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**The dual challenge of right-wing populism to social democratic parties.
Comparative evidence from 2004 to 2016 across 12 European countries.**

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Abstract

Mainstream parties' hegemony in ruling European countries' governments was recently challenged by the entrance of right-populist parties at the core of the decision-making process. The present research argues that social democratic parties are the ones who suffered the most because (a) populist parties' championship of the migration issue is shaping the political debate around it according to its rhetoric and, because of it, (b) they are syphoning off voters from the traditional electorate of the mainstream left, i.e. the working class. Hence, I integrated two different theoretical frameworks – the class-voting behavior approach and the party issue ownership theory – to answer the following research question: To what extent does the shift of class-voting behavior between social democrats and right-populist parties depend on individuals' economic and cultural opinions and parties' ideology and polarization on these two issues? In order to address this issue, ESS, CMP and CHES data are combined in a longitudinal design - from 2004 until 2016. Using a multilevel linear probability technique, results confirmed the hypothesized preference of the working class and small business owners to vote for a right-populist over a social democratic party for both economic and cultural reasons. At a higher level of analysis, the moderator effect of party ideology on class-voting behavior provided some interesting insights: social democratic party's support for migrants' inclusion proves to be an electoral successful strategy, whereas right-populist party's promotion of economic protectionism turns out to be detrimental. It is argued that the actual composition of the electoral base of right-populist parties should be attributed to opinions' alignment on cross-cutting issues as limiting migration, reducing country's involvement in the European Union, and punishing crimes. Therefore, the more right-populist parties mobilize around economic issues, the more they will lose voters amongst the working class in particular. On the other hand, the more social democratic parties represent an alternative to the hegemonic discourse of right-populist parties around migration, the more they gain voters amongst production workers. These findings proved that social democratic parties are still representing the interests of the working class, but they are, however, penalized by this population segment in favor of right-populist parties, when they do not harshly oppose them both on economic and cultural issues.

Keywords: class-voting behavior, new politics approach, party issue ownership, social democratic parties, right-wing populism

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	4
<i>Theoretical Framework</i>	6
State-of-the-art scientific research	8
<i>Data and Methods</i>	14
Operationalization	15
<i>Results</i>	20
Empirical Results of the ESS + CMP analysis	22
Variance Component Analysis 1	22
Fixed Effects Analysis 1	23
Empirical Results of the ESS + CHES analysis	28
Variance Component Analysis 2	28
Fixed-Effects Analysis 2.....	29
<i>Conclusion and Discussion</i>	32
<i>References</i>	36
<i>Appendix 1</i>	40

Introduction

In recent decades, populist parties have become part of the political scene throughout Europe. In this context, populism is mainly present among the right-wing of the political spectrum, with fewer exception of left-populist parties like Podemos in Spain and SYRIZA in Greece (Santana & Rama, 2018). Right-populist parties' entry into parliaments and growing share of consensus led them to take the power in Greece, Italy, Austria, Hungary (Rooduijn, de Lange & van der Brug, 2014). The success of populist parties posed a challenge to mainstream parties, which until then had alternated each other in ruling the country's government (Green-Pedersen, van Kersbergen & Hemerijck, 2001).

In order to cope with the success of these new political associations, mainstream parties have sought various solutions. On the one hand, they adapted their manifesto to that of populist parties, but with little success (Rooduijn, de Lange & van der Brug, 2014). On the other hand, they openly sided against populism, albeit to some extent adopting its rhetoric (Carvahlo & Ruedin, 2018; Van Spanje, 2010). Others suggest that mainstream parties should build a *cordon sanitaire* around extremist populist parties in order to prevent their entrance into the political institutions at the core of the decision-making process (Rummens & Abts, 2010). In other words, the extent to which mainstream parties oppose, form a coalition with or against right-populist parties could foster an electoral propensity in their favor, and simultaneously a backlash for populists.

These strategies may have foreshadowed the maintenance of mainstream parties' own electorate or a substantial loss of voters. In this respect, Bale et al. (2010) argued that social democratic parties have suffered more losses than other mainstream parties, indeed «the success of right-populist parties represents a triple challenge to social democratic parties» (p. 412). This triple challenge originates by populist's issue ownership of migration, a topic whose salience sharply increased during the last decades. Right-populist parties, in particular, shaped the debate around migration at their advantage, by promoting exclusion policies that syphon off votes from the traditional electoral base of the left, namely blue-collars and unemployed. In addition, right-populist parties had hindered the formation of left governments by supporting right-wing parties or opposing them.

Focusing only onto the first and the second challenge, the present research aims at combining two different theoretical approaches, which, until now, have proceeded in parallel, with few points of convergence. The first approach is the class-voting behavior. Studies on class-voting behavior mainly revolved around the historical link between the working class and left-wing parties, highlighting that blue-collars nowadays are less likely to vote for labor and social democratic parties than in the past. This tendency could be explained by the outbreak of a new cultural cleavage that overcame the more traditional divisions along the economic issue in determining the class-voting behavior (Oesch, 2008;

Achterberg & Houtman, 2006). An alternative approach looks into parties' ideology and championship of specific issues, trying to determine whether party ideology around salient issues may determine individual voting behavior more than over less-salient issues (Traber, Giger & Häusermann, 2018; Bremer, 2017; Bélanger & Meguid, 2008).

In order to combine these two approaches, I decided to focus on the economic and migration issues, as studies on voting behavior revealed that the emergence of a new cultural cleavage in structuring the political debate weakened differences in voting behavior over the old economic cleavage (Kriesi et al. 2006). Hence, my research question is: to what extent does the shift of class-voting behavior between social democrats and right-populist parties depend on individuals' economic and cultural opinions and parties' ideology and polarization on the two issues?

In the next chapter, the first paragraph is comprised of two parts. Firstly, I will discuss how two major social changes (the Silent Revolution and the Third Way policy) affected the European politics, but also the behavior of parties and voters. Secondly, an overview of the state-of-the-art scientific research of the two theories (class-voting behavior and issue salience) is presented, from which I will derive my hypotheses. The second chapter describes the data and their operationalization, as well as the research design and the statistical technique used. It is followed by the empirical results of the analysis and, in the end, by the conclusion and discussion chapter, which also includes limitations and suggestions for future research.

Theoretical Framework

The European political scenario was drastically transformed by two main changes that began in the middle of the 1970s: a cultural shift from materialist to post-materialist values, known as the Silent Revolution (Inglehart, 2015; Ignazi, 1992), and the Third Way politics, caused by strong economic and political external pressures (Green-Pedersen, Van Kersbergen & Hemerijck, 2001). I will discuss these two changes in respect to social democratic parties, as they have witnessed and experienced the consequences of them, unlike right-populist parties who have a more recent history.

Two decades of economic development after WWII led to a profound cultural change in Western societies: since material needs seemed to be finally ensured against market's fluctuations, individuals began to focus more on life's quality - well-being - rather than quantity - longevity. This value shift is known as the Silent Revolution, whose impact on the European political scenario was decisive in many ways. First of all, the growing emphasis on human rights, women, ethnic minorities, the environment and so on, led to the emergence of new social movements and political parties. One example for all is the Green Party. The entry of the Greens into the European political arena induced the "old" mainstream left-wing to redesign themselves. For example, social democratic parties took up most of these issues at the expense, however, of their traditional commitment in defending the material interests of the working class (Ignazi, 1992).

The reason why these parties "betrayed" their historic commitment to represent production workers can be traced back to the middle-70s, when the Oil Shock put European country-governments in front of a fundamental trilemma. They were called upon to choose between reducing levels of employment, income equality or public spending to avoid further inflation (Esping-Andersen, 1996). The necessity for retrenchment policies affected mainly the welfare state, which was historically promoted by social democratic parties. In addition, the globalization of the economic and financial markets, as well as the birth of institutions of political-economic control, like the IMF or the European Union with the ECB, made increasingly difficult for social democratic parties to correct the outcomes of capitalism, having as a constrain keeping the balance of the national budget. Thus, they had to include neo-liberal positions on economic and financial issues in their manifestos, shrinking the difference with liberal parties, and distancing themselves from the interests of their historical electorate, the working class (Bremer, 2017).

From this perspective, the party issue ownership and the class-voting approaches can be considered interlinked. We can interpret this link as consequential over time: up to the 90s the class vote was solid and decisive, but, as a result of the Silent Revolution and the Third Way Policy at the end of the decade, this has lost influence and parties, as well as citizens, have freed their behavior from the

dictates of the great isms (communism, socialism, liberalism, conservatism, etc.) (Inglehart, 2015; Green-Pedersen, Van Kersbergen & Hemerijck, 2001; Ignazi, 1992).

Nevertheless, the link between social classes and parties did not completely disappear, it just became more difficult to recognize, partly because social classes are no longer clearly defined as in the past – indeed the level of interests’ fragmentation within a social class is getting higher -, and partly because class differences in voting-behavior are nowadays more determined by conflicts around their cultural interests rather than their material interests (Evans, 2000). In short, it became increasingly difficult for parties to represent the interests of a single social class, and this may be a reason why mainstream parties are taking political positions on central issues in the public debate that drift them apart from their history and ideology.

Since the categories of political left and right have lost their ideological roots in favor of a more contingent distinction based on issue salience and the political position taken on these central issues in the public debate at a given time in history (Sani and Sartori as cited in Cavazza et al., 2009), the crisis of ideologies damaged both the electorate and mainstream parties. Voters no longer dispose of an interpretative framework that subsume single events together into a more general perspective, thus, they tend to base their vote on single-issue opinions (Dassonneville, 2018; Ignazi, 1992). Furthermore, active political participation and party membership are declining, meaning that, instead of relying on personal historical alliance with a specific party, voters begin to choose more freely (Putnam, 2000). At the same time, parties are more flexible, capable to vary the emphasis placed on one issue to another accordingly to the desires and the reactions of the electorate and by a constant comparison with their competitors (Traber, Giger & Häusermann, 2018; Meyer & Wagner, 2013).

Such a conflict between ideology and contingency is mainly experienced by mainstream parties, and especially by social democratic ones, who are recognized to be the more ideological (Bremer, 2017). Under the label of mainstream parties, both right- and left-wing parties are included. The right-wing is mainly composed by liberal and conservative parties, whilst the left-wing is comprised of social democratic and labor parties (Adams, et al., 2006). What associate all these parties is not only the fact that they have a long historical political tradition, but especially the presence of a “full-ideology”, i.e. they display a complete set of political concepts and values that shape the way in which issues are interpreted and policies are consequently developed (Mudde, 2004). Traber, Giger and Häusermann (2018) described mainstream parties as “responsible”, i.e. they are experts in the art of ruling, of how to deal with fiscal and economic shocks, in contrast to populists, who are more “responsiveness”, meaning that they listen to citizens’ instances on more contingent and highly emotionally charged issues, as migration and elite-mass conflict. Moreover, populists display a “thin-centered ideology”, i.e. they are less committed with specific values and concepts, and indeed some of them also refuse

to define themselves as belonging to either the right- or the left-wing (Rooduijn, de Lange & van der Brug, 2014). The core idea that can collect all populist forces together is the concept of “the people” and, by contrast, “the elite”. According to Mudde (2004) and Canovan (1999), populists aim at representing “the people”, the average citizen, whose interest, they claim, has been completely disregarded by the corrupted ruling class, which was pursuing its own interest only.

To sum up, mainstream parties behave as vote-seekers, strategic actors that try both to promptly respond to average citizen’s demand, despite it may drift them apart from their traditional electorate and their historical ideology, and to shape their identity according to their own and other party’s failure or success. In contrast, populists are the new forces, with a “thin-centered ideology” (Mudde, 2004), namely, they are not linked to a specific ideology, and this makes definitely easier for them to adapt to the circumstances without facing the risk of betraying voters’ expectations. On the other hand, voters are less and less committed with a specific political force, they just look forward to someone that is responsive to their contingent claims and has the power to realize them (Dassonneville, 2018).

State-of-the-art scientific research

The study of class-voting behavior is largely based on the Marxist theory of class struggle. The class struggle revolved mainly around the opposite economic interests of two social classes: the proletariat on the one hand, and the capitalist middle-class on the other. The first was politically represented by the left-wing, the second by the right-wing.

This conflict heavily structured the party system in all European democracies until the middle-70s, in fact, it gave rise to class-based parties, like Social Democratic and Labor parties, which have always sided in defense of the economic interests of the working class. Their mission was to protect the lower classes from the capitalist market by redistributing economic resources within the society. Therefore, these parties refused market-deregulation and were the first promoter of the welfare state’s development. On the contrary, Liberal and Neo-Liberal parties were concerned in defending the capitalist interests of employers, i.e. the economic elites and the middle-class.

This double dichotomy between the proletariat and the middle-class on the one hand, and social democratic (left-wing) *versus* liberal parties (right-wing) on the other hand, does not hold true anymore, indeed, several studies pointed out how the effects of globalization changed the class structure (Erikson, Goldthorpe & Portocarero, 1979) and the party system (Ignazi, 1992).

Market globalization increased competition both across and within Western societies, damaging small-business owners and the working class more than others (Evans, 2000). The working class

faced increasing competition due the relocation of industries to countries where the labor force was cheaper (Alderson & Nielsen, 2002), but also internal competition resulting from the entry of unskilled immigrants into the national labor market. Small-business owners were left without protection against the economic hegemony of multinational companies, whose mass production reduced artisans' and farmers' competitiveness. This led to a new conflict between globalization's losers - small business owners and blue-collars - and winners - technical and cultural professionals, large entrepreneurs (Kriesi et al., 2006).

In addition, the Oil Shock during the middle of the 70s forced governments to adopt policies of market deregulation that required more flexible job contracts. These changes increased resource inequality and the level of fragmentation within the middle and lower strata of the social ladder (DiPrete et al. 2006). At the same time, the implementation of the welfare state generated a new social class: the service workers. According to Anderson and Nielsen (2002), this class diverge from the working class for several reasons: service workers earn on average less, there is greater inequality in the income distribution within this class, and their interests are much more diversified; however, they are on average more skilled than production workers, therefore they fear less labor market competition.

In short, the social class structure became more complex, meaning that the double dichotomy – operationalized as the Alford's Index – could not properly explain differences in class-voting behavior (Evans, 2000). Hence, more complex social class schemas were introduced, above all the Erikson, Goldthorpe and Portocarero (1979) class schema (EGP), and, more recently, Oesch's class schema (2006).

Changes in class structure came along with changes in the European party system: the increasing fragmentation within social classes challenged social democratic parties in representing the economic instances of the worse-off. Furthermore, economic differences between mainstream parties shrunk as a result of the Third Way, making the new social democratic liberalism less appealing for the working class (Green-Pedersen, Van Kersbergen & Hemerijck, 2001).

The vacuum left by this lack of representation opened up a space in the European party system which was recently occupied by populist parties. Both Oesch (2008) and Ivarsflaten (2005) found evidences supporting this argument: workers' and small business owners' (shopkeeper, farmers, artisans) material interests have been recently represented by right-wing populism in Europe, that claims to serve the interest of "the people" by promoting protectionist policies, the creation of duties and economic barriers (Oesch, 2008; Ivarsflaten, 2005). Decades of relative deprivation exacerbated feelings of political resentment and worsened the economic status of the less well-off, pushing them to call for even stronger resource redistribution policies (Inglehart & Norris, 2016).

Hence, I expect that:

H1: Production workers and small business owners are more likely to vote for right-populist rather than social democratic parties as they hold the opinion that the government should reduce income differentials.

Not only for economic reasons, but also for cultural reasons, the historical electorate of social democratic parties is nowadays more likely to vote for populist parties. That can be explained tracing back to Inglehart's division between materialist and post-materialist values (Inglehart, 2015). In his theory, the increasing security of life's expectancy is negatively related to the concern about materialist values and positively associated with post-materialist values. In other words, when basic needs are satisfied by the welfare state or the market, people begin to focus on life's quality rather than quantity, meaning that environmental and cultural issues gain much more attention. Following this pattern, mainstream parties defined themselves on cultural rather than economic issues. In other words, they abandoned the old-policy based on economic grievances in favor of a new-policy with a greater emphasis on cultural issues (Achterberg & Houtman, 2006). On one side, the new-left emphasizes cultural issues, as migration, more than in the past, at the expense of economic issues. On the other side, the new-right is leaning more and more towards a renewal of the nationalistic and the protectionist arguments with regards, respectively, to the cultural and economic issues (Oesch, 2008). Such a shift caused an inversion also in class-voting behavior: nowadays the working class is more affiliated with the new-right, whereas the middle class with the new-left.

With regards to the new politics, several scholars highlighted migration (Achterberg & Houtman, 2009; Oesch, 2008; Kriesi et al., 2006; Ivarsflaten, 2005) as the core topic of this new cultural cleavage (Kriesi, 1998). On the one hand, social democratic parties tend to encourage inclusion and integration, albeit differences in individual characteristics such as ethnicity and religious belonging. Hence, they implement policies of open borders, believing that immigrants are a cultural and economic resource (Carvalho & Ruedin, 2018; Oesch, 2008; Achterber, 2006, Ivarsflaten, 2005). On the other hand, in the rhetoric of right-populist parties immigrants are depicted as stealing the few job opportunities offered by the market (Bale et al., 2010), and as not deserving the entitlements that allow for country's welfare provisions (Van Oorschot & Uunk, 2007), which are possible thanks to the citizens' contributions. Such claims are expressed by right-populist parties, who are often recognized to bear extremist positions of total exclusion (Eatwell, 2000; Taggart, 1995), and they do meet the interests of the lower social strata, who want to preserve their status against the threat carried by immigrants (Oesch, 2008; Achterber, 2006; Ivarsflaten, 2005).

In conclusion, I hypothesize that:

H2: Production workers and small business owners are more likely to vote for right-populist rather than social democratic parties as they believe that immigrants are an economic and cultural threat.

If H1 and H2 hold true, I expect that:

H3: Production workers and small business owners are more likely to vote for right-populist rather than social democratic parties.

As stated by Ivarsflaten (2008), the migration issue is at the core of right-populist parties' success. This topic, indeed, has always been more attached to the right-wing. Moreover, right-populist parties' ownership of this issue shaped the terms of the political debate, polarizing both mass opinion and the party system between exclusion and inclusion politics (Silva, 2018; Afonso & Papadopoulos, 2015). In detail, mainstream parties often switch position between two kind of policy, immigrants' integration and migration control, according to right-populist party success and voters' attitudes towards immigrants (Bale et al., 2010; Carvalho & Ruedin, 2018). This suggests that, whether the nationalistic argument typical of right-populism encounters voters favor, mainstream parties, especially right-wing ones, are more likely to conform their manifestos to those of right-populist parties (Van Spanje, 2010). However, this does not necessarily mean that, although mainstream parties have a less clear-cut position on the topic, they will emphasize the migration issue less. On the contrary, recent mass migration from poorer non-EU countries increased the relevance of the issue across all parties. Rooduijn, de Lange and van der Brug (2014) parties' manifestos analysis revealed that mainstream parties do not emphasize this issue less than right-populist party.

Carvahlo and Ruedin (2018) argued that social democratic parties, in particular, tend to gain voters as they emphasize their preference for immigrants' integration in contrast to the exclusion policy of right-wing parties. The reason is that social democratic parties consider immigrants as possible voters and, in order to gain their support, they have to assume a clear-cut position on the issue. The social democratic party policy of inclusivity is even reinforced as it harshly opposes positions of exclusion carried by (far) right-populist parties. Therefore, also in this case, parties demonstrate to behave strategically for vote-seeking.

Rennwald and Evans (2014) pointed out that social democratic parties' success can be explained by class-voting behavior. They found that the more the mainstream left emphasize cultural issues, the more a specific segment of the middle-class, namely socio-cultural specialists, is likely to vote for

them. Amongst white-collars, indeed, we can differentiate between managers and socio-cultural professionals (Oesch, 2006; Kriesi et al., 2006). Managers hold organizational authority, whereas socio-cultural specialists do not have major managerial responsibilities, but they are more likely to hold libertarian attitudes, as their job position requires them to be involved in intense communicative experiences (interactions with students, patients, clients, etc.). In contrast, the working class holds a more conservative position on social issues and a more restrictive position towards immigration.

To sum up, albeit the fact that some mainstream parties tend to have a blurrier position on the topic, the migration issue seems to be highly relevant in all parties' manifestos. Moreover, whether social democratic parties promote integration policies, in contrast to the nationalistic solutions proposed by right-wing parties, their chances of success amongst socio-cultural professionals increases, but at the expense of blue-collars, who, because of their more authoritarian attitudes, will be more likely to turn towards a radical right party.

H4: the more social democratic parties support policy of migrants' integration, the more socio-cultural professionals are likely to vote them compared to the working class.

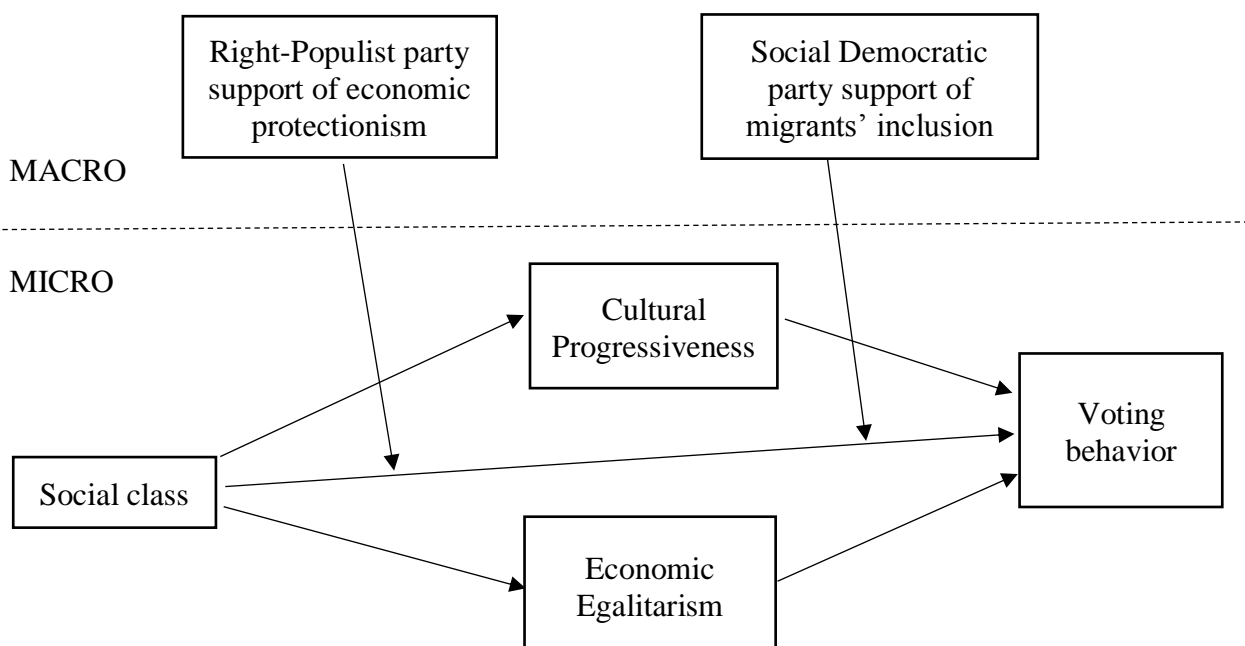
The same argument holds for the economic issue. Bremer (2017) hypothesized that European social democratic parties tended to disregard the economic issues more than other parties, especially after the Great Recession of 2008. However, despite the popular perception that the left was missing and failed to defend its core ideology during the crisis, he found that social democratic parties did not emphasize less the economic issue, in fact, its degree of salience was in line with other mainstream parties. Furthermore, he showed that, prior to the Great Recession, they reversed the neoliberal convergence begun with the Third Way politics. Yet, they conformed to the pressures for fiscal consolidation and budgetary rigor coming from the European Bank, the IMF and the ranking agencies, which created some tensions with their electorate. Thus, left-wing parties still try to provide a response to voters' economic claims, and they do not underemphasize the issue compared to other mainstream parties.

Amongst right-wing populism, Ivarsflaten (2005) argued that there is more heterogeneity in economic policies than about migration. Comparing the Front National in France and the Danish Progress Party, the author found that the first promotes protectionism whereas the latter a form of neo-liberalism which resembles the one of the Social Democratic Party, rather than mainstream neo-liberalism. However, Oesch (2008) comparative analysis of right-populist parties in Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, France and Norway revealed that all these parties tend to promote economic protectionism over social neo-liberalism. In particular, it shall be noted that this regards also the

Norwegian sister-party of the Danish Progress Party, meaning that in Norway a protectionist economic policy is more successful than in Denmark. Therefore, I expect that there will not be significant differences in voting behavior if social democratic and right-populist parties support neo-liberalism. However, major differences will be found with regards to protectionism.

Since the working class and small-business owners are the main supporters of right-wing populism, Ivarsflaten (2005) investigated whether the economic preferences of these two classes are important factors in predicting right-populist vote. The lower strata are expected to diverge in their economic interests: blue-collars should support major state intervention, whereas shopkeepers and artisans should display a more moderate preference, which comes closer to the social neo-liberalism. The author found no evidence supporting this claim, therefore, economic divisions amongst the right-wing populist party electorate are no relevant in predicting class-voting behavior. Apparently, these strata show the same voting behavior because they agree on cross-cutting issues as limiting migrations, reducing country's involvement in the European Union, and punishing crimes. However, Ivarsflaten did not tested, using party-level data, whether the working class is actually more likely to vote for a right-populist party as it supports economic protectionism, whereas small-business owners become less likely to vote it because of its economic politics. Testing for this will provide further insights to answer my research question: if populist parties gain more voters amongst the historical electorate of the mainstream left by promoting economic protectionism, it should be clear that the economic politics of the new right is actually syphoning off voters from social democratic parties. Hence, I hypothesize that:

H5: the more right-populist parties promote policy of economic protectionism, the more the working class is likely to vote for them compared to small-business owners.



Data and Methods

The analysis will be conducted combining data from the European Social Survey (ESS), to address the individual level of analysis, and the Comparative Party Manifesto (CPM) and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) data to cover information regarding European party politics. In detail, the CPM is used to test the last hypothesis about right-wing populist party' level of protectionism, whereas the CHES dataset for the fourth hypothesis about social democratic party migrants' integration politics. Since the CHES does not provide information about 2 countries who do not belong to the European Union - Norway and Switzerland –, this part of the analysis will be conducted on a reduced sample of 10 countries.

I will use a three-level linear probability regression that takes into account the hierarchical structure of the data: individuals are nested in country-time and country clusters. This hierarchical structure allows to control the effect on the dependent variable for different cultural contexts (Country) and for events occurred in different times of countries' political history (Country-time). About the decision to use a linear probability model over a multilevel logistic regression, I refer to Mood's article (2010) about the main problems of logistic regression: coefficients' comparability across models and samples, but also within samples and over time. Mood proposes some solutions, one of these is to use Linear Probability Models. The analysis is carried on using STATA 14.

In order to explain the impact of individual features, issue salience and party politics on voting behavior across European countries, I included as much countries as possible, having as constrains the presence of a right-wing party and countries' participation throughout the ESS waves from 2004 to 2016. Thus, the final sample is comprised of 12 countries (Belgium, Switzerland, Estonia, Finland, France, Great Britain, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, and Slovenia) and 29,920 individuals. Only individuals who were eligible to vote and who actually voted were included in the analysis. Missing values have been excluded from the investigation.

The ESS is a multipurpose survey that collects representative individual data through Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI). The sampling strategy ensures data accuracy and optimizes data comparability across countries, through a multistage random sample procedure of individuals aged 15 and over. The survey was carried out every two years since 2002, therefore 8 waves until now have been released. I will analyze data from the last wave, which dates back to 2016.

The Comparative Party Manifesto (CPM) provides comparative data above over 1000 parties' policies through an analysis of their election manifestos across 50 countries. The study started in 1945 and it is updated every two years. Data are constructed assigning a score to the number of times that a particular claim is present in the manifestos under studied. Afterwards, data are collected in 7

domains: external relations, freedom and democracy, political system, economy, welfare and quality of life, fabric of society and social groups. Data access and documentations are public and easily downloaded from the official website.

The Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) estimates party positioning on European integration, ideology and policy issues for national parties in a variety of European countries. The first survey was conducted in 1999, with subsequent waves in 2002, 2006, 2010, and 2014.

In order to merge the survey of ESS with the 2 macro-level datasets, I had to impute data for the lacking years. Since the CPM analyzes parties' manifestos, changes in manifestos are associated with national elections, hence, the CPM years correspond to elections dates. In order to match the macro-level data with the ESS waves, I had to assign values of right-populist parties support for economic protectionism to the corresponding years before the election. For instance, national elections in a country occurred in 2005 and 2010, therefore, values for the first year of this study, i.e. 2004, were imputed using the party manifesto coding corresponding to the 2005 election in a country, and values for the waves of 2006, 2008 and 2010 correspond to the 2010 election. A similar imputation procedure was done for the CHES data: the values of the variable about social democratic party support for migrants' integration policy in 2006 were assigned to the ESS waves of both 2006 and 2008, and so forth.

Operationalization

Dependent Variable – Party voted: The dependent variable is filtered by the question “did you vote in last national election?”, if the respondent answered positively, the next question, i.e. my dependent variable, is “which party did you vote for?”. Since I am interested in differences in class-voting behavior between right-populist and social democratic parties, I will recode this variable in order to have 2 categories only: right-populist party (coded as 1) *versus* social-democratic parties (coded as 0: baseline category) (Table 1).

Social democratic and right-populist parties have been detected by using different sources. With regards to the former, parties were considered social-democratic if they have ever been members of the Party of European Socialist (PES), and if they were included in the same name category of the variable Party Family in the CPM dataset. About the latter, there is no European party or category for right-populist parties, therefore, the assignment of political parties to this specific category was based on the website source www.popu-list.org (Rooduijn et al., 2019) (Appendix 1).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of party voted at last election (N=27,110)

	N	%
Social Democratic Parties	17,484	58.44
Right-Populist Parties	12,436	41.56

Social Class: In order to define the social class composition of different societies, I used the Oesch's class scheme (2006), that is a more recent version of the EGP-class schema, designed by Erikson, Goldthorpe and Portocarero (1993). The advantage of the Oesch's class scheme is that it combines the hierarchical and vertical structure, typical of the EGP schema, with a horizontal criterion, named the work logic. In other words, it combines the demand side of the labor market with its supply side. «The concept of work logic captures differences between occupations: in (1) the setting of the work process (the potential for division of labor), (2) the nature of authority relations, (3) the ensuing primary orientations and (4) the skill requirements» (Oesch, 2006 p. 267). By specifying the characteristics of these 4 dimensions and how they are related with the work situation variables used to create the social class schema (namely, the occupational title, being or not self-employed and the number of employees managed), the author comes up with 3 different types of work logic: technical, organizational or interpersonal.

This solution allows for a better distinction between the working class and the middle-class, and within the middle-class itself. Furthermore, it captures cultural preferences that help to better explain class-voting behavior. As mentioned by Kriesi et al. (2006), the middle-class cannot be considered as a homogeneous body, therefore a distinction should be made between managers and professionals, as well as within the latter between cultural professionals and technocrats. Cultural professionals' political preferences are opposed to those of managers. The former, which are comprised mainly of highly-educated individuals, are members of new social movements defending human rights, the environment, and the interests of the worse-off. Managers, on the other hand, mobilize against them to defend more traditional, materialist values, i.e. their own interests of globalization winners, therefore, supporting a neo-liberal perspective. Following Kriesi et al. (2006), Oesch (2006) developed his class-schema, which is definitely suitable to analyze class-voting behavior nowadays. In addition, this schema has been tested on several countries and it has been found to be highly suitable for cross-national comparison (Bornschiefer & Kriesi, 2012; Oesch, 2006).

The original scheme results in 16 classes, but I will use the shorter version of 8 classes (Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of respondent's Oesch class position - 8 (N=27,110)

	N	%
Production workers	5,956	21.97
Service workers	5,448	20.10
Small business owners	2,365	8.72
Clerks	2,756	10.17
Socio-cultural (semi-)professionals	3,534	13.04
Technical (semi-)professionals	2,120	7.82
(Associate) managers	4,478	16.52
Self-employed professionals and large employers	453	1.67

Economic Egalitarianism and Cultural Libertarianism: The variable about economic egalitarianism is regarded as the extent to which people support state intervention in resource redistribution. This item requires the respondent to state the extent to which he/she agrees with the following sentence “The country’s government should reduce differences in income levels”. The variable is a 5-point Likert scale, which ranges from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”, and it will be treated as cardinal (Table 3).

About opinion on migration, the ESS provides data about respondents’ self-placement on 3 scales anchored at the extremes. The scales range from 1 to 10 and require the respondent to display his/her perception of immigrants as either positively or negatively contributing to the country’s economy and cultural life, and, more in general, if they make the country a worse or a better place to live.

A principal component factor analysis revealed that the 3 items belong to the same factor, which has an Eigenvalue of 2.30. In order to construct an additive index, the variables underwent to the internal consistency test known as the Cronbach’s alpha. The test scale result of the standardized variables is 0.85, which means that the new measure is highly reliable. The final index ranges from 0 to 10, and can be treated as a cardinal variable (Table 3).

Both economic egalitarianism and cultural libertarianism are hypothesized to mediate the relationship between social class and voting behavior, and higher scores are associated respectively with support for state intervention and positive opinions towards immigrants.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of respondents' opinions (N=27,110)

	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Opinions on immigrants	0	10	5.18	2.06
Opinions on the economy	0	4	1.07	1.02

Individual level control variables: As control variable I will include the 3 main socio-demographic variables – gender, age and highest educational level of the respondent (ISCED). I expect to find no significant difference between male and female in voting behavior. On the other hand, I hypothesize that major differences will be displayed over age and amongst educational levels. I expect that populist parties are mainly voted by younger individuals, whereas older ones are more likely to vote for social democratic or other parties. With regards to the former, I hypothesize that younger individuals are more likely to vote for a right-populist party than older ones, who still support mainstream parties. About the latter, I expect that the higher the educational level, the higher the propensity to vote for a mainstream – in particular a social democratic – party rather than a right-populist party.

The sex of the respondents has been recoded as 0 for “Male” and 1 for “Female”. Age of the respondents was rescaled in order to range from 0 to 82. In other words, the minimum value (14 y.o.) was subtracted to the original variable. The ISCED classification was originally comprised of 7 categories, here reduced to 4, by grouping both “upper” and “lower tier upper secondary education” with “advanced vocational, sub-degree” into “Upper Secondary”, and “Lower (BA level)” and “Higher (>= MA level) tertiary education” into “Tertiary Education (Table 4).

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of control variables (N=27,110)

<i>Gender</i>	N	%		
Male	13,413	49.48		
Female	13,697	50.52		
<i>Educational Level</i>				
Primary	2,135	7.88		
Lower Secondary	4,489	16.56		
Upper Secondary	14,145	52.18		
Tertiary	6,341	23.39		
<i>Age</i>	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
	0	88	37.99	16.54

Right-wing populist party support for economic protectionism: this macro-level variable is expected to moderate the relation between class and individual economic opinion. This variable is actually the sum of the pro- and anti¹-protectionist economic statements found in right-wing populist parties’ manifestos, in order to capture the overall parties’ ideology about the topic. 0 values are plausible as

¹ Before being subtracted, the negative statement variable was reversed.

they mean that parties did not have any position about it (Table 5). Although correlation between the two variables is low (-0.01), the main goal here is to fully describe right-wing populist parties' levels of protectionism in a country, therefore, a variable that captures the overall ideological references to the topic is preferable over more statistically reliable measures who might, however, lack of validity. At the same time the final variable also measure the salience on the topic, since its values are the result of the amount of time right-populist parties in a country refer to economic protectionism.

Social democratic party support for migrants' integration: this variable is the resulting sum of 2 original measures, about party position on both immigration policy (range from 0 “Strongly opposes tough policy” to 10 “Strongly favors tough policy”) and on integration of immigrants and asylum seekers (range from 0 “Strongly favors multiculturalism” to 10 “Strongly favors assimilation”). These two variables were not measured for the first two surveys of 2002 and 1999, thus, data imputation for first year of this analysis (i.e. 2004) was done assigning values of the 2006 CHES wave. The final variable was recoded in order to make 0 meaningful by subtracting its minimum value of 4.64 (Table 5).

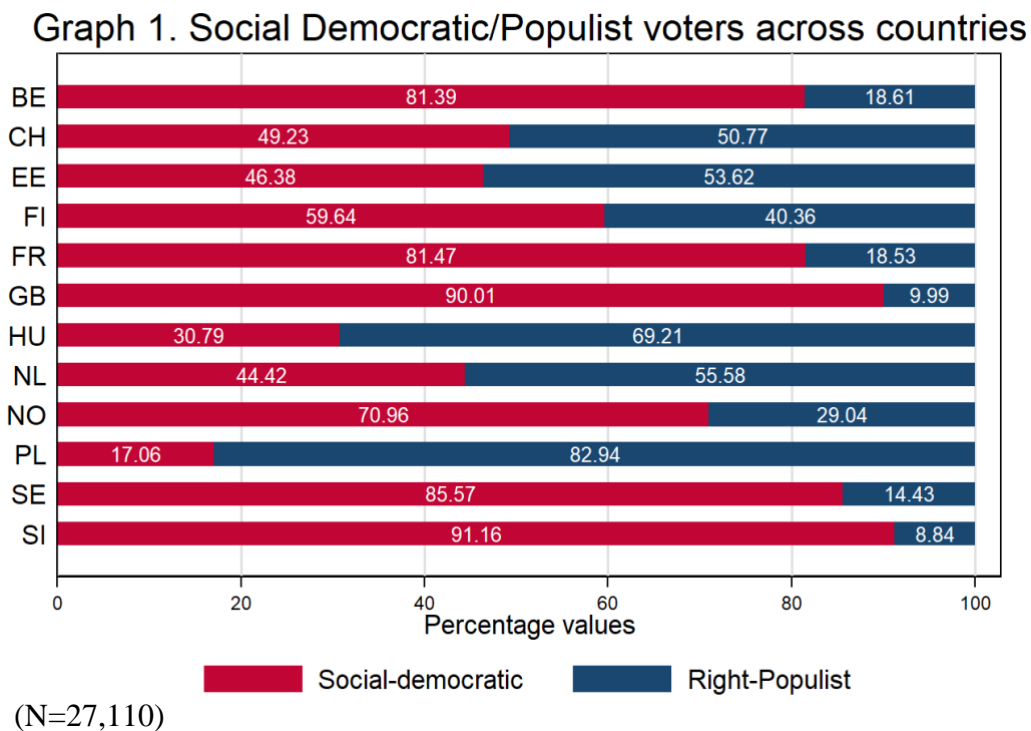
Table 5. Descriptive statistics of macro level variables

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.	N
Right-Populist support for Protectionism	0	7.95	4.07	1.33	19
Soc. Dem. support for Migrants' Inclusion	0	8.23	3.86	1.62	12

Results

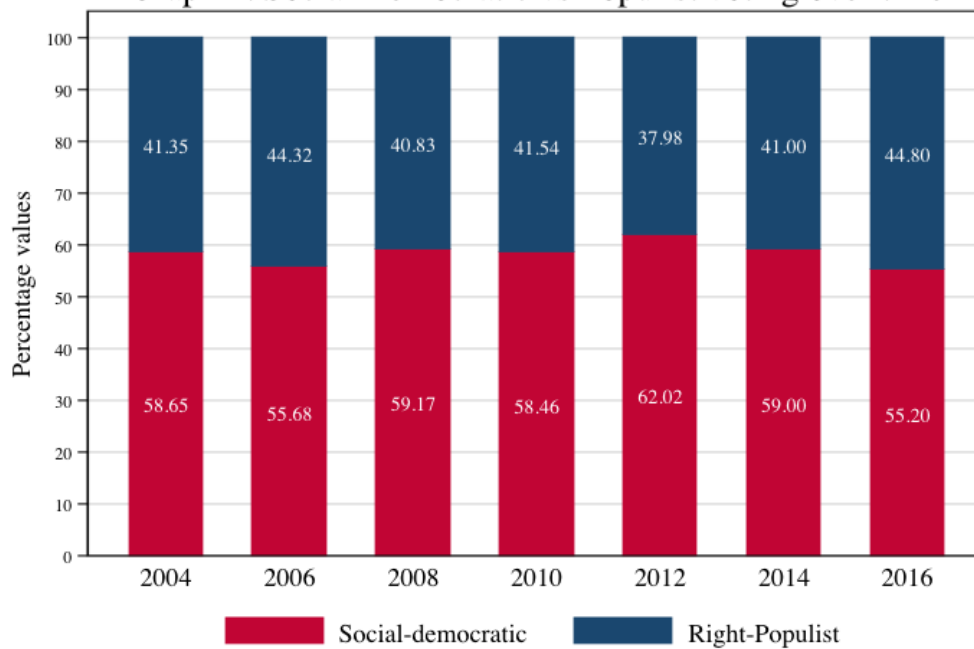
In this section I will show the empirical results of the analysis. I will start with some bivariate statistics using the ESS dataset, in order to have a general idea about the phenomenon.

Graph 1 shows the cross-country variation in voting behavior. Since the goal of the present research is to explain preferences in voting for right-populist over social democratic parties, other political parties are not taken into account. In order, Slovenia, Great Britain, and Sweden display the lowest share of right-wing populist voters, followed by France, Belgium and Norway. In these countries, apparently, social democratic parties are less challenged by right-populist parties. This is not surprising considering their great historical legacy, especially in Scandinavian countries, where social democratic parties played a fundamental role in the development of the welfare state. On the contrary, the highest percentages of populist voting are found in three East-European countries: Poland, Hungary and Estonia; plus the Netherlands.



Graph 2 displays the over-time variation in voting behavior. From 2004 to 2016 differences in voting behavior are not significant, indeed slightly more than half of the country population tend to vote for a mainstream left-wing party over a right-populist party. This suggests that the “challenging momentum” probably occurred before 2004, at least in the European countries here considered.

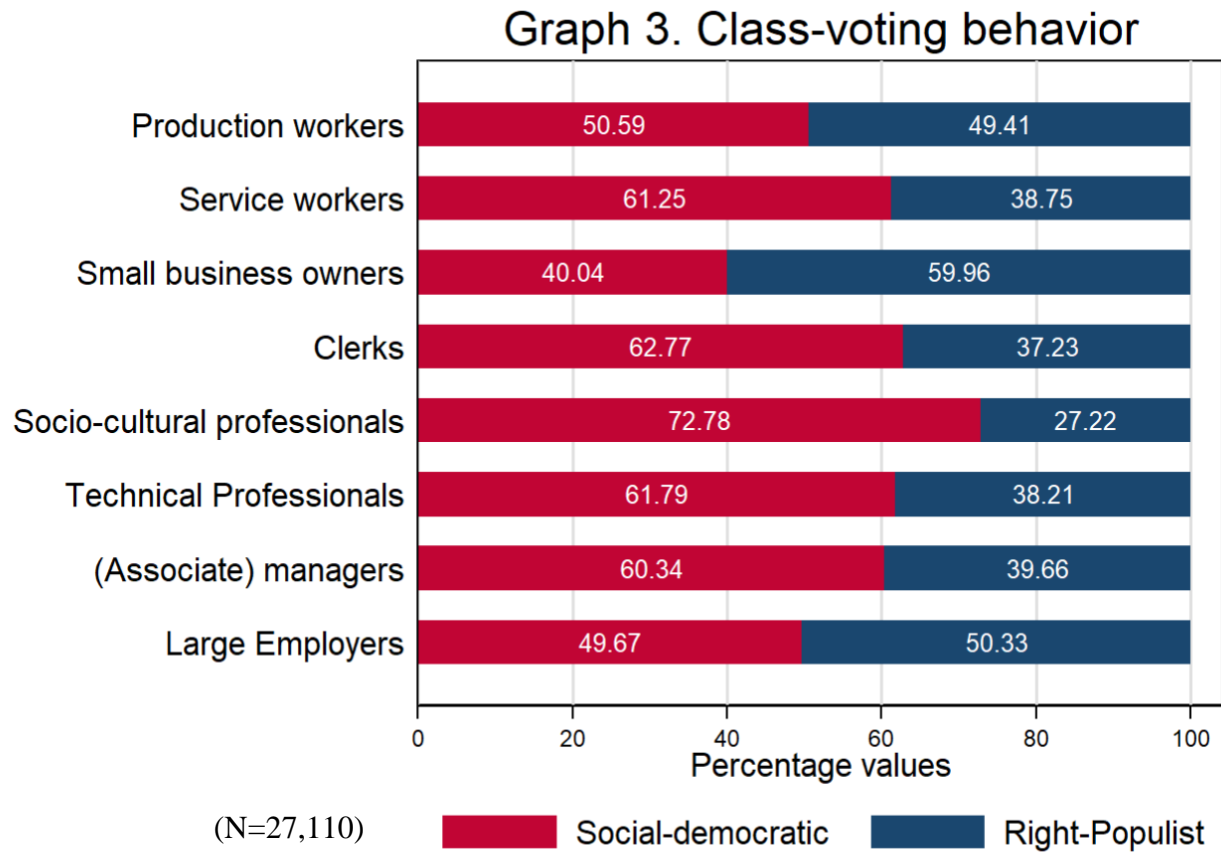
Graph 2. Social Democratic vs Populist voting over time



The last bivariate analysis regards class-voting behavior (Graph 3). In this graph fundamental differences are found amongst socio-cultural professionals, on the one hand, and small business owners, on the other hand. The former definitely prefers a social democratic over a right-populist party, the latter, on the contrary, are more likely to vote for a non-mainstream party. Interestingly, the lower and the upper classes display a similar voting-behavior, since amongst them preferences for a specific party are almost the same. Production workers are slightly more likely to vote for a social democratic over a right-populist parties, whereas large employers slightly prefer populist parties. Service workers, clerks, (associate) managers and technical professionals display a similar voting behavior: the percentage of voting for a left-mainstream party is $\frac{3}{4}$ times higher than the percentage of voting for a right-populist party.

Although there is a general preference for voting a mainstream party, this simple bivariate analysis proves that right-populist parties are syphoning off votes from the historical electoral base of social democratic parties (Bale et al., 2010). Amongst blue-collars, indeed, there is a half-split between left-wing mainstream voters and right-wing populist voters. This result is in line with the more recent literature on class-voting behavior that pointed out the increasing appeal of populist parties for globalization losers, and also depicted a more nuanced picture compared to that of the death of class-vote, arguing that social democratic parties still represent the material interests of the working class (Achterberg & Houtman, 2006; Kriesi et al., 2006). At the same time, this graph provides further evidence for the arguments of Kriesi (1998) and Oesch (2009): there are two different and opposed segment within the middle class also with respect to voting behavior. Socio-Cultural Professionals

have higher chances to vote for a social democratic compared to Technical Professionals and Managers. This means that a specific segment of the middle class is nowadays more affiliated with the mainstream left compared to the working class.



In the next section I will comment the results of, firstly, the full sample analysis using the ESS and the CMP datasets, secondly, the reduced sample analysis (Norway and Switzerland were excluded because of no data available for these two countries in the CHES dataset) using the ESS surveys merged with the CHES ones.

Empirical Results of the ESS + CMP analysis

Variance Component Analysis 1

The ICC indicates the proportion of the total variance due to between group variations. The results suggest that (1) 23% of the chances of voting for a right-populist party is explained by between-country differences, and (2) 25% by between country-year differences. Both intra-class correlations are high, meaning that this multilevel design is appropriate.

I also computed the pseudo R-squared in order to measure the explained variance at each level of the analysis (Table 6). The pseudo R-squared report the proportional reduction of variance in comparison with the empty model (M0). From the empty model to the final one, the explained variance at both the individual and the country level progressively increases, therefore, the measures included help to explain the variances at these 2 levels. About the country-time level, a great amount of its variance (16.67%) is explained by models 4, 5 and 6. The following models, however, do not reduce the variance in comparison with the null model.

The compositional effect corresponds to the pseudo R-squared of model 5, which includes all the individual level variable, and it should be interpreted as such: the 12.10% of the individual level variance is explained by the individual variables included in the model.

The covariance between the random intercept and the random slope (right-populist party position on protectionism) is negative, meaning that the correlation between the two design a converging pattern of the country-year lines. In other words, for instance, the line with the larger intercept has the smaller slope.

Table 6. Variance component (Multilevel Linear Probability Models (N=27,110). Source: ESS + CMP (2004-2016))

	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8
Individual Variance	0.182	0.178	0.175	0.171	0.163	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16
Explained Individual Var.		2.20%	3.85%	6.04%	10.44%	12.10%	12.10%	12.10%	12.10%
Country Variance	0.056	0.054	0.054	0.053	0.053	0.052	0.052	0.054	0.051
Explained Country Var.		3.57%	3.57%	5.36%	5.36%	7.14%	7.14%	3.57%	8.93%
Country-Year	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.030	0.031
Explained Country-Year Var.		-	-	-	16.67%	16.67%	16.67%	-	-
Slope								0.001	0.001
Covariance								-0.005	-0.006

Fixed Effects Analysis 1

A step-wise multilevel linear probability regression allows for coefficients comparability across models, which may provide some meaningful insights (Table 7). For instance, when comparing the first 5 models, it is possible to notice that the voting behavior of large employers is the most similar to that of the reference category, i.e. the working class. This holds true for models 1 and 3, where economic interventionism is introduced. In Model 3, indeed, net of opinions about state intervention in reducing income differentials within the country, the voting behavior of the two classes do not diverge. This result is not unexpected considering the great difference in socio-economic status between the two classes. However, when controlled for educational level and cultural progressiveness, large employers become significantly more likely to vote for a right-populist over a social democratic party compared to the working class, meaning that, probably, large employers are attracted by populist parties for cultural over economic motives.

Conversely, socio-cultural professionals display the more distant voting behavior compared to production workers. This result is not surprising since members of this class have a higher cultural capital that enhances their preference for social democratic over populist parties (Oesch, 2006). Looking at the other classes, only small business owners are significantly more likely than manual workers to vote for a right-populist party. These results confirm my third hypothesis: net of control variables and individuals' opinions on central issues, small business owners and production workers are more likely to vote for a right-populist rather than a social democratic party.

Concerning the intervening variables, the effect of individuals' cultural progressiveness on voting behavior suggests that one-unit change in the independent variable multiplies the probability of voting for a right-populist over a social democratic party of -0.06. In other words, those who believe that immigrants are a cultural and economic resource for the country are, on average, less likely to vote for a right-wing populist party. About economic opinions, it seems that the more individuals support state intervention in decreasing income differentials in the country, the higher their probability (0.06 circa) to vote for a right-wing populist party.

Since hypothesis 1 and 2 refers in particular to the voting behavior of production workers and small business owners, I calculated the probability for the two strata to vote for a right-populist party rather than a social democratic party at discrete levels of both the economic and cultural opinion variables. With regards to the former, it should be noted that higher probabilities on the dependent variable are associated with support for state intervention in resource redistribution, and the opposite holds at its lower levels. Therefore, the probability for the working class to vote for a right-populist party over a social democratic one is 35% at the lowest score of the economic opinion variable, and 61% at the highest score. With regards to small business owners, the probability equals 70% at the lowest score and 43% at the highest level. The opposite holds for cultural opinion: at higher levels of the variable are associated lower probabilities to vote for a populist over a social democratic party. The probabilities of the working class and small business owners to vote for a right-populist rather than a social democratic party are, respectively, 70% and 80% as they hold the opinion that migration is damaging the country. Their probabilities dramatically decrease to 11% and 22%, respectively, at the highest level of the cultural opinion variable. These results confirm both hypothesis 1 and 2.

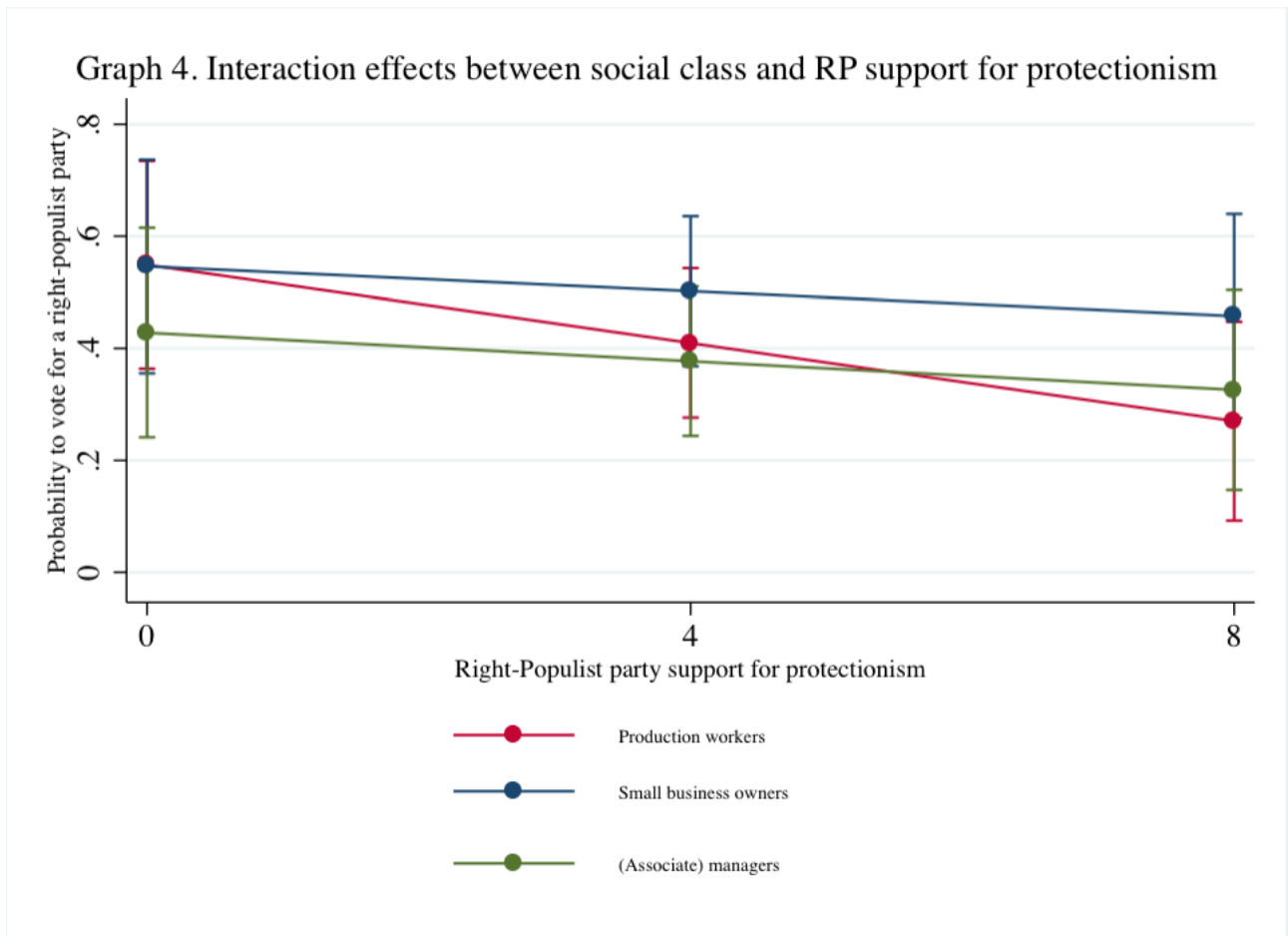
Comparing the different chances for the two population segments with the weakest market position to vote for a right-populist over a social democratic party at discrete levels of the intervening variables, I can assess that there is greater variation in voting behavior in relation to cultural rather than economic issues. This suggests that the new cultural cleavage can better explain differences in class-voting behavior compared to the traditional economic conflict and, since the dependent variable compares social democratic with right-populist party, it means that left-wing parties still represent

the material interest of the lower strata, since they have always supported major state intervention in the economy.

Now I will discuss the findings for the control variables. The gender and age effects suggest, respectively, that women and younger individuals are more likely to vote for a right-populist party. Interpreting now the coefficients of the educational level variable, it is interesting to notice that, before adding the cultural opinion variable to the model, the impact of both lower and upper secondary levels of education were not significant, whereas the opposite concerns the effect of tertiary level of education. This means that the intervening variable has a suppressor effect on the educational level variable. This result is explained by the correlation between educational level and cultural opinion: the level of education explains individuals' opinion about migrants. Thus, when controlled for cultural opinion, lower and middle educated are significantly more likely to vote for a populist party compared to the baseline (i.e. primary level of education or none), whereas the voting behavior of those with a tertiary level of education do not significantly differ from the baseline.

In Model 6 the macro-level variable is added. The variable measures the average level of right-wing populist parties' ideology about economic protectionism in a country. In the following model the variable is allowed to freely vary across countries and years. There are no substantial differences in the coefficients between these two models: in both cases, the variable is negative and significant at $P < 0.05$, meaning that at higher level of support for economic protectionism amongst right-populist parties in a country corresponds lower probability to vote for these parties. The most important model is the final one, where the interaction effects between right-populist party support for economic protectionism and the main independent variable, i.e. social class, are presented. Only the effects of small-business owners and associate managers are statistically significant. Both of them are positive, therefore, compared to the working class, small business owners and managers display, on average, higher chances to vote for right-wing populist parties as they promote economic protectionism. This finding, however, do not confirm the hypothesized divergence in economic preferences within the electorate of the new-right. As shown in Graph 4, both blue-collars and small business owners become less likely to vote for a right-populist party as it supports economic protectionism more, however, small business owners, compared to production workers, display, on average, higher chances. Hence, hypothesis 5 is rejected, since it expected these two classes to display the inverted voting-behaviors. Interestingly, the non-significant interaction effects for large employers, socio-cultural professionals, clerks and service workers suggest that right-populist party economic policy is not affecting at all their voting behavior *vis-à-vis* the reference category (i.e. production workers). Therefore, the divergence in economic interests between the two classes, which comprised the electorate of European right-populist parties, may undermine right-populist parties' success if they

Their economic ambiguity, which so far seems to be successful, it actually hides a deficit of the populist strategy.



As a measure for goodness-of-fit I compared the log-likelihood of the models. It seems that Model 5, which includes only individual variables, fits the data best compared to both the previous and the 2 following models. However, the last model, i.e. model 8, performs better than all the others, therefore it explains more variation in the dependent variable compared to model 5 and the others.

Table 7. Social democratic *versus* right-populist party voting behavior explained by social class, gender, age, educational level and right-populist party position on economic protectionism. (Multilevel Linear Probability Models (N=27,110). Source: ESS + CPM (2004-2016))

	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8
<i>Social Class (ref. Production Workers)</i>									
Service Workers		-0.055***	-0.041***	-0.042***	-0.031***	-0.033***	-0.033***	-0.033***	-0.035***
Small-Business Owners		0.080***	0.097***	0.082***	0.107***	0.093***	0.093***	0.093***	0.111***
Clerks		-0.084***	-0.059***	-0.062***	-0.034***	-0.037***	-0.037***	-0.037***	-0.037***
Socio-Cultural Professionals		-0.182***	-0.123***	-0.121***	-0.080***	-0.079***	-0.079***	-0.079***	-0.075***
Technical Professionals		-0.068***	-0.048***	-0.060***	-0.024*	-0.036***	-0.035***	-0.036***	-0.016
(Associate) Managers		-0.084***	-0.047***	-0.059***	-0.018*	-0.030***	-0.030***	-0.030***	-0.012
Large Employers		0.015	0.068**	0.040	0.099***	0.072***	0.072***	0.072***	0.096***
<i>Educational Level (ref. Primary or none)</i>									
Lower Secondary			0.009	0.013	0.032**	0.035**	0.035**	0.0353**	0.038***
Upper Secondary			0.002	0.001	0.041***	0.040***	0.0397***	0.0397***	0.042***
Tertiary			-0.075***	-0.085***	0.010	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	0.001
Female (ref. Male)			-0.039***	-0.031***	-0.0448***	-0.037***	-0.037***	-0.037***	-0.037***
Age (rescaled: 0 = 14)			-0.003***	-0.002***	-0.003***	-0.003***	-0.003***	-0.003***	-0.003***
Economic Egalitarianism				0.065***		0.060***	0.060***	0.060***	0.060***
Cultural Libertarianism					-0.058***	-0.057***	-0.057***	-0.057***	-0.057***
Right-Populist Party position on Protectionism							-0.023*	-0.030*	-0.035*
Service Workers* Protectionism									-0.007
Small-Business Owners* Protectionism									0.024**
Clerks*Protectionism									0.004
Socio-Cultural Professionals* Protectionism									-0.008
Technical Professionals* Protectionism									0.007
(Associate) Managers*Protectionism									0.022***
Large Employers* Protectionism									0.008
Constant	0.376***	0.432***	0.548***	0.470***	0.799***	0.721***	0.818***	0.849***	0.871***

Empirical Results of the ESS + CHES analysis

This part of the analysis is conducted on a reduced sample of 10 countries rather than 12, because the CHES does not provide data for two countries originally included in the sample: Norway and Switzerland. Due to this shortcoming, I had to exclude the two non-EU country members from the analysis. Since the individual level measures used – including the dependent variable - are the same, I will comment the results of this second analysis only if two conditions are met: (a) results do meaningfully differ from those of the previous analysis, and (b) they are statistically significant. What is changing between the two analyses is the country-level measure. In the first part, I used the CMP data to explain variation in class-voting behavior according to right-populist party position on economic protectionism, now I will use the CHES data to investigate the impact of social democratic parties support for migrants' integration policies on class-voting behavior. For these reasons, the present paragraph will focus only on specific selected results, but, at the same time, I will point out both differences and communalities between the two analyses.

Variance Component Analysis 2

As before, I will start the results' interpretation by commenting the random effects (Table 8). The intra-class correlation for the country level is 26.28%, whereas for the country-time level is 29.19%. Therefore, also in this case, a multilevel design seems to properly fit the hierarchical structure of the data.

The pseudo R-squared at the individual level in model 5 represents the compositional effect. In detail, the 9.77% of the individual level variance is explained by the variables included in the model. The explained variance at the country level in the final model is 4.62%, which is actually lower than its counterpart in models 4 (6.15%) and 5 (9.77%). Apparently, model 5, which includes all the individual level variables, explains more country-level variance than the following models, where the macro-level variable about social democratic parties' support for migrants' integration in a country is introduced. About the third level of analysis, the last two models explain a great amount (85.71%) of the of the country-time variance.

The slope is significantly positive however very close to zero, and the same holds for the covariance, meaning that, on average, those country lines with higher intercepts also have higher slopes.

Table 8. Variance component (Multilevel Linear Probability Models (N=22,175). Source: ESS + CHES (2004-2016))

	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8
Individual Variance	0.174	0.171	0.168	0.166	0.160	0.157	0.157	0.157	0.157
Explained Individual Var.		1.72%	3.45%	4.60%	8.05%	9.77%	9.77%	9.77%	9.77%
Country Variance	0.065	0.063	0.062	0.062	0.061	0.060	0.061	0.062	0.062
Explained Country Var.		3.08%	4.62%	4.62%	6.15%	7.69%	6.15%	4.62%	4.62%
Country-Year Variance	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.006	0.001	0.001
Explained Country-Year Var.	-	-	-	-	-	-	14.29%	85.71%	85.71%
Slope								0.001	0.001
Covariance								0.001	0.001

Fixed-Effects Analysis 2

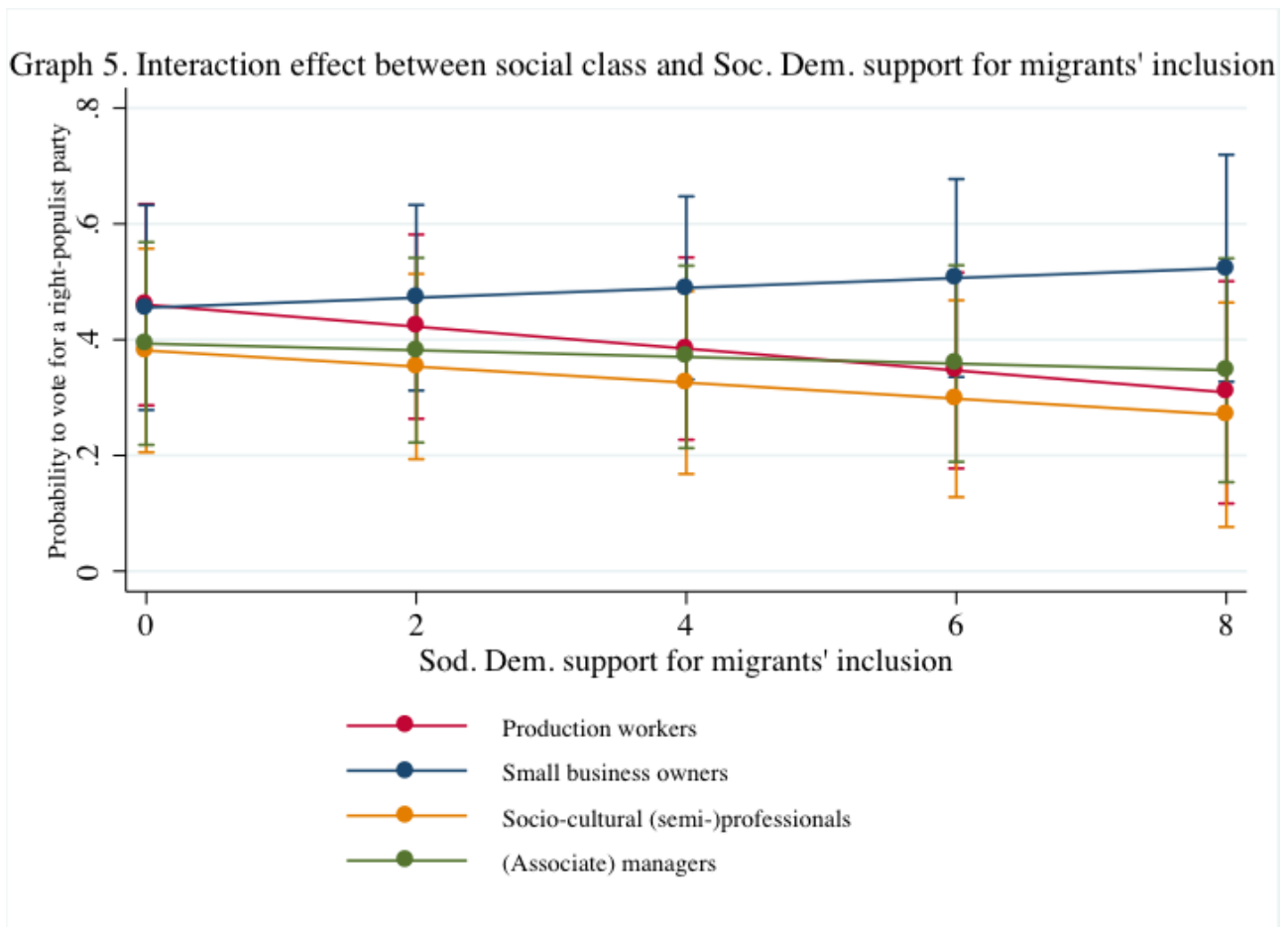
In Table 9, fixed-effects for the reduced sample are presented. There seems to be no major changes in the coefficients of the first 5 models compared to those of the previous analysis, with the exception of the educational level variable, for which the level of significance is reduced. The same occurs for the effects of Managers and Technical Professionals in both Model 4 and 5.

The variable about social democratic parties support for migrants' integration policy in a country is introduced in Model 6. The variable is negative and slightly significant, meaning that the more social democratic parties support migrants' integration policies, the lower the probability for the working class (reference category) to vote for a right-populist party over a social democratic one. In other words, Bale et al. (2010) expectations are supported by this finding: social democratic parties gain voters as their cultural positions about migration become more progressive. Notwithstanding, the variable loses its significance when it is allowed to freely vary across countries and over time (Model 7).

The final model includes the cross-level interaction between social class and social democratic parties support for migrants' integration policy. In this model the direct effects of large employers and technical professionals become non-significant, and also the significance of the other classes are reduced, with the exception of Managers, for whom the significance level increases. At the same time, for all social classes the cross-level interaction increases the coefficients' size. However, social democratic party support for migration inclusion gains significance again.

Looking at the interaction effects now, only two of them are significant: those for small business owners and for managers. In graph 5 the effects for these classes, plus the reference category and socio-cultural professionals (since they are relevant for hypothesis 4), are presented. The linear predicted probability for voting a right-populist party of small business owners increases as social democratic party's support for migrants' inclusion gets higher. Nevertheless, the more social democratic parties support migrants' inclusion, the lower the probability for the other classes to vote for a right-populist party. However, socio-cultural professionals do not significantly differ from the

reference category. Thereby, I hypothesize that having the working class, instead of small business owners, as the reference category may have affected the level of significance of the impact of socio-cultural professionals on voting behavior. Hence, hypothesis 4 should be rejected, since it expected socio-cultural professionals to be more likely to vote for social democratic parties, as they increase support for migrants' integration, compared to the working class. Notwithstanding, this seems to be a successful strategy: when the mainstream left promotes policies of migrants' inclusion, amongst all social classes – excluding small business owners – the average probability to vote for them increases. This finding supports the expectation of Carvahlo and Ruedin (2018), according to whom the more social democratic parties oppose the exclusionist politics of right-populist parties by promoting immigrants' inclusion, the more citizens will be likely to vote for them.



The log-likelihood test revealed that model 5 fits the data best compared to the following one, where the social democratic parties' support for migrants' integration policies is added without allowing it to freely vary across countries and over years (random slope). However, model 5 performs worse compared to the final model, which, therefore, provides the best fit for the data.

Table 9. Social democratic versus right-populist party voting behavior explained by social class, gender, age, educational level and social democratic party position on migrants' integration. (Multilevel Linear Probability Models (N=22,175). Source: ESS + CHES (2004-2016))

	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8
<i>Social Class (ref. Production Workers)</i>									
Service Workers		-0.049***	-0.039***	-0.040***	-0.032***	-0.033***	-0.033***	-0.033***	-0.063*
Small Business Owners		0.081***	0.094***	0.082***	0.105***	0.093***	0.093***	0.093***	-0.005
Clerks		-0.0726***	-0.053***	-0.055***	-0.033**	-0.035***	-0.035***	-0.035***	-0.068**
Socio-Cultural Professionals		-0.141***	-0.098***	-0.096***	-0.064***	-0.063***	-0.063***	-0.063***	-0.079**
Technical Professionals		-0.048***	-0.035**	-0.045***	-0.016	-0.026*	-0.026*	-0.026*	-0.047
(Associate) Managers		-0.061***	-0.033**	-0.042***	-0.011	-0.020*	-0.020*	-0.020*	-0.067**
Large Employers		0.046*	0.080***	0.0572*	0.108***	0.086***	0.086***	0.087***	0.096
<i>Educational Level (ref. Primary or none)</i>									
Lower Secondary			-0.0002	0.005	0.020	0.024*	0.024*	0.024*	0.023*
Upper Secondary			-0.011	-0.011	0.023*	0.023*	0.023*	0.022*	0.022*
Tertiary			-0.063***	-0.072***	0.008	-0.001	-0.001	-0.002	-0.003
Female (ref. Male)			-0.035***	-0.029***	-0.040***	-0.0345***	-0.0345***	-0.0344***	-0.034***
Age (rescaled: 0 = 14)			-0.003***	-0.003***	-0.003***	-0.003***	-0.003***	-0.003***	-0.003***
Economic progressiveness				0.056***		0.0529***	0.0529***	0.0529***	0.053***
Cultural Progressiveness					-0.049***	-0.048***	-0.048***	-0.048***	-0.048***
Soc. Dem. Support for Migrants' Integration							-0.017	-0.011	-0.019
Service Workers*Integration									0.008
Small Business Owners*Integration									0.027***
Clerks*Soc. Dem. Integration									0.009
Socio-Cultural Professionals*Integration									0.005
Technical Professionals*Integration									0.006
(Associate) Managers*Integration									0.013*
Large Employers*Integration									-0.001
Constant	0.371***	0.413***	0.549***	0.484***	0.759***	0.695***	0.883***	0.876***	0.945***

Conclusion and Discussion

Drawing from Bale et al. (2010) triple challenge, the present work aims at investigating which factors may increase the success of right-populist parties at the expense of social democratic parties across European countries. Using individual and party level data, the focus of the analysis is on two of the original three challenges: (a) populist's issue ownership of migration and its consequential effect on (b) class-voting behavior. Hypotheses are derived from the most recent advances in two strains of the scientific literature that often (see Rennwald & Evans (2014) as an alternative example) proceeded in parallel: party issue salience and class-voting behavior. The former is hypothesized to influence the latter; therefore, a multilevel approach was preferred, and, in order to provide a more complete account of the phenomenon, the analysis used data from 2004 until 2016. Results confirmed the three hypotheses at the individual level: small business owners and, in particular, the working class are the most likely to vote for a right-wing populist party over a social democratic party in Europe, both for cultural and economic motives. Therefore, a political shift occurred amongst blue collars, which can be explained by the new politics approach. According to this theory, there is a new cultural cleavage shaping the political debate around Europe, whose salience overcomes the traditional conflict about economic issues (Oesch, 2009; Achterberg, 2006; Kriesi et al., 2006; Inversflaten, 2005). In particular, migration is receiving a lot of attention and clashes on this issue indicate an increasing polarization of the political debate. Blue collars and small business owners are culturally authoritarian, therefore they tend to vote for a right-populist party. They are also economic egalitarian, meaning that they demand major state intervention in the economy, and also for this reason they tend to vote a right-populist party. In conclusion, net of individual opinion about migrants and resource redistribution, the lower strata comprise the electoral base of the new-right.

Since both on economic and cultural issues, right-populist parties are siphoning off voters from the historical electorate of social democratic party, at a higher level of analysis I hypothesized that this "unnatural" voting behavior (Achterberg & Houtman, 2006) could be explained also by party ideology on the two issues. In particular I decided to focus on social democratic party support for policies about migrants' inclusion and right-populist party ideology and salience about economic protectionism. The former is hypothesized to gain voters amongst a specific segment of the middle-class, i.e. socio-cultural professionals, and to lose voters amongst the working class, as its support for migrants' inclusion increases. The latter is recently turning towards strategies of economic protectionism, which seem to respond to the material interests of the working class, but not of small business owners, who are hypothesized to call for a more moderate solution.

Results did not support both hypotheses (H4 and H5), yet, they provided some interesting insights into the phenomena. For instance, it seems that when right-populist party promotes economic protectionism, they lose voters amongst small-business owners but, mainly, amongst the working class. On the other hand, the more social democratic parties support migrant's integration, the less the working class is likely to vote for the new-right, as expected; however, the coefficient for socio-cultural professionals do not statistically differ from that of production workers. At the same time, the likelihood of small business owners for voting a right-populist party over a social democratic party significantly increases.

In other words, social democratic parties have not yet completely lost their appeal to the working class (Achterberg, 2006). The fact that production workers become more likely to vote for them, as right-populist parties support for economic protectionism increases, suggests that social democratic parties still represent the economic interests of this population segment, which also seems to have more libertarian attitudes along the cultural dimension compared to shopkeepers and artisans. Small business owners are definitely the core electoral base of right-populist parties, therefore, social democratic parties have very few chances to gain voters amongst this population segment until they reverse their positions about migration. Socio-cultural professionals, on the other hand, do not even take into account voting for a right-populist party, since they are not affected by changes in their economic position.

From a party-level perspective, the real challenge for left-wing mainstream parties is to reformulate their economic proposal in order to better represent and, therefore, reinforce the long-lasting link with their own historical electorate. Since right-wing populist parties are divided between a protectionist economic policy, that I found to be detrimental in terms of electoral success, or a neo-liberal policy with socialist influences, the current social democratic party proposal does not substantially differ from that of successful populist parties. Kriesi et al. (2006), indeed, defined the mixture of neo-liberalism and socialism as the winning economic strategy of European populist parties, but it seems to be not the best strategy for social democratic parties. If, on the one hand, they should reformulate their economic proposal, on the other hand, they do not have to reverse their cultural position about migration, in order to gain voters amongst the working class. Conversely, right-populist parties face the opposite risk: the more they mobilize around economic issues, as protectionism, the more they lose voters amongst the main two classes that comprise their electorate (Ivarsflaten, 2005).

To sum up, social democratic parties are mainly challenged by the shift in class-voting behavior rather than by right-populist parties' ownership of the migration issue. When the mainstream left, indeed, opposes the new-right by supporting migrants' inclusion, it gains voters amongst almost all social classes (excluding small business owners). Furthermore, as right-populist parties promote economic

protectionism, the likelihood of all social classes to vote for them decreases. Therefore, social democratic party may be more successful in those countries where they represent a valid alternative to the hegemonic migration politics of right-populist parties (Carvalho & Ruedin, 2018). However, social democratic parties should reformulate their economic proposal in order to regain reliability in front of the eyes of production workers, who felt betrayed by the convergence of the mainstream left on neo-liberalist positions after the '70s. Support for state intervention to reduce income differentials in a country was found to be determinant in predicting the voting-behavior of the working class. Therefore, social democratic parties should implement strategies to reduce economic inequality like increasing welfare benefits, as pensions, unemployment and health insurances, in order to protect the population from market's fluctuations and global competitiveness, without turning to neither protectionism nor the mainstream discourse of the populist right, which stresses the negative impact of immigrants on the country's economy, since the mainstream left is found to gain voters as it promotes policies of migrants' inclusion.

A more complete understanding of the phenomenon should be pursued implementing data especially at the party level, for which, there are not enough information about their cultural position on the migration issue, since it has only recently gained salience. About party economic opinion, testing for social democratic and right-populist neo-liberalism could enlarge the perspective about differences in economic politics between the two and how they are reflected in the class-voting behavior.

Further research should also use more complex statistical techniques which allows to deal with two of the main problems I faced: the small country sample and testing for intervening effects. The small country sample could have downward biased the standard errors and the maximum likelihood estimation of the coefficients, leading to an overestimation of the significance level of the results. To cope with this problem, Stegmueller (2013) suggest relying on Bayesian statistics, which proved to be more robust and yield to more conservative tests. Alternatively, when a bigger country sample is available, further research may use generalized structural equation models (GSEM command in STATA), that allow to test for intervening effects at multiple levels of analysis using also non-linear equations. With this tool it should be possible to perform multinomial regressions at multiple levels, therefore, the dependent variable could describe more than a simple dichotomy between the new right and the mainstream left, by taking into account other new and old political parties like liberals, conservative, left-populist parties, and Greens; and, by doing so, increasing the model's power in explaining the complexity of the phenomenon.

In conclusion, I found that the new politics approach provides a valid explanation for the shift in class-voting behavior occurred at the end of the previous century. The working class is now more likely to vote for right-populist parties over social democratic ones both for cultural and economic

reasons. However, the more social democratic parties support migrants' inclusion, the more the working class is likely to vote for them. This suggests that exclusionist politics of right-populist parties, when drastically challenged by its opponents, may turn into a non-successful strategy. The same holds for economic protectionism: the more right-populist parties promote it, the less production workers are likely to vote for them.

Party salience and mobilization around specific issues may help in explaining shift in class-voting behavior, however, this strand of the scientific literature was seldomly combined with the class-voting behavior theory. This work provides an example of how these two approaches can be integrated to explain the recent shift in class-voting behavior. Furthermore, it provides further evidence for the claim that right-populist parties are syphoning off voters from the working class. Apparently, the main challenge social democrats are facing is due to the shift in class-voting behavior rather than on party salience and ideology on a specific topic. However, the more they support alternative economic and cultural policies to those of right-populist parties, the more they gain voters amongst almost all social classes. Therefore, I suggest that social democrats are still representing the interests of the working class, however they are also penalized by their historical electorate in favor of right-populist parties, if they do not represent a real alternative both on cultural and economic issues.

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Appendix 1

Table 1. Party voted at last national elections

	Country	Right-Populist	Social Democratic
1	Belgium	Vlaams Blok Front National (FN)	Parti Socialiste (PS) Socialistische Partij Anders (SP.a)
2	Switzerland	Swiss People's Party (SVP)	Social Democratic Party
3	Estonia	Conservative People's Party Res Publica	Social Democratic Party of Estonia (SDE)
4	Finland	True Finns	Finnish Social Democratic Party
5	France	Front National (FN)	Parti Socialiste (PS)
6	Great Britain	UK Independence Party (UKIP)	Labour Party Social Democratic Labour Party
7	Hungary	Fidesz – KDNP Alliance Justice and Life (MIÉP) Jobbik	Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP) Hungarian Social Democratic Party (MSZDP)
8	the Netherlands	Party for Freedom (PVV) List Pim Fortuyn (LPF)	Labour Party (PvdA)
9	Norway	Progress Party (FRP)	Labour Party (Ap)
10	Poland	Law and Justice League of Polish Families Kukiz'15	Left and Democrats Democratic Left Alliance
11	Sweden	Sweden Democrats (SD)	Social Democratic Workers' Party (SAP)
12	Slovenia	Slovenian National Party (SNS)	Social Democrats (SD) Positive Slovenia (PS)