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
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)
3. What the Brexit Referendum Map Did and Didn’t Show
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
## Selected Leave-Vote Share Regressions

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>0.745***</td>
<td>0.832***</td>
<td>0.692***</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Qualifications</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 4 (Degree equiv)</td>
<td>-0.925***</td>
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<td>-0.805***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 3 /Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.460***</td>
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<td>Levels 1,2, Apprenticeship</td>
<td>0.450***</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>None</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Occupations:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate managers</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.781***</td>
<td>1.288***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational professions</td>
<td></td>
<td>-2.068***</td>
<td>-0.623*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science/tech assoc profs.</td>
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<td>-3.086***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culture, media sports occs.</td>
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<td>-2.207***</td>
<td>-1.231***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative occs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.439**</td>
<td>-0.745***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretarial occs.</td>
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<td>2.675***</td>
<td>2.547***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skilled metal/electrical</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.908***</td>
<td>2.048***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transport/mobile machine drivers</td>
<td>2.519***</td>
<td>1.175***</td>
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<td><strong>Age group</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt;30</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.813***</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-59</td>
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<td>-0.519***</td>
<td>-0.184*</td>
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<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.138*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.199***</td>
<td>-0.154***</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed/multiple</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.552***</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Resident migrants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Acceleration from 2004</td>
<td>8.123***</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.044***</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>380</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>380</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Adjusted R²</strong></td>
<td>0.889</td>
<td>0.909</td>
<td>0.931</td>
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Leave Vote Proportions

Residual from LEAVE Regression
-0.12 - 0.08
-0.05 - 0.02
-0.01 - 0.00
0.01 - 0.03
0.04 - 0.08
4. Looking for a Regional Geography of European Populism
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
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 worrying 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’
Sources/References

http://lordashcroftpolls.com

*British Social Attitudes Survey 2014*, data-file from esds


Lord Ashcroft Polls (2016) *How the UK Voted*: full tables,
http://lordashcroftpolls.com