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*Exploring geographies of happiness and discontent: a
multilevel modelling approach to the
analysis of subjective happiness and voting behavior*

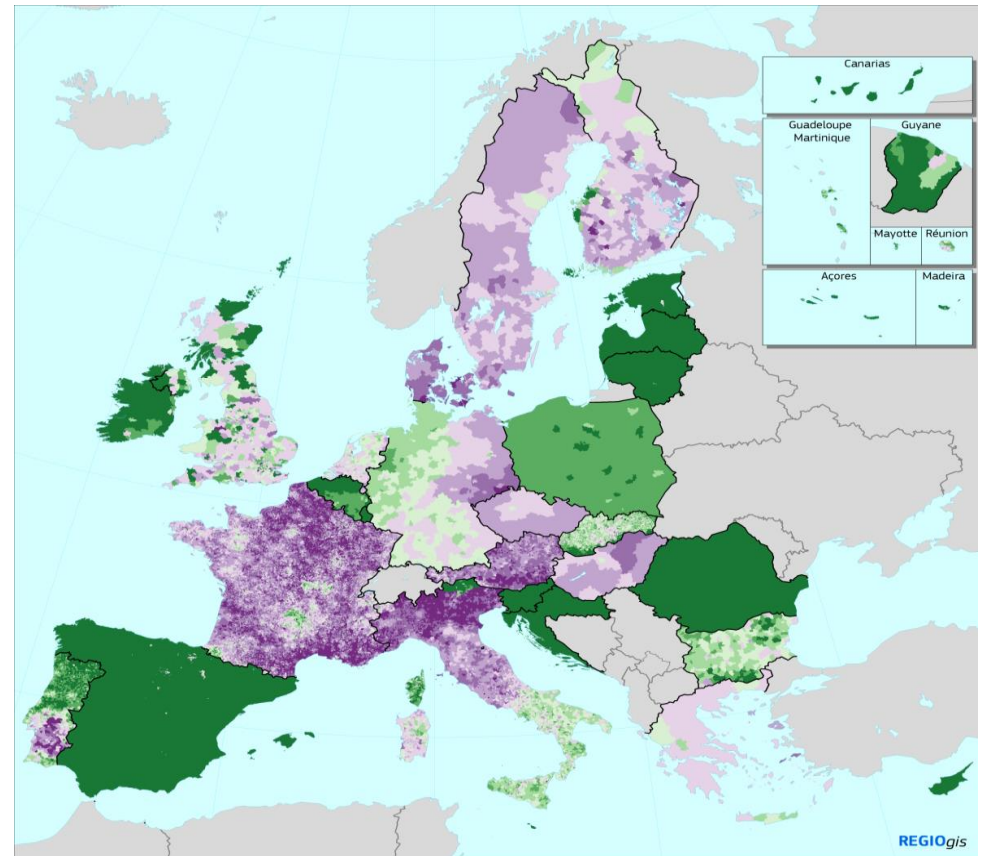
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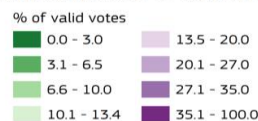
RSA-NL
Autumn Day,
November 21, 2019
Utrecht, The Netherlands



- ❖ Upswing of populist, anti-European and anti-establishment movements across Europe
- ❖ Eurozone crisis, followed by perceived increased migration flows – argued to be catalysts of eurosceptic party support
- ❖ Examining the contextual and individual determinants of voting behavior



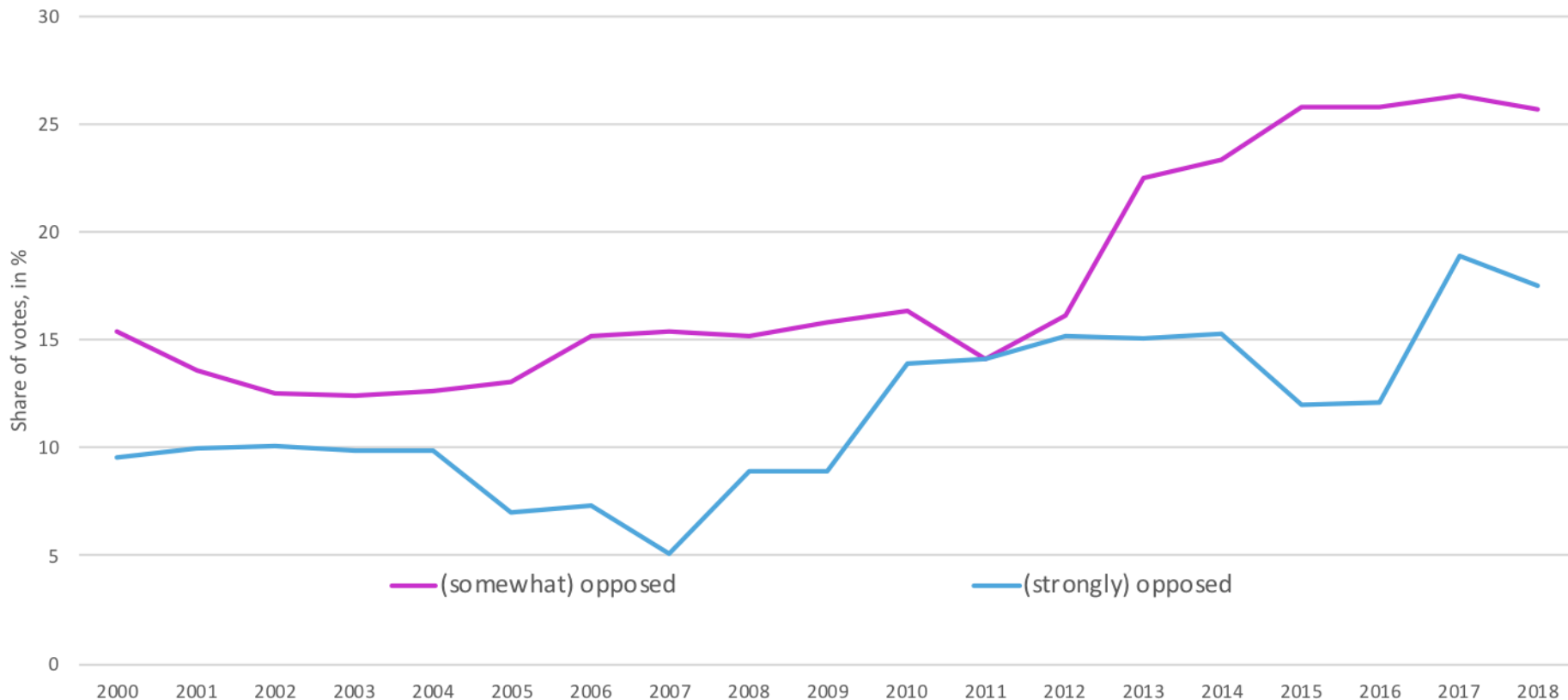
Minimum share of votes for parties (strongly) opposed to European integration, 2013-2018



Sources: national authorities, CLEA, Chapel Hill Expert Surveys 2014 and 2017, EuroGeographics, DG REGIO
Election years:
2018: IT
2017: BG, CZ, DE, FR, MT, NL, AT
2016: IE, ES, HR, CY, LT, RO, SK
2015: DK, EE, EL, PL, PT, FI, UK
2014: BE, LV, HU, SI, SE
2013: LU
EU-28 average = 13.4%



Anti-EU votes in the EU-28, 2000-2018



Source: Own elaboration on CHES data and national sources

Source: EU Commission WP 12/2018



- ❖ The revenge of the places that don't matter (and what to do about it) (Rodríguez-Pose, A., 2018)
- ❖ EU discontent is driven by places left behind
 - ❖ Less educated
 - ❖ Less employed
 - ❖ Rural areas
 - ❖ Low relative economic growth
 - ❖ Decline in industrial employment

Places that don't matter or People that don't matter ?



	Radical right										Radical left		Other		
	FPÖ	VB	SVP	DF	PS	FN	LPF	PVV	FrP	SD	Linke	SP	LDD	FI	M5S
1 Class		-	-	-						-	-				
Income			-								-	-			
Employment status														X	
Education	-			-		-	-	-	-	-					
Age	-				-	-			-	-		-			
Gender			-		-				-						
Religiosity	-						-	-		-	-				
2 Political distrust		+		+	+	+	+	+	+		+				
General left-right radicalism		+		+					+		+				
Satisfaction with economy		+		-											
Satisfaction with government		-	-	+					-			-			+
Income redistribution			-		+					+	+				-
Immigrants	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+					
Political interest															
3 Euroscepticism			+	+											
4 Referendum	X							X	+					X	



	AT	BE	CZ	DE	EE	ES	FI	FR	GB	HU	IE	IT	LT	NL	PL	PT	SE	SI
Happy	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
Immigrant Perc.	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	+
Political Discontent	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
Eurocepticism	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Income	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-
Employment	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
Education	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
Left/Right	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	+
Satisfaction Econ.	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+
Welfare system	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Political Interest	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	+	-	-
Age	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Gender	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Level of Religiosity	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+



- ❖ Anti-Establishment Party (APEP)
 - ❖ Mudde's definition of populism: a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups:
 - "the pure people"
 - versus
 - "the corrupt elite"
 - ❖ arguing that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* of the people' (Mudde, 2007, p. 35)
- ❖ 'Chameleonic nature', populist parties may be found across the whole political spectrum (Taggart, 2002)
 - ❖ Most studied and the most successful party family: Radical right-wing party



Country	Party	Populist	Far Right	Far Left	Eurosceptic
AT	FPÖ	X	X		X
AT	TS	X			X
AT	BZÖ	X	X		X
AT	KPÖ			X	
HU	FIDESZ	X	X		X
HU	Jobbik	X	X		X
HU	MIÉP	X	X		X
HU	MMP			X	X
HU	MSZP			X	



- ❖ Disentangle (and explore possible interactions) the individual attitudes from the regional context: *the places that don't matter vs. individuals that don't matter*
- ❖ Examining regional differences and their underlying mechanisms in electoral support for APEP in national and European elections
 - ❖ In which way contextual and individual factors affect party politics at different geographical scales



- ❖ Addition to contextual data: individual level data
- ❖ Considering the degree to which individual subjective well-being/ happiness may explain the success of the vote for APEP in ‘places left behind’
 - ❖ Other factors such as economic hardship could also explain the support for these parties
- ❖ Aim: demonstrate multiple explaining aspects, by acknowledging that some factors are more prevalent in some areas than others and vice versa
 - ❖ approach will improve our understanding of the individual level factors that drive support for APEP, as well as the regional variations in support for such parties



- ❖ Analysing survey micro-data (such as the *European Social Survey and the European Value Survey*) to study social attitudes, norms and values
- ❖ Multilevel Logistic Regression Modelling
- ❖ Variables:
 - ❖ Dependent variable: decision to vote/support for anti-establishment parties
 - ❖ Independent variables: individual level (e.g. age, income, level of education), contextual level (household, neighbourhood, region, country)



Logistic regression				Number of obs	=	11,831
				LR chi2(14)	=	655.35
				Prob > chi2	=	0.0000
Log likelihood = -5684.0223				Pseudo R2	=	0.0545
totalEU	Odds Ratio	Std. Err.	z	P>z	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Happy	.9912921	.0140848	-0.62	0.538	.9640673	1.019286
Immigration preception	.9242228	.0107485	-6.78	0.000	.9033945	.9455314
Political Discontent	.9768389	.0141344	-1.62	0.105	.9495251	1.004938
Euroscepticism	.9542073	.009287	-4.82	0.000	.9361777	.9725842
Income	1.014972	.0103358	1.46	0.144	.9949146	1.035433
Level of Education	1.000043	.0000835	0.51	0.608	.9998792	1.000207
Left/Right scale	1.157891	.0130388	13.02	0.000	1.132615	1.18373
Satisfaction economy	.9733948	.0138798	-1.89	0.059	.9465675	1.000982
Welfare system	.9391565	.0229688	-2.57	0.010	.8952004	.985271
Political interest	.7805782	.0233057	-8.30	0.000	.7362107	.8276194
Level of Employment	.9694286	.0117057	-2.57	0.010	.9467552	.992645
Age	1.009211	.0016991	5.45	0.000	1.005886	1.012547
Gender	.8359741	.0406827	-3.68	0.000	.7599221	.9196372
Level of Religiosity	1.00267	.0083075	0.32	0.748	.9865187	1.019085
Regional unemployment (mean)	2.917262	.6096946	5.12	0.000	1.936771	4.394129
GDP (region)	.9999813	1.91e-06	-9.77	0.000	.9999776	.9999851
_cons	.1562055	.0597324	-4.86	0.000	.0738244	.3305163

Note: _cons estimates baseline odds.





❖ Multilevel models allow:

- ❖ Study effects that vary by entity (or groups)
- ❖ Estimate group level averages
- ❖ Regular regression ignores average variation between entities
- ❖ Regression may face sample problems and lack of generalization

→ more robust: how much of the variance can be explained in the APEP vote



- ❖ Multilevel Logistic Model
- ❖ Step One: Empty Model
 - ❖ intraclass correlation (ICC) -> the degree of homogeneity of the outcome within clusters
- ❖ Step Two: Intermediate Model
 - ❖ grand-mean centering
- ❖ Step Three: Full Model
 - ❖ add the cross-level interaction(s)



❖ Background:

- ❖ A. Rodríguez-Pose, M. Rooduijn et al.

❖ Aim:

- ❖ Argument: the degree of individual subjective well-being/happiness will explain the success of the vote for APEP in 'places left behind'
- ❖ Multiple explaining aspects, by acknowledging that some factors are more prevalent
- ❖ Model: analysis includes variables from three levels: individual, regional and EU level

❖ Expectations:

- ❖ Improve understanding: individual level factors that drive support for APEP, as well as the regional variations in support
- ❖ **Places vs. Individuals?**



- ❖ Mudde, C. (2007). *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ❖ Rodríguez-Pose, A. (2018). The revenge of the places that don't matter (and what to do about it). *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 11 (1). p. 189-209.
- ❖ Rooduijn, M. (2018). What unites the voter bases of populist parties? Comparing the electorates of 15 populist parties. *European Political Science Review*, 10(3), p. 351-368.
- ❖ Taggart, P. (2002). Populism and the Pathology of Representative Politics. In Meny, Y. and Y. Surel (eds.), *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*. New York: Palgrave (p. 62 – 80).