
Workers' EU political alignments during the Great Recession

Transfer

1–22

© The Author(s) 2017

Reprints and permission:

sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav

DOI: 10.1177/1024258917696239

journals.sagepub.com/home/trs



André Freire

ISCTE-IUL (University Institute of Lisbon), Portugal CIES-IUL, Portugal

Luís Cabrita

ISCTE-IUL (University Institute of Lisbon), Portugal

Mariana Carmo Duarte

ISCTE-IUL (University Institute of Lisbon), Portugal

Hugo Ferrinho Lopes

ISCTE-IUL (University Institute of Lisbon), Portugal

Summary

Using data from the European Election Study 2014, this article focuses on workers' EU political alignments during the Great Recession. It deals with two research questions. First, how does the attitude of (manual) workers towards the EU compare to that of the middle and upper classes in the aftermath of the Great Recession? Second, when it comes to workers' support for the EU, are there systematic differences between countries affected by the crisis? The article finds that, on the one hand, in terms of patterns of workers' EU political alignments, there are no systematic differences between countries affected to varying degrees by the Great Recession. On the other hand, workers still feel fundamentally detached from the EU, especially when it comes to the manual workers. However, high levels of generalised detachment from the EU are not clearly translated into preferences for Eurosceptic parties, since there are high levels of vote fragmentation.

Résumé

En utilisant les données provenant de l'European Election Study 2014, cet article se focalise sur les positionnements politiques des travailleurs vis-à-vis de l'Union européenne durant la grande récession. Deux questions de recherche sont abordées. Tout d'abord, comment l'attitude des travailleurs (manuels) à l'égard de l'UE peut-elle être comparée avec celle des classes moyennes et supérieures à la suite de la grande récession ? Ensuite, s'agissant du soutien des travailleurs à l'UE, y a-t-il des différences systématiques entre les pays affectés par la crise ? L'article montre que, d'une part, en termes de schémas d'affiliation politique des travailleurs, il n'y a pas de différence

Corresponding author:

André Freire, ISCTE-IUL (University Institute of Lisbon), Avenida das Forças Armadas, 1649-026 Lisbon, Portugal.

Email: andre.freire@iscte.pt

systematique entre les pays affectés à des degrés divers par la grande récession. D'autre part, les travailleurs éprouvent toujours un détachement fondamental par rapport à l'UE, en particulier dans le cas des travailleurs manuels. Toutefois, ces niveaux élevés de distanciation généralisée vis-à-vis de l'UE ne se traduisent pas clairement par des préférences pour les partis eurosceptiques, en raison des niveaux élevés de fragmentation des votes.

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Artikel untersucht die politischen Einstellungen von Arbeitnehmern in Bezug auf die EU während der Großen Rezession. Er stützt sich auf die Daten der Europäischen Wahlstudie von 2014 und stellt zwei Forschungsfragen: Zunächst werden die Einstellungen von (manuell tätigen) Arbeitnehmern gegenüber der EU nach der Großen Rezession mit denen von Angehörigen der Mittel- und Oberklasse verglichen. Anschließend wird in Bezug auf die Unterstützung von Arbeitnehmern für die EU gefragt, ob zwischen den von der Krise betroffenen Ländern systematische Unterschiede bestehen. Die Ergebnisse besagen, dass einerseits in Bezug auf EU-politische Orientierungsmuster keine systematischen Unterschiede bestehen zwischen den Ländern, die unterschiedlich schwer von der Krise getroffen wurden. Andererseits empfinden Arbeitnehmer, und insbesondere manuell tätige Arbeitnehmer, immer noch eine grundlegende Distanz gegenüber der EU. Jedoch korrespondieren hohe Level einer allgemeinen Distanz gegenüber der EU nicht eindeutig mit Präferenzen für europaskeptische Parteien, da das Wahlverhalten stark fragmentiert ist.

Keywords

EU integration, economic crisis, workers, support for EU

Introduction

This article focuses on workers' EU political alignments during the Great Recession: we look at the impact of socio-economic factors (i.e. occupational status and trade union membership, both as indicators of social class) on support for the European Union (EU) project. For this we use data from the European Election Study 2014 (EES, 2014) to measure support for the EU by two dependent variables: voting in the 2014 European Parliament (EP) Elections, categorised in terms of 'party families', and 'diffuse support' for the EU project.

We tackle two research questions. First, how does the attitude of (manual) workers towards the EU compare with that of the middle and upper social strata in the aftermath of the Great Recession? The earlier literature (see for example Gabel, 1998; Hix, 2005) found relatively greater detachment on the part of the lower strata of the European population (less educated people, people with lower incomes and/or in manual occupations). Given the range of political responses to the Great Recession (austerity policies; privatisation; deregulation – specifically, in the labour market; electoral promises frequently broken), the unvarnished revelation of the ascendancy of technocratic institutions – the 'European Troika' – over elected politicians and the effects of these policies (rising unemployment and public debt; declining economic output; bank bailouts; lack of money for public services), especially in the countries most severely affected by the crisis, we hypothesised that manual workers are still relatively more detached from the EU project than people in other occupations.

Second, to what extent can the relatively greater detachment of the working classes be explained by the Great Recession? Are there systematic differences between countries affected

in varying degrees by the Great Recession when it comes to workers' EU political alignments (as measured by support for Eurosceptic parties and diffuse support for the EU project)? If there are, then we could conclude that this is an indication of the effects of the crisis across countries on patterns of workers' EU political alignments. But if there are *not*, then that will be an indication that the crisis has done little to disrupt previous patterns of workers' EU political alignments – and a sign of the strength of the attitudes that still underpin them.

To answer both these questions, we chose a set of eight countries, selecting them because they had been severely affected (Greece, Portugal, Spain, Hungary) or less affected (Finland, France, Sweden, Germany) by the sovereign debt crisis in Europe, the austerity policies that followed and/or foreign intervention through bailouts. The article is structured as follows. In the theoretical section, we present our literature review and some central hypotheses. The third section presents our data and methodologies. The next two sections are empirical, looking at the impact of socio-economic factors on support for the EU project: the fourth deals with behaviour and the fifth, attitudes. The article ends with some concluding remarks and policy recommendations.

Our basic findings are, first, that there are no systematic differences between the countries under study which were severely affected by the Great Recession and those less affected, in terms of patterns of workers' EU political alignments: this means that (manual) workers' detachment from the EU project is a long-term phenomenon that predates the crisis – and if the crisis has had any impact on it, this has been across the whole spectrum of these affected countries. On the other hand, our second main finding is that workers have remained fundamentally detached from the EU during the Great Recession, especially those in the lower strata (manual workers).

Theory and hypotheses: attitudes and voting behaviour showing support for the EU

Historically, economic crisis and social upheavals have been accompanied by radical re-evaluations of societies' ways of thinking (Bartels and Bermeo, 2014). In Europe, where globalisation means, above all, 'European integration', new political formations have emerged and are obtaining considerable support. We are talking in particular about the greens and the parties of the libertarian left (Knutsen, 2004) and about radical right-wing parties (Mudde, 2007). These recently emerged types of parties have been labelled 'new left' and 'new right' (Flanagan and Lee, 2003) and have appeared as a consequence of materialist/post-materialist value change (Inglehart, 1977) and/or the similar libertarian/authoritarian cleavage (Kitschelt, 1994; Flanagan and Lee, 2003). This means that several studies on the structure of ideological space have been informed by the assumption that all conflicts, old and new, can be captured in two broad dimensions: a conflict over preferences about redistribution and the economic role of government (i.e. the traditional left-right divide, usually encompassed by the label 'old politics'); and a cultural dimension formed by fundamental divisions in values concerning authority, lifestyles and the level and type of citizens' participation in the political arena (i.e. the so-called 'new politics' divide, also labelled 'the new left versus new right divide').

EU integration has added to this phenomenon, creating a new division in ideological spaces by replacing older ones. Establishment parties have been forced to realign and reposition themselves on the ideological spectrum as a result of a new conflict: the integration/demarcation cleavage (Kriesi et al., 2008). Evidence has shown that the appearance of this new cleavage opened a "window of opportunity" for the formation of new political parties and the restructuring of the national party systems' (Kriesi et al., 2008: 9). According to Kriesi et al., voters tend to perceive EU integration in terms of 'winners' and 'losers' (Kriesi et al., 2008: 4): individuals with more

education, more ‘possessions’ or more substantive ‘well-being’ tend to favour EU integration more than people who are, at the macro level, more affected by country bailouts or, at the individual level, situated on the lower rungs of the social ladder.

A special feature of the most recent, 2014 EP Elections is that they took place at a time of growing anti-EU sentiment, at least in countries hit by the economic crisis (Freire et al., 2014; Schmitt and Teperoglou, 2015). In countries such as Greece, Hungary, Portugal and Spain, which until recently had strong pro-EU feelings, there has been a growth of Euroscepticism, mainly among communist parties and parties of the radical left and/or the radical right (Freire et al., 2016; Schmitt and Teperoglou, 2015).

The literature contains abundant analysis, based on economic voting theory, of the relationship between economic conditions and support for European and/or national government. This demonstrates that voters are more likely to withdraw their support for the government during hard economic times (Lewis-Beck, 1988). Logically, in countries hit hard by the economic crisis, where the EU can usually be seen to play a central role in austerity measures, we can predict that voters are more likely to ‘blame’ the EU for the deterioration in their individual and national economic conditions (Freire et al., 2014).

Even beyond the economic voting theory literature, it is generally accepted that less wealthy and/or less educated voters will tend to be less supportive of the EU (Gabel, 1998; Hix, 2005; Freire et al., 2016). The same goes for ‘the winners of globalisation and/or of Europeanisation’: it is predicted that there will be more support from the upper/middle classes and from more educated or affluent people, because they have more ‘assets’ enabling them to profit from the opportunities created by globalisation and/or by Europeanisation (see Kriesi et al., 2008).

We formulate three overarching hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 (H1) is that less privileged social strata (especially manual workers) are less supportive of the EU, in terms of diffuse support for the EU project, by comparison with better-off social groups (white-collar workers and, especially, managers and the self-employed). This might be due to the weak ‘Social Europe’ component of the EU project and has perhaps been aggravated by the EU’s political responses to sovereign debt crisis in Europe, with harsh austerity policies, especially in bailed-out countries (Greece, Portugal, Spain, Hungary) (see Rodríguez-Aguilera de Prat, 2016; Freire et al., 2016; Escalona and Vieira, 2015; Bartels and Bermeo, 2014). Hypothesis 2 (H2) is that members of less privileged social strata also tend to vote more for parties that are less supportive of the EU project (radical left, radical right, nationalist/conservative parties) by comparison with better-off social groups, who tend to vote more for pro-EU parties (social democrats and liberal/conservatives). Of course, we know that radical left parties and greens (with only a small number of the latter in our samples, we merged their data with that of the radical left parties) and radical right parties are heterogeneous in terms of their positions on EU integration – i.e. some are merely Eurosceptic, while others are Europhobic (see below). However, they all tend to be more Eurosceptic than mainstream parties (social democrats, liberals and conservatives).

Finally, Hypothesis 3 (H3) concerned variation between countries in terms of the impact of the Great Recession and patterns of workers’ EU political alignments. We predicted that in the countries more severely affected by the Great Recession, the context would be prone to increase workers’ detachment from the EU project by comparison with what happened in the countries less affected by the Great Recession. However, it was not completely clear whether that increase would be sufficient to disrupt the previous picture – a generalised pattern of workers’ detachment from the EU across countries. If it were not, we would have to consider H3 as unconfirmed: in other words, the impact of previous long-term patterns on workers’ EU political alignments would have been greater than the impact of the Great Recession.

Moreover, Euroscepticism is a rather complex phenomenon, and one that is somewhat differentiated among the different party families, both in terms of the strength of opposition to EU integration and in terms of its content (see Taggart and Szczepiński, 2002; Kopecký and Mudde, 2002; Kriesi et al., 2008; Leconte, 2010; Charalambous, 2011; Rodríguez-Aguilera de Prat, 2016). In 2002, studying party-based Euroscepticism across EU Member States and the then candidate states, Taggart and Szczepiński (2002: 7) broke down their definition of the phenomenon into two: ‘hard Euroscepticism’, which is a party’s principled opposition to EU integration and advocates withdrawal from the EU or defends policies that have as their corollary opposition to the whole EU project; and ‘soft Euroscepticism’, which is not a principled opposition to EU integration, but where the party’s concerns over policies lead to ‘the expression of qualified opposition to the EU’. In the Member States, the authors found that ‘hard Euroscepticism’ was fundamentally a characteristic of the radical right, with the exceptions of France, Sweden and Denmark, where hard Eurosceptics were also found on the radical left; ‘soft Euroscepticism’ was more common among radical left and some conservative parties (Taggart and Szczepiński, 2002: 10–11).

Studying political parties in Central and Eastern Europe, Kopecký and Mudde (2002) proposed a more complex classification, with four types: ‘*Europhobe*’ (opposing one or both of the two fundamental organisational principles of the EU: pooled sovereignty at the political level and an integrated free-market economy at the economic level); ‘*Europhile*’ (espousing both these principles); and – measured by attitudes towards specific EU policy orientations – ‘*EU-optimist*’, when positive, and ‘*EU-pessimist*’, when negative. In findings similar to those of Taggart and Szczepiński (2002), the authors concluded that ‘Eurorejects’ (Europhobe and EU-pessimist) are mainly concentrated on the radical right and ‘Eurosceptics’ (Europhile and EU-pessimist), mainly in the conservative party family (Kopecký and Mudde, 2002: 16–17). Using the two theoretical approaches presented above, a recent study of the radical left in western Europe (Charalambous, 2011: 311–316) concluded that most of the western European parties described as ‘radical left’ were either ‘soft Eurosceptics’ or ‘Eurosceptics’ (Europhile and EU-pessimist).

But it is not only the level (or strength) of Euroscepticism that differs between the (radical) right and the (radical) left: it is also its ideological or issue content (Kriesi et al., 2008; see also Leconte, 2010: 100–134). From the right, and especially the radical right, opposition to (or ‘demarcation’ from) Europe (and globalisation) is mainly across the ‘cultural dimension’ – in other words, expressed in terms of opposition to immigration and multiculturalism. From the left, and above all the radical left, ‘demarcation’ from Europe and globalisation is mainly across the ‘economic dimension’, i.e. defending the national welfare state, public services and market regulation, opposing (further) integration into the European and global neoliberal economy (with more privatisation, deregulation and welfare state retrenchment). At the level of institutions and of responses to the so-called ‘democratic deficit’, we can also see differences between party families in terms of institutional reform and patterns of opposition to EU integration (Rodríguez-Aguilera de Prat, 2016: 99–141): the right, and especially the radical right, puts more emphasis on opposition to pooled sovereignty and on proposals to restore national sovereignty, while the left, and especially the radical left, emphasises proposals (more or less radically) to democratise the EU and restore the primacy of politics over economics.

Our point here is twofold. First, we argue that Euroscepticism has a different profile on the right and on the left, in terms of both value orientations and strength of opposition to the EU. Second, from these differences follow the (mostly normative) underpinnings of our recommendation for left-left alliances (i.e. radical left and greens with social democrats and socialists), which could fight for a different kind of Europe but without espousing a nationalistic approach to

EU integration. Euroscepticism is a very different phenomenon on the (radical) left and on the (radical and nationalist/conservative) right, specifically in terms of its consequences for the EU project. We shall return to this point in our conclusions and, especially, in our policy recommendations.

Data and methods

This article relies mainly on quantitative comparative analyses of mass survey data from the European Election Study 2014. For details, see: <http://eeshomepage.net/ees-2014-study/>

When it came to case selection, we decided to focus on countries which had different experiences during the Great Recession, as already listed above (see Introduction). As to variables, we decided to pick a set of independent variables in order to explain our two dependent variables: (1) party family vote in the 2014 EP Elections and (2) attitudes towards the EU (see Supplementary material; Appendices 1 and 2 for a full description of all the variables and their respective operationalisation). Since our main objectives were to analyse the specific impact of socio-economic variables on support for the EU, in terms of both attitudes and behaviour towards the EU, we chose the following independent variables: (1) occupational group; (2) trade union membership (self and family). Trade union membership is used as an additional indicator of social class: it is usually associated with worker status (both manual and non-manual); moreover it is said to be one of the organisational components of the class cleavage (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Franklin et al., 1992; Knutsen, 2004; Evans and De Graaf, 2013). As far as the impact of trade union membership on workers' EU political alignments is concerned, we predicted that the situation would be more mixed than with the impact of occupational group. This is for two reasons – first, because union members include both blue-collar and white-collar workers, and the latter have been shown to be less detached from the EU project than the former; second, because at least some union members may be more likely to support the EU – or at least, pro-EU parties – on the basis of the longstanding alliance between (at least some) trade unions and social democrats.

The first stage of our statistical analysis focuses on bivariate analyses, in which we describe and relate each independent variable to each dependent variable. Here, we also use correlations and/or association measures and chi-square tests. In the second stage, we adopt multivariate analysis (logistic regression analysis – binary in regard to support for the EU and multinomial in regard to voting choices) to test the impact of socio-economic factors (two dummies for occupation: D1, white-collar or non-manual workers and D2, manual or blue-collar workers, with the self-employed and managers as reference group; one dummy for trade union membership: 1, member of union – self and/or family and 0, non-member), but controlling for other relevant factors (left-right self-placement on a scale of 0–10 from left to right; perceptions of the state of the national economy from 1, negative to 5, positive; Europe versus country attachment: -3 implies higher attachment to Europe and 3 denotes higher attachment to the country of origin).

Three points should be noted with regard to occupational groups. First, in Table A1.2.1 (Supplementary material; Appendix 1), we give a description of each of the four categories we are using. Second, taking into account the existing literature on this topic (Franklin et al., 1992: 3–60; Kitschelt, 1994: 8–66; Knutsen, 2004: 1–2, 159–197, 224–277), we acknowledge that each of these groups is internally fragmented in terms of social status and political orientations. For example, it is very likely that the self-employed category includes many workers forced into self-employment, perhaps with left-wing leanings. Third, however, we are not in a position to apply more detailed categories, due to the small number of cases and the limitations of using secondary data.

The impact of occupational group and trade union membership on support for the EU (I): voting choices, 2014

We shall begin by analysing manual and non-manual workers' EU political alignments in terms of political behaviour, i.e. of their party vote in the 2014 EP Elections. Party vote, our first dependent variable, is operationalised in terms of party families: 'radical left/greens', 'social democrats', 'liberal/conservative', 'nationalist/conservative' and 'far right' (see Supplementary material; Appendix 2). In the main, we shall use social class/occupational group as the independent variable for measuring 'socio-economic factors'. In terms of occupation, our main focus will be to compare the party votes of workers (white-collar and manual workers) with those of managers and the self-employed. Within each occupational group, we determine for each social class which is the party family most voted for (row percentages), then the second and the third most voted-for party families. In addition, we check whether or not there is a left-left majority among workers (i.e. a majority of workers voting for radical left/greens and social democrats taken together). We are adopting this approach because, as we have explained above, Euroscepticism differs significantly, in terms of both content and strength, from the left to the right – and this has relevant implications for coalition politics and for policy recommendations. In Tables 1 and 2, we also present the total number of cases by party (column totals) and by occupational group (row totals).

We can see that, in Greece, the 'radical left/greens' category is the party family most voted for (with an absolute majority among manual workers and a near-majority among white-collar workers), probably due to the SYRIZA phenomenon, and that 'liberal/conservative' is the second most voted-for party family (see Table 1). However, in all occupational groups, a majority takes the left-left option – although this is particularly the case among workers. However, workers also demonstrate around 10 per cent support for the 'far right', as do the self-employed. On the other hand, these patterns of relationships are not statistically significant, i.e. there are no major differences between the social classes in Greece in terms of party voting.

In the case of Spain, although manual workers (curiously, like managers) seem to be evenly divided between 'radical left/greens' and 'liberal/conservative', there is a left-left majority in every occupational group except the self-employed – although it is especially large among white-collar workers and managers (see Table 1). These patterns of relationships are statistically significant, although with only medium strength of association.

In Finland, among all classes, the majority of votes go to 'liberal/conservative' and, alone or taken together with 'nationalist/conservative', there is consistently a majority right-wing vote across all classes, even among manual workers (see Table 1). What is more, the latter are the ones who vote more for 'nationalist/conservative' (24.6 per cent), the party family that is closer to the far right. These patterns of relationships are statistically significant, although with only medium strength of association.

In France, the voting choices of the social classes are highly fragmented. First, the party family most voted for by manual workers is the 'far right': this party family and 'liberal/conservatives' taken together received the majority of manual workers' votes (see Table 1). Although there is a left-left majority among white-collar workers (as among managers), a substantial proportion of these individuals voted 'liberal/conservative' (23.8 per cent) or 'far right' (19.0 per cent). Self-employed people voted mainly for the right. These patterns of relationships are statistically significant, although with only medium strength of association.

In Portugal, there is a left-left majority in all classes, although it is especially strong among manual workers (see Table 2). However, there is high vote fragmentation in all the occupational groups, with right-wing parties being the first choice of both managers and white-collar workers

∞ **Table I.** Party family vote in the 2014 EP Elections, by social class.

		Radical left/greens	Social democrats	Liberal/conservative	Nationalist/conservative	Far right	
Occupation		Row N%	Row N%	Row N%	Row N%	Row N%	Total N
Greece	Self-employed	40.6%	13.3%	25.9%	8.4%	11.9%	143 (44.54%)
	Managers	45.7%	8.6%	40.0%	2.9%	2.9%	35 (10.9%)
	White-collar	49.5%	16.1%	17.2%	7.5%	9.7%	93 (28.97%)
	Manual workers	58.0%	12.0%	16.0%	4.0%	10.0%	50 (15.58%)
	Total N	149 (46.41%)	43 (13.39%)	75 (23.36%)	22 (6.85%)	32 (9.96%)	321
	Cramer's V			0.126			
	Pearson's chi ²			15.372			
Spain	Self-employed	10.5%	26.3%	63.2%	0.0%	0.0%	19 (14.61%)
	Managers	38.9%	27.8%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	18 (13.85%)
	White-collar	59.1%	27.3%	13.6%	0.0%	0.0%	22 (16.92%)
	Manual workers	38.0%	23.9%	38.0%	0.0%	0.0%	71 (54.62%)
	Total N	49 (37.69%)	33 (25.38%)	48 (36.92%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	130
	Cramer's V			0.227*			
	Pearson's chi ²			13.397*			
Finland	Self-employed	20.8%	6.3%	64.6%	8.3%	0.0%	48 (16.55%)
	Managers	26.1%	6.0%	63.4%	4.5%	0.0%	134 (46.21%)
	White-collar	24.3%	21.6%	40.5%	13.5%	0.0%	37 (12.76%)
	Manual workers	11.5%	29.5%	34.4%	24.6%	0.0%	61 (21.03%)
	Total N	61 (21.03%)	37 (12.75%)	152 (52.41%)	30 (10.34%)	0 (0%)	290
	Cramer's V			0.246**			
	Pearson's chi ²			50.653**			
France	Self-employed	21.7%	8.7%	52.2%	0.0%	17.4%	23 (15.44%)
	Managers	26.8%	33.9%	28.6%	1.8%	8.9%	56 (37.84%)
	White-collar	28.6%	28.6%	23.8%	0.0%	19.0%	21 (14.09%)
	Manual workers	22.4%	22.4%	16.3%	4.1%	34.7%	49 (32.89%)
	Total N	37 (24.83%)	38 (25.50%)	41 (27.51%)	3 (2.01%)	30 (20.13%)	149
	Cramer's V			0.226**			
	Pearson's chi ²			22.898*			

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01.

Source: Data elaborated by the authors from the European Election Study (2014).

Table 2. Party family vote in the 2014 EP Elections, by social class.

		Radical left/Greens	Social Democrats	Liberal/Conservative	Nationalist/Conservative	Far right	
Occupation		Row N%	Row N%	Row N%	Row N%	Row N%	Total N
Portugal	Self-employed	18.5%	51.9%	29.6%	0.0%	0.0%	27 (20.15%)
	Managers	29.6%	25.9%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	27 (20.15%)
	White-collar	28.6%	28.6%	42.9%	0.0%	0.0%	21 (15.67%)
	Manual workers	30.5%	42.4%	27.1%	0.0%	0.0%	59 (44.03%)
	Total N	37 (27.61%)	52 (38.80%)	45 (33.48%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	134
	Cramer's V			0.155			
Pearson's chi ²			6.480				
Sweden	Self-employed	42.9%	10.2%	42.9%	4.1%	0.0%	49 (9.44%)
	Managers	44.5%	18.8%	33.5%	3.1%	0.0%	191 (36.8%)
	White-collar	36.4%	23.3%	31.0%	9.3%	0.0%	129 (24.86%)
	Manual workers	48.7%	24.0%	23.3%	4.0%	0.0%	150 (28.9%)
	Total N	226 (43.54%)	107 (20.61%)	160 (30.82%)	26 (5.00%)	0 (0%)	519
	Cramer's V			0.109*			
Pearson's chi ²			18.527*				
Germany	Self-employed	37.5%	17.9%	42.9%	1.8%	0.0%	56 (16.47%)
	Managers	27.2%	28.1%	36.0%	8.8%	0.0%	114 (33.53%)
	White-collar	20.0%	24.3%	47.1%	8.6%	0.0%	70 (20.59%)
	Manual workers	25.0%	40.0%	28.0%	7.0%	0.0%	100 (29.41%)
	Total N	91 (26.76%)	99 (29.11%)	126 (37.05%)	24 (7.05%)	0 (0%)	340
	Cramer's V			0.134*			
Pearson's chi ²			18.430*				
Hungary	Self-employed	0.0%	26.9%	0.0%	61.5%	11.5%	26 (13.9%)
	Managers	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	56.7%	3.3%	30 (16.04%)
	White-collar	0.0%	21.7%	0.0%	69.6%	8.7%	46 (24.6%)
	Manual workers	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	57.6%	22.4%	85 (45.45%)
	Total N	0 (0%)	46 (24.59%)	0 (0%)	114 (60.96%)	27 (14.43%)	187
	Cramer's V			0.180			
Pearson's chi ²			12.090				

Note: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01.

Source: Data elaborated by the authors from the European Election Study (2014).

(44.4 per cent and 42.9 per cent, respectively). Perhaps due to the high level of class-related vote fragmentation, relationships here are not statistically significant.

In Sweden, every occupational group consistently shows a left-left majority of voters, although this is much larger among workers (see Table 2). The relationships are statistically significant, although with rather weak association.

Germany is also characterised by very high fragmentation of party choices across all the social classes, although there is a consistent left-left majority in all occupational groups except white-collar workers (see Table 2) – and this is especially large among manual workers. Again, these relationships are statistically significant, although with rather weak association.

Finally, the case of Hungary is a somewhat singular one: ‘nationalist/conservative’ received an absolute majority of the vote in each and every social class (see Table 2). Taken together, ‘nationalist/conservative’ and the ‘far right’ receive absolute majorities of the vote in every occupational group: this explains why there are no statistically relevant differences between the social classes.

Overall, the above analyses allow us to draw the following conclusions about our second hypothesis (H2). Among the lowest social class strata (manual workers), support for parties with a relatively more Eurosceptic stance (‘radical left/greens’, ‘nationalist/conservative’, and ‘far right’) is usually more widespread than among higher class strata (white-collar workers, managers and the self-employed). However, due to the very high vote fragmentation of occupational groups, bivariate relationships between social class and vote (set out above) are significant in only half the countries studied (Spain, Finland, France, Sweden and Germany): thus, confirmation of H2 is limited to a subset of cases. In addition, except in Finland, France and Hungary, there are consistent left-left majorities among workers. Moreover, sizeable support among workers for Eurosceptic parties, either on the radical left or on the nationalist and/or far right, is present not only in the countries most severely affected by the crisis but also in those less affected: so the latter does not seem to have done much to alter the main patterns of workers’ EU political alignments in terms of support for Eurosceptic parties.

Turning now to the political cohesion of trade union members as compared with non-members (see Table A5.1 in Supplementary material; Appendix 5), we can say that, for all the countries except Finland and Hungary (where ‘liberal/conservative’ and ‘nationalist/conservative’ or ‘nationalist/conservative’ and the ‘far right’, respectively, receive an absolute majority of union members’ votes), the political cohesion of trade union members is much higher than that of the social classes. This is demonstrated by the fact that each and every other country (i.e. six out of eight) consistently shows an absolute left-left majority among union members. However, only in Spain, Finland, Portugal, Germany and Sweden are these relationships statistically significant (in other words, five out of eight cases). Thus, there is a much lower level of political fragmentation in this regard than across the social classes, except in countries where there is a significant authoritarian-libertarian party divide. The left-left majorities among union members in all countries except Finland and Hungary also indicate that, as expected, support for the EU project is mixed. However, the weakness of relationships (according to association measures) or their lack of statistical significance in many countries is probably due to the fact that differences between the voting behaviour of trade union members and that of non-members are not particularly strong (at least in some countries).

In looking at how occupational group and trade union membership related to voting choices, we also performed multivariate analysis with multinomial logistic regressions, using these two independent variables and other control variables (left-right ideology, perceptions of the state of the economy, European versus national attachment/identity). The data are shown in the Supplementary material; Appendix 3: equations with no control variables, Table A3.1, with all control

variables, Table A3.2, and with all control variables except left-right self-placement, Table A3.3 (see Supplementary material; Appendix 3). The reference category for the dependent variable is always the ‘liberal/conservative’ right – except in Hungary, where the latter’s weakness meant that we used the ‘nationalist and far right’ group. The active categories are shown in the first column of Tables A3.1, A3.2 and A3.3 in the Supplementary material; Appendix 3. Basically, our results highlight the weakness of the impact of both occupational group and trade union membership on workers’ EU political alignments in terms of voting choices, especially when we control for other (mediating) factors: this is because there is a very high level of fragmentation in voting choices. These findings reinforce our bivariate results and the corresponding statistical tests.¹ First, when contrasting the ‘radical left/green’ vote with the ‘liberal/conservative’ vote, only social class is relevant – and then only in France (where white-collar workers vote less for the right than do the self-employed and managers: note that these two categories were collapsed into only one for multivariate regression analysis, Tables A3.1 to A3.3 in Supplementary material; Appendix 3) and Finland (where manual workers vote more for the right than this reference group does: see Tables A3.1 to A3.3 in Supplementary material; Appendix 3). Second, when contrasting the ‘social democrat’ vote with the ‘liberal/conservative’ vote, both social class (in France, Finland and Germany, where manual workers vote more for the liberal-conservative right than do the self-employed and managers: see Tables A3.1 to A3.3 in Supplementary material; Appendix 3) and trade union membership (in Germany, where union members vote more for the right than the reference group does) have a significant impact, but very rarely (i.e. significant relationships are limited to a minority of countries and coefficients). Third, when contrasting the ‘nationalist conservative/far right’ vote with the ‘liberal/conservative’ vote, both social class (in France and Finland, where manual workers vote less for the nationalist right and the far right than do the self-employed and managers: see Tables A3.1 to A3.3 in Supplementary material; Appendix 3) and trade union membership (in Sweden, where union members vote less for the nationalist and far right than the reference group does) have a significant impact, but again very rarely.

Some of these findings are to some extent unexpected: for instance, when we compare social democrats with liberal/conservatives, we find that manual workers tend to vote more for the right than do managers and the self-employed. It may be argued that this could be due to the small number of cases and/or the large number of controls in our analysis. However, even when we collapse the control for left-right self-placement, our results remain fairly similar: the core electorate of the left votes more for the right than the core electorate of the right (see Table A3.3 in Supplementary material; Appendix 3), or, to put it in another way, people who traditionally form the core electorate of the left are now voting more for the right than they used to, in such large numbers that their votes outweigh those of the core electorate of the right, even though the latter have remained faithful to the right: in other words, there has been a massive swing to the right, with people who used to vote for left-wing parties but now vote for right-wing parties outnumbering those who have always voted for the right and continue to do so. This could also be because we are still applying a significant number of controls to a low number of cases – or perhaps because of the limitations of our class typologies; or on the other hand, it could be attributable to the growing irrelevance of social class in explaining voting patterns. It could also be because we are looking at EP elections, which have small turnouts and are strongly biased towards protest votes. This is an area which requires further research.

1 For all the regressions performed in this and the next section, we must emphasise that regression diagnoses consistently showed the analyses to be robust.

The impact of occupational group and trade union membership on support for the EU (II): diffuse support, 2014

Party voting in the 2014 EP Elections is a useful indicator of workers' support for the EU, but it is also a limited one. This is because people have different motivations when they vote in EP elections, as we have already explained. Thus, voters' choices in EP elections are not always directly motivated by EU issues; and even when they are, the latter are not necessarily among the most salient issues. This is one of the main reasons why we need direct measures of support for the EU – which we shall make our dependent variable in this section. We used the best indicator of diffuse support for the EU project available in EES 2014 ('Generally speaking, do you think that (our country)'s membership of the EU is...? a good thing, a bad thing or neither good nor bad') and tested the impact of occupational group and trade union membership on it.

We begin by summarising our bivariate results and the corresponding statistical tests (chi-square and association measures): relating occupational group to our dependent variable – diffuse support for the EU project – we come to the following conclusions (see Tables 3 and 4). Even in Spain and Germany (where there is an absolute majority of EU supporters – 'good thing' – within every social class), workers (white-collar and manual, but especially the latter) are the least supportive or among the least supportive occupational groups. In the other countries, white-collar workers and, above all, manual workers are the occupational groups which are the least supportive of the EU – furthermore, this usually means only minority support, i.e. the support for the EU within the occupational group is below absolute majority (less than around 51 per cent of the total number of respondents in the group (except white-collar workers in Finland, Portugal, Sweden, and Hungary: so it is only for manual workers that we can perceive an absolutely clear pattern of workers' detachment from the EU project, widespread across countries). Thus the least privileged strata of the population – manual workers – are the occupational group least supportive of the EU, while in some countries – Finland, France, and Germany – they are joined by white-collar workers. These relationships are consistently statistically significant, except in Spain.

Summarising our bivariate results and the statistical tests relating trade union membership to diffuse support for the EU project (see Table A5.2 in Supplementary material; Appendix 5), we conclude that trade union members are least supportive of the EU in Greece, Finland, France and Sweden, as compared with non-members. However, even in Finland and Sweden, a majority of union members is in favour of the EU: it is only a matter of relative support. In contrast, in all the other countries, trade union members are more supportive of the EU when compared with non-members (although in Portugal this nevertheless means only minority support). In any case, the differences between union members and non-members are usually rather small: this explains why the differences are statistically relevant only in Germany.

Multivariate tests using logistic regression analysis and taking diffuse support for the EU project (1, support for EU: 'good thing'; 0, no support for EU: 'bad thing' or 'neither good nor bad') as the dependent variable (see evidence in Table A4.1 in Supplementary material; Appendix 4) allow us to highlight the following. The multivariate test results basically confirm our bivariate analysis: i.e. whether we control for three other relevant factors (Model 2) or do not control for other factors (Model 1), manual workers consistently (i.e. in all countries – except in Spain, where there is no effect) demonstrate lower support for the EU than do the self-employed or managers. The same 'negative' support for the EU holds good for non-manual workers, although only in Finland and Germany (only without controls) and France (with and without controls). Trade union membership has a significant positive impact only in Spain: thus, it is usually not a relevant factor. Moreover, using Xpost software (see <http://www.indiana.edu/>

Table 3. Support for the EU by social class, 2014.

QP7 Generally speaking, do you think that (OUR COUNTRY)'s membership of the EU is . . . ?

	Occupation	A bad thing	Neither a good nor a bad thing	A good thing	Total N
		Row N%	Row N%	Row N%	
Greece	Self-employed	24.0%	33.7%	42.3%	208 (40.07%)
	Managers	14.3%	19.6%	66.1%	56 (10.79%)
	Other white-collar	23.4%	31.0%	45.5%	145 (27.94%)
	Manual workers	26.4%	40.0%	33.6%	110 (21.19%)
	Total N	121 (23.31%)	170 (32.75%)	228 (43.93%)	519
					Cramer's V 0.126* Pearson's chi ² 16.439*
Spain	Self-employed	11.0%	27.4%	61.6%	73 (17.63%)
	Managers	1.8%	29.8%	68.4%	57 (13.77%)
	Other white-collar	7.7%	24.6%	67.7%	65 (15.7%)
	Manual workers	14.6%	23.7%	61.6%	219 (52.9%)
	Total N	46 (11.11%)	105 (25.36%)	263 (63.52%)	414
					Cramer's V 0.104 Pearson's chi ² 8.955
Finland	Self-employed	5.3%	26.3%	68.4%	76 (14.53%)
	Managers	7.3%	16.8%	75.9%	191 (36.52%)
	Other white-collar	8.5%	39.0%	52.4%	82 (15.67%)
	Manual workers	17.2%	33.3%	49.4%	174 (33.26%)
	Total N	55 (10.51%)	142 (27.15%)	326 (62.33%)	523
					Cramer's V 0.191** Pearson's chi ² 38.002*
France	Self-employed	15.6%	22.2%	62.2%	45 (9.61%)
	Managers	5.7%	19.3%	75.0%	140 (29.91%)
	Other white-collar	16.1%	35.6%	48.3%	87 (18.58%)
	Manual workers	20.4%	37.2%	42.3%	195 (41.66%)
	Total N	69 (14.74%)	141 (30.12%)	258 (55.12%)	468
					Cramer's V 0.206** Pearson's chi ² 39.689**

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

Source: Data elaborated by the authors from the European Election Study (2014).

~jslsoc/web_spost9/sp_xpost.htm) in Figures 1 to 8 (one graph for each of the countries studied), we present the predicted probability of workers' support for the EU (non-manual and manual workers, always compared to the self-employed and managers – the reference group) (vertical axis), controlling for all other three factors, including left-right self-placement (shown in the horizontal axis). Here we can basically see two things. First, respondents positioned on the left are usually more Eurosceptic than those on the right, except in France (where the reverse is true) and Germany (no relation: horizontal lines). Second, in all the countries other than Spain, manual workers are consistently less supportive of the EU than are white-collar workers, and this is especially true in France, Germany, Finland and Greece. The gap is especially pronounced on

Table 4. Support for the EU by social class, 2014.

QP7 Generally speaking, do you think that (OUR COUNTRY)'s membership of the EU is . . . ?

		A bad thing	Neither a good nor a bad thing	A good thing	Total N
Occupation		Row N%	Row N%	Row N%	
Portugal	Self-employed	28.0%	25.3%	46.7%	75 (16.51%)
	Managers	9.6%	24.7%	65.8%	73 (16.07%)
	Other white-collar	14.3%	21.4%	64.3%	70 (15.41%)
	Manual workers	22.9%	37.3%	39.8%	236 (51.98%)
	Total N	92 (20.26%)	140 (30.84%)	222 (48.90%)	454
		Cramer's V		0.172**	
	Pearson's chi ²		26.863**		
Sweden	Self-employed	11.5%	19.7%	68.9%	61 (9.61%)
	Managers	12.3%	22.4%	65.4%	228 (35.91%)
	Other white-collar	13.0%	18.8%	68.2%	154 (24.25%)
	Manual workers	23.4%	28.6%	47.9%	192 (30.24%)
	Total N	100 (15.75%)	147 (23.15)	388 (61.10%)	635
		Cramer's V		0.133**	
	Pearson's chi ²		22.526**		
Germany	Self-employed	13.8%	12.8%	73.4%	94 (9.60%)
	Managers	6.8%	10.9%	82.3%	192 (35.90%)
	Other white-collar	5.9%	25.2%	68.9%	135 (24.25%)
	Manual workers	11.7%	34.0%	54.3%	256 (30.23%)
	Total N	64 (9.45%)	154 (22.75%)	459 (67.80%)	677
		Cramer's V		0.193**	
	Pearson's chi ²		50.276**		
Hungary	Self-employed	17.3%	25.0%	57.7%	52 (10.17%)
	Managers	9.9%	39.4%	50.7%	71 (13.89%)
	Other white-collar	8.4%	39.3%	52.3%	107 (20.93%)
	Manual workers	11.0%	49.5%	39.5%	281 (54.99%)
	Total N	56 (10.96%)	222 (43.44%)	233 (45.60%)	511
		Cramer's V		0.122*	
	Pearson's chi ²		15.169*		

Note: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01.

Source: Data elaborated by the authors from the European Election Study (2014).

the right in France and on the left in Finland; in the other countries, the gap between workers is more or less flat across the ideological camps.

Applying the findings in this section to our hypotheses, we can clearly confirm our first hypothesis (H1): the less privileged social strata (i.e. workers – especially and above all, manual workers) are usually less supportive of the EU than are better-off social groups (white-collar workers and, above all, managers and the self-employed). The trade union membership effect is usually irrelevant. Again, we found that there are no major differences between countries in terms of workers' generalised detachment from the EU project, though there may be some differences in extent. Workers, especially manual workers, are usually more detached from the EU than are other

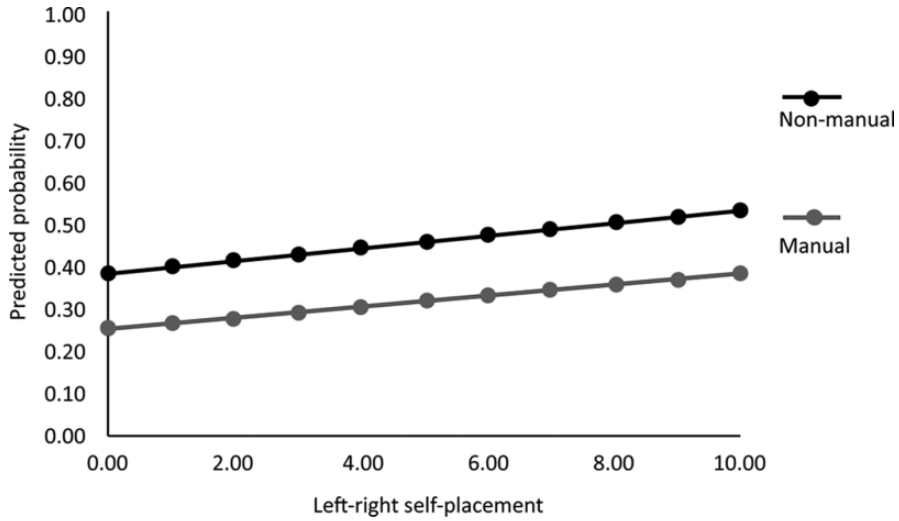


Figure 1. Greece – probability of workers’ support for the EU.
 Source: Data elaborated by the authors using EES (2014).

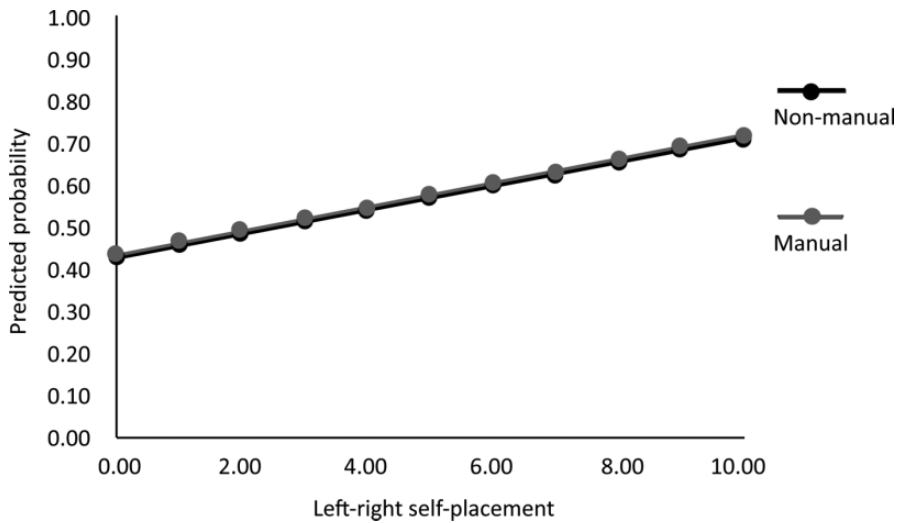


Figure 2. Spain – probability of workers’ support for the EU.
 Source: Data elaborated by the authors using EES (2014).

occupational groups. This pattern is found in all the countries studied, irrespective of the impact of the Great Recession: thus, we do not confirm our third hypothesis (H3).

Concluding remarks and policy recommendations

The analysis set out in this article has, in essence, clearly confirmed H1 (concerning workers’ diffuse support for the EU project), while finding limited confirmation of H2 (concerning workers’

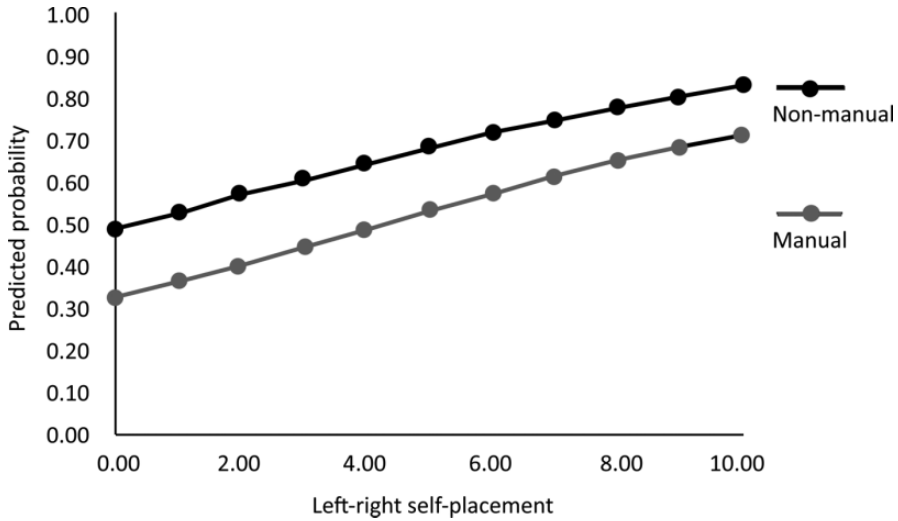


Figure 3. Finland – probability of workers' support for the EU.

Source: Data elaborated by the authors using EES (2014).

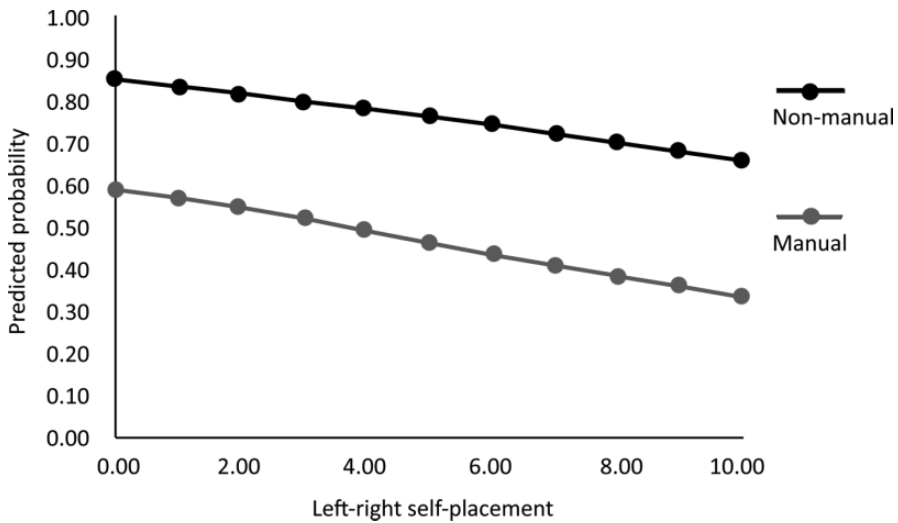


Figure 4. France – probability of workers' support for the EU.

Source: Data elaborated by the authors using EES (2014).

voting support for Eurosceptic parties). First, during the Great Recession and its aftermath, workers (both manual and white-collar, but especially the former) have remained more detached from the EU integration project than have other occupational groups (the self-employed and managers), confirming the findings of previous (though now outdated) studies (see Gabel, 1998; Hix, 2005). The lower class strata of the population, especially manual workers, remain more distant from the EU than do better-off groups, in terms of both H2 (they vote more for Eurosceptic parties, either from the radical left or from the radical right and the nationalist conservative right) and H1 (they

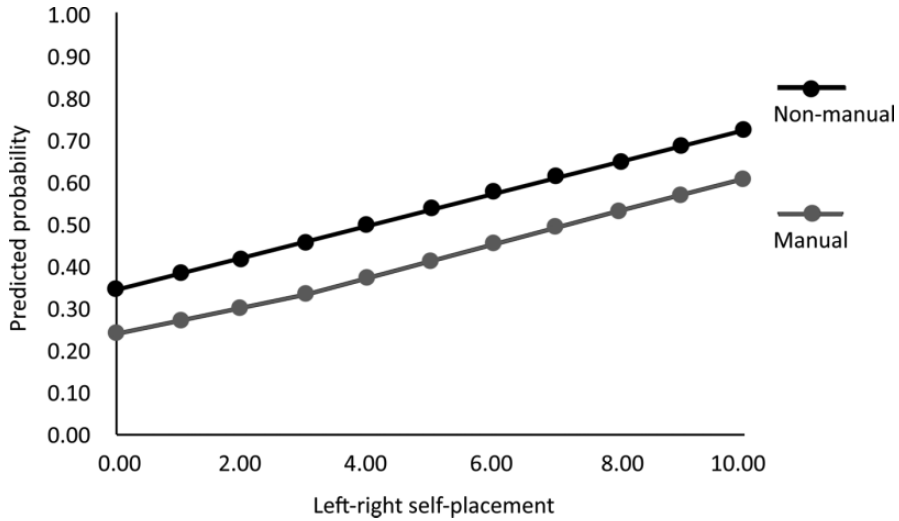


Figure 5. Portugal – probability of workers’ support for the EU.
 Source: Data elaborated by the authors using EES (2014).

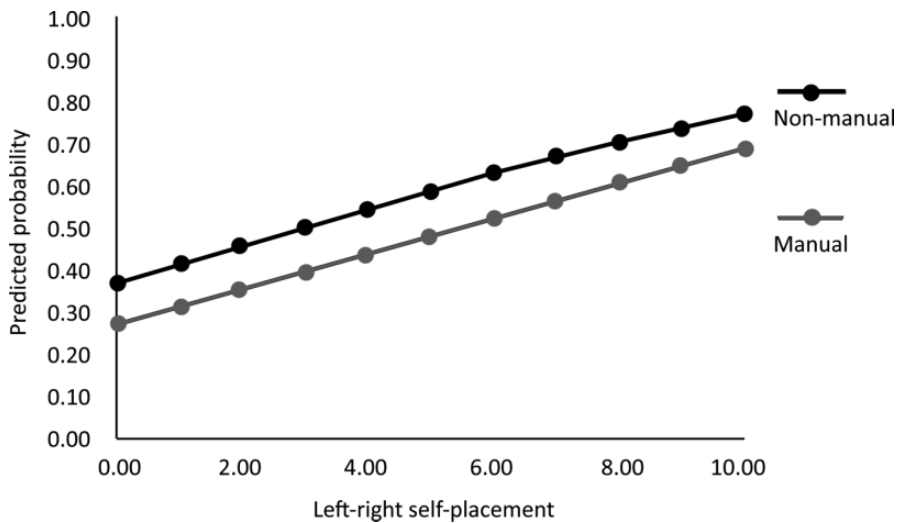


Figure 6. Sweden – probability of workers’ support for the EU.
 Source: Data elaborated by the authors using EES (2014).

demonstrate lower diffuse support for the EU project). Moreover, the reader should also be aware that in many countries (six out of eight in our study, the exceptions being Germany and Spain), the support of manual workers for the EU is so low that it means that only a minority of them support the EU project (i.e. less 50 per cent). However, these results are clearer for blue-collar than for white-collar workers. With the former, this situation pertains in all eight countries studied: manual workers’ support for the EU is always the smallest among the four occupational groups. With white-collar workers, majority support for the EU is the rule, except in Greece and France;

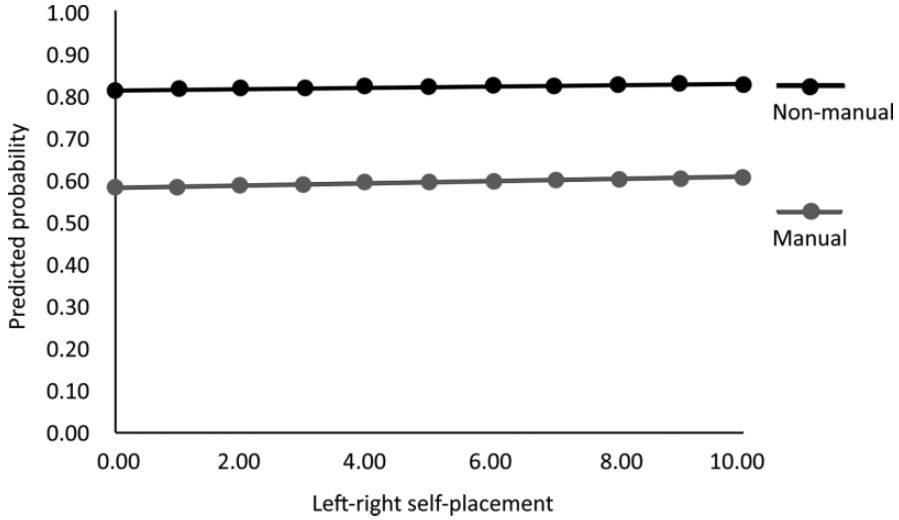


Figure 7. Germany – probability of workers' support for the EU.
Source: Data elaborated by the authors using EES (2014).

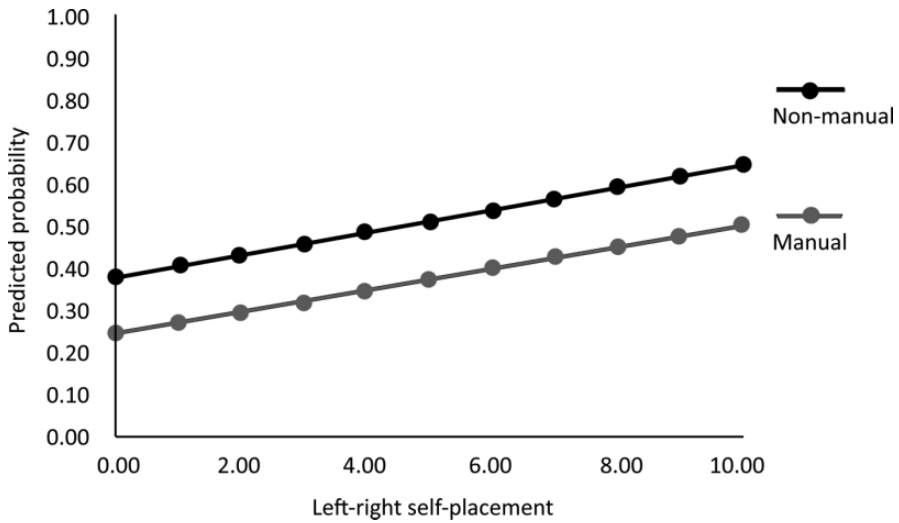


Figure 8. Hungary – probability of workers' support for the EU.
Source: Data elaborated by the authors using EES (2014).

additionally, in terms of the relative level of support for the EU white-collar workers usually show a middle-of-the road position between the manual workers (the lowest levels of support for the EU among the four occupational groups) and one or two of the other two occupational groups (in all the eight countries considered). Both the bivariate analysis (see the data in Tables 3 and 4) and, more importantly, the multivariate analysis (see Figures 1 to 8 and Table A4.1 in Supplementary material; Appendix 4) show abundant evidence supporting these interpretations.

Moreover, the pattern of manual workers' EU detachment is much clearer when it comes to diffuse support for the EU project (clearly confirming H1) than for voting choices (H2), where vote fragmentation in all occupational groups is the norm. Thus, we found only rather limited support for H2: in other words, the tendency of members of less privileged social strata to vote for Eurosceptic parties is visible in statistically significant relationships in only a small number of countries/situations, especially at the multivariate level. Again, both the bivariate analysis (see the data in Tables 1 and 2, for voting choices, and Tables 3 and 4, for diffuse support for the EU) and, above all, the multivariate analysis (see the data in Tables A3.1 to A3.3 in Supplementary material; Appendix 3, for voting choices, and Figures 1.1 to 1.8 and Table A4.1 in Supplementary material; Appendix 4, for diffuse support for the EU) show evidence substantiating these arguments.

As for H3, the results are basically negative – that is, we found no major differences between countries in terms of workers' generalised detachment from the EU, whether this was expressed through party voting or through diffuse support for the EU project. So, even if workers are more detached from the EU after the Great Recession than they were before – something we did not test systematically – the important point underlined by our study is that, if this is actually the case, it has happened across the board (as far as countries are concerned) and thus has not disturbed the picture of widespread manual workers' detachment from the EU, generalised across countries.

Since these patterns of manual workers' detachment from the EU are relatively independent of the crisis (because they were found not only in countries more severely affected by the crisis but also in less affected countries), there must be some structural component here, connected with fundamental interests, values and political visions of the EU. In addition, when measuring diffuse support for the EU project, as opposed to voting choices, we obtained highly consistent results: in all the countries studied, regardless of how severely affected by the crisis, manual workers were always less supportive of the EU than all the other occupational groups (though sometimes – in France, Finland and Germany – they were joined by non-manual workers). This too points to a structural, long-term attitude behind workers' detachment from the EU integration project, connected with their underlying value orientations and political visions. Of course, these patterns could also be due to the fact that manual workers were already in a bad position before the crisis and their situation has not changed much since the Great Recession, with their attitudes being based on their (material) interests, not just on their values, or even independently of their value orientations.

It is also worth mentioning two further points, especially with regard to formulating policy recommendations. First, in most of the countries we studied (the exceptions were Finland and Hungary), the majority of workers demonstrated left-left political alignment (i.e. social democrats and radical left/greens taken together) – although in France this was the case only for non-manual workers, and in Germany the opposite was true. Second, there are indications of stronger political cohesion on the part of trade union members (more of them were left-left aligned) when compared with non-members.

We finish with some policy recommendations. First, trade unions should invest in new political alliances (i.e. in left-left coalitions, which usually gather a majority of support from workers in the countries we studied) in order to fight for a Social Europe, a more democratic Europe and a Europe that gives a stronger institutional role to workers' representatives than does the status quo, which clearly favours corporations. (These are all issues identified in the literature and can be said to underlie, at least in part, the rift between workers and the EU: see Blyth, 2012; Burns et al., 2000; Schmitter, 2000, 2011; Crouch, 2004; Mair, 2013; Merkel, 2015; Escalona and Vieira, 2015; Rodríguez-Aguilera de Prat, 2016.) Second, these new left-left political alliances will be

fundamental to avoiding a situation in which nationalist conservatives and the far right/radical right monopolise the fight against European radical free-market economics (as in Hungary, Finland or France). This is a problem not least because, as shown in our literature review, Euroscepticism is a very different phenomenon on the (radical) left and on the (radical and nationalist conservative) right – in terms of its consequences for the EU project. On the (radical) right, where there are more ‘Europhobes’ and/or ‘hard Eurosceptics’, it usually implies convergence with neoliberal globalisation in economic terms and with pushing back the EU project in the cultural and political dimensions (respectively, opposing immigration and expressing nationalist tendencies in rejection of pooled sovereignty). On the (radical) left, where ‘Europhiles’, ‘EU-pessimists’ and/or ‘soft Eurosceptics’ are more often found, it usually implies opposition to neoliberal globalisation, meaning pushing back the EU project in economic terms but accepting integration in the cultural and political dimensions (tolerant attitudes towards immigration; usually not opposing the principle of pooled sovereignty but demanding profound, radical democratisation of the EU). Finally, trade union membership remains a relevant aspect of political cohesion for the working class (manual and non-manual), although only in voting choices. Thus, it is still worth pursuing investment in unionisation and backing more social and more democratic versions of the EU project, supported by new left-left coalitions at the party level.

Finally, we should underline three major limitations of this article, which future research should address. First, we have been able to consider only a limited number of countries, whether in western Europe or in Central and Eastern Europe (especially for the latter), which leaves more room for an individual country’s specificities to affect the results. Thus, a similar study covering more EU countries – preferably all of them – is recommended. Second, the left has been so weak in Central and Eastern Europe (the radical left ever since 1989 and the centre left, more recently) that our recommendations for left-left alliances are hardly feasible there (see Berglund et al., 2003) – at least for the time being. Because of this and other historical/political factors, a specific, separate study covering Central and Eastern Europe is certainly also to be recommended. Third, the fragmentation of the workers’ vote across the whole spectrum of left-wing parties could make our recommendation for a stronger leftist alliance unfeasible in some countries. In others, however, there are still strong left-left majorities among workers, so a left-left coalition strategy on the part of political parties and/or trade unions might provide the conditions not only to consolidate these politically, but also to increase them numerically.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their gratitude, first, to the directors of the ETUI (European Trade Union Institute) in Brussels, in particular Ulisses Garrido, for their kind invitation to present a draft version of this article at their annual conference ‘ETUI EDU DAYS 2015’ held in Berlin from 19 to 20 November 2015. Additionally, we would like to express our gratitude to the two anonymous reviewers, to the Guest Editors of the Open Issue 4-2017, to Marina Luttrell at the ETUI, Karen George at The Peer Group and Helena Engstrand at SAGE: they were a tremendous help in improving the quality of the final version of the paper through their comments, constructive criticism and careful reading. Any problems that may remain are naturally the authors’ sole responsibility.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

References

- Bartels L and Bermeo N (2014) *Mass Politics in Tough Times: Opinions, Votes, and Protest in the Great Recession*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Berglund S, Ekman J and Aarebrot F (eds) (2003) *The Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Blyth M (2012) *Austerity: The History of a Dangerous Idea*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burns TR, Jaeger C, Kamali M et al. (2000) The future of parliamentary democracy: transition and challenge in European governance. Green Paper prepared for the Conference of the Speakers of EU Parliaments. September 2000, Rome, Italy, pp. 22–24.
- Charalambous G (2011) All the shades of red: examining the radical left's Euroscepticism. *Contemporary Politics* 17(3): 299–320.
- Crouch C (2004) *Post-Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Escalona F and Vieira M (2015) Social democracy caught in the European trap. In: Baier W, Canepa E and Himmelstoss E (eds) *United Europe, Divided Europe: transform! 2015*. London: Merlin Press, pp. 170–182.
- European Election Study (2014) Available at: <http://eeshomepage.net/ees-2014-study/> (accessed 3 April 2017).
- Evans G and De Graaf ND (eds) (2013) *Political Choice Matters: Explaining the Strength of Class and Religious Cleavages in Cross-National Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Flanagan S and Lee A-R (2003) The new politics, culture wars, and the authoritarian-libertarian value change in advanced industrial democracies. *Comparative Political Studies* 36(3): 235–270.
- Franklin MN, Mackie TT, Valen H et al. (1992) *Electoral Change: Responses to Evolving Social and Attitudinal Structures in Western Countries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Freire A, Teperoglou E and Moury C (2014) Awakening the sleeping giant in Greece and Portugal? Elites' and voters' attitudes towards EU integration in difficult economic times. *South European Society and Politics* 19(4): 477–499.
- Freire A, Lisi M, Andreadis I et al. (eds) (2016) *Political Representation in Times of Bailout: Evidence from Greece and Portugal*. London: Routledge.
- Gabel M (1998) Public support for European integration: an empirical test of five theories. *The Journal of Politics* 60(2): 333–354.
- Hix S (2005) Public Opinion. In: Hix S (2005) *The Political System of the European Union*. 2nd ed. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.147–174.
- Inglehart R (1977) *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kitschelt H (1994) *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Knutson O (2004) *Social Structure and Party Choice in Western Europe: A Comparative Longitudinal Study*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kopecký P and Mudde C (2002) The two sides of Euroscepticism: party positions on European integration in East Central Europe. *European Union Politics* 3(3): 297–326.
- Kriesi H, Grande E, Lachat R et al. (2008) *West European Politics in the Age of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Leconte C (2010) *Understanding Euroscepticism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lewis-Beck MS (1988) *Economics and Elections: The Major Western Democracies*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Lipset SM and Rokkan S (1967) *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-national Perspectives*. Toronto: The Free Press.

- Mair P (2013) *Ruling the Void: The Hollowing of Western Democracy*. London: Verso.
- Merkel W (2015) Is capitalism compatible with democracy? *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft – Comparative Governance and Politics* 8(2): 109–128.
- Mudde C (2007) *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rodríguez-Aguilera de Prat C (2016) *The European Democratic Deficit: The Response of the Parties in the 2014 Elections*. Brussels: Peter Lang.
- Schmitt H and Teperoglou E (2015) The 2014 European Parliament elections in Southern Europe: second-order or critical elections? *South European Society and Politics* 20(3): 287–309.
- Schmitter P (2000) *How to Democratize the European Union . . . and Why Bother?* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Schmitter P (2011) Diagnosing and designing democracy in Europe. In: Alonso S, Keane J and Merkel W (eds) *The Future of Representative Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 191–211.
- Taggart P and Szczerbiak A (2002) The Party Politics of Euroscepticism in EU Member and Candidate States. Sussex European Institute Working Paper No. 51, Opposing Europe Research Network Working Paper No. 6.