Is the high tide of populism over?
The European experience

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Lunchtime talk
October 30, 2017
Outline

1. What is populism?
2. Evidence of growing populism
3. Policy dilemmas
1. WHAT IS POPULISM?
A working definition

• Political programme or movement championing the "little man", usually by favourable contrast with a "corrupted" elite (*anti-establishment*)

• Populists are anti-pluralist by claiming to have the exclusive legitimacy to popular representation (*anti-pluralism*)

• Belief that political and social goals are best achieved by the direct actions of the masses (*anti-representativeness*).
Two perspectives

Economic insecurity perspective

- Rising income and wealth inequality as well as economic insecurity among left-behinds fuels popular resentment of the political elites.

Cultural-identitarian backlash

- Reaction against progressive cultural change resulting from intergenerational shift toward post-materialist values, such as cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism.

younger having lost hope, low-waged unskilled workers, long-term unemployed, households dependent on shrinking social benefits turn against neoliberal elites

less educated, older generations and right-wing authoritarians react to erosion of their privileges and societal status
2. EVIDENCE OF GROWING POPULISM
Populist parties in European societies on the rise in national elections

Working class and low-skilled experience globalisation as a threat

**FIGURE 3**  The working class fear globalisation more than the middle class

- **Working Class**
  - Globalisation as a Threat: 47%
  - as an Opportunity: 53%
  - Economic Anxiety: 38%
  - Economic Confidence: 62%
  - Traditionalism: 51%
  - Progressivism: 49%

- **Middle Class**
  - Globalisation as a Threat: 37%
  - as an Opportunity: 63%
  - Economic Anxiety: 25%
  - Economic Confidence: 75%
  - Traditionalism: 48%
  - Progressivism: 52%

**FIGURE 4**  People with low level of education fear globalisation more than people with high level of education

- **Low Level of Education**
  - Globalisation as a Threat: 47%
  - as an Opportunity: 53%
  - Economic Anxiety: 37%
  - Economic Confidence: 63%
  - Traditionalism: 51%
  - Progressivism: 49%

- **High Level of Education**
  - Globalisation as a Threat: 37%
  - as an Opportunity: 63%
  - Economic Anxiety: 28%
  - Economic Confidence: 72%
  - Traditionalism: 45%
  - Progressivism: 55%
Brexit support: It's immigration, not inequality

Brexit and immigration: It's the delta.
France: Social hardship counts


Source: France, Ministry of the Interior, 23 April 2017
# France: An educated center vs. periphery?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education levels</th>
<th>Small vs. big cities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bac+ 3 et plus</td>
<td>Paris and around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bac+ 2</td>
<td>&gt; 100 000 hab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalauréat</td>
<td>20 000 à 100 000 hab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inférieur au bac</td>
<td>&lt; 20 000 hab</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Ipsos Sopra Steria 23 avril 2017
Germany:

Where the AfD has its strongest support

The AfD outperformed predominantly in rural eastern Germany

Foreign-born population (%)

R-squared = 0.22

AfD fared best where the foreign-born population is lowest...

Share of people aged 60 and over (%)

R-squared = 0.42

... and in areas with large numbers of older people

Below national average

14.6 17.6 21.6 27.6 35.5

National vote share 12.6

R-squared is a measure of the strength of association between the two measures on each chart, where zero would indicate no relationship, and 1 is a perfect correlation.

Source: Federal Returning Officer  Graphic: Steven Bernard, John Burn-Murdoch / @jburnmurdoch

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Germany:

The SPD suffered in economically depressed parts of the west

The socialist party had its biggest losses in areas with high unemployment
Austria: good results for the Freedom Party (FPÖ)

National elections of 15 October 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>vote %</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ÖVP</td>
<td>31.6 (+7.6)</td>
<td>Christian conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPÖ</td>
<td>26.9 (+0.1)</td>
<td>Social democratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPÖ</td>
<td>26.0 (+5.5)</td>
<td>Nationalist/populist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEOS</td>
<td>5.1 (+0.2)</td>
<td>Liberal conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PILZ</td>
<td>4.3 (+4.3)</td>
<td>Split from Greens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREENS</td>
<td>3.9 (-8.6)</td>
<td>Environmental/progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHERS</td>
<td>2.2 (-9.1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Voters by level of education

Source: SORA - Institute for Social Research and Consulting
Winners and losers

- Main winner is ANO, led by the billionaire tycoon Andrej Babis.
- ANO swayed votes mainly from Social Democrats and undecided.
- Anti-establishment parties (ANO, Pirates, far-right SPD) gained ground, totalling 51% of the vote.

Who voted for ANO?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60 and more</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-59</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-34</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-active</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-collar</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-collar</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school without diploma</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma and university degrees</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summing up

- **Young European** having lost hope, **low-wage** unskilled workers, long-term **unemployed**, households dependent on **shrinking social benefits** turn against neoliberal elites.
- **Elderly, less educated** and **right-wing authoritarians** react to erosion of their societal status due to the spread of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism.
- Risks from migration: perceived vs real.
- Rural/urban divide.
- Mainstream centre-left parties suffer more => European social model at risk.
- Integration model not accepted in Eastern Europe.
3. POLICY DILEMMAS
Economic populism: Why against the EU?

- Pre-market (endowments)
- Market (liberalisation/integration)
- Post-market (welfare systems)

EU

Populist forces

Nation state
# Identitarian Populism: Why against the EU?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>European Union</th>
<th>Populism</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convergence aim</td>
<td>Homogeneity threat, perceived as erasing national identities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of minorities</td>
<td>Rule of the &quot;no longer silent majority&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU based on rules and institutions</td>
<td>Direct democracy, referenda, twitter policy-making, allergic to &quot;filters&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Policy dilemmas

1. Less Europe (clear assignments) or more Europe (response to distributional concerns)?
2. A different Europe? Focus on new European public goods
3. How to build bridges without losing polity and institutional coherence?

=> The window of opportunity will not stay open for long