In what sense left behind by globalisation?

Looking for a less reductionist geography of the populist surge in Europe/UK and its relation to uneven development

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1. Motivation

Starting Points

- **2015 referendum was a shock** - for what cleavages it revealed, as much as for its direct consequences

- evidently **not just about Europe** (cf. Ashcroft 2012 on UKIP)

- but **nor about a renewed north-south economic divide** either – **and not at all calculated to address that**

- **Leave voters notably complain about** : multi-culturalism immigration, social liberalism, green movement – and also feminism
  - plus strong current of distrust in courage/honesty of government/parties' (& experts)
  - = 'populism' ?

- 'Control' as a concern – but **little directly on globalisation** – tho' commentators plausibly emphasise 'those left behind'
  - If so – in what terms: material or cultural – or an amalgam

- **What's the geography** : differing economic vulnerabilities; simple mix effects; or locality-specific political geographies reflecting past roles in the SDOL ?

2. Populism and Geographies : Lines of Explanation

Populism: what is this thing?

- **A movement :** rejecting the (moral / intellectual) authority of a socio-political establishment, in favour of the authentic, commonsensical responses of ordinary people(s)
- With three necessary elements:
  - **a substantial base sharing a thin-ideology,** involving:
    - 'an imagined people' with a strong core of common interests;
    - elites out of touch with the real/everyday world, and corruptly self-serving; and
    - a need for strong government to do what 'people' simply know to be required
  - **entrepreneurial politicians seeing an opportunity;**
    - to mobilise and rhetorically shape this (inchoate) rejectionism
    - in a space free of established organisations and substantial doctrine
    - to secure power and advance their more specific concerns
  - **a weakening of bases of attachments to established parties**
    - a failure in delivery of expected basic conditions – security, living standards
    - breakdowns in their credibility, through transparent dishonesty on matters of wide concern, and/or prioritisation of internal/internecine conflicts

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People 'left behind' – by globalisation ?

- **A key line of explanation for populism** is of:
    - a (large number of people) being *left behind* by developments that have profited (few or many) others:
        - e.g. John Curtice, Mark Carney, Theresa May ... post UK referendum
    - probably by 'globalisation' – given strong 'loss of control' theme
- But argument about whether primarily **in material / cultural terms**
    - latter reflecting pollsters' emphasis on age/educational dimensions
    - plus focus on qualitative impacts of large recent migration
    - stronger association of Leave voting with cultural positions than with class; cf. UKIP support link to authoritarianism, disbelief in climate change etc.
- Clearest evidence from Inglehart/Norris (2016) analysis of populist party voters, with pooled European Social Survey data:
    - comparing indicators of economic insecurity with set of attitudinal factors
    - showing the former to explain very little, and the latter a lot
    - in effect, that distinctive features of voters paralleled those of manifestos
    - interpreted this as a cultural backlash by those who losing out in triumph of post-materialist values (from 1970) – cumulative change past a tipping point

An alternative: recasting the cultural / political dimension in economic/spatial terms

- A key choice for individuals who invest in human and social capital is between localist/cosmopolitan strategies
  - including emphasis on flexibly applicable academic training emphasising (universal) principles and acquisition of dynamic learning skills/orientation
  - *versus* more focused, **context-specific**, vocational and situational learning – networking and tactical awareness + attachments
- Each strategy naturally fits better to some settings (occupations/ market niches) than others
  - but globalisation has shifted the overall balance of advantage toward the former – with growth of HE reflecting/reinforcing
- Different cultural values are associated with each
  - *amplified by political dynamics of areas dominated by one / other*
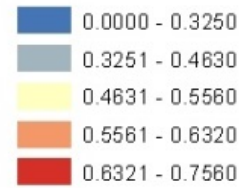
But what about the Geography ?

- A strength of I/N study is its trans-national breadth
  - but its lack of attention to national/regional variation might possibly miss some important links with economic factors ?
  - and focus on attitudinal responses/scales (including strong L/R one!) begs the question: what economic/other factors underlie them
- Globalisation/economic regionalisation don't figure in I/N
  - except (indirectly) in relation to the cultural shock of migration
  - though EU is a bugbear of European populists – and trade a focus of Trumpism (to which they make comparisons)
  - they could be seen as more direct motor for cultural change/cleavage
- A gap needing to be filled
  - by more than *assumptions* about:
    - links between populist responses and material inequalities
    - amplified by increasingly uneven regional/sectoral impacts of globalisation (or neo-liberal policy responses to its challenges)

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3. What the Brexit Referendum Map Did and Didn't Show

Leave Vote Proportions

Leave Share of Vote

- ■ 0.0000 - 0.3250
- ■ 0.3251 - 0.4630
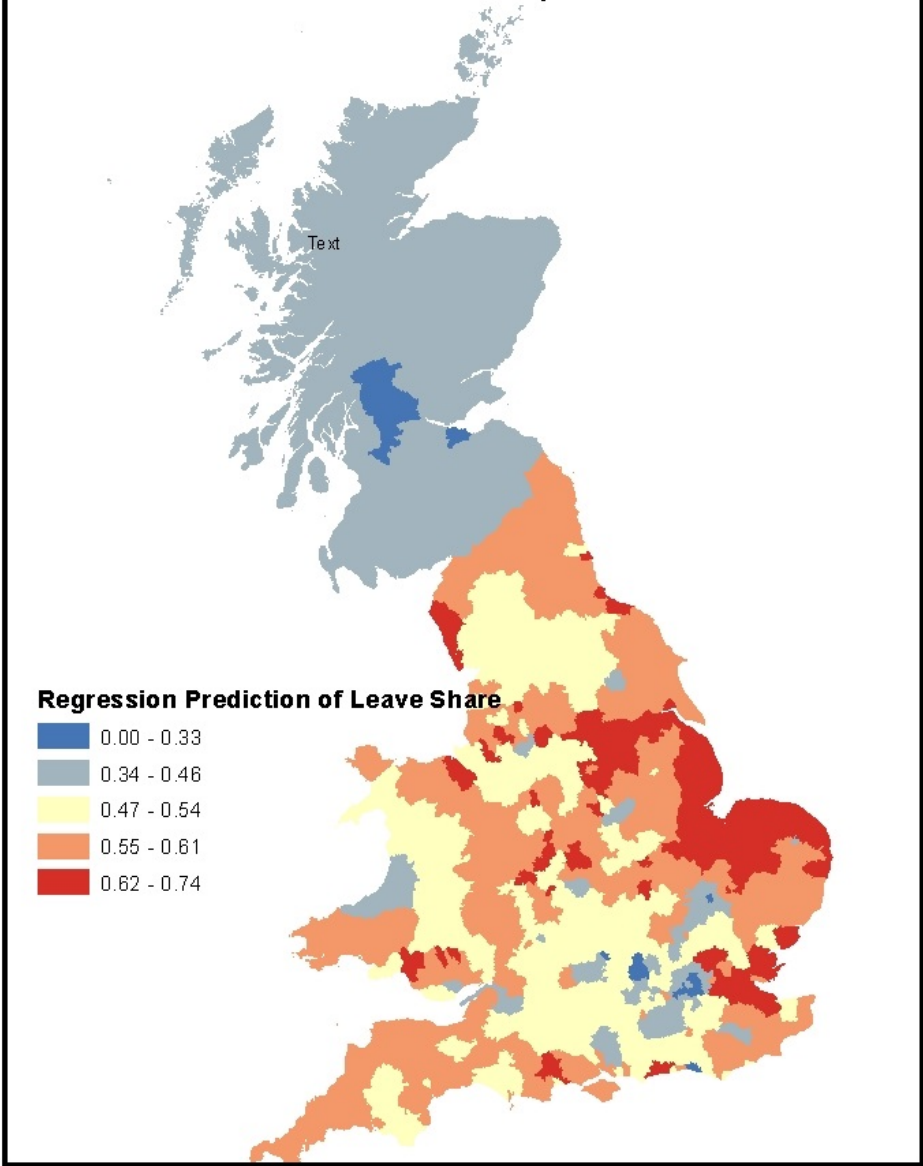- ■ 0.4631 - 0.5560
- ■ 0.5561 - 0.6320
- ■ 0.6321 - 0.7560

Text

Some Very Simple Empirics

- A striking/unfamiliar map of inter-district variation in the Leave share: can be closely approximated with a regression model:
    - involving mostly just *population characteristics*
    - plus an (important) Scottish dummy ;
    - and a (less important) in-migration acceleration measure
- Qualifications and/or occupations are key factors in this
    - but not just high versus low: more people with basic qualifications/ apprenticeship (rather than none) was associated with Leave voting – as was the presence of corporate managers (cf. professionals)
    - maybe consistent with the localist/vocational hypothesis
    - most of the occupational effects are too strong to be purely compositional – suggesting the likelihood of ecological impacts via local culture/politics
- Residual spatial/regional effects seem weak
    - except for devolved nations – and Merseyside - NOT London !!
    - no plausible associations with degrees of economic/industrial success/vulnerability

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Leave Vote Proportions

Regression Prediction of Leave Share

- 0.00 - 0.33
- 0.34 - 0.46
- 0.47 - 0.54
- 0.55 - 0.61
- 0.62 - 0.74

Selected Leave-Vote Share Regressions

	1	2	3
Constant	0.745***	0.832***	0.692***
Qualifications Level 4 (Degree equiv)	-0.925***		-0.805***
Level 3 /Other			-0.460***
Levels 1,2,Apprenticeship	0.450***		
None			
Occupations: Corporate managers		0.781***	1.288***
Educational professions		-2.068***	-0.623*
Science/tech assoc profs.		-3.086***	
Culture, media sports occs.		-2.207***	-1.231***
Administrative occs.		-0.439**	-0.745***
Secretarial occs.		2.675***	2.547***
Skilled metal/electrical		3.908***	2.048***
Transport/mobile machine drivers		2.519***	1.175***
Age group <30	-0.813***		
30-59		-0.519***	-0.184*
60+			0.138*
Scotland	-0.199***	-0.154***	-0.180***
Ethnic Group Mixed/multiple	-0.552***		
Resident migrants Acceleration from 2004	8.123***		5.044***
N	380	380	380
Adjusted R^2	0.889	0.909	0.931

Leave Vote Proportions

PRED Effect of AGE OCC EDUC
- 0.00 - 0.27
- 0.28 - 0.43
- 0.44 - 0.52
- 0.53 - 0.59
- 0.60 - 0.74

Leave Vote Proportions

PRED Effect of Accelerated Migratioon 2004+

- 0.00 - 0.01
- 0.02 - 0.03
- 0.04 - 0.05
- 0.06 - 0.09
- 0.10 - 0.13

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Leave Vote Proportions

Residual from LEAVE Regression

- -0.12 - -0.06
- -0.05 - -0.02
- -0.01 - 0.00
- 0.01 - 0.03
- 0.04 - 0.08

R² Linear = 0.924

y=6.69E-3+0.99*x

LEAVE (y-axis)

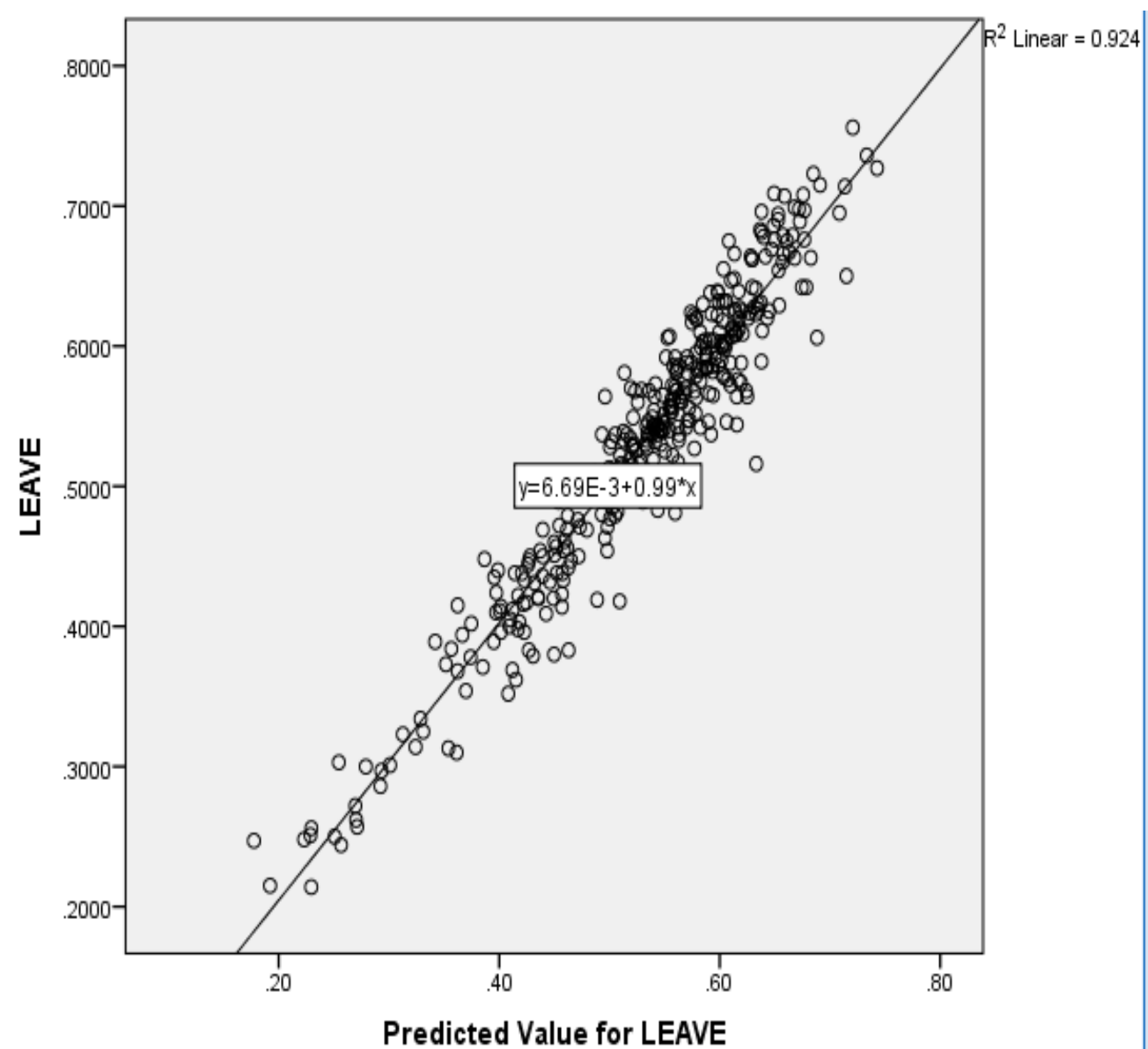Predicted Value for LEAVE (x-axis)
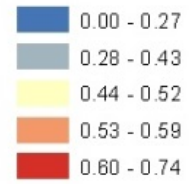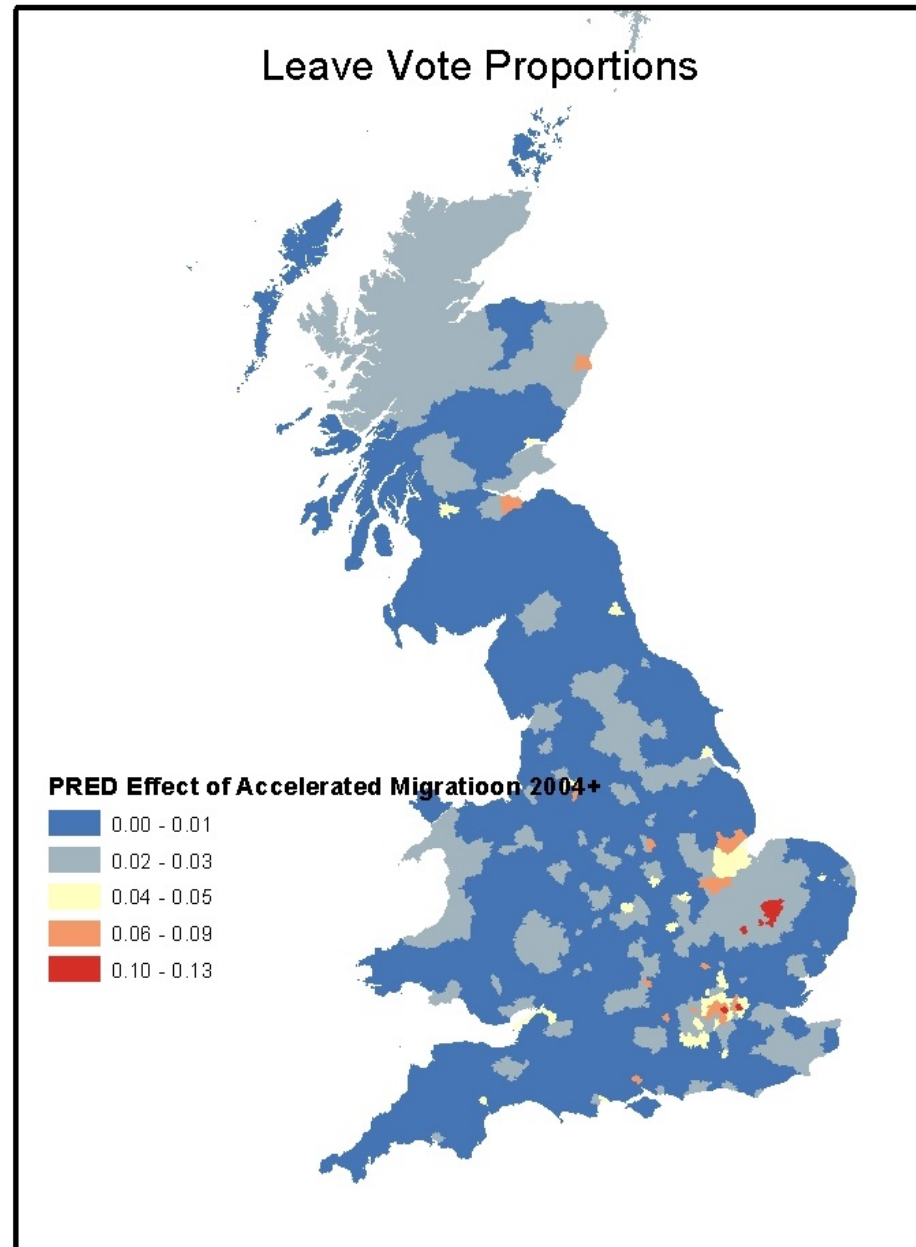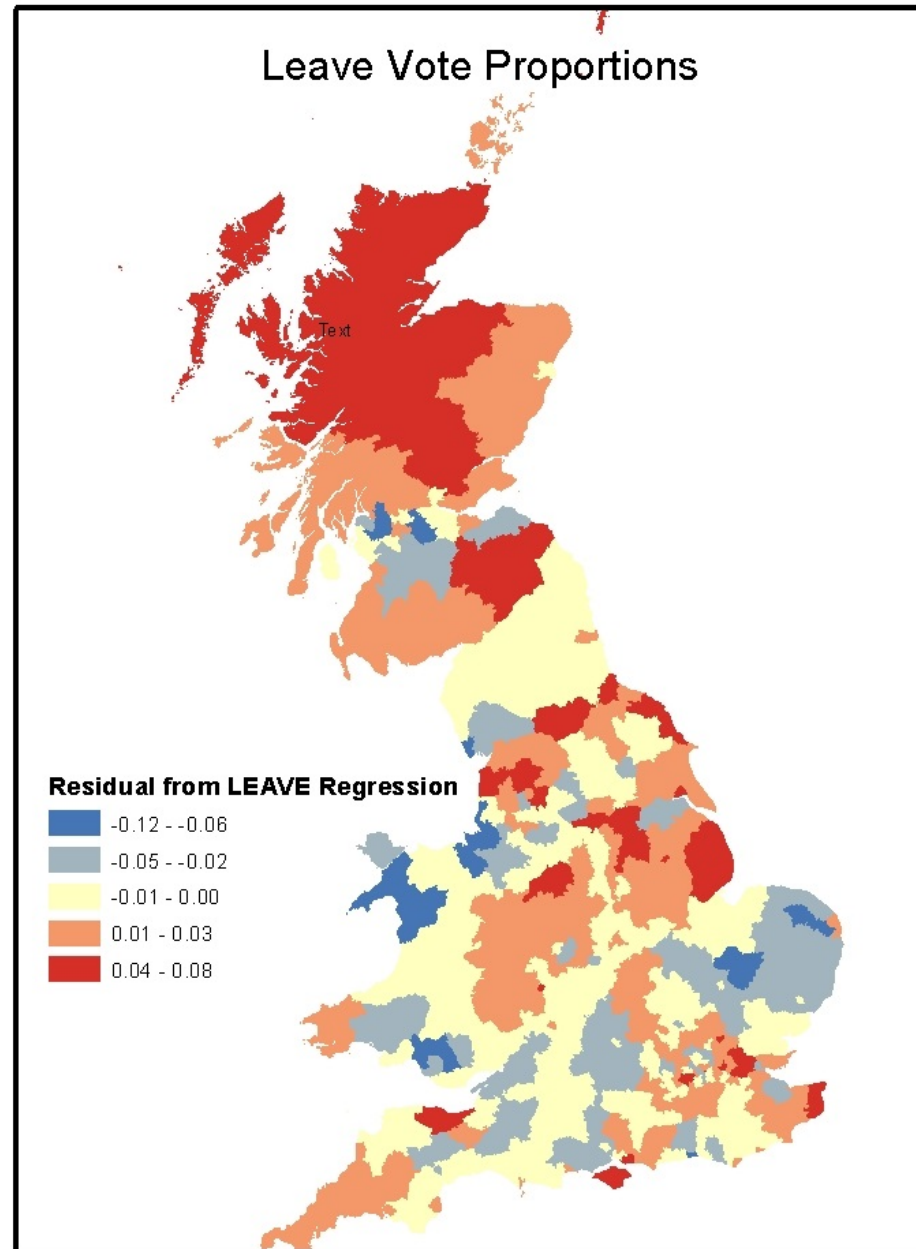
4. Looking for a Regional Geography of European Populism

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Some Less Simple Empirics with European data

- Effectively a follow-up to I/N analyses of pooled European Social Survey data on respondents' propensity to support 'populist parties'
  - with 7 waves, from 2002-14
- adding a spatial dimension:
  - some 200 NUTS2 or NUTS1 regions from 16 countries
- looking 'behind' the (strong) attitudinal influences for structural/contextual factors
  - including indirectly 'economic' effects
- and investigating additional/new hypotheses
  - involving forms of qualification, scale of immigration, ecological effects and interactions among these

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Taking a Second Glance at Significant Attitudinal Influences

- Before taking attitudinal influences out of the model, they were explored in a less pre-structured way (in otherwise similar model)

- In addition to the right-wing ideological identifier (remaining worryingly strong), this highlighted, in order of significance:
  - Lack of trust in the Euro Parliament specifically
  - Opposition to more migrants of a different ethnicity
  - Thinking migrants bad for: culture; for the economy; and the country (in that order);
  - Belief in the importance of strong government
  - Feeling a member of an (unidentifiable) group that is discriminated against;
  - Dissatisfaction with the present state of the economy
  - Support for more migrants of the same ethnicity
  - [only possibly - the importance of: (not) understanding people; and respecting tradition.]

- Among the control variables :
  - being female, educated or from an ethnic minority were strong predictors of non-populism
  - but so too was being Muslim, while religiosity was associated with populism only for (either kind of) Catholics

Hypotheses for testing

- Responses to vulnerability from liberalising international flows:
  - potential job loss from import substitution:
    - proxied by working in manufacturing * regional rate of mfg. job loss
  - potential replacement by migrant worker:
    - proxied by working in migrant intensive occupations * 10 yr migrants in the regional population.
- Differential sensitivity of those with localist asset type to area change, particularly from larger migrant /Muslim population
  - contrasts between the vocational qualified (or in occupations where that's the norm) and those with more formal education:
    - in general likelihood of identifying with populist parties; and
    - impact on this likelihood of a larger 20 yr migrant stock in the area
- Ecological/booster impacts from larger concentrations of either asset type within the local population:
  - mean share of vocationally qualified and years of formal education for local population – as (contrasting) influences on populism & migrant sensitivity

Main Findings from the Analyses

Economic Vulnerability:

- No evidence of specified sources of vulnerability boosting populism
- Individual experience of LT unemployment or perceived hardship did, and populism was stronger in industrial areas, but not related to any job loss

Types of Qualification:

- More years of formal education had a strong negative effect on support for populist parties , while working in occupations with a high incidence of vocational qualifications had a strong positive one
- Similarly, formal education was strongly associated with a lower likelihood of a populist response to: local immigration over the past 20 years, or to a Muslim presence; while working in the vocationally qualified occupations was associated with the reverse effects

Ecological Impacts and Contextual Effects

- Having a population with more (average) years of education had an additional negative effect on individuals' likelihood of supporting populism – but without a significant reverse effect from concentrations of the jobs in vocationally qualified occupations . Urbanity also mattered ....

5. Some Conclusions

Some Modest Reflections

- The traditional UK/EU sub-text to regional policy is that it's needed to maintain political functionality (inc. UK's 2 party system).
  - Opening the Pandora's box of populism is/will be a continuing threat. But it is very hard to link it in any way to anything such policies could/should have done.
- Where (sub-national) geography comes into the story seems to be through the interaction of :
  - More localist economic cultures in some places (maybe reflecting their 'roles in past divisions of labour', a la Massey);
  - Strong cultural shocks (for localists) from concentrated international migration and large Muslim populations; and
  - Intensified responses to these, and other cultural shocks, through the dynamics of local politics in areas where occupations associated with localist/vocational types of asset predominate
- We need to understand the processes involved very much better, however, before offering *expert* advice
  - beyond simply 'more honesty'

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