Tilting towards the cosmopolitan axis? Political change in England and the 2017 general election

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Abstract

The general election of June 2017 revealed a continued tilting of the political axis in England that has been long in the making. This was not a Brexit 'realignment' – in that the vote is better seen as a symptom of a longer-term divide that is emerging between citizens residing in locations strongly connected to global growth and those who are not. In this analysis, we explore constituency-level patterns of voting in England between 2005 and 2017. Over this period, Labour's vote share has tended to rise in urban areas (i.e. major cities), with younger and more diverse and more educated populations often working in 'cosmopolitan' industries, whereas the Conservative vote has tended to increase in less densely populated towns and rural areas, with older and less diverse populations. Significantly, Labour has also increased its vote in constituencies with a higher share of 'precariat' and emerging service workers – somewhat at odds with characterisation of a party that has lost the 'left behind'. To the extent that changes in electoral support for the Conservatives and Labour are linked to the Brexit vote, the relationship far predates the referendum vote and should be expected to continue to reshape British politics in future.

A new cleavage is emerging that is fundamentally changing politics in the early decades of the twenty-first century. The divide is between citizens residing in locations strongly connected to global growth and those who are not. In geographical terms, it is between those from the densely populated cosmopolitan and metropolitan centres of the emerging knowledge and creative economy and those who live beyond that world in suburban communities, post-industrial towns, and coastal areas. In our article published in *Political Quarterly* in early 2016[1] we highlighted differences in outlook among people living in urban-metropolitan areas compared to those residing in more peripheral coastal areas, with the former generally more positive about the EU, equal opportunities for ethnic minorities and gays and lesbians, the impact of immigration and change from the past more generally. Later in 2016, the referendum on Britain's membership of the EU further highlighted this growing divide, with urban-metropolitan areas tending to vote to Remain and regional-coastal areas and post-industrial towns voting to Leave.

This article on the general election of June 2017 extends this focus on the long-term trends driving change in British politics by making three arguments:

1. That this was not a Brexit election – or a Brexit 'realignment' – in that the vote is better seen as a symptom the longer-term geographical bifurcation of politics; less revenge of the "Remainers" and more a continuing battle of mobilization between cosmopolitan and non-cosmopolitan areas.

2. That within cosmopolitan and non-cosmopolitan areas there are complex ecologies of occupations and social groups that create opportunities for a variety of party strategies. Emphasis on the authoritarian reflex of the ever-shrinking traditional white 'working class' (classified based on manual and routine occupations) has distracted from the changing nature of socio-economic status and the precarious situation of a younger generation of voters who tend to be more educated and cosmopolitan in outlook but at the same time increasingly squeezed by falling real wages and by intergenerational inequalities (such as through increased debt, reduced job security and fewer opportunities for home ownership).

3. That the tilting of the political axis, as observed in the outcome of the 2017 general election, reflects long-term trends. On this occasion, the Labour Party made gains in cosmopolitan areas while sustaining some support outside those areas. The Conservatives made inroads in less urban areas made up of older and less educated populations (who tend to be more socially conservative), but lost further ground in big cities and university towns. The party, or parties, that will be most successful in future will be those able to navigate this bifurcation of British politics and the demands of citizens. The effectiveness of parties' electoral strategies will have consequences for the policy choices taken by future governments – which in turn may reinforce, or ameliorate these forces driving electoral change.

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[1] W. Jennings and G. Stoker, 'The Bifurcation of Politics: Two Englands', *Political Quarterly*, vol. 87, no. 3, 2016, pp. 372-82.

In this analysis, we use constituency results and demographics to explore aggregate-level patterns in the vote in England.[2] We start by focusing on the election result in *two* sets of fifty constituencies identified using the method described in our 2016 article, archetypes of 'Clactons' and 'Cambridges' characterized in Jeremy Cliffe's essay in *The Economist* on 'England's Cosmopolitan Future'[3], before proceeding to examine the changes in England's electoral geography between 2005 and 2017 against a range of demographic measures.[4] There is a tricky issue of terminology here which we have found difficult to resolve. By using the term 'cosmopolitan' for certain areas of England we are not stating a normative preference but rather trying to capture the global orientation and connection to the current dynamic of economic growth in these areas. Citizens in these areas are not automatically members of a global elite or without national or community feeling. They just happen to be located in, or have been drawn to, areas where knowledge and creative economic forces are strong. 'Non-cosmopolitan' is our label for the mixture of coastal, post-industrial and suburban locations that are not so strongly connected to these dynamic economic forces.

Electoral change over more than a decade

The cosmopolitan tilt of politics in larger metropolitan centres and economically dynamic university towns is reflected in the growth of support for the Labour Party in those areas. Figure 1 depicts the vote share for the two main parties in our fifty urban-metropolitan constituencies in 2005 and 2017, with the Labour vote share plotted on the y-axis and the Conservative vote share on the x-axis. It is striking that in these sorts of areas the frontier of Labour support has moved outwards over time (despite enduring a setback in the national swing against it in the 2010 election). Even as the party's electoral fortunes have fluctuated nationally it has made advances in more cosmopolitan areas. At the same time, the trajectory of that frontier has pivoted so that its support is increasingly concentrated in constituencies where its vote share is highest, potentially accentuating the bifurcation of Britain's electoral geography (such that the party's gains are largest in existing electoral strongholds). Figure 2 plots the vote share for the two parties in our fifty regional-coastal constituencies. In these areas, in contrast, the Conservatives have seen the most substantial gains in their support between 2005 and 2017. Together, these patterns confirm our findings from 2016, of two subsets of England, moving in different directions, regardless of the national electoral tide. The notion of 'uniform national swing' has little relevance for these groups of constituencies.

[Figures 1 and 2 about here]

Another way of demonstrating this long-term trend is contrasting the difference between Labour's share of the vote in these urban-metropolitan constituencies and regional-coastal constituencies over time. This is shown in Figure 3, alongside the gap between urban-metropolitan constituencies and the average English constituency. The figure reveals a growing gap in the Labour vote between the two types of place, more than doubling between 2005 and 2017 from around 10 points to over

20 points. The increase between the 2015 and 2017 elections was only small, however, relative to the change over the preceding decade. Notably, too, Labour's support in these urban-metropolitan areas was slightly lower than the average constituency in 2005, but is now five points higher. By way of contrast, there was little change in the difference between the Conservative vote in the two types of area over the period between 2005 and 2015 (not shown here), but the gap widened substantially in 2017 (by over 10 points).

[Figure 3 about here]

Finally, to consider electoral change in different sorts of place, in Figure 4 we plot change in vote share for all constituencies over this period against their population density (measured by the number of persons per hectare in the 2011 census). This reveals a pronounced pattern whereby the Labour vote share has tended to rise in urban areas (i.e. major cities), whereas the Conservative vote has tended to increase in less densely populated towns and rural areas.[5] To understand the general election of 2017, then, it is crucial to recognise the longer-term tilting of electoral politics in England – where the advances of the parties have differed by place.

[Figure 4 about here]

The complex social ecology of the new political divides

There is a danger in some commentary on the divide between cosmopolitans and others of painting a picture of the former as a globalist, liberal metropolitan elite and those 'left behind' in other areas as rooted in nostalgia and community. The former are characterised as people from 'anywhere' (due to their lack of connectedness to place or identity) and the latter as being from 'somewhere'. The argument is that it is the somewheres who need to be better understood and, it would appear, be sympathised with given the normative undertones of these labels. This is the language used in David Goodhart's[6] *The Road to Somewhere* and its tone is emphasised in the review of the book by Matthew Goodwin[7] that focuses on 'two different groups increasingly pitted against each other. On one side are the liberal, socially mobile and university-educated "people from Anywhere", who subscribe to an "achieved" and cosmopolitan identity. On the other side are conservative, marginalised "people from Somewhere", who subscribe to a roots-based conception of national identity and cherish ways of life that have been lost or are under threat'. However, this cultural demarcation is far too crude in that it fails to recognise that considerable social capital and identity is to be found in cosmopolitan areas where communitarian politics can be developed via alternative roots and social networks (or may be constructed in online communities). Moreover, this characterisation misses the diversity of socio-economic statuses of the populations of cosmopolitan areas – which are often, especially in cities, characterised by high levels of inequality (an important point that our original article in *Political Quarterly* overlooked).

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[5] Note that the vote share of both Labour and the Conservatives in England increased between 2005 and 2017 (from 37% to 43% and 35% to 45% respectively), which is why the *average change* for both parties is greater than zero in Figure 4.

[6] D. Goodhart, *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics*, London, C Hurst & Co., 2017.

[7] M. Goodwin, 'Shocked by populism? You shouldn't be. The revolt described by David Goodhart 'The Road to Somewhere' has been decades in the making', *The Financial Times*, 29 March 2017.

A better starting point to understanding the complexities of social change in Britain is provided by Mike Savage, Fiona Devine and colleagues who have mapped a more variegated and fragmented social class structure for Britain that mixes economic, social and cultural dimensions[8]. These go beyond traditional conceptions of social class premised on the traditional divide between manual and professional occupations, which have become largely outdated by Britain's shift to a service-based economy and to mass higher education where around thirty percent of young people go to university. Savage et al. identify seven classes and provide data on the types of occupations associated with those groupings and also their geographical locations. Cosmopolitan areas – big cities, university towns – have (in London especially) the highest concentration of a very small elite class – with high income, wealth and social and cultural capital. However, these areas are also home to large numbers of the technical middle class and new affluent workers who are of reasonable economic standing, good (if limited) social networks and moderate cultural capital, especially focused on 'emerging' cultural activities such as social network sites, video games, going to gigs and the gym, and playing sports. Crucially, cosmopolitan areas also contain a proportion of those classes that are not doing so well, including emergent service workers and the precariat. The emergent service category includes many employed as bar staff, chefs, entertainers, customer service workers and in other relatively low paid positions. They have reasonable social capital and high levels of emerging cultural capital. The precariat similarly score low on economic capital but also on social and cultural dimensions, yet as cleaners, care workers, van drivers, retail cashiers, security guards and caretakers, for example, they are an integral part of the cosmopolitan areas. The only two classes that would be relatively absent from many cosmopolitan areas are the traditional working class and the established middle class in the new class structure identified by Savage et al. (2013). Significantly, while cosmopolitan areas are home to high numbers of graduates in terms of these new social classes, they are not only found in the elite and established middle classes, but also in some proportion of the five other classes.

Patterns of voting in the 2017 general election confirm the relevance of these new categories, at the same time as highlighting the persistence of traditional political divides which are far from dying out just yet. These are summarised in Table 1, where we report the direction of (significant) correlations between selected demographics and Labour's vote share in 2017 (in the first column) and change in its vote share between 2005 and 2017 (in the second column), by parliamentary constituency. A number of important patterns and trends are evident. Firstly, support for Labour is higher in areas with a greater proportion of people employed in routine occupations, below the national living wage and with no qualifications. However, there has been a downward trend in its vote in these areas over the past decade. Interestingly, while Labour's vote is substantially higher in constituencies with a higher proportion of precariat and emergent service workers (e.g. carers, cleaners, sales assistants, security guards)[9] there has been no decrease in its vote over time as observed for the traditional (i.e. routine, manual) working class. Additionally, Labour's vote share has risen slightly more in areas that

[8] M. Savage, F. Devine, N. Cunningham, M. Taylor, Y. Li, J. Hjellbrekke, B. Le Roux, S. Friedman and A. Miles, 'A New Model of Social Class? Findings from the BBC's Great British Class Survey Experiment', *Sociology*, vol. 47, no. 2, 2013, pp. 219-50.
[9] This measure is constructed using data on occupations from the Office of National Statistics, with categories selected based on the schema developed by Savage et al. (2013): 'road transport drivers'; 'other drivers and transport operatives'; 'sales and customer service occupations'; 'caring, leisure and other service occupations'; 'elementary cleaning occupations'; 'elementary security occupations'; 'elementary sales occupations'.

have seen a fall in real pay over the last five years. This suggests that the decline of Labour as a party of lower strata of social class – of the 'left behind' – may have been over-stated, or over-simplified at very least.

Alongside this, the results show that Labour has made gains in constituencies with more people employed in 'cosmopolitan' sectors (i.e. finance, science, public administration, education, health, arts and recreation),[10] and with greater jobs density (i.e. the number of jobs in an area divided by the resident population aged between 16 and 64 years old). While it still tends to receive a lower share of the vote in constituencies with more graduates, the trend is for graduate support for Labour to rise. This suggests that Labour has growing appeal to voters who are central to the modern British economy – retaining support of the precariat while making advances with graduates. At the same time, it receives a higher level of support from social renters and those reporting 'bad health'. Perhaps most important of all, Labour's share of the vote is higher in constituencies with a younger population (aged between 18 and 44 years old), and lower in areas with less ethnic diversity (and a higher proportion of white British population). Both these trends have increased over the past decade.

Together, these results highlight the cosmopolitan tilt of Labour's vote – with growth of its vote in cities with high job density, among graduates and younger voters, and in more ethnically diverse areas. However it retains an important underlying structure of traditional forces – those in routine occupations and with no qualifications, below the national living wage, in social housing and in poor health.

[Table 1 about here]

A partial realignment?

During the election campaign, and well before, there was talk that on the back of the Brexit vote the Conservatives would strike deep into Labour's heartlands, with predictions that Labour would lose seats like Bolsover that the party had held for over fifty years. The Conservatives did achieve swings towards it in parts of the North and Midlands (often where UKIP had polled highly in 2015), but the election saw them lose constituencies like Canterbury – which the party had held since 1874. In Figure 5(a) and 5(b) we plot changes in the Labour and Conservative vote share against the Leave share of the vote in the EU referendum, using the constituency-level estimates produced by Hanretty[11]. This reveals that that the Conservatives did indeed tend to make gains in areas where there had been a higher Leave vote in the EU referendum, while Labour tended to make gains in areas where there was a higher Remain vote. Significantly, however, the correspondence is more pronounced between Remain/Leave vote and change in vote share over the longer-term between 2005 and 2017, in Figure 5(a), compared to the change between 2015 and 2017, in Figure 5(b), where the trajectory of the slopes of the (polynomial) line of best fit are much flatter. This suggests

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[10] This measure is constructed from ONS data on employment by sector (QS605UK), using these categories: 'financial and insurance activities'; 'professional, scientific and technical activities'; 'public administration and defence; compulsory social security'; 'education'; 'human health and social work activities'; 'arts, entertainment and recreation; other service activities'.

[11] C. Hanretty, 'Areal interpolation and the UK's referendum on EU membership', *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 2017. doi:10.1080/17457289.2017.1287081

that to the extent that the Brexit vote was associated with voting patterns in the 2017 election, it was more due to its being a symptom of the long-term social and political changes that preceded it – rather than being the focus of an immediate Brexit realignment of English, and British, politics itself.

[Figures 5(a) and 5(b) about here]

To the extent to which the revolt on the right among working class whites matters, it is inextricably interlinked with the crystallizing of a socially liberal, leftist outlook among younger and more educated voters that is tilting the axis of contemporary politics. As social class develops a more complex pattern, age and education have become the defining dimensions of political competition. Crucially, these are interlocking factors – since increasing numbers of young people have enjoyed access to a university education, while the fragmentation of the structure of social class between traditional (routine/manual) and new (precariat/emergent services) has blurred the nature of class voting.

Our final step is therefore to model change in the vote share of both Labour and the Conservatives between 2005 and 2017 as a function of each of the demographics discussed above. The results are reported in Table 2, and reveal how complex and partial the electoral shift that has occurred is. We first present the results of ordinary least squared (OLS) regression models that include the Leave vote percentage in the EU referendum, in the first and third columns. These reveal that support for Brexit was associated with an increase in the Conservative vote and a decrease in the Labour vote between 2005 and 2017. The coefficient (-0.731, p<0.001) is twice as large for Labour indicating a stronger relationship between the forces that underpinned Brexit and long-term change in Labour's vote. To the extent Brexit is associated with a realignment of English politics during this period, the consequences have been most profound for the Labour Party – but far predate the referendum.

[Table 2 about here]

The remainder of our analysis focuses on those models that exclude the Leave vote, since it is itself correlated with many of the other demographics considered here. The estimates presented in the second and fourth columns of Table 2 provide important insights on the partial realignment of British politics during this period. Notably, Labour's vote increased considerably in constituencies with a higher proportion of younger voters and graduates, while the interaction of those measures is negative and significant – indicating that there was a saturation effect, with Labour making smaller advances in areas with *both* more educated and younger populations (understandably given these sub-populations overlap). Labour's vote also increased in areas with higher levels of employment in what we classified earlier as 'cosmopolitan industries'. At the same time, however, Labour also increased its vote in constituencies with a higher share of precariat workers and people with (self-reported) poor health. This is somewhat at odds with characterisation of a party that has lost the 'left behind'. At the very least, it highlights that Labour has gained support among a particular lower strata of social class – those who are particularly vulnerable in the modern economy.

In contrast, the Conservatives have made electoral gains in areas with lower levels of ethnic diversity (i.e. with a higher proportion of white British population) and those areas that have experienced declines in manufacturing employment in recent years – explaining their advances in parts of the North and the Midlands. The proportion of people employed in routine occupations is only weakly associated with increases in the Conservative vote (p=0.063), however. This suggests that the class

basis of the realignment of English politics is partial – or at least not effectively captured by these aggregate-level measures.

Conclusions

The general election of June 2017 revealed the continued tilting of the political axis in England. As part of this longer-term geographical bifurcation of British politics, Labour has made the largest gains in cosmopolitan areas – big cities and university towns, with younger and more educated populations – at the same time as shoring up its support among the *new working class*, the precariat and emergent service classes (those employed in insecure and short-term jobs, living alongside professionals occupations in economic hubs). The Conservatives have made gains in less ethnically diverse areas, and in former manufacturing areas, though these advances were not enough to prevent seat losses to Labour in the 2017 general election. To what extent these forces of electoral change will persist into the future in part depends on the policy choices taken by government and the strategies of parties.

Parties need to develop strategies that avoid simplistic responses to this bifurcation of politics that pit one side against the other – keeping in mind there remains a substantial centre ground in British politics, even if it seems elusive at present. There has been considerable debate among leading Labour figures on how to bridge the gap between the 'Two Englands'[12]. Conservative attempts to address these dynamics have fizzled out since modernization efforts during the earlier days of Cameron's leadership[13], and may be further hampered by Brexit.

One type of strategy concerns the issue of 'cultural backlash'. In their ground-breaking study, Ford and Goodwin[14] found that support for the radical-right UK Independence Party was associated with economic pessimism and distrust of government, but most of all concern about immigration and expression of national identity, in particular among the older white working-class. These voters have been marginalized, it has been argued, by the dominance of a university-educated, professional middle-class elite whose priorities and outlook define the mainstream. Inglehart and Norris[15] argue that growth of support for populist parties more generally is due to a cultural backlash among those citizens who feel that the world that has been moving away from their values.

An alternative strategy focuses on increases in social and economic inequality – such as popularized in the work of Piketty[16] – in particular circumstances where 'the wealth of an elite has grown apace

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[12] T. Hunt and A. Lockey, 'English Radicalism and the Annihilation of the 'Progressive Dilemma'', *Political Quarterly*, vol. 88, no. 1, 2016, pp. 116-25; B. Phillipson, 'The conditions for Labour's previous successes are falling apart. Where do we go from here?' *The New Statesman*, 18 November 2016; L. Nandy, 'Who speaks for Britain's towns in a post-Brexit world?' *The Times*, 7 March 2017.

[13] P. Kerr and R. Hayton, 'Whatever happened to Conservative Party modernisation?' *British Politics*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2015, pp. 114-30.

[14] R. Ford and M. Goodwin, *Revolt on the Right*, London, Routledge, 2014.

[15] R. Inglehart and P. Norris, 'Trump and the Populist Authoritarian Parties: The Silent Revolution in Reverse', *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2017, pp. 443-54.

[16] T. Piketty, Capital in the Twenty-First Century, Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 2014.

while the wealth of the majority has stagnated'[17]. Bifurcation is here is attributed as a function of growing, often generational, divides in levels of home ownership, and access to other forms of wealth – where, interestingly, affluent London fares poorly in terms of net wealth[18], and the increasing strain on public services after years of austerity. From this perspective, the clue to the economic dimension of the 'cultural backlash' is its particular prevalence among the *working class*.

Broadly, in the 2017 election campaign the Conservatives under Theresa May's leadership sought to exploit the first diagnosis by offering restrictive policies on immigration, the reassertion of national sovereignty through commitment to leaving the EU and a general sense of 'turning the clocks back' (with signature policies such as grammar schools and a free vote on fox hunting). Labour under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn adopted the logic of the second diagnosis by focusing its manifesto on the rhetoric of redistribution and in particular arguing that the winners from globalisation – wealthy individuals and companies – should pay more in tax and be prevented from evading their tax liabilities (alongside symbolic policies focused on younger voters such as the abolition of student fees). Ultimately the result suggested that May's attack on 'citizens of nowhere' backfired badly, as the Conservatives lost seats home to some of its traditional supporters, the educated, professional middle-classes.

In the longer-term, the problem for both the parties is that aligning themselves with either group of voters brings electoral risks. For the Conservatives, becoming the party of Brexit and the shrinking (and aging) traditional working class is arguably not a straightforward path to future electoral success. Indeed, an emphasis on the 'left behind' has distracted from the inequality and economic distress within cosmopolitan areas – privileging the traditional white working class at the expense of the growing precariat and emergent service class – for whom social and political inequality is just, if not more, acute. For Labour, relying on the enthusiasm of younger voters and support from cosmopolitan areas in future elections may also be risky given the party's ambiguous position on Brexit, and the rightward shift among younger generations on socio-economic and authoritarian dimensions – relative to the attitudes of their parents and grandparents at a similar age[19]. This is not incompatible with the social liberalism of younger cosmopolitans, but suggests that the waters of British politics may be increasingly tricky for parties to navigate with a compass designed for traditional left-right politics organised around economics and the size of the state.

Given the changing nature of its support base, voter registration could present challenges for Labour in future. Data from the 2015 British Election Study shows that those aged under 45 are less likely to be registered to vote (or are more likely to be registered at a different address). These higher rates of mobility are a feature of the populations of cosmopolitan areas. How to mobilise disparate social groups may require multiple campaign strategies. Social media may be effective in mobilising some prospective supporters (especially the young) but not others. Meanwhile, traditional door-to-door canvassing may no longer provide accurate indications to parties of the local state of play. The result

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[17] F. Devine and M. Sensier, 'Class, Politics and the Progressive Dilemma', *Political Quarterly*, vol. 88, no. 1, 2017, p. 30.

[18] C. D'Arcy and L. Gardiner, *The Generation of Wealth: Asset accumulation across and within cohorts*, London, Resolution Foundation, 2017.

[19] See M. Grasso, S. Farrall, E. Gray, C. Hay, and W. Jennings, 'Thatcher's Children, Blair's Babies, Political Socialization and Trickle-down Value Change: An Age, Period and Cohort Analysis.' *British Journal of Political Science*, 2017. doi:10.1017/S0007123416000375

on June 8th seemingly took both parties by surprise, meaning they often had not deployed resources in seats where the result was close.

The landscape of political and electoral campaigning appears to be changing. Yet while the general election of June 2017 hints at a tilting of the political axis, it is far too premature to assume that a realignment of British politics is inevitable.

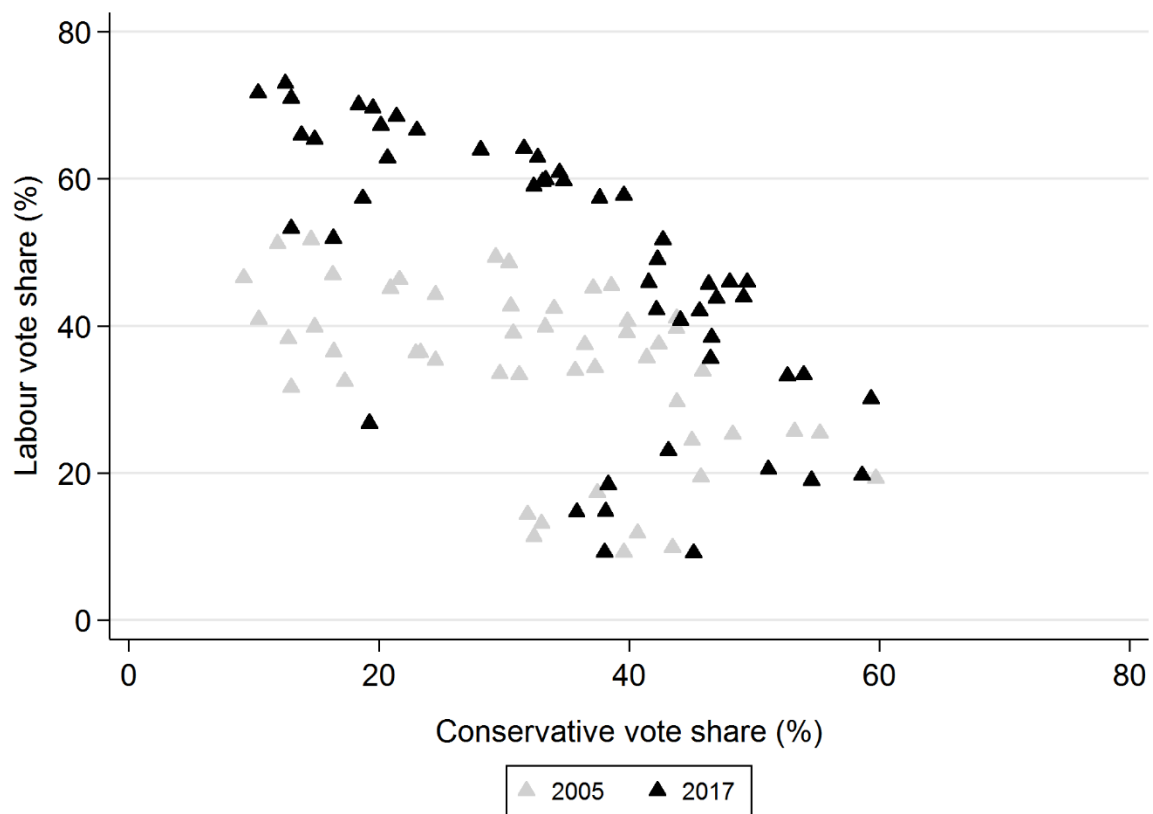**Figure 1.** Labour/Conservative vote share in urban-metropolitan constituencies in 2005 and 2017

Figure 2. Labour/Conservative vote share in regional-coastal constituencies in 2005 and 2017
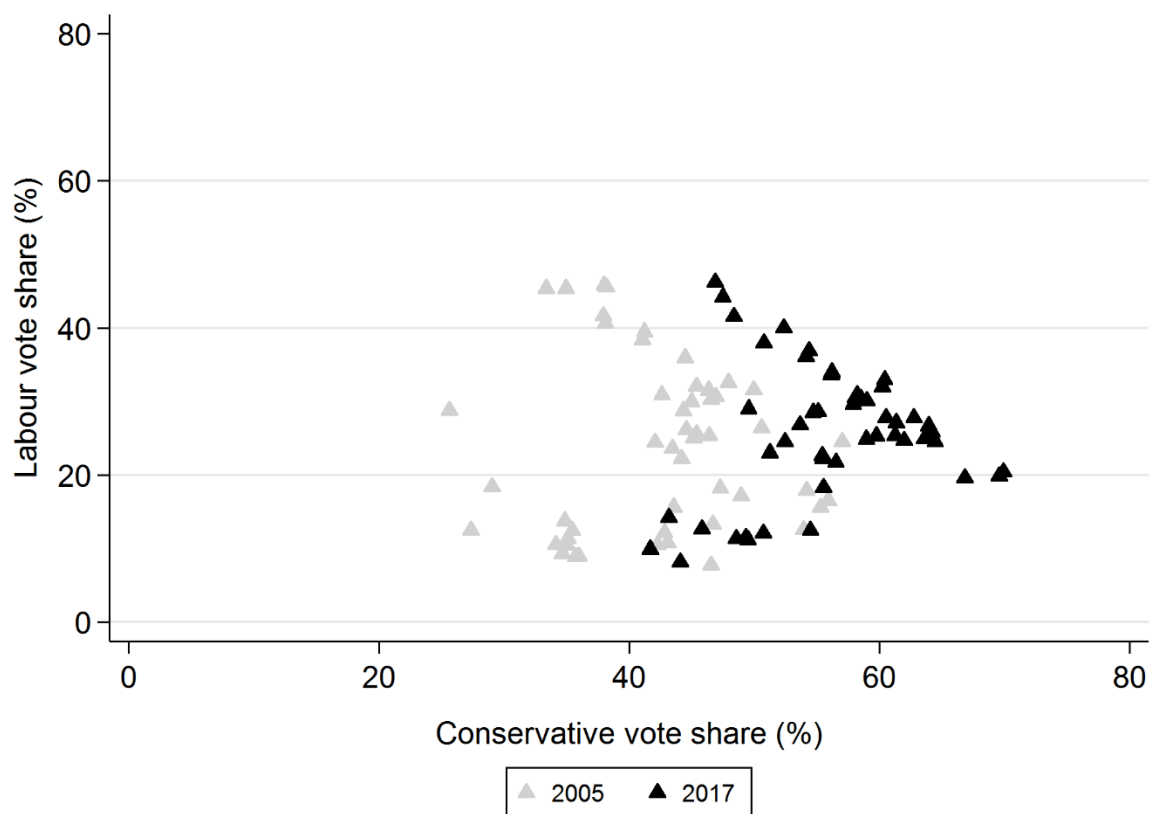
Figure 3. Difference between Labour's vote share in urban-metropolitan and (a) regional-coastal areas and (b) all English constituencies, 2005-2017
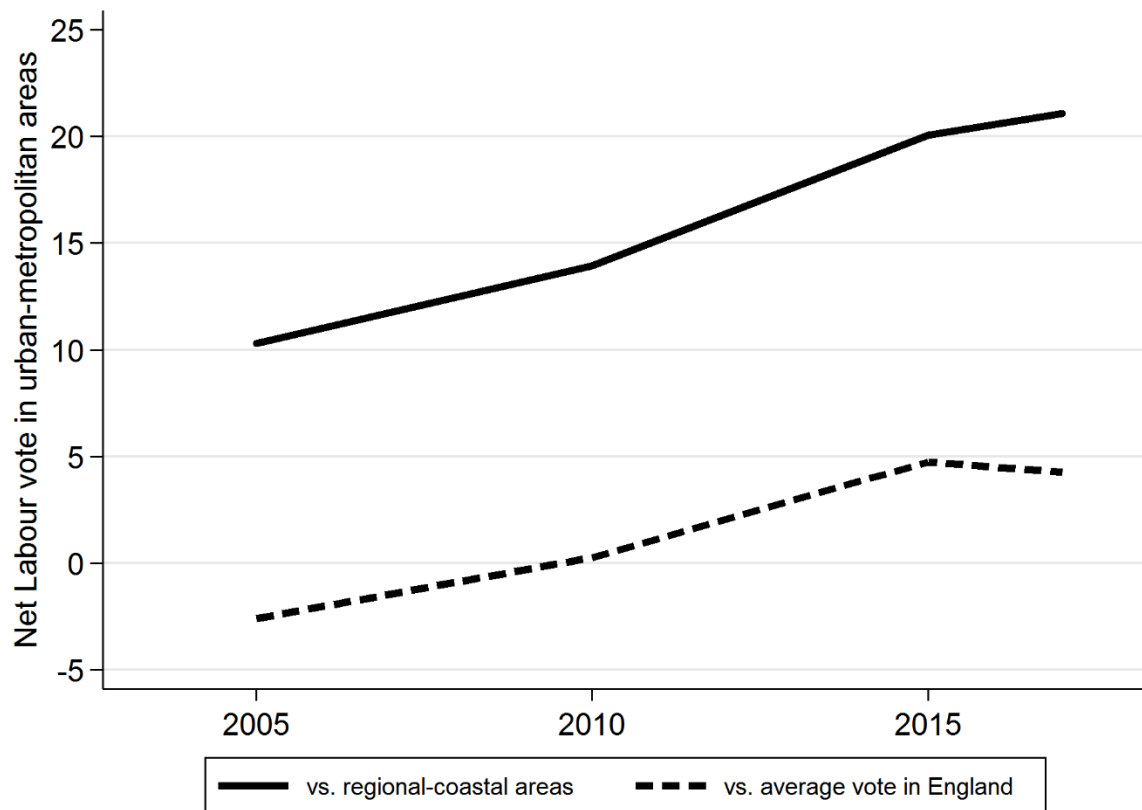
Figure 4. Change in vote share (2005-2017) against population density of constituencies
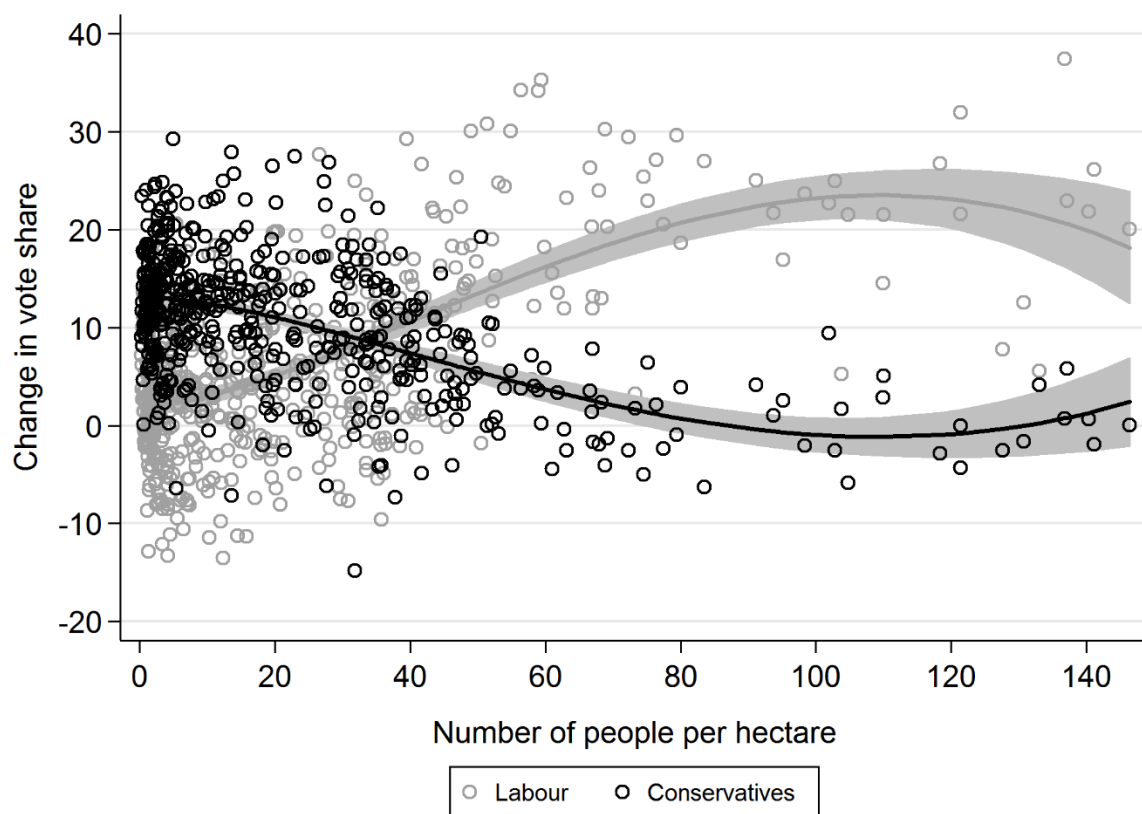
Figure 5(a). Change in Labour/Conservative vote share (2005-2017) and Leave vote
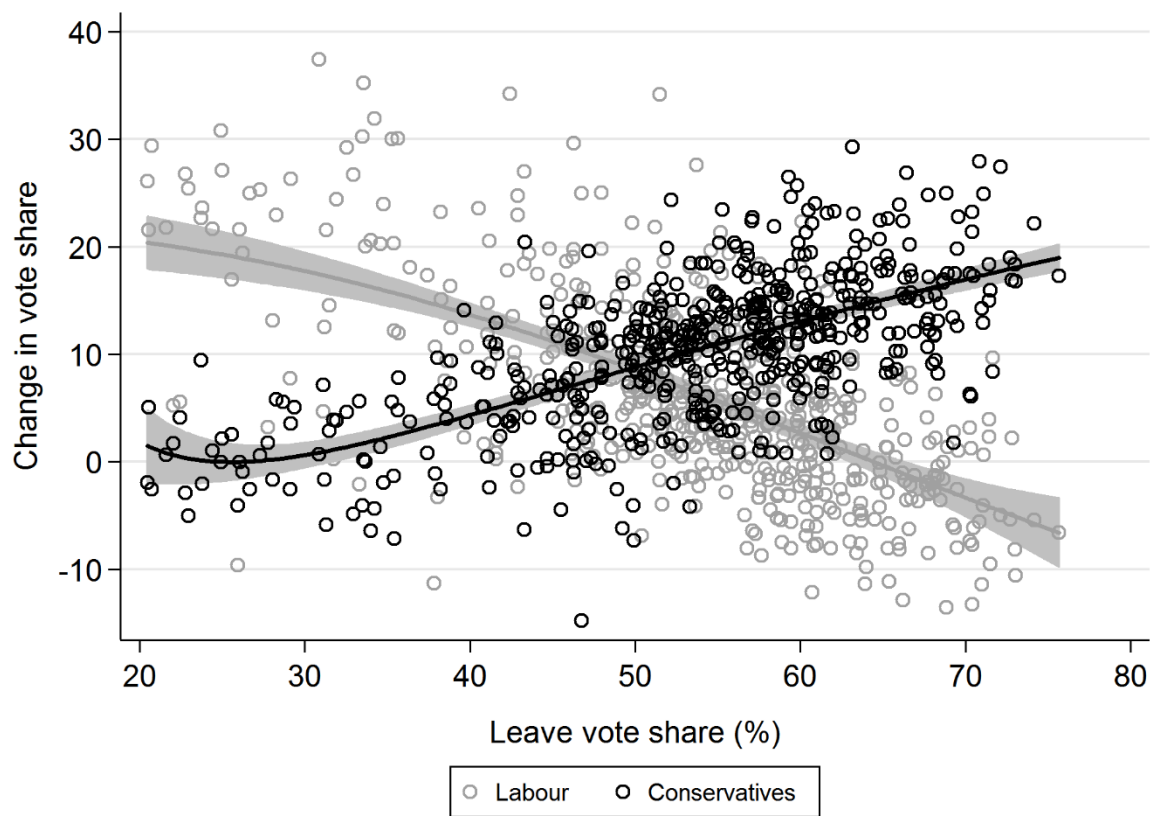

Figure 5(b). Change in Labour/Conservative vote share (2015-2017) and Leave vote
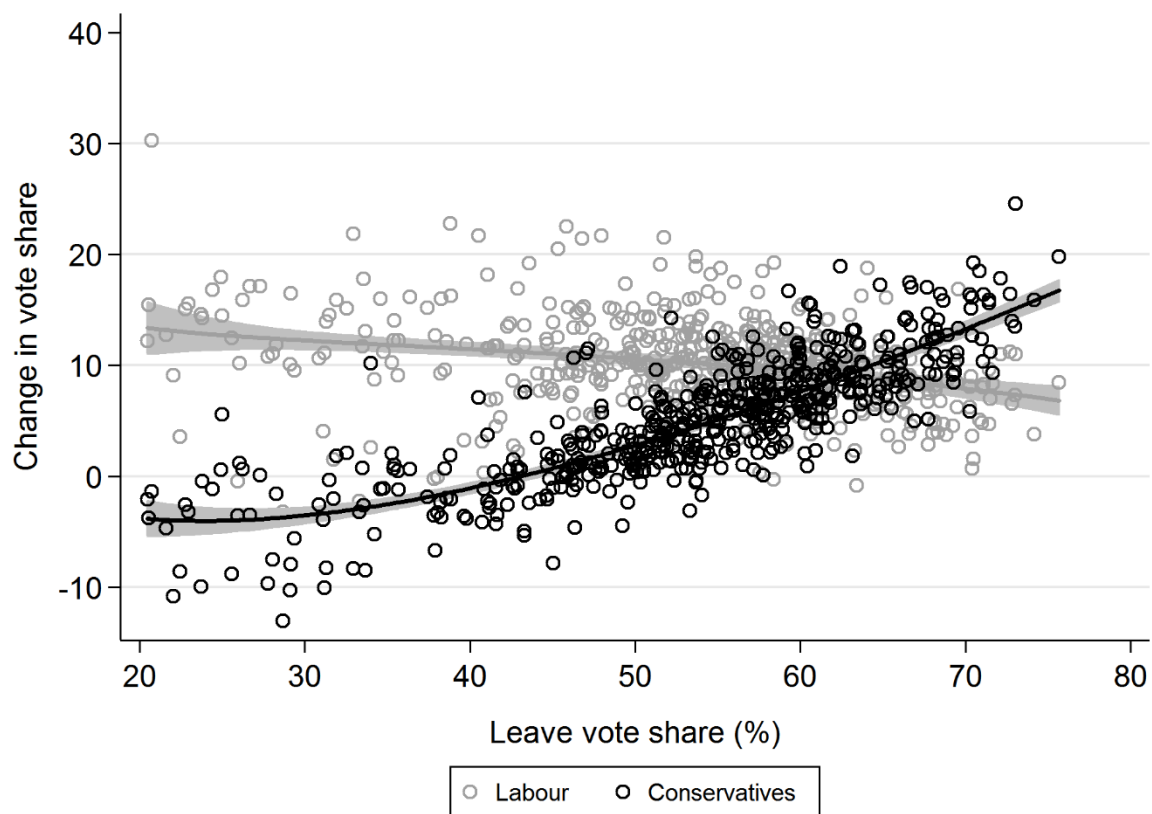
Table 1. Vote share (2017) and change in vote share (2005-2017) for Labour by demographics[20]

	Vote share, 2017	Change in vote share, 2005-2017
Routine occupations	+	−
Employment in manufacturing (2001-2011)	−	+
Precariat	+	.
Employment in cosmopolitan sectors	.	+
Jobs density	.	+
Below national living wage	+	−
Increase in mean real pay (2011-2016)	.	−
Social renters	+	+
Poor health (self-reported)	+	.
No qualifications	+	−
Graduates	−	+
Younger voters (18-44 year olds)	+	+
Ethnicity: White British	−	−
Population density	+	+

Note: '+' or '−' indicates a positive or negative pairwise correlation (Pearson's *r*) $p < 0.05$, N = 530.

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[20] These data are from the ONS/Nomis: per cent of population employed in routine occupations (semi-routine and routine occupations, plus never worked and long-term unemployed; QS607UK), change in per cent of population employed in manufacturing between 2001 and 2011 (categories 'mining and quarrying' and 'manufacturing'; QS605UK); jobs density; percentage below national living wage (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings); change in mean real wages between 2011 and 2016 (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings); social renters (housing tenure; QS403UK), percentage reporting "bad health" or "very bad health" (QS302EW); no qualifications (KS501UK); graduates (degree level or above; KS501UK); younger voters (per cent of 18-44 year olds resident in constituency; QS103EW); ethnicity (White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British; KS201EW); population density (number of people per hectare; KS101EW).

Table 2. OLS regression model of change in Labour/Conservative vote share (by constituency), 2005-2017

	Change in Conservative vote, 2005-2017		Change in Labour vote, 2005-2017	
Leave vote (%)	**0.357**		**-0.731**	
	(0.055)*		**(0.071)***	
Population density	0.010	0.014	0.043	0.034
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.025)	(0.028)
Routine occupations (%)	**0.277**	0.218	-0.243	-0.124
	**(0.113)*	(0.117)	(0.145)	(0.159)
Change in manufacturing employment (2001-2011)	**-0.554**	**-0.593**	0.227	0.306
	(0.130)*	**(0.135)***	(0.167)	(0.183)
Precariat (%)	-0.048	-0.217	0.104	**0.451**
	(0.135)	(0.138)	(0.174)	**(0.188)*
Employment: cosmopolitan industries (%)	**-0.178**	**-0.289**	0.067	**0.293**
	**(0.072)*	**(0.073)***	(0.093)	**(0.099)**
Jobs density	-0.145	0.026	0.498	0.149
	(0.369)	(0.383)	(0.475)	(0.520)
Below national living wage (%)	0.027	0.035	-0.009	-0.025
	(0.035)	(0.037)	(0.045)	(0.050)
Change in mean pay (2011-2016)	0.026	0.015	0.012	0.036
	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.041)	(0.045)
Social renters (%)	**0.109**	**0.102**	**-0.148**	-0.134
	**(0.048)*	**(0.050)*	**(0.062)*	(0.068)
Bad health (%)	**-0.727**	**-1.009**	**1.596**	**2.175**
	**(0.357)*	**(0.369)**	**(0.460)***	**(0.501)***
Degree (%)	-0.023	**-0.695**	0.075	**1.449**
	(0.221)	**(0.203)***	(0.285)	**(0.276)***
No qualifications (%)	-0.255	-0.204	0.028	-0.076
	(0.162)	(0.168)	(0.209)	(0.229)
Aged 18-44 (%)	-0.255	**-0.547**	**0.460**	**1.057**
	(0.153)	**(0.152)***	**(0.197)*	**(0.206)***
Ethnicity: white British (%)	**0.168**	**0.177**	**-0.155**	**-0.174**
	(0.023)*	**(0.024)***	**(0.029)***	**(0.032)***
Aged 18-44 (%) x Degree (%)	0.008	**0.014**	**-0.017**	**-0.029**
	(0.004)	**(0.004)**	**(0.005)**	**(0.006)***
Intercept	-16.042	**36.088**	**50.863**	**-55.784**
	(12.867)	**(10.425)***	**(16.570)**	**(14.176)***
N	530	530	530	530
Adjusted R-squared	0.55	0.51	0.59	0.50

* *p*<0.05; ** *p*<0.01; *** *p*<0.001 (standard errors in parentheses)