



West European Politics in the Age of Globalization

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The electoral consequences of the integration–demarcation cleavage

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Introduction

We conclude our analyses in this chapter by considering the links between parties and voters. After having presented separate analyses of the demand side and of the supply side of electoral competition, in this chapter we seek to relate both levels. Our main argument in this volume has been that globalization leads to the formation of a potential for a new line of conflict, and that the corresponding issues and interests are articulated by political parties. We have presented much evidence for the emergence of such a new division and for the polarizing capacity of the issues associated with globalization. At the level of parties, we have observed substantial changes in the configuration of the main actors. Cultural issues have become more important for explaining the structure of party positions. Furthermore, among these issues, those linked with the process of globalization, such as the questions of immigration and European integration, have become more salient. This is a consequence of the transformation of the character of the cultural line of conflict. Following these developments, electoral competition cannot be summarized by a single line of conflict. Both economic and cultural differences are now equally relevant. In addition, important transformations could be observed among voters. The structure of political attitudes has changed following a similar pattern.

Analyses presented in previous chapters made the implicit hypothesis that the transformations at both levels – of voters and of parties – are strongly related to one another. Parties, for instance, should respond strategically to changes in voters' preferences. Similarly, the new integration–demarcation conflict should be important not only for explaining the structure of voters' attitudes, but also for determining their voting choices. It is the last part of this argument that we are going to test in this chapter. If our arguments are correct, we should observe variations across time and between parties in the determinants of voters'

choices. First, the relative importance of economic issues, as compared with cultural issues, should decrease over time. Secondly, we expect a similar development among cultural issues: those linked with the concerns of the new social movements are expected to become less important for explaining voting choices, while the relevance of the issues most directly associated with globalization should increase. Thirdly, we expect to find increasing differences among parties. While the overall importance of specific issues should vary, they are unlikely to affect preferences towards all parties to the same extent. The likelihood of supporting some parties will depend mainly on the economic preferences of voters, while the probability of supporting other parties will be more strongly affected by attitudes towards cultural issues. While such differences are not necessarily a new phenomenon, they will be all the more important, as the structure of party positions (and of voters' preferences) is clearly two-dimensional.

The [next section](#) presents these hypotheses in more detail. It also emphasizes some important differences between the perspective adopted in this chapter and the research questions on which analyses of issue voting are often based. Then, we discuss the specification of the models and the choice of statistical methods used for testing our hypotheses. The following sections present our results country by country.

The issue basis of voting choices

The main focus of this chapter is on the impact of issue-orientations on voting choices and on how this impact varies across elections and among parties. Following the theoretical arguments presented in earlier chapters and our distinctions between party families and issue-categories, we can specify three sets of hypotheses. The first one concerns the relative importance of both economic and cultural issue-categories. Both should be important for explaining voting choices, but the relative weight of cultural determinants should have increased. As we have seen in [Chapter 10](#), the degree of polarization among social groups on the cultural dimension was higher in recent elections than in the 1970s. Cultural differences among groups of voters are now more important than economic ones. While the economic left–right divide has often been considered as the most important one for explaining party preferences and voting choices, there is reason to expect that cultural preferences have become at least as important. This hypothesis is also

justified by the changes we observed at the level of parties in the [previous chapter](#) ([Figure 11.3](#)). We found that the main axis of competition was now a cultural one in each country except Germany.

The second set of hypotheses concerns two different categories of cultural issues: those linked with the mobilization of the new social movements and those associated with the consequences of the globalization process. As we have argued before, one of the main characteristics of the transformation process analyzed in this volume is a change in the nature of the cultural line of division. This change should also be reflected in the determinants of voting choices. The impact of the traditional cultural issue-categories, mainly cultural liberalism and national defence, should decrease, while the role played by preferences towards European integration and immigration policy should become more important. This is similar to the transformation we have emphasized regarding the structure of political attitudes and the configuration of party positions.

Thirdly, we expect the impact of issue-categories to vary from one party to the other, and we expect that these variations have become larger over time. In other words, we expect the influence of a given issue-category on voting probabilities to vary from one party to the other. As far as left-wing parties are concerned, support for social-democratic parties should depend on both economic and cultural issue-preferences. They have traditionally been the most important actors on the left of the economic divide, and we expect them to continue defending the role of the state for social protection and for market regulation. As far as cultural issues are concerned, these parties strongly support cultural integration. As we have seen in [Chapter 11](#), they are generally in favour of the process of European integration and they defend liberal immigration policies. Corresponding cultural preferences should also be apparent among their supporters. Among right-wing parties, we have emphasized several times the important distinction between the moderate right and right-wing populist parties. The supporters of these two groups of parties should also differ from one another. Support for right-wing populist parties should be driven mainly by cultural preferences, while the likelihood of voting in favour of a 'mainstream' right-wing party should depend more heavily on economic preferences than on cultural ones. This expectation is derived from the strategies of the respective parties, as described in previous chapters. The greater importance of economic preferences should be especially pronounced among

supporters of liberal parties. The contrast between right-wing populist and conservative parties is likely to be less sharp, as the latter are usually less supportive of cultural integration. Cultural issues may also be more important for Christian-democratic parties, at least in countries like Switzerland or the Netherlands where the Christian-democrats take a moderate position towards economic liberalism and remain mainly rooted in the traditional religious cleavage.

This third set of hypotheses is different from the first two, insofar as it focuses on variations among parties. But there are no contradictions between the two. The overall relevance of a given issue-category may increase or decrease while being important for some parties only. It means, however, that we must be cautious when testing for these hypotheses. It is also important to emphasize the specificity of our approach, which is distinct from other analyses of issue voting. Much has been written about the role of issue-orientations in explaining voting choices. Thus, research on electoral dealignment has focused on the contrast between issue voting and other types of determinants (such as party identification or social-structural factors) of voting choices. This literature argues that a decline in the strength of cleavages together with a process of cognitive mobilization leads voters to make more sophisticated voting decisions (Dalton 1984; Dalton and Wattenberg 2000). Following this line of argument, the impact of issues or ideological orientations on voting choices should have increased over the past several decades (Knutsen and Kumlin 2005; van der Eijk *et al.* 2005), while traditional factors, such as membership in social groups or party identification should have become less relevant. In contrast to this literature, the total impact of issues is not central to our analyses. Rather, our arguments refer to the relative impact of different issue-categories.

From this point of view, it is interesting to compare the type of analyses presented here with the debate on the emergence of a ‘new politics’ dimension. As discussed in previous chapters, this debate deals with the first transformation of the cultural dimension, following the mobilization of the new social movements in the 1960s and 1970s. These mobilization efforts, together with a generational change in the voters’ value priorities (Inglehart 1977), have led to the emergence of new issues in the political debate (Franklin *et al.* 1992). Analyses of the electoral consequences of this transformation process have typically focused on the opposition between new issues and traditional ones.

Such comparisons are useful in our case, too, but they have some limitations, for two reasons. First, they assume a clear distinction between ‘old’ and ‘new’ issues. While some issue-categories, such as European integration and immigration, can be directly linked to the process of globalization, establishing a clear distinction is more difficult for other issues. Preferences related to economic liberalism or the welfare state, for instance, should be influenced both by the deregulation processes linked to globalization and by more traditional orientations towards economic redistribution. Similarly, some cultural issue-categories, such as cultural liberalism, may merge old and new concerns. Indeed, old and new issues are only partially separate. Therefore, the distinction between ‘globalization’ issues and more traditional cultural ones, on which our second hypothesis focuses, is only able to capture part of the changes associated with the globalization process.

Secondly, the usefulness of a distinction between old and new issues is limited for yet another reason. As we have emphasized, the impact of issue-orientations should not only vary from one issue to the other, but also between parties. The crucial test of our argument is not simply to show that issues linked with globalization have become more relevant in general. Rather, it is to show that they matter more strongly for specific groups of parties and voters. The impact of issue-preferences on voting choices cannot be separated from changes at the level of parties, and from party-specific variations with respect to their issue-positions and issue-salience.

Strategy of analysis

In order to test our hypotheses about the variations in the determinants of voting choices, we estimate a series of regression models. In each case, party choice is regressed on voters’ issue-orientations. In order to specify these models, we need to decide how voting choice is coded and which issue-categories are considered. This is especially important as we want to compare our results across time and space (i.e. among countries). We face a trade-off between the depth of the analyses for single elections and the ease with which our results can be compared. In the ideal case, we would have measures for all relevant issue categories in all elections, applied to an identical set of parties. This would allow us to estimate exactly the same model in each election and to compare our results directly. As we have seen, however, the number of issue-categories

that we are able to operationalize varies from one election to the other, as does the configuration of parties. As far as the latter are concerned, we shall consider all main parties and ignore only those with too few voters in a given sample. With respect to issues, we shall limit the problems of comparability by focusing on six categories only: economic liberalism, the welfare state, cultural liberalism, the army, European integration, and immigration. These are the most important categories as far as the hypotheses discussed in this chapter are concerned.

As there are more than two parties in each election, all models will be estimated with multinomial logistic regressions. To test our hypotheses, we shall focus on two types of results. The overall impact of specific issue-categories will be estimated with the help of likelihood ratio tests (Long 1997). These tests allow one to estimate the contribution of a variable (or of a group of variables) to the goodness-of-fit of a model. We rely on such tests for the first two of our hypotheses. Variations among parties in the impact of issues, by contrast, will be estimated by looking at first differences, that is, changes in the predicted probability to support one of the choice alternatives for a given change in the values of the independent variables. Our results will be presented country by country, following the order used in previous chapters.¹

France

In the case of France, we distinguish between six parties or groups: the radical left, including the Communist party and smaller Trotskyist parties, the moderate left (PSF and MRG), the Greens, the RPR, the UDF and the FN.² As far as issue-categories are concerned, attitudes towards cultural and economic liberalism can be included in all four elections. The category *welfare* can be considered for only the first two

¹ For reasons of space, we present only the results of the likelihood ratio tests and the values of the first differences. The full results of the estimated regression models are available on the website of our research project (www.ipz.uzh.ch/npw/).

² In 2002, the PCF is coded under moderate left, as the party was then much less radical and far closer to the Socialist party. The FN is not considered in the 1978 election, as we have too few supporters of this party in the sample. The UDF is not included in the analysis of the 1995 election, as there was no candidate from this party.

Table 12.1 *Likelihood ratio tests of the impact of issue-categories on voting choice, France*

	1978	1988	1995	2002
Economic liberalism	672.0 ^c	131.3 ^c	432.2 ^c	283.1 ^c
Welfare	13.4 ^a	229.2 ^c		
Cultural liberalism	198.0 ^c	59.4 ^c	31.5 ^c	31.2 ^c
Army		80.0 ^c		
Europe			91.9 ^c	79.1 ^c
Anti-immigration		227.4 ^c	136.4 ^c	245.1 ^c
Degrees of freedom	4	5	4	5

^a p<0.05

^b p<0.01

^c p<0.001

elections, army only in 1988, and immigration and European integration since 1988 and 1995, respectively.

The results of the likelihood ratio tests for these six categories of issues are presented in [Table 12.1](#). In 1978, attitudes towards economic liberalism have the strongest impact on voting choices. The traditional cultural cleavage, represented by issues of cultural liberalism, plays only a secondary role. Unfortunately, a direct comparison with the impact of immigration and of Europe is not possible, as such items were only included in later election studies. In the more recent period, however, we find a strong impact of attitudes towards immigration on voting choices. Its impact is almost as strong as the one of economic preferences, in 1988 and 2002. Thus, we observe a relative decrease in the role of the economy, as well as a clear decrease in the impact of the traditional cultural cleavage. At the same time, the emergence of a new line of division centred on questions of immigration is unmistakable. As far as the question of European integration is concerned, it plays only a secondary role in explaining voting choices – at least when controlling for attitudes towards immigration. While this issue is central for explaining the reconfiguration and fragmentation of the party system, as discussed in [Chapter 4](#), it is less central among voters' motives.

First differences for all issues and parties are presented in [Table 12.2](#). As explained above, these results show how the probability of supporting a given party varies with a change in the corresponding issue

Table 12.2 *Impact of issue-positions on voting probabilities, France*

Party	Year	Economic liberalism	Welfare	Cultural liberalism	Army	Europe	Anti-immigration
Radical left	1978	-0.13 ^b	0.00	0.06 ^b			
	1988	-0.04 ^b	0.06 ^b	0.04 ^b	-0.03 ^b		-0.03 ^b
	1995	-0.07 ^b		0.03 ^a		-0.03 ^b	-0.04 ^b
	2002	-0.07 ^b		0.03 ^b		-0.02 ^b	-0.04 ^b
Moderate left	1978	-0.18 ^b	0.04 ^b	0.05 ^b			
	1988	-0.11 ^b	0.15 ^b	0.03	-0.07 ^b		-0.17 ^b
	1995	-0.16 ^b		0.04 ^b		0.09 ^b	-0.08 ^b
	2002	-0.12 ^b		0.00		0.05 ^b	-0.11 ^b
Greens	1978	0.00	0.00	0.04 ^b			
	1988	0.00	0.00	0.02 ^a	-0.02 ^b		-0.02 ^b
	1995	-0.02 ^b		0.01		0.00	-0.01 ^b
	2002	-0.01 ^b		0.02 ^b		0.01 ^a	-0.04 ^b
UDF	1978	0.16 ^b	-0.01	-0.07 ^b			
	1988	0.10 ^b	-0.09 ^b	-0.02	0.03 ^b		0.00
	2002	0.07 ^b		0.00		0.01	0.00
RPR	1978	0.15 ^b	-0.03 ^b	-0.09 ^b			
	1988	0.05 ^b	-0.09 ^b	-0.07 ^b	0.05 ^b		0.00
	1995	0.23 ^b		-0.08 ^b		-0.02	-0.03
	2002	0.11 ^b		-0.05 ^b		-0.01	0.06 ^b
FN	1988	0.01	-0.03 ^b	-0.01	0.04 ^b		0.22 ^b
	1995	0.02 ^a		0.00		-0.04 ^b	0.16 ^b
	2002	0.02 ^a		0.00		-0.04 ^b	0.13 ^b

^a p < 0.05^b p < 0.01

Note: Entries are the value of the first difference in the probability of supporting the corresponding party for an increase of one standard deviation in the corresponding issue-category (the other independent variables being set at their average value).

position. These first differences were computed by setting all variables to their average value and by changing the position on a single issue-category by one standard deviation. Changes are in the direction of positions more favourable to economic liberalism, the welfare state, cultural liberalism, national defence, European integration, and a restrictive immigration policy, respectively.

First, we notice that all significant first differences are in the expected direction. Thus, changes towards left-wing economic positions increase the probability of supporting the radical left, the moderate left, or the Greens, while they decrease the level of support for all three right-wing parties. An analogous pattern emerges for positions in favour of cultural liberalism and European integration, or opposition to the army and to a restrictive immigration policy. The only deviation from this general pattern is the impact of European preferences on support for the radical left. These parties enjoy a higher level of support among Eurosceptics than among citizens favourable to further European integration. We comment on this result in more detail below.

As far as our third group of hypotheses is concerned, we first notice a strong contrast between the moderate right and the Front National. Support for the UDF and for the RPR is strongly influenced by attitudes towards economic and cultural liberalism, while it is not related to the issues of European integration and of immigration – except for the RPR in 2002. Support for the right-wing populist party, on the other hand, bears only a weak relationship with economic issue-orientations, while it strongly depends on preferences on the immigration question and, to a lesser extent, on preferences regarding European integration. This pattern can be observed in all elections and corresponds to our expectations. It shows that the ‘tripolarization’ of the party system is also reflected in the determinants of voting choices. Moderate and populist right-wing parties do not differ from one another simply by their relative location, that is, the FN is not just situated more to the right than the RPR. As we saw in earlier chapters, these parties also represent very distinct issue profiles, and this difference is clearly reflected in the determinants of voting choices.

Yet, the results also point to a possible weakening of this difference. First, the overall impact of issue orientations on support for the UDF decreases. Secondly, and probably more interesting, we observe signs of a possible convergence between the RPR and the FN, as far as the determinants of individual voting decisions are concerned. The impact of attitudes towards immigration has decreased for the FN, but becomes significant in 2002 for the RPR. As far as economic issues are concerned, we also notice a weak but significant impact on support for the FN since 1995. So far, these developments indicate only rather weak tendencies and, accordingly, should not be over-interpreted.

On the left, the distinction between moderate and radical parties is less pronounced. Support for these two groups of parties is mainly influenced by orientations towards economic liberalism and towards the welfare state. Together with the Greens, they also attract voters who support cultural liberalism or are opposed to the army. As noted above, however, the supporters of moderate and of radical-left parties differ from one another with respect to the question of European integration – but not with regard to immigration.³ This is not surprising given the results presented in [Chapter 4](#). These results point to a possible divergence between the economic and cultural goals of European integration. The European project is often perceived as neo-liberal, among others by voters from the Communist and radical left. When attitudes towards the economic and cultural aspects of Europe can be separated, as was the case in the 2002 French electoral survey, they correspond to different dimensions of the political space ([Table 4.2](#)). Similarly, if the two groups of European attitudes are separated in the present model, we find that the probability to support a radical left party is significantly affected by economic attitudes towards the EU, but not by attitudes towards the cultural aspects of European integration. The opposite is the case for support of the Front National. These results show that the economic aspects of European integration are dominant among supporters of radical-left parties.

Austria

In Austria, we consider four parties: the SPÖ, the ÖVP, the FPÖ and the Greens – the latter only since the 1994 election. We have indicators for fewer issue-categories than in the other countries. While attitudes towards the welfare state and immigration are measured in all election surveys, cultural liberalism can be considered only in 1975 and 2002, and the categories of economic liberalism and of European integration only in 2002. The results of the likelihood ratio tests, summarizing the impact of these issue-categories on voting choices, are presented in [Table 12.3](#).

³ The values of the first differences may give the impression that the impact of immigration is weaker for the radical left than for the moderate right. The *relative* change in the odds of supporting either of these parties, however, is not significant.

Table 12.3 *Likelihood ratio tests of the impact of issue-categories on voting choice, Austria*

	1975	1994	1999	2002
Economic liberalism				116.9 ^c
Welfare	5.9	50.2 ^c	26.1 ^c	1.9
Cultural liberalism	2.7			49.4 ^c
Europe				3.2
Anti-immigration	0.2	164.2 ^c	162.9 ^c	158.9 ^c
Degrees of freedom	2	3	3	3

^a $p < 0.05$

^b $p < 0.01$

^c $p < 0.001$

The results for the 1975 election may be surprising, as none of the three issue-categories has a significant impact on voting choices. The only significant effect we find is for the contrast between the SPÖ and the FPÖ, which is weakly related to preferences towards the welfare state. Altogether, however, voting choices cannot be explained on the basis of issue-orientations in that election, and nothing can be said on the relative importance of different categories of issues – except that none of them seems to matter. This is probably a direct consequence of the strong economic and social consensus that was prevailing in Austrian politics in that period (see [Chapter 5](#)). In more recent elections, the conclusions we can draw are constrained by the small number of available issue-categories. We find that immigration has a strong impact in all three recent elections and that its influence on voting decisions is stronger than that of economic issues. Yet, this result must be interpreted with some caution, as the operationalization of the issue-categories is far from optimal in 1994 and 1999. If we judge by the results of 2002, our hypothesis about the transformation of the cultural dimension is supported, as attitudes towards immigration have a much larger impact than those related to cultural liberalism. Without a more reliable basis of comparison, however, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions about our first two hypotheses.

Turning to differences among parties ([Table 12.4](#)), comparisons over time are again difficult to make. First, there are no significant changes in predicted probabilities in the 1975 election, for any of the

Table 12.4 *Impact of issue-positions on voting probabilities, Austria*

Party	Year	Economic liberalism	Welfare	Cultural liberalism	Europe	Anti-immigration
SPÖ	1975		0.03	0.02		0.00
	1994		0.09 ^b			-0.11 ^b
	1999		0.08 ^b			-0.10 ^b
	2002	-0.18 ^b	0.02	0.02	-0.02	-0.01
Greens	1994		-0.01 ^a			-0.02 ^b
	1999		-0.02 ^b			-0.06 ^b
	2002	-0.02 ^b	-0.01	0.10 ^b	0.00	-0.06 ^b
ÖVP	1975		-0.02	-0.01		0.00
	1994		-0.04 ^b			-0.01
	1999		-0.04 ^b			-0.04 ^b
	2002	0.20 ^b	-0.01	-0.11 ^b	0.03	0.01
FPÖ	1975		-0.01	-0.01		0.00
	1994		-0.04 ^b			0.14 ^b
	1999		-0.02 ^a			0.20 ^b
	2002	0.00	0.00	-0.01 ^a	-0.01	0.06 ^b

^a p<0.05^b p<0.01

Note: Entries are the value of the first difference in the probability of supporting the corresponding party for an increase of one standard deviation in the corresponding issue-category (the other independent variables being set at their average value).

issue-categories. Secondly, comparisons of the 2002 election with those of 1994 and 1999 should only be made with some caution, as the available indicators are more problematic in the 1990s. However, we do find some interesting contrasts between the four parties. The impact of economic attitudes is characterized by a left–right divide. Voters who defend the welfare state and who are opposed to economic liberalism are more likely to vote for the Social-Democrats and for the Greens, but less likely to support the Christian-Democrats or (except in 2002) the FPÖ.

With respect to cultural issues, we again find a difference among right-wing parties. In 2002, support for the Christian-Democrats is influenced by attitudes towards cultural liberalism, while this issue-category is not relevant for explaining the level of support of the FPÖ. Attitudes towards immigration, by contrast, are much more relevant for

the latter party than for the ÖVP. Again, however, there are differences between the elections of the 1990s and that of 2002, which are difficult to interpret. Thus, the impact of attitudes about immigration is much lower in 2002 than in 1994 or 1999. As it is for economic attitudes, this may reflect changes in the available indicators as much as ‘real’ changes in the motives of voters. Thus, while we find some evidence supporting our hypothesis about differences between moderate left, moderate right, and right-wing populist parties, our conclusions in the case of Austria can only be tentative.

Switzerland

In the Swiss case, we do not have such operationalization problems. There, we encounter less variation in the number of available categories (all can be included in 1999, and only economic liberalism is missing in 1975 or 1995), and the issue-questions we could rely on to construct summary measures of voters’ attitudes closely corresponded to the type of questions we needed. We distinguish between four parties: the Social Democrats (SPS), the Christian Democrats (CVP), the Liberals,⁴ and the Swiss People’s Party (SVP). The latter is not included in our analysis of the 1975 election, since it counted too few supporters in the sample.

In 1975, voting choices were significantly affected by two variables only: attitudes about the welfare state and about national defence (Table 12.5). Similarly to the Austrian election in the same year, voters’ issue-positions had only a weak impact on voting choices. As far as we can judge from this evidence, however, the traditional economic and cultural cleavages were the most important ones, as expected. Preferences regarding immigration and European integration were already included in this election study, but they did not influence the voters’ electoral preferences. The pattern of results for the 1990s turns out to be quite different. Not only is the overall impact of issue-positions larger, but the single most important group of attitudes is now constituted by those concerning European integration. Preferences with regard to cultural liberalism and the army still have an impact on voting choices in the 1990s, but they are clearly less important than the issue of

⁴ This includes both the Radical Party (FDP), which is a member of the governmental coalition, and the smaller Swiss Liberal Party (LPS), which has a similar programmatic orientation.

Table 12.5 *Likelihood ratio tests of the impact of issue-categories on voting choice, Switzerland*

	1975	1995	1999
Economic liberalism			12.0 ^b
Welfare	31.8 ^c	99.8 ^c	109.9 ^c
Cultural liberalism	2.8	2.2	36.4 ^c
Army	7.3 ^a	80.5 ^c	30.6 ^c
Europe	2.4	136.3 ^c	134.9 ^c
Anti-immigration	3.3	12.1 ^b	9.2 ^a
Degrees of freedom	2	3	3

^a p<0.05^b p<0.01^c p<0.001

European integration. The transformation of the cultural line of conflict has thus also affected the determinants of electoral choice. In line with our first hypothesis, we also find that the relative importance of cultural versus economic attitudes has increased. It must, however, also be emphasized that, among the two categories of issues most strongly related to the consequences of globalization, only European integration seems to matter. Attitudes about immigration policy play only a minor role in Switzerland.

Considering now the variations between parties with regard to the determinants of voting choices (Table 12.6), we first observe a clear left–right economic divide. The more favourable voters are to the welfare state, the less likely they are to support a right-wing party. This effect is particularly strong for the Liberals. This is the first sign of a divergence among right-wing parties. Except in 1999, the probability to support the SVP or the CVP also decreases with an increasing support of the welfare state, but less strongly than in the case of the Liberals. The difference is even clearer for economic liberalism, which affects only the probabilities to vote for the Social Democrats or for the Liberals – not those of supporting the Christian-Democratic party or the right-wing populists. As far as cultural issues are concerned, we also observe differences in the motivation of voting choice between supporters of right-wing parties. At the same time, there are also some important differences between the 1995 and 1999 elections, which can be difficult

Table 12.6 *Impact of issue-positions on voting probabilities, Switzerland*

Party	Year	Economic liberalism	Welfare	Cultural liberalism	Army	Europe	Anti-immigration
SPS	1975		0.14 ^b	-0.04	-0.06 ^a	-0.01	-0.02
	1995		0.24 ^b	0.02	-0.16 ^b	0.06 ^a	-0.07 ^b
	1999	-0.04 ^a	0.21 ^b	0.10 ^b	-0.08 ^b	0.09 ^b	-0.05 ^b
CVP	1975		-0.06 ^b	0.00	0.01	-0.02	-0.03
	1995		-0.07 ^b	0.00	-0.02	-0.07 ^b	0.00
	1999	-0.03	0.01	-0.01	0.09 ^b	-0.01	0.01
LIB	1975		-0.08 ^b	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.05
	1995		-0.13 ^b	-0.01	0.11 ^b	0.07 ^b	0.06 ^b
	1999	0.06 ^b	-0.14 ^b	-0.01	0.02	0.04	0.01
SVP	1995		-0.04 ^b	-0.02	0.08 ^b	-0.07 ^b	0.01
	1999	0.01	-0.08 ^b	-0.08 ^b	-0.03	-0.12 ^b	0.03

^a p<0.05

^b p<0.01

Note: Entries are the value of the first difference in the probability of supporting the corresponding party for an increase of one standard deviation in the corresponding issue-category (the other independent variables being set at their average value).

to interpret. It must be emphasized that, contrary to Austria, these variations cannot be explained by changes in the operationalization of our issue-categories.⁵ As far as the traditional cultural cleavage is concerned, we observe again a left–right divide. The SPS enjoys a higher level of support among voters who defend cultural liberalism and oppose the army. On the right of the political spectrum, the SVP is supported more strongly by voters with opposite views in both elections. A similar effect can be noted for the two moderate right-wing parties but only in one election each (the Liberals in 1995, the Christian-Democrats in 1999) and

⁵ Besides the inclusion of a new item on economic liberalism, only the construction of the index of cultural liberalism differs slightly between the two surveys, without changing the meaning of this variable. Attitudes towards cultural liberalism in 1995 are measured by a single scale, measuring preferences towards the defence of traditions. In 1999, two additional items were included, asking respondents whether they are proud to be Swiss, and whether they think the critiques of the behaviour of Switzerland during World War II were justified or not. All three indicators are strongly correlated with one another and they clearly load on the same dimension (more information on the operationalization of the issue categories can be found in [Appendix A](#)).

only with respect to the question of national defence. The chances of supporting either of these parties are not influenced by voters' attitudes towards cultural liberalism.

Similar to the issue of cultural liberalism, preferences regarding the question of European integration mainly affect the opposition between the SVP and the Social Democrats. The latter are more strongly supported by pro-Europeans. In 1995, but not in 1999, the probabilities to vote in favour of the Liberals or of the Christian Democrats are also influenced by the European question. The electoral chances of the Liberals are higher among those who support Swiss membership of the EU, while the Christian Democrats are more strongly supported by Eurosceptics.

The Netherlands

Changes in the relative impact of the six issue categories in the Netherlands also support our corresponding hypotheses, as they did in the other countries. From Table 12.7, we see that the impact of economic preferences has decreased in relative terms during the 1990s – at least until 2002. Voters' attitudes about economic liberalism are still important, and they have a strong impact on their choices at the polls. But preferences on cultural issues have become more important. Among the latter, those linked with the army were the most important ones in

Table 12.7 *Likelihood ratio tests of the impact of issue-categories on voting choice, the Netherlands*

	1972	1994	1998	2002	2003
Economic liberalism	134.7 ^c	201.5 ^c	123.6 ^c	115.0 ^c	146.7 ^c
Welfare			61.6 ^c		
Cultural liberalism	45.3 ^c	114.4 ^c	181.3 ^c	94.0 ^c	37.2 ^c
Army	104.8 ^c	8.5	6.6		
Europe	11.1 ^a	23.2 ^c	7.0	17.7 ^b	9.6
Anti-immigration	36.7 ^c	62.1 ^c	30.3 ^c	219.9 ^c	57.1 ^c
Degrees of freedom	4	4	4	5	5

^a p<0.05

^b p<0.01

^c p<0.001

1972, reflecting the salience of the traditional cultural cleavage. The question of cultural liberalism was important in the 1990s, too. In the 2002 election, however, with the rise of the LPF, the question of immigration played a central role. It was clearly the most important issue for explaining party choice. The results of the likelihood ratio tests also show that the 2003 election differs markedly from that of 2002. In 2003, attitudes towards immigration are still most important culturally, but economic preferences turn out to be dominant again.

The results for the Netherlands not only show trends in the relative impact of the different issue-categories, but also reveal clear patterns in the parties or groups of parties that are opposed on cultural and economic issues (see [Table 12.8](#)). Starting again with economic issues, we find a strong and consistent opposition between the Social Democrats and the Greens, on the one hand, and the VVD, on the other. The probabilities to support each of these parties vary strongly between voters defending economic liberalism and those opposed to it. The impact of attitudes towards the welfare state is similar, though such attitudes can only be included in the analysis of the 1998 election. The traditional cultural cleavage, especially with regard to cultural liberalism, is strong in all elections as well. But it opposes different parties. On the left, it plays some role for explaining support for the Social Democrats, but is stronger and more consistent with respect to the Greens. Support for D'66 is also driven by the defence of cultural liberalism – though this effect weakened during the 1990s and was no longer significant by 2003. On this issue, supporters of D'66 are opposed by Christian-Democratic voters. By contrast, support for the other two right-wing parties, the VVD and the LPF, is not influenced by citizens' preferences for cultural liberalism.

Finally, we observe yet another pattern for the impact of immigration on voting choices. The main contrast here is that between the Social Democrats and the Greens, on the one hand, and the VVD and LPF, on the other. Supporters of the latter two parties defend a restrictive immigration policy. The alignments on this question also depart from the general left–right opposition that we found for other issues. Christian-Democratic voters are also rather in favour of a liberal immigration policy – though less so than voters of left-wing parties. Consistent with the results of the likelihood ratio tests, we also note that attitudes towards European integration have virtually no impact on voting probabilities. Altogether, our hypotheses about the divisions

Table 12.8 *Impact of issue-positions on voting probabilities, the Netherlands*

Party	Year	Economic liberalism	Welfare	Cultural liberalism	Army	Europe	Anti-immigration
PvdA	1972	-0.12 ^b		0.05 ^b	-0.12 ^b	0.04 ^a	-0.03 ^a
	1994	-0.15 ^b		0.01	-0.03	-0.02	-0.06 ^b
	1998	-0.13 ^b	0.09 ^b	-0.03	0.00	-0.01	-0.04 ^a
	2002	-0.07 ^b		0.04 ^a		0.02	-0.10 ^b
	2003	-0.14 ^b		0.08 ^b		0.03	-0.09 ^b
GL	1972	-0.04 ^b		0.05 ^b	-0.04 ^b	-0.02 ^a	-0.04 ^b
	1994	-0.01 ^b		0.02 ^b	0.00	-0.01 ^b	-0.01 ^b
	1998	-0.04 ^b	0.02	0.06 ^b	0.00	-0.02 ^a	-0.01
	2002	-0.04 ^b		0.07 ^b		0.00	-0.05 ^b
	2003	-0.03 ^b		0.02 ^b		0.00	-0.03 ^b
D'66	1972		-0.01	0.01	-0.01	-0.01	0.00
	1994	-0.05 ^b		0.10 ^b	-0.02	-0.02	0.00
	1998	0.00	0.00	0.09 ^b	0.01	0.00	-0.02 ^a
	2002	0.00		0.03 ^a		0.03 ^b	-0.02 ^b
	2003	0.00		0.02		0.01	0.00
CDA	1972	0.04 ^a		-0.09 ^b	0.10 ^b	-0.02	0.06 ^b
	1994	0.01		-0.12 ^b	0.01	0.01	-0.04 ^a
	1998	0.00	-0.02	-0.12 ^b	-0.03 ^a	0.02	-0.02
	2002	-0.03 ^a		-0.15 ^b		-0.02	-0.06 ^b
	2003	0.02		-0.10 ^b		-0.03	0.00
VVD	1972	0.13 ^b		-0.02 ^a	0.07 ^b	0.00	0.01
	1994	0.20 ^b		-0.01	0.04 ^b	0.05 ^b	0.11 ^b
	1998	0.16 ^b	-0.09 ^b	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.10 ^b
	2002	0.14 ^b		0.02		0.00	0.04 ^b
	2003	0.15 ^b		0.00		0.00	0.07 ^b
LPF	2002	0.01		-0.01		-0.02 ^b	0.19 ^b
	2003	0.01		-0.01 ^a		-0.01 ^a	0.05 ^b

^a p<0.05^b p<0.01

Note: Entries are the value of the first difference in the probability of supporting the corresponding party for an increase of one standard deviation in the corresponding issue-category (the other independent variables being set at their average value).

among right-wing parties seem to be confirmed. The CDA, VVD and LPF each represent the pole on one of the main lines of divisions we have identified: the Christian Democrats on the traditional cultural cleavage, the Liberals on the economic one, and the LPF on the issue of immigration, which is emblematic of the new cultural line of conflict resulting from the globalization process.

United Kingdom

The results of our analyses for the UK differ quite strongly from those of the other countries. The summary statistics on the importance of the various issue-categories show a clear dominance of economic attitudes, especially in the 1990s (Table 12.9). In each election, the single most important issue-category for explaining voting choices is economic liberalism. Attitudes towards the welfare state also have a strong impact in 1992 and 1997. The cultural issue-categories, by contrast, have only a weak or moderate impact – except in 1974. Here, we see that the question of European integration was almost as important as the economic dimension. We have already discussed this point in previous analyses, especially in Chapter 8. The debate on Europe was central to the election of February 1974. Compared with this, the impact of European integration on voting choices in the 1990s appears to be particularly weak. Yet, at the same time, this issue has again become more influential during the 1990s and early 2000s. We continue to

Table 12.9 *Likelihood ratio tests of the impact of issue-categories on voting choice, the UK*

	1974	1992	1997	2001
Economic liberalism	206.3 ^c	273.2 ^c	99.9 ^c	129.8 ^c
Welfare	34.2 ^c	111.8 ^c	138.9 ^c	7.8 ^a
Cultural liberalism		6.4 ^a		27.7 ^c
Army		29.7 ^c	10.0 ^b	
Europe	192.0 ^c	6.4 ^a	47.9 ^c	34.7 ^c
Anti-immigration			3.7	8.2 ^a
Degrees of freedom	2	2	2	2

^a p<0.05

^b p<0.01

^c p<0.001

Table 12.10 *Impact of issue-positions on voting probabilities, the UK*

Party	Year	Economic	Cultural		Anti-		
		liberalism	Welfare	liberalism	Army	Europe	immigration
Labour	1974	-0.20 ^b	0.08 ^b			-0.19 ^b	
	1992	-0.20 ^b	0.21 ^b	-0.03	-0.04 ^b	0.01	
	1997	-0.15 ^b	0.14 ^b		-0.04 ^a	0.07 ^b	-0.01
	2001	-0.18 ^b	-0.04	0.04 ^a		0.03	0.01
Libdem	1974	-0.04 ^a	0.01			-0.01	
	1992	-0.11 ^b	0.01	0.03	-0.06 ^b	0.03 ^a	
	1997	-0.02	-0.01		-0.01	0.02	-0.02
	2001	-0.01	0.04 ^b	0.03 ^a		0.05 ^b	-0.04 ^b
Conservative	1974	0.23 ^b	-0.09 ^b			0.20 ^b	
	1992	0.30 ^b	-0.22 ^b	0.00	0.09 ^b	-0.04 ^a	
	1997	0.18 ^b	-0.13 ^b		0.04 ^b	-0.08 ^b	0.02
	2001	0.18 ^b	-0.01		-0.08 ^b	-0.08 ^b	0.03

^a p<0.05^b p<0.01

Note: Entries are the value of the first difference in the probability of supporting the corresponding party for an increase of one standard deviation in the corresponding issue-category (the other independent variables being set at their average value).

observe, during the more recent period, an increase in the importance of the ‘new’ cultural issues, which parallels a decline in the impact of preferences towards the army and towards cultural liberalism.

Given the small size of the British party system, the divides among groups of voters are much easier to summarize than in other countries. For most issues, we find a clear opposition between supporters of the Labour Party and supporters of the Conservatives (see Table 12.10). Attitudes in favour of the welfare state, of cultural liberalism, of European integration, as well as opposition to economic liberalism or to the army, all contribute to higher probabilities of voting for the Labour Party. This pattern is more consistent for economic issues than for cultural ones. The 1974 election also represents an exception as far as the role of attitudes towards European integration is concerned, as mentioned above. This is linked with the radical change in the position of the two major parties on this issue, which was discussed in detail in Chapter 8. Support for the third party, the Liberal Democrats, is usually characterized by a pattern similar to that of

Labour. But the effects of the various issue-categories vary here more strongly from one election to the next.

Germany

In the last of our six countries, again we find strong support for our first two hypotheses, as shown by the results in [Table 12.11](#). In the 1970s, voting choices were structured by the traditional economic and cultural line of conflicts, with attitudes towards economic liberalism having the largest impact. While voters' preferences on the question of European integration were already measured in that election study, they did not significantly contribute to the explanation of party preferences. These results differ strongly from those of the 1990s and early 2000s. In the more recent elections, voting choices were mainly influenced by preferences on cultural issues, especially by the question of immigration. This pattern fits with the hypotheses we have formulated and corresponds to the results observed in the other countries – with the possible exception of the UK.

As there is no party of the populist right, there are fewer reasons to expect strong variations among parties in the determinants of voting choices. But we do observe an interesting contrast between the SPD and the Greens. On economic issues, the opposition runs between social-democratic voters, who are opposed to economic liberalism, and those of the Liberal and Christian-democratic parties. On the question of

Table 12.11 *Likelihood ratio tests of the impact of issue-categories on voting choice, Germany*

	1976	1994	1998	2002
Economic liberalism	136.3 ^c	10.0 ^a	49.9 ^c	19.6 ^c
Welfare	2.0	9.5 ^a		
Cultural liberalism	78.8 ^c	21.3 ^c	56.8 ^c	28.1 ^c
Army		9.4 ^a		
Europe	0.6		9.8 ^a	9.6 ^a
Anti-immigration		98.1 ^c	47.6 ^c	57.6 ^c
Degrees of freedom	2	3	3	3

^a $p < 0.05$

^b $p < 0.01$

^c $p < 0.001$

Table 12.12 *Impact of issue-positions on voting probabilities, Germany*

Party	Year	Economic liberalism	Welfare	Cultural liberalism	Army	Europe	Anti-immigration
SPD	1976	-0.18 ^b	0.02	0.10 ^b		0.01	
	1994	-0.02	0.03	0.02	-0.04 ^a		-0.10 ^b
	1998	-0.10 ^b		0.05 ^b		-0.04 ^a	-0.06 ^b
	2002	-0.07 ^b		0.05 ^a		-0.04 ^a	-0.09 ^b
Greens	1994	-0.01	0.01	0.03 ^b	-0.01		-0.03 ^b
	1998	-0.01		0.04 ^b		0.01	-0.02 ^b
	2002	-0.01		0.04 ^b		0.03 ^b	-0.03 ^b
FDP	1976	-0.01	0.01	0.05 ^b		0.00	
	1994	0.02 ^b	-0.01 ^a	0.00	0.01		0.01
	1998	0.04 ^b		0.00		0.02 ^a	0.00
	2002	0.00		-0.01		0.01	-0.01
CDU/ CSU	1976	0.18 ^b	-0.02	-0.15 ^b		-0.01	
	1994	0.01	-0.03	-0.06 ^b	0.04 ^a		0.11 ^b
	1998	0.07 ^b		-0.10 ^b		0.02	0.09 ^b
	2002	0.08 ^b		-0.07 ^b		0.00	0.13 ^b

^a p<0.05^b p<0.01

Note: Entries are the value of the first difference in the probability of supporting the corresponding party for an increase of one standard deviation in the corresponding issue-category (the other independent variables being set at their average value).

cultural liberalism, a left–right cleavage also emerges, but it is most salient between supporters of the Greens and Christian-democratic voters. This situation bears some resemblance to the French case, in which support for the Greens is only weakly related to economic preferences. Attitudes towards cultural liberalism also influence the odds of the SPD, but this impact is weaker than that of economic liberalism. Finally, a left–right contrast is also characteristic of the category of immigration, where both the SPD and the Greens enjoy a higher level of support among citizens who oppose a restrictive immigration policy.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to analyze the determinants of voting choices and thus to relate both aspects of electoral competition, that

is, the supply side and the demand side. Following the developments emphasized in previous chapters, regarding the line of conflicts that structure party positions and voters' preferences, we formulated three sets of hypotheses. First, the influence of cultural issues on voting choices should have become greater. Secondly, we expected an increase in the relative impact of preferences towards European integration and immigration, as compared with the impact of attitudes towards cultural liberalism and national defence. Thirdly, we expected variations among party families in the relevance of different issue-categories. Most importantly, we suggested a strong contrast among right-wing parties, with the likelihood of supporting right-wing populist parties being influenced mainly by cultural preferences and the odds of voting in favour of a moderate dependent more on economic orientation.

These hypotheses were quite strongly supported by our analyses. As expected, the overall impact of economic issue preferences has decreased in recent elections. While voting choices were mainly explained by attitudes towards economic liberalism or the welfare state in the 1970s, preferences towards cultural issues are now dominant. The traditional economic left–right opposition, associated with the class cleavage, is no longer the most important one. Voters are more strongly influenced by their position on the cultural dimension. The only exception to this pattern is the UK, for which the economic dimension is still the most important one. But, even in this case, we observe a reinforcement of the impact of the European question during the 1990s. In this volume, we have emphasized several times that it was important not to reduce the 'space' of electoral competition to a single left–right dimension, especially if the latter is interpreted mainly in economic terms. The results of this chapter offer further evidence in favour of this conclusion.

Our second hypothesis, regarding the balance between 'old' and 'new' cultural issues, has also been strongly supported. Our analyses have confirmed the expected weakening of the traditional cultural cleavage and the emergence of a new line of division. The opposition between integration and demarcation is clearly reflected in the determinants of voting choices and this opposition has grown stronger during the 1990s and early 2000s. These changes parallel those observed in the separate analyses of both the demand side and the supply side of electoral competition. In line with our 'embedding' hypothesis, we have shown in previous chapters how the articulation of the

consequences of globalization has led to a transformation of the nature of the cultural cleavage. The same development can now be observed in the influence of issue-positions on voting choices. While this hypothesis was tested by contrasting ‘old’ and ‘new’ issues, that is, cultural liberalism and national defence on the one hand, and European integration and immigration on the other, this contrast must be interpreted with some caution. As we have emphasized, such a distinction can only be imperfect. It is not possible to isolate a group of issues that are direct consequences of globalization and that are entirely different from political issues associated with traditional divides. What we sometimes referred to as ‘globalization issues’ captures only part of the consequences of this phenomenon. But still, the changes we observed in the relative importance of these two groups of issues provide strong evidence in favour of our argument.

Finally, we also expected the impact of issues to vary across parties. Most important from this point of view was the expected contrast between parties of the moderate right and those of the populist right. This contrast, of course, is only relevant in four countries, as there are no significant right-wing populist parties in the UK or in Germany. This hypothesis was also generally confirmed, though the results are here less clear-cut. Support for conservative or liberal parties depends mainly on economic preferences, while cultural preferences are central to explaining votes for right-wing populist parties. This pattern appeared clearly in the Netherlands and in France. In the latter country, however, it was stronger in the 1990s than in the 2002 election. In Austria, too, this contrast can be observed when comparing votes for the FPÖ and for the ÖVP in 2002 – but not in the elections of the 1990s. In the Swiss case, the distinction between two types of variables for explaining voting choices was less systematic and there was more variation across elections. Altogether, our results are more mixed for this hypothesis than for the previous two. Yet this may point towards a more general characteristic of this third hypothesis. Contrary to the other two, it depends as much on the strategy of single parties as on more general developments affecting all voters and parties. It shows again that the way in which parties articulate these new issues and challenges is central to understanding the electoral consequences of globalization.

13

Globalizing West European politics: the change of cleavage structures, parties and party systems in comparative perspective

EDGAR GRANDE

Globalizing West European politics: dimensions of comparative analysis

Has globalization resulted in a fundamental change of West European politics, its cleavage structures, parties and party systems? Although globalization has been one of the most important topics in social science research over the past decade, this question has thus far been widely neglected.¹ In political science, most attention has been paid to the empirical analysis of the consequences of economic globalization on national state capacities and policies (e.g. Scharpf and Schmidt 2000a, 2000b; Weiss 2003) and to efforts at establishing new transnational institutions and organizations able to regulate effectively a rapidly globalizing capitalism (Zürn 1998; Held *et al.* 1999; Held 2004; Slaughter 2004; Grande and Pauly 2005). The impact of globalization on *politics* has received hardly any attention. This holds true in particular for political parties. While there are some studies on the reactions of interest groups to globalization (Zürn and Walter 2005; Streeck *et al.* 2006) and on the transnational organization of social movements (della Porta, Kriesi and Rucht 1999; Smith and Johnston 2002; Tarrow 2005; della Porta and Tarrow 2005), a systematic comparative analysis of the consequences of globalization on political cleavage structures, political parties and party systems is missing. Conventional wisdom still holds that political parties, their ideological profiles, their organizational capacities and their strategic interactions are all determined by domestic factors.

It is the aim of this book to revise substantially this picture. In our research design, politics was treated as the dependent variable, while we

¹ For a recent overview of the state of the art in this field, see Schirm (2007).

considered globalization to be the most important independent variable. Basically, we were interested in whether and how globalization has been causing changes in the ideological profile and the organization of politics in Western democracies. The focus of our empirical analysis was cast deliberately on *national parties and party systems*. Despite the establishment of new transnational institutional architectures of political decision-making, the organization of politics remains firmly rooted within the national political systems and it is political parties that remain the most important actors in transforming citizens' preferences into political programmes. In this context, we assume that globalization has the capacity to produce a new structural cleavage in modern societies which offers new opportunities for the transformation of national party politics and party systems.

Our analysis of change in West European politics was based in particular on three theoretical concepts: first, and most importantly, Stein Rokkan's *cleavage theory* (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Rokkan 1999; Kriesi 1998); secondly, the sociological *theory of reflexive modernization* (Beck *et al.* 1994; Beck 1999; Beck and Bonß 2001; Beck and Grande 2007; Beck and Lau 2004, 2005; Giddens 1990; 1994), and, thirdly, different strands of *neo-institutionalist theories*, in particular concepts of historical institutionalism and rational choice institutionalism (March and Olsen 1989; Steinmo *et al.* 1992; Mayntz and Scharpf 1995; Scharpf 1997; Hall and Taylor 1996; Peters 1999). Stein Rokkan's cleavage theory served as a starting point for our analysis. This theory attributes the formation of political parties and party families in West European countries to fundamental societal conflicts and assumes a close relationship between the structure of these social cleavages and their manifestation within the respective national party systems. We have employed this concept in particular for analyzing the structure of political spaces, their development and their transformation. The theory of reflexive modernization focuses on structural transformation processes in West European societies since the 1960s, caused by processes of individualization and globalization. It allows for the formulation of hypotheses on the origins of new structural cleavages in West European societies, in particular on the conflict between the 'winners' and 'losers' of globalization, which plays a central role in our analysis. Finally, neo-institutionalist theories have proven to be a fruitful tool for analyzing processes of institutional change in West European societies. They emphasize factors such as national election systems and party laws, constitutional norms and state structures

and, as we have seen, these factors play an important role for the success and failure of political parties. Moreover, they offer conceptual tools for analyzing the strategic interactions of political parties in their efforts at adapting to changing competitive circumstances. Taken together, these concepts allow us to analyze the effects of globalization on West European party politics as a process of institutionally embedded, strategic interaction between political parties and their electorates in the course of which new political cleavages have emerged, the existing political spaces have been restructured, and national party systems have been reconfigured. We expected the scope of this transformation process to be empirically contingent and to vary across different countries, depending not only on a large number of contextual factors but also on the strategies employed by political elites.

In the following, the results of our empirical analysis shall be summarized and interpreted in a comparative perspective. Our main *conclusion* is that globalization has not only been (at least partly) the result of political decisions and is the object of an increasing amount of political decision-making, but is at the same time also *transforming the very basis of politics in Western Europe*. As we will show in the following, these transformations of politics can be observed at *three different levels*:

- first, the level of *societal conflicts*, their structure and the political spaces constituted by these conflicts;
- secondly, the level of *political* parties and party families organized on the basis of these societal cleavages; and
- thirdly, the level of *party systems*, emphasizing their structural properties and competitive dynamics.

The transformation of cleavage structures and political spaces

Apparently, our analysis of the impact of globalization on national politics goes far beyond the conventional analysis on party politics and party systems, although, as we will go on to show, it does contribute substantially to this body of literature. Nevertheless, in this book, our research interest has been in the *political sociology of globalization* in a more comprehensive sense. Such a political sociology of globalization emphasizes the impact of globalization on the *structure of political conflicts* and the resulting *political spaces*. Our *main hypothesis* in this context is that globalization in West European countries has been

generating a new ‘demarcation-integration’ cleavage, a new conflict between ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ of denationalization, and that this new cleavage has far-reaching repercussions for the structure of political spaces in West European countries.

In our empirical analysis of these national political spaces we distinguished between the ‘supply side’ of political parties on the one hand, and the ‘demand side’ of voters on the other. This distinction offers the possibility to investigate whether the new ‘demarcation-integration’ cleavage has caused processes of *structural alignment and realignment* between parties and voters. Our empirical analysis covered both the ideological positioning of *political parties* (supply side), i.e. the effectively relevant space of political competition and its changes; and the ideological structure of national *electorates* (demand side), i.e. the structuring of the space of political identification and its changes. The quantitative analysis of these political spaces was based mainly on *three indicators*:

- the *number of dimensions* of the political space;
- the *ideological meaning* of the individual dimensions; and
- the *positioning* of political parties and social groups within these political spaces.

Regarding our first indicator, the dimensionality of the political space, the empirical results confirm our initial expectations to a remarkable extent. The data clearly show a *two-dimensional structure* of the political spaces in all six countries over the entire period. This holds for both the supply side as well as for the demand side of political competition. Hence, there is a noticeable *isomorphism* between the ideological structuring of party competition and the preference structure of the electorate (*isomorphism hypothesis*). This finding is not self-evident, but not completely surprising either, because the electorates’ political spaces are not entirely independent from parties and their activities. Rather, we are dealing with political spaces that are pre-structured and mobilized by party politics.

Moreover, in none of the countries and at no time did we find a one-dimensional structure, even if the distances between the two dimensions are very small in some cases (e.g. Austria in the mid-1970s). Nevertheless, on the basis of our empirical analysis, we can clearly refute the presumption that the political space in West European countries shows a one-dimensional structure and is defined by the socio-economic left–right

division only, as was occasionally held to be the case in some of the countries we examined (France and the UK in particular, but also the Netherlands in the most recent elections). The same, however, holds for hypotheses which claim that a pluralization of conflict structures and the formation of multidimensional political spaces has occurred in Western Europe. Neither one-dimensional nor multidimensional political spaces can be observed in our cases. Hence, regarding the *basic structure* of the political spaces, we have found a *high degree of continuity*, both between the 1970s and the early 1990s and in the period from the early 1990s until 2003, the year in which the last election we have examined took place (*continuity hypothesis*).

This is not to conclude, however, that national political spaces have remained stable over the past three decades. Although the number of conflict dimensions has not changed, their meaning has. This applies in particular to the cultural dimension which has changed its meaning repeatedly in individual countries. On the one hand, new culturally defined conflicts about the integration of West European societies, unleashed by increasing numbers of immigrants and asylum-seekers, have replaced old religious conflicts; on the other hand, attitudes towards political globalization (most significantly European integration) have been of increasing importance for the formation of political identities (compared to older, liberal values). Therefore, it might certainly be true that religious factors have lost most of their relevance for political competition and voting behaviour in West European countries;² however, this does not imply that the cultural cleavage has become insignificant for voters and for party competition. On the contrary, the comparisons of the relative importance of the two dimensions in [Chapters 10](#) and [11](#) clearly show that the cultural cleavage has *gained* in importance in most of the countries – and this holds both for parties and for voters! In four of the six countries that we have examined, it has even become the dominant cleavage; and it is particularly pronounced in the UK and the Netherlands. The two countries in which the socio-economic cleavage remains dominant are France and (in the 2002 election) Germany. These are also the countries with the highest

² As the results of our analyses of the demand side (see [Chapter 9](#)) indicate, religious factors have not become completely meaningless for voting behaviour in West European countries.

unemployment levels and the greatest difficulties in reforming their labour markets and their social security systems.³

These empirical findings clearly confirm the *embedding hypothesis*, formulated in the introductory chapter of this book, according to which the new demarcation-integration conflict generated by globalization will not transform the political spaces completely; rather, it will be embedded in the existing two-dimensional structure by altering the meaning of the existing cultural dimension. This redefinition of the cultural dimension can be observed in all countries, widely independent of the former meaning of the cultural dimension. Moreover, the distances between the two dimensions of the political space have become more pronounced and the similarities between countries – in particular regarding voters' attitudes – have become stronger. This is clear evidence of the power of globalization to penetrate West European societies and to shape their social conflicts and political identities. This finding can be boiled down to yet another hypothesis, a *convergence hypothesis*, which suggests that globalization generated a strong convergence of national political spaces and conflict structures at least in Western Europe.

The third indicator which may be employed for analyzing political spaces is the positioning of parties and voters within these spaces. Concerning parties, we will go on to examine this in greater detail in a comparative analysis of party families and party systems. At this point, however, it may suffice to mention four empirical findings which deserve closer attention. First, it is noticeable that the 'space of competition' among the major parties has been shifting significantly towards the right pole of the ideological continuum. Our analysis of the political supply side in [Chapter 11](#) (see Figures 11.4 and 11.5) provided strong evidence of such a repositioning of political parties. This holds in particular for social democratic parties, which have been moving closer towards the political centre in most of the countries. Consequently, the left side of the political space was occupied only by parties of the radical left and some of the green parties during the 1990s.

Secondly, we found that the political space in individual countries is occupied quite differently. In the Netherlands, for instance, all relevant parties have shifted towards the right-authoritarian pole, while in Germany the established parties have shown a tendency towards the

³ In the case of Germany, the importance of socio-economic issues has become even more marked in the election of 2005.

<i>cultural dimension</i>	<i>socio-economic dimension</i>	
	<i>demarcation (pro-state)</i>	<i>integration (pro-market)</i>
<i>integration (strong libertarianism)</i>	social democratic and left-green profiles	radical liberalism
<i>demarcation (strong authoritarianism)</i>	extreme right and fascist positions	'winning formula' of right-wing populist parties in the 1990s

Figure 13.1 Typology of ideological profiles of political parties

centre, and British, French and Swiss parties are distributed across the entire space. We shall return to these findings in our comparative analysis of party families and party systems, but it is striking that individual sectors of the political space are differently populated in the six countries.

Thirdly, when we look at the distribution of political parties in the two-dimensional space, we can also see that the political space is very incompletely occupied in all countries. If we use our demarcation-integration distinction and subdivide the political space into four quadrants, we can identify four different types of ideological profiles (see Figure 13.1). The majority of the parties settles in two of these quadrants, with conservative and right-wing populist parties occupying the bottom right quadrant and social-democratic parties, though moderating their ideological profile still settling in the top left quadrant. In contrast, two quadrants are occupied only weakly, if at all. This applies on the one side to the space in the top right quadrant, in which neo-liberal economic positions are combined with culturally integrative positions. In the countries covered by our analysis, there are only very few examples which represent this ideological profile, and none of the parties represents it exactly. This holds even for the 1970s, when smaller liberal parties such as the German FDP represented an economically moderate variety of this profile. At present, the Dutch D'66 comes closest to this position among the parties in our sample.⁴ It is equally striking that no new party representing this ideological profile has been established over the last three decades. The most remarkable attempt was the launch of the Liberal Forum in Austria, a faction of the right-wing populist FPÖ, which unsuccessfully tried to occupy a relevant position within the party system

⁴ The D'66 has been the most liberal party in the Netherlands regarding issues such as minority rights and it has been right of the two major parties on socio-economic issues, although it remains located in the centre on this dimension.

in the 1990s. The opposite quadrant, in which protectionist positions on social and economic policy issues are combined with authoritarian and nationalist positions in the cultural dimension, also remains unoccupied. Hypothetically, we would expect fascist and extreme right parties in this quadrant.⁵ At its edges, close to the centre, we occasionally find social-democratic and Christian-democratic parties combining defence of the welfare state with moderately neo-nationalistic positions. The centre of this quadrant, however, is occupied in none of the countries under analysis by a relevant party. It is noticeable, however, that over the course of the past years some parties of the radical right have departed from the 'winning formula' of the 1990s, while moving in the direction of this quadrant. This applies particularly to the French FN, but also to the Austrian FPÖ.

The fourth remarkable finding is that supply and demand are not fully congruent. Although we must be careful about drawing conclusions in this respect given the methodological difficulties involved, it is nevertheless striking that we can observe a remarkable mismatch between the positioning of political parties and of voter groups in the two-dimensional space. As our analysis of the 'demand side' in [Chapter 10](#) reveals, this mismatch is partly due to the fact that the bottom right quadrant is actually populated by two sizeable (and in reality overlapping) groups of voters: unskilled workers and the less well educated. Hence, while none of the relevant political parties are positioned in the bottom right quadrant of the political space, not even the parties of the new populist right, some important groups constituted by 'losers' of globalization actually are. This incongruence of supply and demand seems to be particularly striking in France and Switzerland; however, there are some indications of it in Germany, the Netherlands and the UK as well. Since this incongruence has occurred within the same two-dimensional political space, it might indicate a latent – and still unexploited – *potential for polarization* within the party systems of these countries. Moreover, the fact that the political space has not been completely occupied by the established parties yet indicates that we should not only expect new ideological profiles to emerge, it also

⁵ An authoritarian state and an integrative economic system can be considered key elements of any fascist ideology. For a typology of fascist ideology, distinguishing it from both the radical right and a conservative-authoritarian right, see Payne (1995).

suggests that the ‘window of opportunity’ for the establishment of new parties remains open.

The rise of new parties and party families in Western Europe

The second dimension of change relates directly to political parties and party families. We assumed that the new cleavage constituted by the conflict between the ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ of globalization is not ideologically predefined, but politically contingent. It creates political potential which has to be translated into political programmes, strategies and votes. Hence, based on our analysis of cleavage structures, we asked how the political potential generated by globalization has been utilized by political parties and how the redefined political spaces have been occupied by them. In general, the emergence of new cleavages and the restructuring of political spaces can have different effects on parties and party families:

- First, it may result in an *ideological repositioning of established parties*. Existing parties may adapt to the altered conflict structures and absorb the new conflicts (*adaptation and absorption hypothesis*).
- Secondly, however, it might result in the *formation of new parties*, in particular of new radical parties, addressing directly the concerns of groups which are hardest hit by the consequences of globalization, resulting in a fragmentation and polarization of national party systems (*fragmentation and polarization hypothesis*).

Political science literature is ambiguous in this respect. While research on right-wing populist and radical-right parties predominantly supports the fragmentation and polarization hypothesis (e.g. Kitschelt 1995; Betz 2002; Ignazi 2003; Decker 2006), the adaptation and absorption hypothesis dominates the literature on party systems (see Mair 1997: 9ff.; Lane and Ersson 1999). Lane and Ersson (1999:106), for example, pretend that it ‘is difficult not to be impressed by the capacity of the political parties in Western Europe to maintain themselves in such an uncertain world as that of politics’. In our introductory chapter, we found arguments in support of both positions; however, we expected the parties of the populist and extreme right, i.e. the ‘new populist right’, to be the most forceful agents of change in West European politics because they articulate most successfully the preferences of those deprived by globalization.

Our empirical results mostly confirm this expectation, although with some important qualifications. First of all, in comparing our six countries, we find rather *different profiles of change*. *France* is the country which has best met our expectations, although the socio-economic cleavage has remained strong over the past three decades. Here, it was a new party of the radical right, the Front National, which benefited most from the new social conflicts generated by globalization. This party managed to become a major force in French politics, not least by significantly influencing the national political agenda. The *Netherlands* is the second country which confirms our fragmentation hypothesis. Here, the List Pim Fortuyn, a latecomer among the right-wing populist parties in Europe, achieved spectacular success in the early 2000s by addressing problems with the integration of immigrants. Although this success was highly short-lived, the LPF not only forced established parties to adapt to its agenda but also contributed to a second wave of fragmentation in the Dutch party system. In addition, the conservative-liberal VVD has adopted ideological positions which make it a member of the family of 'new populist right-wing parties'. Meanwhile, *Austria* and *Switzerland* are cases in which the emergence of a new political cleavage was also accompanied by the establishment of a successful right-wing populist party. However, in both countries change occurred not by founding a new party but by transforming an existing one. In Austria, it was the transformation of the conservative-liberal FPÖ, and in Switzerland it was the ideological reorientation of the conservative SVP, which contributed to the rise of right-wing populist parties in Western Europe. While the profiles of change in these four countries by and large confirm our assumptions, although with considerable variation in timing and in its exact organizational manifestations, there are two countries which deviate remarkably from this picture. *Germany* stands out in two respects. On the one hand, right-wing populist or extreme right parties have thus far failed to enter the national parliament, although they have had some successes at the level of federal states. On the other hand, Germany was the first West European country in which a (partly new) left-wing populist party was successfully launched. As a consequence, there has been some fragmentation in the German party system too, but this fragmentation developed in a different way than in the other countries. Finally, the UK is the only case in which no new radical party, either on the left or on the right, has achieved electoral success in the last three decades. Party competition and government formation has been dominated by the two

major parties throughout the entire period. It would be wrong to infer, however, that there have been no changes in British party politics. Most importantly, the Conservative Party's programmatic change towards a neo-conservative ideological profile anticipated important elements of right-wing populism both in style and in substance (see Kitschelt 1995: Chapter 7). The subsequent polarization between the two major parties closed the 'window of opportunity' for the establishment of new parties at the right and at the left poles of the ideological spectrum but did allow the formation of a new moderate party in the centre. Our analysis has shown that the ideological profile of the British Conservatives has meanwhile strongly approximated the 'winning formula' with which right-wing populist parties were successful at the beginning of the 1990s. Hence, we can consider the British Conservative Party with its 'in-built populism' as being a functional equivalent of a right-wing populist party.

In a comparative perspective, it is striking that the political potential generated by globalization has been exploited in very different ways. The parties and party systems have changed in all countries, but not with the same scope and intensity. In fact, we can distinguish three groups of countries. First, a group including France and the Netherlands, in which the transformation of politics was caused mainly by new parties (*transformation from outside*); second, countries like Austria and Switzerland in which transformative changes took place within established parties (*transformation from within*); and, thirdly, a group of countries including Germany and the UK, in which established parties managed to adapt and absorb the new political potential to a large extent without radically changing their ideological profiles (*absorptive change*). How can we explain these cross-national differences? As we have shown in Chapter 2, the political potential for change is substantial and rather similar in each of these countries. Hence, the differences in the change of politics cannot be attributed to the different strength of the independent variable, i.e. globalization; rather, we would expect that they are caused by the political and institutional context variables discussed earlier in this book. In a comparative perspective, three factors turned out to be of particular importance: electoral systems, party organizations and party strategies.

The importance of *electoral systems* has once again become apparent in our comparative study, although its effects are not as direct and straightforward as sometimes suggested (cf. Lijphart 1994; Powell 2000). The British majoritarian 'first-past-the-post' electoral system clearly discourages the formation of new parties that do not have a

regional stronghold. Hence, the profile of change of the British party system, with its absence of new radical parties on both the right and the left and the strengthening of regionalist parties, can be explained to a significant extent with reference to electoral rules. The Netherlands represents the opposite case of a proportional representation system without any legal restrictive clause and with a very low effective barrier. With its high fragmentation, and the establishment of new radical parties on both the left and the right, the Dutch case again meets our expectations. The other four countries are more difficult to assess. In France, we have a majoritarian system in the case of national elections which for most of the time prevented the entry of the radical Front National into the national parliament. PR systems at the regional and European level as well as the introduction of a PR system at the national level in the late 1980s, however, created favorable political conditions for the party not only to survive but also to expand its political base. In countries like Germany and Austria, we have a proportional representation system with rather high thresholds of 5% and 4% respectively. These thresholds have produced major obstacles for new parties and have clearly restricted the fragmentation of party systems. The failure of the Liberal Forum in Austria, and of radical-right parties at the national level in Germany, are examples of the restrictive effects of the respective electoral systems. However, the Green parties in both countries have demonstrated that these obstacles are not insurmountable; hence, the importance of electoral systems should not be overstated either in these cases. Finally, in Switzerland we see a PR system without a restrictive clause but with a restrictive effect which varies from canton to canton. The large number of small parties in the national parliament indicates that the Swiss electoral system does not prevent the establishment of new parties.

Party organization is the second factor that explains some of the observed cross-national variation. The organizational structures and capacities of parties matter in several respects. First, the success of new radical parties has been dependent on the *absorptive capacity of existing parties*, particularly the major parties of the left and right. Where this capacity is high, the scope for establishing new parties is correspondingly limited. The absorptive capacity of parties depends on a number of factors, among them their ideological profile and coherence, their organizational structure and their leadership. As our analysis of party families in [Chapter 11](#) has revealed, there is a strong

correlation between a party's ideological cohesion and the extremity of its position. Radical parties, regardless of their size, tend to be more cohesive. Thus, we may assume that it is programmatically open and organizationally flexible 'catch-all-parties' (Kirchheimer 1965) in particular which have a high capacity for integrating new issues and new societal groups. Among the parties in our sample this characterization holds best for the Christian-democratic parties in Germany (CDU, CSU) (see Schmid 1990), and this might explain at least to some extent why new right-wing parties have thus far failed to gain a hold at the national level.

Secondly, party organization may provide more or less favorable *opportunity structures for the transformation of existing parties*. Here, we may assume that it is decentralized party organizations, in which local and regional subdivisions enjoy a high degree of autonomy, which offer the most favorable opportunity structures for transformative change of an established party (cf. Chapter 2). The Swiss SVP and the Austrian FPÖ with the regional strongholds of their populist leaders Blocher and Haider at Zurich and Carinthia respectively are the best illustration for such a possibility. Finally, party organization has also turned out to be important for the *success of new radical parties*. As the case of the French FN has demonstrated, it is not only charismatic leadership but also the existence of a strong, hierarchically structured party organization which is a prerequisite for the successful establishment of a new party of the radical right and for its ideological flexibility. The short-lived success of the Dutch LPF and the failure of the radical right in Germany may at least partly be attributed to the lack of adequate party organization too.

The third factor which contributes to an explanation of cross-national differences is *party strategy*. In Chapter 2, we identified several strategic options for established parties to respond to new issues and new competitors. As we have seen in detail in the various country chapters, the knowledge of these strategies is indispensable for understanding the structuring of national political spaces and the parties' movement within these spaces. For the purposes of our comparative analysis, it is parties' strategies towards new competitors, in particular of the radical right, which is of particular importance. In the six countries under examination, we have identified two different approaches that are largely consistent with our initial expectation: cooperative and stigmatizing strategies. The different strategic responses have become particularly relevant in two situations: the formation of electoral alliances and the formation

of government coalitions. France and Germany are clear cases of a stigmatizing strategy. In France, established parties of the centre and of the right have refused to form electoral alliances with the Front National in the elections to the national parliament. In Germany, the stigmatization of the parties of the radical right became most apparent in the refusal of the established parties to enter coalitions with them in those federal states in which they gained seats in the regional parliament.⁶ In both countries, stigmatization of the parties of the radical right clearly reduced their electoral chances. In the consensus democracies of Austria, the Netherlands and Switzerland, the established parties followed a different strategy. In each of these countries, right-wing populist parties massively attacked the existing ‘cartel’ of parties and interest groups and in each of these countries they came to be coopted into this cartel, albeit for different reasons. It is important to note, however, that the cooptation of right-wing populist parties occurred as a consequence of their electoral success, rather than as a precondition for it.

The results of our comparative analysis of political and institutional opportunity structures for radical right-wing parties in Western Europe are summarized in [Table 13.1](#). Although the three sets of variables included in this analysis cannot provide a straightforward causal explanation of the variation across countries, they contribute considerably to our understanding of their successes and failures in the past two decades. In conclusion, we should emphasize three aspects. First, it is obvious that the potential for new parties has been considerably constrained by institutional and organizational factors in most of the countries under examination. Secondly, radical right-wing parties have been successful even under unfavorable political and institutional conditions. High electoral barriers and a strong ‘cartel’ of established parties might have restricted them, but neither has been strong enough to prevent their success. Thirdly, as the case of France indicates, electoral success in the national parliamentary arena is not a necessary precondition for the radical right becoming a lasting factor in national politics. Taken together, these are clear indications of both the large size and the forcefulness of the new political potential generated by globalization.

⁶ The only exception thus far was a short-lived coalition of the Christian-democratic CDU with the right-wing populist ‘Schill Party’ in the state of Hamburg.

Table 13.1 *Political and institutional opportunity structures for radical-right parties*

Country	Electoral system	Party organization	Party strategy towards new competitor
Austria	medium-high barrier	favourable opportunity structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● medium-high adaptive capacity of established parties; ● strong organizational capacities of new right-wing populist party 	co-optation
France	very high barrier	favourable opportunity structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● low adaptive capacity of established parties; ● strong organizational capacities of new extreme right party 	stigmatization
Germany	medium-high barrier	unfavourable opportunity structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● high adaptive capacity of established parties; ● weak organizational capacities of new parties 	stigmatization
Netherlands	low barrier	unfavourable opportunity structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● high adaptive capacity of established parties; ● weak organizational capacities of new right-wing populist party 	cooptation
Switzerland	medium-high barrier	favourable opportunity structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● medium-high adaptive capacity of established parties; ● strong organizational capacities of right-wing populist party 	cooptation
United Kingdom	very high barrier	unfavourable opportunity structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● high adaptive capacity of established parties; ● weak organizational capacities of new parties 	dismissal

The fragmentation and polarization of party systems in Western Europe

The third dimension of change is at the level of party systems. How did the emergence of new cleavages, new parties and new party families affect national party systems in Western Europe? Has globalization resulted in a fundamental change of West European party systems? While there is broad consensus in the literature that ‘West European party systems are caught up in a process of change’ (Mair and Smith 1990: 1; see also Dalton, Flanagan and Beck 1984), the scope and the consequences of these changes are still unclear. On the one hand, by reporting ‘earthquakes’, ‘ruptures’ and ‘fundamental crisis’, studies on individual countries, elections and parties tend to emphasize discontinuities in the development of national party systems. Comparative analyses, on the other hand, predominantly argue that West European party *systems* on the whole have remained remarkably stable (see Mair and Smith 1990; Mair 1997; Broughton and Donovan 1999; Lane and Ersson 1999). According to Peter Mair, who has been the most forceful in defending this ‘stability hypothesis’, a ‘melting’ of West European party systems is certainly not in evidence. On the contrary, he states that ‘the freezing hypothesis remains largely valid, at least up to now, with the evidence of long-term continuities in party systems far outweighing the ostensibly more striking and more immediate evidence of change. In other words, and some three decades later, the long-standing party alternatives which had been instanced by Lipset and Rokkan are now even older still’ (Mair 1997:3). Mair even takes it further and maintains that it is precisely the numerous small changes identified by other authors that have increased the flexibility of party systems and which eventually contributed to their stability.

Our own empirical findings clearly contradict this hypothesis. While they show that changes should not be overrated, they provide strong evidence that the formation of new parties and party families has destabilized party systems in Western Europe. We can substantiate this argument with the use of Giovanni Sartori’s typology of party systems (Sartori 1976) which combines two dimensions: a quantitative dimension defined by the *number of relevant parties*; and a qualitative dimension defined by *ideological distances* between these parties. Transformative changes in a party system would be particularly strong

Table 13.2 *Effective number of parties (based on votes at national parliamentary elections)^a*

Country	1974–9	1980–5	1986–9	1990–5	1996–9	2000–3
Austria	2.4 (1975)	2.4	2.71	3.9 (1994)	3.8 (1999)	3.0
France ^b	5.0 (1973)	4.1	4.6 (1988)	7.2	7.3	5.3
Germany	2.4	2.6 (1983)	2.9	3.1 (1994)	3.3	3.3
Netherlands	6.9 (1972)	4.3 (1982)	3.8 (1986)	5.8	5.2	6.1 (2002)
Switzerland	5.8 (1975)	6.0	6.9	7.4	6.8 (1995)	5.5
UK	3.1 (Feb. 1974)	3.5	3.3	3.0	3.2	3.3

^a Based on Laakso and Taagepera (1979).

^b Based on Taagepera and Shugart (1989), calculated from vote shares of all candidates at national parliamentary elections.

if both dimensions were affected. In the following, we will examine each of these dimensions in more detail.

Fragmentation

First of all, the quantitative indicators commonly used in comparative analysis (effective number of parties; fractionalization) show that both the *fragmentation* and the *number of relevant parties* in most countries – with the notable exception of Switzerland – has *increased* during the past three decades (see Table 13.2). This holds in particular for France and the Netherlands. In these countries, the party systems went through a phase of consolidation in the 1980s, and in both countries fragmentation has been increasing significantly in recent elections.⁷ In Austria and Germany, we can also observe a moderate increase in fragmentation. In both countries, the dominant position of the two major parties has been weakened considerably, while new parties of the left and the right have become relevant. In the UK, quantitative indicators show no significant changes in the last two decades; but comparisons with the 1950s and 1960s do reveal that the two major parties have lost some of their monopoly position. The most notable exception is Switzerland, where

⁷ In France, however, the results of the two national elections in 2002, the presidential election and the election to the national parliament, point in opposite directions.

fragmentation significantly increased between the 1975 and 1991 elections (from 5.8 to 7.4); in the following elections, however, it decreased continuously and in the elections of 2003, it declined below the initial figure. This indicates on the one hand, that the 'cartel' of the four major parties has hitherto been able to secure its position. On the other hand, we must take into account that the fragmentation of the Swiss party system was already rather high as early as the 1970s.

The increasing fragmentation of West European party systems since the 1970s has several causes and cannot be attributed solely to new right-wing parties. First, in the 1980s, it was a consequence of the emergence of Green parties which are – with the exception of the UK – represented in the national parliaments of each country under examination. It was mostly in the past twenty years that the fragmentation of party systems has been caused by the formation and establishment of new radical right-wing parties. However, the contribution of radical right-wing parties to the fragmentation of West European party systems should not be over-rated. In Germany, right-wing populist and right extremist parties have hitherto only been successful in some federal states; in Switzerland, newly formed radical right-wing parties – after some electoral successes of the FPS in the second half of the 1980s – have not gotten beyond the status of splinter parties. Finally, new parties have emerged as a result of the restructuring of existing parties. This has been particularly noticeable in France where separations, new formations and mergers of parties have decisively shaped the development of the party system in the Fifth Republic (Knapp 2004).

For an overall assessment of this development it is important to consider that there were only very few counter-movements to this fragmentation process, i.e. endeavours to concentrate national party systems by merging existing parties or even by the disappearance of some of them. Such a concentration occurred in the past, for instance in Germany in the 1950s, and in the Netherlands in the 1970s. In the last twenty years, however, we can find only very few examples of such counter-movements. The most important and noteworthy case was the recent merger of the bourgeois parties in France to form the UMP. Further examples might be the mergers between the Liberals and the Social Democrats in the UK, and between the post-communist PDS and the new left-wing populist WASG in Germany.

Although changes in the quantitative dimension of West European party systems are significant, the scope of change should not be

overrated. First, the total number of *relevant* parties in the countries examined is still quite low. Even in the countries with the highest degree of fragmentation (the Netherlands, France, Switzerland), the number of relevant parties still ranges from five to seven. Secondly, the established major parties have been able to maintain their dominant positions despite substantial losses in votes in some cases. Thirdly, the number of relevant new parties and their political influence has hitherto been limited. However, there have been a number of spectacular exceptions to this rule in the course of the last decade: in 1999, the Austrian FPÖ succeeded in breaking down the long-lasting supremacy of the two major parties and managed to become the second-strongest party ahead of the ÖVP (though very narrowly); in the 2002 French presidential election, the candidate of the right-wing extremist Front National, Le Pen, came second in the first ballot, ahead of the Socialist candidate; in the Netherlands, the right-wing populist List Pim Fortuyn succeeded in becoming the second-strongest party in the 2002 parliamentary elections, even outplacing the social democratic PvdA. The examples of the FPÖ (which has since split up) and the LPF (meanwhile insignificant) show, however, that it is very difficult to consolidate and repeat such spectacular successes.

Polarization

How did the changes in conflict structures and the rise of new parties and party families affect *ideological profiles* and *ideological distances* within the party systems? Before we summarize our empirical findings on this issue, we should emphasize that the ideological profiles of right-wing populist and extreme right parties are much more ambiguous than large sections of the literature might suggest. Their ideological profiles have not always been as 'radical' and as far to the 'right' as has been repeatedly maintained. This vagueness is most obvious in their positioning on the socio-economic left–right dimension. While parties of the radical right are clearly distinct from conservative, liberal and social-democratic parties on the cultural dimension, their profile on economic and social policy issues has been rather diffuse and in permanent flux.⁸

⁸ In the case of the Dutch LPF, the ideological ambiguity applied to the cultural dimension as well. Nevertheless, the LPF was perceived to be farthest to the right by the voters (cf. Andeweg and Irwin 2005: 59).

Our quantitative analysis in [Chapter 11](#) confirms their positioning close to the right-authoritarian pole supporting both pro-capitalist and anti-libertarian ideological positions in the 1990s. As our country chapters show, however, we can observe some movement to the centre with regard to economic and social policy issues in recent years. This is particularly true for two of the most successful parties of the new right, the FN and the FPÖ, which meanwhile keep some distance from neo-liberal positions (if they have ever taken such a position at all).

Nevertheless, our findings can be summarized in three conclusions. First, the *polarization* within the West European party systems *has clearly been increasing* since the 1970s. As we have shown in [Chapters 10](#) and [11](#), this holds for both relations between parties and for the ideological distance between major groups of voters. In these comparative chapters we have traced the polarization between parties and voter groups with the aid of sophisticated regression analyses. Another indicator for this polarization trend are the cumulated voting shares of communist, socialist, right-wing populist and extreme right parties. This share has strongly increased in Austria, Switzerland and the Netherlands. In France, where we also witness strong polarization, the total share of votes for extremist parties has remained unchanged, but the weights of the two extreme poles have shifted to the right. This leads to our second conclusion: the polarization of West European party systems has not taken place at both extreme poles simultaneously and to the same extent; rather, the *right pole* of the ideological spectrum *has been strengthened significantly*. In Western Europe, the increasing polarization of party systems has mainly been a consequence of a strengthening of a new family of right-wing populist parties in the last two decades. In the UK, where radical parties have been insignificant, we can find a modification of this general trend but not an exception. In the UK, polarization occurred ‘from within’ the existing party system and it resulted from several waves of ideological radicalization (and subsequent moderation) of the two major parties.

Thirdly, as a result of these trends, a *tripolar structure of political competition* has been emerging. This tripolar structure is constituted by social-democratic and Green parties at the left pole, Christian-democratic and conservative-liberal parties at the moderate right pole and various types of right-wing-populist and extreme right parties forming a new radical-right pole. In the UK, it is the Conservative Party which represents the radical right pole while the Liberal democrats occupy the moderate pole. In our view, this tripolar structure must be interpreted as a product

of the new cleavage between ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ of globalization and it is this new tripolar structure which has been shaping the dynamics of party competition in most West European countries over the past decade.

In the most recent elections in Germany (2005) and the Netherlands (2005), which have not been covered by the quantitative analyses of our country chapters, we find another deviation from the general trend which deserves attention in future research. In both countries, we can observe the remarkable *success of new left-wing populist parties*. In Germany, a new left-wing populist party, the Linkspartei (Left Party), was founded in 2005. In this party, the post-communist PDS and a new protest movement against labour market reforms, WASG (Arbeit und soziale Gerechtigkeit – Die Wahlalternative), joined forces. With a share of 8.7% of the votes in the 2005 national election, the new party achieved spectacular success, while the right pole of the ideological continuum remained vacant on the national level. In the Netherlands, we can also observe the rise of a left-wing populist party, the SP (Socialistische Partij) at the last national election in November 2006. By gaining 16.6% of the votes and twenty-five seats, the SP became the third-largest party in the second chamber of the Dutch parliament. We should be careful not to give too much weight to these cases, but they might indicate that the new political potential generated by globalization can be exploited not only by parties of the (radical) right but also by (new) parties of the left. Their success seems to indicate a *problem shift* within West European societies. In the 1990s, denationalization was mostly perceived as creating new *problems of identity* in the arena of party politics. More precisely, radical right-wing parties managed to define the problem in public discourse in such a way that the negative consequences of economic globalization could be linked to problems of cultural identity.⁹ This allowed them to respond to these problems successfully with an aggressive ‘politics of identity’ (Betz 2002) against foreigners, migrants, asylum-seekers and European integration. Meanwhile, it is the *security problems* created by globalization, in particular the problems of economic and social security, which have gained wider attention in public debates in Western Europe; and it is the threat of a ‘neo-liberal’ globalization, to which left-wing populist parties

⁹ Hence, it is quite plausible that the distinction between economic and cultural issues is blurred in some of the elections, in which right-wing populist parties were strong, as we have in Austria in the 1990s (see [Chapter 11](#)).

respond with interventionist and protectionist programmes. Since the necessary adjustments of the welfare states are far from completed in West European countries, there are good reasons to expect that the 'politics of security' advocated by left-wing populist parties might gain in attractiveness in the coming years.

Still the age of moderate pluralism?

How do these two trends – fragmentation and polarization – affect the structure of party systems? Does globalization have the power to produce a new type of party system in Western Europe? It is striking that the overall picture resulting from our comparative analysis of the two dimensions of party systems is rather *diffuse*. Most of the party systems have become more pluralistic, and in some of them we can observe an increasing ideological polarization as well. But it is still unclear whether these party systems have really been transformed from 'moderate pluralism' into 'polarized pluralism', to employ the terminology of Sartori's typology. This is partly due to the fact that West European party systems are still in flux. As the example of left-wing populist parties indicates, the 'window of opportunity' for the formation of new parties remains open, while the spectacular successes of some of the radical right parties have turned out to be only very short-lived. Hence there is still a great deal of *instability* and *uncertainty* in West European party systems and at present it would appear that this is one of their most striking features.

The difficulty of reaching a conclusive assessment of the state and prospects of West European party systems has yet another explanation, however, which relates to the conceptual ambiguities and weaknesses of Sartori's typology. Most of our problems in classifying party systems result from the fact that it only allows a choice between two types of pluralist party systems, i.e. 'moderate pluralism' and 'polarized pluralism'. Meanwhile, none of these two types satisfactorily fits the reality of the party systems in the countries under examination any longer. This is due not least to the fact that the two dimensions combined by Sartori in his typology – fragmentation and polarization – have developed quite differently in some countries. Hence, if we want to arrive at a more precise and adequate assessment of recent developments in Western Europe it is necessary to modify and extend Sartori's typology by adding a third type of pluralist party system which Sartori had in fact envisaged for his typology but which he did not include, namely, 'segmented

	<i>weak polarization</i>	<i>strong polarization</i>
<i>weak fragmentation</i>	moderate pluralism	polarized pluralism
<i>strong fragmentation</i>	fragmented pluralism	extreme pluralism

Figure 13.2 Typology of pluralist party systems

multipartism'. This term applies to strongly fragmented party systems (i.e. systems with more than five relevant parties) and a low degree of polarization. Given that the term 'segmentation' has since become common in party research with a different meaning, we instead refer to this type as *fragmented pluralism*. This extended typology of pluralist party systems is presented in [Figure 13.2](#).

What are the results of this conceptual clarification? Our empirical analysis shows that most of the countries still retain basic features of a moderate pluralism, but most of them also show marked tendencies towards a fragmented or even a polarized pluralism. Apart from the UK, whose party system is clearly moving in the direction of a moderate pluralism, the German party system is most commensurate with the type of moderate pluralism at present. The two extreme poles are only weakly occupied and the number of relevant parties (five at most) is still within the range of a moderately pluralist system. A look at the sub-national level, however, reveals that even the German party system has latent potential for further fragmentation and polarization (see Grande 2003; Grande and Dolezal 2005). The party systems of Austria and Switzerland still possess important properties of a moderate pluralism too. In both countries the number of relevant parties corresponds to the format of moderate pluralism, despite some increase in fragmentation in Austria. Polarization has increased strongly, however, with right-wing populist parties gaining more than 20% of the votes at the peak of their success. Because of its large number of relevant parties, the Netherlands must be classified as 'fragmented pluralism' with a strong propensity towards an extreme pluralism due to the strength of two left parties, the Socialist Party and the GreenLeft, on the one side, and the successes of right-wing populist parties, the LPF and the VVD, on the other side of the ideological continuum. At present, the French party system resembles most clearly the type of polarized pluralism. The party system's fragmentation has increased, with both poles being occupied, even if the

Table 13.3 *Party systems and party system change in Western Europe*

Country	Type of system and direction of change
UK	two-party system with a strong trend towards moderate pluralism
Germany	moderate pluralism with a trend towards fragmented pluralism
Austria	moderate pluralism with a trend toward fragmented pluralism
Switzerland	moderate pluralism with a trend towards polarized pluralism
Netherlands	fragmented pluralism with a trend towards extreme pluralism
France	polarized pluralism

left pole (the Communist Party in particular) has diminished in importance. [Table 13.3](#) summarizes the development of party systems in West European countries.

This comparative overview leaves no doubt that the stability hypothesis in party systems research at the very least requires substantial qualifications, if it should not be rejected entirely. The new demarcation-integration cleavage generated by globalization and the new political parties and party families, established as a response to these new social conflicts have not only infused a great deal of instability and change in West European party systems, it seems as if these changes have sparked off far-reaching structural transformations in these systems. This transformative change is most apparent in France and the Netherlands, in both of which party systems have shifted from moderate to fragmented or polarized pluralism respectively. It also applies to those countries in which we still find some basic features of a moderate pluralism. In Austria, Germany and Switzerland, we can observe considerable pressure for change towards a fragmented (in Germany) or polarized (in Austria and Switzerland) pluralism. Even in the UK, we might witness the end of the two-party system and its transition to a moderate pluralism.

Conclusion

Our empirical findings have clearly confirmed the hypothesis that globalization has generated a new structural cleavage in West European politics; at the same time, our results indicate that the political potential created by this new cleavage has been processed within the existing two-dimensional political spaces by transforming the meaning of the existing cultural dimension of the political space. This new potential has

been utilized by political parties in quite different ways and to remarkably different extents. The potential for structural changes in politics has partly been slowed down by institutional and organizational factors; partly it has been absorbed by established parties (some of which as a result have radically changed their ideological profile), and in a few cases (most notably in France and the Netherlands), new parties have been established, strongly altering the structure of the existing party systems.

In sum, we have identified far more changes in West European politics than existing research on party systems would have suggested. In none of the countries covered by our analysis has politics remained unaffected by these transformative changes. In all cases, with the partial exception of the UK, party systems have been destabilized and are becoming more fragmented and polarized. The type of 'moderate pluralism' which characterized the party systems of continental Europe for most of the period since World War II has come under intense pressure. In some countries it has already been mutating into new types of 'fragmented' or 'polarized' pluralism. In the light of these developments, the claim that the West European party systems remain frozen can hardly be maintained. Over the past forty years, West European party systems have indeed been melting.

Finally, the results of our comparative study indicate that this process of change has not yet come to its end neither has the process of globalization. West European politics are still in flux, and there is no reason to assume that this process will come to a halt in the near future, nor that it might be possible to reverse its consequences. On the contrary, our findings suggest that the transformative potential of globalization has yet to be fully exploited by political parties and that the 'window of opportunity' for the formation of new parties has not yet been closed.