

Are the issues of Britain's EU membership still relevant?

Dec 2016 – Review of – Is Britain's economic heritage and cultural ideology compatible with European Economic and Monetary Union and the euro? Aug 2002

When I wrote the original essay in 2002 I was specifically warning about the disastrous consequences that would result if Britain joined the euro. I explored the historical evolution of Britain's economy and how this went to the heart of Britain's social and cultural identity. In reviewing this thesis in 2016, the most important question that begs an answer is whether the essay is still relevant now that the British people have voted to leave the EU?

The simple answer is 'Absolutely'. In economic terms, I established that Britain's economy was not compatible with the average European model and that our historical global trading ethos was being undermined and constrained by EU membership. As we enter the stormy seas of 2017, the concept and the facts are absolutely relevant. But perhaps what is more important, are the reasons that lie at the heart of this incompatibility and the almost constant trauma that was evident through much of the 40 years that Britain was a member of the European community. And regardless of whether people voted to leave or stay in the EU, there is an underlying feeling of insecurity, inequality and alienation permeating throughout much of British society that stems from a sense of loss of identity. Although on the surface the effects of membership of the European Union played a large part in this, it was by no means the only contributing factor. In my essay, I explored some of the core issues on identity and these are very relevant when dealing with the deep-rooted effects of modernity and globalization. I am most pleased that the current UK Prime Minister, Theresa May, appears to be tuned in to these subtle but potentially debilitating undercurrents.

And perhaps another important question is whether there is any relevance in this analysis and these concepts for the remaining members of the EU? The answer is most definitely. As we enter 2017, Western liberal ideology is being challenged as never before. The numerous crises and the current lack of leadership in and across the EU, are threatening its very existence. Although there are many separate pressing issues, probably the biggest long-term challenge for the EU, is how to recapture those early manifestations of a collective identity without undermining individual cultural identities. We can only hope, that the EU accepts with good grace, that there are some sagacious lessons to be learnt from Britain's decision to leave the EU and also how Britain adapts to deal with the effects of a dramatically evolving world order. There is much to be gained by the EU in working in partnership with its closest ally. A failure to embrace these opportunities is likely to herald a dark age for Western European stability and prosperity. [Return...](#)

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