

# **TURNING RIGHT? SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE AND THE RECEPTIVENESS OF EUROPEAN WORKERS TO THE EXTREME RIGHT**

## **REPORT ON THE SURVEY ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

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## **GLOSSARY**

ERA:	extreme right-wing affinity
ERPA:	extreme right-wing party affinity
ERVI:	extreme right-wing voting intention
ERW:	extreme right-wing
RWE:	right-wing extremism
SEC:	socio-economic change
SDO:	social dominance orientation
SVP:	Schweizerische Volkspartei
FPÖ:	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs
VB:	Vlaams Blok
DPP:	Dansk Folkeparti (Danish People's Party)
FN:	Front National
MIÉP:	Magyar Igazág és Élet Pártja (Hungarian Justice and Life Party)
AN:	Alleanza Nazionale



## **INTRODUCTION**

In the past years, a number of European countries and regions, including France, Denmark, Germany, Austria, Northern Italy, and most recently Belgium, where the Vlaams Blok managed to win nearly a fifth of the vote in Flanders at the last general elections, and Switzerland, where Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP), at 26.6%, won the largest share of the vote in the parliamentary elections of October 2003, have seen an alarming increase in support for right-wing populist or extremist parties and movements. Attempts to explain the rapid rise of right-wing extremism and populism have often referred to insecure socio-economic status and fear of social failure as key factors for the emergence of xenophobic attitudes and extreme right-wing ideologies: their origin is often seen in the difficulty people have to cope with the dynamics of social change. In this view, 'modernisation losers' would tend to develop 'fundamentalist' reactions that make them more receptive to right-wing extremism or populism. However, little research has been carried out in this area to specifically address the question as to how radical populism and right-wing extremism in Europe are linked with socio-economic change.

The main objective of the SIREN project is to contribute to the understanding of the political reverberations of recent transformations of the labour market and work organisation by means of an empirical, comparative study. Focusing on subjective perceptions of and individual reactions to socio-economic change, the project wants to create original knowledge for the debate on flexibility and security in the European social models and provide an empirical assessment of the extent to which changes in working life can be said to make people receptive to right-wing extremism and populism and, in particular, to xenophobia, nationalism and racism. Moreover, grounded in a deeper understanding of the interconnections between socio-economic change and individual reactions, the project means to develop recommendations for fine-tuning policies in areas such as employment, labour market and social security. Thus the project will bring together two fields of research that have hardly been related up to now: research on changes in working life, labour market developments and social security on the one hand and, on the other, analyses of political orientations and right-wing extremism and radical populism. It is important to note however that the project does not put its main focus on the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of voters of the extreme right, a field already covered by a number of studies. Rather, the focus is on the question as to how people are actually affected by changes in work and what consequences this has for their political orientation. In other words, this is not a study on right-wing electorates in Europe. Neither does it look for cultural explanations for extreme right-wing affinity or extreme right-wing voting intention. The main explanatory focus lies on work-related socio-economic change.

The project covers *Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy* and *Switzerland*. What is special about the SIREN consortium is the integration of Hungary and Switzerland, countries which are rarely taken in account in European research. The project, which started in 2001, runs in four phases, two of which have already been

completed. The first phase was a literature review, for which each national team provided an overview of the national literature on changes in working life, on right-wing extremism and radical populism and on the interrelation between these two areas (Poglia Mileti et al., 2002). The second phase of the SIREN project involved qualitative research, with over 30 in-depth interviews carried out in each country analysing individual frames of interpretation and the strategies people adopt in order to cope with socio-economic change (Hentges et al., 2003). In the present third phase, of which this report discusses the results, a representative survey was conducted on subjective perceptions of socio-economic change and receptiveness to right-wing extremism and radical populism in eight countries. The final policy recommendations and dissemination stage of the project is to concentrate on the development of policy recommendations, including workshops with policy makers and an international conference, to be held in spring and summer 2004.

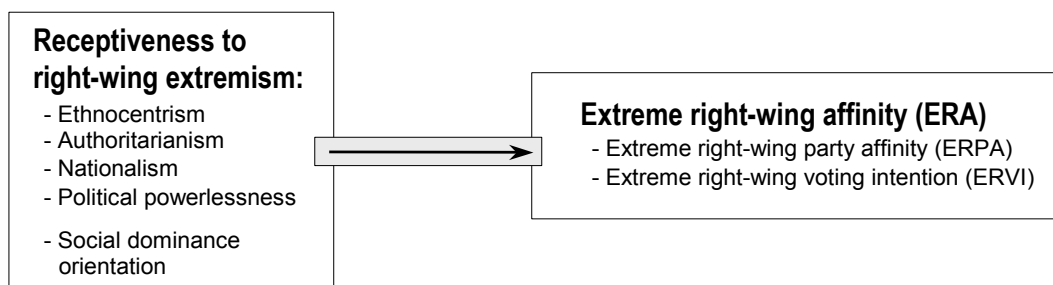
The comparative approach has been embedded in all steps of the project and did not stop at national studies being put together for publication: All methodological tools were discussed and developed with a comparative perspective in mind, thereby providing an original approach to the empirical work at the European level.

### *Structure of the report of the survey data analyses*

This report consists of four major parts. In a first part of this report, we will introduce the conceptual framework and go into the theory and research on which it is based. A second part then describes the survey design, the questionnaire and the operationalisation of concepts, and the methodology used in the analyses.

The third and most substantive part reports the survey results in two distinct empirical parts. In the first part we explore the antecedents of socio-economic change (SEC). The second part relates to the explanation of right-wing extremism and populism, and to the role socio-economic change plays in this explanation. We will therefore distinguish between two concepts, as depicted in Figure 0-1.

**Figure 0-1: Relations between extreme right-wing receptiveness and affinity indicators**



First we will look at ‘receptiveness’ to right-wing extremism or populism. With receptiveness we mean a series of attitudes which, as we know from research, indicate a propensity to sympathise with or even vote for right-wing extremist or populist parties.

Concretely we will look at four ‘classic’ attitudes representing different approaches in this research context: ethnocentrism, authoritarianism, nationalism and political powerlessness. As a fifth, we will also consider a concept which is sometimes considered to be a ‘new’ or ‘modern’ form of racism, namely ‘social dominance orientation’. A detailed description of these concepts, and their theoretical embedding, will follow in the theoretical section of this report.

Next, as shown in Figure 0-1, we will look at two indicators of what we call extreme right-wing affinity (ERA), meaning a more explicit affinity with the extreme or populist right, articulated through an affinity with right-wing extremist or populist parties. A first indicator of ERA is extreme right-wing party affinity (ERPA). Extreme right-wing party affinity indicates how people, apart from a voting (intention) context, assess the ideas and viewpoints of extreme or populist right-wing parties in their countries. A second indicator of extreme right-wing affinity (ERA), related to voting behaviour, is extreme right-wing voting intention (ERVI). As this indicator is about the intention to vote, it is still an attitudinal component, and not a behavioural one.

For these indicators we will discuss the influence of individual socio-economic changes regarding working life. And also, in this empirical part of the report we will look at the role social identification variables play as specific intermediate variables (mediators) between socio-economic change and extreme right-wing attitudes. We will partly do this by taking up organizational identification as an explanatory variable in some of the bivariate and multivariate analyses of extreme right-wing receptiveness and affinity, and partly by introducing a separate path analysis, exploring different pathways to extreme right-wing affinity.



# 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## 1.1. Socio-economic change

The larger-scale socio-economic changes of the last decade or so in Europe and the rest of the world have been dealt with extensively in the literature report (Poglia Mileti et al., 2002). We therefore refer to this report for a detailed discussion of these developments. Because, although we start off from changes at a macro level, such as globalisation, in theoretical terms, in this study, we put the *individual* at the very heart of a complex relationship, making subjective perceptions of individuals a central concept of our work since it provides the connection between two concepts: on the one hand, the way in which different actors see, feel, experience, understand and explain changes in the social and economic world, the way in which they have been affected in their working life and how they perceive and cope with the effects; and, on the other hand, how they express these social changes in political or ideological terms, referring to specific world views. The basic question in this context is: Do we understand better why people are receptive to extremist or radical populist ideas if we take into consideration how they experience changes in working life? This means we first had to look at ways to capture in our survey how general socio-economic changes are reflected in people's working life or working environment. We therefore turned to research on the quality of working life and tried to identify some major aspects of work that we thought might have an influence on people's self-conception if they changed as a result of more general socio-economic processes. One of these aspects of working life is income, probably one of the most important indicators of financial power as well as of the more general socio-economic position of working people. Income probably also forms the closest link between one's job and everyday life in general: The income level quite directly determines much of what people can or cannot do in their normal day-to-day life. Another aspect is job autonomy. Melvin Kohn et al. showed how differences in autonomy influenced the values and perceptions of workers (Kohn, 1995). Subsequent research has pointed out that job autonomy can even have a direct effect on the economic attitudes of workers (De Weerd & De Witte, 2001). The qualitative phase of the research (Hentges et al., 2003) drew our attention to the importance of changes in social atmosphere in the workplace. The qualitative interviews frequently reported a decrease in social atmosphere, which was interpreted as a consequence of more general socio-economic changes and the often blind race for profit by management and was said to cause stress, anxiety and even anger. Next, we thought of the amount of work people had to do and, more precisely, if there had been changes in this amount. The assumption was that a strong increase in workload, not accompanied by any kind of compensation (e.g. increase in income or autonomy) could instigate feelings of deprivation and cause frustration.

Thus, rather than just looking at the structural socio-economic positions of working people in the context of the appeal of the extreme right, which has already been studied in detail, the main interest of our investigation was to study the effects of socio-

economic *change*, and, in particular, forms of growing insecurity in the job domain and its link with receptiveness to right-wing extremism and populism. It therefore seemed the obvious choice to try and capture individual experiences of change in people's working life in a broad sense, because change is one of the most important reasons of insecurity.

## **1.2. Receptiveness (and voting behaviour) to right-wing extremism**

### **1.2.1. Theoretical approach: demand versus supply**

At the individual level, our investigation adopts an approach of explaining receptiveness to right-wing extremism (RWE) and RWE voting at the level of shared individual socio-economic experiences, which can be considered a demand model. Demand models see political parties as competitors who constantly try to attract the largest coalition of socio-economic preference groups possible (Kitschelt, 1994) or as representations of dominant social cleavages (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). These parties' actions, in this view, are based on the demands of the voters. Such research is often limited to investigating either the 'who' (who tends to vote extreme right more than others) or the 'why' (why do people vote extreme right). As we will go on to show, this study addresses both, the 'who' and the 'why'.

Besides the individual level, and to some extent due to the advanced possibilities of statistical methods, interest in the impact of macro-level factors has been growing (see e.g. Lubbers, 2001). Multilevel analysis can be used to analyse variables at country level (such as gross domestic product, size of ethnic minorities, etc.) and to assess their relative effect compared to individual-level explanations. Still, requirements regarding the number of countries needed to be able to perform multilevel analyses<sup>1</sup> might limit the possibilities here, given the fact that we only have data on eight countries. Macro-level explanations will therefore be addressed as much as possible as they can provide valuable information for our investigation, which is one of the few studies so far to combine voting behaviour and political attitudes while also supplying data on concrete experiences of economic change at the individual level. Still, because of the relatively small number of countries involved (at least from a methodological point of view), possibilities for taking on macro-level variables in the analyses are limited.

For some of the common sociological explanations, our data are unfit to be tested. This is because these explanations mainly address composition effects of the entire populations in the different countries: Does the socio-economic composition of the country population in some way account for the success of the extreme right-wing or populist right? With a sample of only working people, it would be inappropriate to

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<sup>1</sup> Frequently, a '30/30 rule' is suggested (e.g. Kreft, 1996), which means researchers should strive for a sample of at least 30 groups (in this case countries) with at least 30 individuals per group. For a discussion on the choices and costs of sample sizes at the two levels, we refer, a.o., to Snijders and Bosker (1993 & 1999).

assess the pertinence of explanations pointing at the composition of the entire population. Still, some theoretical discussions *can* be addressed. For example, the frequent criticism of demand-side models, as we present one here, i.e. that it cannot account for the fact that both blue-collar workers and the self-employed are overrepresented in right-wing electorates (Ivarsflaten, 2002), can be addressed through this dataset.

### 1.2.2. *Models of explanation of extreme right-wing voting*

A vast amount of research into which socio-political attitudes influence the propensity of people to vote for ERW parties already exists (for an overview: Lubbers, 2001). Since it is not the aim of this report to take stock of this body of research, nor to address theoretical discussions, we will only discuss the four theoretical approaches that can be found in the analytical framework of this survey. Still, we would first like to confront our approach with three major streams of voting research. First, our approach cannot be considered an economic model. In economic or rational voter models, the core idea is that voters choose parties that stand for issues they find most important, and they often focus on the matters of issue voting and ‘floating’ electorates. Probably the most important reason not to consider our model an economic model is that ‘traditional’ rational voter approaches tend to explicitly turn away from the origin of voters’ values, while this is our main concern.

Secondly, our approach cannot be seen as purely sociological, since we are not in the first place interested in which groups in society are over/underrepresented in the ERW electorate, but more in why this would be the case for all of these individuals. However, models are never really exclusive. By taking the occupational position of individuals into consideration for the analyses, for example, we in a way adopt a sociological-model framework, looking at differences between socio-economic groups as well as sectoral and employment differences. At the same time, it is not purely sociological, as we said, because the main focus is not really on who is receptive to RWE or even has an ERVI, but more on why this is or is not the case. That is why the *social-psychological* model finally might fit the description of our approach best, certainly in the centrality it ascribes to the individual. The focus, within a broader sociological model, will lie on individual experiences of change, and how they influence ERW receptiveness attitudes and/or ERVI.

We use the term receptiveness attitudes in this research. By doing so, we want to make clear that we start off from the conclusions of an extensive research tradition into which attitudes influence ERW voting. We therefore decided to take up the most important variables from different theoretical approaches and treat them as ‘conclusions’ and not as research questions. Four theoretical approaches are thus integrated into our conceptual framework in this way (for other examples of such integrated models, see e.g. Lubbers, 2001).

A first approach started off from Lipset’s famous work ‘Political man’ (Lipset, 1959), but has undergone numerous modifications since then. We will use *ethnic competition*

*theory* in this research, because this seems to be the theory that is most directed towards the explanation of the sociological structure of modern right-wing electorates by combining realistic conflict theory (Campbell, 1967) with social identification theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Conflict theory predicts that scarcity leads to actual competition between groups. Exclusionist policies of ERW parties build on such distinctions, e.g. between nationals and foreigners, thus claiming to serve the alleged interests of nationals and making themselves an attractive option for people who experience competition from foreigners. This competition is also linked with identification processes, through which people build a positive in-group identity by contrasting it to a negative out-group. Since ethnic competition has proved a fruitful approach in previous research, we chose to operationalise ethnic competition through the concept of prejudice against immigrants.

Next, there is the *theory of psychological interests*, an explanation of ERW voting behaviour stemming from the psychological tradition of the Frankfurt School, evolving around the idea of the ‘authoritarian personality’ (Adorno et al., 1950). Authoritarianism was first investigated as a possible explanation for the surprising overrepresentation of blue-collar workers in the NSDAP electorate, but has come a long way since then. In present research an authoritarian personality is referred to as a combination of a need of submission and a need of domination. Attractive parties for the authoritarian personality are parties whose programmes formulate strict moral codes – mainly with regard to law and order, but also to cultural aspects – and allow people to dominate over individuals who deviate from these norms. This is exactly what extreme right-wing and right-wing populist parties do, as has been demonstrated by research in various countries (e.g. for Belgium: Scheepers, Billiet & De Witte, 1995 or Billiet, Swyngedouw & Carton, 1992; for France: Mayer & Perrineau, 1992; for Germany: Falter & Klein, 1994). In earlier research, authoritarianism was seen as a personality trait, predicting ethnocentric attitudes. At present however, authoritarianism in this research tradition is considered to be an explanatory socio-political attitude, just like or next to ethnocentric attitudes. Basically, recent theory and measurement instruments hereby draw upon three dimensions (Altemeyer, 1988): conventionalism, authoritarian submission and authoritarian aggression. It is this approach we adopted from the theory of psychological interests in this research.

A third important stream of research evolved around the *theory of social disintegration*. This theory looks at the effects of disintegration from society, through different processes of modernisation, social exclusion, etc., on people’s voting behaviour, more precisely on ERW voting. Different aspects of this idea have been indicated. First, in moments of crisis individuals can be disappointed by existing politics, which weakens their ties with political parties and increases their political mobility. Especially people who experience disintegration in times of crisis tend to long for former better times. It is this kind of ‘nostalgia’ a lot of ERW parties appeal to (‘those good old times before migrants came to our country, took our jobs, violated our culture, etc.’). Another important notion is that people in times of crisis are more receptive to new group bonds (Scheepers, Billiet & De Witte, 1995) because of the need for new forms of integration



times of crisis bring about. The strong leaders and clear symbols that tend to mark extreme right-wing parties nowadays (Cheles, 1995) have sometimes led to naming this theory a theory of symbolic interests. Of course, leaders and symbols are important markers of the identity ERW parties propose to those people as a substitute form of (social) integration, but there are additional factors. Nationalism, for example, is another key element in the identity formation of ERW parties. Referring to national pride is a way of positively stereotyping the in-group and can therefore be used as a defence mechanism against other social losses. This is where social disintegration theory gets linked to this research project, in that it sometimes has been connected with the ‘losers of modernisation’ thesis. This thesis suggests that in modern society developments advance so fast and require constant adaptation, which often leads to individuals feeling they lose grip on social change. The qualitative interviews carried out during an earlier research stage of this project (Hentges et al., 2003) showed that, as a consequence, people often tend to find other social groups to blame and that those people are more likely to sympathise with, if not to vote for, ERW parties. According to Falter and Klein, this is even a natural reaction (Falter & Klein, 1994). In sum, we presume that ‘disintegrated individuals’ – because of the important and rapid socio-economic changes of the last ten years – are more likely to be receptive to ERW parties or right-wing populism because the nationalism they proclaim is an attractive and clear substitute for social integration.

A final approach we wanted to integrate into our framework is the *theory of political dissatisfaction and protest voting*. The idea behind this theory is that people who are adversely affected by socio-economic change might develop political dissatisfaction. This dissatisfaction, which can develop both from a feeling of low political efficacy (political powerlessness) or from political anomie (not understanding politics), might then lead to protest voting as the ultimate reaction if people cannot see any solutions provided by the political ‘establishment’. Why it is exactly that protest voters choose ERW or populist parties over other opposition parties, has been said to be due to the ‘outcast’ profile of many ERW parties, which makes them attractive protest parties (Van den Brug, Fennema & Tillie, 2000), certainly as long as they are in an opposition role. The electoral relapse of both the Lijst Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands and the FPÖ in Austria after their government participation seems to support the need of the outcast profile to safeguard the attraction of ERW parties for protest voters. Of course, exclusive attention to protest voting as an explanation has proven to be problematic, because large parts of the electorate have shown an affinity with extreme right-wing ideology itself as well (see a.o. Stöss, 1990; Falter & Klein, 1994; Billiet & De Witte, 1995; Scheepers, Billiet & De Witte, 1995; Mayer, 1996). It is for this reason, a.o., that this theoretical approach is just one among four we chose to include in our theoretical set-up.

In addition we decided to integrate a ‘new’ theoretical approach (at least in the context of this area of research) which has been receiving growing attention over the last few years: the *concept of social dominance orientation* (SDO). This concept has been defined as a general conception of inter-group relations, indicating to which extent

someone prefers these to be structured in an egalitarian or hierarchic way (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth & Malle, 1994). Thus this concept reflects the strength of people's inclination to classify groups on a superiority versus inferiority dimension, as well as the support for a policy that preserves social inequality. This motivation to dominate over people was originally seen as part of the concept of authoritarianism (Maslow, 1943), but subsequent research showed these concepts to be virtually unrelated (Altemeyer, 1998; Duriez & Van Hiel, 2002) and to be independently but strongly related to conservative opinions like nationalism, hard-line crime fighting, support of military programmes, etc. (for an overview: Pratto, 1999).

### *Conclusion*

In sum, four concepts from four theoretical approaches were selected for operationalisation to form the 'core' of the psychological part of the general theoretical model of this study. The concept of prejudice against immigrants or competition was derived from the theory of psychological interests. Authoritarianism was also borrowed from the theory of psychological interests. From social disintegration theory we derived our interest in nationalism. Political powerlessness came into the picture through the theories of political dissatisfaction and protest voting.

All of these concepts turned out to have a theoretical background that links them to the problematic of the far and extreme right, while also providing links with socio-economic change through the recurring concept of deprivation, be it as subjective deprivation, the losers of modernisation thesis, etc.

Social dominance orientation (SDO) will be used to assess the theory of what is sometimes called the 'new racism', which we will test in addition to the aforementioned 'classic' theories. The next section will go on to show how these links come together in a general explanatory framework.

## **1.3. Hypothesis on the link and conceptual framework**

### **1.3.1. Conclusions from the literature report**

The literature review carried out earlier in the SIREN project leads to the conclusion that only very little theory and research exists on a possible link between socio-economic change and right-wing extremism or populism (Poglia Miletì et al., 2002). Still, as it turned out, only very few authors or studies explicitly rejected the idea of receptiveness to RWE being somehow linked with SEC. In Germany, for example, some research projects, in particular on the youth, have pointed out that it is not necessarily those suffering disadvantages through socio-economic change who are more likely to support extreme right ideologies (see Heitmeyer, 1992; Held et al. 1992; Leiprecht et al. 1991). These arguments are also put forward in Switzerland by, for example, Kriesi et al. (1998), who focus mainly on the socio-demographic characteristics of voters, Kobi (1993), with a focus on the 'laissés pour compte' of

politics and the idea of the protest vote and Koopmans and Kriesi (1997), who pointed out constraints and opportunities defined by institutional structures and political cultures.

However, these latter studies are in a minority position as well, compared to the authors or studies encountered that can be classified as presenting the relationship between socio-economic change and right-wing extremism as highly plausible (see, for example, recently for right-wing populism and globalisation: Swank & Betz, 2003). The majority of those, however, remain rather general and vague in their explanation. Both the Swiss and the French contribution to the aforementioned SIREN literature review report, for example, showed that there are numerous publications that evoke a potential link but that only few explain the nature of this link in detail. Other reviews pointed out that the link between socio-economic change and right-wing extremism and populism often seems to be taken for granted. In the Austrian literature, for example, at first sight the hypothesis that there is a clear causal link between SEC and RWE seems to be supported by most of the literature. However, a closer look at the arguments reveals that this potential link is rarely argued for or proven in any detail.

Even the authors arguing that it is quite plausible that support for RWE is caused by changes in working life tend to present additional factors contributing to RWE. This clearly shows the complexity of the phenomenon. RWE does not only come in many different shapes, its emergence also has multiple causes. Socio-economic change is usually not seen as the only, but as one of several factors, mainly in combination with the characteristics of the political system or the influence of the media. In the Hungarian literature, for instance, SEC is often seen as one cause among many others, such as the peculiarities of party formation, the nature of the transition to democracy and the widespread existence of xenophobic sentiments. In the Danish case, besides the socio-economic change factor, which only seems to be part of the explanation, authors mention the influence of social actors such as the media, political parties, authorities, cultural elites and other opinion leaders that also seem to contribute significantly to the creation of widespread attitudes, such as the support for right-wing populism. Finally, even those that take SEC as a starting point of their arguments introduce intervening conditions either at a psychological or political level.

Altogether, drawing upon the data that were gathered in the survey, four main points from the literature review bear importance for the interpretation of the analyses in this report.

1. A large part of the existing research concentrates on the socio-economic characteristics of voters. The general picture is that the unemployed, blue-collar workers and people with low levels of education are more likely to vote for the extreme right (Lubbers, 2001, 230). But there are exceptions, and the socio-economic characteristics can only partly be understood as indicators for effects of socio-economic change. There may be blue-collar workers, for example, benefiting from such changes and highly educated people suffering adverse consequences.
2. The role played by socio-economic change in the rise of extreme right-wing movements and parties is sustained in most of the literature. As we concluded from

the literature report, only a small minority of authors or studies explicitly reject this factor. It is interesting to note that authors, in this context, not only point to growing insecurity but also to inequality and deepened cleavages within European societies. However, it became clear that socio-economic change is only one among several reasons for the strengthening of RWE. The interrelation between socio-economic factors and the characteristics of the political system in each country in particular therefore deserve attention when dealing with the survey results.

3. The review of the literature also drew our attention to the fact that not only the so-called losers of modernisation are likely to be seduced by RWE, as is often assumed. Although economic neglect can in general be seen as a breeding ground for RWE, the rise of support for RWE in political terms does not seem to be a matter of economic or material disadvantages only. Members of the *petit bourgeoisie* who probably count themselves among the winners of modernisation are also among the potential electorate of the extreme right (Kitschelt, 1995). In the Hungarian case, the literature already helped to identify that supporters of right-wing extremist tendencies can be found both among the losers and the winners of the regime change and transition to market economy. Whether this can be confirmed for other countries as well remains to be seen.
4. Building on the previous point, the socio-psychological literature indicated that also socially privileged groups, and not only socially disadvantaged groups, may experience social uncertainty and ‘threat’ (see the literature report for more detail, Pogliani Miletic et al., 2002). Socio-psychological research investigating the processes underlying the link between fast socio-economic changes of the last decades and extremism and authoritarianism resulted in important insights that deserve particular consideration in our project. First, that it is not only material (e.g. economic) threat that triggers right-wing extremism. Psychological threat should also be taken into consideration, and should be specified as follows: (a) personal threat, i.e. threat to one’s sense of self-integrity and self-consistency through different contexts, and over the past and future; (b) social threat, that is threat to one’s own basic feeling of belonging to social categories that provide a ‘safe’ place in the world. The second point is directly related to the first and concerns the relevance of identity and social identity processes in particular for coping with increased uncertainty. This last issue will be addressed in a specific analysis at the end of this report, assessing the mediating role of different forms of social identity in the explanation of the link between socio-economic change and RWE. The theoretical basis for this, and the hypotheses that were formulated in relation to this issue, will be discussed in 1.3.3.

### **1.3.2. Socio-economic change and subjective deprivation**

A lot of times cross-sectional research on the present topic will focus on the socio-economic position of individuals as such. Sometimes longitudinal research goes into the relation between changes in socio-economic position and socio-political attitudes. This study has made a clear choice for the survey in focussing on socio-economic change or, to be more precise, the individual perceptions and experience of socio-economic change

in the work-related environment of individuals at work in the eight countries involved in the research. Change is thus not deducted from e.g. different measuring points of socio-economic position, but put to the question as such. The theoretical reason for this is in part to be found in the *concept of subjective deprivation*. The idea of threat and insecurity possibly lying at the basis of ERPA is after all a prominent one in this research. And this idea cannot be fully captured, we think, through the sociological model. What needs to be looked at is why people react or think the way they do. This means, amongst other things, making the step from looking at the differences between different social groups concerning feelings of insecurity and threat, to trying to find a 'common denominator' in those groups that might explain their (absence of) insecurity. Status, work and income are all important values in modern Western society (Ester & Halman, 1994). Feelings of competition, for example with minorities, might therefore be expected to be stronger if someone thinks his or her job is threatened, or has suffered income or status loss. Deprivation of the attainment of norms considered important to assess personal success (i.e. getting ahead or further in life) could then lead to frustration. Deprived persons, in sum, are in this way more likely to hold unfavourable attitudes towards out-groups, which in relation to ethnic minorities is expected to translate into feelings of ethnic threat, and a greater ERPA.

### **1.3.3. *Two routes from socio-economic change to right-wing extremism: the mediating role of social identity***

Work is undergoing momentous changes all over Europe: from the implementation of new types of contract and new ways of organising jobs to major restructuring efforts and/or mergers of big companies, and the privatisation of former public institutions. This means that relevant changes have featured in the working conditions of many people. These contextual factors are likely to reduce people's certainty about their cognitions, perceptions, feelings, behaviours, and ultimately about themselves. So, from a psychosocial point of view, being exposed to change may mean being exposed to uncertainty. Many authors have traced back the growth of extremist parties, religious fundamentalism, ethnocentrism, nationalism and 'new' racism to widespread uncertainty (inter alia Billig, 1991; Staub, 1989). Accordingly, Jetten, Hogg, and Mullin (2000) have shown that people in uncertainty conditions are especially likely to identify with a homogeneous group. One implication of this result is that when people are uncertain about subjectively important dimensions, they are more likely to join highly orthodox, extremist groups (Hogg, 2000). Finally, some authors have even directly connected the forces of neo-liberalism to right-wing extremist ideologies (Butterwegge & Häusler, 2002).

One of the aims of our research was to investigate psychosocial processes that may underlie a link between perception of change within the job domain and affinity with extreme right-wing parties. In particular, we speculated that social identification processes within the job domain would play a mediating role between perceived change and right-wing affinity. In organizational contexts there are many potential sources of identification, which can be ranked in a hierarchy according to their relative salience

(i.e. their subjective importance and situational relevance; Ashforth & Johnson, 2001). In the present study only organizational identification was taken into account, i.e. identification with the organisation or institution the person works for (inter alia Jetten, O'Brien & Trindall, 2002; Haslam, 2001; van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, Monden & de Lima, 2002).

Identities are likely to satisfy the basic human need of belonging. Such a need may become especially strong in the work context if individuals have to cope with a relevant change – or with frequent changes – in their job conditions. Changes may enhance unpleasant feelings of uncertainty, but these feelings may be attenuated if one has something to identify with. Lack of meaningful identifications and high uncertainty may promote the development of authoritarian and ethnocentric attitudes (Hogg, 2000), which have been shown to be strong psychosocial antecedents of right-wing extremism.

So far, studies on how people cope with change in job conditions have not investigated possible implications regarding socio-political attitudes. In the present study, we addressed this issue and supposed the existence of two different psychological routes leading from people's perception of change in job conditions to right-wing extremism, according to whether the change experienced by people at work would be perceived as positive or negative. We assumed that identification processes would play a relevant role in both routes.

*First route:* In what may be labelled as the 'winners' route, workers perceiving a positive change in their job conditions would react with an increased level of organizational identification and would be likely to endorse beliefs that justify existing social inequalities (within the organisation and society at large). These beliefs would in turn lead to increased affinity with extreme right-wing parties. This is not to say that all people experiencing positive change at work would follow this route. This would be true for people who direct their need of belonging exclusively towards the organisation, and not towards other lower order categories. On the other hand, this would not be true for people who see the workgroup as a privileged category to identify with, a lower-order category which would best satisfy the need of belonging and thus hinder development of ethnocentric attitudes.

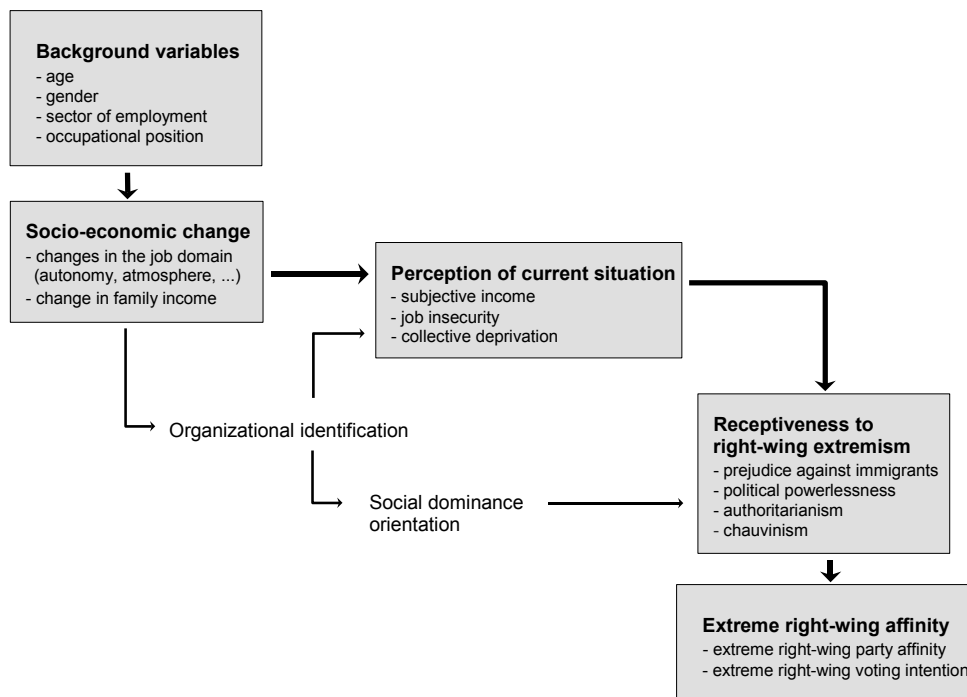
*Second route:* In what may be labelled as the 'losers' route, workers perceiving a negative change in their job conditions would react with a decreased level of organizational identification and would feel somewhat lost, without resources or reference points. This would be likely to foster perception of injustice, indicated by feelings of collective deprivation, which, if combined with a basic distrust in politics and in the processes of democratic social competition (e.g. collective social actions like trade-union initiatives), would lead to increased affinity with extreme right-wing parties. Needless to say, here again we do not assume that negative change in job conditions necessarily leads to right-wing extremism. This would only happen if people lack identifications with salient groups and if perceived injustice is accompanied by a deep distrust in the possibility of acting collectively to reduce injustice.

While analysis of interviews carried out in the qualitative phase of the SIREN research project (Hentges et al., 2003) had already offered some support to the existence of the two psychological routes described above, in this quantitative phase of the project we were able to perform a more precise and controlled statistical test of these processes, employing a large-scale telephone survey.

#### 1.4. Theoretical framework

In order to provide a synthetic overview of the theory introduced in this section, we depicted the theoretical structure in the following diagram, which illustrates the way the different theoretical elements are structured and how they will be approached in the analyses.

Figure 1-1: Conceptual framework



As can be seen in the diagram, the analyses presented in this report are structured along two major paths. In a first path, marked with the bold arrows, we follow a one-way step-by-step path of analysis. In this path, a first block of variables accounts for the background characteristics of the respondents: their age, gender, the sector they work in and their occupational position. In a next step, we expect these background characteristics to determine the kind of changes people have gone through in their working life over the last five years. In the following step, we will ask the question whether these changes in working life influence the way people perceive their current socio-economic position. Then we turn to the question if these experiences and perceptions of the respondents have an impact on their receptiveness to right-wing extremism. In a last step we raise the question whether receptiveness to right-wing

extremism actually leads to a greater affinity with extreme right-wing or radical populist parties, or even leads them to the intention to vote for these parties.

A second major path of analysis, which runs past the finer arrows in the diagram, is a somewhat finer analysis, exploring the idea of the existence of different pathways to right-wing extremism. This path puts the importance of identification processes forward and integrates a new concept of growing importance in this research context, namely social dominance orientation. We thus tried to achieve a balance between building upon existing research, and expanding it in an innovative way by building a theoretical and empirical bridge between research into socio-economic change and research into right-wing extremism and exploring new explanatory pathways.



## 2. SURVEY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Survey design

#### 2.1.1. Operationalisation of concepts in a questionnaire

The questionnaire was comprised of 71 questions, covering seven different areas of investigation. Where possible, questions that had already been employed in cross-national surveys and had proven to be reliable were used.

##### 2.1.1.1. Background characteristics

Filter questions aimed at establishing respondents' working status and nationality were employed. Only participants who had been performing paid work for at least five years and who were native to the country where the survey was carried out were selected. Furthermore, as required by an international agreement among survey agencies, one additional filter question was included to ensure that respondents had not been interviewed in other surveys (face-to-face or by phone) in the previous six months.

*Geographical area and size of urban centre:* These were recorded automatically by survey agencies, thanks to the CATI system. Interviewers coded respondents' gender when they heard the respondent's voice. Respondents were directly asked to state their age, educational level and level of income.

*Educational level:* This was measured asking participants about the highest level of education they had achieved using response categories specific of each country. Responses were recoded according to the ISCED list, which organises educational levels of different countries into a common grid (OECD, 1999).

##### 2.1.1.2. Socio-economic conditions

A group of questions aimed at assessing respondents' socio-economic situation, with a special focus on work.

*Sector of employment:* Respondents were asked to state their *sector of employment* (i.e. whether they worked in the private sector, public sector or whether they were self-employed).

*Occupation:* The respondents were asked which *occupational category* they belong to (e.g. blue-collar worker, white-collar worker, civil servant, entrepreneur).

*Type of work contract:* Respondents had to choose between permanent or fixed-term contract, agency worker or other.

*Worktime regime:* We asked respondents to indicate whether they worked part-time or full-time.

If respondents had more than one job, they were invited to answer these questions referring to their main job (i.e. the job that provided them the highest income). Response alternatives for employment sectors and occupational categories were taken from schemes already used in past cross-national research (e.g. ISCO-88 from ILO).

*Income level:* Respondents were asked whether there was another source of income in their household beyond their own, how many people lived on those incomes (ranging from 1 to 8 or more people) and how they evaluated the total amount of income of their household, choosing among four response alternatives that ranged from 1 (*We do not have enough, and have huge difficulties to get by*) to 4 (*We have more than enough, we can even save money*).

#### 2.1.1.3. *Perceived changes in one's socio-economic condition*

A series of questions were aimed at assessing perceived changes in respondents' family financial situation and working conditions.

*Change in family financial situation:* Respondents were asked to compare the current financial situation of their family with the financial situation of five years before, choosing among five response alternatives that ranged from 1 (*It has clearly got worse*) to 5 (*It has clearly improved*). They were also asked to rate their expectations about their family financial situation in the next 5 years on a scale ranging from 1 (*It will clearly get worse*) to 5 (*It will clearly improve*).

*Changes in work characteristics:* Perceived changes in the amount of work, in the possibility to make their own decisions at work and in job security as compared with 5 years before were rated on scales ranging from 1 (*Clearly decreased*) to 5 (*Clearly increased*). Changes in social atmosphere at work were also rated, on a scale ranging from 1 (*Clearly got worse*) to 5 (*Clearly improved*). A factor analysis on the four indicators of perceived change revealed the presence of one main factor, saturated by the three items regarding perceived change in: a) social atmosphere at work, b) job autonomy, and c) job security. The fourth item, perceived change in amount of work, did not saturate the same factor. This result, together with an exam of internal consistency of the answers given by interviewees to the questionnaire, suggested that this item may have been interpreted in two different ways by interviewees. An increase in the amount of work is likely to have been perceived by some interviewees as positive (having more work means an increase in earnings) and by others as negative (having more work means more stress due to excessive workloads). The opposite may have happened as regards perceived decrease in the amount of work. We therefore decided to keep the three-item factor only.

*Perceived job insecurity:* Participants were asked to rate the probability of their becoming unemployed in the near future, on a scale ranging from 1 (*Very small or impossible*) to 5 (*Very large*) (see De Witte, 1999).

#### 2.1.1.4. Social identification processes

Participants rated their agreement with three items measuring social identification within the job domain (*I feel strong ties with my workgroup; I feel strong ties with my company/my organisation; I feel strong ties with my occupational category*; see Doosje, Ellemers & Russel, 1995; Abrams, Ando & Hinkle, 1998). They also rated their agreement with two similar items measuring social identification with the nation and with the social class. For all items agreement rating ranged from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*).

#### 2.1.1.5. Collective deprivation

Participants' perception of injustice was operationalised as their member group being treated unfairly as compared to other groups, and measured through the concept of collective deprivation (De Weerd & De Witte, 2004). This was done by rating the respondent's agreement or disagreement with four statements, such as: *People like me are rewarded enough for the work we do*, or *People like me contribute more to society than we get back from society*. Agreement was rated on scales ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*). A factor analysis on the items measuring collective relative deprivation showed the presence of one main factor saturated by the three items measuring: (a) perceived appreciation received by one's group, (b) satisfaction with rewards received by one's group, and (c) perceived power of one's group to defend its interests. The fourth item did not saturate the same factor. Accordingly, we kept the three-item factor only. A factor score was calculated on the entire dataset.

#### 2.1.1.6. Receptiveness to right-wing extremism

Questions investigating respondents' receptiveness to right-wing extremism aimed at measuring social dominance orientation, nationalism, prejudice against immigrants, authoritarianism and political powerlessness. Agreement with statements measuring all these dimensions was rated using a scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*).

*Social dominance orientation*: Respondents rated their agreement with five items such as: *I find it normal that some people have more of a chance in life than others*, or *To get ahead in life it is sometimes necessary to step on others* (see Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth & Malle, 1994).

*Chauvinism*: Respondents rated their agreement with five items such as: *I would rather be citizen of (name of the country) than of any other country in the world*, or *The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like the (citizens of the country)* (Coenders, 2001).

*Prejudice against immigrants*: Respondents rated their agreement with five items such as: *Immigrants take jobs away from (citizens of the country)*, or *Immigrants increase crime rates* (ESS; Cambré, De Witte & Billiet, 2001).

*Authoritarianism:* Respondents rated their agreement with five items such as: *Most of our social problems would be solved if we could somehow get rid of immoral and antisocial people*, and *Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn* (see Meloen, van der Linden & De Witte, 1994; Altemeyer, 1998).

*Political powerlessness:* Respondents rated their agreement with six items such as: *It seems that whatever party people vote for, things go on pretty much the same*, and *Politics sometimes seems so complicated that I can't understand what's going on* (see Campbell, Gurin & Miller, 1954; Olsen, 1969; Watts, 1973).

#### 2.1.1.7. Political orientation

This area of the questionnaire included questions aimed at assessing four different dimensions.

*Interest in politics:* Respondents were asked to rate their interest in politics on a scale ranging from 1 (*Very low*) to 5 (*Very high*).

*Political self-location:* Respondents were asked to state their present personal position on the political spectrum as well as to state what their position was five years ago, on scales ranging from 1 (*Extreme left*) to 7 (*Extreme right*).

*Voting intention:* Respondents were invited to indicate a maximum of three parties or political groups they would be likely to vote for if new political elections were to be held. They chose from a list including all national parties of their country.<sup>2</sup>

*Attitude to extreme right-wing parties:* Respondents were invited to give their evaluation of the most representative extreme right-wing party in their country, on a scale ranging from +2 (*I am strongly in favour of it*) to -2 (*I am strongly against it*). Respondents were also asked to compare their current evaluation of that party with the one they had five years before and to state whether they were more in favour of it, less in favour of it or they had the same evaluation. Representative right-wing parties chosen in each country were the following: Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs for Austria; Vlaams Blok for Belgium; Dansk Folkeparti for Denmark; Front National for France; MIÉP (Hungarian Justice and Life Party) for Hungary; Alleanza Nazionale for Italy; Union Democratique du Centre, Schweizerische Volkspartei, and Unione Democratica di Centro for Switzerland. In Germany, CDU/CSU was included by default although it is clearly not an extreme right-wing party.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Because of the limitation of the study to the Flemish case, a list of Flemish parties only was presented.

<sup>3</sup> While CDU/CSU can clearly not be considered as an extreme right-wing or a radical populist party, the choice was still made because of the lack of another acceptable option. In other words, no widespread and well-known national party at the extreme right-wing that could serve as an alternative was found. We will however not treat CDU/CSU equally in the analyses for this exact reason.

### **2.1.2. Survey: description of the field work**

Data collection was co-ordinated by Eurisko in Milan and was carried out in the eight countries by the following institutes: Ifes in Austria, R&M Gebr. in Flanders, I&A Research A/S in Denmark, CSA TMO in France, Millward Brown Germany in Germany, Marketing Centrum in Hungary, Eurisko in Italy, and MIS Trend s.a. in Switzerland.

The questionnaire was first written in English, and then sent out to the various institutes for translation into the local languages. Each SIREN partner also back-checked the translation, and sent amendments back to Eurisko and to the Italian team, who made the required changes.

In each country, researchers of the involved survey agency and SIREN partners held a briefing with the interviewers' team, in order to make sure that research objectives, methodology and procedure were fully understood. During the briefing, interviewers were provided with general information on the research and its objectives, an explanation of each question of the questionnaire, and technical information on the filling in of the questionnaire on the screen. They were also told how to deal with possible respondents' questions. Only experienced and trained interviewers were involved in the survey. Interviews were carried out by: 12 interviewers in Austria, 25 interviewers in Belgium, 42 interviewers in Denmark, 22 interviewers in France, 54 interviewers in Germany, 18 interviewers in Hungary, 30 interviewers in Italy and 40 interviewers in Switzerland. Before starting actual interviews, both the institute research managers and the CATI managers checked the questionnaire again by simulating interviews on the CATI system. The average number of trial interviews carried out by each survey agency was 15. When interviewing started, SIREN partners listened to some interviews while they were being carried out. Interviewers introduced themselves as working for the local survey agency. Then they presented the questionnaire as an international survey carried out within a European Community research programme, and dealing with people's attitudes towards some issues that are currently debated in society. They also ensured respondents that their answers would remain completely anonymous.

The survey was carried out between mid May and early July 2003 (Austria, 14-20/05; Belgium, 07-17/05; Denmark, 14/05-07/06; France, 12-21/05; Germany, 12-17/05; Hungary, 22/05-04/06; Italy, 07-20/05; Switzerland 04/06-05/07).

Interviewing time was from 16h00/18h00 to 21h00/22h00 on weekdays and from 9h00/10h00 to 16h00/21h00 on Saturdays, depending on each country's working times. The CATI system automatically registered: the number of phone calls made (each local agency tried the same phone number a considerable number of times before giving it up); the number of no replies (i.e. no answer, answering machine or number engaged); the number of unobtainable phone numbers (e.g. non-existing numbers, fax or modem number); the number of quota fails (i.e. when no in-quota member was found in the household); and the number of refusals (for country by country details see Table A-18 in the Annex). The duration of an average interview was 15 minutes.

The research was carried out in observance of the deontological regulations laid down by ASSIRM's code of behaviour and quality standards (Market Research, Opinion Polls and Social Research Institutes' Association), which comply with and complement the ICC/ESOMAR International code of marketing and social research practice.

### **2.1.3. *What happened in the different countries socio-politically during or in the time before the survey period?***

In order to check for eventual history effects on the survey, careful attention was devoted to what happened while the survey was being carried out.

With regard to the international context, all the European countries had just been involved, more or less directly, in the events related to the US war against Iraq, which had just ended when the survey started. France and Germany had established a bond between each other, which was further strengthened as they joined Russia in voicing strong opposition to the US-led war with Iraq. In fact, France had initially expressed sympathy and support for the USA following the September 11 attacks. The French had offered military assistance in the war on terror at an early stage but as the focus shifted to Baghdad the policy direction changed. The country insisted at the UN that political and diplomatic measures should be used to disarm Iraq and that force should be employed only as a last resort. This standpoint put relations with both the US and the UK under strain and also highlighted differences of opinion within international bodies, not least the UN and the EU. Similarly, in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the German chancellor had supported Washington's campaign against international terrorism and sent peacekeepers to Afghanistan. However, Germany subsequently took a stance against the US-led war on Iraq, insisting that weapons inspectors be given more time to complete their mission. In Italy, Prime Minister Berlusconi had made no secret of his desire for a close relationship with US President George W. Bush. He voiced support for Washington and London in the build-up to the US-led campaign against Iraq. However, several pacifist public demonstrations took place throughout the country before and during the war. Belgium also attracted international attention following the US-led war on Iraq, firstly because the country explicitly supported the standpoints of France and Germany and spoke out against the war in surprisingly strong terms for an – after all – small country. And secondly, because of a controversial law empowering Belgian courts to try foreigners for war and human-rights crimes, regardless of where the crimes had been committed.

With regard to specific national contexts, some events that happened in May 2003 are worthwhile being mentioned, since they may be related to the issues investigated in the survey.

*In Austria*, a major strike took place: about half a million people took part in the strike as a reaction to the conservative party/FPÖ coalition government's pension reform plans. The proposed pension reforms include a reduction in pension benefits of, on average, 20%. The Federation of Austrian Trade Unions (ÖGB) and its constituent unions had called for the strike and the demonstrations. The trade unions first hesitated

before organising a strike. The unions worked out their own programme of ‘reforms’ and offered to cooperate with Austrian chancellor, Wolfgang Schüssel, on several occasions. But their recommendations were categorically rejected. This sparked nationwide strike actions.

*In Belgium*, general elections were held: the Socialists and Liberals agreed to renew their coalition in government with Flemish Liberal Guy Verhofstadt as Prime Minister. However, the far-right Vlaams Blok, which wants Flemish independence, caused shock waves by winning nearly a fifth of the vote in Flanders and over 10% of the vote nationally.

*In Denmark*, Mr Rasmussen promised a referendum on the Euro and announced that the proposed EU constitution would also be put to a referendum, likely to take place by the end of 2005. The Danish People’s Party ran a campaign against the EU on the buses in Copenhagen and Århus. In the media, there was some discussion about the growing number of elderly people and what this means for the welfare society.

*In France*, proposed pension reforms sparked a wave of industrial action as workers protested against the prospect of having to pay higher contributions over longer periods. According to the proposed reforms, the active life would be pushed to 42 years for the public sector and to 40 years for the private sector. On May 13, two million people demonstrated against the reform. Other strikes took place as a reaction to a government decentralisation plan for administrative departments of the education sector. Immediately before the survey, the media also largely covered the national congress of the Socialist Party, still suffering from the defeat in the first round of the presidential elections of April 21, 2002.

*In Germany*, political debates were highly dominated by a single issue: Chancellor Schröder’s so-called ‘Agenda 2010’, a general political programme for a neo-liberal restructuring of the welfare state ‘in order to preserve it’. Four basic levels were targeted: Labour market problems were promised to be solved by stronger pressures on the unemployed, crisis-ridden pension systems would be protected by strengthening the already privatised wing and by expanding working life to the age of 67, tax cuts and a reform of the health system were announced to foster demand and to cut costs respectively. Protests were especially loud when the cabinet explained its plans to the parliament shortly after the Americans won their decisive battles in Iraq. After several weeks of intense political discussion (public as well as private) even the unions, who had first announced that they were going to offer fierce resistance against the basically pro-capitalist agenda, declared a ceasefire at the end of May and said that they were content with the insignificant but, of course, ‘far-reaching’ concessions Schröder made immediately before his extraordinary party conference on June 1. Leading business lobbyists applauded Schröder’s ‘strong man’ attitude and declared their willingness to vote for the SPD in case the ‘Agenda 2010’ was implemented without revisions. In addition, powerful economists and journalists launched a widely discussed campaign, which tried to radicalise Schröder’s goals. Besides all these ‘Agenda 2010’ discussions, the post-war situation in Iraq and cautious diplomatic efforts to relax the frozen relationship between the German and the US government attracted some attention.

*In Italy*, Mr Berlusconi appeared in Milan court at his own trial on corruption charges relating to business dealings in the 1980s. He asserted that he was the victim of a conspiracy by a politically motivated judiciary. Furthermore, during a public debate on TV, Mr Berlusconi spoke out in favour of judiciary immunity for senators as well as members of the parliament and the government: this gave rise to much public discussion and provoked statements by many politicians. While Mr Prodi opposed the premier's point of view and accused him of employing the media illegitimately, Mr Fini also came out in favour of judiciary immunity, even if only for the highest offices of the state. Mr Berlusconi was also publicly contested by left-wing and Green Party supporters during two official visits to Bari and Venice. In the meanwhile, the government made a decision about the Italian military task force to be sent to Iraq and introduced more rigorous checks at Italian airports as a precaution against the spread of the SARS virus.

*In Hungary*, in April a referendum overwhelmingly approved of Hungary's membership of an enlarged EU. However, turnout was only 46%. In June the Parliament amended the controversial Status Law on work, health and travel benefits for ethnic Hungarians in neighbouring countries. The Status Law, which had been introduced in 2001, referred to ethnic Hungarians as part of a 'united Hungarian nation' and granted them rights to work, study, and claim health care in Hungary temporarily. Hungary's neighbours criticised the law as interfering with their sovereignty and discriminating against other ethnic groups, while the EU objected to the act on the basis that it breached equal opportunities regulations.

With regard to *Switzerland*, the G8 summit was held in Geneva. On that occasion, a number of public demonstrations took place in various parts of Switzerland, with strong and violent confrontations between the police and 'black bloc' groups. Other public demonstrations also took place at that time, demanding peace in Iraq.

#### **2.1.4. Sample description**

A sample of 5,800 workers from eight European countries was selected for the survey. Except for the Swiss sample, which included 900 people, the other country samples were comprised of 700 people each. In each country, the sample was representative of the working population, rated on the basis of national statistics official data: OSTAT for Austria, NIS for Belgium, DST for Denmark, INSEE for France, SBD for Germany, ISTAT for Italy, and OFS for Switzerland. Filter questions ensured that only people born in the country and having performing paid work or having worked on their own for at least five years were included in the sample.

Strict quotas were set on regions, town size and gender. Regions were grouped according to Nielsen macro categories. In Denmark, where there are no Nielsen areas, regions were grouped as follows: Capital Area, Islands, Jutland. In Switzerland regions were grouped according to spoken language: French area, German area, and Italian area. In Belgium the survey was carried out only in Flanders. Age was just a reference quota in assignment.



The Eurisko agency, located in Milan, co-ordinated the agencies located in the various countries, who collected data using the CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) method. In order to complete the fieldwork, they actually carried out 700 interviews in Austria, 710 interviews in Flanders, 698 interviews in Denmark, 700 interviews in France, 700 interviews in Germany, 704 interviews in Hungary, 707 interviews in Italy, and 893 interviews in Switzerland. The final data file was weighted on gender in all the countries involved, on 'region x town size' in Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, and Switzerland, and just on region in Belgium and Denmark. For 'region x town size' weighted percentages, see Tables A-10–A-17 in the Annex. As regards gender, weighted samples were distributed as follows: in the Austrian sample, 56% of the interviewees were male and 44% female; in the Flemish sample, 58% were male and 42% female; in the Danish, German and Hungarian samples, 54% were male and 46% female; in the Italian sample, 63% were male and 37% were female, and in Switzerland 59% were male and 41% female.

## **2.2. Methodology of analyses, description of variables and construction of measurement instruments**

### **2.2.1. Description of variables and operationalisation**

#### *2.2.1.1. Background characteristics*

*Seniority (Q2):* Seniority was primarily used as a filter question. We only wanted to interview people who had been working for over five years, because we wanted to question them, a. o., about changes in their work environment during the last five years. We did however also try to look for autonomous effects of seniority, but because of the high correlation with the age variable (0.81\*\*\*), age can be seen as a proxy for seniority, and so we decided to only take in age.

*Gender (Q4):* was measured with a classic male (=0) female (=1) dichotomy

*Age (Q5):* is measured as the response to an open, non-categorised question asking people about their age.

*Educational level (Q33):* was measured using the country specific ISCED classifications, according to the 'Manual for ISCED-97 implementation in OECD countries', available on the OECD website. This resulted in a 7-category ISCED classification for all countries.

*Sector of employment:* For sector of employment, different questions were asked. A first coarse classification (Q6) dividing respondents into a triple division: public/private/self-employed. Secondly a more detailed classification (Q11) into 9 main sectors of economic activity, such as industry, agriculture, banking and finances, etc. We decided to reduce the detailed classification from originally 5 (primary, secondary, tertiary, public and other) to only 4 classes: Because of the low numbers in the primary sector (just over 3%), primary and secondary were put together.

*Type of contract (Q9)*: Respondents who were wage earners were asked if they were working on a permanent (open-ended), fixed-term or agency-worker contract, or whether they did not have a contract at all. Due to the very small number of agency workers (<5%), they were put together with the fixed-term contractors.

*Worktime system (Q10)*: Only for wage earners, we asked whether they were working part-time or full-time.

*Occupational position (Q7)*: was measured through a self-placement question, following up on the (Q6) filter question, offering a maximum of four choices within each of the three sector categories, thereby reducing the choice difficulty for the respondent.

### **2.2.2. Construction of measurement instruments for the intermediate variables**

*Chauvinism, political powerlessness, authoritarianism and prejudice against immigrants* are factor scores, obtained through factor analysis (for a detailed overview of the exact content and the cross-national comparability of the concepts, see the Annex). The analysis supported a four-factor solution, showing similar structures in each country.

*Social dominance orientation and collective deprivation* are factor scores as well, based on separate factor analyses of the respective items in the questionnaire, suggesting a one-factor solution for each concept that applies to all countries as well as to the overall dataset.

## **2.3. Methodology**

### **2.3.1.1. Analyses**

For the bivariate analyses, we used both Pearson correlation coefficients, and analyses of variance (ANOVA). For the multivariate analyses, we applied multiple regression techniques (ordinary least squares).

### **2.3.1.2. Weighting & representativeness**

Diversity reflected itself in the character of the official statistics delivered by the partner countries. As a consequence we were not able to construct a comparable distribution for all countries on either of the three main variables subject to weighting intentions: age, gender and education. The official statistics, if available for the working population, only follow our classifications for some variables and are different from country to country. There was thus no way of constructing a reliable weighting procedure for all the aforementioned variables based on this information, due to the variability in classifications of the official statistics. Weighting however has been applied where needed and possible. This means that the sample in each country was built and weighted using national statistics offices figures on the working population in terms of main key

demographics: crossing regions x town size, and age x gender. Strict quotas were set only in terms of regions, town size and gender. Age quotas were set as a reference because of the filter ‘working for at least 5 years’ in the questionnaire, which was not a variable present in the official data from national statistics bureaus.<sup>4</sup>

Besides, whenever we were able to compare official statistics distributions with country sample distributions, differences were not problematic. There is however a slight under-representation of white-collars/lower educated, and an under-representation of right-wing voters. These are ‘classic’ deviations for these kind of surveys.

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<sup>4</sup> For Switzerland, because of the trinomial country structure, the sample was, at the request of the Swiss team, expanded to 893 cases and weighted back to 700 interviews assigning a weight to each part of the country reflecting the real proportion represented by each area on the territory: the German part 75%, the French part 22% and the Italian part 3%.

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1. Perceptions of socio-economic change in eight European countries

In this section, we will first look at the relationships between the background variables in the dataset (gender, age, education, type of contract, sector, occupational position) and the way work-related socio-economic change is perceived by working people (self- and otherwise employed). Secondly, we take a look at how people judge their current socio-economic situation (job insecurity and subjective income), their feelings of collective deprivation and their organizational identification.

The tables we will present contain two kinds of analyses. Let us try to illustrate this by looking at this sample part of such a table.

Figure 3-1: Sample bivariate analysis table

Overall	$\Delta$ example	Switzerland	Austria	Belgium	...	
3.67	<b>Mean</b> (1=much less/3=same/5=much more)	3.57	3.83	3.81	...	0.11***
0.10**	Gender	0.15***	n.s.	n.s.	...	
3.2	Male	2.4			...	
4.5	Female	4.2			...	
n.s.	Age	n.s.	-0.13***	n.s.	...	

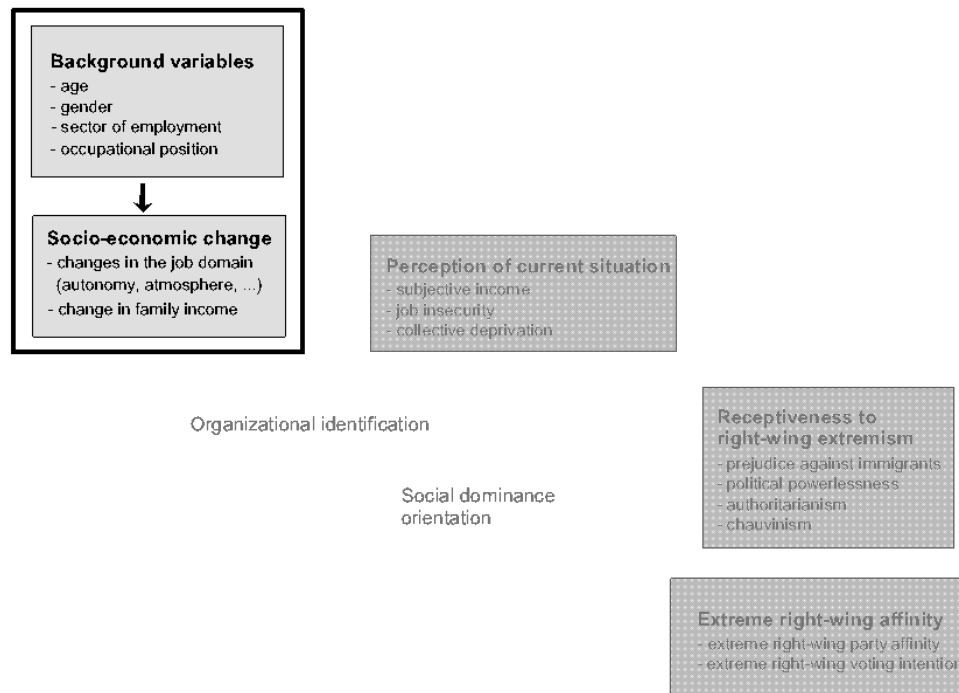
Note: \*= $p < 0.05$  \*\*= $p < 0.01$  \*\*\*= $p < 0.001$

The first row of the results (left and right of 'Mean') in the tables contains the results of an analysis of variance of the investigated variable (e.g. perceived change in workload) by country. The values indicate the mean score on the investigated variable for the overall dataset (first column) and for each country separately (third column and on). The last value in the first row (in the extreme right column) is the correlation coefficient R from this analysis of variance and indicates whether the differences between the countries are significant or not, and how important those differences are. A \*\*\* besides the value indicates a very significant relationship ( $p < 0.001$ ), a \* means that the relation is only just significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), and finally a \*\* indicates an intermediate significance level ( $p < 0.01$ ). These significance levels are the same for all coefficients throughout this report.

Nevertheless, these are the only results in the tables to be read horizontally. All other results have to be read as country results, in other words vertically within each column. The values there can be the results of two kinds of analysis. First, values can again be results of an analysis of variance, when dealing with categorised variables, like gender, sector of employment, etc. The R coefficient will be given, the mean for the categories of the variable only if the correlation is significant (in the example table the mean for gender are shown for Switzerland, but not for Austria and Belgium). A second kind of analysis concerns bivariate correlations. The value (correlation coefficient R) can theoretically vary from 0.00 to 1 in absolute terms, with 1 being the strongest possible or perfect correlation, and 0 meaning no correlation. The sign of the value indicates the direction of the correlation. The negative sign for age in Austria, for example, means that a higher age is related to lower scores on the dependent variable ( $\Delta$  example). Significance levels are indicated in the same way (\* to \*\*\*) as for the analysis of variance.

In the discussion of the results, we will only go into variables that show significant relations in at least half of the countries. This we considered the lowest threshold to be able to talk about certain patterns or tendencies in the countries involved in this research.

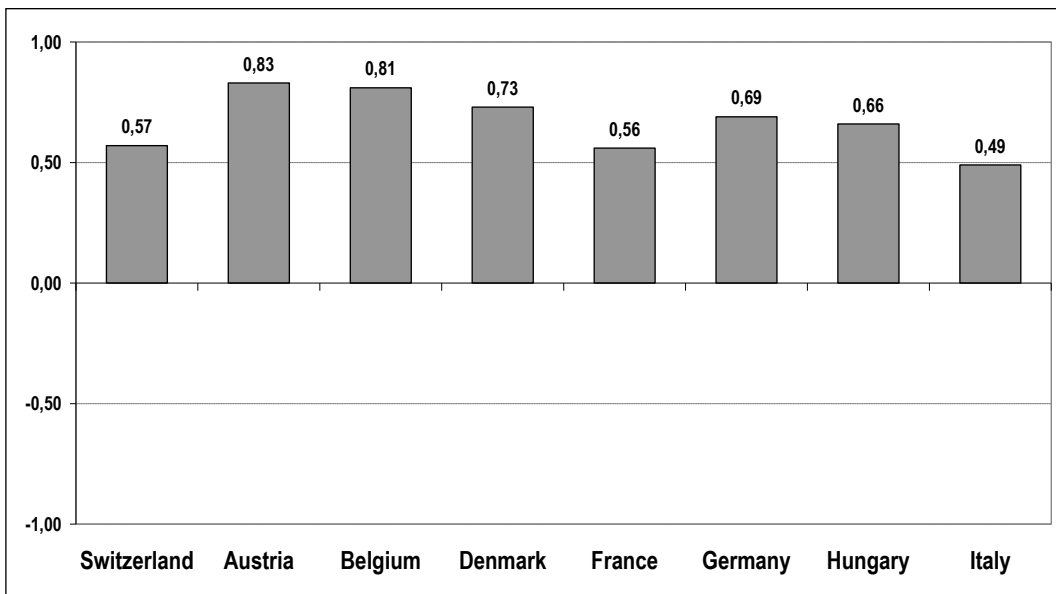
### 3.1.1. Perceived changes in work characteristics, job security and financial situation



In this section we will look at how changes in the work-related environment were perceived by the respondents. Five variables will be discussed, namely changes in (1) the amount of work; (2) in job autonomy; (3) in social atmosphere; (4) in job security; and finally (5) in the financial situation of the respondent's family. For each variable we will first present the mean change for each country, followed by a table in which we will show the results of bivariate analyses of the relation of the changes with a series of background characteristics, like age, gender, sector of employment, etc. In other words, these tables will show whether the changes we discuss are directly related to background characteristics. For example: Did women perceive other or more changes than men; were changes stronger in the public sector than in the industrial sector; etc.

#### 3.1.1.1. Changes in the amount of work

For changes in the amount of work we asked respondents the following question: *'Compared with five years ago, would you say that the amount of work you have to do has clearly increased, increased, stayed about the same, decreased, or clearly decreased?'* Answers are rated on a five-point scale. In the table answers range from 1 (clearly decreased) to 5 (clearly increased), with 3 indicating 'no change'. For the graph we recalculated the scores, making them range from -2 (clearly decreased) to 0 (no change) and +2 (clearly increased).

**Graph 3-1: Mean change in the amount of work**

As can be seen in Graph 3-1, on average, there seems to have been an increase in the amount of work in all countries. The increase has been biggest in Austria and Belgium, the smallest mean increase is reported in Italy.

The next table first of all shows that, on average, there has been an increase in the amount of work people have to do over the last five years in every country.