Populist Response to the Social Crisis in Denmark – How Iliberal-Authoritarian Populism Can Influence Newcomers?

Cătălin-Gabriel Done
University of Naples" Federico II", PhD. Candidate,
email: catalin.done.15@politice.ro
catalin-gabriel.done@unina.it

Abstract

The multiple crises facing liberal democracies have given rise to political manifestations designed to annihilate any form of freedom and individuality by exposing the general public to populist danger. The EU refugee crisis of 2016 revealed a dramatic shift in social and political attitudes across the Scandinavian political spectrum, with ideological force catalyzing distinct social action and a change in the dynamics of the social composite. Based on the political and social study of populism and the effects that this ideology and philosophy have on Danish society, our study aims to reveal how the social anxiety of newcomers manifests itself interpersonally and interculturally. At the same time, we will try to determine the argumentative profile of the populist manifestation at the social and political level in order to observe the dynamics of the behavioural influence of the resident population of foreign origin and how populism and illiberalism attract these individuals. Such research is necessary in light of Denmark's political and social situation, especially after populist and Eurosceptic movements have consolidated their presence in national and regional political life. Our paper examines how the concepts of inequality and social exclusion have developed in the Danish political context and

has a thesis on the interconnection between this development and populism and anti-establishment support in the black and Muslim communities. It is extremely important to investigate how populism influences social behaviour to anticipate possible countermeasures to anti-democratic and anti-liberal movements in the context of the perpetual development of the populist era.

Keywords: liberal Democracy, Denmark, populist attitudes, inequality, social exclusion, ideology

Introduction

The nature of the current crisis of European political logic is due, in part, to the social, cultural, economic, geopolitical and geostrategic crises that Europe has gone through over the last 10-15 years. As Andrei Vieru (2021, p.38) rightly pointed out, „...the peoples of the Old Continent have defined themselves, all of them and always, not starting from a common idea about their collective future, but based on a common memory, which has become their very history.". This is how it is that today we are witnessing the resettlement of contemporary society's social and political foundations, the ideological benchmark being established in the glorious light of the past.

In recent years, the Scandinavian region of the European continent has been subjected to some tendencies to change the liberal, multicultural and pluralistic socio-political climate, the destabilization of societies in this part of Europe being visible even today. The long-term effects of the economic crisis of 2008, the excessive migratory flow to Western and Northern Europe due to the refugee crisis, the lack of inclusion and the lack of trust in the political and social elites are the main causes of the rise of the populist political phenomenon and the support of anti-system movements. Also, the accentuation of identity discrepancies at the social level determined major changes in individuals' personal identity, which made the social groups in the host countries possess an extremely volatile common social identification. In

recent years, there has been an acute need for morality in the political sphere of contemporary society precisely to curb heated debates regarding a so-called need for protectionism against the potential dangers of irregular migration, against the current state of economic insecurity, or multiculturalism. This kind of situation generated a paradigm shift in policy agenda setting – immediate measures replaced long-term reforms without any impact analysis on societies as a whole.

Danish society was not without these changes in collective attitude – large groups of citizens have expressed their legitimate concerns about the general insecurity and the major dangers that any sudden or radical change can generate for the future. Some of these concerns were related to the threat of multiculturalism to their own culture and safety; in the absence of sustainable policies for the social integration of newcomers, as well as due to the accelerated growth of social inequality, contemporary society has atomized and gravitates around ultra-radical ideas that endanger the very existence of liberal Democracy. Of course, hyper-globalization itself has contributed significantly to increased social tensions (as in other parts of the World); the idea that the pool of losers can be so large (Stiglitz, 2018) is widely used by individual political leaders to exploit the uncertainty of the future among the population and provide them with a political capital benefit. Moreover, the phenomena of crisis and government failure determined the granting of discretionary power to specific political forces or radical ideas, which led to a deepening of social tensions.

Today, Denmark faces several social and political challenges: low social cohesion regarding identity and self-determination, a highly volatile political class, growing discrimination, nationalism and protectionism promoted by specific social, political and religious forces. Even though these things have been visible for several years, there has been an awareness at the level of public opinion, which causes an even more significant deepening of the division of society. Political parties and social and cultural movements increasingly adopted populist messages to maximize their gains, but those of conservative origins remained the most vocal.

As several studies have revealed, the Left-Right distinction and group hostility become necessary for theorizing the political and social rigidity of the majority

(Crawford and Pilanski, 2014, Matthews, Levin and Sidanus, 2009, Smith and Semin, 2007, Wilson and Sibley, 2013). Thus, this framework posits that at the social level, a cognitive ideological asymmetry exists that favours the preference for preserving the pre-existing order or an open and much more inclusive society. In a study published in Political Psychology, Linder and Nosek (2009) suggest that the illiberal tendency and a much higher intolerance can be found in the conservative political spectrum than in the liberal one. The theoretical exercise carried out in this article reveals that this is not necessarily generally valid. For this aspect, according to Morgan, Mullen and Skitka (2010), both liberals and conservatives manage to negatively influence social categories and groups whose values are incompatible with their own. The same thing happens in the case of the Left, and mainstream parties (Akkerman, 2015, McClosky and Chong, 1985), the political radicalization of the social spectrum leading in the direction of Populism. Just as Georg Lukács understood „that freedom from the reactionary prejudices of authoritarian populism required theoretical understanding that penetrates beneath empirical facts and phenomena, discerning the underlying dialectical systems generating the observable economic, social, cultural and ecological/ data" (Reitz, 2018, p.108), this study will reveal extremism effects in people's ideological responses to Populism, inequality and exclusion into the Danish society for the new-comers.

This research assumed that the asymmetric relationship between ideology and social status leads to intolerance and political radicalism, with the personal ideological spectrum of individuals undergoing significant changes under certain conditions. In this way, to present a comprehensive picture of ideological, cultural and social intolerance and underline the response to the social crisis, we proposed an ideological-cultural-conflict hypothesis starting from the idea that political and cultural radicalization occurs under the auspices of mass socio-Populism.

Research design, methods and case selection

As the foundation of our PhD thesis, the auspices of the research belong to the University of Naples „Federico II". Beginning in 2020 (a particularly difficult

year in terms of the global socioeconomic situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic), our research set out to find direct and distinct correlations between Muslim and Black social groups and the exponential explosion of support for Populism in Denmark. Thus, we empirically examine the relationship between socioeconomic, cultural and political integration and whether the link between those factors is related to Populism and political radicalization.

Considering the fact that we are in the process of collecting aggregated data and interpreting them, the results presented in this study are preliminary and may undergo changes during the collection of new data.

Our approach is phenomenological, based on conducting exploratory interviews with people belonging to the two social groups (Muslims and Black people). The questions in the interview express the structuring of the concepts of Populism, social integration, economic integration, cultural identity, and acculturation.

To carry out the survey, a nationally representative sample was established (N = 645); at the time of the presentation of the study, the available data came from the collection of results from 311 respondents (N_1 = 311).

Of these, 127 (G_1) are exclusively black (65 women, 62 men), and 184 are Muslims – regardless of race (G_2) – (57 women, 127 men). The minimum age for applying for the survey is 17 years, and the combined average age between the two categories of respondents is M_{age1} = 41.99 years.

Data collection was carried out voluntarily, based on a questionnaire applied online and in the field.

The research included a series of questions that addressed the issue of social integration so that, based on the weighted answers, it was possible to scale the socioeconomic and cultural integration of the groups in Denmark.

The key questions in the first part of the questionnaire were:

a) Are you employed continuously or at least part-time?

b) Do you work for a company with a majority (or entire) Danish or foreign capital?

c) Do you prefer to speak Danish or your mother tongue in public? But at home?

d) Do you live in the city/ village centre or on its outskirts?

e) Do you find native Danes worthy of your trust?

f) Have you benefited from any form of social protection or social integration since you arrived in Denmark (including language and culture courses)?

g) Do you consider yourself close to the Danish sociopolitical culture?

The results of the first part of the research gave us an overview of how newcomers benefit from sociocultural integration. Thus, we can draw the preliminary conclusion that the economic and cultural integration of Muslims and black people is difficult in Denmark due to the illiberal character of Danish society.

In sum, considering the above, how the host society ends up integrating the newcomers determines their social and political behaviour. Whether and how newcomers successfully integrate into Denmark is a complicated question involving multi-level research (economic, political, psychological, anthropological, statistical), and the debates on this topic would be endless. But in an attempt to explain the recent rise of militant Populist and anti-establishment movements, we can suggest that the failure of integrationist policies and forced and radical acculturation are to blame for this. In addition, poor sociocultural integration, low economic performance and discrimination are good bases for the polarization and radicalization of newcomers, regardless of their background.

The need to understand social inequality as a global issue

Modernity and the arrhythmic course of globalization processes have radically transformed the societies in which we live. The market became the central element of this change, Man being placed in front of remarkable freedom and coordination, the individual is allowed to do what he/she wants, how he/she wants, how much he/she wants, and to spend the resources he/she

wants. The full general result of this kind of economic freedom is far from egalitarian. Evidently, the market is a wasteland where social injustices turn into economic ones, and freedom loses its universal attribute. As Charles W. Pipkin (1925) pointed out, „the capacity for using and enjoying the freedom which political communities have made possible has joined the life of the citizen with that of the State, giving him an opportunity of fulfilling at its best his own life at the same time that a common destiny is being worked out for all."

From a critical perspective, the analysis and debate on social rights often fail due to decision-makers' inability to understand that these rights are not only the expression of civic defence against the government. Socioeconomic rights and social justice are vehicles of individual power without which social norms could not be institutionalised. Power relations and the state of Democracy largely depend on the degree of use of these mechanisms, thus implicitly on social equity and equality.

Social inclusion and equity are the foundation of Democracy, and „Democracy is the foundation of all free and just governments. It includes every civic principle which is the basis of liberty, equality of opportunity, and human happiness. It involves so many phases of human welfare that all cannot be included in this discussion. And since this meeting is considering as its special subject, legislation relative to public utilities, especially the railroads, chief attention must be given to this branch of economic democracy." (Todd, 1920) There is no question that social equity and welfare raise a variety of human rights and individual goods, ranging from freedom, privacy, and political and ethical redistribution. However, all of the above are not the only normative framework for approaching the principle that guides social governance and inclusion. The political and public debates on these problems could rely on public interest, social justice or transnational justice. In a study published in 2014, Chandra L. Sriram stated that the last two issues become a critical element of liberal peacebuilding, social and political integration, and reconciliation (Sriram, 2014).

Reconciliation and inclusion shape society and public space. The greater the degree of equity and inclusion, the more the public space acquires crucial

importance in the stabilization and solidity of the social life of individuals. In a broader sense, it is widely believed that by reducing inequality and deepening social inclusion, one can build identities, develop memories and assign personal or group values. In contrast, even if social policies aim to reduce social inequality, the latter persists and remains a reality today. Quoting Bourdieu, the study by Miller et al. (2016, p.129) reveals the importance of the correct management of capital to solve the problem of inequality: „economic capital generally refers to access to money. Social capital describes the social relationships and institutionalised networks of which an individual is a part. Cultural capital includes knowledge or skills gained through education, cultural goods and qualifications. Each of these types of capital is influenced by the others, and Bourdieu's main concern is how they are used by elite groups to reproduce privilege." Indeed, social and human capital is a fundamental resource of well-being, especially for countries that have consolidated their welfare state in recent decades. At the same time, there are inherent social tensions whenever newcomers are financially dependent on the state or its agencies for employment or the existence of their service, and there have always been reasons to doubt whether the state's commitment to reducing inequality and inequity should be applied uniformly or whether it should be conditioned in one form or another. The rhetoric of social radicalism has also left its mark on the policies of migration and social inclusion of newcomers – whether we are talking about the followers of the policies of social radicalism or those of radical liberalism – the importance and volume of individual incomes are of particular importance out of at least three reasons: i) represents an overview of the characteristics of the labour market and inclusive factors; ii) determines the establishment of the individual capacity to generate income and self-satisfaction, considering that financial-social capacities lead to well-being; iii) the political role of social inequality determines radicalization (in our study case, the support of populist policies at the governmental level and of protest movements against the ruling elites). Not surprisingly, given that some scholars have shown that social inequality is very low in preindustrial societies (Milanovic, 2016) and high in modern industrialized ones (Piketty and Rendall, 2022).

Modern industrialized society continues to be the focus of attraction for exogenous labour, which is why over time, the World's rich nations have been the net beneficiaries of massive migration flows. Thus appeared the phenomenon of income inequality based on ethnicity, generating a huge gap between migrants and natives (Borjas, 1985, Nilsson and Wrench, 2009, Kofman, Roosblad and Keuzenkamp, 2009, Tesser and Dronkers, 2007). This is how it happens that most of the time, the first and even the second generation of migrants end up suffering due to economic segregation and inequity in the labour market, with considerable income differences.

Although the level of inequality in highly industrialized states with a tight labour market was stable or declining in the first decades of the postwar period, this trend reversed at some point around 1980. This pattern is similar for income and consumption inequality both at the individual level of the newcomers, but also of an important part of the natives, social vulnerability expanding.

Global social inequality is extremely important in the context of today's hyper-globalization, and global inequality and inequity systematically influence the social identity of each individual and each group; the attributes that define the person and the group result from cognitive phenomena and cognition determined by the fluctuations of global inequality. Furthermore, global cultural phenomena and the global instability of maximum incomes cause obstacles to achieving peaceful coexistence at the global level. Much more precisely, racism, gender inequality, cultural dominance (as a form of post-colonialism), human disparity and inter-regional economic dependence have made it difficult to achieve the desired freedom and emancipation of human capital. As Nancy Birdsall (2004, p.299) well observed, „Inequality across individuals or households or, for that matter, across occupational, regional, ethnic, or other categories of people matters not only in and of itself but also for its impact on other outcomes." Indeed, when communities subject to social and cultural inequality leave their community of origin and try to integrate into new host communities, they will resist acculturation. In this context, we must understand that differences in origin, race, religion, and economic factors

influence the existence of social inequality in the countries where newcomers establish their livelihood. Decidedly, for example, newcomers to Denmark came to shape and adjust their social processes through intense negotiations against the discriminatory system regarding community integration or access to the labour market.

In social and economic studies, the traditionalist principle that human capital is used and rewarded according to its physiological characteristics has been preserved (Mincer, 1974). For this reason, we are witnessing positive discrimination in the labour market and in terms of economic insertion – the experience and individual properties of human capital influence the productive capacity, so the free market will advantage a well-qualified or highly educated employee. Surely, in most developed countries, differences in literacy and personal skills levels are extremely prominent between ethnic groups (Heath and Brinbaum, 2007) (Lutz, 2007), which would explain, in an extremely thoughtful way, why migrants end up being paid less than natives (given the differences cultural, language, integration and relationship or even productivity).

However, this individualist and radical-liberal perspective ignores the structural factors of inequality. Notably, to distinguish between domestic and foreign sources of human capital, any research that focuses on economic and social inequities in a society must relate directly to assimilation theory to understand how the economic and social gap between newcomers and natives affects social cohesion, thus including the politics of that state. We will apply the same strategy in this study, starting from the premise that migrants, as they adapt to the host society's political, social and cultural values, become increasingly attracted to it. In addition, socioeconomic integration transforms newcomers into elements less and less subject to discrimination, acculturation taking place under the profound auspices of social and economic status. Additionally, it is assumed that the perspective of assimilation determines a greater involvement of newcomers in politics or civic activities, and any form of discrimination or inequity turns them into supporters of anti-establishment, populist or even extremist movements.

Social problems, Danish context

In one of her cultural studies, Ellen Kythor (2020, p.214) emphasized a very current reality of perception – „the tendency of the Nordic welfare model to narrow the gap between rich and poor citizens in Scandinavian nations is still regularly remarked upon positively in foreign media. The positive xenostereotypes[1] focus on Scandinavia's societal equality, good work/life balance, strong support of family life and protection of the rights of women. These xenostereotypes are often presented in aspirational, exotic, utopian terms." Karin Borevi (2010) contributes greatly to understanding the social depths of Scandinavia by proposing improved analytical models that allow us to compare the integrative practices of newcomers in Sweden, Denmark, Norway (and the Netherlands). Borevi makes a finding that is extremely useful to our analysis – Denmark, like Norway (and the Netherlands), has imposed strict policies regarding integrating newcomers. Thus, she considers Denmark part of the category of states that rely extremely much on common national identity (p.23). Thus, Danish society is one with illiberal tendencies, according to Borevi's study, because the social basis is the ethnic unity of the citizens (the Danish ethnos). In support of this thesis, Kristian Jensen Kriegbaum's study (2014) has brought to the forefront of the academic branch how Danish and Norwegian politics choose to place newcomers in social and economic debates or policies. He reveals how two Scandinavian states (Norway and Denmark) with almost identical welfare systems have developed completely opposite policies on migration and immigrants. Jensen's findings reveal that Danish society is extremely resistant to change and self-examination, which explains why Denmark requires immigrants to demonstrate that they can adapt and adopt the cultural fabric of Danish society. Indeed, such radical acculturation creates internal friction between groups of newcomers and a degree of structural discrimination as a form of the Danish illiberal residue.

However, this situation is not a new one. Traditional, „since the First World War, Denmark had pursued a rather restrictive immigration policy, but the

---

[1] According to the author, "xenostereotypes are the images those outside Scandinavia have of its people, culture and places." (p.211)

years 1969-1971 marked an exception. In Denmark as well as other European countries with full employment, migrant workers were recruited as 'guest workers', and Denmark had a net immigration of approximately 20,000 foreigners from non-EC and non-Nordic countries." (Ersbøll, 2006, p.123)

Net Migration Rate 1960-2023[2]
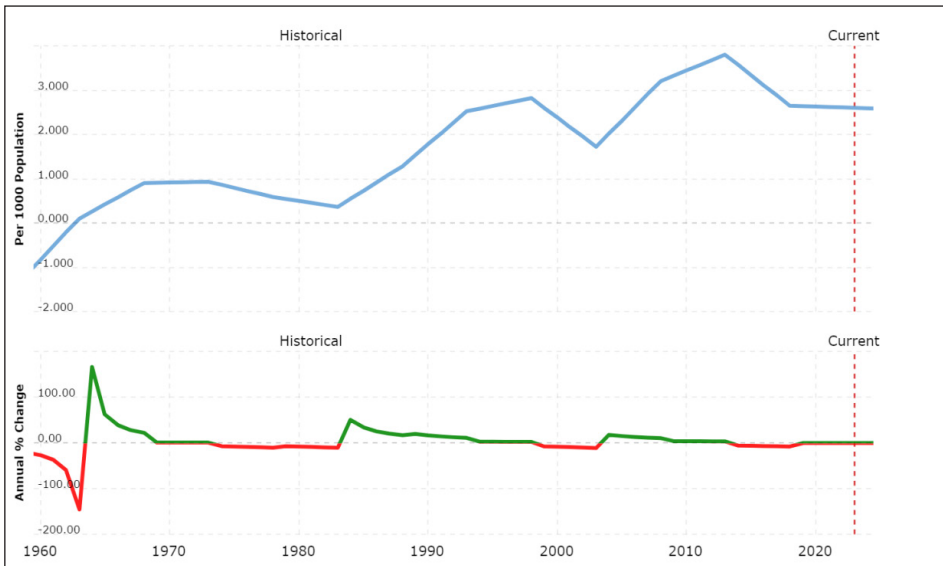
In the case of net migration, the exponential increase in the migratory flow is mainly due to social protection policies' role in defining the Danish state. As Duru, Serjesen and Trenz (2018) well observed, solidarity and redistributive schemes are important pillars of Danish society to ensure solid and sustainable social cohesion. In addition, „one could also argue that the Danish Welfare State and the high level of taxes can only be sustained by a correspondingly high level of trust between the population and its public institutions", as the authors said (Duru, Sejersen and Trenz, 2018, p.40).

For decades, the political and social atmosphere has experienced progressive stages in migration and naturalization crises. During this period, there was

[2] Based on data generated by Macrotrends (https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/DNK/denmark/net-migration)

consistently a higher number of immigrants entering the country, even though the country applied stricter immigration rules.

Thus, the social problems of the newcomers began to appear, especially since the social protection offered by the Danish state was and continues to be conditioned by a „stripping" of one's own identity, as well as by a form of forced insertion into the labour market. Well-qualified and integrated foreign human capital began to be preferred over the less responsive to Denmark's cultural and social stimulation policies. Indices of high inequality between categories of newcomers have generated frustration and political and social radicalization, even though statistically, Denmark ranks high in the extremely low level of the Gini index - assuming that all individuals from marginal and socially excluded groups receive the same income. Moreover, it is often assumed that the relationship between the level of taxation and that of redistribution is a positive one that allows equal access to each socially inserted person's resources and social infrastructure.

Breen and Andersen's observations (2012, p.871) are correct – „income inequality is low in Denmark because of high taxes and the redistributive policies of the Danish welfare state that secure a minimum standard of living for all citizens by transferring money from high- to low-income groups." Nevertheless, what happens to non-citizens who are permanent residents receiving forms of social protection or active in the labour market? Well, we can approach this question through two types of analytical focus:

The first is the relative-deprivation, which involves a combination of economic and psychological elements. Thus, social inequity and inequality are present in society through the open-comparison of the individual with others, which causes a deep marginalization of those with lower incomes and common skills. As many scholars argued, The individual (but also groups) end up in the inferior position of social equity, benefits of redistribution and happiness due to the lack of power, self-determination and the inability of self-inclusion (Marmot *et al.*, 1991, Richard, 2002, Oswald, 1997);

The second analytical focus concerns the sense of social cohesion and residential segregation of human capital. According to Wilkinson and Pickett

(2009), Alejandro Portes (1998) and Martikainen, Kauppinen and Valkonen (2003), social inequality is a phenomenon that affects every individual, regardless of the degree of accumulated income, degenerating society and the environment, and the urban aspect and segregation (or self-segregation) influence social behaviour.

Significantly, we can thus note a growing social, cultural and economic tension in Danish society between the natives and the newcomers, largely due to the exaggeration of acculturation and the rejection of multiculturalism. This is closely related to the fact that redistributive policies based on the theory of cultural plurality undermining social cohesion and harmony persist in Denmark. Either way, this leads to racial and cultural discrimination, as well as exclusion, compromising the idea of freedom and unfettered access to the socioeconomic infrastructure of the state.

At the moment, some serious social problems faced by newcomers do not have an adequate counterpart in the existing legal and institutional structures in Denmark: young migrants not integrated into the labour market and out-of-state care, families who lose their housing independently of their own will, being forced to move either to social centres or within the Danish territory, partially or totally dependent elderly persons; for other problems, the response reaction is insufficient: a series of newly emerging problems such as human trafficking, drug use, family violence, undeclared work – all of these require the development of current institutional capacities and existing mechanisms, as well as the management policies that generate multicultural inclusion. To all this, we can add the inconsistency of social policies and support for multiculturalism, which is characterized by a gap between the component of financial support, with a high degree of effectiveness, and the component of social services – creating gaps between social problems criticisms of newcomers (large social areas were not covered or were insufficiently covered, institutional rigidity towards cultural ethics, reduced residential and community services for newcomers).

Therein lies the problem – newcomers, especially black people and Muslims, do not benefit from welfare policies that ensure optimal cohesion, or if they do, they do not enjoy their effects fully. In practice, redistributive Danish

welfare policies do not amount to a substantial and fair social system for all residents. This failure can still be seen today on the streets of Denmark's big cities, where the need for a policy of equal access to social infrastructure is more than necessary for migrants. Analyzing the problems newcomers face, we found that the differences between a Danish citizen and a newcomer in access to social, economic and cultural services actually prevent equal opportunities. This finding is only a snapshot of our research undertaken in Danish society; policies that claim to fulfil social and inclusion imperatives in the labour market actually perpetuate social gaps, discrimination and exclusion.

Additionally, by linking the results of our research to the national ideological component of Denmark, we can see that the studied population is disconnected from the national welfare system and only economic and cultural factors, thus aggravating the lack of coherence in terms of the functionality of the system as a whole. For example, while the Danes believe that their economic and social system works under the fundamental principles and values of national well-being, the reality shows that the responsibility of the Danish state towards newcomers is minimal. So, cultural tensions diminish the importance of solidarity and social cohesion. Despite intensive efforts to support individual well-being, countries such as Denmark, with a high presence of migrants/refugees from a non-European culture, appear to be more restrictive in allowing equal access to all national welfare benefits.

We should keep in mind that „in Europe small countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands had developed a skeptical view of immigration some time back", as Bevelander and Taras (2013, p.4) pointed out. So, new arrivals in Denmark continuously struggle to obtain a job with a wage level equal to that of native Danes, to enjoy the recognition of cultural autonomy and to reduce marginalization and social exclusion.

Why Popuslim?

In the last period of time, populist parties and anti-establishment movements have gained major importance on the European political scene. One of the most plausible explanations for this phenomenon is the role of social insecurity

and the economic marginalization of vulnerable groups. In addition, the cultural factor and psycho-emotional instability determine the accentuation of individual and group support for populist ideology and philosophy.

At the level of European societies, the transformation of the population structure and the degree of fragmentation of ideal types allowed the emergence of a protest directed against political elites and social and economic pluralism. We can understand this as reactionary, xenophobic and discriminatory manifestations, and through a struggle for social re-emancipation of disadvantaged groups and subject to the devastating effects of inequality or lack of political autonomy.

The need to understand the manifestation of social Populisms is a pressing one, especially since they threaten the political identity of Europe – Democracy. As many scholars have pointed out, modern societies have become illiberal because of socioeconomic and cultural factors, with more and more individuals being in the losers' camp of globalization (Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022, Halikiopoulou and Vlandas, 2020, Kurer, 2020).

So, analyzing the continuous process of social interaction, the macro and micro economic factors, as well as the cultural identity of the individual (or the group), we can consider Populism as a form of atypical social manifestation, which places the individual in time and space, so that the participants cooperative and deliberative socio-political actions are in a conflictual relationship with each other. The essential aspects of this matter are that:

> a) Populism is seen as a social process, not as an individual quality of a person, an institution or a philosophical approach;

> b) Populism as a manifestation is an idyllic space and a perpetual individual connection to the collective.

Populism remains an ideology and a philosophy that always appeals to the revival of the *People*, as Touraine (1997) rightly pointed out. That is precisely why the People acquire different meanings in the conditions in which civil actors are incorporated into politics and become relevant for electoral gains or in the struggle for empowerment.

In the last decades, scholars such as Katsambekis (2016), Freeden (1998), Fallend (Fallend, 2004) or Zaslove (2008) focused their attention on the empirical study of populist phenomena, highlighting the multitude of manifestations of Populist ideology and philosophy, but also the extremely large number of populist parties, movements and groups. Due to the anti-liberal pathogens, Mudde (2004, p.543) has interpreted Populism as „an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, *the pure people* vs. *the corrupt elite*, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale". Similarly, Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011), Pauwels (2014) or Laclau (1977) think that Populism does not call for doctrinal purity, but for exploring and exploiting the disadvantaged masses, claiming that it is the only manifestation of representing their legitimate interests.

Furthermore, the political roots of populism are deeply embedded in anti-political feelings such as political distrust, discontent, resentment and the negative attitudes that the masses develop against representative democracies, the establishment, and the social and cultural elite (March, 2011, McDonnell, 2016, Mete, 2022, De Luca and Ciaglia, 2017).

Taking into account these scholarly reflections, carrying out an exhaustive analysis of Populism in Denmark and the integration capacity of newcomers, we find that there is a protest component that can stimulate the success of this philosophy among marginal groups; thus, there is a link mainly between the performance of the government and the socioeconomic system, as measured by satisfaction with welfare and multiculturalism, and the (perceived) outcomes of the essentially democratic regime.

As Lucian Boia remarked, „Democracy is not at all capable of solving, or at least mitigating, the immense social discrepancies" (2019, p.88), which is why Populism remains the only form of social manifestation that can legitimize the struggle of economic and cultural desegregation. Thus, due to the decline of parties and established political doctrines, political battles have diversified and are no longer fought on the traditional battlefield – Left-Right (Benedetto, Hix and Mastrorocco, 2020, Häusermann, *et al.*, 2021,

Loxbo *et al.*, 2021). The fragmentation of the class structure and the centre-periphery division have imposed new realities, the interesting being how the economic and cultural pillars gain importance in the conjugation of the social force of the political parties. Paradoxically, at this moment, the traditional nation-religion conflict, although existing, fades into the background when individuals want the relative reorganization of society based on the economic structure. Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2019, p.113) reveals something extremely important for understanding populist behaviour and the inclination towards Populism: „many accounts and explanations of populism are of a regional nature and are often extrapolated to other countries or globally, as if similar explanations apply. Another problem is that because as a theme Populism is concerned with form and style it distracts attention from substance, such as political agendas and infrastructures of power.“

However, are there degrees of populism in a group of newcomers? In general, there is a broad consensus in the literature that the social bases of Populism are found among voters who are more dissatisfied, with lower levels of political trust, lower levels of education, more ideologically extreme, with weak social ties and sceptical about deep acculturation. Thus, the political rhetoric, ideology, type of organization and communication style of Populism are key elements in understanding how a person/group chooses to adopt a populist response to illiberal social policies.

The centre-periphery conflict, i.e. the marginal group vs the main group, becomes a systemic presence within the structure of the populist imaginary. In this sense, promoting individual human rights, the rule of law, social and political justice, and human values is a constant of the very philosophical idea of Populism as a self-adaptive system.

Altogether, we suggest that Denmark constitutes a best case for significant overlaps between a „left and right conservative“ democratic party and a mainstreamed, pro-welfare, populist movement because the social-political structure of the population, as well as the illiberal meaning of the idea of *the nation*, occurs the first places on the public agenda and political debates.

Measures, results and discussion

As an exploratory research effort, our study is guided by data collected from the field, with observational participation representing an „exogenous shock" that made us focus on the real problems of newcomers.

Interpretation of the aggregated data revealed no major differences between the study groups in terms of employment and labour force; over 2/3 (72.15%) of the respondents declared that they are employed full-time, and 24.77% have at least a part-time job. 3.08% of the respondents were not integrated into the labour market. However, 53.29% stated that it was very difficult for them to find a job.

An extremely important aspect was the difference between the two groups when we analyzed the character of the workplace. Black Christians from G_1 found a job more easily than Muslims from G_1 (the percentage is 57.47% vs 41.1%), while 1.43% of the group's respondents did not have a job. This favourable trend is also preserved regarding the share of full-time vs part-time jobs.

Regarding G2, the results show that more than 70% of the respondents faced problems finding a job, with 43.02% working full-time, while 1.65% did not. Combined, the analyzed data revealed that 37.9% of respondents work for an enterprise with a majority (or wholly) Danish capital. 0.31% of the respondents could not provide company capital structure data.

Regarding the ability to communicate, out of the total number of respondents, 88.91% know the Danish language at an intermediate level. In both G_1 and G_2, more than 72% of respondents stated that they communicate exclusively in Danish in public spaces, with differences appearing in communication at home and in their families. In the G_1 group, 56.11% of Black Christians stated that they communicate in Danish homes, while 89.95% of Black Muslims stated that they communicate exclusively in their mother tongue. In group G_2, the percentage of those who communicate exclusively in their mother tongue at home is close to that of G_1 – 88.25%.

In terms of the centre-periphery divide, comparatively, the two groups did not differ significantly, with only 26.01% of G_1 living in the city/village centre,

while in the G_2 group, only 24.85% lived in the residential centre. Among the respondents from G_1, we could observe a significant upward slope of the centre's inhabitants in the order of black Christians. In G_2, we encounter frequent peaks and troughs determined by the country of origin of Muslims and monthly income.

An important indicator of newcomers' socioeconomic and cultural integration into Denmark is their trust in native Danes. Only a minority (11.32%) of respondents said they were willing to give full trust to native Danes. Almost 1.0% of the analysis units could not provide a valid answer, and 87.83% of the respondents stated that they did not trust a native Dane.

Regarding the question related to social protection or insertion forms, the results suggest that more than 80.0% of respondents were or are net beneficiaries of redistribution and social welfare programs. However, a similar percentage of respondents (83.32%) stated they feel uncomfortable with the Danish cultural and social ideology.

Then, a second part of our study involved measuring the respondents' ideological and political preferences and ideological self-definition. Thus, the survey participants had to place themselves on a scale between 0 (Left wing) and 10 (Right wing) and on another scale with values between 0 (progressive) and 5 (conservative). In addition, respondents were asked about their political involvement in the host society.

The aggregated results revealed several important aspects of our research. Regarding ideological self-identification, the variations were significantly below the importance of age and gender. In G_1, 73.02% of women declared themselves supporters of the political left, while only 31.86% identified themselves as progressive. The average age of women who declare themselves left-wing and progressive is 34.08 years, while the average age of women who declare themselves left-wing but conservative is 49.76 years. 26.98% of women in G_1 declare themselves right-wing supporters, their average age being 49.11 years. The variation is similar among men in G_1, except that most of them (65.08%) are more likely to declare themselves conservative.

Regarding the G_2 group, the Right-wing received more support from the respondents, even if women tend to declare themselves more progressive than men. We have exemplified this in the table below.

$N_{G2}=$ 184	Right-wing/ Progressive (%)	Right-wing/ Conservative (%)	Left-wing/ Progressive (%)	Left-wing/ Conservative (%)	Average age Right-wing/ Progressive	Average age Right-wing/ Conservative	Average age Left-wing/ Progressive	Average age Left-wing/ Conservative
Women	45.47	26.48	6.98	12.01	26.11	31.56	19.21	38.95
Men	28.12	48.32	2.95	20.61	28.56	37.28	22.74	32.22

A relevant thing from the analysis of the collected data is that the religious factor also influences the collected data; 67.33% of respondents declare themselves to be practising Islam in one form or another.

At the same time, asking respondents to express their attraction to one of the Danish parliamentary political parties revealed the following particularities: 48.32% declared themselves attracted by the rhetoric of populist parties, even if they identify those parties as the first source of discrimination. In addition, the Right-wing/Left-wing ideological orientation predicted a strong preference for populist rhetoric, with men being more likely to challenge the current Danish socioeconomic order.

In terms of the participants' support for a Left or Right-wing solution to the problem of social inequity and exclusion, the result showed a tendency to support the view of the political Right, implicitly support for a restrictive immigration policy. The simple upward slope to the Right was significantly higher when the respondent's view corresponded to simple ideas for solving socioeconomic discrimination, such as employment stimulation, conditional acculturation, and cultural illiberalism.

We are obliged to mention that the qualitative analysis revealed to us that the idea of a restrictive immigration policy is present almost on the entire political spectrum, with social and cultural illiberalism but also Eurscepticism being a constant of the political discourse. In addition, an explanation for the phenomenon described above can be represented by the fact that „not only the dynamics of political contention but also historical precedents and processes influence the form of radicalization." (della Porta and Haupt, 2012, p.317)

Rafał Riedel (2017, p.289) noted that „the most common ways of understanding Populism contain its minimum components: *the good people* that

are endangered by the *evil others.*" So the high rate of respondents' support for parties with populist rhetoric can also be understood through the lens of high self-esteem, of good and very good perception of themselves.

Culturally, several accessible ideas permeate the consciousness of respondents: (1) a belief in personal or group moral superiority closely related to a sense of religious identity, and (2) frustration with the failure to address socioeconomic issues through a Western cultural perspective. Thus, it is understandable why they resonate with the moralizing ideas of populists (left and right).

Conclusions

With the help of this study, we explored a wide range of factors associated with the sociocultural and cultural integration of newcomers to Denmark and compared them across a spectrum of two distinct groups, Muslims and black people. So far, the aggregated data has shown us few significant differences between the two groups, but there are expected to be nuanced differences eventually. Our findings reveal that among the groups studied, the distinction between Right and Left does not lie in simple self-definition as progressive or conservative, with political populism attracting supporters among these disadvantaged categories.

At the same time, combined aggregate results experience more socioeconomic uncertainty among the studied groups, and these findings underline the exposure of a profound difference between newcomers and natives. Furthermore, discriminatory emotions and attitudes drive populist responses and political or cultural extremism. We claim that our research effort may be able to advance populist response research in three respects: a) presenting a comprehensive picture of the evolution of the social, cultural and economic landscape of the newcomers to Denmark and how the anti-multicultural and illiberal tendencies of the Danish society can lead to broad support of Populism by them; b) showing how Populism becomes attractive for newcomers in conditions of exclusion and cultural uniformity; c) providing a versatile analytical framework to describe Populism as a form of ideological, rhetorical manifestation and protest against social inequalities.

As for the first aspect, our study suggests how the crisis of multiculturalism, discrimination and social exclusion has provided a great opportunity for the populist message to assert itself as the rhetoric of newcomers, especially given that the idea of Danish society has created its foundation is an illiberal one and emanating from cultural uniformity. In addition, the quantitative study we applied in our research leads us to the conclusion that the specific populist orientation of the newcomers results from the anti-immigration, illiberal and sometimes discriminatory mobilization of the host society, determining a clear anti-establishment attitude on the part of the studied population.

This leads us to the second point - given that we considered illiberal and authoritarian-populist policies as a reason why newcomers adopt populist rhetoric, the manifestos make it quite clear that one of the main triggers for the consolidation of Populism as an ideology and fundamental feature of the social actions of newcomers are directly related to the social problems they face in the host society. Moreover, the crisis of democratic representation, the lack of acceleration of modernization through multiculturalism, social, economic and cultural insecurity, and the „boom" of xenophobic, anti-European and anti-immigration parties are determining variables of Black and Muslim Populism in Denmark.

Finally, our analysis's methodology and value system can be used as dynamic elements of analysis to account for the vast fluctuations of the anti-establishment movement that could serve as a model for other studies focused on cultural, racial, and ethnic minorities in European societies.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Note

The study results are under the correlation process, and the data presented in this article may change.

Bibliography

Akkerman, T. (2015) 'Immigration policy and electoral competition in Western Europe: A fine-grained analysis of party positions over the past two decades', *Party Politics*, 21(1), pp. 54–67. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068812462928.

Benedetto, G., Hix, S. and Mastrorocco, N. (2020) 'The Rise and Fall of Social Democracy, 1918–2017', *American Political Science Review*. 2020/06/15 edn, 114(3), pp. 928–939. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055420000234.

Bevelander, P. and Taras, R. (2013) 'The Twilight of Multiculturalism?', in R. Taras (ed.) *Challenging Multiculturalism*. Edinburgh University Press (European Models of Diversity), pp. 3–24.

Birdsall, N. (2004) 'Why Global Inequality Matters', *Brookings Trade Forum*, pp. 297–303.

Boia, L. (2019) 'Post-scriptum', in *Întrebări fără răspuns (sau cu prea multe răspunsuri*. Bucharest: Humanitas, pp. 87–89.

Borevi, K. (2010) 'Dimensions of Citizenship: European Integration Policies from a Scandinavian Perspectiv', in B. Bengtsson, P. Strömblad, and A.-H. Bay (eds) *Diversity, Inclusion and citizenship in Scandinavia*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 19–46.

Borjas, G.J. (1985) 'Assimilation, Changes in Cohort Quality, and the Earnings of Immigrants', *Journal of Labor Economics*, 3(4), pp. 463–489.

Breen, R. and Andersen, S.H. (2012) 'Educational Assortative Mating and Income Inequality in Denmark', *Demography*, 49(3), pp. 867–887.

Crawford, J.T. and Pilanski, J.M. (2014) 'Political Intolerance, Right and Left', *Political Psychology*, 35(6), pp. 841–851.

De Luca, M. and Ciaglia, A. (2017) 'The role of the people in the characterization of populism. Evidence from the press coverage of the 2014 European Parliament election campaign in Italy', *Italian Political Science Review / Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*. 2016/11/21 edn, 47(1), pp. 63–85. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2016.23.

Duru, D.N., Sejersen, T.S. and Trenz, H.-J. (2018) 'Denmark', in V. Federico and C. Lahusen (eds) *Solidarity as a Public Virtue?* I. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH (Law and Public Policies in the European Union), pp. 35–52.

Ersbøll, E. (2006) 'Denmark', in E. Ersbøll et al. (eds) *Acquisition and Loss of Nationality/Volume 2: Country Analyses*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press (Policies and Trends in 15 European Countries), pp. 105–148.

Fallend, F. (2004) 'Are right-wing populism and government participation incompatible? The case of the freedom party of Austria', *Representation*, 40(2), pp. 115–130. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/00344890408523254.

Freeden, M. (1998) 'Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology?', *Political Studies*, 46(4), pp. 748–765. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.00165.

Guriev, S. and Papaioannou, E. (2022) 'The Political Economy of Populism', *Journal of Economic Literature*, 60(3), pp. 753–832.

Halikiopoulou, D. and Vlandas, T. (2020) 'When economic and cultural interests align: the anti-immigration voter coalitions driving far right party success in Europe', *European Political Science Review*. 2020/05/20 edn, 12(4), pp. 427–448. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/S175577392000020X.

Häusermann, S. *et al.* (2021) *Transformations of the left. The myth of voter losses to the radical right*. Berlin: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. Available at: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/ipa/17385.pdf.

Heath, A.F. and Brinbaum, Y. (2007) 'Guest editorial: Explaining ethnic inequalities in educational attainment', *Ethnicities*, 7(3), pp. 291–305.

Jensen Kriegbaum, K. (2014) 'What can and cannot be willed: how politicians talk about national identity and immigrants', *Nations and Nationalism*, 20(3), pp. 249–267.

Katsambekis, G. (2016) 'The Populist Surge in Post-Democratic Times: Theoretical and Political Challenges', *The Political Quarterly*, 87(4), pp. 1–9.

Kofman, E., Roosblad, J. and Keuzenkamp, S. (2009) 'Migrant and minority women, inequalities and discrimination in the labour market', in J. Roosblad, K. Kraal, and J. Wrench (eds) *Equal Opportunities and Ethnic Inequality in European Labour Markets*. Amsterdam University Press (Discrimination, Gender and Policies of Diversity), pp. 47–68.

Kurer, T. (2020) 'The Declining Middle: Occupational Change, Social Status, and the Populist Right', *Comparative Political Studies*, 53(10–11), pp. 1798–1835. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414020912283.

Kythor, E. (2020) 'Stereotypes in and of Scandinavia', in A. Lindskog and J. Stougaard-Nielsen (eds) *Introduction to Nordic Cultures*. London: UCL Press, pp. 210–224.

Laclau, E. (1977) *Politics and ideology in Marxist theory: capitalism, fascism, populism*. London: NLB.

Linder, N.M. and Nosek, B.A. (2009) 'Alienable speech: Ideological variation in the application of free-speech principles', *Political Psychology*, 30(1), pp. 67–92.

Loxbo, K. *et al.* (2021) 'The decline of Western European social democracy: Exploring the transformed link between welfare state generosity and the electoral strength of social democratic parties, 1975–2014', *Party Politics*, 27(3), pp. 430–441. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068819861339.

Lutz, A. (2007) 'Barriers to high-school completion among immigrant and later-generation Latinos in the USA: Language, ethnicity and socioeconomic status', *Ethnicities*, 7(3), pp. 323–342.

March, L. (2011) *Radical left parties in Europe*. New York: Routledge (Routledge studies in extremism and democracy, 14).

Marmot, M. *et al.* (1991) 'Health Inequaities among British Civil Servants: The Whithhall II Study', *The Lancet*, 337(8754), pp. 1387–1393.

Martikainen, P., Kauppinen, TM and Valkonen, T. (2003) 'Effects of the Characteristics of Neighbourhoods and the Characteristics of People on Cause Specific Mortality: A Register Based Follow-up Study of 252,000 Men', *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 57(3), pp. 210–217.

Matthews, M., Levin, S. and Sidanus, J. (2009) 'A Longitudinal Test of the Model of Political Conservatism as Motivated Social Cognition', *Political Psychology*, 30(6), pp. 921–936.

McClosky, H. and Chong, D. (1985) 'Similarities and Differences Between Left-Wing and Right-Wing Radicals', *British Journal of Political Science*. 2009/01/27 edn, 15(3), pp. 329–363. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123400004221.

McDonnell, D. (2016) 'Populist Leaders and Coterie Charisma', *Political Studies*, 64(3), pp. 719–733. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.12195.

Mete, V. (2022) 'Cittadini contro la politica. L'antipolitica dal basso.', in *Antipolitica. Protagonisti e forme di un'ostilità diffusa*. Bologna: il Mulino, pp. 15–55.

Milanovic, B. (2016) *Global Inequality*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjghwk4.

Milkinson, R.G. and Pickett, K. (2009) *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*. London: Allen Lane, an imprint of Penguin Books.

Miller, D. *et al.* (eds) (2016) 'Inequality', in *How the World Changed Social Media*. London: UCL Press, pp. 128–141. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1g69z35.16.

Mincer, J. (1974) *Schooling, experience, and earnings*. New York: National Bureau of Economic Research; distributed by Columbia University Press (Human behavior and social institutions, 2).

Morgan, S.G., Mullen, E. and Skitka, L.J. (2010) 'When values and attributions collide: Liberals' and conservatives' values motivate attributions for aslleged misdeeds.', *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 36(9), pp. 1241–1254.

Mudde, C. (2004) 'The Populist Zeitgeist', *Government and Opposition*, 39(4), pp. 541–563. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00135.x.

Nilsson, A. and Wrench, J. (2009) 'Ethnic inequality and discrimination in the labour market', in J. Wrench, K. Kraal, and J. Roosblad (eds) *Equal Opportunities and Ethnic Inequality in European Labour Markets*. Amsterdam University Press (Discrimination, Gender and Policies of Diversity), pp. 23–46.

Oswald, A.J. (1997) 'Happiness and Economic Performance', *The Economic Journal*, 107(445), pp. 1815–1831.

Pauwels, T. (2014) *Populism in Western Europe: Comparing Belgium, Germany and The Netherlands*. 1st edn. Routledge. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315764313.

Pieterse, J.N. (2019) 'What Do People Want?', *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 102(2–3), pp. 111–127. Available at: https://doi.org/10.5325/soundings.102.2-3.0111.

Piketty, T. and Rendall, S. (2022) *A brief history of equality*. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Pipkin, C.W. (1925) 'The ideal of social justice', *The Southwestern Political and Social Science Quarterly*, 6(3), pp. 197–218.

della Porta, D. and Haupt, H.-G. (2012) 'Patterns of Radicalization in Political Activism: An Introduction', *Social Science History*, 36(3), pp. 311–320.

Portes, A. (1998) 'Social Capital: its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24, pp. 1–24.

Reitz, C. (2018) 'Opposing Authoritarian Populism: The Challenge and Necessity of a New World System', in. London: University of Westminster Press, pp. 107–133.

Richard, E. (2002) 'The Mixed Blessings of Material Progress: Diminishing Returns in the Pursuit of Happiness', *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 1(26), pp. 267–292.

Riedel, R. (2017) 'Populism and Its Democratic, Non-Democratic, and Anti-Democratic Potential', *Polish Sociological Review*, (199), pp. 287–298.

Rooduijn, M. and Pauwels, T. (2011) 'Measuring Populism: Comparing Two Methods of Content Analysis', *West European Politics*, 34(6), pp. 1272–1283. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2011.616665.

Smith, E.R. and Semin, GR (2007) 'Situated Social Cognition', *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 16(3), pp. 132–135.

Sriram, CL (2014) 'Liberal Peacebuilding and Transitional Justice: What Place for Socioeconomic Concerns?', in DN Sharp (ed.) *Justice and Economic Violence in Transition*. New York, NY: Springer New York, pp. 27–49. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-8172-0_2.

Stiglitz, J. (2018) 'The Multiple Dimensions of Globalization', in *Globalization and its discontents revisisited: anti-globalization in the era of Trump*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, pp. 30–50.

Tesser, P. and Dronkers, J. (2007) 'Equal Opportunities or Social Closure in the Netherlands?', in A.F. Heath and S.Y. Cheung (eds) *Unequal Chances: Ethnic Minorities in Western Labour Markets*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 359–402. Available at: https://doi.org/10.5871/bacad/9780197263860.003.0009.

Todd, A.M. (1920) 'Relation of Public Ownership to Democracy and Social Justice', *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science in the City of New York*, 8(4), pp. 218–247.

Touraine, A. (1997) 'Le populisme? Neuf réponses', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, (56), pp. 224–242. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/3770611.

Vieru, A. (2021) 'Europa faţă în faţă cu propria-i istorie', in *Elogiul frontierelor: mic tratat de libertate*. Bucharest: Humanitas, pp. 38–39.

Wilson, M.S. and Sibley, C.G. (2013) 'Social Dominance Orientation and Right-Wing Authoritarianism: Additive and Interactive Effects on Political Conservatism', *Political Psychology*, 34(2), pp. 277–284.

Zaslove, A. (2008) 'Here to Stay? Populism as a New Party Type', *European Review*, 16(3), pp. 319–336. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/S1062798708000288.