

An Analysis of Euroskepticism's Influence on Britain's Vote to Leave the European Union*

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Abstract

In June 2016, the United Kingdom held an in/out referendum on membership in the European Union (EU) resulting in a narrow victory for Euroskeptics. Historically, Britain has notably been a Euroskeptic nation, and the following analysis of Britain's relationship with the EU will explore the implications of Brexit in context with Euroskepticism. This analysis is a result of previous research on the British vote to leave the EU and draws substantially on research in the fields of voting patterns, social identity, and Britain's unique characteristics that culminated in the vote to leave the EU. As a result, this paper relies heavily on historical implications of Euroskepticism as well as recent literature on the theories of Euroskeptic voting, demographics, and the history of the relationship between the UK and the EU. The paper concludes that populist and anti-globalist sentiments driven by political parties such as the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) mobilized Euroskepticism, allowing for a philosophy to transform into effective policy change. The main driving factors behind Britain's unique position of leaving the EU were economic and social. This conclusion is substantiated by a constituency-based analysis, which utilizes demographic data, voter turnout, and the referendum result data in order to quantify Euroskepticism and its impact on the top constituencies that voted to leave the EU.

Keywords: European Union, Euroskepticism, Brexit, UKIP, Britain, referenda

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Since the inception of the European project following World War II, Britain was considered a skeptical partner, thus leading to the notion of Britain being a “Euroskeptic” nation. In 2016, the United Kingdom (UK) held an in/out referendum regarding membership in the European Union (EU). The withdrawal of Britain from the EU, also known as “Brexit,” was considered a lengthy, multi-step process essentially signaled by the referendum in favor of leaving. After a hotly contentious political battle between the Leave and Remain campaigns, the result of the referendum was a close victory for pro-Leave, the most dedicated of the Euroskeptics. The aim of this analysis is to understand the elements of Euroskepticism that contributed to the strained relationship between Britain and the EU and ultimately led to the result of the EU Membership Referendum. This essay will explore the multifaceted and unique elements of British Euroskepticism in regard to Brexit, analyze identifiable British Euroskepticism vis-à-vis political parties and the referendum, and conclude with an observation of voter turnout data in top Euroskeptic constituency areas.

Defining Euroskepticism

The term *Euroseptic/Euroskeptic* has differing connotations and definitions. Generally, the term denotes a sense of disillusion from Europe, the European Union, the EU’s aims and goals (usually further political integration), or EU institutions. Moreover, scholars have further defined Euroskepticism as a “barometer that measures non-adherence to the European Union,” as “hostility to participation in or the entire enterprise of the EU,” and as an “expression of doubt or disbelief in Europe and European integration in general” (Condruz-Bacescu, 2014, p. 53; George, 2000, p. 15; Hooghe & Marks, 2007, p. 120). Foundational research into Euroskepticism by Taggart and Szczerbiak (2005) creates a hard-versus-soft dichotomy that essentially allows for comparisons and categorizations of the identifiable variations of Euroskepticism. Euroskepticism is observable in political parties’ philosophies, proposed or implemented national or local policies, and the beliefs espoused by politicians. In “soft Euroskepticism,” there is an observable opposition or concern regarding one or several policies or policy areas. Soft Euroskepticism could be expressed in terms of an opposition to a single European policy that interferes with a specific national interest. Opposition to the EU’s freedom of movement policy, but not the EU as a whole, on the basis of national interest being at stake or compromised, is an example of soft Euroskepticism. “Hard Euroskepticism” is the highest degree of opposition to the EU. Hard Euroskepticism includes a principled opposition to the EU and its policy aims, especially further political integration, and is clearly observable in political parties

that support national withdrawal from the European Union or the dismantling of the EU altogether. Similar to soft Euroskepticism, hard Euroskeptics are acting on the basis of their respective national interest or philosophical opposition to foundational aspects of the EU, such as supranationalism. Voting to leave the EU is one of the clearest examples of hard Euroskepticism. Other examples include political parties such as the United Kingdom Independence Party and British Member of European Parliament (MEP) Nigel Farage's clearly observable opposition to the EU through anti-EU imposed immigration discourse and support of Britain's withdrawal from the EU.

There are four types of Euroskepticism relevant to Britain's vote to leave the EU. These types are based on specific subsidiary issues of economics, sovereignty, democratic legitimacy, and political criterion (Condruz-Bacescu, 2014). While Euroskepticism is not solely a British issue, and Britain's relationship with the EU is not wholly contentious, the result of the EU referendum made the ultimate "hard Euroskeptic" decision to leave the European Union.

British Euroskepticism

The uniqueness of British Euroskepticism can be hypothesized as stemming from several defining characteristics of the UK: geography, the cultural notion of "Britishness," preferred political system and style of governance, and media (Grant, 2008; Geddes, 2003). In the following sections, the implications of these characteristics will be analyzed in relation to Euroskepticism and Brexit.

Geography: Physical and philosophical distance. The UK shares a border with only one EU member state, Ireland, and is separated from the rest of Europe by ocean. The notion of geographic distance from Europe, often referred to as "the continent" by the British, offers insight into Britain's unique characteristics in reference to its relationship with the EU. Charles Grant (2008) offered four explanations as to why the British are Euroskeptic, with the first of the four reasons being geographic distance and its effect on British history and perception of Europe. According to Grant (2008), Britain was oriented to other continents more so than any other European continental power. Maritime Britain's superior trade and colonial expansion into North and South America, Asia, and Africa led not only to strong economic ties to these regions, but also altered patterns of immigration and cultural exchange. Similarly, other European powers sought influence and trade ties with continental partners, especially amongst themselves. European countries, including Britain, were also involved in numerous wars and conflicts, with World War II being most notable for

British Euroskeptics. Furthermore, Grant (2008) noted the prevalent British belief of Britain's involvement in World War II as being the nation's "finest hour," providing a "smug sense of superiority vis-à-vis most of the other peoples of Europe" (p. 3).

Conversely, some writers disagree with the notion of geography being a negative feature contributing to the idea of a "British identity" separate from "Europe" or "European." Notably, Baron Bhikhu Parekh (2009), a political theorist and Labour member of the House of Lords, wrote on the implications of British history and identity in accordance with its geography. Parekh (2009) noted Britain's complex global relationships as a positive feature of its position in the world, citing examples of "a common European heritage," "close ties with the [United States]," and a "[British] political consciousness" shaped by the Empire and "Commonwealth of over fifty countries" (p. 38). Furthermore, Parekh (2009) celebrated Britain's identity as a trifecta simultaneously encompassing European, Atlantic, and globalized identities. Writing in 2009, Parekh's claim that Britain should not "define itself in isolation from the rest of the world" and should instead embrace "all three [identities], and not just the first two [European and Atlantic]" is a reference to Britain's struggle to identify itself geopolitically and culturally in a modern context (p. 38). In 2017, Britain is still struggling to place itself in a position where a multifaceted identity can be embraced and cultivated, not only in terms of external relations with other nations, but also internally.

Undoubtedly, the relationship between identity and Euroscepticism is identifiable. In 2015, a study of national identity from the British Social Attitudes data from 1996–2014 gathered in order to map a trend of social attitude toward the European Union was published (Ormston, 2015). In this report, one of the main conclusions derived from the available data indicated that while identities are difficult to measure, as some may hold multiple identities with differing levels of importance, most respondents did not see themselves as Europeans.

Starting in 1996, the percentage of respondents who described themselves as "European" was at 10%, followed by a slight decrease in 1997 and a substantial increase from 9% to 12–17% in 1998–1999 (Ormston, 2015). Interestingly, while 1998–1999 are the height of this survey's results, the percentage of respondents who described themselves as European decreased substantially and fluctuated between 11% and 12% for the following five years—2000–2005 (Ormston, 2015). While the percentage of respondents describing themselves as European increased sharply during 2005–2006, the rate once again dropped and fluctuated again with a 1% - 4% change from 2007–2014 (Ormston, 2015). The British Social Attitudes surveys measured the

“extent to which people in Britain identify with multiple national (and in the case of European, supranational) identities that are commonly associated with Great Britain and/or Ireland” (Ormston, 2015).

As individuals can hold multiple identities, this raises the question of how strongly “Europeanism” can compete with the British and subsidiary identities. Thomas Risse (2000) remarked on this notion, stating that individuals can hold multiple identities that are contextually bound, and membership of a group can lead to distinctions from other groups e.g. British, French, or German (as cited in Geddes, 2013, pp. 198-200). Furthermore, the cohesiveness of member groups is “often based on emotional ties” to the group linked closely to ideas about nationality, nation state, and sovereignty (Geddes, 2013, p. 33).

In 2015, a *Eurobarometer* poll indicated that 64% of British respondents only saw themselves as British, which was the highest percentage amongst all responding countries, followed by Cyprus and Greece (Eurobarometer Report May 2015, 2015). Furthermore, an additional report composed with British Social Attitudes data by NatCan Social Research concluded with the interpretation of British Euroskepticism by noting that few Britons “feel a sense of European identity” and, as a result, Britons “are not convinced of the practical benefits of [EU] membership as [they] were in the 1990s” (Curtice & Evans, 2015, p. 32).

The identity debate, while multifaceted, has implications far beyond those of answering the question of who is British, especially in light of Brexit. In regard to Brexit, the identity question stretches over into immigration and migration, globalization, and Britain’s future with the EU and the world.

Governance. An important source of tension between Britain and the European Union since its inception was the conflict involving preferred styles of governance. The EU, as it is currently conceived, is a supranational entity, meaning that its member states have pooled sovereignty to an overarching institution of decision making. In addition to political integration, there is also economic integration in the EU—most notably the free trade area in which there are no tariffs or trade barriers within member states, as well as an Economic Monetary Union with a single currency, the Euro (although some have opted out). The UK is not a member of the Eurozone and has opted out of the single currency provision.

Supranationalism also entails that EU law supersedes law made at the national level. Some scholars contend that Britain prefers a system of governance with inter-governmental cooperation, or intergovernmentalism, which would conflict with the

EU's supranational governmental structure. Intergovernmentalism, as noted by Geddes (2013), places power in "unanimity as the basis of decision making" and "allows a veto to be exercised to protect national interests" (p. 24). Neofunctionalism, a contrasting theory on integration, places value on a collective and regional process of integration, reducing the role of the nation state.

Media. British media is undeniably unique in its ability to shape Euroskeptic opinion. According to Grant (2008), the British media is "uniquely powerful and [Euroskeptic]" (p. 3). Furthermore, Grant (2008) posed that three-quarters of the 30 million individuals who read British newspapers are reading Euroskeptic material (p. 3). This claim was justified by noting that British newspapers often print falsehoods about the EU because journalists are "allowed" to do so, and often newspapers' owners encourage or demand anti-EU material (Grant, 2008, p. 3).

One of the most widely circulated newspapers in Britain, *The Sun*, boasts a circulation of approximately 1.8 million and is owned by media giant Rupert Murdoch. According to a post published directly by *The Sun*, the outlet urged readers to "beLEAVE in Britain and vote to quit the EU" and "free ourselves from dictatorial Brussels" (*The Sun*, 2016). Following *The Sun* in circulation figures, *Daily Mail* secures second place with 1.6 million in circulation in 2016. *Daily Mail* supported Britain's withdrawal from the EU with the headline: "If you believe in Britain, vote Leave: Lies, greedy elites and a divided, dying Europe—we could have a great future outside a broken EU" (*Daily Mail Comment*, 2016).

Perhaps less ostentatiously, the *Daily Telegraph*, which has approximately 472,000 in circulation in 2016 and 490,000 in 2015, was seen as neutral. Yet, the *Telegraph* eventually posted on June 20, 2016 in support of Britain leaving the EU, noting that there was a "benefit from a world of opportunity" in voting to leave (*Telegraph View*, 2016). Member of Parliament, former mayor of London, and a leader of the Brexit campaign, Boris Johnson was often a star columnist for *The Telegraph*. Yet, *The Telegraph* also published an opinion piece by United States President Barack Obama, which urged for a vote to remain in the EU, with the headline: "Barack Obama: As your friend, let me say that the EU makes Britain even greater" (Obama, 2016). *The Sunday Telegraph*, their sister paper, also supported Brexit.

While many of the top media outlets in Britain were backing Brexit, there were several news entities that were in favor of remaining in the EU: *The Times*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Guardian*, *Evening Standard*, *The Financial Times*, and *The Observer* (Spence, 2016).

Political parties. When considering the elements of British Euroskepticism, it is important to note the philosophies of political parties in Britain that have historically been Euroskeptic. While there are Euroskeptics of all political affiliations, notably the most Euroskeptic of most modern political parties in the UK has been the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), which is analyzed below.

United Kingdom Independence Party. Inarguably one of the most impactful political upsets in modern British history, a political party which started with a group of 20-somethings and operated out of a Caffè Nero for months managed to usher in the ultimate Euroskeptic dream: a decisive victory to leave the EU in a referendum vote. Drawing upon populism, right-wing exasperation with “political elites” in both Parliament and the EU, and British unionism, the UKIP is interesting yet categorically indescribable.

Starting in 1991, Alan Sked founded the Anti-Federalist League, which would eventually turn into the UKIP in 1993. For many years, the UKIP remained in the shadows until Nigel Farage entered the fray in 2009, bolstered by the backlash regarding the Lisbon Treaty and the seeming influx of immigrants after EU enlargement of former Communist Eastern European bloc countries. Farage, a figure that now serves as a divisive reminder of Brexit woes and conjures up feelings of xenophobia and racism for many, worked diligently to distance himself from political elites and those “posh boys” he despised. Most of the inside analysis of Farage will be gleaned from an interpretation of the recently published *The Brexit Club*, authored by Owen Bennett, on the Leave campaign in 2016. Additionally, drawing upon literature on the UKIP, right wing extremism in modern Britain, the Euroskeptic tendencies of the Conservative Party, populism, and anti-globalism will help further explain and substantiate the rise of the UKIP and its effect on the overall outcome of the EU referendum vote.

Bennett characterized Farage as a political gambler and an anti-establishment man who has great disdain for the posh elite, especially within the Conservative Party. Bennett is not the only author to do so. Farage, especially in his own political works and speeches, sets himself apart as a figure of anti-establishment and as a man of the ordinary people. As a self-declared maverick and anti-establishment politician, he serves as a Member of European Parliament in the very institution he claimed to despise since 1999, winning re-elections in 2004, 2009, and 2014. In 2016, *Politico EU* named Farage as the fifth most influential MEP out of a list of forty and as one of

the two most influential and effective speakers in the EP chamber (Schmidt, 2016). Farage, despite his own claims, is far from ordinary.

The wave on which Farage rode to victory in the Brexit referendum is also far from ordinary. The populist, anti-establishment, and anti-globalist wave across Europe has been fueled incessantly by tensions with the fundamental framework of the EU: freedom of movement of people. Anti-immigration has become, by far, one of the most influential policy points of right-wing extremist movements across Europe and the UK. The “left behind” of globalization also exhibit backlash against those who have benefited from globalization. The terms “left behind” and “have-nots” were used in recent literature on Brexit and the rise of right-wing extremism and populist movements in Europe and the United States. In a working paper on the recent mobilizations of anti-establishment populism in the United States and Europe, authors Inglehart and Norris (2016) proposed several theories on the matter. The economic inequality perspective, which “emphasises the consequences for electoral behavior arising from profound changes transforming the workforce and society in post-industrial economies,” is applicable to Brexit Britain (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, p. 2). Supporters of Brexit and the UKIP, who Inglehart and Norris (2016) would perhaps categorize as a “less secure strata of society,”¹ have reportedly been more skeptical of immigration than, for example, respondents with college degrees or skilled workers (p. 2). However, the theory of cultural backlash, which Inglehart and Norris (2016) have surmised as building upon a silent revolution theory of value change, with cultural shifts experiencing a negative backlash, may prove more pertinent to explain the appeal of the UKIP and its populist, anti-establishment rhetoric.

Authors Ford and Goodwin (2014) wrote that the UKIP’s emergence was based on changes to Britain’s economic and social structure that pushed the “left behind” to the side. Relatedly, the generational changes in the values of Britain have left the older, more traditional voters behind in the sense that those traditional views are seen as parochial by the young, university-educated strata. As a result of these shifts in social change, alongside an increasingly multicultural and liberalized Britain, the “left behind” were drawn to a political party that promised to represent them and their views. Ford and Goodwin’s (2014) additional research surmised three motives of UKIP support as the following:

1. The “less secure strata of society” category includes “low-waged unskilled workers, the long-term unemployed, households dependent on shrinking social benefits, residents of public housing, single-parent families, and poorer white populations living in inner city areas with concentrations of immigrants” (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, p. 2).

1. A “hard” brand of Euroskepticism that opposes the principle of Britain’s EU membership;
2. Strong opposition to immigration and concern about its effects on the British economy and society;
3. Dissatisfaction with established politics in Westminster and how the established political parties have managed immigration and the [Eurozone] post-2008 financial crisis (p. 278).

Drawing on previous research, it can be concluded that the UKIP and the cultural backlash theory best explains the mobilization of the UKIP’s politics, which served as a vehicle for hard Euroskeptic policy change vis-à-vis withdrawal from the EU.

While these sentiments have existed in the UK before the existence of the UKIP, the UKIP brought the hard Euroskeptic movement to the forefront and capitalized on the movement to create effectual policy change. Moreover, the UKIP capitalized on the shift in political change with those “left behind” by mainstream parties, most notably the Conservative Party. According to Ford and Goodwin (2014), Britons with no formal qualifications were twice more likely than middle-class Britons and graduates to feel that they had no say in government (p. 281). The politically “left behind” electorate were disenchanted from the political process, the mainstream political parties, and traditional society. Ford and Goodwin (2014) seemed to agree that the UKIP mobilized the “left behind,” especially the blue-collar, white, and male voters who fell into the “less secure strata” as explained by Inglehart and Norris (2016).

Another facet of the success of the UKIP once again relies on the argument of the politics of identity. Hayton (2016) noted that one of the overlooked facets of the UKIP includes the politics of national identity. While it can be contended that the UKIP is indeed simultaneously a unionist and nationalist party, Hayton (2016) argued that Englishness is the pivot around which key elements of the party’s appeal revolved; moreover, the “Anglo-Britishness” aspect of the UKIP does not challenge the UK as a set of devolved nations, but rather celebrates English identity more so, and exacerbates the divide between Scottish and English identities (pp. 2-5).

The UKIP is undeniably nationalist. Moreover, the UKIP seemingly favors “Englishness” as a defining factor of “Britishness.” For example, an excerpt from UKIP material declaring that Britain faces an existential crisis from the rise of Scottish, Irish, and Welsh nationalism seems to indicate an uncompromising view of Britishness

by rejecting notions of Scottish, Irish, and Welsh nationalism as anti-British and therefore anti-English.

In campaigning, the UKIP was affiliated with two organizations: Vote Leave and Leave.EU. Farage endorsed Leave.EU and was a member of Vote Leave. Leave.EU was started by Arron Banks, a UKIP donor and businessman out of Bristol, England. Vote Leave was established as the official campaign in favor of leaving the EU by the Electoral Commission and was founded by political analysts Matthew Elliot and Dominic Cummings. Vote Leave was a multi-party coalition that held a committee with heavyweight names such as Michael Gove (Conservative MP for Surrey Heath), Douglas Carswell (UKIP MP for Clacton), Iain Duncan Smith (MP for Chingford and Woodford Green), Boris Johnson (Former Mayor of London and MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip), Daniel Hannan (MEP for South East England), and Andrea Leadsom (MP for South Northamptonshire). Vote Leave focused on the economic and domestic rule aspects of leaving the EU whereas Leave.EU handled social aspects such as immigration.

Analysis: The EU Referendum

On June 23, 2016, a majority in England and Wales voted to leave the EU; Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Gibraltar voted to remain. Outside the capital city boroughs of London, almost every region had a majority voting to leave, some by merely one percentage point. Overall, 17,410,742 votes (52%) were cast to leave the EU, and 16,141,241 votes (48%) were cast to remain.

Impressively, the Remain campaign took a majority of London (59.9%) and Scotland (62%). The turn-out was 72% with over 30 million votes overall. Turn-out was lower, however, in areas with a younger population. Areas with higher percentages of residents with higher education and formal qualifications saw a positive relationship between level of education and qualifications and voting to remain (Rosenbaum, 2017). When considering this pattern, an analysis of the top Euroskeptic constituency areas substantiates the characteristics of the British Euroskeptic and the result of the referendum. The following section is a test of relationship between elements of Euroskeptic identity and voting patterns. The methodology included taking the results of the referendum by constituency area and noting the top five areas with an overall percentage in favor of leaving the EU. Following this calculation, an analysis of the constituency in regard to its Euroskeptic qualities, as well as an investigation into which characteristics could fuel such a high percentage (70% or more) turnout for

leave, aims to serve as a way by which an otherwise qualitative explanation of British Euroskepticism can be quantified by empirical data.

Voting to Leave: The 70% Club

In the EU referendum, the narrow majority of the voting population voted to leave. However, in constituency areas such as Boston, South Holland, Castle Point, Thurrock, Great Yarmouth, Fenland, Mansfield, Bolsover, and East Lindsey, the vote percentage to leave was over or equal to 70%, topping out at 75% in Boston. Such a high percentage of votes cast for leaving the EU raises the question: why did these areas predominately vote to leave?

Constituency: Boston and Skegness (and South Holland). In Lincolnshire, Boston and Skegness, with neighboring South Holland, had 75.56% and 73.9% leave vote percentages, respectively. According to 2011–2012 census data, 10.6% of Boston's population of roughly 65,000 are migrants from the newest EU member states such as Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Romania (Gallagher, 2016). In 2012, the local councilor responsible for housing, population, and communities, Mike Gilbert, said that the biggest challenge brought about by the high levels of immigration was the perceived disadvantages of immigration. Throughout 2001–2011, Boston saw a six-fold increase in foreign-born residents (Freytas-Tamusa, 2016). As a result of the growing migrant and migrant-born population, tensions between native British and EU citizens became a “microcosm for the Brexit vote's immigration debate” (Moore, 2016). Seemingly, a major factor in the high percentage of votes for leave has to do with disapproval of immigration. As non-British citizens (EU and non-EU citizens) were not allowed to vote even if they lived in Britain, the reflection of the vote is only that of native British and those with British citizenship. Moreover, the Policy Exchange think tank named Boston as the least integrated area in Britain, adding a quantifiable measure to the idea that racial tensions exist in Boston (Boyle, 2016). The high amount of immigrants has been linked to the substantial opportunity for agricultural and low-skilled work in Boston (BBC News, 2016).

Constituency: Castle Point. With a reported population of 86,608 in 2001, Castle Point is in the British county of Essex. In the referendum, Castle Point had a turnout of 75.38%; 72.7% of the vote cast was in favor of withdrawal from the EU. Currently, Castle Point's Member of Parliament is Rebecca Harris of the Conservative Party. Castle Point has 21 Conservative local councilors, 14 Canvey Island Independent Party councilors, 5 UKIP councilors, and 1 independent councilor. In 2011, the average

median age of Castle Point citizens was 45 years old. In a report by the Essex County Council in 2015, between 25.86%–28.78% of Castle Point citizens were aged 65 or older (Essex County Council, 2015).

According to the same report, 9% of households are older singles with private pensions, aged 66 or older; 7.4% of households are elderly couples with “traditional views” aged 66 or older; and 7.3% of households are couples without children or with adult children living with them aged 55-65 (Essex County Council, 2015, p. 5).

Constituency: Thurrock. Neighboring Castle Point, the constituency of Thurrock has similar concerns. With a population of 163,270, Thurrock is in the county of Essex and has a Conservative Member of Parliament, Jackie Doyle-Price. In Thurrock, the leave percentage of the vote cast was 72.3%. According to investigative reports, in the port town of Tilbury, many of those who voted to leave the EU were swayed by the economic arguments (Noack, 2016). Tilbury and its surrounding area are a caricature of the “left behind.” Massive layoffs in the 1980s due to modernization and emerging industries left the era behind (Noack, 2016). Those who voted to leave were reportedly in industries such as the car manufacturing industry—industries that could be effected substantially by EU trade and the allure of new trade deals (Noack, 2016). Immigration does not seem to be as distinctive a factor as trade and industry, but it still is reported as important with local council and supporters from the UKIP in the area.

Theories

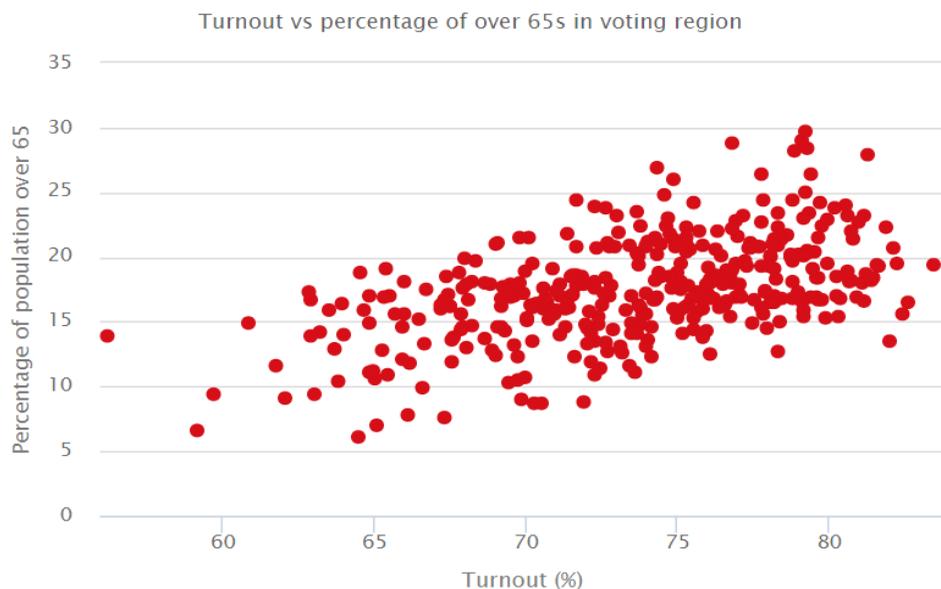
According to the top in the 70% plus range, the commonalities seem to correlate with previous discussion on Euroskepticism and the “left behind” strata. As a result, it can be hypothesized that the main driving factors for the top Euroskeptic, and thereby top leave constituencies, are economic and social.

Within the economic factor was the appeal of new markets outside of the EU, which Vote Leave indicated as a possibility only by leaving the EU, and the backlash against foreign migrant workers. Additionally, there are several social factors that are important for understanding the higher vote leave percentage. Firstly, a majority of the areas analyzed (Boston, South Holland, Castle Point, Great Yarmouth, Fenland, Mansfield, Bolsover, and East Lindsey) have portions of the population that would most likely be Euroskeptic, such as the pensioner age, with the exception of Thurrock. As previously discussed by Robert and Ford (2014), the UKIP’s emergence was based on changes to Britain’s economic and social structure that pushed the “left behind” to the side. As mentioned prior, the generational changes in the values of Britain have left the older, more traditional voters behind in the sense that those traditional

views are seen as parochial by the young, university-educated strata. As a result of these shifts in social change, alongside an increasingly multicultural and liberalized Britain, the “left behind” were drawn to a political party which promised to represent them and their views. In this case, the UKIP and Vote Leave/Leave.EU mobilized the “left behind” in these areas to fulfill the hard Euroskeptical decision to leave the EU in order to right the supposed wrongs caused by the EU and the out-of-touch political establishment in Westminster.

The point is then raised as to how one can explain the remaining portions of England and Wales that voted to leave the EU, especially those which do not exhibit obvious correlations with the theories posed. In looking to analyze the possible answers to such questions, it is imperative to understand the voter turnout for the referendum. Overall, the turn-out for those more likely to vote to remain in the EU (young, college educated, and middle-class) was lower than that of over-65s.

Chart 1: Turnout vs. Percentage of Over-65s in Voting Region



Source: ONS

Turn-out for those more likely to be Euroskeptical (aged 60+) was higher than 60% in most cases, as can be seen in Chart 1: Turnout vs. Percentage of Over-65s in Voting Region.² For those aged 18-24 and eligible, 64% voted compared to 90% of

2. Data for this chart was taken from the ONS. This chart depicts the percentage of turnout for the EU Referendum vote by voting region (or constituency area) in relation to the percentage of population over the age of 65. There is a positive relationship between the increased turnout percentage by voting area and the percentage of population over the age of 65, indicating that areas with an older population had higher voter turnout rates than that of areas with younger populations.

over-65s. The results found that 64% of young people who were registered did vote, rising to 65% among 25-to-39-year-olds and 66% among those aged between 40 and 54. It increased to 74% among the 55-to-64 year age group and 90% for those aged 65 and over. It is speculated that more than 70% of young voters chose to remain in the EU (Helm, 2016).

In analyzing motivations for voting choice, one can subscribe to the social group theory for explaining many of the questions regarding Brexit's turnout. Barring any consideration of the somewhat untruthful campaigns and any misconceptions or misunderstandings of the vote choice, social group theory can explain the way individuals choose to vote as per the social characteristics and properties of the group in which they belong or identify. Essentially, the argument is that people vote politically as they are socially. Additionally, economic and cultural backlash theories follow in the same regard with overlapping imposition of social variables confounding the results. Without oversimplifying the explanation, it seems as if the data points to a correlation between how the region is categorically "left behind" in the globalized world and how willing they would be to reject the notions of the EU and accept the fervor of an anti-establishment populism movement as one which encapsulates the needs of the ordinary British people who have been "left behind."

Moreover, the issue of immigration, while a driving factor in the votes of many, was reportedly second to issues over national sovereignty and the principle that decisions about the UK should be made in and by the UK Parliament alone. In Lord Ashcroft's poll of 12,369 voters after the referendum, one-third of Leave voters indicated that the most important factor driving their vote was national sovereignty, followed secondly by immigration and border control, and thirdly by concerns over the EU's expansion of powers (Lord Ashcroft Polls, 2016). Thus, one can consider the relationship between the "national sovereignty" and "immigration and border control" variables as interlinked. Essentially, while the UK is not part of the borderless Europe vis-à-vis the Schengen Agreement, the fact remains that the UK is obligated to meet some of the EU's immigration requirements. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that the relationship between being concerned with national sovereignty and being able to legislate the control of borders is interlinked in many cases.

Conclusion

The 2016 European Union Membership Referendum held in Great Britain resulted in a narrow victory for the Euroskeptics. Historically, Britain has exhibited Euroskeptical tendencies in its relationship with the EU, and undoubtedly the result of

the referendum has exacerbated both the Leave and Remain campaigns' calls for a change in relationship with the EU. For some Remainers, leaving the EU is considered a major loss. For the Leave campaign, leaving the EU is long overdue—the EU has made hard Euroskeptics of them all. However, with the continued pressure placed on Britain to stake its claim in regard to its relationship with Europe and the rest of the world, Britain must show its flexibility and not succumb to rigid isolationism. As Euroskepticism rides on the political waves of anti-establishment and anti-globalization rhetoric, nations in the EU and the United States have exhibited some of the same defining skeptical characteristics. With Brexit comes great consequences of plunging into an unknown territory outside the realm of the EU, but the possibilities of continuing a relationship with the EU whilst seeking trade agreements and global partnerships across the world are enticing for an emerging British power.

In essence, Euroskepticism has not seen its ultimate moment, but it has seen its greatest victory thus far. Across the EU, additional member states are dealing with rising momentum for Euroskeptic politicians and policies. The political climate is ripe for Euroskeptics to seek additional victories. In turn, the onus is on the Europhiles to keep the European Union before the momentum reaches its peak and results in yet another victory.

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