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Major Research Paper  
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**AUTHORITARIAN POPULISM AND THE SOCIAL INVESTMENT STATE:  
CAN ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET PROGRAMS AND INVESTMENTS IN  
EDUCATION SUPPRESS THE ELECTORAL SUPPORT FOR AUTHORITARIAN  
POPULIST PARTIES?**

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## **Abstract**

The electoral successes of authoritarian-populist parties and leaders across Europe have created challenges for their respective domestic political institutions and to the international community as a whole. Electoral gains made by these parties result from a variety of economic and cultural factors. This study primarily focuses on issues related to the welfare state in an era of neoliberal globalization and whether a social investment state can offset the electoral support and successes of these parties. This study will also focus on the reasons for the electoral successes of these parties and whether economic or cultural variables are the major factor for their support. The research used 26 countries in Europe as the sample for this quantitative analysis and used data from their most recent parliamentary elections gathered from ParlGov. Using macro-level economic and cultural data from a variety of sources, the results suggest that the *cultural backlash thesis* rather than *the economic insecurity thesis* is the driver behind the increase in support for authoritarian-populist parties and leaders. This study also found that a social investment state had no statistically significant bearing on the electoral support for these parties. The affects of a social investment state on voting behaviour, however, requires further research.

## **1. Introduction**

The electoral successes of Donald Trump in the United States, the Leave campaign in the United Kingdom, and the rising popularity of other radical right leaders such as Marine Le Pen in France and Geert Wilders in the Netherlands demonstrates the successes of radical right parties in Europe. The increase in support for these leaders can be attributed to the grievances

related to globalization and neoliberalism that have been left unaddressed and festering.<sup>1</sup> As a result, widespread economic anxieties and a growing discontent with immigration policies have further disconnected the “elite” from a large segment of the population that are left susceptible to populist discourses.<sup>2</sup> These fears and repercussions have further been aggravated as a result of the 2008 Great Recession, the 2010 Eurozone Debt Crisis, import competition from China, and mass immigration, partly as related to the Syrian refugee crisis.<sup>3 4 5</sup> Even in larger welfare states, where governments take more active roles, these economic grievances still exist. Although it may seem that the welfare state no longer contributes in strengthening the social fabric of a given society, I will attempt to demonstrate that a social investment state with high-quality social services, particularly directed towards the labour market (i.e. longer employment insurance, retraining programs) that confront these economic grievances (unemployment from trade, automation, outsourcing and technological innovation), can deter support for authoritarian populists, as these social services may contribute in building social cohesion and combatting inequalities.

### ***1.1 Problematic and Research Question***

The research question that this paper will attempt to address is: Does a social investment state affect the electoral success of authoritarian-populist parties and leaders? This study will use 26 countries in Europe as the sample for this research. It will then use data from their most recent

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<sup>1</sup> Peters, Michael A. "The end of neoliberal globalisation and the rise of authoritarian populism." (2018): 324.

<sup>2</sup> Rodrik, Dani. "Populism and the Economics of Globalization." *Journal of International Business Policy* (2018): 13  
<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 14

<sup>4</sup> Milner, Helen V. "Globalisation, Populism and the Decline of the Welfare State." *Survival* 61.2 (2019): 91

<sup>5</sup> Eatwell, Roger, and Matthew Goodwin. *National populism: The revolt against liberal democracy*. Penguin UK, 2018.

parliamentary elections (gathered from ParlGov) and expenditures on active labour market programs and on education (gathered from OECD stats, Eurostat, and World Bank databases). In doing so, I will be able to analyze whether a social investment state that invests heavily in education and active labour market programs has an affect on the electoral support for authoritarian-populist parties and their leaders. Moreover, this will allow me to analyze whether or not lower investments in social services and education have a positive affect on the electoral support for populist leaders. Accordingly, the dependent variable of this study is the electoral success of the populist radical right.

## **2. Literature Review**

There are extensive analyses on issues related to the rise of populist parties and associated ideologies in Europe and the US, as it is currently a central focus. In this section, I will review existing literature directly and indirectly related to populism and clarify the notion of populism. The term ‘populism’ needs to be conceptually clarified in order to employ the term in this empirical analysis. This ensures that the research is critically reflective of populist politics. I will then look into the two dominant theories pertaining to the origins of populism: the *cultural backlash thesis* and the *economic threat thesis*. Lastly, I will also look into literature on the social investment state, specifically how it can be used as a tool that helps reinforce social cohesion, and possibly, a defense mechanism against the electoral support for populist parties or leaders.

### ***2.1 What is Populism?***

Cass Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser define populism “as a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic camps, “the pure people” versus “the corrupt elite,” and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté generale* (general will) of the people.”<sup>6</sup> This ‘Us’ vs. ‘Them’ definition, according to Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, does not quite capture the essential feature of populism and is rather more closely associated with authoritarianism.<sup>7</sup> This study will instead use the definition provided by Norris and Inglehart “as a rhetorical style of communications claiming that (i) the only legitimate democratic authority flows directly from the people, and (ii) established power-holders are deeply corrupt, and self-interested, betraying public trust.”<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, the term authoritarian-populism, coined by Norris and Inglehart, will be used henceforth in this research. The term provides better clarity than categories such as ‘extreme right’ or ‘radical-right,’ as the policy objectives of these parties differ, particularly with regards to economic policies.<sup>9</sup><sup>10</sup> For instance, according to these academics, authoritarian populist parties, interestingly, have varying economic aims. There are parties that support the usual right-wing free-market ideologies, such as free-trade and the elimination of government intervention.<sup>11</sup> There are, however, right-wing populist parties that are identified as supporting typically left-wing economic ideas.<sup>12</sup> The Sweden Democrats, for instance, advocate for a strong welfare state

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<sup>6</sup> Mudde, Cas, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. *Populism: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2017. pp.6

<sup>7</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. pp.72

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 66

<sup>9</sup>Ibid. 215

<sup>10</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. "Trump, Brexit, and the rise of populism: Economic have-nots and cultural backlash." *Harvard JFK School of Government Faculty Working Papers Series* (2016): 8

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

which, however, restricts welfare services to the natives of their country. The Front National also endorse left-wing economic ideas, such as protectionism from trade and greater government intervention.<sup>13 14</sup>

## ***2.2 Different Forms of Populism***

Populism can be combined with different ideologies that are either on the left side of the political spectrum or on the right or as Norris and Inglehart identify as ‘libertarian populism’ or ‘authoritarian populism.’<sup>15 16 17</sup> There are, however, differences between the two. These academics and others, such as Roger Eatwell and Mathew Goodwin, find that in the case of left-wing populism, “the pure people” represent the working-class.<sup>18 19 20</sup> For example, in the case of Latin America, the “pure people” were mobilized against the Structural Adjustment Programmes and IMF conditionality—conditions imposed by the IMF to ensure loans were repaid—as a result of the 1980s debt crisis in various Latin American countries.<sup>21</sup> These institutions which implemented and promoted these policies, such as rapid economic liberalization, privatization,

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<sup>13</sup> Judis, John B. *The populist explosion: How the great recession transformed American and European politics*. New York: Columbia Global Reports, 2016. pp.146

<sup>14</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. pp.137

<sup>15</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. pp.11

<sup>16</sup> Ivaldi, Gilles, and Andrej Zaslove. "L'Europe des populismes: confluences et diversité." *Revue européenne des sciences sociales. European Journal of Social Sciences* 53-1 (2015): 125

<sup>17</sup> Mudde, Cas, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. *Populism: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2017. pp.8

<sup>18</sup> Eatwell, Roger, and Matthew Goodwin. *National populism: The revolt against liberal democracy*. Penguin UK, 2018.46-47

<sup>19</sup> Mudde, Cas, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. *Populism: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2017. pp.12

<sup>20</sup> Rodrik, Dani. "Populism and the Economics of Globalization." *Journal of International Business Policy* (2018): 24

<sup>21</sup> Mudde, Cas, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. *Populism: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2017. pp.102

and contractionary monetary and fiscal policies, were responsible for making domestic firms unable to compete with foreign and more technologically innovative companies with massive economies of scale. Moreover, austerity measures were implemented which, consequently, sidelined social services. As a result, the most vulnerable, the lower and working classes, were considerably affected. This environment provided fertile ground for the emergence of populist leaders, such as Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, Alberto Fujimori in Peru, and Carlos Menem in Argentina. These leaders mobilized the “pure people” against the political and economic “elites” that had signed their country over to the World Bank and the IMF, as they provided a voice to the majority labourers that were unable to voice their concerns over these austerity measures.

The “pure people” differs to a certain extent in the case of right-wing populism. In this case, “the pure people” signifies a people with a common ancestral background or shared ancestry.<sup>22 23</sup> As mentioned by Norris and Inglehart, authoritarian-populist leaders and their followers are not only ultra nationalist, but tend to be socially conservative, xenophobic, anti-Muslim, and in some cases, such as with the Fidesz Party led by Victor Orbán in Hungary, anti-Semitic.<sup>24 25</sup> They also find that it is the interwar generations, the religious, the less-educated, the working class, white males, and inhabitants of rural communities that are more likely to support authoritarian values and leaders.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Mudde, Cas, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. *Populism: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2017. pp.14

<sup>23</sup> Mounk, Yascha. *The People Vs. Democracy: Why Our Freedom is in Danger and how to Save it*. Harvard University Press, 2018. pp.8

<sup>24</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. "Trump, Brexit, and the rise of populism: Economic have-nots and cultural backlash." *Harvard JFK School of Government Faculty Working Papers Series* (2016): 20

<sup>25</sup> Eatwell, Roger, and Matthew Goodwin. *National populism: The revolt against liberal democracy*. Penguin UK, 2018.45

<sup>26</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. pp.113

### ***2.3 The Rise of Authoritarian-Populist Parties***

Even in the decades preceding the breakthroughs made by authoritarian-populist leaders into mainstream politics, support for many authoritarian-populist parties and associated radical ideologies all around Europe were gaining in popularity since the mid-1980s to early 1990s.<sup>27,28</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Following the collapse of the Bretton Woods system (which will be discussed in further detail in the proceeding sections), globalization and the increasing influence of neoliberalism was increasingly guiding policy making decisions which, in turn, promoted cuts to social spending, privatization, capital account liberalization and the deregulation of banks (particularly in the 1980s). Although these policies did increase the national income, labour-share of these gains were modest.<sup>30</sup> It was also around this time where many Western states were also shifting from a manufacturing to a service-based economy. Consequently, this caused significant economic dislocations that directly impacted the less-educated, lower and working classes that were primarily focused in these declining industries. In addition to this transition, trade unions, which helped negotiate better wage structures and distribution, were also declining in Europe, making it difficult for the labourer to voice their concerns.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ivaldi, Gilles, and Andrej Zaslove. "L'Europe des populismes: confluences et diversité." *Revue européenne des sciences sociales. European Journal of Social Sciences* 53-1 (2015): 122

<sup>28</sup> Howard, Marc Morjé. "The impact of the far right on citizenship policy in Europe: explaining continuity and change." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36.5 (2010): 748

<sup>29</sup> Swank, Duane, and Hans-Georg Betz. "Globalization, the welfare state and right-wing populism in Western Europe." *Socio-Economic Review* 1.2 (2003): 218.

<sup>30</sup> Piketty, Thomas, and Arthur Goldhammer. *Capital in the twenty-first century*. Harvard University Press, 2018. pp.42

<sup>31</sup> Card, David, Thomas Lemieux, and W. Craig Riddell. "Unions and wage inequality." *Journal of Labor Research* 25.4 (2004): 559

The increasing interconnectedness of national economies and open-economic practices, the rising rates of inequality, and the process of economic restructuring provided an opportunity for authoritarian-populist parties to breakthrough into mainstream politics. This breakthrough, however, was not only due to economic factors but rather as result of the increasing rates of immigration and the rapid cultural changes occurring in Europe as well. For instance, Hans-Georg Betz found that there was a steady increase in racialized immigrants and refugees with different customs, traditions, and that the number of political refugees increased from 75,000 in 1983 to approximately 320,000 in 1989 in western Europe.<sup>32</sup> This influx of migrants entering Europe triggered a cultural shock and activated the “perception that Europe is being “invaded” by alien traditions, culture, and religion.”<sup>33</sup> Negative perceptions of immigration were furthered by authoritarian strongmen to further their parties’ interests. According to Dani Rodrik, there is not only a demand side to populism (the voice of the people) but a supply side as well. According to Rodrik, grievance related to populism,

tend to be inchoate and need to be channeled in a particular programmatic direction through narratives that provide meaning and explanation to the groups in question. That is where the supply side of politics come in. Populist movements supply the narratives required for political mobilization around common concerns. They present a story that is meant to resonate with their base.<sup>34</sup>

In many cases, out-group members (immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and even first- and second-generation citizens) were considered as unproductive, a burden to the welfare state and were considered to be stealing resources and employment from the European natives of the

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<sup>32</sup> Betz, Hans-Georg. "The new politics of resentment: radical right-wing populist parties in Western Europe." *The Populist Radical Right*. Routledge, 2016. 340

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.341

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 24

country.<sup>35</sup> After WWII, parties promoting xenophobic and white-nationalist sentiments were associated with the atrocities committed by the Nazis and their regimes, and were therefore isolated;<sup>36</sup> however, during this time this type of narrative was becoming more and more socially acceptable.

Anxieties related to the process of neoliberal globalization, the increasing wage disparity between the rich and poor, and the influx in immigration provided fertile ground for the emergence of authoritarian-populist parties around this time. In their work, Swank and Betz, found that there was a positive correlation between the indirect and direct consequences of neoliberal globalization and authoritarian populist vote shares. For instance, the Freedom Party of Austria had only 5 percent of the vote share in the 1983 election.<sup>37</sup> In 1995, however, the party had increased their vote share to 21.9 percent.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, the Front National in France started with only 0.2 percent of the vote share in the 1981 election, but significantly increased their vote share to 14 percent in the 1997 election.<sup>39</sup> The Swiss People's Party in Switzerland also experienced a significant increase of support during this time. For example, the party had more than doubled their portion of the national vote share from 11.1 percent in the 1983 parliamentary election to 22.5% in the 1999 election.<sup>40</sup> Currently, the Swiss People's party is the largest party in the Federal Assembly.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Arzheimer, Kai. "Contextual factors and the extreme right vote in Western Europe, 1980–2002." *American Journal of Political Science* 53.2 (2009): 259

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. 217

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> "Parlgov · Parties, Elections, Cabinets". *Parlgov.Org*. <http://www.parlgov.org/>. Accessed 19 Nov 2019.

<sup>41</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. pp.242

In former communist countries in East and Central Europe, authoritarian populism took a similar trajectory in its later years; however, the rise in anti-establishment rhetoric and authoritarian strongmen were a result of the failed promises of the guaranteed wealth that came with economic liberalization in the 1990s.<sup>42</sup> Although the national income around this time was increasing, many lower-class citizens were not experiencing the gains of open-economic practices. Rather, many were enduring economic hardships as a result of this transition.<sup>43</sup> Only three authoritarian-populist parties, however, were able to capitalize on this discontent and breakthrough into mainstream politics at this time, the Greater Romanian Party, the Slovak National Party, and the Slovenian National Party.<sup>44</sup>

It was not until the Syrian Refugee Crisis in 2014 where authoritarian populism began making significant breakthroughs in East and Central Europe.<sup>45</sup> Populist leaders were not only able to successfully voice nativist appeals and xenophobic sentiments but were also able to successfully express the disdain towards the European Union, particularly as a result of the imposed refugee quotas placed on them by the EU.<sup>46</sup> Academic Ben Stanley asserts that,

[I]n the wake of the Syria crisis, parties which emphasized their opposition to immigration immediately reaped benefits: the Kukiz Movement (Kukiz'15) entered the Polish parliament in 2015 as the third largest party in part as a result of its implacable opposition to refugee quotas. The strongly Euroskeptic Czech Dawn of Direct Democracy (Úsvit přímé demokracie, ÚSVIT) also took up the refugee issue.<sup>47</sup>

Ultimately, these economic insecurities and the increasing cultural changes in Europe were significant factors for the rise of authoritarian-populist parties in Europe. These concerns

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<sup>42</sup> Stanley, Ben. "Populism in central and Eastern Europe." *The Oxford handbook of populism* 1 (2017): 140

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 6

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.8

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

were becoming even more significant as a result of the economic crises of 2008 and 2010, and as mentioned above, the Syrian refugee crisis. These parties were able to successfully mobilize support by utilizing a discourse of anti-establishment politics, Euroscepticism, and anti-immigration.

#### ***2.4 The Challenges for Liberal-Democracies***

The current confrontation between liberal-democracies and the wave of authoritarian-populist leaders in Europe and the US can have upsetting effects on political institutions. Yascha Mounk describes the detrimental consequences of this form of populism in his work and asserts that authoritarian-populist leaders, without having strong institutional checks and balances on their executive power, can disintegrate liberal democracies into an “illiberal democracy.”<sup>48 49</sup> In his work, William Galston provides an understanding of what a liberal-democracy entails to describe the threat that populist parties pose to these established liberal-democratic values and institutions. He asserts that a liberal-democracy is comprised of four principles; first, the republican principle (the idea that the people are the sole source of legitimacy);<sup>50</sup> second, democracy (the belief that majority rules on a wide-range of public issues);<sup>51</sup> third, constitutionalism (the adherence to, typically codified, institutional structures and powers);<sup>52</sup> and fourth, liberalism (a private sphere beyond the reach of government where individual liberties, freedoms, and privacy exist).<sup>53</sup> Taking this understanding of a liberal democracy into account,

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<sup>48</sup> Mounk, Yascha. *The People Vs. Democracy: Why Our Freedom is in Danger and how to Save it*. Harvard University Press, 2018. pp.35

<sup>49</sup> Finchelstein, Federico. *From Fascism to Populism in History*. University of California Press, 2017.19

<sup>50</sup> Galston, William A. *Anti-Pluralism: The Populist Threat to Liberal Democracy*. Yale University Press, 2017. pp.19

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. 25

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. 26

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. 28

Galston compares and contrasts a liberal democracy to populism and populist leaders, and asserts that,

populism accepts the principles of popular sovereignty and democracy, understood straightforwardly as the exercise of majoritarian power, but is skeptical about constitutionalism to the extent that formal, bounded institutions and structures impede majorities from working their will. It takes an even dimmer view of liberal protection for individuals and minority groups.<sup>54</sup>

Authoritarian strongmen are degrading liberal-democratic values even in countries that were once considered to have fully consolidated into a secure democracy. For instance, places such as Poland and Hungary that had surpassed the threshold of \$4,115USD of GDP per capita (\$14,000USD if adjusted to today's currency)—a level where democracies were considered secured by academics Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi<sup>55</sup>—are now experiencing a threat to their independent liberal institutions posed by these strongmen leaders, such as Jaroslaw Kaczynski (leader of the Law and Justice party in Poland) and Victor Orbán (leader of the Fidesz party in Hungary).<sup>56</sup> Moreover, since the 2014 election in Turkey which saw authoritarian-populist leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan elected, the country has seen a decline in civil liberties. The President of the Republic has waged a full judicial and coercive assault on Pro-Kurdish democratic groups, such as The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and The Peace and Democracy Party (BDP). These attacks on civil liberties have become even more blatant after the 2016 attempted Turkish coup d'état, as Erdoğan was able “to label any opponent of his government a supporter of “terrorism,” arresting scores of academics and journalists.”<sup>57</sup> These blatant attacks

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid. 36

<sup>55</sup> Przeworski, Adam, and Fernando Limongi. "Modernization: Theories and facts." *World politics* 49.2 (1997): 164.

<sup>56</sup> Mounk, Yascha. *The People Vs. Democracy: Why Our Freedom is in Danger and how to Save it*. Harvard University Press, 2018. pp. 99

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. 40

on liberal democratic values by populist strongmen are constantly recurring as a way to “undermine liberal institutions.”<sup>58</sup>

## ***2.4 Theories of Cultural Backlash***

The accumulation of material wealth since the post-World War II era has had a profound impact not only on economic development but on a social basis as well. For instance, Mounk finds that during the post-War decades, economic growth had increased by 4 percent annually in the US and 5 percent annually in France, to name but a few examples.<sup>59</sup> Progressive tax systems and larger social safety nets also accompanied the unprecedented economic growth at this time, particularly in Western Europe. As material survival became a lesser priority and faded into the background, societal changes on a macro-level transformed the values and attitudes that informed and guided behaviour.<sup>60</sup> Many studies have found that the increase in material wealth and security is “conducive to open-mindedness, social tolerance, and trust, secularization, and acceptance of diverse lifestyles, identities, and values.”<sup>61</sup>

This period of time had particularly affected the post-war generation. In Inglehart’s 1970s work, *The Silent Revolution*, he found that around this time, a ‘silent-revolution’ was occurring that accentuated post-materialist values. There was a greater emphasis on cultural and political

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid. 35

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.125-126

<sup>60</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. pp.141

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.89

issues, such as women and minority rights, gender and sexual identities, multiculturalism, principles of social justice, environmental rights, individual free choice and self-expression.<sup>62</sup>

In his 1992 article, “The Silent Counter-Revolution: Hypotheses on the Emergence of Extreme Right-Wing Parties in Europe,” Piero Ignazi agreed with Inglehart insofar as there had been a value change on the left-side of the political spectrum, which helped increase support for the newly established Green Party in various Western democracies; however, as Ignazi argues, Inglehart had overlooked the reaction on the right side of the spectrum from social conservatives.<sup>63</sup> The once-dominant group now feared losing their hegemonic status and having their cultural values challenged by these socially liberal values. In other words, there was a neoconservative reaction against these socially progressive ideas, such as individualism, pluralism, and free choice, which ran in stark contradiction to their views.<sup>64</sup> According to Ignazi, this cultural backlash helped create the way for the emergence of extreme right parties. As stated by Ignazi,

...with the spread of postmaterialism, in Western countries in the 1980s, a different cultural and political mood, partially stimulated by the same ‘new politics’ has also been taking root. This change in beliefs and attitudes has been partially expressed in the so-called neoconservatism [...] But, to a large extent, it remained underground until the recent rise of ERPs. Such an underground melting pot of attitudes and sentiments includes the emergence of new priorities and issues not treated by the established parties, a disillusionment towards parties in general, a growing lack of confidence in the political system and its institutions, and a general pessimism about the future. In a sense, it could be said that the Greens and the ERPs are respectively, the legitimate and the unwanted children of the New Politics; as the Greens come out of the silent revolution, the ERPs derive from a reaction to it, a sort of ‘silent counter-revolution.’<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid. 88

<sup>63</sup> Ignazi, Piero. "The silent counter-revolution: Hypotheses on the emergence of extreme right-wing parties in Europe." *European Journal of Political Research* 22.1 (1992): 5

<sup>64</sup> Ignazi, Piero. "The silent counter-revolution: Hypotheses on the emergence of extreme right-wing parties in Europe." *European Journal of Political Research* 22.1 (1992): 19

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. 6

Authoritarian-populist parties in Europe have effectively mobilized support to contest these changes to cultural values. Multiculturalism and immigration, in particular, have been at the forefront of this confrontation, as ethnic minorities, racialized immigrants, and refugees from lower income countries have generated social hostilities among the white natives in Europe.<sup>66</sup> This can be a result of how immigration, refugees, asylum seekers, and even first- and second-generation citizens are portrayed through populist right discourses. For instance, many populist leaders and critics of multiculturalism contend that multiculturalism policies that embrace the idea of cultural diversity have failed, and that multiculturalism serves as a detriment to the social fabric of society.<sup>67</sup> These critics also contend that countries who embrace their multicultural dimension are also encouraging ethnic communities to marginalize themselves into ethnic enclaves and are supporting their unwillingness to culturally adapt to their adoptive countries.<sup>68</sup> For instance, in Neil Bissoondath's work, he asserts that

...le multiculturalisme, dont le regard est obsessionnellement tourne vers le passé, refuse de reconnaître. L'immigration est essentiellement un renouvellement. Il est injuste, pour les individus et les communautés dont ils sont originaires, d'en faire quelque chose d'immobile, de figé. La considérer de cette manier, c'est légitimer la marginalisation ; c'est transformer les communautés ethniques en musées de l'exotisme.<sup>69</sup>

This sentiment is prevalent even in European states that had once supported the idea of multiculturalism. For instance, Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka observe that there is a strong retreat in multiculturalism, particularly in the Netherlands, for a more assimilative approach, and

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<sup>66</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. pp.177

<sup>67</sup> Lesińska, Magdalena. "The European backlash against immigration and multiculturalism." *Journal of Sociology* 50.1 (2014): 39

<sup>68</sup> Banting, Keith, and Will Kymlicka. "Canadian multiculturalism: Global anxieties and local debates." *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 23.1 (2010): 45

<sup>69</sup> Bissoondath, Neil. "Le marché aux illusions." *Montréal, Boréal-Liber* (1995).pp.124

that many other states, such as Germany and Austria, are also following suit.<sup>70</sup> Magdalena Lesińska finds that this hardline stance against multiculturalism is adopted by authoritarian-populist leaders and parties in countries that never really embraced the ideology and are more assimilationist, such as France and Spain.<sup>71</sup>

In her work, Lilliana Mason states that the reason for this exclusion is related to peoples' attachment to their identity. Mason states that:

People, however, can also associate with a group on a subjective basis, by feeling some psychological sense of attachment to the group. These subjective group identities have been found to generate more loyalty from group members than objective group memberships, and therefore to have greater effects on individual behaviour and intergroup relations.<sup>72</sup>

Inglehart and Norris also finds that the innate tribalistic human trait, that distinguishes the "Us" from the "Them" (in terms of ethnicity), is heightened by fear-mongering politicians that heighten the differences and divisions between different identity groups.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, many authoritarian-populist supporters have strong fears of the demographic shift and the perceived consequences that it may have on their in-group. An analysis on the electoral support for Trump in various electoral districts, conducted by the *Wall Street Journal*, reveal that there was heavy support for the Republican candidate in areas that have witnessed a rapid change in the ethnic composition of their district. Fears deriving from the white majority that they will soon become

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<sup>70</sup> Banting, Keith, and Will Kymlicka. "Canadian multiculturalism: Global anxieties and local debates." *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 23.1 (2010): 44

<sup>71</sup> Lesińska, Magdalena. "The European backlash against immigration and multiculturalism." *Journal of Sociology* 50.1 (2014): 42

<sup>72</sup> Mason, Lilliana. *Uncivil agreement: How politics became our identity*. University of Chicago Press, 2018. pp.38

<sup>73</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. pp.7

the new minority in a land that they have long inhabited, is sparking a backlash. As iterated by Mounk,

A lot of the anger at immigration is driven by fear of an imagined future rather than by displeasure with a lived reality. When immigration levels rise, it is not only the experience of day-to-day life that changes; just as importantly, the social imaginary of what the country's future might hold is transformed as well. As a result, the belief that people from the majority group will eventually be in the minority has come to play a bigger and bigger role in the political imagination of the far right both in Western Europe and in North America<sup>74</sup>

The white majority believes that their interests are becoming second-best to ethnic minorities, immigrants, refugees, women, and other marginalized groups.<sup>75</sup> These convictions are strengthened by the idea of affirmative action. They perceive that they are 'left-behind' in a tide of progressivity and political correctness and that these populist parties will serve their interests.<sup>76</sup>

Immigration is characterized by authoritarian populists as a cause of societal ills and the recent upsurge in refugees and economic migrants entering Europe is only exacerbating fears of immigration. Immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, particularly from Muslim majority countries, have been targeted by authoritarian-populist discourse that tend to portray them as incompatible with Western liberal values or as anti-social and criminal.<sup>77 78</sup> Recent violent and

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<sup>74</sup> Mounk, Yascha. *The People Vs. Democracy: Why Our Freedom is in Danger and how to Save it*. Harvard University Press, 2018. pp.174

<sup>75</sup> Hochschild, Arlie Russell. *Strangers in their own land: Anger and mourning on the American right*. The New Press, 2018. pp. 137

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. 227

<sup>77</sup> Banting, Keith, and Will Kymlicka. "Canadian multiculturalism: Global anxieties and local debates." *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 23.1 (2010): 45

<sup>78</sup> Kymlicka, Will. "The rise and fall of multiculturalism? New debates on inclusion and accommodation in diverse societies." *International social science journal* 61.199 (2010): 108.

terrorist attacks, such as the assassination of Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh by Islamist extremists in the Netherlands, numerous attacks in France, and the bombings in Spain and London, have only strengthened these views on Islam.<sup>79</sup> Additionally, leaders of populist parties, such as Marine Le Pen in France and Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, who are outspoken critics of Islam, have attempted to gain votes from the LGBTQ+ community by portraying Islam as a threat and an enemy to their cause.<sup>80</sup> By doing so, they are attempting to depict the far-right as an ally and a supporter of their community.<sup>81</sup> <sup>82</sup>

The backlash against post-materialist values has not only given rise to a discontent against the cultural, intellectual, and political elites of the country but to supranational institutions, such as the European Union, as well. Euroscepticism is largely prevalent in populist discourses in Europe and the authoritarian populists are effectively arguing that the EU has usurped national sovereignty; blaming the influx of low-skilled immigrants and refugees, and the heightened sense of insecurity—as a result of events proceeding 9/11—on the lax liberal policies imposed on them by the EU.<sup>83</sup> In other words, the political subordination of European states to the EU is exacerbating tensions with national immigration policies. Take, for instance, the UK. It has been observed that the 2004 EU enlargement had greatly impacted immigration policies in the state. In their study, Martin Ruths and Bridget Anderson found that there is a heavy increase

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<sup>79</sup>Vertovec, Steven, and Wessendorf, Susanne. "Introduction: Assessing the Backlash Against Multiculturalism in Europe." *The Multiculturalism Backlash: European Discourses, Policies and Practices*. Routledge, 2009. pp.5.

<sup>80</sup>Carlo, Andrea. "Opinion: The Far Right Paint Muslims As The Enemy Of The Gay Community – But They Are The Real Danger". *The Independent*, 2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/farright-lgbt-muslims-christchurch-shooter-salvini-le-pen-a8846031.html>. Accessed 21 Nov 2019.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup>Grillo, Ralph. "British and Others: From 'race' to 'faith.'" *The Multiculturalism Backlash: European Discourses, Policies and Practices*. Routledge, 2009. pp.53

<sup>83</sup>Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. 17

in economic migrants illegally working in the UK and that it is significantly comprised of low-skilled males from the A8 nations (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia).<sup>84</sup> Additionally, in *The Populist Explosion: How the Great Recession Transformed American and European Politics*, John B. Judis finds that there is a recurring pattern in each nation that can partly explain the rise of populism in the US and in Europe. In the case of France, Judis attributes *la Front Nationale's* gaining support as a result of the growing frustration and discontent with the influx of immigration and the European Union. As iterated by Judis,

The FN's new program on economic nationalism became as integral to its appeal as its opposition to mass immigration. Its entire program was now subsumed under the concept of defending French sovereignty—in an echo of Chevenement and earlier de Gaulle, *souveraniste* was the new watchword. In Le Pen's election brochure, its position on immigration, calling for a 95 percent reduction in annual entries, came on page seven after her position on consumer rights, the Euro, jobs, finance, pensions, and justice. Together, these demands established a divide between the FN's "little people" and the establishment.<sup>85</sup>

## ***2.5 Economic Insecurity Thesis***

Globalization and open economic practices (in terms of trade, finance, and labour) can increase economic growth. This does not only pertain to countries with highly developed economies in the global North, but within developing countries of the global South as well. Even though the benefits of economic integration are increasing globally, these benefits and increased profits, however, are not widespread. Rather, the gains of globalization are one-sided. They tend to accumulate in far more developed countries, within banks and multinational corporations, and

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<sup>84</sup> Ruths, Martin, and Bridget Anderson. "Semi-compliance and illegality in migrant labour markets: an analysis of migrants, employers and the state in the UK." *Population, space and place* 16.3 (2010): 200

<sup>85</sup> Judis, John B. *The populist explosion: How the great recession transformed American and European politics*. New York: Columbia Global Reports, 2016. pp.146

with the more educated “highly skilled professionals, technical personnel, and managers” that are able to participate in the global knowledge-based economy and supply the demand for specialized, knowledge-intensive labour. <sup>86 87</sup> In other words, globalization creates “winners” and “losers.” In this case, the “losers” are the less-educated, lower and working classes that are disproportionately affected by globalization and economic restructuring.<sup>88</sup> These individuals are primarily focused in the declining manufacturing industries and find it difficult to integrate into the transitioning global knowledge-based economy. Areas that were highly dependent on manufacturing are also experiencing higher levels of unemployment, and subsequently, lower incomes.<sup>89</sup> In their 2003 study, “Globalization, the welfare state and right-wing populism in Western Europe,” Duane Swank and Hans-Georg Betz found that the increase in electoral support for far-right parties was specifically related to the working classes’ economic grievances as a result of the increasing trend of globalization, particularly trade, in countries with lower levels of universal social protections.<sup>90</sup> This is especially evident in areas that are categorized as ‘left behind,’ such as Saxony and Bradenburg in East Germany, and Pas-de-Calais in Northern France, to name but a few examples.<sup>91 92 93</sup> These areas are experiencing a sense of economic decline and marginalization while the benefits of globalization are more concentrated in the

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<sup>86</sup> Swank, Duane, and Hans-Georg Betz. "Globalization, the welfare state and right-wing populism in Western Europe." *Socio-Economic Review* 1.2 (2003): 220.

<sup>87</sup> Cameron, David, and Janice Gross Stein. "Globalization, culture and society: The state as place amidst shifting spaces." *Canadian Public Policy/Analyse de Politiques* (2000): S18-S19.

<sup>88</sup> Rodrik, Dani. *The globalization paradox: why global markets, states, and democracy can't coexist*. Oxford University Press, 2011. pp.87

<sup>89</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. 17

<sup>90</sup> Swank, Duane, and Hans-Georg Betz. "Globalization, the welfare state and right-wing populism in Western Europe." *Socio-Economic Review* 1.2 (2003): 233

<sup>91</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. 17

<sup>92</sup> "Far Right Surge In Two Eastern German States". BBC News, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-49544781>. Accessed 24 Nov 2019.

<sup>93</sup> Angelos, James. 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/24/magazine/will-france-sound-the-death-knell-for-social-democracy.html>. Accessed 24 Nov 2019.

urban core. As a result, authoritarian-populist discourses are more effective in these areas, as they provoke feelings of betrayal and economic abandonment, and residents are most likely to vote for populist parties.

With regards to trade liberalization, labour market issues are sometimes overlooked by economists and other technocratic bureaucracies when considering open-trade policies. This is particularly true when examining China's entry into the World Trade Organization. According to Dani Rodrik, higher levels of import competition, as a result of China's most-favoured-nation status granted in the 2000s, disrupted the labour market significantly, especially in the United States.<sup>94</sup> As stated by Rodrik, this heightened exposure to trade is "associated with support for nationalist parties and a shift towards radical right-wing parties."<sup>95</sup> Studies also finds that regions in the UK that were dependent on manufacturing, were hit hardest by stronger levels of import penetration from China, and were more likely to support the United Kingdom Independence Party's Leave campaign.<sup>96 97 98</sup> Similarly, Inglehart and Norris found that Trump supporters came from areas that were "dependent upon manufacturing sectors hit by the penetration of Chinese imports, particularly in Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina."<sup>99</sup>

Open-trade policies have the potential to increase the overall GDP of a country. Yet, redistribution policies with regards to gains from trade, particularly in the United States, are

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<sup>94</sup> Rodrik, Dani. "Populism and the Economics of Globalization." *Journal of International Business Policy* (2018): 16

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. 23

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Milner, Helen V. "Globalisation, Populism and the Decline of the Welfare State." *Survival* 61.2 (2019): 91-96.

<sup>98</sup> Sachs, Jeffrey D. *Building the New American Economy: Smart, Fair, and Sustainable*. Columbia University Press, 2017. pp.3

<sup>99</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. pp.17

inadequate or non-existent in some cases. This has left many working-class citizens exposed to market-forces and has exacerbated their economic anxieties. In his work on inequality, Thomas Picketty finds that, in order to ensure that the situation of the working class improves considerably, a more progressive tax-system on labour income and capital income is required. Picketty states that “even if taxation overall is fairly close to proportional for the majority of the population, the fact that the highest incomes and largest fortunes are taxed at significantly higher (or lower) rates can have a strong influence on the structure of inequality”<sup>100</sup> and that “the progressive tax is indispensable for making sure that everyone benefits from globalization, and the increasingly glaring absence of progressive taxation may ultimately undermine support for a globalized economy.”<sup>101</sup> Although poorly drafted trade deals are not solely responsible for the economic ails of the working class (nor are they the major reason for it), it has, nevertheless, been at the forefront of populist discourse as “trade is a convenient scapegoat, since politicians can point to identifiable foreigners – Chinese, Mexicans, or Germans – as the source of the problem.”<sup>102</sup>

Nevertheless, the issues surrounding neoliberal globalization were long evident even before the rise of authoritarian-populist parties in the West. Eric Helleiner found that there was a stronger emphasis to reduce capital controls and help further the integration of international markets since the fall of the Bretton Woods era.<sup>103</sup> Since then, neoliberalism—the perception that markets should be left unimpeded and are “self-regulating and “self-creating”—had been gaining

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<sup>100</sup> Picketty, Thomas, and Arthur Goldhammer. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Harvard University Press, 2014. pp.495

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.497

<sup>102</sup> Rodrik, Dani. "Populism and the Economics of Globalization." *Journal of International Business Policy* (2018): 16

<sup>103</sup> Helleiner, Eric. *States and the reemergence of global finance: from Bretton Woods to the 1990s*. Cornell University Press, 1996. 21

a stronger influence on policymaking decisions.<sup>104</sup> <sup>105</sup>According to Picketty, it is around this time that income inequality was increasing considerably in the West.<sup>106</sup>

The support for free, unhindered markets is best observed during the Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher eras in the 1980s, as both advocated for the reduction of government intervention and trickle-down economics—the idea that the reduction of taxes on corporations and the wealthy will stimulate economic growth and increase profits, and that these increased profits will eventually trickle down to the rest of society. An already vulnerable population, the lower and working classes, negatively felt these economic policies which reduced taxes, particularly for national and international corporations, and slashed expenditures on social policies. Gøsta Esping-Anderson contends that a strong welfare state can ensure that individuals are protected from market forces;<sup>107</sup> however, welfare policies that were intended to do so were now being slashed to ensure that profits were increasing steadily for the well-off in society. In his work, John Gerard Ruggie—working off of Karl Polanyi’s earlier work—coined the concept of “embedded liberalism” to illustrate how social objectives can be internalized in a free-market.<sup>108</sup> <sup>109</sup> However, as the Bretton Woods System expired, so too did the idea of “embedded liberalism.” For instance, in his work, Jeffrey Sachs found that policymakers are prioritizing the wealth and wellbeing of Wall Street banks and multinational corporations by further deregulating

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<sup>104</sup> Rodrik, Dani. *The globalization paradox: why global markets, states, and democracy can't coexist*. Oxford University Press, 2011. pp.77

<sup>105</sup> Sachs, Jeffrey D. *Building the New American Economy: Smart, Fair, and Sustainable*. Columbia University Press, 2017. pp.8

<sup>106</sup> Picketty, Thomas, and Arthur Goldhammer. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Harvard University Press, 2014. pp.15

<sup>107</sup> Esping-Andersen, Gosta. *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Princeton University Press, 1990. pp.16

<sup>108</sup> Ruggie, John Gerard. "International regimes, transactions, and change: embedded liberalism in the postwar economic order." *International organization* 36.2 (1982): 379-415.

<sup>109</sup> Milner, Helen V. "Globalisation, Populism and the Decline of the Welfare State." *Survival* 61.2 (2019): 91-96.

the markets which has left many in the United States discontented with the “financial elites,” especially after the 2008 financial crisis.<sup>110</sup> Nevertheless, this continued and heavy influence of neoliberalism and the increasing pace of global economic integration have, according to Rodrik, made domestic social policies subservient to open economic practices and other international institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO).<sup>111</sup> In her early works on International Political Economy, Susan Strange affirms these concerns by criticizing the ignorance of economists and technocrats. As iterated by strange,

My other criticism is that the economists' contributions to the study of international economic relations have shown political naivete. Too often they write on international economic problems as though political factors and attitudes simply did not exist, and could be brushed aside as some kind of curious quirk or aberration of dim-witted politicians.<sup>112</sup>

As Mounk finds, many people have now lost trust in their democratic institutions and their political bodies that represent them. The lower and working classes perceive that there is a democratic disconnect, or an “undemocratic liberalism”.<sup>113</sup> The rise of technocratic bureaucracies, international organizations, and corporate and private interest groups makes it appear that the average citizen’s opinion has no significance.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Sachs, Jeffrey D. *Building the New American Economy: Smart, Fair, and Sustainable*. Columbia University Press, 2017.

<sup>111</sup> Rodrik, Dani. *The globalization paradox: why global markets, states, and democracy can't coexist*. Oxford University Press, 2011. pp.76

<sup>112</sup> Strange, Susan. "International economics and international relations: a case of mutual neglect." *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-) (1970): 309

<sup>113</sup> Mounk, Yascha. *The People Vs. Democracy: Why Our Freedom is in Danger and how to Save it*. Harvard University Press, 2018. pp.95

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*.67

When taking into consideration the growing wage disparity between the rich and the poor, the displeasure that the working classes are experiencing may seem clear. Joseph Stiglitz furthers this assertion stating that,

The data describing what has been happening in the United States are sobering: for nearly a third of a century the incomes of most Americans have been essentially stagnant. A middle-class life—a decent job with decent wages and a modicum of security, the ability to own a home and to send one’s kids to college, with the hope of a reasonably comfortable retirement—has been moving increasingly out of reach for a large proportion of the country. The numbers in poverty have been increasing, as the middle is being eviscerated. The one group doing well has been the top—especially the top 1 percent and even more, the top .1 percent, the richest several thousand Americans.<sup>115</sup>

The working- and lower-class in the West perceive that their concerns are second best to corporate interests. Strong trade-unions, however, can influence government social policies and can better manage working class anxieties, such as wage structure and distribution. <sup>116 117</sup>

Interestingly, in their study on wage inequality and rates of unionization during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s in Canada, the UK, and the US, David Card, Thomas Lemieux, and W. Craig Riddell found that rates of unionization have been declining in all three countries at different rates, and as a result, income inequality has been rising as partly due to these declining rates.

## ***2.6 Theories of the Welfare State and the Social Investment State***

The foundation of Marxist critique of capitalism is that alienation and market-dependency results with a capitalist system. For instance, to receive a wage in a capitalist system,

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<sup>115</sup> Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Globalization and Its Discontents Revisited : Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump*. 2018.

<sup>116</sup> Banting, Keith, and John Myles, eds. *Inequality and the fading of redistributive politics*. UBC Press, 2013.pp.6

<sup>117</sup> Card, David, Thomas Lemieux, and W. Craig Riddell. "Unions and wage inequality." *Journal of Labor Research* 25.4 (2004): 559

an individual, without the means of production, is forced to sell their labour-power.<sup>118</sup> labour in its pure form, in a capitalist system, is a commodity, as it is sold on the market in the same way as other commodities are.<sup>119</sup> According to Marxist scholars, this can have deleterious consequences on the proletariat. Labourers are not only dependent on the market to ensure their survival but, as commodities, they are also vulnerable to market forces.<sup>120</sup> For instance, Esping-Anderson contends that “[i]f workers actually do behave as discrete commodities, they will by definition compete; and the fiercer the competition, the cheaper the price. As commodities, workers are replaceable, easily redundant, and atomized.”<sup>121</sup> Moreover, old-age, illness, injury, or a disability can act as a barrier in accessing the labour market, and therefore, an impediment to a better life.<sup>122</sup>

Thus, a comprehensive welfare state is essential to de-commodify labour, and eliminate market-dependency. The welfare state would ensure that labourers are protected from market forces and other circumstances, such as workplace injuries or unemployment. It was during the postwar era where an unprecedented economic boom permitted the space for advanced industrialized states to accommodate and respond to the social needs of their citizens. The compromise reached in the Bretton Woods era enabled participating countries to fulfill these demands. That is, the state was able to balance their economic needs in an increasingly integrated market, while simultaneously ensuring that citizens were protected from market forces by providing social assistance in terms of (unemployment, old-age, illness/injury, or disability).

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<sup>118</sup> Esping-Andersen, Gosta. *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Princeton University Press, 1990.pp.36

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*37

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*47

Although the welfare state is vital in providing a social safety net for the most vulnerable in society, it is not effectively confronting the many challenges in an era of hyper globalization and with other issues, such as economic restructuring, unemployment and income inequality.<sup>123</sup> Take immigration for example, as mentioned above, when the EU enlargement came into effect in 2008, there was a fierce competition between low-skilled national and international labourers in the UK to supply the already shrinking demand for their labour, as a result of hyper globalization.<sup>124</sup> The price of labour had to be minimized in order to compete in this labour market. According to the Belgian Minister for Social Affairs, Frank Vandebrouke, the most effective way to deal with the economic uncertainties that accompany global economic integration and a transition into a knowledge-based economy is to “call for profound changes to the architecture of the welfare state itself.”<sup>125</sup> In their work, Jane Jenson and Denis Saint-Martin present the idea of a social investment state that can tackle the new social challenges emerging out of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Their proposal of a social investment state does not attempt to dismantle the traditional welfare state regime. The social safety net, associated with the welfare state, is always necessary to protect individuals from market forces. A social investment state would rather act as a means to prevent people from relying on the social safety net by integrating them into the market and by focusing on building human capital. In other words, a welfare-state does

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<sup>123</sup> Milner, Helen V. "Globalisation, Populism and the Decline of the Welfare State." *Survival* 61.2 (2019): 91-96.

<sup>124</sup> Bernard, Paul, and Julie Castonguay. "Focus-La cohésion sociale: de l'État social à l'État d'investissement social." *Informations sociales* 1 (2010): 45

<sup>125</sup> Mény, Yves. "From Single Market to Social Market Economy: Is There Room for Solidarity?" *The Crisis of Social Democracy in Europe*. Edinburgh University Press, 2013. pp.12

<sup>126</sup> Ruths, Martin, and Bridget Anderson. "Semi-compliance and illegality in migrant labour markets: an analysis of migrants, employers and the state in the UK." *Population, space and place* 16.3 (2010): 203

<sup>127</sup> Milner, Helen V. "Globalisation, Populism and the Decline of the Welfare State." *Survival* 61.2 (2019): 91-96.

<sup>128</sup> Jenson, Jane, and Denis Saint-Martin. "New routes to social cohesion? Citizenship and the social investment state." *Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie* (2003): 85

help protect the most vulnerable from market forces; however, a social investment state helps integrate these same people back into the market.<sup>129 130</sup> A social investment approach would build individual potential to adapt to changes associated with globalization; providing them with the ability to supply the demand for specialized, knowledge-intensive labour in a global-knowledge-based economy.<sup>131 132 133</sup> This would ensure that the most vulnerable people (individuals that lack skills to compete in a global knowledge-based economy, the long-term unemployed, minorities, women, and children) are able adjust and react to issues, such as economic restructuring.<sup>134 135</sup>

### ***2.7 The Possible Offsetting Effects of a Social Investment State on the Electoral Support for Authoritarian Populists***

As mentioned, studies find that economic growth and material security are important factors that help contribute in generating tolerance and progressiveness. Economic growth and material security, however, are never certain. High levels of material inequality and an inadequate welfare state can have unfortunate effects on social cohesion.<sup>136</sup> Unemployment and income inequality, for instance, can foster a sense of economic deprivation and a strong distrust,

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid. 83

<sup>130</sup> Nicole-Drancourt, Chantal. "Mettre en perspective la perspective d'investissement social." *La revue de l'IRES* 2 (2015): 203

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.88

<sup>132</sup> Bernard, Paul, and Julie Castonguay. "Focus-La cohésion sociale: de l'État social à l'État d'investissement social." *Informations sociales* 1 (2010): 46

<sup>133</sup> Nicole-Drancourt, Chantal. "Mettre en perspective la perspective d'investissement social." *La revue de l'IRES* 2 (2015): 177

<sup>134</sup> Jenson, Jane, and Denis Saint-Martin. "New routes to social cohesion? Citizenship and the social investment state." *Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie* (2003): 88

<sup>135</sup> Nicole-Drancourt, Chantal. "Mettre en perspective la perspective d'investissement social." *La revue de l'IRES* 2 (2015): 197

<sup>136</sup> Vergolini, Loris. "Does economic vulnerability affect social cohesion? Evidence from a comparative analysis." *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 36.1 (2011): 14

not only towards the ruling “elites” and classes but against immigrants as well. In the long run, these sentiments can act as a threat to social cohesion in a society.<sup>137 138</sup> Andrew Rhys and Sebastian Jilke further this argument and state that,

Individuals who are unemployed or not part of the labour force have more negative perceptions of social cohesion than respondents who work as managers, or professionals. The same holds true for those people who are part of the working class and clerical workers: their views on social tensions are significantly more negative than the views of managers, or professionals – as previous research suggests is the case for attitudes towards immigration.<sup>139</sup>

Additionally, Jonas Edlund and Arvid Lindh found in their study that class antagonisms are stronger in areas where an active welfare state does not exist or is inadequate, and where material inequalities are highest.<sup>140</sup> It is economic factors, such as income insecurity, unemployment, and the sense of living in economically left behind communities that can foster support for radical right ideologies.<sup>141</sup>

As mentioned earlier, in the postwar era of “embedded liberalism,” the welfare state was attentive to the social risks involved with the uncertainties of the business-cycle and labour market. This included but were not limited to exogenous shocks to the market resulting in layoffs or large-scale unemployment. The objective was to safeguard citizens from the market by

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<sup>137</sup> Klein, Carlo. "Social capital or social cohesion: what matters for subjective well-being?." *Social Indicators Research* 110.3 (2013): 891-911

<sup>138</sup> Vergolini, Loris. "Does economic vulnerability affect social cohesion? Evidence from a comparative analysis." *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 36.1 (2011): 14

<sup>139</sup> Andrews, Rhys, and Sebastian Jilke. "Welfare states and social cohesion in Europe: Does social service quality matter?." *Journal of Social Policy* 45.1 (2016): 131.

<sup>140</sup> Edlund, Jonas, and Arvid Lindh. "The democratic class struggle revisited: the welfare state, social cohesion and political conflict." *Acta Sociologica* 58.4 (2015): 321.

<sup>141</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. pp.137

providing for their short-term needs in any such event (i.e. unemployment insurance.) The approach taken at this time was one of consumption in the present.<sup>142</sup> A social investment approach, on the other hand, focuses not on consuming in the present, but rather investing in the future. Jenson and Martin further this assertion stating that.

A notion of time underpins the social investment approach. The results produced by an investment are located in the future, whereas consumption (labelled an expense by accountants) is something that occurs in the present. For state spending to be effective, and therefore worthwhile, it must not simply be consumed in the present, to meet current needs, but it must be an investment that will pay off and reap rewards in the future.<sup>143</sup>

Taking this into account, there may be offsetting effects of a social investment state on the support for authoritarian-populist parties. For instance, people that are experiencing declining living standards, that are financially insecure, and that are less-educated are more inclined to vote for the authoritarian populist parties.<sup>144</sup> It can be argued that a social investment state with high quality social services, specifically aimed towards the labour market, can aid in fostering open-mindedness, and subsequently, social cohesion by reducing or eliminating the anxieties related to economic insecurities, which in turn, may suppress the support for authoritarian-populist parties. For instance, Rhys and Sebastian Jilke find that individuals that have a positive perception of the quality of social services, particularly in regards to the labour market, also have positive perceptions of social cohesion and a stronger bond with out-group members (racialized immigrants and ethnic minorities).<sup>145</sup> Additionally, Jonas Edlund and Arvid Lindh find in their

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<sup>142</sup> Jenson, Jane, and Denis Saint-Martin. "New routes to social cohesion? Citizenship and the social investment state." *Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie* (2003): 83.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. pp.113

<sup>145</sup> Andrews, Rhys, and Sebastian Jilke. "Welfare states and social cohesion in Europe: Does social service quality matter?." *Journal of Social Policy* 45.1 (2016): 134.

study that states that are more active in the market and that demonstrate lower levels of material inequality enjoy “less severe social conflict.”<sup>146</sup>

### 3. Hypotheses

This study will anticipate the following results based on the literature and prior studies conducted on the social investment state and the *economic insecurity thesis*:

- (1) The greater the investments in active labour market programs, the lower the support for authoritarian-populist parties.
- (2) The greater the investments in education, the lower the support for authoritarian-populist parties.
- (3) The higher the rate of unemployment, the greater the support for authoritarian-populist parties.
- (4) The higher the rate of inequality, the greater the support for authoritarian-populist parties.

As mentioned above, the widespread economic anxieties and the growing cultural backlash against progressive values and immigration are possible reasons for the success of the populist radical right. Regarding the former aspect, automation, outsourcing and technological innovation, coupled with the process of neoliberal globalization (privatization, financial deregulation, capital account liberalization, and reductions in public expenditure) have significantly disadvantaged the less-educated working classes. This has simultaneously caused a

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<sup>146</sup> Edlund, Jonas, and Arvid Lindh. "The democratic class struggle revisited: the welfare state, social cohesion and political conflict." *Acta Sociologica* 58.4 (2015): 321.

widespread feeling of economic anxiety. To mitigate the effects of globalization and suppress support for authoritarian-populist parties, it requires a social investment state with higher quality social services that directly deal with issues like unemployment uncertainty.

#### **4. Alternative Hypotheses**

This research paper will also look into the *cultural backlash thesis* and hypothesize the following:

- (1) The higher the rate of immigration, the greater the support for authoritarian-populist parties.
- (2) The higher the negative perceptions are of cultural differences, the greater the support for authoritarian-populist parties.

The *cultural backlash thesis* states that the influx of racialized immigrants and refugees from the global South, support for multiculturalism, and an increase in progressive values, such as women and minority rights, immigration, multiculturalism, and LGBTQ rights, have given rise to a strong discontent from a significant portion of the population. I will, however, quantitatively assess this view and examine whether economic grievances are the primary reasons for the rise of authoritarian-populist parties. It can be that populist leaders attempt to use immigration as a scapegoat for societal problems.

#### **5. Methodology**

This section of the paper will provide a detailed description of the research plan. This includes a rationale for using Europe as a case study; how authoritarian-populist parties are coded; and finally, providing an explanation as to how all variables are operationalized.

### ***5.1 Europe As A Case Study***

There are significant increases in authoritarian populist vote shares all across Europe that are continually growing. Therefore, by using Europe as the focus for this research, it is possible to discern the various motives to explain this increase in authoritarian-populist vote shares. Moreover, the number of authoritarian-populist parties operating in various European countries is useful when conducting this research. It will allow me to track expenditures on active labour market programs and investments made in each country. In total, 26 European countries will be analyzed to verify whether a correlation exists between the study's independent variables (active labour market programs, education, inequality, unemployment, rates of immigration, and negative perceptions of different cultures) and the dependent variable: authoritarian-populist vote-shares within the country.

### ***5.2 Definition and Coding of Authoritarian-Populist Parties***

As mentioned earlier, the study will adhere to the definition of populism as a style of discourse. That is, the definition provided by Norris and Inglehart “as a rhetorical style of communications claiming that (i) the only legitimate democratic authority flows directly from

the people, and (ii) established power-holders are deeply corrupt, and self-interested, betraying public trust” will be used in this study.<sup>147</sup>

Taking this definition into account, this paper will further the work of Inglehart and Norris in the *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism*. In their work, the authors identify, classify, and compare political parties using the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey—a survey intended to estimate party positions and ideologies on issues such as European integration and other national issues. Their study measures two important dimensions which captures and categorizes authoritarian-populist parties: the populism-pluralism scale and the authoritarian-libertarian scale. Regarding the former, the authors use two proxy indicators to categorize populist parties, the “importance of anti-establishment and anti-elite rhetoric”<sup>148</sup> and “the salience of reducing political corruption.”<sup>149</sup> Concerning the authoritarian-libertarian scale, their work uses seven indicators to categorize authoritarian parties. They are: “(1) the ‘Galtan’ summary measure in CHES designed to distinguish authoritarian parties valuing order, tradition and stability from libertarian parties favoring expanding personal freedoms and rights; (2) whether parties favored nationalism or cosmopolitanism; (3) law and order or civil liberties; (4) policies of multiculturalism or assimilation of immigrants; (5) liberal positions on homosexuality; (6) restrictions on immigration; and (7) rights for ethnic minorities.”<sup>150</sup> Economic positions were also utilized to identify political parties on the left-right spectrum; however, for the purpose of this paper it has been excluded. These indicators were then

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<sup>147</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. pp.66

<sup>148</sup> Ibid. 230

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. 230-231

standardized to 100-point scales to measure party ideologies. Using both scales, the authors then categorized authoritarian-populist parties. A score above 80 on the libertarian-authoritarian scale signified that the party possessed authoritarian views. The same score was applied on the populism-pluralism scale to assess whether a party was considered populist. Using this, a list of authoritarian-populist parties in Europe were categorized in Table 1. below.

**Table 1**  
**Authoritarian-Populist Parties**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Percentage of Vote Shares</b>
<i>Austria</i>	Freedom Party of Austria	16.2%
<i>Belgium</i>	Flemish Block	12.0%
<i>Belgium</i>	People's Party	1.1%
<i>Bulgaria</i>	National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria	9.3%
<i>Switzerland</i>	Swiss People's Party	25.6%
<i>Switzerland</i>	Federal Democratic Union of Switzerland	1.0%
<i>Switzerland</i>	Ticino League	0.8%
<i>Czech Republic</i>	Freedom and Direct Democracy	10.6%
<i>Germany</i>	Alternative for Germany	12.6%
<i>Denmark</i>	Danish People's Party	8.7%
<i>Spain</i>	VOX	10.3%
<i>Estonia</i>	Conservative People's Party	17.8%
<i>Finland</i>	Finnish Party – True Finns	17.5%
<i>France</i>	National Front	13.2%
<i>United Kingdom</i>	Brexit Party	2.0%
<i>Greece</i>	New Democrats	39.9%
<i>Greece</i>	People's Association – Golden Dawn	2.9%
<i>Croatia</i>	Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonia	1.2%

<i>Croatia</i>	Croatian Democratic Union	35.2%
<i>Croatia</i>	Croatian Peasant Party	0.0%
<i>Hungary</i>	Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Union	49.3%
<i>Hungary</i>	Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary	19.1%
<i>Italy</i>	Northern League	17.4%
<i>Italy</i>	Brothers of Italy – National Centre-Right	4.4%
<i>Lithuania</i>	Order and Justice	5.6%
<i>Luxembourg</i>	Alternative Democratic Reform Party	8.0%
<i>Latvia</i>	National Alliance	11.1%
<i>Latvia</i>	Latvian Association of Regions	4.2%
<i>Netherlands</i>	Party for Freedom	13.1%
<i>Netherlands</i>	Political Reformed Party	2.1%
<i>Norway</i>	Progress Party	15.2%
<i>Poland</i>	Law and Justice	43.6%
<i>Romania</i>	Greater Romania Party	1.0%
<i>Slovakia</i>	Ordinary People and Independent	11.0%
<i>Slovakia</i>	Slovak National Party	8.6%
<i>Slovakia</i>	Christian Democratic Movement	4.9%
<i>Slovenia</i>	Slovenian Democratic Party	24.9%
<i>Slovenia</i>	New Slovenia – Christian People’s Party	7.2%
<i>Sweden</i>	Sweden Democrats	17.5%

### 5.3 Operationalization of Variables

One of the major questions that arose while conducting this study was how to adequately operationalize a social investment state. This study attempts to use expenditures on active labour

market programs as a way to partly measure the level of social investments made in each country. Using macro-level data accessed from Eurostat and on OECD statistics, this study is able to track all expenditures on active labour market programs by types of intervention. There are nine types of interventions in total; however, for the purpose of this study, the total amount will be used. Expenditures on education (as a percentage of GDP) will also be used to further measure the social investment state in each country. These expenditures will help evaluate how best a state mobilizes its citizens to meet the needs of the labour market.

The international migrant stock is used as an indicator to measure the percentage of foreign-born individuals residing in Europe. This is the best macro-level data used to capture the cultural backlash thesis. The migrant stock, however, did not capture the backlash against multiculturalism and diversity. Question B42 of the European Social Survey is therefore used as a way to capture the backlash over cultural issues, such as multiculturalism, that the international migrant stock did not. The question asked: on a scale of 0-10 “would you say that [country’s] cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?”<sup>151</sup> Although this would be the only survey-based variable, it is necessary to incorporate this variable into the study as it provides a better picture of the cultural backlash thesis.

In order to operationalize the economic threat thesis, this study uses macro-level data from the World Bank, such as unemployment rates, to indicate which variable best explains the

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<sup>151</sup> ESS Round 9: European Social Survey (2019): ESS-9 2018 Documentation Report. Edition 1.2. Bergen, European Social Survey Data Archive, NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data for ESS ERIC. [doi:10.21338/NSD-ESS9-2018](https://doi.org/10.21338/NSD-ESS9-2018).

increase in authoritarian-populist vote shares in each country. Lastly, as mentioned, the dependent variable for this study is the electoral success of right-wing populist leaders, which will be operationalized by presenting authoritarian vote-shares in each European state in their most recent parliamentary elections. Table 1. below exhibits the dependent and independent variables of this study and demonstrates how these variables will be operationalized.

**TABLE 1.**

**Operationalization of Variables**

	<b>Variables and Operationalization</b>
<i>Support for Populist Authoritarian-Populist Parties</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Authoritarian populist vote shares               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Most recent parliamentary election (parlgov.org dataset)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Backlash Thesis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Rate of immigration               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ World Bank International Migration Stock, as percentage of the population</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Negative perceptions of different cultures               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ European Social Survey – Question B42 “would you say that [country’s] cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>Economic Insecurity Thesis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Inequality               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Gini Coefficient Index (World Bank)</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Unemployment               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Unemployment rate (Eurostat)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>Social Investment State</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> <li>❖ Investments in active labour market programs               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Expenditures on active labour market programs (labour market services, training, employment incentives, supported employment and rehabilitation, and out of work income maintenance and support), as a percentage of GDP</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Investments in education               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Expenditures on education, as percentage of GDP</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 6. Detailed Findings

### 6.1 Bivariate Regressions

A number of linear regressions were conducted to measure the significance of the study's independent variables and how it correlates to the dependent variable, authoritarian-populist vote share. The findings can be found in Table 2. below. In the first model, the study ran a bivariate regression to measure the correlation between income inequality (as measured by the Gini Coefficient) and authoritarian-populist vote shares. The model demonstrates that there is a negative relation between the independent and dependent variable. That is, for every point increase in the Gini Coefficient, there is a 0.604 decrease in authoritarian populist vote share. The R-squared further finds that there is little variance with the dependent variable. For instance, the Gini Coefficient explains 2.2 percent of the variance in authoritarian-populist vote share. The alpha-level (0.472) confirms that there is not a statistically significant relationship between the two variables.

Moving to the study's other macroeconomic variable, unemployment, the study finds that there is a positive correlation between the independent and dependent variable. The model insists that for every point increase in unemployment, there will be a 0.810 increase in authoritarian-populist vote share. The R-squared value explains only 3.8 percent of variance in the dependent variable. The alpha-level (0.340) confirms that there is no statistically significant relationship between the two variables.

**Table 2.**  
**Bivariate Regression**

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Gini Coefficient</i>	-0.604	0.826	0.472
<i>Constant</i>	38.950	26.133	0.149
<i>R-squared</i>	0.022		
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Unemployment</i>	0.810	0.832	0.340
<i>Constant</i>	14.338	6.508	0.037
<i>R-squared</i>	0.038		
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>International Migrant Stock</i>	-0.226	0.341	0.514
<i>Constant</i>	22.655	4.469	0.000
<i>R-squared</i>	0.018		
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Active Labour Market Programs</i>	-3.055	3.665	0.413
<i>Constant</i>	23.936	5.638	0.000
<i>R-squared</i>	0.028		
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Education</i>	-1.776	2.406	0.468
<i>Constant</i>	29.104	12.747	0.032
<i>R-squared</i>	0.022		
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Negative Perceptions of Different Cultures</i>	1.613	0.697	0.029
<i>Constant</i>	11.078	4.729	0.028
<i>R-squared</i>	0.183		
<i>N</i>	26		

As mentioned, the international migrant stock (as percentage of total population) was used as a way to measure the cultural backlash thesis. The linear regression conducted predicts that there is a negative correlation between the international migrant stock and authoritarian-

populist vote share. It predicts that for every point increase in the variable there is a 0.226 decrease in the dependent variable. The R-squared (0.018), again, shows that this model is a poor predictor, and the alpha-level (0.514) confirms this observation.

Looking at the main independent variables for this study, the model finds that there is a negative correlation between expenditures on active labour market programs and authoritarian-populist vote shares. It predicts that for every point increase in expenditures on these programs, there is a 3.055 decrease in vote shares. This runs in agreement with the study's hypothesis in question; however, the R-squared (2.8 percent) indicates that the model does not predict well. The alpha-value (0.413) further confirms this idea and indicates that the model is not statistically significant. Taking into consideration the study's other main independent variable, expenditures on education, the model finds that there is a negative correlation between the independent and dependent variable. The model indicates that for every point increase in education, there is a 1.1776 decrease in authoritarian-populist vote shares. This finding does support the study's hypothesis; however, the R-squared explains only 2.2 percent of variance between the two variables. The alpha-level (0.468) does not reach the study's benchmark (0.05) and confirms that the independent variable is not statistically significant.

Taking into consideration the study's last independent variable, negative perceptions of different cultures, the model finds that there is a positive correlation between the two variables. The model predicts that for every point increase in negative perceptions of different cultures, there is a 1.613 increase in authoritarian-populist vote share. Moreover, the variable's alpha level (0.029) does reach the study's benchmark, and therefore, is statistically significant. The R-

squared shows that the model describes 18.3 percent of variance between the two variables. This does confirm the study's alternative hypothesis and indicates that the higher the negative perceptions are of different cultures, the greater the support for authoritarian-populist parties.

## ***6.2 Multivariate Regression***

The study conducted a multivariate regression to understand the relationship between the multiple independent variables and the dependent variable. For the purpose of this study and for statistical clarity, the unemployment variable has been excluded. This is due to the strong positive correlations between inequality and unemployment. For instance, it has been found in past studies that "increases in structural unemployment have a substantial aggravating impact on income inequality"<sup>152</sup> and that it has a significant deteriorating effect on income distribution.<sup>153</sup> Therefore, unemployment has been excluded due to its strong causal effect on income distribution, and hence, inequality. Nevertheless, the findings are presented in Table 3 below.

Overall, the model indicates a R-squared value of 28.6 percent. This suggests that all of the independent variables predict only 28.6 percent of the variance in the dependent variable. Regarding the Gini Index, the model demonstrates that there is a negative correlation between the Gini Index and vote shares for authoritarian-populist parties. That is, for every point increase in the Gini Index, there is a 1.612-point decrease in authoritarian populist vote share. The p-value indicates (0.118), however, that the result is not statistically significant. Therefore, the result

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<sup>152</sup> Cysne, Rubens Penha. "On the positive correlation between income inequality and unemployment." *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 91.1 (2009): 218.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

cannot confirm our hypothesis that the higher the rate of inequality, the greater the support for authoritarian-populist parties.

Moving to one of the study's main independent variable, investments in active labour market programs, the result suggests that for every point increase in active labour market programs, there is a 0.393-point increase in authoritarian-populist vote shares. This is runs against our hypothesis, however, the alpha-value (0.927) reveals that the variable is not significant. Therefore, the result cannot confirm that the higher the investments in active labour market programs, the lower the support for authoritarian-populist parties.

Moreover, the results indicated that there is a negative correlation between investments in education and vote shares. The model indicates that for every point increase, there was a 1.700-point decrease in vote shares. However, the model cannot be confirmed as the alpha-value (0.622) does not reach the study's predetermined benchmark (0.05). As a result, our hypothesis that the higher the investments in education, the lower the support for authoritarian-populist parties, is rejected.

Proceeding towards the study's cultural variables, the results indicate that there is a positive relation between the international migrant stock and vote shares. For every point increase in the migrant stock, there is a 0.178-point increase in vote shares. The alpha-value (0.624) again does not confirm the result. Therefore, our hypothesis that the higher the rate of immigration, the greater the support for authoritarian-populist parties is rejected.

Moving on to the study's other cultural variable, the study does find a positive correlation between negative perceptions of different cultures and authoritarian-populist vote shares. That is, for every point increase in negative perceptions of different cultures, there is a 1.985-point increase in authoritarian-populist vote share. The alpha value of the variable (0.043) confirms that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between negative perceptions of cultures and authoritarian-populist vote shares. From this we can ascertain that our alternative hypothesis that the higher the negative perceptions of different cultures, the greater the support for authoritarian-populist parties, is confirmed.

In brief, the multivariate regression conducted demonstrates that only the negative perceptions of different cultures variable has a statistically significant relationship with the dependent variable.

**Table 3.**  
**Multivariate Regression**

	<i>Unstandardize Coefficients</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Standardized Coefficients</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>(Constant)</i>	65.826	42.855		0.140
<i>Gini Index</i>	-1.612	0.987	-0.394	0.118
<i>Active Labour Market Programs</i>	0.393	4.207	0.022	0.927
<i>Education</i>	-1.700	3.399	-0.143	0.622
<i>International Migrant Stock</i>	0.178	0.357	0.105	0.624
<i>Cultural Backlash</i>	1.985	0.920	0.526	0.043
<i>R-Squared</i>	0.286			
<i>N</i>	26			

## 7. Discussion

The analysis raised above does not confirm that a social investment state suppresses the electoral support for authoritarian-populist parties and leaders. It is still uncertain whether or not a social investment state can negatively affect the popularity of authoritarian-populist parties. Nevertheless, the results presented in this study rejects our first hypothesis that the higher the investments in active labour market policies, the lower the support for authoritarian-populist parties.

Regarding investments in education, the study rejects our second hypothesis that the higher the investments in education, the lower the support for authoritarian-populist parties. It has been found in past studies, however, that an educational divide does exist.<sup>154 155 156</sup> That is, individuals who are less-educated or do not hold a post-secondary degree or have some post-secondary education are more likely to vote for authoritarian-populist parties than those who are highly-educated. Therefore, although investments in education were proven to be not statistically significant in this study—as the variable did not reach the benchmark of 95% certainty—a future longitudinal analysis on the topic should be considered. As this study solely looked at the most recent parliamentary elections, a longitudinal analysis may be able to further this work and reveal that educational investments can have a significant impact on the electoral support of

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<sup>154</sup> Swank, Duane, and Hans-Georg Betz. "Globalization, the welfare state and right-wing populism in Western Europe." *Socio-Economic Review* 1.2 (2003): 218-219.

<sup>155</sup> Algan, Yann, et al. "The European trust crisis and the rise of populism." *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* 2017.2 (2017): 396.

<sup>156</sup> Inglehart, Ronald, and Pippa Norris. "Trump and the populist authoritarian parties: the silent revolution in reverse." *Perspectives on Politics* 15.2 (2017): 452.

authoritarian-populist parties. Nevertheless, this study suggests that investments in education does not suppress the electoral support for these parties.

Concerning the *economic insecurity thesis*, this study does not confirm that economic anxieties, such as unemployment and inequality are the reasons for the increased support in authoritarian-populist parties. Regarding unemployment, the study rejects our hypothesis that the higher the rate of unemployment, the greater the support for authoritarian-populist parties. Although past studies concerning the relationship between unemployment and authoritarian-populist voting have been mixed, this does not mean that unemployment or the *economic insecurity thesis* is null. Rather, past studies have found that major economic crises and the severe affects that it may have on a state can affect social and voting behaviour.<sup>157</sup> <sup>158</sup> Take, for instance, Greece. The debt crisis in 2010 had severely impacted the state. During these times, it was found that individuals tended to vote for more radical parties.<sup>159</sup> Future analysis should consider the idea that large macroeconomic shocks or economic crises, such as the China Trade Shock, the Great Recessions, or the Eurozone Debt Crisis, can be better determinants that explain the electoral support for authoritarian-populist parties.

The study also used the Gini index to measure the *economic insecurity thesis*—as the Gini index is a statistical measurement that represents the distribution of wealth in each country. The study rejects our hypothesis that the higher the rates of inequality, the greater the support for

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<sup>157</sup> Mény, Yves. "From Single Market to Social Market Economy: Is There Room for Solidarity?" *The Crisis of Social Democracy in Europe*. Edinburgh University Press, 2013. pp.11

<sup>158</sup> Bedock, Camille, and Pavlos Vasilopoulos. "Economic hardship and extreme voting under the economic crisis. A comparison between Italy and Greece." *Revue européenne des sciences sociales. European Journal of Social Sciences* 53-1 (2015): 192.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

authoritarian-populist parties. In past studies conducted on the relationship between inequality and authoritarian populist voting, it has been found that inequality has a strong influence on voting behaviour. For instance, according to Norris and Inglehart,

[A]uthoritarian values and populist attitudes are strongest among the working class, low-income households, those employed in the manufacturing sectors, people reporting subjective income insecurity (finding it difficult to live on their current household income) and those dissatisfied with the present state of the national economy.<sup>160</sup>

Nevertheless, the study hypothesized that there would be a statistically significant positive relation between the two variables. The study rejected this hypothesis, but this may be due to how the Gini Index is formulated. According to Piketty, the Gini Index is not a reliable indicator and does not assess inequality accurately.<sup>161</sup> As iterated by Piketty:

Indeed, it is impossible to summarize a multidimensional reality with a uni-dimensional index without unduly simplifying matters and mixing up things that should not be treated together. The social reality and economic and political significance of inequality are very different at different levels of the distribution, and it is important to analyze these separately. In addition, Gini coefficients and other synthetic indices tend to confuse inequality in regard to labor with inequality in regard to capital, even though the economic mechanisms at work, as well as the normative justifications of inequality, are very different in the two cases.<sup>162</sup>

Future analysis on the subject should divide inequality of capital (distribution of income from capital) and labour (distribution of income from labour) to provide statistical clarity on the subject.

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<sup>160</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. pp.140

<sup>161</sup> Piketty, Thomas, and Arthur Goldhammer. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Harvard University Press, 2014. pp.266

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

Although the hypotheses of this study were rejected, literature concerning the populist right finds that in an era of hyper globalization and economic restructuring, anxieties concerning future economic conditions are continually increasing, and that the less-educated lower and working classes perceive that they are being ‘left-behind’ or economically isolated. As a result, these individuals are more likely to vote for these parties. It can be argued that in order to pacify these economic anxieties an active government that invests in the most vulnerable to market forces is required. This would ensure that these individuals in society are protected from these globalizing market forces. Moreover, an active government would help foster and facilitate the integration of these individuals into the labour market that prioritizes high-value skills and specialized labour in a knowledge intensive economy.

Moving on to the alternative hypotheses concerning the *cultural backlash thesis*, the study rejects our first hypothesis that the higher the rates of immigration, the greater the support for authoritarian-populist parties. The result was expected as past studies found that areas with a longer history of diversity are more likely to be inclusive and tolerant of different ethnicities and immigrants.<sup>163</sup> Additionally, it has been found in past studies that the lack of interactions between the majority and minority group can have an effect on the outlook and understanding of each other.<sup>164</sup> <sup>165</sup> For instance, in his study, Ryan D. Enos finds that “continued demographic change in Western nations will be accompanied by impulses for intergroup exclusion and that regions predicted to become more diverse should expect initial conflict. However, these results

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<sup>163</sup> Enos, Ryan D. “Causal Effect of Intergroup Contact on Exclusionary attitudes.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States* 111.10 (2014): 3702

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Enos, Ryan D. “Causal Effect of Intergroup Contact on Exclusionary attitudes.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States* 111.10 (2014): 3702

also suggest that more prolonged contact or interpersonal interaction can diminish initial exclusionary impulse.”<sup>166</sup> As mentioned above, it is in areas that are currently experiencing hyper ethnic change that fears of a ‘white minority’ are strongest.<sup>167</sup>

The study, however, confirms our second hypothesis that the higher the negative perceptions of different cultures, the greater the support for authoritarian-populist parties. Question B42 of the European Social Survey was the study’s sole survey-based indicator. It had a statistically significant positive relation with the study’s dependent variable and predicted that for every point increase in negative perceptions of different cultures, there would be a 1.613-point increase in authoritarian-populist vote shares in the bivariate realm, and a 1.985-point increase in the multivariate realm. These results support the study’s alternative hypothesis and suggests that the *cultural backlash thesis*, rather than the *economic insecurity thesis*, is a stronger force behind the support for authoritarian populist parties. This is not to overlook the role that economic insecurities have in the matter, but that economic insecurities may heighten the ‘Us’ vs. ‘Them’ sentiment. For instance, during times of economic uncertainties, the native population may perceive that resources are being unfairly distributed to newcomers and ethnic minorities. As iterated by Inglehart and Norris,

The authoritarian reflex arising from long-term processes of cultural change is likely to be accelerated and deepened by fears of economic insecurity, including the individual experience of the loss of secure, well-paid blue-collar jobs, and the collective experience of living in declining communities of the left-behinds. Material hardship is likely to make groups more susceptible to the anti-establishment appeals of authoritarian-populist actors,

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Mounk, Yascha. *The People Vs. Democracy: Why Our Freedom is in Danger and how to Save it*. Harvard University Press, 2018. pp.174

offering simple slogans blaming ‘Them’ for stripping prosperity, job opportunities, and public services from ‘Us.’<sup>168</sup>

Moreover, this study is significant because it implies that survey-based indicators may be more relevant factors in determining the electoral support for authoritarian-populist parties. Negative perceptions of culture, race and immigration, and maybe even economic issues, may contribute to the electoral support for authoritarian-populist parties. These perceptions can be furthered by authoritarian strongmen and their discourse on immigration and race. In all, support for the authoritarian populists in Europe may, in some ways, relate to economic issues, but it is mainly about the cultural fears driven by perceptions of immigration regardless of the actual rate of foreign-born residents. In other words, people are mobilized based on the backlash against progressive cultural values.

## **8. Conclusion**

The above raised analysis demonstrates the impact generated from the backlash against progressive values and how this is a leading factor behind the electoral support for authoritarian-populist parties and leaders. The primary focus of the study, however, was to assert that a welfare state was inadequate to meet the needs of the most vulnerable of a society in an era of neoliberal globalization. The study hypothesized that a social investment state that prioritized active labour market programs would be able to suppress the electoral support for authoritarian-populist parties. Although the findings of the study were inconclusive, this does not signify that a social investment state is not needed, nor does it mean that it does not affect voting behaviour. It

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<sup>168</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. pp.137

can be argued that in order for the most vulnerable of society—the ‘losers’ from globalization—to meet the needs of a labour market that prioritizes high-value skills and specialized labour in a global knowledge-based economy, the state needs to play an active role and invest in these individuals and communities. This would not only ensure that the ones excluded from society are given equal opportunities but may also suppress the economic anxieties related to the process of neoliberal globalization.

The study also looked into investments in education in Europe and, although the result did not reach the study’s benchmark of 95% certainty, it does not suggest that investments in education may not influence an elector’s decision. Higher education does help contribute in building social tolerance and inclusiveness.<sup>169</sup>

The study also found that unemployment rates and inequality are inconclusive. Again, this does not imply that the *economic insecurity thesis* is not valid. It may rather be that the macro-economic variables are not separated from areas that are affluent and areas that are considered to be left behind. To provide a better indication of the *economic insecurity thesis*, a closer look into areas that were traditionally dominated by the manufacturing industry, such as the Rust Belt in France and East Germany, would provide a clearer indication of whether the economic anxieties are related to the electoral support of these populist parties. Moreover, regardless of the outcome, it can be argued that the implementation of progressive taxation may alleviate the financial burdens and associated anxieties of the lower, working classes.

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<sup>169</sup> Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. pp.97

Lastly, the study's macro-level variable regarding the cultural backlash—the international migrant stock—was not statistically significant. In other words, the macro-level variable that measured the percentage of total migrants in a given country is not a statistically significant factor that explains the electoral support for authoritarian-populist parties and leaders. Conversely, the study looked into survey-based data from the European Social Survey as a way to operationalize the *cultural backlash thesis*. The question “would you say that [country's] cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?”<sup>170</sup> was used in this regard and was statistically significant in the bivariate realm. The result did support the study's alternative hypothesis and suggests that the *cultural backlash thesis* rather than the *economic insecurity thesis* is a stronger force behind the support for authoritarian-populist parties and leaders.

In conclusion, the recent electoral successes of authoritarian-populist parties and leaders in Europe provides a challenge not only to their domestic political institutions but for the broader international community. Although this study found that cultural variables rather than economic variables were the leading cause in the electoral support for populist parties, it may still be seen that a social investment state that invests heavily in the most vulnerable may have a negative impact on the electoral support for authoritarian-populist parties. In spite of the findings, further work on the subject still needs to be done. What is more is that implementing these programs may be difficult considering that some countries are still recovering from the Great Recession or the Euro Debt Crisis, or that many have implemented austerity measures that have significantly

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<sup>170</sup> ESS Round 9: European Social Survey (2019): ESS-9 2018 Documentation Report. Edition 1.2. Bergen, European Social Survey Data Archive, NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data for ESS ERIC. doi:10.21338/NSD-ESS9-2018.

reduced expenditures on social services in their country. This will remain a challenge for economists and for policymakers in the future.

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