

Party Competition in Western Europe

Cleavages and Partisan Realignment

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Event announcement

Next week, we'll kick-off a speaker series on *Understanding Democracies: Challenges and Solutions*.

- Diane Bolet will be our first guest
- Presentation on “The Globalization Backlash in Rural Areas: Price Shocks, Far Right Support, and the Limits of Agricultural Subsidies”
- you are all invited to join us directly after our seminar next Wednesday, 12-13 in Room SCH 100.3

What we did last week...

- discuss KKV and the comparative method
- define parties and party systems
- list party functions and motivations

Plan for today

The session is organized into two parts:

- Substantive part:
 1. party systems in Austria, Italy, the UK and the Netherlands
 2. how cleavages (still) structure political behaviour
- Data part: How to measure political attitudes on the demand side

Party systems around the world

Country	Electoral System	Parties	Volatility/ Fragmentation
Austria			
Italy			
Netherlands			
UK			

Cleavages

What do we mean when we are talking about a political cleavage?

Definition of cleavages

According to Lipset and Rokkan (1967), a cleavage can be defined...

- cleavages capture the lines of conflict running through a society
 - they are dynamic both in spatial and temporal terms
 - for a cleavage to be manifested, it must...
 - lead to socio-structural differences
 - entail a commonly shared value space among its members
 - institutionalize the conflict (e.g. through associations or parties)

Political cleavages organize politics. They capture demands of social groups and let parties adopt strategies to appeal to these groups strategically.

Four cleavages by Lipset/Rokkan



Four cleavages by Lipset/Rokkan



Four cleavages by Lipset/Rokkan



Four cleavages by Lipset/Rokkan



Group work on cleavages

In groups of four, discuss what your cleavage is about. What kind of socio-structural differences does it represent? What's the value space of the opposing factions? Which parties might represent which side?

The Social Bases of Political Parties



The Social Bases of Political Parties

In the course of the seminar, we'll usually follow this scheme to discuss the articles we've read.

- **Research Question:**
- **Main Argument:**
- **Data and Method:**
- **Results:**
- **Implications:**

How would you complete the scheme regarding Marks et al. (2023)?

The Social Bases of Political Parties

- **Research Question:** How can we measure cleavage strength over time?
- **Main Argument:** Cleavage strength depends on composition of group in party and general population.
- **Data and Method:** Election data from surveys from 1973-2019; descriptive analysis of cleavage strength
- **Results:** Cleavages do not lose in significance but new ones gain prominence
- **Implications:** Re-alignment instead of de-alignment

Two opposing perspectives

Which opposing perspectives do Marks et al. (2023) present to motivate their study?

Two opposing perspectives

They outline how scholars on the demand- and supply-side have approached the issue of change in social structures of voting:

1. **voters** increasingly lose attachment to parties and vote for values/issues → more volatility and de-alignment
2. **parties** continue to exist: old cleavages disappear, new appear and are activated

Method

$$P_{i,j}^S = 100 \cdot (p_{j|i}^S - p_j^S)$$

What does this formula mean?

Method

$$P_{i,j}^S = 100 \cdot (p_{j|i}^S - p_j^S)$$

where

- P: probability of
- S: social characteristic to be part of
- i: social basis of a party
- j: share of the group in the party

In words: the prominence of a group for a party is given by its share in the general population minus its share in the party (times 100 to get percentages).

The higher the value of P, the more a social group is associated with a certain party.

Results

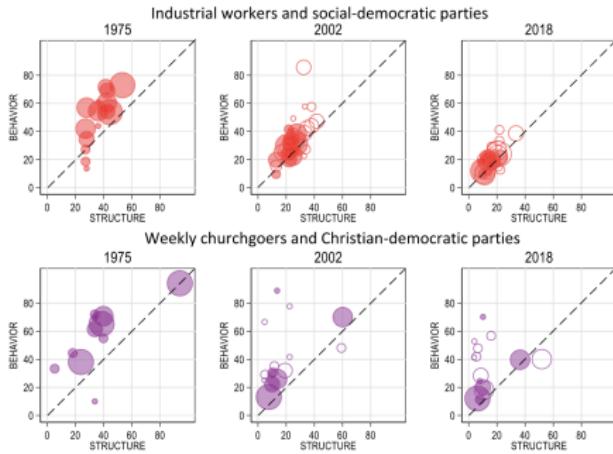


Figure: Evolution of cleavage strength for Social Democrats and Christian Democrats (Marks et al. 2023, p. 254)

What's the story here?

Results

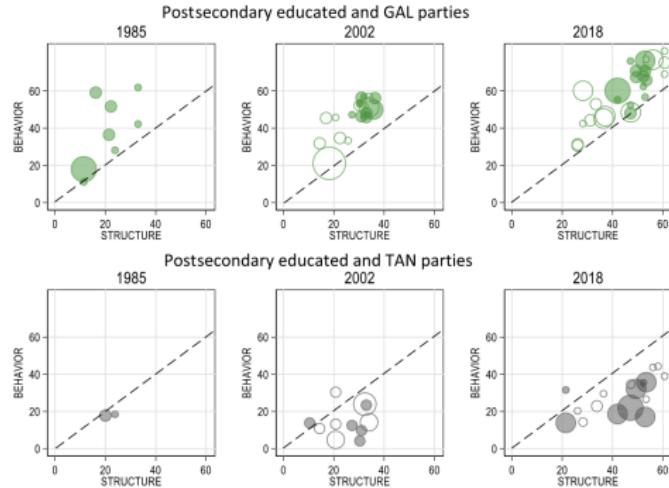


Figure: Evolution of cleavage strength for Greens and TAN (Marks et al. 2023, p. 255)

Results

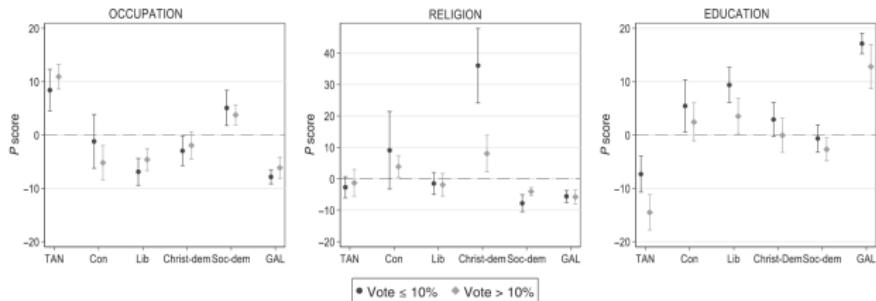


Figure: Evolution of cleavage strength for Greens and TAN (Marks et al. 2023, p. 255)

So, radical right parties are working class parties now?

Results

Not quite...

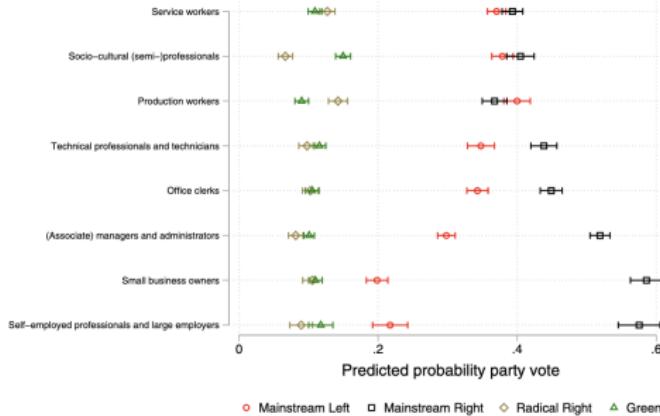


Figure: Voting probability for different party families by class (Abou-Chadi and Hix 2021, p. 87)

Results

Vote share matters as well! For the far-right, working class voters are important – but they are still more present in the centre-left!

Types of data

What kind of data could we use to analyse voters?

- macro-data (voting records, socio-economic composition from administrative data)
- micro-data (survey data, textual data, experimental data)

Survey data

Which information would be interesting in surveys?

- socio-demographic background
- political attitudes
- voting behaviour
- voters' evaluations of parties
- ...

Data to use...

- macro-data: OECD data (e.g. on [migration](#) or [labour](#)), national administrative offices, [poll of polls](#)
- textual data from social networks (difficult to access)
- survey data:
 - [European Social Survey \(ESS\)](#)
 - [European Election Survey](#)
 - [Comparative Study of Electoral Systems \(CSES\)](#)
 - national election studies (e.g. [German Longitudinal Electoral Study \(GLES\)](#))
 - national panel studies ([German Socio Economic Panel](#), [Understanding Society \(UK\)](#), etc.)

European Social Survey

We are using the European Social Survey (ESS) today.

- the data can be downloaded [here](#) (requires free login)
- data can also be [visualized](#) online

European Social Survey

The ESS offers...

- cross-sectional study of 39 countries in 11 waves
- wide-range of repeated socio-political survey items (e.g. voting consideration, trust in politicians)
- changing special modules (e.g. Wave 11 on health and gender)

In R...

Let's switch to R

Data pipeline in R

A typical pipeline to process and analyse data include...

1. download and import of the data
2. data wrangling, among others...
 - filtering missing values
 - transforming variables (e.g. from numeric to character; creating indices)
 - renaming factor labels
 - aggregating data (e.g. calculating mean/median of variable)
 - joining data with other data sources
3. modelling in regression frameworks
4. visualization

What we've done today...

- complete our study on different electoral systems
- defining cleavages
- discussing changes in cleavage structures and how to measure them
- introducing the ESS and how to process it in R

To prepare for next week...

- Next session on polarization
- Readings:
 - Main readings
 1. Burn-Murdoch J (2024) A New Global Gender Divide Is Emerging. *Financial Times*
 2. Bischof D and Wagner M (2019) Do Voters Polarize When Radical Parties Enter Parliament? *American Journal of Political Science* 63 (4), 888–904. ISSN: 0092-5853, 1540-5907. DOI: [10.1111/ajps.12449](https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12449)
 - Complementary readings
 1. Iyengar S, Sood G, and Lelkes Y (2012) Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76 (3), 405–431. ISSN: 0033-362X. DOI: [10.1093/poq/nfs038](https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfs038)

To prepare for next week...

2. **Wagner M (2021)** Affective Polarization in Multiparty Systems. *Electoral Studies* 69, 102199. ISSN: 0261-3794.
DOI: [10.1016/j.electstud.2020.102199](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2020.102199)
3. **Gidron N, Adams J, and Horne W (2023)** Who Dislikes Whom? Affective Polarization between Pairs of Parties in Western Democracies. *British Journal of Political Science* 53 (3), 997–1015. ISSN: 0007-1234, 1469-2112. DOI: [10.1017/S0007123422000394](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123422000394)

Thank you for your attention!
Any further questions?

Literature

-  **Abou-Chadi T and Hix S (2021)** Brahmin Left Versus Merchant Right? Education, Class, Multiparty Competition, and Redistribution in Western Europe. *The British Journal of Sociology* 72.
-  **Bischof D and Wagner M (2019)** Do Voters Polarize When Radical Parties Enter Parliament? *American Journal of Political Science* 63 (4), 888–904.
-  **Burn-Murdoch J (2024)** A New Global Gender Divide Is Emerging. *Financial Times*.
-  **Gidron N, Adams J, and Horne W (2023)** Who Dislikes Whom? Affective Polarization between Pairs of Parties in Western Democracies. *British Journal of Political Science* 53 (3), 997–1015.

Literature

-  **Iyengar S, Sood G, and Lelkes Y (2012)** Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization. *Public Opinion Quarterly* **76** (3), 405–431.
-  **Lipset SM and Rokkan S (1967)** *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*. Free Press, 1967.
-  **Marks G et al. (2023)** The Social Bases of Political Parties: A New Measure and Survey. *British Journal of Political Science* **53** (1), 249–260.
-  **Wagner M (2021)** Affective Polarization in Multiparty Systems. *Electoral Studies* **69**, 102199.