

# **Dealignment Meets Cleavage Theory**

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The issues of immigration and European integration raise fundamental questions about the social structure of politics. These issues are part of a deep divide about the meaning and implications of national community that has gained huge salience in western societies. Many use the term *tribal* to describe the divide. To what extent is political conflict over transnationalism a social as well as a cultural phenomenon?

The answer to this question bears directly on our understanding of party competition. Is the new dimension of conflict more than just a dimension on which individuals and political parties have preferences? Is the conflict evidence of dealignment, of diminishing association between party competition and social structure? Or is this a new cleavage that involves conflict among socially distinctive groups?

Our analysis is in three steps. The next section discusses alternative ways of coming to grips with the decline of the classic cleavage model. The following sections set out expectations for why and when political parties have socially distinct constituencies. We then measure and explain the extent to which contemporary European political parties are structured by higher education, occupation, rural/urban location, religion, and gender. We find that cross-sectional and generational variation in the social structure of political parties and party families is in line with neo-cleavage theory.

## **Dealignment or a new divide?**

The point of departure for contemporary theorizing of party competition is the decline of the historical cleavages famously described by Lipset and Rokkan in their 1967 paper (Dalton 2014: 155-82; Dalton, Flanagan, Beck 1984; Franklin et al. 1992; Knutsen 2004, 2006; van der Brug 2010). The decline appears to be over-determined. The closed social milieus that bonded voters to parties no longer exist. The decline of religion, the diversification of working life, and greater occupational and spatial mobility have weakened the social ties that bind individuals to traditional social strata. Individuals lead lives that are only tenuously encased by durable and homogenous social groupings. Trade unions have declined. Fewer people go to church. Economic transformation has muddied the class divide. The proportion of the workforce in blue-collar manual jobs has fallen with the rise of service and professional employment. The intensity of the religious and class cleavage has been softened as mainstream parties have moderated positions. Socialist parties no longer wish to abolish wage labor. Religious parties accept that the state is secular. Social change points in the same direction. Mass education has increased political sophistication and this arguably loosens the effect of social background while enhancing individual choice. Voters have gained cognitive capacity to make their own choices, to act on their political preferences as individuals, rather than members of a group. Education, in short, releases a person from the chains of inherited social structure. Because these trends are temporal, their effect increases with each new generation of voters (van der Brug 2010; Walzcak, van der Brug, de Vries 2012).

There are two ways of making sense of this. One is to conceive the decline of traditional cleavages as part of an ongoing process of dealignment in which political choice becomes short

term, oriented to particular issues and personalities that have little to do with a person's sense of self. Political preferences become a matter of individual choice. Political parties compete to attract voters by strategically framing manifestos, making populist appeals, and having appealing candidates. In short, dealignment produces destructure in which political parties are no longer tethered to particular social groups, but fish for voters in a viscous political environment.

Alternatively, a broad stream of literature argues that the weakening of traditional cleavages does not presage dealignment, but is a phase in the re-articulation of political conflict (Inglehart 1977; Kriesi 1998; Kriesi et al. 2006; Bornschier 2010; Hooghe and Marks 2017). This literature proposes that new issues have come on the agenda that are oriented around values. It claims that cultural issues—post materialism, values of individual choice, immigration—have produced a dimension of political conflict that is only loosely associated with traditional left-right competition. Lipset and Rokkan hint at this when they write that “The welfare state, the spread of the ‘car and TV’ culture, the educational explosion – all these developments have placed the governing authorities under increasing strains and made it very difficult for the old working-class parties to retain the loyalties of the younger generation” (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 55). Later, Lipset emphasized the divide within the traditional left, and in much cited work, Inglehart (1971: 991; also 1977) diagnosed a “transformation ... in the political cultures of advanced industrial societies, [which] seems to be altering the basic value priorities of given generations, as a result of changing conditions influencing their basic socialization.” In his work on green parties and social democracy, Kitschelt (1988, 1994) relates these patterns of value change to transformations in the party political landscape. In his Stein Rokkan lecture, Kriesi (1998: 180) highlights “the emergence of yet another new cleavage – the cleavage opposing the new middle class winners of the transformation of Western European societies to the group of losers of the very same process.” Inglehart and Norris (2016: 4) observe that “the silent revolution launched in the 1970s seems to have spawned a resentful counter-revolutionary backlash today.”

Whether to call this new divide a cleavage is a matter of debate. To say that a divide is cultural does not settle whether it has a basis in social structure. Values and social structure can be complementary explanations for political conflict. Cleavage theory theorizes an intimate connection between values and social structure. It conceives value conflict as structured by social divides that have a lasting impact on the formation of social movements and political parties (Bartolini and Mair 1990). These divides arise from large-scale processes that shape the lives and the livelihoods of those in a society. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) identify three: the building of national states across Europe from the sixteenth century, the emergence of Protestantism in northern Europe from the seventeenth century, and the industrial revolution from the nineteenth century. Each of these produced a distinctive divide with remarkable durability, which so impressed the originators of cleavage theory that they used the unfortunate term “freezing” to describe their impact.

Old divides may lose the power to shape human relations as the socializing effect of prior institutions attenuates from generation to generation. As prior divides exhaust their shaping force, there is the ever-present possibility that a new cleavage arises to overlay the old.

The organizations that reinforced the religious and class cleavage have declined, but there is reason to suspect that political parties competing on the new cultural divide have distinct constituencies with recognizable social characteristics. We sketch the processes that produced the new divide below, and use this as a point of departure for refining and testing cleavage theory.

## A transnational cleavage

At the core of the contemporary cultural divide is a sharp and prolonged rise in transnationalism with profound social and economic consequences. Transnationalism advanced in a series of reforms following the Reagan-Thatcher regimes that opened up western societies to greatly increased levels of immigration and trade. In the process, and particularly in Europe, the architecture of political life was transformed. The Maastricht Treaty, reconceiving the bulk of Europe as a political union with common citizenship and a single currency, was negotiated from 1990 and signed in 1993. The North American Free Trade Agreement was signed in 1992. The World Trade Organization came into existence in 1994. Ten Eastern European countries began negotiations to join the EU in the early 1990s. From this time to 2008, major indices of transnationalism, include foreign investment, trade, and immigration have grown at rates greatly in excess of their domestic corollaries. The result has been a rapid increase in international economic exchange over the past three decades, vastly increased immigration resulting in intermixing of culturally distinct peoples, and a decline of national sovereignty, most stark in Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Transnationalism has become politically combustible because immigration, trade, and international organization are *political* choices that profoundly affect the lives of both those who enjoy the benefits of openness, and those who suffer it. Immigration is a lightning rod. The intermixing of peoples with contrasting beliefs, norms, and behavior has the potential for intense conflict. To this one may add the economic consequences of the transnational cleavage. Immigration, European integration, and trade tend to benefit those with access to human and financial capital, while those who lack capital experience greater competition for jobs and housing.

Whereas occupation underpinned the class struggle, education appears to be the key to the transnational cleavage. This is so for two reasons. First, higher levels of education are associated with attitudes sympathetic to transnationalism, including tolerance for ethno-cultural diversity and European integration (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010; Hakhverdian et al. 2013; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007). Second, education is a path to economic security in a transnational world for the vast majority who do not have the luxury of rich parents. It is worth

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<sup>1</sup> Our analysis builds on a growing literature that investigates the politicization of trade, immigration, and international organization. See e.g. Burgoon 2009; Caporaso and Tarrow 2009; Conceição-Heldt 2013; Ecker-Ehrhardt 2014; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2006; Higgott 2000; Hooghe and Marks 2009; Hutter et al. 2016; Kay 2015; Kaldor 2000; Mansfield and Mutz 2012; Morgenstern et al. 2007; Rathbun 2012; Rixen and Zangl 2013; Teney, Laceywell, de Wilde 2013; Zürn et al. 2012.

noting that education appears to be influential not for what it does, but for what it signifies. Panel studies find that experiencing education has little effect on a young person's political affinities over time (Kuhn, Lancee, and Sarrasin 2017; Lancee and Sarrasin 2015). Rather, education is a marker. It tells us about a person's station in life, about the benefits that can be conveyed by one's parents, and about how a person was raised—in short, it tells us something important about a person's social and material background.

A political party competing on the cultural or GALTAN<sup>2</sup> cleavage can be also expected to be occupationally distinctive (Häusermann and Kriesi 2015). Professionals—e.g. managers, teachers, nurses, doctors, social workers—exercise discretion at work and are engaged in face to face relations with diverse others in which social skills are important. Such people tend to have GAL values, whereas manual workers, low-grade service workers, and those whose work is chiefly technical tend to be less GAL and more TAN. This is reinforced by an economic logic. Manual workers, in contrast to professional workers, are precariously placed in the international division of labor when they produce traded goods in competition with former peasants from third world countries. For those who have financial or social capital, immigration from neighboring counties is a source of cheap labor. For those who sell their labor, it increases competition. For these reasons, the effect of the transnational cleavage cuts across the class divide, producing radical TAN parties that challenge socialist parties for the allegiance of workers. Lipset once noted that a signal attribute of socialist parties was to turn those towards the bottom of society in an internationalist cosmopolitan direction. Political parties have arisen on the new divide that do just the opposite.

These are the chief ways in which social background lies behind the cultural divide. Education and occupation are not merely choices that a person makes. They are increasingly related to inherited factors, and they shape a person's life, who she works with, who her friends are, and in an increasing number of cases, who she marries. While it is true that the incidence of organizational membership has declined, social networks of friends, family or co-workers may have a similar effect in reinforcing political preferences (Fitzgerald 2011; Kuhn 2009; Zuckerman, Dasovic, and Fitzgerald 2007).

In addition, one might expect political parties on the transnational cleavage to be distinguished by location, gender, and age. Cities have always been known for trade, the flow of ideas, and cultural openness. A nine-country comparative study concludes that "Identical social groups living in metropolitan places with distinct interests and lifestyles behave in starkly different ways" (Sellers et al. 2013: 419; 448-9). Radical TAN parties do exceptionally well in small towns and suburbs that are ethnically less diverse and economically peripheral, while green parties do best in cities.

Recent literature observes that public opinion is sharply divided on immigration, European integration, and transnationalism (de Vries 2017; van Elsas et al. 2016; Hooghe and Marks 2009; Inglehart and Norris 2016; Rooduijn, Burgoon, van Elsas, van de Werfhorst 2017).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> GAL (green, alternative, libertarian) vs. TAN (traditional, authority, national).

<sup>3</sup> For a recent overview of research examining attitudes on immigration or immigrants and European integration, see Kentmen-Cin and Erisen (2017).

There are signs that the division is producing political parties with distinctive constituencies (Aichholzer, Kritzinger, Wagner, Zeglovits 2014; Bornschieer 2010; Hobolt and Tilley 2016; Häusermann and Kriesi 2015; Lubbers and Coenders 2017; Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2016). Radical TAN parties mobilize stark opposition to immigration and European integration and drive one side of this divide. On the other side, green parties take the most pronounced transnationalist positions.

## **From classic cleavage theory to neo-cleavage theory**

Let us recapitulate the argument by summarizing the key claims of cleavage, de-alignment, and neo-cleavage theory:

### Classic cleavage theory

- Political parties express durable political conflicts that arise in the course of socio-economic change.
- Political parties have socially distinctive constituencies.
- Voters are rooted in durable, organizationally coherent, social cleavages.
- Cleavages were set for each national citizenry before or just after the final extension of the suffrage.
- Cleavages are frozen.

### De-alignment theory

- Cleavages have declined in incidence and causal power.
- Education enables individual choice.
- Younger voters tend to be less partisan.
- Transitory issues, rather than durable programmatic commitments, come to the fore in party competition and individual choice.
- Political parties lose structural distinctiveness.

### Neo-cleavage theory

- Classic cleavages have declined, but the generation of cleavages in a society never ends.
- A cultural cleavage has emerged around national community and resistance to transnationalism.
- Political parties on this cleavage have socially distinctive constituencies.

- Education discriminates powerfully between supporters and opponents of transnationalism.
- Dealignment has taken place among mainstream parties, but not among parties on the new cleavage.

The model we have in mind is not one of realignment in which new conflicts replace old ones. It is, instead, akin to a geological process in which cleavages are formed in succession and overlay each other so that the resulting structure of conflict reflects both emerging and eroding tensions.<sup>4</sup> So neo-cleavage theory builds on classic cleavage theory but relaxes the assumption that cleavages are frozen. Instead, we expect deconstruction and restructuring to coexist. This produces a diversified party landscape in which parties with socially distinctive electorates compete with socially generic parties.

Neo-cleavage theory differs from dealignment on three basic questions: 1) Are political parties competing on the transnational cleavage more or less socially distinctive than those competing on left/right? 2) To what extent does education sort voters on the transnational cleavage? 3) How does this play out over time with younger generations of voters?

## Data and Measurement

To answer these questions, we pair individual-level data from the European Social Survey (ESS) (seven rounds, every two years between 2002 and 2014) with estimates on party positioning from the Chapel Expert Survey on party positioning (four waves: 2002, 2006, 2010, and 2014). We select those individuals who say that they “voted in the last national election” for a political party provided that the party has at least 25 voters in one ESS round or a total of 75 across all ESS rounds.<sup>5</sup> This produces a dataset with 146,855 respondents who have voted for 161 parties in 23 European countries.<sup>6</sup> We aggregate individual-level information on vote and social characteristics to the party family or, for the multivariate analysis, to the individual party.

The dependent variables are five structural characteristics hypothesized to predispose an individual to embrace transnationalism: higher education, professional occupation, urban location, secular, and female. *Higher education* encompasses individuals with post-secondary or

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<sup>4</sup> To pursue the metaphor, one might add the possibility that the erosion of a more recent deposit may uncover prior layers, just as the erosion of left-right conflict in Britain has brought to the surface prior conflict about national autonomy for Scotland. Similarly, the national-transnational conflict that is taking shape across Western societies seems to revive a much older center-periphery cleavage, and, in the United States and in some parts of Europe, conflict about the role of religious values in public life.

<sup>5</sup> We impose a minimum number of respondents to reduce the odds on drawing a biased sample of voters. The same concern for reducing sampling bias motivates us to pool party respondents across ESS rounds. The time span in the ESS—just twelve years—is too short to pick up meaningful shifts in the social composition of parties’ voters.

<sup>6</sup> See appendix for a breakdown of individuals and parties by party family, country, and region. We restrict the sample to voters who were at the time of the survey at least 21 years to avoid the confounding effect of people with incomplete education.

tertiary education. *Professional*, derived from Oesch’s ISCO categorization, consists of managers and socio-cultural professionals. *Urban* describes people in cities or suburban communities. *Secular* refers to those who never attend religious services or only on special occasions.

We operationalize party ideology in two ways. Party family—radical TAN, conservative, liberal, Christian democratic, social democratic, radical left, and green—is a standard classification to “summarize the accumulated historical experience of cleavages” (Marks and Wilson 1999: 439). Our baseline is the categorization in the CHES dataset (Polk et al. 2017; Bakker et al. 2015; Hooghe and Marks 2017), which is highly correlated with ParlGov’s classification (Döring and Manow 2016) and consistent with extant categorizations (Akkerman, de Lange, Rooduijn 2016; March 2011; Mudde 2007; Rooduijn and Burgoon 2017). We then can compare the distinctiveness of voters across party families and contrast twenty-one binary party family pairs.

Second, we estimate parties’ ideological positions in a two-dimensional political space, consisting of a left-right dimension tapping the role of the state and equality versus economic freedom, and a cultural GALTAN dimension, using the Chapel Hill expert survey (Kriesi et al. 2006; Hooghe et al. 2002; Marks et al. 2006). CHES data are available for four time points between 2002 and 2014. Where necessary, we interpolate party position scores for an ESS round from the prior Chapel Hill survey.<sup>7</sup>

We control for party size on the intuition that smaller parties may find it easier to sustain a distinctive social base. *Vote share* is a party’s average vote share in the national election of the survey year or the nearest prior year. We include country-fixed effects to account for the fact that respondents and parties are nested within countries. Each analysis is conducted for each European subregion (Northwest, South, East) as well as for the combined 23 countries; for younger and older generations; and for the subset of parties with 5-15 percent of the vote as well as for the whole range of parties.

## Results

We begin by comparing party families. We expect social characteristics to be much more powerful in differentiating political parties on the transnational cleavage than on the class cleavage. And we expect social structuration on the transnational cleavage to increase over time as that on the left-right declines.

Table 1 reports the overrepresentation or underrepresentation of a social group by party family.<sup>8</sup> The first column does this for the 32.57 percent of the ESS sample of respondents who have completed postsecondary or tertiary education. Each row shows the percentage difference in highly educated people relative to the mean for the sample. Hence, higher

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<sup>7</sup> CHES has only estimates for Norwegian and Swiss political parties in 2014, which we interpolate back for prior ESS rounds.

<sup>8</sup> Results are robust when we use more narrowly focused categorizations for education (tertiary educated vs. all others) or occupation (socio-cultural professionals vs. others; production workers vs. others). However, we prefer our more encompassing categories because they divide the population into more equivalently sized groups.

educated voters are 20.87 percent overrepresented in green political parties. In absolute terms, more than half (53.44 percent) of their voters are highly educated. The probability that this distribution would arise randomly is greater than one in one hundred million. This contrasts with an underrepresentation of 12.63 percent for radical TAN parties. On average, less than one in five (19.94 percent) of radical TAN voters are highly educated. The educational gap between green and radical TAN voters is 33.50 percent (the absolute difference between 20.87 and -12.63). Education produces the largest difference among all social characteristics, yet among all other party families, the largest educational gap is 15.44, between the liberals and social democrats.

[Table 1 about here]

These data are consistent with neo-cleavage theory. First, political parties that anchor the GALTAN dimension – green and radical TAN parties – are at the extremes in sorting highly educated persons, professionals and managers, and females. The social distinctiveness of party families on the left-right cleavage is much weaker. The major party families on the left-right—social democrats, Christian democrats, liberals, conservatives—are much alike on education, occupation, urbanization, and gender. This similarity extends even to the radical left. These party families reflect the social structure of the overall electorate, and deviations from the overall mean are less than seven percentage points. Hence, the old cleavage structure built on class and occupation is now only dimly evident in the party families that motivate Lipset and Rokkan’s analysis. Remarkably, green and radical TAN parties are more occupationally distinctive than parties that compete on the class cleavage. The gap between green (12.41) and radical TAN (-9.12) parties in professionals and managers is 21.53 percent, compared to 8.8 percent between the next two most dissimilar parties, liberals (6.10) and social democrats (-2.70). Conversely, Radical TAN parties have a significantly greater over-representation among the traditional core constituency of left political parties. Production and service workers are overrepresented by 9.9 percent in radical TAN parties, compared to 7.0 percent for social democratic parties and 5.7 percent for radical left parties.

This analysis shows that religion still has considerable bite in differentiating party families. Those who do not attend church on a monthly basis are 19.62 percent underrepresented in Christian democratic parties. At the other extreme, secular voters are strongly overrepresented in green parties (14.35 percent) and radical left parties (12.57 percent). In a predominantly secular Europe, religiosity remains a strong marker for partisan choice (van de Brug, Hobolt, de Vreese 2009; Rovny and Polk 2017).

It is worth stressing that the sharp contrast between green and radical TAN parties goes hand in hand with relatively moderate stances on classic left-right issues. Radical TAN parties tend to blur their positions on the left/right (Rovny 2012, 2013) and most have moved away from rightist positions towards a diffuse center.<sup>9</sup> Greens and radical TAN parties conceive their mission in relation to the transnational cleavage, taking polar positions on immigration and Europe. This is what sorts their voters in socio-structural camps. These findings are robust

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<sup>9</sup> This is why we prefer to describe these parties as *radical TAN* rather than radical right.

across subregions (northwest, south, and east), across older and younger electorates, and controlling for party size.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 1 visualizes the difference between every paired combination of party families for all five social characteristics. Black lines represent a difference of at least 30 percent, red lines a difference between 20 and 30 percent, yellow lines a difference between 10 and 20 percent, and green lines a difference of less than 10 percent. In every case, the sharpest contrast between party family dyads involves green or radical TAN parties, and in three cases—education, occupation, and gender—it is precisely the green & radical TAN dyad that exhibits the greatest gap. So while it is valid to say that a cultural or value divide has emerged alongside the conventional left-right cleavage, this does not imply a decline in the role of social structure in differentiating political parties. Education most sharply distinguishes green and radical TAN voters, and while class location is almost imperceptible in differentiating parties on the class cleavage, the gap is wide and significant across green and radical TAN parties.

[Figure 1 about here]

How has this changed over time? To what extent has the social structuration of political parties increased or decreased from generation to generation? We do not have panel data to test this, but we can compare generations of voters in the ESS dataset. We split the sample into three roughly equally sized groups of voters: those born before 1950, those born between 1950 and 1970, and post-1970ers in order to compare the distinctiveness of each group for each social characteristic in each party family. Figure 2 aggregates these comparisons for parties that compete on GALTAN (green and radical right) and for parties that compete on left-right (conservative, Christian democrat, liberal, social democrat, and radical left).<sup>11</sup> The social distinctiveness of party families for the pre-1950 generation of voters is indicated by the light blue bar in each frame, and that for the post-1970 generation is dark blue. Each bar averages the extent (in percent) to which voters deviate from the population mean. So the higher the bar, the more a generation of voters sorts itself on a social characteristic into different parties.

[Figure 2 about here]

Neo-cleavage theory shares with dealignment theory the expectation that social distinctiveness has declined for left-right political parties. We see mixed evidence for this. For left-right parties, the post-1970 generation of voters is less sharply sorted than the pre-1950 generation on higher education, gender, and religion, but more sharply sorted on occupation and rural-urban location. However, in all but religion, the difference across generations is two percent or less. So we see quite stable rates of social sorting for left-right parties across generations, with the exception of religion in which there has been a marked decline from the pre-1950 generation to the post-1970 generation.

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<sup>10</sup> Analyses available from the authors.

<sup>11</sup> In a separate analysis, we compare green and radical TAN parties to all other pairs with substantively similar results.

Other key expectations are more clearly confirmed. One is that social differentiation is considerably greater among parties competing on GALTAN than among those competing on left-right. This is the case for education, occupation, rural-urban location, and gender. Left-right parties are more differentiated on religion than GALTAN parties, though the difference is much greater for pre-1950 voters than for post-1970 voters.

Finally, and most decisively, neo-cleavage and dealignment theory have diametrically opposing expectations for generational change in the social distinctiveness of GALTAN parties. Dealignment theory expects the social distinctiveness of political parties to decline with successive generations, whereas neo-cleavage theory expects that a new cleavage will retain, or even increase, its distinctiveness. We find that social distinctiveness on the GALTAN divide is sharper for the post-1970 generation than for the pre-1950 generation of voters on education, occupation, rural-urban location, and gender. Religion is more differentiating for older voters, though the generation gap is just one percent on GALTAN. Overall, these comparisons are in line with neo-cleavage theory and fit poorly with dealignment theory. The social distinctiveness of party families is much greater on the GALTAN side than on left-right, and while, in general, left-right distinctiveness has diminished across generations of voters, that on the GALTAN side has increased.

Comparison at the level of party family provides a consistent pattern of evidence that the new cleavage evokes social structure as well as values. Next, we disaggregate the analysis to examine individual political parties. Each of 161 political parties is in the dataset with its percentage of highly educated, socio-professional or managerial, urban, female, and secular voters. The dependent variable is party structuration, which is a factor of these five characteristics obtained through principal components analysis. The factor, *party structuration*, has an eigenvalue of 2.24 and explains 44.7 percent of the variance. Higher values reflect social characteristics associated with transnationalism.<sup>12</sup>

We can now estimate the effect of the positioning of a political party on GAL vs. TAN and left vs. right for its social structuration with the expectation that GALTAN has a much greater effect than left-right. All model specifications include a variable tapping the percentage vote of a political party on the ground that smaller parties may be more structured.

The first model in Table 2 specifies a dichotomous variable for each party family and reveals the power of party family in accounting for variation in structuration at the individual party level. Radical TAN parties are the reference category, and all other party families have a more transnational social profile, that is, their electorate tends to be more educated, urban, professional, female, and secular than that of a typical radical TAN party. Green parties as a family are most strongly different from radical TAN parties, and Christian democrats are the least different.<sup>13</sup> This model explains around two-thirds of the variance in party structuration.

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<sup>12</sup> A multivariate analysis on the individual components produces consistent results (Appendix 1), as does an analysis whereby the dependent variables are centered around the country mean (Appendix 2).

<sup>13</sup> Research on religiosity in Catholic countries suggests that it nurtures distance from radical TAN voting but proximity to radical TAN policies on immigration and multiculturalism (Immerzeel, Jaspers, and Lubbers 2013; Minkenberg 2017).

[Table 2 about here]

We expect party ideology to explain a party's structural distinctiveness, and this is what the remaining models in Table 2 show. We use estimates from the Chapel Hill expert survey to gauge the GALTAN and left-right positioning of each political party, and this produces parsimonious and powerful models. Across each of these models, the social structure of a party is strongly predicted by its GALTAN position. In Model 2 and Model 5c, the left-right position of a party has a significant effect, but not as strong as GALTAN position. This is what one would expect if the traditional class divide lost structural power and a new cultural divide centered on transnationalism sorts political parties and voters on social characteristics. When we consider party social structure for the entire electorate, the model explains around 74 percent of the variance.

The substantive effect of GALTAN is large. Two political parties that differ by one standard deviation in their GALTAN position (i.e. 2.5 points on the 11-point GALTAN scale) will differ 24 percentage points in their proportions of highly educated voters or 19 percentage point in their proportions of professionals, keeping all other social characteristics at their mean.

If transnationalism is driving structuration, a party stance's on immigration and European integration should have a strong effect on a party's social structure. Model 3 replaces variables tapping GALTAN and left-right position with party stances on immigration and European integration as estimated by Chapel Hill experts. The model is strongly predictive of the social character of the party. Political parties that are less restrictive on immigration and more supportive of European integration tend to have a distinctly more transnationally structured electorate.

The effect of party size on social structure is not robust across specifications, which gives us confidence that the results are not driven by the smaller size of green and radical TAN parties relative to many mainstream parties. Model 4, which limits the sample of parties to those with a vote share greater than 5 percent and less than 15 percent, allows a direct test of the party size effect. Eighty-nine parties are in this band of vote share, and their structuration is powerfully explained by their GALTAN position. Interestingly, left-right position is insignificant for this subsample. Models for political parties in the Northwest of Europe, the South, and East (models 5a, 5b, 5c) suggest that these patterns are consistent across Europe.

Figure 3 illustrates how GALTAN and social structuring go hand in hand. The colors signify the party family to which each party belongs and reveal that party families are rather coherent with respect to their structuration. Radical TAN and green parties are bunched at opposite ends of the regression line. Liberal parties, as in other respects, are the most diverse party family, with the other party families falling in-between.

[Figure 3 about here]

## Conclusion

The evidence presented in this paper throws into doubt both Lipset and Rokkan's frozen landscape thesis and its chief counter-claim, that individual party preferences are increasingly

unstructured. We find plenty of support for the contention that the conventional left-right divide has narrowed; that class location and education only weakly distinguish mainstream left versus right parties; and that these phenomena are particularly marked among younger generations of voters. However, we also find that voters for political parties on the transnational divide—green and radical TAN parties—are distinguished by their level of education, their occupation, where they live, and whether they are female or male. These differences do not appear to be diminishing over time. They are more pronounced among younger generations of voters than older generations.

Consequently, we are drawn to reassess the idea that socially structured political cleavages are a thing of the past. Among the implications of neo-cleavage theory are that the dynamism in party systems arises from exogenous social change; that the party-political response comes chiefly in the form of new political parties that rise on a new cleavage; that processes of alignment and dealignment coexist as new divides become solidified among voters while old divides lose causal power; and that the decline of social structure among parties on a prior cleavage can go hand in hand with considerable social structuration on a new cleavage.

The rise of a transnational cleavage suggests that, far from being frozen, party systems are subject to exogenous shocks that can produce durable divides. As Lipset and Rokkan stressed, cleavages overlay and interact with each other – and so prior cleavages constitute a prism that affects the incidence of a more recent cleavage. The chief intermediary institutions of Lipset and Rokkan’s era—churches and unions—have lost much of their socializing force, but this does not mean that voters behave as asocial individuals. Research on social networks—family, friends, neighborhood, and work, alongside the digital sources of information in which people self-select—is vital in probing how sociality shapes political preferences and behavior.

A core premise that neo-cleavage theory shares with classical cleavage theory is that change comes in response to rare, and major, exogenous shocks with the power to produce shifts in voter preferences. The shocks that have been observed so far are the rise of the national state which produced a center-periphery cleavage; the rise of Protestantism which produced a religious cleavage; the industrial revolution which produced an urban-rural and a class cleavage; and, we argue, the perforation of national states producing a transnational cleavage. The first cleavage arose with the breakdown of a supranational order and the establishment of strong territorial bureaucracies imposing national religions and languages. The last cleavage has, as its core, a conflict over the role of the national state and national community in an era of transnationalism.

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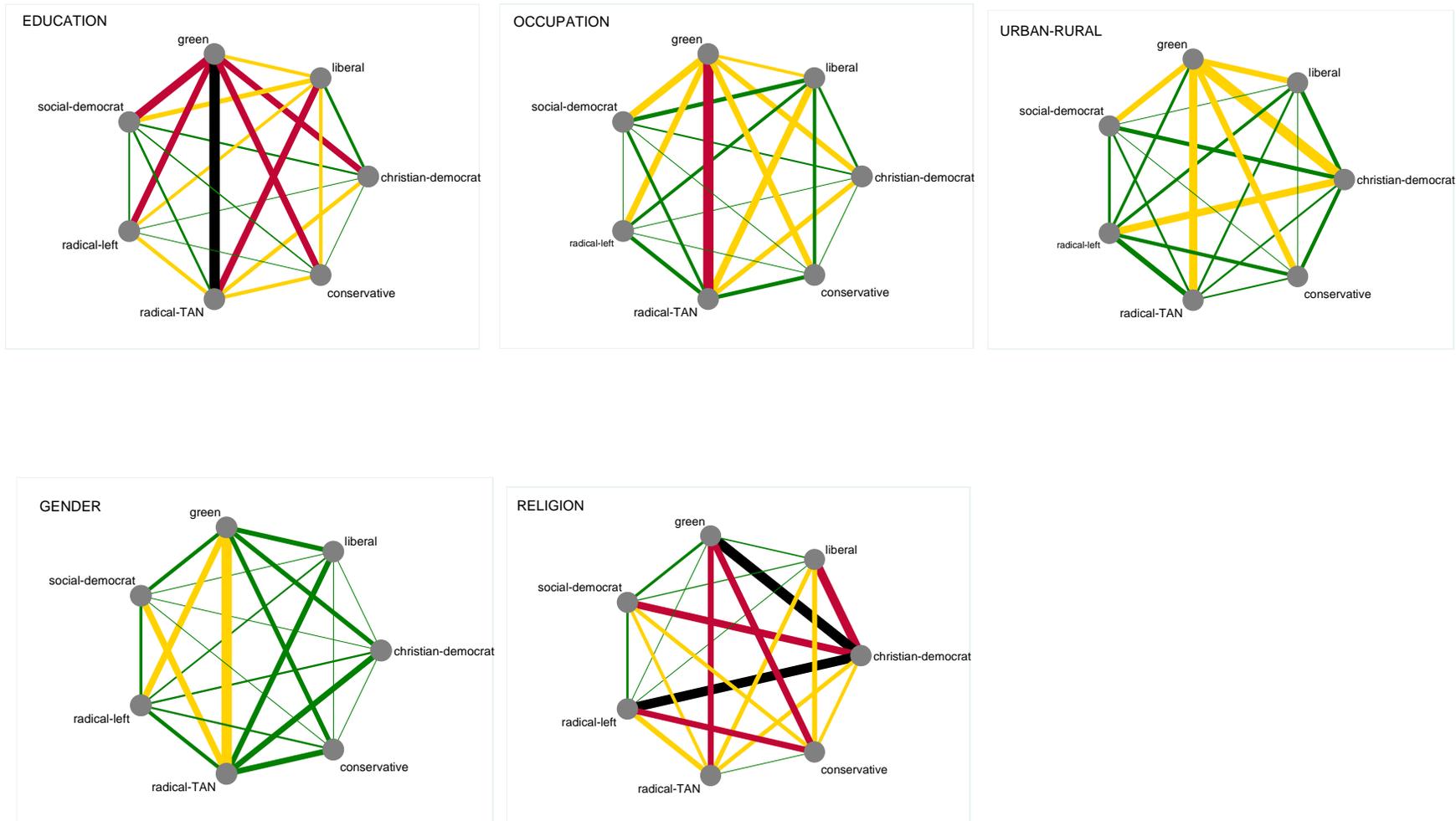
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**Table 1: Socio-structural biases by party family (all countries)**

	<b>Education</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Urban-rural</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Religion</b>
	<i>Higher</i>	<i>Socio-professional or manager</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Secular</i>
<b>Greens</b>	+20.87	+12.41	+11.24	+6.96	+14.35
<b>Liberals</b>	+9.85	+6.10	+0.65	-0.35	+9.37
<b>Radical left</b>	-0.35	-0.66	+6.00	-3.14	+12.57
<b>Social democrats</b>	-5.59	-2.70	+0.72	+1.06	+5.35
<b>Christian democrats</b>	+0.79	+0.82	-6.93	0.00	-19.62
<b>Conservatives</b>	-0.96	-0.98	-0.37	-0.15	-7.85
<b>Radical Tan</b>	-12.63	-9.12	-3.31	-8.90	-5.84
<b>Overall electorate</b>	32.57%	26.29%	32.32%	53.05%	73.03%

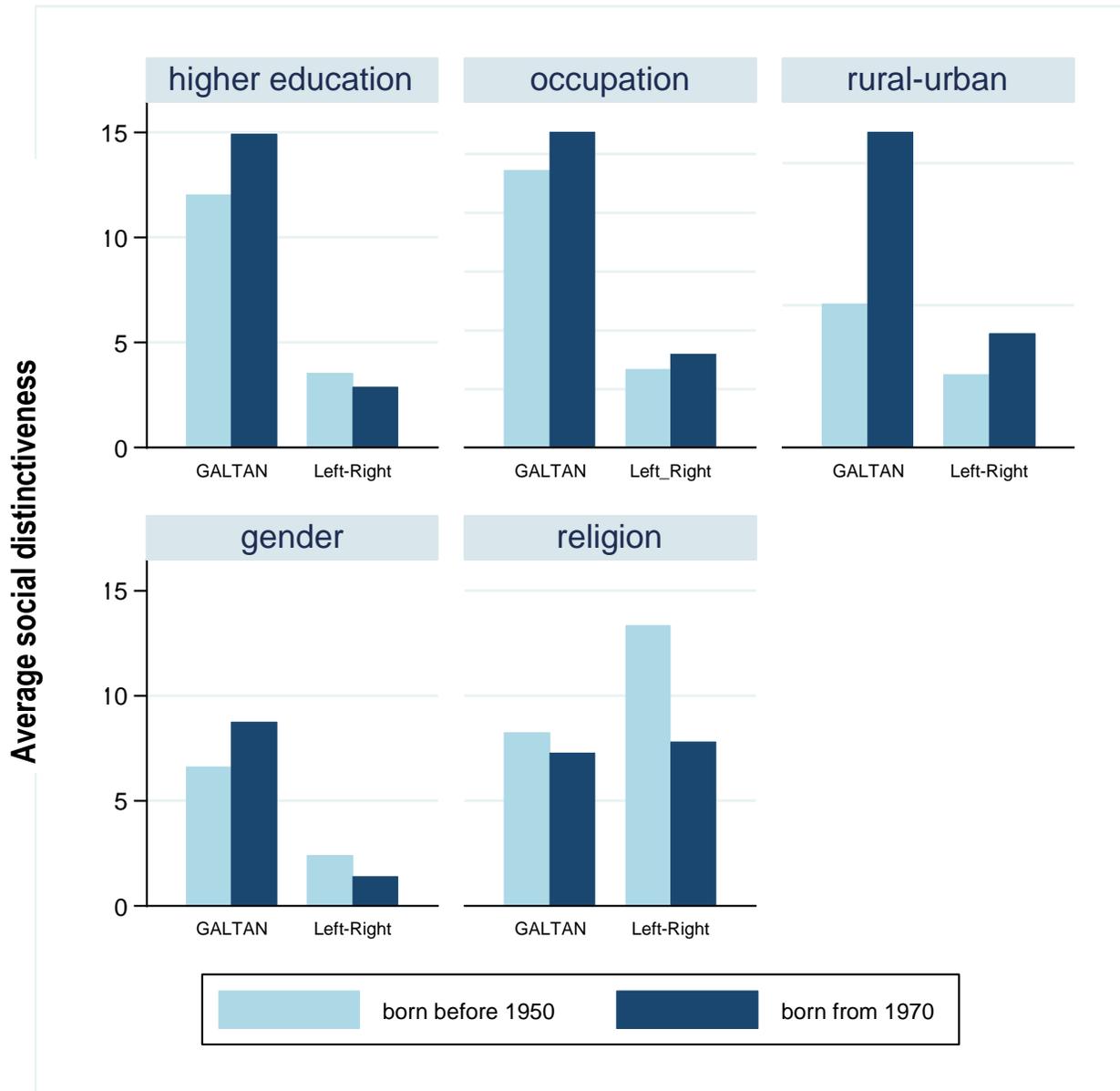
Note: Each cell shows the overrepresentation (+) or underrepresentation (-) of a group having this characteristic in a party family compared to the overall population. Source: ESS (2002-2014) for 23 countries.

**Figure 1: Socio-structural differences between party families**



Note: data from 2002-2014 ESS. The thickness and color of the lines reflects the extent to which the electorate of two party families is distinctive on a social characteristic. **Black** = >30% difference; **Red** = 20–30% difference; **Yellow** = 10–20% difference; **Green** = <10% difference

**Figure 2: Social distinctiveness among younger and older voters:  
the GALTAN vs. Left-Right divide**



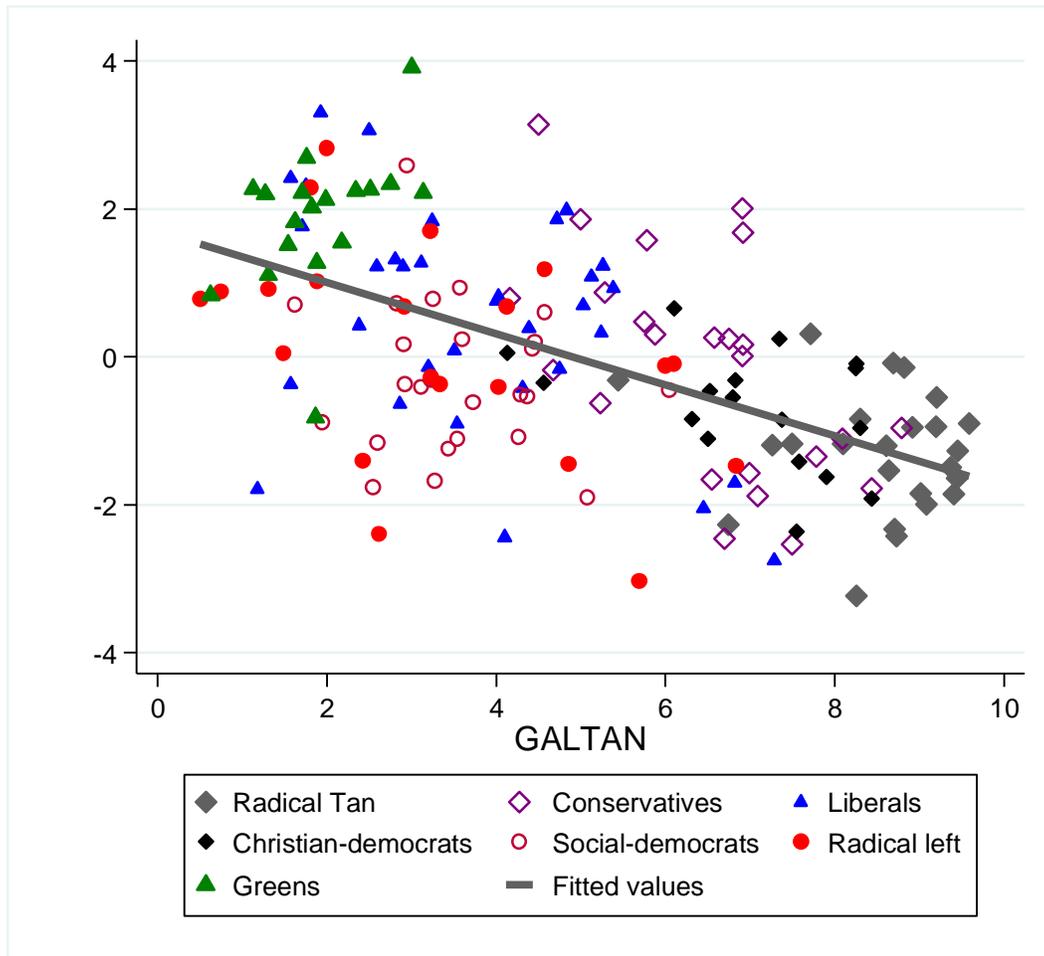
Note: 2002-2014 ESS voting data aggregated to the party family. Structural distinctiveness is estimated by averaging the percentage deviation from the population mean on a given social characteristic for each GALTAN party family resp. each Left-Right party family. For example, for the post-1970 generation, the share of green and radical TAN voters with higher education is on average 14.89 percent different from the percentage in the population (that is, the average of a 12.23% overrepresentation among greens and a 17.55% underrepresentation among radical TAN).

**Table 2: Party Structuration and party ideology**

	Model 1 All parties	Model 2 All parties	Model 3 All parties	Model 4 Parties with 5–15% vote	Model 5a Northwest Europe	Model 5b Southern Europe	Model 5c Eastern Europe
<b>Party family (ref=Radical Tan)</b>							
<i>Conservatives</i>	1.419*** (.290)						
<i>Liberals</i>	1.759*** (.262)						
<i>Christian democrats</i>	0.559 (.312)						
<i>Social democrats</i>	1.368*** (.293)						
<i>Radical left</i>	1.335*** (.302)						
<i>Greens</i>	2.554*** (.317)						
<b>GALTAN</b>		−0.364*** (.029)		−0.344*** (.044)	−0.432*** (.041)	−0.207* (.092)	−0.265*** (.058)
<b>Left–right</b>		0.129*** (.032)		0.093 (.053)	0.107* (.045)	0.038 (.116)	0.244** (.066)
<b>Immigration</b>			0.256*** (.036)				
<b>European integration</b>			0.150** (.054)				
<b>Vote</b>	−0.047** (.013)	−0.045*** (.010)	−0.053*** (.012)	−0.094 (.054)	−0.041** (.013)	−0.086** (.023)	−0.001 (.020)
<b>Country dummies</b>	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.655	0.736	0.675	0.718	0.684	0.736	0.651
Number of parties	161	161	154	89	98	29	61

Note: OLS unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in brackets; \*\*\*sign<.001 \*\*sign<.01 \*sign<.05. Source: 2002-2014 ESS voting aggregated to the party for the dependent variable; CHES data for the independent variables.

Figure 3: Party ideology and party structuration



Note: 161 individual political parties by their GALTAN position (CHES) and their score on party structuration (ESS), whereby low scores indicate an overrepresentation of voters with social characteristics associated with anti-transnationalism and high scores indicate an overrepresentation of voters with pro-transnational social characteristics.

## Appendix 1 -- Party Structuration by individual characteristic and party ideology

	Education (higher)	Occupation (socio- professional or manager)	Location (urbanized)	Gender (female)	Religion (secular)
<b>GALTAN</b>	-0.034*** (.003)	-0.023*** (.003)	-0.017*** (.003)	-0.009** (.003)	-0.028*** (.005)
<b>Left-right</b>	0.019*** (.004)	0.010** (.003)	0.008* (.003)	-0.003 (.003)	-0.004 (.005)
<b>Vote</b>	-0.007*** (.013)	-0.002** (.001)	-0.004*** (.001)	0.001 (.001)	0.000 (.002)
<b>Country dummies</b>	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.713	0.629	0.662	0.345	0.632
Number of parties	161	161	161	161	161

Note: OLS unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in brackets; \*\*\*sign<.001 \*\*sign<.01 \*sign<.05. Source: 2002-2014 ESS voting data aggregated to the party for the dependent variables and CHES data for the independent variables.

**Appendix 2 -- Party Structuration by individual characteristic and party ideology  
(centered on country mean)**

	Education (higher)		Occupation (socio-professional or manager)		Location (urbanized)		Gender (female)		Religion (secular)	
<b>Party family (ref. cat= Radical Tan)</b>										
<i>Conservatives</i>	0.149***		0.131***		0.029		0.100***		-0.079**	
	(.036)		(.019)		(.023)		(.017)		(.027)	
<i>Liberals</i>	.181***		0.159***		0.033		0.067**		-0.026	
	(.033)		(.023)		(.027)		(.021)		(.028)	
<i>Christian- democrats</i>	.091**		0.112***		-0.038*		0.130***		-0.300***	
	(.025)		(.016)		(.018)		(.017)		(.057)	
<i>Social- democrats</i>	.087**		.116***		0.029		0.109***		-0.016	
	(.027)		(.018)		(.020)		(.014)		(.015)	
<i>Radical left</i>	.101**		0.105***		0.038		0.082**		0.079*	
	(.034)		(.025)		(.028)		(.020)		(.033)	
<i>Greens</i>	.240***		0.183***		0.102***		0.165***		0.040	
	(.034)		(.023)		(.024)		(.020)		(0.024)	
<b>GALTAN</b>		-0.033***		-0.023***		-0.017***		-0.009**		-0.024**
		(.004)		(.003)		(.003)		(.002)		(.007)
<b>Left-right</b>		0.017***		0.009**		0.006		-0.003		-0.008
		(.004)		(.003)		(.004)		(.004)		(.006)
<b>Vote</b>	-0.004**	-0.005***	-0.002	-0.002*	0.003**	-0.003**	0.001	0.001*	0.003	0.001
		(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.002)
<b>Country dummies</b>	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.381	0.450	0.396	0.365	0.208	0.246	0.335	0.103	0.289	0.145
Number of parties	161	161	161	161	161	161	161	161	161	161

Note: OLS unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in brackets; \*\*\*sign<.001 \*\*sign<.01 \*sign<.05. Source: 2002–2014 ESS voting data aggregated to the party for the dependent variables and CHES data for the independent variables. Dependent variables are centered on the country mean.