do get a lot of EU funding still voted to leave. So we talked about Cornwall, which is set to lose 60 million pounds of EU funding. We talked about Ebbw Vale.

But Davin came up with a point which he lives in one of these areas which gets a lot of EU funding. And he says in his town, you pay money for a bridge that should've only cost quarter of a million pounds. But apparently, they decided to spend a lot more than that to make it look good, and it's a bit of a pointless feature. But I think that comes in to the point where we might get money from the European Union, but we don't really get to decide how that's spent.

And I worked on rural development previously where we were deciding how some of this money would be spent. And a lot people said well, actually, we'd prefer this project over this project. But unfortunately, we had sort of a mandate of what we could spend it on. But I think Kate brought up about identity as well, which is what we're going into, and whereas it's not about economic issues or it's not about sovereignty issues. It's really about identity, Kate things. So I think she'll very much enjoy this discussion that we're going on to now.

KAREN FOLEY: Thank you very much. Well, that's a lovely link to our next session. Well done. I'm going to welcome Kesi Mahendran to the studio. Now, Kesi is a social psychologist. And she's analysed public attitudes towards the European Union for over 10 years. So this is your moment, Kesi. Welcome to the studio.

KESI MAHENDRAN: Hi, Karen. Hi, HJ.

KAREN FOLEY: So you've been writing a lot about identity and some of the reasons why people may have voted-- so some of the various biases that may have affected the way that people chose to use their vote. But also that we've been talking with Matt Staples about this whole issue of identity and how we feel locally. So we're looking at the map. We're saying, well, that may or may not be the way that I chose to vote.

So what does that, then, say about my identity within my community? And also, Matt was mentioning identity in terms of national, regional, class-based, age-based-- very different identities, multiple identities. And he also raised an interesting issue, which is that some the nations, for example, Scotland, seem to have more identities or the ability to think of themselves with multiple identities compared to maybe, perhaps, other parts of the UK. So can you tell us what's your take on all of this then?

KESI MAHENDRAN: I think, yeah. I mean, it has ended up being about identity, hasn't it? Whether people make political decisions on identity, I think, is a slightly different matter. I think they're more inclined to make decisions on identity when they haven't got other information. So the two big ones-- I think Kate said this. And I think it's true. The two big ones are economics an identity. And we know with referendum decisions that people combine economics with identity.

But when you're in a situation where the economic information becomes ambiguous, which is what we had in this referendum, they switch to identity. When the situation where campaign conditions become hostile and threatening, they harden their identities.

So they become less inclusive. Most people would like to think they have a combination of identities. I'm this and that, and that, and that. But in the situation where people feel under threat, they start to harden around an identity, the most obvious one being national identity.

When we did our research with people asking them their attitudes towards the European Union, it was a calm time. It was 2012, 2013. The referendum hadn't been announced. And they could explore their identities. In the article that I wrote for the conversation, I showed how they explored their identities. They could play with different identities and be true to themselves. You know, say, I'm Scottish. I'm a woman. I believe in gender equality. I believe in internationalism. And they combined a variety of identities. What we saw in this referendum-- I think because people were under pressure, actually-- is that people started to harden around fairly straightforward identities.

KAREN FOLEY: Very interesting. And if you want to see that piece that Kesi's written, it's on the Resources section of the Student Hub Live website. We've got some widgets, as well, that you can engage with if you're in the Watch and Engage function. And I'd like to find out how you're feeling right now. Because we've had these Wordles, these words, where we're saying what three words would you associate with x, y, and z?

We had a lot of very negative words and a very emotional word. So I'd like to know how you're

all feeling right now so that we can see how that's all going. I'd also be very interested, if you're in the chat room, about how your perception of the outcome of the referendum may be shifting as we talk about some of these issues.

So if there is anything that you're thinking, oh, I hadn't really thought about it from this perspective or, indeed, any comments that you want to add, please do put those in the chat. And HJ will feed those into the discussion. HJ, anything immediate that you want to feed back in?

HJ: I think just this whole point about identity and the different communities that we live in has come up quite a bit in the chat. And especially how more multicultural areas-- they seem to be areas which are very much for remain if we look at the voting patterns. Whereas, if we look at areas that aren't very multicultural, which are traditional white British, you haven't had really any experience of that. They seem to have a lot of thoughts on that themselves. And a lot of those areas voted to leave. So I think that's something that did come up on the chat which was very interesting, especially relating to this discussion.

KESI MAHENDRAN: I think we better be careful how we analyse this now. I mean, in the next few months, how we analyse and start categorising people who voted is really important. I mean, the key thing, I think, particularly for people who feel nervous and uncomfortable and fear racism and xenophobia is we need to lance that boil a bit when the fact of the matter is 52% of people voted out of which, at least we know across Britain, about a third of people didn't really have strong views.

So a lot of-- at one point, it was 25% don't knows. So the don't knows had to make a call on it. And then you have people who felt burdened by the decision. Their feeling was that they were good citizen. They were certainly going to vote. But they didn't feel they had enough information. So I think the number of people who have strong nationalist-- particularly within England, rather than Scotland and Northern Ireland-- you had strong nationalist views and wanted out of the European Union is probably not as high as we have a media sense of them. So I think we do need to start to moderate our opinions now.

KAREN FOLEY: Let's look at where everyone is because Matt had raised this question about identity perhaps being more multiple in certain areas. So you can see the map on the screen about where people have selected. There's a cluster around London in the southeast. People right up to Scotland. And interestingly, some in America and Africa, the Middle East. Welcome. And, as

well as, of course, Europe.

We have, indeed, many OU students across the globe. So this is a very interesting in terms of where people are situated. But tell me, Kesi, you're talking about the way that we research things and being mindful of interpreting some of this data. One of the immediate things that springs to my mind about some of this referendum outcome is that people are putting quite broad stereotypes on people whether they chose to leave or remain.

And that in itself is quite an interesting act because there are two very clear ways of viewing people. I take some of those views and think, oh, I'm not really sure how I feel about this whole issue of stereotyping as well as what people are saying about it. Was this what you expected, that people would sort of impose identities on people based on that decision? And how accurate do you think some of those aspects of those identities are?

KESI MAHENDRAN: I think that's a big social science challenge, isn't it? That people go out to measure people. And this is the problem with statistics. It has these preset categories. I mean, one of the things that we've learned-- and I think that there's a real consensus now-- is this decision wasn't about left or right. And those political movements, we've outgrown them in many ways. And partly because you have this cosmopolitan-ism that's gone in globalisation, grassroots activism, social media.

So the terms in which people understand the world have shifted, actually. But, it in a way, I think scientists need to catch up to that. Political commentators need to catch up to that. Media needs to catch up to that. Because it's still using very old categories. So you can see that. Even, I think, the category white working class-- we need to scrutinise that category now. Or language like the left behind-- all of that needs to be scrutinised, really.

And we need to start to really just listen to how people articulate what they think about the European Union, what they think about the UK in their own terms. Scotland was different because Scotland had a narrative on its relationship with the European Union, which it's had for decades. So its participants were less inclined to vote in the first place-- relatively low turnout compared to England.

But they knew where they stood on the European Union because it was very live in Scotland. Partly because the SMP had always seen how it was. They'd seen it is a part of their identity and independence. Movement was freedom within the European Union. In England, it was much more latent.

And we found that in our research in the sense, our research-- although we sample slightly differently. So I wouldn't want to say that we could've predicted the outcome. But we saw a lot of reasons for people to dislike the EU. And I think that's the challenge the European Union Project faces now is that it-- the difficulty for that project is actually rather moderate project.

You get a lot of people to dislike it at one and at the other end. If you put them together, it pushes it over the line, which is what we saw. But it's only just over the line. And I think we really have to hold on to that, really, is that within Britain, there are a variety of identities on this question-- just on this question, there are a variety of identities. And my advice is beware of the binary. Do you know what I mean?

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely, because, I mean, Matt was talking about political activism in terms of lobbying, et cetera. But I also see a lot of activism in terms of identity. So people are trying to push off those labels. They're saying, no, it's not quite as clear cut as that. There's this whole dialogue, in particular, on social media about people saying I'm not this, that, or the other. Both using posts, memes, et cetera, about ways of expressing their identities and ways of reacting to those that are imposed on them. It's a very interesting interaction.

Do you see that whole area where, I guess, in terms of how people are negotiating their identity as being important in terms of the votes or important to them as individuals making sense of something that may not be aligned with the way to their community is seeing things in terms of the outcome?

KESI MAHENDRAN: I think the way that identity works is very dynamic. I don't think we have a pocket full of identities. I think the events cause identities to be created. A lot of people, if you'd have asked them a year ago, they would've been surprised by their own behaviour and their use of Instagram and how they campaigned and lobbied and became a mobilised. So events kind of create identities.

And that-- it's understanding the relationship between event and identity, which I think will get us closer to it, and stories. So once you get events, identities, and stories, I think you get closer to how people actually really work psychologically. I don't think they walk around, they don't leave the house thinking I'm a European or I'm British and so on. It's calibrating that, which is the challenge, I think, for social science, next, really.

KAREN FOLEY: You mentioned before that you've been doing this research for 10 years, and you said you

couldn't have predicted the outcome. And you also raised this point that identities are very fluid, interchangeable, and are negotiated over time and can, indeed, be multiple. So in terms of this research, then, was it ever important to think about predicting things? Or what sorts of things were you looking at?

I mean, the economists were very interested in trying to predict, trying to make sense of things in that perspective. But your research sounds quite different in terms of what you were looking at. And a 10-year period is-- a lot has changed within that time in terms of how people perceive identity and, indeed, how the EU has functioned.

KESI MAHENDRAN: I used to work in Scottish government, and I started the research there in Scottish government. I was an analyst in Scottish government. And Scottish government did a project with the European Union. And you have to go all the way back to the '90s and the constitution, the idea of a European constitution, which became really unpopular right across Europe. So you had a French referendum no vote. You had a Dutch referendum no vote. And suddenly, the European Union-- this is way back before the crash-- suddenly realised it had a problem.

It had a problem that people weren't really going along with this ever-increasing union. So we developed something called Plan D for democracy, which was dialogue for democracy. So it knew it had a problem, actually. And at that time, the Scottish government decided to do a project because they were doing very well with democracy. They had e-petitions. They had social media. And the Scottish people were fairly active, engaged with their own government.

So they said, look, maybe we can learn something from each other. So we did this project together. And that's all available online. It's called Building a Bridge Between Citizens in the European Union. And when I did that project, what became apparent is there was a big gap. I mean, the lack of understanding of the European Union was enormous.

But people have views in their own terms, you know, they had their own views. And so when I became an academic and I joined the Open University, what I wanted to do in my research was to create this dialogue. So what I tend to do in my research-- and we made a wee video just before the referendum, actually and put it out-- is show people what the European Union does. And I gave them small paragraphs. I gave them images. I gave them little statements.

And I'd say, well, do you agree with that? You know, this is what they think about immigration and freedom of mobility. What do you think? And so that's how I did the work, which is, of course, why I can't predict an outcome. The other thing that I did is that I sampled-- we were a

collaborative team. So we sampled people along a migration continuum.

So we sampled people who were generationally non-mobile. They were from the place their parents were, even their grandparents were through to people who travelled rather a lot. They'd lived abroad for maybe half a year, or something, come back. And right the way through to people, who had, in the case of some of our participants, had been travelling since they were born. That one parent was from one place. Another parent was from another place. They were born in a third place.

They're known as third-country children. And they were used to travelling all over Europe. And when you ask them the key question, are you settled? Or do you think you'll move again? They would instantly say, of course, I'm going to move again. You know, me and my partner are thinking about living in such and such a place next. So they were highly mobile people. That was life.

So that's how I sampled it. And that means that we understand. What we did in our research, which is why we get really thoughtful responses, is we got on top of the migration issue. Do you see what I mean? Because they talked about migration for about 20 minutes before we'd even asked them the European Union questions. They talked about their own migration and what they believed about migration.

And I think that really helped. And that was one of the really-- I found it very frustrating during the campaigning is that migration was really noisy. It was a really noisy issue, which was affecting how people made a decision about the UK's relationship with the European Union. And there was no way of separating it. When you're an analyst, you can separate it.

KAREN FOLEY: And some of the language, again, going back to the idea of stereotypes, was very emotive, I guess. And I like the way that you're talking about actually looking at some of the issues as opposed to some of the language, some of the discourse that surrounds some of those. So whereby, people can sort of say, well, of course, I have this opinion on this because it's sensible. It's something that you can think through and agree with, categorically or not. But there are these complexities. And, I guess, this is why this sort of research is so much more insightful than just asking some of those big questions which the stereotypes are sort of falling back on right now.

KESI Yeah, exactly that. I think that's it, Karen. When you're presented with a big question, you lean

MAHENDRAN: on the stereotypes because it's quite tough. And what we create, such calm conditions. And there are things on the table. And they can talk about their own stories, that they can really start to explore their thinking. And what I was really stunned by across our sample is how much people knew about the European Union, even though the first thing they would always say, I don't know anything about the European Union. But actually, they knew lots because it was affecting their lives.

KAREN FOLEY: HJ, let's take a quick chat to see what people are talking about because I hear there are a lot of people in the chat room. How is this resonating?

HJ: I think one of the main things that interest a lot of people is, in terms of identity, how people self identify. So we're seeing people, more and more, identifying as European. And on, then, the other hand, we seem to have more people embracing English-ness, again, as it would seem.

And with that probably see-- we've seen that go hand in hand with the rise of Euro-skepticism as well. So it would seem that a lot of people feel that with the European Union, with migration, that their identity as being British has come under attack and changed so much, that they're now sort of reverting to being more English. And English-ness does seem to be on the rise in relation to this, I think

KAREN FOLEY: Thank you for that. And if you aren't in the chat, go to the Watch and Engage button from the website so that you can see some of the discussion that people are having. It sounds very, very interesting. You don't have to be an OU student. You can get an Open University visitor account to be able to access that.

Picking up from that point, then, Kesi, I mean, we've been talking a little bit about stereotypes and identity, and you mentioned about knowledge of the EU. It's something that I've certainly seen a lot on in social media by people saying, well, people weren't aware, maybe, of what the European Union actually benefited.

So how much of this is a pure identity issue in terms of people wanting to latch onto a stereotype as opposed to genuine understanding? And then what are some of those implications about this for how we are actually voting?

KESI MAHENDRAN: Well, I think that because the knowledge was so contested that they did, as I said earlier, I think people switched to identity in the absence of a clear briefing. And the fact is that people

don't understand the European Union institutions. I mean, I didn't until I went into the government and had to do my induction and learn them all.

But I think most people don't understand the institutions of the European Union. They know about the European Commission. They know about this idea of unelected bureaucrats who make decisions, and that message got sent out right across the UK. So anyone who was concerned about democracy immediately-- and I think we do need to keep identity in perspective.

It's the relationship between identity and democracy that will help us crack this question, really. People felt that this was an undemocratic arrangement. If you have civil servants who make legislation, I mean, actually, this isn't how the European Union runs. But there are so few people who would really know that. And we didn't get much clear briefing on that either.

It's the same with freedom of mobility. Actually, if you ask most people about freedom of mobility, they would have concerns about it. It doesn't sound quite right. Everybody-- half a billion people can move around an area as much as they like. Oh, well, that doesn't sound quite right because most people don't want to move. I mean, 90% of people want to stay still.

But the actual European Union legislation isn't freedom of mobility. It's freedom of mobility after the transition period. This is a question I've been thinking about. If you were to ask the British public now which is the date that you think about that changed us as a country-- 2004 or 2008? 2008, financial crash, yeah? 2004, 10 new countries come into the European Union.

I think a lot of people will say 2004. I think they will say the point at which we began to have an immigration problem was 2004. Actually, in 2003, when that particular treaty, the Accession Treaty, was written, Britain turned the dial down on its transition period to zero.

But people don't know that. They think that the European Union project means that new countries come in and their citizens can move. Actually, it is-- new countries come in, and their citizens can move after the agreed transition period. Now, Britain decided to set that dial at zero. Everybody else decided to set it a seven. OK.

So people came to Britain because they couldn't go to the other countries. There are only two other countries that are set at zero-- Sweden and Ireland. So a lot of people came to Britain for obvious reasons. They were in poor countries that joined the EU. Everybody else had imposed a transition period. All the other member states had imposed a transition period.

Britain hadn't. It set it to zero. But we didn't get that information during the campaign because it's too technical.

KAREN FOLEY: And it is very interesting. And I bet it's something that a lot of people don't know. I mean, to what extent-- we've spoken a little bit about the way that some of this was negotiated in terms of the leave and remain campaigns, so that it was very much from an American system. We were talking about how these were enacted. You've spoken about knowledge as well and how people maybe didn't have that knowledge. How much did identity play a part in the actual campaigning?

KESI MAHENDRAN: I think people played identities. They played identity entrepreneur. So there was this idea that HJ's just spoken about-- this idea that if you were English, you would have a certain position, that this was an exclusive identity. It was an exclusive identity that was now under threat. And it was in danger of being diluted. I mean, it's in danger of being diluted by globalisation.

But now, you had your focal point. It's in danger by this super project that's very big and out of control. And also, in a more every day way, our streets are changing. We heard that a lot. Our communities are changing. Look around you. Look at your high street. It's changed. And people were fed that.

So it was this combination of identity entrepreneurialism by political actors and non-state actors and also do this myth of a pure time. Actually, Britain's never had that time. I mean, for goodness sake, in hundreds of years, it's never had that time. But it worked because people didn't have that kind of long memory. They worked-- not with some things. We must be careful just to set a big [INAUDIBLE]. But they could go back, maybe, two decades.

So they could say, well, you know, the '60s, '70s, it was different then. I wasn't under pressure to have all these sensibilities that I'm supposed to have now. And so I think they were fed a sort of entrepreneurial line on identity. And yeah, people are insecure and nervous. And we've had this massive crash and are followed by austerity. So for lots of people, they were angry about their daily life. And it gave them an explanation for that.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. Kesi Mahendran, thank you so much. That's all we've got time for, unfortunately. But you've raised so many interesting issues about the way that psychologists use a lot of these techniques-- you know, about the way memory works, about our biases. And there is so much out there that we can use to interpret some of the ways that people are voting and the ways that they're feeling, perhaps, now as a result of that.

But also, I'm really interested, and thank you so much for bringing to light some of that information about the knowledge about the European Union. That has, I think, cast another spin on things. We're going to return with Richard Heffernan in a minute.

But Kesi, thank you very much for joining us and discussing that. And if you are interested in some of the things Kesi's been talking about, you can see on the Resources section on the Student Hub Live website. That's studenthublive.kmi.open.ac.uk. And there's a wealth of information out there that you can check out later that I'm sure will be very, very useful.

And also just going to plug our feedback. I know lot of you are really enjoying this discussion, and we love to know what you think. There's a feedback button as well on the website. After the event, please do just spend a moment to tell us what you thought of it and if you've got any suggestions about how we could do things better. HJ, what's going on in the chat? There's a lot going on.

HJ: I think, well, we very much enjoyed the session on identity. And we're just talking about how people identify themselves as being European, is being Welsh, as being British. And I think one comment that came up from Marianna. She says, quite interestingly, "I've never really strongly identified with where I come from. It makes me comfortable to do because there's something at my core which makes me feel as though I'm excluding others."

And we had a little conversation about whether or not it's helpful to put these identity labels on ourselves-- whether or not it creates a banner for people to get behind. It creates commonality with other people that might not otherwise be there or whether or not it does exclude people. But Danielle says she was born in Britain, and she's an Irish descendant, and she feels European all her life.

Kate says she's very much European. She's lived in Germany five years, Spain three years. "My children were born in Germany. My husband is Spanish." And I think Catlyn's very right that identity is more complicated, perhaps, more these days than there ever has been. We don't just simply grow up and live and die in one place. We are very much mobile. We move around.

We meet people, a lot more these days, from other countries. We're influenced by different cultures a lot more so. It is very interesting to see how the idea of identity has changes, how it has changed, how it's fluid, and how that's affected the referendum outcome and people's

thoughts and views on it as well.

KAREN FOLEY: Thank you very much-- sounds very, very interesting. And if you are in the Watch and Engage, do come over to the chat. Well, I'd like to welcome back to the studio Richard Heffernan. Hello again, Richard. How is Friday Thinker doing? Have we any developments on your question-- is having a referendum a good way of deciding public policy?

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Lots of people posting.

KAREN FOLEY: What are they saying?

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Lots of interesting thoughts. Mostly about the utility of a referenda in the campaigns and is it a helpful way of deciding things. Pretty much, the balance of opinion is against referenda-- largely reflecting, perhaps, the experience last week and this. But a couple of other people are making the point that it's a democratic process and that people are choosing and making decisions, and governments need to reflect upon those and enact the decision that they take.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, we asked people how they were feeling recently. We've done a lot of widgets at the beginning of this session. And we asked them during Kesi's talk how they were feeling. And we've got some very mixed emotions here. People saying hopeful, worried, interested, sad, happy, unsure, anxious, excited, depressed, resolute, betrayed-- lots of emotional responses coming up with how people are feeling as well as some of the other things that we asked them in terms of the outcome of the referendum.

I'd like to put some of those widgets back up into the session so that people can tell us, perhaps, now what they were feeling about the referendum in particular. So, you know, about three words to describe how you feel about the outcome. Let's see whether some of those have changed or whether there's anything new that we want to add to that.

We also asked, did you vote? Was the outcome what you wanted? And there was another one. What three consequences are you most worried about? So we'll put those up again. To select those, you need to be in Watch and Engage. Just click on the widget. Enter the points that you'd like to make, and then close it down. And you will then be able to see what other people have voted as well.

So Richard, returning to this question, then. You're saying things are fairly mixed, but on the whole, people don't think it's a very good idea in terms of having a referendum. But we have

had one. And so it's all of this fall out, like you rightly pointed out earlier. Matt's been talking about political activism as a grassroots level.

And I was asking the question about, you know, we're very mindful now that politics is something, perhaps, that we felt we could vote for. This vote mattered to people. We felt that we could have an impact on the outcome, perhaps, for one of the first times in recent history. Because it was something different than local politics or even national politics, where we may feel that the vote that we have doesn't necessarily count towards the end result.

In terms of people doing and acting in political ways, what would be some things that you would say would help right now? Do you think that people can have an impact in their local and national politics by some of the actions that we're seeing right now?

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Well, what people aren't doing is joining political parties. Less than 1% are members of political parties. 100% of the House of Commons are members of political parties. So in order to become an MP, you need to be over the age of 18. You need to have 10 people sign your nomination papers. You need to pay a small deposit of 500 pounds. And therefore, you need everyone to vote for you.

But the only way you can actually do that is by being a member of a party because we vote for party candidates. So the gene pool from which we select our members of Parliament is very, very limited. The gene pool from which we select the prime minister is even limited. The 350-odd Tory MPs will nominate two people who go to a ballot of 119,000 people who will choose between Andrea Leadson, Theresa May, and Michael Gove-- two of those. And Mrs. May seems to be the favourite.

So lots of people are, kind of, on the outside looking in. And of course, you can click on a-- you can be a clicktivist. You can tweet your opinion. You can shout at a television. You can talk to your friends in pubs and clubs and bars. But actually, decisions taken by narrow political class. And we need to think of ways to broaden that out.

And old-school protests, which is just marching and complaining is important. But it's really heckling a steamroller. And the steamroller will only take notice of you if you vote. So getting voting levels up is important. But actually, a lot of people don't vote for one of two reasons. First of all, they're apathetic or they're alienated.

Well, the apathetic are always with us. The apathetic people-- you know, there's always 20%,

15% of people didn't vote in the Scottish referendum. There's nothing you can do. That's their choice. They either don't have the capability or they lack the interest. Fine.

Alienated people is much more worrying because therefore, they're not voting because they don't like the choices. And it's all a matter of making choice, not pursuing a preference. The choice is yes or no last week. Not, well, I'd like a reformed European Union. I'd like to be in the single market, but I think we should restrict the freedom of movement, and so on. Those options weren't available. It was yes or no, such as the nature of the binary choice that was presented to us.

KAREN FOLEY: So how do you tell, then, who is alienated or who's just not voting out of apathy? I mean, I was talking to HJ on the way up and we were saying, you know, wouldn't it be sensible if there was some way of actually saying I'm not sure. I don't vote for either of these. And he was mentioning people spoiling ballot papers. And I remember with bated breath listening to that pool of results of the spoiled papers and the votes that weren't counted. But how do we know?

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Spoiled ballots aren't recorded. I regularly spoil my ballot in the election for the European Parliament because I don't agree with European Parliament. So I go, and I put a big X on it-- X, I feel virtuous because I've registered my opposition. And then when they count the ballots, they say, this is an idiot who can't fill up his ballot paper. And they put it in the bin. And I can, but I may be an idiot. But I'm trying to express a point.

I always think that one sensible moderate democratic reform would be none of the above. And then you could indicate your opposition. I don't believe in compulsory voting because I don't believe in compulsory many things, apart from taxation, sadly, because we have to pay it. So none of the above. And then if none of the above gets over 50% plus one, you re-run that election.

And opening primaries-- I mean, opening the selection of candidates-- the problems is that these narrow, little, intolerant parties select candidates that we have to choose from. We need to broaden out the number of people. You can obsess about women in politics. We need more women, more gay people, more ethnic minorities. But we need ordinary people, not necessarily of modest means, whatever means-- ordinary people who aren't party hacks, who will lie in the service of themselves if necessary, but not in the service of the party. It's parties, I think, are part of our problem. And in representative democracies, you can't get away with having them, but we need to broaden them out and make them more representative of the

population at large.

KAREN FOLEY: So two key issues then about more people being involved in politics, and, I guess, you're saying that the main point that people could, if they wanted to influence change, is joining a political party and doing something.

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Well, they can join now. They just choose not to 'cause they don't like them. As I say, less than 1% are members of political parties. So 99% of us--

KAREN FOLEY: How aware do you think people are, though, of some of these things? For example, how aware do you think people are about spoiling a ballot paper as an option. How aware are people that they could go and join a party?

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Well, I think people know there's an election. I mean, there are degrees of political efficacy. People equal knowledge. Some people are more knowledgeable than others. The more social capital you have, the more leisure time, the more informed you are, the more likely you are to vote. I think a lot of people, now-- as I say, there's nothing you can do about the apathetic.

But the alienated are-- it's a political act in itself, not voting. I don't vote for them 'cause I don't like them. And I'm sure lots of people voted for the first time last week. Turnout was up in many labour places, where historically, labour turnouts are down. So I mean, there's no panacea. We're never gonna get 100% turnouts. Even back in the golden era of the 1950s, we had turnout. The highest turnout we ever got was 80%. So those days are gone.

Everybody has other things to do now other than get involved in politics. As Voltaire said, we spend a lot of time cultivating our garden, whatever that may be, rather than get involved in civic affairs. And people only get involved when they really think it matters to them. And they don't think it matters to them. A lot of people vote out a sense of duty, out of a sense of obligation. They don't enjoy the process, but they feel that they should do their bit.

KAREN FOLEY: This whole act of physically going and voting-- I mean, in this day, where we've got apps, where feedback is so important, there could be a system, arguably, where we could enable more people to have a say in that matter in a number of ways, both through technology, as well as, I guess, mobilising people about some of those options and educating them.

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Well, it's as easy as pie to vote at the moment. You just simply walk in a big city, where 80% of us live, or a small town, it's five minute's walk. You take a piece of paper. You get a pen, which they provide for you, or a pencil, and you mark an X. And you put in a ballot. So quick fixes,

such as postal ballots, all-day voting-- these are-- if people are mindful to vote, they will. I think that it's a problem with the supply side, not a demand side. It's not the fault of the public they don't vote in large numbers because they don't like the politicians they're invited to choose between.

KAREN FOLEY: So you would argue, then, there's a lot of this is people not voting because they don't see it as a viable option, as opposed to being apathetic or not actually bothering to walk down to the--

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Yeah, surveys show about 20% are apathetic. And then the other 20% are alienated, or 15% or so in a general election. And, of course, there are gradations of elections. People vote less in local elections that they see as less significant, second order elections. They vote in general elections, big decisions.

KAREN FOLEY: So how democratic is it, then, to give people a binary decision?

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Well, you can actually say that the referendum really empowered people because they were asked to choose an existential question, do you want to stay in the European Union or do you want to leave?

And then we get lost of people who are angry, depressed, worried, upset, uncertain. I'm OK, which is my favourite, which I think is the way you should live your life-- just to be OK.

KAREN FOLEY: That'll be the psychologist.

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: I am all of these things on a daily basis. Interested, too. I'm not a Scot. And I'm not ashamed to be English. But that was an empowering-- but, you know, everything has consequences. There's no ideal time. Politics is messy because as Kant said, "Out or the crooked timber of humanity no straight thing was ever made." Right? We just need to get as right as we can and to try to bring as many people with us as possible. But the political system is in crisis because I think the political class is not fit for purpose.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, interesting points. HJ, what are people talking about in the chat?

HJ: I think what's really interesting is that someone asked who isn't a member of a political party? And there was only a few-- probably more than would be if we were talking to anyone. But there were only a few that said that they were members of political party. But what I did find interesting is the same thing that we saw after the Scottish referendum is after this referendum, people are a lot more interested in politics now.

So even if they don't agree with the results, they're writing to their MPs. They're signing petitions. They're going out and protesting. So I think it's also about looking at not just voting or being a member of a political party as a traditional of getting involved in politics. It's actually just people talking about these issues is getting involved in politics.

And a lot more people are doing that these days. And someone said that as soon as they heard about the result of the referendum, they joined a political party because they felt so passionate about the case that they were making. So I think one of the big things that is interesting is how much engagement this has brought about.

But, I think, a lot of people are concerned as well. This has just come up about how it there was only a small percentage difference in it. And people are talking about, well, does that mean that it really gives a mandate or not? People did know about the election quite far in advance. Parties knew. We knew what the parameters of the election was. So yeah, that's very interesting and some spiky stuff as well.

KAREN FOLEY: Anything you'd like to pick up on from that?

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: No, not really. I mean, if you're studying politics, you're much more likely to join a political party than a citizen. If you're older, you're more likely to vote than a young person. Young people's participation rates were lowest of all last week, even in London. And so you need to be empowered to vote, which is knowledge is power. And you need information.

But you've also got to think that it matters to you, that your one vote won't make a difference because only rarely is an election decided by one vote. It hasn't happened in a general election for a long, long time. So you've got to be mobilised and motivated. And, as I say, if you're not, it's not necessarily your fault. It is largely because you don't like the choices that are available to you.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, on a positive note, though, we are seeing more people engaged with politics, more people are being mobilised. And that can only be a good thing.

RICHARD HEFFERNAN: Yes, of course, of course. Yes, yes. I mean, far be it from me to dis-encourage anyone to participate in the subject I earn my living studying. I think, though, you've got to be realistic. I mean, a lot of people get disillusioned when they get involved in politics, young people, particularly. And voting and activity is a learned habit, yes? If you learn to be a voter young,

you stay one for the rest of your life.

And the reason why old people vote, the pensioners vote is because-- because they vote, the parties represent them better. They protect pensions. They protect public services that old people use. And therefore, old people vote. And therefore, parties react. Because younger people don't vote, parties can take them for granted in terms of providing them with education with university education and so on-- housing. I mean, young people are getting a bad deal of it now. I think whether you're conservative or labour, you'd recognise that.

And that, probably, owes something to the fact that they vote in smaller number than older people. You know, it's really up to you. And, as I say, we have an awful lot of choices. With our phone in our hand, we can choose to read a newspaper or play Candy Crush. And we tend to do what is we want to do. And there's nothing wrong with that. Perhaps we should try to do both.

KAREN FOLEY: Very good point to ends on, Richard Heffernan. Thank you so much for joining us. It's been a really, really interesting discussion. Thank you all at home for participating. This has been a two-hour, short *Student Hub Live* special. I hope you've enjoyed it. It's something new that we've been doing.

And I'd love to know what you think. If you could spend a few moments to fill in our feedback on the website, I'd really, really appreciate it. And if you have any ideas, as well, please do let us know. You can contact us on email, studenthub@open.ac.uk. Our Twitter handle is @studenthub. And the hashtag for these events is #studenthublive16.

I've been Karen Foley. My guests have been Richard Heffernan, Matt Staples, Jonquil Lower, Kesi Mahendran. HJ, thank you very much. Would you say anything before we end?

HJ: Yes, I'd just like to, well, thank everyone for such a fantastic discussion that we've had on the chat. We'll probably keep the room open for a bit to continue, I think, our conversations. But yeah, thank you for joining in. We're also on Twitter @studenthublive, so if you want to continue the discussion or let us know your thoughts and comments. You can also email us as well. We'd love to hear from you. Studenthub@open.ac.uk. And, of course, we've still got the Friday Thinker running for the rest of the day. And I'm sure Richard will be more than happy to answer your questions. And I'll be hopping on to that later as well, I think.

KAREN FOLEY: Fantastic. A very exciting day. And there have been record numbers of people in the chat, say

thank you so much for coming along. It's been really good. And if you like this sort of thing, there's also a Count Me In button. If you give us your email address, we'll email you and tell you what else we've got planned in store for you.

So thank you very much. That ends this two-hour special that we've done. It will be available on Catch Up if you've missed any of it. And, as we say, there are a whole host of ways that you can still engage with us. Thank you for watching, and we will see you very soon. Bye.

[MUSIC PLAYING]