

Brexit: the real cause of our woes?

Many theories about the hierarchy in society start with an assumption that inequality is somehow a natural state of affairs and beneficial to us. The argument goes that it bestows efficiencies, motivates innovation and increases the likelihood of survival.

But what if the opposite were true? It seems highly likely that our pre-agricultural, hunter-gatherer societies relied on collaboration and sharing to a considerable degree. I am sure that co-ordinated groups had better results in the hunt than lone individuals. We see this kind of 'pack' organisation in all sorts of mammals to this day.

In a simulation led by Deborah Rogers at Stanford University, the team found that rather than imparting advantages to the group, unequal access to resources de-stabilised and raised the chance of group extinction in stable environments. They modelled inequality as a multi-tiered class society or what economists call a Pareto wealth distribution - in which as with our 1% of super-rich today - the top tier get the lion's share of wealth. For more data, see here: <http://bit.ly/QtCza9>

In the modelling the fact that inequality was so de-stabilising led to migration in search of further resources, much as we see today with the flow of migrants into the richer countries. This in turn puts more pressure on under-funded social systems and we get the kind of overload at schools, hospitals and on transport that we see in our own country every day. In a paradoxical fashion the search for individual improvement generates a huge social cost that demands more central funding for social systems – extremely unpopular with the Tory administration and which now has even the Left kow-towing to the idea of shrinking the state.

In other words ***inequality does not spread from society to society because it is a natural system for survival, but because it creates demographic instability which drives migration and leads to the cultural extinction of more equal societies.*** It happened to Rome and is exactly the situation in the UK since the 1970's, with the right complaining endlessly about the dilution of UK society that is multi-culturism. People are simply coming to the UK in search of better lives.

We cannot assume that because inequality exists it is somehow beneficial. It is a cultural choice and who could not fail to be uplifted by the exuberance and collaborative spirit of the recent London Olympics. We are indeed, better together!

Writing in the Sydney Morning Herald, Greg Baum had this to say: "London, you didn't half do a decent job. These Olympics had Sydney's vibrancy, Athens's panache, Beijing's efficiency, and added British know-how and drollery. With apologies to Sydney, they might just represent a new PB [personal best] for the Olympics. They were superbly organised. The Olympic Park's setting, in one of Britain's poorest boroughs, proved inspired. Some Olympic sites become wasteland after the Games. This one began as wasteland and is now full of possibilities." <http://bit.ly/PQdlSy>

I am very pleased to add the words of Lisa Mckenzie in the Guardian on the reason for Working Class voters enthusiasm for Brexit:

Over the past 30 years there has been a sustained attack on working-class people, their identities, their work and their culture by Westminster politics and the media bubble around it. Consequently they have stopped listening to politicians and to Westminster and they are doing what every politician fears: they are using their own experiences in judging what is working for and against them.

In the last few weeks of the referendum campaign the rhetoric has ramped up and the blame game started. If we leave the EU it will be the fault of the “stupid”, “ignorant”, and “racist” working class. Whenever working-class people have tried to talk about the effects of immigration on their lives, shouting “backward” and “racist” has become a middle-class pastime.

Working-class people in the UK can see a possibility that something might change for them if they vote to leave the EU. The women in east London and the men in the mining towns all tell me the worst thing is that things stay the same. The referendum has become a way in which they can have their say, and they are saying collectively that their lives have been better than they are today. And they are right. Shouting “racist” and “ignorant” at them louder and louder will not work – they have stopped listening.

For them, talking about immigration and being afraid of immigration is about the *precarity* of being working class, when people’s basic needs are no longer secure and they want change. The referendum has opened up a chasm of inequality in the UK and the monsters of a deeply divided and unfair society are crawling out. They will not easily go away no matter what the referendum result.

Lisa's full article is here: <http://bitly/brexitworkingclass>