



Pitts, F. H., Thompson, P., Cruddas, J., & Ingold, J. (2022). Culture Wars and Class Wars: Labour Between Post-Corbynism and Johnsonism. *Renewal: A Journal of Social Democracy*, 30(3), 80-94.

Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication record on the Bristol Research Portal](#)
PDF-document

This is the author accepted manuscript (AAM). The final published version (version of record) is available online via Lawrence Wishart at <https://journals.lwbooks.co.uk/renewal/vol-30-issue-3/abstract-9619/>. Please refer to any applicable terms of use of the publisher.

University of Bristol – Bristol Research Portal

General rights

This document is made available in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite only the published version using the reference above. Full terms of use are available: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-policy/pure/user-guides/brp-terms/>

Culture Wars and Class Wars: Labour Between Post-Corbynism and Johnsonism

Frederick Harry Pitts, Paul Thompson, Jon Cruddas, Jo Ingold

This is the accepted version of an article forthcoming 2022 in Renewal: A Journal of Social Democracy. The full and definitive version edited prior to publication will be available at <https://renewal.org.uk/>

Introduction

Weakened by a torrid few weeks, it is likely Boris Johnson will once again seek comfort in the winning card he played in the last election – a ‘culture war’ centred on partisan conflicts over social values, waged against young, educated, middle-class urbanites on behalf of older, working-class voters in Tory heartlands and the so-called Red Wall. Although Keir Starmer seems to be finally stealing a march in the polls, Labour can draw upon little record of success on this cultural front. 2019 was an instructive lesson in what happens when the left pitches its own populism against that of the right in a doomed attempt to fight a battle started by the other side.

As forecast ahead of time, Corbynism’s left populism, centred on moralism and victimhood, could not compete with the red-in-tooth-and-claw version offered by the Tories, based on visceral attachment and belonging.¹ Corbynism’s message of the ‘many not the few’ failed to compete for attention in a crowded field, populism having become the standard mode of politics across the electoral spectrum. This default setting sucked in even the supposedly sensible Remainer movement, which, with increasing implausibility, blamed Brexit on a shadowy elite conspiracy.

It was only the Tories, fully liberated from liberal reason and economic rationality under Johnson, who were capable of persuading voters of the salience of the antagonisms they promoted. This was to centre on a culture war staked out against urban hipsters and urbane liberals and their *cause celebres*, in the name of older swing voters in seats rendered newly winnable by the ruptures of Brexit.

In this context, Labour’s opposition to ‘austerity’ and ‘neoliberalism’ sounded anachronistic against a Conservative campaign untethered from fiscal common sense. Voters were left largely unconvinced by the central antagonism Corbynism posed between a plebian mass and an elusive, intangible “1%” difficult to locate in most people’s experience of everyday life. People were apparently unpersuaded of their status as puppets operated by the strings of the rich, recognising, rightly, that power does not work that way.

In spite of its failure to convince voters that it had successfully identified the culprit for all social ills, Corbynism's net effect was to exacerbate rather than dampen the culture war. Creating a favourable environment for the spread of conspiracy theories and left antisemitism, it introduced fresh rancour and division into contemporary politics. But even while fuelling the populist fire, Labour lacked a sufficiently likeable leadership and believable programme to profit from it.

Corbyn-led Labour failed to sidestep the trap game of binaries, beginning with Brexit but spiralling far beyond, that beguiles the modern left. This consequently permitted little room for healing, the construction of a notion of the common good, and any conviction that politics was more than performance. This performance a politician like Johnson could carry off with an aplomb the left will always lack, the latter possessing few tools to fight and win a culture war launched on the right's terms.

The new few

Today, the Conservative culture war continues, and will worsen the weaker Johnson gets, his party mired in sleaze and corruption. What route does Labour have under Keir Starmer to staunch the wounds incurred by Corbynism in this domain?

It is almost certain that, on cultural issues alone, the leadership recognises that the contemporary left is not up to the task of engaging the opposition. Its causes and concerns, whilst often justified, are too particularistic and minoritarian to confront the bombastic majoritarian nationalism of what has been termed 'Johnsonism'.² The more the left fights on this front, the more it reinforces the central antagonism promoted by the other side.

As we note elsewhere, another option being floated would be to fight the culture war on a more favourable economic and material footing, giving left populism one last heave in a fresh effort to compete on the new battleground of British politics.³ Irrespective of its earlier failure, this appears to be the proposed strategy of the post-Corbyn left, whose inescapable constitution seemingly still rests in the friend-enemy distinction foundational to populist politics.⁴

The culture war, the post-Corbynist crop of left analyses suggest, is really a class war in disguise, and contesting it is simply a case of stripping away layers of ideological mystification to uncover the true economic content of the clash between the privileged old and the 'new dispossessed'.⁵ This is increasingly seen to rest in unequal access and exposure to assets and rents rather than the traditional terrain of employment relations.⁶

Granular and empirically informed, this admittedly marks a step forward from Corbynism. Ineptly attempting to personify the abstract power of global capital in a concrete class actor, Corbynism's railing against an elite 'few'

comprehensively failed to sell to the electorate a compelling antagonist. The critique of financial capitalism, developed in the wake of the 2008 crisis, did not strike a chord in the context of the promise of a radically changed political economy under a post-liberal, big-spender Johnsonist government.

The post-Corbyn left-populist path through the culture war proposes to build from this low base, addressing the absence within Corbynism of a coherent analysis of contemporary post-crisis capitalism, and offering a more sophisticated understanding of class that better translates to the ballot box. This accepts the basic division at the centre of the Tory culture war between young, educated urbanites and older provincial working-class voters, but grants political primacy to economic interests over cultural issues.

In particular, instead of focusing on global finance as the problem with capitalism, the new analysis stresses the role of rentier activity and asset ownership as the central issue to be solved.⁷ This produces a depiction of a new antagonism based on generational divides around access to housing, pensions and other asset holdings and the combination of economic interests and political behaviour this generates.⁸

This has the effect of fighting the culture war on economic grounds by expanding the category of the 'few' to a much broader swathe of the population, whilst reducing the 'many' to a small but growing vanguard. Specifically, it posits older provincial voters with mortgages and pensions as the new 'few', an interest group obstructing economic reform and the electoral fortunes of the left. This includes working class voters whose homeownership is taken as binding their interests permanently to the Tories.

Assuming the loss of these older workers to the Tories, post-Corbyn left populism redefines class around a new set of social and economic coordinates more conducive to the young, educated, urban base to which the party has been reduced electorally.⁹ As such the category of the 'many' on which Corbynism rested is whittled down to an exclusive association with younger voters enduring urban living, rented accommodation, precarious work and graduate debt.

This displaces the connection between class and politics away from employment to a wider array of social relationships incorporating housing and education. It retains a materialist analysis of voter interest, with economic security and asset accessibility taken as driving older working-class voters to vote right, and economic insecurity and asset inaccessibility seen as driving younger voters in the 'new working class' to vote left.

A centre left bereft

The populist dividing line here, rather than between a plebian 99% and an elite 1%, is between insecure, asset-poor young people and supposedly secure, asset-

rich older people. Just as the analysis rings truer than the left's previous gambit, the latter target appears somewhat more concrete and everyday than the all-powerful global elite that Corbynism pitched to voters as the culprit for capitalism's flaws.

Unlike the much lesser-spotted mansion or skyscraper suite of the remote global elite, the mown lawn of a mortgage-free homeowner nearing or enjoying pensionable age is both local and visible. In this tangibility lies the new divide's potential dynamism as well as its potential danger, making for convenient politics but with unpredictable consequences. In particular, this strategy is likely to attract some on the centre-left seeking a compass to navigate the electoral terrain of the new culture wars.

It is undeniable that age increasingly acts as a source of cleavages in voting behaviour. The shifting populist logic of the post-Corbyn left rests on a demographic determinism that assumes generational trends will inevitably break in their favour given the right electoral offer. As the relationship between politics and class has been complicated by cultural and geographical factors, age in particular may appeal to centre-left strategists searching for an alternative basis upon which to construct electoral coalitions.

Here, the post-Corbyn left has something the centre of the party lacks. Having rode to internal power on the basis of no real preceding wave of intellectual renewal, Corbynism's five years at the helm did eventually produce some serious thinking that reassembled the post-crisis left imaginary into a halfway viable left populism.

Today, the professionalisation of the radical left in its brush with power grants it a confidence and articulacy out of step with the disaster of the project. Regrouping around a new set of themes and talking points, the analysis of rentier capitalism and the asset economy undoubtedly furnishes this part of the left with a more useful language to appraise the failures of British capitalism and put forward policy tweaks that could serve to solve them.

Whilst Labour Party conference certainly started to put flesh on the bones of an intellectual agenda, Starmerism lacks definition, having itself emerged from an abyss of serious thinking on the party's centre over the past five years.¹⁰

Displaying little thought or imagination for well over a decade, the centre-left has experienced no substantial period of deep intellectual reflection since its recuperation and revitalisation in the run up to Blairism. The Labour centre and right are still largely beholden to the legacy of that brief intellectual ferment of nineties social democracy – varieties of capitalism, worlds of welfare, social investment and so on.

Among adherents of such centre-left canards, there is already emerging crossover with the new thinking on age and assets developing within the post-Corbynist left.¹¹ With the centre and right bereft of new ideas of their own, then, the assertion of the further left in the context of a culture war that paralyses

conventional political strategy thus has the capacity to convince and pick off elements of the rest of the party. It could appear as an easy way to import a superficially coherent frame through which to view the current electoral and economic challenges Labour faces.

Its potential attraction on the party's centre and right owes not least to its formal similarity with how New Labour sliced and diced the electorate in pursuit of votes, using policy to satisfy the whims of an imaginary 'middle England' constraining its political priorities. With any appeal to a politics of the common good cancelled out by the rancour of the culture war, this demographically determinist account represents a similarly easy frame for conceiving and eking out small but satisfying margins of victory in difficult circumstances.

But, as with New Labour, the superficial attractiveness of this analysis skirts the tensions and contradictions concealed in its hidden wiring, and its fundamental incompatibility with pluralist politics.

The post-Corbynist left's argument for a new demographic vanguard thus requires much greater scrutiny, not least because of its understandably untested and speculative character. The need to kick the tyres is all the more pressing because a strategy based on age and assets represents a big electoral bet the stakes of which are not simply success or failure at the polls, but the survival or destruction of the party itself.

Culture war, class war

This updated left understanding of contemporary capitalism has more veracity than the simplistic morality tale spun by Corbynism, and correctly captures how the 'culture war' is not simply a story of vying social values but also of broader divides that certainly reward our focus and attention. However, it has a number of empirical issues.

For starters, the focus on individual asset holdings like housing, whilst bringing into focus everyday economics, is arguably insufficient to grasp the real significance of rentierism in the corporate world.¹² In many firms, work has been restructured in pursuit of financial returns against a backdrop of declining productivity and profitability.¹³ Seeing the sphere of circulation as the problem with capitalism, as did Corbynism's conspiracist critique of political economy, a narrow analysis of rentierism risks leaving the sphere of production pristinely untouched.

Processes of rentierisation and financialisation shape economic pressures in the workplace and across the lifecourse for a plurality of voters, not just the young. But, instead of confronting the totality of relationships through which production and circulation intertwine on this terrain, the new left populism proposes to personify economic categories like rent in specific voter blocs and interest groups. In this way, it marks only a slightly more contoured version of

Corbynism's own failed attempt to condense the complexity of the contemporary capitalist economy into the figure of the "1%", the "elite" or the "few".

The danger is that empirical weaknesses flow into errant electoral strategies and political prescriptions. There is a fundamental issue with simply displacing the two sides of the culture war onto the field of economic interests. An economistic understanding of the relationship between material conditions and political expression underestimates cultural factors that mediate and condition how class and electoral dynamics intersect.

There are several specific 'cultural' factors that could be said to underpin some of the emotional disconnect between Labour and its previous supporters. Labour have ducked issues of national and regional identity and sense of community, especially in Scotland – although Welsh Labour have lately adopted a more positive and proactive approach. Labour's previous failure to project a strong notion of national security and international responsibility, meanwhile, went hand-in-hand with a nervous awkwardness around the issue of patriotism and overseas power that ceded the ground to nationalists. There is also more general sense that, owing to a mix of middle-class moralism and social movement activism, Labour delivers voters only a missionary gospel of doom and gloom on the doorstep.

In this context, the underestimation of culture has empowered the left to wittingly or unwittingly continue picking sides based on belonging, geography, age and education. Recent analysis from the likes of Rob Ford suggests that this remains a trap for Labour, the latter lacking an emergent electoral majority given the geographical limits of its chosen demographics compared with the Conservative electoral coalition, which sustains a wider and enduring breadth more suitable for gaining and retaining power under the present electoral system.¹⁴

In spite of the Labour left's attempt to move political divides onto the economy, both under Corbyn and after, recent years have borne cruel witness to the overdetermination of the economic by the cultural.¹⁵ Dynamic and contingent cultural tendencies, and not economic calculations, increasingly drive political subjectivity, but, for the most part, contemporary left analyses have little or no conceptual or practical apparatus to comprehend and confront them. Patronising voters only as passive recipients of material compulsions strips them of political agency and avoids confrontation with the volatile emotional aspects of contemporary politics.

This economic and demographic determinism also liquidates the complexity that cuts across classes and generations, failing to account for intermediate groups like the middle-aged or mortgage-payers. Recent talk of 'Barratt Britain' highlights the continuing salience of aspirational working-class swing voters who have benefitted from government help with home ownership but may be

subject to the pressures of the restructuring of the workplace and wider economy.¹⁶ These voters also need to be included in any overall message about economic security and prosperity, rather than being left to fall through the gaps of an overly rigid analytical frame.

Moreover, associating insecurity solely with younger people receptive to left politics elides the insecurity faced by older workers – even those who own assets. Indeed, party strategist Deborah Mattinson's recent book evidences that many Labour-Tory switchers in the Red Wall are in insecure work.¹⁷ One [aspect](#) of the financialisation or 'rentierisation' of the economy in pursuit of short-term shareholder value has been perpetual restructuring, pension cuts and work intensification in precisely the kinds of manufacturing industries older working-class voters are, or have been, employed in.¹⁸

By displacing economic determination to other areas like asset ownership, the post-Corbynist left excludes these voters from a working class whose boundaries have been radically revised in the left's own favour. On a kind of 'no true Scotsman' rationale, this second-guesses the class status of voters unswayed by the siren calls of progressive politics. Reflecting the historical disappointment of the left with the concrete manifestations of working-class political agency, it suspects them of being among the beneficiaries of asset price inflation and thus irretrievably lost to the other side.

Such an analysis assumes that voters reject the left driven by their economic position rather than the tactical, strategic, organisational and presentational failures of the left itself. Although this offers a consoling comfort zone after an epic defeat, it does not provide space for the necessary enquiry and examination that should follow. There is instead a predestinarian reading of every defeat as a pyrrhic victory to be realised fully in future triumph – a claim untenable after four losses at the ballot box in only eleven years.

In this spirit, the Labour hard left lurches between romanticising a traditional working class when it thinks their votes are in the bag, to casting them aside for a more pliant 'new' working class when the old one refuses to perform to type. There is an inability or unwillingness on this part of the left to consider why large numbers of working-class voters might think it worthwhile voting Tory. It is insufficient to simply wish those voters away, casting them aside as inevitably lost to the Tories owing to material and economic determinations around age and assets, as the 'working-class' is redefined around new axes more accommodating of the experience of younger leftists.

Rather Labour needs to move with those votes and voters. An appeal to static economic interests based on age and assets cannot capture and react to the movement and change in voting behaviours as individuals experience the uneven distribution of employment and financial opportunities across the lifecourse and between different geographies.

For these reasons, under Starmer's leadership, and with the Corbynist left in a weakened position of little power and influence, it would be a mistake for the party to take the path of giving left populism another crack. In spite of its potential appeal to different parts of the party, it would be both politically and electorally unwise to try and contest any continuing culture war, even if it is justified through an economic arithmetic. Despite the apparently economic implications of such an approach, the consequence of recentering Labour's electoral coalition around younger urban graduates would be not to escape the culture war, but exacerbate it.

Paul Mason has argued that the priorities of this 'new working class', are less to do with economy and work and more focused on social values like 'human rights, equality, climate change, transgender issues, national self-determination, male violence or Black Lives Matters'.¹⁹ Whilst Labour as a party can accommodate and work with the grain of most of these values, their more radical and activist versions often present a challenge to communicating beyond the narrow progressive consensus of which these positions represent the perceived price of entry.

It is not a question of embracing a Blue Labour narrative of 'faith, flag and family'. Rather, it is a question of recognising the risks posed to the construction of a viable, diverse electoral coalition by an overassertion of the primacy of identity issues salient amongst some of the urban young.

Pluralism and the politics of work

A renewed populism like that on offer from the post-Corbynist left has few lessons to offer the Labour leadership. Regardless of whether an expanded 'few' or a narrower 'many' gets any nearer to empirical or electoral reality, any political strategy that finds itself moving, within the space of a few years, from claims to have the support of the "99%" or "the people" to claiming the support only of graduate tenants in cities sets no useful example to the wider centre-left.

The premise of left populism is that politics is impossible without the identification of an enemy by the incorruptible, morally pure 'friends' of radical reform. But this has a corrosive effect on practical politics in a liberal democracy insofar as a strategy based on such agonism obstructs attempts to construct cross-class compromises and pluralist electoral coalitions.

Better suited to a system of proportional representation, under first-past-the-post the best such an approach can hope for is to eke out a win on the basis of individual voter blocs, rather than wield parliamentary power with the broadest possible mandate. Arguably a 'popular front'-style progressive alliance could help support such a strategy within the context of first-past-the-post, but both

the current Labour leadership and the populist left lacks the openness and pluralism necessary for such an experiment.

A populist approach may provide a prism through which to identify and portray as accountable parties apparently responsible for the left's own deficiencies when put to the test electorally.²⁰ But, beyond providing comfort during the long period of mourning following Corbynism's comprehensive defeat, it serves no purpose in organising politically precisely because it sees the very voters Labour needs to win as a problem to be overcome.

Given the geographical concentration of younger voters in urban areas already dominated by Labour, there is no viable route to a winnable electoral arithmetic that does not pass in some way through the votes of older members of the so-called 'traditional' working class who might own their home and have a half-decent pension, as well as aspirational swing voters in other parts of the country. Even were it true that the post-Corbynist left had found a new radical political subject, such a subject would represent only one part of this potential coalition. The question is how to build it.

The Biden-Harris victory in the US election seemed to mark the waning of divisive populism as the default mode of politics, as they fashioned a winning coalition without requiring the identification of an opposing class fraction to function. The Democrats seemed to be consciously seeking to heal and reconcile a fractured polity around a politics rooted in a transcendent common good. Luckily the Labour leadership seems to have learnt this lesson and shows no sign of desiring a slice of the culture war, carefully crafting a more unifying message instead.

Although it is necessary for Labour to circumnavigate the culture war, it is not enough to do so simply by peeling away culture to fight on the grounds of economic interest alone. Political affinities cannot be seamlessly read off from economic interests, the latter being mediated through a whole host of cultural, emotional and geographical factors. The task is to create a pluralist politics that can address these factors together with the economic.

Work – the focus of Starmer's conference speech – is one area to focus on. The zero-sum opposition of older rentier asset holders and younger asset-poor renters forecloses any politics geared towards stakeholding in its various forms, and specifically at the level of the workplace. Like both New Labour and Corbynism, it remains intellectually detained by purely distributional concerns centred on the ownership and circulation of wealth, rather than directly confronting architectural issues in work and how wealth is created.

Owing to this, the radical left's new political economy sees rentierism as an external cause of Britain's productivity malaise rather than its result. In reality, repelled by an underperforming and unprofitable industrial sector weakened by

global competition, firms and investors seek returns from rentier activities instead, many of which imply the sweating of low-wage, low-skill work.

Tackling this requires a politics of work that can connect with the experiences of those subject to the shifts associated with financialisation and rentierisation in the workplace. The new left populism writes off these experiences of work as secondary to other aspects of economic life like asset ownership. But the common pursuit of good work actually constitutes a potential means to construct durable alliances between voters young and old, urban and non-urban.

This would represent an intergenerational politics that first bridges and then abolishes the cleavages that underpin the right's culture war. Rather than demeaning the advantages secured by older workers, the Labour Party has at its disposal the history and language to link up the earlier struggles of generations of working-class people to gain access to assets, good jobs and economic security with the struggles of young workers fighting for the same privileges today.

More broadly, the antagonisms and divisions promoted by the Tory culture war can be overcome by building coalitions around the wider challenge of fostering UK industrial renewal in the face of the climate crisis and a changing global order. A politics of production addressed to the productivity malaise is central to the reenvisioning of Britain's place in the world in a post-Brexit, post-COP26 context characterised by intensifying geopolitical conflict and systemic competition. Across the shadow treasury, foreign affairs and business teams, the Labour frontbench is already fashioning a coordinated response to these challenges that places work and everyday economic life at its core.

It is not so much a case, then, of choosing the "Red Wall" or the "Blue Wall", but about developing a strategy that can find common ground wherever possible and accept inevitable trade-offs, compromises and priorities where it is not. This promises to escape the echo chamber of performative politics based on taking sides between binary opposites. The key question is how electoral coalitions can be constructed across the differentiated ways in which contemporary British capitalism is not meeting people's aspirations, thereby offering up opportunities for a progressive, pluralist politics of work and economic life that transcends the culture war.

Notes

- ¹ Matt Bolton and Frederick Harry Pitts, *Corbynism: A Critical Approach*. Emerald, Bingley 2018.
- ² Christabel Cooper, "The Rise and Fall of Johnsonism," *Progressive Britain*, 26th November 2021, <https://progressivebritain.org/the-rise-and-fall-of-johnsonism/>
- ³ Jon Cruddas, Paul Thompson, Frederick Harry Pitts, Jo Ingold, "Labour's political strategy: age, assets and the politics of work," *LabourList*, 2nd August 2021, <https://labourlist.org/2021/08/labours-political-strategy-age-assets-and-the-politics-of-work/>
- ⁴ Chantal Mouffe, *For a left populism*. Verso Books, London 2018.
- ⁵ William Davies, Johnson's Tories are reaping the rewards of an economy built on rising house prices, *The Guardian*, 26th April 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/apr/26/boris-johnson-tories-economy-rising-house-prices-wages>; Ishan Khurana, Phil Jones & Jack Kellam, 2021. Who Are The Renters? A study of occupations, rent and geography. *Autonomy*, 7th May 2021. Available from: <https://autonomy.work/portfolio/whoaretherenters/>
- ⁶ Christine Berry, "Rethinking Class in the Age of Rent," *Autonomy*. 23rd April, 2021, <https://autonomy.work/portfolio/berry-class-rent/>
- ⁷ Lisa Adkins, Melinda Cooper and Martijn Konings, *The Asset Economy*. Polity, Cambridge 2020; Brett Christophers, *Rentier Capitalism*. Verso, London 2020
- ⁸ Samuel Earle, "It's the Housing Market, Stupid: How Property Became the Battle Line of British Politics," *Novara Media*, 31st May 2021, <https://novaramedia.com/2021/05/31/its-the-housing-market-stupid-how-property-became-the-battle-line-of-british-politics/>; Keir Milburn, *Generation Left*, Polity, Cambridge 2019
- ⁹ Andy Beckett, "If Keir Starmer wants to 'rethink Britain', he'll need some bigger ideas," *The Guardian*, 8th April 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/apr/08/keir-starmer-britain-ideas-labour-leader-jeremy-corbyn>
- ¹⁰ Paul Thompson, Frederick Harry Pitts and Jo Ingold, "A Strategic Left? Starmerism, Pluralism and the Soft Left," *Political Quarterly*, 92(1), 2021, pp. 32-39
- ¹¹ Nick Pearce, "Grey power plays," *IPR Blog*, 5th May 2021, <https://blogs.bath.ac.uk/iprblog/2021/05/05/grey-power-plays/>
- ¹² Brett Christophers, "Class, Assets and Work in Rentier Capitalism". *Historical Materialism* 29.2 (2021): 3-28.
- ¹³ Javier Morena Zacaes, "Euphoria of the Rentier," *New Left Review*, 129, May/June 2021, pp. 47-67
- ¹⁴ Robert Ford, "If Labour can't beat the Tories' polarising game, it should build bridges instead," *The Guardian*, 7th November 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/nov/07/if-labour-cant-beat-the-tories-polarising-game-it-should-build-bridges-instead>
- ¹⁵ Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- ¹⁶ The Economist, "The truth behind the Tories' Northern strongholds," *The Economist*, 31st March 2021, <https://www.economist.com/britain/2021/03/31/the-truth-behind-the-tories-northern-strongholds>
- ¹⁷ Deborah Mattinson, *Beyond the Red Wall*, London: Biteback, 2020.
- ¹⁸ Jean Cushen and Paul Thompson, "Financialization and value: why labour and the labour process still matter," *Work, Employment and Society*, 30(2), 2016, pp. 352-365; Patricia Findlay and Paul Thompson, "Contemporary work: Its meanings and demands," *Journal of Industrial Relations*. 59(2), 2017, pp. 122-138.
- ¹⁹ Paul Mason, "Labour must embrace a post-work future or condemn itself to irrelevance," *New Statesman*. 28th April 2021, <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2021/04/labour-must-embrace-post-work-future-or-condemn-itself-irrelevance;>
- ²⁰ See e.g. David Graeber, "The Center Blows Itself Up: Care and Spite in the 'Brexit Election'," *New York Review of Books*, 13th January 2020. <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2020/01/13/the-center-blows-itself-up-care-and-spite-in-the-brexit-election/>