

The impact of globalization on national party configurations in Western Europe

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Introduction

This paper analyses the impact of the process of globalization on the structure of national electoral competition and on the positions of parties in the political space. It is part of a larger research project on the national political consequences of the process of globalization (Kriesi et al. 2006, 2007). We argue that globalization leads to a transformation of the dimensions or cleavages that have usually structured electoral competition and to a reconfiguration of parties' positions. We analyze these evolutions in six European countries (Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the UK) by focusing on the issue positions and issue salience of political parties during electoral campaigns in the 1970s and in the 1990s/2000s.

Globalization can be conceived as a process of 'denationalization' (Zürn 1998; Beisheim et al. 1999), as a transformation and weakening of national borders. These evolutions are not entirely new phenomena; they are earlier examples of phases of intense economic and cultural exchanges. However, such evolutions have accelerated in the last two or three decades and the 'actual phase' of globalization surpasses both quantitatively and qualitatively those of earlier epochs (Held et al. 1999: 425). Most important for understanding the potential impact of this process on national politics is to see that its influence on citizens is not homogeneous. Some segments of a national community will benefit from new opportunities, while others will have more to lose and will perceive the changes associated with globalization as a threat.

Globalization leads to new oppositions, new disparities, and to the formation of groups of potential 'winners' and 'losers'. These new oppositions result from at least three forms of competition: economic, cultural, and political.¹

First, at the economic level, globalization is linked with a growing pressure towards deregulation. This leads to an opposition between different sectors of a national economy. Firms and employees in sectors that have traditionally been 'sheltered' from international competition by protectionist measures are opposed to firms and employees who are mainly oriented towards international markets. The latter favor deregulation as the weakening of national borders is beneficial to their international competitiveness, while it threatens the privileged position of the former on national markets. Second, globalization is associated with immigration, which leads to a cultural opposition. Immigration and cultural diversity may be perceived by some citizens as a threat to their national or cultural identity and to their standard of living. Individuals' education level is most important for understanding how they

¹ Our presentation of these new oppositions and of the characteristics of the 'winners' and 'losers' of globalisation is based on Lachat and Kriesi (2003) and Kriesi et al. (2006, 2007), where these points are discussed in more detail.

perceive immigration. Citizens with a low level of education are not only in a more direct competition with immigrants on the labor market, but they also usually have less tolerant, less multicultural values. At the political level, finally, the most important evolution is clearly the process of European integration. The creation of a supra-national arena of decision-making and the increasing role of European-wide regulations is perceived as a loss by part of the citizens. Most important here is the degree of attachment to one's national identity. Those who feel strongly bound to their national community should perceive any weakening of the state's autonomy or sovereignty as a loss. Individuals with a more cosmopolite identity, by contrast, should be more favorable to this process – at least if it leads to the creation of a new system of regulation at the European level.

These new divides affect not only voters, but also parties. As the interests of the potential 'winners' and 'losers' of globalization are articulated at the political level, the structure of electoral competition should be affected. If some parties try to mobilize segments of the electorate on the basis of issues linked with these consequences of globalization, we would expect a transformation of the main dimensions that structure the political space and of the determinants of voting choices. At the level of parties, the political mobilization of the latent structural potentials constituted by the challenge of globalization should give rise to two interdependent dynamics – the transformation of both the basic structure of the national political space and the parties' positioning within the transforming space. On the one hand, parties react to the political conflicts and the associated preferences developing in the electorate and articulate them in the political arena. In this way, they restructure the political space. On the other hand, the individual parties position themselves strategically within the emerging spatial configuration of their competitors in the transformed space. We expect that the parties who appeal to the preferences of the 'losers' of globalization constitute the driving force of the current transformation of the Western European party systems (Kriesi et al. 2006, 2007). We propose that the initial electoral success of these parties set in motion the transformation of the dimensional structure and the repositioning of the established parties within the transforming structure, which, in turn, contributes to the ongoing transformation of the dimensions of the political space.

Following up on Kitschelt's (1994, 1995) analysis of political cleavages and their implications for the strategies and success of social-democratic and radical right parties in Western Europe, we are concerned with the long-term transformations which are expected to give rise to a fundamental reconfiguration of the political space in all Western European countries. We expect the impact of these long-term trends to vary from one country to the other, depending

on the country-specific social, economic and cultural context, the original structure of the national party systems and on the strategic considerations of the various parties embedded in this structure.

We have shown elsewhere that the political space of the six countries we analyze here has transformed in a relatively similar way in recent decades (Kriesi et al. 2006, 2007). Issues linked with the consequences of globalization have been integrated into the traditional economic and cultural oppositions. The character of these oppositions has changed, in particular on the cultural dimension. This one is now dominated by the issues of immigration, of cultural liberalism, and of European integration. This transformed cultural cleavage is best characterized as an opposition between ‘integration’ and ‘demarcation’.

In this paper, we are interested with the second aspect of the transformation process emphasized above. We analyze the positioning of political parties with respect to the new dimensions of political conflict. In the next section, we first discuss in more detail how national political spaces have been affected by the process of globalization, and we summarize our hypotheses about the positions of parties within this space. Then, we present the data and methods used to compare party positions across the six countries. Our analyses are divided into two parts. First, we compare the general configurations of parties across countries. We focus on two aspects: whether parties belonging to the same ideological families react in similar ways to the challenges of globalization and how the configurations of the main parties vary across countries. Then, we turn to the level of parties, rather than focusing on general configurations. We estimate the relative importance of contextual factors and of party characteristics in determining the salience of different issues categories, as well as the positions of parties with respect to these issues.

The transformation of the national political space

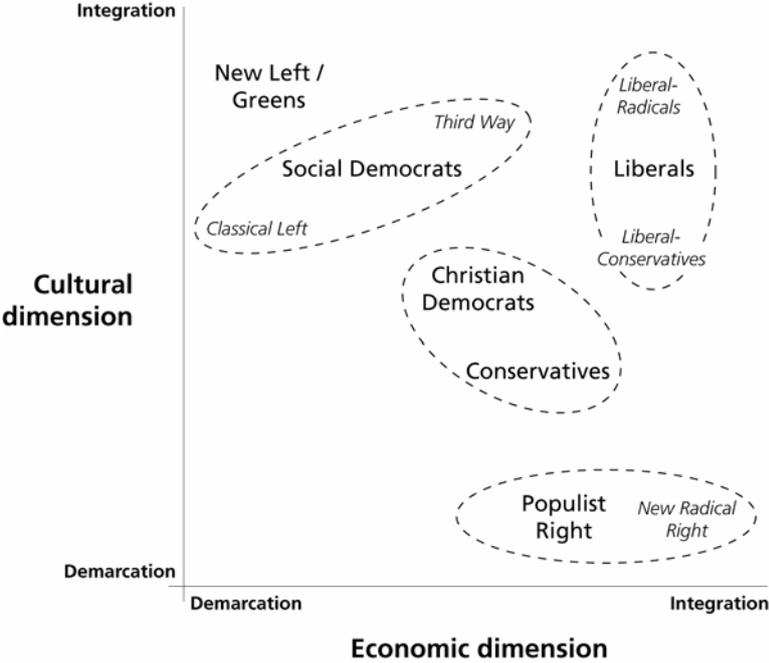
The structure of party systems in most Western European democracies has traditionally been two-dimensional, with an economic and a cultural dimension (Budge et al. 1987; Cole 2005; Kriesi et al. 2006). They are the product of the traditional cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan (1967). Of the four cleavages distinguished by these authors, which resulted from the National and Industrial Revolutions, the class and religious ones have been dominant in most Western democracies (Kriesi 1994). This structure was characteristic of the post-war period. It has however already been transformed, among others as a consequence of the mobilization of the new social movements in the late 1960s and 1970s. Together with changes at the level of mass electorates – rising educational levels, secularization, cognitive mobilization, etc. –

this has led to a process of ‘electoral dealignment’ and to a gradual transformation of the dimensions structuring national political spaces (Dalton et al. 1984; Inglehart 1990; Franklin et al. 1992). The most important evolution has been the transformation of the cultural dimension. From a dimension mainly based on the religious cleavage, it has changed to a dimension which has been labeled as ‘new politics’, ‘materialist-postmaterialist’ (Inglehart 1990), or ‘libertarian-authoritarian’ (Kitschelt 1994). There has been some controversy on the exact nature of this transformed cultural dimension and on how it can be measured (see for example Inglehart and Flanagan 1987; Flanagan and Lee 2003; Duch and Strøm 2004). But despite these transformations, the structure of the party system remained two-dimensional (Kriesi et al. 2006). Similarly, we expect the emergence of issues linked with globalization to lead to a transformation of the existing structure, rather than to the materialization of a third dimension. On the economic dimension, the new conflict should reinforce the opposition between a pro-state and a pro-market position while giving it a new meaning. The pro-state position is likely to become more defensive and more protectionist, while the pro-market position is likely to become more assertive in favor of the enhancement of national competitiveness on world markets. On the cultural dimension, we expect enhanced opposition to the cultural liberalism of the new social movements. The defense of tradition is expected to increasingly take on an ethnic or nationalist character. Furthermore, new issues should be integrated into the cultural dimension. Central among these are the issues of European integration and of immigration, which correspond to the new political and cultural forms of competition linked with globalization. The ‘demarcation’ pole of the new cultural cleavage should be characterized by an opposition to the process of European integration and by restrictive positions with regard to immigration.

Parties should take diverging positions in this transformed political space. Figure 1 summarizes our hypotheses on the expected positions of the main party families. One of the main contrasts is between established parties of the moderate left and right, on the one hand, and more peripheral actors, on the other. Established parties usually take a positive, but moderate position towards globalization (Lachat and Kriesi 2003; Kriesi et al. 2006). They favor further integration, both economically and culturally. This has been confirmed by several analyses of parties’ positions towards European integration (Hix 1999; Hooghe et al. 2002; Eijk and Franklin 2004): while there are differences across party families and across countries, the moderate left and right parties usually favor further European integration. This does not mean however that established parties will take identical positions with respect to the national consequences of globalization. On the left, mainstream parties are generally liberal in

social and cultural terms, but they face the dilemma that market integration in Europe (and more globally) poses a threat to their national social achievements. Depending on their capacity to defend these achievements at the national level, mainstream left parties may vary with regard to the extent to which they endorse economic integration (Marks and Wilson 2000; Hooghe and Marks 2001). Accordingly, their positions are likely to vary mostly along the economic dimension of the political space. On the right, conservatives also face a dilemma – a dilemma that is precisely the opposite of the one faced by mainstream parties of the left (Marks and Wilson 2000; Hooghe and Marks 2001): economically they tend to endorse liberalization, but socially and culturally they tend to be nationalists and opposed to the opening up of the borders. Accordingly, their positions are likely to vary especially along the cultural dimension. Depending on the threat posed by integration to the national identity, the conservatives will be more or less opposed to integration.

Figure 1: Expected positioning of party families with respect to the new cleavage



Compared to the other two main political families, at first sight the opening up of the borders seems to constitute less of a challenge for the liberal family. Classical liberalism was both economically and socio-culturally liberal. At closer inspection, however, we can find that European liberalism has been characterized by a strong ambivalence regarding the left-right dimension. As a consequence, we can distinguish several variants within the liberal party family (Smith 1988). Most important is the distinction between ‘liberal-radicalism’ and ‘liberal conservatism’. Whereas the former (e.g., the Dutch D66) has been left-of-centre on

economic issues, the latter (e.g., the Dutch VVD) has emphasized economic freedom and market liberalization and tended to be right-of-centre. Faced with the opening of the borders, liberal-conservatives are distinguished by the fact that they tend to put the accent on market liberalization, while they oppose supranational political integration (Marks and Wilson 2000: 448-450).

The interests of the 'losers' of globalization are articulated by more peripheral political parties, both on the left and on the right. On the left of the political spectrum, parties of the radical left or some segments of social-democratic parties take a more defensive position on economic issues. They oppose any form of economic deregulation and advocate strong measures of social protection. While they are favorable to cultural liberalism and to the process of European integration, they may oppose specific steps towards a further integration if these are perceived to be too liberal economically or to present a danger for social protection at the national level. This is well illustrated by the strong opposition of the French radical left to the European constitution in the 2005 referendum campaign, or by the division of the Socialists on this issue. While parties of the radical left articulate the economic interests of the 'losers' of globalization, it is the populist right which most strongly opposes cultural forms of integration. Opposition to immigration, an emphasis on national identity and on its norms of exclusion, and the defense of cultural protectionism, are central characteristics of their programmatic stance (Kitschelt 1995; Betz 2003; Bornschier 2005). On economic issues, by contrast, the position of the populist right is less clear-cut. Kitschelt (1995) has argued that the most successful parties of the populist right are those who combine an authoritarian position on cultural issues with economic neo-liberalism. However, he later emphasized that parties of the populist right had changed to a more moderate position on economic issues (Kitschelt 2001). It is first of all on cultural issues that they stand in a stark opposition to mainstream right-wing parties.

Research design

In order to analyze the impact of globalization on the national political space, we study six Western European countries: Germany, France, Britain, Switzerland, Austria, and the Netherlands. Our analysis focuses on national elections, which we consider to be central for the restructuring of national political contexts. In each country, we analyze three elections of the 1990s and early 2000s, as well as one electoral contest from the 1970s.² This serves as a

² The elections we consider are the following ones: Austria: 1975, 1994, 1999, 2002; France: 1978, 1988, 1995, 2002; Germany: 1976, 1994, 1998, 2002; Netherlands: 1972, 1994, 1998, 2002; UK: 1974 (February), 1992, 1997, 2001. Switzerland: 1975, 1991, 1995, 1999.

point of comparison to follow changes over a longer period of time. We consider that the most appropriate way to analyze the positioning of parties and the way in which they deal with the new issues linked with globalization is to focus on the political debate during electoral campaigns, as reflected by the mass media. We consider both the saliency with which parties address certain issues and the positions they take. While extensive research based on party manifestos has shown that parties tend to avoid direct confrontation and that they differ from each other mainly through the selective emphasis of their priorities (see Budge 2001 for a review), we also know that new issues usually do not have a valence character, and that direct confrontation, i.e., parties advocating diverging positions on political issues, is much more pronounced in the media and during electoral campaigns than in party programs (Budge and Farlie 1983: 281).

We rely for this on content analyses of the editorial part of major daily newspapers. For each country we chose a quality paper and a tabloid.³ We selected all articles related to the electoral contest or to politics in general, during the two months before the election. We coded the headlines, the 'lead' and the first paragraph of these articles, sentence by sentence, using a method developed by Kleinnijenhuis and his collaborators (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 1997; Kleinnijenhuis and Pennings 2001). This method is designed to code every relationship between 'political objects' (i.e., either between two political actors or between a political actor and a political issue) appearing in the text. For the present purposes, we are only interested in relationships between political actors, on the one hand, and political issues on the other. Each sentence is reduced to its most basic structure (the so called 'core sentence') indicating only its subject (political actor) and its object (issue) as well as the direction of the relationship between the two. The direction is quantified using a scale ranging from -1 to +1 (with three intermediary positions).

Political actors were coded according to their party membership. For the political issues, comparisons are only possible if we have the same categories in each country. We have grouped the various issues addressed during campaigns into a limited number of categories. We distinguish between twelve issue domains, which are defined in table 1. The first three of these categories refer to the traditional left-right economic opposition, while the next six categories refer to the cultural dimension. We first distinguish between three categories defending a universalistic, cosmopolitan point of view: support for cultural liberalism, European integration and education, culture and research. Next, we add three categories for

³ The selected newspapers were *Die Presse* and *Kronenzeitung* in Austria, *The Times* and *The Sun* in Britain, *Le Monde* and *Le Parisien* in France, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Bild* in Germany, *NRC Handelsblad* and *Algemeen Dagblad* in the Netherlands, and *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and *Blick* in Switzerland.

the opposing point of view: support for a tough immigration policy, law and order and a strong army. The last three categories, finally, are neither purely cultural nor purely economic.

Table 1: Definition of the issue categories

Economic liberalism	Support for deregulation, more competition, and privatization. Opposition to market regulation provided that the proposed measures do not have an impact on state expenditure, which is the distinguishing criterion from the Welfare-category. Opposition to economic protectionism in agriculture and other sectors.
Welfare	Expansion of the welfare state and defense against welfare state retrenchment. Tax reforms that have redistributive effects, employment programs, health care programs. Valence issues such as ‘against unemployment’ or ‘against recession’ were dropped if there was no specification of whether the goal was to be achieved by state intervention or by deregulation.
Budget	Budgetary rigor, reduction of the state deficit, cut on expenditures, reduction of taxes that have no (direct) effects on redistribution.
Cultural liberalism	Support for the goals of the new social movements, with the exception of the environmental movement: Peace, solidarity with the third world, gender equality, human rights. Support for cultural diversity, international cooperation (except for the EU and Nato), support for the United Nations. Opposition to racism, support for the right to abortion and euthanasia. Opposition to patriotism, to calls for national solidarity, the defense of tradition and of national sovereignty, and to traditional moral values, support for a liberal policy on drugs.
Europe	Support for European integration – including enlargement – or for EU-membership in the cases of Switzerland and Austria.
Culture	Support for education, culture, and scientific research.
Anti immigration	Support for a tough immigration and integration policy, and for the restriction of the number of foreigners.
Army	Support for the army (including Nato), for a strong national defense, and for nuclear weapons.
Law and order	Support for more law and order; fight against crime as well as political corruption.
Environment	Support for environmental protection, opposition to atomic energy.
Institutional reform	Support for various institutional reforms such as the extension of direct democratic rights, modifications in the structure of the political system, federalism and decentralization, calls for the efficiency of government and public administration, New Public Management.
Infrastructural projects	Support for the improvement of the infrastructure (roads, railways, etc.).

These data offer valuable information on two aspects of the supply side of electoral competition: the positions of political parties regarding the various political issues, and the salience of these issues for a given political party. The position of an actor on a category of issues is computed by averaging over all core sentences which contain a relationship between this actor and any of the issues belonging to this category. The salience of a category of issues

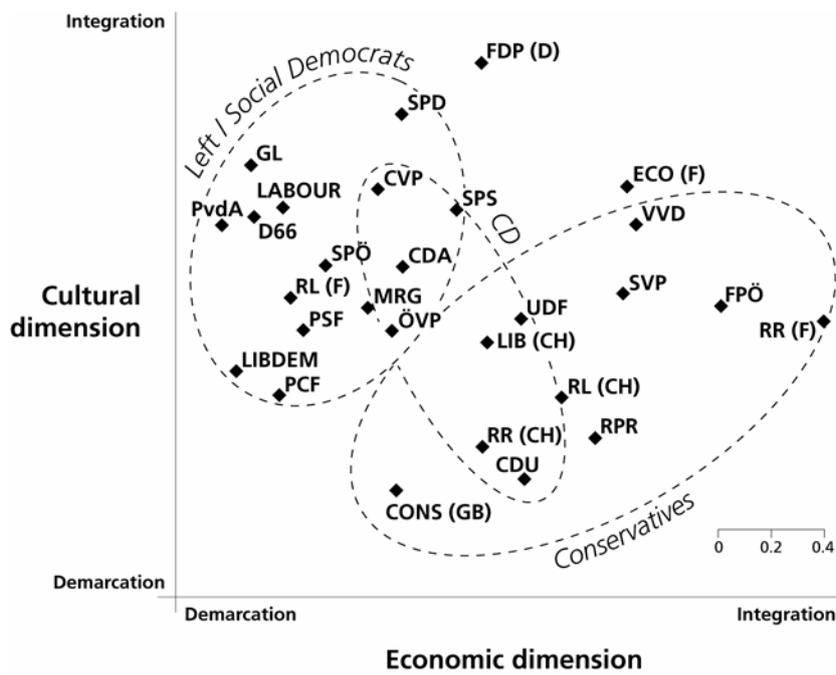
refers to the relative frequency with which a given political party takes a position on this category. We use these data here for two types of analyses. First, we want to determine the relative location of parties in a joint analysis of all six countries. The aim is twofold: to show how the configuration of political parties has changed between the 1970s and the recent period, and to assess how similar are the locations of parties from different countries belonging to the same ideological family. In the second part of our analyses, we focus on specific issue categories and analyze the determinants of the positions taken by parties on these dimensions, and on the salience which these issues are addressed.

The aim of the first part of our analysis is to produce a representation of the positions of parties in the political space. To this end, we rely on the method of multidimensional scaling (MDS). MDS is a very flexible method that allows for the graphic representation of similarities or dissimilarities between pairs of objects (Borg and Groenen 1997; Cox and Cox 2001; Kruskal and Wish 1978). In our data, we have information on the ‘similarity’ or ‘distance’ between parties and issues. For this analysis, however, what we are really interested in are the similarities between pairs of parties. To construct such a measure, we can consider the positions of parties on each of the twelve issue categories as their coordinates in a twelve-dimensional space. We can thus also compute the distance between two parties in this space. We have used such a measure of distance here, which gives us information on the similarity or dissimilarity of all pairs of parties. When computing these distances between parties, we also account for the fact that some issue dimensions are more important than others. If a Green party centers its campaign on the question of environmental protection, for instance, we should give more importance to this issue dimension when computing the distance between this party and its competitors. We have thus relied on a measure of distance that accounts for the variation across parties in the salience of issues (the construction of this measure is presented in more detail in the appendix).

The configuration of party positions

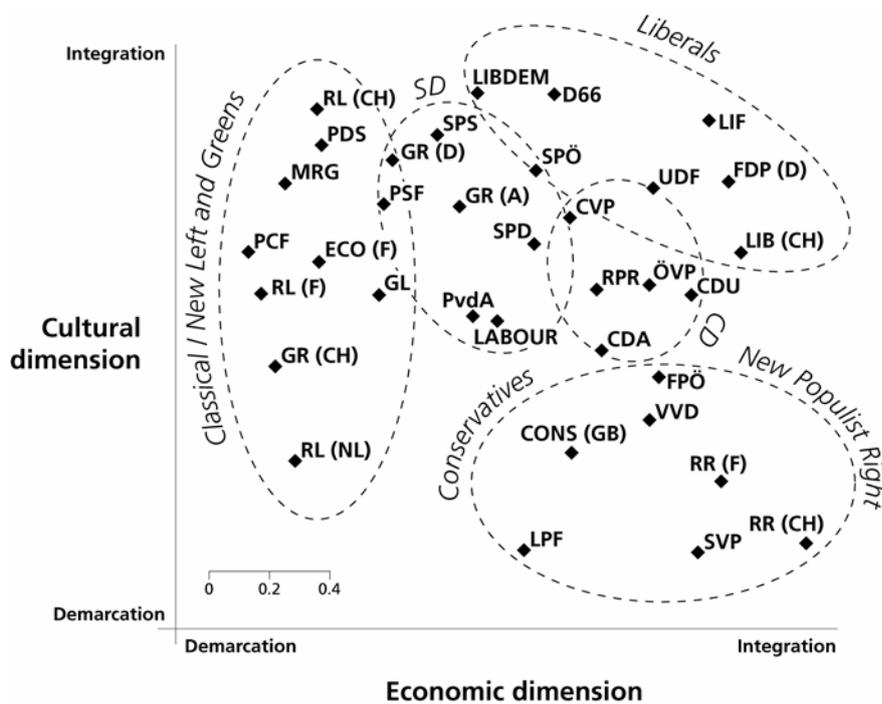
Using the measures of dissimilarities for each pair of parties described in the previous section, we have performed two MDS analyses. One is based on the distances between parties in the election of the 1970s. The second analysis focuses on the more recent elections, averaging the positions (and issue salience) of parties over the three elections considered in each country. The resulting configurations of party positions are presented in figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2. Positions of party families in the political space, 1970s



CD = Christian Democrats

Figure 3. Positions of party families in the political space, 1990s-2000s



SD = Social Democrats, CD = Christian Democrats

In the 1970s, party configurations are expected to have still been strongly shaped by the traditional class and religious conflicts. This is, indeed, what we find, although the emerging

pattern is not as clear-cut as we might have expected on the basis of the two traditional cleavages alone. We can clearly distinguish the three families of the Social-democrats, the Christian-Democrats and the Conservatives, each of whom forms a more or less coherent cluster (figure 2). The Liberals, however, are spread all over the place and do not constitute a coherent cluster at all. The wide spread of the Christian-democrats along the vertical (cultural) axis, the clear separation of the Conservatives into a liberal-conservative and a national-conservative subgroup, and the extreme dispersal of the Liberals over the entire space complicate the emerging pattern to a considerable extent.

The Social-democratic family turns out to be most coherent. It is clearly situated on the left, ranging from the Dutch PvdA and the British Labour Party at the very left-hand end of the horizontal axis to the Swiss SPS, located close to the center of the space. The Social-democratic cluster also includes the Dutch and French radical Liberals (D'66 and MRG) as well as some minor parties from the Left of these two countries, all of whom closely cooperated with the Social-democrats at the time. The Conservatives constitute the opposites of the left on each one of the two axes. On the economically liberal end of the horizontal dimension, directly opposite to the Social-Democrats, we find two liberal-conservative parties, the Dutch VVD and the Austrian FPÖ, as well as the Swiss People's Party and the French Front National. By contrast, more culturally traditional conservative parties – the British Tories, the French RPR – and the Swiss radical right (National Action and Republicans at the time) constitute the direct opponents of the cultural liberals (most clearly represented by the German FDP at the time). Together with the German CDU, they are located at the center of the economic, but at the traditional (nationalist and religious) end of the cultural axis. The Christian-democrats, finally, who, in the seventies, contributed to the expansion of the welfare state and promoted a 'social market economy', are all situated on the left-hand side of the economic divide. But they are widely spread along the cultural divide – ranging from the left-liberal Swiss CVP and Dutch CDA, across the economically rather socialist and culturally rather moderate ÖVP to the economically centrist and culturally very conservative CDU. The French UDF, who included an important Christian-democratic component at the time, takes a moderate position on both dimensions and we also attribute it to the Christian-democratic cluster. The Swiss Liberals, who occupy a very similar position in the center of the space, are also included in this cluster. In the seventies, the populist right had not yet carved out a clearly delimited niche for itself and the New Left and the Greens had not yet systematically occupied their terrain either.

By the 1990s/2000s (figure 3), the predominant pattern has evolved in the direction of the expectations laid out in figure 1. We now find five quite clearly delimited party families: the Social-democrats; a fragmented family including the New Left, the Greens and the classical Left; the Christian-Democrats; the Liberals and the populist right/conservatives. Among the social-democratic parties, the Dutch PvdA, the British Labour Party, the German SPD and the Austrian SPÖ have most clearly adopted principles of the 'Third Way' and are now more on the right in economic terms than the Swiss SPS and the French PSF. At the same time, however, the PvdA, Labour and the SPD are the culturally least liberal party in this group. The very parties who have most clearly adopted the neoliberal principles of the 'Third Way' have least embraced its culturally cosmopolitan principles, and vice versa. In other words, we do not find the champions of the 'Third Way', where we expected them. Instead, the Swiss SPS, together with the British Liberal Democrats and the Dutch D'66 most clearly correspond to the position of the ideal-typical 'Third Way'.

Moving towards the center of the space, the Social-Democrats opened a niche for the fragmented smaller parties of the left whom we all find at the left end of the economic axis, but widely spread along the cultural one. Not all of these parties are liberal in cultural terms, however. Some of them (e.g. the Swiss Greens, the Dutch or the French classical left) are opposed to European integration and, therefore, not located in the upper left-hand quadrant of the space.

Not only the Social-Democrats, but also the Christian-Democrats have moved to the right in economic terms. Moreover, by the end of the 1990s, the Christian-Democratic family has become much more coherent in cultural terms. Note that the conservative RPR is located close to these parties, while the UDF is positioned between the Christian-democratic and the liberal parties. The Liberals are now situated where we have expected them. The Swiss and the German Liberals most clearly represent the liberal conservative position, while the British Liberal Democrats and the Dutch D'66 constitute, as we have already pointed out, the most typical representatives of the 'Third Way'.

Finally, and most clearly in line with our expectations, there is now a conservative/populist right cluster in the lower right hand quadrant of the political space. In this cluster we find the Dutch LPF and the VVD, the Swiss People's Party and the Swiss new radical right, the French Front National, the British Conservatives and the FPÖ. In other words, we find in this family not only the new challengers from the populist right, but also the established conservative or liberal-conservative parties who have transformed their positions under the impact of the new challengers and the political potentials they stand for. The Swiss SVP, the

smaller parties of the Swiss new radical right and the French Front National most clearly represent Kitschelt's 'winning formula' of the combination of a culturally conservative and an economically liberal position. The Dutch LPF by contrast, seems to have chosen an economically more centrist position. The British Conservatives and the Dutch VVD, finally, are not as culturally conservative as the true populist challengers from the right, but they are still located in the proximity of these parties and constitute functional equivalents for them in their respective countries.

Comparing national party configurations

We can look at figures 2 and 3 in yet a different way. Instead of focusing on the party families, we can compare the national party configurations. We do this by highlighting the configuration formed by the main parties in each country. In the 1970s (figure 4), we note a strong contrast between the configurations of the Dutch, Austrian, and French systems, on the one hand, and the British and German party systems on the other hand, with the Swiss system falling in between the two extremes. The first group of party systems is clearly structured along the economic contrast between left and right, while the second group of party systems is dominated by the contrast between cultural liberalism and tradition. In the British case, all parties are pro-welfare state. In 1974, even the British Conservatives took a position which was situated to the left of the SPS or the SPD in economic terms. However, in cultural terms, the contrast between Labour and Conservatives was substantial, with the Liberals taking an intermediate position. In Germany, the party system of the 1970s was generally much more liberal economically than the British one, but just as in the British case, there were few economic differences between the parties, while the cultural differences between the social-liberal coalition (SPD and FDP), on the one hand, and the opposition of the CDU, on the other, were enormous. In Britain, Germany and, we should add, in Switzerland, the mobilization by the New Left and the new social movements in the seventies did not incite the major parties to renew the class conflict, but rather incited the major liberal and social-democratic parties to take up their cultural themes. By contrast, in the Dutch, Austrian and French party systems, the differences were mainly of an economic nature in the 1970s, whereas the parties took rather similar positions on the cultural axis. Under the impact of the mobilization of the New Left, the seventies saw in these three countries a confrontation between established parties of Left and Right in terms of a renewed class conflict.

Figure 4. Main dimensions of party competition, 1970s

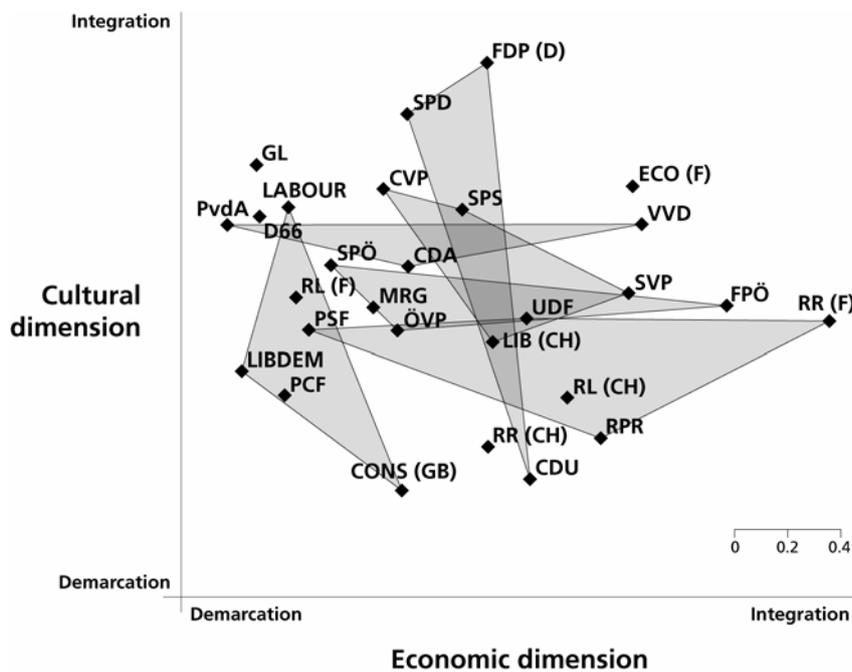
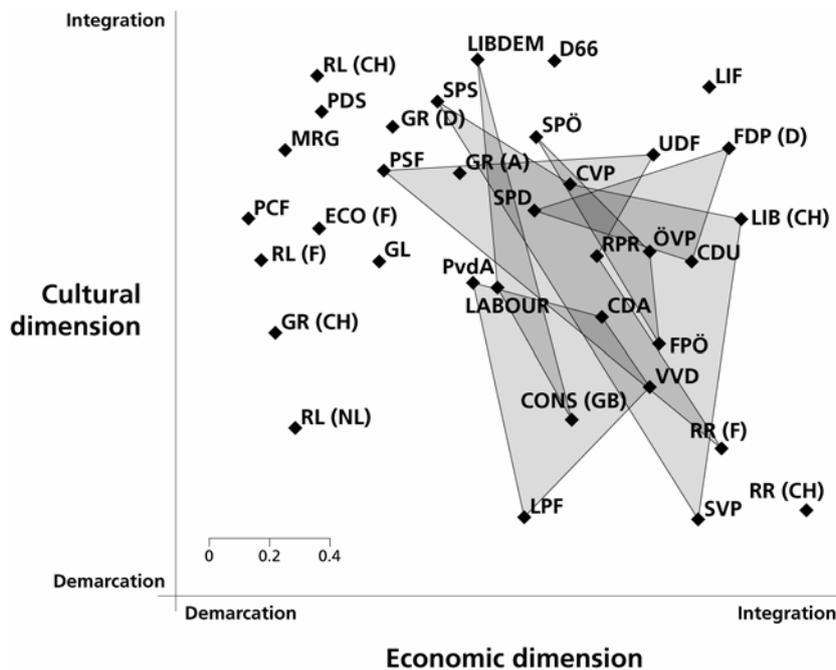


Figure 5. Main dimensions of party competition, 1990s-2000s



By the 1990s/2000s, the configurations have undergone two crucial changes (figure 5). First, most major parties appear to have moved towards the economic right. Second, the cultural axis has become the main line of conflict in all countries except Germany. The British configuration is still dominated by the contrast on the cultural axis. In Austria, Holland and France, and in Switzerland, too, the cultural axis has become clearly more important than the

economic one for the shape of the configuration. Only the German case deviates from the rest of the countries, in that its configuration is not predominantly shaped by the cultural contrast between a social-liberal and a conservative position. This reflects the impact of reunification on the salience of economic conflicts in the 1990s (Dolezal 2007).

The determinants of salience and position

In the last step of our analysis, we turn to the individual parties in order to identify the determinants of two aspects of their mobilization during national election campaigns: how salient the various issue categories are for their mobilization during such campaigns (percentage of issue statements of a party dealing with a given issue category), and the average positions they take on the main issues. These two measures have been computed for six issue categories, which we consider to be the most important ones for our hypotheses: the two key economic categories, welfare and economic liberalism, and four cultural categories: European integration, immigration, cultural liberalism, and law and order. The first pair of cultural categories refers directly to the ‘integration-demarcation’ cleavage, while the second pair is closer to Kitschelt’s ‘libertarian-authoritarian’ contrast. For the 1990s/2000s, we calculated summary measures which we compare with those of the 1970s.

In addition to the global social change (indicated by the time period), the issue-specific mobilization of the parties depends on characteristics of their own as well as on the national contexts characteristics (Kriesi 2007). Our independent determinants for the analysis of salience and position, therefore, include a dummy for the 1990s as well as dummies for the various party families and a dummy identifying opposition parties. Depending on the issue at stake, we distinguish between the radical left, the left-libertarians (the radical left, the greens and the radical liberals), the social-democrats, the Christian-democrats, the liberal conservatives and the new populist right/national conservatives. For the composition of the families, we use the results presented for the 1990s/2000s in figure 2 and 3. Thus, the last family, which is crucial for our analysis, not only includes the new challengers of the populist right (Front National, Swiss radical right and LPF), but also the transformed established liberal conservative/conservative parties (the British Conservatives, the Dutch VVD, the Austrian FPÖ, and the Swiss SVP). For the sake of brevity, we shall refer to this family subsequently as the ‘new populist right’. Together with the Swiss, German and Austrian Liberals we include the French UDF and RPR among the liberal conservatives, while the

radical liberal family includes the British Liberal Democrats, the Dutch D'66 and the French MRG.⁴ The remaining family compositions are straightforward.⁵

Four variables specify the context characteristics of the countries: a dummy variable each for small open economies (Austria, the Netherlands and Switzerland), for countries with deep-seated national anxieties about losing their national sovereignty (Switzerland and the UK), and for culturally monist (Austria, Germany, Switzerland and France) as opposed to multicultural countries. In addition to these indicators, we also use dummies for individual countries in order to account for some exceptional aspects of the data. Although we are aware of Przeworski and Teune's (1970) injunction that the comparativists ought to replace the countries' names by variables, we also know that it is sometimes difficult to translate the specificity of some country into a general concept applicable to all. Finally, we shall use interaction terms, if we expect the effect of party or country characteristics to change over time or if we expect the effect of party characteristics to vary from one country to the other. It is important to emphasize that this analysis has a more exploratory character. We do not work with a standard set of determinants for all issues and aspects, but draw heavily on the results of detailed country-specific analyses performed in the framework of this research project (Kriesi et al. 2007).

Economic issues

Table 2 presents the results for the salience and average party positions of the two economic issue categories – welfare state and economic liberalism. Overall, these two broad issue domains, which include the bulk of economic issues, are the two most salient ones in all the countries. They are salient for all types of parties, i.e., there is not much variation across party families in this respect. The parties of the radical left stand out, for whom both economic issue categories are particularly salient. The radical left is still mainly politicizing in class terms, which means that economic issues are of particular importance for it. The liberal conservatives, their most pronounced adversaries on the economic axis, are the only other family, for whom questions related to economic liberalism in particular have a significantly greater salience than for the other parties. The positions of the parties on these economic issues, in turn, are mainly determined by the traditional opposition between left and right. Parties on the left lend significantly stronger support to the welfare state than the liberal

⁴ The Austrian Liberals (LIF) are usually considered as radical liberal. However, because of their proximity to the liberal conservatives in figure 3, we include them among the latter family.

⁵ For the analysis, we only include parties with at least five issue-specific statements, which excludes the Swiss Greens.

conservatives and the parties from the family we have labeled the ‘new populist right’, and vice versa for economic liberalism.

Table 2. Impact of party level and country level factors on economic issues: issue salience and average issue position. Coefficients (standard errors in parentheses) of OLS regressions.

	Salience		Position	
	Welfare	Economic lib.	Welfare	Economic lib.
Constant	0.14*** (0.01)	0.16*** (0.02)	0.58*** (0.08)	-0.68*** (0.09)
1990s/2000s	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	0.04 (0.08)	0.59*** (0.11)
Radical left	0.07** (0.02)	0.06* (0.03)	0.22 [†] (0.12)	
Christian-democrats			0.09 (0.16)	0.39** (0.13)
Christian-dem., 1990s			-0.47* (0.21)	
Liberal-conservatives		0.09*** (0.03)	-0.51*** (0.10)	0.77*** (0.13)
New populist right			-0.84*** (0.10)	0.51*** (0.11)
France	0.09*** (0.02)			-0.17 (0.15)
Netherlands	0.16*** (0.03)			
Netherlands, 1990s	-0.11*** (0.04)			
Small open economy		-0.06*** (0.02)		
UK		0.17*** (0.04)	0.64*** (0.16)	
UK, 1990s		-0.17** (0.06)	-0.60* (0.24)	
Germany				0.51** (0.17)
France, Germany, 1990s				-0.53** (0.18)
R ²	0.54	0.51	0.65	0.63
N	62	62	62	59

[†] $p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

As far as country-specific differences are concerned, welfare has been and still is significantly more salient in France than in the other countries. This is in line with the finding that class conflicts still have a high mobilizing capacity in France (Kriesi 2007). In the seventies, the expansion of the welfare state has also been of particular salience in the Netherlands, where the left has tried to remobilize in class terms. But in the Netherlands, contrary to France, it has

lost its exceptional mobilizing capacity by the 1990s/2000s. Similarly, economic liberalism which, against the background of a deep economic crisis, has been of particular salience in the 1974 British general elections has lost its exceptional salience by the time Labour had come to embrace its tenets in the late nineties. Neo-liberalism generally seems to have been less relevant for the electoral debates in the small open economies, where corporatist solutions have been institutionalized for the protection of the economically vulnerable.

Two observations are of particular relevance with respect to the positioning of the parties on these two economic issue categories: first, as we have noted in the previous section, a pronounced shift in the direction of increasing economic liberalism has occurred across all parties, although not in all the countries: Germany and France have not followed the general trend. These two countries have been characterized by particularly severe economic problems in the 1990s (Kriesi 2007), which may be one reason, why they have resisted the common trend. One should keep in mind, however, that they started out from quite different levels of economic liberalism in the 1970s: at that time, the German parties were much more economically liberal than the parties in the other countries, while the French parties already took rather less economically liberal positions. By the 1970s, all German parties had more or less adopted the concept of the 'social market economy', which had proved to be so successful in the post-war period of reconstruction, while all the French parties have been marked by the French statist tradition, which had proved to be equally successful during that period (Hall 1986). By the 1990s-2000s, the parties of the other countries have caught up with the Germans, while it is the French who now clearly lag behind all the others. No comparable shift with regard to the support of the welfare state has occurred. Most parties in all the countries still support or oppose the welfare state to the same extent as they did in the 1970s. There are two kinds of exceptions, however. On the one hand, the Christian-democrats have become significantly more critical of the welfare state. On the other hand, the British parties, who have all been exceptionally supportive of the welfare state back in the seventies (as is reflected in figure 4) have fallen in line with the parties in the other countries.

The second observation concerns the new populist right, who turns out to be the least supportive of the welfare state and to be almost as economically liberal as the liberal conservatives. In other words, we provide support for Kitschelt's idea of the 'winning formula', which maintains that the new populist right has been so successful at the polls, because it combined its cultural demarcation strategy with a critique of the welfare state and an appeal to the economic liberalism of the old middle class.

European integration and immigration

On the cultural axis, we first consider the two issues, which are most closely related to the integration-demarcation theme and which have been most clearly associated with the rise of the new populist right – European integration and immigration. Both issues do not belong to the most salient categories in the period covered, but both have become more prominent over time in the parties' national electoral campaigns. Together with the issue of law and order, another issue traditionally associated with the conservative right, the two belong to the three issues characterized by the most pronounced increase in salience: Europe made up only 2.5 per cent of all issue-related statements in the 1970s campaigns, but close to 7 per cent in the campaigns of the 1990s/2000s; immigration was up from 1.6 per cent in the 1970s to 6.3 per cent in the 1990s/2000s. The salience of Europe increased most in the two most Euroskeptical countries, the UK and Switzerland, where Europe became one of the key issues in the electoral campaigns of the 1990s with 11.2 and 12.2 per cent of all issue-specific statements, respectively.

The salience of Europe in these two countries increased above all for the parties of the new populist right (table 3). In a similar vein, the salience of immigration increased more strongly in the countries with 'monist' approaches to the integration of migrants, which require the prospective citizen to adapt to the dominant culture (Koopmans et al. 2005; Koopmans and Kriesi 1997), than in those with a multicultural approach. Such an assimilationist position provides ample opportunities for the new populist right's call for tougher immigration policies. And again, as shown by table 3, it is above all the new populist right in these monist countries for whom the salience of the immigration issue has increased. As far as its salience is concerned, immigration differs, however, in two respects from European integration: first, immigration has become significantly more salient for the populist right in the multicultural countries as well, whereas Europe has not. Second, immigration has also become significantly more salient for the left-libertarians (i.e., the radical left, radical liberals and greens) in the Netherlands, who have increasingly mobilized against the demands of the new populist right (Kriesi and Frey 2007). The Dutch left-libertarians have been particularly vigilant in this respect, since we could not find comparable counter-mobilizations in the campaigns of their colleagues in other countries.

Table 3. Impact of party level and country level factors on cultural issues: issue salience and average issue position. Coefficients (standard errors in parentheses) of OLS regressions.

	Salience		Position	
	Europe	Immigration	Europe	Immigration
Constant	0.01 (0.01)	-0.03 (0.02)	0.50*** (0.16)	-0.55* (0.20)
1990s/2000s	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.20 (0.19)	0.13 (0.15)
Opposition party			-0.39 [†] (0.24)	
Left-libertarians		.00 (.02)		-0.61*** (0.17)
Christian-democrats				0.57** (0.21)
New populist right	-0.01 (0.01)	0.06** (0.02)	-0.88*** (0.23)	0.89*** (0.21)
UK, Switzerland	0.03** (0.01)		-0.34 [†] (0.20)	
New populist right (UK,CH), 1990s	0.08** (0.03)			
Monism		0.04 [†] (0.02)		0.33* (0.16)
New populist right (monism)		0.08* (0.02)		
Netherlands		0.03 (0.03)		
Dutch left-libertarians		0.06 [†] (0.04)		
R ²	0.43	0.43	0.36	0.57
N	62	63	44	47

[†] $p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

We do not observe any time trends with regard to the positioning of the parties on these two key issues. Mair (2001) has argued that European integration has generally had very little impact on either the format or the mechanics of national party systems thus far. He maintains that Euroskeptical parties – such as the Austrian FPÖ, the French FN, the Italian AN or the Swedish Left party – cannot be reduced to their anti-European appeal, and that their anti-European positions are merely part of their general oppositional stance. As Taggart (1998) and Sitter (2001) have already shown, Euroskepticism is characteristic of parties outside the mainstream, both on the extreme left and the extreme right. Drawing on these studies, Mair doubts whether European integration has had any direct effect on how national party systems operate. According to this reasoning, we would expect the parties' positions with respect to Europe to be above all determined by whether or not they are part of the governing coalitions. As the corresponding analysis in table 3 shows, this expectation is not entirely unfounded.

Parties in opposition are significantly more anti-European than parties in government. However, as this table also shows, Euroskepticism is not simply part of the ‘politics of opposition’. In fact, compared to the effect of being in the opposition, the effect of the new populist right on the positioning with regard to European integration is considerably more substantial. As we have argued, the question of Europe is part of the new structural conflict over ‘integration’ (into the European or global community) versus ‘demarcation’ (of the national community). With regard to immigration, we cannot find any ‘opposition-effect’ at all. Immigration is much rather a question that opposes the new populist right to the left-libertarians, independently of whether the parties involved are in government or not. But one should not reduce the new populist right to its anti-immigration stance: as we have just seen, the new populist right is not only the most significant promoter of a tough anti-immigration policy, but also the most clearly anti-European force. These parties consistently defend a cultural ‘demarcation’ strategy.

On the immigration issue, we also find the Christian-democrats on the side of the new populist right. Although not as radical as the latter, the Christian-democrats prove to be very significantly more opposed to immigration than the Social-democrats or the liberal conservatives who serve here as the base category. Finally, as far as country differences are concerned, Europe is not only very salient in the two most Euroskeptic countries, but the parties’ Euroskepticism is also more pronounced there. Similarly, in monist countries, a tough immigration policy is both a particularly hot issue and an issue strongly supported in the parties’ electoral campaigns.

Cultural liberalism and law and order

In addition to the two cultural issue-categories most clearly linked to the new cleavage, we look at two cultural issues, which are most clearly associated with Kitschelt’s (1995) interpretation of the new populist right. In his perspective, the New Right constitutes ‘the mirror image and opposite political pole of the New Left that began to mobilize in the 1960s’ (1995: 2). According to his interpretation, the New Right not only advocates free market economics, but also “‘authoritarian” hierarchical arrangements in politics, together with a limitation of diversity and individual autonomy in cultural expressions.’ Our two categories of cultural liberalism and law and order quite nicely capture the opposition between libertarians and authoritarians. With the exception of environmental protection, the category of cultural liberalism includes all the themes that were raised by the so called new social movements of the seventies and eighties – peace, solidarity with the Third World, gender equality, and

human rights. These are issues which have been traditionally defended by the left and which have gained enormously in importance during the ‘cultural revolution’ of the late sixties and the emergence of the New Left and the new social movements in the early seventies. Law and order, by contrast, is a traditional issue category, that has mainly preoccupied the parties from the right.

Cultural liberalism has been and still is the most salient cultural issue category: no less than 13.9 per cent of all issue-related statements referred to this category in the seventies and by the 1990s/2000s, it still made up 12.4 per cent of all such statements. The salience of law and order has increased substantially since the seventies – from 5.2 per cent to 9.8 per cent of the issue-related statements. Our regression analyses (table 4) show that the salience of these two categories hardly varies at all between parties: they preoccupy virtually all of them to the same extent. But, in the seventies, cultural liberalism has been exceptionally salient in German and Swiss electoral campaigns. As we have shown elsewhere (Kriesi et al. 1995), the mobilization by the new social movements was very strong in these two countries, which provided an incentive for both their allies among the parties on the left and their enemies among the parties on the right to debate their issues in the election campaigns. In the seventies, the mobilization by the new social movements has been equally strong in the Netherlands. But the Dutch parties paid less attention to issues related to cultural liberalism in the 1972 elections – a result of a polarization strategy adopted by the Dutch left, which put the accent on economic issues and a renewal of the class conflict. In the meantime, cultural liberalism has become much less salient in Switzerland and Germany, while in the other countries, its salience has actually increased.

Questions of law and order have been particularly salient in Germany in the early seventies and remained salient there ever since. The strong challenge by the New Left and the new social movements provoked equally strong reactions on the part of those who sought to protect democracy against its imagined or real enemies (Koopmans 1992). In addition, we now find that the increasing salience of law and order has mainly taken place in the two multicultural societies – the Netherlands and the UK. In the Netherlands, law and order has become more important than anywhere else in the 1990s/2000s and it has, in fact, become the most salient category with 16.6 per cent of all Dutch issue-related statements. The UK is next with 11.1 per cent of all corresponding statements.

Table 4. Impact of party level and country level factors on cultural issues: issue salience and average issue position. Coefficients (standard errors in parentheses) of OLS regressions

	Salience		Position	
	Cultural lib. ¹	Law & order	Cultural lib.	Law & order
Constant	0.02 (0.02)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.23* (0.11)	0.39** (0.15)
1990s/2000s	0.04* (0.02)	0.02 (0.01)	0.12 (0.12)	-0.03 (0.15)
Social-democrats			0.31** (0.19)	
Left-libertarians		-0.03** (0.01)	0.22 [†] (0.13)	-0.35* (0.16)
Christian-democrats				0.44* (0.19)
New populist right			-0.63*** (0.14)	0.47** (0.16)
Switzerland, Germany	0.20*** (0.02)			
Switzerland, Germany, 1990s	-0.15*** (0.03)			
Germany		0.04** (0.02)		
Multicultural (NL-UK)		0.02 (0.02)	0.36 [†] (0.19)	-0.70** (0.21)
Multicultural (NL-UK), 1990s		0.05* (0.02)	-0.70** (0.22)	0.56* (0.27)
France				0.45** (0.16)
R ²	0.60	0.43	0.49	0.43
N	61	63	60	57

[†] $p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

¹⁾ Excluding the Swiss radical left and the Swiss Greens, who are both extreme outliers

The debate on cultural liberalism, indeed, opposes the Left – social-democrats and left-libertarians – to the new populist right. The debate on law and order mainly confronts the left-libertarians, on the one hand, and the new populist right together with the Christian-democrats, on the other hand. In this respect, the social-democrats do not take a particularly distinct position. As far as law and order is concerned, the tone of the debate has become tougher in the multicultural countries, but not elsewhere. These countries were much more tolerant back in the seventies – more culturally liberal and more critical of a rigorous position on law and order. By the 1990s, however, they have lost much of their former tolerance on both counts. By this time, the Dutch parties have become the least culturally liberal of all the countries compared, and the cultural liberalism of British parties is now close to the average. All this is to suggest that the opening up of the borders is putting a strain even on multicultural societies. Just as the culturally monist countries, these countries are now also

confronted with the problems created by the immigration of culturally very diverse populations. Finally, the reader should note that, although law and order has been particularly salient in Germany, German parties have, on average, not been particularly tough in this respect. The French parties have generally been much tougher. We can simply note this result here without being able to account for it.

The upshot of this detailed discussion of the cultural issues is that they generally oppose the left to the new populist right, but that the details of the configuration heavily depend on the country context, the impact of which varies from one issue category to the other. To summarize this discussion, we have constructed two weighted positional contrasts for each party – the contrast between a party's position on Europe and its position on immigration, and the contrast between its position on cultural liberalism and on law and order. The weights are provided by the corresponding saliences. The first contrast most clearly refers to the 'integration-demarcation' cleavage, whereas the second one most clearly addresses Kitschelt's distinction between libertarians and authoritarians. The two weighted contrasts correlate moderately with each other ($r=.42$; $n=52$). Dividing each contrast into two categories (cutting each at its mid-point, 0) and combining the two, we arrive at a four-fold typology ranging from libertarian/open to authoritarian/closed positions. It turns out that libertarian parties are generally also rather open, i.e., one of the two mixed types is quite rare. The other one is more frequent: although many authoritarian parties tend to take rather more closed positions, some of them do not.

Table 5 presents the distribution of the party families on these combinations for the 1970s and the 1990s/2000s. For this summary presentation, we only distinguish between the three relevant combinations and the party families have been reduced to only three groups, too – the left (including the radical liberals), the moderate right (including Christian-Democrats and liberal conservatives), and the new populist right. As we can see from this table, the left is typically libertarian and open, while the new populist right tends to be both authoritarian and closed. It is the mainstream parties of the moderate right, for whom the two cultural contrasts do not necessarily coincide. The mixed category is actually the most frequent one for the moderate right, who is open, but still rather authoritarian in terms of Kitschelt's contrast. The table also indicates that the alignment of the two cultural contrasts has decreased: by the 1990s/2000s, some parties on the left have become more authoritarian, while remaining (or becoming more) open. In addition to the British Labour party and the Austrian social-democrats, three of these parties, who have become more authoritarian, are from the Netherlands (the Dutch Social-democrats, Groen Links and the radical left). On the other

hand, there is one new populist right party which does not quite fit the fold of a combination of authoritarianism with closure – the Dutch LPF. It constitutes an exception among the parties of the new populist right, since its leader did not insist on the incompatibility of cultures and ethnicities, as the authoritarian parties of this family usually do, but attacked Islam in the name of the universalist principles of modernity (Kriesi and Frey 2007)

Table 5. Party family and period: percentages

Type and period	Party family			Total
	Left	Moderate right	New populist right	
1970s				
Libertarian-open ¹	88.9	42.9		57.9
Authoritarian-open	11.1	42.9		21.1
Authoritarian-closed		14.3	100.0	21.1
All	100%	100%	100%	100%
1990s/2000s				
Libertarian-open ¹⁾	70.6	33.3		45.5
Authoritarian-open	23.5	44.4	14.3	27.3
Authoritarian-closed	5.9	22.2	85.7	27.3
All	100%	100%	100%	100%

¹⁾ Including a few libertarian-closed exceptions

If we focus on the contrast between the left and the new populist right, as Kitschelt has done, we tend to overlook the emerging new ‘integration-demarcation’ cleavage, since the positions of these two types of parties on the new cleavage are closely aligned with their respective positions on the libertarian-authoritarian cleavage identified by Kitschelt. If we take into account the moderate parties of the established right as well, and if we also consider the more recent transformations in the party systems of multicultural countries in particular, we become aware of a differentiation with respect to the cultural issue categories, which is – in our view – a consequence of a new dynamic in Western European politics. This new dynamic is at the heart of the emerging differentiation among right-wing parties.

Conclusion

We have compared the transformation of the configurations of parties in six countries, as well as the determinants of the issue positions and issue salience of these parties. We started from the assumption that the current process of globalization or denationalization leads to the formation of a new structural conflict in Western European countries, opposing those who benefit from this process to those who tend to lose in the course of the events. We analyzed

here the consequences of the articulation of this new conflict on the positions of parties and on the configuration of party systems.

We have shown that the main axis of competition has shifted since the 1970s, from an economic opposition, to one based increasingly on cultural issues. This is the consequence of changes in the position of the main party families. On the left, the main moderate parties have generally moved towards the center of the economic opposition. On the right, there is an opposition on cultural matters between Liberal parties, on the one hand, and the populist right and conservative parties, on the other. The latter group of parties takes a distinct position in favor of ‘demarcation’, supporting tougher immigration policies and opposing the process of European integration.

By analyzing the positions of parties on specific issue categories, we have also shown that the contrast between the moderate right and populist right is not the same for all cultural issues. By the 1990s/2000s, both the cultural issues most associated with Kitschelt’s libertarian-authoritarian cleavage and those most associated with our ‘integration-demarcation’ cleavage clearly oppose the left and the new populist right. The two types of issues differ, however, with regard to the positioning of the moderate right, which often remains authoritarian, but sides with the left on the ‘integration-demarcation’ cleavage. With respect to the economic dimension, the new populist right is clearly siding with the moderate right, confirming Kitschelt’s original idea of the “winning formula”.

Finally, we have found the general theme to vary from one country to the other, depending not only on the strategies of the established parties, but also on cultural context characteristics. The relevance of the latter varies from one issue to the next, which makes it difficult to generalize. Thus, European integration is especially salient for the electoral mobilization of the new cleavage in countries characterized by great anxieties about their national sovereignty (Switzerland and the UK); immigration becomes especially relevant for electoral mobilization in monist countries (Austria, Germany, France and Switzerland); cultural liberalism was especially relevant in countries with very strong new social movements and a left no longer preoccupied with the renewal of class conflicts (Germany and Switzerland), and law and order has become much more relevant for the electoral mobilization in multicultural countries, where the parties have lost much of their cultural tolerance by the 1990s/2000s.

Appendix

The measure of the dissimilarity between two parties used for the MDS analyses is based on a weighted Euclidian distance in a multidimensional issue space. We know the position of each party on up to twelve issue categories. We can thus locate parties in this issue space and compute the Euclidian distance between pairs of parties. In this framework, a simple Euclidian distance between parties a and b in an k -dimensional space is defined as

$$d_{a,b} = \sqrt{\sum_{k=1}^K (x_{ak} - x_{bk})^2},$$

where x_{ak} and x_{bk} are the positions of parties a and b , respectively, on dimension k . In our case, however, we need to depart from a simple Euclidian distance for two reasons. First, we want to account for the fact that parties do not give the same importance to all issue categories or issue dimensions. Second, the number of issue categories for which we can compute a distance varies across pairs of parties. As far as the first problem is concerned, we rely on a weighted Euclidian distance, giving each issue category an importance which is proportional to its salience. The salience of an issue category can be computed for each party as the number of issue statements pertaining to this issue category, as a proportion of its total number of issue statements. For a pair of party, the weighting factor used is the average of the two salience measures of the corresponding parties. The second problem implies that the dimensionality of the issue space in which a distance between two parties is computed can vary across pairs of parties. As the range of possible distances depends on the number of dimensions, this makes it difficult to compare such Euclidian distances. To address this problem, we express the weighted Euclidian distances as a proportion of the maximal possible distance in the corresponding k -dimensional space.

Accounting for these two problems, we use the following measure of dissimilarity for a given pair of parties:

$$d_{a,b} = \frac{1}{2\sqrt{2}} \cdot \sqrt{\sum_{k=1}^K \omega_k (X_{ak} - X_{bk})^2},$$

where X_{ak} and X_{bk} are the positions of parties a and b , respectively, on the k^{th} issue category, and where ω_k is a weighting factor, defined as

$$\omega_k = \frac{n_{ak}}{\sum_{k=1}^K n_{ak}} + \frac{n_{bk}}{\sum_{k=1}^K n_{bk}},$$

with n_{ak} and n_{bk} being equal to the number of issue positions of parties a and b , respectively, on the k^{th} issue category.⁶ This measure of dissimilarity can vary between 0 (identical position on all issues) and 1 (i.e., 100% of the maximum possible distance in the corresponding issue space).

⁶ To avoid relying on average issue positions that are computed on a very small number of observations, we included only issues for which n_{ak} and n_{bk} are both greater than 4.

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