Protection Approaches

A gathering storm?
Assessing risks of identity-based violence in Britain

Authors

Dr Kate Ferguson, Director of Research & Policy
Kate is a global expert on the prediction and prevention of identity-based violence. She is Chair of Policy at the European Centre for the Responsibility to Protect and is Honorary Research Fellow at the University of East Anglia. Kate received her BA and PhD from the University of East Anglia and MPhil from the University of Oxford.

Andy Fearn, Director of Learning and Outreach
Andy has spent the past decade working with communities to bridge local and national divides. He has designed and implemented largescale grassroots community building and nationwide peace education programmes in the UK and Rwanda. Andy has a BA from the University of Reading and Masters' in Human Rights from Kingston University.

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About Protection Approaches

Protection Approaches defines identity-based violence as any act of violence motivated by the perpetrator's conceptualisation of their victim's identity. We were the first organisation to adopt this term; we have redefined its definition, use, and application; in doing so we introduced a new way of viewing what are too often seen as disconnected challenges, experiences, and crimes.

Protection Approaches addresses the manifestations of identity-based violence that occur every day, all over the world, as a global but preventable challenge: When an individual or a group is attacked on the streets of London or in an unknown town on the other side of the world because of their gender, sexual orientation, political affiliation, economic status, disability, race, culture, religion, or ethnicity, this is identity-based violence. Identity-based violence is not a phenomenon particular to certain countries, regions or groups. Almost everyone will witness, be the victim of, or – knowingly or unwittingly – play a part in the common pathways and processes that lead prejudice, exclusion, and identity-based violence.

Connecting rising domestic and global challenges to social cohesion, viewing these forms of violence through a wide lens, and understanding the shared responsibility to protect people as beginning with individuals and communities and stretching to global leaderships, is why we exist.

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Executive summary

As experts in identity-based violence and its prevention, Protection Approaches has become deeply concerned by the growing divisions in Britain and by rising hate-based incidents. Hate crime, hate speech, and other forms of verbal and physical attack motivated by how perpetrators conceptualise their victims' identity are becoming more common.[1] Our own work in local communities and schools has documented rising anxieties felt across society of widening social divides.[2] To better understand these worrying trends Protection Approaches commissioned a social attitudes poll to assess what we know to be risk factors present in societies vulnerable to increasing identity-based violence.

The paper outlines our analysis of social trends in Britain today relating to identity, community, perceptions of security, and of belonging. It brings together our qualitative analysis of risk indicators of identity-based violence, and the results of our public attitudes poll of 1250 respondents, carried out by Attest in January 2019. The poll was nationally representative of age, gender and region in Britain, excluding Northern Ireland.[3]

We forecast that if left unchecked, current and emerging negative social trends will continue to gather momentum and lead to further, long-term rises of identity-based violence in Britain.

We outline four causes of concern:

1. **Prejudice of minorities has become mainstream**
2. **Public trust in politicians, Government and the press is very low**
3. **There is a risk of high expectations around Brexit not being met, especially among those who believe they have the most to gain**
4. **The minority who do not feel part of a global community are more likely to hold prejudiced views and have lower respect for human rights**

We judge that it would be a mistake to wait for social tensions to escalate further. As the country enters a period of unique and acute political and economic uncertainty, Britain must not think itself immune to the threats populist, far-right, and anti-human rights movements pose elsewhere in Europe and around the world. Social cohesion is not a 'nice to have' but a fundamental tenet of contemporary British stability and security.

We take a view that the matter of whether the UK does or does not withdraw from the European Union is of immense significance, but that the manner in which the current impasse is overcome is as important to Britain's success and cohesion as the outcome itself.

Risk indicators of identity-based violence

No community, society or country is immune to identity-based violence; rather, constant and consistent effort is required from local grassroots to political leaderships to ensure that the fundamental rights and freedoms of all are protected and respected. In times of political, economic, or social crisis, societies become more vulnerable. When a sense of national anxiety becomes widespread, minority and marginalised groups very often pay the greatest price. There are certain risk factors that can reduce a society's resilience to divisive and hate-based behaviours. These indicators of hate are used all over the world to assess resilience of states and societies.[4] We are concerned that many risk factors are worsening at a time when the country is approaching a unique period of uncertainty.

This is not an exhaustive list but it is these indicators that have informed our risk assessment of Britain today.

Society-wide conditions:

- national level political or economic crisis
- intergroup tensions or patterns of discrimination against identity groups
- widespread, often competing, perception/s of grievance, threat, or inequality
- sense of group, community or national insecurity
- normalisation of hate speech, dehumanising language, and incitement to violence against identity groups
- revival of historic grievance, myths of collective victimhood, politicisation of national memory
- widespread disinformation, propaganda, and fake news
- widespread delegitimisation of expertise and intellectualism
- widespread lack of trust in the media
- widespread lack of trust in the Government
- widespread belief that the democratic process cannot lead to positive change
- removal of or failure to uphold human rights protections
- growth in number and legitimacy of groups who use violence or the threat of violence
- impunity for those who commit, incite, or threaten violence

Personal conditions:

- not feeling valued by those around you
- not feeling represented by those who make decisions affecting your life
- not feeling in control of your life or its direction
- believing that certain groups are responsible for your problems or pose a threat to your security or prosperity
- believing that certain groups are 'less legitimate', 'less human', or deserving of punishment including violence
- having a violent or criminal history
- having a history of psychological ill health
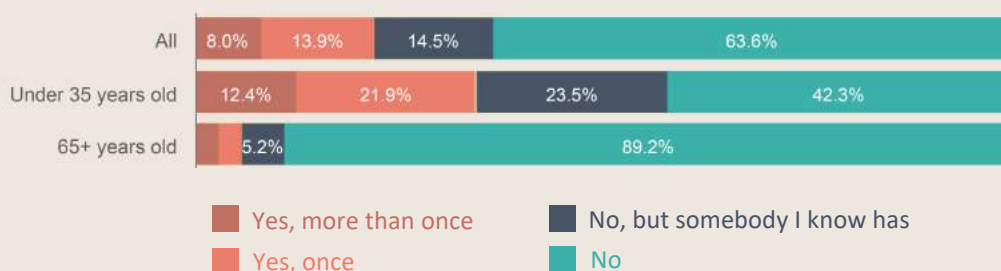- personal networks or relationships with corrupting individuals

Breaking Britain

In 2018, a BBC - IPSOS Mori poll found that 85% of the UK think the country is fairly or seriously divided while 3 out of 4 feel it is more divided than it was ten years ago.[5] The more acute consequences of these divisions are already being felt.

Harmful manifestations of hate in Britain appear to be rising and diversifying; dehumanising language and stereotypes are no longer confined to the social, political and cultural margins, nor are they solely directed towards protected groups.[6] Many growing hatreds are motivated by or connected to political identity. We are seeing widespread efforts by many divisive groups, online and offline, seeking to classify 'enemy' groups of all kinds, and an increasing move to attribute or impose symbolic identity upon those groups. Categorisation and dehumanisation are common warning signs of hate-based violence and are of urgent concern.

The most recent hate crime figures from 2017/18 saw the highest levels of recorded hate crime since records began.[7] In July, 2018 Tell MAMA reported that it had recorded its highest number of anti-Muslim hate incident reports since its launch in 2012.[8] In February 2018 it was reported that antisemitic attacks were at an all-time high.[9] In late 2018 it was reported that religious hate crime had risen 40% in a year, and doubled in three years.[10] In addition to the vast proportion of hate crimes that go unreported, official figures do not include many violent or abusive actions committed against non-protected groups such as refugees or migrants. The high levels of prejudice towards minorities are of serious concern but should be seen as both a product and cause of Britain's rapidly unknitting social fabric.

Acts of violence or violent speech directed against individuals or groups because of their political affiliation or perceived political affiliation appear to be rising amid an increasingly toxic environment of political "debate" where the potency of partisanship has stigmatized dissent, nuance, and disagreement. Threats to members of parliament were rising before the murder of Jo Cox in June 2016, but now abusive language, intimidation, and threats to personal security are becoming frequent both on and offline; the BBC found that during the last general election nearly all of the MPs they spoke with - 87% - said they had faced some form of abuse on the campaign trail.[11] 51% said the 2017 general election campaign had been the worst they had ever experienced.[12] In late 2018, the number of crimes against MPs had more than doubled in year.[13]

Our poll asked if people had been verbally or physically attacked in the past two years because of an aspect of their identity (e.g. race, gender, disability, politics, religion…)

	Yes, more than once	Yes, once	No, but somebody I know has	No
All	8.0%	13.9%	14.5%	63.6%
Under 35 years old	12.4%	21.9%	23.5%	42.3%
65+ years old		5.2%		89.2%

Prejudice is now mainstream

Negative attitudes towards immigrants and other minorities in Britain exist far beyond the margins of British society. Nor c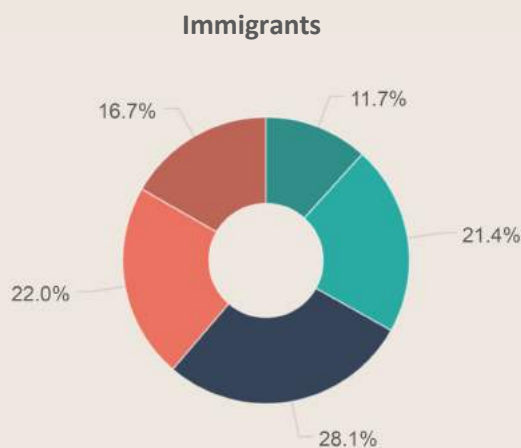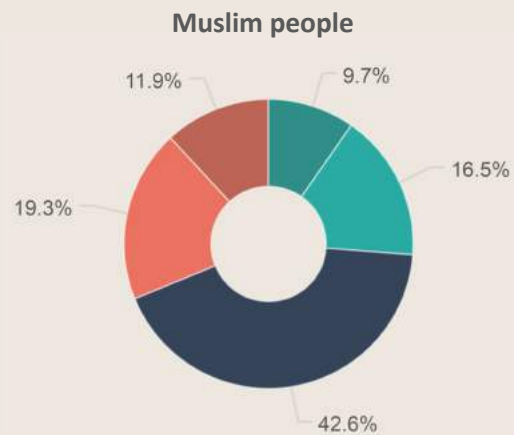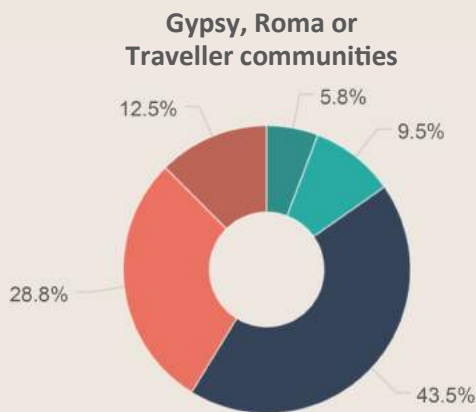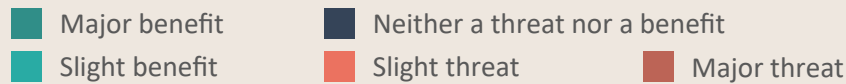an such prejudice be solely attributed to the marginalised minority who have disproportionally experienced negative impacts of immigration or globalisation. Anti-immigration, anti-Muslim and anti-Roma, Gypsy and Traveller attitudes are now widespread.

To what extent do you think each of the following is a threat or benefit to Britain's success and prosperity?

- Major benefit
- Slight benefit
- Neither a threat nor a benefit
- Slight threat
- Major threat

Gypsy, Roma or Traveller communities

- 5.8%
- 9.5%
- 43.5%
- 28.8%
- 12.5%

Muslim people

- 9.7%
- 16.5%
- 42.6%
- 19.3%
- 11.9%

Immigrants

- 11.7%
- 21.4%
- 28.1%
- 22.0%
- 16.7%

Jewish people

- 1.1%
- 4.5%
- 14.2%
- 22.3%
- 57.9%
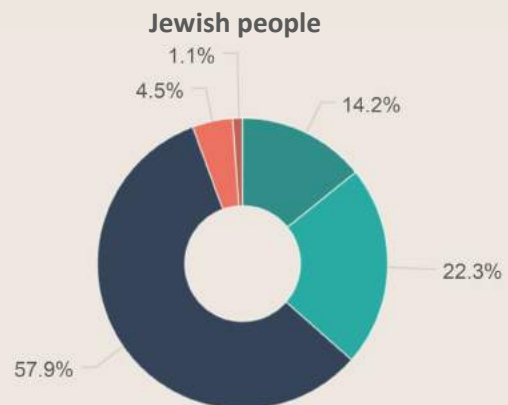
Nearly two in five surveyed consider immigrants to be a threat to Britain's success and prosperity. Over forty percent see Roma, Gypsy or Traveller communities, who account for less than half of a percent of the population, as a threat. One in three see Muslims as a threat. Considering the very high levels of prejudice towards other minorities, it was somewhat reassuring to see that even amidst the concerning rise in reported antisemitic hate crime and growing anxiety in parts of the Jewish community, a far lower percentage of 5.6% hold such views about Jewish people. However, 5.6% represents nearly 3 million over-16s who consider Jewish people a threat to Britain.

Percentage of respondents in each household income bracket who believe the minority group is a threat to Britain's success and prosperity

Percentage of respondents at each education level who believe the minority group is a threat to Britain's success and prosperity

	Muslim people	Immigrants	Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller communities
Household income under £25,000	31.9	40.5	40
Household income £25,000 - £49,999	33.4	40.9	44
Household income over £49,999	25.4	30.5	39

- Household income under £25,000
- Household income £25,000 - £49,999
- Household income over £49,999

	Muslim people	Immigrants	Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller communities
Education to GCSE/O Level or below	40.5	52.7	45.9
Education to A level or equivalent	30.7	37.1	41.7
Education beyond A level or equivalent	25.8	28.3	36

- Education to GCSE/O Level or below
- Education to A level or equivalent
- Education beyond A level or equivalent

Our poll found that many of those who hold negative attitudes towards minorities cannot be described as coming from a socio-economic background commonly attributed to Britain's 'left behind.' A significant proportion of those who consider minorities to be a threat to Britain are both financially secure and educated beyond GCSE/O level; a majority feel satisfied with their lives, able to influence decisions that affect them and feel valued in their local communities. They are less likely to have experienced identity-based attack and are disproportionately over 65. Our poll did find that those who voted to leave the European Union in 2016 are more likely to hold negative attitudes towards minority groups, however these respondents have varied household incomes and are from across Britain.

While those with lower household incomes and educational qualifications are slightly more likely to hold negative views of minorities, it significant that about one in four of those who are significantly well off and educated also hold these views. This suggests that many who consider Muslims, immigrants, Roma, Gypsy or Travellers to be a 'threat to Britain's success and prosperity' could be described as the 'winners' of the past decades rather than Britain's 'left behind'.
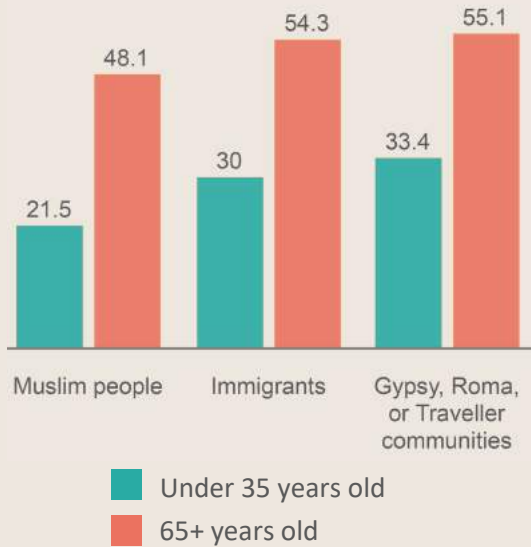
75% are very or fairly satisfied with their life at the moment

75%

64%

64% feel completely or mostly able to influence decisions that affect their lives

Percentage of under 35 / over 65s who believe the minority group is a threat to Britain's success and prosperity

Percentage of Leave / Remain voters who believe the minority group is a threat to Britain's success and prosperity

Under 35 years old
65+ years old

Voted Remain in 2016
Voted Leave in 2016

Increasingly we see rising prejudice in Britain being directly and indirectly attributed to those who are widely agreed to have genuine concerns regarding badly managed immigration, rapidly changing communities, and economic deterioration. In doing so, many British politicians and commentators are on the one hand quietly legitimising those prejudices, while on the other scapegoating the very marginalised socio-economic minority their narrative purports to defend.

As a consequence, true concerns of Britain's socio– and economically 'left behind' have been conflated with an increasingly mainstream othering of minorities. The genuine concerns are ignored while the prejudices (and their consequences) are a long way from being addressed. Moreover, exaggerating or misattributing attitudes of prejudice to an already marginalised socio-economic group reinforces grievances that group might hold, irrespective of whether those grievances are real or perceived. In attributing the country's growing problem with racism and prejudice solely or disproportionately to a 'left behind' group, it has become harder to both publicly condemn racism, and to discuss its causes. As a result the widespread normality of anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, and anti-Roma, Gypsy and Traveller prejudice is neither acknowledged nor condemned.

No form of identity-based violence is spontaneous because it is motivated by a conceptualisation of a victim's identity, which is something that must be learnt. Growing fear in Britain of the 'other' can be seen as a rational response to a decade of political and media commentary that has consciously constructed clear threats to British prosperity and security.[14] The extent to which prejudice is now felt across society should therefore be considered a longer-term consequence of the manipulation of 'other' as well as more recent shifts to the post-2016 status quo.
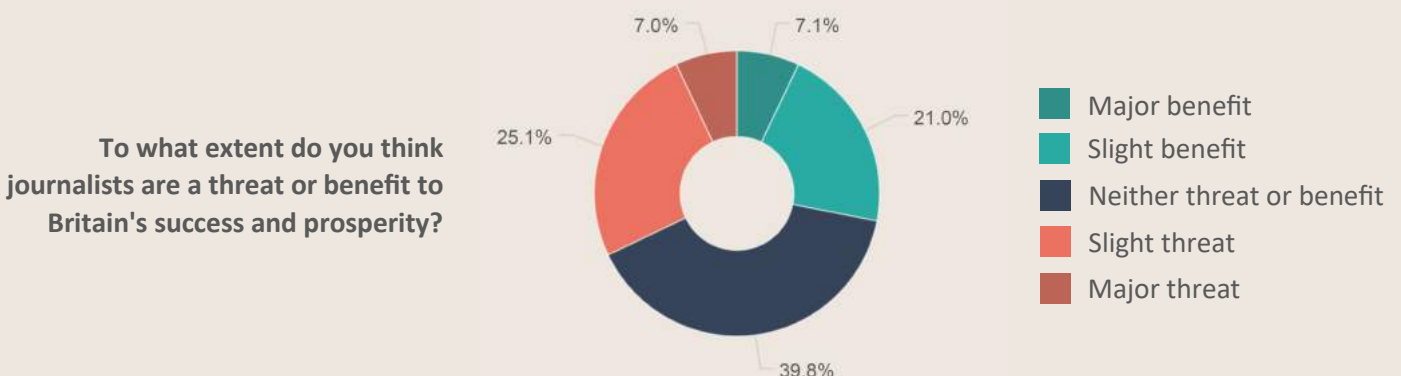
Low public trust

The low levels of trust in politicians and Government has become widespread; our poll found that the majority of the British public, irrespective of background, income, or views on Brexit, do not feel valued by the political establishment. More than two-thirds believe their point of view is rarely or not at all valued by the Government or by politicians (70.4% and 71.4% respectively). Only a slightly lower number (66%) feel that way towards journalists. One third believe journalists are a threat to Britain's success and prosperity.

This weakening confidence in the institutions of Parliament, Government, and the press should be of urgent concern, and interpreted as an early indicator of long-lasting social-political challenges. Should divisions in Britain worsen and identity-based violence increase, low trust in media, Parliament and Government will impede effective response and sustainable prevention.

Most people do not feel their point of view is valued by the Government , politicians or journalists

66% feel their point of view is rarely or not at all valued by journalists

66%

70%

70% feel their point of view is rarely or not at all valued by the Government

71% feel their point of view is rarely or not at all valued by politicians

71%

Many people see journalists as a threat to Britain's success and prosperity

To what extent do you think journalists are a threat or benefit to Britain's success and prosperity?

7.0%   7.1%

25.1%

21.0%

39.8%

- Major benefit
- Slight benefit
- Neither threat or benefit
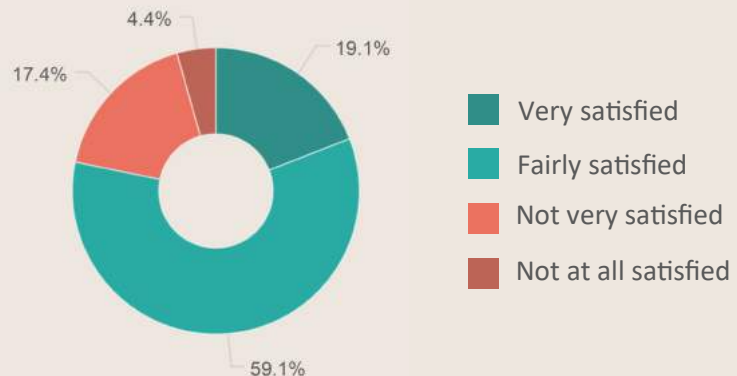- Slight threat
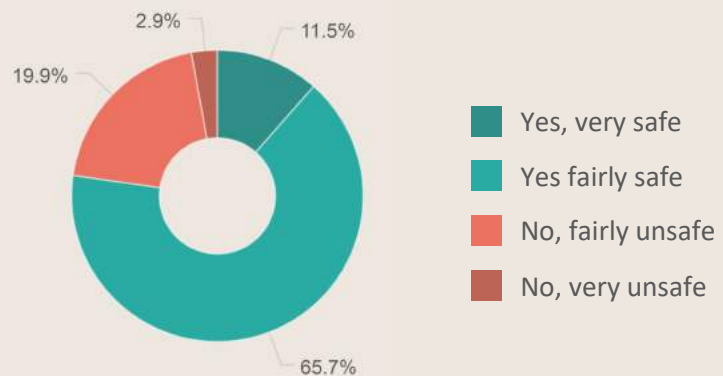- Major threat

Great expectations

A large majority of survey respondents feel satisfied, safe, and in control of their lives. However, there is a significant minority who feel less secure and less optimistic. Over half of respondents expect their lives to improve over the next 3-4 years but over 40% do not; one in ten think their lives will get worse. Nearly 40% think the country is less safe than it was 5 years ago. While the young (16-34) and the old (65+) feel much more satisfied with their lives, 35-65 are a little less sure. Those aged 16-34 are generally the most optimistic about their life satisfaction, expectations for their lives to improve, and their projected forecasts for Brexit – despite being heavily in favour of remaining within the EU.

> **Most people feel safe, satisfied with their lives and able to influence the decisions which affect them**

All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life at the moment?

- 4.4%
- 19.1%
- 17.4%
- 59.1%

Legend:
- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Not very satisfied
- Not at all satisfied

Do you think Britain is a safe place to live?

- 2.9%
- 11.5%
- 19.9%
- 65.7%

Legend:
- Yes, very safe
- Yes fairly safe
- No, fairly unsafe
- No, very unsafe

Do you feel as if you are able to influence decisions that affect you and your life?

- 6.5%
- 14.6%
- 26.4%
- 52.5%

Legend:
- Yes, I feel in complete control
- Yes, for the most part
- Only sometimes
- No, not at all
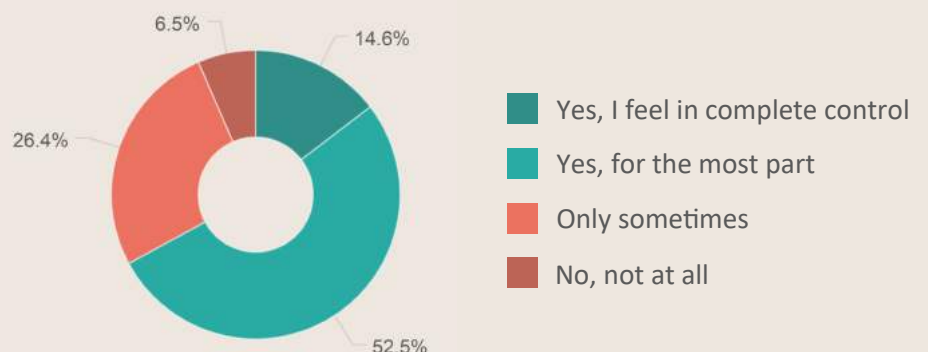
While it is positive that the majority of those surveyed feel safe in Britain, feel in control of their lives, feel broadly satisfied, and valued, we are concerned to find a significant minority do not. Our wider research into identity-based violence has found that those who commit hate-based or identity-based violence are far more likely to feel undervalued, unsafe, insecure, less in control, and less satisfied. This will always be a minority in any society, and individual motivations and circumstances are always more important than statistical trends. Nevertheless, we are concerned to find that nearly a third of over-16s do not feel able to influence most decisions that affect their lives while more than one in five feel unsatisfied with their lives. This group are more likely to think that Britain is an unsafe place to live and that it has become less safe over the past five years. At a time of national crisis, this group believes that the protection of human rights becomes less important. At a time when public trust in Government, politicians, and journalists is so low, these figures are particularly concerning.

We asked whether respondents believe human rights become more or less important at a time of national crisis

30% of those who feel able to control the decisions that affect their lives believe human rights become less important

30%

43% of those who do not feel able to control the decisions that affect their lives believe human rights become less important

43%

30% of those who think Britain is a safe place to live believe human rights become less important

30%
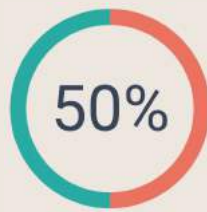
50% of those who do not think Britain is a safe place to live say human rights become less important
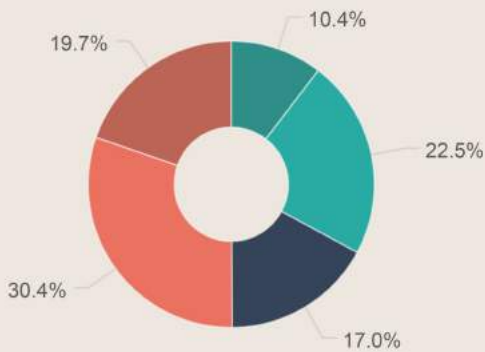
50%

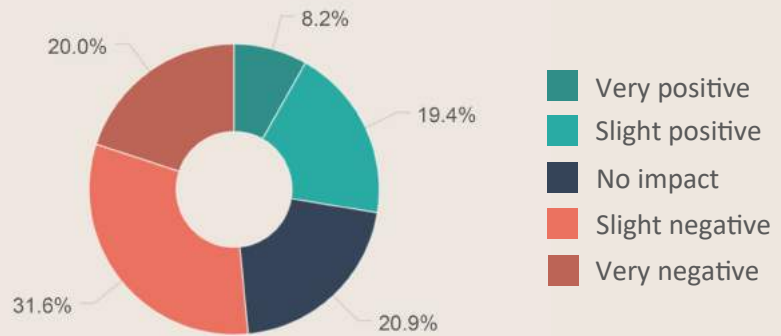19% of those who believe immigrants are a benefit to Britain believe human rights become less important

19%

48% of those who think immigrants are a threat to Britain believe human rights become less important

48%

Expected Brexit effect on social cohesion in Britain

10.4%
22.5%
17.0%
30.4%
19.7%

Expected Brexit effect on people from minority groups in Britain

8.2%
19.4%
20.9%
31.6%
20.0%

- Very positive
- Slight positive
- No impact
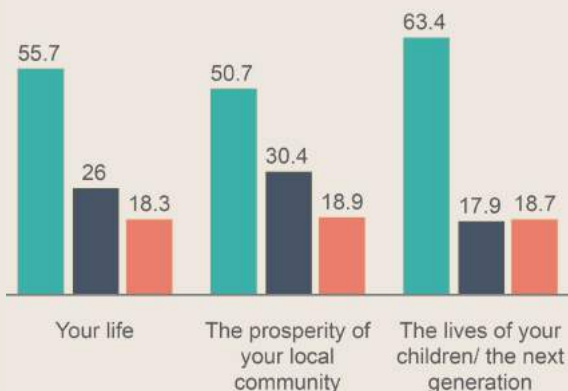- Slight negative
- Very negative

Expectations of the impact Britain's withdrawal would/will have upon individual lives, British society, social cohesion, and local communities are as important as the reality; whatever the outcome, many will be disappointed.

We asked our survey respondents about their predictions should the UK leave the EU on 29th March 2019. While expectations of a positive or negative impact loosely reflected the Remain/Leave divide, the majority of respondents think that leaving the EU will have a negative impact on social cohesion and on minorities in Britain.
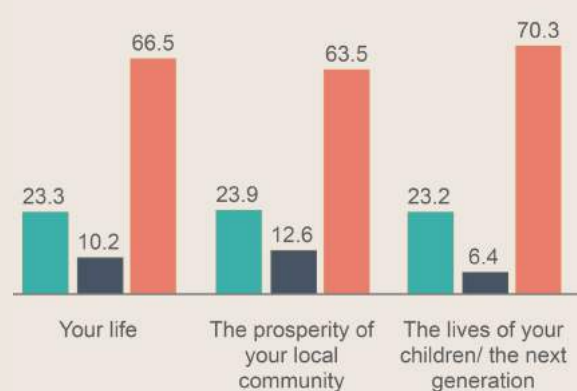
The majority of those who voted to Leave the EU in 2016 believe Brexit will have a positive impact on their own lives, on their community, and for their children; very few believe the consequences of Brexit will negatively affect them. Should these benefits not come to pass, for what ever reason, grievances and disappointment (whether well or ill founded) will inevitably follow.

How will the UK leaving the EU on 29th March impact…

Respondents who voted leave in 2016

	Your life	The prosperity of your local community	The lives of your children/ the next generation
Very / slightly positive	55.7	50.7	63.4
No impact	26	30.4	17.9
Very / slightly negative	18.3	18.9	18.7

Respondents who voted remain in 2016

	Your life	The prosperity of your local community	The lives of your children/ the next generation
Very / slightly positive	23.3	23.9	23.2
No impact	10.2	12.6	6.4
Very / slightly negative	66.5	63.5	70.3

- Very / slightly positive
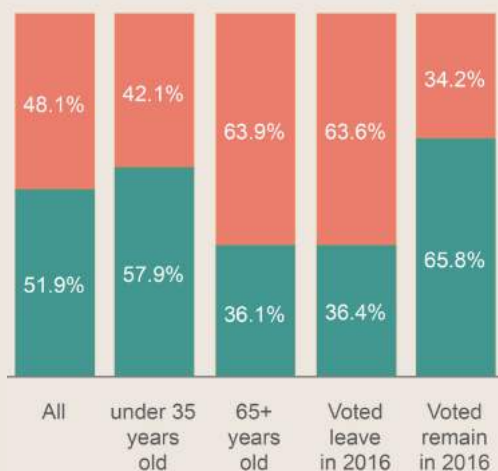- No impact
- Very / slightly negative

Global Britain?

Today, relatively few voters feel strongly attached to a political party. In contrast, it is commonly argued, since the EU referendum many think of themselves as 'either a strong 'Remainer' or a strong 'Leaver'.[15] While the Brexit divide certainly cuts through and across traditional party lines, geographic areas, families, and many communities, to interpret the relatively recent public and emotional prominence of the Leave-Remain schism as the country's primary dividing line on matters of British international identity and engagement is not sufficient.

Instead, we argue, there exists a division between those who feel international and those who do not. While for many the wish to either leave or remain in Europe is connected to their world view, and perhaps their sense of personal identity, our survey found that one third of Leave voters feel part of a global community while one third of Remain voters do not. This data makes plain that the 2016 referendum result did not provide a mandate on Britain's sense of international identity.
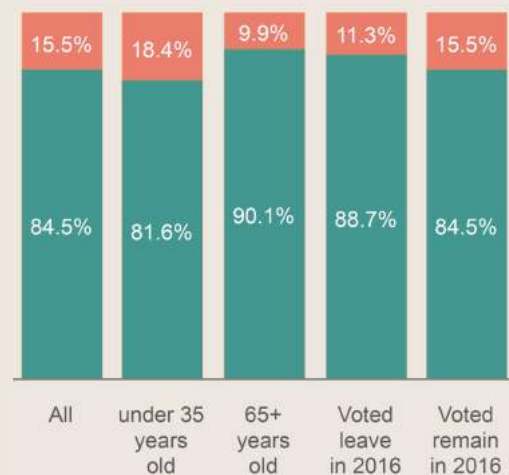
Moreover, unlike Prime Minister Theresa May's assertion in 2016 that 'if you believe you're a citizen of the world….you don't understand what the very word "citizenship" means',[16] our poll found that those who consider their identity to be both national and international feel more positively towards minorities, believe human rights become more important during times of national crisis, and feel more valued by their local community and by those of other backgrounds.

> **Overwhelmingly people feel themselves to be British, but a majority also feel part of a global community**

When thinking about your identity, how strongly do you feel part of a global community?

	Very strongly / somewhat	Not much / not at all
All	51.9%	48.1%
under 35 years old	57.9%	42.1%
65+ years old	36.1%	63.9%
Voted leave in 2016	36.4%	63.6%
Voted remain in 2016	65.8%	34.2%

When thinking about your identity, how strongly do you feel British?

	Very strongly / somewhat	Not much / not at all
All	84.5%	15.5%
under 35 years old	81.6%	18.4%
65+ years old	90.1%	9.9%
Voted leave in 2016	88.7%	11.3%
Voted remain in 2016	84.5%	15.5%

Very strongly / somewhat   Not much / not at all

However, our survey found that it is those who feel neither part of a global community nor European who are far more likely to hold negative views of human rights at home as well as abroad. This part of the British public are far more likely to view minorities in Britain as threats and to think that human rights become less important during times of national crisis. This group feel less valued in their local community, by their friends and families, at work, feel less safe, less able to influence the decisions that shape their lives. It is a group made up of people from across the country, with different economic backgrounds, although they are a little more likely to be older and male. One in four, if the referendum was held again tomorrow, would vote to remain and under two-thirds would vote to leave.

Just over fifty percent of the British public, when they think about their identity, feel that they belong to a global community and feel European. And this sense of international identity is growing; the young feel overwhelmingly more global and European than those over 65. But the strengthening of international identity in Britain has not displaced the sense of national identity. Yet there is an emerging populist discourse that equates pro-European or international sentiment to a displacement or abandonment of national identity. It implies that those who wish to remain in the EU, about half of the public, are betraying their national kin for foreign loyalties; this is incorrect and undermines the extent to which the British public feel simultaneously part of Britain, Europe, and the world.

> Those who feel a part of a global community are more likely to hold positive attitudes to human rights, minorities and their community

Of those who feel part of a global community: **Of those who do not feel part of a global community:**

78% say human rights are more important at a time of national crisis — **78%**

53% — 53% say human rights are more important at a time of national crisis

20% say Muslim people are a threat to Britain's success and prosperity — **20%**

43% — 43% say Muslim people are a threat to Britain's success and prosperity

77% feel valued by people from different backgrounds to them — **77%**

51% — 51% feel valued by people from different backgrounds to them

A gathering storm? Assessing risks of identity-based violence in Britain

Our assessment

Current indicators do not suggest that civil unrest or other forms of widespread violence are imminent, although as tensions rise the risk of a single incident triggering a ripple effect will increase.

We forecast that without sustained, comprehensive effort, the negative and divisive trends outlined in this report will continue. If this deterioration is left unchecked, the truly 'left behind' will be those from vulnerable and already marginalised and minority communities. Prejudice and identity-based violence will keep rising and it will be the Roma, Gypsy, Traveller, Muslim, and immigrant communities who will be Brexit's biggest losers, whether Britain leaves Europe or if Britain stays.

The EU referendum and its consequences have exacerbated existing divisions and created new ones. Should the country enter a period of economic difficulty or greater political uncertainty, either as a result of withdrawal from the EU without a deal, a second referendum, a general election or a downturn resulting from a negotiated agreement, we predict a heightening of anxieties among those who would feel their promised future threatened; in these circumstances we would be particularly concerned for the safety and wellbeing of minority communities in the UK. Should the country experience actual or threatened shortages of food, medicine, or fuel we would be deeply concerned about how those who hold extreme prejudices, or cynical political ambition, might seek to capitalise from the crisis.

Anxieties surrounding the uncertainty of Britain's pending exit from the EU are understandable. However, alarmism regarding the future of British democracy has the potential to exacerbate these anxieties. These fears will be felt most among those who believe they have the most to gain from a speedy and 'hard' withdrawal and by those who have been told their grievances, concerns and difficulties will be solved if that eventuality comes to pass. We believe it has been irresponsible that so many have sought to position anything that can be seen to frustrate Britain's timely exit (including a second referendum) as, in the words of the Prime Minister, "catastrophic" for British democracy.[17] It has been claimed that 'traitors' from a 'liberal elite' are working to undermine the 'will of the people' and it has been argued that those who warn of the possible negative impacts of Brexit are lying to frustrate Brexit through 'project fear'. We believe the regressive impact this rhetoric will have on British society has so far been underestimated.

The shifts in British society, politics and press regarding the permissibility of marginalisation have led to a reimagining of "other" in contemporary Britain; traditional prejudices have melded to newer, less familiar, more flexible narratives. The defence of fundamental freedoms and rights has become the purview of the full political spectrum. This appropriation of rights-based language as a means of closing down debate compromises the efforts of those who genuinely work to call out racism, prejudice and violations of rights and freedoms in Britain.

The factionalisation of opinion has the effect of squeezing space for individuality and nuance in public contributions to debate, particularly on Brexit, immigration, rights and power - and also across public commentary online. As a result, Britain's press, parliament, and public culture appear to have become more tolerant of intolerance.

We believe it is crucial to acknowledge the relationship between rising identity-based violence and the apparent normalisation of abusive, divisive, and exclusionary commentary in both public and political spheres, and the apparent impunity for those who display such behaviour. It is feeding old and new prejudices.

The product of these negative trends can be seen most acutely in the rise in far-right extremist groups in the UK, online and offline. The internationalisation of anti-globalist, nationalist, anti-rights based populism is likely to gather its own momentum but even if this remains on the margins of mainstream social and political interaction in the UK, these movements may succeed in altering the public moral compass by a couple of degrees. The appropriation by many of these groups, both in the UK and abroad, of the pro- Brexit position is having a radicalising effect upon a far wider community than the minority of self- identifying far-right groups/individuals. We consider this rising threat the greatest challenge facing British counter extremism and counter terrorism efforts, and anticipate it will remain so for the next decade. These concerns are shared by Britain's Head of Counter-terrorism Policing Neil Basu, who has warned that the far-right inside and outside Britain will exploit Brexit-related tensions, triggering further rises in hate crime, creating an atmosphere that terrorists can exploit… "My concern is the polarisation, and I fear the far-right politicking and rhetoric leads to a rise in hate crime and a rise in disorder".[18]

We know that it is possible – in fact far more common – for individuals to hold, express, and consume prejudiced views, without transgressing to violence. In fact, most of us hold contradictory ideas about our own and others' identity; we all hold prejudices that we have unintentionally learnt or developed. Individual motivations and push factors towards identity-based based violence are usually much more banal, and related to the personal lives of the perpetrators. However, when broader social attitudes towards certain groups deteriorate, the likelihood of violence against those groups increases. These shifts, and the measurable indicators that help forecast risks, can be reversed. Waiting for these negative trends to worsen before taking action will incur human, political and financial costs.

The promise of Brexit has raised the stakes of identity-based politics in Britain. It is critical, as Britain enters this new period of acute uncertainty, that prevention of further social cleavage is prioritised through sustained, comprehensive community building and further escalation of identity-based violence is prevented through more targeted engagement.

What can be done?

Responsibility to help protect people from the threat of identity-based violence is part of the modern social contract; resilient societies rely upon the actions of citizens, the strength of communities, and the support of the State. Whatever the outcome of Britain's Brexit dilemma, the coming months and years will see contestation of national, local and even individual values and identity. All countries experience periods of identity crisis and renegotiation but such times are always precarious moments in any nation's history. As this paper has set out, there are already signs of worsening social disintegration, political polarisation, and of rising prejudice. However, there are realistic and responsible actions that can impede negative trends and begin to bridge Britain's divides. Building safe, strong, and cohesive societies requires consistent and sustained effort, from grassroots communies, to local government, across industries and from national leaders.

- Everyone should take personal responsibility for improving standards of debate
- Local communities should create spaces for dialogue to foster locally-led bridging of divides
- Britain must prioritise long-term community building and civic education

Immediate - public figures commit to uphold and improve standards of debate

There is widespread agreement on the need to detoxify political and public debate, extending far beyond discussion of Britain's withdrawal from the European Union. All individuals, but particularly those who are in the public eye, have a responsibility to ensure their own contributions to debate reject hate speech, exclusionary language, personal attack, misinformation and 'fake news'. This might be achieved through a voluntary charter of standards.

Over coming months - create citizen forums for debate and reconciliation

Local Authorities, civil society, and community members should prioritise the creation of citizen forums for meaningful interactions between people of different backgrounds, beliefs and/or opinions. It is crucial during this period of uncertainty, growing social tensions, and rising hatreds, to encourage dialogue and to provide safe, inclusive environments where diverging opinions can be heard. Such forums must be rooted in and led by the local community, and founded upon principles of community building, dialogue, and reconciliation.

Longer term - invest in comprehensive community building & civic education

Articulating a positive message of inclusivity is important, however investment of financial, human and political resource in upstream community building will be essential if the damage already done to British society is to be reversed. Community building must once again be prioritised in Britain with far greater attention given to inclusive programmes that build capacity and increase representation of marginalised communities. There is an urgent need for long term education programmes to help people of all ages to analyse information and think critically about rumours, stereotypes, and other identity-based prejudices.

These recommendations are informed by consultations carried out in communities, analysis of global best practice, and Protection Approaches' theory of change.[19]

Endnotes

1. Identity-based violence includes hate crime, violent extremism and also identity-based atrocities such as ethnic cleansing and genocide. It is any act of violence motivated by a perpetrator's conceptualization of their victim's identity, eg race, religion, disability, political affiliation, class, sexuality, gender
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3. We judge that a risk assessment of identity-based violence in N.I. to be a priority requiring analysis of additional specific indicators and local contexts. For more see: Senator Mark Daly &UNESCO Chairs Professor Pat Dolan & Professor Mark Brennan, Northern Ireland Returning to Violence as a Result of a Hard Border due to Brexit, February 2019
4. These are drawn from Protection Approaches' risk analysis framework and global best practice including: 'Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes; A tool for prevention', United Nations 2014; and 'Preventing Violent Extremism through Inclusive Development and the Promotion of Tolerance and Respect for Diversity' UNDP, 2016
5. Bobby Duffy and Glenn Gottfried, *BBC Global Survey: A world divided?,* Ipsos MORI, 2018, https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2018-04/bbc-global-survey-a-world-divided-2018.pdf
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7. Home Office, 'Hate Crime England and Wales, 2017/18' see also: All Party Parliamentary Group on Hate Crime, (2019) 'How do we build community cohesion when hate crime is on the rise?' Her Majesty's Stationary Office
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15. What UK Thinks EU, 'The Emotional Legacy of Brexit: How Britain Has Become a Country of 'Remainers' and Leavers', National Centre for Social Research, https://whatukthinks.org/eu/analysis/the-emotional-legacy-of-brexit-how-britain-has-become-a-country-of-remainers-and-leavers/ [Accessed 02/02/2019]
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17. Theresa May, The Sunday Express, 13th January 2019, https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1071241/Theresa-May-latest-Brexit-news-EU-meaningful-vote-express
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19. Protection Approaches, Prejudice and Us, June 2018

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