

Religion and Brexit: Populism and the Church of England.

Author Names

Greg Smith

Associate Research Fellow

William Temple Foundation

Preston, UK

CONTACT ME by email; gregcity3@yahoo.co.uk

Phone - Mobile 07726177044

and Linda Woodhead

Professor Linda Woodhead MBE DD I Dept of Politics, Philosophy and Religion I

Co-director, Institute for Social Futures

Lancaster University,

UK

Tel:+44 (0)1524 510819

l.woodhead@lancaster.ac.uk

Religion and Brexit : Populism and the Church of England

Abstract

Drawing on our own recent surveys on beliefs and values in Great Britain (Woodhead) and evangelical Christians in the UK (Smith) as well as those of others, this paper explores the links between religion and views and votes on leaving or remaining in the EU in the UK's 2016 referendum. Analysis of data commissioned by Woodhead and gathered by YouGov shortly after the referendum ($n= 3243$) allows us to test associations between religious identity and behaviour and attitudes relevant to the EU Referendum, while controlling for other demographic variables. The main finding is that identifying as Church of England (Anglican) was an important independent predictor of voting Leave even when other relevant factors like age and region were corrected for. By contrast self-defined English evangelicals (from an opportunity sample of 1198 collected and analysed by Smith) appear to be more pro-EU and generally internationalist in outlook. Previous surveys by Woodhead of religion and values in the UK allow us to provide some explanations for these findings, and for the striking difference of UK and US Evangelicals - 81% of whom supported Donald Trump in the 2016 US Election. The paper ends with reflections on whether the term 'populist' can be usefully applied to the evangelical pro-Trump vote in the USA or the Church of England pro-Brexit vote in the UK, concluding that it can for the former but not for the latter.

Keywords: religion; no religion; nones; church of england; anglican; brexit; eu referendum; evangelicals; Europe; voting; identity; populism

Introduction

On June 23rd 2016 a referendum was held on the United Kingdom's continuing membership of the European Union. The key issues in the campaign were immigration, national sovereignty, the EU's 'democratic deficit' and the advantages and disadvantages to the British economy. The turnout was high at 72% (47m), with more people turning out to vote than in the previous year's general election. The result was that the British voted to leave the EU by 52% to 48%. In Scotland 63% voted to remain, in Northern Ireland 56% (and in London 60%), but in Wales and every other region of England there was a majority for leave of between 52% and 59% (see Table 1). Much analysis of the vote has been carried out examining in detail the strong correlations with age and geography in particular,¹ as for example in Lord Ashcroft's exit poll (2016) of a sample of over 12,000 voters,² but there has so far been little polling or analysis of whether and how religion and denominational affiliation among Christians affected this outcome: this paper fills that gap.³

**** INSERT TABLE 1 ****

Religion in the Brexit Vote: the importance of Anglican identity

Woodhead commissioned data on religion from YouGov's referendum exit poll of voters. In total 3,243 respondents were surveyed; the sample is weighted and representative of the adult population in the United Kingdom. Because of the distinctive patterns of voting between the different nations of the UK, each of which also has a different religious history, we have based our analysis in this paper on the respondents resident in England ($n=2,769$) (in what follows the terms 'England' and 'Britain'/'UK' are used deliberately to signal the unit being referred to).

**** INSERT TABLE 2****

Table 2 shows the proportions of remain and leave voters for five religious categories. While it is evident that a majority of those whose religious affiliation is Christian voted to leave the EU (and in slightly greater proportions than the English electorate as a whole) and that those who had no religion or were from another faith voted by a slight majority to remain, what is most striking is that those who

identified affiliated as ‘Church of England, CofE, or Anglican’ (synonyms on the survey) voted by two to one for Brexit. By contrast, Roman Catholics were more likely to vote Remain than Leave.

Lord Ashcroft’s ‘How Did you Vote? Referendum poll has similar findings, with all religions except Christianity (including ‘nones’) having a majority in favour of Remain, but unlike ours this data has no breakdown of Christian by denomination.⁴ A newspaper article by Trevor Phillips (2017) discusses Brexit by denomination but draws (we think) on Woodhead’s data and reports the same finding about the significance of Anglican identity for pro-Brexit voting. Because of the doubt about its independence it cannot be used for corroboration.⁵

Before drawing firm conclusions about the significance of religion for Brexit it is necessary to control for the influence of other demographic variables, including age and area of residence which proved such important factors in the Referendum. This is important because we know, for example, that Anglicans are typically older than that of the population as a whole, whereas ‘nones’ (those reporting ‘no religion’) are typically younger (Woodhead 2016).

***** INSERT TABLE 3 *****

Table 3 breaks down Brexit-voting Anglicans and nones by various demographic variables, and by how they voted in the 2015 General Election. It compares them with the population of England as a whole. The figures confirm that gender, age, political orientation, living in or outside the London region, social class and previous voting preference are all associated with the referendum vote. Nevertheless, what is so striking is that in every group Anglicans are more likely than average to vote leave, while nones are more likely to vote to remain.

In order to control for the interactions of these variables where there is some degree of co-linearity, a logistic regression model was applied with the aim of predicting the separate contribution of each variable to the probability of voting ‘leave’. The model shows that age plays the greatest role, followed by social class, and living outside London. However, identifying as CofE still emerges as a

highly significant factor. (Details of the model can be seen in Table 10 in the appendix.) It is also worth considering the matter another way round: taking affiliation to the Church of England as the dependent variable and examining which other variables in the dataset best predict this particular religious identity. The second logistic regression model (see Table 11 in appendix) suggests that age is the best predictor, but that being a leave voter, and being a woman all significantly raise the probability of calling oneself CofE. Interestingly social class and living in or outside the capital do not show a significant effect.

In short: identifying as ‘Church of England’ is a major independent predictor of voting Brexit. The effect remains even when all other factors are controlled for. Anglicans in England had a serious impact on the Referendum result.

Religiosity – the role of church attendance

The information about religion from Woodhead’s YouGov poll presented so far is based on a single response to a survey question about religious affiliation. We can also explore other indicators of religiosity, such as frequent attendance at worship, being employed by the church, and identifying strongly as an evangelical Christian. We have for this purpose two data sets from surveys conducted in the period immediately before the referendum, Woodhead’s YouGov poll of 4018 GB adults commissioned for the Westminster Faith Debates in June 2013, and a panel survey for the Evangelical Alliance from Spring 2016.

***** INSERT TABLE 4 *****

Table 4 shows how people in 2013 said they would vote if there were to be a EU Referendum (although mooted, the Referendum was not called until February 2016; Woodhead asked the question in order to gauge attitudes and values at that time). The result was strongly in favour of leaving the EU, and the breakdown by religious affiliation showed that those who identify as Anglican were significantly more in favour of leaving than any other religious group. Apart from nones, the other religious groups do not have large enough samples to draw serious conclusions, but ‘Other Christian’ denominations and Sikhs were at

this stage showing a majority in favour of leave; Jewish voters and Nones too close to call; Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists in favour of remaining in the EU.

***** INSERT TABLE 5 *****

Using this 2013 survey we can also see whether regular church attendance amongst Anglicans (representative sample) and Catholics (smaller sample) makes a difference to (predicted) voting for Brexit. Table 5 shows that regular church attendance reduces the likelihood of voting to leave, though a majority of churchgoing Anglicans (55%) still say they would vote this way.

English Evangelicals and Brexit

Our data on Evangelical Christians comes from the 21st Century Evangelicals research programme carried out since 2010 by the Evangelical Alliance (Smith 2015). The research programme takes the form of a quarterly online survey on various topics of relevance to Christians. It is completed by a panel of volunteers recruited through the membership and networks of the Evangelical Alliance. Typically around 4000 people are invited by email with about 70% of respondents to the preceding wave and 30% of the total pool of contacts responding. Further open invitations via social media recruit a few hundred additional respondents in each wave of the survey. While this is a self-selecting opportunity sample and cannot be taken as truly representative of any known and enumerated population of evangelicals it is organized by the organization which is widely recognized as representing the largest and broadest constituency of evangelicals in the UK. Regular monitoring suggests a consistent demography in the sample in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, social class, places of residence and church denomination.

The data about referendum voting intentions comes from a question included in a wave of the panel survey carried out in March 2016 and is based on the replies of 1198 self-identifying evangelicals living in England. Of this sample 93% identify their ethnicity as 'White British'. They have a high average age with 58% having been born before 1960, 32% in the 1960s or 1970s, and only 10% since 1980. They tend to be committed and active Christians and regular churchgoers and they are drawn from a wide range of Christian denominations including at least a third who belong to the Church of England.

Although a specific question about social class was not asked in this particular wave it is clear from earlier survey waves reported in Smith (2015, pp. 21-22) that the panel is predominantly middle to upper class. In the ‘Working faithfully?’ survey in May 2013, 24% were higher professionals and a further 47% intermediate professionals. In the ‘Do we value education?’ survey in November 2012 70% had a university degree and 41% had postgraduate qualifications. This probably reflects the socio-economic profile of evangelicals in Britain more generally. While no question about political affiliation was asked in March 2016 an earlier wave of the survey immediately after the May 2015 general election found that 31% of English evangelicals voted Conservative, 25% Labour, 17% Liberal Democrat, 11.5% UKIP and 8% Green.

***** INSERT TABLE 6 *****

Table 6 shows the EU Referendum voting intentions expressed by the evangelical panel and shows a small absolute majority (51% of those who had already decided) were intending to vote remain. Even though this question was asked at least two months before the actual referendum it is highly unlikely that a late swing among these English evangelicals would have brought them into line with the electorate as a whole. They appear to be considerably more internationalist than Anglicans in their outlook, which is remarkable given their age profile. This was underlined in the survey wave on politics prior to the 2015 general election in which immigration to the UK was only seen as the most important single issue by 6% percent of evangelicals compared with 21% in the population at large (EA 2015).

While the format of the data made it difficult to apply regression modelling, cross-tabulations of the data showed statistically significant differences (which tended to reflect the breakdown of the national electorate) in the panel for :

1. **gender** 30% of the men said they intend to vote leave compared with 23% of women, although importantly 25% of women compared to 17% of men were undecided.

2. **Age group** Older evangelicals (in line with the whole electorate) were more likely than younger ones to support Brexit, though even among the over 55's there was still a large majority intending to vote remain.
3. **Denomination** Pentecostals were the only denominational group where more respondents intended to vote 'leave' than 'remain'. In contrast with the YouGov poll Anglicans with only 20% supporting 'leave' were the least Eurosceptic.
4. **Region** Evangelicals in London had the highest proportion of 'remain' supporters at 59%, followed by 57% in Yorkshire and the Humber, while the East Midlands had the highest number of 'leave' supporters, but still reaching only 35%.

Comparison with the USA

In November 2017 the United States of America held a General Election for the Presidency and the members of Congress. Following a long selection process the Republicans nominated a maverick outsider candidate who had never before held any elected public office, Donald J. Trump. Running against the Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton, a career politician and former First Lady and Secretary of State, on a turnout of 54%, he gained 62,979,636 votes (46%) of the popular vote nationwide compared with her 65,844,610 votes (48.1%). However because of the structure of the Electoral College, mandated on a State by State basis, and as a result of his strong showing in important key 'swing' states, Trump was elected President by 306 College votes to 232 and was inaugurated as President on January 20th 2017. As in the UK, much analysis of the breakdown of the voting, largely based on exit or post referendum polling, has been carried out examining in detail the geography, demography and political loyalties and attitudes of voters on each side. Unlike the UK, attention has also been given to religion.

In the US presidential election the geographical distribution of the vote suggested that Clinton and Democratic voters were concentrated in the metropolitan areas of the east and west coasts while the Republican victory was secured by majorities in mainly rural, small-town and post-industrial areas of middle America (Brilliant Maps 2016) . Exit polls reported by the New York Times (2016) and the Pew Foundation (2016) show that race, gender, age and education were key factors. White non-Hispanic voters preferred Trump over Clinton by 21 percentage points (58% to 37%), women supported Clinton

over Trump by 54% to 42% while men supported Trump over Clinton by 53% to 41%. College graduates backed Clinton by a 9-point margin (52%-43%), while those without a college degree backed Trump 52%-44%. Young adults preferred Clinton over Trump by a wide 55%-37% margin while older voters (65+) preferred Trump over Clinton by 53%-45%. All these patterns find some echo in what happened in England over Brexit.

As for religion, regularly-practising Christians support Trump in greater proportions than average with support rising to over 80% among white Evangelicals or ‘born-again’ believers (Pew 2017). Smith and Martinez (Pew 2017) analyse the religious breakdown of the US vote and find that ‘fully eight-in-ten self-identified white, born-again/evangelical Christians say they voted for Trump, while just 16% voted for Clinton. Trump’s 65-percentage-point margin of victory among voters in this group – which includes self-described Protestants, as well as Catholics, Mormons and others – matched or exceeded the victory margins of George W. Bush in 2004, John McCain in 2008 and Mitt Romney in 2012.’

**** INSERT TABLE 7 ****

Table 7 shows that US Christians (especially Protestants, White Catholics and Mormons) are less likely than Jewish people, those of other faiths and ‘nones’ to support the more progressive, liberal-internationalist option on the ballot paper. We have seen that much the same is true in England, where Christians, of whom Anglicans make up the largest share, are more likely to favour Brexit than are ‘nones’ and other faiths. But a striking difference is that white evangelicals and regular churchgoers in the USA (who are of course a much more important voting bloc than in the UK) are overwhelmingly conservative politically and more likely to support Trump, whereas in England evangelicals and more regular churchgoers are less likely to support Brexit than traditional ‘cool’ Anglicans. English evangelicals and frequent churchgoers are spread along the political spectrum but tend to be centrist or left-leaning liberal-progressive politically, whereas US evangelicals are firmly conservative and Republican. It is also notable that US nones are overwhelmingly Democrat, whereas UK nones are distributed across the political spectrum from moderate left-wing to moderate right-wing in much the

same way as the British population as a whole, with under a third being left-leaning, just under a third right-leaning, and the rest – a plurality – being centrist (Woodhead 2016).

The Evangelical Vote in the US and UK Compared

In both the USA and UK Protestant Christians were more likely to support Trump or Brexit respectively and in both countries they made a difference to the outcome of the votes. In the UK, however, it was religiously ‘cool’ Anglicans who made the difference rather than religiously enthusiastic evangelicals, whereas in the USA it was the other way round: here it was enthusiastic, churchgoing Christians – above all evangelicals – who made the difference. So, besides the fact that evangelicals make up a larger proportion of the Christian vote in the US and Anglicans make up a larger proportion in the UK, why the difference between the evangelicals in each country?

One answer could be that US evangelicals (and perhaps English Anglicans) set aside their religion when they voted for Trump, and voted largely out of economic self-interest. This is certainly what some evangelical leaders thought, several of whom opposed Trump and his agenda on theological grounds and told their (disobedient) followers to show their faith by doing the same. (Similarly, Anglicans ignored their pro-Remain bishops and archbishops.) There may well be truth in this, but it pulls apart religion, culture, politics and class too starkly.

A better answer has to do with important historic differences between evangelicals in the two countries (apart from evangelicals much larger size and influence in the USA). One is difference in socio-economic profile. Evangelicalism in the USA is grounded in a tradition of populist revivalism which means that those who identify as evangelicals are still likely to be a people of lower social status, in contrast to the mainly middle class evangelicals in the UK (Niebuhr 1954; Schwadel 2014). In addition, there is a difference in ethnic profile and outlook. The legacy of slavery and segregation mean African American churches and white evangelical churches inhabit distinct social and political territory. Whites are more likely to identify the USA as God's chosen or covenant people (Longley 2003) and therefore to conflate nationalism and the kingdom of God (Hummel 2016). For a variety of reasons, including its long history of international mission work and strong connection with Christians of the post-colonial

diasporas who have settled in British cities, the culture and ethos of English evangelicalism is more ecumenical and internationalist. Finally, there is a difference in political profile. Since the 1980s there has been an intentional movement to identify the evangelical churches in the USA with the Republican party (Schwadel 2016). The so-called moral majority with its concern for family values such as marriage, patriarchy, and opposition to abortion and LGBT rights has created a climate where voting for a female, liberal progressive, pro-choice candidate such as Hillary Clinton was seen as tantamount to apostasy. By contrast in the UK, even though evangelicals in the UK are generally conservative and illiberal on issues of sexual morality, the family and abortion, these issues do not ally with a political party as they do in the USA.⁶

Thus, as an affluent and well-educated constituency with a rather cosmopolitan outlook, it would not be surprising that many British evangelicals saw their economic and cultural interests as being better served by remaining in the European Union than in putting Britain, let alone England, first, whereas in the USA evangelicals' ethnic, cultural and economic interests were more obviously served by Trump than Clinton.

Why did Anglicans Vote Brexit?

If US evangelicals voted for Trump because he was perceived to support their moral stance, political stance, socio-economic and ethnic interests and sense of (traduced) historic entitlement and identity, why did English Anglicans vote Brexit, and were there equivalent reasons? In answering this question we will rely chiefly on the several surveys of Anglican attitudes carried out by Woodhead between 2013 and 2015 (representative samples of the UK, excluding Northern Ireland).⁷

***** INSERT TABLE 8 *****

***** INSERT TABLE 9 *****

Even though it sounds tautological, it is worth emphasizing that the main reason Anglicans supported Brexit was hostility to the EU, the latter being widely perceived as an overly-bureaucratic and ‘interfering’ body without sufficient democratic accountability. Table 8 shows that a huge proportion of Anglicans (over three-quarters) agree that there are ‘too many EU laws and regulations’ whereas a ‘mere’ two-thirds of British people agree. This is Anglicans’ strongest objection to the EU, and Table 9 ramsthe point home by showing that a full quarter of Anglicans say that they ‘do not think there have been *any* advantages from the UK’s membership of the EU’ – not even easier travel!

A further, related, reason for ‘Anglican Brexit’ has to do with cultural and ethnic pride. When those who take a positive view of the Church of England were asked what they most value about it, the top three answers had nothing to do with God or religion, but were (in order) that it is ‘integral to English culture’, ‘an ethical voice in society’, and ‘past of our heritage’. Most English Anglicans refer to themselves *not* as Anglican (which refers to a global communion of churches) but as ‘CofE’ or ‘Church of England’. These attitudes go back a long way. The CofE is inseparable from the development of the English nation, monarchy, language, people, culture and mores: they have co-evolved for five centuries. Until recently, to be CofE was simply to be born English – and legally it still is. As a result the default religious identity for many English people who consider themselves Christian, even if they do not practice their religion by attending worship very often, has always been CofE. This is a matter of ethnicity and social respectability as well as religion *per se*. The CofE has long been the church of the social elites and the establishment as well as aspiring lower classes, and has long had a conservative lean (large and small ‘cs’), despite having some very left-wing elements within it and having played a key role in the development of the welfare state (Clements, 2015). By contrast the ‘non-conformists’, including many of the ancestors of today’s evangelicals, were historically more likely to be politically Liberal (before the decline of that party) and support social change. Catholics in contrast, with membership drawn in large numbers from working class Irish -- and in more recent years European migrants – have tended to support the trade unions and the Labour Party and, as members of a church that is self-consciously global in scope, to be more internationalist in outlook.

This English Anglican cultural-ethnic pride has as its other side negative attitudes to immigration. As Table 9 shows, this concern is not as great as concern about EU laws and regulations, but

there is nevertheless great concern about illegal immigration and about ‘too many people from the rest of the EU coming to work in Britain’. Anglicans are significantly more concerned about these things than the general British population. Because Anglicans are spread across the classes, and because most are older, this does not seem to be a concern solely about their own economic livelihood, but a wider concern about culture. This is confirmed by a question which asked whether people thought it was better to live in Britain when more people shared a common culture’, to which 60 percent of Anglicans said ‘yes’ compared with 48 percent of the population as a whole. There may be an element of colour-racism at play here as well, given that Anglicans are disproportionately white, but that is not what people say, and overtly racist political parties do not have much support in Britain, nor a particular link to Anglicanism (Marzouki, McDonnell, and Roy, 2016).

So against the urgings of their bishops and archbishops (who are predominantly evangelical in orientation), English Anglicans voted in large numbers to Leave the EU.⁸ Their refusal to listen to their bishops was an indication of the division which now exists between grassroots and leadership in almost all areas of Church teaching, and which at least in relation to Brexit extends to a refusal to listen to political and economic leaders as well (Brown and Woodhead 2016).

Is the Christian vote ‘Populist’?

Our evidence has shown that, despite being largely ignored in the UK, Christianity played an important role in the Brexit vote (as well as the election of Donald Trump), but that it looked different in each country. In the USA white evangelicals voted for Trump and influenced the outcome; in the UK Anglicans, not evangelicals, voted for Brexit and influenced the outcome. Despite the differences, does this mean that Protestant Christianity can be said to have played a ‘populist’ role in both countries?

Since these two events ‘populism’ has become a buzz word which, at its worst, is used pejoratively by those who are strongly opposed to the outcome of both of these votes, and who hold the voters responsible to be morally reprehensible (Gidron and Bonikowski, 2013). This usage is most common amongst those whom their opponents equally pejoratively dub ‘liberals’. These ‘liberals’ regularly conflate populism with mob rule, illiberalism, opposition to democracy, xenophobia, parochialism and nativism, and the far right (in fact populism exists on the right and the left, Bonikowski,

2016). From this 'liberal' point of view, the Christian vote in both countries is assumed to be populist and to display the negative characteristics associated with that term – an easy assumption for those who already view religion as a retrograde and oppressive force.

Fortunately there are now a number of political analyses and socio-cultural analyses of 'populism' which allow us to take the concept seriously but use it in a more critical way: standing back from the ongoing struggles rather than re-running their scripts. From this literature there has emerged a significant agreement about three defining characteristics of contemporary populism: a dualism between the people and the elite, a strong leader (or party, or movement), and a commitment to democracy but not to the institutions and processes of *liberal* democracy. By looking at each in turn we can gauge whether the Christian vote counts as populist.

The distinction between the people and the elite does a great deal of work in populism (Aydın-Düzgüt and Keyman, 2017; Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2015). It is politically useful because it is very flexible: the 'people' and the 'elite' can have many different meanings. The 'people', for example, can mean the voting populus/the common people, the 'natives', the nation – or some combination.

The use of this distinction is clearly important within both pro-Trump evangelicalism and pro-Brexit Anglicanism. For the latter, however, the 'elite' is much more circumscribed: above all the EU and its bureaucrats who are seen to be out of touch with the people and the various nations of the EU, outside democratic control by ordinary people. The 'elite' can also encompass all those business and political and religious leaders (i.e. the majority of them) who instructed the British to vote Remain and predicted doom and disaster if they did not. They included Barack Obama, the Governor of the Bank of England, the then Prime Minister David Cameron and the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. In other words, the EU referendum did not just tap into an existing sense of an 'us and them', it helped to create one.

If the 'elite' for Anglicans are primarily 'EU bureaucrats' and their supporters, then who are the 'people'? They cannot be 'the common people' simply in class terms, because Anglicans cover the class spectrum and their church has a middle- and upper-class reputation. They could be 'ordinary people like us' and they could also be 'the nation', in this case England. The latter idea gains support from the very name 'Church of England' and its long association with the English nation. It is the established church: Anglicans still pray regularly for the Queen and the nation, and all their clergy have to swear allegiance to

the monarch. The polling cited above shows that many Anglicans have a deep commitment to English culture and heritage, and their religion is in many ways an ethnic religion (something which British evangelicals with their more global and missionary outlook tend to reject). However, caution is needed before concluding that Anglicans and their vote are ‘nationalist’ if that implies that they have some sort of political nationalist agenda equivalent to Trump’s ‘Make America Great Again’. Anglican nationalism doesn’t fit this mould, in fact localism and/or regionalism may be more important in the Brexit vote than nationalism (hence the strongly regional nature of the Brexit vote, and a growing reassertion of ‘northernness’ and other regional identities, along with resentment at concentration of power in London and the SouthEast). Loyalties in the Church of England are as much to the locality/parish as the nation, and the two are often combined (England visualized as the village green and parish church, for example). This fits well with David Goodhart’s (2017) analysis where he suggests that the Brexit vote makes the division between those sections of the population who hold an identity tightly linked to ‘somewhere’ and those more mobile sections who can happily live and belong ‘anywhere’.

So Anglican Brexiters appear to have been defending a cultural and ethnic identity against perceived threats. We have noted their dislike of illegal immigration and a loss of control of national (British) borders. Here there is a clear overlap with the vote for Trump. In the USA there was anxiety about Mexicans and other immigrants taking jobs, committing acts of terrorism, and undermining culture; in the UK it was more about eastern Europeans and Muslims taking jobs, drawing on the overstretched welfare system, committing acts of terrorism, and undermining ‘our’ culture. Politicians’ (national and EU) refusal to take these concerns seriously, partly because of the commercial sector’s desire for cheap foreign labour, all helped fuel a reaction amongst both Christians and non-Christians in Britain.

So in terms of the elite/people distinction, the Christian vote in both the US and UK seems to qualify as populist, albeit in interestingly different ways. In other respects, however, the populist label is much harder to pin to Anglican Brexit.

It is not associated with a strong leader, or political party, or movement – all of which are said to be defining of populism by (e.g. Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2015, p.43). On the contrary, Anglican Brexit rejected its own leaders’ pleas to Remain, and the politicians associated with Brexit could hardly be called charismatic ‘strong men’. The only figure who even partly fits this role was Nigel Farage, the leader of

UKIP. Though he and his party tended not to make overt appeals to Christianity, Anglicans were somewhat more likely to vote UKIP in the 2015 General Election (18% compared with 13% of the country as a whole). The majority of Anglicans are Conservative, with Theresa May with her solid CofE credentials their natural leader: anyone less like a strong and charismatic populist leader, or indeed ‘one of the people’ is hard to imagine. Donald Trump, of course, fits the bill rather better.⁹

Finally, Anglican Brexit is not critical of liberal democracy and the democratic process in the way that populism is. Here again Trump and his supporters seem much closer to type. As several commentators point out, populism seems to have an integral connection with democracy, but as Mudde, and Kaltwasser (2013) clarify, it is at one with the participatory aspect of democracy (rule by the people), but critical of the liberal aspect of democracy (protection of the freedoms – including those of minorities by liberal instruments and procedures like a free press and an independent judiciary). There is much less attack on liberal institutions and processes in the UK than in the USA currently, and there is little evidence that Anglicans are opposed to liberal democracy and its historic institutions. Indeed, as we have seen, the most popular Anglican reason given for voting Leave was to protect British freedoms and institutions against ‘meddling’ bureaucrats. Thus in terms of its second and third main characteristics, the claim that Anglican Brexit is populist fails.

Conclusion

The religious vote played a significant role in both Donald Trump’s victory in 2017 and the Brexit vote in 2016. In both cases support came from Protestant Christians, but the profile of those voters and their concerns was very different. In the USA evangelicals played the lead role, in the UK it was Anglicans (because of a different history and profile, evangelicals in Britain were more likely to vote Remain). In the USA the Christian vote fits the description of populism far better than in the UK: it follows a strong leader, is critical of many of the liberal elements of democracy, and it contrasts the good, Godly people and an untrustworthy elite. By contrast, Brexit-supporting Anglicans defend liberal democracy against EU incursions and have no leader, party or movement. The only feature of populism they share is a defence of their ethno-religious identity and heritage against elites whom they believe to be indifferent or hostile to them. The Anglican vote for Brexit does not qualify as ‘populist’ in the way the evangelical vote for Trump does, and the two should not be assimilated.

Bibliography

Ashcroft, Lord (2016). How the United Kingdom Voted on Thursday and Why.

Friday, 24 June, 2016 Report at <https://lordashcrofthpolls.com/2016/06/how-the-united-kingdom-voted-and-why/> (The data tables are found at <http://lordashcrofthpolls.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/How-the-UK-voted-Full-tables-1.pdf>) (both accessed 8 Jan 2018) .

Aydın-Düzgıt, Senem, and E. Fuat Keyman (2017). The Trump Presidency and the Rise of Populism in the Global Context. Policy Brief, Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center.

Begum, N (2017). The many Brexits of Bristol on Open Democracy blog 23rd May 2017
<https://www.opendemocracy.net/neema-begum/many-brexits-of-bristol> (accessed 8 June 2017)

Bonikowski, Bart (2016), Three Lessons of Contemporary Populism in Europe and the United States. *Brown Journal of World Affairs*. Fall/Winter 2016, XXIII(1), pp.9-23.

Brilliant Maps (2016). US Presidential Election Map By County & Vote Share”, November 29, 2016, accessed online on 8 June 2017 at <http://brilliantmaps.com/2016-county-election-map/>

Brown, Andrew, and Woodhead, Linda (2016). *That Was The Church That Was: How the Church of England Lost the English People*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Clements, Ben (2015). *Religion and Public Opinion in Britain: Continuity and Change*. London: Palgrave McMillan.

(EA, 2015) *21st Century Evangelicals; A snapshot of the beliefs and habits of evangelical Christians in the UK - Spring 2015, Faith in Politics?*. Research by the Evangelical Alliance. Available online at <http://www.eauk.org/church/resources/snapshot/faith-in-politics.cfm>
Accessed 26 January 2017

Gidron, Noam, and Bonikowski, Bart (2013). Varieties of populism: Literature review and research agenda. Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University. Available online at https://wcfia.harvard.edu/files/wcfia/files/gidron_bonikowski_populismlitreview_2013.pdf
Accessed 4 February 2018.

Goodhart, David (2017). *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics*, Oxford University Press.

Guardian (2016). <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/12/archbishop-of-canterbury-supports-remain-campaign-in-eu-referendum>. Accessed June 12 2016

Hummel, Daniel (2016). Revivalist Nationalism since World War II: From ‘Wake up, America!’ to ‘Make America Great Again. *Religions* 7(11) (2016). Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/rel7110128>
Accessed 26 January 2017

Longley, Clifford (2002). *Chosen People: The Big Idea that Shapes England and America*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Marzouki, N., McDonnell, D. and Roy, O. eds. (2016). *Saving The People: how populists hijack religion* New York: Oxford University Press.

Mudde, Cas, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser (2013). Populism. In Freedon, M., Sargent, L.T. and Stears, M. eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*. OUP Oxford.

Mudde, Cas, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser (2015). *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

New York Times (2016). Election 2016: Exit Polls - produced by Jon Huang, Samuel Jacoby, Michael Strickland and K.K. Rebecca Lai, Nov. 8, 2016 available online at <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/11/08/us/politics/election-exit-polls.html> (accessed 26 January 2017)

Niebuhr, Helmut Richard, (1954). *The social sources of denominationalism*. Shoe String Press,

Peace, Timothy (2016). Religion and Populism in Britain. In Marzouki, N., McDonnell, D. and Roy, O. eds., (2016) *Saving The People: how populists hijack religion* (p. 295). New York: Oxford University Press.

Pattillo-Lunt, A., (2016). This World Is Not My Home: Richard Mouw and Christian Nationalism. *Religions*, 8(1), p.2. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/rel8010002> Accessed 26 January 2017

Pew Foundation (2016) Behind Trump's victory: Divisions by race, gender, education by Alec Tyson and Shiva Maniam. November 9 2016. Available online at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/behind-trumps-victory-divisions-by-race-gender-education/> Accessed 9 June 2017

Pew Foundation (2016). How The Faithful Voted. Available online at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/how-the-faithful-voted-a-preliminary-2016-analysis/> Accessed 9 June 2017

Phillips, Trevor (2017). To Understand Brexit – Look to Anglicans. *The Daily Telegraph* 14th April 2017. Available at <https://www.pressreader.com/uk/the-daily-telegraph/20170414/282050506932951> (accessed 8 Jan 2018)

Schwadel, P. (2017). The Republicanization of Evangelical Protestants in the United States: An examination of the sources of political realignment. *Social Science Research*, 62, pp.238-254.

Schwadel, P. (2014). Are White Evangelical Protestants Lower Class? A partial test of church-sect theory *Social Science Research*, 46, pp.100-116.

Smith, Greg ed. (2015). *21st Century Evangelicals. Reflections on research by the Evangelical Alliance*. Watford: Instant Apostle.

Swales, K. (2016). Understanding the Leave Vote. London: NatCen Social Research. Available online at http://whatukthinks.org/eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/NatCen_Brexplanationsreport-FINAL-WEB2.pdf Accessed 12 December 2016

Woodhead, Linda (2014). *What British People Really Believe*. Special issue of *Modern Believing*, Vol 55, No.1.

Woodhead, Linda (2016). The Rise of 'No Religion' in Britain: The emergence of a cultural majority. In *Journal of the British Academy*. 4, pp. 245-61. Available at <https://www.britac.ac.uk/sites/default/files/11%20Woodhead%201825.pdf>

Kkk

Tyson, Alec, and Shiva Maniam (2016). "Behind Trump's Victory: Divisions by Race, Gender, Education." *Pew Research Center*(2016). <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/behind-trumps-victory-divisions-by-race-gender-education/> Accessed 9 June 2017

Smith, Greg, and Jessica Martínez (2016). How the Faithful Voted: A preliminary 2016 analysis." *Pew Research Center, Fact Tank, November 9 (2016)*

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/how-the-faithful-voted-a-preliminary-2016-analysis/>

Accessed 9 June 2017

Appendices

****insert tables 10 and 11 here

Table 1. EU Referendum Results by United Kingdom constituent countries

Constituent country	Electorate	Voter turnout, of eligible	Votes		Proportion of votes	
			Remain	Leave	Remain	Leave
England (including Gibraltar)	39,005,781	73.0%	13,266,996	15,188,406	46.7%	53.3%
Northern Ireland	1,260,955	62.7%	440,707	349,442	55.8%	44.2%
Scotland	3,987,112	67.2%	1,661,191	1,018,322	62.0%	38.0%
Wales	2,270,272	71.7%	772,347	854,572	47.5%	52.50%

Table 2. Brexit Vote by Religion (England) (Woodhead/YouGov June 2016).

Faith group	Remain	Leave	N
no religion	53%	47%	1224
CofE	34%	66%	733
Roman Catholic	45%	55%	200
Other Christian	46%	55%	146
other faith	51%	49%	136
Total	46%	54%	2439

Table 3. Percent of Anglicans and Nones voting Leave by demographic characteristic and 2015 vote (Woodhead/YouGov June 2016).

	All (England)	CofE	None
All	54%	66%	47%
Gender			
Male	51%	64%	45%
Female	57%	68%	50%
Social Class			
AB	45%	63%	36%
C1	47%	63%	39%
C2	63%	70%	59%
DE	66%	71%	66%
Age Group			
Born since 1980	37.00%	49%	35%
Born 1960s-70	57%	66%	53%
Born before 1960	66%	72%	60%
Region			
Out of London	55%	68%	49%
London	41%	57%	35%
Leave by voting preference in the 2015 General Election			

Voted Conservative	60%	66%	58%
Voted Labour	33%	49%	26%
Voted Liberal Democrat	35%	40%	28%
Voted UKIP	98%	99%	96%
Voted Green	20%	25%	19%

Table 4. Voting intentions by religious affiliation (Woodhead for Westminster Faith Debates/You Gov, June 2013, n=4018)

If there was a referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union, how would you vote?

	I would vote for Britain to remain a member of the European Union	I would vote for Britain to leave the European Union	I would not vote	Don't know	Total N
Religious affiliation					
Church of England/Anglican/Episcopal	26%	57%	4%	13%	1120
United Reformed Church	26%	57%	0%	17%	20
Baptist	36%	51%	0%	13%	43
Presbyterian/Church of Scotland	36%	51%	4%	10%	82
Overall average	33%	47%	5%	15%	4018
Roman Catholic	36%	46%	3%	15%	260
Methodist	33%	45%	3%	19%	91
Sikh	29%	43%	5%	24%	87
None	37%	41%	6%	16%	1550
Jewish	41%	41%	5%	12%	156
Other	32%	41%	6%	21%	154
Hindu	38%	35%	4%	24%	93
Islam/Muslim	36%	34%	8%	22%	243
Buddhist	42%	31%	4%	23%	24

Prefer not to say

26%

25%

10%

38%

88

Table 5. Leave vote by regular church attenders (CofE and RC)

(Woodhead for Westminster Faith Debates/You Gov, June 2013, *n*=4018)

Frequency of attending	Religious denomination:	% of those expressing a view (excluding don't know and won't vote)		
		None	Anglican (CofE)	Roman Catholic
attends at least once a month	I would vote for Britain to leave the European Union	50%	55%	41%
N		10	106	54
attends less often	I would vote for Britain to leave the European Union	52%	69%	56%
N		1219	830	156

Table 6. EU voting intention, evangelicals in England (Evangelical Alliance What is Evangelicalism? Survey - Spring 2016)

		to stay in the EU	to leave the EU	haven't decided or unlikely to vote	N answered question	skipped question
In the forthcoming referendum on Britain's place in Europe how are you likely to vote?	All	608	320	262	1190	7
	Response Percent	51%	27%	22%		
By Gender						
	Male	52%	30%	18%	710	
	Female	50%	23%	27%	476	
By Age Group						
	born before 1960	47%	31%	22%	683	
	born 60s or 70s	54%	24%	22%	384	
	born after 1980	67%	8%	25%	119	
					1186	11
By Denomination						
(main 6)						
	Pentecostal	31%	46%	23%	52	
	Charismatic independent	46%	32%	22%	213	
	Free Church	47%	28%	23%	94	
	Baptist	56%	27%	17%	237	
	Other evangelical	48%	25%	27%	130	
	Anglican	57%	20%	23%	409	

By Region

London	59%	22%	19%	159
South-east England,	50%	30%	20%	257
East Anglia	53%	24%	23%	124
East Midlands	45%	35%	21%	112
West Midlands	52%	27%	21%	105
South-west England	44%	28%	29%	189
North-west England	53%	26%	22%	120
North-east England	51%	24%	24%	37
Yorkshire and the				
Humber	57%	21%	22%	87

Table 7. US Presidential Election voting by religion (Pew 2017, how the faithful voted)

	Clinton	Trump
Protestant / Other Christian	39%	58%
Catholic	45%	52%
White Catholic	37%	60%
Hispanic Catholic	67%	26%
Jewish	71%	24%
Other Faiths	62%	29%

Religiously Unaffiliated (“none”)	68%	26%
White Born again /evangelical	16%	81%
Mormon	25%	61%
Attend services weekly	40%	56%
Monthly	46%	49%
Few times a year	48%	47%
Never	62%	31%

Table 8. Advantages of EU membership by religion

(Woodhead for Westminster Faith Debates/You Gov, June 2013, GB adults, *n*=4018)

Below are some advantages that people have identified from the UK's membership of the European Union. Which, if any, of the following do you think have been ADVANTAGES of the UK's membership of the European Union? Please tick all that apply.

	All	None	CofE	RC
Greater ease of travel within Europe	48%	52%	45%	52%
Increased trade and investment between member states	43%	48%	38%	49%
Easier for British people to work and retire elsewhere in Europe	39%	43%	36%	39%
Peace in Europe	33%	35%	30%	37%
Easier to catch criminals across European borders	30%	33%	28%	31%
Stronger say in the world	24%	28%	21%	20%
Economic strength	23%	27%	19%	20%
Reinforcing common values	12%	15%	10%	11%
Something else	3%	5%	1%	5%
Not applicable - I do not think there have been any advantages from the UK's membership of the EU	19%	17%	25%	17%
Don't know	10%	10%	8%	7%

Table 9. Disadvantages of EU membership by religion (Woodhead for Westminster Faith Debates/You Gov, June 2013, GB adults, *n*=4018)

Below are some disadvantages that people have identified from the UK's membership of the European Union. Which of the following do you think have been DISADVANTAGES of the UK's membership of the European Union? Please tick all that apply.

	All	None	CofE	RC
Too many EU laws and regulations	66%	61%	76%	64%
Less safe borders meaning more people come to Britain illegally	55%	49%	65%	52%
Too many people from the rest of the EU coming to work in Britain	54%	47%	66%	54%
British parliament having less power	53%	48%	62%	53%
Subsidizing agriculture in other EU countries through the EU's Common Agricultural Policy	50%	47%	59%	49%
Undermining British values	45%	36%	58%	44%
Too many imports into Britain from the rest of Europe damaging UK jobs and prosperity	31%	26%	40%	26%
Something else	5%	6%	4%	1%

Not applicable, I do not think there have been any disadvantages from the UK's membership of the EU	6%	8%	3%	4%
Don't know	10%	11%	7%	10%

Table 10. Logistic regression Model Summary likelihood of voting leave :

(Woodhead/YouGov June 2016)

Step 1	-2 Log Cox & Snell	Nagelkerke R
	likelihood	R Square
	2914.79	0.09

Table: Classification		Predicted	Var =	%	
Table		leaver		Correct	
Observed	Var = leaver	remain	voted remain	voted leave	
			voted		
Step 1	Var = leaver	remain	548.43	509.60	51.83
		voted leave	324.48	887.21	73.22
	Overall				63.25
	Percentage				

Table: Variables in the Equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	
Step 1	agegrp3	0.52	0.06	80.86	1	0.000	1.68
	social class	0.28	0.04	48.66	1	0.000	1.33
	CofE	0.49	0.1	21.73	1	0.000	1.63
	London	-0.47	0.13	12.91	1	0.000	0.62
	Constant	-1.59	0.15	112.72	1	0.000	0.2

Table: Case Processing Summary

Unweighted Cases	N	Percent
Included in Analysis	2471	89.24
Missing Cases	298	10.76
Total	2769	100

Table 11. Logistic regression Model Summary on likelihood of affiliating as CofE
(Woodhead/YouGov June 2016)

Step 1	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke Squared Multiple Correlation
	2450.35	0.09	0.13

Table:

Classification Table

Observed	Predicted		% Correct
	0	1	
0	1515.87	135.19	91.81
1	491.21	127.45	20.6
Overall Percentage			72.4

Table:

Variables in the Equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1						
agegrp3	0.74	0.07	126.2	1	0.0000	2.09
leaver	0.49	0.1	22.57	1	0.0000	1.63
gender	0.34	0.1	11.67	1	0.0010	1.4
Constant	-3.34	0.22	235.18	1	0.0000	0.04

Table:

Case Processing

Summary

Unweighted Cases	N	Percent
Included in Analysis	2471	89.24

¹ See, for major examples,

BBC News. EU Refrendum Explained. 24th June 2016. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-36616028>

Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Brexit Vote Explained. 31st August 2016.

<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/brexit-vote-explained-poverty-low-skills-and-lack-opportunities>

British Social Attitudes. Brexit, Litmus Test or Lightning Rod?

<http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/latest-report/british-social-attitudes-34/brexit.aspx>

² How the UK Voted on Thursday and Why. Friday 24th June.

[https://lordashcroftpolls.com/2016/06/ Data Tables](https://lordashcroftpolls.com/2016/06/Data%20Tables) at <https://lordashcroftpolls.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/How-the-UK-voted-Full-tables-1.pdf>

³ The first version of this paper was delivered as a keynote lecture by Woodhead at the British Sociological Association Study Group for Sociology of Religion, Lancaster University, July 2016.

⁴ EU Referendum ‘How Did you Vote?’ 21-23 June 2016 $n=12369$, data table 15

<https://lordashcroftpolls.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/How-the-UK-voted-Full-tables-1.pdf>

⁵ The source of data unclear, it says: exit poll analysed ‘**for** Professor John Denham of the University of Windsor’ and mentions a two to one preference for ‘leave among Episcopalians and Anglicans’, the same as our finding which had been reported in the media a few days before (e.g. Woodhead on Andrew Marr ‘Start the Week’, BBC Radio 4, Monday 10th April 2017). Trevor Phillips, To Understand Brexit Look to Anglicans. *Daily Telegraph*, 14th April 2017.

⁶ The Evangelical Alliance, the main body representing evangelicals in Britain, remained politically neutral throughout the Brexit campaign, but produced resources to enable Christians to think more deeply about the issues involved. It urged them to pray for the process, outcome and implications of the result of the referendum. See <http://www.eauk.org/current-affairs/politics/eu/a-christian-mission-perspective-on-the-eu-referendum.cfm>; <http://www.eauk.org/idea/may-jun-2016.cfm>;
<http://www.eauk.org/current-affairs/politics/eu/prayer-for-the-eu-referendum.cfm>

⁷ Data tables available at www.faithdebates.org.uk/research

⁸ The current Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, made a clear statement prior to the EU vote in favour of Remain: ‘Warning against ‘succumbing to our worst instincts’ over immigration, Justin Welby said he would vote to stay in on 23 June to avert economic damage that could harm the poorest’ (Guardian 2016). The other bishops followed suit. Only one is on record as supporting Brexit, Mark Rylands, Bishop of Shrewsbury, having admitted in a letter to the Church Times that he voted Leave ‘At my bishops’ cell group in May, I came out as a Brexit bishop. My episcopal friends, at first, did not believe me. The following 24 hours brought some lively conversation, mixed with a certain amount of gentle mocking.’ In contrast to the CofE bishops, the Evangelical Alliance, the main body representing evangelicals in Britain, remained politically neutral throughout the campaign, but produced resources to enable Christians to think more deeply about the issues involved. It urged them to pray for the process, outcome and implications of the result of the referendum.

⁹ One of the few works in political science to address the link between populism and religion is the volume edited by Marzouki, McDonnell, and Roy. (2016): Various chapters, especially those on Europe, and most especially the nations of the East, highlight that many of the exclusionary right-wing variants of populism seem to focus on the widespread discontent with globalisation and specifically with the perceived threat of Islam overwhelming the ‘native’ culture of Christendom. This is not very strongly linked with Christian religious belief or participation in church worship, indeed in some countries such as France the secular language of ‘laicite’ is equally deployed. In fact the case study from Britain (Peace 2016) includes analysis of the Respect Party, which grew out of the Stop the War movement and appealed greatly to Muslim voters, alongside UKIP and the BNP (British National Party) . The BNP which inherits a fascist and racist tradition dating back to the pre-war ‘Black-shirts of Oswald Moseley had little time or

love for Christianity and was repeatedly and forcefully condemned by the leaders of the major British churches. With the electoral demise of Respect and the BNP since 2015 and the growing irrelevance of UKIP since the referendum Peace's chapter seems somewhat dated, and fails to notice the emergence of the EDL (English Defence League) and Britain First (as populist movements rather than organized political parties) where the extremist rhetoric is openly anti-Islamic, and from time to time seeks to mobilise the symbolism and identity markers of 'Christian England' such as the Cross and the legend of the (Libyan) St George.