

United in opposition to globalization?
An analysis of the programmatic
convergence of European
right-wing populist parties

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1. Introduction¹

The continuing or mounting presence of right-wing populist parties in Western Europe's political landscape today is a phenomenon escaping explanations centered on the level of individual countries. Despite some differences in the policies advocated by these parties, there seems to have been a certain convergence in their programmatic profile. This centers around what has been termed "differentialist nativism" and is increasingly combined with a position in favor of economic protectionism in the international domain, even if the parties in question may favor liberal economic strategies in the domestic realm (Betz 2002, 2004). It can be argued that this phenomenon is part of a larger process in which globalization leads to new conflicts opposing "winners" and "losers" of the opening up of national markets and increasing transnational cultural flows (Kriesi 2000).

In this paper, I follow Betz and others in proposing that the right-wing populist parties' programmatic convergence in the 1990s is linked to the process of globalization. At the same time, as a number of scholars have argued persuasively, most of these parties have come up in reaction to specific national political constellations in the 1980s (cf. Betz, Immerfall 1998, Kitschelt, McGann 1995, Ignazi 2003). My aim is therefore twofold: In the theoretical part of this paper, I develop two political potentials in opposition to globalization and two mechanisms to help explain why right-wing populist parties so far have been most successful at mobilizing these potentials. If the proposition outlined is correct, their programmatic stance is likely to converge across countries. In a second step, I therefore want to empirically investigate to what extent right-wing populist parties have actually articulated a position in opposition to the processes of economic and cultural globalization from the early 1990s on.

Of the two potentials emerging as a consequence of globalization, one has an economic background, while the other touches more on perceived threats to the identity of certain groups of citizens. The *economic logic* leads lower-skilled individuals to oppose globalization because they associate it with their difficulty in competing in an increasingly competitive labor market. Theoretically distinct from the economic rationale, though possibly empirically overlapping with it, is a cultural pattern of opposition to phenomena apparently linked to globalization, most noticeably immigration. This second potential is related to the waning

¹ This paper presents first results from a dissertation project carried out within the project "National Political Change in a Globalizing World", conducted jointly by a team at the University of Zurich (Prof. Hanspeter Kriesi, Romain Lachat, Timotheos Frey and the author of this paper) and by a team at the University of Munich (Prof. Edgar Grande, Dr. Martin Dolezal). The project is financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation and by the German Research Community (DFG). I would like to thank Timotheos Frey for his support in the MDS analysis and presentation.

force of traditional social bonds and the resulting challenges to established forms of social integration. Here, an increasingly multicultural society has provided populist political entrepreneurs with the opportunity to articulate a new concept of exclusionary identity. This is the *cultural-identitarian logic*.

Why are right-wing populist parties more likely than others to mobilize these potentials in opposition to globalization? Here, I suggest that there are two mechanisms at work. The first is an organizational advantage right-wing populist parties have relative to the established parties. The large parties are internally divided and cannot decide on an appropriate strategy concerning globalization and europeanization. Consequently, they either take a moderately positive stance towards these issues or try to circumvent them (see Kriesi 2000). Right-wing populist parties, by contrast, have a hierarchical internal structure which allows them to adapt quickly to new potentials and to advocate issues that the established parties do not take up. They couple this strategy with a populist anti-political-establishment discourse. I call this the *political logic* of their mobilization and argue that this mechanism also accounts for right-wing populist parties' success in the 1980s.

Finally, the right-wing populist parties' rise must be seen in the context of a series of transformations of European party systems which have begun in the late 1970s. Since then, political conflict is no longer exclusively structured by the classical left-right-divide centering around the conflict between state and market. A cultural line of conflict has emerged that complements the old distributional axis and opposes citizens holding libertarian from those holding authoritarian values (Kitschelt 1994). This process has led to a weakening of the force of traditional cleavages and paved the way for politics of identity to take prevalence over economic issues. Right-wing populist parties' success must therefore be analyzed in relation to the *transformation of traditional cleavages* in Western Europe.

I claim that it is the political logic of their mobilization which distinguishes right-wing populist parties most forcefully from established political parties. Populism is therefore defined primarily in party organizational terms here, as a form of political mobilization weakly mediated by political organization. On the other hand, right-wing populist parties are set apart from parties of the radical right in that they do not reject liberal democratic practices in their discourse. As long as this is the case, they therefore have to be considered polarizing parties rather than anti-system parties, employing Capoccia's (2002) framework.

Since the four factors proposed – two potentials coupled with two mechanisms allowing their mobilization – are likely to operate in a similar way across countries, the model

presented posits that right-wing populist parties positions will converge. To compare the programmatic profile of right-wing populist parties both over time and across countries, I rely on a data-file containing a sentence-by-sentence coding of the media coverage of election campaigns. This data has been assembled in the research project in which I am involved and covers six countries. For this paper, the four countries displaying a strong presence of right-wing populist parties on a national level are considered, namely Switzerland, the Netherlands, France, and Austria.² In each of these countries, three election periods in the 1990s are analyzed, while one election in the 1970s serves as a point of reference in a period in which we expect national politics not yet to have been structured by globalization.

An empirical analysis of the parties' issue positions using Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) reveals that competition in European party systems is structured by an economic and a cultural axis of conflict. While we find the dimensions of political space in the 1990s to accord rather well with the ones postulated by Kitschelt (1995) in his analysis of the Radical Right parties in the 1980s, it can be shown that the content of these political dimensions has been modified by globalization. To varying degrees across the investigated countries, the cultural axis reflects not only a libertarian-authoritarian value divide, but also includes issues relating to the support or the opposition to globalization. While the positions of all parties are taken into account to detect the conflicts structuring political competition in the countries considered, the main emphasis in the interpretation will be laid on the positioning of the right-wing populist parties along the economic and the cultural axis of political conflict. The cultural line of conflict opposes libertarian universalistic values to traditional and organic-communitarian ones, as theoretically postulated by Žižek (1994), among others.

This paper is organized as follows. In the following section, the two political potentials deriving from globalization are developed. While the *economic-rationalist mechanism* is relatively straightforward, the *cultural-identitarian logic* is more complicated. Consequently, more space is devoted to the latter, and the underlying social psychological mechanism is developed in a separate paragraph. Section three is devoted to Western European traditional cleavage structures and the role of value conflicts in their transformation since the 1970s.

² The two countries left aside for the moment are Great Britain and Germany. Apart from their limited success compared to the four other countries, the British National Party (BNP) and the German Republikaner (REP) have a much clearer anti-system profile, which is one of my distinguishing criterions. The Front National can be considered at the margin, but as our media analysis has made clear, Le Pen adopts a populist strategy in which he claims to endorse "real democracy".

The six countries included in the project have been chosen according to several criteria. Hence, three large and three small countries have been included, the latter having a long tradition of world market integration, resulting in compensatory strategies. Further, the countries differ in their model of citizenship. Of the countries examined in this paper, France represents the republican model, the Netherlands the multicultural model and Austria and Switzerland the ethnical model.

Here, the *impact of cleavage structures* on the mobilization of right-wing populist parties' exclusionary identity conception are discussed. In section four I go on to develop the second, *political logic* of right-wing populist parties' mobilization in the 1990s. This builds on their strategic flexibility and is meant to underpin the hypothesis that right-wing populist parties have been more successful than others in mobilizing the potentials deriving from globalization and from the weakening of traditional cleavages. In the fifth section, the empirical analysis of political space in the four countries is presented. The results lend qualified support to the presumed convergence in right-wing populist's programmatic profile. Specifically, they indicate that the proposed cultural-identitarian potential from globalization, in interplay with the political logic of mobilization, seem to play a more important role than the economic potential in most countries so far.

2. Globalization and new political potentials

The economic logic

Although there is no single and uncontested definition of globalization, for the present purposes it can be understood broadly as a spatial widening and as an intensification of regional or global economic and cultural interactions.³ On the economic side, it can be assumed that intensified financial interactions and increasing international trade intensify competition on the labor market for less qualified employees. As such, these effects of economic globalization on the economic structure and employment opportunities are not easy to distinguish from the general process of modernization which was in Kitschelt and McGann's (1995) focus. But as an acceleration of modernization, globalization and also europeanization are likely to intensify new social divisions (see Kriesi 2000, Esping-Andersen 1999). The "losers" of this process are lower-skilled individuals who either have increasing difficulty in competing on the labor market, or who face a relative decline in real income,

³ This definition is close to the one employed by Goldblatt and his colleagues, according to which "Globalization denotes a shift in the spatial form and extent of human organization and interaction to a *transcontinental* or *interregional* level. It involves a stretching of social relations across time and space such that day-to-day activities are increasingly influenced by events happening on the other side of the globe and the practices and decisions of highly localized groups and institutions can have significant global reverberations" (Goldblatt, Held, McGrew, Perraton 1997: 271). As is evident from this definition, globalization is not merely an economic phenomenon. For reasons which will become apparent later on, the debate about how "real" globalization actually is need not concern us here. For an overview of this debate, see Held and McGrew (2000).

depending on a country's politico-economic system (Scharpf 2000: 68-124).⁴ Those left behind by modernization could well come to constitute what Dahrendorf (1988) has called a "new underclass", as opposed to the "majority class".

Evidently, globalization is only a contributing factor to modernization. Since both processes have by and large the same consequences and affect the same social groups, it is not evident why an anti-globalist potential should automatically follow. The form a political reaction to structural economic changes takes, depends heavily on how this process is perceived and interpreted by the social groups affected by it, and also society at large. Whereas an opposition to modernization in general could constitute an anti-capitalist potential, attributing growing difficulties on the labor market to economic globalization is more likely to result in a protectionist, anti-globalist potential. Which of the two forms takes precedence then depends on how they are mobilized by political actors. In this respect, even most established political actors have used the structural imperatives of globalization or European integration as an argument to counter opposition to unpopular measures, such as budgetary rigor or welfare state retrenchment in the 1990s. Consequently, it has not proven very difficult for right-wing populist parties to find resonance in propagating a "return of the political" as against the structural imperatives of globalization.

An anti-establishment strategy building on issues related to globalization is promising because national economic and social policy is becoming less effective as a consequence of the imperatives of economic globalization on the one hand, and of re-regulation by international or supra-national organizations on the other hand, most notably the European Union. As a consequence, a real problem of legitimacy arises, since "Governments must increasingly avoid policy choices that would be both domestically popular and economically feasible out of respect for GATT rules and European law or as a result of decisions made by the WTO, the European Commission, or the European Court of Justice" (Scharpf 2000: 116; similarly Mény and Surel 2000). At the same time, the loss of effectiveness of national economic and social policy makes the intensity of the conflict between labor and capital decline (Zürn 2001: 120).

⁴ On the different trends in inequality, see also Alderson and Beckfield (2004). According to this analysis, overall inequality measures can rise due to various, qualitatively different distributional trends. As far as the countries included in our analysis are concerned, the share of households at the lowest end of the post-redistribution income scale has risen in Great Britain, Austria, the Netherlands and slightly in Switzerland since the 1970s or 1980s, whereas Germany and France do not display such a clear trend. For a more detailed theoretical discussion on globalization and inequality, see Alderson and Nielsen (2002).

This narrowing of the scope of government intervention, I hypothesize, results in a national-protectionist potential related to globalization. This potential corresponds to a first, economic-utilitarian logic of right-wing populist anti-establishment mobilization.

The cultural-identitarian logic

The second mechanism is cultural, or, more precisely, has to do with identities. Identities can be understood here as “[...] sets of meanings people hold for themselves that define ›what it means‹ to be who they are as persons, as role occupants, and as group members” (Burke 2004: 5).⁵ The development of the identity-related potential dates back to the 1970s, when new political issues arose that had more to do with values and life-styles than with traditional, materialist questions of conflict. As Inglehart (1977) has put it, a “silent revolution” took place that led segments of society to question traditional societal values and forms of politics. As a result, according to Inglehart, a “postmodern political conflict” has developed, which was initially described as an opposition between materialist and post-materialist values. However, the materialist-postmaterialist-scale used to measure these attitude changes relate more to different political styles – one being elite-directed and one being elite-challenging – as well as more generally people’s attitudes towards state authority. This was indeed a central conflict in the 1970s, when the New Social Movements challenged established politics (Offe 1985). It also gave rise to a neo-conservative or elitist counter-reaction, whose proponents saw democratic stability endangered by these developments (for instance Crozier, Huntington, Watanuki 1975). David Held has referred to this phase as one of a “polarization of political ideals” (Held 1996: Ch. 7).

However, differing somewhat from this initial emphasis on political styles, the resulting conflicts are now more often described as cultural and value-based in character. As Flanagan and Lee (2003) have recently shown, an opposition between “libertarian” and “authoritarian” values continues to polarize the inhabitants of advanced industrial countries. What can this value opposition be traced to? Flanagan and Lee (2003) conceive the shift from authoritarian to libertarian values as representing a long-term process of secularization, that leads from theism over modernism to postmodernism. In theism, the localization of authority is external and transcendental, and truth and morality are based on absolute principles. In modernism, it

⁵ Other conceptions of identity for instance use the term either as a general reference to culture, resulting in an understanding of identity and ethnicity as more or less the same thing, or to refer exclusively to what will be discussed as social identity later on, namely the identification with a collectivity or social category (see Stryker, Burke 2000: 284). For an illuminating account on the multiple sources of identity which can provide people with meaning, see Taylor (1992).

is still external, and universal, but based in and constructed by society. Finally, in postmodernism, the location of authority “has become internal and individual” (Flanagan, Lee 2003: 237). The authors conceive the resulting cultural conflict as a result of the mobilization and countermobilization around the new social issues that have replaced economic issues on the political agenda. They can show in a factor analysis including twenty issues, and based on data from twelve countries, that libertarian values on the one hand, and authoritarian values on the other, represent two consistent clusters of attitudes from three domains, which I briefly summarize here:

1. *The outer societal domain.* At the authoritarian end of this scale values such as authority, loyalty and dutifulness are found, whereas on the libertarian end, autonomy, equality and freedom are stressed.
2. *The inner cognitive domain or intellect.* This mainly circles around conformism/non-conformism, open and closed mindedness, and the importance attributed to God.
3. *The relational and emotional facet.* This evolves around the relationship with other human beings, where libertarians stress self-development and -realization as well as pursuing personal interests. Authoritarians, on the other hand, stress group loyalties and traditional moral values (Flanagan, Lee 2003: 238).

I now want to turn to the identity-aspect of these value oppositions. On the libertarian side, it is rather apparent what “identity politics” have to do with identity, that is, the fight for the recognition of difference, for example in terms of lifestyle, gender or sexuality.⁶ The aims of these movements are often related to their members’ identities, as in the examples just cited. This is maybe less the case in the peace or the ecology movement, but what characterizes all New Social Movements is that the very constitution of a movement striving for certain goals entails a process of collective identity formation and maintenance (see Melucci 1995, Habermas 1992: Ch. 8). This second identity-related aspect of social movements will play an important role in my discussion of cleavage formation in the next section.

As is not so often noted, the movements of the right – such as religious, fundamentalist and nationalist movements – are equally manifestations of identity politics, and are just as

⁶ Taylor (1992: Ch. 2), in his discussion of the various sources of identity, conceives “striving for something” – for example women in the emancipation movement – as bearing on the identity of those involved in that they fight against external barriers which curtailed their authentic desires and attitudes, which are an aspect of their identity.

much concerned with *recognition*, as Calhoun (1994: 22f.) points out.⁷ Calhoun further criticizes the notion of identity politics being a new phenomenon which is, as Inglehart has argued, a product of rising affluence. In his view, for example nineteenth century European nationalism represents a rather “old” form of identity politics.

Here, I also follow Kriesi (1999) in conceiving the mobilization of the populist right as part of a broader movement of the right, which has its origin in broad societal transformations that oppose social groups for structural and cultural reasons. At the same time, I prefer the term populist right to radical right, since I would argue that what distinguishes the two is that the former is more moderate, since it is not in principle opposed to liberal democracy. Because liberal democracy is an almost universal value today (see Fuchs et al. 1995), this allows the populist right to mobilize beyond the more narrow radical right constituency.

The fact that movements of the right are also manifestations of identity politics is perhaps not so evident since the underlying pattern is more diffuse. Whereas the libertarian’s quest for recognition is often associated with specific goals, such as those which the New Social Movements have been fighting for, the traditionalist-authoritarian pattern is essentially conservative and reactive, rather than liberating. As a conservative movement, its values and goals are probably more diffuse and less prone to a grassroots mobilization, and therefore more dependent on political elites than the libertarian goals. For this reason, I assume the formation of a collective identity to be more difficult for the movements of the right than for the movements of the libertarian left.

A durable organization of collective interests, however, always involves the construction of a collective identity, as Cleavage-theory teaches us. This is a point I will develop in more detail in the next section. For the time being, I assume that for the traditionalist or authoritarian potential to be politicized in a way that mobilizes broad segments of society, it probably has to be connected with more concrete political conflicts which are conducive to collective identity formation.

To summarize, I suggest that the potential represented by citizens on the “authoritarian” pole of this societal divide as one insisting on the defense of traditional social values, laying

⁷ For a detailed account of the concept of recognition, see Honneth (2003) who derives the concept both from philosophy and from social psychology. Honneth argues that love, justice and appreciation are three forms of recognition which are necessary for a well-balanced conception of the self. Fraser (2001: 88-94), in her discussion of Honneth’s approach, refers to the new conflicts after the shift of the “center of gravity” of political culture from redistribution to recognition as the “politics of status”.

emphasis on community and guiding norms. This “communitarian” potential, I would argue, comes from the waning of traditional social bonds, for example driven by general processes of individualization and transformation of traditional family structures, the weakening of class identities which are tied to traditional social cleavages, and other reference groups.

It is likely that globalization has contributed to or has catalyzed the communitarian potential in at least two ways. First, due to a historically unparalleled intensity and speed of global cultural communications, today “People everywhere are exposed to the values of other cultures as never before” (Held, McGrew 2000: 17). Second, and probably even more important in our context, immigration has gradually made European societies more multicultural. Thus, interaction with people from different cultural backgrounds is more directly and locally experienced and more present in day-to-day life as well as in the media. Even if both facts do not necessarily challenge identity by themselves, increasing interaction does highlight differences and therefore presents an opportunity for projects of exclusionary community construction (see for instance Loch, Heitmeyer 2001: 19, Fraser 2001: 88-94). In the next sub-section, I will draw on social psychology to show on what premises such a process of collective identity construction rests.

Migration can be conceived as an aspect of globalization (Held et al. 1999: Ch. 6), even if this is debatable since immigration into Europe has not necessarily coincided with the economic aspects of globalization, and has not risen in the same time frame either (Nayyar 2002). What matters more is that intellectual currents of the European New Right have explicitly drawn the connection between neo-liberalism, globalization and immigration. Seemingly, an ideological cluster has emerged which links opposition to these phenomena to a defense of tradition and community, as Antonio (2000: 57) summarizes:

“[...] New Right opposition to African, Middle Eastern, or Asian immigration stresses the evils of capitalist globalization, resistance to cultural homogenization, and defense of cultural identity and difference. Their pleas for ›ethnopluralism‹ transmute plans to repatriate immigrants into a left-sounding anti-imperialist strategy championing the autonomy of all cultural groups and their right to exert sovereignty in their living space. Claiming to counter ›antiwhite racism‹, they argue that multiculturalism serves global capitalism’s merciless leveling and that only exclusionary monoculture nurtures genuine cultural diversity.”

Thus, traditional moral values, anti-immigrant and anti-neoliberal attitudes form an ideological pattern that is at the core of the arising potential in opposition to globalization. Globalization and immigration are the political issues par excellence which can give the

diffuse communitarian quest for recognition and the authoritarian-traditionalist value-pattern a tangible content. These issues are also highly suitable for an anti-political-establishment discourse, which is likely to contribute to a process of collective identity formation as a necessary precondition for political mobilization.

The social-psychological bases of identity politics and in-group vs. out-group formation

In a way similar to my argument, authors such as Loch and Heitmeyer (2001: 19) have argued that authoritarian developments in our time are manifestations of collective identity formation. However, there are differing conceptions in social psychology on what the prerequisites are for such a process to start off. Here, I will draw mainly on Social identity theory, building on the work of Henri Tajfel (1982).

At the heart of the mechanism of exclusionary identity formation as I have formulated it lies the social aspect of identity. The distinction between personal and social identity is summarized by Monroe et al. (2000 : 421) as follows: “Broadly defined, social identity refers to the social categories, attributes, or components of the self-concept that are shared with others and therefore define individuals as being similar to others. In contrast, personal identity is made up of those attributes that mark an individual as distinct from all others.”

Social identity theory now seems to suggest that there is something like a natural propensity of humans to group-formation and to the demarcation from others. This is because social groups provide members with social identities, whose maintenance is important for individual’s positive self-esteem (Tajfel 1982: Ch. 5).⁸ Arguably, this is also one of the aspects central to the concept of recognition, as in Honneth’s (2003) account. As Tajfel (1982: Ch. 6) has shown in the experiments underlying his “minimal group paradigm”, and as subsequent research has validated, even a random assignment of individuals to different groups leads them to exaggerate between-group differences and to downplay within-group differences. Furthermore, groups not only favor their in-group in the distribution of resources, over and above this they try to maximize the differences in allocation even if there is no personal gain at stake. Consequently, an individual interest, material gain or concrete conflict over resources, which “realistic group conflict theory” posits, is not necessary to provoke group-formation and the development of prejudice towards out-groups, as Monroe et al. (2000: 435) summarize: “Unlike realistic group conflict theory, social identity theory argues

⁸ Similarly, Burke (2004: 10) argues that social identities have a bearing on feelings of self-worth. This mechanism is central in various, otherwise competing social psychological theories linking identity to group formation and intergroup conflict. See the overview in Monroe et al. (2000).

that the self-esteem that individuals receive from evaluating the in-group (and thus themselves) positively in relation to the out-group is enough to drive self-identification and intergroup discrimination.”

Following (realistic) group conflict theories, a number of studies have linked the phenomenon of rising prejudice towards foreigners among segments of western societies to economic and other interests, thereby trying to view prejudice as a rationalistic mechanism similar and partially overlapping with my first, economic mechanism related to globalization. In their view, prejudice is a response to perceived group threat, either in terms of competition for scarce resources, or in terms of a threat to established group privileges, or to the identity of the group (Quillian 1995, Falomir-Pichastor et al. 2004).

However, while Quillian’s analysis indeed shows that prejudice is driven by the size of the foreign population and by a difficult economic situation in the particular country, we know little from his analysis about the mechanism that brings prejudices about, except that it cannot be explained by individual factors.⁹ The empirical findings are therefore compatible with different explanations. While I find the assumption of a direct competition between immigrants and nationals for scarce resources, as it is posited in realistic group conflict theory, rather unlikely in the European context,¹⁰ I would rather draw on Social identity theory, which offers a different interpretation. The main conclusion from Tajfel’s research then seems to me that out-group stereotyping and discrimination are relatively open to manipulation, even if the categories groups use to compare themselves with one another have to be relevant to them. Consequently, in-group/out-group perceptions can be constructed by political entrepreneurs, if the latter manage to link them to specific issues.

We then of course have to go on to ask how and why people differ in their propensity to adopt negative out-group stereotypes, and why some are consequently mobilized by political actors promoting an exclusionary ethnic community project, while others are not. Building on conceptions from social psychology which link identity and social structure (House, Mortimer 1990, Morgan, Schwalbe 1990, Stryker, Burke 2000, Burke 2004), it seems plausible to assume that identity politics do have a relation to social structural position. For one thing, exclusionary group formation seems to be influenced by insecurity, since more refined

⁹ It is important to note that the approach does not posit an individual-level experience of competition or threat, but focuses on group prerogatives (Quillian 1995: 588-589). For a discussion of these theories in the context of competing theories on group conflict, see Olzak (1992: Ch. 2-3).

¹⁰ Here, I converge with Kitschelt (2001: 426-436) who argues that rationalist theories of ethnic mobilization identify the right groups which display anti-immigrant attitudes, but for the wrong reasons, since there is little evidence of competitive processes between immigrants and natives on the labor market. Kitschelt therefore concludes that this perception is a result of projection.

experiments have shown that self-esteem has an impact on its potential as an intermittent variable (Petersen, Blank 2003). Feelings of insecurity – material or status-related – are most probably more diffused in some social structural positions than in others. In this sense, the cultural-identitarian potential is linked to the economic potential developed before.

Secondly, it can be assumed that different social groups have differing values and belief systems which are partially captured by the libertarian-authoritarian divide, and make them more or less open for the process of exclusionary collective identity formation sketched out above. However, contrary to political conflicts structured by cleavages, it has so far not been possible to fully identify the social-structural correlates of value oppositions, a point to which I will return in the next section. Cleavage structures also play an important role in structuring the potentials for a mobilization based on broad ascriptive categories, as I now want to show.

3. The new political potentials and cleavage structures

The formation and transformation of cleavages and identities

The formation of party systems in Europe has been structured by historical cleavages, which have resulted from the national and industrial revolutions by the 1920s, when the full mobilization of electorates was completed. These cleavages have subsequently structured political competition at least until the 1960s (Lipset, Rokkan 1990 [1967], Rokkan 2000). While there is great variance across countries in Western Europe as far as the first three cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan are concerned, namely those between center and periphery, between state and church, as well as between primary and secondary sector, the class cleavage is what makes party systems in Europe alike. Still, the impact of the class divide on these party systems has varied greatly from country to country. Its strength and character has been heavily determined by the older cleavages and the loyalties and identities that they entailed (Rokkan 2000: 277-412, Bartolini 2000: Ch. 8).

According to the often quoted definition of Bartolini and Mair (1990: 213-220), a cleavage can be conceptualized as comprising three elements: (1) An empirical element, which anchors it in *social structure*, (2) an element of *collective identity* of this social group, and (3) an *organizational manifestation* in the form of an organization or collective action of those concerned. As this definition makes clear, existing cleavages structure new conflicts through the collective identities and organizational loyalties which they already entail. Lipset

and Rokkan have referred to this as the “narrowing of the support market” for political parties, leading to the “freezing” of the major party alternatives (Lipset, Rokkan 1990: 134-5). As Sartori (1968), and, more recently, Mair (2001) have made clear, it is not so much the conflicts tied to the cleavages which have frozen into place, but the shape of the party systems. Once party systems are “structurally consolidated”, in Sartori’s terms, new generations of voters are socialized into the conflict structure of the existing party system, which thereby helps to reproduce the collective identities represented by the cleavages. Cleavages, therefore, have a structuring power beyond the concrete conflicts which have originally brought them into being. As Bartolini and Mair (1990: 218) put it, they offer individuals pre-existing alternatives for their social identity and political integration.

As Kriesi and Duyvendak (1995: 5-10) have noted, this results in a zero-sum relationship between old and potentially new cleavages. The greater the degree of social closure of the groups separated by a cleavage, and the less pacified the conflicts associated with this cleavage, the smaller the mobilization potential of new conflicts. Arguably, both of these elements impinge on the group awareness of the group question, and thus on the *intensity of the group identity underlying a cleavage*. In line with this assumption, I would claim that moving from “objective” common interests to the creation of a subjective collective identity is the most difficult and therefore the most crucial aspect in cleavage formation.¹¹ The zero-sum relationship between old and new cleavages is therefore essentially a *zero-sum relationship between old and new group identities*. Although the importance of the collective identity element of cleavages is generally acknowledged, it is then often neglected in empirical analysis due to the difficulties of measuring collective identity.¹²

Cleavages are transformed as new conflicts are integrated into the existing party system. Due to persisting group identities, change is gradual. New political conflicts are more likely to result in a restructuring of existing conflicts and electoral alignments than in the formation of completely new cleavages which cross-cut the old ones. In other words, as old relationships

¹¹ This is underlined by the historical experience of the mobilization of the political left. As Rueschemeyer, Huber Stephens, and Stephens (1992) show for a large variety of countries, the mobilization of the working class was difficult in the countryside, and succeeded only when industrialization led to a spatial concentration of workers, which enabled the development of a collective identity. This process is also discussed in Bartolini (2000: Ch. 3). Honneth offers a theoretical discussion of the role of collective identity in political mobilization (Honneth 2003: Chapter 8).

¹² Thus, Bartolini (2000), despite insisting on taking into account all three elements of a cleavage, finds himself unable to measure this second element in a meaningful way. Knutsen and Scarbrough (1995) have attempted to include values as a manifestation of collective identity, but I have doubts concerning the adequacy of their operationalization. It turns out that only the Netherlands conform to the model of cleavage-dominated voting, whereas in the other countries, voting choice is most often *not* structured by the three elements a cleavage comprises, and this was already the case as far back as the 1970s.

between social groups are weakened in a process of *dealignment*, at the same time, in a process of *realignment*, new links are formed between groups of voters and parties.¹³

There is some evidence to suggest that the structuring power of the *traditional* political cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan has been waning, as Franklin et al. (1992: 286) as well as Knutsen and Scarbrough (1995) have shown for the class cleavage. A new potential for group identities could therefore arise. On the other hand, there is of course also evidence suggesting that despite the decline of the traditional state-market cleavage, party preferences continue to have a structural basis. Studies using more refined class schemata better suited to detect the structural basis of conflicts in the post-industrial era are able to show that there is no general trend according to which the effect of social structure on voting choice is declining (Nieuwbeerta, de Graaf 1999, Kriesi 1998, Müller 1999, Elff 2002, Lachat 2003).

However, the conflicts in the post-industrial era are very much structured by value oppositions, resulting in a profound transformation of the traditional state-market cleavage. It is therefore highly questionable if we are still examining the same cleavage. A change in the socio-structural basis of a cleavage which can only be detected using a more refined class schema implies that at least one of the cleavage's constitutive elements has been transformed. And presumably, what constitutes the collective identity of the group involved has also been transformed in the realignment process. Consequently, we do not know if the new group identities deriving from this process of realignment are of the same intensity as those embodied in the traditional cleavages. As I will argue in the next section, this can not be expected to be the case concerning the transformed class cleavage. Therefore, the decline of the traditional cleavages has probably opened the way for new group identities to form.

To be able to identify the present meaning and content of a given cleavage, we have to look at the political conflicts which actually structure political competition and then, later on, tie them to traditional cleavages. In other words, we have to connect the demand side of political competition – voters socio-structural profile, their values and preferences – with the supply side of political competition – the policy positions parties advocate in order to collect votes. In this paper, the analysis is restricted to the supply side of this process. I will start with a discussion of the transformation of the left-right-cleavage by the advent of culture- or identity-related conflicts on the political agenda, and then go on to develop expectations as to

¹³ Even though this is a gradual process, processes of realignment can manifest themselves rather eruptively in particular elections, due to the inertia that cleavages introduce in voter alignments, as Martin's (2000) reformulation of realignment theory makes clear.

how these conflicts have been transformed by the new potentials related to globalization, which were discussed in the preceding section. The final step is then to empirically verify if right-wing populist parties' issue-positions correspond to the expected potentials.

The transformation of cleavages, the advent of value-based conflicts in the 1980s, and arising potentials for exclusionary nationalist mobilization

After the left-right divide had long been structured by distributive issues, the movements' of the left politicization of value and identity issues, which were discussed in the preceding section, have transformed the meaning of this opposition. Dalton, Flanagan, and Beck (1984), together with Inglehart (1984), claimed early on that identity- and lifestyle-politics were transforming the traditional left-right divide and therefore blurring the socio-structural basis of voting choice. In a similar vein, Kitschelt (1994) has then empirically shown that in the 1980s, the value divide had created a two-dimensional political space in European party systems. Cross-cutting the "old" distributional axis, a line of conflict opposing libertarian and authoritarian values had come to structure the attitudes of voters. The value conflict discussed in the previous section, often referred to as the "politics of identity", had therefore manifested itself in the content of political conflict. At the heart of this conflict, in Kitschelt's account, are different conceptions of community, where the values of equality and liberty in a self-organized community form the one pole, while on the opposite pole, conceptions of community are structured by values of paternalism and corporatism (Kitschelt 1994: 9-12).

This conception is quite similar to the somewhat broader pattern that Flanagan and Lee (2003) have detected. As a variety of sources of the policy positions of political parties show, political space in advanced western democracies is at least two, if not three-dimensional (Warwick 2002).¹⁴ On the political left, the prominence of libertarian political issues has given rise to the establishment of Green parties and a transformation of Social Democratic parties early on in the 1980s, as Kitschelt (1994) has shown. As a result of this change, they have attracted an increasing number of votes from the middle class, especially in certain constituencies of it such as among the so-called social-cultural professionals (Kriesi 1993, 1998, Müller 1999).

¹⁴ However, the new value opposition so far has only been discussed in relation to the traditional class cleavage. At least in some countries this cleavage has been cross-cut by a religious divide, which has always primarily been a value divide, including relatively "modern" issues such as the right to divorce and abortion, as Lipset and Rokkan (1990: 101-2) underline. Especially since Flanagan and Lee (2003) conceive the authoritarian-libertarian value divide as a consequence of secularization, this conflict also has to be analytically linked to the religious cleavage.

On the political right, however, the impact of this new axis of conflict has had less of a uniform impact, although Kitschelt and McGann (1995) have argued that the opposite pole on the new libertarian-authoritarian axis of conflict is represented by radical right parties. Similarly, in Ignazi's (1996, 2003) interpretation, radical right parties are a "by-product of a Silent Counter-revolution", in other words an equivalent on the right to Inglehart's "Silent Revolution". However, the process these authors sketch out for the rise of the radical right is much more country-specific than the process on the left, although there too, there were differences in the timing of the emergence of Green parties.¹⁵

Kitschelt and McGann's (1995: Ch. 1) explicit differentiation of European Radical Right-wing parties exemplifies the heterogeneity of this category. In the case of their "winning formula" of the New Radical Right, authoritarian and pro-market appeals are combined in a programmatic profile which seems somewhat contradictory, but allows parties such as the Front National to appeal to losers of modernization, as well as to disenchanted segments of the middle class. In other cases, the model is specified in that party systems and political economies characterized by patronage make a populist-statist strategy most successful, as in the case of the Austrian FPÖ or the Italian Lega Nord. In still other cases, a "welfare chauvinist" strategy is most promising. Due to these differences in the programmatic profile of the radical right, it is debatable if its rise can be considered an equivalent transformation of the political right to that of the left in its move towards libertarian positions.

I would argue that in the 1980s, the "winning formula" of right-wing populist parties consisted not so much in a specific programmatic profile, but in a *strategic flexibility*, which allowed them to capture issues that other parties had neglected. Right-wing populist parties' main commonalities in their first mobilization phase in the 1980s were, therefore, primarily their anti-establishment discourse (Betz 1998 and the country chapters in Betz and Immerfall 1998, Schedler 1996). This was combinable with advocating issues which the established parties did not take up, in the 1980s for example neo-liberal demands (in the domestic realm), and allowed right-wing populist parties to present themselves as "anti-cartel-parties" in Katz and Mair's (1995) terminology.¹⁶ Immigration policies, on the other hand, did not play a prominent role until the early 1990s (Betz 2004: Ch. 2).

¹⁵ For an explanation linking this to the positions of the established parties, see Hug (2001).

¹⁶ Kitschelt (2000) has vividly criticized this view, arguing that parties always have an interest in exiting the cartel in order to attract votes. However, his argument is inconsistent since a few pages on, he traces dissatisfaction with parties to the very non-responsiveness that Katz and Mair (1995) can be assumed to have in mind: „Dissatisfaction with parties does not originate in their new capacity to form cartels and dissociate themselves from their voters, but [...] in the political-economic agenda of policy-making, confronting parties with inevitable trade-offs among objectives voters would like to maximize jointly [...]“ (Kitschelt 2000: 160).

In addition to their strategic flexibility, right-wing populist parties share a second commonality, which has much to do with the first: A hierarchical internal structure, setting them apart from the pluralist character of the established parties and allowing them to repeatedly revert their policy-positions in response to sentiments in the populace, as the vast country-specific literature on their programmatic stances indicates. This argument is supported by the fact that where a pre-existing, established party underwent a transformation to a populist party, as in the case of the Austrian FPÖ or the Swiss SVP, their rise was accompanied by a change in internal organization to build up hierarchical structures allowing a charismatic leader to dominate the party. This is apparent from Ignazi's (2003: 111-116) analysis of the Austrian case as well as from the Swiss experience, where Blocher curbed internal pluralism and managed to dominate first the Zurich section of the SVP and then the national party structure (Meienberg et al. 2004).

All in all, while the value divide has undoubtedly structured political conflict in European party systems since the 1980s, the evidence so far suggests that it has not developed into a structural conflict. Though differences in value preferences can be traced to positions in the social structure, once class schemata are for example modified to take into account differences in the work logic, Kriesi (1998) states that value positions have an impact beyond this, which cannot be explained by social-structural categories. This then either implies that our concepts to describe the social structure have to be modified to detect the new cleavage's structural underpinnings, or that we are still in a process of realignment, and that a new cleavage has not yet consolidated. As Dalton, Flanagan, and Beck (1984: 474) have argued early on, issue-group divides are less likely to "freeze", in Lipset and Rokkan's metaphor, than social-group divides, because of their smaller potential of forming group identifications linked to mass organizations.¹⁷

However, I would tentatively suggest that the transformation of the traditional left-right distributional cleavage by the advent of identity politics has been more prone to the formation of new collective identities on the libertarian left than on the right of the political spectrum. Beyond entailing a process of collective identity-building in order to organize and to maintain their organization, the movements of the left have probably, by way of their societal

Though I admit that Katz and Mair's argument as to why cartellization occurs (e.g. because parties become more and more "parties of the state" instead of being organizations arising from civil society and aiming to keep the state responsive to citizens) may be unconvincing, the fact that they do not always or *cannot* always adequately represent the preferences of the citizenry, would seem less controversial to me.

¹⁷ Similarly, regarding the divisions within the new middle class, which some class schemes have integrated, Kriesi (1998: 173) notes that without knowing future mobility patterns, we cannot say much yet about the degree of closure of these groups.

resonance, led to the formation of collective identities of larger segments of society holding libertarian values – to the extent that these segments identify with the goals of these movements.

Arguably, on the “right side” of European party systems, collective identities have been much less structured by the libertarian-authoritarian value divide than on the libertarian left. On a theoretical level, the formation of a collective identity merging identities related to the old distributional cleavage with those related to authoritarian values is made more difficult by the fact that the traditionalist-authoritarian movement is one of opposition. Thus, contrary to the mobilization of New Social Movements, the movements of the right are primarily exemplified by political parties, and therefore heavily elite-driven. Their more diffuse set of values and defensive political goals is presumably rather difficult to organize under a common programmatic pole which could form a collective identity of these segments of society – unless skillful politicians manage to create such an identity, building on the social psychological mechanisms I have discussed.

Building on the assumptions so far, we can now consider their consequences for the mobilizing potential of broader categories such as the exclusionary national identity category which right-wing populist parties propagate. To briefly recapitulate: The first assumption, in line with what most evidence suggests, is that the collective identities associated with *traditional* cleavages have weakened. The second assumption is that whatever social relations we might find to underlie the value divides which have transformed these traditional cleavages, these new groups are likely to be characterized by less social closure than in the case of the structural basis of traditional cleavages. Further, as argued just before, building on the difference between the collective identity potential lying in the left-libertarian movements’ fight for recognition as opposed to the one deriving from the right-wing authoritarian counter-movement, it can be assumed that right-wing authoritarian movements have not resulted in the formation of a social identity to the same degree as left-libertarian movements have.

This has important consequences for the mobilizing potential of broader categories such as an exclusionary national identity because identities related to traditional cleavages based on class and religion have typically cross-cut such broader ascriptive or identity categories. Therefore, if these cleavages lose their structuring power, this can enable identity and ethnic categories to manifest themselves or to resurface in politics – this is at least what the zero-sum relationship between old and new identities would lead us to expect.

This proposition is supported by students of ethnic conflicts, who stress the fact that “Ethnicity competes with other large-scale bases of organization, notably class mobilization, for the loyalty, time, and resources of potential members” (Olzac 1992: 18). In the context of waning traditional cleavages, political campaigns then play an important role in the mobilization of such identities, as Monroe et al. (2000 : 441) point out, since from a social psychological point of view, “Campaigns not only draw on existing groups and group bias but also construct new coalitions from latent identity categories.” If the assumption regarding the differences in the social identity formation potential of left and right movements is correct, we would expect broad ascriptive identity categories to play a potentially more important role for people holding authoritarian values than those holding libertarian values.

4. Coupling the anti-establishment discourse with the opposition to globalization: Opportunity structures for right-wing populist parties in the 1990s

As I have argued earlier on, globalization creates new potentials which could perpetuate the realignment process under course since the 1980s and contribute to the formation of a new cleavage. Whether or not right-wing populist parties are successful at mobilizing the anti-globalist potential sketched out above depends on a variety of factors, most importantly the positions of the established parties. Where these parties defend traditional social values and do not leave the subject of immigration to marginal political actors, right-wing populist parties are presumably less successful in mobilizing the potential described above. A central thesis underlying my argument, however, is that marginal political actors are strengthened by globalization due to the established parties’ inability to take a clear position on the new axis of conflict between integration and demarcation. Since they have not found it possible to form a sustainable alliance of different economic and cultural interests in favor of or against globalization, they tend to take a moderately pro-integration position (Kriesi 2000: 17).

This has two important consequences: First of all, in such a situation, the strategic flexibility which right-wing populist parties have already displayed in the 1980s becomes their prime advantage, since it opens the way for actors advocating policies which the established parties refrain from. Here, the two mechanisms related to globalization, the economic and the cultural-identitarian, merge with the third decisive factor, the *political logic*

of their mobilization, namely their anti-establishment discourse, in which they portray themselves as anti-cartel-parties and defenders of real democracy. As long as they are not in government, this is a feasible strategy – once they are in government, this turns out to be a problem, since they cannot adopt their propositions.¹⁸

Secondly, and more generally, the decline of importance of distributional issues contributes to the weakening of the identities related to the state-market-cleavage and opens political space for value- and identity-politics. Therefore, globalization is likely to contribute directly to the weakening of traditional cleavages and to their adaptation to new conflicts. Political issues related to identity can thereby achieve new room. For the left-libertarian movements such issues have often evolved around the recognition of difference, whereas for the movements of the right, it has so far often manifested itself in the “resurfacing” of older identity categories such as national identity and culture. This resurfacing is made possible by the proposed zero-sum relationship between old and new cleavages and the identities these entail. To put it in Schattschneider’s (1975: 69) famous metaphor of the political organization being the mobilization of bias, these identity-related issues are no longer “organized out of politics” by parties being receptive mainly to distributional conflicts.

I now want to turn to the more specific expectations regarding the new line of conflict structured by globalization. Apart from the right-wing populist parties’ organizational advantages which allow them to set issues related to globalization on the political agenda, and thereby to exploit the new potentials, there are of course also substantial affinities between the libertarian-authoritarian divide and the proposed new demarcation-integration line. Taking Kitschelt’s (1994, 1995) model as appoint of departure, we can develop expectations regarding the attitudes of parties towards globalization and europeanization. These are both theoretical, as well as conforming to some of the rare evidence on the association between parties positioning on the libertarian-authoritarian axis and their attitude towards European integration, based on country-expert evaluations (Hooghe, Marks, Wilson 2002).

In Kitschelt’s analysis of the 1980s, Social democratic and Green parties combine an economically statist position with an emphasis on libertarian values. The libertarian position advocates universalistic values, which are likely to push Social democratic and especially Green parties towards a strategy of positive integration beyond the nation-state. This means advocating a system of economic regulation at the supra-national level, of international

¹⁸ These contradictions are analyzed by Heinisch (2003).

openness as far as culture is concerned, and in the model of a multicultural society at the domestic level (for a more detailed theoretical discussion, see Kriesi 2000).

Extreme right-wing as well as right-wing populist parties in the 1980s have taken a clear position on the authoritarian pole of the value axis, but varied in their positioning on the economic axis, in Kitschelt and McGann's (1995) analysis. At the authoritarian pole, according to Flanagan and Lee (2003), group loyalties, traditional moral values, community, cautiousness about change and the preservation of traditions are emphasized. Regarding globalization, we can expect right-wing populist parties to continue advocating these values, but at the same time to lay more emphasis on the "communitarian" conceptions, resulting in what Antonio calls "reactionary tribalism" advocated by thinkers of the New Right such as Alain de Benoist, who explicitly characterizes this position as one of "organic communitarianism" (Antonio 2000: 55, 63). Here, too, a conservative or reactionary thrust is observable, since these thinkers at the same time denounce the New Left's "cultural hegemony" (Antonio 2000: 57).

Here, the above-mentioned potential for the activation of latent identity categories and of politically constructed in-group/out-group formation comes into play, partially made possible by the decline of traditional cleavages, as I have argued. The work of Hans-Georg Betz (2002, 2004) on the discourse of right-wing extremist populist parties cogently testifies how skillful political entrepreneurs have managed to activate this "communitarian" potential. As far as more specific policy positions are concerned, which are in tune with these identity-appeals, I have proposed two mechanisms. The one is linked to increased economic competition and modernization, leading to support for protectionist policies in the outer domain, even if these parties may continue to advocate anti-statist positions in the domestic realm. The second mechanism, related to cultural globalization but mainly a product of political construction, leads people to attribute various problems such as rising insecurity and crime to immigration, thereby supporting policies in favor of law and order. Together, the two mechanisms are expected to lead to the support for a position of comprehensive national demarcation.

In the following analysis of political space in six countries, it will be possible to track right-wing populist parties' positions on these issues over four elections in France, Switzerland, Austria, and the Netherlands. To the extent that the Front National, the Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP), the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ) and the list Pim Fortuyn have moved away from a country-specific anti-establishment strategy and attempt to mobilize the

structural potentials arising from globalization, their programmatic profile is expected to be similar. Due to limitations of space and the theoretical assumptions developed, the following discussion will focus on general trends and mainly on *similarities* between right-wing populist parties, and discount most country-specific factors accounting for *differences* between the countries under examination.

5. Right-wing populist parties in the political space of the 1990s:

A convergence in programmatic profile?

Research Design

To be able to identify the lines of conflict structuring political competition in elections, we have conducted a media analysis of parties' "political offer" in the two months preceding the election for each country's first parliamentary chamber.¹⁹ In each country, a quality newspaper and a tabloid were selected – *Le Monde* and *le Parisien* for France, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and *Blick* for Switzerland, *Die Presse* and *Kronenzeitung* in Austria, *NRC Handelsblad* and *Algemeen Dagblad* in the Netherlands. In each of these countries, we selected all articles related to the electoral contest or politics in general during the last two months before Election day for three elections in the 1990s and early 2000s and for one election in the 1970s. In Holland, we additionally took into account the anticipated elections of 2003, which provides us with a second time-point for the Pim Fortuyn movement. For the last election considered in every country, we further analyzed the daily TV news broadcast on the most important channel. Due to the importance of newspaper adverts in political campaigns in Switzerland, these were also coded for each election.

The articles and transcripts were then coded sentence by sentence using the method developed by Kleinnijenhuis and his collaborators (see Kleinnijenhuis and De Ridder 1998 and Kleinnijenhuis and Pennings 2001). This method allows a coding of the relationship between political actors and between political actors and political issues. The sentences are reduced to their basic structure (so called "core sentences"), indicating its subject (a political actor) and its object (a political issue or another political actor). The direction of the relationship indicates whether the actor is in favor or opposed to the issue and is coded on a

¹⁹ In France, with the exception of the 1978 parliamentary campaign, presidential elections were analyzed. The choice of a parliamentary election for the 1970s is due to data constraints.

scale ranging from -1 to +1, with three intermediary positions. For the present purposes, only relationships between political actors and political issues are considered. The resulting number of sentences used in the analysis per country is 3424 for Austria, 3578 for France, 4786 for the Netherlands and 5006 for Switzerland.

Political actors were coded according to their party membership. In Switzerland, the Netherlands and France, small parties were grouped, such as the parties of the radical left. In Switzerland and the Netherlands, a Christian Democrat category was formed comprising all parties with this profile, while in France, the UDF category comprises several small parties as well. For the political issues, we coded between 200 categories in the case of Switzerland and almost 400 in the case of France. For the statistical analysis, they were regrouped into 13 broader categories. This is because the importance of the more specific issue categories may vary from one election to the next depending on the political agenda, making them difficult to compare over time. Furthermore, the broader categories ensure that enough observations are available for every party in a given year. In the following, the content of the 13 categories is specified. All categories have a clear direction, and actor's stance towards them can be either positive or negative. The abbreviations in brackets refer to the ones used in the figures later on:

State vs. market issues

Welfare. Expansion of the welfare state and defence against welfare state retrenchment. Tax reforms that have redistributive effects, employment programs, health care programs. Valence issues such as “against unemployment” or “against recession” were dropped if there was no specification if this was to be achieved by state intervention or by deregulation.

Environment. Protection of the environment, pollution taxes, against atomic energy.

Budget. Budgetary rigor, reduction of the state deficit, cut on expenditures, reduction of taxes that have no effects on redistribution.

Economic liberalism (ecolib). Support for deregulation, for more competition, and for privatisation. Opposition to market regulation, provided that the proposed measures do not have an impact on state expenditure – this is the distinguishing criterion from the Welfare-category. Opposition to economic protectionism in agriculture and other sectors.

Cultural issues

Cultural liberalism (cultlib). Support for the goals of the New Social Movements, with the exception of the environmental movement: Peace, solidarity with the third world, gender equality, human rights. Support for cultural diversity, international cooperation (except for the European Union), support for the United Nations. Opposition to racism, for the right to abortion and euthanasia.

Europe. Support for European integration or for EU-membership in the cases of Switzerland and Austria.

Culture. Support for education, culture, and research.

Cultural protectionism (cultprot). Patriotism, calls for national solidarity, defence of tradition and national sovereignty, traditional moral values, restrictive drug policy.

Immigration (immigr). Support of a tough immigration and integration policy, for the restriction of the number of foreigners.

Army. Support for the army and for a strong national defence, for nuclear weapons.

Security. Support for more law and order, fight against criminality and political corruption.

Residual categories

Institutional reform (instit reform). Support for various institutional reforms such as the extension of direct democratic rights, modifications in the structure of the political system, federalism and decentralization, calls for the efficiency of government and public administration, New Public Management.

Infrastructure. Support for the improvement of the infrastructure (roads, railways etc.).

The differentiation between state-market, cultural and residual issues is provided as an orientation and does not determine the empirical analysis. The economic issue categories are expected to lie on a *state vs. market axis of political conflict*. Unfortunately, regarding the category “Economic liberalism”, it has not been possible to differentiate between general liberalizing strategies and those pertaining to the international realm. As I have claimed, right-wing populist parties may favour liberalizing strategies domestically (possibly in an anti-statist strategy), but at the same time support protectionism towards the outside. However, there are too few sentences expressing favourable attitudes to protectionism, so these statements are grouped in the economic liberalism category (inverting the sign, i.e. taking it as an opposition to economic liberalism).

The categories forming part of the *cultural dimension* oppose a libertarian-universalistic and cosmopolitan point of view on the one hand and a traditionalist-communitarian stance on the other. The former is expected to comprise support for European integration as a step towards positive supranational integration. According to my theoretical expectations, cultural protectionism, and especially an anti-immigration position as a manifestation of the exclusionary identity project of right-wing populist parties are expected to lie at the opposite pole of the cultural axis. At the same time, support for the army and calls for law and order are likely to lie close to this pole of the axis. Finally, there are two residual categories which are more heterogeneous. There are no clear expectations as to infrastructure, whereas institutional reforms may be demanded by various political parties. However, since right-wing

populist parties often postulate the introduction of direct democratic rights, I do expect them to be fairly close to this category.

The data are now analysed using Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) which allows to represent the parties and the issues in the a low-dimensional space in every country. MDS allows objects to be represented graphically according to measures of similarity or dissimilarity between them (Coxon 1982, Rabinowitz 1975). In our case, for every of the 13 categories, the mean distance between the individual parties and the issues comprising the category has been calculated. To give those relationships most weight that are based on a large number of observations, a Weighted Metric Multidimensional Scaling (WMMDS) has been used.²⁰ There are always distortions between the “real” distances and their graphical representation in the low-dimensional space resulting from the MDS, but the weighting procedure means that the distances corresponding to salient relationships between parties and issues will be more accurate than less salient ones.

Results: The general pattern

The results of the analysis are presented for Austria, the Netherlands, France, and Switzerland in Figures 1 to 4. Due to the limitations of space, I will focus rather narrowly on the right-wing populist parties in the following interpretation. The reason why all parties have been included in the analysis is that we are looking at a political space which is structured by the interaction of all parties – by the party system, in other words. A possible convergence of the programmatic profile of right-wing populist parties, within the framework I have presented, then must be the expression of a broader transformation of western European party systems.

In all four countries, political space proves to be clearly two-dimensional, since the move from a one-dimensional to a two-dimensional representation results in the clearest reduction in the Raw Stress statistic, which is a measure for goodness-of-fit. This means that adding additional dimensions does not reduce Stress markedly.²¹ It has to be emphasized that the

²⁰ Weighted Metric Multidimensional Scaling can be carried out using the algorithm Proxscal, which is implemented in SPSS.

²¹ The so-called “elbow” is thus visible in the plotted Stress diagram after two dimensions. It has to be emphasized, however, that the Stress I statistic, which is more appropriate for the estimation of the goodness-of-fit of the final configuration, is rather high (NL: 0,32; A: 0,38; F 0,35; CH 0,40). However, this is partly due to the fact that for every country, the number of objects is much higher than the number of dimensions. Furthermore, the models have been run with a high number of starting configurations to ensure that the solutions do not represent local minima (see Coxon 1982 for explanations).

dimensions resulting from the MDS analysis are not substantially meaningful. The only relevant information provided is the distance between the parties and the issue categories. This means that the solution can be freely rotated. However, to facilitate the interpretation, it is possible to lay axes into the distribution which are theoretically meaningful.

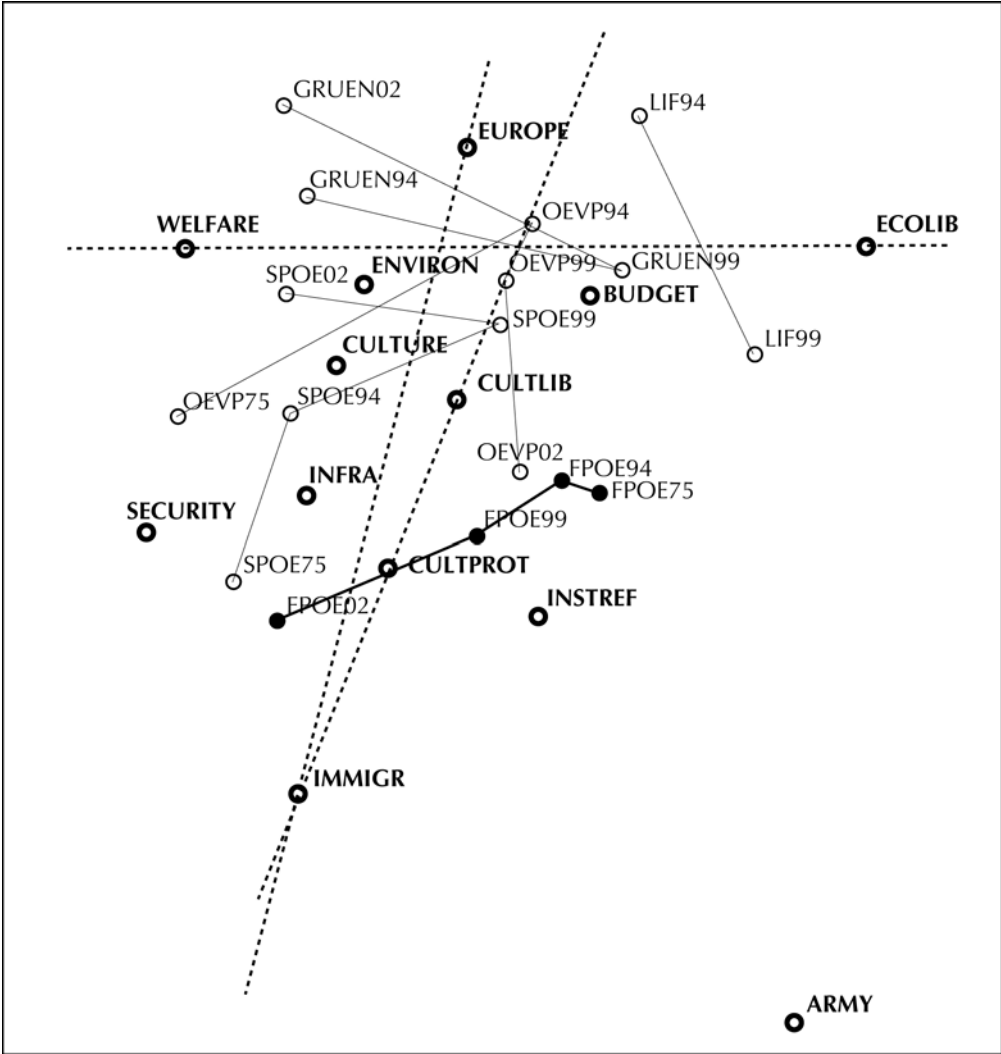


Figure 1: Austria

Legend: FPOE: Freiheitliche Partei Österreich (Austrian Freedom Party); OEVP: Österreichische Volkspartei (conservatives); LIF: Liberales Forum; SPOE: Social Democrats; GRUEN: Greens.

In Figures 1 to 4, a first axis has been drawn between “welfare” and “economic liberalism” as a representation of the distributional political conflict. All the configurations have been rotated to make this axis lie horizontally in political space. This line can be considered the traditional left-right divide, or, arguably, the political content of the traditional state-market cleavage. Two further axes have been drawn between “Europe” and “immigration” and between “cultural liberalism” and “cultural protectionism”. They represent the cultural

conflict proposed, which has resulted from the transformed libertarian-authoritarian divide found by Kitschelt (1994). These two lines represent the universalistic/pro-integration vs. traditionalist-communitarian opposition. I have drawn both lines because they do not coincide to the same degree in all countries.

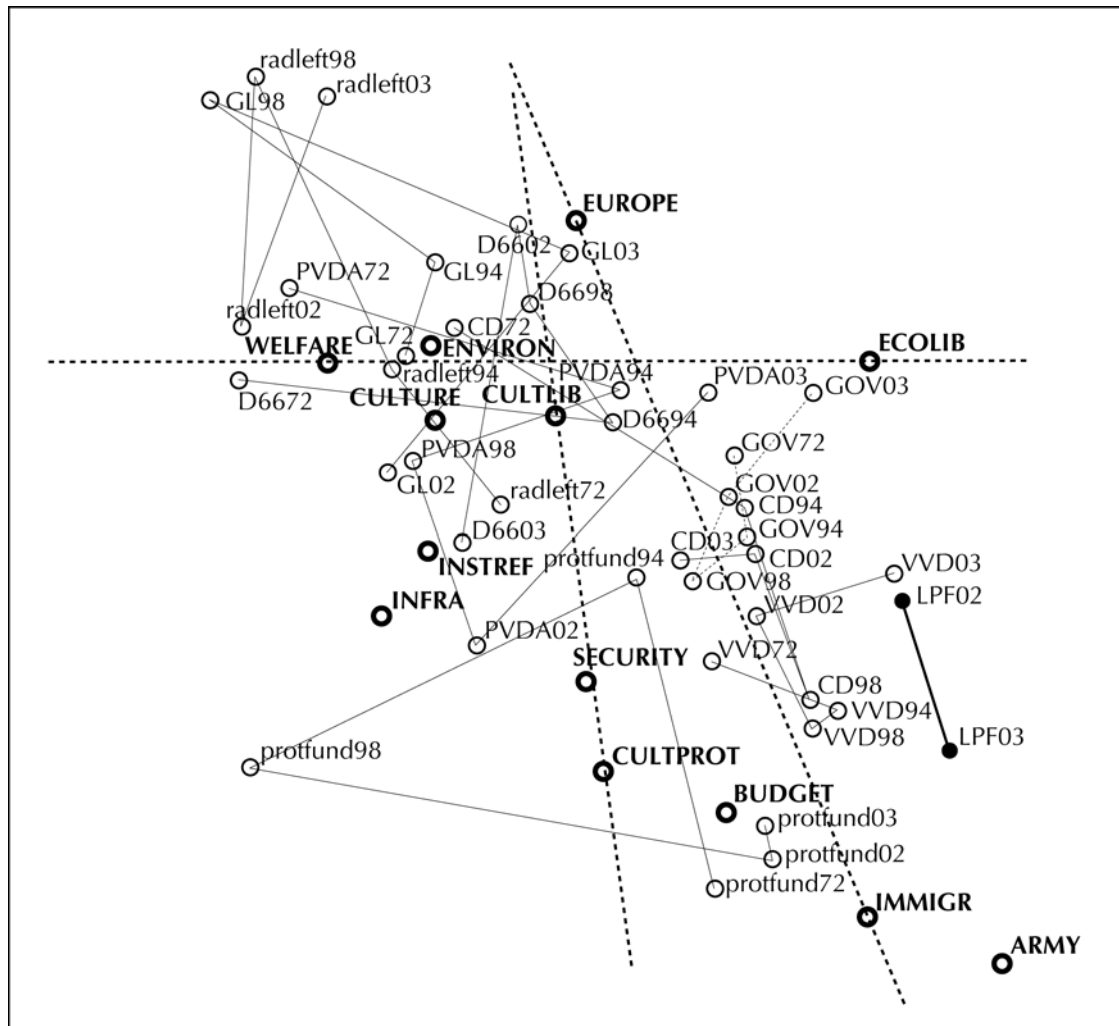


Figure 2: The Netherlands

Legend: LPF: List Pim Fortuyn, Leefbaar Nederland; Profund: Protestant fundamentalist group (CU GPV-RPF, GPV, SGP); VVD: Conservatives; CD: Christian Democrat group; D66: Democrats '66; PVDA: Worker's Party; GL: Green Left (Groenlinks, PSP, PPR); Radleft: Radical left group (CPN, SP); GOV: Government coalition.

The first thing we notice when looking at the general patterns is that the *configuration of political alternatives presented in the four party systems is strikingly similar*. Political competition everywhere is structured by an economic and by a cultural axis of conflict, though to varying degrees. The figures also clearly show that *right-wing populist parties are located at the one pole of the cultural axes of conflict*. The most important finding is that

everywhere, they are to be found near a cluster of issue-categories comprising “immigration” and “cultural protectionism”. Thus, they are not single-issue-parties, but represent a more general ideological cluster centring around an exclusionary conception of community, as well as a defence of tradition and traditional moral values. Right-wing populist parties are also near the issues “security” and “army”, although this is not necessarily what sets them apart from other right-wing parties. The same is true for budgetary rigor, although here, Austria is an exception, budgetary rigor being located close to the state-market axis. In general, right-wing populist parties are also near to issues concerning institutional reforms, where calls for direct democracy are included. This category also includes other institutional reforms, however, because there are not enough observations for direct democracy alone.

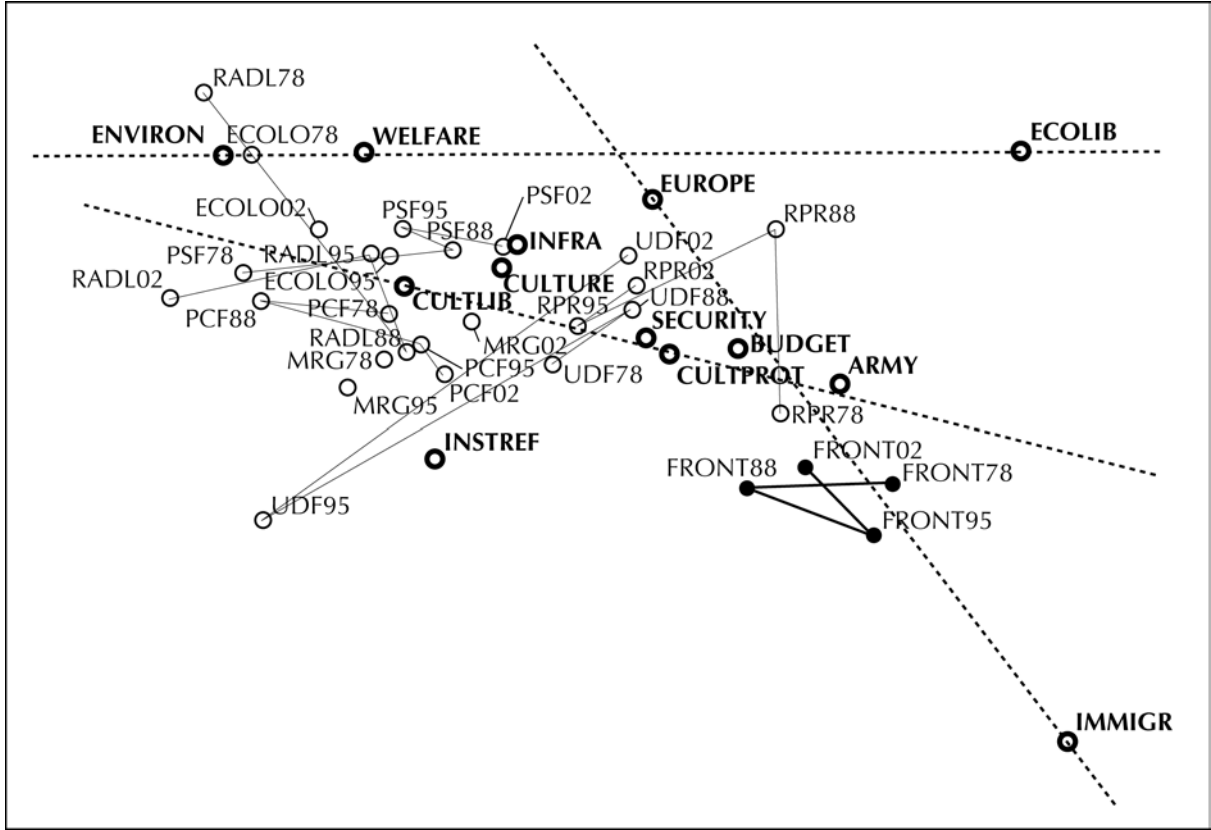


Figure 3: France

Legend: FRONT: Front National, Mouvement National Républicain (MNR); RPR: Rassemblement pour la République; UDF: Union pour la Démocratie Française, small center parties; MRG: Mouvement des Radicaux de Gauche; PSF: Parti Socialiste Français; PCF: Parti Communiste Français; Ecolo: Verts, ecological parties; Radleft: Radical left group.

In interpreting the configurations, it is important to keep in mind that the distances are only meaningful in relation to each other, and not in absolute terms. Thus, right-wing populist parties may not be just next to subject of immigration in absolute terms, because their

proximity to other issues also “pulls” them in another direction. The relevant information from the configuration then is that they are nearer to the subject of immigration than any other party – this is especially evident in Austria and France.

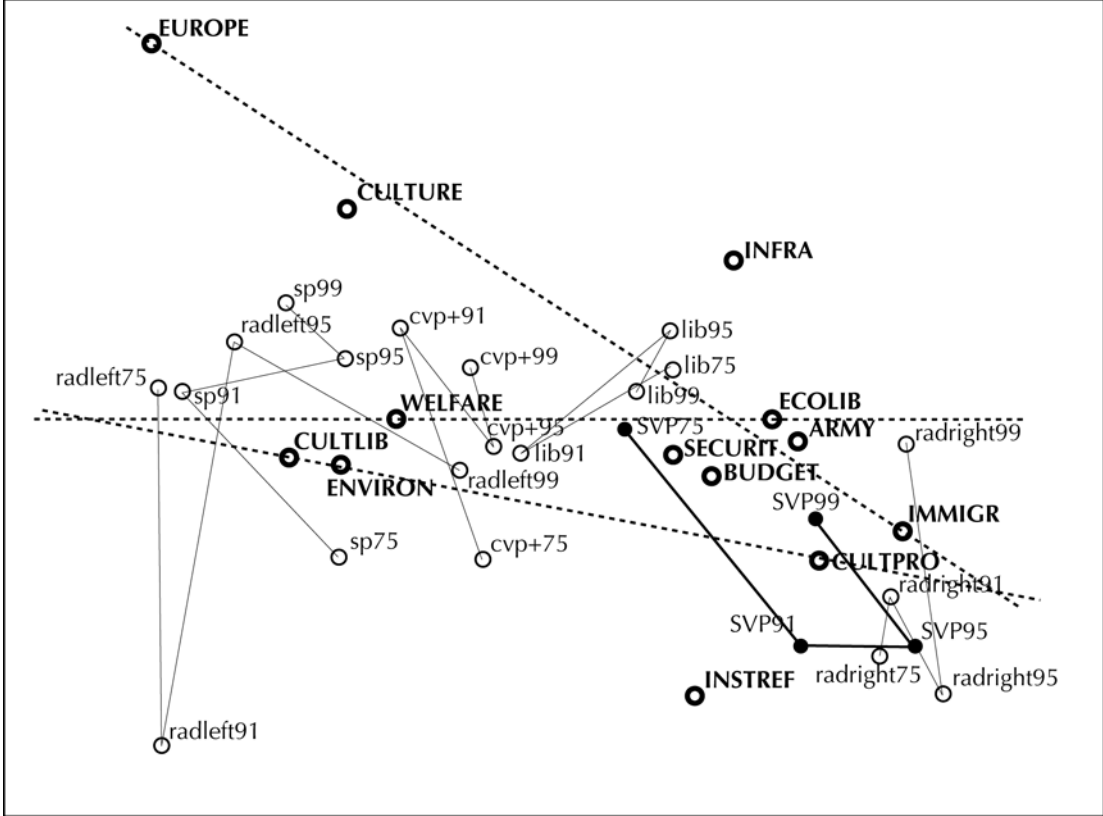


Figure 4: Switzerland

Legend: SVP: Schweizerische Volkspartei (Swiss People’s Party); Radright: Radical right group, Lib: Liberal Democrats (FDP), CVP: Christian Democrat group; SP: Social Democrats; Radleft: Greens, Radical left group.

At the same time, it is apparent that the issue opposition between “Europe” and “immigration” is much more universally polarizing in the four countries than that between “cultural liberalism” and “cultural protectionism”. Thus, the latter two issues are comparatively near to each other in Austria and in France. Concerning all of these issues, however, right-wing populist parties are clearly at the opposite pole from the New Left, represented by the Social Democrat and Green parties. The general pattern thus accords rather well to the postulated position of right-wing populist parties according to the cultural-identitarian logic. By contrast, their position is less uniform concerning the issues representing the state-market divide, where my hypothesis postulated a move away from neo-

liberalist to more statist positions. I will discuss these differences in a following brief interpretation focused on the individual countries.

In *Austria*, the cultural axes cut across the distributional axis very clearly. The FPÖ, together with the issues it is nearest to – anti-immigration, cultural protectionism and security – are located on a cultural line of conflict and rather remote from the distributional axis. At the same time, the FPÖ has clearly moved away from neo-liberalism, which was an issue it propagated in the 1980s, and is now located nearer to “welfare” than to “ecolib”. This move is in line with a strategy aiming to mobilize the losers of economic modernization or globalization. It is quite striking how the FPÖ in 2002 has almost arrived at the position where the Social Democrats were located in 1975. The FPÖ’s programmatic profile thus conforms to the expectations deriving both from the cultural-identitarian, as well as the economic logic of right-wing populist parties’ mobilization and thus represents something like the “master case” of an anti-globalist party. This is not equivalent to success, of course, since on the one hand, right-wing populist parties face problems when in government, while on the other hand, established parties may seek to mobilize the same potential, even if this is more difficult for them, as I have argued. Thus, it is quite striking how close the Conservatives (ÖVP) have moved to the FPÖ’s position in the 2002 election campaign.

In *the Netherlands*, we find a situation similar in some respects to Austria.²² The two cultural axes also clearly cut across the distributional axis. The Pim Fortuyn movement, despite being located near the typical cluster of issues propagated by right-wing populist parties, most noticeably anti-immigration, faces strong competition by other parties located in a similar position. Political space seems very much structured by the cultural axes of conflict, and the Conservatives (VVD) and the Christian Democrats (CD) are not very far away from the LPF’s position. Even the Worker’s Party (PvdA) moving towards issues such as security, cultural protectionism and immigration in 2002. The group of small protestant fundamentalist parties occupy an almost ideal type position for a radical or populist right-wing party, but as more in-depth analysis show, this is not due to their stance on immigration, but due to other issues located in this space. As far as the LPF’s programmatic profile regarding the welfare state and economic liberalism is concerned, it appears to be nearer to a liberalist than a statist position, thus not confirming to the economic logic of an anti-globalist profile.

In *France*, the axis connecting “Europe” and “immigration” cuts across the distributional axis rather clearly, while this is not the case for the axis connecting culturally liberalist and

²² In the Netherlands, the “Centrumsdemokraten” and other radical right parties had to be excluded from the analysis because we have too few observations regarding their positioning.

protectionist positions. The latter two issue-categories are not very polarizing in France and therefore lie close to each other. There are few observations concerning cultural protectionism, and the standard deviation in the positioning of the parties in this category is relatively low (data not shown here). By contrast, immigration is highly polarizing, and the Front National is very clearly positioned concerning this issue. The empirical analysis of political space thus reveals a triangular distribution, with the parties of the left situated on the upper left, the moderate right-wing parties to their right and the Front National at the bottom pole of the cultural axis. This triangular pattern conforms to analysis of the value preferences of French voters (Grunberg, Schweisguth 2003). At the same time, the Front National is nearer to economic liberalism than to a pro-welfare position, and thus does not advocate policies which I have hypothesized to be close to the preferences of the losers of globalization in economic terms.

Finally, in *Switzerland*, the issues used to draw the cultural axes are set far apart and appear highly polarizing. The Swiss SVP is situated at the one end of both cultural lines, clearly advocating cultural protectionism and a strict immigration policy. What is striking about the SVP is the fact that it has moved from a moderately rightist position in 1975 into a political space originally occupied by radical right-wing parties such as *Freiheitspartei*, *Schweizer Demokraten* and *Eidgenössisch-demokratische Union*. In the course of this programmatic shift, the radical right wing parties in Switzerland have almost vanished. From 1991 on, the SVP is clearly distinguishable from the Liberal Democrats.

The SVP's fervent opposition to joining the European Union is evident in the location of this issue, whose position is much less centred than is the case in the other three countries. Political space is thus very much structured by the opposition between a pro-integrationist position on the one hand, and a traditionalist-authoritarian-communitarian position on the other hand. On this axis, the SVP is clearly at the lower right end, while the left-wing parties are near to the opposite pole. The Social Democrats are the nearest to Europe – this is perhaps not so evident at first sight, due to the fact that they are similarly far away from Europe, from cultural liberalism and from a pro-welfare position.

Furthermore, the SVP is located quite near to a law and order position, as well as to budgetary rigor and economic liberalism. Hence, its positioning in the economic domain diverges from a position suitable to mobilize the economic potential deriving from the globalization process. However, as a non-member of the European Union, the SVP's refusal to join the EU can be considered an expression of protectionism as well. Furthermore, the

salience of the cultural dimension of conflict is clearly higher than that of the redistribution conflict in the Swiss media. It is therefore possible that the SVP's mobilization is driven more by a cultural-identitarian than by an rationalistic-economic logic.

6. Conclusion

The evidence from the empirical analysis of political space shows that right-wing populist parties are similar in their position on the cultural axis, which structures the parties' positioning in the four countries examined. Furthermore, advocating an exclusionary concept of collective identity and traditionalist-authoritarian values, they also contribute to a certain similarity in the structure of competition in these party systems. With the exception of the List Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands, their programmatic stance clearly sets them apart from their competitors of the moderate right.

I have suggested two mechanisms by which globalization contributes to a political potential which right-wing populist parties seem especially apt to mobilize. The first one is cultural-identitarian, and meshes authoritarian values with a new emphasis on the need to preserve a culturally homogeneous community. According to my argument, and building on insights from social psychology, political actors have used anti-immigration issues to construct an exclusionary form of identity, which has proven very successful for the mobilization of a fairly broad right-wing countermovement to the libertarian left. The propagation of anti-immigrant policies and of a bundle of values we have termed "cultural protectionism" is the centrepiece of right-wing populist parties' programmatic profile. Even here however, a qualification is required: The Pim Fortuyn movement in the Netherlands belongs to the right-wing populist group as far as its stance concerning immigration policy is concerned, but it is not particularly in favour of cultural protectionism.

With regard to the second, economic mechanism, I have hypothesized that right-wing populist parties appear well-suited to mobilize the potential of lower skilled individuals who feel their life chances to be threatened by the process of economic globalization. There is evidence for the fact that the Austrian FPÖ is increasingly mobilizing voters along these lines. The FPÖ has clearly moved to the left and away from economic liberalism, which it had advocated especially in the 1980s. At the same time, survey evidence suggests that the FPÖ is becoming the new worker's party in Austria. Whereas in 1986, 10% of the manual workers

voted for the FPÖ, 47% did so in 1999, while the Social Democrats increasingly lost blue-collar votes (Plasser, Ulram 2000: 232). In the other countries, however, no such move away from economic liberalism in favor of a stronger support for the welfare state is visible. As the empirical analysis has shown, the Swiss SVP, the Dutch LPF and the French Front National are closer to economic liberalism in their programmatic stance than to welfare state measures. Thus, their profile does not conform to what we might expect to be the preferences of the “losers of globalization”.

However, in this paper, I have only examined the positioning of political parties as the “supply side” of politics, leaving aside for the moment the characteristics and preferences of the voters who constitute the “demand side”. As a result, we do not yet know in what respects the preferences of right-wing populist voters match the policies advocated by these parties, and according to which of the two identified axes – the economic state-market or the cultural-identitarian axis – voters of right-wing populist parties actually make their voting choice. Consequently, we do not know to what extent the programmatic profile of right-wing populist parties along the two axes allows them to mobilize social groups beyond the lower economic strata in a cross-class coalition, or if, for example, their economic stances are simply less relevant to their average voter than the anti-immigrant position. In this sense, the results presented here are provisional.

Further, I have argued that one of the factors making the mobilization of broad ascriptive identities by right-wing populist parties possible is the waning force of traditional political cleavages. So far, we can only speculate on the question whether the new line of conflict between cosmopolitan-universalistic and traditionalist-communitarian goals and values is likely to develop a firm socio-structural basis which would result in the formation of a cleavage. For the value divide confronting libertarian and authoritarian values, this seems not to have been the case so far.

At the same time, I have argued that the process of collective identity formation appears to be more advanced on the libertarian left, where the New Social Movements have contributed to a grassroots mobilization of broad groups of citizens. The countermovement of the authoritarian right since the late 1970s and early 1980s, by contrast, is largely reactionary. Right-wing populist parties’ success in my view is best conceived as a delayed manifestation of this movement. Ironically, their “populist” mobilization is highly elite-directed and dependent on charismatic leaders who have adopted a hierarchical rather than a pluralistic party organization. According to my model, they have not only been the first political actors

to recognize the new political potentials deriving from globalization, but – thanks to the organizational structure of these parties – also the only ones capable of changing their programmatic stance quickly enough to mobilize them.

The question then remains if this will, in the long run, lead to the formation of a structural cleavage. However, since globalization has provided political entrepreneurs with an opportunity to advocate an exclusionary collective identity, the process of collective identity formation of the right-wing countermovement to the libertarian left might be catalyzed – and the formation of a collective identity is one of the preconditions for the formation of a cleavage, as we know. In a sense, then, right-wing populist parties might be laying the preconditions for the formation of such a cleavage, even if they themselves may some day prove to have been a temporary phenomenon. Two cases illustrate this point: In the Netherlands, the LPF is already situated in a relatively occupied space, while in the last Austrian elections of 2002, the conservative ÖVP has moved into a terrain close to the FPÖ's homeland.

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