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Article

Free Trade-Populism and Nativist-Protectionism: Trade Policy and the Sweden Democrats

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Abstract
The past three decades have seen the entry and increased influence of radical right parties into the European party landscape. These parties harness disaffection with the status quo by appealing to nativist or authoritarian tendencies in the electorate. Their policies often center around the protection of the "common man" from foreign or elite forces (particularly, cultural and economic globalization) and their emergence has been linked to decreasing support for globalization—the so-called "globalization backlash." Several authors note that although radical right parties advocate economic protectionism to attract voters, who are disaffected by globalization, they say little about how this is manifested in advocacy of concrete policy measures. This speaks to the need for more systematic study of the trade policies of radical right parties. This article studies the Swedish radical right party, the Sweden Democrats (ostensibly free traders), to advance an argument based on the core ideology of radical right parties, nativism, and populism. In doing so, the article contributes to the literature that stresses cultural rather than economic foundations for opposition to globalization. Moreover, this article widens the definition of protectionism from that germane to the literature on radical right parties to include non-tariff barriers to trade (in addition to tariffs and quotas), providing a more up-to-date and multifaceted account of the range of trade policy instruments that radical right parties may advocate. I find that populism inspires advocacy of liberal trade policies, while nativism inspires protectionist trade policies. Protectionism almost exclusively consists of non-tariff barriers.

Keywords
nativism; non-tariff trade barriers; populism; radical right parties; trade policy

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1. Introduction

Several studies find that Western radical right parties (RRPs) oppose free trade and advocate protectionist policies in their appeal to voters (Burgoon & Schakel, 2022; Norris, 2005; Zaslove, 2008). A case that appears to break with this tendency is the Sweden Democrats (SD). Protectionism—defined as the advocacy of tariffs, quotas, and subsidies—has almost no salience in the election manifestos of the SD (Lehmann et al., 2022), and they consistently declare support for free trade and opposition to protectionism, illustrated by the quote below from the legislative proposal Trade Policy for Growth:

> We are, in essence, positive to free trade and global trade deals as an entirety. Our conviction is that Sweden should promote, through the EU and other international fora such as the WTO, open and free trade and work against protectionism. (SD, 2022a, p. 3)

Does the free-trade rhetoric of the SD mean that they are not protectionist? If not, how are they protectionist and how does protectionism fit with their advocacy of free trade? To answer these questions, this article studies the trade policies of the SD between 2010 and 2022, using content analysis of their party manifesto and

parliamentary proposals. After a period of ostracization, recent electoral successes offered them significant leverage to impact government policy (Aylott & Bolin, 2023). Sweden has historically been a stalwart of open markets and often pushes for free trade in international organizations, such as the EU and WTO (e.g., Jakobsson, 2007), which makes increased understanding of the trade policy of the SD important to understand the development of Nordic and European trade policy.

The emergence and growth of RRPs in the European party landscape have received much scholarly attention over the past two decades (e.g., De Vries et al., 2021; Hooghe & Marks, 2018; Kriesi et al., 2006; Minkenberg, 2001; Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2007; Zaslove, 2008). Their rise in political prominence has been attributed to disaffection with globalization (e.g., Burgoon & Schakel, 2022; Colantone & Stanig, 2019; De Vries et al., 2021; Mudde, 2007). The elections of Donald Trump in the US, Giorgia Meloni in Italy, and Brexit are examples of how radical-right politicians take issue ownership of globalization to reach electoral success. Together with radical-left parties, RRPs have emerged as viable alternatives to mainstream parties in appealing to voters disaffected by globalization and as drivers of the contestation of globalization (Bisbee et al., 2020; Burgoon & Schakel, 2022; De Vries et al., 2021). However, RRPs are distinct from radical left parties in that their opposition to globalization is made on cultural grounds rather than economic (Burgoon & Schakel, 2022; De Vries et al., 2021; Kriesi et al., 2006; Mudde, 2007). This has earned them the title of culturally protectionist (Kriesi et al., 2006, p. 928; Norris, 2005). However, the literature has yet to provide a systematic answer to how it manifests into advocacy of concrete policy instruments.

Even though several authors note opposition to free trade as a characteristic of RRP policies, it has received less empirical attention than immigration, EU-integration, or composite measures of international cooperation (e.g., Burgoon, 2009; Burgoon & Schakel, 2022; De Vries et al., 2021; Hooghe & Marks, 2018; Kriesi et al., 2006). This article feeds into an emerging literature that instead seeks to understand RRP-positioning on free trade (Colantone & Stanig, 2019; Milner, 2021; Ostermann & Stahl, 2022; Polk & Rosén, 2023). While making valuable contributions to our understanding of RRP opposition to trade, the case of the SD suggests the need for a more careful empirical examination of how RRPs use trade policy to mobilize voters. The first step is to acknowledge that many ways to be protectionist do not involve advocacy of tariffs and quotas. Modern trade negotiations focus less on tariff and quota reduction than on removing trade restrictions in domestic legislation—the non-tariff barriers to trade (NTB; e.g., Young, 2017). Case studies of TTIP and CETA find that RRPs tend to support rule-of-origin and oppose regulatory harmonization (e.g., Rone, 2018), suggesting that focusing on tariffs and quotas alone risks obscuring the full range of trade-related instruments that RRPs advocate to restrict free trade. Consequently, this article considers NTBs in addition to tariffs and quotas.

Previous studies argue that the core ideology of RRPs, nativism, and populism (developed by Mudde, 2007) inform RRP economic policy but do not consider how these dimensions carry over to trade policy nor how they translate into advocacy of trade-policy instruments. My contribution to the literature, therefore, is twofold. In addition to considering NTBs, I complement previous research on the ideological underpinnings of RRPs' opposition to globalization. This includes complementing the debate on the emergence of the "transnational cleavage" (Hooghe & Marks, 2018) by considering opposition to trade, where previous research has focused mainly on European integration and immigration, as part of the general pattern of opposition to globalization among RRPs. This article builds on the work of Otjes et al. (2018), Ennser-Jedenastik (2016), and Ivaldi and Mazzoleni (2020) on the economic policies of RRPs by developing a framework uniquely adapted for trade policy, comprising two dimensions, nativism and populism. The populist dimension relates to the domain of international trade as captured by the interests of large or geopolitically powerful nations and multinational firms at the expense of low-skilled workers and small-business owners. The nativist dimension signifies how trade policy is used to protect the native population from the influence of foreign ideas and cultural expression—"cultural competition," as Kriesi et al. (2006, p. 928) put it.

I find that the SD promotes both protectionist and liberal trade policies. Advocacy of protectionist policies is grounded in protecting ethnonationalist notions of Swedish culture, history, and identity, while liberalization emerges as a response to elite co-optation of the international trading system.

2. RRPs and Globalization

A contributing factor to the emergence of RRPs as competitors in Western party systems is the deepening of globalization in the past three decades. International exchange of goods, services, capital, and labor—while beneficial in the aggregate—has made certain groups the "losers of globalization" and made globalization increasingly contested (e.g., Bisbee et al., 2020; Colantone & Stanig, 2019; De Vries et al., 2021; Hooghe & Marks, 2018; Kriesi et al., 2006). A convergence toward pro-globalization positions of mainstream left and right parties (Milner & Judkins, 2004; Mudde, 2007, p. 197), conflicting positions on economic and cultural globalization (Kriesi et al., 2006), and imperatives of international cooperation (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018, p. 1678), have enabled radical parties on the right and left to attract voters who are critical of globalization (Bisbee et al., 2020; De Vries et al., 2021; Kriesi et al., 2006). However, where radical parties on the left oppose globalization on economic grounds (March & Mudde, 2005), RRPs oppose globalization on cultural grounds

(Colantone & Stanig, 2019; De Vries et al., 2021; Kriesi et al., 2006; Polk & Rosén, 2023). RRPs are more effective at attracting voters on the sociocultural rather than the socioeconomic dimension (Rydgren, 2018, p. 7). Hence, rather than emphasizing increases in inequality, globalization is opposed because it threatens the national ways of life and traditional hierarchical principles of societal organization since it restricts the sovereignty of the people (Mudde, 2007; Zaslove, 2008).

While some authors emphasize immigration and European integration as the chief sources of voter mobilization against globalization for RRPs (e.g., Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2018), others identify opposition to free trade alongside European integration and immigration (Burgoon, 2009; Burgoon & Schakel, 2022; De Vries et al., 2021; Hooghe & Marks, 2018; Kriesi et al., 2006) but do not engage with free trade in their empirical analysis. For example, in their seminal article on the changing cleavage structures of Western party competition, Hooghe and Marks (2018) note trade skepticism together with opposition to European integration and immigration as characteristics of the nationalist pole of the transnational cleavage without explicitly analyzing trade. However, while there has emerged literature that considers RRP positioning on free trade (Colantone & Stanig, 2019; Milner, 2021; Ostermann & Stahl, 2022; Polk & Rosén, 2023; Rone, 2018), few of these studies, with some exceptions (Ostermann & Stahl, 2022; Polk & Rosén, 2023), engage thoroughly with the ideological underpinnings of RRP trade policies. Furthermore, how they manifest into concrete policy instruments is largely undeveloped. Studying the ideological motivations and trade policies of RRPs is, then, an important step to understanding how trade plays a part in the general increase of politicization of globalization (e.g., Walter, 2021).

Even if some research has been done, most do not consider the complexity surrounding the supply side of trade politics. First, previous research tends to consider composite measures of international cooperation (Burgoon, 2009; Burgoon & Schakel, 2022; Colantone & Stanig, 2019; for exceptions see Ostermann & Stahl, 2022; Rone, 2018) rather than trade itself. Second, it does not define in sufficient detail which trade-policy instruments RRPs advocate (Burgoon, 2009; Burgoon & Schakel, 2022; De Vries et al., 2021; Otjes et al., 2018; Norris, 2005; van der Waal & de Koster, 2018; Zaslove, 2008). Studies by Burgoon (2009), Burgoon and Schakel (2022), and Colantone and Stanig (2019) use a variable called "net autarky," composing positions on international cooperation and protectionism collected from comparative manifesto project data. Apart from the problem of disentangling protectionist statements from statements on international cooperation, the definition of protectionism from the Comparative Manifesto Project-codebook does not distinguish between tariffs, quotas, or NTBs. In the past 30 years or so, international trade negotiations have moved away from tariff and quota reduction to focus more on removing domestic regulations that restrict trade (e.g., Young, 2017). Case studies of TTIP and CETA show RRPs favoring NTBs, such as rules-of-origin (e.g., Rone, 2018), which indicates that we may fail to capture the range of trade-policy instruments that RRPs may advance as well as a central source of trade-policy conflict.

The choice between traditional trade policies (tariffs and quotas) and NTBs has implications for electoral strategy. The politically contested and technical nature of NTBs may make it less straightforward to declare them protectionist—and thus illegitimate (Winslett, 2020)—than tariffs and quotas, whose use may be more strictly constrained by international trade agreements (Milner & Judkins, 2004, p. 103). This allows NTBs to be exploited to introduce trade-restrictive policies that may be more acceptable to the public than traditional trade policies. In addition, while tariffs/quotas are "blunt" in the sense that they apply evenly across industries, NTBs can be used to target specific firms or voter groups (McGillivray, 2004, p. 161; Rickard, 2012, p. 779). Consequently, they allow for greater precision, for example, in proposing that product regulation only applies to certain culturally-sensitive products, segments of workers, or firms, without harming an entire industry—which may be worthy of protection—for example, rules prohibiting halal/kosher-butchering. Conversely, protection for products with cultural significance may be carved out without granting benefits to other less-deserving producer groups or products.

3. The Core Ideology of RRP Trade-Policy

Building on Mudde's (2007) core ideology of RRPs and its applications for economic policy (Ivaldi & Mazzoleni, 2020; Otjes et al., 2018), I outline two dimensions, "trade policy-populism" and "trade policy-nativism." In the former, international economic cooperation is construed as a competition between the interests of large/or politically powerful nations and multinational companies (MNCs), smaller nations, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). This struggle inspires efforts for further liberalization but also advocacy of protectionism in the protection of SMEs and workers. Populist trade policies are, thus, both about the erection and removal of trade barriers. Trade policy-nativism is about how trade policy is used to protect "members of the native group" (Mudde, 2007, p. 19), i.e., the ethnic majority of the nation, from the influence of foreign ideas and cultural expression—the "cultural competition" of Kriesi et al. (2006, p. 928). However, it is also about protecting culturally significant symbols of national pride that evoke a myth of a distant past (Rydgren, 2007), such as culturally or nationalist-coded industries or products.

3.1. Trade Policy: Populism

RRP populism consists of a conflict between the people and the elites. Corrupt elites use their privileged

access and power to forward their own interests against the well-being of the people (Ivaldi & Mazzoleni, 2020; Mudde, 2007; Otjes et al., 2018; Zaslove, 2008). The task of politics for RRPs is to wrest control from elites and return it to the people (e.g., Ivaldi & Mazzoleni, 2020; Zaslove, 2008). For trade policy, I expect that the dichotomy between people and elites is projected into the arena of international trade negotiations. The utopian vision of unrestricted popular sovereignty that RRPs outline as the end goal of their political engagement (Ivaldi & Mazzoleni, 2020; Zaslove, 2008) is, in terms of trade policy, the notion of a "fair economy" (Zaslove, 2008), where less privileged nations and small-businesses are allowed to compete on an undistorted international market. Here, I develop the observation by Otjes et al. (2018) that opposition to "rent-seeking behavior" is a central tenet of RRP-economic policy, which I modify to also apply to trade policy. This opposition inspires skepticism of the trade-policy motives of the large and geopolitically powerful nations and multinational firms that are commonly vilified by RRPs (e.g., Zaslove, 2008). They are perceived as exploiting or dictating the rules of international economic institutions or lobbying for trade-distorting policies, such as subsidies or product regulation, to privilege their own interests to the detriment of low-skilled workers and small-business owners, often recognized as RRP core voter groups (e.g., Ivarsflaten, 2005; Oesch & Rennwald, 2018). Although this definition likely overlaps considerably with a more nativist conception of the people as the ethnic-native population, the onus is on their "common economic destiny" (Ivaldi & Mazzoleni, 2020, p. 212) being under threat from elite interests. Because smaller, less geopolitically influential nations and firms do not carry the same weight in international trade negotiations, their competitiveness will be unfairly reduced. Therefore, international trade negotiations are not an activity for the realization of mutual benefits between partners. Rather, because the game is "rigged" in favor of bigger and more geopolitically powerful nations, trade negotiations become a zero-sum game between hostile partners seeking benefits for their industries at each other's expense.

In terms of policy advocacy, my argument is inspired by Ivaldi and Mazzoleni's (2020, p. 206) finding that RRPs may advocate both free-trade policies and protectionism. Wresting control of the international trading system from the hands of corrupt elites may be pursued either by removing the causes of distortions introduced by elites—liberalization—or by introducing trade restrictions that help make market participation more equitable. Historically, RRPs have shifted from promoting neoliberal economic policies, in the 70s and 80s to promoting increased government intervention, in the 90s and onwards (Zaslove, 2008). The early neoliberalism was a reaction to a perception of the state and political class as corrupt and inefficient (Betz, 1993), while from the 90s and onwards, government intervention was a response to accelerated globalization and the empowerment of global capital (Zaslove, 2008). Then, who the antagonist is perceived to be, appears to matter for the ideological flavor of populism. When the antagonist is the state, the prescription is neoliberal policies, which regarding trade policy is advocacy of free trade. When global capital/MNCs are the object of populist resentment, government regulation (protectionism) is the preferred policy response. Moreover, since small business owners are more likely to favor neoliberal policies than low-skilled workers (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Oesch & Rennwald, 2018), the choice between free trade and protectionism may depend on which part of their constituency is framed as the beneficiary.

Empirically, this implies that the SD are likely to advocate liberal trade policies in response to large or geopolitically powerful nations that use their influence to seek undue benefits for their own industries to the extent that it damages small business owners. With Sweden being a small economy not possessing the market power and geopolitical standing to make much impact on the structure of world trade, the SD are likely to seize on the asymmetric power relationship between large and small nations to vilify international trading as unfair and corrupt.

Populist protectionism, then, is more likely to emerge in response to global capital and MNCs, where government intervention should be favored as a counterweight to co-optation by non-state actors. Because NTBs may be more targetable toward particular segments of the workforce, for example, low-skilled workers, and because they are less politically sensitive than tariffs and quotas, the SD are more likely to advocate NTBs than import tariffs and quotas.

3.2. Trade Policy: Nativism

I call nativist trade policies those policies that, through the regulation of international economic exchange, seek to protect the ethnically native population from foreign cultural influence and segments of the economy that have value as symbols of national identity, history, and culture. These policies build on the idea that native populations should be kept distinct so as not to destroy their bonds of common history and cultural heritage through cultural exchange (Elgenius & Rydgren, 2019; Zaslove, 2008). The primary problem with economic globalization is, thus, not that foreign competition allows foreigners to exercise control over domestic production and employment patterns (Mudde, 2007; Otjes et al., 2018), but the import of alien cultural expressions and the decay of ethnonationalist economic symbols (Rydgren, 2007). Aversion to cultural diversity, more than to economic inequality and ethnocentrism, is typical of those who are likely to vote for RRPs (van der Waal & de Koster, 2015). These voters are reported to fear less the distributional consequences of trade openness than a loss of social status (Bornschier & Kriesi, 2013). RRPs may mobilize these voters by advocating protection from cultural influences

that threaten their social status to alleviate their cultural insecurities. In other words, the call to protect sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing is made for their significance as symbols of ethnonationalism, not because those who threaten to run them out of business happen to be foreigners.

Agriculture and manufacturing are examples of sectors that used to make up large parts of Western economies at a time when the population was more homogenous and when "real values prevailed, against multiculturalism" (Ivaldi & Mazzoleni, 2020, p. 213). The selective protection of these sectors from international competition, thus, is a way of preserving—or reinstating—what is perceived as unique historical and cultural characteristics and values of the native population, deployed to resonate with voters who are insecure about their perceived loss of social status.

Based on this discussion, I derive a set of empirical expectations. Elgenius and Rydgren (2019) show how the SD refers to historical, cultural, and ideational facts about what unites native Swedes to justify anti-immigration policies as a means to restore and preserve the essential "Swedishness." Further, the SD has been found to contrast Swedish cultural and historical affinity for animal protection and care for nature with the mistreatment of animals in foreign cultures (Backlund & Jungar, 2022). The expectation is that these tendencies also inform their trade policies. One manifestation may be the reference to the historical greatness of Swedish industry or the values of ecological consciousness and self-sufficiency embodied by Swedish agriculture, mining, and forestry—sectors that historically made up sizable parts of the Swedish economy and contributed significantly to Swedish growth during the 19th and 20th centuries (e.g., Schön, 2012). Hence, we are likely to see the SD selectively protecting sectors that they regard as symbols of the values of the native Swedish population, such as agriculture, manufacturing, mining, and forestry. However, nativist policies of this kind may also involve promoting the export of culturally significant products or restricting imports that embody values that are alien to the values of the native population, such as halal and kosher meat.

4. Methodology, Data, and Case Selection

For long, Sweden was exceptional in not having an RRP in parliament (Rydgren & van der Meiden, 2019). This changed in 2010 when the SD gained 5.7% in the parliamentary election, and their support has increased in each successive election. A vote share of roughly 22% in the election of 2022 provided them with enough electoral leverage to become a supporting partner to the incoming conservative–liberal government in exchange for influence over policy formulation. Consequently, the policy priorities of the SD have the potential to be reflected in the international economic policies of the Swedish government, making the results of this study important to understand future Swedish policy developments. Moreover, Sweden is a small and highly trade-dependent nation (Katzenstein, 1985) that has historically lobbied for liberal international policies and has had high popular support for free trade (Darvas, 2020, p. 7; Jakobsson, 2007). Critique of free trade, then, may be more politically costly than in contexts where trade is less economically important, for example, in bigger nations with larger home markets. Hence, Sweden is a well-situated case to study how trade skepticism is articulated in an environment where it is likely to be politically untenable.

As data sources, I consider legislative proposals, elections, and party manifestos from 2010, when the SD entered the Swedish parliament, to 2022. Citations are translated from the original Swedish by the author. The year 2010 was selected as a starting point partly because the production of legislative proposals requires representation in parliament and given the data availability. Some suggest that RRPs moderate their policies upon inclusion in parliament or government (e.g., Minkenberg, 2001). While exhibiting a slight tendency toward this, moderation is largely a question of language rather than policy content. Since 2015, the SD has issued annual editions of the proposal Trade Policy for Growth, which is arguably the document that most approach a collected trade-policy platform. This proposal is almost identical from one year to another, except for rephrasing and treatment of current events (e.g., TTIP), which indicates no significant variation in the substance and motives of SD trade policy over the period considered.

By going through legislative proposals, this study avoids problems associated with manifesto research; for instance, they often reflect the electoral moment and tend to be vague on issues that are detrimental to electoral success or that can inflame intra-party tensions (Marks et al., 2007). Legislative proposals reflect the process of everyday legislation and thus tend to be more concrete and too technical to attract attention from the media or be widely read by party officials. Proposals then avoid the problem of political sensitivity but also provide data of enough detail to study the low salience and complexity that is modern-day trade policy. A search in the party and election manifestos for the term *frihandel* (free trade) returns far fewer hits and exhibits lower salience than searches on the terms *invandr* (immigration) and *EU* (see the table in Supplementary File 2). Because references to trade were, in addition to being few in number, often quite general, and the level of detail required to study nuances in ideology and trade policy instruments necessitated, the analysis consists entirely of legislative proposals.

The so-called "sampling units" (Krippendorf, 2013, p. 99) are textual units that are subject to analysis. These can be entire sections, paragraphs, or sentences depending on whether international economic issues are discussed by the SD. Statements are the textual units that make up the analysis and consist of claims, criticisms, and

other characterizations, according to Table 1. The content analysis is based on the dimensions that constitute my analytical framework: trade policy-populism and trade policy-nativism. These dimensions are operationalized according to the empirical expectations described in the previous chapter.

5. Analysis

5.1. Populism in SD's Trade Policy

This section explores how populism informs the trade policies of the SD. The expectation was that populism would manifest as a conflict between small business owners and workers who are being exploited by elites, large geopolitically powerful nations, and multinational firms. The results indicate that this narrative is present in framing the general trade political outlook and for particular sectors, such as agriculture, chemicals, and retail, and is targeted against states rather than MNCs or global capital. Powerful nations are maligned as co-opting the international trading system to advantage their domestic industries. Surprisingly, this distrust does not seem to translate into protectionism. Rather, populism is attached to advocacy of liberalization and anti-protectionism can be illustrated by the quote below:

> From a global perspective, big exporting and economically powerful nations, should not act protectionist and give market-support and distortionary subsidies to their own industries. Should such action occur, the government needs to call attention to the attending problems in order to always seek fairness in global trade. (SD, 2022a, p. 4)

The quote also indicates a self-interested form of liberalism that borders on mercantilism. International trade should "increase market-share, growth and profit-margins and that this occurs in real terms with comparable countries" (SD, 2022a, p. 5)—i.e., Sweden should benefit more from trade than other countries. More concretely, this means that in trade negotiations, Sweden should seek to "incorporate that which strengthens Swedish comparative advantages" (SD, 2022a, p. 5), which may be interpreted as particular provisions covering sectors where Sweden has a comparative advantage. In instances of excessive lobbying by exporting nations, import substitution (IS) may be warranted to shield domestic production from the inequities of foreign state manipulation of the international trading system (SD, 2022a, p. 5). This coincides with Mudde's (2007, pp. 186–187) observation that RRPs are interested in economic policy only insofar as it serves the interests of the nation; free trade is not advanced because of commitments to norms of reciprocity or collaboration but because it secures gains for the Swedish economy—preferably net gains.

The protection of trade gains from elite misbehavior is best sought through liberal trade policies. Small business owners, or SMEs, are the primary targets of these policies. As expected, elites come in the form of geopolitically powerful states in the EU, China, India, and, to some extent, the US. The EU, they argue, exhibits "market and trade-hostile tendencies" (SD, 2022a, pp. 4–5), of which the "European champions" proposal is an example. The EU system of trade preferences also tends to favor the interests of old colonial powers in extending preferences to former colonies (SD, 2011a, p. 16). The SD argues that China leverages its "economic muscle to gain great influence and possibilities to extort nations," securing benefits for Chinese companies (SD, 2011a, p. 16). The US is similarly targeted as leveraging its economic power to secure benefits, such as the investor-state dispute settlement mechanism in the TTIP negotiations (SD, 2022a).

Table 1. Operationalizations of the analytical framework.

Analytical dimension	Operationalization
Trade policy—populism	(a) Statements that refer to international trade or the international trading system as corrupt and formed by the interests of big/geopolitically powerful nations or MNCS.
	(b) Statements that advocate liberalization or protectionist measures—tariffs and quotas or NTBs—as taking back control over the international trading system from big/geopolitically powerful nations or MNCS or making international markets more fair and accessible to smaller/less powerful nations, small business owners, and workers.
Trade policy—nativism	(a) Statements that refer to economic globalization as contributing to either the decline of historical/cultural symbols (sectors, firms, or products that contribute, promote, or embody the national culture, history, or identity) or the import of goods that embody values alien to native culture or values.
	(b) Statements that refer to protectionist measures—NTBs (subsidies, product regulation, labeling requirements or restrictions on government procurement, etc.) or tariffs and quotas—as either a defense against culturally distant influences or protection of historical/cultural symbols.

Their critique is not only of individual nations but of the international trading system itself. The WTO, the SD argues, is "effectively put out of play," likely undemocratic and a pawn of bigger nations, such as China, which they argue is "wrongly privileged by the WTO" (SD, 2022a, p. 9). The concessions developed for least-developed countries (LDCs) as part of the Doha-Round are "colored by the national considerations of China and India with respects to their domestic production" and used to access the EU market while restricting the access of LDCs to their home market (SD, 2011a, p. 16). Consequently, the SD argues that the WTO should be reformed to become more democratic by offering businesses, particularly SMEs, influence over WTO policy (SD, 2022a, p. 7). Reform should also include stripping China of its status as a developing country and the attending privileges (SD, 2022a, p. 6), for example, lower postal rates that unfairly disadvantage Swedish e-retailers. The SD argues that to ensure "sound competition" (SD, 2022a, p. 6), postal rates should be harmonized in the global postal strategy. This is an example of how the SD legitimize political action on trade by reference to the misbehavior of large nations. Similar efforts at liberalization are found in the chemical sector, where they argue for harmonized regulations to ensure that "particular nations do not get competitive advantages" by adopting discriminatory rules against foreign chemical firms (SD, 2018, pp. 2–3). In terms of agriculture, the SD argue for more lenient rules on genetically modified crops (GMO) to help Swedish "small farmers" compete on the international market. Currently, the process of GMO approval in the EU is marred by the tendency of states to vote no "for overtly political reasons" (SD, 2021a, p. 17), which recalls the skepticism of other nations on the trade-policy arena.

In sum, liberalization seems to be the policy prescription most affiliated with populism for the SD, contrasting earlier studies (Mudde, 2007; van der Waal & de Koster, 2018; Zaslove, 2008). Rather than ignoring economic globalization or disputing its inevitability, as Mudde (2007, p. 197) suggests, the SD advances the benefits of competitive international markets. The endorsement of free trade by the SD reflects the sensitivity of RRP trade policy to issue and context, as noted by Ivaldi and Mazzoleni (2020), and populism as a "thin ideology" (Mudde, 2007) capable of accommodating diverse policy prescriptions. At the same time, the reduction of international economic collaboration to a winner-take-all-game and the espousal of IS betrays a (if not protectionist) at least mercantilist understanding of international trade.

5.2. Nativism in SD´s Trade Policy

The expectation for how nativism informs SD trade policy was that they were more likely to advance trade-restrictive policies to protect sectors that are significant parts of Swedish culture or history and for protection against products that signify culturally remote or distant ideas or expressions. The results align with the expectations. Agriculture, fishing, and the creative and cultural sector (although surprisingly not manufacturing) are emphasized as symbols of Swedish history, heritage, culture, and identity, which warrants their protection from countries with lower environmental, animal welfare, and consumer-health standards. The framing of Swedish environmental, animal welfare, and health standards as stricter may be interpreted as nativist because it appeals to notions of agricultural customs that are historically distinctive for the native Swedish population, as demonstrated by Elgenius and Rydgren (2019) for immigration policy. To a lesser extent, the SD advocates protection against foreign cultural expressions, halal and kosher meat (SD, 2021b), or the promotion of distinctly Swedish export products, such as the tobacco product snus (SD, 2021c). The data shows that the SD primarily selects NTBs, such as subsidies, domestic and international product standards, and labeling requirements, rather than tariffs and quotas. This vindicates broadening the definition of protectionism.

The SD attributes parts of the economy that engage in the exploitation of natural resources (agriculture and fishing) as symbols of Swedish history, culture, and identity, and as embodying particularly Swedish characteristics and values. These values have "clear popular support" and need to be integrated into any trade deal that Sweden signs (SD, 2015a, p. 5). Swedish agriculture, they argue, symbolizes a rural lifestyle and is integral in maintaining "landscape and cultural values" and "our cultural heritage and cultural geography" (e.g., SD, 2017, p. 62). Similarly, Swedish fishing is an enterprise where "culture, heritage, environment, and identity interact with employment, economy and food production" (SD, 2015b, p. 68). The romanticization of the symbiosis between agriculture and fishing with nature paints a picture of a distinct Swedish landscape particularly suited for cultivation (SD, 2020, p. 58). Swedish agricultural traditions of care for the natural landscape and animal welfare imply its moral superiority over agriculture in other countries, as seen below:

> Sweden has one of the most comprehensive animal-protection legislation and most competent animal breeders. The Swedish animal welfare legislation is unique and goes much further than the other big food-producing competitor countries…Animal welfare is also something that Swedish farmers stake their honor on. Here, the animals are healthy and the use of antibiotics low. (SD, 2021a, pp. 14–15)

This contrasts with other countries, for example, those that bleed animals to death without sedation (SD, 2011b, p. 89), a not-so-subtle reference to the religious practices of Muslim countries (see Backlund & Jungar, 2022, for an analysis of nativism in SD animal protection policy). In fact, the SD argues that "the degree of civilization of a society is measurable in its treatment of animals"

(SD, 2012, p. 33), which arguably implies a hierarchical perspective. The elevation of agriculture and fishing has implications for the direction of SD trade policy. The distinctiveness of Swedish agriculture is what makes it unable to compete with countries that do not adhere to the same strict animal and environmental standards (SD, 2011b). Import from countries with lower standards risks "a continuously diminishing agricultural sector," the loss of traditional knowledge and lower quality food for Swedish consumers" (SD, 2011b). Fishing, the SD (2022b, p. 2) argues, suffers from the same competitive disadvantage from countries such as Norway and Scotland that do not care enough about fish health. Other examples include the film industry, where productions that celebrate the Swedish environment, language, and common heritage risk being outcompeted by cheaper foreign films (SD, 2021f, p. 2).

The SD advocates several protectionist policies to address the problems of competitiveness raised in the previous passage. These are predominantly NTBs: subsidies, product regulation, labeling requirements, and to a lesser extent, import restrictions. Subsidies, the SD (2012, p. 3) argues, are necessary to compensate for the extra costs contracted through compliance with strict Swedish regulations on animal welfare to make Swedish farmers internationally competitive, for example, an "animal-welfare-handout" or grazing and dairy cow supplements (SD, 2015b, p. 66). The purpose of the handout is to privilege the "absolute majority of farmers that respect the intentions of Swedish animal-protection legislation so that they will not face competitive disadvantages" (SD, 2012, p. 3), indicating the purpose of the subsidy as relating to the politics of trade. Subsidies, in the form of discount systems on production costs and differentiated tickets, are also advanced for films that "emphasize and vivify Swedish history and cultural heritage" (SD, 2021f, p. 2). Changes in product regulation are advocated for agriculture but also fishing. For agriculture, the SD (2021d, p. 8) advocates harmonization of animal welfare legislation at the EU level to the strict standards of Swedish legislation; for fishing, they advocate Nordic harmonization of environmental standards to ensure vibrant populations of fish and flourishing coastal fisheries (SD, 2021e, p. 4). Support for agriculture and fishing also extends to calls for labeling products according to the origin and specifying if they are produced in Sweden, including mandatory labeling for businesses that serve food (SD, 2022c). Traditional Swedish food products should also be marked as products of cultural and historical value (SD, 2016, p. 1). Moreover, the superiority of Swedish agricultural and fishery products warrants privilege or exclusivity in government procurement, according to the SD. For food, they want to "require that when the government procures food, they should only buy products that comply with Swedish environmental and animal-welfare legislation" (SD, 2021d, p. 9), and fish caught in Swedish waters should be "prioritized ahead of products on the international market" by public institutions (SD, 2019, p. 2). Finally, halal and kosher meat imports should be prohibited (e.g., SD, 2021b) and the government should advocate for lifting the EU-imposed export restrictions on Swedish snus. The SD (2021b, pp. 1–2) claims that the promotion of snus is part of "preserving and strengthening Swedish culture and tradition" because of its status as part of Swedish cultural heritage. Import restrictions on halal and kosher butchery and export promotion of snus show how cultural connotations, rather than an economic assessment of distributional consequences, have implications for SD trade policy.

These findings serve to concretize the meaning of cultural protectionism in the previously understudied domain of trade policy. I have shown that the SD advocates trade-restrictive policies to protect nativist conceptions of uniquely Swedish characteristics.

6. Conclusion

This study found that the SD advocates both protectionist and liberal trade policies and that nativism and populism play a part in informing those policies. Advocacy of protectionist policies is grounded in the protection of ethnonationalist notions of Swedish culture, history, and identity, while liberalization emerges as a response to elite co-optation of the international trading system in defense of the interests of small-business owners. The answer to the question posed initially—are the SD protectionists?—is by necessity then, yes and no. Nonetheless, the division into nativism and populism has significantly clarified the sources of this ambiguity. Even if they largely do not support more traditional trade-policy instruments, their claim to support free trade betrays an advocacy of more complex intra-state trade-restrictive measures—NTBs. This demonstrates the need to pay attention to the plurality of trade-policy instruments that RRPs advocate.

This article complements research on the ideological underpinnings of RRP economic policy (Ivaldi & Mazzoleni, 2020, building on Mudde, 2007; Otjes et al., 2018) and offers a framework adapted for international trade policy. By focusing on trade policy instead of European integration or immigration, this framework contributes to a greater understanding of how RRPs use trade policy—an understudied facet of globalization—to mobilize voters. The finding that the SD engage in cultural protectionism complements earlier research on how globalization structures Western European party competition (Hooghe & Marks, 2018) by showing evidence of how trade skepticism, and not only EU integration and immigration, may constitute the nationalist pole of the transnational divide. At the same time, the finding that the core ideology of RRPs inspires a combination of liberal and protectionist trade policies for the SD nuances the picture of RRPs as drivers of the contestation of globalization. Scholars of the economic policies of RRPs treat such ambivalences as being the result of "blurring," i.e.,

RRPs make their positions on economic issues purposely vague to attract a broader coalition of voters while simultaneously emphasizing the cultural issues where they are most competitive (Rovny, 2013) or selectively framing certain elements that are more salient to their core voters (De Vries et al., 2021). Because nativism and populism are regarded as "ideological master frames" (Mudde, 2007), they may well be able to accommodate disparate positioning on the economic left-right scale, as the literature on blurring would suggest. However, the findings of this article indicate that the core ideology of RRPs may restrict certain positions, at least in the realm of trade policy; in essence, it sets boundaries on the range of contradictory positions, hemmed in by core tenets of nativism and populism.

Moreover, I have shown how ideological constructions and narratives of cultural and populist entrenchment inform international economic policy proposals, although I do not claim that these dimensions are exclusive to RRPs. Thus, in addition to contributing to the literature that stresses cultural determinants of RRP policies (Kriesi et al., 2006; Mudde, 2007; Otjes et al., 2018), I also expand the relevance of previous findings on how RRPs field cultural markers to legitimate policy intervention on trade policy, in addition to policy areas, such as immigration (e.g., Elgenius & Rydgren, 2019; Norris, 2005) and animal welfare policy (Backlund & Jungar, 2022).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the ideological underpinnings of SD trade policies by developing conceptual tools derived from previous research on the core ideology of RRPs. The use of the single case study necessarily restricts the prospects for generalization, but this article offers two promising venues for future studies.

First, to test the generalizability of the results within the radical right party family, for example, regarding variation in the acceptability of protectionist policies across political contexts. Sweden's history of liberal international economic policy (e.g., Jakobsson, 2007) and high support for free trade (Darvas, 2020, p. 17) may make the Swedish electorate disapprove of protectionist policies. The highly technical nature and ambiguous legal status of NTBs may, thus, offer greater leeway for the SD to advocate protectionism if traditional trade policies are politically untenable. However, where protectionism is less politically costly, for instance, in bigger and less trade-dependent nations, the policy mix between tariffs and quotas and NTBs may be more balanced than for the SD.

Second, to test the generalizability of the results across party families. Studies suggest that as RRPs grow more electorally relevant, mainstream parties tend to adopt policy positions and priorities that more closely resemble those of RRPs, at least on immigration and crime policy (e.g., Joon Han, 2015). The task for further research is, then, to examine if nativist and populist arguments carry over to the trade policies of mainstream parties in contexts where RRPs wield political influence. Finally, this study has not considered Mudde's (2007) conception of "authoritarianism": the belief in a strictly ordered society in which the state's authority is celebrated. This dimension is related to the emphasis on the state as a guarantor of national security and is likely to gain analytical relevance for the study of RRPs and trade policy, given the geopoliticization of international trade and investments (e.g., Babic et al., 2022) and the newly launched European economic security strategy (Directorate-General for Communication, 2023). The strategy involves promoting competitiveness, protecting economic security, and intensifying international cooperation with reliable partners. Because the strategy represents increased EU involvement in its member states' security and industrial policies, it may activate populist antipathy toward international organizations, particularly given the deep-seated SD skepticism of the EU. At the same time, the empowerment of states to safeguard economic security may appeal to authoritarian tendencies in SD and RRP ideology that prioritizes security over economic aspects. Further research should explore how RRPs straddle authoritarianist underpinnings, on the one hand, and populist and nativist, on the other, in the context of increased geopolitical tension in international economic policy.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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