Triin Lauri[1]

ORCID: 0000-0002-2459-0856
School of Governance, Law and Society, Tallinn University, Estonia

Anu Toots

ORCID: 0000-0002-2247-3074
School of Governance, Law and Society, Tallinn University, Estonia

From nationalism to educational divide? Party positions and voters' profiles on welfare state issues in Estonia and Latvia in the 2010s

Abstract

This paper studies electoral dynamics in Estonia and Latvia in the years 2011–2019 by juxtaposing political supply with political demand in the welfare state issue. The article contributes to the theory of two-dimensional policy space, which has been widely studied in the context of mature welfare states. We show, using Estonia and Latvia as examples, that this framework can be extended to explain electoral dynamics in contemporary post-communist Eastern Europe. Empirically, we found that despite the temporary prominence of the distributional divide, the socio-cultural dimension has preserved its dominance in political supply and demand. While distinctive voters' profiles are detectable in both countries, stable party constituencies are not formed behind those divisions and the strongest predictor that distinguishes voters is the level of education. Thus, the strong legacy of the socio-cultural cleavage in combination

---

[1] **Corresponding author:** Triin Lauri, School of Governance, Law and Society, Tallinn University, Narva road 25, 10120, Tallinn, Estonia; email: triin.lauri@tlu.ee.

with renewed saliency of immigration and EU integration issues still constrains Estonian and Latvian party politics.

Keywords: two-dimensional policy space, nativism, voter preferences, party manifestos, Latent Class Analysis, Estonia, Latvia

Introduction

Continuity and change in the patterns of political competition for voters and parliamentary seats have ever inspired the research of political scientists. Recent fundamental changes in economies, labour markets and cultural identities in Western Europe have once again raised the importance of these issues (see for example Beramendi et al., 2015; Häusermann et al., 2013; Manow et al., 2018). A common claim of political science is that two key dimensions of the post-industrial policy space, the socio--economic and the socio-cultural, are transformed and increasingly interwoven. Consequently, preferences in the socio-cultural dimension assumed to capture identity politics, often predict preferences in the socio-economic dimension and vice versa. Factors that load these dimensions have also become more diverse (Häusermann & Kriesi, 2015) and regionally specific (Manow et al., 2018). While this theoretical framework has been elaborated on and tested in the established democracies, the knowledge is much scarcer regarding the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). As Tucker (2015) aptly stresses, the theoretical rationale for including the CEE countries in comparative studies has been increasing, and the time has come to move from purely empirical comparative studies to theoretically grounded analyses. The concept of a multidimensional policy preferences space (Beramendi et al., 2015; Kitschelt, 1994) promises to be an interesting choice to be tested from the CEE perspective.

Our article explores the importance of socio-economic (distributional) and socio--cultural (identity) dimensions in structuring the policy space in two former Soviet republics – Estonia and Latvia – countries that share similar Soviet legacies but took somewhat different reform routes in transition to the market economy and democratic polity. Compared to mature welfare states in Western Europe, distributional and identity preferences have different roots and timing in these Baltic countries. The ethnocentric nation-building narrative strongly structured identity politics since the early transition period (the 1990s) because both countries inherited from the Soviet period a large Russian-speaking immigrant population (Bohle & Greskovits, 2012; Rovny, 2014). In Western Europe, differently, identity politics only became a driver of the socio-cultural divide since the migration crisis of 2015. Shifts in distributional preferences and class-based voting in mature democracies are related to the shrinkage of mainstream left-wing parties due to de-industrialisation (Abou-Chadi & Wagner, 2019; Gingrich & Häusermann, 2015). The saliency of the socio-cultural dimension driven by migration crises and interwoven with the growing diversity of the working class offered a new opportunity for right-wing parties to gain power (Mudde, 2019) and forced their left-wing counterparts to re-establish their positions (Abou-Chadi et al., 2021). In Estonia and Latvia, left-wing parties also struggle with shrinkage but

the content and timing differ from the West. First, left-wing ideologies were discredited by the Soviet regime (Saarts, 2011). Second, de-industrialisation and the decline of the working class occurred in the Baltic region later, during the market reforms in the 1990s. Besides these commonalities, Estonia and Latvia had important differences in restructuring their economies. Estonia took a more radical approach to privatisation, monetary reform and reorientation from an industrial to a service sector. Latvia was more conservative and kept the economy focused on transport and logistics and allowed privatising enterprises to citizens from the former Soviet elite (Norkus, 2011). Based on these choices in market reforms, the formation of the new middle class also occurred somewhat differently in each country. In Estonia, the foundations of the emerging middle class were primarily the booming internet technology and banking sector, whereas in Latvia the emerging middle class was expanding in the industrial and logistics sectors (Avlijaš, 2020). So, the interplay of socio-economic and socio--cultural dimensions of political space in Estonia and Latvia have a more complex layering, and somewhat different drivers and timing compared to Western Europe.

The corpus of literature provides us with some data on voters' preferences in the Baltic region during the transition period (Evans & Whitefield, 1993; Mair, 1989; Saarts, 2011), while the knowledge of recent developments is scant. Furthermore, there are two shortcomings. First, studies tend to focus on socio-cultural (ethnic- and identity-related) preferences neglecting the distributional themes and their entwinement with identity issues in party manifestos. Second, party positions are often analysed as being detached from voters' behaviour leaving us with a one-sided picture of electoral dynamics. Our article aims to fill this gap by studying the electoral politics in Estonia and Latvia in the years 2011–2019 and juxtaposing the salient issues in party manifestos (political supply) with the policy preferences of voters (political demand). This approach contributes to a better understanding of pro-welfare coalitions and a better grasp of social policy reforms in post-communist CEE.

We pose two research questions. First, based on the successful transition to the market economy and stabilisation of the social class structure, we ask whether the socio--economic dimension (distributional dilemmas) has gained prominence over the socio-cultural dimension (identity dilemmas). Secondly, we ask which of those two dimensions distinguishes voters' preferences and which predictors are behind those preferences.

The article starts with presenting the concept of two-dimensional political space in Western Europe and discussing the relevance of these accounts for Estonia and Latvia. We then proceed with the empirical analysis to answer our research questions. First, we investigate the main patterns of political supply along the socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions and show how these patterns have evolved across three waves of parliamentary elections in the years 2011–2019. Second, we analyse political demand by comparing the importance of socio-economic (distributional) issues to socio-cultural ones. More specifically, by applying Latent Class Analysis (LCA) and LCA regressions we investigate voters' profiles based on their policy preferences in selected socio-economic and socio-cultural issues, as well as the main determinants behind those preferences. The concluding section discusses the key empirical findings and theoretical implications.

Concept of two-dimensional policy space and its applicability in contemporary Baltic States

In Western Europe, distributional issues have been associated with attitudes towards the welfare state. The general view here is that left-wing parties and voters are pro-welfare, whereas right-wing parties and their constituencies are anti-welfare. Yet, as Pierson (2001) argues such a broad approach is insufficient today because there is general public support for the welfare state and all political parties across the entire political spectrum include welfare issues in their manifestos, in an adjustment to the voter demand. The emergence and success of radical right-wing parties in the second half of the 2010s did not change this general trend and rather fuelled the entwinement of socio-economic and socio-cultural issues (Halikiopoulou & Vlandas, 2020). Mainstream right-wing parties have made a pro-welfare move, whereas mainstream left-wing parties have moved their manifestos away from the traditional protectionist working-class platform toward the middle class and an activation paradigm to respond to the new social risks of the post-industrial era (Gingrich & Häusermann, 2015). Thus, in the socio-economic dimension, political parties are becoming closer, which makes it harder for voters to decide on their party affiliation based only on distributional issues. Therefore, the socio-cultural dimension that captures the openness-closeness dilemma and identity politics gains importance in complementing the conventional left-right (socio-economic) dimension of party positions and voter preferences (Häusermann & Kriesi, 2015; Manow et al., 2018; Kostelka & Rovny, 2019). Although identity politics, boosted by the 2015 immigration crisis, was initially the playground of the populist challenger parties, it later became the main driver of the socio-cultural divide (Hobolt & Tilley, 2017; Hooghe & Marks, 2017). Thus, in Western Europe, identity issues have gained more prominence than before, although this shift has occurred relatively recently. Furthermore, along with the growing diversity of class-based constituencies, the education divide indicates the divergence of high- and low-educated voters' preferences across all dimensions of policy space (Ansell & Gingrich, 2021; Attewell, 2021; Beramendi et al., 2015).

To what extent do these transformations in mature welfare states have relevance for Estonia and Latvia?

Let us first look at the *socio-economic dimension* of policy space associated with the design of the welfare state and class-based voting. Kitschelt and Rehm (2018) claim that the generosity of the welfare state and the high polarisation of the party landscape on distributional issues facilitate the dominance of the socio-economic dimension over the socio-cultural one. Neither of these structural preconditions exists in Estonia and Latvia. A low level of social expenditures makes all parties and all voters regardless of their left-right preferences advocate welfare expansion (Toots, 2022). Due to discrediting of the mainstream political left by the Soviet legacy, the right-wing parties (including the populists) adopted welfare issues and shaped the policy supply accordingly. As a result, despite the overall high demand for welfare policies

among the Baltic electorate (Roosma & Oorschot, 2017), Estonian and Latvian voters tend to consider national economic competitiveness and the national way of living more important than social cohesion (see Appendix 1). Tavits and Letki (2013) claim that right-wing parties in post-communist countries try to avoid distributional debates and for this purpose emphasise identity issues. These authors (Tavits & Letki, 2013) also argue that if the ethnic divides are prominent, it is much easier for right-wing parties to mobilise voters on value-based appeals and mute socio-economic debates. We claim that Tavits and Letki (2013) slightly neglected the positive effects of the 2010s market reforms. Instead of seeing only the "losers of transition", who could counter the neoliberal welfare state agenda, there are also the "winners of transition" – business and banking sector professionals, individuals with high earnings, good education and excellent employment perspectives (Toots & Lauri, 2022). These people are not entirely against the welfare state but do favour its orientation towards social investments and individual choices (Häusermann & Kriesi, 2015). This "new politics of welfare state" and its distributional logic can be well accommodated into Estonian and Latvian right-leaning political supply. In this respect, Estonia and Latvia as relatively successful transition countries (Avlijaš 2020) bear an important similarity with Western Europe, in terms of the growing complexity of the socio-economic divide on social policy choices (Beramendi et al. 2015; Häusermann et al. 2021). This transformation of the social class structure might create room for the right-wing distributional agenda or, offer opportunities for a renaissance of the mainstream political left.

The *second dimension* of policy preferences' space, the *socio-cultural,* gained prominence in Estonia and Latvia long before the 2015 European migration crises. The salience of nationalist issues that formed the core of the socio-cultural dimension in the Baltic region was fuelled by the influx of immigrants in the Soviet era and made nativism dominant in the 1990s (Bohle & Greskovits, 2012; Rovny, 2014). Besides the difference in chronology, there were different key dilemmas of socio-cultural dimensions in Estonia and Latvia compared to those in mature Western welfare states. In Baltic countries, the initial core of the socio-cultural dimension was citizenship policy, replaced in the early 2000s by the concerns of low birth rates and the emigration of youth. The owners of these issues in the Baltics were often mainstream parties and not the populist and challenger parties as in Western Europe.

In addition to the saliency of immigration and demography, other issues in the socio-cultural dimension, such as globalisation and EU integration, were seen universally in a positive vein in Estonia and Latvia until the mid-2010s (Rohrschneider & Whitefield, 2010). As Marks et al. (2006) claim, until European integration is still just a political perspective, parties tend to stay close. When it becomes an everyday reality, pro-EU and anti-EU positions become more visible. But differently from Western Europe where anti-EU platforms can be found across the left-right spectrum, in Eastern Europe, these are concentrated on radical left and radical right with attitudes towards closeness and nationalism. Constituencies of these parties are typically "losers" of globalisation (Marks et al., 2006). Existing studies on Estonia and Latvia partly confirm the above findings. In Estonia, the right-wing populist party EKRE started using these issues for their anti-EU agenda after the recession (Ehin et al., 2020) and the 2015 migration crisis together with the EU policies on asylum seekers just boosted those

activities. In Latvia, the left-wing populist party did not take an anti-EU position but rather on contrary. This can be because of their specific constituency – mainly the Russian-speaking minority, who felt threatened more by Latvian nationalism than globalisation. Issues of family models, gender roles and sexual identities become pertinent in Baltic politics only very recently and are driving political parties apart. So, the socio-cultural dimension continues to be significant in Estonia and Latvia, but the focus has experienced several shifts and is only partly comparable with socio-cultural discourses in the mature welfare states.

The structural approach, on which the concept of the two-dimensional policy space relies, illuminates important aspects of partisan competition and political supply in post-communist Estonia and Latvia that partly share the post-industrial trends of Western Europe but also have important communist legacies. According to Kostelka and Rovny (2019), pro-independence political forces in peripheral republics of former communist federations oppose egalitarianism both on economic and national grounds and thus, associate free market economics with cultural conservatism. This is a pattern, clearly present in Latvia, and to a significant extent also in Estonia (Toots & Lauri, 2022). In case there is a significant ethnic minority from the ex-federal centre (such as the Russian minority in Latvia and Estonia), the left parties are assumed to advocate for cultural liberalism (Kostelka & Rovny, 2019). Yet, these associations may get blurred and cultural liberalism may become detached from the left-right dimension. As a result, right-wing parties can stand for cultural liberalism whereas left-wingers do not necessarily do so. To understand, whether and in what way Baltic voters respond to these transformations in party positions, it is equally important to look at the demand side of the policy space.

What drives voters' choice in the socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions?

Regarding the *socio-economic dimension*, there are two distinct although increasingly overlapping research strands. The first departs from individual self-interest and explains voters' distributional preferences by their economic insecurity (Rehm et al., 2012; Rueda, 2007). According to this logic, those with either or both higher labour market risks and the probability to benefit from welfare or existing tax policy measures are more likely to support them and vice versa. The second explanation emphasises the role of ideas and norms in the formation of distributional preferences. Here, utility maximisation-driven arguments, such as the effect of welfare policies on personal income level, play a minor role. Instead, ideological and value-based motives, or the perceived deservingness of a social category to receive social support, are important (van Oorschot, 2010). The deservingness argument has gained importance with the growing popularity of radical right and welfare chauvinism, under which the cultural and economic arguments are closely entwined (Busemeyer et al., 2021). Furthermore, Attewell (2021) argues this attitudinal multidimensionality of welfare preferences, i.e., the degree of state involvement in wealth (re)distribution and the question of who deserves welfare support, helps to explain how the educational divide in party politics

is an expression of redistributive conflict. The level of education is associated with vote choice both directly and indirectly, via differences in attitudes not just about the proper scope of the welfare state, but even more strongly about the deservingness of welfare state beneficiaries (Attewell, 2021).

In Estonia and Latvia, class and inequality discourse were effectively marginalised due to the durable focus on nationalising issues (Saarts, 2011). Adding to that a right-leaning ownership of welfare issues in Estonia and Latvia, circumstances for class-based voting and the formation of relevant constituencies were not promising. However, Rovny (2015) shows that despite those idiosyncratic complexities, voters in favour of greater state involvement and redistribution of resources are significantly more likely to vote for left-wing parties also in Eastern Europe. The effect of economic preferences, however, remains relatively modest compared to the effect of ethnicity (Rovny, 2015).

Voter preferences in the *socio-cultural dimension* are often analysed through the lens of gender (Gingrich & Häusermann, 2015) and lately also through immigration and citizenship issues (Greve, 2020; Bruzelius & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2018). The latter accommodates well the openness-closeness dilemma in the framework of a two--dimensional policy preferences space. The focus in relevant studies on post-communist CEE countries is slightly different as the formation of voters' socio-cultural preferences is analysed mainly through ethnic and language issues (Saarts & Saar, 2021) and almost never through gender issues. Studies on Estonia and Latvia have revealed that the Russian-speaking minority has been much less involved in civil society and politics, a phenomenon partly explained by their lower trust in and higher dissatisfaction with the government (Evans & Lipsmeyer, 2001). Rohrschneider, Schmitt-Beck and Jung (2012) found that post-communist voters in Eastern Germany were more likely to abstain from voting when they were dissatisfied with the performance of parties and democratic institutions. This thesis also seems to hold for the Russian-speaking voters in the Baltic States, where the share of abstaining voters is, as some studies indicate, twice as high as among titular nations (Kalmus et al., 2020) and transition losers tend to abstain from voting (Greskovits 2007). However, today's socio-cultural divide in Estonia and Latvia runs not just across the Soviet period Russian-speaking immigrants and the indigenous population. The European immigration crisis in 2015 and the opening of the local labour markets to foreign workers have fuelled xenophobic attitudes among the Baltic electorate regardless of their ethnic origin (Stefanovic & Evans, 2019).

In sum, transformations of the post-industrial society have intensified discussions around the multidimensionality of political space and the importance of the socio--cultural dimension in it. We are puzzled by similar developments in Estonia and Latvia, where historical legacies enabled the socio-cultural dimension to dominate the political space since 1991. Yet, recent developments in Baltic economies may have brought about important transformations in the two-dimensional preferences' space, which might make the socio-economic dimension more prominent. To explore the validity of this assumption, we will analyse the parliamentary elections of the 2010s and juxtapose the salience of issues in party manifestos with the policy preferences of voters. First, we will look at the balance between the socio-economic dimension

(distributional dilemmas) and the socio-cultural dimension (identity dilemmas) to see whether distributional dilemmas have gained prominence in time. Secondly, we analyse voters' political preferences along the same lines and finally, we attempt to determine, which predictors are behind distinctive voter profiles.

Empirical analysis

The empirical analysis has two steps. We start with the analysis of political supply, and for this, we measure party positions and their shifts in socio-economic and socio--cultural dimensions of the policy space. The Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) database (Volkens et al., 2017) serves as a data source here. The CMP dataset includes policy statements from political parties' electoral manifestos. In the CMP, issues in party manifestos are coded and the percentages of total sentences in each manifesto that mention a particular issue are reported. Some issues can be mentioned in a positive or negative way (supporting versus opposing the EU, internationalism versus protectionism etc.). Moniz and Wlezien (2020) define issue salience as the extent to which voters engage with a particular political issue. The platform enabling this engagement is usually a political party manifesto. Therefore, in analysing issue competition, we assume that the higher the saliency of a particular issue, the higher a party's attempt to get that issue to dominate the political agenda (Green-Pedersen, 2007; Hobolt & De Vries, 2015; Kitschelt & Rehm, 2018). We use Stata16 to run our analysis and for visualisations.

We describe the patterns of issue saliency and shifts in party positions across three waves of parliamentary elections (2011, 2014/2015, 2018/2019). Based on the operationalisation, specific issues in the analysed party manifestos are the units of analysis and we are able to reveal which dimension of policy space dominates in the manifestos and what the distance between parties along those dimensions is.

The second step of the analysis looks at political demand by employing the European Social Survey (ESS) 2018 data. Instead of measuring average support for each issue separately, we run LCA (Latent Class Analysis) in order to distinguish voter profiles across socio-economic and socio-cultural issues.

In analysing political supply, we are interested in the saliency and the cross-party distance in the socio-economic and socio-cultural issues to decide on the essence of the political supply in Estonia and Latvia. The analysis of political demand explores to what extent political alignments revealed in political supply are reflected in political demand. However, the two databases on supply and demand were not merged for the analysis and therefore, caution needs to be practised in jointly interpreting the results.

Political supply along socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions

Placement of political parties along the left-right scale is the most common approach to the socio-economic dimension in political economy literature (De Vries & Marks, 2012; Green-Pedersen, 2007; Rovny & Whitefield, 2019). Therefore, we used the welfare state expansion and limitations issues in CMP to operationalise parties' positions at socio-economic divides and its cross-election dynamics (see Appendix

1 and 2 for concrete measures and their values for each party). Welfare expansion is expected to be the identifier of the political left, whereas the political right emphasises the need for welfare limitation. So, in measuring the position of a political party in the socio-economic dimension, we subtract the welfare expansion from welfare limitation (the lower the value the more left-leaning). However, due to the low social protection expenditures in Estonia and Latvia compared to Western countries, a more expansive welfare state is rather salient in all party manifestos and the need for welfare limitations barely exists, being slightly present only in neoliberal ER and conservative IRL in Estonia (see Appendix 2). While this developmental specificity makes values of the socio-economic dimension biased toward the left, the variable allows, still relatively well, us to investigate differences between parties in distributional matters[2].

Given the saliency of ethnicity and the complex interplay between the EU optimism and nativism in Estonia and Latvia, in operationalising the second, socio-cultural dimension, we capture two sub-dimensions – nationalism *versus* internationalism, and EU positivism *versus* EU negativism. In addition to the traditional openness measures such as EU optimism and internationalisation (Häusermann & Kriesi, 2015; Morgan, 2018) we add the variable of the national way of living, which captures the regionally important issues of citizenship and language regulations. So, in measuring the position of a political party in the socio-cultural dimension, we add the positive mentioning of the EU and internationalism and subtract the negative mentioning of the EU and internationalism and positively mention the national ways of living. A detailed overview of the wording of all the issues in the Manifesto Project Database, the saliency of each issue for each party across countries and elections, and the logic of calculations are provided in Appendices 1 and 2.

In order to comply with the fragmented and volatile party systems in Estonia and Latvia, our analysis is limited to those political parties (and their predecessors), which either participated in at least two parliamentary elections in the 2010s or received more than 10 per cent of votes at least once (Table 1). As indicated earlier, some specific parties and generic party families in Estonia and Latvia tend to be quite different from their equivalents in Western Europe. In general, Estonia and Latvia have been considered as strongly right-leaning in terms of governing coalitions and voter demand (Toots & Lauri, 2022). However, this appearance might be somewhat misleading. In Estonia, the liberal party family includes neoliberals (ER) and social liberals (K), the latter being somewhat left and populist in their programs, and they have

---

[2]   We do admit the limitation of that choice, by being both too broad, i.e., we are not able to reveal potential transformation from "old" to "new" social risks brought along with social investment agenda, and at the same time also too narrow in capturing parties' positions at distributional logic, a limitation indicated by several others (Bakker & Hobolt, 2013; Gethin et al., 2021). Therefore, for robustness, we applied also a "RILE-index"' to measure parties' positions on the socio-economic dimension and to capture also political-economy of left-right, i.e., taxation and state interventionism. "RILE-index" is the method to measure left-right positions proposed by CMP (Volkens et al., 2017). The overall pattern does not change much compared to the "welfare expansion" issue, i.e., the socio-cultural dimension is re-emerging in both countries but is more explicit in Estonia. (See Appendix 3 for the visualization of the results of this alternative operationalization of political supply).

Table 1. Political parties included into the analysis

Country	Elections	Name of the Party	Abbreviation	Party Family + Specificity	Share of Votes 2011/12	Share of Votes 2014/15	Share of Votes 2018/19
Estonia (EE)	2011/2015/2019	The Social Democratic Party	SDE	SOC	17%	15%	10%
Estonia (EE)	2011/2015/2019	The Estonian Centre Party	K	LIB, social-liberal, populist; excluded from governing coalition from re-independence until 2016	23%	25%	23%
Estonia (EE)	2011/2015/2019	Estonian Reform Party	ER	LIB, neoliberal, 2005–2016 the party of prime ministry	29%	28%	29%
Estonia (EE)	2011/2015/2019	Pro Patria	IRL	CON, national-conservative, "open nationalism"; been most of the time in coalition since 1991	21%	14%	11%
Estonia (EE)	2011	The People's Union of Estonia	ERL	AGR, merged with EKRE in 2012 since then NAT	2%	NA	NA
Estonia (EE)	2015/2019	The Conservative People's Party of Estonia	EKRE	NAT	NA	8%	18%
Latvia (LV)	2011/2014/2018	Social-democratic party HARMONY	SC/SDPS	SOC/COM; excluded from governing coalition from re-independence	29%	23%	20%
Latvia (LV)	2018	Development/For	AP!	LIB; Development/For AP! Formed in 2018	NA	NA	12%
Latvia (LV)	2011/2014/2018	Unity	U	CON, liberal-conservative; been most of the time in coalition	19%	22%	7%
Latvia (LV)	2011	Zatlers' Reform Party	ZRP	CON, centre-right party founded by ex-president; 2014 merged with U	21%	NA	NA
Latvia (LV)	2011/2014/2018	National Alliance ALL FOR LATVIA!-For F	NA	NAT, right-wing populist; been in coalitions since 2011	14%	17%	11%
Latvia (LV)	2018	New Conservative Party	JLP	CON, New Conservative Party. Formed in 2014	NA	NA	14%
Latvia (LV)	2011/2014/2018	Greens' and Farmers' Union	ZZS	AGR, centrist and anti-liberal; in coalition 2014–2016	12%	20%	10%

Source: Manifesto Project Database

enjoyed a clear favourite position in the Russian-speaking community until recently. The neoliberal ER has long been the "issue owner" of welfare policies, including education. Perhaps even more strikingly, both liberal and conservative parties in Estonia and Latvia have been advocating the national way of living for years, which means that the nativism issue has not necessarily been owned by the radical right. Furthermore, for many mainstream parties, it has been common to advocate concurrently both closeness and openness, to label their ideology as open nationalism (conservatives in Estonia), or to form coalitions with nationalists. Some parties, such as Estonia's K and Latvia's SC/SDPS, also have close ties to Russian businesses and have consequently been "hard-to-accept" coalition partners. Agrarian parties also have played important but differing roles in Estonia and Latvia across the decades. In the 1990s, agrarian parties represented the interests of farmers who suffered in the extreme from the collapse of Soviet collective farming. In the second half of the 2010s, agrarian parties moved towards populism, which in Estonia (the agrarian ERL is the predecessor of the nationalist EKRE) and in Latvia (ZZS) takes a radical right-wing flavour. Only in Estonia is the Green Party ideologically close to the West European party family and advocates a modern ecological lifestyle. Yet, and maybe exactly because of this, they have not gained a sufficient share of the votes to enter Parliament.

We begin the empirical analysis with the political supply in Estonia and map (Figure 1) the positions of the main parties in the socio-economic and socio-cultural
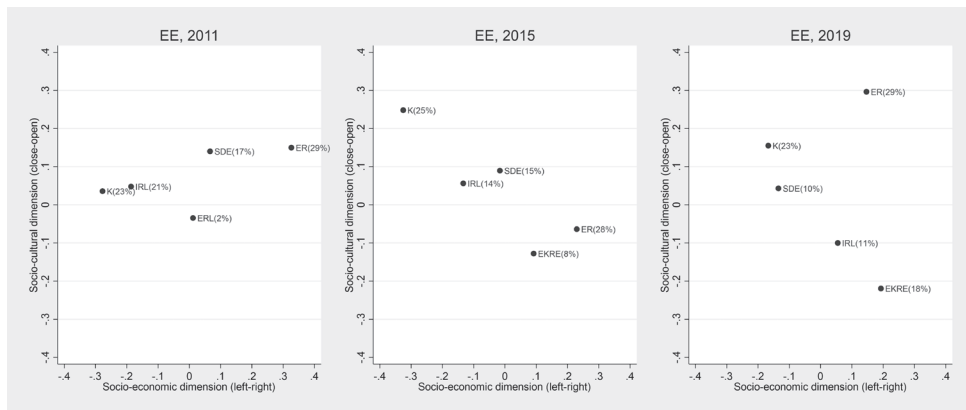

Figure 1. Political supply in Estonia (EE) across socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions in three national elections

Source: Manifesto Project Database

Notes: Percentages in brackets show parties' percentages of votes in particular elections. Both dimensions indicate the weighted saliency which is calculated as the degree of dispersion of issues of particular dimension (standard deviation) multiplied by the share of party popularity. Parties, parties' abbreviations and their affiliations to party families as defined by Manifesto Project Database are as follows: **SDE** – Social Democratic Party (SOC); **K** – Centre Party (LIB); **ER** – Estonian Reform Party (LIB); **IRL** – Pro Patria and Res Publica Union (CON); **ERL/EKRE** – Estonian People's Union (AGR) that transformed to Conservative People's Party of Estonia (NAT).

dimensions across the three parliamentary elections in the 2010s. The saliency is calculated as the degree of dispersion (standard deviation) of particular issues multiplied by the vote share of a particular party (see values in Appendix 2) to visualise contextualised prevalence of socio-economic and socio-cultural divides.

Figure 1 illustrates that while the saliency of the socio-economic dimension dominated in 2011, it is growingly overruled by the socio-cultural dimension in 2015 and 2019. In the socio-economic dimension (distributional issues) parties move closer to each other whereas in the socio-cultural dimension (identity issues) they move apart.

Furthermore, an important change can be detected. The neoliberal ER that experimented with a nationalist discourse in 2015 has re-established its explicit EU-positivism, whereas the conservative IRL has followed a nationalist discourse, together with right-wing populist EKRE. Hence, while in 2011 there was only one party, the agrarian ERL that took a relatively pertinent position in favouring the national way of living and socio-economic divide dominated over socio-cultural, in 2019 there were three relatively distinctive positions of parties: first, the (relatively) *open left* represented by the social-democratic SDE and the social-liberal K; second, the (relatively) *open-right* represented by the neo-liberal ER; and third, the (relatively) *closed right* represented by the conservative IRL and the nationalist EKRE. The distance of parties in the socio-economic dimension is smaller but well aligned with their ideological party families, i.e., the social-democratic SDE and the social-liberal K have the most left-leaning positions and the neo-liberal ER, the conservative IRL and the nationalist EKRE more right-leaning positions. Alternatively, we operationalised the socio-economic dimension by RILE index (Volkens et al., 2017) to capture also the political economy of the welfare state (see Appendix 3 for the visualisation of that version of political supply in Estonia). The main result, i.e., the growing dominance of socio-cultural dimension and concurrent party positions, holds. The only difference is that the neo-liberal ER has moved towards the left in 2019, being at the same level as centrist SDE and K but more open. This indicates "hard" choices of ER in their office-seeking strategies while bearing the governing responsibility and is well aligned with the prevalent criticism by their constituencies in "losing" their neoliberal ethos.

Figure 2 reveals that the dynamics of political supply in Latvia are more volatile in terms of either the saliency of the socio-cultural dimension or the parties' tendency to switch positions across both dimensions and the emergence of new parties (note also differences in the range of axes in Figure 1 and 2).

Similar to Estonia, the saliency of the socio-cultural divide in Latvia is driven by a nationalist party (NAT). However, the divide has been salient already since the 2011 elections and slightly diminishes in time. While NAT was the distinctive "issue owner" of nationalism in 2011 and 2014, in 2018 its position in the socio-cultural dimension became relatively close to the conservative JKP due to flirting with positive mentions of Europeanisation and internationalisation (see Appendix 2 for concrete parties and values). Distinct from Estonia, the salience of socio-economic issues decreased substantially in 2018. All parties but the socialist SC/SDPS have clustered closely around the centre of the left-right scale. As explained earlier, the SC/SDPS has always been in opposition, and thus had pursued only "vote-seeking" strategies.
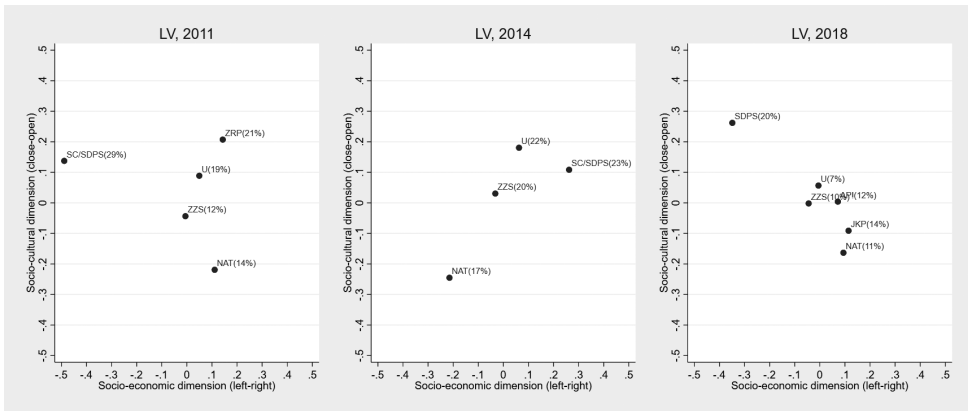
Figure 2. Political supply in Latvia (LV) across socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions in three national elections

Source: Manifesto Project Database

Notes: Percentages in brackets show parties' percentages of votes in particular elections. Both dimensions indicate the weighted saliency which is calculated as the degree of dispersion of issues of particular dimension (standard deviation) multiplied by the share of party popularity. Parties, parties' abbreviations and their affiliations to party families as defined by Manifesto Project Database are as follows: **SC/SDPS** – Social-democratic party HARMONY (COM); **AP!** – Development/For (LIB); **U** – Unity (CON); **ZRP** – Zatlers' Reform Party (CON); **JKP** – New Conservative Party (CON); **NA** – National Alliance ALL FOR LATVIA!-For F (NAT); **ZZS** – Greens' and Farmers' Union (AGR).

Hence, while cross-party distances in both dimensions have become shorter in Latvia, the overall positioning of parties is less stable than in Estonia. Also, while Estonian nationalist EKRE has been explicitly right-leaning, Latvian NAT has constantly switched positions in the socio-economic dimension. Hence, in the Latvian case, we can also detect distinctive groups of parties in 2018: *open-left* position represented by socialist SC/SDPS; (relatively) *open-centre* represented by conservative U, liberal AP! and agrarian ZZS; and (relatively) *closed-right* represented by conservative JKP and nationalist NAT. However, the distance between latter two is meagre. Again, we ran the additional analysis with an alternative measure of socio-economic dimension, RILE-index, and overall our results hold (see Appendix 3).

Thus, generally, the socio-cultural dimension continues to dominate in terms of both saliency and cross-party distance. In Estonia, it has become even stronger in time whereas in Latvia the initial high distancing has transformed into a more squeezed centre-right position (except for a solo SDPS in open-left). The socio--economic divide has been most visible in both countries in 2014/2015 but decreased since then. Again, Latvia demonstrates a more squeezed pattern around the centre whereas in Estonia parties are placed on a left-right scale as expected according to their ideological families. To test, how voters respond to such political supply, we move to the next stage of our analysis devoted to the demand side of electoral politics.

Political demand, voter profiles and their socio-economic determinants

To measure political demand, we use ESS (2018) and the selection of manifest variables was guided by the assumption of multidimensional policy space. Five questions that define preferences in the socio-economic dimension and four in the socio-cultural dimension have been selected. For the socio-economic dimension, we have one question on government responsibility in reducing income differences (Econ1); and four questions regarding fair society (Econ2-Econ5) that combine questions that capture both preferences regarding the degree of state involvement needed for society to be fair and deservingness and a meritocracy (Table 2 gives an overview of the exact wording and descriptive statistics of the included measures). In operationalising the socio-cultural dimension in voters' preferences, we have both an opinion on Europeanisation (Cult1) and attitudes on immigrants (Cult2-4). Thus, if the analysis reveals that the formation of distinctive voter profiles is driven by differences in the distributional preferences, we may consider it as an indicator of the prominence of the socio-economic dimension. Alternatively, if the socio-cultural issues dominate in composing distinctive voter profiles, the socio-cultural dimension drives differences in voters' profiles.

Descriptive statistics of political demand demonstrate that voters' preferences on socio-economic issues lean relatively more to the left in Latvia as voters on average prefer the government to have a bigger role in reducing income differences and creating a more equally distributed wealth (Table 2). In questions on deservingness, cross-country differences are slight. On average, respondents in Estonia and Latvia strongly believe that hard-working people deserve to earn more, although high-status people (Econ5) do not deserve to enjoy additional privileges. Regarding the socio--cultural dimension, the question of whether the EU has gone too far (Cult1), approximately 40 per cent of respondents in both countries agreed. Regarding attitudes towards immigrants (Cult2-4), Latvian respondents are, on average, more pro-immigrants compared to Estonian respondents in assessing immigrants' positive role in both improving the economy and enriching cultural life.

To analyse voter profiles, we used LCA[3], a type of latent variable model enabling unobserved patterns of responses in the data to be revealed (Oberski, 2016). The central idea is to fit a model, in which any confounding between the manifest variables (in our case policy preferences in socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions) can be explained by a single unobserved latent categorical variable (in our case voter profiles or "classes" in the vocabulary of LCA). To reveal the presence of distinctive profiles, respondents are grouped through maximum likelihood estimation into a "latent class", the members of which all share similar response patterns. The main model fit criterion in LCA is the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), i.e., the model that exhibits the lowest BIC is considered the best fitting. In addition to revealing distinct profiles of voters, we include covariates to analyse to what extent a casted vote and socio-economic characteristics predict belonging to a specific profile.

---

[3]   LCA package for Stata16 was used for analyses and visualisation.

Table 2. Variables included in the analysis of political demand: voters' preferences, casted vote and socio-economic characteristics

Label in ESS	Dimension / Measurement	Label in Article	Min	Max	Obs	Mean	S.E.	Obs	Mean	S.E.
	Socio-Economic Dimension									
gincdif	The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels (1 – agree strongly, agree; 0 – neither agree nor disagree, disagree, disagree strongly)	Econ1	0	1	1,896	0.66	0.47	877	0.83	0.38
sofrdst	A society is fair when income and wealth are equally distributed among all people (1 – agree strongly; agree; 0 – neither agree nor disagree, disagree, disagree strongly)	Econ2	0	1	1,899	0.25	0.43	856	0.46	0.50
sofrwrk	Society fair when hard-working people earn more than others (1 – agree strongly; agree; 0 – neither agree nor disagree, disagree, disagree strongly)	Econ3	0	1	1,903	0.89	0.32	890	0.86	0.34
sofrpr	Society fair when takes care of poor and in need, regardless of what give back (1 – agree strongly; agree; 0 – neither agree nor disagree, disagree, disagree strongly)	Econ4	0	1	1,899	0.73	0.44	866	0.74	0.44
sofrprv	Society fair when people from families with high social status enjoy privileges (1 – agree strongly; agree; 0 – neither agree nor disagree, disagree, disagree strongly)	Econ5	0	1	1,890	0.18	0.39	862	0.25	0.43
	Socio-cultural dimension									
euftf	European Union: European unification gone too far or go further (0 – gone too far … 10 – go further; 0 if 0–5, 1 if 6–10)	Cult1	0	1	1,830	0.38	0.48	757	0.36	0.48
imbgeco	Immigration bad or good for country's economy (0 – bad … 10 – good; 0 if 0–5, 1 if 6–10)	Cult2	0	1	1,860	0.37	0.48	852	0.50	0.50
imueclt	Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants (0 – undermined …10 – enriched; 0 if 0–5, 1 if 6–10)	Cult3	0	1	1,874	0.42	0.49	848	0.42	0.49
imwbcnt	Immigrants make country worse or better place to live (0 – worse … 10 – better; 0 if 0–5, 1 if 6–10)	Cult4	0	1	1,867	0.24	0.43	826	0.39	0.49

Table 2 – continued

Label in ESS	Dimension / Measurement	Label in Article	Min	Max	Obs	Mean	S.E.	Obs	Mean	S.E.
		Covariates								
prtvt	Party voted for coded based on party family (1-GREENS; 2 – SOC; 3/4 – LIB; 5–7 – CON; 8 – NAT; 9 – AGR)	PARTY	1	9	1,027	3.96	1.70	463	5.61	2.33
eisced	Highest level of education (1 – lower ISCED1; 7 – higher tertiary ISCED5)	EDU	1	7	1,903	4.58	1.64	918	4.66	1.64
blgetmg	Belonging to the minority (1 – Yes; 0 – No)	MINORITY	0	1	1,897	0.17	0.37	912	0.11	0.13
gndr	Gender (1 – Male; 0 – Female)	MALE	0	1	1,904	0.44	0.50	918	0.32	0.47
agea	Age (continuous)	AGE	15	90	1,904	50.73	19.31	918	55.85	17.76
grspnum	Usual monthly gross pay (continuous)	INCOME	0	5200	843	1,203.00	799.00	384	881.84	572.83

Source: ESS 2018

Starting with the analysis of distinctive voter profiles, based on chosen manifest variables, the two-class model exhibits the lowest BIC for both countries (see Appendix 4 for the BIC values of alternative specifications). This means that the distinction between two voter classes (compared to models with one or three classes) has the best model fit.

In Estonia, we revealed two voters' profiles, comprising 65% (Class 1) and 35% (Class 2) of voters. Opinions on socio-cultural issues are the ones that to a large extent drive differences between voter profiles, whereas distributional issues are relatively similar across profiles. More specifically, voters from both profiles in Estonia prefer comparatively high state involvement in reducing income and status differences (see Figure 3 and Table 3 for concrete values of each measure). The exception concerns
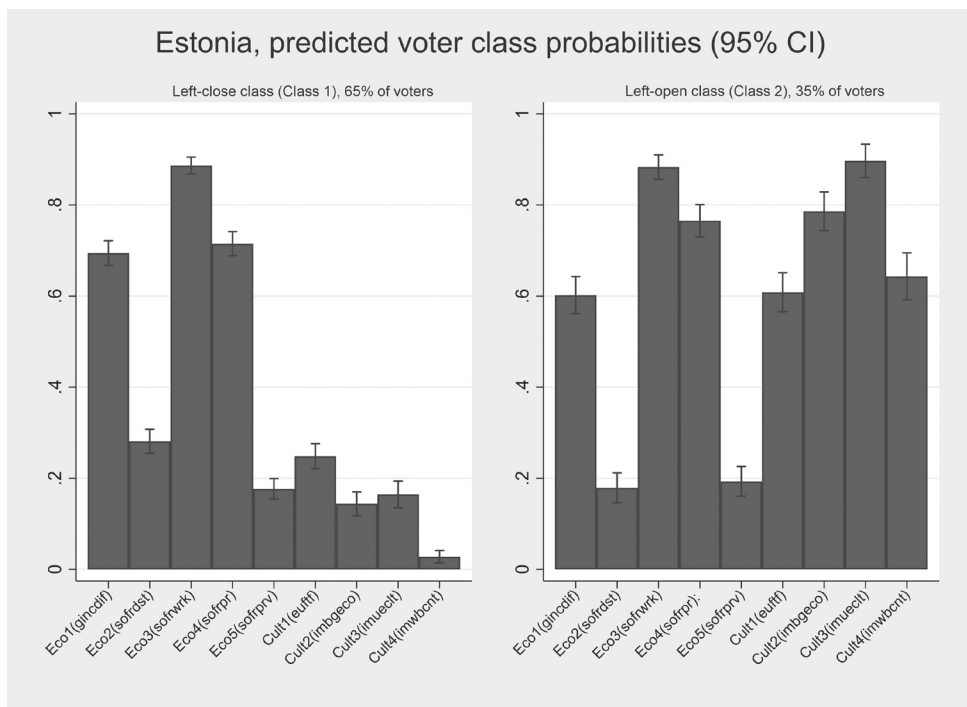

Figure 3. Socio-economic and socio-cultural preferences of voters in different profiles, Estonia

Source: ESS2018

Notes: Bars indicate predicted probabilities of respondents who agree with statements. Labels and wording of statements in ESS questionnaire: **Eco1 (gincdif)**: *The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels*; **Eco2 (sofrdst)**: *Society is fair when income and wealth are equally distributed among all people*; **Eco3 (sofrwrk)**: *Society is fair when hard-working people earn more than others*; **Eco4 (sofrpr)**: *Society is fair when it takes care of the poor and those in need, regardless of what they give back*; **Eco5 (sofrprv)**: *Society is fair when people from families with high social status enjoy privileges*; **Cult1 (euftf)**: *European Union: European unification should go further*; **Cult2 (imbgeco)**: *Immigration is good for the country's economy*; **Cult3 (imueclt)**: *The country's cultural life is enriched by immigrants*; **Cult4 (imwbcnt)**: *Immigrants make the country a better place to live*.

equal distributions to all (Econ 2), a low value of which probably indicates the overall stigma of the "equality of outcome" explained in the theoretical section. Thus, while we can detect a slight overall incoherence across preferences in the socio-economic dimensions, they do not differ across voter groups.

Questions where voters of two profiles are at strikingly distinct positions are all in the socio-cultural dimension, i.e., agreement with further European unification (margins at 25 vs. 61 respectively, see Table 3) and three questions on immigration (margins at 11 vs 7 on average). Thus, based on voters' preferences in socio-economic and socio-cultural issues, the distinction of voters is only in the latter and we have *left-close* (Class 1) and *left-open* voters' profiles (Class 2) in Estonia.

Table 3. Latent class marginal means

	Label in ESS	ESTONIA			LATVIA		
		Margin	S.E.	95% Confidence Interval	Margin	S.E.	95% Confidence Interval
Class 1							
Econ1	gincdif_d	0.69	0.01	0.67	0.72	0.84	0.02	0.80	0.87
Econ2	sofrdst_d	0.28	0.01	0.26	0.31	0.45	0.02	0.40	0.49
Econ3	sofrwrk_d	0.89	0.01	0.87	0.90	0.85	0.02	0.81	0.88
Econ4	sofrpr_d	0.71	0.01	0.69	0.74	0.72	0.02	0.67	0.76
Econ5	sofrprv_d	0.18	0.01	0.16	0.20	0.27	0.02	0.23	0.31
Cult1	euftf_d	0.25	0.01	0.22	0.28	0.24	0.02	0.20	0.29
Cult2	imbgeco_d	0.14	0.01	0.12	0.17	0.22	0.02	0.18	0.27
Cult3	imueclt_d	0.16	0.01	0.14	0.20	0.09	0.02	0.06	0.14
Cult4	imwbcnt_d	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.05	0.05	0.02	0.03	0.10
Class 2							
Econ1	gincdif_d	0.60	0.02	0.56	0.64	0.81	0.02	0.77	0.85
Econ2	sofrdst_d	0.18	0.02	0.15	0.21	0.49	0.03	0.43	0.54
Econ3	sofrwrk_d	0.88	0.01	0.85	0.91	0.88	0.02	0.84	0.91
Econ4	sofrpr_d	0.77	0.02	0.73	0.80	0.77	0.02	0.72	0.81
Econ5	sofrprv_d	0.19	0.02	0.16	0.23	0.22	0.02	0.18	0.27
Cult1	euftf_d	0.61	0.02	0.56	0.65	0.52	0.03	0.46	0.58
Cult2	imbgeco_d	0.79	0.02	0.74	0.83	0.85	0.02	0.80	0.89
Cult3	imueclt_d	0.90	0.02	0.85	0.93	0.84	0.03	0.77	0.89
Cult4	imwbcnt_d	0.64	0.03	0.59	0.69	0.79	0.03	0.73	0.85

Regression (see Table 4) indicates that the most statistically significant predictor of belonging *to the left-open* (Class 2) profile compared to the *left-close* (Class 1) profile, are education and income. People with higher education and income tend to be voters of the *left-open* profile (see the visualisation of predicted probabilities of education and income levels across voter profiles in Figure 5). This finding is in accordance with empirical evidence of the growing trend of socio-cultural professionals to vote for left liberals (Abou-Chadi et al., 2021; Attewell, 2021; Häusermann & Kriesi, 2015). In addition to higher education and income, *left-open* voters are younger and of the ethnic majority (see the visualisation of those in Appendix 5). Neither gender nor the party voted for in the last election showed a statistically significant result.
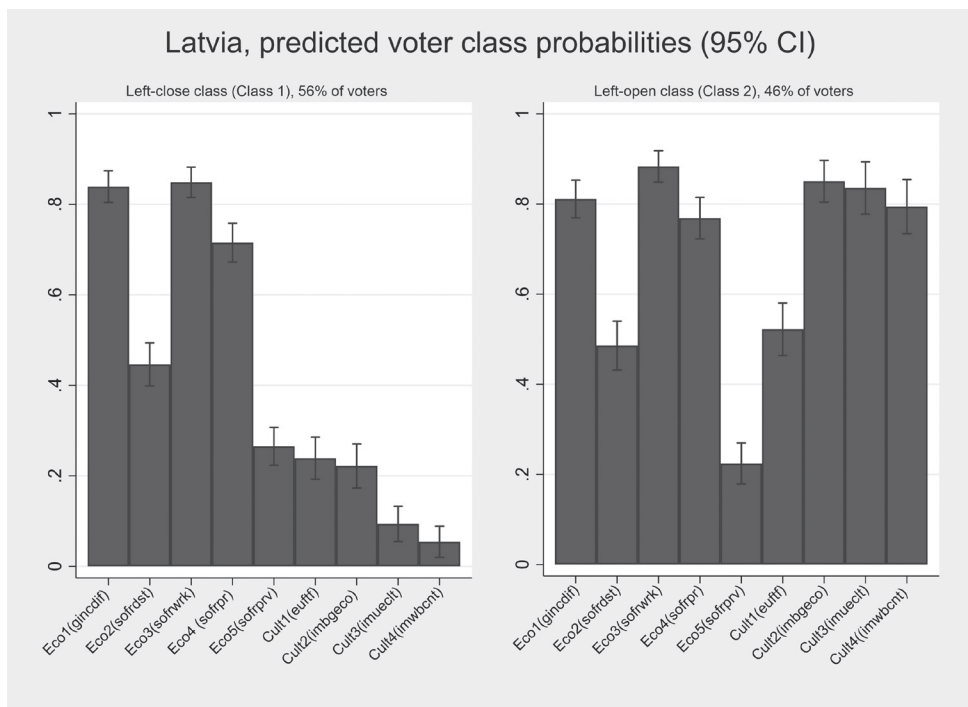

Figure 4. Socio-economic and socio-cultural preferences of voters in different profiles, Latvia

Source: ESS2018

Notes: Bars indicate predicted probabilities of respondents who agree with statements. Labels and wording of statements in ESS questionnaire: **Eco1 (gincdif)**: *The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels*; **Eco2 (sofrdst)**: *Society is fair when income and wealth are equally distributed among all people*; **Eco3 (sofrwrk)**: *Society is fair when hard-working people earn more than others*; **Eco4 (sofrpr)**: *Society is fair when it takes care of the poor and those in need, regardless of what they give back*; **Eco5 (sofrprv)**: *Society is fair when people from families with high social status enjoy privileges*; **Cult1 (euftf)**: *European Union: European unification should go further*; **Cult2 (imbgeco)**: *Immigration is good for country's economy*; **Cult3 (imueclt)**: *The country's cultural life is enriched by immigrants*; **Cult4 (imwbcnt)**: *Immigrants make the country a better place to live*.

In Latvia, similarly, two distinctive profiles of voters were revealed, comprising 56% (Class 1) and 44% (Class 2) respectively. Again, these are neither distributional nor deservingness questions that explain differences between voter profiles, but opinions on socio-cultural issues. Voters in both profiles prefer a rather high government involvement in decreasing income and status differences, and a similar incoherence exists, i.e., the hesitance in equal distribution coexists with preference for strong state involvement in Latvia as it does in Estonia (see Figure 4 and Table 3 for concrete values of each measure). Thus, similar to Estonia, the aspect that drives differences across voters is the range of attitudes on socio-cultural issues. More concretely, and again similar to Estonia, Class 2 voters in Latvia are much more open toward the EU and immigrants,

Table 4. LCA Regression: Voter choice and socio-economic characteristics of different voter profiles

|	Regression Coeficient	Robust Standard Error	P>|z|	95% Confidence Interval	
ESTONIA					
Class 1 (left-close)	Reference Category				
Class 2 (left-open)					
PARTY	-0.02	0.07	0.76	-0.16	0.12
EDU	0.31	0.10	**0.00**	0.11	0.51
MINORITY	-1.20	0.47	**0.01**	-2.12	-0.29
INCOME	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00	0.00
MALE	-0.23	0.26	0.37	-0.75	0.28
AGE	-0.03	0.01	**0.01**	-0.05	-0.01
_cons	-1.14	0.74	0.12	-2.58	0.30
LATVIA					
Class 1(left-cose)	Reference Category				
Class 2 (left-open)					
PARTY	0.02	0.10	0.80	-0.16	0.21
EDU	0.32	0.18	**0.07**	-0.02	0.67
MINORITY	0.20	0.85	0.82	-1.47	1.86
INCOME	0.00	0.00	0.82	0.00	0.00
MALE	-0.62	0.39	0.11	-1.39	0.15
AGE	-0.06	0.02	**0.01**	-0.11	-0.02
_cons	1.73	1.28	0.18	-0.77	4.23
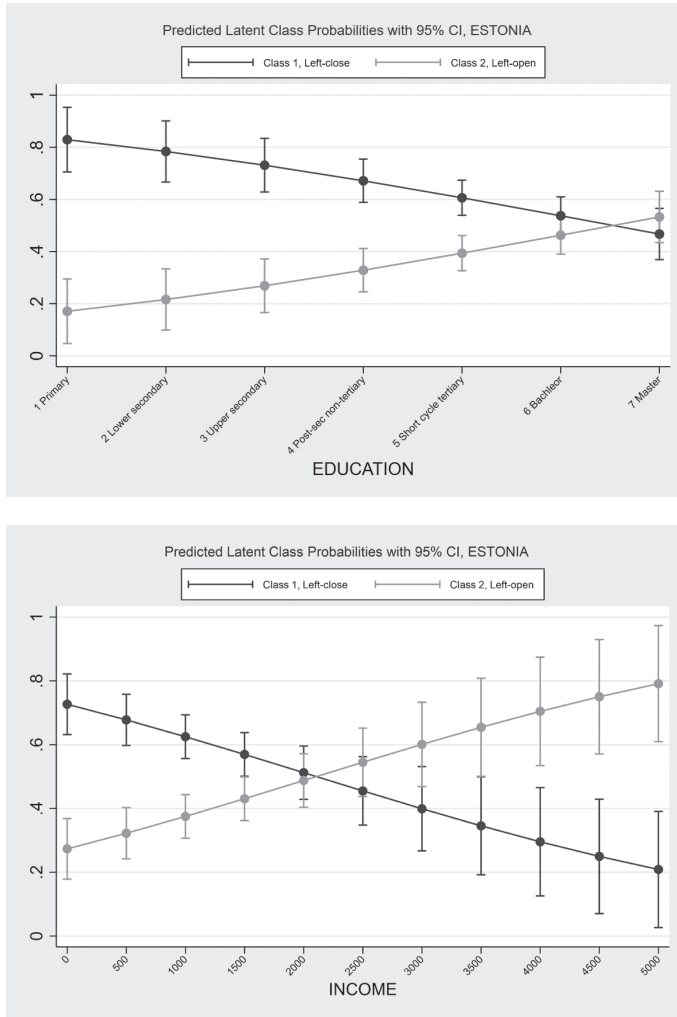
Figure 5. Predicted probabilities of the level of education

Source: ESS2018

(EDUCATION; first panel) and the level of income (INCOME; second panel) across voters' profiles, Estonia

compared to Class 1. While the overall pattern of voter profiles is similar to Estonia, i.e., both *left-close* and *left-open* profiles exist, there are slight differences in the share of Classes and intensity of attitudes. In Latvia, *left-open class* composes 44% compared to 35% in Estonia. Furthermore, all Latvian voters are more left-leaning in terms of socio-economic issues regardless the Class, and Class 2 (*left-open*) voters are even more positive toward immigrants than their Estonian counterparts.

Regression analysis of Latvian voter profiles revealed (Table 4) that there are very few statistically significant predictors among covariates, and only age and education

turn out to be significant, though in the case of education the confidence is lower (see Figure 6 for visualisation of predicted probabilities). Thus, younger and higher educated voters statistically significantly more often belong to the *left-open* (Class 2) than to the *left-close* (Class 1) class. Hence, for Latvia, we can conclude that despite the relatively high saliency of both dimensions in political supply and distinctive profiles of voters, similar to Estonia there are no stable party constituencies behind those divisions.
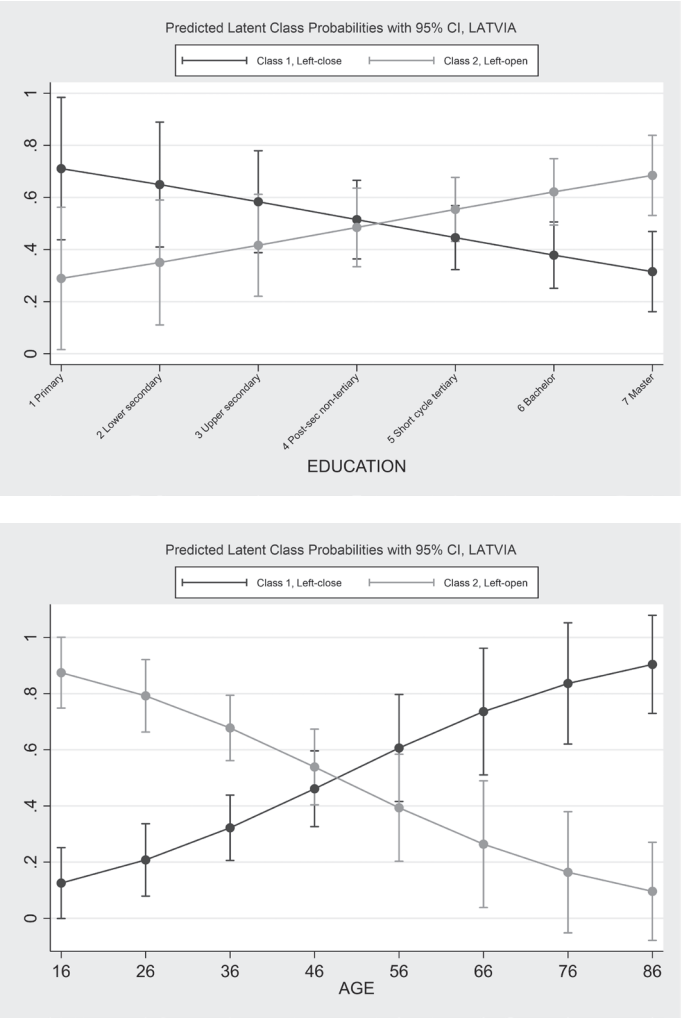

Figure 6. Predicted probabilities of the level of education

Source: ESS2018

(EDUCATION; first panel) and age (AGE; second panel) across voters' profiles, Latvia

Conclusion

This study aimed to test whether the concept of two-dimensional policy space, which has become mainstream in studies of electoral politics in Western European welfare states can be extended to the post-communist countries in Eastern Europe. According to Rathgeb and Busemeyer (2021), only an integrated analysis of socio--economic and socio-cultural dimensions can equip us with a fine-grained understanding of recent, though principal shifts in electoral dynamics including the rise and success of populist parties. As a novel contribution to the corpus of research on two-dimensional policy space, our article juxtaposes the salience of issues in political supply with the policy preferences of voters (political demand). This approach facilitates a better understanding of pro-welfare coalitions and prediction of possible social policy reform trajectories. Empirically we tested the explanatory value of two-dimensional policy space in Estonia and Latvia by using party manifestos and population surveys from the 2010s. This allowed us to capture some important events in Europe, such as the 2008 recession and the 2015 migration crisis and to investigate their effect on political supply and demand in the Baltic countries.

Previous empirical research has demonstrated that Soviet legacies made identity--based factors central in predicting voter behaviour and the party landscape in Estonia and Latvia (Saarts, 2016; Saarts & Saar, 2021). This is in line with the theoretical claims according to which socio-economic issues dominate policy space in the case of a generous welfare state and polarised party landscape (Kitschelt & Rehm, 2018). Neither of these premises existed in Estonia and Latvia between the 1990s and early 2000s. Yet, during further development, things might have changed making the redistributive issues more important. Departing from these assumptions we asked whether the socio-economic dimension (distributional dilemmas) has gained prominence over the socio-cultural dimension (identity dilemmas) due to the successful transitions to the market economy and stabilisation of the social class structure. Secondly, we were interested to find out, whether either of those two dimensions distinguishes voter preferences and which predictors are behind those preferences.

The analysis of *political supply* revealed that the socio-economic dimension has not gained prominence over the socio-cultural one. In the long-term perspective, political parties in both countries have become closer to each other in distributional issues. In Estonia, this trend has been continuous since 2011, whereas in Latvia political parties clustered 2018 together again after some distancing in 2014.

Several explanations can be offered for the dominance of the socio-cultural dimension. First, based on Kitschelt and Rehm's (2018) thesis on the generosity of the welfare state as a prerequisite for the salience of distributional issues, we can claim that lean and mean welfare states in the Baltic States hinder the development of distinct socio-economic positions both among political parties and voters. Second, as voter profiles do also not differ in socio-economic issues, the parties adjust to this situation and put less emphasis on them in their electoral manifestos. Eventually, this becomes a mutually enforcing dynamic that keeps distributive dilemmas low. Thirdly, as shown by Kostelka and Rovny (2019) and Marks et al. (2006), historical legacies may lose their effect but new external events can bring socio-cultural issues into the spotlight

again. Based on a comparison of policy supply in three parliamentary elections in the 2010s, we can claim that effective EU membership and the European immigration crisis in 2015 served as triggers and made party positions on socio-cultural issues more distinct and salient.

Beyond these commonalities, Estonia and Latvia demonstrate also somewhat different patterns in two-dimensional policy space. In Estonia, the socio-cultural divide has increased and three distinctive groups of parties have emerged – one includes conservatives and right-wing populists favouring a national way of living, second includes social democrats and social liberals combining the advocation of international and European cooperation with left-leaning supply, and third are neo-liberals that take explicitly right-open position. We can interpret the emergence of these distinct groups as a party's adjustment to the social outcomes of an open economy. The parties orienting on a national way of living seek the votes of the "losers of globalisation" whereas the others orienting on international cooperation seek the votes of the "winners of globalisation". Both groups are visible as a result of Estonia's radical neoliberal transition to the open market economy. In Latvia, the nationalist party has moved closer to the others, towards international openness but the overall pattern is towards closure and the only single party in the open-left corner does not change the picture. Estonia, while being more right-wing in the economic dimension, is more open compared to Latvia in the identity dimension. At the same time, Latvia shows higher volatility in party positions on both issues across the three elections.

The analysis of *political demand* revealed two distinctive voter profiles in both countries whereas political demand is much more left-leaning compared to political supply. One voters group (Class 2) has positive attitudes towards immigrants, the EU and international cooperation, whereas the other (Class 1) is against them. Interestingly, preferences in distributional issues, while somewhat incoherent, do not diverge across voter profiles as all voters in both countries are relatively left-leaning. The predictor of voter profiles is not the party voted for but most strongly the level of education. This accords with recent studies claiming the level of education to become the new structural divide in electoral politics (Ansell & Gingrich, 2021; Attewell, 2021; Beramendi et al., 2015; Gethin et al., 2021).

Overall, the concept of a two-dimensional policy space provided a more nuanced theoretical framework for empirical analysis. By measuring political supply and demand in the legacy distorted political space of Estonia and Latvia, we were able to highlight aspects that so far have remained hidden – such as shifts in the positions of political parties, and the main divides in preferences of voters' profiles and predictors behind those divisions. The LCA allowed capturing the degree to which people's preferences form distinct groups, what is the size, vote choice and socio-economic gradient of these groups – questions that are highly relevant for analysing the responsiveness of policymaking, so far scarcely covered in Central and Eastern Europe. Beyond those analytical achievements, we admit also some limitations, especially in operationalising political supply. The policy categories in the CMP database remain broad and do not allow running a detailed analysis of welfare politics. To tackle this problem, we ran an analysis with two alternative operationalisations of socio-economic dimensions that provide more solid evidence and confirmed the robustness of initial findings.

In predicting future social policy reforms in Estonia and Latvia, a more profound juxtaposition of political supply and demand is necessary. The current study revealed the importance of the socio-cultural dimension and its entwinement with socio--economic preferences along diverse voter groups formed on the bases of predictors different from those in the industrial era. Based on the discredited legacy of the political left in Estonia and Latvia, and the growing prominence of social policy issues that assume international interventions (climate, energy, health, immigration) this would be a politically important and academically intriguing avenue to explore.

Funding

References

Abou-Chadi, T. & Wagner, M. (2019). The Electoral Appeal of Party Strategies in Postindustrial Societies: When Can the Mainstream Left Succeed? *Journal of Politics*, 81(4), 1405–1419. https://doi.org/10.1086/704436.

Abou-Chadi, T., Mitteregger, R. & Mudde, C. (2021). *Left behind by the working class? Social democracy's electoral crisis and the rise of the radical right*. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Abteilung Analyse, Planung und Beratung. https://www.zora.uzh.ch/id/eprint/207180/.

Ansell, B. & Gingrich, J. (2021). The End of Human Capital Solidarity? In F. McCall Rosenbluth, and M. Weir (eds.), *Who Gets What? The new Politics of Insecurity*, Cambridge University Press, 52–78.

Attewell, D. (2021). Redistribution attitudes and vote choice across the educational divide. *European Journal of Political Research*. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12486.

Avlijaš, S. (2020). Beyond Neoliberalism? Revisiting the Welfare State in the Baltic States. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 72(4), 614–643. https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2019.1709622.

Bakker, R., & Hobolt, S. (2013). Measuring Party Positions. In G. Evans and N.D. de Graaf (eds.), *Political Choice Matters: Explaining the Strength of Class and Religious Cleavages in Cross National Perspective*, Oxford University Press, 27–45.

Beramendi, P., Häusermann, S., Kitschelt, H. & Kriesi, H. (2015). *The Politics of Advanced Capitalism*. Cambridge University Press.

Bohle, D., & Greskovits, B. (2012). *Capitalist diversity on Europe's periphery*. Cornell University Press.

Bruzelius, C. & Seeleib-Kaiser, M. (2018). European citizenship and social rights. In S. Seubert, M. Hoogenboom, T. Knijn, S.A. de Vries and F. van Waarden (eds.), *Moving Beyond Barriers: Prospects for EU Citizenship*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Busemeyer, M.R., Rathgeb, P. & Sahm, A.H.J. (2021). Authoritarian values and the welfare state: the social policy preferences of radical right voters. *West European Politics*, 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2021.1886497.

De Vries, C.E. & Marks, G. (2012). The struggle over dimensionality: A note on theory and empirics, *European Union Politics*, 13(2), 185–193. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116511435712.

Ehin, P., Saarts, T. & Jakobson, M.L. (2020) Estonia. In V. Hloušek and P. Kaniok P. (eds.), *The European Parliament Election of 2019 in East-Central Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-40858-9_5.

Evans, G. & Lipsmeyer, C.S. (2001). The Democratic Experience in Divided Societies: the Baltic States in Comparative Perspective. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 32(4), 379–401. https://doi.org/10.1080/01629770100000161.

Evans, G. & Whitefield, S. (1993). Identifying the Bases for Party Competition in Eastern Europe. *British Journal of Political Science*, 23(4), 521–548. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123400006712.

Gethin, A., Martínez-Toledano, C. & Piketty, T. (2021). Brahmin Left versus Merchant Right: Changing Political Cleavages in 21 Western Democracies, 1948–2020. https://datascience.iq.harvard.edu/files/pegroup/files/gethin_et_al_brahmin_left_merchant_right_01.pdf

Gingrich, J. & Häusermann, S. (2015): The decline of the working class vote, the reconfiguration of the welfare support coalition and consequences for the welfare state. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 25(1), 50–75. https://doi.org/10.1177/0958928714556970.

Green-Pedersen, C. (2007). The Growing Importance of Issue Competition: The Changing Nature of Party Competition in Western Europe. *Political Studies*, 55(3), 607–628. https://doi.org/10.1111%2Fj.1467-9248.2007.00686.x

Greskovits, B. (2007). Is East-Central Europe Backsliding? Economic Woes and Political Disaffection. *Journal of Democracy*, 18(4), 40–46. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/223233.

Greve, B. (2020). *Welfare populism and welfare chauvinism*. Policy Press.

Halikiopoulou, D. & 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*, 12(4), 427–448. https://doi.org/10.1017/S175577392000020X.

Häusermann, S. & Kriesi, H.P. (2015). What Do Voters Want? Dimensions and Configurations in Individual-Level Preferences and Party Choice. In P. Beramendi et al. (eds.), *The Politics of Advanced Capitalism*. Cambridge University Press, 202–230.

Häusermann, S., Picot, G. & Geering, D. (2013). Review Article: Rethinking Party Politics and the Welfare State – Recent Advances in the Literature. *British Journal of Political Science*, 43(1), 221–240. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123412000336.

Häusermann, S., Pinggera, M, Ares, M. & Enggist, M. (2021). Class and social policy in the knowledge economy. *European Journal of Political Research*, https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12463.

Hobolt, S.B. & De Vries, C.E. (2015). Issue Entrepreneurship and Multiparty Competition. *Comparative Political Studies*, 48(9), 1159–1185. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414015575030.

Hobolt, S.B. & Tilley, J. (2016). Fleeing the centre: the rise of challenger parties in the aftermath of the euro crisis, *West European Politics*, 39(5), 971–991. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2016.1181871.

Hooghe, L. & Marks, G. (2017). Cleavage theory meets Europe's crises: Lipset, Rokkan, and the transnational cleavage. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25(1), 109–135. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2017.1310279.

Kalmus, V., Lauristin, M., Opermann, S. & Vihalemm, T. (2020). *Researching Estonian Transformation: Morphogenetic Reflections*. University of Tartu Press.

Kitschelt, H. (1994). *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*. Cambridge University Press.

Kitschelt, H. & Rehm, P. (2018). Determinants of Dimension Dominance. In P. Manow, B. Palier and H. Schwander (eds.), *Welfare Democracies and Party Politics: Explaining Electoral Dynamics in Times of Changing Welfare Capitalism*. Oxford University Press.

Kostelka, F. & Rovny, J. (2019). It's Not the Left: Ideology and Protest Participation in Old and New Democracies. *Comparative Political Studies*, 52(11), 1677–1712. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414019830717

Mair, P. (1989). The Problem of Party System Change. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 1(3), 251–276. https://doi.org/10.1177/0951692889001003001.

Marks, G., Hooghe, L., Nelson, M. & Edwards, E. (2006). Party Competition and European Integration in the East and West Different Structure, Same Causality. *Comparative Political Studies*, 39(2), 155–175. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414005281932

Manow, P., Palier, B. & Schwander, H. (eds) (2018). *Welfare Democracies and Party Politics: Explaining Electoral Dynamics in Times of Changing Welfare Capitalism*. Oxford University Press.

Moniz, P. & Wlezien, C. (2020). Issue Salience and Political Decisions. *Oxford Research Encylopedias*. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.1361

Morgan, K.J. (2018). Varieties of Electoral Dilemmas: Partisan Jousting over Welfare States and Immigration in a Changing Europe. In P. Manow, B. Palier and H. Schwander (eds.), *Welfare Democracies and Party Politics: Explaining Electoral Dynamics in Times of Changing Welfare Capitalism*. Oxford University Press.

Norkus, Z. (2011). Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian post-communist development in the comparative perspective. In *Baltic way(s) of human development: twenty years on*. Eesti Koostöö Kogu, 22–30. https://kogu.ee/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/eia_eng_2011.pdf

Mudde, C. (2019). *The Far Right Today*. Polity Press.

Oberski, D. (2016). Mixture Models: Latent Profile and Latent Class Analysis. In D. Robertson and M. Kaptein (eds.), *Modern Statistical Methods for HCI*. Springer International Publishing, 275–287.

Pierson, P. (2001). *The New Politics of the Welfare State*. Oxford University Press.

Rathgeb. P. & Busemeyer, M.R. (2021). How to study the populist radical right and the welfare state? *West European Politics*, 45(1), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2021.1925421.

Rehm, P., Hacker, J.S. & Schlesinger, M. (2012). Insecure Alliances: Risk, Inequality, and Support for the Welfare State. *American Political Science Review*, 106(2), 386–406. https://doi.org/doi:10.1017/S0003055412000147.

Rohrschneider, R.; Schmitt-Beck, R. & Jung, F. (2012). Short-term factors versus long-term values: Explaining the 2009 election results. *Electoral Studies*, 31(1), 20–34. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2011.06.006.

Rohrschneider, R. & Whitefiled, S. (2010). Consistent choice sets? The stances of political parties towards European integration in ten Central East European democracies, 2003–2007. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 17(1), 55–75, https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760903464903.

Roosma, F. & van Oorschot, W. (2017). The social legitimacy of welfare states in European regions and countries: balancing between popular preferences and evaluations. In P. Kennett and N. Lendvai-Bainton (eds.), *Handbook of European Social Policy*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Rovny, J. (2014). Communism, Federalism, and Ethnic Minorities: Explaining Party Competition Patterns in Eastern Europe. *World Politics*, 66(4), 669–708. https://doi.org/doi:10.1017/S0043887114000227.

Rovny, J. (2015). Party Competition Structure in Eastern Europe: Aggregate Uniformity versus Idiosyncratic Diversity? *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*, 29(1), 40–60. https://doi.org/10.1177/0888325414567535.

Rovny, J. & Whitefiled, S. (2019). Issue dimensionality and party competition in turbulent times. *Party Politics*, 25(1), 4–11. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068818816970.

Rueda, D. (2007) *Social Democracy Inside Out: Partisanship and Labor Market Policy in Industrialized Democracies*. Oxford University Press.

Saarts, T. (2011). Comparative Party System Analysis in Central and Eastern Europe: the Case of the Baltic States. *Studies of Transition States and Societies*, 3(3), 83−104. http://publications.tlu.ee/index.php/stss/article/view/86

Saarts, T. (2016). The ethnic-colonial communist legacy and the formation of the Estonian and Latvian Party systems. *Trames*, 20(70/65), 2, 115–143. https://kirj.ee/public/trames_pdf/2016/issue_2/Trames-2016-2-115-143.pdf

Saarts, T. & Saar, E. (2021). When the Ethnic Cleavage Overshadows the Class Cleavage in a Post-Communist Country and Why We Should Care? *European Politics and Society*, 23(2), 223–242. https://doi.org/10.1080/23745118.2020.1858397.

Stefanovic, D. & Evans, G. (2019). Multiple Winning Formulae? Far Right Voters and Parties in Eastern Europe. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 71(9), 1443–1473. https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2019.1653447.

Tavits, M. & Letki, N. (2013). From Values to Interests? The Evolution of Party Competition in New Democracies. *The Journal of Politics*, 76(1), 246–258. https://doi.org/10.1017/S002238161300131X.

Toots, A. (2022). Social Governance Reforms in a Quasi-Bismarckian Welfare State: How Estonia Moved from Tripartism to Direct State Management. *Studies of Transition States and Societies*, 14(1): http://publications.tlu.ee/index.php/stss/article/view/906.

Toots, A. & Lauri, T. (2022). Nation (re)building through social investment: The Baltic reform trajectories. In J.L. Garritzmann, S. Häusermann and B. Palier (eds.), *The World Politics of Social Investment Volume II: The Politics of Varying Social Investment Strategies*. Oxford University Press.

Tucker, J.A. (2015). Comparative Opportunities: The Evolving Study of Political Behavior in Eastern Europe. *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*, 29(2), 420–432. https://doi.org/10.1177/0888325414559051.

Van Oorschot, W. (2010) Public perceptions of the economic, moral, social and migration consequences of the welfare state: an empirical analysis of welfare state legitimacy. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 20(1), 19–31. https://doi.org/10.1177/0958928709352538

Volkens, A.; Lehmann, P.; Matthieß, T.; Merz, N.; Regel, S. & Weßels, B. (2017). *The Manifesto Data Collection. Manifesto Project (MRG/CMP/MARPOR). Version 2017b*. Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB).

Appendix 1. The list of issues and their wording used to operationalise dimensions of political supply

|	Wording	Direction
Socio-economic dimension		
Per504	**Welfare State Expansion**: Favourable mentions of need to introduce, maintain or expand any public social service or social security scheme. This includes, for example, government funding of: health care, child care, elder care and pensions, social housing.	Left
Per505	**Welfare State Limitation**: Limiting state expenditures on social services or social security. Favourable mentions of the social subsidiary principle (i.e. private care before state care).	Right
Socio-cultural dimension		
Per107	**Internationalism: Positive**. Need for international co-operation, including co-operation with specific countries other than those coded in 101. May also include references to the: need for aid to developing countries; need for world planning of resources; support for global governance; need for international courts; and support for UN or other international organisations.	Open
Per108	**European Community/Union: Positive.** Favourable mentions of European Community/Union in general. May include the: desirability of the manifesto country joining (or remaining a member); desirability of expanding the European Community/Union; desirability of increasing the ECs/EUs competences; and desirability of expanding the competences of the European Parliament.	Open
Per109	**Internationalism: Negative.** Negative references to international co-operation. Favourable mentions of national independence and sovereignty with regard to the manifesto country's foreign policy, isolation and/or unilateralism as opposed to internationalism.	Close
Per110	**European Community/Union: Negative.** Negative references to the European Community/Union. May include: opposition to specific European policies which are preferred by European authorities; and opposition to the net-contribution of the manifesto country to the EU budget.	Close
Per601	**National Way of Life: Positive.** Favourable mentions of the manifesto country's nation, history, and general appeals. May include: support for established national ideas; general appeals to pride of citizenship; appeals to patriotism; appeals to nationalism; and suspension of some freedoms in order to protect the state against subversion.	Close

Source: Manifesto Project Database

Appendix 2. Operationalisation of socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions

Party	Date	Issues in MPD — Socio-Economic Dimension		Issues in MPD — Socio-Cultural Dimension						Composite Index		Degree of Dispersion* Vote Share	
		Welfare Expansion — Left (504)	Welfare Limitation — Right (505)	Inter-nationalism: positive — Open1 (107)	EU: positive — Open2 (108)	Inter-nationalism: negative — Close1 (109)	EU: negative — Close2 (110)	Int/EU — Open_all	National way of living: positive — Close3 (601)	Socio-Economic Dimension	Socio-Cultural Dimension	Socio-Economic Dimension	Socio-Cultural Dimension
ESTONIA													
ER (29%)	2011	8.7	0.0	2.7	0.7	0.0	0.0	3.4	4.1	-8.7	-0.7	1.12	0.52
ERL/EKRE (2%)	2011	10.4	0.0	0.8	1.2	0.0	0.0	2.0	15.1	-10.4	-13.1	0.58	-1.73
IRL (21%)	2011	15.0	0.0	2.4	0.9	0.0	0.0	3.3	5.6	-15.0	-2.3	-0.89	0.23
K (23%)	2011	16.0	0.0	0.7	1.3	0.0	0.0	2.0	4.7	-16.0	-2.7	-1.21	0.16
SDE (17%)	2011	11.0	0.0	1.3	1.3	0.0	0.0	2.6	1.6	-11.0	1.0	0.39	0.82
ER (28%)	2015	5.4	0.7	1.1	1.8	0.1	0.1	2.7	8.3	-4.7	-5.6	1.15	-1.60
ERL/EKRE (8%)	2015	6.7	0.0	1.8	0.0	2.5	0.4	-1.1	12.8	-6.7	-13.9	0.82	-0.23
IRL (14%)	2015	15.0	0.0	1.5	1.5	0.2	0.0	2.8	5.6	-15.0	-2.8	-0.56	0.23
K (25%)	2015	19.5	0.0	3.2	0.6	0.0	0.0	3.8	2.0	-19.5	1.8	-1.30	0.99
SDE (15%)	2015	12.3	0.0	1.6	0.4	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.4	-12.3	0.6	-0.11	0.60

Party	Year												
EKRE (18%)	2019	8.5	0.0	0.3	0.0	1.2	2.1	-3.0	8.2	-8.5	-11.2	1.07	-1.22
ER (29%)	2019	10.8	0.6	2.1	3.0	0.0	0.0	5.1	3.4	-10.2	1.7	0.51	1.02
IRL (11%)	2019	10.6	0.4	1.6	1.7	0.0	1.6	1.7	11.1	-10.3	-9.4	0.50	-0.91
K (23%)	2019	14.0	0.0	1.8	0.8	0.0	0.0	2.6	2.9	-14.0	-0.3	-0.73	0.67
SDE (10%)	2019	15.9	0.0	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.9	2.6	-15.9	-1.7	-1.35	0.43
LATVIA													
NA (14%)	2011	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	31.4	-5.9	-31.4	0.79	-1.57
SC/SDPS (29%)	2011	17.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-17.1	0.0	-1.68	0.47
ZRP (21%)	2011	6.4	0.0	1.6	9.5	0.0	0.0	11.1	3.2	-6.4	7.9	0.68	0.99
ZZS (12%)	2011	9.7	0.0	3.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.2	16.1	-9.7	-12.9	-0.05	-0.36
U (19%)	2011	8.3	0.0	3.3	3.3	0.0	0.0	6.6	6.7	-8.3	-0.1	0.26	0.47
NA (17%)	2014	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	-16.7	-15.0	-1.26	-1.44
SC/SDPS (23%)	2014	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	-2.4	0.0	-2.1	-2.4	1.14	0.47
ZZS (20%)	2014	10.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	5.6	-10.0	-4.5	-0.16	0.15
U (22%)	2014	7.3	0.0	3.6	1.8	0.0	0.0	5.4	5.5	-7.3	-0.1	0.28	0.82
NAT (11%)	2018	6.9	0.0	3.5	1.7	0.0	1.7	3.5	15.5	-6.9	-12.0	0.85	-1.48
SDPS (20%)	2018	21.1	0.0	4.2	1.4	0.0	0.0	5.6	1.4	-21.1	4.2	-1.74	1.31
ZZS (10%)	2018	14.0	0.0	0.0	3.5	0.0	0.0	3.5	7	-14.0	-3.5	-0.45	-0.02
U (7%)	2018	12.0	0.0	0.0	5.3	0.0	0.0	5.3	4	-12.0	1.3	-0.08	0.81
AP! (12%)	2018	8.3	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	4.2	-8.3	-3.2	0.60	0.03
JKP (13.7%)	2018	7.1	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	1.4	8.6	-7.1	-7.2	0.82	-0.65

Source: Manifesto Project Database

Appendix 3. Alternative operationalisation of the socio-economic dimension in ana-lysing political supply in Estonia and Latvia in three national elections
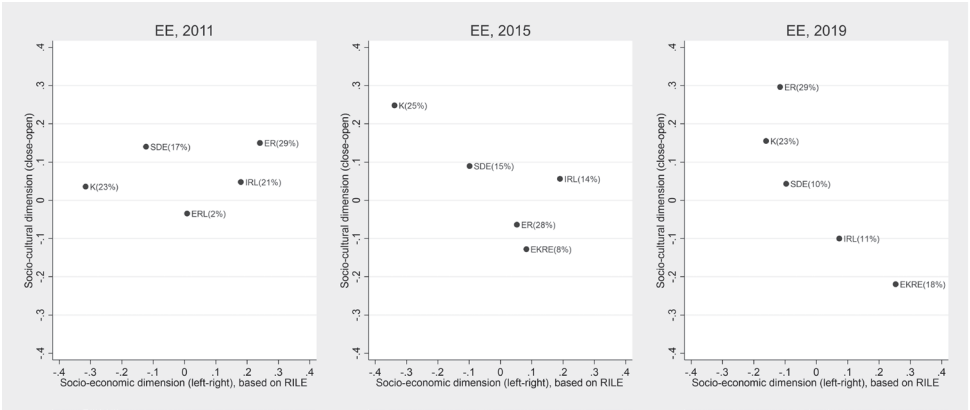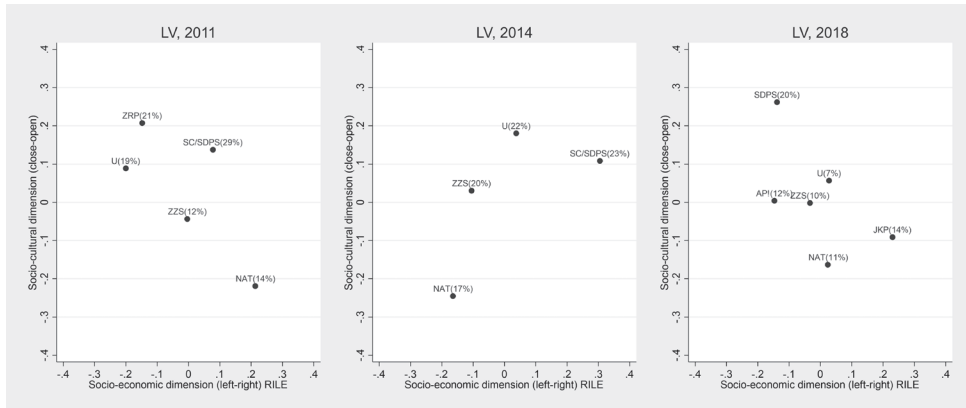

Panel A

Source: Manifesto Project Database

Notes: Percentages in brackets show parties' percentages of votes in particular elections. Both dimensions indicate the weighted saliency which is calculated as the degree of dispersion of issues of particular dimension (standard deviation) multiplied by the share of party popularity. Parties, parties' abbreviations and their affiliations to party families as defined by Manifesto Project Database are as follows: **SDE** – Social Democratic Party (SOC); **K** – Centre Party (LIB); **ER** – Estonian Reform Party (LIB); **IRL** – Pro Patria and Res Publica Union (CON); **ERL/EKRE** – Estonian People's Union (AGR) that transformed to Conservative People's Party of Estonia (NAT).

The meaning of RILE index: Right-left position of party (Volkens et al. 2017): The importance of external security and defence, freedom and human rights, constitutionalism, political authority, free market economy, economic incentives, anti-protectionism, economic orthodoxy, welfare limitations, national way of life, traditional morality, law and order, and civic mindedness as **indication of the right leaning supply**. The importance of anti-imperialism, internationalism, anti-military, market regulation, economic planning, protectionism, controlled economy, nationalisation, welfare state expansion, educational expansion, labour groups' protection, and democracy **as the indication of left-leaning supply**.

Panel B

Source: Manifesto Project Database

Notes: Percentages in brackets show parties' percentages of votes in particular elections. Both dimensions indicate the weighted saliency which is calculated as the degree of dispersion of issues of particular dimension (standard deviation) multiplied by the share of party popularity.

Parties, parties' abbreviations and their affiliations to party families as defined by Manifesto Project Database are as follows: **SC/SDPS** – Social-democratic party HARMONY (COM); **AP!** – Development/For (LIB); **U** – Unity (CON); **ZRP** – Zatlers' Reform Party (CON); **JKP** – New Conservative Party (CON); **NA** – National Alliance ALL FOR LATVIA!-For F (NAT); **ZZS** – Greens' and Farmers' Union (AGR).

The meaning of RILE index: Right-left position of party (Volkens et al. 2017): The importance of external security and defence, freedom and human rights, constitutionalism, political authority, free market economy, economic incentives, anti-protectionism, economic orthodoxy, welfare limitations, national way of life, traditional morality, law and order, and civic mindedness as **indication of the right leaning supply**. The importance of anti-imperialism, internationalism, anti-military, market regulation, economic planning, protectionism, controlled economy, nationalisation, welfare state expansion, educational expansion, labour groups' protection, and democracy **as the indication of left-leaning supply**.

Appendix 4. Parameters of fit of LCA analysis

	Estonia	Latvia
	Estimated Class Population Shares	
Class 1	0.65	0.56
Class 2	0.35	0.44
AIC(1)	19411.41	9107.176
BIC(1)	19461.37	9150.527
AIC(2)	18234.03	8541.479
BIC(2)	**18339.51**	**8633.00**
AIC(3)	18216.72	8504.87
BIC(3)	18377.72	8644.56
Number of Observations	1904	913

Appendix 5. Predicted probabilities of belonging to minority (MINORITY; left panel) and age (AGE; right panel) across voters' profiles, Estonia