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BETWEEN THE REPRESENTATION
OF THE CRISIS AND THE CRISIS
OF REPRESENTATION

Cultural dynamics and Brexit

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UNIVERSITY OF
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Visible differences **between** groups

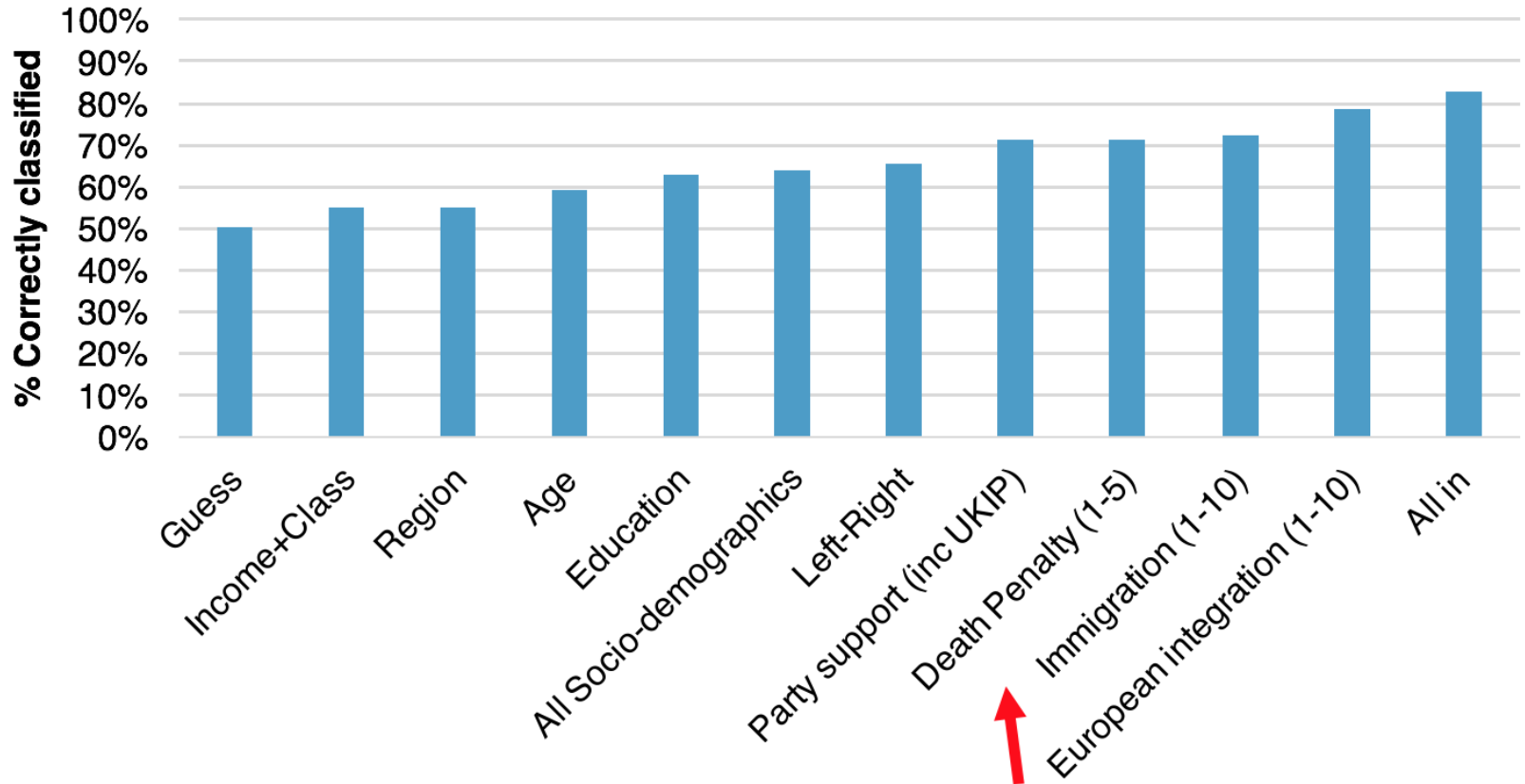


Invisible differences **within** groups



Traditional ways of identifying social milieus focuses on socio-demographic variables in order to understand patterns of behaviour but it less and less effective

Predicting Brexit Vote Intention (BES 2015) N=up to 24,430



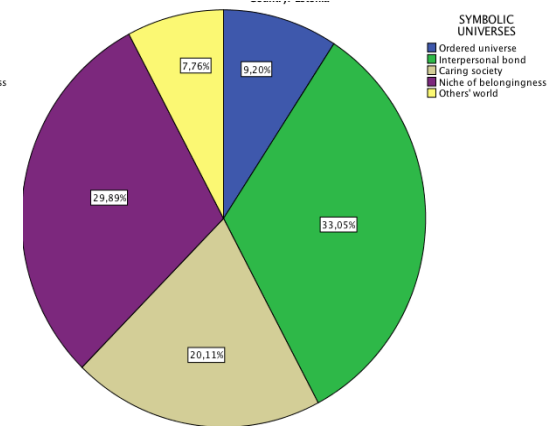
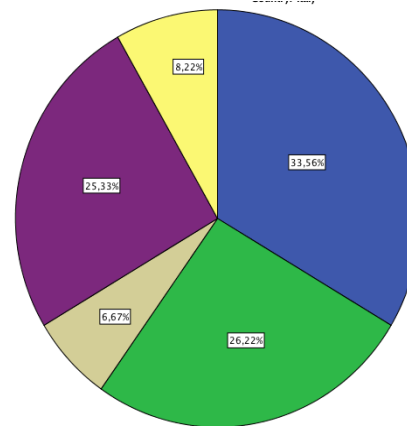
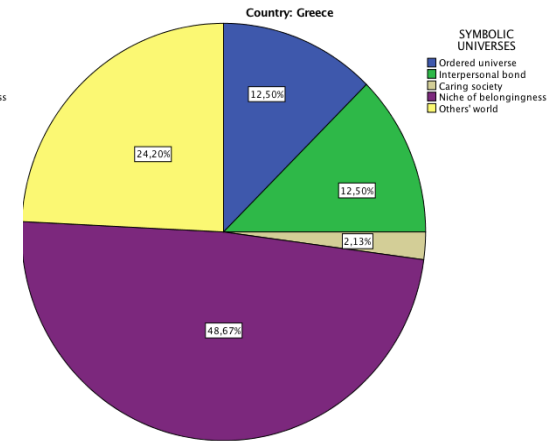
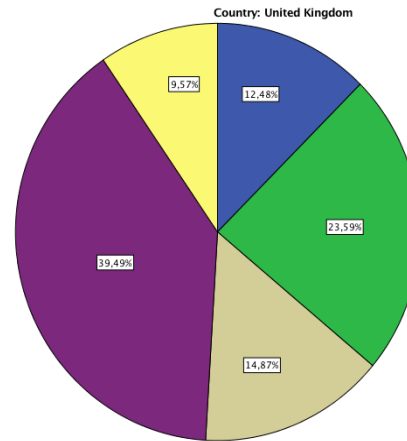
Armed with information on region or their economic situation – income and social grade – your hit rate improves to about 54 percent, not much better than chance

Thought communities

- Our cognitive perceptions, what we “see” and foreground in our mind and what we ignore as irrelevant background, are socially organized in the communities, cultures, subcultures, and organizations we belong to.
- It's the notion of the “thought collective” or the “thought community” as the collective thinking of an interactive community with similar thought styles and norms of focusing.

Distribution of Symbolic Universes within countries

- Estonia: higher proportion of *interpersonal bond* (ar=4,5) and *caring society* (ar=6)
- Greece: higher incidence of *niche of belongingness* (ar=5,8) and *others' world* (ar=8,2)
- Italy higher proportion of *ordered universe* (ar=10,6)
- **United Kingdom** higher proportion of *caring society* (ar=3,6) and *niche of belongingness* (ar=2,2)



Inner homogeneity,
engagement in
social life, no
commitment on
system:

VOC →

| NUT1 Region | LEAVE/ ELECT |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| East England | 2 |
| East Midlands | 2 |
| London | 1 |
| North East | 2 |
| North West | 1 |
| Northern Ireland | 1 |
| Scotland | 1 |
| South East | 1 |
| South West | 2 |
| Wales | 1 |
| West Midlands | 2 |
| Yorkshire and The Humber | 2 |

1=Leave < 40%

- (i) Homogeneity of the line of semiotic force DIRECTION OF DESIRE;
- (ii) Level of Engagement;
- (iii) Homogeneity of symbolic universes
- (iv) Low incidence of the polarity demand for systemic order and safety

2= Leave >39%

performative
affirmation of
identity, opposed to
the system

Methodological note: N=840, stratified probability sample

Findings

- Taken as a whole, these findings are consistent with the view of **the Brexit vote in terms of identity enactment rather than as reaction to anomy.**
- This interpretation is suggested, in particular, by the role played by the incidence of *interpersonal bond* and *niche of belongingness* – i.e. the two symbolic universes characterized by the relevance of the identity network – in territorial areas with high percentage of Leave votes as well as by the fact that the anomic symbolic universe does not play any discriminant role.