The Mechanisms of Class-Party Ties among the Finnish Working-Class Voters in the 21st Century

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When I was a first-year student in political science in 2012 at the University of Tampere, I remember an excursion we did to the Finnish Parliament in Helsinki. When we walked down the long corridors of the Parliament House, we passed by the group work rooms, which had trade unions’ names by their doors, one of my fellow students said to me ”a lot of power sits in here”. Those words got stuck in my head and I remembered them again one year later when I participated in – at that time University Lecturer – Elina Kestilä-Kekkonen’s course on political participation. On the course, Elina talked about trade unions’ election campaigns in Finland. I got very interested in the topic right away and decided to write my bachelor’s thesis related to that. As my interest in the topic grew, the thesis started to swell. As such, I decided to stick to the same topic in my master’s thesis as well. The same thing happened to my master’s thesis and so began work on this doctoral dissertation, which saw its first daylight in year 2015 when I started my doctoral studies.

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Aino Tiihonen
ABSTRACT

Traditionally, voters’ class positions have determined their party choices in Western democracies. At the same time, social class has been considered being the most significant political cleavage of which political parties have conventionally emerged in the West-European multi-party systems. Class cleavage has emerged from the industrial revolution based on the labour market confrontation between workers and owners. The cleavage has been so divisive and has resulted in the formation of various political organisations especially at the worker-side. Meanwhile, Labour Unions, Social Democratic (SD) parties and socialist parties were formed.

Since the late 1980s, numerous studies have claimed that voters’ class has become an irrelevant determinant of electoral behaviour. This trend has been related to working-class voters, whose occupational position is regarded becoming gradually a weaker predictor of their voting behaviour than in the past. At the macro level, this weakening trend has been explained by a decline in the relative proportion of the working class. The share of blue-collar employees has decreased significantly in the past few decades in advanced industrialised democracies. For example, in Finland, the share of blue-collar employees has decreased by almost 20 percentage points from the 1970s to the 2010s. The declines in class voting have been linked to the political parties’ disintegration, reconfiguration of society, and large-scale societal change in the Western world. Globalisation, the rising level of education, unstable working-life conditions, and the ageing population have been the most common societal explanations for the change in the political sphere.

Despite the relative decrease, some previous studies have indicated that the working class is still relevant and has not lost its significance as a determinant of voting behaviour to same extent in the Nordic countries as in other Western democracies in the 21st century. Moreover, the societal change, its consequences, and declining trends in class voting have motivated scholars to consider the subjective approach to voters’ class positions. Typically, scholars who have focused on the subjective approach, i.e., class identification, have considered the declining trend in class voting more carefully.

This study aims to provide new knowledge on the Finnish working class’ voting behaviour, party attachment, and attitudinal orientations from the perspective of class voting in 21st century Finland. It originates from two observations on the Finnish electorate and party system in the 21st century. The first observation relates
to the continued significance of class identification among the Finnish electorate. Considerable majority of eligible voters identify with a specific social class, despite ongoing debates over the decreasing significance of social classes to voting preferences. The second observation relates to the notable changes, which have occurred in the Finnish party system in the 21st century. A good example of this is a large share of working-class voters who switched from the SDP to the Finns Party in the 2011 parliamentary election. This study integrates these two separate observations together by studying the mechanisms of working-class voting from the perspective of class (in)congruence and voters’ attitudinal orientations. As such, the study discovers how the working-class votes in 21st century Finland.

The research problem is built on analysing working-class voting from the perspective of a two-dimensional approach to voters’ class positions, i.e., class (in)congruence. The study formulates three groups of working-class voters by considering voters’ occupation and class identification. The first group, the traditional working class, consists of blue-collar employees with working-class identification. The second group, the occupational working class, is blue-collar employees who do not have working-class identification, but they identify with the lower-middle, middle, or upper-middle class. The third group, the ideological working-class, consists of those who are not blue-collar employees by their occupation but have working-class identification. In addition, the study considers the working-class voters’ attitudinal orientations, the significance the previous research has highlighted with regard to determining voting decisions in the 21st century. The datasets used for the analyses are the 2003-2019 Finnish National Elections Studies (FNES).

The first part of the study’s threefold analysis focuses on finding factors that explain class incongruence and congruence among the three working-class groups. The results show that class of the childhood home, the level of education, and spouse’s occupation are the most significant factors that explain both class incongruence and congruence. Above all, working-class childhood home is the most significant factor that explains working-class identification.

The second analysis examines the extent to which three working-class groups differ from each other based on their attitudinal orientations, i.e., the extent that class (in)congruence affects attitudinal orientations. The results show that the three working-class groups differ from each other by their socioeconomic and sociocultural orientations. The ideological working-class is more leftist based on their socioeconomic orientation than the traditional or the occupational working class. In addition, the results show that the occupational working class has a more conservative sociocultural orientation than the traditional and ideological working
class. From the outcome of the results, all three working-class groups have more opposing attitudes towards the EU than other voters.

The third analysis combines the previous analyses and examines the extent that party choices among the Finnish working-class voters are influenced by the class (in)congruence and the voters’ attitudinal orientations. Moreover, the last analysis aims to discover the extent the class (in)congruence affects directly working-class voters’ party choice or indirectly via the working-class voters’ attitudinal orientations. The findings indicate that the working-class’ voting patterns are multidimensional and cannot be defined as simple class-party ties in 21st century Finland. The traditional left-wing parties, the SDP, and the Left Alliance, are still parties, to which working-class voters give their votes in general.

This study shows that the party choices of the Finnish working class is determined by their attitudinal orientations. In spite of this, the leftist socioeconomic orientation, which is traditionally linked to working-class voting, is increasingly less common determinant of party choice among the Finnish working class. The results show that belonging to a particular working-class group and having a particular socioeconomic orientation do not increase the likelihood of voting any of the six parties under study. Instead, there can be distinguished an indirect effect on party choice, which goes via opposing attitudes towards the EU among each working class group. In addition, belonging to the occupational working class has an indirect effect on voting both for the Centre Party and the Finns Party via conservative sociocultural orientation.

Overall, the results indicate that traditional working class voting still occurs in 21st century Finland, but the votes of the working class tend to be shared between several parties. Along with the SDP and the Finns Party, Finnish working-class voters give their votes to the Green League, the Left Alliance, and the Centre Party. One important finding is that the Finns Party is, however, able to compete for the votes of the working class among each of the three working-class groups. The party can gather support from all working-class groups despite their class identification, occupation, or level of education. The findings also show that despite the split of the Finns Party in June 2017, the split fails to reduce the party’s popularity among the working-class voters. Moreover, the EU criticism has moved working-class voters closer to the Finns Party. While the opposing views about the EU have been linked to voting for the other parties as well, the Finns Party has undoubtedly managed to channel particularly these types of votes among the working-class voters.

The findings show that working-class voting still occurs in 21st century Finland revealing that when a comprehensive approach is applied to the voters’ class
positions, important knowledge on the patterns and mechanisms of class voting is provided. The study contributes to the vast literature on class voting by applying a two-dimensional approach to voters’ class positions and combining it with the voters’ attitudinal orientations. If one of the three factors—objective class-position, subjective class-position, and attitudinal orientations—is not examined, then the essential mechanisms of class voting remain undiscovered. Future class-voting studies should consider all subjective class indicators, the voter’s occupation, and voters’ attitudinal orientations.

**Keywords:** attitudinal orientations, class voting, class identification, class congruence, class incongruence, Finland, party choice, political cleavages, political participation, political socialisation, voting behaviour
Länsimaisissa demokratioissa äänestäjien yhteiskuntaluokka ja koettu luokka-asema ovat perinteisesti selittäneet heidän puoluevalintojaan. Tätä äänestyspäätöksiä selittävää toimintamallia, eli omasta yhteiskuntaluokkastaan liittyvän puolueen äänestämistä, kutsutaan luokkaäänestämiseksi. Luokkaäänestämistä painottavissa teorioissa yhteiskuntaluokkia pidetään merkittävimpänä poliittisena jakolinjana. Länsimaisissa monipuoluejärjestelmissä myös poliittiset puolueet ovat syntyneet tältä pohjalta.

Nykysillekin puoluejärjestelmile merkitykselliseksi poliittiseksi jakolinjaksi yhteiskuntaluokat muodostuivat jo teollisessa vallankumouksessa, joka synnytti vastakkainasetteluja työläisten ja omistavan väestön välistä. Jakolinja oli niin voimakkaasti kansalaisia ehdotettava, että se synnytti nopeasti yhteiskuntaan erilaisia poliittisia järjestöjä etenkin työväestön keskuuteen. Tällä tavoin ammattiliitot, sosiaalidemokraattiset sekä sosialistiset puolueet saivat alkunsa.


Luokkaäänestämisen laskun on esitetty liittyvän puoluekentän pirastoutumiseen, yhteiskunnan uudelleenjärjestäytymiseen ja laajamittaisiin rakenteellisiin muutoksiin länsimaisissa. Globalisaatiokehitys, koulutustason nousu, työelämän lisääntyvä epävakaus sekä väestön ikääntyminen ovat yleisimmäät yhteiskunnan rakennetason muutoksia, jotka ovat vääristäneet ja ruosteuttaneet myös poliittista kenttää.

Vaikka luokkaäänestämisen on vähentynyt, osa tutkimuksista on suhtautunut havaintoihin sen vähennemisestä varauksellisesti. Varsinkaan Pohjoismaiden vaaleissa työväenluokkaisuuden on kosnettavissa samassa suhdeessa merkitystään äänestyspäätöksiä selittävänä tekijänä verratuna muihin länsimaisiin demokratioihin. Lisäksi yhteiskunnan rakenteelliset muutokset sekä niiden seuraukset ja luokkaäänestämisen yleinen vähenneminen ovat motivoineet tutkijoita tarkastelemaan äänestäjien luokka-asemaa myös subjektiivisesta näkökulmasta. Subjektiivisesta näkökulmasta kiinnostuneet tutkijat ovat tyypillisesti keskittyneet analysoimaan

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äänestäjien luokka-asemia heidän luokkasamastumisensa kautta. Luokkasamastumisella tarkoitetaan yhteiskuntaluokkaa, johon henkilö kokee itse lähinnä kuuluvansa.


Tutkimusongelma nojaa tapaan analysoida äänestäjien luokka-asemia kahdesta näkökulmasta. Se tarkoittaa objektiivisen luokka-aseman, eli ammatin, ja subjektiivisen luokka-aseman, eli luokkasamastumisen, tarkastelemista samanaikaisesti. Näiden kahden luokka-aseman mittaavan yhteyttä nimitetään tässä tutkimuksessa joko luokkakongruuressiksi tai inkongruuressiksi riippuen siitä, ovatko ne toisiaan vastaavat vai eivät. Tutkimus muodostaa kolme erillistä työväenluokkaryhmää. Ryhmistä ensimmäinen on ”perinteinen työväenluokka” (traditional working class), joka koostuu työntekijäammateissa toimivista, jotka samastuvat työväenluokkaan. Ryhmä ”ammatillinen työväenluokka” (occupational working class) koostuu työntekijäammateissa toimivista, jotka samastuvat ammatilaisten keskiluokkoihin, keskiluokkoihin tai yleemään keskiluokkoihin. Kolmanteen ryhmään, ”ideologiseen työväenluokkaan” (ideological working class) kuuluvat eityöntekijäammateissa toimivat, jotka kuitenkin samastuvat työväenluokkaan. Lisäksi tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan näiden kolmen ryhmän arvoja ja asenteita, joiden merkitystä viimeaikainen tutkimus on painottanut puolueevalintojen taustalla.


Tutkimuksen toinen analyysiluku tarkastelee sitä, missä määrin kolme työväenluokkaryhmiä eroavat toisistaan arvoiltaan ja asenteiltaan. Toisin sanoen luku analysoi sitä, missä määrin luokkakongruenssi ja luokkainkongruenssi vaikuttavat arvoihin ja asenteisiin. Tulokset osoittavat, että kolme työväenluokkaryhmiä eroavat jossain määrin määrin toisistaan sekä sosioekonomisilta että sosiokulttuurisilta arvoiltaan ja asenteiltaan. Ideologinen työväenluokka (ideological working class) erottuu kahdesta muusta ryhmästä vasemmistolaisemmalla sosioekonomisella orientaatiollaan. Lisäksi ammatillinen työväenluokka (occupational working class) on sosiokulttuuriselta orientaatioltaan kolmesta työväenluokkaryhmästä konservatiivisin. Kaikki kolme ryhmä ovat selvästi enemmän EU-kriittisiä kuin EU-myönteisiä verrattuna muihin äänestäjöihin.


Työväenluokkaisten äänestäjien puoluevalintoja ohjaavat myös heidän arvonsa ja asenteensa. Perinteisesti työväenluokkaäänestämiseen liitetty vasemmistolainen sosioekonominen orientaatio, on kuitenkin tulosten valossa yhä harvemmin löydettävissä työväenluokan äänestyspäätösten taustalta. Tulosten valossa mihinkään työväenluokkaryhmään kuuluminen yhdistettynä sosioekonomiseen orientaatioon ei...
lisää todennäköisyyttä äänestää mitään tarkasteltua puoluetta. Arvoista ja asenteista EU-kriittisyys yhdistetynä mihin tahansa työväenluokkaryhmään erottuu selvästi useimmiten puoluevalintoja selittävänä tekijänä. Tämän lisäksi konservatiivisen sosiokulttuurisen orientaation havaitaan lisäävän todennäköisyyttä äänestää Suomen Keskustaa tai Perussuomalaisia ammatillisen työväenluokan (occupational working class) keskuudessa. Kyse on sellaisista työväenluokkaisista äänestäjistä, jotka toimivat työntekijämmuteissa, mutta samastuvat alempaan keskiluokkaan, keskiluokkaan tai ylempään keskiluokkaan.


Avainsanat: arvot ja asenteet, luokka- kongruenssi, luokkainkongruenssi, luokkasamastuminen, luokkaäänestäminen, poliittiset jakolinjat, poliittinen osallistuminen, poliittinen sosialisatio, puoluevalinta, Suomi, äänestyskäytäntötyminen
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1. INTRODUCTION AND THE STARTING POINTS OF THE STUDY

‘A person thinks, politically, as he is, socially. Social characteristics determine political preference.’

(Lazarsfeld et al. 1948, 27).

1.1 Introduction

This study provides new knowledge on the Finnish working class’ voting behaviour, party attachment and attitudinal orientations from the class voting perspective. The study analyses trends and changes in working-class voting patterns in 21st century Finland to discover the mechanisms that explain present-day working-class voting in Finland. The study contributes to the vast class voting literature, focusing on the two-dimensional approach to the voters’ class positions. Instead of focusing on the objective approach to the class positions, namely voters’ occupations, the study sheds also light on the subjective approach to the class position or the class identification. Given the objective and subjective approach, the study operationalises various analytical groups of working-class voters based on class incongruence and class congruence, i.e., the congruence between voters’ subjective and objective class positions. In addition, the study considers the working-class voters’ attitudinal orientations. Their impact on party choice is widely acknowledged in post-industrial societies especially in the 21st century.

The study’s empirical analyses aim to examine the extent to which working-class’ party choices are explained directly through class (in)congruence and indirectly via attitudinal orientations. The research model combines the models of the previous class voting studies that have measured the effect of voters’ attitudinal orientations
on their party choice. Hence, the study answers the following question: How does the working-class vote in 21st century Finland?

Traditionally, voters' class positions have determined their party choices in Western democracies. At the same time, social class has been considered the most significant political cleavage tool for political parties including those from West-European multi-party systems (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Bartolini and Mair, 1990; Nieuwbeerta, 1995; Nieuwbeerta and Ultee, 1999; Knutsen, 2006). Class cleavage emerged from the industrial revolution and the labour market confrontation between workers and owners. The cleavage was so divisive that it resulted in the formation of various political organisations especially at the worker-side. Labour unions and social democratic (SD) parties along with the socialist parties were formed (e.g., Lipset and Rokkan, 1967, Bartolini and Mair, 1990).

Since the late 1980s, numerous studies have claimed that voters' class positions have become less relevant determinants of electoral behaviour (e.g., Butler and Stokes, 1974; Dalton 1984; Inglehart, 1984; Clark and Lipset, 1991; Weakliem, 1995; Knutsen, 2006; Evans and Tilley, 2012). This trend has been related to working-class voters whose occupational position is regarded as a weaker predictor of their voting behaviour than in the past (e.g., Gingrich and Häusermann, 2015; Evans and Tilley, 2017; Rennwald, 2020). At the macro-level, the relative proportion of working-class, i.e., the share of blue-collar employees, decreased significantly within the past few decades in advanced industrialised democracies. This scenario also applies to the Nordic countries. In Finland, the share of the working-class among all employees has decreased to almost 20 percentage points from the 1970s to 2015 (1970: 54%, 2015: 37%) (Melin, 2020). Despite this decrease, some previous studies indicate that the working class has not lost its significance as a determinant of voting behaviour in the Nordic countries as compared to other Western democracies in the 21st century (see e.g., Clark and Lipset, 1991; Oskarson and Demker, 2015; Bengtsson and Berglund, 2010; Bengtsson et al. 2014). In a broader sense, the declining trend in class voting is based on the societal change in electoral structure and the consequences of the change. Societal change is the significant alteration over time in society’s behaviour patterns, cultural values, and norms.

The consequences of declining class voting include the decrease in support of SD parties within the Western democracies. Since the mid-1990s, this has been one of the constant themes in electoral studies (e.g., Kitschelt 1994, Thomassen, 2005; Arter, 2003). The decrease has been linked to the vast discussion about political parties’ disintegration and societal reconfiguration (see e.g., Gallagher et al. 2006; Mair, 1997; 2001). Large-scale structural adjustments in the western world such as
globalisation, a rising level of education, unstable working-life conditions and ageing of the population are the most common factors that influence the change in the political sphere (see Inglehart, 1977 and 1997, Kriesi et al. 2006). These structural changes and developments have reshaped voters’ political interests and created pressures on political parties especially socialist and left-wing parties. The traditional social cleavages have started to lose their long-lasting significance as a determinant of political preferences, i.e., party choice. In addition, the mass public’s attitudinal orientations have shifted from religious to secular values and from authoritarian to libertarian values (Knutsen, 2018, p. 1). Moreover, the turnout rates and party member rates have decreased in Western democracies. This has been the crucial trend for the SD parties who traditionally operate as mass bureaucratic parties that build their support on the active participation of the masses (e.g., Paloheimo, 2019, p. 70).

The Finns Party’s sensational victory in the 2011 parliamentary election increased the electoral participation of the Finnish working class. The party raised its support by 15 percentage points in the 2007 parliamentary election, whereas the support received by other parliamentary parties decreased. The support of the Centre party decreased by over 7 percentage points. The election result showed that the balance between ‘the old parties’ (the Social Democratic Party (SDP) of Finland, the Centre Party, and the National Coalition Party) had started to be volatile among the electorate. Thus, the Finns Party became visible in the Finnish party system and emerged as one of the largest political parties in Finland with a historical 19.05 per cent support. At the same time, the weakening electoral strength of the SDP was noticed. In the 2015 general election, the party captured a historically low support of 16.5 per cent. Even though the SDP won the latest parliamentary election in 2019, the party’s support rate was the second-lowest ever in the party’s history at 17.7 per cent.

Many studies on class voting have approached voters’ class positions from the objective perspective, i.e., measuring voters’ class positions with objective indicators such as occupation, education, or income (from many see, e.g., Alford, 1963; Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Korpi, 1983; Nieuwbeerta, 1996; Evans and Tilley, 2017 and Vestin, 2019). Researchers tend to attribute objective class indicators to voters. Objective indicators stem from cleavage research in which class cleavage reflects the characteristics of the social structure and is the most fundamental determinant of political preferences. In other words, objective indicators fail to consider experience

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1 For clarity’s sake, the name ‘the Finns Party’ will be used for the party in the entire study despite the party’s name changes during the 21st century.
or feelings, but the subjective class indicators are built on the target and target’s views, feelings, and experiences (e.g., Jackman and Jackman, 1973; Hout, 2008). In electoral studies, class identification is the most common subjective class indicator indicating the social class to which voters belong.

Subjective class indicators are rarely discussed in class voting studies. However, societal change, its consequences, and the declining trend in class voting have motivated scholars to consider the subjective approach to voters’ class positions. According to Maria Oskarson (1994 and 2016), the mechanism of class voting cannot be completely captured and understood if the pattern is studied only from the objective perspective, i.e., through the social cleavages, social structure, or party systems. Therefore, attention should be given to the individual level and the subjective mechanism of how individuals consciously align with parties (Oskarson 2016, p. 248).

The subjective mechanisms apply to Bartolini’s and Mair’s (1990) seminal cleavage typology of which cleavage has three components: 1. structural and empirical, 2. psychological and normative, and 3. organisational. The second component focuses on collective identity revealing the extent to which class cleavage provides a sense of identity to guide individuals’ social and political behaviour (Bartolini and Mair 1990, see also Oskarson, 1994, 2016). If the second component is neglected while measuring class voting, then the mechanisms being measured are habitual, unconscious, or even fake according to Oskarson (2016, p. 248).

The societal change and its consequences have also encouraged researchers to pay more attention to the effect of voters’ attitudinal orientations on their political preferences within past decades (e.g., Inglehart 1984; Kitschelt, 1994; Knutsen, 1997; Oesch, 2006 and 2008; Van der Eijk et al 2005). These studies have approached attitudinal dimensions differently from the perspectives of the number, formation, and fluctuation. The results have also indicated that attitudinal orientations have become more significant determinants of voting behaviour in line with the results that highlighted the weakening explanatory power of the social class. In their comparative study, Knutsen (2018) analysed contemporary European party systems including the extent to which social structure affects party choice via value orientations. Their results suggest that value orientations and social structure hold massive explanatory power, but this varies across countries (Knutsen 2018, p. 271).

The thesis is structured as follows:

After the introduction (1.1) in Chapter 1, the second subchapter (1.2) steers towards the research problem by outlining the starting point of the study at three levels: structural, organisational, and citizen levels. Furthermore, the third
subchapter (1.3) defines the concepts of alignment, dealignment, and realignment. These describe the underlying mechanisms regarding working-class voting.

Chapter 2 focuses on the study’s design discussing the concept of social class (subchapter 2.1). Chapter 2 introduces the research problem (2.2) and the research questions in the third subchapter (2.3).

Chapter 3 is dedicated to the most central concept: class voting. The chapter is divided into three subchapters. The first (3.1) focuses on the fundamental idea of class voting especially class voting patterns among working-class voters. The second subchapter (3.2) discusses the indicators of voters’ class positions and class voting. In particular, it discusses the objective and subjective approaches to the voters’ class positions from the class congruence and incongruence perspective. The third subchapter (3.3) presents a multidimensional approach to working-class voters’ class positions and class voting.

Chapter 4 presents the context of the study, which is divided into three subchapters following a similar structure as the introduction (see subchapters 1.2.1–1.2.3). The Chapter discusses the characteristics of Finnish society on the structural (4.1), organisational (4.2), and citizen (4.3) levels.

Chapter 5 focuses on the empirics. It introduces the data, the limitations of the study, and the research model (subchapters 5.1–5.3). Subchapter 5.4 outlines the principal way of measuring voters’ class positions and class (in)congruence.

Chapter 6 starts with the empirical analysis and is divided into three Chapters (6-8). The first analysis in Chapter 6 explains class (in)congruence among the working class. The second analysis in Chapter 7 analyses the effect of class (in)congruence on working-class voters’ attitudinal orientations. The third analysis in Chapter 8 brings the previous two analyses together and explains working-class voting using both class (in)congruence and attitudinal orientations. Chapter 9 summarises the results and evaluates the study’s contribution. The main implications and directions for future research are also discussed.

1.2 The changing context of the working-class vote

This subchapter introduces the contextual approach of the working-class vote. It anchors the research problem to the previous studies and highlights the patterns and phenomena relevant to this study. The subchapters (1.2.1–1.2.3) outline the structural
level, organisational level, and citizen’s level. These levels are discussed in the study’s case country (Finland) in Chapter 4. This subchapter focuses on those societal developments tangential to the research problem (see Figure 1.1). Changes in the structural level can induce changes at both the organisational and citizen level. However, this thesis does not seek to distinguish a clear causality between the levels. It does not claim that structural level changes influence changes in the organisational and citizen levels or vice versa.

The structural level captures broad trends that have affected the development of working-class vote in the West European democracies. These broad lines give rise to new trends and developments both at the organisation level and at the individual level. Thus, this study refers to the structural level with significant societal change, globalisation, and its parallel phenomena such as changes in the occupational structure and value shift. These have significantly affected the working-class milieu by reshaping working-class occupations and political preferences. In addition, the structural level refers to the increased social mobility and demographic transition. Social mobility and demographic transition offer explanations for the change in the role of the working class and its importance in people’s political behaviour.

The organisational level refers to those organisational actors in society that are relevant to this study’s research problem. These organisations are first party systems that include political parties and trade unions. Furthermore, the organisation level tackles organisation-related phenomena and trends such as the decline of SD parties in the Western democracies and weakening of the party-union ties that have been traditionally strong in Finland and other Nordic countries.

The citizen level refers to voters and elements that are relevant for political engagement. The citizen level emphasizes the factors that are significant to the working class’ political participation. Partisan change and the decline in turnout rates are trends that are important to consider when analysing political participation. Trade union membership is a common feature of working-class party attachment. For many decades, these two have gone hand in hand especially in Nordic countries. Moreover, social identity links the study’s research model and the underlying hypothesis of social identity referring to the class identification that affects working-class voters’ party choice. Social mobility has also been one of the key explanations for the declining class voting trend (e.g., Knutsen, 2006).
1.2.1 Structural level: Societal change

Ronald Inglehart (1977, 1997) acknowledged the increasing support for the post-materialistic values in the 1970s. Inglehart called this value shift a ‘silent revolution’ that caused changes in political life. According to Inglehart, the shift was from materialistic values to post-materialistic values. The latter has emphasised the quality of life and political skills in managing political decision-making (ibid).

Inglehart’s thoughts have been developed further by Piero Ignazi. He has argued that the silent revolution has provoked a ‘silent counter-revolution’, which refers to an authoritarian countermovement, which rose as a reaction to the post-materialistic values in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Ignazi, 1992, 2003). While the silent revolution of post-materialist values gave rise to the green and left-libertarian
parties, the silent counter-revolution provided a fertile breeding ground for the neo-conservative as well as radical-right parties in the Western countries.

When globalisation accelerated within the millennium, scholars began to discuss actively the changes in the political cleavage structure (see e.g., Kriesi et al. 2006, 2008; van der Brug and van Spanje, 2009). The main argument has been that the traditional political cleavages\(^2\) merged from the new sociocultural cleavage. The traditional cleavages refer to the old four cleavages formulated by Lipset and Rokkan (1967). According to Lipset and Rokkan, these cleavages emerged in the late 19\(^{th}\) century and only the parties—that reflect these four cleavages—have been able to succeed in the political competition. These four traditional cleavages are 1. religion, 2. centre versus peripheral, 3. urban versus rural, and 4. owners versus employees. (ibid).

During the 21\(^{st}\) century, the sociocultural cleavage has consolidated its position as one of the most important political cleavages in Western European politics. Despite this, the latest findings fail to support the notion that the traditional socioeconomic cleavage has lost its significance. Despite covering all political issues, the relevance of socioeconomic cleavage as a universal cleavage has started to fade (e.g., Thomassen, 2005). Consequently, scholars tend to illustrate the political sphere as a two-axis political spectrum highlighting both the socioeconomic and sociocultural issues (Hooghe et al. 2002).

Nevertheless, the political atmosphere has changed remarkably in recent years. Besides the economic crisis, the European Union (EU) has faced challenges in maintaining its integration policy and accelerating migration. Climate change is also a major concern. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic shook the foundations of social stability globally. These developments have increased turbulence in the Western democracies and reshaped the political agenda, party systems, and voters’ preferences. The election results have become more unpredictable and volatile.

For example, Donald Trump’s presidency and Brexit, i.e., Britain’s exit from the EU were patterns that polarised and challenged the political and economic stability. These events are good examples of the rise of authoritarianism and populism in the 21\(^{st}\) century. Norris and Inglehart (2019) formulated the *Cultural Backlash Theory* (ibid. 32-56) showing that these events caused new challenges for representative democracy. According to the theory, *‘the Silent Revolution’* (See Inglehart, 1977, 1990)

\(^2\) This study applies Bartolini’s and Mair’s (1990) definition on the concept of political cleavage. According to this definition, cleavage has three elements: 1) belonging to a social group, which is objectively distinguishable, 2) the group shares common values, interests, and social identities, 3) the group tends to vote for the political party, which represents these values and interests. Bartolini and Mair call these elements empirical, normative, and organisational.
reflected the social liberal attitudes and triggered an authoritarian reflex on the demand side. The trigger stems from the threat, ‘the Silent Revolution’ has caused for social conservative values. On the supply side, the orientation of voters’ values can turn into votes. In addition, some institutional rules can explain the support for the authoritarian-populist parties, e.g., regulations to monitor party competition, election campaigns, and the election. However, the way that the media frames the issues, has a major effect on the election outcome. The election rules can also affect the success of political parties.

In contrast, the Silent Revolution’s value shift created erosion for the conventional side of political participation. Traditional ways to participate, such as voting, membership in trade unions, and political parties, have given room to protests, demonstrations, and new forms of activism. Norris and Inglehart argue that these developments have transformed public opinion to the demand and supply side. In addition, the transformation reflects voters’ social identities, which moved away from traditional values towards the post-material and socially liberal values (Norris and Inglehart 2019, pp 32-56.). At the end of this subchapter, this societal change is discussed from the value shift perspective. The next subsections focus on the concrete societal developments and trends that partially act as a stimulus to value shifts in Western democracies.

**Globalisation**

A great deal of knowledge has been revealed regarding the effects of globalisation on the global economy and the world order. According to the Oxford Encyclopaedia of Modern World (2008), the concept of globalisation refers to the increasing worldwide integration of economic, cultural, political, religious, and social systems. However, globalisation and its side effects are purely linked to economic issues. The concept has been actively used since the end of the cold war in early 1990 until the 2008 worldwide financial crisis. The 2008 financial crisis was the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression in 1929 and was a negative effect of globalisation.

After the crisis, the terms 'glocal' and 'glocalisation' were increasingly used instead of globalisation. These terms are a combination of local and global aspects (Oxford Reference, 2021). Since the business world became aware of the downsides of globalisation, the term ‘glocal’ has become popular in the 21st century’s business language. In this study, the aim is not to explore the definition of globalisation and
glocalisation. Rather, the intention is to outline developments that have caused changes in the political sphere.

In reality, the economic issues related to globalisation are undeniably significant. Globalisation has changed the balance of the world economy shifting it towards multipolarity and reshaping the production structure of Western democracies. Simply put, the market has changed along with the demand for the workforce. In addition, the economy has become more volatile due to globalisation and free trade.

Kriesi et al. (2006, 2008) argue that globalisation and its side effects have caused fundamental changes in West European politics at the beginning of the 21st century. Globalisation has increased inequality worldwide. Thus, Kriesi et al. talk about the losers and winners of globalisation (ibid. 4). According to Kriesi et al. (2008, pp. 4-9), the losers of globalisation are citizens whose life patterns have traditionally been protected by national boundaries. Boundaries have been demolished by increasing worldwide integration, and the losers have lost most of their life chances and become increasingly uncertain about their future. The winners are those whose life patterns have traditionally been restricted by national boundaries, but globalisation has provided them more opportunities and broadened their milieus3. The winners have secured better work opportunities. The winner side tends to approach globalisation and immigration from a positive point of view because they create fair competition and reduce production costs (ibid). Kriesi et al. (2008) distinguish three mechanisms: economic competition, increasing cultural diversity, and increasing political competition. All three have reinforced the gap between these winners and losers.

The first mechanism, economic competition, is the result of massive deregulation. Many companies have been exposed to the global market and have attempted to bring down the costs of production to remain competitive in the globalised market. The second mechanism, increasing cultural diversity, is the result of increasing economic competition. Cultural diversity increases when the market is global and the workforce moves freely across countries’ borders (Kriesi, et al. 2008, p. 6). Consequently, countries that welcome immigrants from different ethnic backgrounds become symbols of threats to the standard of living of the native population. The third mechanism refers to the increased political competition due to globalisation. Hence, countries have lost their political influence and problem-solving capacity to international political actors such as the EU, NATO, and UN. (Kriesi et al. 2008.)

3 In this study, 'milieu' refers to voter’s sphere of life or surroundings, which consist of social environment, relatives, close friends as well as work life and leisure activities.
These three mechanisms are relevant when attempting to change the working-class voting system. Economic competition, increasing cultural diversity, and increasing political competition have reshaped Western European societies towards a post-industrial society. Due to increased economic competition, the workforce has become a globally competitive product, just like other products in the global market. Labour-related immigration increases as the workforce begins to move across borders. Concurrently, cultural diversity increases. As Kriesi et al. (2008) have noted, cultural diversity has become a symbol of the threats to the traditional lifestyle and job opportunities. The increased political competition and international political decision-making have affected labour legislation, labour unionisation, and the autonomy of employees (e.g., Kurer, 2020; Kurer and Palier, 2019; Oesch, 2015).

The EU has played a key role in European integration and globalisation process in Europe. Despite the different ideological approaches to European integration, the EU has inevitably affected member states’ domestic policies directly or indirectly as well as the entire European development. The EU has created a new arena for member states to pursue economic, societal, legislative, and cultural goals. The internal market, EU law, the European monetary union, and the common currency have reshaped both the national and global economy. Furthermore, the free movement, increasing immigration, geographical mobility, as well as native and cultural diversity have changed people's daily lives and affected the European countries’ socio-demographic composition. With an increase in the integration process, the EU has become an important factor for the national political parties. Though national parties primarily operate in their national parliaments and governments, the cooperation between the European parties has increased (Raunio, 2007).

According to World Bank (2020), 75.7 per cent of the European population lived in urban areas in 2018. Urbanisation is an ongoing phenomenon in Europe, and it is predicted to increase in coming decades. Today, peri-urban space is increasing faster than the centres of the cities. Similar developments considerably impact the regional, social, ecological, and economic processes. Lastly, diverging migration has affected demographics globally. In Europe, net emigration turned into net immigration after Second World War. In 2016, the share of foreign-born people living in the EU-28 was 10.7 per cent of the total population. The share of people born outside the EU was almost twice as high (6.9%) as the share of people living in the EU-28 member states other than their country of birth (3.8%) (EU, 2016). Thus, net immigration has favoured the dependency ratio.
Occupational change covers employees, employers, their actions, and an institutional context. Many studies agree that technological development is the most important factor behind occupational change (see e.g., Oesch, 2015, 2013 and Kurer, 2020 p. 1799). In Western Europe, most firms access similar levels of technological developments, which partly explains the common trend in the occupational structure. Nevertheless, countries differ from each other in occupational polarisation i.e., the polarisation between high, middle, and low-skilled occupations. When analysing the differences between countries, the labour market’s supply and demand are considered. This is important because technological developments affect firms’ demand for certain types of labour (demand). In addition, firms seek to adapt to what the regional labour market offers (supply). Education and immigration are key factors and affect these patterns (Oesch, 2013, pp. 3-4).

Several studies in the social sciences have explored occupational change for over a century. According to Oesch (2015, p. 113), occupational change was at the centre of the debate even in Karl Marx’s seminal studies. In the 1960s and 1970s, scholars analysed post-industrialised societies and predicted the growth of the service sector and knowledge employees. They predicted that the growth of the service sector would create a need for professional expertise and a simultaneous decrease in the need for routine production tasks. In the 1990s, the term skilled-based technological change (SBTC) was established. The SBTC suggests that technology not only complements a high-skilled workforce but substitutes for a low-skilled workforce, which automatically diminishes the employment prospects among the low-skilled workforce (see e.g., Piketty, 2014, Oesch, 2015, p. 113). However, there are slightly differing opinions concerning the SBTC revealing that high-skilled technology cannot replace interpersonal service tasks such as services offering in restaurants, the caring industry, and the cleaning sector. Thus, technological developments are likely to complement high-skilled occupations and low-skilled interpersonal occupations; they are more likely to supplement industrial workers and office clerks in the middle of the occupational structure (Oesch, 2015 and 2013 see also Autor, et al. 2003).
What have been the trends of occupational change in Europe? Figure 1.2 illustrates the number of people in employment by occupational groups in the 28 EU-member states. In 1991-2020, these trends show that the number of professionals including service and sales workers has increased. However, the number of so-called middle-skilled occupations (elementary occupations, craft and related trade workers, and clerical support workers) has decreased.

Working life has also changed. The technical developments and shifts to the information society have unquestionably and significantly affected the nature of work. Producing and organising information have become characteristics of the 21st century.

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4 The EU28 member-states are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Note: While this study was unfinished, the United Kingdom withdrew from the EU on 31 January 2021 leaving 27 member-states. However, we show here data for the 28 member states.
century’s job description. Today, the share of knowledge workers\(^5\) increases rapidly although their exact number is difficult to calculate. Robotics and automation are also replacing humans in various tasks. Such societal changes and economic restructuring have made working life more unstable, fragmented, and fragile. In addition, short-term contract work and self-employment are now more common (Melin and Saari, 2019).

Age has become a determinant of capability in working life. Raising the retirement age has been the state’s tool to cover society’s increasing expenses, which has raised the average age of labour. Given the prompt shift towards an information society, this has led to real problems in working life. The older cohorts have struggled with working life due to integration of modern technology in job processes. Therefore, they have faced discrimination in the job market that consequently have affected their well-being (Melin and Saari, 2019, p. 35; see also Viitasalo, 2015).

Overall, working life has quickly changed threatening many people’s work or at least reshaped their job descriptions. On the other hand, the intense progress, i.e., technological innovations and development of information society, has created new work and business. In summary, employees have changed their impressions and expectations towards their work. From the perspective of the working-class voters, this notion is quite important because their jobs are most likely at the centre of these developments. This, in turn, is likely to reshape working-class voters’ social identities and reflect their positions in society. The focus shifts from the occupational structure and working life to society’s demographic transition and social mobility.

Demographic transition and social mobility

Several Western democracies have undergone a demographic transition when transforming from agrarian societies to industrial and urban societies in the 19\(^{th}\) and 20\(^{th}\) centuries. Population development and demographic transitions were dependent on three factors: 1) the level of fertility, 2) the death rate, and 3) the size of immigration. In addition, life expectancy affects the structure of the population. The demographic transition is linked to the country’s welfare. The population’s age structure and the dependency ratio along with the net immigration and natural population growth provide the basis for societal planning and social policies. Furthermore, the population’s occupational, educational and family structures, as

\(^5\) Simply put, this refers to employees whose job includes either handling or using information.
well as language and ethnic distributions influence the demand for various social services (Kestilä and Martelin, 2019 p. 26).

In the 21st century, dependent ratios in most Western democracies have become more uneconomical as explained by two demographic transitions: First, fertility and death rates have decreased. Second, life expectancy has increased significantly. Consequently, the ageing population has increased rapidly to automatically weaken the dependency ratio. Public economies have faced concrete problems in financing social security benefits. Economic statistics have proven that the public economy’s capacities will go through serious tests in the coming years due to the massive demographic changes (Kestilä and Karvonen 2019, pp. 10-11; Kestilä and Martelin, 2019 p. 26).

Source: OECD 2021a

Figure 1.3 The share of the working-age population (15–64-year-olds) of the total population in the 28 European countries from 1950 to 2018.

The age structure in most European countries has similarly changed: The share of elderly has increased, whereas the share of the working-age population, 15- to 64-year-olds, has decreased. After the second world war (1945–1950), the baby boom generation reshaped European countries' age structures with longer life expectancy and lower fertility rates. According to the EU’s calculations, most of the EU-28 population were of working age in 2019 (59.4%) with roughly one fifth (20.4%) under 20 years, and another fifth (20.3%) 65 years old or older (Eurostat,
Figure 1.3 shows how the share of the working-age population has changed over time concerning the entire population of the EU member states from the post-war area through the 21st century. The trendline shows how the baby boomers entered the labour market in the 1970s to increase the working-age population's share through the 2010s.

In Europe, the population ageing started increasing decades ago. Figure 1.4 demonstrates how the share of the elderly population of the working-age population has changed over time in the EU member states since the 1960s until the 21st century. The trend is clear: The share of elderly citizens has steadily increased since the 1960s. The increase has been slightly faster after the turn of the millennium. In the last 60 years, the share has increased by 10 percentage points. This trend has inevitably weakened the dependency ratio and overburdened public economies. However, population ageing will be a continuous future trend. According to the latest estimates, the median age in the EU will increase with 5 years from 43.7 in 2019 to 48.8 in 2100. The trend will increase for the next 80 years. Thus, the elderly population will continue ageing in the future. The latest estimates show that the share of the population aged 80 years and above in the EU is likely to double in the 21st century (EuroStat, 2021b).

Source: OECD 2021b

Figure 1.4 The share of the elderly population of the working-age (15-64 years) population in 28 European countries and between 1960–2018.
Social mobility

Social mobility is a fundamental mechanism of the 21st-century society’s structure. It refers to individuals’ movement in a society’s hierarchy; this study refers to social mobility as movement in a society’s class structure. However, the concept of social mobility is not synonymous with class mobility despite the similar meanings of the two concepts. Class mobility is a part of social mobility, i.e., social mobility is defined as mobility from one class position to another. From the empirical perspective, both spouse’s occupation and class of one’s childhood home have influence on social mobility. These both are been controlled for in the empirical part of this study.

Social mobility is a seminal concept and phenomenon based on two rationales in social science. First, it measures social inequality and the level of equality in society. Second, it measures equal opportunities in society showing the extent to which people determine their success (Lipset and Bendix, 1959). Social heredity, social transfer, and social positions from parents to their children are the opposite of social mobility.

Scholars have argued that the level of social mobility has been a good indicator of openness and meritocracy in society. Social mobility is either absolute or relative. Absolute social mobility measures the extent to which parents’ class positions are transferred to their children. The relative social mobility measures the same phenomenon but has been controlled by the temporal differences in society’s class structure and between generations (e.g., Goldthorpe, 1980, 2018; Lipset and Bendix, 1992). Some studies use the term ‘vertical social mobility’ to indicate mobility up or down from one socioeconomic level to another due to marriage or a new higher position in the job market. In recent decades, vertical social mobility has occurred mostly upwards in Western democracies: This is a result of improving living standards. However, social mobility can also refer to horizontal mobility, i.e., movement from one position to another within the same socioeconomic level such as changing from a prestigious occupation to an equally prestigious occupation (e.g., Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992; Lipset and Bendix, 1992, 1959).

Many studies published from the 1970s to the early 21st century indicated that social mobility was common in Western democracies. Despite these results, there is a concern of increasing (economic) inequality and decreasing inter-generational social mobility in Finland—these metrics have both increased in other Western democracies in the last few decades (e.g., Piketty, 2016; Goldthorpe, 2018; Riihelä and Tuomala, 2019; Lahtinen, 2019). Other scholars have argued that the decreasing trends in intergenerational social mobility can be explained by generational
differences, e.g., the various sizes of generations, the period when the generation went to school and/or entered the job market, etc. (Breen and Jonsson, 2000). For instance, if a generation experienced a recession in their childhood, then it could affect their economic and work-life behaviour in their adulthood (Härkönen, 2010, p. 65).

The impact of social mobility on class voting has been discovered in previous class voting research (e.g., Manza, Hout, and Brooks, 1995; Knutsen, 2006; Nieuwbeerta and Ultee, 1999). Knutsen (2006, p. 1) stated that voters who have changed their social positions are likely to place their political preferences in the middle of their current class position and original class position. Some studies have also found evidence that older voters have weaker explanatory power of the original class. Simultaneously, the voter’s current class position is more significant (DeGraaf, Nieuwbeerta and Heath, 1995). Class voting scholars have studied the effects of social mobility on class voting. Therefore, social mobility has been perceived to negatively affect class voting and contribute to its decline.

From the study’s research problem, demographic transitions and increasing social mobility have two major consequences on traditional working-class voting: First, demographic change has reshaped the composition of the left-wing parties’ supporters. Supporters have become older, and the share of pensioners has increased remarkably. Second, due to the demographic transitions and weakened dependency ratio, the policies of the left-wing parties have been gradually reshaped. The values of the welfare state were not the same as they were in the 1970s and 1980s. Moreover, support for the welfare state in the 21st century is more about maintaining the old structures than creating new ones. Changes in the support base have led to changes in left-wing policies. When a large percentage of supporters retire, the policy preferences will be built on different issues than from the past issues—especially when the majority of the supporters are blue-collar employees (e.g., Keman, 2017; Paloheimo, 2019 and Rennwald, 2020). The change in the supporter base of the SD parties and left-wing parties is discussed in more detail in subchapter 1.2.2.

From this study’s perspective, the trend in social mobility and the share of middle-class voters has increased whereas the share of working-class voters has declined. This issue has diminished the core of the left-wing parties’ support base namely the blue-collar employees and traditional working-class families. Today, the children of working-class families rarely end up in middle-class occupations in their adulthood. This shows that the patterns of working-class voting cannot continue to be based on occupation. However, this does not exclude the possibility that working-
class voting could not be passed from parents to children via other mechanisms, i.e., working-class identity.

Value shift

This subchapter focuses on key societal developments that have acted as a stimulus to the shift with changes in the political sphere. The trends of the value shift from the post-war period through today have been outlined. In terms of the research problem, the value shift is the most important factor in changing the working-class vote. The value shift has affected the supply and demand side of working-class voting—namely the political parties (supply) and the working-class voters (demand). This relationship deserves some further discussion.

The importance of the value shift has been widely acknowledged in many studies focusing on political participation and election. The term ‘value shift’ refers to the post-war societies’ shift from materialist to postmaterialist values (Inglehart 1977; 1990). In the late 1970s, Inglehart stated that values shifted from material values to values emphasising the quality of life (1977). In his other work (1984, 1990 & 1997), Inglehart’s core argument is that societies have changed from class-based politics towards politics based primarily on the division between materialist and post-materialist values. This has diminished the significance of the socioeconomic left-right cleavage and is the most important political division in the industrialised democracies for many decades. According to Inglehart, the value shift has declined the class voting based on the socioeconomic left-right cleavage.

After Inglehart’s first seminal studies, several studies (e.g., Dalton et al. 1984; Franklin et al. 1992; Kitschelt, 1994 and 1995) have challenged the traditional and stable cleavage pattern put forward by Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967). Inglehart’s studies acted as a stimulus for many of these arguments. These studies have highlighted the change in the value structure since the late 1960s and the declining significance of the traditional cleavage structure. In these studies, new conflicts are called ‘new politics.’ In line with Inglehart, they show that the new politics have been a result of societal change, i.e., rising levels of education, improved living conditions, and occupational change. The new conflicts in society have given rise to new social movements and social dimensions that were formed around new values such as cultural liberalism and traditional authoritarian values (Kriesi, 1993, 1998; Kriesi, et al. 2006, see also Manza and Brooks, 1999; Oesch, 2006).
Political demand and supply have gradually adopted these new conflicts. The sociocultural cleavage has consolidated its position in the political sphere since the mid-1990s. At the beginning of the 21st century, scholars outlined the political sphere as two-dimensional (Kitschelt, 1995; Kriesi, et al. 2006; van der Brug and van Spanje, 2009).

Due to the value shift and its underlying factors, there is a presumption that the interests and threats of the working class have changed. For instance, the working class itself and the working class’ political preferences have become more heterogeneous (e.g., Piazza, 2001; Güveli, et al. 2007; Gingrich and Häusermann, 2015; Rennwald, 2020). The changes imply a change in the working class’ voting patterns. The value shift from the voters’ perspective is discussed in more detail in subchapter 1.2.3, which focuses on the changing context of the traditional working-class voting at the citizen level and the value shift from the perspective of voters’ attitudinal orientations. The value shift and voters’ attitudinal orientations are observed in subchapter 2.2. where the study’s research problem is anchored to previous studies.

1.2.2 Organisational level: Party system, political parties, and trade unions

This subchapter summarises the organisation-level factors that are the most relevant and important for studying working-class voting in the 21st century. The scrutiny begins by looking at changes in the party system from the perspective of left-wing and SD parties. The focus then shifts to the SD parties and their declining support rates in Western democracies. The subsection specifies factors that influence the decline. Lastly, the focus turns to the linkage between political parties and trade unions, i.e., party-union ties, traditionally linked to the SD parties and blue-collar employees’ trade unions in Nordic countries.

Party system change

Lipset and Rokkan used the cleavage model (1967) to distinguish the most fundamental characteristics of the Nordic party system. These characteristics can still be distinguished today. The Nordic party systems were stable (frozen) for several
decades with low volatility rates (e.g., Arter, 2012). The cleavage model is based on Rokkan’s triangle (see Figure 1.5 below), which illustrates the three main conflicts, i.e., cleavages, in society. In each corner of the triangle, there is an organisation and a party that supports certain group’s preferences in society. Thus, the triangle consists of three cleavages: urban-rural, centre-periphery, and workers-owners. When these cleavages are put in the triangle, they form three ends that create the three major social groups forming the basis of the Nordic party systems.

First, at the end of worker/urban cleavage, there is demand for working-class’ supporters leading to a rise in trade unions and labour parties. Second, supporters of the rural areas, agriculture, and forestry are connected at the end of rural and periphery. Thus, the farmer’s league as well as liberal and agrarian parties emerge. Third, at the end of owners and centre, the commercial preferences are united creating the basis for trade associations, i.e., an organisation formed by businesses to promote conservative parties as well as commercial and industrial opportunities (Rokkan, 1966; Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Bengtsson, et al. 2014; see also Hansen and Kosiara-Pedersen, 2017).

![Stein Rokkan’s Triangle-model (1966)](image)

**Figure 1.5** Stein Rokkan’s Triangle-model (1966).
Rokkan’s cleavage model determined the Nordic party systems for many decades. Several studies have refined the idea of strong traditional parties—agrarian/liberal, conservative, and SD—distinguishing each of the Nordic party systems (Bartolini and Mair, 1990; Nieuwbeerta and Ultee, 1999; Deegan-Krause, 2007; Knutsen, 2007). The model faced its first challengers in the mid-1960s when the Finnish Rural Party increased its support and won seats in the Finnish parliament. The party was officially the first right-wing populist party in the Nordic party systems. A decade later, the populist right began to gain support in other Nordic countries especially in Denmark (*Progressive Party*) (Hansen and Kosiara-Pedersen, 2017).

The concrete rise of the populist right occurred in the 21st century and challenged Rokkan’s triangle and traditional cleavage structures on which the Nordic party systems were built. Simultaneously, sociocultural dimensions and political issues related to the populist right have established their position as one of the main political dimensions (e.g., Hooghe et al. 2002; Kriesi et al. 2006). The value shift presented in the previous subchapter created a demand for a change in the party system by reshaping the cleavage structure.

Typically, the right-wing populist party has gained support among working-class voters with lower education levels. It tends to support national, traditional, and authoritarian values. However, the sociocultural dimension has also gained support in the Nordic party systems giving rise to green liberalism and the emergence of parties in the Nordic party systems. Thus, Rokkan’s cleavage model has been challenged by the establishment of new middle-size parties in Nordic countries. Their political agendas lean strongly on sociocultural values and issues (Sundberg, 1999; Heidar, 2004; Arter, 2012; Bengtsson, et al. 2014; Hansen and Kosiara-Pedersen, 2017). The decline in the support for the SD parties has been consequential for changes in the party system. The research problem is discussed in more detail in the following section because it is so important.

*Decline in Social Democratic parties’ support*

The decline in support for SD parties and moderate left parties has occurred in Europe since the 1970s and 1980s, respectively. Some scholars have referred to this decline as ‘the crisis of social democracy’ (e.g., Kitschelt and Hellemans, 1990; Keating and McCrone, 2013). Since the 1980s, the SD parties have lost their
working-class support. Several studies have shown that this gradually started to shift behind the right-wing populist parties (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Oesch, 2008; Bornschier and Kriesi, 2013; Oskarson and Demker, 2015; Hansen and Kosiara-Pedersen, 2017; Rennwald, 2020).

The deceleration in economic growth in many West European democracies at the beginning of the 21st century negatively affected support for SD parties. However, the booming economy had significantly helped the SD parties to create the resources for welfare services through income transfers in an earlier time (Pontusson, 1995; Paloheimo, 2019; Rennwald, 2020). Dissatisfaction with globalisation and uncertainty explain the change in party support among working-class voters (Oesch, 2008; Paloheimo, 2019; Rennwald, 2020).

Occupational change is the most common explanation for the SD parties’ decline in the West European democracies. Since the 1970s and 1980s, the traditional supporter group of the SD parties, i.e., industrial employees, have gradually decreased due the occupational changes. The share of skilled industrial employees (who were the major SD parties’ supporters in the past) have decreased. In addition, the work-life culture has changed leading to unfavourable features for social democracy. The working-class disappeared from the workplaces, and the division between the private sector and public sector employees has grown considerably. Simultaneously, the share of white-collar employees has begun to increase—this has been a favourable trend for the conservative bourgeois parties (see e.g., Keating and McCrone, 2013; Rennvald, 2020).

Gradually, the share of pensioners has increased among the SD party supporters. Voters under 45 years of age have switched their support to the new left-wing parties. These parties have adopted democratic socialism and eco-socialism as their core ideologies to meet the demand of younger voters (Paloheimo, 2019). However, this trend has not been extensively adopted in West European countries (see Paloheimo and Tiihonen 2020, p. 511).

The declining trend for SD parties is noted due to the concrete support rates in West European countries (see Table 1.1). Support for SD parties has declined in each EU country from the 1990s through the latest parliamentary election. The only exception is Malta where the SD party’s support rate has increased by 6.9 percentage points. Nevertheless, a major decline in support rate is noted in Greece where over a third of the SD party’s support has disappeared within the last couple of decades.

In the last few decades, both party membership and turnout rates have declined in almost every Western European democracy. In many of these countries, the party member size in the 21st century is approximately half of its size in the 1970s. This
trend has been the most crucial for the SD parties, whose organisations have based their actions on the logic of mass-based parties and mass support (Paloheimo 2019, p. 70; Duverger, 1978)

Table 1.1. The support for Social Democratic parties in the West European countries in the parliamentary elections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1990–99</th>
<th>Latest</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>-34.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>-20.8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>-16.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>-16.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>-13.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>-11.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-10.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>-10.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>-8.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>-8.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>-7.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>-6.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>-6.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxemburg</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>-6.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>-4.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>-3.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
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<td>36.3</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
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<td>-1.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: ‘The years 1990-99’ indicate the SD party’s average support rate in the country’s parliamentary elections throughout the 1990s. ‘The latest’ refers to the SD party support rate in the country’s recent parliamentary election and the election years are listed in the column labelled ‘year’. Finally, ‘the ranking’ indicates the SD party’s ranking in the share of votes in the country’s recent parliamentary election.

Globalisation has created pressures on SD parties for several reasons. First, SD parties’ policies have traditionally been state-centred and focused on domestic income distribution and the provision of public services. Thus, SD parties have adopted a more defensive than confident approach towards daily politics due to the
growing internationalism and integration between states. Second, the ideology of the Nordic welfare state has changed and has weakened the SD parties’ stable positions in the welfare-state countries. Third, neoliberalism as an ideology spread around society and institutions highlighting the market and the free economy as key factors for improving citizens’ well-being. This has threatened the welfare state’s public services, which have traditionally been one of the SD parties’ most important policy agendas. Fourth, the present-day modern welfare state has been harnessed to protect individualistic values, which are nearly the complete opposite of traditional SD values such as collectivism and solidarity (Keating and McCrone, 2013; Gingrich and Häusermann, 2015; Paloheimo, 2019, p. 71, see also Arter, 2003).

Even though the aim of this study is not to focus on the decline of the SD party’s support, it is still a crucial trend from the perspective of working-class voting. Furthermore, the decline in the SD parties' support has made scholars question whether the pattern of traditional working-class voting has begun to waver. The declining trend is a clear sign of this staggering. The following subsection focuses on the linkage between the SD parties and trade unions, i.e., party-union ties. Such linkage describes the impact on SD parties’ standing in Nordic countries.

Trade unions and party-union ties

Hague and Harrop (1992, 2004) have grouped pressure groups into four categories: 1) potential pressure groups, 2) organisational pressure groups, 3) ideological pressure groups, and 4) pressure groups. These all act as interest groups. This study’s focus is on pressure groups that act as interest groups—namely trade unions. Furthermore, trade unions are defined as organisations of which the primary aim is to promote certain social group’s benefits and rights in society using pressures to achieve their policies6.

Simply put, trade unions are pressure groups: Their target is to promote the interests of their members, i.e., the employees’, rights, and benefits in the workplaces. However, trade unions share many similarities with political parties. For instance, they are organised similarly, and they operate in-between government and society by connecting civic society and state. Both political parties and trade unions accumulate citizens’ interests and preferences and influence public policy by expressing these collective views (Allern and Bale 2012, pp. 9-10). Thus, trade unions should be

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6 This definition is similar to Wiberg’s definition, see (Wiberg 2006, p. 68)

What sets these two organisational actors apart from each other? First, political parties pursue a broader range of political issues than interest groups. Second, political parties’ main goal is to acquire a public office in elections. The number of votes that the parties have collected in the previous elections determines the parties’ political influence in the future. Thus, parties try to achieve electoral support and power whereas trade unions try to influence the ruling power. Trade unions do not need to cling to power in every electoral year. However, parties must attempt to hang to power (Sundberg, 2008). In addition, trade unions use pressure politics to influence public policy (Beyers et al. 2008; Schmitter, 2001; Wiberg, 2006).

Some scholars have claimed that political parties differ from each other, but they demonstrate the internal homogeneity in their policy compared to trade unions. Indeed, parties differ by ideological, organisational, and behavioural features. In contrast, trade unions are more heterogeneous organisations because they cover a wider range of citizens from various occupations under their influence. This especially relates to central confederations of trade unions such as Akava (Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland), SAK (Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions) and STTK (Finnish Confederation of Professionals) in Finland (e.g., Katz and Mair, 1995; Burnstein, 1998). In this study, trade unions are observed through their central confederations under which they perform their functions. The Finnish trade unions and party-union ties in Finland are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

The relationship between trade unions and political parties is crucial to understand representative government and how democracy works (e.g., Katz and Mair 1995; Allern and Bail 2017, p. 1). Political parties have benefited from their close relationship with trade unions by gaining communication channels, platforms, and instruments to reach more key constituencies (Allern, 2010; Poguntke, 2006; see also Bengtsson et al. 2014, p. 67). Historically, the most well-known party-union ties are between centre-left parties and trade unions. The organisational relationships between parties and unions have varied across countries (Padgett and Patterson, 1991).

Party-union ties have traditionally been considerably strong especially in Nordic countries. These relationships have also been regarded as institutional—not only organisational. The party-union ties have been the strongest between the social democratic parties and trade unions. These two actors have been called the ‘Siamese twins’ of the labour movement (Ebbinghaus, 1995; Padgett and Patterson 1991, p.
Trade unions have managed to achieve political influence because they have shared similar goals and ideologies with the SD parties (Gumbrell-McCormick et al. 2013, p. 157). On the contrary, the SD parties communicate with their supporters and party members more comprehensively through the unions (e.g., Allern, 2010, pp. 3-4).

Scholars have increased their interest in party-union ties for a fairly long period providing various definitions for the different types of relationships. Over time, the definitions have developed some common principal elements indicating a certain closeness between parties and unions. The most common elements are 1) the correlation between the union and the national political cleavage structure, 2) the party’s main supporters’ need for more broad resources, and 3) the timing of the founding of the union/party and which one of the two organisations was established first to thus influence the other’s founding (see Duverger, 1954/1972; Rawson, 1969).

When analysing party-union relations, multiple methods are used to define the links between parties and unions. Studies use sociological emphases to define the party-union ties as manifestations of social cleavages (e.g., Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). Others have focused on the divided material resources, i.e., financial support in-between parties and unions (e.g., Sundberg, 2003 and Wilson, 1990). Allern and Bale (2017, p. 10) have comprehensively used various approaches to explain party-union relationships. They have explored the organisational links between left-of-centre parties and trade unions in 12 different Western Democracies. They have divided organizational approaches into five different categories: 1) interaction and contact, 2) material, 3) ideological, 4) strategic, and 5) power balance.

Societal and economic conditions have become less favourable for trade unions in Western democracies in this century. This in turn has weakened party-union ties. The rise of neoliberalism, the economic crisis in the 21st century, and increasing globalisation have made left-wing politics face challenges in pursuing party-union ties (McCrone and Keating, 2013). This issue has created a common trend for studies on the party-union. One goal is to determine the way to reshape the weakened party-union alliance (Allern et al. 2007; Allern and Bale, 2017; Piazza, 2001).

As discussed in the earlier subsection, social democracy as an ideology has become less popular under electoral and fiscal pressure. When support for the SD parties declined, allies between trade unions and political parties have become less attractive. The golden age of blue-collar unions is over in most European countries (Table 1.2). Since the late 1970s, union density has declined in advanced industrial societies. However, the decline only happened recently in the Nordic countries.
Table 1.2 shows how the union density decreased in every Nordic country from 1998 to 2018 except in Iceland where the trend has been the opposite. The steepest decrease has been in Sweden and Finland.

Table 1.2. Trade union density in the Nordic countries in 1998–2018.

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>76.3</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>-9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>78.4</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>-18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>87.8</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>-4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-24.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: OECD 2020

Few studies disagree about the changes in the party-unions-ties in recent decades, but scholars do offer different outlooks on this matter. Some scholars have emphasised the country context more explaining weakening ties based on structural variables such as a change in the division of labour and declining heavy industry sectors (e.g., Howell, 2001; Thomas, 2001; Allern and Bale, 2017). Others have focused more on the changes in party systems highlighting that political parties have begun to take steps away from civic society (e.g., Katz and Mair 1995; Poguntke, 2006 and Allern 2012). Scholars have agreed that the weakened party-union ties have been extremely harmful to the SD parties because they fail to reach their constituencies as actively as before. Simultaneously, the decline in trade union membership has weakened their influence (e.g., Rennwald, 2020; Allern et al. 2007; Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013).

Trade unions’ funding base naturally declines when membership rates decline (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013 p. 29). At the same time, the loss of members reduces union power. Compared to political parties, unions’ influence is not as directly dependent on their total number of members (Epstein, 1967, pp. 275-81). Müller-Jentsch (1988) categorised three trade unions crises: 1) ‘crisis of interest aggregation’, 2) ‘crisis of workers’ loyalty towards unions’, and 3) ‘crisis of union representation’ (see also Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013) These crises can also affect the party-union ties.
1.2.3 Citizen level: Voters, partisan change, and attitudinal orientations

In recent decades, a sphere of political activity has become more complex and multidimensional. At the same time, studies have found that voters’ decisions are based on new political issues than older traditional cleavage-based positions and societal preferences. Social identity theory\(^7\) has increased as a rival theory to explain voting patterns among the 21\textsuperscript{st} century’s electorate. This subchapter discusses the value change at the citizen level by outlining the partisan change and value shift from the perspective of voters and working-class voters.

Partisan change

Partisan change refers to the change in party-voter ties that increase electoral volatility. In other words, it refers to the change in parties’ vote shares between elections. For instance, the decline in turnout rates (e.g., Blais, 2007; Franklin, 2004) reduces party identification (e.g., Dalton, 2000), decreases party member rates (e.g., Hooghe and Kern, 2015), and increases the share of swing voters (often called gross volatility, e.g., Dalton and McAllister, 2000). These issues have been the signs of increasing electoral volatility. Here the focus is briefly on the turnout and electoral volatility itself. These two are the most relevant factors and phenomena in terms of this study’s research problem, working class voting since they focus on explaining the changes in party support.

Turnout is the most common indicator of electoral participation. It refers to an act of giving a vote in an election. Several studies have argued that turnout rates have been in continuous decline in Western democracies since the 1980s (e.g., Blais, 2007; 2010; Dalton, 2006). The declining turnout rates have been especially crucial for SD parties because their existence has been based on mass support.

Scholars have provided various explanations responsible for this decline and sought to find developments that could increase turnout rates (e.g., Miller and Shanks 1996; Franklin, 2004; Blais and Rubenson, 2013). Above all, socioeconomic differences are the main explanation for turnout rates and electoral participation\(^8\).

\(^7\) Social identity theory refers to seminal psychological theory invented by Henri Tajfel (1978) and John Turner (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). They report that people lean on their group memberships. In other words, their self-perceptions are based on the social group(s) to which they belong.

\(^8\) See Lahtinen (2019, pp. 14-16) for comprehensive summary of previous studies’ arguments on socioeconomic differences’ relevance in political participation.
Many studies have explained the mechanisms that make socioeconomic factors affect electoral participation.

Between the 1970s and 2010s, electoral volatility increased moderately in Western European party systems. This trend indicates the growth of electoral uncertainty and electoral competitiveness between parties. Voters’ behaviour in the elections has become less certain and more impulsive. Predicting election behaviour has become more difficult (Söderlund, 2008 and 2020, pp. 461–3; Dalton et al. 2000).

Exploring electoral volatility as an approach to party-voter ties is important because it is a characteristic of 21st century electoral studies. In a larger perspective, the decline in class voting is the factor responsible for an increase in electoral volatility. Scholars have offered explanations for electoral volatility’s increase in the 2010s. Society’s structural changes such as globalisation and global economic crisis, the rise of new political parties, and the decline of Old Politics9 have been responsible for electoral volatility (Pedersen, 1979; Söderlund, 2020).

Electoral volatility is an important trend to acknowledge when examining party choice in the 21st century. The characteristics of the electoral volatility in Finland are discussed in detail in subchapter 4.3. These characteristics are the foundation of 21st century’s political engagement in Finland. In addition, subchapter 1.3 outlines the mechanisms of voter alignment, dealignment, and realignment with political parties. This is important in electoral volatility discussions. Electoral volatility and dealignment explanations are often similar.

**Voters’ attitudinal orientations**

As discussed previously in subchapter 1.2.1, scholars have acknowledged a change in the voters’ attitudinal orientations since the late 1970s based on the rise of post-materialist issues among the electorate (Inglehart, 1977; 1990). At that time, ‘New Politics’ was established to describe the division between post-materialist and materialist value orientations. According to Inglehart, ‘the Silent Revolution’ influenced the New Politics in modern society. While the materialist values highlighted the importance of safety, economy, and the physical environment, the post-materialist values highlighted their opposites: self-expression, belonging, and autonomy (Inglehart, 1977; 1990 and 1997).

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9 The concept of Old Politics refers to Lipset and Rokkan’s (1967) cleavage structure, primarily on the class cleavage. See subchapter 1.3.3 in this study for more explanation.
In the 1990s and 2000s, society’s structural changes shook voter’s value orientations. In the 21st century, Kriesi et al. (2006; see also 2008) argued that globalisation created a new conflict among voters: It divided voters into those who benefit from globalisation and those whose everyday life became worse. In practice, the outcomes of globalisation are increased immigration, reduced national identity, and a larger open market. These created concrete threats for blue-collar employees whose jobs were vulnerable to globalisation and open competition (ibid).

Globalisation has created a new political dimension among the electorate after the rise of post-materialist values. This sociocultural dimension has established its role as one of the most important political dimensions of the 21st century along traditional socioeconomic dimensions determining both voters’ attitudinal orientations and the party systems. Some scholars have argued that the old traditional political parties have not considered voters’ sociocultural positions (Van der Brug and van Spanje, 2009). This issue applies to the SD parties that have been under pressure to change their policies to capture the working-class votes in the 21st century (Rennwald, 2020; van der Brug et al. 2013). The general attitudinal climate has begun to favour individualistic values and an individual-oriented way of life; thus, the SD parties have been forced to change their orientation in terms of supporting collectivism (Pitlik and Rode, 2017; see also Paloheimo and Tiihonen, 2020, p. 505).

Voters’ attitudinal orientations have had a significant impact on voters’ party choices in the 21st century. It has been increasingly common for voters to emphasise a single issue in their vote choice. Studies have found that attitudinal orientations are connected to voters’ sociodemographic background (Knutsen, 2018) and their level of education (Stubager, 2009). In the 2010s, the trend has shifted from cleavage-based politics towards attitudinal orientations and issue-voting. More specifically, studies have discovered that voters’ attitudinal orientations are connected to their class positions (Van de Werfhorst and de Graaf, 2004; Svalfors, 2006; Bengtsson et al. 2013). In terms of socioeconomic dimensions, working-class voters tend to be oriented towards the left, and they tend to support authoritarian and anti-immigration values. In addition, working-class voters are willing to reduce immigration because it poses a threat to the job market (Stubager, 2008; Bengtsson et al. 2013). The Finnish working-class voters’ attitudinal orientations are discussed in more detail in subchapter 4.3 and Chapter 7; the latter analyses working-class voters’ attitudinal orientations in 21st century Finland.
Milieu change

The sociodemographic composition of the population changed significantly in the Western democracies in the 21st century leading to a change in the citizens’ milieu. As discussed previously, social mobility and ageing have reshaped the composition of the population. Causes of social mobility are the increasing level of education, occupational change, work-life change, migration, and urbanisation. They can be considered as the causes of the milieu change as well.

Simply put, the milieu changes in this study’s context refer to working-class voters’ family members, close friends, and their everyday life. These factors are important because they produce class signals for the voters. In other words, voters consider their class identification based on their subjective reflections of their surroundings, i.e., class signals (more about the concept of class identification is in subchapter 3.2.2 and class (in)congruence in subchapter 3.2.3).

Working-class voters’ milieu changed for several reasons. First, there have been major increases in women in the labour market, and the rising levels of education have affected society’s family structure (Alford et al. 2011; Huber and Malhotra, 2014; Smith et al. 2014). Second, the number of dual-income households has increased. Third, social mobility has increased the number of couples with different socioeconomic backgrounds. Fourth, recent studies have found spouses with different socioeconomic statuses (SES) (Schwartz et al. 2016). From the research problem, this could indicate that a larger number of working-class voters' spouses do not belong to the working class according to their occupation, income level, or education. The issue has increased the likelihood of mixed class signals.

Concerning working life changes, scholars have discussed the pronounced effect of job experiences on attitude formation in the 21st century: People spend many hours a day at work or work-related milieu. They have noticed that values such as libertarian-authoritarian and socioeconomic are linked to the level of autonomy and nature of job tasks (Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014; see also Oesch, 2006).
Social identity theory is based on group identification. It includes an individual’s perception of belonging to a certain group in society. One must be aware of the various groups in society. Social identity is an attachment that mostly occurs psychologically (Tajfel, 1970; 1979; 1981; Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Huddy, 2013).

Social identity theory has challenged rational choice theories and cleavage-based theories when explaining voters’ party choices in the 21st century. Scholars have emphasised the impact of social identities instead of the effect of classic political engagement on voters’ decisions in elections (Achen and Bartels, 2016). The decline in cleavage-based politics has played an important role in social identity and voting decisions. Along with the decline in cleavage-based politics, the explanatory power of the voters’ socio-structural positions has declined gradually (Franklin, et al. 2009; Dalton, 2000). Scholars have been aware of subjective indicators of voters’ socio-structural positions to explain political behaviour. However, the increasing awareness of subjective indicators, e.g., various social identities, has increased the significance of objective indicators (van der Eijk, 2009, p. 409).

Social identity can be considered as an umbrella concept for class identification (see subchapter 3.2.2) as well as party identification. The latter has been a central concept in the Michigan model originating from in the United States in the 1960s. According to the Michigan model (Campbell et al. 1960), partisan identity is a core political behaviour developed through long-term sociological characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, social status, and gender).

The effectiveness of social identity stems from its relation to other factors that are unrelated to a social class or a political party. In modern societies, many factors affect voters’ social identity formation. Social identities are no longer confined to voter’s occupations or socioeconomic positions. The number of social identities has increased with the rise of New Politics. In addition, there has been noted the rise of new political ‘isms’ and political movements such as feminism, rights of the sexual minorities, and environmentalism. Several new organisations have been formed and represent these isms and movements. However, these organisations have challenged the role of political parties (van der Eijk et al. 2009). There is still, however, very little research on which social identities the voters base their voting decisions, and how many different social identities they can simultaneously have.

Even though this study’s aim is not to contribute to the wide range of literature on social identity or analyse the concept itself, it is important to
acknowledge the recent discussions around it for two reasons. First, this study’s central concept, class identification, originates from social identity theory. Second, although this study takes into account solely one social identity, class identification, awareness of the social identities’ increasing role in voting behaviour is important. Moreover, social identities have been suggested to increase the understanding of the recent changes in the Finnish party system and especially the increased polarisation among voters. According to social identity theory, voters can place themselves in groups, which provide them with social identities. Since social identity theory is based on group-memberships, it can divide groups into ‘we and they’, i.e., in-group and out-group. This kind of division is likely to increase polarisation among voters. (Isotalo et al. 2020, p. 291; see also Tajfel 1970; 1978; Tajfel and Turner 1979). To summarise, the aim of this study is not to analyse several social identities; rather, the focus is on working-class voters’ class identification.

1.3 Alignment, dealignment, and realignment

The previous subchapter (1.2) focused on the contextual side of the study’s research problem. It outlined the structure, organisation, and citizen level trends, i.e., changes and phenomena relevant when studying working-class voting in the 21st century. This subchapter moves towards the mechanisms through which political demand and supply merge. Political demand refers to voters, and political supply refers to political parties. These mechanisms apply to working-class voting because they illustrate how working-class voters align, dealign and alternatively realign with certain political parties, which might turn into a working-class vote. This chapter comprises three subchapters (1.3.1-1.3.3), and each of their focus is on one of the mechanisms: alignment, dealignment, and realignment.

1.3.1 Alignment

Voters’ party attachment and class-party ties are strongly related to three concepts: alignment, dealignment, and realignment. Alignment refers to a stable situation in a political system where the political demand and supply meet (see Figure 1.6 page 66). Many concepts relating to party support and voting behaviour are derived from the concept of alignment. In this study, alignment refers to the social basis of party support. Chronologically, the alignment exists in the past when party systems were
built on traditional social structures, i.e., class cleavage. In contrast, mechanisms of dealignment and realignment have begun to emerge in advanced industrialised democracies. Major changes in the social structure have occurred in industrialised democracies and shaken citizens’ political engagement in the post-war period. These developments have created concepts of dealignment and realignment (Knutsen, 2018, p. 10).

Kitschelt (2013, p. 224) stated that “only when demand and supply meet, the socio-structural dispositions translate into actual vote choices”. This statement describes the nature of alignment. In terms of class voting, the voters (demand) must be oriented by the class cleavage. The party system (supply) must also reflect the same cleavage. According to Kitschelt (ibid), the degree of class voting depends on the ‘law’ of supply and demand (see also Oskarson and Demker, 2015, p. 631). When considering working-class voting, alignment makes working-class voters give their votes to socialist parties, including SD parties.

In other words, alignment describes a situation where various groups of voters align to a political party favouring their interests. Simply put, alignment indicates citizens’ engagement to political parties. It contains an underlying assumption that certain social groups align with certain parties. Alignment illustrates the stability of a party system. According to Lipset and Rokkan (1967), both the party systems and party alignments froze in the 1960s in most Western democracies. Despite socioeconomic restructuring in the post-war period, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) noticed that most Western party systems reflected the same political cleavages similar to that of the 1920s (see also Erlingsson, 2009, pp. 113-4). Lipset and Rokkan illustrated the constant effect of socio-structural factors on citizens’ party choices. This situation can be considered as the traditional alignment in a political sphere.
Figure 1.6 The relation between political supply and demand: alignment, dealignment, and realignment.

1.3.2 Dealignment

Later studies have acknowledged changes in the supply and demand of the political sphere (Dalton, 1984; Crewe and Denver, 1985; Kriesi, et al. 2006; Kitschelt, 2013; Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014). The structural changes¹⁰ have undermined the mechanisms of stable partisan alignment. Most scholars have highlighted that structural changes have occurred on the demand side, i.e., the electorate. The supply side has not yet been put aside. Scholars have explicitly emphasised their role in enforcing the dealignment process by arguing that political parties have moved away from voters (e.g., Mair et al. 2004; Jansen, 2011; Jansen et al. 2013).

The term dealignment (also partisan dealignment) refers to the weakened effect of socio-structural variables on voters’ party choice (e.g., Dalton 2002, 183; Dalton, Flanagan, and Beck, 1984 and Franklin et al. 1992). The first signs of the weakened effect among the electorate were distinguished in the mid-1980s when scholars

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¹⁰ See subchapter 1.2.1 in this study
observed increasing fluctuations in election results one after another (Crewe and Denwer, 1985). Consequently, it became more difficult to predict voting behaviour, and the electorate’s party choice was based on their socio-structural positions (e.g., Knutsen 2018, p. 3).

Lipset’s and Rokkan’s (1967) theory of frozen party systems and voter alignments is a traditional description of political alignment, but it is the starting point of dealignment studies. The theory of frozen party systems illustrates the stable situation, which changes due to dealignment. Furthermore, dealignment has been a trend that started to break the stable alignment between political parties (supply) and voters (demand) from the 1970s onwards. In terms of class voting, dealignment refers to the difficulties of social classes to choose a political party and align with political parties.

Several studies have explored the relationship between dealignment mechanisms and the decline of class voting (e.g., Clark and Lipset, 1991; Nieuwbeerta, 1995; Jansen, 2001; Evans and Tilley, 2017). ‘Bottom-up’ theories emphasise the demand side and the change in society’s class structure (see e.g., Evans and Tilley 2012a, 2017; Jansen, 2011). These theories look at the increased social heterogeneity among voters. According to the ‘bottom up’ theories, the increased wealth in societies, globalisation, and changes in the economic structure have created a completely new social group of voters (see Figure 1.6). In turn, this has created new types of political demand. The existing parties have faced challenges in responding to the issue. From the voters’ perspective, finding a suitable party has become more difficult because a voter may identify with various social groups or with no social group. In this scenario, voters may be confused about their social identities.

Other scholars have argued that the electorate has become more educated and more conscious about political information leading to more advanced voting strategies. However, cognitive mobilisation theory (CMT) suggests changes in voting trends and psychological voting behaviour and election results (Dalton 1984; Dalton 2002, pp. 189 – 91). This notion also applies to class voting. If voting has become more an expression of opinions about specific political issues than an expression of social identities, it has undoubtedly affected class voting (ibid. and Knutsen, 2018, p. 3 and Vestin, 2019, p. 8).

Some of the dealignment theories focus on the supply side of the political sphere. These theories argue that the dealignment processes are caused by changes in the political supply, i.e., political parties. These theories are known as the ‘top-down’ theories in the class voting literature. They reveal that political parties moved away from class-related policies, giving less class-based voting cues to the electorate. The
‘top down’ perspective is not as common among the dealignment literature as the ‘bottom up’ perspective. Among the class voting studies, ‘top-down’ literature offers explanations for the decline in class voting. For instance, scholars have suggested that due to less class-related policy programs, parties cannot persuade voters from certain social classes. The issue has affected working-class voting because left-wing parties have abandoned the pure working-class and decreased their solidarity with the working class (e.g., Jansen, 2011; Jansen, et al. 2013). Both the bottom-up and top-down literature will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3 where the primary focus is to scrutinise the recent trends in class voting and find their common explanations.

1.3.3 Realignment

Realignment occurs when old traditional political cleavages are weakened, and new cleavages emerge (Figure 1.6 page 66). According to Knutsen (2018, p. 4), during this realignment process, voters are first dealigned from the old cleavages and then realigned to the new existing cleavage structure. However, realignment should not be treated as an automatic continuum dealignment because realignment depends on the dealignment or vice versa. Dealignment and realignment can be separate from each other. However, dealigned voters are likely to realign (ibid.)

New issues in politics have been the driving force in the realignment process. Environment, sexual equality, nuclear energy, and human rights have failed to fit in the old cleavages that were the basis for the old partisan alignment. Voters have gradually started to form a new basis for political alignment as they become more interested in these new issues. This realignment has resulted in developments from the perspective of political supply and demand (Dalton, 2002, p. 168).

More detailed impressions on the realignment mechanism are given in the class voting literature. However, many of these studies seem to rely more on the ‘top-down’ perspective that emphasises the political supply-side rather than the ‘bottom-up’ perspectives. According to these studies, the structure of society has changed significantly giving rise to other phenomena: the division between labour market’s insiders and outsiders, increased segments of the middle-class, and changed group-interests in a welfare state (Gingrich and Häusermann, 2015, pp. 53-4.) In contrast, the ‘bottom-up’ perspective argues that the societal changes primarily affect voters especially their political values and attitudes. The effect is called “ecological realignment” (see Knutsen, 2018, p. 5) because it describes how realignment follows the changes in social structure and after the changes have occurred.
The realignment is based on Inglehart’s (1977, 1984, 1997) work on the value shift in the industrialised democracies. As discussed in subchapter 1.2.1, such new values and attitudes are outcomes of a large-scale cultural shift. According to Inglehart, economic growth and globalisation are developments that have initiated a cultural shift. They give rise to a new division between materialist and post-materialist values as well as other new structural divisions between the public and private sector workforce (see Knutsen, 2018, p. 4; 2001 and 2005).

Realignment and its mechanisms can be observed from the class voting perspective using Inglehart’s work as a starting point. In class voting studies, discussions about realignment complement the discussions of New Politics against Old Politics. The concept of Old Politics is based on the class cleavage similar to Lipset and Rokkan’s (1967) cleavage structure. New Politics are new political issues that create new dimensions since the 1970-80s based on immigration, ethnic diversity, and environmental issues (Dalton 2002, p. 134). Old Politics are strongly linked to industrial societies and their social structure—namely social classes. However, the Old Politics have to give space for the New Politics in advanced industrialised democracies. This has weakened the link between the Old Politics and social structure thus linking voter’s class position and party choice (Knutsen 2018, p. 5).

In realignment studies, some class voting scholars have put more emphasis on developing new class-schemas to match with the post-industrial labour market that has undergone an occupational change (see Oesch, 2006 and 2008 for significant contributions). Oesch found a correlation between voters’ occupation and party choice. However, the trends have been different from that of the past events (ibid. & 2013). In the past decade, Kitschelt and Rehm (2014) also analysed these trends in detail to understand the extent to which workplace culture and work experiences affect people’s political preferences. They found that the labour market has changed and that changes in the work culture have affected people’s economic and cultural thinking. Based on their results, citizens’ jobs tend to change their political preferences. The analyses suggest that sociocultural professionals are strong supporters of grid and group issues. (Grid means personal autonomy and libertarian governance; group refers to conceptions of political identity, and greed means egalitarian distributive principles). Furthermore, petty bourgeoisie is extreme on economic liberalism, centrist, or somewhat authoritarian on-grid and group preferences. On a larger scale, these various political preferences can explain weakening traditional class-party attachments (ibid).
This first chapter outlined the study’s context distinguishing working-class voting based on the structure, organisation, and citizen level. In addition, the chapter outlined the underlying mechanisms, alignment, dealignment, and realignment regarding working-class voting and political participation. Before defining the concept of class and introducing the research problem, Table 1.3 summarises the primary contextual features presented in Chapter 1.
Table 1.3  Summary of the study’s context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural level</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Globalisation</strong> has changed the balance of the world economy, shifted it towards multipolarity and reshaped the production structure of Western democracies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Western societies have gone through a value shift in which citizens’ values have shifted from material values towards post-material values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Occupational structure</strong> and work-life culture have changed and have threatened people’s work or at least reshaped their job descriptions. The share of middle-skilled employees has declined whereas the share of service employees and professionals has increased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The population composition has changed in Western democracies due to the demographic change and increased social mobility. Above all, the ageing population has increased, which creates pressures on the dependency ratio.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational level</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A traditional determinant of West European party systems, i.e., <strong>Rokkan’s cleavage model has faced challengers</strong>. The rise of right-wing populist parties has challenged the established parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>The SD parties’ support rates have declined</strong> in almost every West European country since the 1990s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• At the same time, the party-union ties have begun to weaken. This trend has influenced the SD parties’ declining trend especially in Nordic countries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citizen level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Partisan change</strong>: The decline in turnout rates, weakening of party identification, as well as increased electoral volatility are signs of increased electoral uncertainty. In practice, voters’ party choices have become more unstable in the 21st century’s Western democracies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Voters’ attitudinal orientations</strong>: Increasing significance of sociocultural dimension among the electorate has been a favourable trend for the populist parties, but this is less favourable for the SD parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Milieu change</strong>: The changes in the society’s structure, i.e., increasing levels of education and occupational change, have changed the working-class voters’ milieu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Social identity</strong>: The decline of cleavage-based politics has enhanced the role of social identity in voting decisions. Social identities have been the significant determinants of party choices in the 21st century. Class identification is one such example of social identity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This chapter takes a closer look at the class concept outlining the most important class theories in studying the research problem. The first subchapter (2.1.) focuses on the most important class theories in chronological order from the Marxist and Weberian times until today. Second, the chapter introduces the research problem and discusses the three theoretical starting points stemming from the previous literature. These three theoretical frameworks are discussed in each separate subchapter. The first (2.2.1) discusses social class as cleavage by leaning on Stefano Bartolini’s and Peter Mair’s (1990) seminal cleavage typology. The second subchapter (2.2.2) considers a two-dimensional approach to voters’ class position based on Maria Oskarson’s (1994 and 2016) contextual framework for class voting. The subchapter also defines the concept of class (in)congruence. The third subchapter sheds light on Oddbjørn Knutsen’s (2018) work on voters’ attitudinal orientations concerning their socio-structural positions and party choice (2.2.3). The last subchapter of this chapter (2.3) presents the study’s research questions.

2.1 The concept of class

“In the analytic vocabulary of contemporary sociology, ‘class’ refers to a specific social location and causality, a specific pattern of groupness, and a specific form of identification.”

(Pakulski and Waters 1996, p. 2).

Social class is undoubtedly one of the most fundamental concepts, if not the most fundamental in social sciences. For over a century it has been a central unit in social science research, and social scientists have used and operationalised the concept to analyse social phenomena including social stratification, inequality, and order in society. Understanding the concept of class is crucial before heading to a more empirical approach to classes, namely class voting. Many class voting scholars agree
with the notion that class voting has progressed remarkably after the work of Karl Marx and Max Weber. Nevertheless, it is important to explore the concept of social class\(^{11}\) in class voting. This study contributes to the theories of the class by operationalising voters’ class-positions while considering objective and subjective class positions—namely their occupational group and class identification at the same time.

Distinguishing the difference between the operationalisation and actual definition of a certain concept might be complex. However, operationalisations and definitions sometimes overlap regarding the concept of class and class voting. Studies have approached the concept of class from an empirical perspective by debating various ways to measure class and voters’ class positions. By exploring the class voting theoretical frameworks, class studies follow Lipset and Rokkan (1967) cleavages to develop their theories. The cleavage literature (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Bartolini and Mair; Franklin et al. 2009; Enyedi, 2008) offers a theoretical link between a class and a vote: This link explains the mechanism of how voters’ class positions align with their vote decisions. The extensive cleavage literature is discussed in more detail in subchapter 2.2.1. Meanwhile, this chapter takes one step backwards and considers the fundamental idea of class and its determinants more thoroughly.

To be able to analyse class voting and measure it in the election studies, it is essential to define the term ‘class’ itself. Thus, the starting point has been more empirical than theoretical. Previous voting scholars have separated themselves from the roots of the traditional class theorists. They seldom review the history of sociological class literature. Those few theoretical discussions focus on whether classes are relational or gradational (Ossowski, 1963) and whether the various characterisations of voters’ class positions reflect Marx’s or Weber’s seminal thinking (Evans and Tilley 2017, p. 2).

Thus, this chapter seeks to review the various ways the concept has been defined, approached, and operationalised in the previous social science literature. The chapter goes through the most important definitions chronologically. However, the chapter’s main aim is not to operationalise the voters’ class positions. The operationalisation of voters’ class positions is discussed later in subchapter 3.3, which provides this study’s approach to class voting.

For two centuries, the question of how to define and measure people’s class positions in society has been at the heart of social science research. Scientific approaches to social class have been both empirical and theoretical depending on the research topic and the field of study. Classes have constituted structural positions

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\(^{11}\) The terms ‘social class’ and ‘class’ are used as synonyms in this study.
in society and have often been related to the ownership or wealth in social sciences. This reasoning reflects Marx’s and Weber’s thinking dating back one and a half-century. Marx and Weber have dominated class theories for almost two centuries. They found that the owners of factories, entrepreneurs, and industrial workers belong to different and opposite classes. Indeed, this has been the case in the past.

In today’s class research, the definitions of the class have focused on occupational groups. Thus, the changes in the occupational structure have generated new challenges in defining and analysing social classes. For instance, it is difficult to define the growing group of officials as managers or employees, and scholars have not fully agreed into which social class they belong (Oskarson 1994, p. 31; Wright, 2005).

In recent decades, a significant number of the class has been under discussion (see e.g., Clark and Lipset, 1991 and 2001; Clark, 2003; Hout et al. 1993; Manza and Brooks, 1999). The contextual factors presented in subchapters 1.2.1–1.2.3 have been the prime movers behind these debates. The decrease in production-based occupations, the decline of labour unions, and the increase in middle-class occupations have prompted several questions about social classes’ relevance in today’s society (e.g., Wasburn and Covert 2017, p. 157). Almost unanimously, scholars in the social sciences have stated that social classes have lost their political significance. In other words, scholars have questioned whether classes determine people’s lives in the current political environment.

Even though the classical definitions of social class might be different from 21st century political thinking, they constitute a great deal of today’s empirical research. This chapter is four-fold and seeks to discover (1) what is a ‘social class’, (2) how scholars have approached social class, (3) how it can be determined in today’s changing society, and (4) whether there is anything left from the past centuries’ seminal thinking of Marx and Weber.

In addition, the chapter categorises previous studies in three different and chronological entities: (1) The first category includes traditional class theories formulated by Marx, Engels, and Weber—this is the unquestionable heritage that is still significant in today’s social sciences. (2) The second category takes these ideas one step further from traditional class theories and discusses about the reconceptualisation of the class theories that determines class in contemporary society. (3) Finally, we include arguments on social classes’ decline and their weakened significance both in society and social sciences; these fall under the third and final category. The third category presents the most crucial explanations for why classes have changed their form and lost their significance in the 21st century. Overall, this chapter attempts to create a brief, but rather extensive, overview of the
class theories and the concept of class. Moreover, it is vital to define social classes in the context of class voting.

1) Social classes – Classical definitions and seminal theories

The classical distinction in social science’s class-theories has been between Marxist and Weberian theories of class. These two theorists have sought to find answers to very similar questions but have substantially different outlooks especially on how classes and class divisions have been formed in societies. However, both Karl Marx and Max Weber have based their theories and thinking on industrialisation and market capitalism, though in different ways. Simply put, Marx sees classes first and foremost from the perspective of ‘historical class struggle’ whereas Weber puts more emphasis on social stratification particularly in his class-formation theories. Weber’s insights have been used, applied, and upgraded in today’s sociological and economic research (e.g., Brady et al. 2015). Marx’s heritage is both indisputable and unique above all in sociological class theory traditions. Even though Marx’s and Weber’s theories of class oppose each other, they should not be interpreted as exclusive of each other.

Marx’s most famous class analysis is ‘The Communist Manifesto’ (1848). Ever since, social scientists have applied Marxist thinking to societies all over the world. Many Marxist thinkers have been interested in concepts of social class and stratification. However, for a long time, some declared to be “the owners” of these concepts (e.g., Clark, 2003, p. 17). The core of the Marxist theory of class lies in two opposite social classes: bourgeoisie and proletariat—especially the conflict between them. According to Marx, the most significant factor that distinguishes these two classes is the ownership of wealth: The bourgeoisie class owns the means of production, whereas the proletarian class creates the labour force.

Alternatively, Weber argued that class is a dimension of social structure, and class is a status and ‘social honour’. According to Weber, the most important difference between classes lies in the possession of property. In contrast to many other assumptions, both Weber and Marx deal with three core dimensions: ownership, production, and struggle in their class theories. They both have argued that society’s class divisions exist at the political, ideological, and economic levels, which has led to a strong baseline for future theories of class (e.g., Marshall et al. 1995, pp.16-18.)

Despite several similarities, Weber’s and Marx’s views are divergent in many ways. Two particularly crucial differences can be emphasised. First, Weber’s approach to
social classes was not as deterministic as Marx’s. According to Weber, being a member of a social class does not require being conscious about the class position or any class-based action. However, class-position only affects one’s life experiences and opportunities and is thereby involved in people’s everyday life (Marx (1959/1848; Weber 1922/1968; see also Sosnaud et al. 2013, p. 82; see also Korpi, 1983; Wright 2005; Breen, 2005). Second, Weber did not offer any theory for occupational structure or division of labour. According to Weber, the same mechanisms, such as the capitalist market, regulate both social divisions and property distribution (Marshall et al. 1988, p. 17).

Later definitions of the class have shifted gradually away from Marx’s and Weber’s thinking but without putting them fully behind. When social scientists first focus on the concept of class, Marx’s and Weber’s theories were almost exclusive in the field. After more than a century, their theories are still clearly the foundation of class research. Eventually, most measurement tools for class positions today still reflect Marx’s and Weber’s ideas (e.g., Manza, Hout and Brooks, 1995; Wright, 2005; Hout, 2008; Evans and Tilley, 2017, 2; see also Rennwald, 2020, pp. 16-18.)

2) Revising the class theories

The theories of class and the concept of class have gradually shifted away from Marxian and Weberian theories. Changes in working life and occupational restrictions began to stretch scholars’ thinking beyond Marx’s and Weber’s thinking. Scholars already noticed in the mid-20th century that the concept of class had passed its traditional boundaries. In addition, the concept of social stratification was also redefined (Clark and Lipset 1991, p. 397). This category’s perspective on class definitions and class theories begin to lean more towards the study’s research problem, i.e., working-class voting. The category covers a period called the ‘post-Marxian and post-Weberian phase’.

From studies focusing on class voting, social classes have been built on the idea of cleavage structure. Perhaps, the most well-known cleavage study was presented in the 1960s by Lipset and Rokkan (1967). Their cleavage structure leaned on both national and industrial revolutions of which heritage was based strongly on Marxist and Weberian thinking. Social class was considered one of the most seminal cleavages in Western democracies. This partly proves that there is a common
chronological thread in the concept of the class despite social and economic restructuring and the need for reconceptualising the theories of class.

As society changed after the war period, society’s class structure also changed leading to a concrete need for a reconceptualisation of the class concept. Scholars have yet to be convinced that social classes still exist in post-war societies. Despite the various theoretical perspectives, scholars agree on the existence, significance, and relevance of social classes for many decades since the mid-20th century. Briefly, the need for reconceptualisation created discussions at the macro and micro levels. At the macro-level,12 scholars discussed ‘The Social Cleavage Model’ by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) (e.g., Dalton, Flanagan and Beck; Knutsen, 1988; Brooks and Manza, 1997). Simultaneously, at the micro-level, scholars focused on inventing more advanced class-schemas and methods to analyse the schemas among citizens (e.g., Erikson, 1979; Goldthorpe, 1983 and 1987; Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992; Wright, 1985).

Since the 1960s, Western European scholars have been particularly interested in the effect of social class on citizens’ political behaviour and their party choice including from both macro- and micro-level approaches (from many, see Lipset, 1960 and 1981; Alford, 1963). The growing diversity of class voting studies expanded the class schemas. The classical Marxist and Weberian confrontation between owners and employees got along with other classifications such as categories of income, status rankings, and educational groups (e.g., Evans, 2017, p. 2).

It is important to recall studies that fitted Marx’s and Weber’s theories into post-war and post-industrial society (from many, e.g., Dahrendorf, 1959; Goldthorpe and Portocarero, 1979; Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992; Wright, 1980 and 2005). At the same time, increased interest in the patterns of class voting has encouraged scholars to develop their class schemas since the 1970s. Erikson, Goldthorpe, and Portocarero (1979) published a well-known class schema (EGP) at the end of the 1970s. The schema was based on the hierarchy of skill control and asset status. This class schema was close to Weberian class theory (e.g., Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014, p. 1673). Goldthorpe further developed the schema (e.g., Goldthorpe, 1980; 1983; 1987 & 2000). Both Goldthorpe’s and the EGP schemas remain two of the most well-known and most commonly used class schemas in social science research. They were inspired by Weber’s class theory. Goldthorpe’s class schema is widely used in class voting studies.

Occupation gradually started to establish itself as one the most common ways to capture and understand social classes in modern society. Income level became

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12 Macro-level refers here to the structure of society, whereas the micro-level refers to citizens. Levels can be overlapping, and the studies related to these levels are often tangent to each other.
another common way to evaluate social classes; it has been in use since the 1960s. Economists define often social classes through income. However, economists are not that interested in the source of income. They simply consider that money provides a good measurement tool to analyse citizens’ class positions because it measures citizens’ freedom of choice. In short, more income leads to greater freedom of choice and a higher social class position. (See Hout, 2008, p. 26.)

The important characteristic of the industrial as well as post-Marxian and post-Weberian periods was large and monopolistic factories that provided jobs for numerous blue-collar employees. Another characteristic was that class became a central concept in research in sociology and political science (e.g., Pakulski and Waters, 1996, p. 1). The class concept established its position in social sciences even though Western economies experienced the booms and busts in the 20th century. Blue-collar employees became aware of their rights due to the unsteady economic conditions. However, the rise of the welfare state and the growing occupational structures diminished the frustrated agitation among blue-collar workers (Clark, Lipset and Rempel 1993, p. 297). It is fair to say that this period contributes to class theories and has influenced the development of the theories of class in the future. The post-war period’s social and economic restructuring in Western societies has had a major impact on traditional class voting studies and the way they approach voters’ class positions.

3) Social classes – Dying, weakening, or changing their shape?

The late 20th century was a ground-breaking period for the concept of class in the real world and social sciences. The collapse of the Soviet Union was a backlash for Marxism, communism, and socialist ideologies. Thus, scholars started to question the significance of class ideology, its centrality in social sciences, and its application in a real-life political environment (see e.g., Clark et al. 1993; Clark and Lipset, 2001; Evans, 1999; Pakulski and Waters, 1996). According to Pakulski and Waters (1996), the class began to lose its centrality in the political left and political right because both were interested in new political issues. For instance, the political left started to add issues like gender, citizenship, and human rights to its agenda. However, the political right paid more attention to issues like morality and ethnicity. The historical events also cleared the class concept. After the collapse of communism, it became easier to discuss class, class politics, and class divisions without an ideological tone. (ibid. 1-2.) This phenomenon also applied to social sciences and class-related
research. Scholars did not put an ideological tone in class definition whether they were Marxist or Weberian.

In political sociology, several scholars have contributed to the class research of the 1990s demonstrating the weakening power of social class. For instance, Clark and Lipset asked in their article in 1991 ‘Are Social Classes Dying?’. Ten years later (2001), they published a book entitled ‘The breakdown of Class Politics: A Debate on Post-Industrial Stratification’. Many sociological and electoral studies have focused on the significance of social classes and class-based politics in the 1990s (e.g., Hout, Brooks and Manza 1993; Manza and Brooks 1999; Clark, Lipset and Rempel, 1993). Some studies view the significance of class revealing that its decline has been more radical than others. Some studies have suggested that social classes have died (Clark and Lipset 1991; Pakulski 1993). Other studies have highlighted substantial decline and significant class changes (e.g., Hout, Brooks and Manza 1993; Clark, Lipset and Rempel, 1993).

Concerning the decline of class politics, scholars started to use the terms ‘Old and New Politics’. These terms refer to either traditional socioeconomic divisions based on economic conflict and uneven distribution of poverty (Old Politics) or new political issues such as morality and ethnicity raised by societal changes (New Politics) (see e.g., Dalton, 2002, pp. 147-8). The terms ‘Old and New Politics’ were discussed more in detail in subchapter 1.3.

The tone of past studies on social class changed significantly in the 1990s. The contextual structural changes awakened a demand for more modern openings. The societal structural changes reshaped the class structures. This created a demand for new approaches to social classes in the research field and day-to-day politics. Structural changes lead to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the deepening of globalisation, the embourgeoisement of manual labour, and the rise of the market economy (see subchapter 1.2.1 for more details). In Western democracies, the formation of the middle class is the major change from the development of the class structures. Past studies confirmed that the new middle class was the most far-reaching development (e.g., Dalton, 2002, pp. 147-9; Pakulski and Waters, 1996, pp. 1-7).

The concept of the new middle class became the centre of academic discussions in the late-1960s. Studies used it as an explanation to reveal the weakened link between voters’ class positions and votes. In addition, some scholars emphasised how the growing size of the new middle class increased volatility among voters (e.g., Zelle, 1995; see also Vestin, 2019, p. 14). Thus, the new middle class is less stable
politically, and it has an identity unrelated to the working-class-related and traditional middle class (See e.g., Lipset and Rokkan, 1967, but see also Vestin, 2019, p. 8).

According to Dalton (2002, p. 148), the new middle class is a result of three major changes. The first is the growth of the service sector. The second is a result of the separation of management from the capital. The third is a result of the growth of non-profit occupations because of the increased public sector. Due to these changes, a new social class is created between the already existing working-class and the traditional ‘old’ middle class (Ibid, 148).

How does the 21st century look from the perspective of class-related studies and the concept of class? Despite the reshaping of the class concept, class studies have not disappeared in the 21st century. Scholars have become aware of the concept’s complexity, sensitivity, and multidimensionality. For instance, Wright (2005) has posed questions about class for today’s society. Wright has stated that classes reflect people’s objective positions in terms of the distribution of material inequality. Classes indicate people’s income or wealth. According to Wright (ibid. 183-4), class refers to people’s views of their position in society. The class provides a tool through which citizens evaluate their positions. Classes also generate subjectively salient experiences affecting people’s (class) identities. Wright notes that classes contrast other subjectively salient evaluations such as religion, ethnicity or gender.

Barratt (2011) has analysed Wright’s thinking in his book titled “Social Class on Campus: Theories and Manifestations”. While the book is partly written with a playful mind, it manages to cover all of today’s characteristics of class in an analytical way while highlighting the multidimensionality of class. According to Barratt (ibid.), social class is more than money: Class is a personal and an intercultural experience. Class is an individual perception, a tool, identity, income, and wealth. In addition, class is capital, education, prestige, occupation, culture, a system, privilege, oppression, and a role. Barrett’s characteristics also emphasise how people use various features to assign people to different classes. Even though many studies argue that the golden times of social class are over, the trends might not be as simple as they seem at the first sight. As Barrett’s (2011) thinking shows, many new ‘societal features’ still stem from class and class divisions.

This study begins with an assumption that social classes have taken different shapes—they have been transformed or even merged. However, their influence in the political sphere is still significant in the 21st century. Like previous class voting studies, this study does not have its roots in any class theory. Instead, it contributes to the social class literature by applying a two-dimensional approach to the working-class voters’ class positions. However, the class theory is still important because all
empirical operationalisations of class reflect and carry their heritage from class theory.

Several class voting studies have, yet, strongly argued that class divisions have not completely disappeared in the 21st century despite the structural changes in society. Thus, classes continue to determine people’s political behaviour (e.g., Evans and Tilley, 2017 and 2012a; Knutsen, 2007; Manza, Hout and Brooks, 1995; Oskarson, 2015). Some scholars have highlighted the vital link between voters’ class positions and their political values in Western democracies (see e.g., Evans and Tilley, 2012a and Knutsen, 2018). These two observations form the basis of this study’s research problem in the next subchapter.

2.2 Research problem

This study examines a classic topic in political science to reveal how voters’ class positions affect voting behaviour. The study focuses on the Finnish working-class voters and their political behaviour in the 21st century from the perspective of class voting. More specifically, this study aims to measure the effect of class (in)congruence on Finnish working-class voters’ party choices. In addition, the study analyses, how the effect of class incongruence on party choice is possibly mediated through working-class voters’ attitudinal orientations. Three following subchapters (2.2.1 – 2.2.3) outline the three theoretical starting points. The theory on political cleavages (subchapter 2.2.1) sets the foundation for the class voting research by highlighting the importance of social class cleavage. The second subchapter emphasises the relevance of subjective class indicators, which are central to class identification. Based on these viewpoints, the study forms a two-dimensional approach to working-class voters’ class positions based on class incongruence and class congruence (subchapter 2.2.2). The third subchapter acknowledges an increased role of voters’ attitudinal orientations in the party choice. The study illustrates a research model that measures the effect of working-class position on party choice—directly and indirectly—through attitudinal orientations (2.2.3).
2.2.1 Social class as a cleavage

The class voting pattern refers to a certain social class ready to give their vote to a certain political party. Since the mid-20th century, this pattern has been the most traditional voting pattern in the West European multi-party systems (see e.g., Alford, 1963; Rokkan, 1966; Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Dalton, Flanagan and Beck, 1984; Nieuwbeerta and Ultee 1999; Evans, 2000; Knutsen, 2006; Evans and Tilley, 2017 and Knutsen, 2018). Social class has been an important determinant of voters’ party choice. However, social class has led to a conflict in society dividing citizens into opposite groups. In other words, social class and class divisions have traditionally created the foundation for both political supply and demand. Social class in electoral studies is based on the theory of political cleavages developed by Lipset and Rokkan (1967; see also Rokkan, 1966). As discussed previously, class cleavage and cleavage structures originated from the work of Lipset and Rokkan (1967) in the mid-1960s revealing that both the party and voter alignments rely on underlying social identities and groups.

In 1967, Lipset and Rokkan presented their well-known social cleavage model ‘Party Systems and Voter Alignments’. They argued that the social divisions and cleavages in the society are anchored to societal historical development. There are four different social cleavages resulting from significant historical processes of industrial revolutions and national reformations. The four most important social cleavages were 1) religion-cleavage, 2) centre/periphery-cleavage, 3) rural/urban-cleavage, and 4) class-cleavage among employers and workers. These four cleavages paved the ground for political parties in Western democracies and shaped the party systems. Social groups that reflected these cleavages aligned to the political parties. Thus, the Western democracies’ party systems reflected these social cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Nieuwbeerta and Ultee, 1999; Knutsen, 2007).

Stefano Bartolini and Peter Mair (1990) refined the Lipset and Rokkan thinking in the early 1990s. In their book ‘Identity, Competition and Electoral Availability’, they presented three elements of political cleavages. They explain why certain social cleavages become political cleavages, i.e., widely accepted cleavages in society (Figure 2.1). From their definition, a political cleavage consists of three elements: (1) structural and empirical element, (2) psychological and normative element and (3) organisational element. A cleavage cannot exist without fulfilling these three elements. This study adopts Bartolini’s and Mair’s definition of a theoretical framework of cleavages and the three key elements of cleavage. Many other cleavage studies in the 21st century have also adopted their cleavage typology (e.g., Dalton,
2002; Deegan-Krause, 2007; Enyedi 2005 and 2008). Bartolini’s and Mair’s definition of political cleavage is here approached from the perspective of social class.

According to Bartolini and Mair (1990), social cleavage requires a structural or an empirical element to be political: Political cleavages stem from permanent social divisions in a society such as a language, religion, status, or education (element 1). In practice, social groups in society are distinguished empirically by these social characteristics. Bartolini and Mair highlight the collective identity to which all members of the social group relate (element 2). Some mobilisation evokes organisation around the cleavage. Through this, Bartolini and Mair (ibid.) suggest that the cleavage is expressed in society based on organisational terms (element 3). These organisations are political parties, labour unions, or civic organisations.
In this study, social classes are scrutinised as a political cleavage that contains Bartolini’s and Mair’s three elements (see Figure 2.2). First, the general assumption is that society’s social structure reflects and contains class divisions. Various class indicators (e.g., income, education, occupation) are the key factors shaping these divisions. They form objective classes in society and determine citizens’ objective class positions. Thus, citizens become aware of their existing divisions, i.e., social classes. They gradually form the consciousness of belonging to a certain social class due to their income level, education, and/or occupation thus leading to the formation of class identification. In addition, the class cleavage generates collective identity around itself, which evokes the organisational element. According to Bartolini and Mair’s theory, the issue has given rise to working-class organisations such as left-wing parties and trade unions.

2.2.2 Class (in)congruence: a two-dimensional approach to class-positions

In the dealignment and realignment literature, the main argument has been that socio-structural variables have lost their significance in explaining party choice in Western democracies over a couple of decades (e.g., Dalton, 1984; Manza and Brooks, 1995; Manza, et al. 1999; Knutsen, 2006; Evans and Tilley, 2012a, 2012b;
2017; Vestin, 2019). This phenomenon is correlated to the declining trend in class voting because it underlies the weakening effect of voters’ socio-structural positions on their party choice. To analyse the declining trend and class voting profoundly and multidimensionally, Maria Oskarson (1994 and 2016) has formulated a contextual research frame for class voting (see Figure 2.3).


Figure 2.3 The key aspects of class voting by Maria Oskarson.

According to Oskarson, contextual research is an ideal model for rational class voting. The research frame consists of a structural level and an individual level—both influenced by political and societal factors. The structural level consists of the class structure (societal factor) and party system (political factor). It is crucial to examine the extent to which these factors are correlated, i.e., to what extent are party systems are based on the class cleavage. The more that these factors are connected, the more favourable the conditions are for class voting. At the individual level, voters are conscious of the classes in society and their class positions. According to Oskarson, class consciousness is a crucial element in society. If the voters are unaware of the existence of social classes in society, it will be difficult to base voting decisions on them. Moreover, class voting would be impossible without society, where social classes do not exist (Oskarson, 1994, pp. 24-6).

Maria Oskarson (1994 and 2016) has argued that class voting cannot be fully understood if the linkage between a voter’s class position and a vote is analysed only from the perspective of party systems and political cleavages, i.e., the structural level
According to Oskarson (ibid.), the mechanisms at the individual level should be considered because the voter's choice is following class position. Oskarson’s argument applies Bartolini’s and Mair’s (1990) theory to political cleavages—namely the consciousness and normative element of political cleavage. If voters do not identify themselves with their class positions, then class voting will be incomplete. In this situation, the voters’ political preferences are either spurious, habitual, or based on variables other than voters' class position (Oskarson 2016, p. 248).

Especially, Oskarson’s argument on class voting at the individual level (1994 and 2016) is considered when forming the study’s research problem. A central theorem is that objective and subjective class positions should not be regarded automatically parallel with each other. Stemmed from Oskarson’s thinking, the theory is processed by arguing that voters’ objective and subjective class positions are congruence or incongruent and thus affect the mechanisms and the outcome of class voting.

2.2.3 Class, attitudinal orientations, and party choice

In recent decades, scholars have begun to put more attention on voters’ attitudinal orientations as the determinants of voting behaviour due to the major changes in the social structure (Inglehart, 1984 and 1997; Kitschelt, 1994 and 1995; see also Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014; Knutsen, 2018). It is important to recall that the attitudinal orientations are not completely new determinants of political behaviour. However, their explanatory power has increased in recent decades because traditional determinants, i.e., socio-structural variables, have weakened. In this study, the definition of attitudinal orientations is adapted from the definition of value orientations developed by Oddbjørn Knutsen and Staffan Kumlin (2005). They find that values are those prescriptive beliefs that citizens use to reflect their political system. Furthermore, the political system contains political participation, through which citizens seek to influence politics and present their values (Knutsen and Kumlin 2005, p. 125).

Inglehart (1984) reported a change from a class-based society to a value-based society in the mid-1980s. According to Inglehart, the traditional left-right class voting started to decrease, and voters chose more often their parties based on materialist/post-materialist values. Two of Inglehart’s hypotheses have been ‘the

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13 The study uses term ‘attitudinal orientation’ throughout for clarity’s sake.
issue-polarisation hypothesis’ and ‘the group-polarisation hypothesis’. The issue-polarisation hypothesis refers to the increasing popularity of New Politics over the Old Politics. The group-polarisation hypothesis uses two different perspectives. First, it refers to new value orientations that stimulate social classes to vote for different parties from their traditional former party. Second, the group-polarisation hypothesis highlights attitudinal orientations’ role as intermediates between socio-structural variables and party choice (Inglehart, 1984; 1997).

To explore the concepts of social class, attitudinal orientations, and party choice, this study adopts the theorems of a comparative study on Western European countries adopted by Oddbjørn Knutsen (2018). Knutsen analyses the impact of the socio-structural factors, i.e., social class, rural-urban residence, age, and gender on voters’ political preferences and party choice. Knutsen’s starting point is twofold: 1) the changing social structure and its weakening role as a determinant of voting behaviour and 2) the shift in value orientations. Knutsen also highlights the generally weakened social identities (particularly class identification and party identification) as well as increased political sophistication and improved cognitive skills among voters.

Knutsen’s (2018) results show that the linkage between voters’ socio-structural positions and value orientations is dynamic. In terms of class voting, Knutsen discovers significant findings: First, the results indicate that social class and religion are the most significant existing political cleavages in Western European democracies. However, slightly unexpectedly, voters’ class positions correlate better with the New Political parties than with traditional Old Political parties. The goal of the correlations is to vote for the Green parties corresponding with voters’ gender, level of education, residence, religion, and occupation instead of voting for the Radical Right parties that correlate with gender and social class. According to Knutsen, the results suggest that New Political parties have managed to create new polarisation regarding social structures. This in turn challenges the Old Political parties (Knutsen, 2018, pp. 182-3 and 268–269).

Second, Knutsen’s findings provide important results on the influence of the value orientations and socio-structural variables on party choice. At the beginning of the study, Knutsen constructed a research model that illustrates the socio-structural variables directly and indirectly influencing party choice (Figure 2.4). Knutsen’s results indicate that the value orientations influence party choice more than socio-structural variables when the direct effects of these explanatory variables are

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14 Knutsen analysed these value orientations in his study: economic left-right, environmental issues, libertarian-authoritarian values, and immigration orientations.
measured simultaneously (Figure 2.4: arrows a₁ and a₂). Conversely, if socio-structural variables are considered before value orientations (arrow b), the socio-structural variables are more important. In other words, the socio-structural variables appear to be having an indirect effect on party choice via value orientations. This indicates that even though the value orientations have increased their influence on party choice in recent decades, socio-structural variables cannot fully be excluded. The two concepts should be considered even though the main research interest would be the focus on one of them.

\[ a₁ = \text{Socio-structural variables have a direct effect on party choice.} \]
\[ a₂ = \text{Value orientations have a direct effect on party choice.} \]
\[ b = \text{Socio-structural variables have an indirect effect on party choice through value orientations.} \]

*Source: Oddbjørn Knutsen (2018, 9).*

**Figure 2.4** The causal model for explaining party choice with socio-structural variables and value orientations by Oddbjørn Knutsen.

### 2.3 Research questions

This study combines the above-presented research models and theories to produce a comprehensive overall view of working-class voters in the 21st century in Finland. In terms of partisan alignment, this study explains the Finnish working class
dealignment and realignment. First, the study’s theoretical framework is based on the cleavage typology developed by Bartolini and Mair (1990; see also Lipset and Rokkan, 1967), which sets social class as a vital cleavage of West-European multi-party systems and distinguishes the three elements of a political cleavage: (1) structural and normative, (2) psychological and normative, and (3) organisational.

Second, the study bases its approach on the voters’ class positions using Oskarson’s contextual research frame for social class (1994), which separates the objective and subjective elements of social class and class voting. Given the recent studies on objective and subjective class positions’ incongruence and congruence, there is evidence that the relation between subjective and objective class positions significantly affects the party choice (e.g., D’Hooge et al. 2018; see also Sosnaud et al. 2013). However, these studies paid little attention to factors that explain the incongruence. Thus, this study considers class (in)congruence as an explanation for the change (or decline) in working-class voting.

Third, the study sheds light on voters’ value orientations by examining the role of political values and attitudes on working-class voters’ party choices. Knutsen (2018) encouraged scholars to consider voters’ value orientations. According to Knutsen (2018), the linkage between value orientations and social structure is dynamic and has strong explanatory power on party choice in 21st-century Western democracies. Knutsen’s findings suggest that voters’ value orientations are more significant when the value orientations and the social structure variables are analysed separately. However, if the social structure variables are analysed before value orientations, then the social structure variables are more significant. (Knutsen 2018, p. 271). This study adapts Knutsen’s results by considering the effects of class (in)congruence and attitudinal orientations on working-class voters’ party choice. More specifically, the study applies a path analysis to examine both the direct effects of class (in)congruence and indirect effects of class (in)congruence via attitudinal orientations on working-class voters’ party choice.
Based on the discussion above, **the research problem** is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How does the working-class vote in 21st century Finland?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The more specific **research questions** (1–3) are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>What are the factors that explain the class incongruence and class congruence among the working class?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>To what extent do three working-class groups differ from each other regarding their attitudinal orientations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>How does the class (in)congruence affect party choice among the Finnish working class?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This chapter focuses on the study’s central concept: class voting. The chapter explores class voting, approaches in previous research, and takes a closer look at its declining trend. The first subchapter (3.1.1) answers classical questions such as ‘what?’ and ‘why?’. Next, the focus shifts towards working-class voting (subchapter 3.1.2), which is the most important class voting from the perspective of this study. The third section of subchapter 3.1 (3.1.3) outlines the declining trend of class voting as emphasised by previous class voting studies. Since the concept of class voting is empirical, the later part of Chapter 3 (3.2.) focuses on voters’ class positions and class voting scrutinising various ways to measure it. This study’s approach to class voting is discussed in more detail at the end of chapter (subchapter 3.3).

3.1 What is class voting?

3.1.1 The definition of class voting

The intent of social classes to vote for certain political parties is not new in the field of electoral studies. In the middle of the 20th century, scholars acknowledged that social characteristics played a significant role in voting behaviour and party choice in the Western democracies’ party systems. This is considered the reason why party systems were very stable and constant. In the West European multiparty-systems, voters’ class positions have been key determinants of electoral behaviour since the early 20th century (from many see e.g., Tingsten, 1937; Lazarsfeld, et al. 1948; Alford, 1963; Rokkan, 1966; Goldthorpe, et al. 1969; Dalton, Flanagan, and Beck, 1984; Nieuwbeerta and Ultee, 1999; Evans, 2000; Evans and Tilley, 2017 and Vestin, 2019). The centrality of the voting pattern stems from the role of social class as one of the most universal conflicts in society, which is the basis of the class cleavage (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Bartolini and Mair, 1990).
Class voting refers to the tendency of social classes to direct their vote to certain candidates or parties. In other words, voters’ positions in the social class structure increase likelihood to vote for a certain party over others (see Evans, 2017; Knutsen, 2018). Scholars focusing on class voting have distinguished ‘traditional’ class voting from ‘total’ class voting. ‘Traditional class voting’ is the tendency of blue-collar employees to vote for the Left, and the tendency of middle-class voters and bourgeois voters to vote for the Conservative Right. Rather, ‘total class voting’ refers to the predictive power of social class on party choice (e.g., Gingrich and Häusermann 2015, p. 52). In other words, class voting is a mechanism that links social class position to party choice (Evans and Tilley, 2012a). In this study, the particular interest lies in these mechanisms.

As a concept, ‘class voting’ is almost purely empirical: Class voting studies are also more empirical and concern various ways to measure voters’ class positions. Class voting studies contribute to traditional class theories empirically by developing new and more advanced ways to measure voters’ class positions and their relation to party choice. Given the empirical approach, various operationalisations of class positions have caught the attention of class voting scholars. Traditionally, most scholars have been interested in objective class positions, i.e., occupations, when analysing class voting (e.g., Rokkan, 1967; Goldthorpe et al. 1969; Dalton, Flanagan and Beck, 1984; Crewe and Denver, 1985; Nieuwbeerta and Ultee, 1995; Evans, 1999; 2000 and Knutsen, 2006). Such comparative studies have provided the objectivity of the class voting measurements (e.g., Alford, 1963; Bartolini and Mair, 1990; Franklin et al. 1992; Nieuwbeerta and Ultee, 1995; 1996; Knutsen, 2006).

Maria Oskarson has defined the contextual frame of class voting (see Oskarson, 2016, 247; see also subchapter 2.2.2 in this study). Oskarson’s definition anchors on the cleavage literature i.e., the social cleavage model and particularly social class as one of the most crucial cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Bartolini and Mair, 1990). Traditionally, party systems are based on social cleavages, and voters are aligned with parties based on their orientation to those cleavages. From the perspective of class voting, voters align with parties based on their class positions and parties’ positions in the society’s class structure. This alignment process has been acknowledged as a central starting point of every class voting study in the 2010s (e.g., Jansen et al. 2011 Evans and Tilley, 2017; Knutsen, 2018; Vestin, 2019).

Some class voting scholars have developed their views based on the social cleavage model and the alignment process. At the structural level (see Maria Oskarson’s contextual frame of class voting, Oskarson, 1994, 2016 and subchapter 2.2.2), these scholars have argued that the relationship between a class and a party
should not be regarded as causality. Furthermore, these studies have stated that the class does not depend on the party, and the party does not depend on the strength of the social cleavage. The most important feature is that the party will react to the demand based on cleavages in the electorate for promoting their policies (Sartori, 1969; Bartolini and Mair, 1990; Oskarson, 1994; Evans and Tilley, 2012b). From this perspective, class voting considers cleavage-voting in its purest form. From the structural perspective, party systems and political parties change from mass parties to catch-all parties that have weakened the traditional alignments, i.e., class voting (e.g., Katz and Mair, 1997, see also Oskarson, 2016, pp. 248-9).

From the perspective of voters, some class voting scholars have emphasised the mechanism through which the voters align with certain parties (Bartolini and Mair, 1990; Oskarson, 1994, 2016). In this regard, these studies highlight the normative and conscious elements of class voting (see subchapter 2.2, page 81). According to these views, it is inevitable that a voter identifies with the class position that can be transferred to the political preferences and the party choice. In subchapter 3.3, this study emphasises normative and conscious elements when framing the study’s approach to class voting.

3.1.2 Working-class voting

This study analyses class-party ties among the Finnish working-class voters, i.e., working-class voting. This subchapter looks more closely at the class voting trends among the working-class voters in the Western European multi-party systems. The working class has been the focus of class voting scholars almost from the beginning of class voting studies. In Western Europe, working-class voters have generally voted for the left-wing parties especially social democratic parties. However, the employers and business owners have given their vote for parties advocating more trade and industry employers' interests. These parties have been liberal and conservative parties (Oskarson and Demker, 2014; Bartolini and Mair, 1990; Lipset and Rokkan, 1967).

In the studies focusing on working-class voting, working-class cohesion and class unity have been central research questions. Simply put, these studies have aimed to examine the extent to which the working class continues to vote for left-wing parties. According to Hout et al. (1995), these class voting studies are the core of the
traditional class voting studies because the focus has been on the certain social class’ tendency to vote for a certain party or parties. Evans and Tilley (2017, p. 1) have stated that the working class has been the heart of social science literature for many decades at least from the post-war period until the late 1970s. First class voting studies and class voting measurements were based on the dichotomy between working-class votes and middle-class votes especially before the advanced class-schemas in the 1970s (e.g., Alford 1963; Butler and Stokes, 1974; Crewe et al. 1977).

The working class managed to maintain its significant and nearly untouchable status in the class voting research until social scientists began to question the entire meaning of ‘social class’ in the late 1990s (Evans and Tilley, 2017, p. 2; Savage 2000). Since this period, scholars have begun to question the meaning of the working class. However, the questioning has been more common outside the Nordic countries especially when it comes to the weakening significance of the working class. In the Nordic countries, the working-class has not lost its significance in the class voting studies to the same extent as in many other Western democracies in the 21st century despite the smaller size of the traditional working-class voter blocks, i.e., blue-collar employees (see e.g., Clark and Lipset, 1991; Oskarson and Demker, 2014; Bengtsson and Berglund, 2010; Bengtsson et al. 2014). Rather, scholars have begun to analyse the new and transformed patterns in working-class voting (see e.g., Oskarson and Demker, 2014).

As mentioned earlier, the voting patterns of Nordic countries intertwine with the social cleavage model and the theory of cleavage voting developed by Lipset and Rokkan (1967). According to Lipset and Rokkan (ibid.), class cleavage was based on the labour market’s division, which came into existence during the Industrial Revolution. On the other side, the cleavage was the traditional business owners and employers as well as tenants and workers. The central idea of working-class voting lies in Rokkan’s famous triangle model that reflects the cleavage model (Rokkan, 1966, see subchapter 1.2.2). In the worker’s and tenants' end of the triangle, there are trade unions and labour parties. The starting points of working-class voting come into existence at this point (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Bartolini, 2000; Karvonen and Kuhnle, 2001; Knutsen, 2018).

Scholars have yet perceived the declining trend in working-class voting as well as the entire class voting. These explanations are discussed in more detail in subchapter 3.1.3. The most common explanations for a decline in the working class have been the decline in the number of blue-collar employees among the electorate and the value shift from the traditional class-based politics to post-material values since the 1980s.
3.1.3 The declining trend of class voting

In recent decades, scholars have started discussing the change of social classes and the decline in class voting. In addition, many studies have acknowledged that large-scale structural changes have reshaped societies and class structures. However, it is impossible to scrutinise class voting literature in recent decades without discussing its decline. This subchapter outlines the principal findings and explanations that recent studies have highlighted when analysing the declining trend of class voting. The class voting decline anchors to the general discussion of voters’ changing alignments. In other words, the decline in class voting is a form of dealignment (see more about terms alignment, dealignment and realignment in subchapter 1.3).

The literature discusses Western democracies and massive class voting’s decline. The findings were presented in the early 1990s when studies began to distinguish the effects of class mobility and changes in the traditional class structure (e.g., Franklin et al. 1992; De Graaf, Nieuwbeerta and Heath, 1995; Manza, Hout and Brooks, 1995). These studies discussed whether social classes would disappear, transform, or stay the same in developed societies (e.g., Clark, Lipset and Rempel, 1993; Manza, Hout and Brooks, 1995). This constitutional approach offered one of the main explanations for the declining trend. The constitutional approach highlighted the weakening explanatory power of social class political behaviour by arguing for the significance of the decline of class in society (Manza et al. 1995). Some scholars have argued that ‘the traditional class voting’ has declined, but the decline has not been as strong as ‘the total class voting’ (Hout et al. 1995; see also Gingrich and Häusermann, 2015). Thus, social classes’ votes for some parties have declined. However, the explanatory power of social class in terms of voters’ party choices has not declined. In other words, these studies have approached the general declining explanatory power of voter occupation.

The decline in class voting is explained from two different approaches emphasising different elements that cause the decline. The first approach has emphasised the significant changes in society, the shifts in values, and citizens’ political preferences due to e.g., globalisation, increasing levels of education, and labour market change (Clark and Lipset, 1991; Kitschelt, 1994; Inglehart, 1997; Oskarson and Demker, 2014). These factors have been scrutinised when outlining the structural level of the study’s context (see also subchapter 1.2.1). The second approach has, instead, focused on explaining the decline with the change in the party systems and political parties (see e.g., Knutsen, 1998; Katz and Mair, 1995).
Jansen, Evans, and Graaf (2013) provided the two approaches in their comparative study (see also Evans and Tilley 2012a; 2012b). According to them, the first approach focuses on changes in political demand, i.e., in the class structure whereas the second approach focuses on the political supply—the political system and political parties. However, these both approaches stem from large-scale societal change because both the demand and supply-side changes are based on the consequences of the societal change (Jansen et al. 2013; Evans & Tilley 2012 a; 2012b).

Jansen et al. (2013) refined the two approaches and distinguished their characteristics. The first approach is found on the changing of political divisions (occupational, religious, ethnic, and linguistic) with direct or indirect impact on the political preferences and citizens' interests. Scholars have begun to call the first approach the 'bottom-up' approach because it stems from society’s bottom citizens (Evans and Tilley, 2012a and 2012b; see also Jansen, 2011). From this approach, large-scale economic changes have occurred in society and reshaped the divisions among the citizens. Good examples are the increase in the level of education among employees, change in gender composition in many occupations, and change in the working culture. The relationship between class and vote choice has changed because the entire class structure has been reshaped. The results overlap classes and class mobility (e.g., Evans and Tilley, 2012a; Jansen et al. 2013; Dalton, 2002 and Lipset and Clark, 1991). However, the ‘bottom-up’ approach should not be mixed up with the cognitive mobilisation theory that emphasises voters’ increased cognitive capacity and evaluates their voting decisions (see Dalton, 1984 and 2002).

The second approach emphasises political choice and changes in the positions of political parties based on changes in the social structure, i.e., the supply side of the political system. Thus, scholars called this approach a ‘top-down’ approach. In this essence, the large-scale societal and economic change has affected political parties and their policies. For instance, parties have moved closer to each other: Their politics are similar and have moved away from class-related politics. Therefore, voters have faced difficulties in differentiating the party interests. As a result, issue-based voting has become more volatile. From the argument of the top-down approach, the changing size and social classes composition have changed the parties’ positions and enhanced their capacity in persuading more voters (e.g., Evans and Tilley, 2012 a, and 2012b; Jansen, 2011, Jansen et al. 2013; see also Mair et al. 2004; Kitschelt, 1994; Przeworski and Sprague, 1986).

One of the most comprehensive analyses made on class voting in different countries is Paul Nieuwbeerta’s (1995) analysis on the fluctuations of the class voting
in twenty different countries in between years 1945 and 1990. His findings show that
the decline is neither common nor coherent in Western democracies’ class voting.
Nieuwbeerta’s study is a good example of the importance of context when evaluating
the decline in class voting. Alongside various contexts, class voting is measured
differently affecting the comparability of the findings. However, Knutsen (2006)
provides a slightly contrary opinion in his book ‘Class Voting in Western Europe: A
Comparative Longitudinal Study’: The results still show a declining trend despite the
measurement or the theoretical framework.

The empirical evidence of class voting’s decline has led to various theoretical
explanations since the 1980s. The theories are grouped into the ‘bottom-up’ and the
‘top-down’ approaches as already presented earlier in this subchapter. Some scholars
have presented the declining trend. For instance, recent studies from Sweden have
shown that class voting has changed its form and to some extent also declined, but
it still occurs (see e.g., Oskarson, 2016; Bengtsson and Berglund, 2010; Karlsson,
2005). Other studies have got interested in analysing the declining mechanisms
instead of solely observing the declining trend (Vestin, 2019; Vestin and Oskarson,
2017).

### 3.2 Indicators for voters’ class positions and class voting

#### 3.2.1 Measures and approaches

Previous survey-based election studies have correlated voters’ social backgrounds
with their electoral decisions. Even though the research models have become more
advanced since the early days, scholars are still interested in measuring the linkage
between class and votes. This subchapter briefly discusses various ways that previous
studies have measured class voting and voters’ class positions. The subchapter
proceeds chronologically starting from the mid-20th century towards the 2010s.

Before the Second World War, social scientists conducted simple analyses of
extensive datasets to examine the relationship between voters’ social positions and
their political behaviours (e.g., Tingsten, 1937; Sorokin, 1959). These studies are the
first generation of class voting studies, and the aim was to determine whether there
is a significant linkage between citizens’ social background and their voting
behaviour. The first class voting studies that used national panel survey data were
published in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s (e.g., Campbell et al. 1960).
The survey data expanded rapidly to Western Europe and other Western industrialised countries (see e.g., Alford, 1962 and 1964; Butler and Stokes, 1974). Voters’ class positions were classified in two opposite categories: i.e., a two-class schema that divided voters into manual or non-manual workers.

In the 1960s, scholars began to use more advanced statistical analyses for measuring the level of class voting. This is considered the beginning of the second generation of class voting scholars. The Alford index, named after the inventor, is one of these well-known measurements (Alford, 1962). The index measures the absolute level of class voting calculating the difference between non-manual workers who voted for left-wing parties and manual workers who voted for left-wing parties.

In left-wing voting, the index calculates the difference between working-class voters and non-working-class voters (e.g., Alford, 1962; Knutsen, 2006, p. 117; Nieuwbeerta, 1996, p. 346; Oskarson, 2016, p. 250). A higher Alford index implies stronger class voting. The statistical method assists in conducting the first comparative analyses between countries due to standardisation of the measurement (Nieuwbeerta, 1995 & Nieuwbeerta, 1996, p. 349).

The outcome of the comparative analysis helped scholars to develop different linear regressions and path models since the 1970s. These methods later became well-established among class studies. The Thomsen index is one the most well-known methods (Thomsen, 1987) and is based on odds ratios using a more advanced method versus the simple Alford index. The Thomsen index is calculated when the odds of manual workers to vote for the left-wing compared to the right-wing parties are divided by the odds of non-manual workers to vote for the left-wing parties compared to the right-wing parties. This calculation interprets the level of working-class voters. The same calculation is used for other groups, such as employers, bourgeois, and middle-class voters (e.g., Thomsen, 1987; Oskarson, 2005; Knutsen, 2006).

In the mid-1980s, cross-national comparative class studies and non-linear regression models became more popular in class voting studies. Third generation scholars argued that class schemes should be measurable internationally, and class voting should be measured using log-odds ratios instead of dichotomous class-variables based on the divide between non-manual and manual workers. With log-odds ratios, scholars can examine the probabilities of other variables affecting the linkage between class and votes. In addition to the methodological developments, class voting studies started exploring various class schemas in the 1980s-1990s. Thus, class voting scholars were more interested in categorising and defining class thereby
constructing class schemas based on occupation\textsuperscript{15} (Erikson, et al. 1979; Goldthorpe, 1987; 2000; Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992; Wright, 1985). In addition, large-scale comparative studies have been focused on these class schemas because they were not context-related. The schemas could then be used in all Western democracies. Towards the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, class schemas have been augmented theoretically along with empirical evidence to strengthen their justification. Several class schemas are currently available, and scholars have made efforts to explain the benefit of using a particular schema (see Breen, 2005; Grusky and Galescu, 2005; see also Vestin, 2019, pp. 20-1).

3.2.2 Class identification

“Class is an adjective. Not a noun”

(Resnick and Wolff, 1987)

This chapter has outlined previously discussed class voting studies and provided a linkage between class and voting patterns while focusing on the objective of voters’ class positions, i.e., occupations (see e.g., Rokkan, 1967; Goldthorpe et al. 1969; Dalton, Flanagan and Beck, 1984; Crewe and Denver, 1985; Nieuwbeerta and Ultee, 1995; Evans, 1999; 2000 and Knutsen, 2006). In modern society, these traditional class voting studies have declined for many decades. A weakening linkage has been observed precisely between voters’ objective class positions and their vote choice (e.g., Clark and Lipset, 1991).

Commonly accepted and widespread trend has appeared to be for a long time that objective class-indicators, such as occupation, education and income, have lost their effect on vote choice over time (e.g., Pettersson, 1982; Manza and Brooks, 1999). Scholars have long agreed that class voting is in decline. However, contrary studies have argued that social classes have remained strong (see e.g., Oskarson,

\textsuperscript{15} More about these class schemas, their theoretical approaches and categorisation in the subchapter 5.5. which focuses on the empirical design and operationalises the concept of class (in)congruence.
2015; Bengtsson and Berglund, 2010; Hout, Brooks and Manza, 1995; Manza and Brooks, 1999 and Brady et al. 2009). According to these studies, social classes have retained their significant effect on voter’s choice through the mechanisms of voters’ subjective class positions (e.g., Brady et al. 2009; Sosnaud et al. 2013 and van der Waal et al. 2007).

Furthermore, some class voting scholars have argued that class identification is a key factor in understanding the class voting mechanisms (see e.g., Oskarson, 2015, 253; Oskarson, 1994). When relying on this argument, the concept of class identification sets out an entire framework to which class voting occurs. This thinking follows the cleavage typology proposed by Bartolini and Mair (1990; see subchapter 2.2.1). Thus, one argument of these studies is about social classes as political groups. Second, it makes people aware of the political groups. Third, it makes people identify with them and therefore enables social class positions to affect the electoral behaviour especially through their party choice. Before discussing the significance of class identification in the class voting literature, we focus on the concept of class identification.

In the previous literature on political sociology, class identification, and class consciousness, scholars have sought to explain the mechanisms of class identification—the process by which voters identify with a certain class and the nature of class identification (Evans and Kelley, 2004; Stuber, 2006: Wright, 1997). Class identification is a vital indicator among all objective class indicators. In political sociology, class identification has created a subjective approach to social classes. However, it has not yet been used widely in electoral studies. Despite this, some political scientists have argued that as an indicator of social class, class identification can capture some more fundamental and more genuine options than the objective class indicators. This argument often relies on cognitive element of class identification emphasising citizens' awareness of objective class positions. According to scholars, who have analysed class identification, only awareness of class position can lead to subjective class orientation (Oskarson, 2017; Hout, 2008).

From the time of Karl Marx, the cognitive class identification of class consciousness has been a way to express group identity among the class. This

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16 Terms ‘class identification’ and ‘class identity’ are used as synonyms in this study even though some studies might have separated these two terms from each other (see e.g., Bengtsson and Berglund 2010, 33; Cigelné et al. 2001). In addition, scholars in sociology especially have separated ‘class identification’ from the ‘self-placement in the social structure’ where the latter refers more to the hierarchy in the society’s class structure. In Sweden, these two concepts have yet to correlate strongly with each other among the working-class. Furthermore, among working-class women, the polarisation of class structure is stronger than among working-class men (See Karlsson, 2017).
thinking leads to one of Marx’s most famous distinctions between ‘class in itself’ and ‘class for itself’. With these distinctions, Marx made a distinction between classes. On the one hand, the members of class groups are aware of classes’ existence. Marx referred to factory workers who were aware of their class position. This helped to create a group identity that enabled them to engage gradually in collective action. (Lewis-Beck et al. 2008, 337; Marx, 1959a/1848.)

This subjective approach to social classes is commonly operationalised in survey-based studies so that the respondents are being asked, which social class they feel the closest to or they feel they belong to (see e.g., Lewis-Beck et al. 2008, p. 339). In many national election studies and other social science surveys, the question of respondents’ class identity has appeared since the mid-1900s (Butler and Stokes, 1969). Essentially, the question of class identification seeks to find people’s subjective views about which social class they represent in society. The fundamental question is: ‘How do people see themselves?’ (Evans and Tilley, 2017, p. 42).

Using respondents’ class identification, the surveys have divided the questions into two separate questions considering the distinction between the emotional and cognitive components of class identification. In practice, respondents are asked whether there are various social classes in society. If they agree, then they are asked to which social class they belong. From a theoretical perspective, not all surveys include these two separate questions even though class identification contains both emotional and cognitive components. An identity with a class contains itself perception that there exists various, at least two various, classes in a society. (Bengtsson and Berglund, 2010, p. 40; see also Oskarson, 1994, p. 113). The operationalisation of class identification has been criticised because surveys rarely include questions neither on the two components (emotional and ideological) nor on the strength of the identification. Thus, the differences in the class identification have remained mostly unrevealed (Lewis-Beck et al. 2008, p. 55). Undoubtedly, the depth of class identification can fluctuate between respondents and between classes. In the early 21st century, class identification has been stronger among the middle class and upper-middle-class citizens in Finland (Sundberg, 2003, p. 55).

Previous studies have found generational differences in class identification (e.g., Oskarson, 1994; Westholm, 1991; Bengtsson and Berglund, 2010). For instance, Maria Oskarson titled her dissertation 'Klassröstning i Sverige: rationalitet, lojalitet eller bara slentrian?' (1994, pp. 137–140) and distinguished a generational effect in working-class identification and middle-class identification between the 1960s and 1990s in Sweden. Oskarson found that among the older generations of workers, identification with the working-class was more common than among the younger generations who
were more likely to identify themselves with the middle class. This similar generational effect was not as strong among the middle class.

Generational differences have led scholars to be more explicit in the linkage between objective class-position and class identification and the fact that they may not always coincide. This has given rise to a concept of class congruence or class incongruence indicating the relation between subjective and objective class positions, i.e., the relationship between class identification and occupation. The next subchapter (3.2.3) goes deeper into the meaning of class incongruence. It explores the explanation of previous studies' understanding of class incongruence and class congruence.

### 3.2.3 Class congruence and incongruence

Objective class indicators such as occupation, education, and level of income correlate strongly with subjective class identity. Previous studies provide various examples of the effect of objective class on subjective class identity (e.g., Andersen and Curtis, 2012; Robinson and Kelley, 1979; Evans and Kelley, 2004; Schwartz and Mare, 2005; Bengtsson and Berglund, 2010). However, fewer studies have highlighted that objective class positions and subjective class identities do not always coincide (see e.g., Sosnaud et al. 2013; Jackman and Jackman, 1979; Oskarson, 1994; Andersen and Curtis, 2012). The term ‘class incongruence’ is a situation where the objective class position is not the same as the subjective class position. This study refers to a situation where one’s occupational group is not congruent with one’s class identification. The core of the concept of class incongruence lies in the explanations of the incongruence. In other words, it is crucial to find the factors that might generate cross-pressures when forming class identification. Previous studies have acknowledged a few factors.

The concept of class incongruence falls close to the concept of false class consciousness, which stems from the thoughts of Karl Marx (see subchapter 2.1. in this study). According to Marx the core of the class theory lies on the idea of class consciousness, i.e., one’s awareness of their social or economic position in society. Accordingly, false class consciousness refers to one’s failure to see oneself belonging to a class with specific social and economic interests. Moreover, according to Marx,
before the working class became conscious about their class, they had false class consciousness (Crossman, 2020.) Later, especially Marxist scholars, have theoretically developed further the concept false class consciousness (from many: Gramsci, 1971; Lukács, 1971; Eagleton, 1991).

The concept of class incongruence shares with the concept of false class consciousness the idea that the socioeconomic position does not match with their class identification or they do not have a class identification at all. However, in electoral studies the concept has been approached from more empirical perspective, although they have evidently been interested in the factors that may cause class incongruence (e.g., Newman et al. 2015; DiMaggio, 2015; Robinson and Stubager, 2017).

One factor affecting class incongruence is marital status or spouse’s class position: The spouse’s class position may differ from their own class position (see Oskarson, 1994, pp. 124-131). In sociology, the debate on the family’s class position has been lively especially in the 1980s (e.g., Goldthorpe, 1983; Dale et al. 1985; Abbot, 1987). The childhood family’s class position has also often been linked to the wider discussion of social mobility, social stratification, and women’s occupational mobility (see e.g., Dex, 1987 and 1996).

The spouse’s effect on subjective class identity has been analysed in various Nordic studies in the 1980s and 1990s (e.g., Abbot, 1987; Hernes and Knudsen, 1987; Oskarson, 1994; Wright, 1997; Hout, 2008). To summarise, the main conclusion has been that the spouse’s class position influences the subjective class identity. If spouses share the same objective class positions, then it strengthens the linkage between objective and subjective class. Strengthening in this context shows that one’s objective and subjective classes are the same.

However, if spouses’ objective class positions differ from each other, then it may loosen the linkage between one’s objective and subjective class. This likely occurs more often among women than among men. In other words, previous studies have indicated that women’s subjective class identity concerning their objective class position is more vulnerable to change due to their spouses’ objective class positions. For instance, in Sweden, scholars have observed that identification with the working class has decreased among working-class women because women have emphasised more with their spouse’s class when considering their own class positions (Cigéhn, 1997; see also Karlsson, 2017).

However, generational differences should be considered when interpreting this trend. Studies have suggested that women’s class positions are not as unequivocally certain as their husbands’ class positions in the 21st century as in the past. Cross-class
marriages, an increase in women’s labour market participation, and an increasing level of education have weakened this trend in the 21st century (Abbot, 1987; Hernes and Knudsen, 1987; Oskarson, 1994; Hout, 2008).

In addition to spouses’ effect on subjective class identity, scholars have also argued that childhood’s social class or the class of the childhood home have a significant role in one’s class identity in later life (Oskarson, 1994; Butler and Stokes, 1974; see also Robinson and Stubager, 2017). This approach is applied to social mobility studies. Some studies have analysed, how the class of the childhood home affects class (in)congruence showing that if one’s objective class position is the same as the class of one’s childhood home, then it is likely that one’s class identity is in line with the objective class position in adulthood (See e.g., Oskarson, 1994, pp. 131–133).

The childhood home’s effect on class identification or more broadly on political behaviour is well-known in the field of political socialisation (e.g., Hyman, 1959; Thomassen, 1976; Jennings et al. 2009). According to the studies of political socialisation, childhood home, parents’ income level, parents’ occupations, and educational path combined with the voter’s occupation are potential explanations for subjective class identification in adulthood. However, scholars of political socialisation have argued that among all other socialisation agents, family plays a particularly crucial role in shifting both values and behaviour to children; these effects are reflected in later life (Perceron and Jennings, 1981; Sapiro, 2004). At this point, it is important to note that political science has not fully perceived the transformation of family structures (Dolan, 1995). For instance, scholars have not conducted comprehensive empirical analyses of single-parent families—this requires further analysis. Similar approaches would be undoubtedly needed in electoral studies.

In sociology, one of the key research problems is how to deal with class identity in dual-earning households (Goldthorpe, 1983; Plutzer and Zipp, 1996 and 2001; Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1988). Some studies have approached this by studying the spouse’s effect on subjective class identity and found mechanisms similar to the studies mentioned above (e.g., Bernadette et al. 1992; Abott, 1987; Hout, 2008; Plutzer and Zipp, 2001). At the same time, some studies have suggested that ‘family’ would be more a proper unit when analysing the class identity. Scholars support this argument by believing that evaluating spouse’s class positions has led to similar conclusions for class positions (Heath and Britten, 1984). Even though these studies have considered the objective class positions of both spouses, they have not profoundly considered cross-class couples’ mechanisms in forming subjective class
identities. Despite several determinants for class incongruences, people’s living environments are often multidimensional and contain many units. Many other factors also affect the perception of class position. However, the factors distinguished in this chapter are those captured in survey-based studies.

Although in sociology the linkage between objective and subjective class position has been studied for a couple of decades, this approach has not yet received much attention in electoral studies specifically in class-voting studies. Some studies have, however, analysed the effect of class (in)congruence on the outcome of class voting (Oskarson, 1994; Sosnaud et al. 2013 and D’Hooge et al. 2018). The determinants of class incongruences have received relatively little attention. The next subchapter (3.3) introduces this approach to class voting and seeks to fill this gap by enhancing knowledge on the determinants of class (in)congruences and the effect of class (in)congruence on class voting.

3.3 Study’s approach to class voting

Most class voting studies have defined voters’ class positions with objective indicators based on voters’ occupations. As mentioned previously, the subjective approach to voters’ class positions has remained undiscovered. The approach considers both objective and subjective class indicators. This study contributes to class voting research by bringing these two latter approaches into the same observation. More specifically, this study argues that class identification is the key factor and enables one to filter class position into one’s vote choice. The working-class voters’ class positions have been operationalised through the concept of class (in)congruence that considers voters’ occupation and class identification at the same time. This study’s approach to class voting is in based on three perspectives represented in previous studies.

First, this study’s approach to class voting follows the cleavage typology presented by Bartolini and Mair (1990; see also subchapter 2.2.1). The typology highlights the normative and conscious elements of class cleavage. In addition to Bartolini’s and Mair’s cleavage typology, this study follows Maria Oskarson’s (1994 and 2016; see also subchapter 2.2.2) approach to voters’ class positions by bringing
both working-class voters’ occupation and their class identifications under same scrutiny. According to Oskarson (1994 and 2016), society consists of both structure-level and individual-level class determinants, which should both be considered if the goal is to understand the mechanisms of class voting.

Second, even though scholars have argued that the decline of class voting has occurred in Western democracies partly due to the weakening of class identification, this same trend cannot be fully observed in Finland in the 21st century. The weakening extent of class identification has weakened the level of party identification in Nordic countries (Bengtsson et al. 2014). However, in Finland, approximately 9 out of 10 voters identify with the lower-middle, middle, upper-middle, or upper class in the 21st century. This trend has been stable over all recent decades (Tiihonen, 2016, p. 331). This indicates that voters’ class perceptions have not disappeared. This same trend was reported in Sweden in the 2010s, even though some have argued that the political articulation has begun to efface ‘class’ from daily politics and voters’ minds (Karlsson, 2017). In particular, identification with the working-class has traditionally been strong in Sweden. However, in the 21st century, identification with the working class among workers has decreased in Sweden while identification with the middle class has increased. In other words, class incongruence has increased among blue-collar employees (Karlsson, 2005; 2017). These interesting results encourage us to look deeper into this same pattern in the Finnish context.

Third, this study aims to fill a research gap by applying the class (in)congruence approach to class voting studies. In recent decades, there have been a couple of interesting studies on the effect of class (in)congruence on class voting (Sosnaud et al. 2013; D’Hooge et al. 2018). These have indicated not only the continuity of class voting patterns, but also subjective class positions increased explanatory power over objective class positions what comes to voters’ economic orientation and their vote choices. Overall, these studies offer interesting new patterns in class (in)congruence and its effect on political preferences. However, a similar approach has not yet been adopted in Finland.
This chapter presents a country-specific context, i.e., the case of Finland. The chapter uses a similar approach as subchapters 1.2.1–1.2.3. The Finnish context is categorised into structural level, organisation level, and citizen level. While the first chapter focused on outlining the changing context of working-class voting, this chapter focuses on the characteristics of the Finnish case. The structural level begins by presenting the timeline of the Finnish working class. This historical approach acts as a comprehensive introduction to the Finnish case. Finland’s occupational structure and its change in the demographic change of the Finnish population are then outlined. The organisational level consists of the Finnish political system and its characteristics, i.e., the political cleavages, on which it has been formed. In addition, the chapter discusses the party-union ties in the Finnish context. The citizen level scrutinises the trends and characteristics related to Finnish citizens’ political engagement such as partisan change, the decline in turnout, trade union membership, and Finnish voters’ attitudinal orientations. Each of these levels is considered in the following separate subchapters (4.1–4.3).

4.1 Structural level

4.1.1 Timeline of Finnish working class

This subchapter summarises the key events and organisations of the Finnish working class’ history from the late 19th century to the 21st century. The focus is primarily on the Finnish working-class’ movements and various organisations. Furthermore, the subchapter distinguishes the key factors that have affected the emergence and development of these movements. The key events are illustrated in the two timelines (see Figures 4.1 and 4.3).

The 1880s were a period of radicalism in Finnish political history. The first political parties were founded within the language cleavage (Finnish and Swedish). The country went through internal turmoil because of the language issue. The supporters of the Finnish language (Fennomans) pursued to improve Finnish language’s position in society. Towards the end of the 19th century, Finnish began to
consolidate its position as official language alongside Swedish. The first three Finnish estates the Fennomans, the Svecomans, and the liberals proposed legislation in the Finnish diet during the Grand Duchy of Finland (1809–1917). The foundation of the Finnish labour movement began before the radical period even though the Finnish Labour Party was officially founded in 1899. Mickelsson distinguished three forerunners of the Finnish Labour Party: 1) ‘Wrightist’ workers’ associations\(^{17}\), 2) working-class radicalism, and 3) the temperance movement. These preceded the foundation of the Labour Party in the late 19th century (Mickelsson, 2015, p. 37).

The first reform that affected the Wrightist workers in Finland was the occupational health and safety act in 1889. According to von Wright, the founder of the ‘Wrightist’ labour movement, paternalism was at the core of “Wrightist” working-class thinking and attitude. Wrightism aimed to demolish remnants of the class society and correct the failures of industrialised society. The main problem of the Wrightist labour movement was that it held the majority of its support from the intellectuals and not among actual workers. High unemployment rates and general strikes in 1892-93 created a fertile breeding ground for (2) working-class radicalism in the Wrightist associations. This working-class radicalism symbolized separation from the Wrightist thinking. Towards the end of the 19th century, the working-class associations separated from Wrightism and embraced socialism in the bigger cities such as Helsinki, Turku, and Tampere after von Wright withdrew.

The Finnish temperance movement organisation was founded in 1884 and was the decade’s largest mass organisation in Finland. The temperance movement is considered to be the labour movement’s predecessor. Like Wrightism, the temperance movement was at first a paternalistic movement. Its aim was to increase citizens’ knowledge of the harmful effect of alcohol. Its goal was the general pledge to stop drinking in 1898. Over 70,000 citizens stopped drinking alcohol for eight months. Along with the pledge, the temperance movement called for the Prohibition law, equal voting rights, and an eight-hour working day. The pledge put favourable winds in the working-class movement’s sails. At the beginning of 1899, local labour parties were formed in Tampere, Turku, and Helsinki. The first party conference of the Finnish Labour Party was held in Turku in 1899. Four years later, the party changed its name to the SDP of Finland in 1903 (Mickelsson, 2015, p. 39; Sulkunen, and Alapuro, 1989; Jussila et al. 2009). At that time, the party aimed to improve the living conditions of the Finnish working class and free them economically and socially (Mickelsson 2015, p. 49). The working-class movement, another central

\(^{17}\) In Finnish ‘Wrightiläinen työväenliike’
organisation, was formed in 1907 when the Finnish Federation of Trade Unions was founded because of workers’ activism within the SDP. From that time on, trade unions were separated from SDP thereby becoming an independent organisation to improve people’s working conditions (Mickelsson, 2015, p. 72).

Finnish citizens were polarised from each other despite the successful independence endeavour in 1917. Indeed, Finland underwent a destructive civil war in 1918 shortly after independence: The newborn nation was driven towards the civil war only two months after independence, which was the result of integrated and decisive action. The bloody conflict rose from the country’s transition from a Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire to a fully independent state. The civil war was fought between the socialist Red Guards who shared a working-class background and were led by the SDP and the bourgeois and Whites who were mainly farmers and middle-class citizens and led by the conservative senate (see e.g., Tepora and Roselius, 2014).

Several factors were responsible for the outbreak of civil war. First, the war was a part of a general turbulent period in Europe caused by World War I (1914–1918). WW I contributed to the fall of the Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire, which stimulated Finland’s independence. Second, after the declaration of independence, Finland started fighting for state authority. The breach between the left-wing parties and the right-wing parties became irreconcilable. Third, the withdrawal from the Russian empire affected Finland’s economy and industry negatively. The inequality among the Finnish citizens widened. Food prices increased, and some Finns suffered from malnutrition. There was also high unemployment. Generally, these disturbances gave rise to strikes and mass movements. Due to the societal turbulence, both the working-class population and the middle-class bourgeoisie mobilised their armed forces. The working class founded the Red Guards, and the middle-class bourgeoisie founded the Civil Guards. The fighting between the guards escalated during the end of 1917 (Tepora and Roselius, 2014; Jussila et al. 2009).

The war ended in May 1918 with the victory for the Civil guards led by General Gustaf Mannerheim. Finland became a republic in the summer of 1919, and the country elected its first president K.J. Ståhlberg (The National Progressive Party). The civil war left deep wounds in Finnish society for a long time. This could be seen for instance in the way that Finnish citizens, national newspapers, and cultural work
reflected the events of 1918. Some emphasised the victory of the Whites while others emphasised the loss of the Reds19 (see Kinnunen, 2014).

The war was one of the most fatal civil wars in European history. Historians have argued that the war had remarkable traces in Finnish society. Additionally, the war led to reforms such as the right to vote, standing as a candidate in local elections, the ability to participate in compulsory education, and laws regarding tenant farmers' right to redeem fields and farms. This outcome led to notable developments in Finnish history. More crucially, each of these reforms took place rapidly after the civil war because Finland was eager to start the nation’s unification in the 1920s (Hentilä, 2018; Heimo and Lintunen, 2018, p. 14).

The Whites won the civil war, and the young new republic focused on quickly developing the nation. However, Finnish society was still politically polarised. First, the left side split after the war into a reformist social democrat and a communist revolutionary wing: The latter took control of the labour unions. The communists and the more radical side of the left-wing organised political strikes to provoke the Whites. Second, the Whites who had won the war were suspicious of the left. They especially worried about the radical communists and founded their anti-communist ‘Lapua Movement’. Not immediately, but gradually, the Lapua movement began to move towards fascism, which aggregated even more division in society (Karvonen, 2014, p. 13).

The civil war was a turbulent time for political parties and labour movements in Finnish history. In Finland, the Reds lost the war, but Finland’s neighbouring country, the Russian Empire, went through a revolution that brought down the empire and transferred power to the socialist Bolsheviks. Thus, the Finnish communists found it more favourable to travel to Russia. They founded the Finnish Communist Party20 at the end of summer 1918 in Moscow. Meanwhile, there were also disagreements within the SDP regarding the party’s control. The disagreements escalated, and the dissidents and the critics were expelled from the party. Those expelled founded their party called ‘The Socialist Workers’ Party of Finland21 in 1920. While the SDP relied on their influence in the parliament, the Finnish Communist Party and the Socialist Workers’ Party relied on the extra-parliamentary activities (Mickelsson 2015, pp. 58–60; Saarela, 1996).

19 One good example of this is the several names the war has had in the Finnish language. Alongside with ‘civil war’, which is a rather neutral name, the war has been called as ‘class war, the war of liberation, a revolution and a revolt’. These other names indicate that the war has different constructions in people’s minds (See Jussila et al. 2009, pp. 111–113).

20 In Finnish ‘Suomen Kommunistinen Puolue, SKP’

21 In Finnish ‘Suomen Sosialistinen Työväenpuolue, SSTP’
In general, the political atmosphere was favourable for the right in the 1920s in Finland. The SDP was the most important organisation on the red side. The party’s ideology gradually transformed from revolutionary towards more reformist ideas. The rightist radicalism was more intense during the 1920s and created conflicts between the SDP and the bourgeois. At the same time, the Communist Party and the SDP began to drift apart. The Communist Party was not that eager to improve the working conditions to increase the working class power and incite a revolution. (Mickelsson, 2015, pp. 85-6).

The communists had the power in the Finnish Federation of Trade Unions during the 1920s. Towards the 1930s, the rightist movements got tighter control of the Finnish society, and there was intense persecution of the communists. This caused the disbandment of the Finnish Federation of the Trade Unions in the summer of 1930. However, the Confederation of the Finnish Trade Unions (SAK)\(^\text{22}\) was founded only three months later under the leadership of the SDP. The federation’s goal was to improve the living conditions of the working class and increase class power (Mickelsson 2015, pp. 88-90).

The strength of the rightist radicalism and the persecutions of the communist caused significant trouble for the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers’ Party. While the Communist Party shifted its activity underground, the Socialist Workers’ Party disbanded its activity in 1923. The Unions of Workers and Smallholders\(^\text{23}\) in 1924 were formed based on the disbandment of the Socialist Workers’ Party.

\(^{22}\) In Finnish ‘Suomen Ammattiyhdistysten Keskusliitto, SAK’

\(^{23}\) In Finnish ‘Suomen Työväen ja Pienviljelijöiden vaalijärjestö, STPVJ’
Figure 4.1 The Timeline of the Finnish working class from 1890 until the war period 1939–1945.

1940s–1960s

The outbreak of the Second World War (1939–1944) forced politicians to put party politics aside for a while. The socialist enemy in the war caused unrest among the Finnish communists (Mickelsson, 2015, p. 110) making the SDP split two times after the war. The first split occurred in 1944 after the war. There was a group inside the SDP who criticised the party’s long-term politician, foreign minister, Väinö Tanner. These critics—along with the Finnish communists who had escaped underground—founded a new party: the Finnish People’s Democratic League24 in 1944.

24 In Finnish ‘Suomen Kansan Demokraattinen Liitto, SKDL’
The second split occurred in the SDP’s party conference in 1957. Some of the party’s members did not like SDP’s cooperation with the bourgeois regarding a foundation of a common sports union. This SDP’s inner opposition separated from the party and founded a new party. This is how the Social Democratic Union of Workers and Smallholders25 arose (Mickelsson, 2015, pp. 124-8).

The Finnish People’s Democratic League (SKDL) became a mass party during the 1950s and 1960s. It arranged mass meetings and general strikes. From the beginning, the party had tight cooperation with the Finnish Communist Party. The parties agreed on cooperation after the war in 1944. In practice, the Communist Party formed a significant part of the SKDL during the party’s entire period. The increase in both parties’ membership rates can also be explained by the contribution of several organisations formed under these parties such as the parties’ youth organisations, women’s organisations, and sports federations. At the same time, the SDP’s member rates decreased after an intense increase in the war period. The Association of Finnish Industries and the SAK recognised each other as the official parties of the collective bargaining in January 1940. This event increased first and foremost the trade unions’ popularity. The SDP also gained an advantage from the reformist event because it had gradually raised its support inside the SAK. The SAK increased its influence during the 1950s. The Finnish General Strike in 1956 was its accomplishment of strength. With the strike, the SAK achieved a pay raise for the workers. Unfortunately, inflation emerged and erased the value of the pay rise. This increased workers’ and trade union dissatisfaction, which soon reflected dissatisfaction with the SDP. Thus, the 1950s was a turbulent decade for the SDP. Its position was threatened by the other socialist parties as well as their split that affected other labour organisations such as the sports federations and the trade unions. Due to the splits and the turbulence among the labour movement, the SDP lost many of its organisations and decreased its member rates (Mickelsson, 2015, pp. 134-5.)

The disagreements inside the labour movement and between the left-wing parties heightened the SAK at the end of the 1950s. In 1960, the trade unions supported the SDP’s split from the Confederation and formed their central organisation: The Finnish Trade Union Federation26. However, the new Federation did not manage to secure many member unions due to the SDP’s continuous internal disagreements. Thus, the members were moderate, and it could not act as a counterforce to the SAK. The Finnish Trade Union Federation went out of business in 1969, and its

25 In Finnish ‘Työväen ja Pienviljelijöiden Sosialidemokraattinen Liitto, TPSL’
26 In Finnish ‘Suomen Ammattijärjestö, SAJ’
member unions merged with the SAK. The SAK’s membership reached half a million shortly after the merge.

1970s – the beginning of the 1990s

The first national income policy agreement was negotiated in 1968. These agreements referred to tripartite agreements between trade unions, employers’ organisations, and the Finnish government. The national income policy agreements calmed down the Finnish political atmosphere, but its effects were favourable to the SDP. The party chose moderate socialism as its ideological guideline, and the building of the western welfare state began. The main tool was the tripartite agreements. Simultaneously, the Finnish government coalitions leaned strongly on centre-left cooperation in the 1970s-1980s (Mickelsson, 2015, pp. 197–199; Bergholm, 2013, pp. 60-3; Jussila et al. 2009, pp. 293–7.)

Meanwhile, the conditions were not favourable for the more radical left. The Social Democratic Union of the Workers and Smallholders (TPSL) failed to secure seats in the parliament in the 1970 parliamentary election, and the party was dissolved in 1973. The Finnish People’s Democratic League (SKDL) also lost a couple of its seats in the same election, and it suffered from turbulence and disagreements inside the party. The Liberal People’s Party27 was involved in the government coalitions in the 1970s, and it made the political atmosphere narrow for the SKDL. Therefore, the party took turns in both the government coalition and the opposition.

In the 1980s, the Finnish Communist party began to fall apart reflecting the SKDL’s activities. In 1981, the SKDL expelled most rebel Communist Party’s members of parliament from their parliamentary group, but they allowed them to return a half year later in 1982. The Communist Party continued to fall, and the communists who left the party founded a new political party Democratic Alternative, DEVA28, in 1986. The SKDL’s members with a communist ideology resigned from the party and joined DEVA. The new party won four seats in the Finnish parliament in the 1987 election, but the party was dissolved only three years later when a new leftist party, the Left Alliance, was formed in 1990. The Left Alliance was founded by the SKDL, the Finnish Communist Party and their youth and women organisations. The Left Alliance brought a new breeze to the leftist parties since its ideology combined traditional Marxist ideology with eco-socialism. Its first

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27 In Finnish ‘Liberaalinen kansanpuolue’ and from 2001 ‘Liberals’
28 In Finnish ‘Demokraattinen Vaihtoehto, DEVA’
parliamentary election in 1991, it gave the party 19 seats in the parliament. The Green League had been founded two years earlier\textsuperscript{29} and used social liberalism as its central ideology alongside green politics. From the beginning, it was clear that the Left Alliance and the Green League competed for the same votes even though the Green League systematically avoided taking a position on the socioeconomic left-right dimension (Mickelsson, 2015, pp. 201–202; Jussila et al. 2009, p. 337; see also Nousiainen, 1992, pp. 77–79.)

![Figure 4.2](image)

**Figure 4.2** The total support for the left-wing parties in Finland in the parliamentary elections 1945–2019 (share of votes, %).

Note: In 1945–1958, the total support is the sum of the support for the SDP and the Democratic League of the People of Finland, SKDL. In 1958–1972, the total support is the sum of the support for the SDP, the SKDL and the Social Democratic Union of Workers and Smallholders. In 1975–1998, the total support is the sum for the SDP and the SKDL, which includes the year 1987 for the DEVA (Democratic Alternative). In 1991–2019, the total support is the sum of the SDP and the Left Alliance.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the Finnish party system was built on three traditional large parties: the Centre Party, the NCP, and the SDP. However, in the early 1990s, the party system was built on the same three large parties and two middle-size parties: The Green League and the Left Alliance. (Mickelsson, 2015, pp. 203). The SDP membership rate declined in the 1980s. This was not an exceptional phenomenon since this trend was similar among the SDP in all the Western

\textsuperscript{29} In Finnish ‘Vihreä Liitto (lyh. Vihreät)’
Democracies. Despite the decline of members, the party’s support was over 20 per cent from the late 1960s to the 21st century. Towards the 1990s, the combined total support for the leftist parties in Finland fell from its golden age in the post-war period (See Nurmi, 2019, p. 171 and Figure 4.2).

**1995 – 2010s**

The last couple of decades have not been favourable for the SDP in Western democracies. They have been challenged by the general weakening of mass parties, societies’ occupational shifts, and the new political movements (see subchapter 1.2.2). This phenomenon also applies to the SDP in Finland (Mickelsson 2015, p. 225). In addition to the general decline of the left-wing support, the party’s support rates declined through the 2010s.

The radical left experienced ideological turbulence in the 1990s. The formation of the Left Alliance acted as a stimulus leading to three different ideological groups inside the party. One group supported the party’s new ideology, which leaned on the idea of ‘the third left’, i.e., Green Politics combined with socialism. The background of the second group was in the 1970s-1980s Taistoism, which had its roots in communism. The third group supported the trade unionism and ideology that was close to the SDP. The disagreements between the groups caused the resignation of the party’s leader Suvi-Anne Siimes (Mickelsson, 2015, p. 249).

As discussed earlier in this subchapter, Finland went through a recession in the early 1990s. The SDP chose Paavo Lipponen as a new leader in 1993, and he became Finland’s new Prime Minister in 1995 after the SDP won the parliamentary election in 1995 (28.25%). The SDP’s election campaign focused on criticising the bourgeois government’s economic policy, which provoked a recession, and the criticism paid off. The SDP formed the so-called rainbow coalition with the Green League, the Left Alliance, the National Coalition Party (the NCP), and The Swedish People’s Party. This coalition was in power from 1995 until 2003. Paavo Lipponen acted as the Prime Minister during both election periods: 1995–1999 and 1999–2003. This ideology has broadened the government coalition, and it has been one of the main reasons why Finland recovered rapidly from the 1990s recession. The coalition brought together the parties from the socioeconomic dimension, i.e., the NCP and the Left Alliance.
The Lipponen government had positive opinions towards the EU making Finland join the EU in 1995 (Mickelsson, 2015, p. 222, 264). The voters in support of the SDP and the Left Alliance were more critical towards the EU than the leading politicians of the parties. The voters’ opinions of these parties towards the EU were rather diverse: Some were strongly anti-EU and some strongly pro-EU (see Sänkiaho and Säynätsalo, 1994). Though the left-wing parties’ support slightly waned after Finland’s EU membership, the SDP managed to win the election in 1999 (22.86%) forming majority members in the cabinet (Mickelsson, 2015, p. 264; see also Jussila et al. 2009, pp. 339–352.) The left-wing parties’ development and electoral success
in the 21st century are discussed in Chapter 8, which focuses on the party choice of the Finnish working-class voters.

Support for the Social Democratic Party and the Left Alliance

Figure 4.4 illustrates the support for the SDP in the Finnish parliamentary elections from the war period until the 2019 election. The party’s support has remained over 20 per cent from the 1945 election until the 2010s except for the 1962 election. Before the 1962 election, the left-wing parties suffered from turbulence and conflicts. The SDP suffered from disunity during the election period. This was reflected in the SDP’s election result (19.50 %) and was over 3 % points (lower than the 1958 election; see Mickelsson, 2015, pp. 146-9; Jussila et al. 2009, p. 276.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>25.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>26.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>26.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>26.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>23.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>19.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>27.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Figure 4.4 Support for the Social Democratic Party in the Finnish parliamentary elections 1945–2019 (share of votes, %). In the table below listed the party’s placement in each parliamentary election.
Overall, the SDP has managed to be the largest party winning 14 elections out of the 21 parliamentary elections between 1945 and 2019 in Finland. However, the party’s support declined in the 2010s. The 2011 election was a turning low point. In 2015, the party received the lowest historical support rate (16.51%) in the parliamentary elections. Regarding the SD parties’ support rates in the 21st century’s Western democracies, this trend is not exceptional (see Table 1.1 in this study). The SDP’s decline from the 1980s until today is average compared to the other Western European countries.


Figure 4.5 Support for the Left Alliance in the Finnish parliamentary elections 1991–2019 (share of votes, %).

The support for the Left Alliance stabilised in the 21st century in parliamentary elections (see Figure 4.5). The party’s support was the highest in the 1995 parliamentary election (11.2%): This election was victorious for the left-wing parties. In the 1995 campaigns, the SDP and the Left Alliance criticised the bourgeois government for their economic policies, which returned Finland’s economy to the early 1990s recession. This criticism helped both parties to obtain more votes. In the 2003 election, the support of the Left Alliance dropped below 10 per cent for the first time since 2003. The explanations for the fluctuation in the 21st century’s parliamentary election for the SDP’s and the Left Alliance’s support rates are
discussed in more detail in Chapter 8. The next subchapter scrutinises the party-
union ties in the Finnish context from the perspective of the organisation level.

This subchapter briefly outlines the history of the Finnish Labour movement and
its central organisations from the late 19th century until the 2010s. This summary
indicates that while the Finnish labour movement has actively been organised and
unionised before Finland's independence, its history comprises several phases from
splits to mergers. Thus, there is usually a more radical left-wing side and a moderate
social democratic side inside the Finnish labour movement. Since the beginning of
the 2020s, these sides have become dissimilar. After the foundation of the Left
Alliance in 1990 and the disbanding of the Communist Party, SKP, during the 1990s,
the more radical left-wing votes have channelled the Left Alliance.

4.1.2 Occupational structure and change

Finland has gone through an occupational change similar to other Western
democracies in the 20th century. Besides the changes in the production structure, the
composition of the workforce has changed significantly in Finland from 1970 to
2018 (Figure 4.6). Versus many other countries, the change occurred in Finland a
couple of decades later.

The share of blue-collar employees decreased (1970: 45% → 2018: 29%) whereas the share of lower officials and higher officials increased in Finland (1970:
25% → 2018: 36%). The share of higher officials nearly tripled in almost 50 years
(1970: 7% → 2018: 22%). At the same time, the share of the service sector of
Finland’s total gross value increased nearly 20 percentage points. The share of the
process industry and construction decreased by 10 percentage points, and the share
of farming and forestry declined by approximately 10 percentage points (Statistics
Finland, 2020a).

In Finland, the trends of occupational change have been similar to that of other
Western democracies. An overall trend has been the labour market’s polarisation,
i.e., restructuring. This decreased the employment share among certain occupations
and increased employment share among certain other occupations. Additionally, the
decline of certain occupations reduced employment opportunities.
More precisely, a decline in employment opportunities occurred among office clerks, metal workers, machinists, trade employees, craftsmen, plant operators in papermaking and wood-processing, as well as machine operators in rubber, paper, and textile products. The economic reports and studies on Finland have noted that the declining trend among these occupations has been faster since the beginning of the 21st century (from many: Asplund et al. 2015; Asplund et al. 2011 and Honkapohja et al. 2009; See for comparison Oesch and Rodríguez-Menés, 2011).

The growth of the information and telecommunication technology (ICT) sector has affected the labour market polarisation and restructuring in Finland. The ICT has provided new tools and machines that have completely or partly replaced the human workforce. Due to globalisation, the costs of information and transportation have decreased significantly, which facilitated the decentralisation of many operations and businesses to low-cost countries.

Scholars have analysed the new prospects of the shrinking occupational groups, i.e., employees’ possibilities to find another job, distinguishing two factors. First, an employee’s age and education affect job opportunities in the labour market. Second, office clerks and employees with higher education can find new jobs easily relative to manual workers. In other words, a higher level of education leads to a greater
likelihood of finding a new job (Asplund et al. 2015). According to the Finnish working life barometer of 2018, Finnish people are currently more optimistic about their ability to find a new job that matches their skills and experience should they lose their job than in the beginning of the 21st century. However, younger age groups are more optimistic than people over 55 years. Though optimism has increased in every age group since the economic downturn between 2008 and 2009\textsuperscript{30}, significant differences between men and women were not observed (TEM, 2018).

4.1.3 Demographic transition and social mobility

The population structure has changed significantly in recent decades in Finland and other Western democracies. The transformation from an agrarian to industrial and urban society accelerated the demographic transition. Fertility and mortality rates decreased towards the 21st century. In addition, life expectancy increased significantly in recent decades. These changes have weakened the dependency ratio in Western democracies. In year 2019, there were more people aged over 65 years than people under 15 years of age (see Figures 4.7. and 4.8). In Finland, the dependency ratio has weakened more rapidly than in most other West European countries. According to recent calculations, the demographic rate will be the same as the European average level in the coming years (Kestilä and Martelin, 2019, p. 26).

\textsuperscript{30} Globally, the 21st century’s Great Recession occurred between 2007 and 2009, but the global crisis and its effects swayed Finnish economy between 2008 and 2009 (see e.g., Bank of Finland, 2014).
In Finland, the urban-rural division has created a notable challenge to the demographic transition. Even though urbanisation has occurred rather moderately in Finland compared to Sweden or Denmark, the internal migration is directed towards growing centres in the southern part of Finland\textsuperscript{31}. Thus, 85 per cent of the Finnish population lived in an urban area in 2018 (OECD, 2018). The urban centres in Finland are still in their infancy compared to the other European urban areas (Laakso and Loikkanen, 2018). However, both the employment and the working-age population have clustered in these few growing urban centres, which has caused regional, ecological, social, and economic challenges. For instance, the demographic transition and regional differences partly caused uneven inflation from the housing market as well as differences in the demand and supply of public services (i.e., schools, day-care and eldercare), differences in income levels, and regional employment disparities (Kestilä and Martelin, 2019; Laakso, 2013).

\textsuperscript{31} Such as the greater Helsinki, Tampere, and Turku.
Note: the share of over 85-year-olds is 0.1 per cent in 1900 and 0.2 per cent in 1950; these are both rounded down to 0 in the Figure.

**Figure 4.8** The share of age groups among the total Finnish population in 1900, 1950, 2000, and 2019 (%).

Emigration was notably high in Finland in the 20th century especially in the late 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. In the 1960s and the 1970s, emigration to Sweden and North America was vivid. Thus, the 1990s can be considered a turning point because Finns living in Sweden started to move back to Finland. Since then, the net-immigration has begun to rise, and Finland's immigration rates have been higher than the emigration rates. Its EU membership and free movement of people increased steadily, which increased immigration to Finland in the 21st century (Statistics Finland, 2020c; see also Sipinen, 2021).

At the same time, the number of people of foreign origins increased annually in Finland. A little over 8 per cent (8.3%) of the population was of foreign origin by December 2019; this was 1.6% in December 1997 (Statistics Finland, 2020d). However, the rate varies in different areas. In addition, the number of households has started decreasing in recent years, and, alternatively, the number of one-person households has started to increase. In 2017, 43 per cent of all households were one-person households, and approximately a little over a fifth of the total population (22 per cent) lived alone. (Kestilä and Martelin, 2019, p. 33).
The characteristics of the Finnish population presented in this subchapter are important from the perspective of the study’s research problem for two reasons. First, they indicate a change on the political demand side, namely the socio-demographic composition of the Finnish electorate. Changes in the composition of the electorate have occurred due to the changes in Finland’s population structure—especially the composition of working-class voters. With these changes, we assume that the working-class voters in Finland are increasingly older in the 21st century and from more diverse family backgrounds. However, they do not engage in a traditional working-class profession. Furthermore, the socio-demographic backgrounds of the working-class voters are likely to affect their political values and attitudes. Second, the transformation in the population structure leads us to assume that at the political supply-side, political parties and the trustees of the Finnish working-class voters must consider several new political preferences when formulating policies in the 21st century.

Social mobility

The strong social mobility has balanced the polarisation of the labour market in Finland. Thus, differences in social mobility between age groups and gender are as persistent in the Finnish labour market and working life as in other Western democracies. Due to horizontal and vertical segregation, men and women end up in different occupations, which leads to income differences and work culture differences. Horizontal segregation is the differences in the number of people of each gender across occupations whereas vertical segregation refers to a situation where opportunities are limited to career progression for a particular gender, age, or race within a company or sector (Melin and Saari, 2019, p. 32; see also Koivunen et al. 2017).

In contemporary studies, Finland has been an open society where social mobility is active. In these studies, approximately 70 – 80 per cent of the Finnish youth in the early 21st century ended up in different class positions compared to their parents (Erola, 2009; Erola and Moisio, 2002). For several decades, the level of absolute social mobility has been close to average in Finland and other Nordic countries. Absolute social mobility refers to societies’ change in terms of structural and occupational change and societal progress. At the individual level, children’s
socioeconomic positions differ from their parents’ socioeconomic positions (e.g., Erola 2010, p. 53.)

According to previous studies (Eurofound, 2017), absolute social mobility has traditionally been higher among women than men in Finland (Table 4.1). Considerable economic progress in women has been associated with differences in social mobility between men and women. Upward social mobility has been most common among the post-war generation (1945 – 1964). Stable mobility, i.e., having the same socioeconomic position as one’s own parents, has become more likely over time especially among women. Upward social mobility has occurred most actively among women born in 1965 – 1977.

Table 4.1 Absolute social mobility rates across three age cohorts in Finland.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(N)</th>
<th>Downward mobile (%)</th>
<th>Stable (%)</th>
<th>Upward mobile (%)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All</strong></td>
<td>11,976</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years of birth</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927 - 1946</td>
<td>(3,568)</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946 - 1964</td>
<td>(6,368)</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965 - 1977</td>
<td>(2,040)</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927 - 1946</td>
<td>(1,682)</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946 - 1964</td>
<td>(3,226)</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965 - 1977</td>
<td>(1,020)</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927 - 1946</td>
<td>(1,886)</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946 - 1964</td>
<td>(3,142)</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965 - 1977</td>
<td>(1,020)</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eurofound 2017

The relative social mobility has continuously increased in Finland since the early 20th century. Even though the trend applies to both genders, the growth has been slightly more extensive among men than women. The trends in social mobility apply
to pre-and post-war generations as well as to Generation X (born in 1964-1979). Among Generation Y, those born in 1981 - 1996, the early 1990s recession affected the strength of social mobility (Jokinen and Saaristo, 2002). Some studies indicated that the level of social mobility did not increase but was stable during the 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century in Finland. It is also important to recall that the effects of the recession are still being felt in some periods (Erola, 2009 and 2010). With regards to declining of social mobility in Finland, the factors that affect social mobility should be approached carefully. Social mobility has also recently been considered in electoral studies. According to Lahtinen (2019), social mobility has been a mechanism that constrains inequality within socioeconomic groups.

**Education and social mobility**

The correlation between social replication, social mobility and education has been acknowledged extensively in comparative studies (e.g., Breen and Johnsson, 2005). Scholars have noted that children from higher socioeconomic status (SES) families are likely to perform better at school and thus end up in higher positions in the working life (Kivinen et al. 2007). In Finland, children likely end up in similar occupational positions as their parents. Scholars have distinguished primary and secondary effects of parents’ education on their children’s education. Primary effects refer to a correlation between parents’ socioeconomic position and their children’s grades at school. The secondary effect is the notion that children from a higher SES family get higher grades at school and are more likely to continue their educational paths to the second and third levels. (Erola, 2010, 56; see also Boudon, 1974).

The Finnish educational system has created favourable conditions for social mobility. In the 21st century, higher education leading to a degree is available and free of charge for citizens of EU member states and those in the European Economic Area. This has increased social mobility. However, it is important to recall that social mobility has occurred in both directions: The children of parents with academic education could have chosen vocational training, and the offspring of parents with vocational training could have gravitated to higher education (Keski-Petäjä and Witting, 2016).

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32 In short, Generation X, which is sometimes shortened to Gen X, is the name given to the generation of people born between the mid-1960s and the early-1980s. Generation Y refers to people born in early 1980s to mid-1990s.
Studies have shown that some occupations and fields of education are more likely to run in the family than others. The most hereditary fields in Finland have been medicine, arts, and law. Often, the heredity of education goes hand in hand with hereditary occupations because certain occupations require specific education. In other words, the mechanisms of hereditary education and occupation are tangential (Keski-Pitälä and Witting, 2016; see also Avonius et al. 2016).

Source: Erola (2010, 76), see also Silvennoinen 2002

**Figure 4.9** The selection mechanisms in the education and labour markets.

Education has become more competitive in the 21st century. The competitive aspect stems from two areas: first, the self-motivation to continue education after compulsory education, and second, the competitiveness within the school year. Success in the future labour market increases motivation to continue the educational path after compulsory school. Even though there is a strong correlation between parents’ socioeconomic position and their children’s socioeconomic position, education plays a key role. This is distinguished by a ‘black box’ model. Simply put, the black box illustrates a box between the SES of parents, the input, and the SES of the children in their adulthood, i.e., the output (Figure 4.9). Scholars have estimated that it takes approximately 30 years to get from the input to the output phase. Several crucial educational processes and choices have occurred during these
30 years. Learning schools’ cultures and students’ diversity affect the output significantly. These mechanisms indicate the secondary effects of parents’ SES and education of their children’s adult life in the society.

Given that one of the study’s aims is to identify determinants for the class (in)congruence among working-class voters, social mobility offers two significant standpoints that highlight the importance of explanatory variables. First, social mobility and its theories help to hypothesise that working-class voters do not always come from working-class families. Additionally, the studies on social mobility in Finland indicate differences between family backgrounds in terms of age and gender of working-class voters. Thus, these factors should be controlled in the empirical analyses. Second, the studies highlight that education has a major impact on social mobility considering control of the empirical analyses.

4.2 Organisational level: Finnish party system, political parties, and party-union ties

This subchapter summarises the organisational-level factors that are the most relevant and important when studying working-class voting in 21st century Finland. The factors are similar to the study’s introduction (1.2.2), but this subchapter focuses on these factors from the perspective of the Finnish context. The scrutiny begins by looking at the formation of the Finnish party system and its characteristics (4.2.1). The focus moves towards the party system today and its features in the 21st century. The latter part of the organisational level outlines the party-union ties, i.e., the linkages between left-wing parties and trade unions in the Finnish context.

4.2.1 The Finnish party system

The progression of the Finnish party system has gone hand-in-hand with historical events. The present-day political parties and the party families are built on the social cleavages shaped by traditional, social, and political conflicts in society. Similar to the political systems of other Western democracies, Finland’s political system has undergone fundamental changes since independence in 1917. However, scholars
have highlighted that Finland’s transformation is unique from in a Western European comparison. Events and characteristics that give Finland unique features are late industrialisation, a geographic location between West and East, intense development towards the modern welfare state, and the worldwide-acknowledged breakthrough in the ICT sector since the 1990s. (Karvonen, 2014, p. 29 and Pesonen and Riihinen, 2002, pp. 37–42.)

Even though some countries are similar to Finland both culturally and politically, several features separate Finnish society from other European societies. Industrialisation and the development of the socioeconomic structure occurred relatively late in Finland compared to other Western democracies. In Finland, most of the workforce belonged to the primary sector until the 1960s whereas at the same time only around 15 per cent of the workforce worked at the primary sector in Western Europe. Finland shifted straight from a pre-industrialisation to a post-industrialisation phase without any interphase. The political parties in Finland experienced rapid change by forming their social bases. Overall, the Finnish parties, voters, and politics adapted to the pressure of the dynamic transformation created for the entire Finnish political system (Karvonen, 2014, pp. 28-31).

The old traditional political parties in Finland have reflected on the combination of class cleavage and regional cleavage pioneering Rokkan’s triangle model (1967; see subchapter 1.2.2) at the beginning of the 20th century in Finland. The agrarian party, the Centre Party of Finland, was formed to support the rights of the independent farmers in the rural areas. The conservative party, the National Coalition Party, was formed in 1918 to support the rights of the capital, bourgeois, and upper-class. The party was a transformation from the Old Finnish Party, founded in 1906. The Social Democratic Party was formed in 1899 to originally support the rights of the rural proletariat, but gradually it offers more support for the rights of the working-class (See Karvonen, 2014, pp. 26-7.) The history of the Finnish SDP was discussed in detail in the previous subchapter 4.1.1 and illustrates the timeline of the Finnish working class and its organisations.

Some cleavage events have been more significant than others in the Finnish party system. The three core cleavages have traditionally been language, regional differences, and social class. The cleavages have determined the Finnish political system and party formation since the late 19th century and are still partially relevant today (e.g., Karvonen, 2014, p. 3). These cleavages are discussed in more detail in this subchapter.

However, the roles of the language, regional, and class cleavage are central to the formation of the Finnish party system and thus they are been outlined in this part of
the study. As it has been already discussed in this study (subchapter 1.2), there has occurred a value shift in the Western democracies, which obviously reflects to both the party systems and the attitudinal orientations of voters in Finland as well. The attitudinal orientations are discussed from the voter perspective in the forthcoming subchapter 4.3.4. It presents those attitudinal orientations, which are relevant for this study’s research problem and thus are important to consider in this study’s empirical analyses. In addition to this, the subchapter 7.2 focuses on outlining the attitudinal orientations and the arguments for their selection in this study.

Language cleavage

Finland was under Swedish rule for many centuries until Finland gained autonomy under the Russian empire; hence, the Swedish language has a long-standing history in Finland, since Finland belonged under Swedish rule for many centuries until Finland got its autonomy under the Russian empire. The autonomy was a result of the Finnish war in the beginning of the 19th century. During this period, approximately 13 per cent of the Finnish population spoke Swedish as their mother tongue. Regardless of the secession from Sweden, the number of Swedish speakers did not decline remarkably during the Great Duchy period (1809–1917). On the contrary, Swedish remained an official language in administration, higher education, and courts until 1863.

In the 1840s, a rise of a societal movement and ideology occurred: Fennomania. This movement sought to improve the position of the Finnish language in society. Gradually, the two official languages (Finnish and Swedish) became equally spoken. In 1902, Finland became a bilingual country where both Finnish and Swedish languages were a medium of official communication. Despite the implementation, the language continued to divide the Finnish citizens and party politics. Both Finnish-speakers and Swedish-speaking politicians organised their parties. The Swedish people’s party was seen as an elitist party whose supporters and members were mostly members of the Diet of Finland. The Finnish party was formed in the 1860s. At first, it was formed by Finnish artists and intellectuals who wanted to improve the Finnish language’s position in society. The party supported nationalism and conservative values, which emerged as the first cleavage. The universal suffrage granted in 1906 acted as a main motivator for the Swedish-speaking politicians. They
organised a new Swedish People’s Party—a mass party to seek support from the Finnish electorate (Pesonen and Riihinen, 2002, pp. 69-73).

After Finland’s independence, the language was still one of the main issues in Finnish politics in the 1920s and 1930s. However, the war period (1939-1945) managed to appease the social tensions concerning language. Today, approximately five per cent (5.3%) of the Finnish population are Swedish speakers. The Swedish People’s Party of Finland has been in the Finnish parliament since 1907, and it receives the majority of support from the Swedish-speaking regions such as metropolitan areas, on the coast of Ostrobothnia, the Archipelago Sea, and Southwest Finland. Though the language conflict has declined over time, it still arises occasionally in political discussions. During the last couple of decades, the most significant language debate has been related to the position of Swedish as a mandatory subject in comprehensive school, upper secondary school, and vocational school (Pesonen and Riihinen, 2002, pp. 69-73). According to the recent report produced by E2 research, almost two-thirds (62%) of the Finns agreed or somewhat agreed with a statement that the Swedish language is a part of Finnish society in 2017 (Pitkänen and Westinen, 2017, pp. 13).

Regional cleavage

Regional differences have always distinguished climatic conditions in Finland. The climate varies significantly between the Northern and Southern parts of Finland, which itself provides different conditions for economic development. Compared to Sweden, the southernmost parts of Finland do not have mild and fertile climate conditions for farming. Therefore, Finland’s economy has focused on raw materials, proximity to energy supplements, and modern technology (Pesonen and Riihinen, 2002, pp. 77.)

Despite the unfavourable conditions for farming, agriculture has still been part of Finland’s culture and economy. In the 1960s and 1970s, Finland developed from an agricultural country into a modern industry and service-based society. This development accelerated urbanisation, and Finnish people began to move to Southern Finland’s few growing cities, which offered service work and modern production (ibid. 77; see also Westinen, 2015, pp. 52-3). This internal migration increased the divide between rapidly growing cities and inhabited rural areas. The regional disparities have caused disparities in regions’ economies due to municipality taxation. The dependency ratio is high in the municipalities because the share of the
elderly is higher than the working-age inhabitants. Thus, most of the tax revenues are spent on elderly care and statutory tasks. Additionally, the unemployment rates have typically been higher in the rural areas than in most urbanised areas, which have weakened the economic prospects of the municipalities.

The Centre Party (official name Centre of Finland, founded in 1906) known as the Agrarian League until 1965 has been traditionally the voice of the farmers and the rural population in Finland’s political spectrum. The party has been one of the largest parties in Finland for over a century. Shortly after the independence and the civil war in 1919, the party raised its support to almost 20 per cent, and the support increased in parliamentary elections until 1970. Large-scale urbanisation caused a decline in the Centre Party’s support for several years between the 1970s and 1980s (Pesonen and Riihinen, 2002, pp. 77–81).

However, the decline in the Centre party’s electoral support in the 1970s-1980s occurred mainly because of the spectacular victory of the Finnish Rural Party. Formerly, the party had been the Centre Party’s splinter group and changed its name from the ‘Small Farmers’ Party’ to ‘the Finnish Rural Party’ in 1966. The party had its first impressive victory in 1970 and was considered the first victory of Finnish populism (Karvonen, 2014, p. 46). In addition, the elections in 1983 and 1987 were victorious and gave the party a place in the cabinet. However, the party’s support gradually declined between years 1983–1990. At the same time, the party had internal problems, which weakened its electoral support. In the 1995 parliamentary election, the party won only one MP to the Finnish parliament. Six months after the election, the Finnish Rural Party went bankrupt. The Finns Party has continued its anti-establishment ideology since the late 1990s. (Pesonen, 2001, pp. 118–9; Karvonen, 2014, p. 46; Paloheimo and Sundberg, 2005, p. 182). After the Finns Party’s historical victory in the 2011 election, scholars have separated the Finns Party from its ancestor—the Finnish Rural Party (see Arter, 2012 and Wiberg, 2011).

Even though opinions towards European integration have been one of the most dividing issues in terms of the regional cleavage, the Centre Party was one of the leading parties that supported Finland’s EU membership in the early 1990s. The ideology expansion led to the new rise of the Centre Party in the 1990s from pure agrarianism towards liberal conservatism. However, the party’s traditional supporters in the 1990s were more sceptical about the EU than had favourable opinions on the EU due to the EU’s common agriculture policy, which Finnish farmers considered to be discriminative (Paloheimo, 1996). All in all, the party’s ideological core has always been built on the support for decentralisation, which is not that common among other West-European countries’ liberal parties. Although, at the European
level, the Centre Party belongs to the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe of which political position is in the centre, and its ideology is based on liberalism and pro-Europeanism (Pesonen and Riihinen, 2002, pp. 77–81; See also Westinen, 2015, p. 254).

In the 21st century, the Centre Party faced challenges in keeping support within 20 per cent. This same applies to two other traditional large parties in Finland: the SDP and the National Coalition Party. The Centre Party's concerns are the regional and socioeconomic equality issues as well as voters’ political values and attitudes (see Westinen, 2015). In the 2015 parliamentary election, the Centre Party managed to raise support to 21.1 per cent. However, in 2019, the Centre Party recorded its lowest support rate (13.8%) since Finland’s independence in 1917.

**Class cleavage**

Class conflicts exploded in Finland for over a century ago because of the civil war. However, changes in the Finnish class structure were not like that of the monarchies in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark where the estates had created the basis for the class structure. In addition, the modernisation and industrialisation occurred much later in Finland than in its neighbouring countries, which partly explained Finland’s unique features in terms of its class structure’s formation. Despite the lateness, the cleavage between owners and workers was born because of industrialisation in Finland similar to other Western democracies (Karvonen, 2014, p. 23; Pesonen and Riihinen, 2002, p. 73).

The class cleavage was traditionally based on the socioeconomic left-right cleavage in Finland. The characteristics of the Finnish class cleavage and the socioeconomic left-right cleavage are discussed in more detail in subchapter 4.3.3. The strong middle class in the socioeconomic cleavage has confused a clear socioeconomic cleavage in Finland. The working-class who supported the socialist ideologies belonged to the left-end. However, the bourgeois and the owners belonged to the right end of the socioeconomic cleavage. However, the Finnish political sphere shows that the socioeconomic cleavage belonged to owners who were mostly the landowners.

The victory of the Whites in the civil war created specific characteristics for the Finnish party system from the perspective of class cleavage. For a long period, the centre and right, i.e., anti-socialist parties, united against the socialist and communist parties as well as the Soviet Union. Even though the war period at the beginning of
the 1940s managed to unite the Finnish population, it did not sweep away the social classes. Class conflicts existed in the society, and the main class groups were bourgeois, working-class, and farmers. The middle class disentangled itself from the bourgeois at that time. (Mickelsson, 2015, p. 115).

The class cleavage in Finland was stable until the 1960s. From this period, scholars have distinguished factors that have weakened its significance in the Finnish context. First, the effective government cooperation between the Social Democrats and the Centre Party in the post-war period dispelled the class cleavage in daily politics. Second, the collapse of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1990s rasped off the sharpest edges of the class cleavage. Third, the economic changes at the structural level (see Chapters 1.2.1 and 3.1) created pressures for traditional class cleavage by challenging the significance of social classes in general (Paloheimo and Sundberg, 2005, Karvonen, 2014; Westinen, 2015).

The changes in the country’s economic structure rapidly reformed the composition of the labour markets after the post-war reconstruction in the 1950s. The number of manual workers declined, and the service sector grew; the new middle class increased. According to some studies (e.g., Dalton, 1984 and Dogan, 2001), the class consciousness—particularly among the working class—began to weaken in the 1990s. This weakened the mechanisms of class voting. Parties faced new challenges when they could not base their support exclusively on society’s class division (Dalton, 2008, pp. 147-154; Westinen, 2015, pp. 50-1).

Overall, two major changes have notably reshaped the class structure in Finland. The first change is the decreasing number of farmers since the 1960s both in agriculture and forestry. Consequently, the Centre Party lost the majority of its class-based, i.e., farmer-based, support. The second major change has been the decline in the share of blue-collar employees due to the decrease in manual work. Simultaneously, there has been a rise in the service sector between the 1960s and 1990s, which has created new occupations and professions outside the traditional class structure (Pesonen, 2001, pp. 121-5).

Finnish party system today

During the 20th century, scholars agreed on the stability of the Finnish party system, which reflected the famous triangle model developed by Rokkan (1966) and Rokkan and Valen (1974) (see Nousiainen, 1985; Arter, 1999 and Karvonen, 2014). For almost a century, the Finnish party system managed to reflect the interests of three
core social groups: farmers, employers, and employees. However, at the latest in the 2011 parliamentary election, this institutionalised set-up began to fracture. The Finns Party’s historical election victory shook the traditional old parties’ (The SDP, The Centre Party, The National Coalition) relative strength. New issues such as immigration, climate change, and ethnicity have started to gain more ground in the political sphere. This has changed the dynamics of the party system, which increased the fluctuation of the parties’ supports (Kestilä-Kekkonen and Wass, 2020; von Schoultz, 2017).

There are several main features of today’s Finnish party system: First, the system is strongly fragmented, and the number of influential parties is high due to the history of the cleavage structure and the ideologically diverse electorate (see Westinen, 2015, pp. 1-2; see also Paloheimo, 2008). Second, the left-wing parties have steadily lost their influence and parliamentary power since the 1970s. Third, there has occurred two waves of populism in the Finnish party system. The first wave occurred in the 1970s and 1980s when the Finnish Rural party’s support had its peak. The populist parties had their second coming after the mid-1990s and the formation of a completely new party—the Finns Party (Karvonen, et al. 2016; see also Karvonen, 2014).

The Finns Party was small in the 1990s and did not gain over 5 per cent support during its first 15 years even though it managed to get a couple of MPs in the parliamentary elections 2003 and 2007. In the 2011 parliamentary elections, the Finns Party secured 19.1 per cent of the total votes. A similar trend continued four years later in the parliamentary election of 2015, and the party secured 17.7 per cent support (Karvonen, Paloheimo and Raunio, 2016). The Finns Party’s immigration policy, support for a long-time charismatic leader Timo Soini, and strong support among the working-class men were factors that explained the party’s electoral success. Similarly, with other West European populist parties, the party gained support among various social groups (Arter and Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2013; Kestilä-Kekkonen and Söderlund, 2014).

After two victorious elections, the party won the majority seat in the government in 2015. The election period 2015 – 2019 was a turbulent period for the Finns Party and Finnish populism. In June 2017, the party selected a new leader to continue the pioneering heritage of former party leader Timo Soini. The party’s new chairman, Jussi Halla-aho, was known for his radical views on immigration, which turned out to impede the party’s position in the government. Altogether, these events led to the party’s split in the summer of 2017. The former leader and the incumbent foreign minister, Timo Soini, as well as a total of the party’s 21 MPs and other ministers,
formed a new parliamentary group, the ‘New Alternative’, which enabled them to continue the government coalition. In the 2019 parliamentary election, the New Alternative became an official party with a new registered name ‘Blue Reform’. Even though the Blue Reform had nominated diverse candidate lists all around the country, the party lost all its seats. The Finns Party, led by Jussi Halla-aho, secured as many votes (17.5 per cent) as the party had gotten in the 2015 election and was the second-largest party after the Social Democrats.

4.2.2 Trade unions and party-union ties

This subchapter focuses on the party-union ties in the Finnish context, their historical context, and the current situation. This study’s introduction chapter 1.2.2. already sheds light on the party-union ties and their mechanism in Europe with emphasis on the Finnish case. The focus is on the organisation level since the next subchapter deals with the citizen level instead of focusing on trade union members and Finnish citizens’ trade union activism.

Finnish employee unions have been organised under three confederations: Akava (Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland), SAK (Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions), and STTK (Finnish Confederation of Professionals). In the early 2020s, approximately 2.2 million Finnish employees (67 per cent of the working-age population) are members of a trade union. Additionally, in 2020, over 316,000 Finnish citizens are in local agricultural producers’ organisations and regional forest management associations with members in MTK.

The SAK, the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions, is the largest union confederation with 860,000 members in 2020. The STTK and the Akava members are close. Akava is the only organisation that has increased its membership during the 21st century. The SAK and the STTK lost members in the 21st century. However, the SAK lost more members than the STTK (Table 4.2; more about trade union participation and the confederations’ sizes of membership in subchapter 4.3.2).
Table 4.2 The three trade union confederations, Akava, SAK and STTK, by size in 2020 in Finland.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Akava</th>
<th>SAK</th>
<th>STTK</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member unions</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members in 2020</td>
<td>609 000</td>
<td>860 000</td>
<td>500 000</td>
<td>1 969 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The share of all trade union members (%)</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In Finland, like in other Nordic countries, the national income policy agreements have established their position in the trade unions and the political system. These income policies are based on a pluralist view of society in which a society is founded on overlapping interest groups and where power and influence in a society are distributed33(Kyntäjä, 1993). The tripartite agreements were more influential by the end of the 1960s when the national income policy model established itself in Finland. The first national income policy agreement was implemented in 1968, which stabilised the effect of the devaluation of the Finnish mark in 1967. The agreement is an intersection of various contradictory developments. The first tripartite agreement changed the course of Finland’s domestic politics. The new procedure reduced the power of the Finnish Parliament—rejecting or adapting the agreements—made with the trade unions. (Ollila and Paloheimo, 2007.) One argument for the increase in the tripartite agreements was their ability to strengthen democratic decision-making (Mickelsson, 2015, p. 197).

The significance of the tripartite national income policy agreements has weakened since the early 21st century. From the viewpoint of an employer, globalisation has shaken the roots of tripartite agreements. In the 21st century, the goal of companies is to maintain global competitiveness. Therefore, if the wages are more expensive in Finland than elsewhere, then maintaining competitiveness becomes impossible. On the contrary, the employee-side has faced problems due to globalisation. Since Finnish companies have transferred factors and other functions abroad, they have laid off many workers, and some of their workforce in Finland has become redundant. This issue strengthened the employee-side in the tripartite negotiations.

33 The national income policy agreements with the pluralist view on society have created the corporatist regime in the Nordic countries. A corporatist regime has considered being as characteristic of a Nordic society as the regime of parliamentary democracy. Corporatism refers to a social system in which trade unions have well-defined roles and reference groups in society (Kyntäjä, 1993).
Undoubtedly, Finland’s EU membership also partly weakened trade unions’ societal influence (Ruostetsaari, 2014, p. 285).

In this study’s context regarding the party-union ties, attention turns towards the left-wing parties especially towards the SDP with which SAK has traditionally had close relations. This stems from the history of the labour movement and the SDP’s significant role in the SAK especially from the 1960s onwards. As presented in the previous subchapter (4.1.1) on the Finnish working-class’ history, these two organisations have emerged from the same societal movement, i.e., labour movement in Finland and the other Nordic countries (see also Epstein, 1967; Padgett and Patterson, 1991, p. 177; Ebbinghaus, 1995 and Allern and Bale, 2012). For many decades, it has been conventional for the left-wing politicians to have worked in the SAK. For instance, the former party leader of the SDP (2014-2020) and the former prime minister of Finland, Antti Rinne, worked as a lawyer for a SAK member union. Later, he worked as an executive director of the STTK’s member union (Raunio and Laine, 2017).

In the 21st century, the relationship between leftist parties (the SDP of Finland and the Left Alliance) and the SAK was firmly institutionalised. Even though there are no written rules regarding institutional ties, there are still daily meetings and cooperation between both working groups and personnel. Since the last tripartite agreement in 2001, the party-union ties were not as concrete in daily politics as they were a couple of decades ago. The politicians sometimes suggest that the tradition of tripartite negotiations could be brought back. For instance, the former Prime Minister Juha Sipilä (the Centre Party, 2015-2019) suggested in 2015 before the parliamentary election that Finland should adopt a social contract, which would include features of the once buried tripartite negotiations. Despite this suggestion, the tripartite negotiations and agreements have remained in the past. However, some features have been applied in collective bargaining in recent years (See Tiihonen, 2016, p. 321).

In the 2010s, the SDP and the SAK have been formally independent. However, in reality, their relationship has still been very close. Understanding Finland’s political history and particularly its working-class history is nearly impossible without accepting that those trade unions have played an influential role in Finnish political life through corporatist policies. In Finland, the economic support from the trade unions to the left-wing parties has been significant even in the 21st century (Raunio and Laine, 2017; Sundberg, 2003).
4.3 Citizen level: foundations of the 21st century’s political engagement in Finland

This third subchapter focuses on outlining the citizen-level key characteristics of the Finnish context from the perspective of working-class voting. The subchapter focuses on a decline in turnout rates, partisan change, trade union membership, as well as the Finnish voters’ attitudinal orientations. The characteristics and trends are similar to those outlined in the study’s introduction subchapter 1.2.3. However, this subchapter aims to scrutinise these trends among Finnish citizens.

4.3.1 Decline in turnout

Typically, turnout refers to voting action in the national general elections: presidential, parliamentary, municipal, and European Parliament election. In each of these, all people who meet the statutory requirements are entitled to vote. In this study’s context, turnout and electoral participation are the voting system in the Finnish parliamentary election in which every Finnish citizen who has reached the age of 18 not later than on the day of the election is entitled to vote (Ministry of Justice, 2020b.)

Parliamentary elections are held every four years in Finland. The electoral system in the Finnish parliamentary election is an open-list proportional system in which seats are first allocated to parties based on their vote share, then assigned to party-affiliated candidates on the parties' electoral lists. The number of seats won by each list in each of the 13 constituencies is determined based on the total votes using the d’Hondt divisor. This shows that the candidate who got the most votes secures the total list vote (see e.g., Karvonen, 2014, pp. 15–17).

Turnout is usually measured with a turnout percentage—the share of the eligible voters who have cast a ballot in the election. The eligible voters are called ‘VAP’ referring to ‘the voting age population’ including the group of citizens (i.e., immigrants, prisoners) who are unlikely to vote. The share is measured in percentages. In Finland, the turnout percentage has been approximately 70 per cent

34 Among Finnish citizens living in Finland. This should not be mixed with the turnout rate among all eligible Finnish voters, which include the expatriate voters. The turnout rate among the entire Finnish VAP is usually couple of percentage points lower, e.g., 68.7% in 2019.
in the parliamentary elections in the 21st century (see Figure 4.10 below). In the latest parliamentary election 2019, the turnout increased by 2.0 percentage points to 72.1 per cent. However, the ‘stay-at-home party’ has steadily been the largest party in Finland since the 1999 parliamentary election. Generally, the turnout rates in Finland have been close to the European average (Borg et al. 2015; Grönlund, 2016; Borg and Wass, 2016). Since the parliamentary election in 1987, women have voted more actively than men (Figure 4.10). Nevertheless, the share of women in the candidate lists is still below 50 per cent.

**Source:** Statistics Finland 2020f

**Figure 4.10** The turnout rate among eligible voters living in Finland in the Finnish parliamentary elections 1908–2019.

Even though the voter turnout rates have declined in Finland from the golden era of the 1960s, the decline has not been as steep in Finland as in some other Western democracies35. However, the turnout rates have declined especially among certain social groups. In other words, as a recent study (Lahtinen (2019) on Finnish voters

35 For instance, in France and in Portugal, the turnout rates in parliamentary elections have declined with over 20 percentage points in 30 years (International IDEA, 2020).
shows that socioeconomic differences have increased among the Finnish electorate in the 21st century.

Previous studies have distinguished key motivators to vote in representative democracy. The motivators can be distant, close, or direct. The distant motivators and causes are the characteristics of the electoral system (number of parties, the competitiveness of elections, and mobilisation). The close motivators and causes refer to voter characteristics, which either increase or decrease the likelihood to vote. These characteristics refer to the available resources such as parents’ electoral behaviour (role models or socioeconomic position) as well as the sources of motivation (personal political interest, political knowledge, as well as internal and external efficacy). The direct motivators and causes turn directly into action, e.g., the easiness of voting, the impressiveness of casting a ballot, or the feeling that voting is a civic duty (see Wass and Blais, 2016; Wass and Borg, 2016, p. 180).

Previous studies have identified the most effective resources that affect the motivation to vote. These resources are the socioeconomic position and education as well as those of the parents. Even though the effect of voters’ socioeconomic bias on turnout has been widely acknowledged, scholars have argued that the full picture has still remained rather confusing. Especially, why those in lower socioeconomic positions use their right to vote, who could benefit from the votes? To explain this puzzle, scholars have put more attention to the processes of political socialisation in voters’ pre-adult life and analysed voters’ parents, siblings, and grandparents as the principal agents (the most well-known theory on political socialisation was developed by Hyman, 1959; see also Lahtinen, Erola and Wass, 2019; Wass and Blais, 2016; Abendschön, 2013). According to the recent studies (Lahtinen, 2019; Gidengil et al. 2016), both parents’ education and their voting in childhood affect the turnout of young adults (18–30-year-olds) and the parental voting seems to have been even slightly more important (Gidengil et al. 2016). However, recent results regarding extensive Finnish register data also implicate that the inter-generational differences in electoral participation are explained by the socioeconomic differences that stem from differences in the family background (Lahtinen, 2019).

Descriptive statistics from the recent Finnish parliamentary election in 2019 show that the voters’ education significantly affects their turnout. When the voters’ level of education is combined with their age, there can be clear differences in the voter turnout within groups (Table 4.3). In 2019, the lowest turnout rate, 33.6 per cent, was among 25–34-year-olds with lower secondary education. The highest turnout rate, 94.4 per cent, was among 65–74-year-olds with higher tertiary or doctoral
education. These figures show that both education and age affect electoral participation in Finland. These figures show that the level of education has affected in spite of voters’ age. In Finland and other Western democracies, the extension of youth has slowed down the trend of increasing turnout with age (Smets, 2016; Wass and Borg, 2016, p. 184).

**Table 4.3**  Turnout by age and level of education in Parliamentary elections 2019 (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Lower secondary</th>
<th>Upper secondary</th>
<th>Lowest tertiary(^{36})</th>
<th>Lower tertiary</th>
<th>Higher tertiary/doctorate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>79.9%</td>
<td>89.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
<td>64.6%</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>74.9%</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
<td>84.7%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
<td>86.5%</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
<td>92.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
<td>73.8%</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
<td>90.1%</td>
<td>92.3%</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>72.3%</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>84.0%</td>
<td>88.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
<td>83.4%</td>
<td>91.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Statistics Finland 2020*

Education is the only indicator of socioeconomic position. Studies have shown that a voter’s occupational group correlates with the likelihood of casting a ballot. Previous studies have suggested several theories that would explain the mechanism between voter’s occupational group and motivation to vote. Scholars have suggested that voters in higher occupational positions are more likely to be politically active because they are likely to be interested in politics, discuss politics, and vote in elections. Therefore, voters in higher occupational positions adapt to social norms, which emphasise the importance of electoral participation. Often a higher occupational position is linked to higher education which can help explain the higher level of political efficacy among citizens in higher occupational positions (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980). The occupation naturally affects the level of income, which has also been noted to affect electoral participation. The simple trend has been that

\(^{36}\) It is important to note that the lowest tertiary level qualifications have started to decrease among the Finnish population, and new degrees are no longer completed in this category. Inevitably, this affects the results regarding this category.
higher income voters are more likely to cast a ballot. For instance, in the 2015 parliamentary election in Finland, voters in the highest income group were four times more likely to vote in the parliamentary election than voters who belonged to the lowest income group (Wass and Borg, 2016).

Table 4.4 Share of those who voted among persons entitled to vote by occupational group (ISCO-88 main categories) in the Finnish parliamentary election 2019 (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational group</th>
<th>Turnout (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>88.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>87.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed forces</td>
<td>84.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technicians and associate professionals</td>
<td>82.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers</td>
<td>80.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical support workers</td>
<td>78.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service and sales workers</td>
<td>75.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant machine operators and assemblers</td>
<td>66.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft and related trades workers</td>
<td>65.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary occupations</td>
<td>61.8 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Finland 2019

Note: The data on the citizens entitled to vote and those who voted is based on the voting register of the Election Information System of the Ministry of Justice. The unit-level background data are based on Statistics Finland’s data such as population, employment, and family statistics, and the Register of Completed Education and Degrees. The electronic voting register was in use in 141/309 (including Mainland Finland and Aland) Finnish municipalities in the 2019 parliamentary election.

Descriptive statistics from the recent Finnish parliamentary election in 2019 show that the turnout rate varied within occupational groups (Table 4.4). The lowest turnout rate was in elementary occupations at 61.8 per cent. Elementary occupations are typically routine jobs that require only limited education. The highest turnout rate was found among professionals (88.9%). The turnout rates within the occupational groups follow the trend of the impact of education on voter turnout. The differences in turnout rates between occupational groups are significant. The
difference was over 25 percentage points between the highest and lowest rate in the 2019 election.

4.3.2 Partisan change: party membership, party identification, and electoral volatility, and trade union membership

Partisan change in the Finnish context is discussed in this subchapter as observed with four indicators: party membership, party identification, electoral volatility, and trade union membership. The aim is to shed light on those trends, which indicate that there has been a partisan change in the Finnish political system. In other words, this subchapter outlines those citizen-level observations that have resulted from the increased complexity and multidimensionality of the political sphere especially within a couple of recent decades.

Party membership

The party membership rates in Finland have declined in the 21st century. This trend applies to the three old traditional parties, i.e., the Centre Party, the National Coalition Party, and the SDP. Newer parties have begun to increase their membership in the 2010s. For instance, the Left Alliance, the Green League, as well as the Finns Party have gradually secured more members in the 21st century (see Mickelsson 2015, 201). Despite the increase in the membership rates among the newer parties, the declining trend among the traditional old parties has been quite sharp. The membership rates of the parliamentary parties have dropped by over a third between the 1980s and 2020s. In general, party membership rates are much smaller than the share parties’ voters and supporters.

Party identification

Party identification has traditionally been one way to measure voters’ party attachment and party alignment. It refers to a political party to which a voter feels closer compared to other parties. It indicates party support. However, as a concept, it is not the same as party choice. Simply put, party identification is a more stable
attachment whereas the party choice varies over a short time and is a more time-related concept. Originally, party identification stems from the reference group theory and the Michigan model of voting behaviour, which highlights the socio-psychological and emotional side of party attachment. According to the Michigan model, party identification begins to develop already in early childhood through emotions and feelings for a certain social group. Such feelings develop as a life-long sympathy for a certain political party (see Campbell et al. 1960). The concept has been more popular in the United States’ two-party system than in the European multi-party systems where the party systems have first and foremost based on the class cleavage. Thus, the concept of class identification has partially challenged the party identification especially when explaining party choice. (Westinen and Grönlund 2012, p. 157; Bengtsson et al. 2014; see also Holmberg, 2007, pp. 557-9.)

Scholars have highlighted various elements of party identification and criticised its significance. Some have highlighted its cognitive elements, i.e., voters’ ability to evaluate political parties’ recent success in daily politics (Fiorina, 1981). Some have continued highlighting the original Michigan socio-psychological model, which emphasises the identification’s ability to evoke stable orientation towards a certain political party (e.g., Miller and Shanks, 1996). Overall, scholars have not fully agreed on the way to measure party identification. Various questions have been used in surveys over the decades (Bengtsson et al. 2014, p. 67).

In Nordic countries, party identification has divided scholars’ opinions. The concept has shown its complexity in the multi-party systems where voters identify with several parties or change their identification with a party choice. Thus, party identification has often correlated strongly with party choice in the Nordic party systems, which has also weakened the usefulness of the concept. Scholars have explained the weakness of party identification with similar factors as the general dealignment trend. For instance, the increased political and cognitive skills of voters as well as increasing cognitive mobility have made their political decisions less stable and therefore decreased their party identification (Budge et al. 1976; Thomassen, 1976; Dalton, 1984; Holmberg, 1994).
In Finland, the level of party identification has been rather stable in the last couple of decades (Figure 4.11). Compared to its Nordic counterparts, party identification is approximately 50 per cent, which is the same level in Finland in the 21st century as in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. However, the Nordic countries have experienced a declining trend in party identification back to the 1980s. The declining trend is closely connected to the more general increase in dealignment (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Bengtsson et al. 2014, pp. 69–71.)

Recent studies on Finnish voters show that the voting decisions are increasingly based on single issues or their value orientations, which is partly because of declining party identification (Borg, 2020; Söderlund, 2016; Westinen, 2015; Westinen et al. 2016). From the perspective of this study, party identification is not a vital concept although its significance as an indicator for party attachment has been acknowledged. Instead of party identification, this study sheds light on class identification and emphasises its significance as one of the determinants of voting behaviour. In addition, the decline in the theories on party identification in Western democracies is an example of increased dealignment and general social unrest among the electorate specifically among working-class voters.
As already discussed in subchapter 1.2.3, electoral volatility refers to the change in parties’ vote shares between elections. In other words, it is an indicator of electoral change. Studies on electoral volatility seek to examine the extent to which voters change parties between elections and why they decide to change parties from one election to another. Electoral volatility is also a good way to analyse swing voters and the decisions of those voters who have uncertain political views.

Until the 1970s, the Finnish party system was stable with low volatility rates. However, several trends in the last few decades have already been outlined in this study, which assumes that the political dealignment has increased thereby increasing the electoral volatility. The decreasing number of partisans, weakening level of party identification, and the general decline in the traditional forms of political participation have shown that the share of swing voters has increased and that the voting decisions have become more volatile. Many signs of electoral volatility are measured.

Party identification is an indicator of electoral volatility. Another way to measure electoral volatility is to analyse the juncture when the voters make their voting decisions. Basically, the closer the voting event, the less politically aligned or engaged voters are (see e.g., Chaffee and Choe 1980). Approximately, half of the voters in the 2011 and 2015 Finnish parliamentary elections made their decision on their party choice several months before the election (Söderlund, 2016, p. 246). The third way to measure electoral volatility is to inquire whether voters considered other candidates or parties while making their decision. This does not automatically tell anything about the juncture of their consideration. In Finland, approximately half of the voters considered other party candidates in the 2007, 2011, and 2015 elections (Söderlund, 2016, p. 346).

The fourth way to measure electoral volatility is to look more closely for party choice and measure swing vote. This can be called gross volatility37. A swing vote is a voter’s decision to change a party in between two elections (Söderlund, 2008, 2016). Measuring a swing vote is problematic in terms of reliability in survey methodology. If respondents have been asked, which party they voted for in the elections four years ago, then the measures could be uncertain (Söderlund, 2016, p. 345.) Regarding the level of swing-voting in the Finnish parliamentary elections, studies on the Finnish Election Studies (FNES) have indicated a rather stable trend. The share of swing voters, i.e., voters, who have changed the party in-between two consecutive

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37 See Söderlund (2020, p. 462) for more specific introduction on how to measure electoral volatility
parliamentary elections have not remarkably increased from the mid-1970s to the 2019 election. Approximately one-quarter of the voters can be considered swing voters in 1975 and 2019. In the 2011 elections, the share of swing voters has increased to 32 per cent but returned to approximately 25 per cent afterwards. Despite the stable trend regarding the swing voters, the share of party loyal voters—voters who have voted for the same party in the two consecutive elections—has declined from the 1970s till today. However, this has occurred more likely due to the declining turnout than an increasing share of swing voters (see Borg, 2020, pp. 248 – 250; Söderlund, 2020; Söderlund, 2016; Paloheimo, 2003).

The most important aspect is the swing-voting among the voters of the left-wing parties. The recent 2019 results indicate that the share of swing voters among the SDP voters and the Left Alliance’s does not differ significantly from the other parliamentary parties’ shares that varied from 60 per cent (the Finns Party) to 84 per cent (the Centre Party). Approximately, 70 per cent of the SDP’s voters had given their votes to the party in 2015. The same share among the voters of the Left Alliance was 62 per cent (Borg, 2020, p. 251.)

Finally, a recent study on the electoral volatility in Finland has shown that the volatility has been rather moderate in the 21st century, from the comparative perspective. This is an interesting finding because many indicators let us assume that the volatility has increased more rapidly. There has not been a clear explanation for this. For instance, Finland’s candidate-based electoral system and the traditional broad coalition governments have been one possible explanation (Söderlund, 2020, p. 473).

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Trade union membership

The tripartite agreements and negotiations with the occupational shift in the 1970s increased Finnish citizens’ intent to join the trade unions (Rantala, 1982, p. 172). Traditionally, trade unions have considered their membership rate as one of the most central indicators of their social influence. Compared to other Western democracies, trade union membership has been quite common in Finland, even in the 21st century.
In general, trade union membership is voluntary-based, and each worker can decide personally whether to join a trade union unemployment fund or not. Figure 4.12 illustrates the popularity of trade union membership among Finnish employees in the 21st century (2002-2019). The trend seems rather stable. In 2002, approximately three out of four employees (74.0%) were trade union members whereas the same share in 2019 was slightly below 70 per cent (67.0 %). Hence, the share of trade union members among the Finnish employees has declined by 7 percentage points in total during the last couple of decades.

Interestingly, trade union membership has become less popular among men compared to women in the 21st century. Approximately the same share of women (75%) and men (73%) employees were trade union members still in 2002, but men’s share has dropped to 60 per cent in 2019 whereas women’s share has stayed the same at 75 per cent.

As already mentioned above, Finnish employee unions have been organised under three confederations: Akava (Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland), SAK (Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions), and STTK (Finnish Confederation of Professionals). These three confederations differ by the size of their membership (see Figure 4.13). For a long period of time SAK stood out as the largest


Figure 4.12 The share of trade union members among the Finnish employees (% of the employees in total).
confederation by its membership size. Especially the rise of the tripartite negotiations in the late 1960s nearly doubled the size of SAK’s membership size. However, in the 1990s its membership size turned gradually in decline due to the fusions of separate unions, which prospectively changed their confederation. In addition, SAK’s membership size has also declined due to the general decline of blue-collar occupations. Controversially, STTK’s membership size turned in increase in the beginning of the 1990s because of nine smaller trade unions, which decided to join in STTK. Akava is the only confederation, which has managed to steadily increase its size of membership since the 1950s until today. Nevertheless, it is important to recall that there is always a lot speculation about the actual membership sizes of the confederations. Typically, the confederations have been careful with releasing the precise numbers, because membership size determines not only their influence but also their funding. The numbers presented here in Figure 4.13, are based both on the Financial Supervisory Authority and the sizes the confederations have given themselves. Therefore, they should be approached with caution.

Sources: Financial Supervisory Authority (from 1989- ) and the earlier years (1950-1989): SAK (sak.fi), STTK (sttk.fi), and Akava (akava.fi).

Figure 4.13 The number of members in SAK, STTK, and Akava in 1950–2020.
Traditionally, Finland’s cleavage structure has been based on the three strong cleavages: the language-cleavage regarding Swedish-language’s status in Finland, the rural-urban cleavage, and the socioeconomic left-right cleavage (e.g., Paloheimo, 2008; see also subchapter 4.2.1). In recent decades, Finland has gone through a similar value shift with other Western democracies. Several studies have shown the increasing relevance of the sociocultural cleavage among the Finnish voters (Westinen, 2015, Westinen et al. 2016; Westinen and Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2015; Isotalo et al. 2020). At the same time, the socioeconomic left-right cleavage has maintained its significance. However, voters might associate different issues with the socioeconomic left and right (Kestilä-Kekkonen et al. 2018).

In this brief overview on Finnish voters’ attitudinal orientations, the focus is on the Finnish political system’s two most central cleavages in the 21st century: socioeconomic (left-right) and sociocultural cleavage (liberal-conservative). These cleavages and attitudinal orientations are the most relevant given the study’s research problem for two reasons: First, previous studies have discovered their significance as determinants of voters’ voting decisions in the 21st century. Second, the studies have found a connection between voter’s socioeconomic position and these two attitudinal orientations (e.g., Westinen, 2015; Westinen and Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2015; Westinen et al. 2016; Suuronen et al. 2020; Isotalo et al. 2020).

In addition, the EU issues have started to divide voters’ opinions since the 2010s and especially concerning voters’ socioeconomic position (Westinen, 2015). Thus, voters’ EU attitudes are also considered. These attitudinal orientations are outlined from the perspective of voters (ref. Chapter 4.2.1, where the cleavages are outlined from the perspective of the Finnish party system and its formation).
Placements of the Finnish voters on the left-right cleavage have changed in the 21st century. When considering their self-placement in 2003-2019, scholars have distinguished a moderate polarization trend. The shares of voters who placed themselves either close to the left-end (0-3) or close to the right-end (7-10) increased between 2003 and 2019 (Isotalo et al. 2020, p. 295). The same study also found that the Finns Party’s electorate moved towards the left-end in the 2011 election. However, in the 2015 and 2019 elections, they moved gradually towards the centre-right. In addition, voters of the Left Alliance moved closer to the left-end during the 21st century, and this trend applies to the SDP and the Green League voters. However, the shift is insignificant (ibid. 295-7).

The socioeconomic left-right cleavage is connected to the regional, i.e., rural-urban cleavage. Attitudes such as opinions on income disparity and differences in regional development have been correlated in the 21st century in Finland. This indicates that regional and socioeconomic equality have similar values and preferences in voters’ minds (Westinen, 2015). The socioeconomic views have not differed among the Finnish voters and the Finnish parliamentary parties (Westinen, 2015; Westinen et al. 2016, p. 278). This is partly based on voters’ socioeconomic attitudes. Studies have found that the same voters may support a larger public sector, lower taxation, and a market-based economy (Westinen, 2015, p. 231). Moreover, voters associate different issues with the socioeconomic left and right. Furthermore, many issues are not traditional socioeconomic issues. However, NATO membership, EU integration, or nuclear power are related to the socioeconomic left and right (Kestilä-Kekkonen et al. 2018).

Typically, in the 21st century, the NCP voters, men, and entrepreneurs have supported the socioeconomic right and other related issues. When analysing the 2003-2015 elections, the SDP voters are not significant supporters of the socioeconomic left-related issues (Westinen et al. 2016). However, in the 2019 election, it seems that the SDP voters moved slightly more towards the socioeconomic left (Isotalo et al. 2020). Another important notion is that the supporters of the Finns party have moved first towards the left. Then, during the 2015 election and the 2019 election, they have moved towards the socioeconomic right.
Sociocultural orientation

Sociocultural cleavage has increased significantly in Finland in the 21st century. The cleavage comprises issues such as multicultural diversity, immigration, equality regarding sexual minorities, gender equality, and the environment. These have gradually started to divide more and more voters’ opinions in the recent decades. The general trend is that the voters’ level of education is connected to their sociocultural orientation in Finland. In addition, the voters’ occupations have been acknowledged to affect their sociocultural orientations. A higher level of education correlates with a more liberal orientation in the sociocultural cleavage whereas a lower level of education is likely to correlate with a more conservative orientation. As to the occupation, it has been found that the managers and senior white-collar employees are more likely to be of liberal orientation than conservative orientation. In addition, farmers, service employees, and blue-collar employees lean to the conservative end of the spectrum. (It is good to recall that education has a connection to occupation and career development.) Thus, educational level and occupation might correlate with each other. In addition to these characteristics, older age is on average linked to more conservative orientation (Westinen, 2015, see also Westinen et al. 2016, p. 289).

In the 21st century, the Green League voters have the most liberal orientation in the Finnish electorate, whereas the most conservative orientation has been typical for the supporters of the Finns Party. In the 2010s, the Left Alliance and the Green League have changed their positions towards a more liberal orientation due to their voters’ sociocultural orientation. The SDP has remained quite stable on this matter. Thus, the SDP voters, the Left Alliance, and the Green League are the most liberal in the 2010s. In contrast, the voters of the Finns Party and the Christian Democrats are the most conservative based on their sociocultural orientation (Isotalo et al. 2020, p. 300.) Furthermore, the Finns Party voters have differed from other parliamentary parties’ voters by their critical views on immigration (Suuronen et al. 2020, p. 280).

EU-orientation

The questions of the EU and European integration have divided Finnish voters. The tension around the EU has been linked to issues such as state sovereignty and nationalism. In the 21st century, the EU question has been linked to globalisation.
Those critical towards the EU and the European integration have emphasised similar threats like those of globalisation. After the Euro-Crisis in 2011, questions have been heightened regarding the benefits of the EU among the Finnish electorate and other EU member states. The TAS party and Finns Party have managed to offer the most Eurosceptic EU policy in Finland. (Westinen, 2015; Raunio, 2011; see also Paloheimo, 2008.)

The opinions on the EU have been difficult to be included in the existing political cleavages in Finland. Scholars have faced challenges in correlating between the voters’ EU opinions and other political views, which has been the case in other Western democracies (e.g., Westinen, 2015; Westinen et al. 2016, see also De Vries, 2007). In the 2010s, the opinions on the EU began to polarize the Finnish electorate when the Finns Party brought out more critical attitudes towards the EU integration and the EU economic policies. Even though the EU issues have been linked to globalisation, they should still be treated as a separate cleavage and attitudinal orientation among Finnish voters (Westinen, 2016, pp. 126–8).

Voters in rural areas are more likely to oppose the EU integration than voters in bigger cities or metropolitan areas. In addition, scholars have noticed that farmers, blue-collar employees, and service employees have been more critical towards the EU compared to managers, senior white-collar employees, and entrepreneurs. The level of education determined voters’ EU opinions. In general, a university or polytechnic degree correlates with pro-EU opinions, whereas a comprehensive school education is most likely to correlate with anti-EU attitudes (Westinen, 2015; Westinen et al. 2016, p. 291).

In the 2019 parliamentary election, voters’ opinions on Finland’s commitment to the EU did not vary much compared to issues like immigration and taxation. However, the Finns Party voters were different from the electorates of other parties. Approximate two-thirds of the Finns Party voters thought that Finland should be less committed to the EU (Suuronen et al. 2020, p. 276).
This chapter introduces the empirical design of the study, presents research strategy, and develops the hypotheses. The first subchapter (5.1) outlines the research problem and sheds light on the multidimensional approach to working-class voters’ class positions. It presents four analytical groups of voters and particularly the three groups of working-class voters. The data and the limitations of the study are presented in the second subchapter (5.2). The three separate research models and the central variables in the models are outlined in the third subchapter 5.3. Subchapter 5.4 overviews the operationalisation of class congruence and incongruence by looking closely at the objective and subjective class indicators, i.e., occupational group and class identification. In addition, subchapter 5.4 presents the operationalisation of the four analytical groups in the Finnish National Election Study datasets.

5.1 Objectives

The general aim of this study is to examine the working-class voting in Finland in the 21st century and those mechanisms of its occurrence. The major focus is on class (in)congruence and its effects on working-class voting. The study presumes that class (in)congruence can affect working-class voting directly or indirectly through value orientations by combining previous studies’ theories on social class, class voting, and class-position with attitudinal orientations. The multidimensional approach to social class considers the objective and subjective class indicators at the same time, which is at the heart of the study.

Multidimensionality refers to the concept of class (in)congruence, which is operationalised by cross-checking class identification against the occupational groups and vice versa. Based on the idea of combining subjective and objective class indicators, this study forms four separate analytical groups. None of the analytical groups leans entirely on either objective class-indicators or subjective class-indicators but rather the combinations of the two. Table 5.1 presents the logic of these four
groups. Henceforward, these concepts are based on the four analytical groups of respondents. The study’s focus is on the three working-class groups: traditional working-class, occupational working-class, and ideological working class.

Table 5.1 The four analytical groups. The groups are based on the voters’ objective (occupational group) and subjective (class identification) class positions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATIONAL GROUP</th>
<th>CLASS IDENTIFICATION</th>
<th>OCCUPATIONAL GROUP</th>
<th>CLASS IDENTIFICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blue-collar employee</td>
<td>(1) Traditional working class</td>
<td>Blue-collar employee and working-class identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-blue-collar employee</td>
<td>(2) Occupational working class</td>
<td>Blue-collar employee but class identification with lower middle/ middle/ upper middle class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Ideological working class</td>
<td>No working-class occupation but working-class identification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4) Non-working class</td>
<td>No working-class occupation, and no working-class identification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) The traditional working class consists of those respondents who operate in a working-class occupation, and they are blue-collar employees by their occupational group. Additionally, they have working-class identification. The group is labelled as ‘Traditional working class’ because it closely resembles the old, traditional working class.

(2) The occupational working class consists of those respondents who operate in working-class occupations, i.e., blue-collar employees by their occupational group, but do not have working-class identification. Instead, they have a lower middle class, middle class, or upper-middle-class identification. In other words, this group represents class incongruence. The name of the group ‘Occupational working class’ simply indicates that this group of voters have only an occupational linkage to the working class.

38 The term ‘respondent’ is used for the potential voters who belong to anyone of the four analytical groups. They are not called ‘voters’ because belonging to one of these groups does not automatically indicate that they would be voters in elections. However, the last empirical Chapter 8 uses the term ‘voters’ because it examines these groups’ party choices in the Finnish parliamentary elections.

39 This category also contains 'upper class', but none of the respondents whose occupational group was ‘a worker’ identified with upper class in any year.
(3) **The ideological working class** is also based on class incongruence. This group comprises respondents who have working-class identification, but by their occupational group, are not blue-collar employees. Their occupational group may be farmers, entrepreneurs, white-collar salaried employees, senior white-collar salaried employees, managers, or executives. The group’s name shows that this category of voters belongs to the working-class primarily through their identification; occupational linkages to the working-class do not exist.

(4) **The non-working class** consists of those respondents who are not blue-collar employees by their occupational group and not by their class identification. This group is mainly used as a reference category in the analyses. It is important to remember that this group of voters is rather heterogeneous since it contains several occupational groups as well as several class identifications.

## 5.2 Data and limitations of the study

In principle, there is not only one suitable quantitative dataset on Finnish voters, which would include comprehensively all those necessary variables relevant for analysing voters’ socioeconomic positions, attitudinal orientations, and voting patterns in Finland. In this study and other studies, some requirements are required for collecting suitable datasets. These requirements concern especially those essential variables and their existence in the same dataset. Given the study’s multidimensional approach to social class and the research problem, the most essential variables are respondents’ occupation, class identification, and party choice in the 21st century’s Finnish parliamentary elections. The dataset should be as representative as possible in terms of Finnish citizens entitled to vote. Additionally, maintaining a high N was a clear advantage despite creating the four analytical groups. With the study’s three working-class groups, the number of respondents is likely to drop considerably in multivariable models. The representativeness and large N played a key role when selecting the datasets.


\(^{40}\) See Karvonen and Paloheimo, 2003; Paloheimo, 2007; Paloheimo, Borg and Grönlund, 2011; Grönlund and Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2015 and Borg; Kestilä-Kekkonen and Wass, 2019
Fortunately, the FNES datasets also include a variety of questions on voters’ political values and attitudes of which some are identical in every election year. The FNES surveys are post-election surveys collected after each parliamentary election in mainland Finland. The FNES datasets are seen in two stages: first, the face-to-face interview questionnaire and second, the self-administrative drop-off questionnaire following the interview (main) questionnaire. Answering the drop-off is voluntary, and the questionnaire form is returned by mail. All the variables needed in this study are in the main questionnaire, which automatically increases the N. The number of cases in the datasets varies between 1270 (FNES, 2003) and 1598 (FNES, 2019). Approximately, 40–70 per cents of the respondents in face-to-face interviews returned the drop-off questionnaire in 2003–2019.

The 2003 study applied a multistage stratified sampling. The sampling was based on region, degree of urbanisation, and the latter digits of postal codes. The 2007 and 2011 studies applied quota sampling based on the quotas on respondents’ age, gender, and province of residence. The 2015 and 2019 studies applied multistage sampling based on prior knowledge of the groups in which the population was divided and considered the various types of Finnish municipalities.

Some limitations in survey-based datasets are noted. In terms of the FNES datasets, the first limitation is that they are not panel datasets but cross-sectional despite collected data on every parliamentary election year. The panel data helps to analyse the same respondents across the election years, which helps to look closer into the socialisation processes regarding class congruence and incongruence. Nevertheless, no panel data, which meets the other requirements, is available on the Finnish voters.

Additionally, the longer timespan even with the cross-sectional datasets would have made it possible to analyse the temporal change of working-class voting. However, we do not yet share as long tradition of national election studies in Finland as for instance in Sweden or in Norway. Other datasets such as surveys on Finnish Values and Attitudes 1984–2017 (EVA 1984–2017) have helped to examine longer-term trends. However, the EVA datasets do not include all essential variables that could not be considered in the main datasets.

The second limitation is that not all the dependent variables are in every five datasets (FNES 2003-2019). For instance, spouse’s occupation is asked in 2003 and 2019 datasets and class of one’ childhood home in 2015 and 2019 datasets. In addition, the statements considering voters’ attitudinal orientations are asked in 2015 and 2019. The reliability of the analyses increased by merging datasets thereby increasing the N of the analytical groups. In summary, the FNES datasets are the
best for combining socio-structural variables, political attitudes, values, and party choice in the same analyses despite certain limitations.

5.3 Research model

As discussed previously, this study examines the working-class vote in 21st century Finland. Moreover, it tests, to which extent class (in)congruence directly affects working class voting or alternatively indirectly through voters’ attitudinal orientations, which is the full research model (Figure 5.1: Model 3). Two other research models are used to tackle one specific part of the research problem and one of the three specific research questions (Figure 5.1: Models 1 and 2).

The first research model, presented in the first chapter (Chapter 6), focuses on explaining class incongruence and class congruence, i.e., the linkage between the occupational group and class identification (See Figure 5.1: Model 1). It analyses why people do not always identify with the social class that they represent by their occupational group (incongruence). Alternatively, why do they identify with the social class that they represent by their occupational group (congruence)? It seeks to identify explanatory variables that significantly increase or decrease the likelihood of both class incongruence and class congruence.

The second research model, presented in the study’s second analysis chapter, (Chapter 7), takes one step further towards party choice by examining to what extent does class (in)congruence affect attitudinal orientations? The aim is to determine whether the three working-class groups differ from each other based on their attitudinal orientations, and if so, how, and why? Even though the main interest is on the relationship between class (in)congruence and attitudinal orientations, the independent variables of the previous chapter are also considered and controlled in the analysis. The relevant questions have been chosen based on their theoretical relevance. The idea is to construct the most common and effective attitudinal dimensions in the Finnish political sphere as shown by previous studies (see Paloheimo, 2008; Westinen, 2015; Westinen et al. 2016; Suuronen et al. 2020) and use these as the dependent variables in the analyses. These attitudinal orientations are socioeconomic orientation, sociocultural orientation, and the question on Finland’s commitment to the EU. In an ideal situation, the questions reflecting these three cleavages in the 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019 datasets would have been formulated similarly in each year’s survey. Unfortunately, this is not completely the
case. However, even more important is that the questions have been formulated to measure the same thing or phenomenon (see Westinen, 2015, p. 97). The socioeconomic and the sociocultural orientations are measured with sum variables created by a group of attitudinal questions. Statistical tools are used to measure the reliability of the sum variables. These tools show whether the selection of relevant questions measures the same variables. The question of Finland’s commitment to the EU is measured with a single question.

The third research model, presented in the study’s Chapter 8, resembles the full model that brings together the previous two models (1 and 2). It controls the same independent variables along with the main independent variables, class incongruence, and attitudinal orientations. The third model aims to analyse working-class voting and to which extent the class (in)congruence and the voters’ attitudinal orientations affect it. Furthermore, the third analysis seeks to discover the patterns and mechanisms of the 21st century’s working-class voting in Finland. The underlying presumption is that working-class voting is dependent on both class incongruence and attitudinal orientations. The full research model shares elements of a path model by depicting indirect and direct effects between class (in)congruences, attitudinal orientations, and party choice. These effects are tested with path analysis. These three research models provide empirical analysis presented in separate chapters (Chapters 6–8 in this study). The research model that contains Models 1-3 is presented in Figure 5.1. The full research model and Models 1 and 2 are from left to right.

Each research model and analysis contain a particular dependent variable whereas the independent variables remain somewhat unchanged (see Table 5.2). The first analysis seeks to find the determinants of class incongruence and class congruence. It tests how gender, age, education, class of the childhood home, spouse’s occupational group, and trade union participation explain class incongruence and alternatively class congruence.

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41 Such as Cronbach’s alpha
Figure 5.1 The research design of the study.
Table 5.2 The outline of the study’s three research models is divided into three separate analyses (Chapters 6–8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis / Chapter</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Independent variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Analysis 1 / Chapter 6 | Class (in)congruence | a.) Gender  
Age  
Education  
Class of one’s childhood home  
Spouse’s occupational group  
Trade union participation |
| Analysis 2 / Chapter 7 | Attitudinal orientations:  
(1) Socioeconomic  
(2) Sociocultural  
(3) EU | a.) Gender  
Age  
Education  
Class of one’s childhood home  
Spouse’s occupational group  
Class (in)congruence |
| Analysis 3 / Chapter 8 | Party choice | a.) Gender  
Age  
Education  
Class of one’s childhood home  
Spouse’s occupational group  
b.) Class (in)congruence  
c.) Attitudinal orientations:  
- Socioeconomic  
- Sociocultural  
- EU |

The second analysis focuses on explaining attitudinal orientations with class (in)congruence and it controls for the similar variables as in the study’s first analysis: gender, age, education, childhood home’s class, spouse’s occupational group and trade union membership. More specifically, three attitudinal orientations are independent variables for separate analyses: socioeconomic orientation, sociocultural orientation, and EU attitudes. The independent variable in the third analysis’ is party choice. The main interest lies in determining the extent to which working-class voters’ party choice is determined by class (in)congruence, attitudinal orientations, or both. The last empirical chapter (8) consists of two different analyses: multinomial structural regression analysis and path analysis. The effects of both class incongruence and the three attitudinal orientations (socioeconomic, sociocultural and EU) on working-class voters’ party choice are being tested when
gender, age, education, class of the childhood home, and spouse’s occupational group and trade union membership are controlled. Each empirical chapter (6-8) presents tested hypotheses in the analyses.

5.4 Operationalising class congruence and incongruence

This subchapter introduces the operationalisation of four analytical groups of voters especially the three groups of working-class voters. As outlined in the previous subchapter 5.1, the operationalisation is based on class congruence and incongruence. As a measurement, class incongruence consists of an objective class indicator and a subjective class indicator. These are the occupational group (objective) and the class identification (subjective). The focus is on introducing the objective class indicator, i.e., occupational group, and how it has been operationalised (5.4.1). The focus then shifts to the subjective class indicator, class identification, and its operationalisation as well as its general trends in the datasets applied in this study (5.4.2). The last two subchapters present the formation of the study’s four analytical groups (5.4.3).

5.4.1 Objective class-indicator: occupational group

One very old occupational categorisation, broadly used in the early class voting studies (e.g., Alford, 1962), has been the division between manual and non-manual workers. In modern social science studies, the EGP class schema by Erikson, Goldthorpe, and Portocarero (1979; see also Goldthorpe, 1987; Goldthorpe and Erikson, 1992) has been the most popular since the early 1990s. It was originally developed from their class schema based on labour market positions by giving individuals different socioeconomic or property statuses. The class schema was popular in sociological studies for analysing social mobility and social stratification. However, it quickly gained the attention of class voting scholars. The schema’s eight occupational categories are measured based on voters’ occupations (e.g., Tittenbrun,
Today, there are several versions of the EGP class schemas, which all have their nuances.

In sociological research, the class schema by Erik Olin Wright (1985 and 1997) has been widely used. If the EGP class schema followed the footsteps of Weber, then Wright’s schema would follow the footsteps of Marx. The EGP class schema underlines the ownership of capitalists, workers, and petty bourgeoisie.

The labour market has been in constant change in the 21st century, and thus there has been a demand for new class schemas. Oesch (2006) has attempted to respond to the demand by introducing his class schema based on the new ‘horizontal’ conflict in the labour market. Oesch’s schema emphasises the work logically and distinguishes three types: 1) administrative and organisational work, 2) technical work, and 3) inter-personal work. According to Oesch, there are conflicts between employees who follow different work logics. Thus, the classes form around these logics (Oesch, 2006).

In this study’s empirical analyses, the objective approach to social class is measured with respondents’ occupational group. The categorisation of the occupations in the FNES datasets is derived from the standard classification for occupations called ‘ISCO-88’ (between 1988–2008) and ‘ISCO-08’ (from 2008 onwards). The FNES dataset’s categorisation has been influenced by the EGP/EG class schemas and the European Socioeconomic Classification (ESEC). The latter was created by David Rose and Eric Harrison (2007 and 2010). Oesch’s class schema has not been fitted as the baseline because the original coding of occupations in the FNES 2003-2011 datasets has been coded to wrong levels. The combination of the several class schemas has been the baseline for occupation categories in the FNES-surveys. Above all, it has been a reasonable compromise given the number of respondents in each FNES dataset. Fitting a class schema with at least eight categories would have been impossible since the number of respondents per category would remain too low (See Westinen, 2015, p. 110).

At first, the respondents have been asked about their occupation with a separate open question in the FNES studies. The respondents’ occupational group was then asked using a separate multiple-choice question. The question offers the following alternatives for the respondents: blue-collar employee, white-collar salaried employee, senior white-collar salaried employee, manager or executive, farmer, or entrepreneur. This means that every respondent has considered their occupational group after having answered the question regarding their occupation. Hence, a

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42 Of course, there are also alternatives: student, pensioner, full-time parent, unemployed, or other, but this study is limited to the examination of the employed population.
conflict between respondents’ occupation and the occupational group is possible. However, crosstabulations in every dataset (FNES, 2003–2019) are checked. If there is any inconsistency, then the occupational group was recoded to meet the respondent’s actual occupation43.

Considering one of the study’s independent variables, spouse’s occupation, only the FNES 2003 and the FNES 2019 contain question on it. It has been asked with an open question similarly with the respondent’s own occupation. In this study, the question on spouse’s occupation contains the same categories as the respondents occupational group.

Figure 5.2 illustrates the distribution of occupational groups in each FNES dataset 2003–2019. Since the FNES datasets are not register-based, they do not...

43 The number of respondents, whose occupational group needed recoding was below 20 in each FNES dataset (2003–2019).
provide data that could enable us to analyse the actual trends regarding the sizes of occupational groups in Finland. Instead, Statistics Finland provides this kind of data, which has already been considered earlier in this study (see Figure 4.1 in subchapter 4.1.2). Even though the relative size of the occupational groups in the FNES datasets (Figure 5.2) differs from the occupational groups’ distribution reported by Statistics Finland (See Figure 4.6), the study’s examination is not problematic. The FNES studies are based on the same population as the register-based data, i.e., those Finnish citizens who are eligible to vote (over 18-year-olds).

Regarding differences between the FNES-studies’ datasets and the register-based data on occupational groups in Finland, the relative share of blue-collar employees is higher in the FNES datasets than among employed persons who are over 18 years-old in Finland. In addition, the share of white-collar salaried employees is lower in the FNES datasets compared to the employed adults (over 18-year-olds) in Finland. The analyses are not, however, dependent on these biases because the main aim is to study the working-class voters’ voting patterns, which are not dependent on the occupational group’s distribution in the datasets. From this perspective, it is beneficial because the FNES datasets have captured slightly more than the average share of blue-collar employees in Finland.

### 5.4.2 Subjective class-indicator: class identification

The concept of class incongruence is based on the combination of two variables, i.e., objective and subjective class indicators. These are typically occupation and class identification. The objective class-indicator, occupational group, was introduced in the previous subchapter (5.4.1). This subchapter focuses on the subjective class indicator, i.e., class identification.44

Traditionally, class identification has been strong in Finland and other Nordic countries. More concretely, a large share of the Finns finds a suitable alternative if they have been asked ‘to which social class would you say you belong? The working class, lower middle class, middle class, upper-middle-class, upper class, no class?’. The level of class identification among the Finnish citizens varies roughly between 70 and 90 per cent depending on the dataset.

44 In surveys, class identification is typically operationalized with questions such as “Which social class would you say you belong to? Working class, lower middle class, middle class, upper middle class, upper class, or not to any class?”
The share of respondents who identify themselves with some social class is analysed with two datasets and both highlight a similar trend. First, the EVA’s (Finnish Business and Policy Forum, EVA) datasets conducted by postal surveys, indicate that class identification has become more popular in recent decades more specifically between 1984 and 2017. Similarly, the FNES datasets collected with interviews illustrate a small peak for in-class identification at the beginning of the 21st century but also a small decline after 2010. Despite the decline, the FNES datasets still indicate that in 2019, approximately 9 out of 10 Finnish citizens would consider themselves belonging to some social class. The same share is 8 out of 10 in 2017 in the EVA datasets (see Figure 5.3 above). Nevertheless, considering the EVA datasets enables us to observe the trends in class identification over a longer period.
Even though the general trendline of class identification has stayed rather stable in recent decades, the targets of the identification have varied over years. Class identification with various social classes has been examined with EVA and FNES, which are used to show the general trend of class identification. According to the EVA datasets, the identification with the working class has decreased, whereas the identification with the middle class has increased between 1984 and 2017 (Figure 5.4.). In 1984, approximately the same share of respondents identified with the working class (38%) as with the middle class (40%); this difference increased by over 20 percentage points until the year 2017, when 23 per cent identified with the working class and 46 per cent with the middle class. Identification with lower-middle, upper-middle, and upper class has been stable since the 1980s. However, if looking at more closely, the identification with upper-middle-class has increased from 9 to 15 per cent between 1984 and 2017, whereas the identification with lower middle class has increased from 12 per cent to 16 per cent. According to the EVA
datasets, the share of respondents identifying with the upper class has varied quite a bit from 1 to 2 per cent in 1984–2017.

Figure 5.5 Class identification with working, lower-middle, middle, upper-middle, and upper class in Finland in years 2003–2019 (share of respondents, %).

While the FNES datasets capture a shorter period than the EVA datasets, they indicate a similar but more careful trend especially regarding the declining identification with the working class and the increasing identification with the middle class. According to the FNES datasets, identification with the working class dropped from 35 per cent to 29 per cent between 2003 and 2019; identification with the middle class increased from 40 to 42 per cent. A slight variation has also taken place in the identification with lower-middle, upper-middle, and upper class but not as much as in the EVA datasets.
Blue-collar employees’ class identification is of particular interest given the study’s four working-class categories, which are based on class (in)congruence. The blue-collar employees’ identification with social classes in 2003–2019 follows the trendlines of class identification. While identification with the working class has declined, identification with the middle class and the lower middle class has increased (Figure 5.6). Approximately one of four (23.6%) Finnish blue-collar employees identified with the middle class in 2003, but the share was almost one-third (29.5%) in 2019. The identification with ‘no class’ and upper-middle as well as an upper class has not significantly changed among blue-collar employees in the 21st century. These figures indicate that class incongruence, i.e., the conflict between occupational class and class identity, has been more common among blue-collar employees during the 21st century in Finland.


Figure 5.6   The class identification of blue-collar employees in 2003–2019 in Finland (share of blue collar employees, %).
5.4.3 Study’s four analytical groups

Table 5.3 The operationalisation of the four analytical groups in the FNES 2003–2019 datasets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational group</th>
<th>Traditional working class</th>
<th>Occupational working class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class identification</td>
<td>Working-class</td>
<td>Lower middle class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Upper middle class /upper class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational group</th>
<th>Ideological working class</th>
<th>Non-working class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class identification</td>
<td>Working-class</td>
<td>Lower middle class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Upper middle class / upper class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The empirical analyses of the study are based on the four analytical groups: traditional working-class, occupational working-class, ideological working class, and non-working class. As outlined earlier in subchapter 5.1, the operationalisation of these groups is based on the concept of class (in)congruence, i.e., the congruence or incongruence between the respondents’ occupational group and class identification.

Table 5.3 illustrates in more detail how the study’s four working-class groups have been operationalised in the FNES datasets. In other words, it shows where the occupational group and each group of class identification are based. The traditional working-class consists of blue-collar employees who also identify with the working class. The occupational working-class refers to those blue-collar employees who do not identify with the working class. Hence, they identify with the lower middle class, middle class, upper-middle-class, upper-middle class, or upper class. The respondents who belong to the ideological working-class identify with the working class. However, they are not blue-collar employees by their occupational group. Instead, they are farmers, entrepreneurs, white-collar salaried employees, senior
white-collar salaried employees, managers, or executives. Lastly, the non-working-class group consists of those respondents who neither belong to the working-class by their occupational group nor by their class identification. Thus, they are either farmers, entrepreneurs, white-collar salaried employees, senior white-collar salaried employees, managers, or executives who identify themselves with the lower middle class, middle class, upper-middle-class, or upper class.

Table 5.4  The four analytical groups in the FNES datasets by size (share of all four groups, %).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional working class</td>
<td>215 (30.3)</td>
<td>255 (28.3)</td>
<td>184 (23.0)</td>
<td>230 (25.0)</td>
<td>216 (25.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational working class</td>
<td>140 (19.8)</td>
<td>146 (16.2)</td>
<td>109 (13.6)</td>
<td>182 (19.8)</td>
<td>189 (21.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological working class</td>
<td>46 (6.5)</td>
<td>65 (7.2)</td>
<td>38 (4.8)</td>
<td>50 (5.4)</td>
<td>44 (5.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-working class</td>
<td>307 (43.3)</td>
<td>434 (48.2)</td>
<td>469 (58.6)</td>
<td>457 (49.7)</td>
<td>413 (47.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>708 (100.0)</td>
<td>900 (100.0)</td>
<td>800 (100.0)</td>
<td>919 (100.0)</td>
<td>862 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As expected, the sizes of these four analytical groups vary within datasets (FNES 2003–2019). However, their relative comparative sizes are similar in each year’s dataset. The group of non-working-class voters is the largest in each FNES dataset, traditional working-class voters are the second largest, occupational working-class voters are the third largest, and the ideological working-class is the smallest (see Table 5.4 above). The groups’ variation by size is not crucial for this study’s analyses. Moreover, the study applies merged datasets in the multivariate models to maintain as high of an N as possible.
6  THE DETERMINANTS OF CLASS (IN)CONGRUENCE AMONG THE WORKING-CLASS VOTERS

6.1  Research model and hypotheses

This first empirical chapter analyses the determinants of class incongruence and class congruence. Given both the previous literature on class identification and class (in)congruence (subchapters 3.2.2 and 3.2.3) as well as the contextual background of the research problem, the study tests the extent the class of the childhood home, education, trade union membership, and spouse’s occupational group including how these variables increase or decrease the likelihood of incongruence or congruence along with the sociodemographic variables (Figure 6.1). As such, it aims to answer the first research question:

- What are the factors that explain the class incongruence and class congruence among the working class?

The chapter proceeds as follows. This first subchapter outlines the research model and the hypotheses tested in this chapter’s empirical analyses. It also briefly presents the methods and data applied in this chapter. The empirical examination begins by looking more closely at the independent variables concerning the study’s working-class groups (subchapter 6.2). In subchapters 6.2.1 – 6.2.5, the study sheds light on the previous studies’ findings on these variables and takes the first steps towards statistical modelling by conducting descriptive statistics of gender, age, education, class of the childhood home, spouse’s occupation, and trade union participation of the three working-class groups. The focus then shifts towards examining factors that explain the formation of the study’s three working-class groups: the traditional working-class, occupational working-class, and ideological working class (subchapter 6.3). The last subchapter (6.4.) concludes the main findings.
This first empirical chapter tests hypotheses H1–H5 listed in Table 6.1. Hypotheses 1–5 focus on the first research model and test the determinants that increase or decrease the likelihood of class congruence or incongruence between the occupational group and class identification among working-class voters. Each hypothesis (H1–H5) focuses on one determinant: gender, class of the childhood home, spouse’s occupational group, level of education, and trade union participation.

The first hypothesis (H1) tests whether the class incongruence is more common among women than men. The second hypothesis (H2) tests whether higher education increases the likelihood of class incongruence among blue-collar employees. The third hypothesis (H3) tests whether a non-working-class childhood home increases the likelihood of class incongruence among blue-collar employees. In other words, this work studies whether blue-collar employees from non-working class childhood homes are more likely to identify with the lower middle class, middle class, upper-middle-class, or upper class than working class. The fourth hypothesis (H4) considers spouse’s occupation and tests whether the spouse’s occupation (other than a blue-collar employee) increases the likelihood of class incongruence among
blue-collar employees. The fifth hypothesis (H5) tests whether trade union participation increases the likelihood of class congruence among blue-collar employees, i.e., their likelihood to identify with the working class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.1</th>
<th>The hypotheses (H1–H5) regarding the determinants of class congruence and class incongruence among working-class voters.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H1</strong></td>
<td>Class incongruence is more common among women who are blue-collar employees by their occupational group than among men who are blue-collar employees by their occupational group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H2</strong></td>
<td>Higher education increases the likelihood of incongruence among working-class voters who are blue-collar employees by their occupational group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H3</strong></td>
<td>Working-class childhood home increases the likelihood of working-class identification in adulthood regardless of actual occupation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H4</strong></td>
<td>If spouse's occupational group is other than blue-collar employee, then it increases the likelihood of incongruence among those working-class voters who are themselves, blue-collar employees, by their occupational group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H5</strong></td>
<td>Trade union participation increases the likelihood of class congruence among working-class voters who are blue-collar employees by their occupational group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Binary logistic regression* is applied to discover the determinants of class incongruence and congruence in subchapter 6.3. As a method, the binary logistic regression tests the effect of several independent variables on a binary variable that comprises two categories. In practice, it examines which factors increase or decrease the likelihood of class congruence or class incongruence. The binary dependent variable is dummy-coded, which means that a value of 1 is the value that is focused on the analysis, and a value of 0 indicates the opposite value. For instance, in this chapter’s analyses, 1 indicates working-class identification, and 0 indicates identification with other social classes. The FNES dataset from 2019 is used in the regression analyses. This year's dataset was selected because it contains all needed independent variables. None of the other FNES datasets meet this criterion.

The first regression analysis is presented in subchapter 6.3.1 and it examines the factors that increase or decrease the blue-collar employees’ likelihood to identify with the working class. It analyses the factors that belong to the study’s first group of working-class voters: the traditional working class. The second analysis seeks to find factors that increase or decrease the likelihood of class incongruence among blue-collar employees, i.e., the likelihood of belonging to the second working-class
group—the occupational working class (subchapter 6.3.2). The third analysis also examines class incongruence, but within non-blue-collar employees (subchapter 6.3.3). It identifies the factors that either increase or decrease non-blue collar employees’ likelihood to have working-class identification. In other words, it aims to find the determinants of belonging to the ideological working class.

6.2 Independent variables: gender, age, education, class of the childhood home, spouse’s occupation, and trade union participation

Along with the traditional sociodemographic variables (gender, age, and education), logistic regression is used to test the effects of childhood home’s class 45, spouse’s occupational group, and trade union participation on the formation of class incongruence and class congruence. Each of the independent variables and their categories are listed in Table 6.2. Some categories have been merged due to the problem of the empty cell 46. The merged categories are reported in the brackets in Table 6.2. Before moving to the logistic regression analyses, the following subchapters (6.2.1 – 6.2.5) draw basic descriptive analyses on the independent variables to create an overall view of these variables. They enable us to examine the potential relationships between the variables and visualise their basic information. The main focus is on the three groups of working-class voters. However, the fourth analytical group (the non-working-class) is also included in the descriptive analyses to illustrate if the three working-class groups differ from the other voters, i.e., non-working-class voters.

45 Used here as synonym for the term ‘the class of the childhood home’.

46 Empty cells problem refers to missing values in the dataset. It is likely that the dataset contains some missing values since respondents did not answered all items on a questionnaire. It is problematic when the number of empty cells is large because the statistical program (i.e., SPSS and Stata) cannot run the commanded analysis because too many respondents have not answered the question on their spouse’s occupational group.
Table 6.2  A list of the independent variables and their categories used in this chapter’s empirical analyses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1= Male, 0 = Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1 = 18 – 34 years, 2 = 35 – 49 years, 3 = 50 – 64 years, 4 = 65+ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1 = Primary education, 2 = Vocational education, 3 = Upper secondary education, 4 = Polytechnic degree, 5 = University degree OR 4 = Higher education (merged: university and polytechnic degree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class of the childhood home</td>
<td>1 = Working class, 2 = Lower middle class, 3 = Middle class, 4 = Upper middle class (merged: upper middle and upper class), 5 = Entrepreneur 6 = Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse’s occupation (occupational group)</td>
<td>1 = Blue-collar employee, 2 = Lower professional (white-collar salaried employees), 3 = Higher professional (senior white-collar salaried employees, managers and executives), 4 = No spouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade union membership</td>
<td>1 = Passive member, 2 = Active member (merged: active member and member), 3 = Not a member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: See Appendix A for more detailed information on the operationalisation of the variables.
6.2.1 Socio-demographic variables

Gender

Gender is generally an important socio-demographic variable when analysing voters’ political value orientations and party choices. According to Kitschelt and Rehm (2015), gender and age are relevant conflicts in the political sphere. The authors (ibid.) argue that gender and age are the main reason for realignment among the electorate. Recently, there have been discussions around gender and the possible shift from the traditional gender gap to a modern gender gap (Knutsen, 2018, p. 60).

The term ‘traditional gender gap’ referred to the 1960s concept when women were considered to be more politically in the socioeconomic right and men in the socioeconomic left. Typically, women voted for conservative parties and supported Christian values. Compared to men, women were less active in trade unions, and they did not support the traditional working-class values: solidarity and collectiveness. Women tended to be more religious than men, which explained their differences in party support (Rose, 1974).

By the end of the 20th century, scholars noted that women had started to move towards the socioeconomic left. The same trend was found in several Western democracies. The modern gender gap refers to the change in women’s and men’s interests. This change has been associated with women’s increased economic independence as well as their growing activity in work-life. However, women have become more aligned with the welfare state regarding employment and social welfare. Because of these factors, women are more likely to shift their support to left-wing parties (Knutsen, 2018, pp. 114 -177). Another explanation is the broader value shift. However, the rise of post-materialistic values, green values, and feminism are more popular among women than men. Regarding party choice, these values encourage women to support left-wing and green parties (Knutsen, 2018, p. 116), and these trends also apply to Finland (Westinen, 2015; Holli and Wass, 2009).
Table 6.3  The study’s four groups of working-class voters by gender (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2003</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional working class</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>60.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational working class</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological working class</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-working class</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2011</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional working class</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>53.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational working class</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological working class</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-working class</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2019</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional working class</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational working class</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological working class</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-working class</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The gender divide varies within the three working-class groups. Some of the differences stem from history when gender has been the basis of certain occupations. However, during a couple of decades, the differences have become smaller due to educational emancipation although they still exist in Finland and the other Western democracies. According to Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (2019), there is deep gender segregation in the Finnish labour market. The outcome of the Finnish labour market survey 2019, conducted by Statistics of Finland, indicated that 86 per cent of the labour force working at the social and health care were women whereas 91 per cent of the labour force working in construction were men.

The traditional working class is male-dominated in each year dataset (Table 6.3). Correspondingly, the respondents who belong to the occupational working class are female-dominated except in 2007. The same notion applies to the group of
ideological working-class. Thus, the outcome of the analysis shows that class incongruence is more common among women than men. The reference category, group of non-working-class, is female-dominated in most years. The group is male-dominated only in 2015. The differences in gender distribution are rather small, and they have become narrow during the 21st century. The differences can also be explained with marginal differences between datasets and samplings.

**Age**

Given the study's research problem on working-class voters’ party alignments, the empirical analyses are limited to examine the working population, which sets particular frame for the respondents’ age. According to Statistics Finland (2020g), all citizens aged between 15 and 74 years are considered to be working-age population, which differs from the population of the FNES-datasets. However, age is not used here as a variable to select working-age subjects from the data. Rather, subjects are selected by their occupational group. In other words, the occupational group variable acts as a filter variable, which in practice separates those respondents who are in work-life from those who are pensioners, unemployed, house-mothers or -fathers, students, or in family carers. Thus, the age category at 65 years and above are those respondents whose primary source of income has been in full-time jobs.

Originally, the age variable is coded from respondents’ years of birth by subtracting it from the year each FNES study was conducted. Age cohorts can be used as an indicator of respondents’ age. The cohorts refer to respondents who are born around the same period. Given the timeframe of the datasets, the research problem, and merging of datasets, age cohorts would be complicated to use as indicators for respondents’ age. Age in years is a more stable indicator in this regard. Age is used as a continuous variable in most of the study’s empirical analyses. As a categorical variable, it has been coded in four age categories: 18–34, 35-49, 50-64, and 65+. 
The average ages of the four analytical groups do not vary considerably (see Table 6.4). Though some variations were distinguished, the respondents belonging to the occupational working class had the lowest average age in 2003–2015 while the respondents belonging to the ideological working class had the lowest average age in 2019. Interestingly, the occupational working-class had the highest average age in 2019 whereas the non-working-class had the highest average age in 2003, 2007, and 2015, as well as the ideological working-class in 2011. The average age among each of the study’s four analytical groups increased from 2003 to 2019. Only the ideological working-class is an exception. Their average age increased steadily from 2003 to 2011. It has gradually decreased since 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>All (mean)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional working class</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational working class</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological working class</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-working class</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FNES 2003–2019

Education has traditionally been one of the most important sociodemographic variables explaining voters’ party choice and attitudinal orientations (e.g., Kriesi, 1998; Stubager, 2009; Westinen, 2015; Knutsen, 2018). The level of education has been related to other socio-structural variables such as status, wealth, and occupational group (Knutsen, 2018; Westinen, 2015). Education is a highly important variable to consider in this study’s empirical analyses because previous studies have acknowledged its role in explaining social identity (Weakliem, 2002; Robinson and Stubager, 2017; Goldthorpe and Jackson, 2008). Some studies have highlighted its importance in the choice of occupation, especially in a situation, where one’s education and occupation are not in accordance (Robinson and Stubager, 2017; Weakliem, 2002; Stubager, 2009). Thus, education serves as one
possible explanation for incongruence given the increase of education level at the macro-level during the 21st century.

There is one question on respondents’ level of education in the FNES-studies, and it appears in each one of the five datasets (2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019). It asks the highest level of education that the respondent has accomplished. The response categories are based on the length and type of respondent’s education, and the categories illustrate Finland’s educational structure. This study forms five educational groups following Westinen (2015, pp. 126–7; see also Stubager, 2010). These categories are: 1) primary education, which covers the elementary school, 2) vocational education, which refers to vocational school and gives basic skills needed in a profession, 3) upper-secondary education, which refers to matriculation exams in Finnish upper secondary schools, 4) polytechnic education or degree, and 5) university education or degree.

Next, the level of education is analysed among the three working-class groups. Figures 6.2–6.4 illustrate the highest level of education among the traditional working class, the occupational working class, and the ideological working class in the years 2003–2019. According to Figure 6.2., vocational education is the most commonly accomplished education among the respondents in the traditional working class. The share varied between 58 to 81 per cent during the 21st century, but in each year’s dataset, most of the traditional working class has accomplished vocational education as their highest level of education. Another important remark is that the share of respondents having primary education declined gradually during the 21st century among the traditional working class. In 2003, a third (33%) of the respondents belonging to the traditional working-class had primary education as their highest education while the same share was 14 per cent in 2019. This notion is in line with the general trend of the education structure of the population in Finland (Statistics Finland, 2020h).
The highest level of education among the traditional working-class voters in 2003–2019 (%).

The highest level of education among the occupational working-class voters looks slightly different (Figure 6.3.). The largest share of the occupational working class has vocational education as their highest education. However, the share declined significantly from 2003 (61%) to 2019 (44%). At the same time, upper secondary education, polytechnic degrees, and university degrees became more common. Roughly every fifth respondent of the occupational working class had a polytechnic degree in 2019 whereas the same share was 12 per cent in 2007 and only 6 per cent in 2007. Primary education declined among the occupational working-class voters. In 2019, 7 per cent of the respondents belonging to the occupational working class had not completed any degree or education after primary education.
The level of education of the respondents in the ideological working class seems to vary. According to Figure 6.4, at the beginning of the 21st century, a majority of the ideological working class had vocational education, but this share has declined in the 2010s. At the same time, the share of both polytechnic and university degrees has steadily increased. In 2019, a fifth (20%) of the ideological working class had a polytechnic degree and approximately one out of ten (11%) had a university degree. However, in 2019, the majority of the ideological working class had vocational education (42%). The share of primary education varied between 2003 and 2019, and this variation is partly explained by the low number of respondents belonging to this working-class group.

The educational structure of the working-class groups’ supports the general increasing trend in the level of education in Finland in the 21st century (Statistics Finland, 2020h). The share of respondents having a higher level of education, i.e., polytechnic or university degree, increased among each one of the three working-class groups during the 21st century. At the same time, the share of primary education and vocational education has decreased.

Figures 6.2–6.4 indicate some differences between the three working-class groups in terms of the educational structure. For instance, vocational education seems to be somewhat more common among the traditional working-class, while upper secondary education, polytechnic education and university education are more common among the occupational and ideological working class in the 2010s. This indicates that a higher level of education has a connection to class incongruence. Moreover, this notion would be in line with the previous studies’ interpretations that citizens would base their social identity more on education if their occupation and education are not coherent. This interpretation applies to the respondents who belong to the occupational working class. However, it does not apply to those who belong to the ideological working class. Despite their higher level of education, they identify with the working class. Since the respondents of the ideological working class are not blue-collar employees by their occupational group, their education and occupation may be coherent. In that case, the previous studies’ interpretation applies.
to the ideological working class. The independent variables examined in the following subchapters offer some other possible explanations for both class incongruence and congruence.

### 6.2.3 The class of the childhood home

Socioeconomic position of one’s childhood home is an interesting factor from the perspective of occupational inheritance. Simply put, it is meaningful to examine the extent to which children end up with the same or similar occupations as their parents. This kind of approach has been a typical way of measuring equal opportunities, especially in the welfare states. Better equal opportunities minimize the impact of childhood socioeconomic position on adulthood’s socioeconomic position. Even though an occupational inheritance is not the key research problem, this study takes a brief look at the relationship between parents’ occupational and Finnish citizens’ occupation. In other words, this scrutiny can strengthen the argument that the class of the childhood home plays a significant role in forming class identification in adult life.

Statistics Finland has observed the occupational inheritance among Finnish citizens in the 21st century. The results are based on a register-based dataset, which represents the entire population of Finland at the time of data collection. The dataset was collected in 2009 from Finnish citizens born in 1975, i.e., respondents were 34 years old at the time of data collection. The socioeconomic data for the respondents' parents and the parents’ occupational group were collected for the year 1980 when the respondents were 5 years old.

Based on Statistics Finland’s observations, childhood’s home socioeconomic position affects adulthood’s socioeconomic position suggesting occupational inheritance (see Figure 6.5). However, this trend varies within adulthood’s occupational groups. It is particularly strong among the blue-collar employees where 61 per cent come from a blue-collar family. This is an important notion in terms of this study’s research problem and lets us assume that the working-class childhood home has an impact on class (in)congruence. The same trend is found among those respondents who are farmers: 50 per cent of their parents also were farmers. Regarding the parents of the respondents who are senior white-collar salaried employees, 34 per cent of them are senior white-collar salaried employees. Altogether, the socioeconomic backgrounds among entrepreneurs, senior white-collar, and white-collar salaried employees are much more diverse than among the blue-collar employees. This can be explained by the general increase of white-collar
occupations and the simultaneous decrease of blue-collar occupations between 1980 and 2009. Above all, this overview gives important information on the relevance of the childhood home in adult life and supports the study’s hypotheses on the effect of childhood home’s class on class congruence and incongruence.

Source: Statistics Finland 2012

Note: Socioeconomic position of childhood home has been determined by the occupation of the family’s reference person. According to the Statistics of Finland (2020i), the reference person is usually the member of the household with the highest income. If more than one member of a household has the same income, or no member of the household has income, then the oldest member of the household was selected as the reference person.

Figure 6.5 The occupational group of the Finnish citizens born in the year 1975 in 2009 and socioeconomic position of their childhood home in 1980 (%).

Similar scrutiny is done by merging datasets, which include both FNES 2015 and FNES 2019 datasets. Moreover, it considers the study’s four analytical groups (see Table 6.5). Class of one’s childhood home has been asked in the FNES questionnaire.
in both 2015 and 2019. The merged dataset was used to enable a larger N. The crosstabulation shows a statistically significant correlation between the class of the childhood home and the working-class group. In other words, the class of the childhood home varies significantly among the traditional, occupational, and ideological working class.

Table 6.5 The class of the childhood home and the study’s four analytical groups in 2019. Crosstabulation, % (N).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of Childhood Home</th>
<th>Traditional Working Class</th>
<th>Occupational Working Class</th>
<th>Ideological Working Class</th>
<th>Non-working Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>65.7 (283)</td>
<td>25.6 (85)</td>
<td>52.2 (48)</td>
<td>20.7 (164)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower middle class</td>
<td>4.9 (21)</td>
<td>13.0 (43)</td>
<td>4.3 (4)</td>
<td>13.8 (109)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>9.0 (39)</td>
<td>28.0 (93)</td>
<td>7.6 (7)</td>
<td>30.2 (239)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper middle class / upper class</td>
<td>3.2 (14)</td>
<td>8.7 (29)</td>
<td>2.2 (2)</td>
<td>11.6 (92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>3.7 (16)</td>
<td>7.2 (24)</td>
<td>10.9 (10)</td>
<td>17.7 (140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurs</td>
<td>13.5 (58)</td>
<td>17.5 (58)</td>
<td>22.8 (21)</td>
<td>5.9 (47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (N)</td>
<td>100.0 (431)</td>
<td>100.0 (332)</td>
<td>100.0 (92)</td>
<td>100.0 (791)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson Chi-Square = 151.288, p-value = 0.001**

Source: Merged dataset FNES 2015 & FNES 2019

Note: The Pearson Chi-Square test regards the three groups of working-class voters and does not include the non-working-class group.

The relatively largest share of the traditional working-class is from a working-class family (65.7%). Additionally, over half (52.2%) of the ideological working class are from working-class families. It seems that the working-class identification might have a connection with the working-class home since this is the common denominator of the traditional working-class and the ideological working class. Interestingly, nearly a fourth of the respondents (22.8%) who belong to the ideological working class come from an entrepreneur family. In addition, the share of the farmer-families is the highest among the ideological working class (10.9%) compared to the traditional working-class and the occupational working-class. However, the number of respondents belonging to the ideological working class is

---

47 In the FNES 2019 and FNES 2015 datasets, class of one’s childhood home is measured with a question ‘Which of the following alternatives best describes your childhood home? Working-class family, lower middle-class family, middle-class family, upper middle-class family upper class family, entrepreneur family, or farmer family?’
rather low compared to the other three groups in this analysis, which suggests that these results are strongly indicative.

According to the results, almost one third of the occupational working class comes from a middle-class family (28.0%) whereas a little over a fourth come from a working-class family. Approximately half of the respondents (49.7%) who belong to the occupational working class come from either lower-middle-class (13.0%) or middle-class/upper middle-class/upper class (8.7%) homes. The group of the non-working-class voters is the most diverse in terms of childhood home class. This is explained by group heterogeneity because it contains various combinations of occupational groups and class identifications.

6.2.4 Spouse’s occupation

The variation of the spouse’s occupation is observed through the four analytical groups. Spouse’s occupation has been asked twice in the Finnish National Election Studies in the 21st century (2003 and 2019); thus, it is also possible to observe this variation across time. This descriptive scrutiny considers the share of the respondents who do not have a spouse. The results of the crosstabulation are presented in Table 6.6.

Based on the variation within the four analytical groups, a similar trend has been found in previous studies: The largest share of spouses are blue-collar employees among all three working-class groups. This is obvious when comparing the three groups with the group respondents who belong to the non-working class. However, the share of spouses who are blue-collar employees has dropped within the traditional working-class, the ideological working-class, and the non-working class. However, it has increased from 2003 to 2019 among the occupational working class. Overall, a notably smaller share of the occupational working class’ spouses is blue-collar employees compared to the traditional and the ideological working-class.

On the contrary, the share of spouses who are senior white-collar salaried employees or white-collar salaried employees has increased in all three other working-class groups, except the traditional working class, between 2003 and 2019. The share increased the most among the respondents who belong to the ideological working-class. However, the number of respondents in the ideological working class in the FNES 2003 and the FNES 2019 datasets is rather low, which means that the
results should be taken with caution. The spouses’ occupations vary the most among the non-working-class voters. None of the occupational groups has the largest share compared to other groups.

Table 6.6 Spouse’s occupational group among the four analytical groups in 2003 and 2019. Crosstabulation (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional working class</th>
<th>Occupational working class</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-collar employee</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-collar salaried employee</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior white-collar salaried employee</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager / Executive</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No spouse</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (N)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(148)</td>
<td>(145)</td>
<td>(112)</td>
<td>(123)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ideological working class</th>
<th>Non-working class</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-collar employee</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-collar salaried employee</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior white-collar salaried employee</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager / Executive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No spouse</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (N)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(30)</td>
<td>(34)</td>
<td>(363)</td>
<td>(414)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2003: Pearson Chi-Square = 47.022, p-value = 0.001***
2019: Pearson Chi-Square = 25.335, p-value = 0.013*

Source: FNES 2003 & 2019

Note: Category ‘no spouse’ is coded based on ‘marital status’-variable. Those respondents, who are widows/widowers or unmarried, have been categorised as ‘no spouse’. The Pearson Chi-Square test regards the three groups of working-class voters and does not include the non-working-class group.

Overall, these trends are in line with the changes in the occupational structure in Finland especially when it comes to the comparison between 2003 and 2019. The number of blue-collar employees has decreased, and the number of white-
collar salaried employees has simultaneously increased. Even though the number of respondents in this scrutiny is rather low, the results are indicative presuming that spouses’ occupational groups vary among the study’s working-class groups.

Generally, the connection between a spouse’s occupation and the socioeconomic position of one’s childhood home might seem a little farfetched. The previous studies have yet acknowledged family background’s significant role (Schwarz et al. 2016; Blackwell, 1998; see also Frödin Gruneau, 2018). Scholars have found a trend that marrying spouses from higher SES-position has improved the socioeconomic status in society. In the past, marrying higher social class has been more common among citizens, who come from lower SES families and more often among women than men. Access to higher social classes’ networks and resources has been possible through the spouse’s higher socioeconomic status (Schwarz and Mare, 2005).

Today, increasing education levels have changed the cross-marriage of different social class groups. Citizens who come from lower SES families might need to access a higher level of education to attract spouses from higher SES families. In some cases, citizens also marry a spouse with similar family backgrounds, which can promote homogamy. In light of current research, it seems that family background has a significant role in mating (e.g., Schwartz, Zeng and Xie, 2016; Blackwell, 1998).

Additionally, some sociological studies have investigated the effect of parental resources on children’s success and the effect on other relatives. In a recent Finnish study, scholars found a connection between citizens’ occupational attachments and parents-in-law. According to the results, the connection is stronger among women than men. Despite this, higher resources of spouse’s parents, marital status, and children have given additional benefits for men than for women (Kailaheimo-Lönnqvist et al. 2019).

Figure 6.6 illustrates the connection between childhood’s socioeconomic position and spouse’s occupation among all respondents of the FNES 2019 study. Unfortunately, the spouse’s occupation and the socioeconomic position of one’s childhood home have been asked in Finnish National Election Studies only once in 2019. Therefore, the scrutiny is based on the FNES 2019 dataset.

According to the crosstabulation (see Figure 6.6), there is a connection between the socioeconomic position of childhood home, i.e., class, and the spouse’s socioeconomic position in terms of the spouse’s occupational group. This trend is found among respondents from working-class, upper middle class/upper class, or entrepreneur families. It is more common that spouses of the children from working-class families are blue-collar employees (44%) compared to children with
other family backgrounds. A little over a third (34%) of the spouses of the respondents from upper middle class or upper-class families are managers or executives. Additionally, 25 per cent of the spouses from the entrepreneur families are also entrepreneurs. On the other hand, there is more variation in the spouses’ occupations when it comes to children of other family backgrounds (lower middle class, middle class, and farmer families). Only the share of spouses who are white-collar salaried employees is rather high (46%) among respondents with farmer-family backgrounds.

**Pearson Chi-Square = 39.287, p-value = 0.006**

*Source: FNES 2019*

**Figure 6.6** The relationship between the class of the childhood home and spouse’s occupational group. All respondents. Crosstabulation.
6.2.5 Trade union participation

Trade union membership combined with participation activity has been addressed in each FNES dataset, and hence their trends can be examined across time. The respondents have been asked whether they are members of a trade union and if so, how actively they participate in it. The trade union members are in four categories: active member, member, passive member, and not a member. ‘Active member’ refers to a trade union member who has participated in the activities frequently; ‘member’ refers to a trade union member who has participated occasionally, and ‘passive member’ refers to a member who has not participated.

A decline in trade union membership among all working-class groups has been a general trend in the 21st century. Membership declined among the ideological working class, i.e., the share of non-members increased by 18.6 percentage points (see Table 6.7). The share of members (passive, regular, and active) has declined rapidly among the traditional working class. Interestingly, the share of active members has increased slightly among the ideological working class. The occupational working class is the most stable group of working-class voters regarding the trade union membership. However, once again, these results are indicative due to the rather small number of respondents.

The differences between the groups of working-class voters are minor in terms of the trade union membership and participation activity. Above all, the differences began to decrease in the 2010s. Roughly, half of the voters in each working-class group were trade union members in 2019. In addition, the trade union membership does not differ much among non-working-class voters, the traditional, or occupational and ideological working-class voters. The statistical tests (Pearson Chi-Square test) also show that the differences between the working-class groups have become less significant in the 2010s.
Table 6.7  Trade union membership and activity of trade union participation among the four analytical groups (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional working class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active member</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive member</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>-8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a member</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>+11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100 (215)</td>
<td>100 (255)</td>
<td>100 (184)</td>
<td>100 (230)</td>
<td>100 (216)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupational working class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active member</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive member</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>-3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a member</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>+8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100 (141)</td>
<td>100 (146)</td>
<td>100 (109)</td>
<td>100 (181)</td>
<td>100 (188)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideological working class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active member</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>+1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>15.4</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>-11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>52.1</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>-8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>29.2</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>+18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100 (45)</td>
<td>100 (66)</td>
<td>100 (38)</td>
<td>100 (51)</td>
<td>100 (44)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Non-working class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>+0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>-4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive member</td>
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<td>47.8</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>-3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>43.6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>+7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100 (448)</td>
<td>100 (109)</td>
<td>100 (360)</td>
<td>100 (457)</td>
<td>100 (414)</td>
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Pearson Chi-Squares:


Note: The Pearson Chi-Square test regards the three groups of working-class voters and does not include the non-working-class group.
Trade unions have traditionally had a significant role in channelling and supporting the working class’ preferences. Additionally, trade unions have influenced the working class politically, socially, and economically. Trade unions have also been active in Finnish election campaigns. For instance, in the 2003 and 2007 parliamentary elections, the Central Organisation of the Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) organised provocative campaigns, which influenced blue-collar employees' voting. In addition, SAK has joint campaigns with the SDP using cooperation such as conferences, seminars, and meetings. (Raunio and Laine, 2017; see also subchapters 1.2.2 and 4.2.3 on trade unions and party-union ties.)

These results are not surprising given the occupational changes and the changes in trade unions—more concretely a general downward trend of the trade union membership rates in Finland. Despite the decreasing differences between the working-class voters, trade union membership is still considered a relevant independent variable to control when examining class (in)congruence among the working class. Particularly, the history of the working-class and the cleavage typology presented by Bartolini and Mair (1990, see also subchapter 2.2.1) shows that trade union membership is important to consider for two main reasons. First, the blue-collar trade union movement has a long tradition in the working class’s history despite its two-fold roots in both the SDP and the communist parties. Second, according to Bartolini and Mair’s cleavage typology (1990), the class-cleavage has generated a collective identity that evokes the organisational element. In this context, the organisational element refers to the working-class organisations such as left-wing parties and trade unions. Thus, we assumed that a linkage exists between trade union membership, participation in trade unions, and working-class identification.

6.3 Explaining class congruence and incongruence

This subchapter presents the results of the three logistic regressions that seek to find the determinants of class incongruence and class congruence. In other words, the logistic regressions examine the factors that explain the formation of the study’s three working-class groups: traditional working-class, occupational working-class, and ideological working class. The dependent variable is different in each of the logistic regression analyses, but the independent variables remain the same. Only the
The reference categories have been set in each category to best fit with each dependent variable. The independent variables are added in the regression model in four blocks, which means that each regression analysis contains four models (M1–M4). Adding the independent variables in blocks offers a better effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The first block consists of basic sociodemographic variables such as gender, age, and education along with the class of the childhood home. The second block controls the sociodemographic variables along with the spouse’s occupation. The third model controls the sociodemographic variables along with the trade union membership. The fourth model contains all the independent variables and tests to demonstrate their effects.

The three analyses are presented in separate subchapters (6.3.1 – 6.3.3). The first analysis (6.3.1) examines the factors that increase the likelihood of class congruence, i.e., blue-collar employees’ likelihood to have working-class identification. Thus, it analyses the formation of the traditional working class. The second analysis (6.3.2) identifies the determinants of class incongruence among blue-collar employees. In other words, blue-collar employees’ likelihood to have lower-middle-class, middle-class, upper-middle-class, or upper-class identification. Therefore, it explains the formation of the occupational working class. The third analysis tackles the ideological working class—those who are not blue-collar employees by their occupational group, but that have working-class identification. The section aims to find the determinants that increase the likelihood of identifying with the working-class through occupational groups other than the blue-collar employees.

6.3.1 Traditional working-class: explaining class congruence among the blue-collar employees

The effect of sociodemographic variables, class of the childhood home, spouse’s occupation, and trade union membership on working-class identification among blue-collar employees are detected using binary logistic regression. The results of the first logistic regression analysis are presented in Table 6.8 (Models 1-4). The odds ratios indicate whether the independent variables increase or decrease the likelihood of working-class identification. The models’ goodness-of-fit is evaluated with pseudo-Nagelkerke’s R², adjusted pseudo-Nagelkerke’s R², and -2 Log-Likelihood (-2LL) values. The interest lies in observing whether the goodness-of-fit values vary between the models. The independent variables (class of the childhood home, spouse’s occupation, and trade union membership) are placed separately in the
models instead of stepwise to evaluate each of their effects on the dependent variable.

According to the results, the class of the childhood home significantly affects the working-class identification of blue-collar employees. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the odds ratios indicate that the working-class childhood home significantly increases the likelihood of a working-class identification. In contrast, lower middle class (OR=.275), middle class (OR=.158), upper-middle-class (OR=.170), and entrepreneur (OR=.221) childhood home class significantly decreases the likelihood of having working-class identification compared to the working-class childhood home, which is set as a reference category. The statistical significance of the odds ratios remains the same even though all the independent variables are added in the model (Model 4).

In terms of sociodemographic variables, the blue-collar employee’s education appears to significantly affect the likelihood of working-class identification. If the blue-collar employee has a higher education (polytechnic or university degree) compared to primary school-level education, then it decreases the likelihood of working-class identification. The odds ratios of higher education remain statistically significant in each of the four models. Finally, the regression analysis indicates that if the spouse’s occupational group is higher professionally compared to the blue-collar employee, then it decreases the likelihood of a blue-collar employee to have working-class identification (Model 4, OR=.377). This effect remains the same even if all the independent variables are controlled.
Table 6.8: Explaining working-class identification among blue-collar employees. Results of logistic regression. Odds ratios and standard deviations. (Dependent variable: 0 = non-working-class identification, 1 = working-class identification).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>M1</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>M2</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>M3</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>M4</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
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<td>.557</td>
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<td>.776</td>
<td>.210</td>
<td>.884</td>
<td>.203</td>
<td>.832</td>
<td>.227</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 – 34</td>
<td>1.507</td>
<td>.435</td>
<td>1.244</td>
<td>.413</td>
<td>1.486</td>
<td>.402</td>
<td>1.287</td>
<td>.447</td>
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<td>35 – 49</td>
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<td>.453</td>
<td>1.202</td>
<td>.433</td>
<td>1.551</td>
<td>.422</td>
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<td>.466</td>
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<td>1.596</td>
<td>.414</td>
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<td>.407</td>
<td>1.784</td>
<td>.443</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>.512</td>
<td>.412</td>
<td>.784</td>
<td>.455</td>
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<td>.436</td>
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<td>.430</td>
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<td>.474</td>
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<td>.275***</td>
<td>.374</td>
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<td></td>
<td>.262***</td>
<td>.382</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>.159***</td>
<td>.295</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.157***</td>
<td>.301</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>.170***</td>
<td>.445</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.178***</td>
<td>.450</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.217***</td>
<td>.302</td>
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<td>.354</td>
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<td>(Active member)</td>
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<td>1.229</td>
<td>.355</td>
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<td>.107</td>
<td>.414</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>.414</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>.414</td>
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<td>.168</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.414</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.414</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.414</td>
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<td>-2 Log likelihood</td>
<td>266.242</td>
<td>494.172</td>
<td>505.507</td>
<td>255.978</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>414</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Source: FNES 2019

48 The dependent variable’s reference category ‘do not identify with the working class’ includes categories ‘identifies with the lower middle-class, middle class, upper middle-class, or upper class’.
The explanatory power of each independent variable (class of the childhood home, spouse’s occupation, and trade union membership) is interpreted when comparing the adjusted Nagelkerke $R^2$ values of Models 1–3. They indicate the goodness of fit of each model. From the three models, the adjusted Nagelkerke’s $R^2$ value is the highest in Model 1 in which the class of the childhood home is set as an independent variable thereby controlling the sociodemographic variables gender, age, and education. Altogether, the highest adjusted Nagelkerke’s $R^2$ value is in Model 4 (.311), which is the full model testing for all the independent variables indicating that the model has the most explanatory power when all independent variables are considered.

The -2 Log-likelihood values of Models 1-4 support this notion. Basically, -2 LL -values indicate how well the models of logistic regression fit the data. A lower -2 LL -value implies that the model better predicts the dependent variable, i.e., working-class identification in the logistic regression analysis. Model 1 has the second-lowest -2 LL value (266.242), and Model 4 (the full model) has the lowest (255.978). Finally, both Nagelkerke’s $R^2$ values and the -2 LL values indicate that trade union membership is the weakest explanator of working-class identification among blue-collar employees.

6.3.2 The occupational working-class: explaining class incongruence among blue-collar employees

The second binary logistic regression examines the impact of sociodemographic variables, class of the childhood home, spouse’s occupation, and trade union membership on class incongruence among the blue-collar employees. In other words, it seeks to find the independent variables, which explains belonging to the study’s second working class group, the occupational working class. Table 6.9 presents the results of the second logistic regression model. The analysis consists of similar four models as the previous binary logistic regression (subchapter 6.3.1), except the independent variables’ reference categories have been changed to fit better with the dependent variable, i.e., identification with the lower, middle, or upper-middle class.

The results show that respondent’s education is a significant determinant in explaining the likelihood of class incongruence among blue-collar employees. Vocational education, upper secondary education and primary education decrease
the likelihood of class incongruence compared to higher education (polytechnic or university degree). That is, higher education increases the likelihood of class incongruence among the blue-collar employees, i.e., their likelihood to have lower-middle-class, middle-class, upper-middle-class or upper-class identification. The odd ratios of vocational, upper secondary, and primary education remain unchanged in the four models.

The class of the childhood home has a significant effect on class incongruence. If a blue-collar employee is from a working-class home, then it decreases the likelihood of class incongruence compared to a person from an entrepreneur home (OR = .177 in Model 4). Working-class childhood home remains statistically significant in the full model (Model 4). Additionally, the logistic regression indicates that a spouse’s occupation has a significant effect on class incongruence. If the spouse is a blue-collar employee compared to a higher professional, then it decreases the likelihood of class incongruence among blue-collar employees (OR = .413 in Model 4). The same effect applies to a situation where the spouse’s occupation is a lower profession than a higher profession (OR = .405 in Model 4). However, if the spouse is in a lower profession, then it decreases the statistical significance of the class incongruence among blue-collar employees only in Model 4 in which all independent variables are controlled.
Table 6.9  Explaining non-working-class identification among blue-collar employees. Results of logistic regression. Odds ratios and standard errors. (Dependent variable: 0 = working-class identification, 1 = non-working-class identification).

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<th>OR</th>
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<th>S.E.</th>
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<td>.471</td>
<td>.783</td>
<td>.469</td>
<td>.761</td>
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<td>.771</td>
<td>.487</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Upper middle class</td>
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<td>.382</td>
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<td>.360</td>
<td>1.603</td>
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*p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p< 0.001

*Source: FNES 2019*

The fourth model contains all independent variables and has the highest adjusted pseudo-Nagelkerke’s R² value (.380). Interestingly, both spouse’s occupation (Model 2 = .191) and trade union membership (Model 3 = .178) have notably lower adjusted pseudo-Nagelkerke’s R² values than the first model, which contains the class of the
childhood home and sociodemographic variables (.348). The first model’s adjusted pseudo-Nagelkerke’s $R^2$ value is rather close to the full model’s adjusted pseudo-Nagelkerke’s $R^2$ value indicating that childhood home is an important factor for the class incongruence among blue-collar employees. The -2 LL values are the same because Model 4 has the lowest -2 LL value (433.982), which is slightly lower than the first Model’s -2 LL value (439.815). Overall, the -2 LL values suggest that the class of the childhood home is the strongest explainer of class incongruence among blue-collar employees whereas the trade union membership is the weakest.

6.3.3 The ideological working-class: explaining class incongruence among non-blue-collar employees

The third and final binary regression analyses reveal that independent variables increase or decrease the likelihood of incongruence, i.e., working-class identification among non-blue-collar employees. Thus, it seeks to find the determinants behind the study’s third working-class group, the ideological working class. Table 6.10 presents the results of the third binary logistic regression analysis.

The results show that education is a significant determinant for explaining the likelihood of class incongruence among non-blue-collar employees. Vocational education, upper secondary education, and primary education increase the likelihood of class incongruence compared to the reference category, i.e., higher education (polytechnic or university degree). Higher education decreases the likelihood of class incongruence among the non-blue-collar employees revealing their likelihood to have working-class identification. The odd ratios of upper secondary and primary education remain unchanged in the four models. However, the odd ratios of vocational school are no longer statistically significant in the full model (Model 4). In particular, primary education compared to higher education increases the likelihood of statistical significance of identifying with working-class among non-blue-collar employees (OR = 15.296 in Model 4).
Table 6.10 Explaining working-class identification among non-blue-collar employees. Results of logistic regression. Odds ratios and standard deviations. (Dependent variable: 0 = non-working-class identification, 1 = working-class identification).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M1</th>
<th>M2</th>
<th>M3</th>
<th>M4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OR</strong></td>
<td><strong>S.E.</strong></td>
<td><strong>OR</strong></td>
<td><strong>S.E.</strong></td>
<td><strong>OR</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>.001***</td>
<td>.020***</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>.001***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender ref. Female</strong></td>
<td>1.230</td>
<td>.366</td>
<td>.989</td>
<td>.916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1.230</td>
<td>.366</td>
<td>.236</td>
<td>3.599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (ref. Over 65)</td>
<td>2.668*</td>
<td>.615</td>
<td>3.65***</td>
<td>.403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 - 34</td>
<td>2.988</td>
<td>.592</td>
<td>2.848</td>
<td>.573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 49</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>.594</td>
<td>1.062</td>
<td>.590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 64</td>
<td>5.586</td>
<td>.394</td>
<td>1.562</td>
<td>.346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (Ref. Higher education)</td>
<td>2.668*</td>
<td>.615</td>
<td>3.65***</td>
<td>.403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational</td>
<td>4.006*</td>
<td>.660</td>
<td>6.167**</td>
<td>.619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Education</td>
<td>3.218***</td>
<td>1.077</td>
<td>3.386***</td>
<td>1.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class of the childhood home (ref. Middle class)</td>
<td>3.218***</td>
<td>1.077</td>
<td>3.386***</td>
<td>1.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>7.165</td>
<td>1.278</td>
<td>6.146</td>
<td>1.298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper middle class</td>
<td>31.656***</td>
<td>1.081</td>
<td>35.986***</td>
<td>1.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>3.468**</td>
<td>.420</td>
<td>3.879**</td>
<td>.456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse’s occupation (Ref. Higher professional)</td>
<td>.729</td>
<td>.533</td>
<td>.808</td>
<td>.562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-collar employee</td>
<td>.871</td>
<td>.515</td>
<td>.861</td>
<td>.554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower professional</td>
<td>.871</td>
<td>.515</td>
<td>.861</td>
<td>.554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade union membership (Not a member)</td>
<td>.659</td>
<td>.614</td>
<td>.469</td>
<td>.670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive member</td>
<td>.659</td>
<td>.614</td>
<td>.469</td>
<td>.670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active member</td>
<td>.659</td>
<td>.614</td>
<td>.469</td>
<td>.670</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

Source: FNES 2019

The class of the childhood home seems to have a significant impact on working-class identification among non-blue-collar employees. Working-class childhood

49 The dependent variable’s reference category ‘do not identify the with working class’, which includes people who ‘identify with the lower middle-class, middle class, upper middle-class or upper class’.
home compared to middle-class home significantly increases the likelihood of having a working-class identification among the non-blue-collar employees (OR = 33.860 in Model 4). Additionally, an entrepreneur childhood home increases the likelihood of having working-class identification in adulthood among the non-blue-collar employees compared to a middle-class childhood home (OR = 35.986 in Model 4). The latter result is in line with the scrutiny presented earlier indicating that most of the ideological working-class voters come from entrepreneur families (see Table 6.5 page 189). The odds ratios of the working-class home and entrepreneur home remain unchanged in the four models.

In the third Model, the spouse’s occupation emerges as an important determinant of the ideological working class. If the spouse is a blue-collar employee compared to a higher professional, then it increases the statistical significance of the likelihood of being a non-blue-collar employee in working-class identification (OR=3.879 in Model 4). This result remains the same despite all other independent variables being controlled in the full Model 4.

In terms of the model's goodness-of-fit, the four models vary in the binary logistic regression analysis. Regarding Models 1-3 in which each of the independent variables is added separately with the sociodemographic variables, the first Model (1) has the highest adjusted pseudo-Nagelkerke’s R2 value (.275) indicating that the class of the childhood home individually has the strongest impact on class incongruence among the non-blue-collar employees. The fourth model consists of all the independent variables and has the highest adjusted pseudo-Nagelkerke’s R2 value (.327). However, the -2 LL -values indicate that the difference between the Model 1 (222.966) and Model 4 (222.868) is low. Their -2 LL values are almost the same, which supports the notion that the class of the childhood home with the sociodemographic variables is individually a good predictor of the class incongruence among the non-blue-collar employees than all other independent variables. Regarding spouse’s occupation and trade union membership, there is a little variation in their predictabilities based on their -2 LL -values.

### 6.4 Main findings

The chapter aimed to analyse the determinants of class congruence and class incongruence. The results support three determinants. First, the analyses found a strong connection between respondent’s level of education and class congruence
and class incongruence. Working-class identification seems to be likely among those with vocational, upper secondary or primary education despite their occupational group. In contrast, higher education (polytechnic or university degree) correlates with non-working-class identification, i.e., increases the likelihood of class incongruence among blue-collar employees. Overall, this means that the study’s second hypothesis gets strong support (See Table 6.11.).

Second, the results indicate that the class of the childhood home has a strong connection to both class incongruence and class congruence. The results show that a working-class childhood home increases the likelihood of having a working-class identification in adulthood despite the occupation. This means that hypothesis H3 gets strong support (Table 6.11). In addition, an entrepreneur home in childhood increases the likelihood of having a working-class identification in adulthood, but this applies only to non-blue-collar employees.

Possibly, the linkage between entrepreneur childhood home and respondents’ working-class identification can be, at least partly, explained with the technical aspect that being an entrepreneur does not exclude a possibility of being a blue-collar employee at the same time. A person can be an entrepreneur and have a business as well as being a blue-collar worker, e.g., a carpenter at the same time. This is something that cannot be discovered in the datasets used for this study.

Third, the spouse’s occupational group is an important determinant, which increases or decreases the likelihood of class incongruence or class congruence. If a spouse is a blue-collar employee, then it increases the likelihood of having a working-class identification despite one’s occupational group. The spouse’s occupational group seems to have the opposite effect. If the spouse of a blue-collar employee is a higher professional, then it increases the likelihood of class incongruence, i.e., the blue-collar employees’ likelihood of having working-class identification. This gives support for the study’s hypothesis H4. From a broader perspective, this is an interesting finding because some studies have highlighted the growing trend of marrying out of one’s own social class especially selecting a spouse from a higher social position compared to one’s class.

Table 6.11 lists the chapter’s main findings concerning the hypothesis H1-H5. According to the results presented in this chapter, hypotheses H2-H4 get strong support whereas the hypothesis H1 gets weak support scrutinised at the beginning of the chapter (Table 6.3, page 180). The results suggested that belonging to the occupational working class is slightly more common among women than men. However, the logistic regression analyses failed to support this finding. Lastly, hypothesis H5 regarding the effect of trade union membership is not supported. The
binary logistic regression analyses did not give support for trade union membership’s statistical significance regarding class incongruence.

**Table 6.11** The main findings concerning the hypotheses H1–H5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Class incongruence is more common among women who are blue-collar employees based on their occupational group than among men who are blue-collar employees based on their occupational group.</td>
<td>Weakly supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Higher education increases the likelihood of incongruence among working-class voters who belong to the working-class by their occupational group.</td>
<td>Strongly supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Working-class childhood home increases the likelihood of working-class identification in adulthood despite the occupation.</td>
<td>Strongly supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>If the spouse's occupational group is other than a blue-collar employee, then it increases the likelihood of incongruence among those working-class voters who are themselves blue-collar employees by their occupational group.</td>
<td>Strongly supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>Trade union membership decreases the likelihood of class incongruence among citizens who belong to the working class based on their occupational group.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7 THE EFFECT OF CLASS (IN)CONGRUENCE ON WORKING CLASS’ ATTITUDINAL ORIENTATIONS

7.1 Model and hypotheses

The research model in this chapter stems from two perspectives. First, it follows the ideas of Inglehart (1984 and 1997), Kitschelt (1994 and 1995), and Knutsen (2018) who argue that the explanatory power of attitudinal orientations in explaining party choice has grown stronger in Western democracies. Simultaneously, socio-structural variables have lost their significance.

Second, it anchors to those studies that have argued that social class determines voters’ political outlooks and ideological orientations (Knutsen, 1995, 2001; Van de Wержhorst and de Graaf, 2004; Svalfors, 2006; Bengtsson et al. 2013). These studies have indicated that voters’ class positions are related to their socioeconomic left-right orientation and their authoritarian-libertarian orientations. The mechanism has been explained with lifestyles, revealing the extent to which the voters from various status groups adapt to modern lifestyles because of a socialisation process. The lifestyles lead to the embracing of attitudinal orientations and ideological orientations (Bengtsson et al. 2013, p. 711).

The relationship between the socio-structural variables and the voters’ attitudinal orientations is dynamic. Knutsen (2018) investigated this relationship in his book titled ‘Social Structure, Value Orientations and Party Choice in Western Europe’. The author reported that socio-structural variables and value orientations have the strongest explanatory power on voters’ party choices. Moreover, Knutsen’s results focused on West European countries showing that these two explanatory variable categories should be included in the analyses even though the main research interest was only on one of them. The theoretical approach and previous research on social class, voters’ attitudinal orientations, and party choice are discussed in detail in subchapter 2.2.3 (page 86).
This chapter presents the second part of the study’s research model, which focuses on the relationship between class (in)congruence and attitudinal orientations (Figure 7.1). The model tests the extent to which the working-class groups’ attitudinal orientations are dependent on the class (in)congruence. Given the main research problem, it is important to compare the working-class groups’ attitudinal orientations and analyse the extent that they differ and if so, why? The aim is to answer the study’s second research question:

- To what extent and how do the study’s three types of working class differ from each other regarding their attitudinal orientations?

The analyses are based on three attitudinal orientations: sociocultural, socioeconomic, and EU attitudes.
This chapter tests the following hypotheses regarding the working-class groups’ attitudinal orientations (Table 7.1):

**Table 7.1** The hypotheses regarding working-class voters’ attitudinal orientations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H6</th>
<th>The attitudinal orientations vary significantly among the study’s three working-class groups.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H7</td>
<td>Working-class identification increases the likelihood of a having more liberal sociocultural orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H8</td>
<td>Working-class identification increases the likelihood of having a more leftist socioeconomic orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H9</td>
<td>Belonging to an occupation group of blue-collar employees increases the likelihood of having a more critical orientation towards Finland’s commitment to the EU.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypotheses 7–9 focus on one attitudinal orientation. First, H6 hypothesises that the traditional, occupational, and ideological working-class voters differ from each other based on their attitudinal orientations. Hypothesis 7 examines the sociocultural orientation, and it hypothesizes that working-class identification correlates with more liberal orientation. Hence, it assumes that both the traditional and the ideological working-class voters who have working-class identification are more likely to possess liberal than conservative sociocultural orientation.

Hypothesis 8 considers the socioeconomic orientation and argues that working-class identification increases the likelihood of having leftist socioeconomic orientation. This applies to the traditional and the ideological working-class voters. Conversely, H8 assumed that the occupational working class is more likely to have rightist socioeconomic orientation because they do not have working-class identification.

This chapter’s last hypothesis, H9, considers the EU attitudes, which measure Finland’s commitment to the EU. It hypothesises that belonging to an occupational group of blue-collar employees increases the likelihood of having a more critical orientation towards Finland’s commitment to the EU. This hypothesis applies to both the traditional working-class voters and the occupational working-class voters. Hypotheses focusing on three attitudinal orientations are presented in Table 7.2 to illustrate the differences between the three working-class groups.
Table 7.2  The hypothesised attitudinal orientations of the traditional, occupational, and ideological working-class voters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional working class</th>
<th>Occupational working class</th>
<th>Ideological working class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic orientation</td>
<td>Leftist orientation</td>
<td>Rightist orientation</td>
<td>Leftist orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural orientation</td>
<td>Liberal orientation</td>
<td>Conservative orientation</td>
<td>Liberal orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-attitudes</td>
<td>Opposition to a stronger commitment to the EU</td>
<td>Opposition to a stronger commitment to the EU</td>
<td>Support for stronger commitment to the EU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analyses in this chapter are in two sections: the descriptive analyses and the regression modelling. The descriptive analyses present an overall understanding on the probable differences in attitudinal orientations between the three working-class groups. These descriptive analyses apply crosstabulations to show whether the three groups differ statistically from each other based on their sociocultural, socioeconomic, and EU orientations. The second section of this chapter applies linear regression to identify factors likely to explain the differences in attitudinal orientations between the three working-class groups. The linear regression examines the impact of the sociodemographic variables (gender, age, education), class of one’s childhood home, spouse’s occupation, and class (in)congruence on each attitudinal orientation. Trade union membership is left out due to its low predictive power in the previous chapter’s analyses (Chapter 6).

Data

The 2015-2019 Finnish National Election Study datasets are used in this chapter’s analyses. The datasets are suitable to test this chapter’s hypotheses because they include all necessary dependent variables, i.e., identical values, and attitude questions. Additionally, the FNES datasets include the most crucial variables for this study: respondents’ occupational group and class identification. The datasets FNES 2015 and FNES 2019 are merged to increase the number of working-class respondents.
In practice, the merging of FNES 2015 and FNES 2019 datasets has been possible due to similarly coded variables. All needed variables have been recorded identically in both datasets before merging. The merged dataset has a total of 3,185 cases assisting in analysing the three working-class categories and OLS regression without the risk of empty cells.

Both the FNES 2015 and the FNES 2019 datasets include identical question batteries on respondents’ attitudinal orientations. These batteries contain questions about Finnish society and its future developments. Respondents are been asked to answer these questions using a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means ‘strongly disagree’ and 10 means ‘strongly agree’. The 10-step scale enables us to apply linear models in analyses where the attitudinal orientations are set as dependent variables (e.g., Johnson and Creech, 1983). The question batteries include various statements that capture the main attitudinal orientations among the Finnish electorate. The topics of the statements vary from immigration, the level of taxation, minority rights, and income disparity. The years between 2015 and 2019 are a short period in the political sphere. No significant political changes occurred in Finland between 2015 and 2019, which was fundamental to this study’s scrutiny. The next subchapter (7.2) presents the concrete operationalisation of the variables that measure the attitudinal orientations.

7.2 Measuring working-class voters’ attitudinal orientations

Together with the class incongruence, the attitudinal orientations are key predictors to working-class voters’ party choice. In the full research model, attitudinal orientations act as mediator variables, through which class incongruence affects the working class voting (see Figure 5.1 in the subchapter 5.3). Hence, the study does not put all its empirical effort into exploring the value and attitude dimensions. More importantly, it seeks to discover the three working-class groups’ differences in terms of their attitudinal orientations and the explanations for these differences. This Chapter focuses on three attitudinal orientations: sociocultural, socioeconomic, and EU-attitudes in separate subchapters (7.2.1–7.2.3). Additionally, the subchapters present the results of the descriptive analyses, which test the differences in the attitudinal orientations of the three working-class groups.
Selecting the attitudinal orientations

The characteristics of the attitudinal orientations in the Finnish political system are described in subchapter 4.3.4 (see also subchapter 4.2.1 on the Finnish party system and subchapter 1.2.3 for more general views on voters’ attitudinal orientations). As these Chapters outlined, there are some traditional key political dimensions in Finland (Paloheimo, 2008; Westinen, 2015): the socioeconomic left and right, the geographical centre vs. periphery, and the language dimension between Swedish-speaking and Finnish-speaking populations. In the 21st century, the sociocultural dimension has started to determine the Finnish political sphere both on the political supply side (political parties) and the demand side (voters). Recent studies of Finnish voters have shown that the socioeconomic and sociocultural dimensions are the most dividing dimensions and constantly polarise the Finnish electorate (Suuronen et al. 2020; Isotalo et al. 2020). In addition, the EU attitudes have begun to polarise the Finnish electorate and parties in recent decades. Even though the EU issues are tangential to globalisation, which are the core to the sociocultural dimension, the EU issues have become a dimension among the Finnish electorate. (Westinen, 2015.) In the 2019 election, voters in the Finns Party were more critical towards the EU than the voters of other parties (Suuronen et al. 2020).

Relevant attitudinal orientations for working-class voters

Previous studies have distinguished the influence of voters’ socio-structural positions on their value and attitude orientations in Finland (Westinen, 2015; Westinen et al. 2016; Paloheimo, 2008) and Western Europe (Knutsen and Kumlin, 2005; Knutsen, 2018). Most of these studies have highlighted education as the strongest socio-structural factor predicting voters’ value and attitudinal orientations (e.g., Stubager, 2008; Inglehart, 1990; Weakliem, 2002). The social class holds second place among the most influential predictors of political values and attitudes right after education (Knutsen, 2018, 106-7). Knutsen (2018) used a comparative study to show that social class correlates strongly with environmental issues as well as libertarian and authoritarian values. Immigration orientations strongly correlated with economic left-right values.

Similarly, Westinen (2015) analysed the impact of occupational class on value and attitude dimensions among the Finnish electorate in 2003-2011. Occupational class was found to be a statistically significant determinant of economic right and authority
dimension, regional and socioeconomic equality dimension, sociocultural dimensions, and EU dimensions. Furthermore, Westinen’s results indicate that compared to the managers and higher professionals, the Finnish blue-collar employees are more likely to have optimistic attitudes towards redistribution and decentralisation. Compared to managers and higher professionals, they are more anti-EU than pro-EU. They are also more in favour of entrepreneurship, tax cuts, traditional moral values, and strong authority. On the sociocultural dimension, blue-collar employees are less tolerant to immigration than managers and higher professionals (Ibid. 170-1).

Previous studies distinguished six central characteristics of Finnish blue-collar employees in the 21st century. First, blue-collar employees have been more critical of immigration than the Finnish electorate. Second, blue-collar employees have been more critical of multiculturalism than other occupational groups. Third, blue-collar employees have supported redistribution and decentralisation. Fourth, they tend to have more critical attitudes towards the EU compared to the senior white-collar salaried employees. Fifth, they support entrepreneurship, a free-market economy, and strong authority. Finally, blue-collar employees offer lower support for post-materialist values than other occupational groups (Westinen et al. 2016; Westinen, 2015).

The choice of these three attitudinal orientations (socioeconomic, sociocultural, EU) is based on three principal notions:

1) Previous research on political values and attitudes have shown that the attitudinal orientations have been significant for the Finnish electorate in the 21st century.

2) They are relevant for the working-class voters and are not overly time-related.

3) They exist both in FNES 2015 and 2019 datasets, which are merged in this chapter’s analyses to increase the number of cases (N).

The following subchapters 7.2.1–7.2.3 present the operationalisation of these three attitudinal orientations. In addition, they present the descriptive analyses concerning the study’s three working-class groups’ socioeconomic, sociocultural, and EU orientations.
7.2.1 Socioeconomic orientation

Socioeconomic left and right has been the most central dimension in the political sphere in Finland and the Nordic Countries. It has created the baseline for the party systems and has differentiated parties from each other. It has also traditionally reflected the dynamics of the social class dimension. Scholars have argued that since the economic policies have dominated the West-European party systems for over a century, the socioeconomic dimension has become a constant factor to explain voters’ political preferences. (e.g., Thomassen, 2005; Mair, 2007 and Oscarsson and Holmberg, 2013.)

Typically, values and issues such as higher levels of taxation, a broad public sector, and income distribution are categorized as leftist values and issues, supported by the left-orientated voters. Correspondingly, the diminishing roles of states in economic regulation, lower levels of taxation, and entrepreneurship are considered as right-wing values and issues on the socioeconomic dimension. (e.g., Budge and Farlie, 1983). However, in recent decades, there has been discussion about the relevance and the status of the socioeconomic dimension based on two opposite views. Some scholars have regarded the socioeconomic dimension as a universal dimension comprising other issues, e.g., moral and cultural values and environmental issues. However, other scholars have argued that the socioeconomic dimension has kept its traditional characteristics reflecting primarily economic and social policy issues. (Dalton 2002 and van der Eijk et al. 2005).

This study follows the composition of socioeconomic values and attitudes. The socioeconomic orientation of the three working-class groups has been measured with three statements representing the economic and social policy issues in the Finnish context (see Table 7.3). The first statement measures voters’ attitudes towards the market economy and entrepreneurship. The second measures voters’ attitudes towards taxation, and the third measures voters’ attitudes towards the size of the public sector.
In the following, some propositions relating to the future direction of Finland are listed below. What is your opinion on these propositions on a scale of 0-10 where 0 refers to ‘a very bad proposal’ and 10 refers to ‘a very good proposal’?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposition</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finland, where entrepreneurship and market economy is increased.</td>
<td>.583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland, where the taxation level is lower.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland, where the public sector is smaller.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three statements form a sum variable, of which Cronbach’s alpha value is 0.583. Cronbach’s alpha tests whether the separate factors measure the same phenomenon, in other words, whether the different questions in the question battery share the same latent variables. Calculating Cronbach’s alpha requires that the statements, which are included in the analysis, are formulated in same direction. In other words, if a respondent has answered, for instance, ‘10 = strongly agree’ in each of the analyses’ sociocultural statements, then the value refers to the similar attitudes in every statement. Several previous studies on Finnish voters’ political orientation have used these statements to measure voters’ socioeconomic orientation (see Westinen 2015; Grönlund and Westinen, 2012; Paloheimo, 2005 and Kestilä-Kekkonen et al. 2018).

50 Westinen’s study on the political cleavages among the Finnish electorate in 2003-2011 offered slightly similar observation. In Westinen’s study, the factor analyses showed that the economic right statement on entrepreneurship and market economy loaded in the same factor with the statements on conservative values and attitudes. However, this combination was also tested in the study’s merged dataset, but the conservative values and attitudes did not have high Cronbach’s alpha value for the entrepreneurship and market economy.

51 From the perspective of the study by Kestilä-Kekkonen et al. (2018), the Cronbach’s alpha value is not that surprising. Their study shows that voters associate very different issues to the socioeconomic-dimension and that these issues are not in line with their personal position on the dimension.
Table 7.4. The socioeconomic orientation among traditional, occupational, and ideological working class (% in rows). The non-working-class category is included as a reference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socioeconomic orientation</th>
<th>Left</th>
<th>Somewhat left</th>
<th>Not left, not right</th>
<th>Somewhat right</th>
<th>Right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional working class (N=434)</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational working class (N = 334)</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological working class (N = 92)</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-working class (N = 793)</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pearson Chi-Square** = 9.973, **p-value** = 0.267

Source: Merged dataset FNES 2015 and FNES 2019

Note: The 0-10 response scale of the sum variable has been recoded as follows: values 0-2 = ‘Disagree’, values 3 - 4 = ‘Somewhat disagree, value 5 = ‘Not disagree, nor agree, values 6-7 = ‘Somewhat agree and values 8-10 = ‘Agree’. The Pearson Chi-Square -value is calculated within the three working-class groups, which excludes the non-working-class. It indicates whether there is a statistical difference between the three groups.

Table 7.4 presents the results of the crosstabulation, which analyses whether the three working-class groups vary based on their socioeconomic orientation. The results show some variation. Leftist or somewhat leftist voters vary to some extent within the working-class groups. In total, 22.8 per cent of the respondents belonging to the ideological working-class are either leftist or somewhat leftist based on their socioeconomic orientation. The same share among the occupational working-class is 17.1 per cent, and the lowest among the traditional working-class is 14.7 per cent.

Quite interestingly, the share of the left or somewhat left socioeconomic orientation is slightly larger among the non-working-class than among the voters of the traditional working class. Nevertheless, it seems that the leftist socioeconomic orientation is not directly linked with working-class identification because the socioeconomic orientations of the respondents who belong to the ideological working class and the traditional working-class differ. Rather, the results show that
the leftist socioeconomic orientation has a connection to the ideological working class.

In a similar vein, the share of rightist and rightist voters varies within the working-class groups, but do not have much share for leftist and somewhat leftist orientations. Perhaps an unexpected result is that approximately two-thirds of the observed groups are somewhat rightist, or rightist based on their socioeconomic orientation. This result is in line with Kestilä-Kekkonen et al. (2018), which discovered that many traditional socioeconomic issues such as the public sector and taxation correlate with voters’ rightist rather than leftist socioeconomic orientation. The differences in the working-class groups’ socioeconomic orientations are subtle, and they resemble the orientation of the non-working class. Moreover, the Pearson Chi-Square test indicates that the observed differences are not statistically significant at the .05 level between the three working-class groups (p-value = .267).

7.2.2 Sociocultural orientation

The sociocultural orientation of working-class groups is measured with variables consisting of statements on immigration, multiculturalism, gender equality, and minority rights (Table 7.5). These issues are widely acknowledged as a part of the sociocultural dimension or cleavage in the previous literature (e.g., Kriesi et al. 2006; van der Brug and van Spanje, 2009). The immigration and multiculturalism issues reflect cultural identity. However, gender equality and minority rights reflect social relationships (ibid. see also Westinen 2015, p. 147). Some scholars suggest that environmental issues should be included in the dimension of sociocultural values and attitudes (Inglehart, 1977 and 1997) because they are issues of the New Politics and the new political movements such as the environmental movement. On the contrary, some scholars argue that environmental issues should be part of the socioeconomic dimension because environmental pollution affects economic growth and prosperity (Knutsen, 2018, p 7; see also Ester et al. 2004). Since the FNES 2015 and the FNES 2019 datasets contain statements on environmental issues, it was included as a statement in the sum variable. In addition, the previous studies on the value and attitude orientations of the Finnish electorate have used these similar issues to measure sociocultural values and attitudes (see Westinen 2015; Grönlund and Westinen 2012, and Paloheimo, 2005). Moreover, the reliability of the sum variable has been tested with Cronbach’s alpha. The value increases once the environmental issues are added. The Cronbach’s alpha for the sum variable of sociocultural orientation is 0.710—this is sufficient for a sum variable.
Table 7.5  The operationalisation of the sociocultural orientation. The original statements from the FNES 2015 and FNES 2019 datasets.

In the following, some propositions relating to the future direction of Finland are listed. What is your opinion on the propositions of the scale 0-10, where 0 refers to ‘a very bad proposal’ and 10 refers to ‘a very good proposal’?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposition</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finland, where there is more multi-culturalism, and the tolerance towards people from other countries is high.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland, where immigration in Finland increased.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland, where the status of sexual minorities is reinforced.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland, where the equality between men and women is strengthened.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More environmentally friendly Finland, even though it would require low economic growth or not economic growth at all.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland, where there is more law and order.*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland, where the status of a traditional nuclear family is reinforced.*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland, where the Christian values are in a more central role.*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cronbach’s alpha = 0.710

* The direction of these variables’ scale has been coded in reversed order before computing the sum variable to be sure that the sum variable ‘0’ is conservative and ‘10’ liberal.

The studies on Finland have noted that in the Finnish context, the questions about the Swedish language and bilingualism also correlate with the above-mentioned sociocultural issues. More specifically, the language question has correlated with the minority issues, i.e., the status of the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland. (e.g., Paloheimo, 2008; Westinen, 2012; Westinen, 2015; see also subchapter 4.2.1 in this study). Nevertheless, the statements on the status of Swedish-speaking Finns and bilingual Finland did not increase the reliability of the sum variable. Hence, they have been left out. In addition, the language question has not been an issue, which has typically divided opinions among working-class voters in Finland.
Table 7.6 The sociocultural values and attitudes among the traditional, occupational, and ideological working-class voters (% in rows). The non-working-class category is included as a reference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sociocultural orientation</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Somewhat conservative</th>
<th>Not conservative not liberal</th>
<th>Somewhat Liberal</th>
<th>Liberal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional working class (N = 434)</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational working class (N = 334)</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological working class (N = 92)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-working class (N = 793)</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson's Chi-Square = 3.220, p-value = .920

Source: Merged dataset FNES 2015 and FNES 2019

Note: The 0-10 response scale of the sum variable has been recoded as Likert-scale in which 0-2 = ‘Conservative’, 3 - 4 = ‘Somewhat conservative’, 5 = ‘Not conservative, not liberal’, 6-7 = Somewhat liberal and 8-10 = Liberal. The Pearson Chi-Square value is calculated within the three working-class groups excluding the non-working-class. Thus, it indicates whether there is a statistical difference between the three groups.

The sociocultural orientation variation among the three working-class groups has been analysed using a simple crosstabulation (see Table 7.6). To simplify the interpretation, the original 0-10 scale variable is recoded into five categories similar to the sum variable that measures socioeconomic orientation in the subchapter (7.2.1). The results of the crosstabulation indicate no significant differences in sociocultural orientation between the three working classes. The largest share of respondents in each working-class group is somewhat liberal based on their sociocultural orientation. Additionally, the three groups do not differ from the non-working class—the distribution follows the same trend. The observed differences in sociocultural orientation between the working-class groups are not statistically significant according to the Pearson’s Chi-square-value (p-value = .920).
7.2.3 Attitudes towards the European Union

The merged dataset (FNES 2015 and FNES 2019) is framed in one statement for the EU (Table 7.7). More precisely, the statement measures Finland’s support for the EU. This statement was included in this study’s analyses since the latest studies have discovered a correlation between the occupational groups and the EU-dimension orientation in Finland (Westinen, 2015, p 64; see also subchapter 4.3.4 on EU attitudes among the Finnish electorate).

Table 7.7 The operationalisation of the EU attitudes. The original statement from the FNES 2015 and the FNES 2019.

In the following, some propositions relating to the future direction of Finland are listed. What is your opinion on these propositions on a scale of 0-10, where 0 refers to ‘a very bad proposal’ and 10 refers to ‘a very good proposal’?

Finland, which is less committed to European Union.

In many European countries, the attitudes towards the EU have correlated strongly with immigration attitudes. Previous studies have found a linkage between Euroscepticism and anti-immigration attitudes (De Vreese and Boomgaarden, 2005; see also Hobolt and de Vries, 2016). In Finland, the EU issues have not correlated strongly with immigration (Westinen, 2015, p. 150). In the 2019 parliamentary election, supporters of the Finns Party offered a different opinion from other parties’ supporters based on their critical opinions on European integration (Borg, 2020; Suuronen et al. 2020). Some scholars have stated that at the beginning of the 2010s, the Finns Party benefited from other Finnish parliamentary parties’ pragmatic consensus towards the EU (Raunio 2011 & Westinen 2011). Traditionally, there have been four Finnish parliamentary parties that have shared positive opinions towards the EU: The Coalition Party, The Green League, The SDP, and the Swedish-People’s Party (Bäck and Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2020; see also Raunio, 2011).

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52 The EU-statement was here tested as a part of the sum variable of sociocultural values and attitudes; it decreased considerably the sum variables’ reliability (Cronbach’s alpha value= 0.499).

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The attitudes towards the EU statement were crosstabulated against the three working-class groups (see Table 7.8). Nearly a third of the respondents belonging to the traditional working-class (30.9%) and the ideological working-class voters (30.4%) agree about Finland’s decreasing commitment to the EU. The same share was seen among the occupational working-class. This is a little over one-fifth (21.3%). Moreover, the largest share of respondents who disagree with the statement are found among the ideological working class (16.3%). Disagreement with the statement indicates that the respondents of the occupational working-class support Finland’s stronger commitment to the EU. The majority of each three working-class groups agree with the statement on Finland’s decreasing commitment to the EU. In other words, the three working-class groups differ from the non-working class and are critical towards the EU. The Pearson’s Chi-square shows that the observed differences in the attitudes towards the EU between the three working-class groups are statistically significant at the .05 level (p-value = .042).

Table 7.8 The EU attitudes among the traditional, occupational, and ideological working class. (% in rows). The non-working-class category is included as a reference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes towards Finland’s decreasing commitment to the EU</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Not disagree, nor agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional working class (N= 434)</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational working class (N = 334)</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological working class (N = 92)</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-working class (N = 793)</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson’s Chi-Square = 16.027, p-value = .042

Source: Merged dataset FNES 2015 and FNES 2019

Note: The 0-10 response scale of the sum variable has been recoded as Likert-scale, in which 0-2 = ‘Disagree’, 3 - 4 = ‘Somewhat disagree’, 5 = ‘Not disagree, nor agree’, 6-7 = ‘Somewhat agree’ and 8-10 = ‘Agree’. Hence, this means that value ‘0’ refers to Finland’s stronger commitment support to the EU, and value ‘10’ refers to opposing Finland’s stronger commitment to the EU. The Pearson Chi-Square - value is calculated within the three working-class groups excluding the non-working-class. Thus, it indicates whether there is a statistical difference between the three groups.
7.3 Testing the impact of class (in)congruence on attitudinal orientations among the working-class groups

This chapter examines the extent to which the sociocultural orientation, the socioeconomic orientation, and the attitudes towards the EU are correlated with the sociodemographic variables (gender, age, education), working-class group, class of one’s childhood home and spouse’s occupation (see Appendix Table A. for more information about the analyses’ independent variables). The main interest lies in finding possible differences between the three working-class groups in their attitudinal orientations and the significant explanatory variables for those differences.

The relationship between the independent and dependent variables is tested with the linear regression analysis (ordinary least squares regression). It analyses the effect of independent variables, which are all coded as dummy variables, on each attitudinal orientation separately.

Each linear regression analysis consists of two models (Model 1 and 2) in which the independent variables are added in two blocks to analyse the added variables’ effect on both the independent variable and the goodness-of-fit of the model. The first model, i.e., the first block of variables contains the working-class variable and the basic sociodemographic variables (age, gender, and education). In the second model, the rest of the independent variables are added in the second block of variables: class of one’s childhood home and spouse’s occupation. The goodness-of-fit is measured by the adjusted $R^2$-value. The models are also tested for possible multicollinearity, autocorrelation, and heteroscedasticity.

7.3.1 Explaining socioeconomic orientation

The effect of independent variables on the working-class groups’ socioeconomic orientation is analysed by the linear regression (OLS) in this subchapter. The previous subchapter’s (7.2.1) sum variable—the socioeconomic orientation—is used as the operationalisation for the analysis’ dependent variable. The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 7.9.
The results show that childhood home class has a significant effect on socioeconomic orientation. A middle-class home, an upper-middle-class home, an entrepreneur home, or a farmer's home correlate with having more rightist than leftist socioeconomic orientation versus those from a working-class home. Additionally, the spouse’s occupation influence voters’ socioeconomic orientation. If the spouse is a senior white-collar salaried employee compared to a blue-collar employee, then the spouse’s occupation correlates with more rightist than leftist socioeconomic orientation. In addition, respondents, who do not have a spouse compared to those whose spouse is a blue-collar employee tend to have a more rightist socioeconomic orientation. An important finding is that those who belong to the ideological working class compared to the traditional working class and the groups that share both working-class identification correlate with having leftist socioeconomic orientation. This finding is statistically significant in the first and the second model. The coefficients also indicate that women tend to be socioeconomically more leftist than men. Regarding the level of education, having upper secondary education compared to primary education has an increasing effect on being socioeconomically right versus left. The significance of the regression analysis’ coefficients can be interpreted with the goodness-of-fit values, i.e., adjusted $R^2$. The values indicate how well the regression models fit the data. Regarding the goodness-of-fit of Models 1 and 2 (adjusted $R^2$), the values indicate that all the independent variables explain 7.7 per cent of the variance in socioeconomic orientation. The goodness-of-fit increases slightly when the class of the childhood home and spouse’s occupation are added to the model.
Table 7.9  The impact of sociodemographic variables, class (in)congruence, class of the childhood home, and spouse’s occupation on the socioeconomic orientation (0 = Socioeconomic left, 10 = Socioeconomic right). Results of OLS regression.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>5.626 (.232)***</td>
<td>5.513 (.239)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENDER (ref. Man)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>-.397 (.089)</td>
<td>-.462 (.090)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age in years</td>
<td>.015 (.002)</td>
<td>.013 (.003)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION (ref. Primary school)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary</td>
<td>.284 (.133)*</td>
<td>.275 (.132)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational school</td>
<td>-.169 (.183)</td>
<td>-.276 (.181)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polytechnic degree</td>
<td>.078 (.170)</td>
<td>-.051 (.170)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University degree</td>
<td>-.208 (.157)</td>
<td>-.406 (.162)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKING CLASS (ref. Traditional working class)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational working class</td>
<td>.162 (.148)</td>
<td>.033 (.148)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological working class</td>
<td>-.566 (.271)*</td>
<td>-.605 (.270)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLASS OF THE CHILDHOOD HOME (ref. Working-class home)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower middle-class home</td>
<td>-.046 (.156)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-class home</td>
<td>.452 (.121)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-middle-class home</td>
<td>.483 (.170)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur home</td>
<td>.388 (.129)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer home</td>
<td>.827 (.208)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPOUSE (ref. Blue-collar employee)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-collar salaried employee</td>
<td>.072 (.167)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior white-collar salaried employee</td>
<td>.521 (.142)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No spouse</td>
<td>.331 (.111)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>1570</td>
<td>1562</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: merged dataset: FNES 2015 & FNES 2019

Note: The entries reported are the unstandardised coefficients with the respective standard errors, *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001

Regression diagnostics

The linear regression includes an assumption that there is linearity and additivity between independent and dependent variable(s). In addition, the linear regression assumes that the dependent variable and the error terms, i.e., residuals, are normally distributed and follow constant variance (see more for OLS regression e.g., von Eye and Schuster, 1998; Hoffmann, 2016; Field, 2011). These general assumptions are tested with regression diagnostics. Hence multicollinearity, autocorrelation, and
homoscedasticity are tested using various statistical tests in this chapter’s linear regression analyses.

The multicollinearity of the independent variables is tested by the variance inflation factor (VIF) and with the tolerance value. Multicollinearity is a situation where two or more independent variables correlate with each other. Multicollinearity decreases the explanatory power because it cannot separate independent variables and predicted coefficients from each other. In this regression analysis, the highest VIF value is 2.265, and the highest tolerance value is below 1 (.994). Both values indicate that the risk for multicollinearity is low. Autocorrelation refers to the correlation between linear regression’s error terms and was tested with the Durbin-Watson approach that has values between 0 and 4. A value closer to 2, implies that error terms are less likely to correlate with each other. In this linear regression analysis, the Durbin-Watson test returned a value of 1.996, which indicates that the error terms are unlikely to correlate with each other.

Lastly, the regression analysis’ homoscedasticity has been tested by looking at the residuals, i.e., the error terms and their deviation. The presumption is that residuals’ mean is zero. According to the residual statistics, the mean of the residuals is zero, indicating that the error terms’ variance is almost the same for each independent variable. This indicates homoscedasticity and linear correlation between dependent and independent variables. Concerning the residuals, the mean of the Cook’s distance is 0.001 indicating no outliers in the regression model, showing a crucial influence. The dependent variable is normally distributed given the Central limit theorem. Here, the distribution of the means of a sufficiently large sample is approximately normally distributed. It assumes that the sampling distribution of the mean is normal in most cases, which applies to the FNES datasets. Therefore, separate testing for normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test) is not required in this chapter’s linear regression analysis.

7.3.2 Explaining sociocultural orientation

This subchapter presents the results of the linear regression (OLS regression), which tests the extent to which sociodemographic variables, working-class group, class of one’s childhood home, and spouse’s occupation affect the respondent's sociocultural
orientation. In other words, the results of the OLS regression indicate whether one of the study’s working-class groups correlates with more conservative or liberal sociocultural orientations when other important independent variables are controlled. The sociocultural orientation is measured with the sum variable from scale 0 to 10 in which 0 refers to conservative orientation, and 10 refers to liberal orientation. The coefficients of the regression analysis are reported in Table 7.10.

The results show that each sociodemographic variable statistically affects the sociocultural orientation. First, according to the results, women are socioculturally more liberal than conservative versus men; older people are more conservative. Second, the coefficients indicate that voters who have higher-levels of education are more liberal than conservative. Basically, the results indicate, that more educated people are also more liberal.

The results confirm the conclusions of the descriptive analyses (subchapter 7.2.2) that those respondents who belong to the occupational working class are more conservative in terms of their sociocultural orientation. As to the class of the childhood home, having an entrepreneur or farmer family background seems to be connected to conservative orientation on the sociocultural dimension versus a working-class family, which is set as the reference category. According to the results, a spouse’s occupation does not have a statistically significant effect on sociocultural orientation. The goodness-of-fit values do not differ much between models 1 and 2 indicating that adding a childhood home class and spouse’s occupation does not increase the value. Thus, all independent variables explain roughly 15 per cent of the variance in the sociocultural orientations.
Table 7.10  The impact of sociodemographic variables (age, gender, education), working class group, class of the childhood home and spouse’s occupation on sociocultural orientation (0 = Conservative, 10=Liberal). Results of OLS regression.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>5.174 (.185)***</td>
<td>5.143 (.192)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENDER (ref. Man)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>.600 (.071)***</td>
<td>.623 (.073)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age in years</td>
<td>-.014 (.002)***</td>
<td>-.013 (.002)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION (ref. Primary school)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary</td>
<td>.091 (.106)</td>
<td>.096 (.106)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational school</td>
<td>.759 (.146)***</td>
<td>.766 (.147)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polytechnic degree</td>
<td>.562 (.146)***</td>
<td>.574(.137)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University degree</td>
<td>.851 (.125)***</td>
<td>.867 (.131)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKING CLASS (Ref. Traditional working class)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational working class</td>
<td>-.293 (.118)*</td>
<td>-.260 (.119)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological working class</td>
<td>-.288 (.216)</td>
<td>-.232 (.217)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLASS OF THE CHILDHOOD HOME (Ref. Working class home)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower middle-class home</td>
<td>.143 (.126)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-class home</td>
<td>-.086 (.097)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-middle-class home</td>
<td>-.049 (.137)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur home</td>
<td>-.458 (.168)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer home</td>
<td>-.241 (.104)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPOUSE (Ref. Blue-collar employee)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-collar salaried employee</td>
<td>.101 (.135)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior white-collar salaried employee</td>
<td>-.103 (.115)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No spouse</td>
<td>-.097 (.089)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(1570)</td>
<td>(1562)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: merged dataset: FNES 2015 & 2019

Note: The entries reported are the unstandardised coefficients with the respective standard errors, *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.

Regression diagnostics

Similar to the previous linear regression analysis, multicollinearity, autocorrelation, and homoscedasticity were tested using linear regression analysis and other statistical analyses. The multicollinearity of the independent variables was tested with the VIF value and with the tolerance value. The VIF and tolerance remain the same because
the independent variables remained unchanged from the previous linear regression. The highest VIF value is 2.265, and the highest tolerance value is below 1 (.994). Both values indicate that the risk for multicollinearity is low. Autocorrelation is analysed using the Durbin-Watson test. The value of the Durbin-Watson test is 1.871, close to 2, indicating that the error terms unlikely correlate with each other.

The regression analysis’ homoscedasticity was tested by looking at the residuals, i.e., the error terms and more specifically their deviation. According to the residual statistics, the mean of the residuals is zero, which means that the error terms’ variance is almost the same for each independent variable. This indicates the existence of homoscedasticity and linear connection between dependent and independent variables. The mean of the Cook’s distance is .001, which indicates that there does not exist significant outliers in the regression model.

In addition, the dependent variable is normally distributed given the Central limit theorem explained in more detail in the previous section on linear regression (subchapter 7.3.1).

7.3.3 Explaining attitudes towards the EU

The working-class groups’ attitudes towards the EU are also analysed with a linear regression analysis. The EU attitudes among the voters are measured with the same statement, which concerns the respondent’s attitude towards Finland’s decreasing commitment to the EU. The response scale is 0-10 in which 0 refers to ‘strongly disagreeing’ and 10 refers to ‘strongly agreeing’. This shows that values towards 10 indicate opposing attitudes towards the stronger commitment, and values towards 0 indicate supportive attitudes towards the stronger commitment. The independent variables and reference categories are the same as in the previous regression analyses presented in this chapter. The results of the linear regression analysis are compiled in Table 7.11.

The results show that women are more supportive of the EU than men. Additionally, younger age has a small effect on being supportive towards Finland’s commitment to the EU. This means that younger respondents are more supportive of the EU than the older ones. As expected, higher education leads to more supportive attitudes towards the EU. Upper secondary education, vocational school, polytechnic degrees, and university degree all have an increasing effect on the supportive attitudes towards the EU versus primary education.
Table 7.11  The impact of sociodemographic variables, working class group, class of the childhood home, and spouse’s occupation on the attitudes towards Finland’s decreasing commitment to the EU (0 = Strongly disagreeing, 10 = strongly agreeing). Results of OLS regression.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>5.171 (.334)**</td>
<td>5.512 (.346)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (ref. Man)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>-.269 (.128)*</td>
<td>-.266 (.130)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.013 (.004)**</td>
<td>.010 (.004)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (Ref. Primary school)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary</td>
<td>.152 (.191)**</td>
<td>.126 (.191)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational education</td>
<td>-.832 (.263)</td>
<td>-.695 (.265)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polytechnic degree</td>
<td>-.953 (.244)**</td>
<td>-.843 (.247)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University degree</td>
<td>-.1720 (.226)**</td>
<td>-.1509 (.235)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working class (Ref. Traditional working class)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational working class</td>
<td>.295 (.213)</td>
<td>.376 (.215)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological working class</td>
<td>-.221 (.389)</td>
<td>-.372 (.391)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class of the childhood home (ref. Working-class home)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower middle-class home</td>
<td>-.652 (.227)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-class home</td>
<td>-.493 (.175)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-middle-class home</td>
<td>-.711 (.246)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur home</td>
<td>-.364 (.302)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer home</td>
<td>.176 (.188)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse (Ref. Blue-collar employee)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-collar salaried employee</td>
<td>.087 (.244)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior white-collar salaried employee</td>
<td>-.117 (.226)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No spouse</td>
<td>-.001 (.161)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(1570)</td>
<td>(1562)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: merged dataset: FNES 2015 & FNES 2019

Note: The entries are the unstandardised coefficients with the respective standard errors, *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.

A lower-middle-class, a middle-class, or an upper-middle-class childhood home affected being opposed to Finland’s commitment to the EU compared to a working-class home. In other words, a higher SES-family correlates with having more supportive attitudes towards the EU in adulthood. This analysis does not indicate any statistically significant differences between the three working-class groups in terms of their EU attitudes. Regarding the goodness-of-fit values, i.e., adjusted R²,
Models 1 and 2 do not differ from each other. Independent variables explain 10 per cent of the variance in working-class voters’ EU attitudes measured with the statement on Finland’s commitment to the EU.

**Regression diagnostics**

Regression diagnostics tests regarding multicollinearity, autocorrelation, and homoscedasticity are conducted similar to the previous linear regression analyses. The results of the test indicate that the multicollinearity risk in the models is low. According to the residual statistics, the mean of the residuals is zero revealing that the error terms’ variance is almost the same for each independent variable. Additionally, the mean of the Cook’s distance is .001 indicating no single outliers in the models, which influences the regression model. Finally, the dependent variable, EU-orientation, is normally distributed based on the central limit theorem.

### 7.4 Main findings

This chapter examined the extent to which class incongruence affects working-class voters’ attitudinal orientations in terms of their socioeconomic, sociocultural, and EU attitudes. In other words, it sought to determine whether the three working-class groups differ from each other regarding their attitudinal orientations, and if they do, then how? Sociocultural, socioeconomic orientations, and attitudes towards the EU were selected as the analysis based on previous literature on voters’ values and attitudes towards Finland.

The key results are summarised in Table 7.12 and presented in relation to the hypotheses in Table 7.13. The results suggest that the traditional, occupational, and ideological working classes differ from each other based on their sociocultural and socioeconomic orientation, but not by their EU attitudes when the gender, age, education, class of the childhood home, and spouse’s occupation are controlled. Nevertheless, the descriptive analysis showed statistically significant differences between the three working-class groups concerning their EU attitudes. The results show that the ideological working class is more towards the left based on their
socioeconomic orientation whereas the occupational working class is more towards conservative attitudes in terms of their sociocultural orientation.

**Table 7.12** The summary of the results of OLS regressions regarding sociocultural orientation and the EU attitudes. The statistically significant coefficients from the full model (Model 2) are listed in the table. Here, ‘+’ refers to an increasing effect, and ‘–’ refers to a decreasing effect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Socioeconomic orientation: (-) Left - Right (+)</th>
<th>Sociocultural orientation: (-) Conservative-Liberal (+)</th>
<th>Finland’s decreasing commitment to the EU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GENDER</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Ref.</td>
<td>Ref.</td>
<td>Ref.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age in years</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDUCATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary education</td>
<td>Ref.</td>
<td>Ref.</td>
<td>Ref.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational school</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polytechnic degree</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University degree</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CLASS OF THE CHILDHOOD HOME</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working-class</td>
<td>Ref.</td>
<td>Ref.</td>
<td>Ref.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower middle class</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper middle class</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur home</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer home</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPOUSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-collar employee</td>
<td>Ref.</td>
<td>Ref.</td>
<td>Ref.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-collar salaried employee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior white-collar salaried employee</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No spouse</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORKING-CLASS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional working class</td>
<td>Ref.</td>
<td>Ref.</td>
<td>Ref.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational working class</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological working class</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Middle-class homes, upper-middle-class homes, farmer homes, and entrepreneur homes correlate with more rightist socioeconomic orientation compared to the working-class childhood home. In other words, the results suggest that a working-class childhood home is connected to leftist socioeconomic orientation in adulthood.
As to the sociocultural orientation, coming from either an entrepreneur or a farmer childhood home correlates with being conservative more than liberal in adulthood. In addition, a lower-middle-class, a middle class, or an upper-middle-class childhood home correlates with having more supportive attitudes towards the EU. A spouse’s occupation affects the socioeconomic orientation. However, the analyses did not find any significant effect on sociocultural orientation or the EU attitudes. Furthermore, the results indicate that education has a significant role in explaining sociocultural orientation and EU attitudes. It seems that a higher level of education correlates with liberal sociocultural orientations and supports attitudes towards the EU. In terms of the class of the childhood home, higher education has a strong impact on socioeconomic orientation.

The goodness-of-fit values are not relatively high in the regression analyses. The given sociodemographic variables are approximately 10 per cent of the variance in working-class groups’ attitudinal orientations. This shows that several other factors exist that affect the attitudinal orientations but are not controlled in the analyses. These factors could be macro-level factors such as the current topics in the Finnish media and daily politics. However, most of the study’s central independent variables have a significant impact on the working-class groups’ attitudinal orientations. These results are an important background for the next chapter’s analyses, which look at prospect predictors of the working class’ party choices.

Table 7.13 The main results concerning the hypotheses (H6–H9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H6</th>
<th>The attitudinal orientations vary significantly among the study's three working-class groups.</th>
<th>Moderately supported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H7</td>
<td>Working-class identification increases the likelihood of having more liberal sociocultural orientation.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H8</td>
<td>Working-class identification increases the likelihood of having a more leftist socioeconomic orientation.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H9</td>
<td>If the occupational group is a blue-collar employee, then it increases the likelihood of having a more critical orientation towards Finland’s commitment to the EU.</td>
<td>Moderately supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results support only some of the hypotheses (see Table 7.13). Hypothesis 6 gets moderate support because the analyses distinguished variation of the three working-class groups’ socioeconomic and sociocultural orientations. Hypothesis 7 is also supported. The linear regression analysis showed that the working-class group,
which does not have working-class identification, i.e., occupational working-class, tends to be more conservative than liberal. Hypothesis 8 gets support due to the finding that the ideological working-class possesses a more leftist socioeconomic orientation than the traditional working class. Despite this, the analysis did not find a correlation between leftist socioeconomic orientation and the traditional working class that shares the working-class identification. Thus, Hypothesis 8 is not supported.

Finally, Hypothesis 9 gets moderate support. The traditional working class and the occupational working class, who are blue-collar employees by their occupation, stood out as being slightly more critical towards the EU than the ideological working class. This notion is based solely on descriptive scrutiny. Moreover, more supportive attitudes towards the EU among the ideological working class may derive from their generally higher level of education compared to the traditional and the occupational working classes. Naturally, education and occupation correlate. The multicollinearity tests did not indicate any risk for multicollinearity in the regression models. Overall, the most important finding is that the respondents of the traditional working class, the occupational working class, and the ideological working class differ statistically from each other based on socioeconomic and sociocultural orientations.
8 EXPLAINING WORKING-CLASS VOTING BOTH WITH CLASS (IN)CONGRUENCE AND ATTITUDINAL ORIENTATIONS

We previously analysed the determinants of class incongruence and the attitudinal orientations of the three working-class groups. This chapter tackles the study’s third research question:

- How does the class (in)congruence affect party choice among the Finnish working class?

The analyses seek to distinguish the direct and indirect effects of both class incongruence and attitudinal orientation on party choice.

The chapter is structured as follows: First, subchapter 8.1. gives a general introduction to the 21st century’s Finnish parliamentary elections. Subchapters 8.1.1. – 8.1.5. summarise each of the key points of every parliamentary election 2003–2019 such as the winners and losers of the election, the changes in the government coalitions, and the central campaign issues and the important notions regarding working-class voting. After focusing on the macro-level events, subchapter 8.2. presents the research model and the hypotheses. Subchapter 8.3. looks more closely at the trends in the working-class voters’ party choices in every parliamentary election in the 21st century.

Both subchapters 8.4. and 8.5. explain the working-class vote in Finland. Subchapter 8.4. conducts a multinomial structural regression analysis to assess the effects of the key independent variables, i.e., education, class of the childhood home, class incongruence and attitudinal orientations, on working-class voters’ party choice. The final analysis, a path model, is conducted in subchapter 8.5. The path model enables us to analyse the extent to which class incongruence directly affects party choice or indirectly affects party choice via the working-class voters’ attitudinal orientations. The closing subchapter 8.6 summarises this chapter’s main findings.
8.1 The parliamentary elections and the election results in 21st century Finland

This chapter outlines the 21st century’s five parliamentary elections in Finland: 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019. Each election’s macro-level characteristics are discussed in separate subchapters (8.1.1–8.1.5). The focus is primarily on the election results and the parties’ changing support, but also on the campaigns and the macro-level conditions, campaign themes, and government coalitions relevant to working-class voting. Furthermore, each subchapter aims to distinguish those factors that explain the fluctuation in the traditional working-class parties’ support, i.e., the SDP and the Left Alliance. Each subchapter summarises each election’s most distinguishing features.

The results of the five parliamentary elections are presented in Figure 8.1. As discussed earlier in subchapter 4.2.1, the Finnish party system was ‘frozen’ for many decades (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). The ‘frozenness’ referred to both the stability of political parties and the voters’ political behaviour. However, Finland’s stable party system started to fracture in the 21st century due to changes in the occupational and economic structure. These changes have been discussed in Chapters 1.2 and 4.1. The consequences of the structural changes are easily seen in the election results and the parties’ support since the 2010s.

Figure 8.1 illustrates how the support for the traditional three large parties (the Centre Party, the NCP, and the SDP) has declined. More strikingly, none of the parties managed to win more than 20 per cent of the popular vote in the 2019 election. After the 2011 election, the Finnish party system consisted of four middle-sized parties, whose support varied between 15 and 18 per cent, along with four smaller parties. However, only three parties managed to get more than 15 per cent of the vote in the 2019 election: the SDP, the Finns Party, and the NCP. After the election, the general opinion was five middle-sized parties in the Finnish political arena: the Centre Party, the Finns Party, the Green League, the NCP, and the SDP.

The voters’ support has been stable for couple of recent decades in the Finnish party system for the small parties: the Christian Democrats and the Swedish People’s Party of Finland. The support for the Left Alliance was on a steady decline at the beginning of the 21st century. However, in 2019, the party recorded an increase in support. On the contrary, the support for the Green League gradually increased, except for 2011, when the party’s support has declined by 1.2 percentage points from the previous parliamentary election.
Including the support for the Blue Reform, which was 1.0 per cent in the 2019 election.

Note: each party’s Finnish abbreviation in brackets.

Figure 8.1 The election results of the Finnish parliamentary elections 2003–2019. The support figures of the eight parliament parties, other smaller parties, and constituency associations in total (share of votes, %).

*) Including the support for the Blue Reform, which was 1.0 per cent in the 2019 election.

The support for the left-wing parties, in total, declined during the 21st century (see Table 8.1). The combined support refers to the sum of the support for the SDP and the Left Alliance. The combined support declined by 8.7 percentage points between the 2003 election and the 2019 election. Before the 2019 election, the downward trend had been fairly steep, and the left-wing parties eventually
achieved moderate success. While approximately every third voter voted for a left-wing party in the 2003 election, approximately every fourth voter voted for the party in the 2019 election.

Table 8.1 The combined support for the Left-wing parties in the 21st century’s parliamentary elections (the SDP and the Left Alliance). Share of votes (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Support (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.1.1 The 2003 parliamentary election

Two “rainbow coalitions” (Lipponen I Cabinet and II Cabinet) had ruled in Finland for two election periods before the parliamentary election of 2003. The Prime minister Lipponen’s (SDP) first cabinet (1995–1999) was composed of a coalition of five parties: the SDP, the National Coalition Party (the NCP), the Swedish People’s Party, the Left Alliance, and the Green League. The second cabinet (1999–2003) was based on the cooperation between the SDP and the NCP, but remained a rainbow coalition, since the Swedish People’s Party, the Left Alliance and the Green League continued in the government. When the government decided to build Finland’s first nuclear plant in May 2002, the Green League left the coalition. The closer the 2003 election came, the more actively the Centre Party tried to make its way out of the opposition (Arter, 2003).

The new constitution of Finland came into force in March 2000 and affected the 2003 election. For the first time in Finland’s history, the prime minister was supposed to be elected by the parliament according to the new constitution. Therefore, the media started to use the term ‘the election of a prime minister’ and the largest parties emphasized their prime minister candidates in their campaigns. The former prime minister of the SDP campaigned that voters should decide between the current SDP’s red-blue government coalition and the centre-right coalition. However, parties were unwilling to take a stand on their favourite coalition partners in their election campaigns. (Pesonen and Borg 2005, pp. 28-30).
In the election spring 2003, there was a general concern about the possible low turnout rate. Various politicians and organizations sought to encourage citizens to use their right to vote. The Central Organisation of the Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) in particular carried out a prominent and provocative campaign that encouraged all employees to participate in the election. SAK’s election posters and advertisements illustrated the confrontation between the employees and the employers. Most likely, the campaign aimed to activate those blue-collar employees who had stayed at home in the previous elections. The conservative players criticised that the left-wing parties conducted hidden election advertisement campaigns (ibid. 2005, 30-31.)

The Centre Party won the 2003 election with a far higher level of support in the 21st century by winning 24.7 per cent of the popular vote. The party became the largest party by votes and seats. It increased its number of seats by 7 and got 55 seats in total. The SDP came second with 24.5 per cent of the vote even though it managed to increase its support from the 1999 election with 1.6 percentage points. The Green League (8.0%) and the Finns Party (1.6%) also were election winners in 2003. The National Coalition Party (2003: 18.6%) lost the most seats and votes. The Left Alliance support (2003: 9.9%) declined by 1.0 percentage points from the previous election, and it lost one seat in the parliament. The 2003 election was not victorious for the Swedish People’s Party. It saw its support drop by 0.5 percentage points, but the decline caused a three-seat loss in the parliament for the party (Ministry of Justice, 2020).
Table 8.2  Summary of the 2003 parliamentary election.

| Election winners | Centre Party, +2.6% / + 4 seats  
| Green League, +0.7% / +3 seats  
| Finns Party, +0.6% / +2 seats |
| Election losers | SDP, -5.4% / -12 seats  
| NCP, -2.5% / -6 seats |
| General remarks on election campaigns | The change in Finland’s constitution in 2000 caused the parties to emphasise their prime minister candidates in their campaigns.  
| The SDP’s party leader, Paavo Lipponen, and the Centre Party’s party leader, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, debated on Finland’s foreign affairs regarding Finland’s relations with the USA and possible participation in the ongoing Iraq-war. |
| Remarks on working-class voting | SAK’s provocative election campaign aimed to influence blue-collar employees to actively use their right to vote. |

8.1.2  The 2007 parliamentary election

After the 2003 parliamentary election, the winner of the election, the Centre Party, formed a centre-left government coalition with the SDP and the Swedish People’s Party. The government’s prime minister, Anneli Jäätteenmäki (Centre Party) was Finland’s first female prime minister. However, her cabinet did not survive for a long time (only for 69 days): Anneli Jäätteenmäki resigned due to her involvement in the information leak regarding the Foreign Ministry’s classified Iraq documents. The Centre Party’s deputy chairman at that time, Matti Vanhanen, became the new prime minister in June 2003, and the previously formed government coalition with the SDP and the Swedish People’s Party remained the same. Vanhanen’s first cabinet was in operation until the parliamentary election in the spring of 2007.

Many have considered the 2007 election unsurprising. The opinion polls indicated stable party support rates during the entire election period. The Centre
Party and the SDP led, and the most exciting aspect of the election seemed to be the two parties’ race for the premiership. This partly explains why many of the parties started their campaigns late in the winter of 2007. Only the main underdog party, the NCP, began its campaign before the new year (Moring and Mykkänen, 2008, p. 28).

The Central Organisation of the Finnish Trade Unions, SAK, had already had a rather provocative campaign in the 2003 election. However, in the election in the spring of 2007, SAK released an even more provocative TV campaign that was negative towards the political right. In the TV commercial, a loudmouth employer sits at the dining table, feasts on a massive amount of food, and makes fun of employees who do not dare to vote. Additionally, the SDP election advert criticized the right-wing parties and actors. Eventually, the National Coalition Party managed to gain an advantage from the SAK’s nearly scandalous campaign because the campaign was pushing the voters of the NCP to use their right to vote (Ibid., pp. 28-46).

Although the Centre Party obtained the largest share of votes (23.1%), the real winner of the 2007 elections was the National Coalition Party (NCP). Its support (22.3%) increased by 3.7 percentage points in the 2003 election, and the party won 10 more seats. The SDP’s share of the votes decreased by 3 percentage points, and it settled for third place with 21.4%. The support for the SDP declined more significantly between elections 2003 and 2007 than the support for the Centre Party. The SAK’s provocative campaign failed to encourage enough employees to go to the ballot boxes. Instead, it might have increased the support of the employer-side, namely the NCP (Ibid. 44).

Other election winners were the Green League and the Finns Party. The latter increased its support by 3.5 percentage points from the previous parliamentary election. The Green League increased its support by 0.5 percentage points. The support for the left-wing parties declined: The Left Alliance lost 1.1 percentage points of its vote share compared to the 2003 election results.

Voter turnout declined by 1.8 percentage points, from 69.7 per cent in 2003 to 67.9 per cent in 2007. Voter turnout has also been far lower since the war period. The 2007 election also changed the government’s composition from the SDP defeat and the Coalition Party victory. However, the prime minister was elected from The Centre Party revealing that the former prime minister (Matti Vanhanen) was re-elected and led the government negotiations. Vanhanen’s second cabinet was a conservative-right coalition formed by the Centre Party, the NCP, the Green League, and the Swedish People’s Party. The Finns Party was the only party of the election winners that failed to enter the government (Borg and Paloheimo, 2008, pp. 16–19).
Table 8.3   Summary of the 2007 parliamentary election.

| Election winners | NCP, +3.7% / + 10 seats  
|                 | Green League, +0.5% / + 1 seat  
|                 | Finns Party, +2.5% / +2 seats  
| Election losers  | SDP, -3.0% / -8 seats  
|                 | Left Alliance, -1.1% / -2 seats  
|                 | Centre Party, -1.6% / -4 seats  
| General remarks on election campaigns | The election was considered boring, rather predictable, and the parties began their campaigns fairly late.  
| Remarks on working-class voting | The SAK organised a more provocative campaign than in 2003. Eventually, SAK decided to suspend the campaign due to a lot of criticism. The SDP had also its election advertisements and criticised the right-wing parties and actors.  

8.1.3   The 2011 parliamentary election

The global economic situation changed dramatically during the parliamentary term 2007–2011 and significantly affected Vanhanen’s second term in the cabinet and its ability to execute the government’s agenda. Furthermore, the campaign funding scandal took place in the spring of 2009 in the first parliamentary year of the new government. The scandal implicated many MPs, particularly those from the NCP and the Centre Party. They had not made their campaign funding public during the 2007 parliamentary election. The concern was about the Finland of Developing Regions organisation\(^{53}\), which passed 400,000 euros to the NCP and the Centre Party during the 2007–2011 election (Pernaa, 2012; Mattila and Sundberg, 2012).

Due to the campaign finance scandal, Matti Vanhanen voluntarily left his post as the Centre Party’s party leader. He also resigned from his prime ministership post in the summer of 2010. The Centre Party elected a new leader, Mari Kiviniemi, who was appointed as Finland’s new prime minister. The coalition of Kiviniemi cabinet was similar to Vanhanen cabinet, which ran the office between 2007 and 2010 (Pernaa, 2012, pp. 30-31).

\(^{53}\) In Finnish: Kehittyvien Maakuntien Suomi, KMS
In the 2011 parliamentary election run-up, the European debt crisis and the difficulties in the global economy provoked the political debate. The immigration policy guidelines also heightened the political agenda due to the economic crisis and the increasing unemployment rates. The debate was favourable for the Finns Party. The debate on immigration was more active at the beginning of 2010 when the SDP’s current party leader, Jutta Urpilainen, announced that the party was preparing a new immigration programme. The SDP’s programme represented a pro-immigration perspective making the immigration critics sharpen their views. (ibid. 31-32).

Both the municipal election in 2008 and the European Parliament election in 2009 offered support for the NCP and the Finns Party. The pre-election polls showed increasing support for the Finns Party after the summer of 2010. The polls speculated whether major support was for the party leader, Timo Soini, or for the party itself. However, Soini was a member of the European Parliament in 2009–2011 showing that his party was becoming more popular in Finland even though he was apart from the domestic politics (ibid. 32–33).

The most significant changes in the 2011 election took place in the Finns Party’s and the Centre Party’s support. The Finns Party was the winner of the election, while the Centre Party suffered the heaviest defeat. The election victory of the Finns Party was both historical and unique. Despite the pre-election outcome, polls had predicted a sharp increase in the Finns Party’s support; the party’s actual share of votes was a considerable surprise on the election day. The party’s support increased by 15 percentage points within four years from the 2007 parliamentary election, and the party secured 34 more seats in the Finnish parliament. The increase in the Finns Party’s support was so significant that it inevitably caused a decline in other parliamentary parties’ support (Borg, 2012, pp.19–20). Additionally, previous studies indicated that the volatility rate was historically high in the 2011 election (e.g., Söderlund, 2016).

In the 2011 election, voters used their right to vote more actively than in the two previous parliamentary elections. Turnout was 70.5 per cent, which was 2.6 percentage points higher than in 2007. The former prime minister party, the Centre Party, decreased its support by 7.3 percentage points. Other established parties’ electoral support also declined, and they lost seats in the parliament, but not dramatically. The NCP won the election with 20.4 per cent, which was 1.9 percentage points less than the 2007 election. The SDP came second with a 19.1 per cent share of the votes. Its support rate declined by 2.3 percentage points. The SDP and the Finns Party got the same share of votes (19.1%), but the SDP’s final number of votes
was larger than that of the Finns Party. However, it was larger only with approximately 1,500 votes (Borg, 2012, p. 20).

The Green League lost a relatively large share of the votes. Its support dropped from 8.5 per cent (2007) to 7.3 per cent. The party also changed its leader in the party conference a couple of months after the 2011 election when Anni Sinnemäki left her duty as the party leader, and Ville Niinistö got elected as the party’s new leader. Besides the Finns Party the Swedish People’s party was the only party that did not lose any seats in the parliament.

The 2011 election result changed the power ratio between the parliamentary parties. The traditional old large parties—the SDP, the Centre Party, and the NCP—all lost 11.5 percentage points of the total vote share and 27 seats in the parliament. After the 2011 parliamentary election, four middle-sized parties emerged in the Finnish parliament instead of three large parties.

Table 8.4 The summary of the 2011 parliamentary election.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election winners</th>
<th>Finns Party, +15.0% / +34 seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Election losers</td>
<td>Centre Party, -7.4% / -16 seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NCP, -1.9% / -6 seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SDP, -2.3% / -3 seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green League, -1.2% / -5 seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General remarks on election campaigns</td>
<td>The campaign finance scandal of 2008 was still ongoing during the 2011 election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The global financial crisis in 2008 along with the euro crisis increased political debates on Finland’s economy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The guidelines of Finland’s immigration policy rose to the political agenda due to the economic crisis and growing unemployment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remarks on working-class voting</td>
<td>Both the euro-crisis and the immigration policy-related issues were favourable for the Finns Party. The party stood clearly out from other parties by opposing the EU’s financial support package to Greece in late 2010.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.1.4 The 2015 parliamentary election

After the 2011 election, the winning National Coalition Party (NCP) began the government negotiations. The NCP’s party leader at that time, Jyrki Katainen, was appointed as the new prime minister. The coalition of Katainen cabinet was formed with six parliamentary parties: the NCP, the SDP, the Green League, the Left Alliance, the Christian Democrats, and the Swedish People’s party. The large coalition lasted until the spring of 2014 when the Left Alliance quit because they were dissatisfied with the government’s cuts and taxes. Soon after, prime minister Katainen was elected as an MP in the European Parliament, and he resigned from both the party leadership and the prime ministership in June 2014. The former MP Alexander Stubb was elected as the party’s new leader and was chosen to be the next prime minister. Stubb cabinet was formed by the same parties as Katainen cabinet except the Left Alliance. The strength of Stubb’s government declined because they won 101 seats out of 200 in the parliament after the Green League left the government in September 2014. The party did not accept the government’s decision to construct a new nuclear power plant. In summary, the years of the Katainen’s cabinet 2011–2015 were turbulent (Hämäläinen, 2016, pp. 46-57).

In the spring 2015 election, there was a lot of criticism towards Stubb’s government. Additionally, the relations between the two largest government parties, the NCP, and the SDP, were strained. Meanwhile, the Centre Party increased its opposition, and the pre-election opinion polls predicted a clear election victory for the party. Furthermore, the polls predicted competition between the NCP, the SDP, and the Finns Party. (Grönlund, 2016, p. 58.)

Votes counting on election night was a thriller. The parties’ placements changed constantly. However, the counting of the advance votes was postponed, which made it even more difficult to predict the election result. The parties’ electoral support varied between the advance votes and the election day votes. The Finns Party got the fourth largest share of the advance votes (16.0%) after the Centre Party (23.6%), the NCP (17.6%), and the SDP (17.9%). However, the Finns Party won the largest share of the votes on the election day, which secured third place with 17.7 per cent share of the total votes. The Centre Party’s support in the advance votes was close to its total share in the pre-election opinion polls (23.6%). Its support was considered more modest on the actual election day. The Centre Party won the election despite the contradiction in the advance votes and the election day votes. The party got a 21.1 per cent share of the total votes, which was 5.3 percentage points more than
the previous election in 2011. The turnout rate was 70.1 per cent and remained almost the same as in the 2011 election. (Nurmi and Nurmi, 2015; Grönlund, 2016, pp. 58-60.)

Other than the Centre Party and the Green League, all other parties lost their support from the 2011 election. The SDP secured its historically worst parliamentary election results, only 16.5 per cent of the votes, which opinion polls had already predicted. The change of the party’s leader from Jutta Urpilainen to former trade union leader Antti Rinne’s strained relations with the NCP in the government and affected the party’s support unfavourably54. The decent support rates on election day improved both the National Coalition’s and the Finns Party’s general support. The NCP received the second-largest support in votes (18.2%) but received one seat in the parliament lower than the seats received by the Finns Party. The Finns Party’s support in votes (17.7%) was less than the NCP’s support due to the proportional representation (ibid. 59–61.)

The Green League and the Left Alliance also compete for the votes. Their competition proved that the final election result could change significantly from the advance voting rates. The Left Alliance got 0.7 percentage points more for the advance votes, but the Green League still managed to receive a share of the votes on election day. The Left Alliance (7.1%) was behind the Green League (8.5%) for the first time in history. The election result was the worst for the Left Alliance’s history, whereas the Green League got its highest support rate in the parliamentary elections. (Nurmi and Nurmi, 2015; Grönlund, 2016; see also Raunio, 2015.)

54 Antti Rinne beat the incumbent, party leader, Jutta Urpilainen, narrowly with a margin of 14 votes in the SDP’s party conference in May 2014. From his political profile, Rinne was different from Urpilainen. He was a former trade union leader lacking experience of the Finnish parliamentary politics. There was a strong belief in the party that Rinne could strengthen the linkage between the SDP and the trade unions and thus collect the votes of the metal and paper workers. His political views were also seen more leftist compared to those of Urpilainen (see Raunio and Laine, 2017, p. 95).
Table 8.5  The summary of the 2015 parliamentary election.

| Election winners         | The Centre Party, +5.3 % / +14 seats  
The Green League, +1.3 % / +5 seats |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Election losers          | The SDP, -2.6 % / -8 seats            
The NCP, -2.2 % / -7 seats          
The Left Alliance -1.0 % / -2 seats |
| General remarks on election campaigns | A lot of criticism towards the government was due to Stubb’s government public sector cuts. Turbulent relations between the two largest government parties: the NCP and the SDP. The Centre party led the opinion polls several months before the election; the hardest battle was fought for second place between the NCP, the SDP, and the Finns Party. |
| Remarks on working-class voting | Historically low support for the SDP and the Left Alliance in the parliamentary elections. |

8.1.5  The 2019 parliamentary election

After the 2015 election, prime minister Juha Sipilä (the Centre Party) formed the new government with the Finns Party and the NCP. In June 2017, the Finns Party, elected a new party leader. A couple of months earlier, the party’s leader for 20 years, Timo Soini, announced that he would no longer run for the party leader’s position in the next election. Nomination for a new party leader led to competition between Sampo Terho and Jussi Halla-aho. The latter was known especially for his critical views on immigration. Terho was seen to continue Soini’s heritage. At the party conference, all party chairpeople were replaced. Jussi Halla-aho was elected as the party’s new leader. The shift in the party leader changed the party’s political profile. After the party conference, a small majority of the original party’s MP’s members resigned from the parliamentary group including the minister of the party. This resigned group founded their independent parliamentary group, which was named the Blue Reform. Generally, the supporters of Halla-aho had more critical views on immigration policy, asylum seekers, media, academic research, and they argued that
Finnish citizenship was influenced by ethnicity (Westinen, Pitkänen, Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2020, p. 308; see also Pitkänen and Westinen, 2019).

The most important event during the parliament term 2011 – 2015 was the split of the Finns Party (see also Chapter 4.2.1). Despite the split, Sipilä’s cabinet was running the office. The Finns Party’s new party leader Jussi Halla-aho led the opposition, and the new party split from the Finns Party. Blue Reform continued in the government with the Centre Party and the NCP (Borg, Kestilä-Kekkonen and Wass, 2020, p. 50).

Even though the Sipilä cabinet remained in office in the entire parliamentary term 2015–2019, the legislative period included several issues, which undermined its position. The social and healthcare reform, regional reform, immigration policy, climate change, public sector cuts and savings, and elderly care were important political issues actively discussed while the Sipilä cabinet was in the office. In the run-up for the parliamentary election of 2019, all these issues started to favour the opposition parties and particularly the left-wing parties. Simultaneously, the government parties’ popularity began to decline. The SDP was leading in the polls already in the summer of 2018. Social policy-related issues and elderly care were considered favourable topics for the SDP (Borg, Kestilä-Kekkonen and Wass, 2020, pp. 50-1).

In the spring 2019 election, issues related to the economic situation, employment, and social and healthcare reform no longer dominated the public debate. The debate around climate change gained ground in the campaign of several parties. The media boosted active conversations on climate change, sustainability, and the environment. For instance, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report special report on global warming received a lot of publicity in the Finnish media by the end of 2018. The Finns Party stood out from other parties with its more critical attitude on climate change. The party emphasised Finland’s small role in global warming. The other parliamentary parties seemed to have a consensus on Finland’s environmental strategies and policy. The Finns Party’s support rates increased due to the sexual crimes in the region of Ostrobothnia that were committed by immigrants in the end of the year 2018 and the beginning of the year 2019. In the election of spring 2019, both the SDP and the Finns Party continued to rise in the polls together with the Green League revealing that Sipilä’s government could no longer sit in a politically high-powered position. In March 2018, Sipilä asked permission from president Sauli Niinistö to dissolve the Sipilä cabinet. The government coalition’s cooperation broke down due to the health and social services reform’s disintegration in the Finnish parliament. The Sipilä cabinet continued as a caretaker coalition until the
new government coalition was formed after the 2019 election (Borg, Kestilä-Kekkonen and Wass, 2020, 52; Raunio, 2019; Mykkänen, 2019).

The parties’ support rates were historically close to each other in the 2019 parliamentary election. The pre-election polls had predicted competition between the SDP, the Finns Party, and the NCP. The SDP won the election narrowly with 17.7 per cent of all votes cast. The Finns Party came second with 17.5 per cent and the NCP got the third-largest share of the votes at 17.0 per cent. The NCP’s support rate declined (-1.2 percentage points from that of the 2015 election results) due to its government responsibility. However, the Centre Party suffered much more from the government's responsibility. The Centre Party’s support rate declined by 7.3 percentage points from the 2015 election. It was the party’s historically lowest result in 100 years at only 13.8 per cent. Blue Reform was another election loser: Its support was only 1.0 per cent, and therefore the new parliamentary group did not manage to get any seats in the parliament. Instead, the Green League increased its support from the 2015 election at 3.0 percentage points. Additionally, the Left Alliance increased its support by one percentage point and got 8.2 per cent support (ibid. 52–3; Borg, 2019; Raunio, 2019).

The turnout increased in the 2019 elections: It was 72.1 per cent, which was 2.0 percentage points higher than in the 2015 election indicating increased interest in politics, election, and voting. The turnout rate especially increased among 18-24-year-olds among which turnout was 8 percentage points higher than in 2015 (ibid., 53). Altogether, 94 women got elected to the parliament, which was 11 more than in 2015. Hereby, the relative share of female MP’s increased from 41.5 per cent (2015–2019) to 47.0 per cent from 2019 onwards. This was the largest share of female MP’s among all European countries. The share of women also increased in the government. The SDP’s current party leader at the time, Antti Rinne, got elected as the prime minister after the 2019 election. In Rinne’s cabinet, most of the ministers were women (11/20). The situation of women improved considerably once more in December 2019 when Antti Rinne’s cabinet tendered his resignation due to the government coalition’s inner conflicts and lack of trust. Soon after the resignation, Finland got a female prime minister, and the SDP’s Sanna Marin was selected as a new prime minister. Marin was 34 years of age when she took the office and became the world’s youngest serving prime minister. In Marin’s cabinet, 12 of the 19 ministers were women. In June 2020, Marin was also elected as the new leader of the SDP (see Pikkala, 2020, p. 80; see also Mykkänen, 2019).
Table 8.6  Summary of the 2019 parliamentary election.

| Election winners       | SDP, +1.2 % / +6 seats  
|                       | Green League, + 3.0 % / +5 seats  
|                       | Left Alliance, + 1.0 % / +4 seats  
| Election losers        | Centre Party, - 7.3 % / -18 seats  
| General remarks on election campaigns | Climate issues were actively discussed and the sociocultural issues, foremost immigration, got more space in the election debates.  
|                       | The NCP received unfortunate publicity due to several defaults in elderly care, which were reported all over the country from 2018-2019. Most of the defaults were found in private care homes, which the NCP supported as a part of the social and health care reform.  
|                       | The Finns Party’s support was reduced due to the sexual crimes in the region of Ostrobothnia that were committed by immigrants toward the end of 2018 and early 2019.  
| Remarks on working-class voting | Both the SDP and the Left Alliance went to the election as opposition parties. Many campaign issues were generally favourable for the left-wing parties and the Finns Party. Additionally, the government received a lot of criticism especially due to social policy issues.  

This subchapter focused on the five parliamentary elections in the 21st century in Finland and distinguished the key themes and trends of each election. The emphasis in this chapter moves next to empirics. The observations of Finnish parliamentary elections are considered in the following sections. The further analyses include a variable for each election year to control for the year-specific characteristic of the elections. In addition, variables that measure voters’ attitudinal orientations are connected to the key campaign themes. In the following subchapter (8.2), the focus is on modelling the chapter’s empirical analyses and formulating the hypotheses.
8.2 Model and the hypotheses

This chapter aims to explain the study’s three working-class groups’ party choices and factors that explain the party choices. The empirical examination tackles the study’s third research question ‘How does the class (in)congruence affect party choice among the Finnish working-class voters?’ The analysis brings those two models which have already been tested in the previous empirical chapters. In other words, the third model (see Figure 8.2) is built by analysing the effect of class incongruence and the effect of value orientations on working-class voting.

Given the study’s theoretical framework, the underlying presumption is that class (in)congruence, values, and attitude orientations affect working-class voting in Finland together or separately. This presumption is based on the work of Bartolini and Mair (1990), Maria Oskarson (1994 and 2016), and Oddbjørn Knutsen (2018). The third research model is theoretically a combination of their studies: 1) Bartolini’s and Mair’s argument on the ‘class as a cleavage’; 2) Maria Oskarson’s contextual model of class voting and the differentiation of subjective class indicators from the objective ones; and 3) Oddbjørn Knutsen’s causal model for explaining party choice using the socio-structural variables and based on the value orientation in the Western democracies.

Figure 8.2 The third empirical model: the full model of class voting.
The final hypotheses are formulated in Table 8.7. The hypothesis H10 is on working-class voters’ party choices in Finland in the 21st century. Three working-class groups’ party choices vary significantly from each other in the 21st century’s parliament elections. Hypotheses H11–H13 tackle mechanisms of how the class (in)congruence and attitudinal orientations explain party choice of different working-class groups. These two hypotheses are based on Oddbjørn Knutsen’s (2018) findings, which suggest that socio-structural factors and value orientations have the strongest effect on party choice in Western democracies. The effects of class incongruence and attitudinal orientations on working-class groups’ party choices are studied with path analysis. More specifically, the H11 hypothesises that class (in)congruence directly affects working-class voters’ party choice. However, the H12 hypothesises that class (in)congruence indirectly affects working-class voters’ party choice via their attitudinal orientations. Finally, H13 hypothesises that traditional working-class voting decreased in Finland in the 21st century. Simply put, traditional working-class voting is a blue-collar employees’ tendency to vote for the left-wing parties, which in the Finnish context are the SDP and the Left Alliance.

**Table 8.7** The effect of class (in)congruence and attitudinal orientations on working-class voting: Hypotheses 10–13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H10</td>
<td>The party choices of the three working-class groups differ significantly in the 2010s parliamentary elections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H11</td>
<td>The party choice of the three working-class groups is determined directly by class (in)congruence when the socio-demographic factors have been controlled for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H12</td>
<td>The party choice of the three working-class groups is determined by class (in)congruence indirectly through attitudinal orientations when the socio-demographic factors have been controlled for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H13</td>
<td>The traditional working-class voting has decreased in the 21st century in Finland.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When analysing the class voting, the main interest lies in the party choice. Table 8.8 presents hypotheses 14–16 that were formulated to hypothesise the party choice of the three working classes groups. Each hypothesis has two parts: A and B, of which the first one (A) concerns the most likely party choice. i.e., the party or the parties that a certain working-class group is most likely to support. The second part (B) concerns the most unlikely party choice for that group. i.e., the least party likely to
support for votes. The explanations for the most likely party choice and the most unlikely party choice stem from the two previous analyses, in which their explanatory power of both class (in)congruence and attitudinal orientations has been investigated.

Hypothesis H14 focuses on the traditional working class. It hypothesises about ‘traditional working-class voting’, which simply refers to the working class’ tendency to vote for left-wing parties. This is explained by class congruence and working-class identification. The support for the left-wing parties is hypothesised to stem from similar determinants of the working-class identification among the blue-collar employees: a working-class childhood home and a spouse who is a blue-collar employee with primary or vocational education. The NCP is hypothesised to be the most unlikely party choice in the traditional working-class voting, which contrasts with voting for left-wing parties.

Table 8.8  The party choice among each working-class group. A refers to the most likely party choice, and B refers to the most unlikely party choice: Hypotheses 14–16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRADITIONAL WORKING CLASS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Left Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party NCP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATIONAL WORKING CLASS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Centre Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The NCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Finns Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Left Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Green League</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDEOLOGICAL WORKING CLASS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Left Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Green League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Finns Party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the occupational working class, the most likely party choice is hypothesised to be either the Centre Party, the NCP, or the Finns Party. This is explained by the tendency of the occupational working class to identify with the
higher social class, i.e., class incongruence and their stronger likelihood to adapt to more conservative sociocultural orientation. Instead, the most unlikely party choice is hypothesised to be the Left Alliance and the Green League due to their tendency to support liberal values.

The party choice of the ideological working class is hypothesised to be close to the party’s choice of traditional working-class voters because they both share working-class identification. The most likely party choices are hypothesised to be either the SDP, the Left Alliance, or the Green League. The SDP is the most likely party due to the same determinants, which explains working-class identification among non-blue-collar employees: working-class childhood home, and blue-collar employee spouse. The Green League is hypothesised to be the most likely party choice due to the higher level of education of the ideological working-class voters and their liberal sociocultural orientation. In general, the Green League has been a popular party among higher educated voters in 21st century Finland (Suuronen et al. 2020; Westinen, 2015 and 2016). The previous Chapter 7 shows that the ideological working-class has a more leftist socioeconomic orientation—this explains voting for the left-wing parties. The Finns Party is hypothesised to be the most unlikely party choice of ideological working class because it has traditionally received low support among the voters with higher education and is more liberal than conservative sociocultural orientation.

8.3 The trends in the working-class voters’ party choices 2003–2019

After outlining the context of voting in the previous subchapter (8.2), this section focuses on voters and working-class voting. It puts party choice in the centre of the examination. The following subchapters (8.3.1–8.3.4) reveals the trends of party support among the three working-class groups in the 21st century’s parliamentary elections. Each subchapter focuses on the trends of these groups. The last subchapter (8.3.4) concludes with general remarks and trends of the working-class voters’ party choices in the 21st century.

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55 See subchapter 4.3.3 in this study for more detailed discussion on the relation between the party supporters and attitudinal orientations.

56 See e.g., Suuronen et al. 2020, pp. 265–267
8.3.1 The party choice of the traditional working class

Among the traditional working-class voters, the Social Democrats and the Finns Party have fought for the largest position between the 2003 and 2019 national elections (see Figure 8.3). More precisely, the SDP lost its status for the Finns Party as the most popular party for the traditional working class in the 2015 national election. Since then, the SDP has secured roughly one-third of the votes of the traditional working-class voters. The 2003 election has been so far the most victorious election for the SDP among the traditional working class in 21st century Finland. In 2003, the SDP’s support rate was nearly a half or 46 per cent. However, the support for the Finns Party has fluctuated even more. The party’s historic election victory in 2011 and its rise to an established middle-size party in the Finnish political system partly explain its fluctuation. One noteworthy point was that it was not in the 2011 election when the Finns Party secured the most popular position among the traditional working-class voters despite rising in its support to nearly 20 percentage points from 8 per cent (2007) to 26 per cent (2011). This occurred in the 2015 election, and the party kept this position in the 2019 election even though its support declined from 33 per cent to 28 per cent.

Among the traditional working class, the support for the Centre party has declined considerably between 2003 and 2019. Whereas almost a fifth (18%) of the traditional working-class voters voted for the Centre Party in the 2003 and 2007 elections, the same share was 7 per cent in the 2019 election. However, the support for the Left Alliance more than doubled from the 2015 election to the 2019 election. Similarly, the support for the Green League has increased among the traditional working-class voters. In 2003, only 4 per cent gave their votes to the Green League, and the party was the third least popular party among the traditional working-class. In 2019, Green League received 13 per cent votes, and the party was the fourth most popular. The last expected finding is that the NCP has failed to secure more than 6 per cent support from the traditional working-class voters even though the party’s general support rate varied from 17.0 to 22.3 per cent in the 21st century’s parliamentary elections.
According to the findings, party choices among the occupational working-class voters have fluctuated in the 21st century (Figure 8.4). The Centre Party, the NCP, and the Finns Party suffered from the highest fluctuation. The results showed the Centre party’s lowest support rate in 2019. While the Centre party’s support rate was 34 per cent in the 2003 and 2007 elections among the occupational working class, the support rate was only 7 per cent in the 2019 election.


Figure 8.3 Party support in the parliamentary election 2003–2019 among the traditional working class (share of votes, %).

8.3.2 The party choice of the occupational working class
Even more interesting is that the support for the Centre party seems to have similarities with the support for the Finns Party among the occupational working-class voters. However, the development of the two parties’ support is just opposite. Furthermore, the support for the NCP has fluctuated among the occupational working-class voters. The support rates have varied between 23 per cent at the highest (2003) and 8 per cent at the lowest (2015). In the 2019 election, the support rate rose to 21 per cent and was 4 percentage points higher than the party’s general support rate (17%). Expectedly, the support for the SDP has been constant among the occupational working-class voters. The support has stayed below the SDP’s general support rate: 18 per cent in 2003 and 17 per cent in the 2007 elections. However, the support rate increased to 23 per cent in the 2011 election, but the party support has not increased to more than 23 per cent since 2011 (2015: 17 %, 2019: 19%). Versus traditional working-class voters, the SDP has not been the most popular party among the occupational working-class voters in the 21st century’s elections. Typically, it has been the third most popular party except in the 2011 election, when it received the second-largest share of the votes among the occupational working class. These results argue that swing-voting is most common among the occupational working class compared to the other two working-class groups.
8.3.3 Party choice of the ideological working class

Party support rates among the ideological working-class voters are lower than support received by the traditional working-class or the occupational working class. The party support varies, and the position of the most popular party has changed many times during the 21st century’s parliamentary elections (Figure 8.5). More specifically, the support for the SDP, the Centre Party, and the Finns Party has fluctuated the most.

![Figure 8.5: Party support in the parliamentary election 2003–2019 among the ideological working class (share of votes, %).](source: FNES 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019)

In the 2003 election, half of the ideological working-class voters gave their votes to the SDP whereas support for the SDP declined in the 2007 election. The party received 28 per cent support. In the Centre party’s victorious election 2007, a considerably larger share of the ideological working-class voters voted for the Centre party (28%), and the party shared the position of the most popular party with the SDP. In the 2011 election, approximately one-third (31%) of the ideological working-class voters voted for the SDP. Simultaneously, the Finns Party rose as the second most popular party among the ideological working class with a 25 per cent share of the votes. Similarly, the Finns Party has been the most popular party among the ideological working-class voters since the 2015 election.
The support for the Green League has been higher among the ideological working class than among the two other working-class groups. In addition, the support for the Left Alliance has been higher than among the occupational working-class voters. The share of the ideological working-class voters is rather low in every FNES dataset, and the support trend should be taken with caution.

8.3.4 General remarks on the working-class voters’ party choices

Figures 8.3 – 8.5 illustrate the party choice of the three working classes in the 21st century’s parliamentary elections in Finland. The yearly support rates are based on datasets collected from the National Election Study revealing that party support has been volatile in all working-class categories in the 21st century. However, the same party received the largest share of votes in 2003 and 2019 from the diverse working classes. The figures indicate that the three working-class groups differ from each by their party choices. Moreover, the figures indicate that the party support rates vary significantly among each one of the three working-class groups. These arguments support the chapter’s first hypothesis (H10) *The party choices of the study’s three working-class groups differ significantly in the 2010s parliamentary elections.*

More specifically, the analyses showed that a battle for the position of the most popular party has been fought between two parties among all the three working classes. Among the traditional working class, the SDP and the Finns Party have fought for the largest share of votes in the 21st century. Among the occupational working class, the Centre Party and the Finns Party competed for the most popular party position. Among the ideological working class, the SDP and the Finns Party competed to become the largest party. The Finns Party has challenged the old traditional parties after the 2011 election regarding the share of the working-class voters. A newer and more important notion is that the party, which Finns Party has challenged, varies between the three working-class groups. This indicates that the competition for the working-class votes has occurred in two different arenas. First, competition can be distinguished between the Finns Party and the SDP. The second competition can be distinguished between the Finns Party and the Centre Party as seen in descriptive results, which do not control for any of the voters’ characteristics. The multivariate models control for important factors and seek to identify factors that explain the variation in party support.
8.4 The impact of class (in)congruence and attitudinal orientations on the party choice of the working-class voters

8.4.1 The multinomial structural regression model

This chapter shifts the focus from descriptive analyses to multivariate modelling. The aim is to conduct multinomial regression to examine the impact of sociodemographic variables, childhood home class, attitudinal orientations, and the working-class group on party choice. This analysis puts all of the study’s variables in the same model. The analysis aims to identify and explain the party choice. The main interest lies in figuring out whether the three working-class groups differ from each other based on their party choices when the independent variables are controlled. The multinomial regression analysis precedes the study’s final analysis, the path model, presented in subchapter 8.5. This examines the direct and indirect effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable (party choice).

Model and methods

The multinomial regression model is the first step of the last analysis: the path model (subchapter 8.5.). The multinomial regression tests all the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable (party choice) (see Table 8.9, page 262). A multinomial regression is applied because the dependent variable (party choice) has several categories, of which the second category, i.e., voting for the NCP, is set as the reference category. The coefficients indicate whether the examined sociodemographic variables belong to a certain working-class group and have a certain attitudinal orientation. This increase or decrease the likelihood of voting for a given party when the voter’s education, class of the childhood home, socioeconomic orientation, sociocultural orientation, and EU attitudes are controlled.

Data

In this section, the merged datasets that combined the FNES 2015 and the FNES 2019 are used for the analysis because they contain all relevant variables for the scrutiny of working-class voters’ party choice. In practice, the merging of the cases of FNES 2015 and FNES 2019 datasets is similar to that of Chapter 7. The merging
is based on similarly coded variables. All needed variables are recoded identically with similar categories in both datasets before merging. The merged dataset has 3,185 cases assisting in analysing the three working-class categories and applying multinomial logistic regression without the risk of empty cells.

Variables and reference categories

Table 8.9 presents the selection of the reference categories. The most important selections are the reference category of the dependent variable (party choice) and the reference category of the working-class group variable. The NCP was chosen as the reference category for the dependent variable. The reasons are severalfold: First, as the descriptive analyses reveal in subchapter 8.3, the NCP is the most unlikely party choice regarding the three working-class groups. Second, the NCP is large enough to be used as the reference category. In addition, the party choice variable consists of five other categories: the SDP, the Finns Party, the Centre Party, the Green League and the Left Alliance. These have been selected based on the descriptive analysis showing that the respondents belonging to the three working-class groups are likely to vote for these parties.
Table 8.9 The selection of the reference categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEPENDENT VARIABLE</th>
<th>REFERENCE CATEGORY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party choice (in the 2015 or 2019 parliamentary election)</td>
<td>The National Coalition (The NCP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEPENDENT VARIABLES</th>
<th>REFERENCE CATEGORY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age in years</td>
<td>[Continuous variable]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>University degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class of the childhood home</td>
<td>Entrepreneur home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working-class group</td>
<td>Non-working class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural orientation:</td>
<td>[Continuous variable]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0 = Liberal, 10 = Conservative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-attitudes:</td>
<td>[Continuous variable]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 = supports integration, 10= against integration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic orientation:</td>
<td>[Continuous variable]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0 = socioeconomic left, 10 = socioeconomic right)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election year-dummy:</td>
<td>Year 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1= 2015, 0 = 2019)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The analysis contains year fixed-effects based on the election year-dummy variable.

The non-working class was chosen as the reference category for the working-class group variable. This choice is made because of the forthcoming path analysis and that the working-class group is a categorical variable. Therefore, there should be a reference category. Since estimating the three working-class groups is crucial, the non-working class is an inherent choice for the reference category. The direct and indirect effects cannot be calculated for a reference category; hence, none of the three working-class groups is chosen as the reference category. The reference categories for the education and the class of the childhood home were selected to fit the reference category of the dependent variable and the reference category of the
working-class group. This is not necessary, but it interprets the results more logically. In attitudinal orientations, the socioeconomic orientation, the sociocultural orientation, and the EU attitudes are measured using variables like those used in Chapter 7.

8.4.2 Results

*Voting for the SDP*

Table 8.10 presents the results of the multinomial regression showing that older voters are more likely to vote for the SDP than to vote for the NCP, which is the reference category of the party choice dependent variable. Even though the SDP traditionally has strong support among the Finnish pensioners, it is important to recall that the pensioners are excluded from this study (see more detailed operationalisations in subchapter 5.1). Despite this exclusion, older age seems to increase the likelihood to vote for SDP. In terms of voters’ educational background, respondents with vocational education are most likely to vote for the SDP. If a voter is from a working-class home rather than an entrepreneur home, then it significantly increases the likelihood of voting for the SDP.

Belonging to any of the three working-class categories significantly increases the likelihood of voting for the SDP over the NCP. The result is in line with the party support rates of each working-class group, which is shown earlier in this subchapter (8.3). The SDP has been the third, the second, or the most popular party among all three working-class groups in the 2015 and the 2019 elections. However, when the coefficients are compared, they indicate that voting for the SDP is the most likely party option among the traditional working-class voters.

Regarding the three attitudinal orientations, the socioeconomic orientation and the attitudes towards the EU significantly affect voting for the SDP. The closer the voter’s socioeconomic orientation is to the left (0 = left, 10 = right), the more likely the voter votes for the SDP. Additionally, the more the voters are against Finland’s commitment to the EU (0 = pro, 10 = against), the more the voters vote for the SDP.
The analysis shows that younger voters are more likely to vote for the Finns Party compared to the NCP. Upper-middle-class family versus working-class home decreases the likelihood of voting for the Finns Party. In terms of the three working-class categories, belonging to either the traditional working-class or the ideological working class increases the likelihood of voting for the Finns Party compared to the NCP. More specifically, belonging to the traditional working-class doubles the likelihood of voting for the Finns Party compared to the NCP. This effect is not as strong as the ideological working class but is still positive.

All three attitudinal orientations have statistically significant coefficients. A more leftist socioeconomic orientation increases the likelihood of voting for the Finns Party. The results indicate that voters of the Finns Party support the conservative end (traditional nuclear family, law and order, Christian values) based on the sociocultural dimension. In other words, the closer voters are to the conservative end in their sociocultural orientation, the more likely they are to vote for the Finns Party. Supporting Finland’s commitment to the EU decreases the likelihood of voting for the Finns Party. The more the voters are against Finland’s commitment to the EU, the more they are likely to vote for the Finns Party versus the NCP.
Table 8.10

The impact of class (in)congruence and value and attitude dimensions on the party choice of working-class voters. Multinomial structural regression analysis. Coefficients (standard errors). p-value < 0.05* < 0.01** and < 0.001***. Dependent variable's reference category: the NCP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The SDP</th>
<th>The Finns Party</th>
<th>The Left Alliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>0.689 (.835)</td>
<td>4.018 (1.115)***</td>
<td>4.492 (.926)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender (ref. woman)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>-1.168 (.247)</td>
<td>0.322 (0.249)</td>
<td>-1.22 (0.266)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>0.25 (.009)**</td>
<td>-0.024 (.009)**</td>
<td>-0.00 (0.01)</td>
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<td><strong>Education (ref. University)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>-2.85 (.610)</td>
<td>4.018 (1.115)***</td>
<td>-1.028 (.774)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational school</td>
<td>-2.85 (.610)</td>
<td>4.018 (1.115)***</td>
<td>-1.028 (.774)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary</td>
<td>1.833 (.128)</td>
<td>1.833 (.128)</td>
<td>-1.028 (.774)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polytechnic</td>
<td>-2.85 (.610)</td>
<td>4.018 (1.115)***</td>
<td>-1.028 (.774)</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>1.107 (.413)**</td>
<td>1.107 (.413)**</td>
<td>1.107 (.413)**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lower middle class</td>
<td>-1.480 (.910)</td>
<td>-1.480 (.910)</td>
<td>-1.480 (.910)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle class</td>
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<td>-1.346 (.269)</td>
<td>-1.346 (.269)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper middle class</td>
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<td>-1.502 (.455)</td>
<td>-1.502 (.455)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
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<td>-1.220 (.672)</td>
<td>-1.220 (.672)</td>
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<td><strong>Working class (ref. Non-working class)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
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<td>2.226 (.451)**</td>
<td>2.226 (.451)**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupational</td>
<td>-1.432 (.435)</td>
<td>-1.432 (.435)</td>
<td>-1.432 (.435)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological</td>
<td>-1.346 (.268)</td>
<td>-1.346 (.268)</td>
<td>-1.346 (.268)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Left-right values and attitudes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.503 (.077)**</td>
<td>-0.503 (.077)**</td>
<td>-0.503 (.077)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sociocultural values and attitudes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.131 (.039)</td>
<td>-0.131 (.039)</td>
<td>-0.131 (.039)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EU Integration</strong></td>
<td>.171 (.049)*</td>
<td>.351 (.048)**</td>
<td>.223 (.058)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year (ref. 2019)</strong></td>
<td>-.081 (.251)</td>
<td>-.763 (.246)**</td>
<td>-.497 (.290)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Green League</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Centre Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>5.156 (.840)**</td>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>1.157 (.778)</td>
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<td><strong>Gender</strong> (ref. woman)</td>
<td>-.343 (.230)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Man</td>
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<td>Man</td>
<td>-1.794...1.08</td>
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<td>-.013 (.010)</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.004 (.008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong> (ref. University)</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Education</strong> (ref. University)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>-1.905 (.905)*</td>
<td>Vocational school</td>
<td>.697 (.323)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational school</td>
<td>-.168 (.373)</td>
<td>Upper secondary</td>
<td>-.901 (.323)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary</td>
<td>-.876 (.562)</td>
<td>Polytechnic</td>
<td>-.901 (.323)**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polytechnic</td>
<td>-.140 (.328)</td>
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<td>-.901 (.323)**</td>
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<td><strong>Class of the childhood home</strong> (ref. Entrepreneur)</td>
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<td><strong>Class of the childhood home</strong> (ref. Entrepreneur)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Working class</td>
<td>-.901 (.386)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.587 (.519)</td>
<td>Lower middle class</td>
<td>-1.159 (.423)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>-.295 (.449)</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>-1.633 (.334)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper middle class</td>
<td>-.695 (.531)</td>
<td>Upper middle class</td>
<td>-2.023 (.432)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>-.517 (.611)</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>-2.025 (.519)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working class</strong> (ref. Non-working class)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>1.700 (.494)**</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>.284 (.463)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational</td>
<td>.685 (.350)*</td>
<td>Occupational</td>
<td>.173 (.307)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological</td>
<td>1.615 (.746)*</td>
<td>Ideological</td>
<td>.213 (.725)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Left-right values and attitudes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Left-right values and attitudes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.450 (.077)**</td>
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<td>-.332 (.073)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sociocultural values and attitudes</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.610 (.106)**</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.475...- .189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU Integration</strong></td>
<td>.147 (.053)**</td>
<td><strong>EU Integration</strong></td>
<td>.191 (.045)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year (ref. 2019)</strong></td>
<td>-.479 (.260)</td>
<td><strong>Year (ref. 2019)</strong></td>
<td>.451 (.238)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pseudo R² = 0.2455**

*Source: Merged dataset FNES 2015 & 2019, N = 1 104*
Voting for the Left Alliance

None of the basic socio-demographic variables (gender, age, or education) are statistically significant when considering voting for the Left Alliance. Instead, belonging to the working-class family increases the likelihood of voting for the Left Alliance. Expectedly, being in the traditional working-class nearly increases the odds two-and-a-half times to vote for the Left Alliance versus the NCP. In addition, being in the ideological working class almost doubles the odds of voting for the Left Alliance compared to the NCP.

All three attitudinal orientations significantly affect voting for the Left Alliance. Unsurprisingly, leftist socioeconomic orientation increases the likelihood of voting for the Left Alliance compared to voting for the NCP. The results show that the linkage between leftist orientation and voting for the Left Alliance is weaker than linkages between leftist orientation and voting for the SDP.

The results suggest that having a liberal sociocultural orientation increases the likelihood of voting for the Left Alliance. The Left Alliance policy to EU is parallel with the results of the other examined parties. Having critical attitudes towards Finland’s commitment to the EU seems to moderately increase the likelihood of voting for the Left Alliance versus the NCP.

Voting for the Green League

The results indicate that women are more likely to vote for the Green League than men. The results of the multinomial regression indicate that voters with higher education are more likely to vote for the Green League than voters with lower levels of education. Primary education, compared to a university degree, decreases the likelihood of voting for the Green League.

Being part of any of the study’s three working-class groups, compared to the non-working-class increases the likelihood of voting for the Green League. However, being part of the traditional working-class increases the likelihood of voting for the Green League.

All three attitudinal orientations influence voting for the Green League significantly. Regarding socioeconomic orientation, a more leftist orientation makes voters more likely to cast their vote for the Green League compared to the NCP. Regarding the sociocultural orientation, the results suggest a
linkage between liberal orientation and voting for the Green League. Furthermore, this linkage seems to be even slightly stronger than the linkage between liberal orientation and voting for the Left Alliance. The attitudes towards Finland’s stronger commitment to the EU are parallel with the other parties’ results. Being against Finland’s stronger commitment to the EU increases the likelihood of voting for the Green League versus the NCP.

**Voting for the Centre Party**

A voter’s educational background influences voting significantly for the Centre Party. Having a vocational degree compared to a university degree increases the likelihood of voting for the Centre Party. In addition, the results show a correlation between an entrepreneur childhood home and voting for the Centre Party. Neither working-class groups nor the voters’ attitudinal orientations significantly decrease or increase the likelihood of voting for the Centre Party. The references category, the NCP, and its relative closeness to the Centre Party partly explain this pattern. Compared to other examined parties, the Centre Party and the NCP have been reported to receive similar levels of support regarding socioeconomic and sociocultural orientations in the 21st century (see Isotalo et al. 2020, pp. 294–299).

**Testing the impact of different reference categories**

Different reference categories have been adapted to the working-class to confirm the differences between the working-class groups: traditional, occupational, and ideological. The test involves changing the reference category of the working-class group variable. In practice, the multinomial structural regression has been run with all reference categories. The coherence of the coefficients has been examined. The results show that the coefficients are the same despite the reference category. Appendix Table B presents the results of the test.
Adjusted predictions

The results of the regression analysis are tangible and show adjusted predictions or the predictive margins. The values provide the probabilities of certain events to occur when controlling some factors. Moreover, the adjusted predictions transform the statistical estimates into probabilities. For instance, the predicted likelihood that an average true working-class voter votes for the SDP, the Finns Party, the Left Alliance, the Green League, the Centre Party, or the NCP. The results provide an intuitive way to understand how the voting behaviour among the study’s working-class categories differ (for more information about adjusted predictions, see Williams 2012).

The adjusted predictions show interesting differences between the three working-class groups’ probabilities to vote for certain parties (see Table 8.11). The values are interpreted as percentage points. The adjusted predictions or predictive margins are computed for the reference categories of the regression analysis. The adjusted predictions show that the Finns Party is the most probable party choice among the traditional working-class voters. The probability of voting for the Finns Party is 27.1 per cent, whereas the probability of voting for the SDP is 23.9 per cent. The probability of voting for the Left Alliance is the third-highest at 17.3 per cent.

Among the occupational working-class voters, the Centre Party is the most probable party choice. The marginal effects indicate that 22 per cent of the voters who belong to the occupational working class vote for the Centre Party. No large difference is remarked between the probabilities of voting for the SDP (20.0%), the Finns Party (18.7%), or the Green League (17.3%) among the occupational working-class voters. The Left Alliance is the least likely party choice for the moderate working-class voters (7.5%). The probability of voting for the Left Alliance among the occupational working class is even lower than among the non-working-class voters (9.7%).
Table 8.11  Adjusted predictions. i.e., predictive margins, standard errors, and 95% confidence intervals; *p-value < 0.05*, < 0.01** and < 0.001***.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Traditional working class (N=73)</th>
<th>Occupational working class (N=39)</th>
<th>Ideological working class (N=11)</th>
<th>Non-working class (N=61)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SDP</td>
<td>.239 (.029)***</td>
<td>.200 (.028)***</td>
<td>.173 (.046)***</td>
<td>.121 (.015)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[.181 -.292]</td>
<td>[.145 -.254]</td>
<td>[.082 -.264]</td>
<td>[.091 -.151]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finns Party</th>
<th>Traditional working class (N=81)</th>
<th>Occupational working class (N=49)</th>
<th>Ideological working class (N=15)</th>
<th>Non-working class (N=76)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.271 (.026)***</td>
<td>.188 (.023)***</td>
<td>.264 (.050)***</td>
<td>.163 (.017)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[.220 -.322]</td>
<td>[.143 -.234]</td>
<td>[.166 -.362]</td>
<td>[.130 -.196]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left Alliance</th>
<th>Traditional working class (N=53)</th>
<th>Occupational working class (N=14)</th>
<th>Ideological working class (N=10)</th>
<th>Non-working class (N=51)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.174 (.025)***</td>
<td>.075 (.018)***</td>
<td>.139 (.040)***</td>
<td>.097 (.013)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[.124 -.224]</td>
<td>[.039 -.112]</td>
<td>[.061 -.217]</td>
<td>[.072 -.123]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green League</th>
<th>Traditional working class (N=28)</th>
<th>Occupational working class (N=34)</th>
<th>Ideological working class (N=10)</th>
<th>Non-working class (N=92)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.153 (.027)***</td>
<td>.173 (.024)***</td>
<td>.204 (.050)***</td>
<td>.141 (.014)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[.099 -.207]</td>
<td>[.126 -.221]</td>
<td>[.106 -.302]</td>
<td>[.114 -.169]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre Party</th>
<th>Traditional working class (N=25)</th>
<th>Occupational working class (N=53)</th>
<th>Ideological working class (N=9)</th>
<th>Non-working class (N=144)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.101 (.019)***</td>
<td>.220 (.025)***</td>
<td>.137 (.041)***</td>
<td>.272 (.019)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[.063 -.139]</td>
<td>[.171 -.270]</td>
<td>[.057 -.218]</td>
<td>[.234 -.310]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Coalition</th>
<th>Traditional working class (N=9)</th>
<th>Occupational working class (N=28)</th>
<th>Ideological working class (N=3)</th>
<th>Non-working class (N=182)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.062 (.019)***</td>
<td>.144 (.023)***</td>
<td>.087 (.043)*</td>
<td>.204 (.016)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[.024 -.100]</td>
<td>[.099 -.190]</td>
<td>[.003 -.170]</td>
<td>[.173 -.235]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Merged dataset FNES 2015 and 2019
Among the ideological working-class voters, the Finns Party and the Green League are the most probable party choices. The probability of voting for the Finns Party is 26.0 per cent, and the probability of voting for the Green League is 20.4 per cent. The third most probable party is the SDP (17.3%). The Centre Party (13.7%) and the NCP (8.7%) are the least supported parties by the ideological working-class voters.

Before moving to the path analysis, the study discusses the results of the hypotheses (Table 8.12 below). For the traditional working class, the results provide support for the most likely and most unlikely party choices (H14). The results show that the SDP is a likely party choice among the traditional working class. However, the results also show that voting for the Finns Party is more likely than voting for the SDP among the traditional working class. According to the results, the Left Alliance is the third most likely party choice among the traditional working class, while the NCP is the least likely option.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8.12</th>
<th>The main findings considering the hypotheses H14–H16.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRADITIONAL WORKING CLASS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| H14 | A:  
The SDP  
The Left Alliance | B:  
The NCP  
Supported |
| OCCUPATIONAL WORKING CLASS |  |
| H15 | A:  
The Centre Party  
The NCP  
The Finns Party | B:  
The Left Alliance  
The Green League  
Partly supported |
| IDEOLOGICAL WORKING CLASS |  |
| H16 | A:  
The SDP  
The Left Alliance  
The Green League | B:  
The Finns Party  
Partly supported |
The results support partly H15 regarding party choices by the occupational working class. The results indicate that the Centre Party is the most likely party choice among the occupational working class. As hypothesised, the results also support that the Finns Party is also considered as a popular party choice among the occupational working class. The results NCP do not, however, give support for the NCP as one of the most popular party choices among the occupational working class. In addition, the results do not indicate that the Green League is the most unlikely party choice among the occupational working class. Instead, the results reveal that the Left Alliance is the most unlikely party choice among the occupational working class. Thus, the hypothesis 15 is not fully, but partly, supported.

Regarding the party choices by the ideological working class, the results give moderate support showing that the Green League is the most likely party choice among the ideological working class. However, the results fail to support the assumption of the SDP and the Left Alliance being more popular among the ideological working class. Instead, the results support the assumption of the Finns Party as the most likely party choice in contrast to the hypothesis 16. Therefore, the hypothesis 16 is also partly supported.

8.5 Path analysis

Model and method

The previous analyses showed that the three working-class groups’ party choices differ statistically from each other. Moreover, the results showed that the sociodemographic variables, childhood home class, and attitudinal orientations have an impact on the party choice. According to Chapter 7, the differences between the three working-class categories in terms of attitudinal orientations are small. The previous analyses fail to detect if the three working-class groups are differently guided by their attitudinal orientations while making voting decisions. Path analysis offers methodological tools to tests the study’s hypotheses 11 and 12 regarding the mechanisms of how class
incongruence and attitudinal orientations affect working-class voters’ party choice.

The primary aim of this study is to investigate how class incongruence affects working-class voting in Finland. A more detailed question is: to what extent does class incongruence affect party choice directly and indirectly via the working-class voter’s value and attitude orientations? The multinomial structural regression (Chapter 8.4) examined the effect of class (in)congruence and attitudinal orientations on party choice. The path analysis measures both direct and indirect effects, which often remain undiscovered in regression analyses (Rjinhart et al. 2019, Samawi et al. 2018). The path analysis is an extension of the multinomial structural regression analysis presented in the previous subchapter 8.4.

The path diagram is formulated as a simple mediation model (see Figure 8.6). A path model determines whether there are alternative causal mechanisms between the independent and dependent variables. The model consists of both the independent variable and dependent variables in addition to a third independent variable (mediator variable). The mediator variable explains the nature of the underlying mechanism between the independent variable and dependent variable (see Rjinhart et al. 2019, Samawi et al. 2018).

A path model examines three types of effects: direct, indirect, and total. The direct effect indicates the parameter between the independent variable and dependent variable that controls the mediator variable (see Figure 8.6 arrow c). The indirect effect is an outcome of the independent variable’s effect on the mediator variable (Figure 8.6: arrow a) and the mediator variable’s effect on the dependent variable (Figure 8.6: b). Finally, the total effect is the sum of the direct effect and the indirect effect (Figure 8.5: arrows ab + c).
• **Direct effect** = $c$,
The direct effect of class (in)congruence on party choice after controlling attitudinal orientations

• **Indirect effect** = $ab$,
  Mediation effect of class (in)congruence on party choice via attitudinal orientations

• **Total effect** = $ab + c$,
The total effect of class (in)congruence on party choice

**Figure 8.6** Path analysis: simple mediation model with attitudinal orientations as mediator variable.

In this study’s context, the core assumption of the path analysis is the mechanism between class incongruence and voters’ attitudinal orientations. The path model presumes an underlying mechanism in the class incongruence and party choice relationship, i.e., attitudinal orientations. In other words, class identification concerning occupational group helps to explain the value and attitudinal orientations and which influence one’s party choice. Thus, the **direct effect** illustrates the effect of class (in)congruence on party choice, while controlling value and attitude orientations. Second, the **indirect effect** is the effect of class (in)congruence on party choice via the mediator variable, voter’s attitudinal orientations. Third, the **total effect** is the total effect of class (in)congruence on party choice calculated as the sum of the direct $(c)$ and the indirect $(ab)$ effects.
Variables and reference categories

Table 8.13 lists the variables used in the path analysis and their reference categories. The direct effects are analysed between class (in)congruence, i.e., the working-class groups and party choice. The reference categories are identical to those in the multinomial regression analysis since the multinomial structural regression acts via pathway analysis. In addition, the control variables and their reference categories are the same as the multinomial structural regression analysis: gender, age, education, class of the childhood home, and election year (2015/2019).

Moreover, the indirect effect of class (in)congruence on party choice was analysed via attitudinal orientations. The variables and the reference categories remain unchanged based on the model that measures the direct effects. The change reveals that attitudinal orientations are the mediator variables. Attitudinal orientations are measured with the same variables used in the multinomial structural regression.
Table 8.13  The dependent variable and the independent variables in the path analysis.

Direct effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEPENDENT VARIABLE</th>
<th>➔</th>
<th>DEPENDENT VARIABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class (in)congruence</td>
<td>➔</td>
<td>Party choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Traditional working class</td>
<td>➔</td>
<td>1) SDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Occupational working class</td>
<td>➔</td>
<td>2) National Coalition (ref.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Ideological working class</td>
<td>➔</td>
<td>3) Finns Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Non-working class (ref.)</td>
<td>➔</td>
<td>4) Centre Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5) Green League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6) Left Alliance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Controls: Gender, Age, Education, Class of the childhood home, Year (2015 / 2019).

Indirect effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEPENDENT VARIABLE</th>
<th>➔</th>
<th>MEDIATOR VARIABLE</th>
<th>➔</th>
<th>DEPENDENT VARIABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class (in)congruence</td>
<td>➔</td>
<td>Attitudinal orientations</td>
<td>➔</td>
<td>Party choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Traditional working class</td>
<td>➔</td>
<td>1) Sociocultural orientation (Liberal – Conservative)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Occupational working class</td>
<td>➔</td>
<td>2) Socioeconomic orientation (Left – Right)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Ideological working class</td>
<td>➔</td>
<td>3) Attitudes towards the EU, i.e., Finland’s commitment to the EU (0 = Pro, 10 = Against)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Non-working class (ref.)</td>
<td>➔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1) The SDP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2) The National Coalition (ref.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3) The Finns Party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4) The Centre Party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5) The Green League</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6) The Left Alliance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Controls: Gender, Age, Education, Class of the childhood home, year (2015 / 2019).

The variables used in the path analysis and their reference categories are listed in Table 8.13. The direct effects are analysed between the class (in)congruence, i.e., the working-class groups and party choice. The reference categories are similar to those in the multinomial regression analysis. This is necessary because the multinomial structural regression acts as the basis of the path analysis. In addition, the control variables and their reference categories are similar to those used in the multinomial structural regression analysis: gender, age, education, childhood home class, and the election year (2015/2019).
The indirect effects are analysed between the class (in)congruence and party choice via the attitudinal orientations. The variables and reference categories remain unchanged based on the model that measures the direct effects. The only change is that the attitudinal orientations serve as the mediator variables. The attitudinal orientations are measured with similar variables as in the multinomial structural regression.

Data

Survey responses from FNES 2015 and FNES 2019 are merged into a single dataset, which include all variables for the study’s research problem. A merged dataset is crucial because it increases the N of the working-class groups and enhances multivariate models without the risk of empty cells problem (see subchapter 5.2 in this study for a more detailed description of the FNES datasets).

8.5.1 Results

The SDP

Table 8.14 presents the coefficients of the path analysis. The traditional working class has a direct effect on the SDP vote revealing that voters who are working class and workers by occupation are more likely to vote for the SDP compared to voting for NCP. There are also statistically significant direct effects of the occupational and ideological working class on voting for the SDP.

In addition, there can be distinguished an indirect effect of the traditional working-class voting for the SDP because of their opposing attitudes towards the EU. According to the previous results in this study, the traditional working-class tends to be against Finland’s stronger commitment to the EU. Therefore, the results indicate that supporting Finland’s weaker commitment to the EU correlates with voting for the SDP. A similar indirect effect is remarked regarding both the occupational and the ideological working-class vote for the SDP based on the opposing attitudes towards the EU. Despite the results of the multinominal structural regression (Table 8.10), none of the
working class groups had statistically significant indirect effect on voting for the SDP via the socioeconomic orientation.

The Finns Party

A direct effect is noted regarding the intent of the traditional working class to vote for the Finns Party and the NCP, which is the reference category. In addition, an indirect effect is remarked regarding the intent of the traditional working class to vote for the Finns Party because of attitudes towards the EU. This shows that voters who belong to the traditional working-class and have more opposing views than supportive views about Finland’s commitment to the EU are more likely to vote for the Finns Party.

The path analysis fails to detect a direct effect of the occupational working class on voting for the Finns Party. From the results, two significant indirect effects are noted. The first indirect effect concerns the occupational working class and its tendency to vote for the Finns Party via sociocultural orientation. Belonging to the occupational working class and conservative sociocultural orientation correlate with voting for the Finns Party. The second indirect effect is based on the occupational working class’ tendency to vote for the Finns Party because of their opposing attitudes towards Finland’s increasing commitment to the EU. Voters in the occupational working class tend to have more opposing views than supportive views on Finland’s commitment to the EU. Hence, they are more likely to vote for the Finns Party.

In line with the results of the multinominal structural regression, the ideological working class has a direct effect on voting for the Finns Party. The results indicate a similar indirect effect of the ideological working class on voting for the Finns Party via attitude towards the EU. Overall, it seems that the working class is more inclined to vote for the Finns Party than being a blue-collar employee. Nevertheless, the results indicate that being a blue-collar employee in combination with a conservative sociocultural orientation increases the likelihood of voting for the Finns Party compared to the reference category, the NCP.
The Left Alliance

The effect of traditional working-class voting for the Left Alliance is direct. The only indirect effect is the EU attitudes. Traditional working-class voters exhibit more opposing views than supportive views on Finland’s stronger commitment to the EU. They are more likely to vote for the Left Alliance. However, voters who have no working-class background (the reference category) are likely to vote for the National Coalition Party (the reference category). However, belonging to the occupational working-class influences voting for the Left Alliance. However, the effect of occupational working class seems to be mostly indirect through both the sociocultural orientation and the EU attitudes. Voters who belong to the occupational working class tend to be more conservative than having liberal sociocultural orientation, and they are less likely to vote for the Left Alliance. In other words, occupational working-class voters emphasise conservative sociocultural orientation in their party choice, which causes that the Left Alliance is unpopular among this working-class group. Instead, the indirect effect is the opposite in terms of the EU attitudes. Belonging to the occupational working class can increase the likelihood of voting for the Left Alliance indirectly if the voter exhibits opposing attitudes towards Finland’s stronger commitment to the EU.

Belonging to the ideological working class increases the likelihood of voting for the Left Alliance both directly and indirectly through EU attitudes. The indirect effect is parallel with the other working-class groups: Belonging to the ideological working class and having opposing attitudes towards Finland’s stronger commitment to the EU increases the likelihood of voting for the Left Alliance.

The Green League

All three working-class groups have a direct effect on voting for the Green League compared to the NCP. They have also moderate indirect effects on the Green League vote via the sociocultural orientation and the EU attitudes. Belonging to the traditional working-class indirectly increases the likelihood
of voting for the Green League via opposing attitudes towards Finland’s commitment to the EU. A similar trend is noted among the occupational working-class voters and the ideological working-class voters.

Additionally, there is an indirect effect in belonging to the occupational working class and voting for the Green League via sociocultural orientation. This indicates that belonging to the occupational working class and being more conservative than liberal in sociocultural orientation increases the likelihood of voting for the Green League.

The Centre Party

No direct effects are noted between the three working-class groups and the Centre Party vote; this partly is in line with the finding that the three working-class groups support the Centre Party. Yet, a couple of indirect effects of class incongruence on the Centre Party vote via the voters’ attitudinal orientations are remarked.

The results indicate that the attitudes towards Finland’s commitment to the EU follow parallel trends with previously examined parties. The results show that belonging to any of the three working-class groups moderately increases the likelihood of voting for the Centre Party via the opposing attitudes towards Finland’s increasing commitment to the EU. However, this indirect effect is strongest among the traditional working-class voters. An indirect effect is also seen among voters who belong to the occupational working class and tend to have a more conservative than liberal sociocultural orientation. According to the results, they are more likely to vote for the Centre Party.
Table 8.14 Path analysis’ findings: direct effects, indirect effects and total effects. Coefficients (Standard errors). p-value < 0.05*. < 0.01** and < 0.001***. Dependent variable’s reference category: The National Coalition Party (NCP).

### The SDP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct effect</th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
<th>Total effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional working class</td>
<td>2.228 (.451)***</td>
<td>.009 (.016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational working class</td>
<td>.971 (.339)**</td>
<td>.027 (.036)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological working class</td>
<td>1.463 (.717)*</td>
<td>-.001 (.028)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Finns Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct effect</th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
<th>Total effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional working class</td>
<td>2.005 (.449)***</td>
<td>.036 (.062)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational working class</td>
<td>.560 (.334)</td>
<td>.191 (.075)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological working class</td>
<td>1.546 (.693)*</td>
<td>.001 (.114)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Left Alliance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct effect</th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
<th>Total effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional working class</td>
<td>2.353 (.496)***</td>
<td>-.034 (.058)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational working class</td>
<td>.249 (.431)</td>
<td>-.180 (.074)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological working class</td>
<td>1.684 (.761)*</td>
<td>-.001 (.107)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The Green League

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct effect</th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
<th>Total effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional working class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.700 (.494)***</td>
<td>Traditional wc + sociocult -0.040 (.069)***</td>
<td>1.660 (.499)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traditional wc + socioeco 0.071 (.063)***</td>
<td>1.771 (.498)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traditional wc + EU 0.199 (.077)*</td>
<td>1.899 (.496)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational working class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.685 (.350)*</td>
<td>Occupational wc + sociocult -0.215 (.083)*</td>
<td>0.470 (.356)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occupational wc + socioeco 0.091 (.069)***</td>
<td>0.777 (.356)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occupational + EU 0.096 (.046)*</td>
<td>0.781 (.351)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological working class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.615 (.748)*</td>
<td>Ideological wc + sociocult -0.001 (.128)</td>
<td>1.614 (.757)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ideological wc + socioeco 0.161 (.119)***</td>
<td>1.776 (.755)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ideological wc + EU 0.156 (.077)*</td>
<td>1.771 (.748)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Centre Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct effect</th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
<th>Total effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional working class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.284 (.463)</td>
<td>Traditional wc + sociocult 0.018 (.031)</td>
<td>0.301 (.464)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traditional wc + socioeco 0.053 (.047)</td>
<td>0.336 (.465)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traditional wc + EU 0.258 (.071)***</td>
<td>0.542 (.467)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate working class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.173 (.307)</td>
<td>Occupational wc + sociocult 0.096 (.046)*</td>
<td>0.268 (.309)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occupational wc + socioeco 0.068 (.052)</td>
<td>0.240 (.311)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occupational + EU 0.125 (.050)*</td>
<td>0.298 (.310)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological working class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.213 (.725)</td>
<td>Ideological wc + sociocult 0.001 (.057)</td>
<td>0.214 (.727)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ideological wc + socioeco 0.119 (.089)</td>
<td>0.332 (.730)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ideological wc + EU 0.203 (.084)*</td>
<td>0.416 (.728)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Merged dataset: FNES 2015 & FNES 2019

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### 8.6 Main findings

In this chapter, the results show that the voting patterns of the three working-class groups differ. The results support each of the hypotheses (H10-H13). As stated in Chapter 8.4.2, the results demonstrate that the three working-class groups chose parties differently in the 21st century’s parliamentary elections. These differences are statistically significant (H10).

The path analysis supports hypothesis 11 (subchapter 8.5) indicating that each one of the working-class groups has a strong belief in voting for certain parties. Subchapters 8.6.1–8.6.3 discuss the party choices from the
perspective of each working-class group. From the path analysis, class (in)congruence has an indirect effect on working-class voters’ party choice via their attitudinal orientations (H12). Several statistically significant findings are recorded showing that some working-class groups are influenced by the sociocultural and socioeconomic orientation or the attitudes towards the EU.

Table 8.15 Main findings concerning the hypotheses H10-H13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H10</td>
<td>The party choices of the study’s three working-class groups differ significantly in the 2010s parliamentary elections.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H11</td>
<td>The party choice of the study’s three working-class groups is determined directly by class incongruence when the socio-demographic factors are been controlled.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H12</td>
<td>The party choice of the study’s three working-class groups is determined by class incongruence indirectly through attitudinal orientations when the socio-demographic factors are been controlled.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H13</td>
<td>The traditional working-class voting has decreased in the 21st century in Finland.</td>
<td>Partly supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, overall, this study shows that, on the one hand, the traditional working-class voting has decreased, but on the other hand, it can still be distinguished among the Finnish electorate (H13). The findings suggest that working-class voters have not completely stopped voting for the left-wing parties, but they have switched their votes to other parties as well, such as the Finns Party, the Green League, and the Centre Party.

At the same time, the findings measure the class positions using the two-dimensional approach. If the voters’ working-class positions are measured with their occupation and class identification, then no strong decreasing trend is noted in working-class voting because each of the working-class groups has voted for the SDP or the Left Alliance in the 21st century. Nevertheless, the results indicate that working-class voting is foremost connected to working-class identification and is not as much connected to working-class occupation. The results show that the identification is important for the attitudinal orientations and can explain various working-class patterns in the 21st century.
The following subchapters conclude the results from the perspective of each working-class group.

8.6.1 Traditional working class

The multinomial regression analysis and the path analysis show that the traditional working-class does not confine their support to a particular party. The results of the adjusted predictions (Table 8.11) show that the Finns Party is the most likely party choice among the voters of the traditional working class. Voting for the SDP was almost as likely, but the Finns Party stood out being the most likely party choice. The results also indicated that voting for the Left Alliance and the Green League was more likely among the traditional working class.

According to the results of the path analysis, a direct effect is remarked between traditional working-class voters and voting for the Finns Party, the SDP, the Left Alliance, or the Green League (Figure 8.7). After comparing the coefficients, voting for the Left Alliance was the strongest followed by voting for the SDP. This indicates that traditional working-class voting still continues in Finland till today.

![Figure 8.7](image)

**Figure 8.7** The direct effect of class congruence on party choice among the traditional working class.
Chapters 6 and 7 show that a working-class childhood home, a spouse who is a blue-collar employee, and primary or vocational education increase the likelihood of a blue-collar employee to have a working-class identification. From these results, voting for the SDP, Left Alliance, Finns Party, and the Green League is correlated to blue-collar employees who have working-class identification, come from a working-class childhood home, have either primary or vocational education, and a spouse who is also a blue-collar employee. Particularly, this pattern applies to voting for the SDP, the Left Alliance, and the Finns Party.

**Figure 8.8** The indirect effect of class congruence on party choice via opposing attitudes towards the EU among the traditional working class.

The path analysis found some indirect effects regarding the traditional working-class voters and their attitudinal orientations. Belonging to the traditional working class affects indirectly voting for the SDP, the Left Alliance, the Finns Party, and the Centre Party via opposing attitudes towards the EU (Figure 8.8). According to the results, this effect increases the strongest intent to voting for the Finns Party. This is a rather expected result because the Finns Party has been the most critical parliamentary party towards the EU.
8.6.2 Occupational working class

The results show that party support has not been confined to one party among the occupational working class either. The results show that blue-collar employees from entrepreneur childhood homes and having professional spouses with higher education, i.e., a polytechnic or university degree, are most likely to choose the Centre Party, the SDP, the Finns Party, or the Green League. Interestingly, the Finns Party and the Green League (opposition parties) are likely party choices among the working-class voters when sociodemographic factors, the class of the childhood home, and the attitudinal orientations have been controlled. This is partly explained by the class incongruence among the occupational working class—they still identify with the lower, middle, or upper-middle class despite their blue-collar occupation.

![Diagram](image.png)

**Figure 8.9** The direct effect of class incongruence on party choice among occupational working class.

The results of the path analysis found a direct effect between an occupational working class and voting for the SDP and the Green League (Figure 8.9). By comparing the coefficients, the direct effect was stronger regarding voting for the SDP. Overall, the direct effects were weak among the traditional working-class voters or the ideological working-class voters.

There were also a couple of indirect effects regarding the occupational working-class voters, their attitudinal orientations, and party
choice. First, belonging to the occupational working class increases indirectly the likelihood of voting for the Finns Party or the Centre Party via conservative sociocultural orientation. This indicates that conservative sociocultural orientation explains the likelihood of voting for both the Finns Party and the Centre Party among the occupational working class (Figure 8.10).

Figure 8.10  The indirect effect of class incongruence on party choice via conservative sociocultural orientation among the occupational working class.

Another indirect effect is noted besides conservative sociocultural orientation. The results showed that being in the occupational working-class indirectly affects the opposing attitudes towards the EU and voting for certain parties: the Finns Party, the Centre Party, the SDP, the Left Alliance, and the Green League (see Figure 8.11). Chapter 7 shows that all three working-class groups have been more critical towards the EU than an average electorate. Consequently, findings of an indirect effect are not surprising because the Finns Party is more critical towards the EU.

Figure 8.11  The indirect effect of class incongruence on party choice via opposing attitudes towards the EU among the occupational working class.
8.6.3 Ideological working class

One of the most interesting findings is that the Finns Party is the most likely party choice among the ideological working class. According to the adjusted predictions of the multinomial structural regression analysis, the second most likely party is the Green League, and the SDP is the third most likely party choice among the ideological working-class voters. Overall, the results indicate that the ideological working class is correlated to being from either an entrepreneurial or a working-class home, having a spouse who is a blue-collar employee, and having primary or upper secondary education. In addition, the results showed a higher probability of the ideological working class having a rightist socioeconomic orientation compared to the voters of the two other working-class groups. Voters of the ideological working class have class incongruence between their occupation and class identification; thus, this partly explains the deviation in their party choices. This is a similar finding with voters from the occupational working class.

The results of the path analysis showed a direct effect between being in the ideological working class and voting for the SDP, the Finns Party, the Left Alliance, and the Green League. Moreover, these coefficients are almost the same indicating that the direct effects are roughly equally strong (see Figure 8.12).

![Figure 8.12](image)

**Figure 8.12** The direct effect of class incongruence on party choice among ideological working class.
The results of the path analysis also showed that a similar indirect effect can be remarked among other working-class groups as well. Belonging to the ideological working-class has an indirect effect via opposing attitudes towards the EU, on voting for the Centre Party, the Green League, the Finns Party, the Left Alliance, and the SDP (Figure 8.13). These coefficients indicate that the indirect effect is slightly stronger when it comes to voting for the Finns Party. This result is identical with the occupational working class and almost identical with the traditional working class apart from the increasing likelihood of voting for the Green League.

![Figure 8.13](image)

**Figure 8.13** The indirect effect of class incongruence on party choice via opposing attitudes towards the EU among the ideological working class.

### 8.6.4 General remarks

Overall, this study’s results provide three important findings on working class voting in 21st century Finland. First, the two-dimensional approach to voters’ class positions is reasonable and it provides important contributions to future class voting studies. The study demonstrates the increasing trend of social identities, which have determined voters’ decisions in the 21st century. The results show that characteristics between the three groups of working-class voters are well-founded. Moreover, there can be discovered several factors, which determine these groups’ voting patterns. First and foremost, the class of the voters’ childhood home out as an important factor. It also highlights the sociological mechanism in relation to voting decisions and the inheritance of party choice as well as political attitudes.
Second, the results show that the three working-class groups’ voting patterns differ from each other. The traditional, occupational, and ideological working-class voters vote differently, but also to some extent the same parties in the 21st century’s Finland. Nevertheless, the battle for the largest party among each group is fought between different parties. Among the traditional working class, the battle is between the SDP and the Finns Party, whereas among the occupational working class, it is between the Centre Party and the SDP. Among the ideological working class, the battle is between the Finns Party and the Green League.

Third, the mechanisms to explain the party choices of the three working-class groups are also different. A common factor found in all three working-class voting patterns is having opposing attitudes towards the EU. Otherwise, the results indicate the existence of different mechanisms regarding the direct and indirect effects and attitudinal orientations. For instance, both the Finns Party vote and the Centre Party vote are correlated to the conservative sociocultural orientation of occupational working-class voters. The results suggest that class incongruence has a linkage to weaker direct effects between class incongruence and party choice. This is noticed among the occupational working class but to some extent also among the ideological working class. Nevertheless, the results give moderate support for the notion that working-class identification is the major determinant of working-class voting. Similar results regarding the traditional and the ideological working class support this finding because voters in these groups share working-class identification.

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57 This finding is partly in line with the previous studies that working class support for the SD parties is connected to economic considerations, while working class vote for the radical right is connected to cultural reasons (see Oesch and Rennwald, 2018; Rennwald, 2020).
9 CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Working-class voting in 21st century’s Finland

This doctoral thesis was set to study working-class voting and its mechanisms. The study has discovered how the working-class vote in 21st century Finland. Furthermore, the aim has been to answer three more specific research questions:

1. What are the factors that explain class incongruence and class congruence among the working class?

2. To what extent do the study’s three working-class groups differ from each other regarding their attitudinal orientations?

3. How does the class incongruence affect party choice among the Finnish working class?

The study was anchored to the structural, organisational and citizen level starting points, which all illustrated from their own perspective the changing context of working-class vote. The structural level highlighted the globalisation and its side-effects, the western societies’ value shift from the material values towards the post-material values, the change in societies’ occupational structure and demographic change increased social mobility. At the organisational level, the study shed light on the decline of the SD parties’ support in West European countries. It also discussed about the rise of right-wing populist parties and acknowledged the declining trend in party-union ties especially in the Nordic countries and between the employee organisations and the left-wing parties. The citizen level focused on the partisan change and changes in the voters’ attitudinal orientations, the milieu
changes, and the effect of the social identity as a determinant of voters’ decisions.

The study had three theoretical points of departure. First, the cleavage typology of Bartolini and Mair (1990) was applied to social class and political cleavage. According to the typology, the cleavage has three elements from a social cleavage to a political cleavage: structural and empirical element, normative and psychological elements, and organisational elements.

Second, the study based its approach on working-class voters’ positions using Oskarson’s contextual framework for social class (1994), which separated the objective and subjective elements of both social class and class voting. The study operationalised three groups of working-class voters based on their occupation and class identification.

Third, the study emphasised the voters’ attitudinal orientations by examining the role of political values and attitudes in explaining working-class voters’ party choice. Oddbjørn Knutsen (2018) encouraged considering the voters’ value orientations and socio-structural positions. This study adapted Knutsen’s findings by considering how class (in)congruence and voters’ attitudinal orientations affect their party choice. The path analysis distinguished the direct effects of class (in)congruence and the indirect effects of class (in)congruence via attitudinal orientations on working-class voters’ party choice.

This study was built on analysing the working class voting from the perspective of a two-dimensional approach to voters’ class positions. By considering both voters’ occupation and class identification at the same time, the study operationalised three groups of working-class voters and analysed their voting patterns in the 21st century. The traditional working-class consists of blue-collar employees who have working-class identification. The occupational working class was formed by blue-collar employees who had non-working-class identification, i.e., identification with lower-middle-class, middle class, upper-middle-class, or upper class. Lastly, the ideological working class consists of farmers, entrepreneurs, white-collar salaried employees, senior white-collar salaried employees, managers, and executives who have working-class identification.

The first empirical Chapter (6) of the study sought to find the determinants of class congruence as well as class incongruence. It was meant to identify the primary determinants of the three groups of working-class voters. As to the first research question, this study showed that education,
spouse’s occupation, and the class of the childhood home were factors explaining both class congruence and class incongruence. One of the limitations of this study was the lack of other variables that might explain class (in)congruence by giving conflicting class signals to voters. The variables excluded here were the voter’s parents’ occupations, circle of friends, or consumer habits. They all can possibly shape one’s perceptions of the society’s class-structure in general and, of course, their own position in it. In other words, they are potential class-signals shaping one’s class identification.

This limitation also applies to other election studies, which have traditionally not considered comprehensively variables measuring voters’ milieu or subjective class indicators. In future studies, voters’ subjective class identities should be measured using several variables—especially variables that can consider voter’s milieu. Their perceptions of society should be included in the explanatory models. In addition, it would be important to inquire and also measure the strength of class identification in survey-based studies, i.e., to figure out, how close does one feel to certain social class.

To examine the second research question, the working-class voters’ attitudinal orientations were analysed in Chapter 7. Both the socioeconomic and the sociocultural orientations were examined along with the working-class voters’ attitudes towards the EU. The results indicated some differences in attitudinal orientations between the three working-class groups: The voters of the ideological working class stood out as being more leftist by their socioeconomic orientation. However, the voters of the occupational working class had a more conservative sociocultural orientation compared to the other working-class groups. Furthermore, the results of Chapter 7 showed that many factors that explained the class incongruence and class congruence in Chapter 6 also influenced voters’ attitudinal orientations.

The aim of the last empirical Chapter (8) was to put together study’s previous analyses and examine the extent to which the party choices of the Finnish working-class voters are affected by the class (in)congruence and the voters’ attitudinal orientations. Chapter 8 expanded on Chapter 7 and reflected the differences in the three working-class groups and their attitudinal orientations. It highlighted that the groups had different linkages to the attitudes, which affected their party choices. In addition, class incongruence was connected to more divided party choices as applied to the party choices of the occupational working class and the ideological working class.
Given the study’s overall research problem: ‘How has working-class voting changed in Finland in the 21st century?’. This study offers several responses. Working-class voting patterns are multidimensional and cannot be defined along simple class-party ties in the 21st century. The traditional left-wing parties—the SDP and the Left Alliance—are still popular among working-class voters, but they face competition from the Finns Party, but from other parties as well. For instance, the Centre Party has challenged the SDP for the votes of the working-class voters including blue-collar employees without working-class identification who have conservative sociocultural orientation. In addition, the Green League competes with the SDP and the Left Alliance for the votes of the ideological working class, i.e., working-class voters who share working-class identification but are not blue-collar employees.

One important finding is that the Finns Party competes for the working class votes among each of the study’s three working-class groups. The party gathers support from all working-class groups despite their class identification, occupation, or education level. Moreover, this finding seems to apply to the Finns Party despite their split in June 2017, which indicates that the split has not diminished the party’s influence among the working-class voters. Moreover, the working-class voters’ EU-criticism has moved them closer to the Finns Party, but the opposing EU attitudes were linked to voting for the other parties as well. However, the Finns Party has undoubtedly managed to channel these votes among the working-class voters. Another interesting finding considering the Finns Party is that among the ideological working class the opposite parties by key values, the Finns party and the Green League get both rather high support. This is a good example of how class incongruence may lead to significantly diverse voting patterns.

Overall, the results indicate that working-class voting has become more nuanced in the 21st century Finland. Despite this, working-class voters have still continued to vote for the traditional working class parties i.e., the SDP and the Left Alliance. In the light of this study’s results, the future of the left-wing parties does not explicitly look dark, since they still seem to manage to capture votes especially among those blue-collar employees, who also have working-class identification. The left-wing parties have, yet, got challengers from other parties, which is likely to increase competition for the working class’ votes also the future. This study shows that the electorate of the traditional working-class parties has changed more heterogeneous. This
heterogeneity means that hardly any party alone is able to meet the demands of the working class.

Given the study’s findings regarding the attitudinal orientations among the working-class voters, three notions should be made. First, all three working-class groups of the study have, on average, relatively rightist socioeconomic orientation. Although the ideological working class stands out as having the most leftist socioeconomic orientation, belonging to it (or any other two of the working-class groups, for that matter) and having a particular socioeconomic orientation do not increase the likelihood of voting any of the six parties under study. Second, regarding sociocultural orientation, more conservative orientation is found to be more common among the occupational working class. Moreover, the results show that belonging to the occupational working class has an indirect effect, via conservative sociocultural orientation, on voting for both the Finns Party and the Centre Party. Third, all three working class groups tend to have more opposing than supportive attitudes towards the EU. Together with class congruence as well as class incongruence, the EU attitudes have an indirect effect on voting for the SDP, the Centre Party, the Finns Party, the Green League as well as the Left Alliance.

This study’s results indicate that traditionally the strong determinant of working-class voting, the socioeconomic orientation, has somewhat lost its power in the 21st century Finland. As to the sociocultural orientation, the conservative orientation seems to be more important determinant of party choice together with voter’s class position than liberal orientation. This finding is somewhat surprising, since liberal sociocultural orientation has been typically been associated to the Left Alliance or the Green League vote in Finland. In addition, the most common attitudinal orientation among the three working class groups, were the opposing EU attitudes. The Finns Party, in particular, has undoubtedly succeeded to channel the EU criticism of the working-class voters.

Eventually, these findings lead to fundamental questions: What do we mean by working-class voting and, of course, how do we measure working class? Given the traditional definition of working-class voting, i.e., blue-collar employees' tendency to vote for the left-wing parties, this study’s findings prove that it still occurs in 21st century Finland. In particular, the findings highlight that traditional working-class voting occurs among those working-class voters who are blue-collar employees and have also working-class
identification. Furthermore, the findings indicate that compared to working-class occupation, working-class identification determines more efficiently working class’ voting decisions.

9.2 Subjective approach to voters’ class positions: a missing piece?

The nature of class identification and social identity are twofold: It consists of people’s subjective and personal perception of the surrounding groups and society. From the perspective of social psychology (see also Bartolini and Mair (1990) and Oskarson (1994/2016)), class identity anchors a voter in society by bringing comfort, a sense of unity, and equality. Furthermore, class identity creates a feeling of belonging to a particular social group, which gradually generates political alignment. This turns into class voting even in the 21st century as proved in this work.

From the perspective of political parties, voters’ class identities should not be forgotten either. Fundamentally, voters wish that their preferences become recognised, acknowledged, and respected and class identity could be the key for that in political life. Most Finnish voters identify themselves with some social class in the 21st century. Moreover, this study’s results indicate that class identification has an impact on voter’s attitudinal orientations, which determine voting decisions in the 21st century.

On the one hand, class identification cannot alone offer a sufficiently comprehensive approach to voters’ class positions in the 21st century. As this study has shown, class identification can be determined by different factors. This proves that class identification is not alone a stable or structured indicator for voters’ class positions. On the other hand, as this study has argued from the beginning, objective class indicators cannot offer a comprehensive approach to voters’ class positions either, because they do not indicate anything about how voters see themselves. From the perspective of class-voting studies, using only one of these indicators for measuring voters’ class positions, can be misleading. This is simply because of the remark that these two are not always congruent.
Given these limitations of both the class identification and the objective class indicators, i.e., voter’s occupation, this study suggests that class identification and occupation offer together the most comprehensive way to measure voters’ class positions. Hence, they offer a new approach to class voting (Figure 9.1). By simultaneously considering these two approaches to voters’ class positions, the class-voting patterns can be studied in full.

Figure 9.1  Class (in)congruence and class voting: voter’s occupation, class identification and party choice.

This study’s findings have shown that when applying this two-dimensional approach, i.e., class (in)congruence, it is important to consider a couple of aspects. First, the factors that increase or decrease the likelihood of class incongruence or class congruence should be acknowledged. In other words, awareness of those factors that determine class identification in relation to occupation offer important knowledge of class (in)congruence. In this respect, this study highlighted especially the importance of spouse’s occupation, class of the childhood home, and education.

Second, class (in)congruence’s connection to voter’s attitudinal orientations should also be considered. This study’s results show that both class congruence and class incongruence affect voters’ attitudinal orientations and thereby their voting decisions. The results of the path analysis in Chapter 8 have clearly shown that the various attitudinal orientations together with class (in)congruence lead to different party choices. This study highlights the
importance of both class (in)congruence and voters’ attitudinal orientations when analysing class voting in the 21st century (Figure 9.2.). This approach offers the most comprehensive way to measure and understand the patterns and mechanisms of class voting. This remark is in line with Knutsen’s (2018) finding that shows that value orientations and social structure manage together explain most comprehensively voters’ party choice in the West European multi-party systems.

Lastly, this doctoral thesis originates from two observations of the Finnish electorate and party system in the 21st century. The first observation relates to the continued significance of class identification among the Finnish electorate. Considerable majority of eligible voters identify with a specific social class, despite ongoing debates over the decreasing significance of social classes to voting preferences. The second observation relates to the notable changes in the Finnish party system in the 21st century. A good example of this is a large share of working-class voters who switched from the SDP to the Finns Party in the 2011 parliamentary election. This thesis sought to bring these two separate notions together by studying working-class voting in Finland from the perspective of class (in)congruence and voters’ attitudinal orientations.

This study’s findings do not only show that working-class voting still occurs in 21st century’s Finland, but also that when a more comprehensive approach is applied to the voters’ class positions, important knowledge on the patterns and mechanisms of class voting can be provided. This study contributes to the vast literature on class voting by applying a two-
dimensional approach to voters’ class positions and combining it with the voters’ attitudinal orientations. If one of the three factors—objective class-position, subjective class-position, and attitudinal orientations—is not examined, then the essential mechanisms of class voting remain undiscovered. Nevertheless, this study does not manage to provide knowledge on the extent to which the voters of these various working-class groups emphasise certain attitudinal orientations in their voting decisions. This information fails to be provided the datasets used in this study. Eventually, this study suggests that class-voting studies should consider other, foremost subjective class indicators, along with voter’s occupation in the future.
APPENDIX A: LIST OF VARIABLES USED IN EMPIRICAL ANALYSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Original survey question</th>
<th>Recoding (underlined the formulation in this study):</th>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Year of birth</td>
<td>Year, the survey has been conducted - the year of birth = Age</td>
<td>1 = 18-34,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = 35-49,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = 50-64,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = 65+ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class identification</td>
<td>Which social class do you consider you belong to?</td>
<td>Working class = Working class, Lower middle-class = Lower middle-class, Middle class = Middle class, Upper middle class &amp; upper class = upper middle / upper class, No class = does not identify with any class</td>
<td>1 = Working class,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Lower middle class,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Middle class,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Upper middle / upper class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Does not identify with any class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class of the childhood home</td>
<td>Which of the following categories describes the best way of your childhood family?</td>
<td>Working-class family = working-class family, Lower middle class family = lower middle class family, middle class family = middle class family, upper middle class &amp; upper class family = upper middle class family, farmer family = farmer family, entrepreneur family = entrepreneur family OR farmer &amp; entrepreneur family = entrepreneur family</td>
<td>1 = Working-class family,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Lower middle class family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Middle class family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Upper middle class family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Farmer family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 = Entrepreneur family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>OR 5 &amp; 6 = Entrepreneur family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>The highest level of education possessed?</td>
<td>Primary school classes 1-9 = Primary school, Secondary level vocational degree = Vocational, The Finnish Matriculation Examination = Upper secondary, Polytechnic degree, university degree, academic PhD degree = Higher education</td>
<td>1 = Primary school,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Vocational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Upper secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Polytechnic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>OR 4 &amp; 5 = Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>What is your gender?</td>
<td>1 = Woman, 2 = Man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>To which occupational group you belong?</td>
<td>A farmer, Self-employed or employer = Entrepreneur. An employee in executive position = Manager / Executive. Senior white-collar salaried employee. White-collar salaried employee. Blue-collar employee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 = Farmer 2 = Entrepreneur 3 = Senior white-collar salaried employee (including the managers and executives) 4 = White-collar salaried employee 5 = Blue-collar employee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse’s occupation</td>
<td>What is your spouse's current or most recent occupation? (open question)</td>
<td>Occupations were recoded as occupational groups by following the Statistics of Finland Classification of Socioeconomic groups.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 = Entrepreneur 2 = Manager. executive 3 = Senior white-collar salaried employee 4 = White-collar salaried employee 5 = Blue-collar employee 6 = No spouse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade union membership</td>
<td>Are you a member of a trade union and if so, how actively do you participate in it?</td>
<td>I don't belong to = Not a member. I belong to, but I don't participate = Passive member. I belong to and I participate sometimes = Member. I belong to and I participate often = Active member</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 = Not a member 2 = Passive member 3 = Member 4 = Active member OR 3 &amp; 4 = Active member</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B: TESTING THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT REFERENCE CATEGORIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The SDP</th>
<th>Working class (ref. True working class)</th>
<th>Working class (ref. Moderate working class)</th>
<th>Working class (ref. Wannabe working class)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate working class</td>
<td>Moderate working class</td>
<td>True working class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wannabe working class</td>
<td>Wannabe working class</td>
<td>Wannabe working class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-working class</td>
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<td>1.256 (.478)**</td>
<td>.764 (.782)</td>
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<td>[.320... 2.192]</td>
<td>[.320... 2.192]</td>
<td>[-2.298... .769]</td>
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<td>-2.228 (.451)**</td>
<td>-2.192... -.320</td>
<td>[-3.112... -1.343]</td>
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<td>.492 (.739)</td>
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<td>-1.463 (.717)*</td>
<td>-1.940... .956</td>
<td>[-2.298... .769]</td>
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<th>Working class (ref. Moderate working class)</th>
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<td>[-2.380... -.511]</td>
<td>[.511... 2.380]</td>
<td>[-1.955...1.037]</td>
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<td>[-2.885... -1.124]</td>
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<td>-560 (.334)</td>
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<td>[.1037... 1.955]</td>
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<td>[-1.940... .956]</td>
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<th>The Left Alliance</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Moderate working class</td>
<td>Moderate working class</td>
<td>True working class</td>
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<td>-.669 (.824)</td>
<td>1.435 (.808)</td>
<td>[.149... 3.019]</td>
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<td>-.235 (.496)**</td>
<td>-.249 (.431)</td>
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<td>.669 (.824)</td>
<td>[-3.019... .149]</td>
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<td>-1.435 (.808)</td>
<td>[-3.175... -.192]</td>
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<td>-1.684 (.761)*</td>
<td>-1.684 (.761)*</td>
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<td>The Green League</td>
<td>Working class (ref. True working class)</td>
<td>Moderate working class</td>
<td>-1.015 (.521)</td>
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<td>Wannabe working class</td>
<td>-.085 (.824)</td>
<td>[-1.701... 1.530]</td>
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<td>-1.700 (.494)**</td>
<td>[-2.667... -.732]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working class (ref. Moderate working class)</td>
<td>True working class</td>
<td>1.015 (.521)</td>
<td>[-.005... 2.036]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wannabe working class</td>
<td>.930 (.773)</td>
<td>[-.585... 2.444]</td>
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<td>Non-working class</td>
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<td>[-3.078... -.152]</td>
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</table>

| The Centre Party | Working class (ref. True working class) | Moderate working class | -.111 (.494) | [-1.080... .858] |
| | Wannabe working class | -.071 (.812) | [-1.662... 1.521] |
| | Non-working class | -.284 (.463) | [-1.191... .623] |
| Working class (ref. Moderate working class) | True working class | .111... (.494) | [-.858... 1.080] |
| | Wannabe working class | .040 (.749) | [-1.428... 1.509] |
| | Non-working class | -.173 (.307) | [-.775... .430] |
| Working class (ref. Wannabe working class) | True working class | .071 (.812) | [-1.521... 1.662] |
| | Moderate working class | -.040 (.749) | [-1.509... 1.428] |
| | Non-working class | -.213 (.725) | [-1.634... 1.208] |
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Statistics Finland (2020h):

Statistics Finland (2020i):

Statistics Finland (2020j):


In this academic dissertation Aino Tiihonen aims to provide new knowledge on the Finnish working class’ voting behaviour, party attachment, and attitudinal orientations from the perspective of class voting. It originates from two observations on the Finnish electorate and party system in the 21st century. The first observation relates to the continued significance of class identification among the Finnish electorate. Considerable majority of eligible voters identify with a specific social class, despite ongoing debates over the decreasing significance of social classes to voting preferences. The second observation relates to the notable changes, which have occurred in the Finnish party system in the 21st century. A good example of this is a large share of working-class voters who switched from the SDP to the Finns Party in the 2011 parliamentary election. This study integrates these two separate observations together by studying the mechanisms of working-class voting from the perspective of class (in)congruence and voters’ attitudinal orientations. As such, the study discovers how the working-class votes in 21st century Finland.