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# The Class Basis of Switzerland's Cleavage between the New Left and the Populist Right

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*This article argues that a full grown cleavage has surfaced in Swiss politics, separating a libertarian-universalistic (the New Left) from a traditionalist-communitarian camp (the Populist Right). Based on survey data of Switzerland's parliamentary election 2007, it examines the cleavage's micro-foundations and shows that the class constituencies of the New Left (the Social-Democratic and Green Parties) and the Populist Right (the Swiss People's Party) present the almost exact mirror image of each other. The former draws disproportionate support from the salaried middle class, notably socio-cultural professionals, whereas the latter is rallied by small business owners, production and service workers. Although anchored in the employment structure, this divide is not primarily about the economy and resources, but about culture and identity. It thus strongly correlates with opposing cultural attitudes. While small business owners and workers prefer cultural demarcation and defend national traditions, salaried professionals strongly favour international integration and multi-culturalism.*

KEYWORDS: Class Voting • Cleavage • Middle Class • Working Class • Populist Right-Wing Parties • New Left

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Over the last two decades, political competition in Switzerland has thoroughly been shaken by the irruption of two political formations. The first to rise was the Green Party at the left wing. A new-comer to the political scene, the Greens slowly increased their share in national parliamentary elections from 2 per cent in 1983 to 5 in 1995 and 10 per cent in 2007. The reaction at the right wing came from the Swiss People's Party (SVP), which mutated in the 1990s from a conservative agrarian into a modern right-wing populist party, absorbing on the way the electorate of various

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small protest parties. This mutation brought large electoral dividends, raising SVP's electoral share from 11 per cent in 1983 to 15 in 1995 and to 29 per cent in 2007. Our article argues that the surfacing of these two parties is part of the same phenomenon and has led to a full grown cleavage: While the Green Party represents, together with the Social-Democratic Party, the libertarian-universalistic end of political competition, the SVP stands at the traditionalist-communitarian end.

This argument is not new. Various authors convincingly maintained that the New Left and the Populist Right occupy the opposite poles of a new value divide (Ignazi 1992; Kitschelt and McGann 1995; Kriesi 1998; Bornschieer 2007). Accordingly, much effort has been made to shed light on these opposing values. What has been doubted, however, is that this cultural conflict is anchored in social structure and presents thus a veritable cleavage in Bartolini and Mair's (1990) acceptation of combining – alongside shared values and a common organization – a structural element such as class, religion or ethnicity. A first strand of the literature argues that there is no structural correlate to the new cultural conflict: we simply deal here with opposing values that are distributed more or less randomly across the electorate (Dalton 1996: 332). A second strand rejects the idea that social structure and values have become disconnected in today's electoral competition, but remains undecided about what the structural basis of the new cultural conflict looks like (Kriesi 1998: 177; Bornschieer 2007: 87).

It is this last issue that our article addresses: we argue that there is a clear class pattern underlying the cultural conflict's electoral constituencies. We thus maintain that voters of the New Left and the Populist Right do not only differ in terms of their values, but also belong to different objectively identifiable social groups. This implies that the new value conflict in Switzerland satisfies the threefold notion of what is commonly understood under a cleavage: a common position within the social structure, a shared collective identity and a common organization.

The micro-foundation of this cleavage will be empirically examined on the basis of *Selects*, an individual-level survey of Switzerland's parliamentary election in 2007 and, accessorially, 2003. Our findings suggest that party support is not distributed randomly across classes. On the contrary, the class constituencies of the New Left and the Populist Right are the almost exact mirror image of each other: the former draws disproportionate support from socio-cultural and technical professionals, whereas the latter is strongly overrepresented among small business owners, production and service workers. This electoral contrast between occupational classes cor-

relates with opposing values concerning cultural integration and demarcation. While workers and small business owners strongly value the defence of Swiss traditions and prefer cultural demarcation, salaried professionals are more likely to question Swiss traditions and to be in favour of multiculturalism. The former provide massive support to SVP, whereas the latter tend to vote for the Green and Social-Democratic Parties.

Our study is structured as follows. It starts out with a theoretical discussion of the new value divide and argues that the divide is primarily anchored in questions of community and identity. The section's goal is to single out the conflict's structural micro-foundations. A next section presents the analytical strategy and shows how class location and attitudes are operationalized. The two following sections then display the empirical evidence. First, the class pattern of voting for the New Left or Populist Right is examined for the elections 2003 and 2007. Second, our analysis integrates attitudes in order to find out whether class differences are channelled into party choice through voters' attitudes towards *economic* redistribution or *cultural* integration. The article concludes by discussing the implications that the surfacing of a new cleavage has for electoral competition.

### **The Class Basis of the New Value Conflict**

Our central argument is that the divide between libertarian-universalistic voters of the New Left and traditionalist-communitarian voters of Populist Right-Wing Parties cannot be reduced to a mere conflict over values, but is also rooted in different positions within the social structure. This leads us to the question about the critical juncture: what evolution in society and economy has brought about this conflict? Following Kriesi (1999: 400) and Bornschieer (2007: 88), we believe that the 1960s and 1970s set loose three socio-economic trends that created the potential for a new political divide within the employment structure. First, the democratization of access to higher education led to massive *expansion of educational attainment* in Western Europe. The educational revolution of the 1960s resulted in a steadily growing share of the population with tertiary education, a process that still gained momentum in Switzerland over the 1990s. Second, in the 1970s *deindustrialization* set in and led to a strong decline in the proportion of the industrial workforce relative to rising service employment. Service sector expansion was further stimulated by massive job growth in the welfare state – in health care, education and social services

–, a trend that continued in Switzerland throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Third, the joint impact of educational expansion and service sector growth, decisively aided by technological change, led to substantial *upgrading in the occupational structure* of Western European countries: the number of high-skilled jobs in the professions and management strongly increased at the expense of low-skilled jobs in industrial manufacturing, artisanal crafts and agriculture (for Western Europe: Tåhlin 2007; for Switzerland: Sheldon 2005).

The three trends of educational expansion, tertiarization and occupational upgrading stand for the transition from high industrialism to the service society. This transition has opened new opportunities for some groups, while making life more difficult for other groups. Among the *winners* are the highly educated employees who have filled the growing number of service jobs demanding specialized knowledge and expertise. This is particularly true for professionals and semi-professionals in social and cultural services: they benefitted both from the opening up of tertiary education to new social categories (and new professional fields) and from the growth of the (public) service sector (Kriesi 1998; Müller 1999). These expanding semi-professions in social services proved an especially effective channel of upward social mobility for women. Thanks to the democratization of higher education and welfare state expansion, these occupational groups have obtained relatively comfortable positions within the salaried middle class. In contrast, the *losers* of the transition outlined above are primarily found among workers and small business owners. These mainly masculine categories have lost out from educational expansion and occupational upgrading and find themselves at the gradually less populated lower-end of the social structure. On the whole, the evolution towards a more skill-intensive, rational and competitive service economy has worsened the job prospects of blue collar workers, owners of small stores, independent artisans and farmers alike (Kriesi et al. 2008: 4).

Although anchored in the employment structure, this divide between winners and losers of modernization is not primarily about the economy and the just distribution of resources, but about culture and the definition of identity (Bornschiefer 2007). The new class of professionals and semi-professionals in social and cultural services are wage-earners and do not have major managerial responsibilities. Since furthermore their jobs are often set in the public sector, they are unlikely to take great concern over the market-liberal interests of capital owners and their delegates, managers. In contrast, they have clearly defined cultural interests: in their daily face-

to-face interaction with patients, students, migrants or the elderly, they constantly deal with human individuality (Müller 1999: 143–44; Kitschelt 1994: 17). Taking place outside clearcut organizational authority relations, these communicative experiences are likely to give forth to a libertarian-universalistic outlook, where people's right both to individuality and equal treatment is recognized. Such universalistic preferences are probably further enhanced by the "liberalizing effect" of higher education (Kohn and Schooler 1969: 676). Accordingly, the strongest defenders of libertarian values should be found among (semi-)professionals engaged in a interpersonal work logic, where they daily deal with human individuality: medical doctors and nurses in health care, social workers and counsellors in social welfare, professors and teachers in education, journalists and artists in the media and entertainment (Oesch 2008a: 333).

These members of the helping, teaching and caring occupations had already formed the backbone of the new social movements that crystallized in the 1980s around the ecology, the anti-nuclear, the women's, the peace and squatters' movements (Kriesi 1989: 1'096). By mobilizing for individual autonomy and the recognition of difference in terms of lifestyle, gender or sexuality, they set the foundation for the New Left. On the one hand, their libertarian-universalistic claims gave rise to the establishment of Green Parties (Bornschiefer 2007: 2). On the other, they were gradually integrated into the programme of Social-Democratic Parties in several countries – notably in Switzerland, where the Social Democratic Party (SPS) has become a decisive actor in the new cultural conflict. While SPS never adopted the economic principles of the Third Way (unlike British Labour or German SPD), it promptly integrated the libertarian claims of the New Left. A comparison of six West European countries thus shows SPS to take the most libertarian stance on cultural issues among the social-democratic parties examined (Lachat and Kriesi 2008: 279).

The reaction to the New Left agenda took place with a delay of almost a decade, when right-wing populist parties began to surface at the end of the 1980s. Their rise has been convincingly described as the communitarian counteroffensive to the universalistic values promoted by the left-libertarian movement – as a backlash against post-industrial society and the ideas of 1968 (Bornschiefer 2007: 89; Ignazi 1992; Kitschelt and McGann 1995; Minkenberg 2001). Right-wing populist parties thus defend the principles of national demarcation against open borders, of cultural homogeneity against multicultural relativism, and of traditional authority against individualistic equality. Yet while the development of the New Left followed a

bottom-up approach, where social groups mobilized around specific claims that were then adopted by parties, mobilization of the right depended more strongly on the deliberate moulding of a collective identity by political elites – on the presence of the charismatic leader typical of the Populist Right (Bornschieer 2007: 89).

In this effort to articulate discontent, right-wing populist parties were most successful in rallying the support of the groups left out from social modernization, notably low-skilled workers and small business owners. Within their daily job routine of close supervision, both groupings tend to value close conformity with rules and to be distrustful of innovation and change (Kohn and Schooler 1969: 671). Accordingly, the Populist Right's angry resistance to cultural change and its pointed defence of national traditions struck a chord with these constituencies. Yet the mobilization of the Populist Right could only meet with large popular success, among other reasons, because collective identities rooted in working-class culture or religion had become less salient (Andersen and Bjørklund 1990: 214; Lachat 2008: 133, 146). The transition from industrial to service society described above has transformed societies' conflict structure and weakened traditional cleavages; working-class culture and organizations have thus been eroded by de-industrialization and educational expansion. In this situation, other collective identities such as belonging to the national community appear to acquire greater salience both among workers and small business owners (Bornschieer 2007: 89). Accordingly, we believe the new value conflict to separate two clearly delimited groups which vary both in their structural (labour market positions) and cultural (values) characteristics. The three dimensions at the basis of electoral competition between the New Left and the Populist Right can then be summarized in Table 1.

This new identity cleavage cuts through older distributional and religious cleavages (Bornschieer 2007: 113). A production worker may thus be torn between his economic identity as a member of the working class (and vote for the Social-Democratic Party), his religious identity as a catholic churchgoer (and vote for the Christian-Democratic Party) or his cultural identity as a proud member of the national community (and vote for the Swiss People's Party). Party choice is likely to be determined by the identity that is most salient – and the salience of identities in turn strongly depends on parties' mobilization efforts. If social-democratic parties succeed in putting distributional issues at the centre of the debate, they stand a better chance of winning a substantial share of production workers' votes than if the political agenda is dominated by cultural issues linked to im-



Table 1: The Three Dimensions at the Basis of the Cultural Conflict in Switzerland

	New Left	Populist Right-Wing
Basis in Social Structure	(Semi-)professionals in Social or Cultural Services and, less so, in Technical Fields	Small Business Owners, Production and Service Workers
Common Values Collective Identity	Libertarian-universalistic: Demand for Cultural Integration, for Universalistic Normative Principles, for basic Equality and Individual Autonomy	Traditional-communitarian: Demand for National Demarcation, for Cultural Homogeneity, for Traditional Authority and Hierarchy
Parties Articulating the Conflict	Green Party and Social-Democratic Party	Swiss People's Party

migration, European Integration or multiculturalism (Oesch and Rennwald 2010b).

### **Analytical Strategy, Data and Measurement of Concepts**

Our hypothesis is that electoral competition between the New Left and the Populist Right is best understood as a political conflict entrenched in different labour market positions and going along with opposing values. An empirical test of this supposition needs, in our view, to go through the following three steps:

- (i) It must be shown that the electorate of the New Left and Populist Right differ systematically in terms of their class basis.
- (ii) It must be shown that these class differences in parties' electorate also correlate with different cultural attitudes.
- (iii) It must be shown that these differences in cultural attitudes explain voting for either the New Left or the Populist Right.

We empirically examine these three steps for Switzerland and its most recent parliamentary election held in 2007. In order to improve our results' reliability, we replicate our analysis for the anterior election 2003. The analysis is based on individual-level data stemming from Selects, the Swiss Electoral Studies project. SELECTS is a large post-election survey carried out after national parliamentary elections held every four years, interviewing more than 4'000 citizens about their social background, political beliefs and party choice (see Lutz 2008: 48–55).

Throughout the following analysis, we use voters' effective party choice as the dependent variable. Since the notion of social structure carries a lot of weight in our argument, a few words must be said about the class concept. Traditionally, political scientists have measured the influence of class on voting behaviour with the Alford index (e.g., Dalton, 1996), computed as the difference in support for left-wing parties between blue-collar and white-collar workers (Alford 1962). Being too crude a measure, electoral studies have begun to move away from binary measures of class (working class vs. middle class) to more sophisticated concepts (Hout et al. 1995; Evans 2000; Oesch 2008a). This need was all the more evident as shifts in the employment structure such as service sector growth, welfare state ex-

Table 2: The 8-class Schema – with Representative Occupations and the Size within the Swiss Electorate

Interpersonal Service Logic	Technical Work Logic	Organizational Work Logic	Independent Work Logic
Socio-cultural (semi-) Professionals (15%)	Technical (semi-) Professionals (10%)	(Junior) Managers (22%)	Self-employed Professionals and Large Employers (5%)
Medical doctors Teachers Social workers	Engineers Architects IT-specialists	Administrators Consultants Accountants	Entrepreneurs Lawyers Dentists
Service Workers (10%)	Production Workers (14%)	Office Clerks (11%)	Small Business Owners (13%)
Waiters Nursing Aids Shop Assistants	Mechanics Carpenters Assemblers	Secretaries Receptionists Mail Clerks	Shop Owners Independent Artisans Farmers

Source: Oesch (2006: 269).

Note: Percentages within parentheses indicate how Switzerland’s electorate is distributed across the eight classes, based on weighted data from Selects 2007 (Number of Observations = 2’522).

pansion, occupational upgrading and rising female participation led to an increasingly large and heterogeneous salaried middle class, at the expense of the shrinking industrial working class. Accordingly, we capture growing heterogeneity in class locations with a detailed measure that discriminates *hierarchically* between more or less privileged employment relationships (following Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992) and *horizontally* between different work logics (following Oesch 2006). Combining the two dimensions provides us with the 8-class schema shown in Table 2. In order to convey a better idea of the different classes' composition, we list for each class a few representative occupations and note the share of each class within the Swiss electorate 2007 (voters only).

For the majority of voters, class location is determined on the basis of their present (59 per cent) or past (35 per cent) employment. If respondents declare never having had a job, their class location is deduced from their partner's present (2 per cent) or past (1 per cent) employment. If there is no partner or if that partner never held a job either, respondents' class location is determined on the basis of the main earner's employment in the household (3 per cent of all voters). Once we have determined the relevant source of individuals' employment, they are then allocated to different classes based on (a) their employment status, in order to distinguish employers and the self-employed from the much larger group of employees, and (b) their (past or present) occupation, as measured by the over 150 different occupational codes (ISCO-88 at 4-digit) distinguished in Selects. The procedure followed to allocate occupations to different classes is described in greater detail elsewhere (Oesch 2006: 270–72).<sup>2</sup>

A few words are also necessary with respect to the operationalization of attitudes. We try to measure voters' attitudes both on distributional issues linked to the economy and on cultural issues linked to the community. The objective is to determine voters' position within a two-dimensional political space based on an economic and a cultural axis, as sketched out, among others, by Herbert Kitschelt (1994: 27). For this reason, we run a factor analysis on *economic attitudes* by using the following three questions (factor loadings decreasing in this order): (i) augment / reduce taxes on high incomes, (ii) increase / cut social spending by the government, (iii) in favour of government intervention into the economy / in favour of as free a market as possible. This first factor provides us with a measure for a distributive axis going from a socialist ("for more state") to a capitalist pole ("for more

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<sup>2</sup> The syntax in SPSS can be obtained by e-mail from the authors.

market”). Another four questions are used to obtain a factor score for *cultural attitudes*: (i) defend or question Swiss traditions, (ii) join (or not) the European Union, (iii) stress (or not) law and order, (iv) grant (or not) equal opportunities to immigrants. This gives us a proxy for the cultural dimension underlying the politics of identity and community, which stretches from a libertarian (“in favour of integration”) to a traditionalist pole (“in favour of demarcation”). The factor loadings of these two composite attitudinal indices are shown in Table A.1 and A.2 in the Appendix.

### **Class Differences in Voting for the New Left and the Populist Right**

We start our analysis with a look at the class basis of the major parties in Switzerland in 2007. Based on *t*-tests, we assess whether the support for a given party differs significantly between a given class and the sample mean. Table 3 thus shows the support that the different parties obtain within each class – results being expressed as deviations in percentage points from the party’s score within the entire electorate.

These results clearly suggest that party support is not distributed randomly across classes. On the contrary, we find a class pattern for the New Left that is the almost exact mirror image of the Swiss People’s Party’s electorate: in the classes in which the New Left performs disproportionately well, SVP does badly – and vice versa. Within the New Left, SPS and the Green Party have a class basis that is very similar – with the sole difference of SPS being less popular among the small and very heterogeneous category of self-employed professionals and large employers. The two parties on the left receive largest support from technical and, above all, socio-cultural (semi-)professionals: While no more than 30 per cent of the Swiss electorate voted for SPS and GPS in 2007, they obtained over 50 per cent of votes among socio-cultural professionals. In contrast, support for the New Left lies strongly below average among small business owners as well as among production and service workers: in these classes, SPS and GPS received together less than a fourth of all votes. Hence, as shown in greater detail elsewhere, Switzerland’s Left has lost its working class basis (Oesch and Rennwald 2010a). This dealignment has benefited – in Switzerland as in other Western European countries – the rise of right-wing populist parties (Oesch 2008b): SVP obtained close to 40 per cent of ballots among production and service workers and thus almost twice the score of the New Left. However, the foremost stronghold of the Populist

Table 3: Difference between a Party's Electoral Score in a Given Class and the Entire Electorate (in Percentage Points), Swiss Parliamentary Elections 2007

	GPS Green Party	SPS Social-Demo- cratic Party	CVP Christian Demo- cratic Party	FDP/LPS Liberal- Radical Party	SVP Swiss People's Party	Other Parties
Socio-cultural (semi-)Professionals	<b>+8</b>	<b>+14</b>	0	-5	-17	-1
Technical (semi-)Professionals	<b>+5</b>	<b>+4</b>	-2	<b>+9</b>	-13	-2
(Junior) Managers	-1	-1	+1	<b>+4</b>	-3	0
Office Clerks	-3	-2	<b>+4</b>	-3	+2	2
Service Workers	-4	-4	+1	-3	<b>+11</b>	-1
Production Workers	-2	-4	-3	-4	<b>+10</b>	<b>+4</b>
Self-empl. Profes. and Large Employers	<b>+6</b>	-5	+2	+7	-8	-2
Small Business Owners	-6	-6	-1	-1	<b>+15</b>	-2
Party's share in entire electorate	10%	20%	17%	18%	29%	7%

*Notes:* Number of observations: 2'522. Results show the differences between a party's electoral score made in a given class and the entire electorate (in the bottom row). Hence, +8 means that GPS obtained 18% of votes among socio-cultural professionals (8 percentage points more than the score made in the entire electorate, 10%).

Values in italics / bold indicate significantly lower / higher scores than the party's score in the entire electorate. Values with neither italics nor bold are not statistically different from the party's total score in the electorate. Statistical significance is based on t-tests and  $p > 0.001$  with Bonferroni correction, which corrects for chance capitalization ("when testing long enough, something will inevitably turn out 'significant'"") by adjusting the threshold for significance downward to the number of pairwise comparisons made.

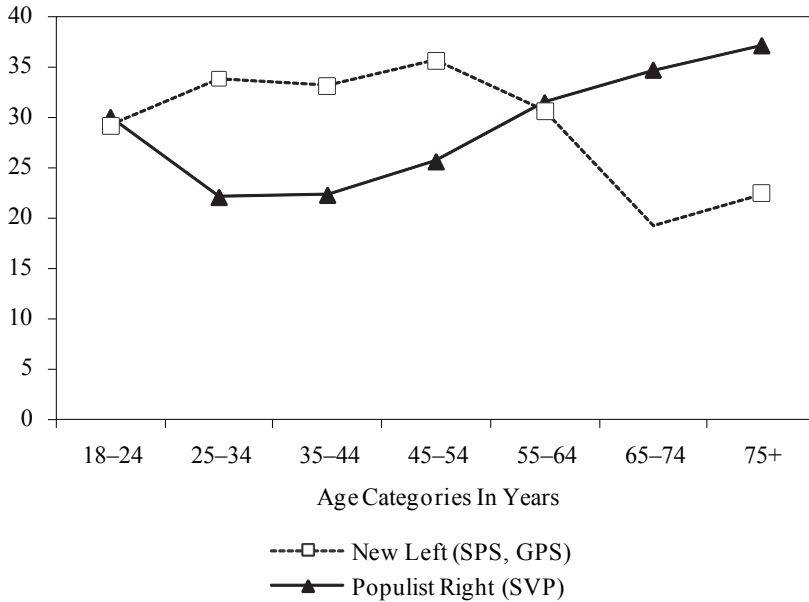
Right is still constituted by small business owners, among whom 44 per cent voted for SVP.

Table 3 further shows class location to be much less relevant for support of the Christian-Democratic Party (CVP) than for SVP, SPS or GPS. CVP obtains a similar share of votes across classes. This suggests that Christian Democracy's traditional interclass strategy is also mirrored in its electoral basis. The same conclusion cannot be drawn for the Radical-Liberal Party, which is clearly more successful among the economically privileged classes (technical professionals, managers, self-employed professionals and entrepreneurs) than among the working-class categories (production and service workers). Hence, unlike the Social-Democratic electorate, the Radical-Liberal constituency still seems organized along the lines of the traditional class conflict.

The replication of the same analysis for 2003 suggests that the class pattern found for 2007 was already evident in the preceding parliamentary election (see Table A.3 in the Appendix). However, the links between the salaried middle classes and the Left on the one hand, the working classes and the Populist Right on the other hand have become stronger over time. While the New Left was already overrepresented among socio-cultural and technical professionals in 2003 (obtaining 47 and 35% of their votes respectively), it further reinforced its stronghold on these two classes in 2007 (with 52 and 39% of their votes respectively). In contrast, although SVP increased its electoral score between 2003 and 2007, it did not strengthen its support within these two categories of professionals – quite to the contrary. Its success was rather due to its unremitting appeal among small business owners and its further advance among production and service workers, where SVP improved its voting share from 35 to 39 per cent between 2003 and 2007. This evolution coincided with workers' ongoing estrangement with the New Left: among production and services workers, the proportion voting for either SPS or GPS receded from 26 to 23 per cent.

The constituencies of the New Left and Populist Right do not only differ in terms of class, they also present very different age profiles. In the parliamentary elections 2007, the two poles – SPS and GPS on the one side, SVP on the other – obtained almost the same score of 30 and 29 per cent respectively. However, Figure 1 shows that among the age categories in the prime of their working life (voters between 25 and 54 years), the New Left secured much more support (34%) than the Populist Right (24%). The situation is more balanced in the two age categories at the fringe of the labour force – the very young voters and the voters about to retire –, where

Figure 1: Electoral Score of the New Left and Populist Right within Age Groups (in %)



Note: Number of observations: 2'813.

the Populist Right slightly outdoes the New Left in terms of votes. The disparity is large, however, among the citizenry above 65 years; here, SVP is much more successful than SPS and GPS combined, obtaining an electoral score of 36 per cent against only 20 per cent for the New Left. Hence, the New Left draws its strength from prime-age voters, whereas the Populist Rights succeeds in securing disproportionate support from both the very young and, above all, the elderly. The parties' diverging fate among age groups closely correlates with their appeal among people in different employment statuses. The New Left is thus more successful than SVP among voters in paid employment (obtaining 32 against 26% of all votes), whereas SVP secures much higher support than SPS and GPS among housewives (32 against 22%) and, above all, the retired (36% against 21%).



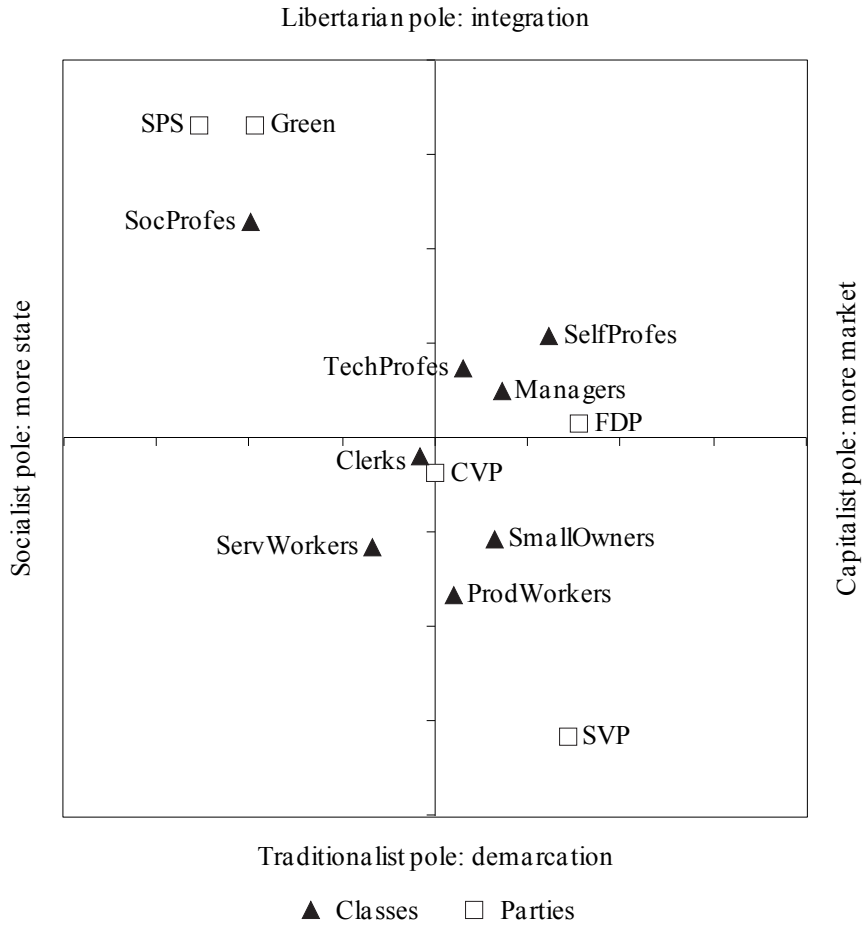
### **The Attitudes Linking Class Location to Party Choice**

So far, we have only looked at structural determinants of voting for the New Left or the Populist Right. In a next step, we enquire into the relationship between class location and party choice by integrating values into our analysis. According to the cleavage theory, a normative element – a given set of values and beliefs – is needed to provide a sense of identity to the social-structural position and to thus translate it into the behavioural response of voting (Bartolini and Mair 1990: 199). In other words, attitudes and opinions should pick up the class effect and channel it into party choice.

We examine this hypothesis by plotting voters' attitudes on economic and cultural issues (based on the factor analysis outlined above) in a two-dimensional political space. Drawing on Kitschelt (1994: 27), this political space combines an economic axis going from a socialist ("for more state") to a capitalist pole ("for more market") with a cultural axis going from a libertarian ("in favour of integration") to a traditionalist pole ("in favour of demarcation"). The results are shown in Figure 2 and confirm that professionals in social and cultural services are particularly libertarian in terms of cultural integration. Moreover, they also stand out as being the class most favourable to government redistribution on the economic axis. At the other extreme of the economic axis are self-employed professionals and large employers, managers and small business owners, who – unsurprisingly – constitute the most market-liberal classes. Self-employed professionals and large employers are very liberal both economically and culturally; they thus constitute the capitalist-libertarian equivalent to the statist-libertarian class of socio-cultural professionals. On the cultural axis, the pole opposite to socio-cultural professionals is occupied by small business owners, service and production workers. Production workers have particularly strong preferences for traditional forms of community: while their economic attitudes do not differ much from the median voter, they are the class most strongly in favour of cultural demarcation. They are followed by service workers and small business owners. Interestingly, service workers combine a traditionalist outlook on the cultural axis with a favourable stance towards redistribution on the economic axis, which situates them at the antipodes of self-employed professionals.

Figure 2 seems to substantiate our expectation that the new value conflict relays a cultural opposition between libertarian (socio-cultural) professionals on the one hand and traditionalist workers and small business owners on the other. The conflict's contours become clearer when the mean

Figure 2: Voters' Mean Position by Class and Party on the Economic (State-Market) and Cultural (Integration-Demarcation) Value Axes in 2007



Notes: Number of observations: 2'288 (economic axis State-Market), 2'321 (cultural axis Integration-Demarcation). See Tables A.1 and A.2 in the Appendix for the questions used to construct the factors for the two dimensions.

Legend for classes: SocProfes: socio-cultural (semi-)professionals; TechProfes: technical (semi-)professionals; Managers: (junior) managers; Clerks: office clerks; ServWorkers: service workers; ProdWorkers: production workers; SelfProfes: self-employed professionals and large employers; SmallOwners: small business owners.

Legend for parties: SPS (Social Democratic Party), Green (Green Party), CVP (Christian Democratic Party), FDP (Radical-Liberal Party), SVP (Swiss People's Party).

Table 4: Variance in Party Choice explained by Economic and Cultural Attitudes (McFadden Pseudo-R<sup>2</sup>)

Regression	Independent Variables Introduced	New Left (SPS and Green)	Populist Right (SVP)
(1)	Socio-demographic Variables only	0.075	0.073
(2)	plus Economic Attitudes	0.223	0.114
(3)	plus Cultural Attitudes	0.259	0.272
(4)	plus Economic and Cultural Attitudes	0.350	0.287

*Notes:* Number of observations: 2'137. Values shown are McFadden Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> of four distinct binomial logistic regressions where the dependent variable is either “has voted for New Left: yes / no” or “has voted for Populist Right: yes / no”. The independent variables are sex, age, employment status and class. Economic and cultural attitudes are measured with the first factor score discussed above.

position of parties' voters are also taken into account. When plotted into our two-dimensional space, the electorates of the New Left and the Populist Right are situated at the very opposite ends: supporters of SVP are both less favourable to government redistribution and, above all, to cultural integration than Social-Democratic and Green voters. The mean position of SVP's electorate is thus located closest to production workers, small business owners and service workers. At the other extreme, socio-cultural professionals are the class who's cultural and economic attitudes correspond most closely to those of Social-Democratic and Green voters, followed, albeit by a long distance, by technical professionals.

Finally, Figure 2 also suggests that Swiss parties – as measured by their voters' attitudes – are broadly aligned along a *single* dimension within the two-dimensional space of electoral competition. This dimension runs from the libertarian-socialist New Left across the moderate centre-right to the traditionalist-capitalist Populist Right. Hence, consistent with Kitschelt (1994: 30), our tentative evidence indicates that parties' positions on the two axes are strongly correlated with each other. Contrary to Lachat and Kriesi's (2008: 275–77 finding for Britain and Germany, Switzerland's party space thus seems to lack a third liberal pole combining libertarian and capitalist positions.

Figure 2 reveals that voters of the New Left and Populist Right do not only vary in their cultural attitudes, but also in their economic preferences:

compared to the median voter, the Social-Democratic and Green electorate is less and the SVP electorate more market-liberal. Hence, in order to find out whether cultural or economic attitudes are more consequential for voting for the New Left and the Populist Right, we need to resort to multivariate analysis. To begin with, we run a series of nested *binomial* logistic regressions on voting for either the New Left or all other parties, then on voting for the Populist Right or all other parties (see Table 4). The goal is to find out, for each party group separately, which attitudes explain most variance in voting. In a first baseline model, we only include structural determinants of voting: sex, age, employment status and class. In a second model, the index for economic attitudes is added and again removed. A third model then includes the index for cultural attitudes, while a fourth and final model contains both cultural and economic attitudes. Table 4 shows for these regressions a measure of total variance explained (McFadden's Pseudo  $R^2$ ) and gives us an idea of how good the independent variables fit the model. These results suggest that economic attitudes account for almost as much variance in voting for the New Left as do cultural attitudes. In contrast, cultural attitudes appear of much greater relevance for explaining why people cast a vote for the Populist Right. In effect, for SVP, the integration of cultural attitudes into the regression substantially improves the model's fit, whereas economic attitudes account for very little additional variance once voters' cultural attitudes are taken into account.

In a next step, the determinants of voting either for the New Left or the Populist Right are analyzed simultaneously in the context of multinomial regressions. The objective is to see whether economic or cultural attitudes account for the observed class differences in support for the two opposing political camps. We thus wish to find out whether voters' social-structural situation (class location) is channelled into party choice through the intermediate element of attitudes. Our dependent variable is a four-fold measure of the party voted for (New Left, Centre-Right, Populist Right, other party) and the independent variables include the usual four socio-demographic determinants (sex, age, employment status, class) plus economic and cultural attitudes. Again, we first estimate the influence of socio-demographic factors only (model 1), before entering and removing economic attitudes (model 2) and cultural attitudes (model 3). In a last step, the two attitudinal measures are then introduced together (model 4). These models

Table 5: Voting for the New Left Relative to Voting for the Populist Right in 2007

		Model 1: Socio-demographic Factors only		Model 2: + Economic Attitudes		Model 3: + Cultural Attitudes		Model 4: + Economic and Cultural Attitudes	
		Beta	SE	Beta	SE	Beta	SE	Beta	SE
Sex	Women	0.26	0.16	0.11	0.19	0.31 *	0.16	0.14	0.17
	18-24	-1.16 *	0.47	-1.38 *	0.60	-0.33	0.57	-0.46	0.71
	25-34	0.14	0.28	0.02	0.31	-0.16	0.31	-0.22	0.33
	35-44	Reference							
Age	45-54	-0.01	0.20	-0.13	0.27	-0.34	0.27	-0.42	0.31
	55-64	-0.15	0.29	-0.14	0.36	-0.06	0.35	-0.07	0.37
	65-74	-0.19	0.36	-0.24	0.44	0.20	0.33	0.12	0.37
	75+	-0.09	0.57	0.04	0.70	0.74	0.52	0.79	0.63
Status	In Paid Work	0.60	0.33	0.66	0.37	0.69 *	0.24	0.70 *	0.30
	Unemployed	1.06	0.61	0.13	0.83	1.84	0.70	0.82	0.90
	Disabled	0.38	0.84	0.30	0.92	0.25	0.98	0.18	1.00
	In Training	2.34 *	0.58	2.57 *	0.85	1.52 *	0.69	1.68	0.99
	In Household	-0.17	0.68	-0.07	0.77	0.12	0.67	0.23	0.71
	Retired	Reference							
	Socio-cultural Professionals	1.45 *	0.35	0.81 *	0.36	1.26 *	0.48	0.70	0.49
	Technical Professionals (Junior) Managers	0.99 *	0.31	0.93 *	0.29	1.22 *	0.37	1.14 *	0.33
Class	Office Clerks	-0.43	0.32	-0.83 *	0.35	-0.26	0.43	-0.61	0.46
	Service Workers	-0.78 *	0.27	-1.32 *	0.31	-0.05	0.38	-0.67	0.43
	Production Workers	-0.57 *	0.24	-0.85 *	0.23	0.38	0.37	0.05	0.36
	Self-employed Professionals and Employers	0.26	0.48	0.49	0.38	0.18	0.50	0.37	0.43
	Small Business Owners	-1.10 *	0.28	-1.26 *	0.34	-0.69	0.36	-0.81 *	0.38
	Attitudes	Economic (for more Market)			-1.86 *	0.15			-1.71 *
Cultural (for more Integration)						2.80 *	0.19	2.68 *	0.19
Constant		0.22	0.17	0.39	0.22	0.01	0.29	0.24	0.29
N		2'137		2'137		2'137		2'137	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup> (McFadden)		0.064		0.138		0.204		0.250	

Notes: \* significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Coefficients are based on multinomial logistic regressions. Only the results for New Left voting relative to Populist Right voting are shown (but not for the two other categories: Centre-Right Parties and other parties).

are estimated with robust regressions.<sup>3</sup> Table 5 shows the results for the two party groups

<sup>3</sup> Robust regressions are necessary as observations from within a canton may not be independent from each other (among others, because not all parties compete in all cantons). Robust regressions correct for the possible intercantonal correlation of observations by producing robust (Huber-White) standard errors, thus providing more conservative confidence intervals (Breen 2005: 131).

of interest. Our comments focus on the effect of class and attitudes on party choice. Beginning with model 1, we find voters in different class locations to vary significantly in their party choice even when other socio-demographic differences such as sex, age and employment status are taken into account. These characteristics appear less consequential than class in shaping party choice. Based on model 1, the probability can be calculated for a man aged between 35 and 44 years, engaged in paid work, to vote for a given party depending on his class location. Hence, among middle-aged male socio-cultural professionals, 52 per cent are predicted to vote for the New Left, but only 10 per cent for SVP. In contrast, 35 per cent of middle-aged male service workers' and even 39 per cent of small business owners' votes would go to SVP, but only 23 and 20 per cent respectively to the New Left.

Model 2 integrates economic attitudes into the analysis. These attitudes towards the state's involvement in the economy go some way in explaining socio-cultural professionals' preference for the New Left over the Populist Right. In contrast, they do not account for differences in party choice among the other class categories. Notably, economic attitudes contribute nothing to the explanation of production and service workers' disproportionate support of SVP. On the contrary, the coefficients in model 2 suggest that production and service workers rally SVP despite their economic preferences. SVP thus obtains the votes of large working-class segments *not thanks* to the party's market-liberal stance, but *notwithstanding* it. This finding was already reported by Kriesi and colleagues (2005) for Switzerland's parliamentary elections 2003 and suggests that the original "winning formula" of the Populist Right – a combination of cultural authoritarianism with economic liberalism (Kitschelt and McGann 1995) – seems out of tune with large parts of its increasingly blue-collar constituency (Bornschier 2007; Kitschelt 2007; Oesch 2008b).

A comparison of models 2 and 3 shows both economic and cultural attitudes to be highly significant predictors of party choice. A favourable attitude toward *more* government redistribution and *more* cultural integration strongly *increases* the likelihood of preferring the New Left over the Populist Right. However, a look at the variance explained by the two models (the pseudo  $r^2$ ) confirms that cultural attitudes are of much greater relevance than economic attitudes. Cultural attitudes seem particularly consequential for production and service workers' party choice: As for small business owners, these two working-class categories' inclination towards cultural demarcation explains their voting for SVP. The Populist Right's

defensive stance on cultural integration thus seems at the root of its success among these “modernization losers”. In contrast, cultural attitudes do not suffice to account for socio-cultural and technical professionals’ support for the New Left: even when controlling for their libertarian attitudes, these two categories remain more likely than managers to favour the New Left over the Populist Right.

When introducing economic and cultural attitudes together into a final model 4, we are able to account for socio-cultural professionals’ preference of the New Left. This class simply stands out as being particularly leftist both in economic (socialist) and cultural (libertarian) terms. However, economic and cultural attitudes combined do not explain why technical professionals are particularly *unlikely* and small business owners particularly *likely* to favour SVP over either SPS or the Greens. For these two categories, the class effect persists. Likewise, differences in attitudes do not explain why people in paid work are more likely than retired individuals to vote for New Left as compared to the Populist Right. This result indicates that our analysis still misses a piece linking voters’ social-structural situation to their party choice. This piece may be constituted by relatively stable long-term loyalties such as party identification or, more probably, simply by other attitudes and values than those captured in our two measures.

## Conclusion

Our article has started out by arguing that Switzerland’s electoral competition between the New Left and Populist Right is best understood as a cultural conflict entrenched in different class positions and going along with opposing values. Our main objective has then been to show that this cleavage is anchored in social structure. We have thus maintained that the electorates of the two poles do not only differ in their values, but also with respect to their class constituencies. Our analysis of the cleavage’s micro-foundation has produced the following three findings.

First, individual-level data clearly show that party support in Switzerland is not distributed randomly across *classes*. On the contrary, the class basis of the Social-Democratic and Green Party represent the almost exact mirror image of SVP’s electorate. Among the classes where the New Left is very successful, notably socio-cultural and technical professionals, SVP performs very poorly. At the same time, the three classes carrying greatest weight in SVP’s electoral success – small business owners,

production and service workers – give disproportionately low support to the Social-Democratic and Green Parties. We thus obtain a voting pattern where the New Left is dominant within the salaried middle classes, while the Populist Right rallies the economically threatened categories of small independents and blue collar workers. These class differences were already evident in 2003, but have become more marked in the elections of 2007. Moreover, they correlate with very different age profiles: the New Left draws its strength from prime-age voters, whereas the Populist Rights succeeds in securing disproportionate support from both the very young and, above all, the elderly. The New Left is more successful among the gainfully employed, while SVP obtains greater support from housewives and the retired.

Second, the electoral divide between members of the salaried professions on the one hand and the unlikely alliance of workers and small business owners on the other strongly correlates with differing *values*. With respect to cultural attitudes, socio-cultural professionals are the class situated closest to the libertarian pole and thus most favourable to international integration and multiculturalism, whereas workers and small business owners occupy the traditionalist pole and most strongly support cultural demarcation. When plotted into a two-dimensional space of cultural and economic attitudes, the electorates of the New Left and Populist Right are thus located in the very opposite corners: SVP's voters are less favourable to government redistribution and, above all, to international integration and multi-culturalism than Social-Democratic and Green voters.

Third, multivariate analysis suggests that *cultural attitudes* are of much greater relevance in explaining support for SVP than economic attitudes. Once we account for differences in voters' opinions about defending Swiss traditions, joining the EU, integrating foreigners and upholding law and order, service and production workers are no more likely to support the Populist Right than the average voter. Workers thus rally SVP because of its traditionalist stance towards issues of identity and community – and *despite* the party's market-liberal position towards the economy. While our findings confirm that SVP primarily competes on the cultural – and not the economic – axis, results are more ambiguous for the New Left. Contrary to our expectation, citizens' attitudes towards the economy explain nearly as much variance in voting for parties of the New Left as do attitudes towards the community.

What are the implications of these findings? They suggest that a full grown cleavage has surfaced in Switzerland's electoral competition, sepa-



rating a libertarian-universalistic from a traditionalist-communitarian camp. This cleavage has brought along a process of class realignment, where the beneficiaries of educational expansion and occupational upgrading – notably salaried professionals – have come to form the backbone of the New Left. In contrast, the voters left out from socio-economic modernization – workers and small business owners – express their discontent by rallying the Populist Right. Although anchored in the employment structure, this divide is not primarily about the economy and resources, but about culture and identity (Bornschieer 2007).

Two lines of further research seem promising. To begin with, our findings suggest that both economic and, above all, cultural attitudes have a powerful influence on party choice in Switzerland. However, as we have pointed out, these intermediary variables do not account entirely for the class differences we observed. Hence, additional work is needed to identify the linkages between class positions, values and party choice: what mechanism translates differences in class position into distinct voting decisions? A second line that needs to be explored concerns the applicability of our findings to other contexts. The argument about social modernization and the emergence of a new identity cleavage is not specific to Switzerland. Therefore, we should observe a similar class divide in support for the New Left and the Populist Right in other countries where this electoral potential is articulated by political parties. A natural choice would be Austria or the Netherlands, where the presence of sizeable parties of the New Left and Populist Right points towards a similar identity cleavage as in Switzerland.

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## Appendix

Table A.1: Factors Loadings for the Index “Economic Attitudes” (based on Selects 2007)

Question	Factor 1
Higher / Lower Taxes on High Incomes	0.57
Increase / Cut Social Expenses	0.55
State Intervention / Free Market	0.39
Eigenvalue	0.79
Proportion Variance	0.98

Note: Number of Observation (Voters with Class Position only): 2’527.

Table A.2: Factors Loadings for the Index “Cultural Attitudes” (based on Selects 2007)

Question	Factor 1
Defend / Question Swiss Traditions	0.67
Join / Do not Join EU	0.63
Stress / Do not Stress Law and Order	0.58
Grant / Do not Grant Equal Right to Foreigners	0.52
Eigenvalue	1.46
Proportion Variance	0.94

Note: Number of Observations (Voters with Class Position only): 2’574.

Table A.3: Over- and Underrepresentation of Classes in Party’s Electorate 2003 (in Percentage Points)

	GPS Green Party	SPS Social-Demo- cratic Party	CVP Christian Demo- cratic Party	FDP/LPS Liberal- Radical Party	SVP Swiss People’s Party	Other Parties
Socio-cultural (Semi-)Professionals	+7	+10	0	-3	-14	+1
Technical (Semi-)Professionals	0	+5	-3	1	-5	+1
(Junior) Managers	-1	-2	0	+5	-3	0
Office Clerks	-3	+2	+2	-2	-1	+1
Service Workers	0	-2	0	-5	+7	0
Production Workers	-3	-3	1	-4	+9	-1
Self-empl. Profes. and Large Employers	-2	-8	0	+9	+5	-3
Small Business Owners	-3	-9	-1	0	+15	-2
Party’s Share in Entire Electorate	7%	23%	17%	20%	27%	6%

Notes: Number of Observations: 3’618. See Table 3 for Notes.

### **Le fondement social du clivage entre la nouvelle gauche et la droite populiste en Suisse**

Cet article argumente qu'un nouveau clivage est apparu dans la politique suisse, séparant un camp libertaire-universaliste (la nouvelle gauche) d'un camp traditionaliste-communautaire (la droite populiste). Se basant sur les données de sondage des élections fédérales 2007 en Suisse, il examine les fondements microsociaux de ce clivage et montre que les électors de la nouvelle gauche (parti socialiste et Verts) et de la droite populiste (Union démocratique du centre) ont un profil presque à l'opposé l'un de l'autre en termes de classes. Les classes moyennes salariées soutiennent fortement la première, alors que les petits indépendants, les travailleurs de production et des services rallient la seconde. Bien que cette division soit ancrée dans la structure de l'emploi, elle ne porte pas principalement sur l'économie et les ressources, mais sur la culture et l'identité. Elle est ainsi fortement corrélée avec des attitudes culturelles opposées. Alors que les petits indépendants et les ouvriers sont favorables à une démarcation culturelle et aux traditions nationales, les classes moyennes salariées soutiennent l'intégration internationale et le multiculturalisme.

### **Das Klassenfundament der politischen Spaltlinie zwischen Neuer Linken und Populistischer Rechten in der Schweiz**

Dieser Artikel argumentiert, dass eine neue gesellschaftliche Spaltlinie die schweizerischen Politik in ein libertär-universalistisches (die Neue Linke) und ein traditionalistisch-gemeinschaftliches Lager (die Populistische Rechte) trennt. Auf der Basis von Umfragedaten der Parlamentswahlen 2007 wird das Mikrofundament dieser Spaltlinie untersucht und gezeigt, dass sich Neue Linke (Sozialdemokratische und Grüne Partei) und Populistische Rechte (Schweizerische Volkspartei) diametral unterscheiden bezüglich der Klassenzusammensetzung ihrer Wähler. Während die Neue Linke vor allem von der lohnabhängigen Mittelklasse unterstützt wird, erhält die Populistische Rechte starken Zuspruch vom Kleingewerbe sowie den Produktions- und Dienstleistungsarbeitern. Diese Spaltlinie ist in der Beschäftigungsstruktur verankert, basiert jedoch nicht in erster Linie auf wirtschaftlichen Verteilungs-, sondern auf gesellschaftlichen Wertfragen. Sie korreliert folglich mit sehr unterschiedlichen kulturellen Einstellungen. Kleingewerbler und Arbeiter sprechen sich für Abschottung und die Verteidigung der nationalen Eigenheiten aus. Demgegenüber bevorzugen Wähler aus der lohnabhängigen Mittelklasse internationale Öffnung und Multikulturalismus.

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