



Young Cosmopolitans Against Brexit

The June 2016 referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union provided a major shock to the political establishment. The decision to leave the EU, by a margin of 52–48%, represented a rejection of what the vast majority of political and business elites considered to be in the country's best economic interests, in preference to returning sovereignty over political decision-making to the United Kingdom and reducing net migration. The *Leave* campaign was characterized by populist appeals to national identity and the (perceived) cultural threat posed by European integration. It also sought to capitalize on strong anti-establishment sentiment towards the British political elite.

These events must be viewed within the broader context of the rise of authoritarian-nationalist forms of populism: from the success of far-right parties in Central and Eastern Europe, including the Freedom Party in Austria, the Law and Justice party in Poland, and Fidesz in Hungary, to the election of Donald Trump in the United States. Some commentators in America branded Trump's victory a 'cultural backlash' against the liberal social values of the Obama administration (Gusterson 2017; Norris and Inglehart 2018). The decision, in the UK, to leave the European Union, can be seen as a product of these same forces. It was no surprise, therefore, that Marine Le Pen in France applauded the referendum result, or that US Presidential candidate Trump was keen to associate himself with Nigel Farage. In a triumphant address to a Trump rally in Jackson, Mississippi on 24 August

2016, Farage encouraged American voters to take the opportunity to ‘beat the pollsters... the commentators... and Washington’.

These authoritarian-nationalist movements and parties, including the campaign for Britain to leave the European Union and the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), were characterised by an *economic-cultural* paradox. On the one hand, a large amount of support for Brexit and UKIP was drawn from economically disadvantaged communities and social groups (Ford and Goodwin 2014). And, those who were well-off or had high levels of educational attainment were very likely to support British membership of the EU. On the other hand, the fault lines between *Remainers* and *Leavers* were clearest on cultural issues such as immigration and national sovereignty, and attitudes towards ethnic and cultural diversity.

The EU referendum result was, therefore, defined by socio-economic cleavages *and* cultural conflict. But the decision to leave the European Union was more nuanced than this would suggest. For a start, referenda are always partly a plebiscite on the popularity of the incumbent government. Second, internal cultural dynamics within the UK were also at play: including, the assertion of ‘Englishness’ (and its conflation with Euroscepticism through UKIP); the rise of the Scottish National Party (and its support for European integration); and, the relative acceptance of immigration and diversity across London. There were also clear asymmetries on how important ‘Europe’ was viewed as an issue – it was ranked very highly and relatively lowly by Leavers and Remainers, respectively.

Age was another key variable in determining whether an individual voted for Remain or Leave. As we show in this chapter, the differences between the views of younger and older citizens over the question of European integration were stark. With regard to age, our survey showed that the vast majority of young people – 69% of 18–30 year olds and 76% of 18–21 year olds – voted for the UK to remain in the EU. But why did they do so? Which groups of young people were most likely to support EU membership? And, to what extent does the young Remain vote correspond with the cosmopolitan-left group of Young Millennials identified in this book?

This chapter begins by discussing the linkages between authoritarian-nationalist forms of populism (and socialist-internationalist ideology) and Euroscepticism, and outlines pre-existing attitudes towards the European Union in the UK in comparison to other established European democracies. Afterwards, it examines youth engagement in the referendum

campaign, before underlining the influence of age and socio-economic status on the referendum result. Drawing upon data from a representative survey of 1,351 young adults (18–30 year olds),¹ the chapter provides a detailed examination of the demographic profile of young Remain voters and the issues and values that drove them to vote Remain.

Our findings reveal that young *Remainers* were characterized by *cosmopolitan-left* values and attitudes, as illustrated by their concerns for the economic consequences of a potential Brexit *and* by their strong support for cultural diversity. Despite their overwhelming backing for the establishment position in the referendum, these young people harboured high levels of antipathy towards the Conservative Government (and Prime Minister, David Cameron), as well as low levels of trust in politicians in general.

We claim that the EU referendum, whilst acting as a lightning rod for resurgent nationalism amongst many older and less well-off citizens, also led to the crystallization of a common sense of political identity amongst Young Millennials in reaction to the negative impact of austerity upon their lives and what was perceived as an economically costly and inward-looking Brexit vote. The increase in political activism amongst these younger voters provided a springboard for the surge in support for the Labour Party in the 2017 UK General Election (explored in Chap. 5).

POPULISM, COSMOPOLITANISM AND THE QUESTION OF EUROPE

Public attitudes towards the European Union have been strongly influenced by citizens' cultural values (their social liberalism or social conservatism), by their views on the role of markets and the state, and also by national perspectives on European integration.

In Chap. 2, we considered the rise of nationalism and populist politics in the United States and Europe. In Europe, this resurgence has the added dimension of fuelling scepticism towards the EU (Mudde 2016). The existing literature establishes a clear link between Euroscepticism and the populist right, manifesting itself around the issues of immigration and national sovereignty (Hobolt 2016). Several studies have also shown that previous national referendums on various questions of European integration have provided fertile ground for populist parties and social movements (de Vreese and Boomgaarden 2005).

Although cosmopolitan values and left-of-centre politics are sometimes associated with pro-European views, it would be wrong to assume that this is always the case. From a radical cosmopolitan perspective, the European Union has been accused of becoming *Fortress Europe* – for example, advocating freedom of movement internally, while at the same time closing the door to immigrants from the developing world (Rumford 2005). And, many on the left of the political spectrum have criticized the EU's support for free markets, deregulation and fiscal conservatism at the expense of social policies and state-run public services (Scharpf 2002). This was laid bare during the recent sovereign debt crisis when the imposition of austerity (through the European Stability Mechanism) was vehemently opposed by left-wing parties in debtor countries, including Syriza in Greece and PoDemos in Spain. These reservations also account for the lukewarm attitude of Jeremy Corbyn to European integration. During the referendum campaign, the Labour leader expressed himself as only seven out of ten in favour of an EU that, in his view, was not doing enough on human rights and social cohesion (BBC Online, 11 June 2016). Even so, there are important, qualitative differences between authoritarian-nationalist and cosmopolitan-left forms of Euroscepticism. The former is fixed upon returning *sovereignty* to 'nation states'. The latter aims to establish tighter social and economic controls at the EU level, and allow greater scope for state involvement in the economy and growth-oriented fiscal policy.

Hobolt (2016: 1260) explains that the Brexit vote also reflected 'a lack of economic opportunities and anger with the political class'. However, anti-establishment sentiment has been a prominent feature of *both* authoritarian-nationalist *and* cosmopolitan-left politics. In the wake of the financial crisis, a wave of protest gathered against corporate greed, neo-liberal policies, and a lack of social investment. This manifested itself in support for Occupy, the Spanish Indignados and in the emergence of new electoral challengers, such as Corbyn, Sanders and PoDemos, and also illustrated the preference of young cosmopolitan-left citizens for political outsiders. Anti-establishment sentiment certainly helped to drive the Leave vote amongst the general adult population. However, we present evidence to show that young Remainers were actually less trusting of mainstream politicians than young Leavers and the average young person.

The UK has experienced a troubled relationship with the European Community (EC), now the EU, from the very beginning of the integration

project: from its initial reluctance to join, to Margaret Thatcher's intransigence on Britain's budgetary contribution, to the political crisis over the Maastricht Treaty (forming the EU), to David Cameron's decision to pull the British Conservatives out of the centre-right European People's Party. Even pro-European Prime Minister Tony Blair, found it hard to gain support for European integration against the backdrop of a divided political establishment, a hostile media, and a sceptical public. According to Eurobarometer (European Commission 2017) data, the proportion of British citizens who thought that membership of the European Union was a good thing versus a bad thing was only +17 percentage points in 2006, compared to an average score of +49 across nine other established European democracies.²

This relative indifference or antipathy towards the EU was exacerbated both *directly* by a rapid increase in immigration from new member states after Eastern enlargement in 2004 and the reputational damage caused by the Eurozone crisis (Curtice 2017), and *indirectly* by the anger and frustration of European citizens with all layers of politics in the aftermath of the financial crisis. By 2011, the proportion of British citizens believing that EU membership was a good thing versus a bad thing had plummeted to a score of -6, compared to an average of +33 in nine other old member states (European Commission 2017).³

Nevertheless, younger citizens have tended to be more trusting of the EU: in 2014, 42% of 15–24 year olds across all member states trusted the EU compared to 31% of all citizens and 28% of over 65s (European Commission 2014). In the UK, the age differential has become particularly large. Despite rising levels of Euroscepticism within the general population, the mainstream media and political elites, young people have remained very supportive of British membership. Thus, youth (18–24 year olds' support for the UKIP at its highpoint in the 2015 General Election reached only 8%, compared to 13% of all adults and 17% of over 65s (Ipsos MORI 2015).

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN THE EU REFERENDUM

Young Britons' support for membership was not matched – initially at least – by high levels of interest in the referendum. As we shall see later in the chapter, Europe and the EU were not high-priority issues for young people compared to older citizens. Our YouGov survey revealed that only 39% of 18–24 year olds (and 31% of 18–30 year olds) found the campaign

interesting six weeks prior to the vote. Unsurprisingly, this figure was higher for those young people who identified themselves as intending to vote for Remain or Leave. The initial lack of interest in the referendum was mirrored by younger citizens' intention to vote or abstain: only 50% of 18–24 year olds and 56% of 26–30 year olds declared that they were certain to vote on 23 June 2016.

However, we should be cautious about this interpretation of the data. It may be that the low prioritization of Europe as an issue reflected satisfaction with the status quo; that for most young people, the EU was not a controversial issue. As we shall see, there is evidence to show that, as the race tightened and the debate heated up, the referendum 'stimulated the political interest of Britain's young people' (Fox and Pearce 2016). And, after the vote, young people became deeply concerned about the prospect of Brexit (Sloam 2018).

Another explanation for the low prioritization of Europe as an issue by (young) Remain supporters is their lack of knowledge about the EU and how it works. UK citizens are known to have low levels of knowledge about the EU when compared to their counterparts elsewhere in Europe, and this lack of political knowledge is particularly pronounced amongst younger cohorts (Hix 2015).

The Conservative Government believed that it would win the referendum comfortably by focussing on the economic risks of leaving the EU and securing the backing of political and economic elites – from the main party leaders, to Alan Sugar, to Mark Carney, to Barack Obama. On the other hand, both the official Vote Leave campaign and the more extreme UKIP-led operation emphasized the 'threat' of immigration, which was linked to the need to 'take back control' from Brussels and halt payments to the EU budget. Curtice (2017) demonstrates that both the Remain argument on the economy and the Leave argument on immigration were broadly accepted by public opinion. The crux of the matter was, therefore, which of these issues were perceived as being more important. As we demonstrate further on in the chapter, young people perceived the economy as far more important than immigration (in sharp contrast to citizens over 65 years of age).

The Vote Remain and Vote Leave campaigns were characterized by posters and slogans that highlighted these *winning issues*. Vote Remain posters read: 'For Every £1 We Put Into the EU We Get Almost £10 back' (through trade, investment, jobs, growth and low prices); 'Britain Out of Europe, Your Family Out of Pocket'; and, '3 Million UK Jobs are Linked

to Our Trade With the EU'. These messages appealed to young people's concerns about the negative economic consequences of Brexit, but little else. Less well advertised issues included the assertion that 'EU Laws Protect Women's Rights'.

The Vote Leave campaign opted for: 'Turkey (population 76 million) is Joining the EU', and 'Let's Give the NHS the £350 Million the EU Takes Every Week'. These claims were flanked by UKIP's infamous 'Breaking Point' poster with an image of a queue of immigrants at a border crossing and another which implied that schools were being 'over-run' by immigrants. These messages were most likely to appeal to older, less well-off, and less highly-educated social groups.

The simple, emotional appeals adopted by the Leave campaigns aroused greater passion than the economic and pragmatic arguments of the Remain camp. Vote Leave was, thus, able to dominate coverage in the (sympathetic) mainstream media. But the Leave campaign's dominance of social media was surprising. Even though most social media have a young, socially liberal demographic (that was very likely to vote Remain), 'the campaign to leave had routinely outmuscled its rival, with more vocal and active supporters across almost all social media platforms' (Polonski 2016).

Although our cosmopolitan-left group of young people distrusted and opposed the economic policies of the Cameron Government that fronted the Remain campaign, it is easy to see how the Leave campaign's use of nationalist and xenophobic tropes provoked the counter-mobilization of this group of socially liberal young people during and beyond the referendum.

THE ROLE OF AGE AND SOCIAL STATUS IN THE EU REFERENDUM

Figure 4.1 shows the results of YouGov and Lord Ashcroft polls conducted on the day after the referendum (excluding those who said that they did not turn out to vote).⁴ It shows that young people (18–30 year olds) were by far the most likely of any age group to support British membership of the EU. Nearly 7 in 10 (69%) of this cohort claimed to have voted Remain, compared to 51% of all adults,⁵ and 36% of over 65s. Social class was also very important in determining voter choice: 59% of citizens with a higher than average social grade (ABC1) wanted to remain in the EU in contrast to 39% of those with a lower than average social grade

(C2DE voters). The results were even more striking with regard to levels of educational attainment. A very large majority (71%) of those with a university degree wanted Britain to stay in the Union, compared to just 34% of those with GCSEs or lower. A large majority of ethnic minority citizens (68%) voted in favour of Remain. And, there was also a regional dimension to the vote: Londoners (62%) and Scots (59%) both opted decisively for Remain (as did many large cities, including Manchester, Liverpool and Bristol). For adults of all ages, gender did not seem to be a major factor in influencing voter choice – although women were slightly more likely to report having voted to remain in the EU (by 52–48%), while men were marginally more likely to vote to leave (by 51–49%).

A great deal of research has been carried out on voting patterns in the EU referendum. These studies depict those who voted Leave as the ‘losers of globalization’ or the ‘left behind’, who are most likely to be over 50, male, working class, and have low levels of educational attainment (Goodwin and Heath 2016; Hobolt 2016; Jennings and Stoker 2016; Clarke et al. 2017). This can be contrasted with Remain voters, who have been characterized as ‘winners of globalization’, who are most likely to be young, female and highly educated. We emphasize the fact that there was also a strong cultural component to the referendum vote based on issues of regional identity and attitudes towards cultural diversity and immigration.

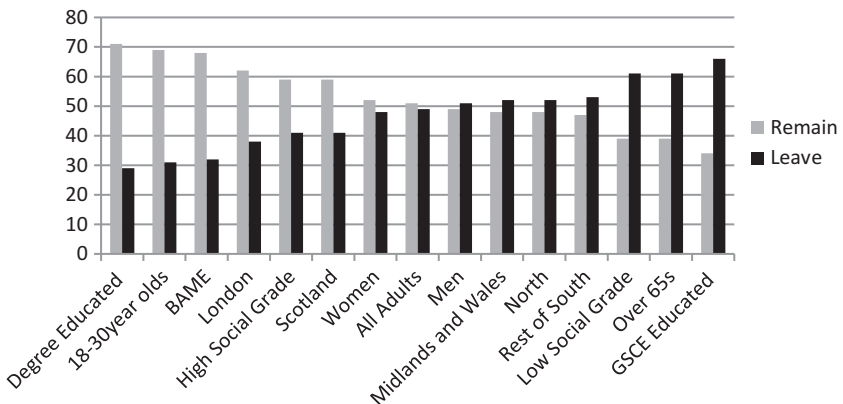


Fig. 4.1 Support for ‘remain’ and ‘leave’ in EU referendum by social group (excluding ‘don’t knows’ and ‘won’t votes’) (%). (Sources: YouGov 2016, Lord Ashcroft Polls 2016. YouGov $N = 1351$; Lord Ashcroft $N = 12,369$)

The existing literature has much to say about the importance of inter-generational differences in voting patterns but has little to say on intragenerational voter choice. This is important for young people, because youth political participation does not always reflect patterns of participation in the country as a whole. For instance, we show that young women were much more likely to vote Remain than young men, even though gender did not seem to influence voter choice amongst adults of all ages. The following section identifies more precisely the characteristics of those young Remainers, who were so diametrically opposed to the cultural politics of older generations.

YOUNG REMAINERS AS YOUNG COSMOPOLITANS

In this section, we explore the role that demographic factors, identities, values, policy preferences and trust in politicians played in shaping the youth vote in the EU referendum focussing on those groups of Young Millennials that were more likely to vote Remain than the average young person.

Figure 4.2 displays the results for groups of young people voting Remain across a range of social and demographic measures. Supporting the conclusions of the post-referendum studies, we found that education was very strongly associated with voting Remain, with 82% of full-time students claiming that they did so.⁶ Our own qualitative research suggests that this might be explained by the fact that full-time students were more

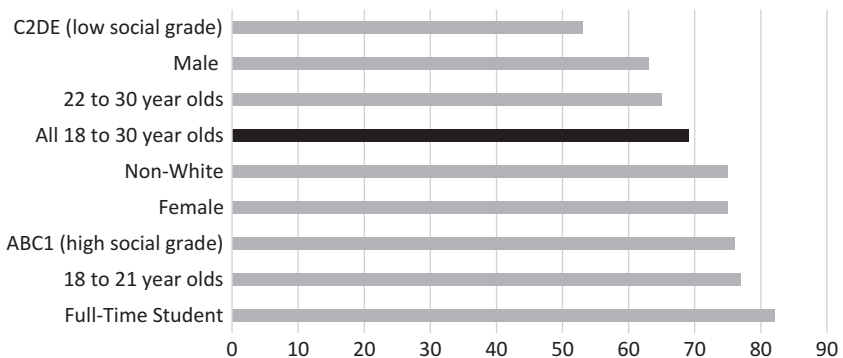


Fig. 4.2 Support for 'remain' amongst sub-groups of 18–30 year olds (excluding 'dont knows' & 'won't votes') (%). (Source: YouGov 2016. $N = 1,351$)

exposed to the campaign in colleges and on campuses (Sloam 2018). Being of a higher social grade (ABC1) was also associated with voting Remain – 76% of this group voted remain – but less so than being in education.

The findings regarding education and social grade lend support to the *winners and losers of globalisation* thesis. Younger people who were better off and possessed higher levels of educational attainment, were more supportive of EU membership – developing an image of the well-educated, economically successful Remain voter. Younger citizens who had lower levels of educational attainment, or who fell into the C2DE social category, were much more evenly split between Remain and Leave.

The socio-demographic results also revealed clear differences on the basis of age, gender and ethnicity. It was immediately apparent that, within our sample of young people, the very youngest group – 18–21 year olds – were more likely to support British membership of the EU than 22–30 year olds by 77–66%. To a large extent, this reflects the fact that 18–21 year olds are much more likely than 22–30 year olds to be in full-time education.

Young women were also more likely to vote Remain than their male counterparts by 75–63%. This latter finding correlates with the rate of young, female support for Corbyn’s Labour Party in the 2017 General Election (see Chap. 5), demonstrating the ongoing existence of a female cosmopolitan-left political grouping. Ethnicity also played a role in determining voter choice. In spite of the fact that they were, as a group, less well-off and less highly-educated than their white counterparts, 75% of young ethnic minorities voted Remain. One explanation for this high score is that the negative portrayal of immigrants in the Leave campaign persuaded young ethnic minority citizens to vote Remain. Although the results for young women and minority groups do not confound the left behind thesis, they suggest that other, political and cultural factors were also at work.

With respect to identity and values, those who saw themselves primarily as British or Scottish were more likely to vote Remain than the average young person – by 74% and 75% to 69%, respectively (Fig. 4.3, below). Both primary English and Welsh identity were associated with a lower likelihood of voting Remain. The case of Scottish identity defies resource-based explanations of the EU referendum. In purely geographical terms, our poll recorded that 83% of young people living in Scotland favoured EU

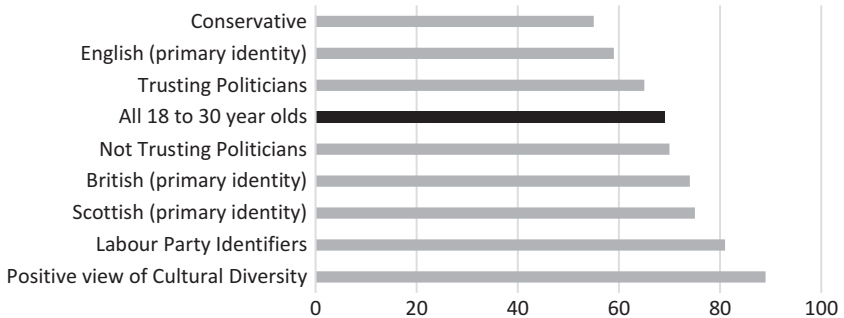


Fig. 4.3 Support for ‘remain’ amongst 18–30 year olds by values, identity, party allegiance and trust (excluding ‘dont knows’ & ‘won’t votes’) (%). (Source: YouGov 2016. $N = 1,351$)

membership (compared to just 64% of 18–30 year olds from Wales and the Midlands). Other research has shown that a cosmopolitan, outward-looking sense of identity is also related to the urban-rural divide (Jennings and Stoker 2016). Even taking into account socio-economic status, city dwellers tend to have more positive views regarding cultural diversity and the European Union.

When it came to party identification, an overwhelming 81% of young Labour Party identifiers claimed that they would vote Remain (compared to the almost unanimous 94% of young Liberal Democrat identifiers). This provides further evidence of the linkages between voting Remain in 2016 and Labour in 2017. Young Conservative Party identifiers were marginally in favour of British membership of the European Union (55%), but significantly less likely to vote Remain than the average young person. So, support for an opposition party (Labour, Liberal Democrat, Green or SNP – though not, of course, UKIP) actually made it more likely that a young person would side with the official Government position in the referendum. In essence, young people voted for continued membership of the EU *despite* their opposition to the Government of the day.

On the subject of cultural diversity, those who responded positively to the question ‘Do you think that having a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures is a positive or negative part of modern Britain?’ were overwhelmingly supportive of membership of the EU. In fact, this issue was more strongly associated with voting Remain than any other demographic, value

or identity variable that we tested (with the exception of the small number of Liberal Democrat identifiers and the tiny proportion of those who saw themselves primarily as ‘European’). A huge majority (89%) of young Remain voters answered positively to this question. This paints a picture of young Remain voters as postmaterialist, cosmopolitan liberals, who were at ease with cultural heterogeneity.

Figure 4.4 compares various policy issues that were considered important by young Remain voters, young Leave voters and young people in general. Young Remain voters believed that the most important issues facing the country were (in order) healthcare, the economy, housing, education, Europe, the environment, immigration and asylum, and defence and terrorism. Whilst material, economic issues were placed firmly at the top of young Remainers’ policy agendas, they were closely followed by international and postmaterialist policy items associated with the cosmopolitan-left. Young Remainers were predominantly in favour of increased public spending on the NHS and education, greater state intervention in the housing market, retaining membership of the European Union, and more action to protect the environment. Immigration and security issues, associated with authoritarian-nationalist sentiment, were considered to be least important by young Remainers. The largest gaps between Remain and Leave were to be found on immigration and asylum (−44 percentage points), education (+22), health (+21), and the environment (+18).

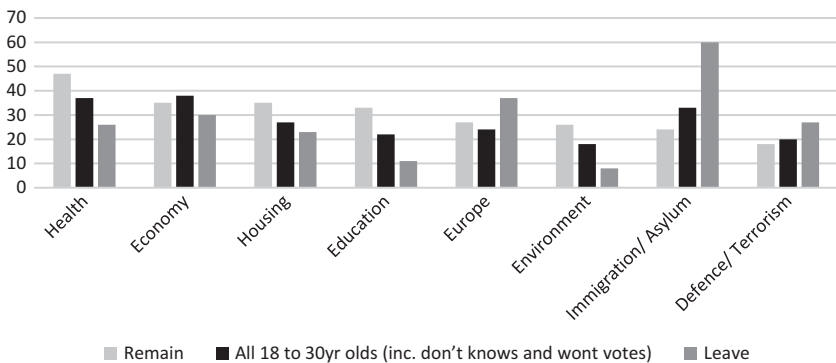


Fig. 4.4 Most important issues facing the country for all 18–30 year olds and by support for ‘remain’ and ‘leave’ (%). (Source: YouGov 2016. $N = 1,351$)

We found, earlier in the chapter, that young Leavers were more interested in the EU referendum than young Remainers. Figure 4.4 reveals that young Leavers also placed the question of Europe higher up on their list of political priorities for the UK. More than a third (37%) of those young people who supported Brexit believed it was one of the most important issues facing the country (second only to immigration), compared with 27% of those who supported British membership of the EU and 24% of all 18–30 year olds. Again, we would argue that this illustrates the relative contentment of young Remainers with the status quo.

Although voting Remain was the establishment choice (advocated by all the major parties with the exception of UKIP), we found that it was actually young Remain voters who were least likely to trust politicians. Figure 4.5 shows that young Remainers had a net trust score of –28 percentage points (those who trusted politicians a fair amount or a great deal minus those who had no trust at all in politicians), marginally below that of the average young person (–26) and young Leavers (–23). This lack of political trust, nevertheless, came hand-in-hand with greater social trust (something one would expect of a more prosperous, highly-educated group). A large majority (61%) of young Remain supporters trusted their fellow young people compared to 47% of those that favoured Leave. This last result suggests that young Leavers may have bought into the narrative of a ‘broken Britain’ – a country that was being undermined by “others” through immigration and multiculturalism.

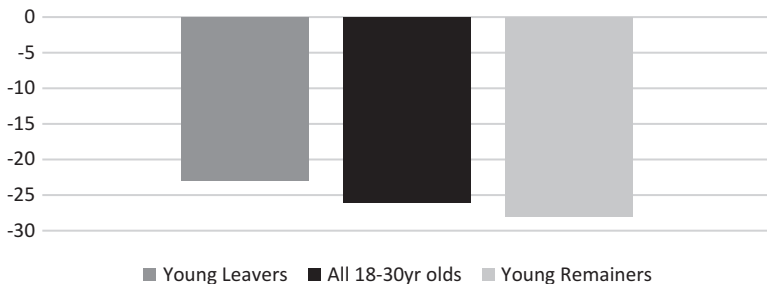


Fig. 4.5 Net trust of young people, young remainers and young leavers in politicians (‘fair amount’ and ‘great deal’ minus ‘not at all’). (Source: YouGov 2016. $N = 1,351$)

YOUNG PEOPLE POLITICALLY ENERGISED BY BREXIT

In the opening chapters, we explained how young people have increasingly been drawn to issue-based forms of political engagement – to causes that have a tangible meaning for their everyday lives. In this regard, the European Union initially appeared to many young people as a rather remote and abstract issue, which was much less important than pressing economic concerns regarding jobs, housing and healthcare.

We have already demonstrated that youth political interest in the referendum was very low despite the large amount of media coverage devoted to the EU before and after the 2015 General Election, through David Cameron's efforts to re-negotiate Britain's relationship with the European Union, to the start of the campaign proper. We have also alluded to the lack of self-proclaimed political knowledge amongst UK citizens, which was particularly the case for young people. In our survey, only 50% of 18–30 year olds claimed to know 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' about the European Union and what it does. It is worth noting that levels of interest and knowledge were much lower amongst young women (who are more likely to be young cosmopolitan-left Remainers) than amongst young men. Only 39% of young women claimed to be knowledgeable about the EU.

These findings are supported by our qualitative analysis of '#Votebecause', an initiative to engage higher education students in the referendum, that took place across several university campuses during the campaign period (Sloam 2018). Through our student interviews and ethnographic observations of student behaviour, it became abundantly clear that Europe was not seen as a controversial subject. Since nine out of ten student interviewees in our sample were in favour of the status quo, it was hard to generate the sense of urgency witnessed on the Leave side.

However, we also witnessed that students became increasingly engaged as a result of the initiative and through their exposure to the campaign around campus (for example, through debates and lectures about the EU and the referendum), on TV, via online news feeds, and through their own social networks. Our analysis identified the key role of discussion and deliberation during the campaign. One student volunteer summed up how this worked with regard to #Votebecause: it encouraged 'people to tell you what they think... they just really open up about it. And, after doing the questionnaire, they were more engaged in what the campaign was about, and why we were asking the questions.' (Key Informant, male, aged 18).

In the end, youth voter turnout in the referendum was reported to be far higher than in the general election one year earlier. According to Ipsos MORI (2016) and British Social Attitudes (Curtice and Simpson 2018) data, the turnout of 18–24 year olds was 53% and 66%, respectively – an estimated 14 and 10 percentage points higher than at the 2015 General Election. We designed a survey before the 2017 General Election, which asked young people and adults of all ages how closely they were following the election and their views on Brexit.⁷ A huge majority (81%) of 18–24 year olds in our sample claimed that they were following the general election closely, compared to an average of 80% for all age groups (and only topped by the interest of the over-65 age group). Moreover, 88% of 18–24 year olds stated that they were following Brexit negotiations closely – more than any other age group. So, young people were energised both by the EU referendum and in reaction to the referendum result.

SUMMARY

The European Union referendum provided a unique test of British public opinion. On the one hand, young people were overwhelmingly in favour of the UK remaining in the EU – around three quarters of 18–24 year olds (and 70% of 18–30 year olds) voted Remain. On the other hand, the Remain campaign was championed by a Government and political establishment that was deeply unpopular amongst younger citizens. In this context, this chapter has attempted to draw the contours of a *cosmopolitan-left* group of citizens in the UK, characterized by young Remainers, which reflects a broader trend in youth political engagement across many established democracies.

From the findings, we are able to develop a profile of the typical young person who voted Remain in June 2016. The conventional socio-demographic characteristics most strongly associated with voting Remain were *being highly-educated* (and *being a full-time student*) and being of a higher (ABC1) social grade. In this regard, the chapter lends support to the *winners and losers of globalisation* thesis. Young people who were of a higher socio-economic status, were more likely to support continued EU membership. Having a lower level of educational attainment or being of a lower social grade (C2DE) was (as expected) associated with voting Leave. However, the above average support of young women, young ethnic minorities, young Scots and young city dwellers for Remain demonstrates that the left behind thesis can only explain part of the picture.

Young, well-educated, politically engaged individuals could be considered to be both winners and losers of globalisation. Whilst emphasizing the growing gap between the super-rich and everyone else, these young cosmopolitans tend to hold postmaterialist concerns over issues such as the environment and embrace the cultural diversity which defines their societies. These young people are the very antithesis of the contemporary wave of authoritarian-nationalist populism that has captured so much media attention. Conversely, the small proportion of young people who prioritised the issue of immigration, asylum, national defence and terrorism were much more likely to belong to the 30% of 18–30 year olds who voted for Brexit.

Contrary to expectations, young Remain voters were less likely to trust politicians than young Leavers. This defies much of the political commentary, which identified anti-establishment sentiment and a lack of trust in conventional politics as major drivers of the Brexit vote. Despite their relative lack of trust in the political class that led the campaign for continued EU membership, these voters opted for Remain. In fact, the demographic and attitudinal profile of Britain's young Remainers resembles that of social movement participants, such as those who supported Occupy Wall Street and the Spanish Indignados, whose momentum was converted into strong electoral performances for PoDemos in Spain and Bernie Sanders in US. In the UK, young cosmopolitan-left citizens were galvanized by the referendum into a coherent political force that – as we explain in Chap. 5 – was harnessed by the Labour Party, under Jeremy Corbyn, at the 2017 General Election.

NOTES

1. The survey was designed by the authors, commissioned by Hope Not Hate and Bite the Ballot from YouGov, and fielded between 6 and 13 May 2016. It provided a representative sample of 18–30 year olds with regard to age, gender, geographical location (excluding Northern Ireland), ethnicity and occupational status.
2. The large, established democracies referred to here are Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.
3. It should be noted that public perceptions of the EU as 'a good thing' have diverged dramatically since the financial crisis, between those countries that were worst affected (the average score in Greece, Portugal, Spain and Italy fell to +20 in 2011) and the rest (the average score remained stable at +42 in the other five countries).

4. In Fig. 4.1., YouGov statistics were used for all groups except BAME citizens.
5. This survey estimate compares with the actual result, where 48% of UK voters supported Remain.
6. In this chapter we focus on ‘being in education’ rather than ‘educational attainment’ amongst 18–30 year olds, given the fact that those with high levels of educational attainment (university degrees) are an older sub-set within this sample (and differences in this age within this cohort are relatively large).
7. We designed a Populus poll (commissioned by Freud and Bite the Ballot) that was fielded from 10 May to 11 May 2017. The sample was comprised of 2,007 UK citizens, including 218 18–24 year olds.

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