

WHEN DEMOCRACY INCUBATES INEQUALITY AND HETERONOMY

Authoritarianism and nationalism in the European Union

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Abstract In this study we analyse the social base of authoritarian and nationalist (AN) parties in the European Union grounded on a theory that articulates social and cultural dimensions. We aim to characterize and understand this electorate, and explain its increase, considering their social class, education, income, social orientations, human values, and attitudes towards immigrants, and looking upon the trajectory of inequalities. Data is from the European Social Survey and contextual national level information on economic and educational inequalities, and on social mobility. We find that AN parties voters are mostly industrial and agricultural workers, with very low educational resources and low income. They are characterized by the social orientation of heteronomy, a paradigmatic conformist disposition combining conformity with inequality and conformity with hetero-determination of one's social position, here defined by a low score of the human values of equality and creativity. Heteronomy helps to understand a wide range of AN cultural traits of this population such as their exclusionary attitude towards immigrants. And we verify that the expansion of this electorate follows increasing inequality, mainly in education, as well as downward mobility, and social exclusion.

Keywords: authoritarianism, nationalism, social class, social orientations, human values.

Quando a democracia incuba desigualdade e heteronomia: autoritarismo e nacionalismo na UE

Resumo Neste estudo analisamos a base social dos partidos autoritários e nacionalistas (AN) na União Europeia a partir de uma teoria que articula dimensões sociais e culturais. Pretende-se caracterizar e compreender este eleitorado, e explicar o seu crescimento, considerando a sua classe social, escolaridade, rendimento, orientações sociais, valores humanos e atitudes relativamente aos imigrantes, e observando trajetórias de desigualdades. Os dados são do European Social Survey e de informação contextual ao nível nacional sobre desigualdades económicas e escolares, e sobre mobilidade social. Observa-se que os votantes nos partidos AN são sobretudo operários e trabalhadores agrícolas, com escolaridade muito baixa e rendimento baixo. Caracterizam-se pela orientação social da heteronomia, uma disposição conformista paradigmática que combina conformidade com a desigualdade e conformidade com a hetero-determinação da própria posição social, aqui definida pela baixa importância atribuída aos valores humanos da igualdade e da criatividade. A heteronomia permite compreender um largo espectro de traços culturais desta população como a sua atitude excludente relativamente aos imigrantes. E verifica-se que a expansão deste eleitorado acompanha processos de crescimento da desigualdade, nomeadamente escolar, bem como de mobilidade descendente, e de exclusão social.

Palavras-chave: autoritarismo, nacionalismo, classe social, orientações sociais, valores humanos.

Quand la démocratie incube inégalité et hétéronomie: autoritarisme et nationalisme dans l'UE

Résumé Dans cet étude nous analysons la base sociale des partis autoritaires et nationalistes (AN) dans l'Union Européenne en partant d'une théorie où s'articulent des dimensions sociales et culturelles. L'objectif est de caractériser et comprendre cet électorat, et expliquer sa croissance, en considérant sa classe sociale, éducation, revenu, orientations sociales, valeurs humaines, et attitudes par rapport aux immigrants, et en observant des trajectoires des inégalités. Les données proviennent de l'European Social Survey et d'information contextuelle au

niveau nationale sur inégalités économiques et scolaires, et sur mobilité sociale. Nous observons que les votants dans ces partis sont surtout des ouvriers et des travailleurs agricoles, très peu scolarisés, aux faibles revenus. Ils se caractérisent par l'orientation sociale de l'hétéronomie, une orientation conformiste paradigmatique que combine conformisme avec l'inégalité et conformisme avec l'hétéro-détermination de sa propre position sociale, ici définie par une faible importance accordée aux valeurs humaines de l'égalité et de la créativité. L'hétéronomie nous permet de comprendre un vaste spectre de traits culturels de cette population comme ses attitudes d'exclusion des immigrants. Et nous vérifions que l'expansion de cet électorat accompagne des procès de croissance des inégalités, scolaires en particulier, aussi bien que de mobilité descendante, et d'exclusion sociale.

Mots-clés: autoritarisme, nationalisme, classe sociale, orientations sociales, valeurs humaines.

Cuando la democracia incuba desigualdad y heteronomía: autoritarismo y nacionalismo en la UE

Resumen En este estudio se analiza la base social de los partidos autoritarios y nacionalistas (AN) en Unión Europea a partir de una teoría que articula dimensiones sociales y culturales. Se pretende caracterizar y comprender estos electores, y explicar su crecimiento, considerando su clase social, educación, rendimiento, orientaciones sociales, valores humanos, y actitudes respecto a los inmigrantes, y observando las trayectorias de las desigualdades. Los datos son de European Social Survey y de información contextual al nivel nacional sobre desigualdades económicas y educativas, y sobre movilidad social. Se observa que los votantes de los partidos AN son sobretodo obreros y trabajadores agrícolas, de muy baja escolaridad, y bajo rendimiento. Se caracterizan por la orientación social de la heteronomía, una orientación conformista paradigmática que combina conformismo con la desigualdad e conformismo con la hetero-determinación de su propia posición social, aquí definida por una baja importancia atribuida a los valores humanos de la igualdad y de la creatividad. La heteronomía nos permite comprender una gama amplia de trazos culturales de esta población, como su actitud de exclusión de los inmigrantes. Y verificamos que la expansión de estos electores acompaña procesos de aumento de la desigualdad, en particular educativa, bien como de movilidad descendente, y exclusión social.

Palabras-clave: autoritarismo, nacionalismo, clase social, orientaciones sociales, valores humanos.

The social base of authoritarian and nationalist parties

In recent times we observe an increase of voting in authoritarian and nationalist (AN) parties in oldest democracies and most developed countries, including in the European Union (EU) that was founded with the objective of creating a supranational cooperative space and putting an end to war in Europe.¹

The dimension of a political party depends on the historical and institutional contexts, and on the characteristics, practices and discourses of its leadership and activists, the party's political programme and its organization, the role of the media, etc. A full study of current growth of AN parties requires the examination of compatibility and financial flows between national interests (military, political), economic groups, statist forces, conservative organizations, and authoritarian protagonists. For instance, in a paper named "Trump: authoritarian, just another neoliberal republican, or both?" R. Lachmann (2019) shows that the autocratic

1 The revision of this text was provided by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia through the Financing of the R&D Unit UIDB/03126/2020.

public image of the USA's president and his decisions are a part of the overall strategy of the Republican party (and the economic elites that support it), which keeps fostering liberalism and becoming increasingly authoritarian and nationalist.

But in a democracy those compatibilities and financial support aren't effective if AN parties can't ensure a significant social base. Analysing the characteristics of the social base of AN parties is then decisive.

There exists a relevant literature on the social base of these parties (Golder, 2016; Arzheimer, 2012; Van der Brug and Fennema, 2007; Mayer, 2005). Some authors defend that AN vote is ideological, with specific proposals about policies on immigration, integration and law and order (Swyngedouw, 2001; Van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie, 2000; Eatwell, 2000), while others emphasize that this social base is irrational, with no specific values or policy preferences (Rydgren, 2011; Zhirkov, 2014).

For those who stress an ideological support, the development of this social base is explained by the growth of economic inequality (Lubbers, Gijsberts and Scheepers, 2002), by the escalation of relative deprivation (Dubet, 2017) and culture wars (Graeber, 2011), or by a cultural backlash to post-materialism (Inglehart and Norris, 2016). But despite the fact of being accepted that economic, social and cultural factors are interrelated (Inglehart and Norris 2016: 16), this interlacing is not theoretically and empirically addressed; a consistent and comprehensive approach that articulates those factors and that allows for characterizing, comprehending and explaining the growth of this sociocultural base is lacking.

The alternative explanation that sees an irrational behaviour of AN electors considering that these voters have "no specific values or policy preferences" may be challenged if we work on a theoretical ground that analyses dispositions and social orientations expressed both in rational and non-rational action.

Contributing to reduce this gap, we study the social base of AN parties grounded on a theory that articulates social and cultural dimensions. These dimensions are defined at levels that are both structural (social structure, mainly class structure, and cultural patterns) and individual (class location and individual dispositions, orientations, values and social representations). Individuals interiorize dispositions during their life experiences that are therefore shaped by the structural context of these experiences, and that are expressed in orientations, values, social representations and social practices. Social and cultural determinism, and individualistic and holistic reductionism are rejected in this model that seeks to ascertain relationships between its components in a heuristic mode (Almeida, Machado and Costa, 2006: 95-98).

Within the social dimension the conceptualization of social class follows the ACM model (Almeida, Costa and Machado, 1988; Costa, 1999). This model is built on prior contributions from E. O. Wright, A. Giddens, R. Erikson, J. Goldthorpe and L. Portocarero, G. Esping-Andersen, and P. Bourdieu, aiming to move beyond the objectivist/subjectivist and economicist/culturalist deadlocks. It is focused on the analysis of inequalities and differences within the division of labour and education, grounded on theoretically relevant and institutional indicators that are directly translated into/from official data and other class analysis models, resulting on a comprehensive and qualitatively descriptive class typology.

The cultural dimension is addressed through the analysis of human values, defined by S. H. Schwartz (2012) as trans-situational and general beliefs that motivate action. We complement this approach with a link to the concept of social orientations (Casanova, 2009; 2004). This last concept allows the operationalization of cultural structure (considered as socially structured and structuring of behaviour according to P. Bourdieu and A. Giddens), and the definition of “heteronomy”. With values and social orientations, we aim to grasp cultural characteristics that are long-lasting and difficult to change.

We study the social base of parties analysing party’s voters and joining a long research tradition that stresses significant variations of party voting with social class (P. Lazarsfeld, P. Converse, G. Michelat, M. Simon) and with values (R. Inglehart, S. Schwartz). This tradition is currently updated on the specific subject of AN parties by Rydgren (2013), Bornschieer and Rydgren (2013), and Kalb and Halmai (2011).

We also build upon previous work focused on the French AN party “Front National” and the comparison of the socio-political situation in France, Portugal and the United States of America (Casanova and Almeida, 2018). Following this work, we expect to observe increasing inequality (especially in education) in welfare states in the EU despite the expectations of equality of opportunities and social inclusion that have been institutionally cultivated in these countries. The rise of inequality is breeding a political reaction in response to the failure of those welfare expectations, driven by deprived social classes threatened with social exclusion, mainly in education. Together with Rydgren (2013), Bornschieer and Rydgren (2013), Kalb and Halmai (2011), and Mayer (2005) we expect that the social base of AN parties is essentially composed of this deprived population, namely less educated industrial and agricultural workers, and routine employees. A further original contribution is the expectation that the growth of AN social base is associated with the expansion of heteronomy. By this we mean a conformist social orientation that helps to understand values and cultural traits involved in authoritarianism and nationalism, the relation of AN voters with society, their attitudes towards immigrants, and why a socially deprived population is an effective Right-wing voter (Casanova and Almeida, 2018).

“Populist / non-populist”, “left / right”, “centre / extreme” and “radical / moderate” are controversial distinctions (Muis and Immerzeel, 2017; Mudde, 2016) eventually involving confounding and disguising notions. “Populist” in particular is an excessively syncretic term to classify a party. The indiscriminate use of “populism” to define political parties may dismiss as demagogic legitimate claims from the socially deprived, implicitly excluding them from democracy.

Given the need for clear definitions within this disputed topic, countries that have parties with evident AN characteristics were chosen focusing on sharper ideological content that has a clearer definition: support for a strong central power ruling over the “natural” differences that exist in society (authoritarianism) and for congruence between state and nation promoting a mono-cultural state (nationalism) (Mudde, 2007; Golder, 2016). The AN parties were selected among the “radical populist” parties listed by Mudde (2007), Van Kessel (2015), and Inglehart and Norris (2016).

We use individual level data delivered by the European Social Survey (ESS) that in addition to “vote” also provides pertinent indicators of social class and values.² The analysis is centred in Round 8 of ESS, with data from 2016, but cross-temporal observation will also be introduced comparing Round 8 with earlier Rounds.³ Furthermore, we include contextual national level data on economic and educational inequalities, and on social mobility.

The countries being analysed were selected considering that we want to concentrate on older democracies and most developed countries in the EU. Eastern countries in the EU were not included since they belong to a recent democratization wave and they share a specific type of nationalism developing, at least partially, against previous Soviet supra-nationalism (Narozhna, 2004: 300). We privilege the countries with AN parties belonging to the five most voted parties in the country. We end up with eight countries/AN parties: Austria — Freedom Party of Austria, Finland — True Finns, France — Front National, Germany — Alternative für Deutschland, Italy — Lega Nord, Netherlands — Party for Freedom, Sweden — Sverigedemokraterna, and the United Kingdom — United Kingdom Independence Party. These are all populist radical or extreme Right-wing parties, where AN traits normally excel.⁴ The other four parties contemplated in each country were divided in two sets differentiating Left and Right parties.⁵

The concept of social class according to ACM model integrates socio-professional and socio-educational dimensions; the former is operationalized through the ESS indicators of occupation, employment relation and number of employees respondent has/had (tables A2 and A3, Annex), and the latter through the indicators of highest level of education (ES-ISCED, Educational Stage — International Standard Classification of Education) and years of full-time education completed.

Household’s total net income was also used as a supplementary indicator of economic resources.

Human values are operationalized in the ESS through the 21-item measure as a basis for the typology of 10 values designed by S. H. Schwartz.

Additionally, we analyse several ESS indicators of the relation with politics and human development, and attitudes towards immigrants.

The indicator of vote is the party people voted for in last national election.

2 The most relevant limitation of these data is that “vote” was absent in the process of sample stratification.

3 At the time of the production of this paper, data from ESS9 was not yet completely available.

4 Belgium is not included because Vlaams Belang and Lijst Dedecker, considered authoritarian and nationalist parties, are not among the five most voted parties. Denmark and Greece did not collaborate in ESS8. Political parties with authoritarian and nationalist traits in Portugal did not have parliamentary representation in 2016, so this country was not included.

5 See the list with all the parties in table A1 (Annex). There is no consensus on the classification of the Movimento 5 Stelle in Italy, but it is considered by some as mainly Right-wing with no authoritarian and nationalist traits (Mudde, 2007; Van Kessel, 2015). Moreover, the mean value of the placement of its electorate on a Left-Right scale in ESS8 is located within the Centre-Right (table A5, Annex), so this party was included in the list of Right parties.

Sociocultural characterization and comprehension of AN electorate

A deprived social position

The social class with the most weight among voters of AN parties is routine employees followed by industrial and agricultural workers, both representing 61,4% of the total of voters. These social classes and their global weight are smaller within Left and Right-wing parties (table 1). On the contrary, intellectual and technical professionals and supervisory employees, and entrepreneurs, managers and independent professionals have a significantly lower weight in AN voters compared to Left and Right-wing voters. The percentage of self-employed workers is high in AN voters but this is not characteristic since it remains relatively higher in the Right-wing voters.

Table 1 Social class (column percentage), education and income (mean values) in voted parties

	AN	Right	Left
Entrepreneurs, managers and independent professionals	9.8	15.9	11.0
Intellectual and technical professionals, and supervisory employees	21.0	35.1	40.8
Self-employed workers	8.1	9.7	4.9
Routine employees	32.1	24.4	28.1
Industrial and agricultural workers	29.3	12.8	15.2
Highest level of education (1-less than lower secondary; 7- ≥ MA level)	3.6	4.4	4.6
Household's total net income (1-lowest decile; 10-highest decile)	5.5	5.9	5.7

Source: ESS8.

When we look at each country (table A4, Annex) we note that routine employees and industrial and agricultural workers are the largest social classes of AN supporters in Austria, France and Netherlands. For the other countries, routine employees are not so prominent in AN voting (nonetheless they are in a second place in Finland and Germany), but industrial and agricultural workers are always predominant within AN voters. We can also see (table A4, Annex) that the sum of industrial and agricultural workers and routine employees is systematically higher than 50% in AN parties, except in France (48.8%).

The highest level of education attained is significantly lower in AN voters, compared to Left and Right-wing voters (table 1), and this is valid within each country except in Finland, but here True Finns voters stand quite close in the second lowest position (table A4, Annex).

The analysis of household's total income indicates that its lowest score is found in AN voters (table 1), while Left-wing voters show an intermediate result and Right-wing voters display a higher average income.⁶ The AN electorate has a

6 We have no data on the respondent's income in ESS so we use household's income as an approximate indicator.

lower income in almost all countries except in Austria, Germany and Italy; but in Austria and Germany AN voters have the second lowest average income and only Italy is a decisive exception with Lega Nord showing the highest income within all the parties (table A5, Annex).

Alienated, distrustful, critical

When we consider the relation of the respondents with politics (table 2) we observe that those who vote for AN parties are the least confident in their own ability to participate in politics, and this stands for Finland, France, Germany and the United Kingdom. In Italy and Netherlands this electorate is the second less self-assured, and in Austria and Sweden it is in third place (table A5, Annex).

In general AN electors place themselves on the Right wing of the political scale and a little above the supporters of the Right parties (table 2), but this Right-wing slight extremism of the AN electorate only pertains to Austria and Germany while in the other countries the placement of AN supporters is not as far-Right as the other Right voters (table A5, Annex).

Voters in AN parties are those who express lower trust in politicians and in the European Parliament, and are less satisfied with democracy in their country (table 2). This is valid for all countries except for trust in politicians and satisfaction with democracy in Italy (table A5, Annex).

Considering the relation with human development, we see that AN supporters are also those who feel more that they don't live comfortably with their household's income (table 2). This holds for most countries but not for Germany, where Alternative für Deutschland takes a second critical position or Italy, where Lega Nord appears in the second-to-last position (table A5, Annex). But despite this critical feeling and their lower income, AN voters come after Left-wing voters when it comes to agreeing that the government should reduce differences in income (table 2). This intermediate attitude is visible in all countries except Italy where Lega Nord and Popolo della Libertà voters are those who disagree the most to reducing differences in income (table A5, Annex).

When evaluating the state of education and health services in the country, AN supporters are the ones with a more critical opinion (table 2). This is valid for most countries excluding Austria and Germany; in Italy only the state of education follows the general rule (table A5, Annex).

If we measure the difference between mean values in AN, Left and Right-wing parties across all indicators in table 2 we realise that AN supporters are closer to Right-wing voters except in relation to trust in politicians and in European Parliament, satisfaction with democracy in the country, and the state of education where they stand nearer to the Left.

Having the lowest income, there is no surprise that AN voters feel less comfortable with their income; being those with the lowest education level (having less information and structured opinions), they feel less confident to participate in politics; and with the lowest income and education (less economic and cultural resources to access to and benefit from the services available), they express a more

Table 2 Relation with politics and human development, and attitudes towards immigrants in voted parties (mean values)

	AN	Right	Left
Confidence in own ability to participate in politics (1-not at all confident; 5-completely confident)	2.31	2.34	2.51
Placement on left/right scale (0-left; 10-right)	6.30	6.17	3.65
Trust in politicians (1-no trust at all; 10-complete trust)	2.70	4.19	4.14
Trust in the European Parliament (1-no trust at all; 10-complete trust)	2.81	4.55	4.54
How satisfied with the way democracy works in country (0-extremely dissatisfied; 10-extremely satisfied)	4.03	5.79	5.75
Feeling about household's income (1-living comfortably; 4-very difficult)	1.84	1.67	1.67
Government should reduce differences in income (1-agree strongly; 5-disagree strongly)	2.19	2.41	1.90
State of education in country nowadays (0-extremely bad; 10-extremely good)	5.31	5.93	5.72
State of health services in country nowadays (0-extremely bad; 10-extremely good)	5.71	6.22	6.25
Immigrants make country worse or better place to live (0-worse place; 10-better place)	3.40	4.88	5.92

Source: ESS8.

critical view about the state of education and health. But why do members of this deprived and critical population identify themselves, display similar attitudes, and vote for Right-wing parties, and do not demand more vehemently for the government to reduce differences in income?

To address this question, we will move beyond characterization to a comprehensive approach focused on the meaning of action of AN voters. As Immanuel Wallerstein emphasizes when reflecting on why do workers vote for right-wing parties, we must search beyond the concept of “false consciousness” and “try to discern how these others envisage for themselves what is their self-interest” (Wallerstein, 2017). With this purpose we build on values and social orientations as intermediate factors between social positions and social practices, according to the aforementioned theoretical framework.

Heteronomous and exclusionary

One of the main elements usually put forward to differentiate Left from Right-wing politics is equality: it is argued that Left-wing parties value equality more than Right-wing parties (Giddens, 1998).⁷ When we draw on the indicator of the human value of equality designed by Schwartz in the ESS8 (table 3), we see that AN voters

7 This thesis is validated by data on table A5, Annex: Left-wing supporters in all countries give a higher importance to equality than Right-wing supporters, except in the case of Austria where SPO (Left) shows a slightly less attachment to equality than NEOS (Right). All voters in all countries score between 1.4 and 2.7 (in a scale from 1 to 6) showing that in average equality is relatively important for everyone; equality has been institutionalized as a civic norm and there may be circumstantial adjustments to the norm inflating its importance on surveys, this meaning that small differences in equality valuation are significant. In any case, the AN electorate's score for equality is the smallest.

Table 3 Human values in voted parties (mean values)

	AN	Right	Left
Important that people are treated equally and have equal opportunities (1-very much like me; 6-not like me at all)	2.35	2.21	1.84
Important to think new ideas and being creative (1-very much like me; 6-not like me at all)	2.51	2.49	2.44
Important to do what is told and follow rules (1-very much like me; 6-not like me at all)	3.23	3.21	3.50
Important to help people and care for others well-being (1-Very much like me; 6-Not like me at all)	2.20	2.10	2.00
Security	0.50	0.31	0.20

Source: ESS8.

are the ones who give the least importance to this value.⁸ And this is true for all countries except Italy (where Lega Nord comes after the Popolo della Libertà in this relative devaluation) and the United Kingdom (where UKIP comes after the Conservative Party).

Therefore, there is significant conformity with inequality interiorized by the social classes that characteristically support AN parties, and the unveiling of this conformity helps to understand why voters of deprived social classes place themselves on the Right side of the Left-Right scale, are in general closer to Rightist attitudes, and vote for Right-wing parties.

Conformity with inequality has been studied drawing on the concept of “social orientations”. Social orientations are envisaged to measure social culture, the incorporated dispositions in individuals of their relation with the structure of social positions, associating the concept of *habitus* developed by P. Bourdieu and the reflexive capacity of social actors widely discussed by A. Giddens and P. Bourdieu, among others. Social orientations are operationalized through the combination of indicators of the orientation towards inequality and action’s orientation as presented in figure 1. To define the respondents’ social orientation, they must identify themselves in a questionnaire with one of the two opposite beliefs deployed in each indicator (“non-conformity / conformity with inequality” and “proactivity / non-proactivity”), its combination resulting on four ideal-typical social orientations: autonomy, independence, resistance and heteronomy. A fifth social orientation is added, integrating those respondents that didn’t answer to at least one of the

8 The scores in these tables are mean values for the 21-item questionnaire with the exception of the centred mean value for security that follows the operationalization of human values in 10 categories. “Security” is a category resulting from the recoding of two of the original 21-item, with no scale, and the higher the score, the higher the importance given to security. The relevance of security for AN voters was previously observed by Casanova and Almeida (2018). Deviations in mean values seem residual but they are effective, representing significant cultural differences according to Schwartz. The value of security integrates two indicators from the 21-item questionnaire. The analysis of these two indicators show that the valuation of security among AN electors is due to the importance they give to a strong government and not to safe surroundings. This means that they strive for security not against local threats but in confrontation with societal challenges.

Action's orientation	Orientation toward inequality	
	Nonconformity with inequality "It's true that all people are different, but it's always possible to reduce social inequalities among them"	Conformity with inequality "It's true that all people are different, and social inequalities among them are inevitable"
Proactivity "Our position in society depends above all on having objectives in life and striving to attain them"	Autonomy	Independence
Non-proactivity "No matter what we do, our position in society depends above all on things that we cannot control"	Resistance	Heteronomy

Figure 1 Social orientations

two questions. It has been extensively verified that these respondents live in the poorest conditions and are the least informed, reflexive and participative in civic and political life, thereby expressing what is defined as the social orientation of exclusion (Casanova, 2009; 2004).

Within this model conformity with inequality can be proactive or non-proactive. As we can see in table 3, AN voters are those who give less importance to thinking new ideas and being creative, an indicator for proactivity.⁹ This occurs in most of the countries except Finland, Netherlands and the UK (where AN supporters appear in a second position), and in Sweden where Sveridgedemokraterna voters are those who show higher proactivity (table A5, Annex).

In short, since the AN electorate is comparatively more conformist with inequality and less proactive, this means that it is fundamentally characterized by the orientation of heteronomy.

Heteronomy is predominantly found in deprived social positions and it is the paradigmatic conformist orientation, logically opposed to autonomy, and combining conformity with inequality and conformity with hetero-determination of one's social position (Casanova, 2009).

Heteronomy is, then, essentially associated with passive or reactive social action. It has been verified that people characterized by the orientation of heteronomy scarcely participates in political life and in the work of institutions, limiting themselves essentially to complying with rules (Casanova, 2009). Table 3 shows that AN electors have an intermediate position when they are asked about the importance of doing what they are told and following rules, but they are very close to the Right-wing voters who score just a little higher. And in Italy, Sweden and the United Kingdom AN voters are among those who give the highest importance to this value (table A5, Annex). Given the distance from politics and institutions found amid people characterized by

⁹ The indicators for social orientations are not the same as those adopted by Schwartz, but they have a global identical meaning and may be used as equivalents.

heteronomy, voting appears as an exceptional compliance to civic and political rules and may be fundamentally intermittent and reactive.

In table 3 we see that helping people and caring for others' well-being, an indicator of solidarity, reached its lowest score with AN voters. This evokes traits like "selfishness" and "unwilling to pay taxes that go to the unfortunate" found by Hochschild among the supporters of Tea Party, that also have AN traits and would decisively contribute to elect Donald Trump in the USA (Hochschild, 2016: 234). Lower solidarity indicates higher closure in restricted circles and cultural isolationism, and when combined with social conformity and within a deprived social position means that it is primarily a dominated and protective cultural isolationism. This is valid for all countries but Italy where Lega Nord is second after Popolo della Libertà (table A5, Annex).

And the human value of "Security" excels in AN supporters, being more than double the average in the Left voters (table 3). This striking valuation of security and a protective cultural isolationism, adding to compliance with rules indicates that this population relies on rules mainly to protect themselves and their closest relations. This doesn't apply entirely in Germany and Sweden however there AN electors come immediately in second place (table A5, Annex).

In sum, the prevalence of deprived social positions and the orientation of heteronomy in AN voters allows us to understand their alignment with Right-wing parties and other attitudes. Conformity with inequality usually entails accepting and naturalizing the existence of "superior" and "inferior" sociocultural categories. This conformity and the deprived social position of AN voters imply that they may consider the probability of not being part of the "superior". Yet, their tenuous claim for the government to reduce differences in income suggests that although they are in a deprived and dominated social position, they may not like to depend on the government. This suggests that we are dealing with self-confident conformists, raising traits such as "pride", "capacity for sacrifice and endurance", and the valuation of "honour" again observed by Hochschild in Trump's electors (Hochschild, 2016: 234).

Significant compliance with rules, self-confidence, and reactive and critical attitudes allows us to understand why this electorate is often described as moralist. Heteronomy, passive / reactive action, compliance with rules and the "capacity for loyalty" also identified by Hochschild within Trump's electorate (ibid.: 234) helps to comprehend its support for authoritarianism. Heteronomy, self-confidence, moralism and critical attitudes in relation to politics and human development may signify that their expectations are not fulfilled when it comes to those to whom they delegate initiative and decisions-making abilities in society; and this helps to understand why they might engage in Manichean party programs and political discourses based on the allegation of the purity of the people and the corruption of elites.

Since AN electors characteristically have deprived social positions, a conformist orientation, and so expressively value the security that a strong government may ensure, this means that they may feel threatened by social exclusion, and this is a likely concern given their precarious inclusion in society. And if they feel exposed to social exclusion and are especially critical of the state of health and educational services, being deprived, conformist, protective-centred, not liking to depend on the State

indicates that this population miss major means to improve their own well-being, being dependent and unprotected from social exclusion.

A relative lack of solidarity, adding to conformity with inequality (and its expression in the naturalization of sociocultural “superiority” and “inferiority”) sets the cultural ground for nationalist, xenophobic, racist, sexist and homophobic attitudes within this population. Not only inequalities but also differences in general tend to be hierarchized, reduced to a division between “superior” and “inferior”. Once this is coupled with lower sense of solidarity, self-confidence, the prospect that different people will not comply to the rules which AN voters know and acknowledge, and a perceived risk of their own social exclusion, then what is felt as culturally different is considered a threat to their culture and to their precarious integration in the “socio-cultural hierarchy”. Therefore, we may expect that the AN electorate develops exclusionary predispositions against those they think represent this threat.

In fact, these voters are those who more expressively say that immigrants make a country worse (table 2) and this is evident for all countries (table A5, Annex). And there is a higher statistically significant correlation according to the predicted direction between this attitude and the value of equality (that indicates a varying disposition to naturalize inequality).¹⁰

Thus heteronomy (the low scores for equality and creativity) and low solidarity are significantly associated with attitudes towards immigrants enabling us to comprehend AN electorate’s alignment with exclusionary political discourses and policies targeting this segment of the population.

Explaining the expansion of AN electorate

On the edge of social exclusion

AN voters have deprived social positions. But are they as deprived as immigrants? How do they compare to those who are in a situation of social exclusion?

We cannot directly compare AN voters with immigrants using data of the ESS8, but it is possible to approach this issue by comparing AN supporters with those who are or are not citizens of the country, those who are or are not born in the country, those belonging or not to minority groups, and those whose father is or is not born in the country (table 4).

Within the population that can be considered “native”, entrepreneurs, managers and independent professionals, intellectual and technical professionals, and supervisory employees, and self-employed workers have greater weight than in the “non-natives” where industrial and agricultural workers and routine employees are comparatively larger.¹¹

10 But we still find significant correlations with the values of creativity and solidarity; significance is always $p \leq 0.01$; Cramer’s V is -0.193 for equality, -0.081 for creativity, and -0.074 for solidarity.

11 We use the term “non-native” to encompass those who are not citizens of the country, that are not born in the country, that belong to minority groups, and those whose father is not born in the

Table 4 Social class (row percentage), education and income (mean values) of “natives” and “non-natives”

		Social class					Highest level of education	Household's total net income
		EMIP*	ITPSE*	SEW*	RE*	IAW*		
Citizen of country	Yes	11.8	32.6	5.8	30.2	19.6	4.0	5.5
	No	9.2	22.2	4.7	36.6	27.3	4.6	4.6
Born in country	Yes	11.9	32.8	5.8	30.1	19.4	4.0	5.5
	No	10.1	25.7	4.8	34.4	25.0	4.5	4.9
Belong to minority group in country	Yes	9.6	26.9	4.3	35.9	23.3	4.7	4.8
	No	11.8	32.5	5.8	30.2	19.7	4.0	5.5
Father born in country	Yes	11.9	32.8	5.9	29.9	19.5	4.0	5.5
	No	10.7	28.0	4.7	34.0	22.7	4.3	5.0

* Social classes are displayed by their initials

Source: ESS8.

On average “natives” have lower education but higher income than “non-natives”.

And whatever the degree of development of the original country of “non-natives” (table 5) they always have higher education and lower household income than “natives” (table 4).¹²

When we focus on industrial and agricultural workers and routine employees we note that within the social classes where most AN voters are positioned we have the same scenario as on the national level: within the social classes where “non-natives” have a higher weight, they have lower household incomes but higher education levels than “natives” (table 6).

Bearing in mind that mean values for education and household's income in AN voters are 3.6 and 5.5 respectively (table 1), we grasp two important further results. First, this electorate has a higher income compared to “non-natives” from all over the world (table 5) and to industrial and agricultural workers and routine employees in general (table 6), and equivalent income to the average of “natives” (table 4). Second, AN supporters have higher education levels than “natives” in industrial and agricultural workers and routine employees (table 6) but lower education compared to “natives” and “non-natives” in general (table 4), whatever the degree of development of the country of origin (table 5), and “non-natives” in industrial and agricultural workers and routine employees (table 6).

country; we consider that these categories comprise immigrants in general, and we use “native” as the opposite notion.

12 The categories in table 5 were defined using the indicator “country of birth” in the ESS8.

Table 5 Education and income of citizens from different parts of the world (mean values)

	Highest level of education	Household's total net income
Citizen of EU countries	4.6	5.1
Citizen of developed countries outside the EU	4.5	4.6
Citizen of developing countries	4.3	4.1

Source ESS8.

Table 6 Education and income in routine employees, and industrial and agricultural workers of "natives" and "non-natives" (mean values)

		Routine employees		Industrial and agricultural workers	
		Highest level of education	Household's total net income	Highest level of education	Household's total net income
Citizen of country	Yes	3.4	4.8	3.0	4.6
	No	4.4	4.1	4.6	4.2
Born in country	Yes	3.4	4.8	3.0	4.6
	No	3.9	4.2	4.1	4.3
Belong to minority group in country	Yes	4.3	4.1	4.4	4.5
	No	3.4	4.8	3.1	4.6
Father born in country	Yes	3.4	4.8	3.0	4.6
	No	3.8	4.3	3.9	4.5

Source: ESS8.

So, AN electors are in an equivalent situation to "natives" in general, a little better than industrial and agricultural workers and routine employees, and considerably better than "non-natives" in terms of income, but significantly disadvantaged when it comes to education compared to "natives", but mainly with "non-natives", including those who come from developing countries.

These results suggest that both "non-natives" and "natives" belonging to deprived classes may endure feelings of relative deprivation, economic in the former and educational in the latter.

Despite its deprived social position, these AN supporters do vote. Voting is a significant indicator of social inclusion. In order to have a fuller picture of the degree of deprivation of AN voters we will compare them now with those who do not vote, assuming that on average non-voters are by and large in a situation of social exclusion.

Data in table 7 confirms that people who do not vote have significantly lower socio-professional, educational and economic resources than those who vote.

When we compare AN voters with non-voters (table 7) we observe that AN electors exhibit a slightly lower weight in deprived social classes (61.4% compared to 64.5% in non-voters) and higher education, and also a noticeably bigger household income. This means that the AN electorate is quite close to a social exclusion situation essentially in terms of educational resources contributing to explain their extreme critical attitude towards the state of education in their country.

Table 7 Social class (column percentage), education and income (mean values) of voters, non-voters and AN voters

	Voted last election		AN voters
	Yes	No	
Entrepreneurs, managers and independent professionals	13.2	7.2	9.8
Intellectual and technical professionals, and supervisory employees	35.5	21.9	21.0
Self-employed workers	5.7	6.4	8.1
Routine employees	28.0	37.3	32.1
Industrial and agricultural workers	17.5	27.2	29.3
Highest level of education (1-less than lower secondary; 7- ≥ MA level)	4.3	3.4	3.6
Household's total net income (1-lowest decile; 10-highest decile)	5.7	4.4	5.5

Source: ESS8.

Thus although these AN supporters do vote, showing a defensive-reactive — not passive or uncritical — political behaviour, and assuming the most sceptical posture about equality and stronger exclusionary attitudes towards immigrants, they live at the edge of social exclusion and this is mainly due to their low and deteriorating educational resources.

Growing inequality and heteronomy

According to previous research it is expected that rising inequality will explain growing heteronomy and the expansion of AN electorate (Casanova and Almeida, 2018). If heteronomy is defined by conformity with inequality, we expect that the increase of inequality contributes to the diffusion of heteronomy: the growth of inequality reinforces sociocultural alienation of those in deprived social positions, who incorporate (accommodating and endorsing) the systematic frustration of actions and expectations devoted to the improvement of their life conditions.

To verify this proposition, we analyse the trajectory of inequality by contemplating national level data on economic and educational inequality, and social mobility in official reports, while considering education and income at individual level in ESS.

Recent data demonstrates that economic inequality in disposable income has grown since mid-1980s in Finland, Netherlands, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom (OECD, 2017: 8). This study doesn't have enough data for Austria and Sweden but other reports show that the global trend in these countries is the same (Verwiebe et al., s/d: 12; Atkinson et al., 2017). France appears as an exception in the OECD report; nonetheless more data reveal that inequality in disposable income falls between 1960 and 2002, and starts mounting since then (Hasell, s/d). It is also evident that these eight countries are amongst those where the wealth share of the bottom 40% of the population is currently lower than Europe's and the OECD's average in most cases (OECD, 2017: 10).

The analysis of absolute mobility rates across cohorts from 1927 until 1977 in European countries show that the percentage of the upwardly mobile decreases systematically within that period in France and Sweden, and since the cohort born in

1946-1964 in Austria, Germany, Finland, United Kingdom and Netherlands, this accompanied by a generalized increase of downward mobility (except in Finland, mainly characterized by increasing social immobility) (Eurofound, 2017, Annex 4).¹³

Data from a report on equity in education reveals that “average levels of educational attainment rose worldwide during the past few decades, but more so in OECD countries than in developing countries” (OECD, 2017: 77). Yet, in OECD countries “large socio-economic differences in educational attainment, for example, in the completion of tertiary degrees, have not narrowed over the past few decades, despite the expansion of education observed during this period” (ibid.: 59).

It is also found that there is a diminishing upward educational mobility among cohorts born between 1946 and 1989 in 21 countries that include Austria, England, Finland and Sweden (ibid.: 81). In France, Germany and Netherlands there are some variations, and only in Italy did the trend in upwardly mobile adults increase over time (ibid.: 82).

When we examine trends in tertiary education among cohorts born between 1946 and 1989 (33 countries) we note that, “because gains were larger among those with highly educated parents, the gap in tertiary attainment between adults with highly educated parents and those with low-educated parents grew over time” (ibid.: 86). Here Italy is a markedly typical case (ibid.: 87), and Austria, England, France, Netherlands and Sweden follow the general trend too. Finland seems to display a minor improvement in equity (ibid.: Annex 2.26), and the same for Germany but this is mainly because “the probability of completing tertiary education decreased [...] regardless of their parent’s level of education. Greater equity is achieved because the decrease in likelihood is slightly greater for adults with highly educated parents than for adults with low-educated parents” (ibid.: 90).

National level data doesn’t allow us to observe the trajectory of inequalities comparing different social classes, “natives” and “non-natives”, or AN, Left and Right-wing voters. With this purpose we return to ESS. First comparing data on education and income of social classes in rounds 1 and 8, allows for the analysis of the trajectory between 2002 and 2016, after analysing the intergenerational trajectories of education within ESS8.

Education rises for all social classes between 2002 and 2016 except for intellectual and technical professionals, and supervisory employees, but these remain the social class with the highest education (table 8). The smallest growth is observed in industrial and agricultural workers and routine employees.¹⁴

Household incomes decreased for all social classes, but quite unequally, with industrial and agricultural workers and routine employees losing at least the triple of the other social classes (table 8).¹⁵

13 Data from Italy is not available.

14 To analyse educational trajectories, we used the indicator “years of full-time education completed” in ESS.

15 We have no data in ESS about the income of the father or the mother of the respondent to calculate incomes’ intergenerational trajectory.

Table 8 Variation between 2002 and 2016 in education and income according to social class

	Years of full-time education completed	Household's total net income
Entrepreneurs, managers and independent professionals	0.9	-3.2
Intellectual and technical professionals, and supervisory employees	-1.2	-1.9
Self-employed workers	1.0	-3.3
Routine employees	0.7	-9.7
Industrial and agricultural workers	0.7	-10.1

Source: ESS1-8.

Table 9 Intergenerational variation in education of “citizens of country” and “non-citizens” (mean values)

Highest level of education	Respondent	Father (F)	Mother (M)	Mean M+F	Intergenerat. variation	
Citizen of country	Yes	4.0	3.2	2.8	3.0	1.0
	No	4.6	3.4	3.0	3.2	1.4

Source: ESS8.

Table 10 Intergenerational variation in education in voted parties (mean values)

Intergenerational variation in highest level of education		
AN	Right	Left
1.1	1.3	1.4

Source: ESS8.

If we consider the intergenerational variation of education in “citizens of country” and “non-citizens” we see that the level of education is higher in the family’s background and it grows more significantly among “non-citizens” (table 9). This means that immigrants may have a more favourable educational background and are increasing their education levels faster. Previous studies already pointed to a significant increment in education among immigrants compared to natives in developed countries (Eurostat, 2018; Oberdabernig and Schneebaum, 2017).¹⁶

And when we compare intergenerational variation in education amongst electorates we see that the lowest progress is in the AN electorate (table 10).¹⁷

16 In a recent article we can see, for instances, that the number of doctors in rich countries that immigrate from poor countries is growing, while they are missing in their native countries (*Monde*, 2020).

17 We computed intergenerational variation in highest level of education as in table 9 (difference between the respondent’s and the mean of father and mother’s highest level of education).

When democracy incubates inequality and heteronomy – a fake democracy?

The present analysis is not about AN leadership and activists, which would require a different research design, but about those who more widely vote for parties with AN traits.¹⁸

As expected, social class following the ACM model constitutes a highly significant factor to explain voting patterns of five major parties in all countries under analysis.¹⁹

We confirmed that, comparing to Left and Right-wing voters, the AN electorate in these countries is characterized by an over-representation, both in absolute and relative terms, of deprived social classes (industrial and agricultural workers and routine employees), exposing a structural polarization between AN voters and the rest of the voters. In AN voters the proportion of industrial and agricultural workers – which appears as the typical social class of AN voting in the EU in 2016 (including Italy) – doubles and the percentage of intellectual and technical professionals and supervisory employees decreases to half. The supporters of AN parties are also those with the lowest level of education and household's income.

We also substantiated the relevance of the concept of social orientations to understand social culture, and we ascertained that the AN electorate is characterized by heteronomy, the paradigmatic conformist social orientation defined here by a low score of the human values of equality and creativity.

Heteronomy is likewise considered as the foundation of ethics for the philosopher E. Levinas who defines it as a morality previous to individual conscience, a norm of norms, founded in the responsibility towards the "other" and expressed in passivity; these features seem to correspond to a large extent with the cultural aspects of the social orientation of heteronomy.

When combined with the valuing of compliance with rules and the undervaluing of solidarity, heteronomy allowed us to comprehend well-known cultural traits and attitudes associated with authoritarianism and nationalism. Authoritarianism in industrial workers was previously discussed, among others, by S. Lipset (1959); currently this authoritarianism is fuelling Right-wing parties and we verified that this alignment is correlated with a particularly low valuing of equality associated with the incorporation of a conformist orientation in relation to inequality among industrial and agricultural workers.

So, the spread of the social orientation of heteronomy in a population seems to be the cultural terrain for authoritarian and nationalist leadership and activism to prosper.

If we look at sociocultural characteristics of the AN electorate in each country, we find some deviations to the general pattern, but these are minor deviations

18 For instance, it is known that the reasons why people vote for AN parties and the reasons that AN leaders claim that they support it are different (Swyngedouw, 2001).

19 Correlations are always $p < 0.01$ except in Italy where the significance attached to the highest level of education is $p < 0.05$.

involving a minority of countries, and only Italy seems to be a distinct case. Despite the diversity of historical and institutional national contexts, political systems, and party's organizations and leadership we clearly observe a common class base and shared relevant cultural traits in AN electors in the eight countries, justifying our objective of searching for a transnational reasoning and explanation within older democracies and most developed countries.

Our results also show that we can identify specific values amid the AN electorate and, with the support of a comprehensive approach, interpret their political preferences; this outcome stands in opposition to Rydgren (2011) and Zhirkov (2014) who considered this population as "irrational". Yet, the heteronomous culture and reactive behaviour found in AN electorate means that they may not have an "ideology" in the sense of a systematized set of values expressed on an explicit socio-political agenda and respective policy preferences.

Our explanatory hypothesis has also been corroborated. Whether we consider national trends, the trajectory between 2002 and 2016, or intergenerational trajectory we observe growing inequality and downward social mobility in the eight countries. And these processes are essentially undermining the economic and educational conditions of industrial and agricultural workers, and routine employees, and in particular of those who are voting for AN parties in these social classes who are caught in a trajectory of social exclusion, mainly in education.

These eight countries are among those with highest inequality-adjusted human development index and lower inequalities in the world and in the EU (UNDP, 2018). Therefore, the trajectory of inequalities has specific effects on the expansion of heteronomy and AN voting beyond present degree of inequality in the context of older democracies of developed countries. And our results may be valid for other developed countries with AN electorate like the United States of America, Canada, etc.²⁰

This also means that law and sanctioning measures against authoritarian organizations and protagonists tend to be inefficient when democracy incubates inequality.

Thus, according to our results, if there is a "culture war" involving AN electors it may be against those who value equality, creativity and solidarity more, and do not value following rules as highly. This hypothetical "culture war" may correspond, at least in part, to the previously found class polarization related to AN voting between industrial and agricultural workers, on one side, and intellectual and technical professionals and supervisory employees, on the other side. Since the predominant social orientation in intellectual and technical professionals and supervisory employees is autonomy (Casanova, 2009; 2004) — the opposite social orientation to heteronomy — this helps to understand the cultural tension between AN supporters and this elite.

20 The thesis in this paper was already highlighted in a chapter of a book published in 2018 (Casanova and Almeida, 2018), and was further extended in oral communications in scientific events (Research Forum CIES-IUL, 2018; Lisbon's European Social Survey Seminar, 2018; X Portuguese Congress of Sociology, 2018). Piketty's *Capital et Idéologie*, edited in 2019, shares a similar general diagnosis, mainly that growing economic and above all educational inequality is fostering authoritarian and nationalist parties.

Autonomy is considered by E. Kant (following Aristotle and J.-J. Rousseau, and in opposition to E. Levinas) the supreme principle of ethics, entailing dignity and rationality, freedom from all dependency but reason, and considering that being moral is being autonomous. We can also find a focus on autonomy in the work of C. Castoriadis who defines it as a cultural project, a process closely linked to equality; and, in an implicit mode, in the thought of P. Bourdieu who evokes modernity when referring to the process of autonomisation (imposition of auto-nomos, with “nomos” being the “fundamental law” or “rules of the game”) of fields, following the case for the field of literature.

This suggests that the difference between heteronomy and autonomy, whether in the philosophical sense as ethical principles, whether in sociological terms as social orientations, is closely associated with the classical differentiation between tradition and modernity simplified in dichotomies like pre-capitalism / capitalism in K. Marx, community / society in F. Tonnies, mechanic / organic solidarity in É. Durkheim, and non-rational / rational social action in M. Weber. So, the tension between AN electorate and intellectual and technical professionals and supervisory employees may be interpreted as a tension and a difficulty in communication between traditional and modern culture. Recalling the previous statement on the association between increasing inequality, the expansion of heteronomy, and the spreading of authoritarianism and nationalism this also means that modernity, as a structural process, may lose substance when inequality grows.

Being socially conformists, if AN voters feel relative deprivation this will involve as a group of reference not so much the dominant classes but mainly those with whom they interact and compare more directly. Being mostly industrial and agricultural workers and routine employees, AN supporters may compare to “non-natives” that have significant weight in these social classes (table 4). Based on our data, we can say that when “natives” compare themselves to “non-natives” within industrial and agricultural workers and routine employees they may realize that they have a higher household income but inferior education (table 6). Furthermore, if income and educational condition of industrial and agricultural workers and routine employees is failing when compared to other social classes (table 8), “natives” in general are not increasing their education as fast as their “non-native” co-workers (table 9). Therefore, and considering that in ESS data AN electors are predominantly “natives”, their specific social position is globally deteriorating in relation to both “non-natives” in general and “non-natives” in industrial and agricultural workers and routine employees. And relative deprivation in AN electorate comparing to “non-natives” may be above all educational, also taking account of their extreme critical attitude towards the state of education.²¹

How can we explain the increase in education of “non-natives” in the countries under analysis? Is it, at least partially, the result of the current strategies by

21 We find a territorial illustration of this thesis on educational relative deprivation and frustrated expectations of industrial and agricultural workers knowing that it was in the Midwest of the USA, once the “rustbelt” and now the “brainbelt” of the country, that D. Trump had its most surprising and decisive victory in 2016, a region that previously contributed to elect B. Obama in 2008 and 2012 (Lauck, 2017; *Economist*, 2020).

states and organizations in most developed countries to capture “cheap” excellence in qualification from abroad, enrolled in a competition for supremacy within the so called “knowledge society”? Are these countries benefiting from the efforts of students and educational systems in other countries, at the expenses of investing in their own educational system and allowing bigger inequality of opportunities in education within their borders?

If it is so, the irony is that in those countries that are increasing the capture of excellence in qualification from abroad (“brain-gain”), neglecting equality of opportunities especially in education at home, and preventing non-qualified immigration, AN voting may continue to enlarge. And in those countries that are affected with the “brain-drain”, their development will be negatively affected, their employment will contract, and socio-political unrest and emigration for developed countries may surge.

AN supporters react in an exclusionary mode to “non-natives” but, since AN voters are socially conformists, with low confidence in their ability to participate in politics and negligible involvement in institutions and politics — therefore acting on the margins of citizenship — this exclusionary disposition is originally a reaction to those who have increasingly higher education levels and job opportunities, and are supposed to represent a threat to their social inclusion. AN supporters are the least solidary when compared to Left and Right-wing voters. However, they still state that solidarity is important (table 3). This exclusionary attitude is essentially a circumstantial symptom observed within deprived social classes undergoing educational deterioration and relative deprivation when comparing themselves to their “non-native” co-workers, and are threatened with social exclusion, all this ultimately associated with growing inequality. The decisive political question is: are we acting on the symptoms or on the cause?

If there is a broad “cultural backlash” — where the typical AN electorate is a protagonist simultaneously with other sociocultural segments of the population, altogether expressed in a “generalized and intensive fall on trust in political institutions and agents, mostly in the European Parliament, and on satisfaction with democracy” (Casanova, 2018: 210) — this backlash will surely have some roots in the contradiction between the expectations of growing equality of opportunities and social inclusion institutionally promoted in the EU and the reality of increasing inequality, downward social mobility, and social exclusion. All this is undermining basic objective requisites for democracy like the spread of middle classes, the reduction of poverty, and the promotion of equality (Lipset, 1958: 103, 105). That is to say that if we are observing a “cultural backlash” it will be at least in part against a “democracy” that incubates inequality and heteronomy. Are AN voters anti-elite because they think that elites are illegitimate, rulers failing the rules of democracy, corrupted in the promotion of equality and social inclusion?

Since 2016 the situation seems to be changing, as the contexts move quickly making the diagnosis equally fragile and dependent of successive conjunctures.

While it appeared, for several analysts, that the decadence of central and traditional parties in European policy was a continuous and inevitable process in

favour of the far right and AN rise, subsequent elections results seem in general to contradict those views.

In France, for instance, recent local elections showed that the Front National lost a substantial number of their voters. And who won? The environmental parties with a strong support of the younger generations.

This robust presence of a voting youth connected with the “Greens” was already visible before the pandemic, but it seems to survive it as recent surveys in Germany confirm.

In more general terms, the so called “green wave” has affected several European countries and seems to progress not only at the expense of the far right but also of the traditional parties, those trying to adapt as fast as possible to the current times.

Besides the political rise of new generations, which has equivalence in other parts of the world including the USA, it is necessary to invoke different societal dimensions to grasp the apparent losing of strength of the European right in some of its countries, or its eventual resilience.

One of the favourable circumstances that feeds authoritarianism and nationalism, as we saw, is the deepening of resources inequality in each country. It is impossible to predict what will be the economic recovering of the pandemic and how fast it will occur. But it seems clear, for the moment, that it did not bring more equality. It must be said that the general opinion of Europeans seems to go in the direction of more powerful involvement from the European Community, mainly on the health front. This results from a survey in June 2020 solicited by the European Parliament where a clear majority of respondents asked for stronger community budgets to respond both to health problems and economic consequences of pandemic.

The political interventions in each country to combat Covid-19 and recover economies are under close popular scrutiny on a daily basis. The results of those evaluations will certainly have reflections on trust in institutions and in the outcomes of future elections. If trust is reinforced, AN support may lose momentum. And, again, new generations may be decisive in eventual game changing.

Finally, there are more structural trends. A social re-composition developing in Europe for some decades now goes in the sense of strengthening the so-called knowledge society. Apart from other dimensions and consequences, this implies the continuous growth of social classes that are more educated, namely intellectual and technical workers which are in opposition to heteronomy.

In the medium/long term we can expect, therefore, that this will also play against the affirmation of authoritarian and nationalist parties.

Annex

Table A1 Countries and parties

	AN parties	Right parties	Left parties
Austria	FPO – Freedom Party of Austria	OVP – Austrian People's Party NEOS – The New Austria and Liberal Forum	SPO – Social Democratic Party of Austria Grüne – The Greens – The Green Alternative
Finland	TF – True Finns	CP – The Centre Party NCP – The National Coalition Social Democratic Party	SDP – Social Democratic Party GL – Green League
France	FN – Front National	UMP – Union pour un Mouvement Populaire	PS – Parti Socialiste FDG – Front de Gauche EELV – Europe Écologie Les Verts
Germany	AfD – Alternative für Deutschland	CDU-CSU – Christian Democratic Union of Germany-Christian Social Union in Bavaria	SPD – Social Democratic Party of Germany DL – Die Linke B/DG – Bündnis90/Die Grünen
Italy	LN – Lega Nord	PdL – Popolo della Libertà LD – La Destra M5S – Movimento 5 Stelle	PD – Partito Democratico
Netherlands	PF – Party for Freedom	PPFD – People's Party for Freedom and Democracy D66 – Democrats66 CDA – Christian Democratic Appeal	LP – Labour Party
Sweden	SVD – Sverigedemokraterna	MS – Moderata Samiingspartiet	SD – Socialdemokraterna MdG – Miljöpartiet de Gröna VP – Vänsterpartiet
United Kingdom	UKIP – UK Independence Party	C – Conservative LD – Liberal Democrat	L – Labour SNP – Scottish National Party

Table A2 Operationalization of socio-professional category (ESS1-5)

ESS1-5 Occupations ISCO88	Employment status		
	Self-employed with 6 or more employees	Self-employed with 5 or less employees and working for own family	Employees
Legislators, senior officials and managers*	EMIP	EMIP	EMIP
Professionals	EMIP	EMIP	ITPSE
Technicians and associate professionals	EMIP	EMIP	ITPSE
Clerks	EMIP	SEW	RE
Service workers and shop and market sales workers	EMIP	SEW	RE
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	EMIP	SEW	IAW
Craft and related trades workers	EMIP	SEW	IAW
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	EMIP	SEW	IAW
Elementary occupations	EMIP	SEW	RE/IAW**

*Occupations in group 1.3 were distributed among EMIP or SEW according to the economic sector.

**Occupations in group 9.1 were classified as RE; all the others were classified as IAW.

Armed Forces were distributed among ITPSE and RE according to their education degree.

Table A3 Operationalization of socio-professional category (ESS6-8)

ESS6-8 Occupations ISCO88	Employment status		
	Self-employed with 6 or more employees	Self-employed with 5 or less employees and working for own family	Employees
Managers	EMIP	EMIP	EMIP
Professionals	EMIP	EMIP	ITPSE
Technicians and associate professionals	EMIP	EMIP	ITPSE
Clerical support workers	EMIP	SEW	RE
Service and sales workers	EMIP	SEW	RE
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	EMIP	SEW	IAW
Craft and related trades workers	EMIP	SEW	IAW
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	EMIP	SEW	IAW
Elementary occupations	EMIP	SEW	RE/IAW*

*Occupations in groups 9.1, 9.4, 9.5 e 9.6 were classified as RE; all the others were classified as IAW

Armed Forces were distributed among ITPSE and RE according to their education degree

Socio-professional categories:

EMIP — Entrepreneurs, managers and independent professionals

ITPSE — Intellectual and technical professionals, and supervisory employees

SEW — Self-employed workers

RE — Routine employees

IAW — Industrial and agricultural workers

Table A4 Social class and education in voted parties

	Voted party				
	FPO	SPO	OVP	Grüne	NEOS
AUSTRIA					
Social class**					
EMIP	5.0	3.3	8.7	14.6	2.9
ITPSE	14.5	21.9	21.8	35.4	45.7
SEW	5.0	3.3	10.2	3.9	8.6
RE	48.8	45.1	36.3	32.6	28.6
IAW	26.9	26.5	23.0	13.5	14.3
RE+IAW (% of total)	75.7	71.6	59.3	46.1	42.9
Highest level of education (HLE)**	3.2	3.5	3.8	4.9	4.9
Intergenerational variation of HLE	0.4	0.7	0.8	1.1	1.0
FINLAND					
	TF	CP	NCP	SDP	GL
Social class**					
EMIP	2.2	6.9	19.4	4.3	7.5
ITPSE	25.7	37.2	50.9	35.5	57.2
SEW	7.1	20.6	7.7	4.8	4.4
RE	29.5	18.4	17.6	30.1	24.5
IAW	35.5	17.0	4.4	25.3	6.3
RE+IAW (% of total)	65.0	35.4	22.0	55.4	30.8
Highest level of education (HLE)**	4.4	4.5	5.2	4.2	5.4
Intergenerational variation of HLE	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.0
FRANCE					
	FN	PS	UMP	EELV	FDG
Social class**					
EMIP	16.0	16.2	27.1	8.6	17.5
ITPSE	29.4	41.8	32.7	58.6	35.0
SEW	5.9	2.9	9.5	3.4	7.5
RE	32.8	24.4	18.3	15.5	30.0
IAW	16.0	14.7	12.3	13.8	10.0
RE+IAW (% of total)	48.8	39.1	30.6	29.3	40.0
Highest level of education (HLE)**	3.2	4.0	4.0	5.1	4.0
Intergenerational variation of HLE	1.3	1.8	1.7	2.5	0.8
GERMANY					
	AfD	CDU	SPD	B/DG	DL
Social class**					
EMIP	5.3	17.6	11.5	17.1	18.0
ITPSE	29.8	39.3	45.1	51.7	36.5
SEW	5.3	6.0	3.4	4.7	3.2
RE	22.8	23.1	21.4	14.1	18.5
IAW	36.8	14.1	18.6	12.4	23.8
RE+IAW (% of total)	59.6	37.2	40.0	26.5	42.3
Highest level of education (HLE)**	3.9	4.4	4.5	5.1	4.9
Intergenerational variation of HLE	0.3	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.2

ITALY	LN	PD	M5S	PdL	LD
Social class**					
EMIP	16.0	10.2	10.3	12.4	17.9
ITPSE	20.0	34.6	25.1	28.1	15.4
SEW	10.7	9.8	6.9	16.9	20.5
RE	21.3	24.1	29.6	33.7	25.6
IAW	32.0	21.4	28.1	9.0	20.5
RE+IAW (% of total)	53.3	45.5	57.7	42.7	46.1
Highest level of education (HLE)*	3.3	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6
Intergenerational variation of HLE	1.3	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.9
NETHERLANDS					
	PF	PPFD	LP	D66	CDA
Social class**					
EMIP	7.9	26.8	14.6	22.6	12.5
ITPSE	14.9	37.2	35.8	50.3	36.1
SEW	8.9	13.8	3.3	0.6	13.2
RE	42.6	17.6	34.0	19.4	24.3
IAW	25.7	4.6	12.3	7.1	13.9
RE+IAW (% of total)	68.3	22.2	46.3	26.5	38.2
Highest level of education (HLE)**	3.0	4.7	4.4	5.3	3.6
Intergenerational variation of HLE	0.6	1.4	1.8	1.7	1.6
SWEDEN					
	SVD	SD	MS	MdG	VP
Social class**					
EMIP	13.8	4.8	22.7	11.8	5.1
ITPSE	13.8	35.3	40.8	58.1	49.4
SEW	9.6	3.9	6.4	2.2	5.1
RE	27.7	35.5	21.2	21.5	31.6
IAW	35.1	20.5	8.9	6.5	8.9
RE+IAW (% of total)	62.8	56.0	30.1	28.0	40.5
Highest level of education (HLE)**	3.4	3.9	4.6	5.4	4.7
Intergenerational variation of HLE	0.2	1.0	0.1	1.0	1.5
UNITED KINGDOM					
	UKIP	C	L	LD	SNP
Social class**					
EMIP	12.2	15.7	13.9	15.6	8.3
ITPSE	19.4	37.9	32.6	49.5	29.2
SEW	12.2	10.4	4.8	3.7	12.5
RE	31.6	25.0	35.3	27.5	39.6
IAW	24.5	11.0	13.4	3.7	10.4
RE+IAW (% of total)	56.1	36.0	48.7	31.2	50.0
Highest level of education (HLE)**	4.7	4.8	4.8	5.2	5.4
Intergenerational variation of HLE	2.9	1.7	1.1	0.7	2.4

Source: ESS8; **p < 0,01; *p < 0,05.

Table A5 Household's income, values and social representations in voted parties

AUSTRIA	Voted party				
	FPO	SPO	OVP	Grüne	NEOS
Household's total net income	4.5	4.8	5.4	4.9	4.3
Feeling about household's income nowadays	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.7
Government reduce differences in income	2.1	2.0	2.1	1.9	2.4
Security	0.74	0.64	0.57	0.24	0.36
Important that people are treated equally	2.4	2.1	2.3	1.7	2.0
Important to do what is told and follow rules	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.5	3.9
Important to help and care for others well-being	2.3	2.1	2.2	1.9	2.1
Important to think new ideas and being creative	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.2	2.0
Confidence in ability to participate in politics	2.6	2.3	2.4	2.8	2.6
Placement on left/right scale	6.6	4.2	5.7	3.2	5.1
Immigrants make country worse/better	2.5	4.6	4.2	6.2	4.0
Trust in politicians	2.3	4.7	4.5	4.4	3.3
Trust in the European Parliament	1.8	4.5	4.3	4.9	4.0
How satisfied with democracy in country	4.1	6.5	6.1	6.4	5.5
State of education in country	5.6	6.4	6.3	5.9	4.9
State of health services in country	6.5	7.5	7.4	7.3	6.2
FINLAND	TF	CP	NCP	SDP	GL
Household's total net income	5.3	5.7	7.3	5.6	5.8
Feeling about household's income nowadays	2.1	1.9	1.6	1.9	1.8
Government reduce differences in income	1.9	2.2	2.7	1.7	1.9
Security	0.43	0.35	0.16	0.41	0.04
Important that people are treated equally	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.0	1.6
Important to do what is told and follow rules	3.0	2.8	3.0	2.8	3.6
Important to help and care for others well-being	2.2	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.0
Important to think new ideas and being creative	2.6	2.7	2.5	2.7	2.3
Confidence in ability to participate in politics	2.0	2.1	2.4	2.1	2.5
Placement on left/right scale	5.8	6.6	7.5	4.3	4.4
Immigrants make country worse/better	4.4	5.4	6.0	5.9	6.6
Trust in politicians	3.6	5.3	5.4	4.7	5.0
Trust in the European Parliament	4.0	5.4	5.8	5.3	5.6
How satisfied with democracy in country	5.4	7.2	7.4	6.6	6.9
State of education in country	7.6	7.9	8.1	8.0	7.9
State of health services in country	6.7	7.3	7.6	7.4	7.2
FRANCE	FN	PS	UMP	EELV	FDG
Household's total net income	5.1	5.5	5.6	5.4	5.7
Feeling about household's income nowadays	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.8
Government reduce differences in income	2.1	1.9	2.5	1.9	1.5
Security	0.55	0.40	0.54	-0.04	0.40
Important that people are treated equally	2.3	1.8	2.1	1.9	1.4
Important to do what is told and follow rules	4.2	4.0	3.7	4.5	3.9
Important to help and care for others well-being	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.1	2.0
Important to think new ideas and being creative	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.1	1.9
Confidence in ability to participate in politics	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.7	2.7
Placement on left/right scale	6.7	3.5	7.0	3.6	2.0
Immigrants make country worse/better	2.8	5.7	4.6	6.1	5.7
Trust in politicians	2.0	3.4	3.5	2.8	2.2
Trust in the European Parliament	2.2	4.2	3.9	4.4	2.8
How satisfied with democracy in country	2.4	5.0	4.8	4.3	3.5
State of education in country	3.8	4.9	4.4	4.6	4.7
State of health services in country	5.5	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.2

GERMANY	AfD	CDU	SPD	B/DG	DL
Household's total net income	5.4	6.5	6.3	6.9	5.2
Feeling about household's income nowadays	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.8
Government reduce differences in income	2.3	2.4	2.0	2.1	1.6
Security	0.51	0.53	0.38	-0.02	0.35
Important that people are treated equally	2.5	2.3	2.0	1.9	1.8
Important to do what is told and follow rules	3.5	3.4	3.6	4.0	3.7
Important to help and care for others well-being	2.0	2.0	1.9	2.0	1.9
Important to think new ideas and being creative	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.3
Confidence in ability to participate in politics	2.8	2.8	2.8	3.1	3.0
Placement on left/right scale	5.8	5.2	4.1	3.7	2.9
Immigrants make country worse/better	3.4	5.0	5.6	6.4	5.6
Trust in politicians	2.6	4.6	4.4	4.6	3.4
Trust in the European Parliament	3.2	4.4	4.4	4.8	3.7
How satisfied with democracy in country	4.0	6.1	6.2	6.7	5.0
State of education in country	5.0	5.5	5.4	5.4	4.2
State of health services in country	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	5.6
ITALY	LN	PD	M5S	PdL	LD
Household's total net income	5.7	5.4	4.8	5.1	4.1
Feeling about household's income nowadays	2.0	1.9	2.2	2.0	2.3
Government reduce differences in income	2.1	1.9	1.9	2.1	1.9
Security	0.75	0.53	0.56	0.69	0.58
Important that people are treated equally	2.4	2.2	2.2	2.7	2.3
Important to do what is told and follow rules	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.9
Important to help and care for others well-being	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.3
Important to think new ideas and being creative	2.8	2.6	2.5	2.7	2.7
Confidence in ability to participate in politics	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.2	2.2
Placement on left/right scale	7.1	3.3	5.4	7.0	8.2
Immigrants make country worse/better	2.6	4.0	3.2	3.0	2.8
Trust in politicians	2.0	3.1	1.8	2.7	2.0
Trust in the European Parliament	3.6	4.9	3.9	4.2	4.3
How satisfied with democracy in country	3.6	5.0	3.3	4.3	3.9
State of education in country	4.8	5.6	4.8	5.5	5.2
State of health services in country	5.9	5.6	4.8	5.7	5.1
NETHERLANDS	PF	PPFD	LP	D66	CDA
Household's total net income	5.2	7.4	5.9	7.0	5.9
Feeling about household's income nowadays	1.7	1.3	1.6	1.3	1.5
Government reduce differences in income	2.4	3.2	2.1	2.4	2.4
Security	0.31	-0.04	-0.06	-0.23	0.12
Important that people are treated equally	2.2	2.2	1.9	1.9	2.1
Important to do what is told and follow rules	3.0	3.3	3.3	3.5	2.9
Important to help and care for others well-being	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.0
Important to think new ideas and being creative	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.6
Confidence in ability to participate in politics	1.8	2.0	1.9	2.3	1.7
Placement on left/right scale	6.4	6.6	4.0	4.8	6.0
Immigrants make country worse/better	4.0	5.5	5.7	6.1	5.5
Trust in politicians	3.5	5.4	5.4	5.9	5.3
Trust in the European Parliament	2.7	4.7	5.1	5.5	4.8
How satisfied with democracy in country	4.3	6.3	6.5	6.9	6.4
State of education in country	6.2	6.5	6.6	6.5	6.6
State of health services in country	5.2	6.4	6.5	6.5	6.5

SWEDEN	SVD	SD	MS	MdG	VP
Household's total net income	5.6	5.7	7.3	7.2	5.9
Feeling about household's income nowadays	1.6	1.5	1.2	1.3	1.5
Government reduce differences in income	2.3	2.1	2.8	1.9	1.6
Security	0.06	0.07	-0.33	-0.42	-0.33
Important that people are treated equally	2.3	1.9	2.1	1.6	1.6
Important to do what is told and follow rules	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.6	3.8
Important to help and care for others well-being	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Important to think new ideas and being creative	1.9	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.2
Confidence in ability to participate in politics	2.6	2.2	2.6	3.0	2.7
Placement on left/right scale	6.3	4.0	7.1	4.1	2.5
Immigrants make country worse/better	3.7	6.2	6.1	7.1	7.1
Trust in politicians	2.6	4.9	4.7	5.6	4.6
Trust in the European Parliament	3.1	4.7	4.9	5.5	4.5
How satisfied with democracy in country	3.9	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.4
State of education in country	4.5	5.6	5.0	5.4	4.8
State of health services in country	4.7	5.7	5.7	5.4	4.9
UNITED KINGDOM	UKIP	C	L	LD	SNP
Household's total net income	4.9	5.6	5.0	6.3	5.3
Feeling about household's income nowadays	1.8	1.5	1.7	1.5	1.6
Government reduce differences in income	2.3	2.7	2.0	2.4	2.2
Security	0.62	0.51	0.42	0.26	0.35
Important that people are treated equally	2.3	2.4	1.9	2.0	1.9
Important to do what is told and follow rules	3.3	3.3	3.5	3.7	3.3
Important to help and care for others well-being	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.9
Important to think new ideas and being creative	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.3
Confidence in ability to participate in politics	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.6
Placement on left/right scale	5.7	6.0	4.0	4.3	4.3
Immigrants make country worse/better	3.8	5.4	6.2	6.6	5.9
Trust in politicians	3.0	4.2	3.6	4.2	3.5
Trust in the European Parliament	1.9	3.3	4.0	4.9	3.9
How satisfied with democracy in country	4.5	6.4	5.1	5.6	4.5
State of education in country	5.0	5.8	5.7	6.0	6.2
State of health services in country	5.1	5.7	5.7	5.9	6.3

Source: ESS8.

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