

# Brexit? CBS Facts It!

*By Yasmeen Zaman, Birmingham City University Student*

During the summer I replied to an email asking BCU students if they would like to become an intern for the Centre of Brexit Studies (CBS), as all things Brexit are currently a major sociological discussion topic and I am a psychology with sociology student, I thought this would be a fantastic opportunity to learn and conduct some social research which is relevant to my course. So, up to now in my first year at BCU I have signed up to a fair few workshops and courses for psychology and was extremely happy to do something which could enhance my sociological insight.

I was invited to attend an interview with Professor Alex de Ruyter who heads the CBS and Jessica Guy who leads as the Communications Officer. Both were lovely, made me feel at ease AND offered me coffee (which always puts people in my good books). The interview went surprisingly well, I've never had a formal interview before and I was unsure if my folder of achievements and certificates needed to come out of my bag (which it didn't). I was questioned about why I wanted to be an intern for the Centre and why I was interested in Brexit, at the time my answer was fairly basic as the nerves were kicking in but Professor de Ruyter and Jessica seemed positive about my answers and later emailed me to say that I had been offered an internship. I told my family and tweeted to the world immediately, I was so excited that I may actually get my name on a research paper and to be involved with the Centre.

My role as a Researcher within CBS has been to conduct interviews with people mainly around the location close to where the Commonwealth Games will take place in 2022, the objective has been to ascertain if local businesses can see and make use of possible connections made available via the Commonwealth Games in a bid to dampen the economic annihilation which a bad Brexit deal could bring. In the current political climate, I feel it's important to gain some concrete research into how Brexit will affect us and to be part of this process feels like I'm doing something useful and positive about the possible social chaos which I feel may ensue post-Brexit.

As any qualitative researcher knows, Researcher bias can have an effect on how questions are put forward and framed, to avoid as much of this as possible I was given a semi-structured questionnaire and a Dictaphone to record the data collected from participants. I learned that recruiting relevant and willing participants can be tricky and being impartial during interviews can be challenging, all of which I feel I managed to do fairly effectively with the rest of the team.

The people at CBS have always been kind and polite, there's a few regular staff who are all pleasant and I was presented with a gift as a thank you for my time and effort, I was given a lovely academic year diary which I am currently using and a chocolate card (yum).

Conducting qualitative research during my second year at BCU has been really rewarding, especially whilst I am doing a module on the subject, working as an intern with the CBS has enabled me to utilise what I'm learning into practise and has been one of the most helpful tools made available to me to enhance my education. I'd recommend anyone studying a degree to get this type of experience and apply if you are able to take up the opportunity.

*Yasmeen Zaman is a second year Psychology and Sociology student at Birmingham City University. She worked as an intern for the Centre for Brexit Studies between May 2018 to November 2018 and will shortly have her name included as an author on her first research paper.*

*Yasmeen and her children live in Birmingham, she would like to continue her studies after her degree in either clinical or forensic psychology. She has written an article for the soon to be published BCU BLSS magazine and is currently a MHFA (Mental Health First Aid) volunteer within the university.*

*This blog post is written in a personal capacity.*