

<b>Institution:</b> King's College London		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 19 Politics and International Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Enhancing political decision making and public understanding of the politics and economics of Brexit		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> May 2015 – Dec 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Professor Anand Menon	Director of UK in a Changing Europe	From 2015
Professor Jonathan Portes	Professor of Economics & Public Policy, Political Economy	From 2017
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> May 2015 – Jan 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		

### 1. Summary of the impact

The UK in a Changing Europe (UKICE) initiative, led by King's College London, has communicated social science findings and analysis to inform politicians, policy-makers and stakeholders affected by, and involved in shaping, the UK's future outside the European Union (EU). This unique, evidence-based, non-partisan and impartial reference point has produced research on the drivers and political impacts, and broader social and economic consequences, of Brexit for the UK and the EU. Through sustained stakeholder networking and media engagement, it has established a high-profile among decision-makers, improving scrutiny and decision-making in Parliament; shaping policymaking in Whitehall and the business community; and helping to inform public debates.

### 2. Underpinning research

Both before and after the referendum in 2016, there was significant demand for evidence and expert-led analysis of UK relations with the European Union (EU). Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, UKICE was established in 2015 to produce and disseminate impartial and rigorous social science research on that relationship and inform public debate. A cross-disciplinary body of research, with both empirical and theoretical specialisation, has allowed King's researchers to uncover and better understand the long-term structural drivers behind the Leave vote in 2016; set out the political and economic trade-offs inherent in Brexit; explore the economic impacts of changes to the UK's trade and migration policies; and analyse the effect of Brexit on governance processes and structures. This research puts Brexit in the context of long-term processes of European integration and institutional change to look at how the UK's relationship with the EU will evolve outside the bloc. Of particular impact for the concurrent UK-EU negotiations was King's empirical research that modelled the potential economic impacts of different Brexit scenarios, and King's theoretically-informed research on the consequences of the Leave vote and different Brexit scenarios for long-term political processes and governance.

#### Modelling the impact of Brexit-induced reductions in migration on UK GDP

As politicians made pivotal decisions around Brexit, there was a vital need for empirical analysis of its likely impact on trade and immigration, and hence GDP growth and wages. Research by Prof. Portes (supported by an ESRC Senior Fellowship) analysed both the short-term and longer-term implications of different scenarios ranging from 'no deal' through to the Withdrawal Agreements negotiated by the May and Johnson governments [6]. This included the first comprehensive analyses of the impacts of a 'no deal' Brexit and the first macroeconomic modelling of the eventual Withdrawal Agreement. This research analysed the determinants of migration flows to the UK, and the impact of restrictions on free movement post-Brexit, with empirically-based estimates of the likely impact on growth and wages [5,6]. This research suggested that Brexit-induced reductions in migration were likely to have a significant negative impact on UK GDP

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and productivity (GDP *per capita*), with relatively modest positive impacts on wages in the low-skill service sector, particularly strongly impacted by EU migration. For the first time, this research provided indications of the plausible order of magnitude of possible impacts.

### Understanding the governance effects of the Leave vote

King's research unpicked the tensions arising from the referendum that would go on to make enacting Brexit – a deep process of institutional change - so difficult [1,3]. This includes theoretical understanding of the long-term nature of UK-EU relations across foreign policy and security [2,5]; how economic integration and trade would be disrupted [5]; the effect of Brexit on the EU, and demonstrating the fact that Brexit was part of a structural strain put on the EU's governance model following the 2008 economic and financial crisis [2,5]. This also involved – through stakeholder interviews – tracking the behaviour, interpretations and understandings of key actors involved across the institutions of government in the UK and the EU [4]. An important aspect of the governance of Brexit – particularly around the implications of a mooted no deal Brexit – has been the implications of Brexit on citizens' rights: both EU citizens resident in the UK, and UK citizens living in the EU [6]. King's identified the key issues relating to the status of EU citizens resident in the UK, in particular with respect to their employment and social rights after Brexit and the administrative issues with respect to giving them (but not future EU migrants) permanent resident status [6].

### 3. References to the research

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- [1] Menon, A & Salter, J-P (2016), 'Brexit: Initial reflections', *International Affairs*, vol. 92, no. 6, pp. 1297-1318
- [2] Evans, G & Menon, A (2017), *Brexit and British politics*. Polity
- [3] Glynn J., Menon A. (2018) *Brexit In: The British General Election of 2017*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. DOI:10.1007/978-3-319-95936-8\_2
- [4] Jones, E & Menon, A (2019), 'Europe: Between dream and reality?', *International Affairs*, vol. 95, no. 1, pp. 161-180
- [5] Portes, JD (2017), 'The economic impact of Brexit-induced reductions in migration to the UK', *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, vol. 33, no. supp\_1, pp. S31-S44
- [6] Portes, JD (2019), *Immigration: what do we know and what should we do*. London: Sage

### Funding

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### 4. Details of the impact

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The decision to leave the EU in the 2016 referendum marked a fundamental change in the UK's governance, its politics and its society. Ideally placed to provide this information, due to their long history of research on the politics, public policy and political economy of UK-EU relations, and being host to the ESRC UKICE hub, researchers from King's produced timely empirical analyses of Brexit and its socio-economic impacts, focussing on urgent questions highly pertinent to the ongoing political and public discourse. This rigorous, high-quality and independent research was translated into a series of accessible policy papers aimed at government, business and media stakeholders. These included analyses of: 'no deal' Brexit ('Cost of no deal', 'No deal: issues, impacts, implications'); withdrawal agreements negotiated by the UK governments ('The economic consequences of the Brexit deal' and 'The economic impact of Boris Johnson's Brexit proposals') and specific policy domains including migration and citizens' rights ('Free Movement after Brexit: Policy Options').

These analyses were disseminated widely, ensuring that King's research reached a diverse range of audiences and that those within decision-making roles were informed of the facts to call upon at key moments in the unfolding Brexit process. This engagement resulted in Prof. Menon and UKICE receiving accolades for effective research communication, impact and influence on decision-makers in Westminster, Whitehall, industry, as well as the wider public around Brexit (Political Studies Association Communicator Award 2016; ESRC Impact Champion 2017;

Prospect Think Tank Awards 'One to Watch' 2016, 'Best International Think Tank' 2018 and 'Best Foreign Affairs Think Tank' 2019).

### Enhancing UK Political Decision Making

King's research had a direct impact on decisions made by Parliament in both its legislative and scrutiny roles. In particular, UKICE policy reports, exploring the economic impact of both Theresa May and Boris Johnson's Brexit proposals (underpinned by [5,6]), provided rapid and rigorous analysis on the economic consequences both Brexit deals would have on UK GDP. This analysis informed the arguments of several key Parliamentarians including the Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer John McDonnell, who drew on 'The economic consequences of the Brexit deal' when opposing Mrs May's Brexit agreement in parliamentary debates [C]. In addition, within two weeks of its 2019 publication, the UKICE report 'The economic impact of Boris Johnson's Brexit proposals' was cited on 8 separate occasions during Parliamentary debates [C]. For example, Liberal Democrat Brexit Spokesperson Tom Brake, Treasury Spokesperson Ed Davey, and SNP Treasury Spokesperson Kirsty Blackman drew on the report to persuade MPs to oppose Mr Johnson's negotiated withdrawal agreement [C].

In addition, King's analyses of the impact of Brexit scenarios ('no deal', and the various draft withdrawal agreements) were central to the policies and positions of a number of key MPs and decision-makers. For example, findings within the UKICE policy reports on 'no deal' drew on academic analysis of the EU's institutions and economic analysis to set out the economic and public policy implications of a 'no deal' Brexit. The Chair of the Exiting the European Union select committee, Hilary Benn MP, remarked that *"the [UKICE] analysis of a potential 'no deal' Brexit was particularly useful in helping me better understand the many implications of such an outcome"* [D2].

The possibility of a 'no deal' Brexit was a critical juncture during the parliamentary process, with many looking to King's research to help MPs make their decisions on how to vote. The Conservative MP and minister Nicky Morgan – who was at the time also Chair of the Treasury Select Committee – describes King's research as *"widely regarded across the Brexit debate"* [D1]. In particular, she recognised the *"non-partisan nature of their work on the 'Cost of No Deal Brexit' as being particularly beneficial in informing my position and preparing me for debates in the House of Commons Chamber"* [D1]. The Conservative MP Rory Stewart stated that throughout the process of Brexit, UKICE conclusions were regularly cited by Members on all sides of the House of Commons and were of particular use when colleagues required information on the structure of various aspects of the European Union [D3]. In particular, Mr Stewart – who organised the campaign within the House of Commons for a 'customs union' solution to the Brexit impasse – describes using King's research which shows the negative economic impacts of leaving the EU with no deal [5,6] to persuade his colleagues to support his motions [D3]. On 29 Mar 2019 – the day of the first set of indicative votes on Brexit options including no deal and Theresa May's deal – Prof. Menon briefed 80 MPs on the options open to them in the House of Commons.

Parliament works not just to legislate, but also to scrutinise, and King's research has helped MPs to perform their scrutiny role within the context of Brexit more effectively. The House of Commons Liaison Committee – a select committee in the House of Commons which plays a crucial role in overseeing the work of all the other select committees and the Prime Minister – described UKICE as a *"particularly significant example [of] research hubs and engagement organisations which are devoted specifically to generating and facilitating engagement" with the House of Commons, and a "one stop shop for all things Brexit"* [A]. King's researchers have given oral evidence to the House of Commons Exiting the European Union Committee on 'the future relationship with the EU' (Mar 2020), and 'EU Brexit talks' (Dec 2017); the Treasury Select Committee on 'The UK's economic relationship with the European Union' (Mar 2018); and the House of Lords EU Select Committee on whether a deal would be reached with the EU 'Deal or No Deal'. In addition, written evidence from King's researchers has been submitted to a variety of House of Commons and House of Lords Select Committees, on areas from UK diplomatic presence in EU capitals, to how Parliament can improve scrutiny in later stages of Brexit negotiations [B].

To achieve this impact, as well as the public evidence cited above [A], King's researchers have undertaken a wide variety of briefings, meetings and advisory positions with Parliamentary research groups such as the European Research Group, the One Nation Group of Conservative

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MPs, Labour MPs and the Liberal Democrats. As well as their public-facing work, King's researchers have conducted several private meetings with MPs and senior ministers including multiple Secretaries of State for Exiting the European Union and senior civil servants. Philip Rycroft – Permanent Secretary at the Department for Exiting the European Union from 2017 to 2019 – said that UKICE work on public opinion [3,4] was *“a useful cross-check against our own analysis, helping to us to spot any gaps in our own thinking and to understand how issues we were working on were perceived by a wider public”* [E].

King's research directly influenced the policy of the devolved administrations, and Profs Menon and Portes have given evidence, based on King's research, to Committees in both the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments. In September 2019, work on the potential impact on the Welsh economy of ending free movement, and on possible policy options to address the potential negative impacts, including national/regional differentiation of the immigration system, was directly reflected in the Welsh Government policy paper *“Brexit: Fair Movement of People”* and was published as an annex to that paper. Piers Bisson (Director, European Transition, Welsh Government) commented that: *“the analytical research and policy proposals set out in your [Portes'] paper ‘Immigration Policy after Brexit’ were accepted in full by the Welsh Government”* [F]. King's research on immigration and citizens' rights [6] was also cited in the Welsh Assembly by the leader of Plaid Cymru Adam Price and First Minister Mark Drakeford, who describes Prof. Portes as *“the leading expert on these matters in the UK”* [B].

### Enhancing European Political Decision Making and International Impact

As the most important body managing the Brexit process within the European union, the EU Taskforce on Article 50 (TF50) controls strategic operations and is led by Michel Barnier. King's research has been used to underpin regular briefings which have been given to both the TF50 and the German Chancellor Angela Merkel's Brexit team in Berlin. Focussing on the politics and policy of withdrawal from the EU in the UK, these briefings have enabled key decision-makers within the Brexit process on the other side of negotiations to more clearly understand the politics and processes within the UK. For example, Stefan De Rynck – a deputy to Michel Barnier and head of public engagement strategy and relations within TF50, stated that the work of UKICE had been *“particularly supportive for the understanding by TF50 of the British political situation and of the policy debates on Brexit in the UK [...] and shaped our analysis of the situation in the UK”* [G]. King's research has also been used to brief staff from a number of embassies outside the EU – with researchers working with the High Commissions of New Zealand and Australia and the US embassy to brief delegations and ambassadors on the status of UK-EU relations. EU Deputy Heads of Mission from all 27 EU member states were briefed on the Brexit process in Brussels by both Profs Menon and Portes.

A key example of engagement with the EU institutions also came around the issue of citizens' rights. Claude Moraes, UK MEP and Chair of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, stated: *“The rights of EU citizens resident in the UK, and of Britons resident elsewhere in the EU, were the European Parliament's overriding priority in the negotiations on the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement. Jonathan Portes made a major contribution to developing the European Parliament's policy stance on this issue. He was one of the first researchers to identify both the scale and complexity of the issues involved - political, administrative and legal. He testified to the Parliament on two occasions, and supplied detailed written evidence. [H]e also proposed constructive solutions, particularly on issues relating to family rights and the registration of EU citizens - his work therefore went well beyond academic research and analysis to assisting in the development of concrete policy solutions”* [D4].

### Helping businesses understand and plan for the impacts of Brexit

King's researchers have met with more than 50 business associations and individual firms to brief businesses on (i) the status and progress of negotiations, and (ii) the potential economic impact of Brexit. UKICE has worked closely with and briefed organisations such as Deloitte, the Caxton Group, Metro Bank, Apple, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, John Mills Limited and Tate and Lyle Sugar. Prof. Menon and Prof. Portes have also spoken at over 40 events with groups including: Prudential Financial, the Insurance Times Brexit Forum, the Risk Advisory Group, JP Morgan, the Chartered Management Institute, the Chartered Institute of Housing, London First, and the Confederation of British Industry's (CBI) Brexit Trade Association forum.



Nicole Sykes, CBI Head of EU Negotiations, has testified to the benefit of UKICE's *"robust and well thought through"* analysis, circulating it to their membership of over 1000 senior business leaders from over 700 CBI member companies; it *"has played a role in helping the CBI's Trade Association prepare their corporate memberships for the various scenarios"* [H] created by Brexit for UK business through disruption of trade links and the creation of governance uncertainty.

### Informing Public Debates

In addition to parliaments and governing bodies, UKICE has worked significantly in the media and with the general public to develop understanding of issues in and around Brexit, empowering individuals with knowledge of the political situation and having impact on voters across the UK. King's researchers have been quoted in every national media outlet, with over 2000 media mentions including The Times, The Guardian, The Financial Times, CNN, Huffington Post, Mashable and BuzzFeed as well as Newsnight, BBC Breakfast, Good Morning Britain, Channel 4 News, and Sky News [I]. Prof. Menon has twice appeared on the BBC's Question Time during key junctures in the Brexit process. As such, UKICE has developed a relationship of trust with the major media outlets (including the BBC and ITN), who frequently turn to King's researchers for comment and advice. Peter Foster, Brexit Editor of The Daily Telegraph, described the difference that King's researchers have made as *"daring to put a foot in"* and challenge *"factually untrue and misleading"* use of data, including, for example, challenging the claim that EU membership cost the UK £350 million a week [J2]. Julie Hulme, Head of Newsgathering at ITV, said the importance and impact of Prof. Menon is that he *"gets how important it is to explain complex issues clearly for the audience"* [J1].

Alongside this media work, King's researchers have also developed a series of events to engage and inform a wide variety of UK citizens. From a series of more than 40 'ask the expert' town hall events, held across the UK throughout the referendum campaign in places such as Norwich, Leeds, Cardiff, Belfast, Canterbury, York, and Birmingham, to talks in pubs and prisons, UKICE has aimed to ensure that even the most hard-to-reach citizens have access to the facts. In addition, King's researchers have spoken at schools across the country, providing key information to around 2000 students. David Cooper, Deputy Head of Batley Girls' High School, remarked that in Prof. Menon's visits, the information provided was *"highly informative and has a clarity and objectivity which is rare"* and *"feedback has always been about how balanced and high in integrity your approach is"* [K].

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

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- [A] House of Commons Liaison Committee Report (2019) The effectiveness and influence of the select committee system
  - [B] Report containing selected instances of King's researchers providing Parliamentary Committee Evidence
  - [C] Report containing details of mentions of UKICE analyses by MPs in the House of Commons, House of Lords and devolved administrations
  - [D] Testimonials from MPs and MEPs highlighting use of UKICE evidence: [D1] Rt Hon Morgan MP [D2] Rt Hon Benn MP [D3] Rory Stewart MP [D4] Claude Moraes MEP
  - [E] Testimonial from: Philip Rycroft, Permanent Secretary, Department for Exiting the European Union (2017-2019), Oct 2019
  - [F] Testimonial from: Piers Bisson, Director of European Transition, Welsh Government, July 2019
  - [G] Testimonial from: Stefaan De Rynck, EU Commission Head of Public Engagement Strategy and Relations, Task Force 50, 7 Oct 2019
  - [H] Testimonial from: Nicole Sykes, CBI Head of EU Negotiations [via letter], 5 May 2020
  - [I] Report of UKICE newspaper articles and tv/radio appearances [collated in document]
  - [J] Testimonials from media representatives: [J1] Julie Hulme, Head of Newsgathering, ITV News [J2] Peter Foster Brexit Editor of The Daily Telegraph [via ESRC], June 2017
  - [K] Testimonial from: David Cooper, Batley Girls' High School, 27 Feb 2020