Chapter 5

Social Cleavages

The previous chapter documented how electoral systems have important mechanical effects upon party systems. They can also be expected to exercise an indirect psychological impact upon patterns of electoral behavior as well, including how far voting choices are determined by social identities. To explore these matters, the first part of this chapter outlines the framework for understanding these issues by comparing rational-choice institutionalism and cultural modernization theories. Part II examines patterns of cleavage politics and the influence of the primary cleavages on voting behavior in the legislative and presidential elections under comparison, including the role of social class and religion. The conclusion considers how far these relationships are contingent upon the incentives provided under different electoral system and how far they are determined by broader secular trends.

Part I: Theories of Social Cleavages and Voting Behavior

The seminal sociological studies of voting behavior developed during 1960s by Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan emphasized that social identities formed the basic building blocks of party support in Western Europe. For Lipset and Rokkan, European nation-states were stamped by social divisions established decades earlier including the regional cleavages of center-periphery, the class inequalities of workers-owners, and sectarian cleavages over church and state that split Christendom between Catholics and Protestants. These traditional cleavages were powerful for several reasons. First, they reflected major ideological fissions in party politics. Social class mirrored the basic schism between the left favoring a strong role for the state through egalitarian welfare policies, fiscal redistribution, and interventionist economic management and the right preferring a more limited role for government and laissez-faire market economics. The religious division reflected conservative and liberal moral debates, such as those surrounding the role of women, marriage and the family. Differences between core and periphery concerned how far the nation-state should be centralized or how far power should be devolved downwards to the regions. Lipset and Rokkan theorized that organizational linkages gradually strengthened over the years, as party systems ‘froze’ from around the 1920s until at least the mid-1960s, with stable patterns of party competition revolving around the salient primary cleavages dividing each society, as exemplified by the role of class in Britain, religion in France, and language in Belgium. The electoral systems used in Western Europe at the time that the mass franchise was expanded played a vital role in stabilizing party competition, by reinforcing the legitimacy of those parties and social groups that had achieved parliamentary representation, so long as parties remained internally united and maintained their electoral base. Electoral systems created hurdles for newer parties threatening to disturb the status quo. Party systems, with patterned and predictable interactions in the competition for seats and votes, became settled features of the electoral landscape throughout many established democracies. Of course this picture exaggerates as some nations like Germany and Italy experienced major disruptions, while the great depression triggered important realignments in the mass base of parties in America. Nevertheless in the absence of sudden demographic upheavals, the external shock of events like the Second World War, electoral reforms, or massive new expansions of the electorate, party systems in many European countries seemed to exhibit a rock-like stability permitting only glacial evolution.

The structural theory provided by Lipset and Rokkan became widely influential as the established orthodoxy in understanding voting behavior and party competition in Western Europe, as well as in many other established democracies such as Australia and Canada, but from the mid-1970s onwards these accounts came under increasing challenge. New minor parties started to gain electoral momentum and a foot-hold of parliamentary representation, including ethno-nationalist parties in Canada, Spain, and the United Kingdom, environmentalists in Germany and France, the anti-immigrant radical right like the National Front in Britain, or a range of diverse ‘protest’ parties advocating cross-cutting moral and economic issues in Denmark, Italy, and the
Netherlands. This led observers to suggest that the process of societal modernization was eroding the ‘traditional’ social identities of class and religion that predicted the mass basis of party support in late 1950s and 1960s. These identities no longer seemed capable of generating unwavering and habitual party loyalties in many postindustrial societies. If the rock-like ballast of class and religion no longer anchored voters to parties, this promised to have significant consequences for patterns of growing volatility in electoral behavior and in party competition, opening the door for more split-ticket voting across different levels, the occasional sudden rise of protest parties, as well as more vote-switching within and across the left-right blocks of party families, and the growing influence of short-term events, party strategy, candidates and leaders, and media coverage in determining the outcome of election campaigns.

In this study we lack time-series data to compare trends in social dealignment since the early 1960s, but we will focus here instead upon comparing the cross-national evidence in over thirty countries for two alternative accounts seeking to explain where social dealignment should have advanced furthest and fastest. Incentive-based explanations, building upon organizational studies of party politics, emphasize the strategic role of political actors in reinforcing or weakening party-voter bonds, including how far social democratic parties make class appeals. We will develop these ideas to consider in particular whether electoral rules have the capacity to shape the incentives for parties either to reinforce support among their natural electoral constituency or alternatively to develop catch-all electoral appeals outside their base. By contrast, cultural theories of societal modernization, providing orthodox ‘bottom up’ accounts grounded in traditional account of mass political behavior, focus upon secular trends in the nature of postindustrial societies, both in the cognitive skills of electors and in the value basis of issue conflict, that are believed to have eroded the traditional affective bonds linking citizens to parties. If incentive based accounts are accurate, then we might expect to find considerable differences in the strength of cleavage politics in elections held under majoritarian and proportional formula. If cultural accounts are closer to the mark, and rising levels of education and cognitive skills have altered the basis of voting decisions, then we would expect that cleavage politics would be weakest in postindustrial societies. Let us first outline these accounts in more detail then turn to consider the available cross-national evidence.

Rational-Choice Institutionalism and Campaign Strategies

Alternative theories based on rational-choice institutionalism emphasize the importance of the electoral rewards facing political parties when either deliberately reinforcing the strength of group-party ties through bonding appeals or in weakening these linkages through bridging strategies. These ideas were developed by Adam Przeworski and John Sprague, and subsequently expanded by Herbert Kitschelt. The earliest party organizations that evolved from the late eighteenth century onwards were essentially elite-driven parliamentary factions, loosely coordinating elected members of parliament and their followers, built around rival leaders. With minimal party discipline in parliament, and a limited franchise, elections were based around informal networks and patron-client relations. When the mass suffrage spread throughout different countries in Western Europe during the mid-nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, the electorate became too large to manage through the older associations of local elites. Duverger suggested that the mass-branch party emerged, primarily among trade unionists and Labour and Social Democratic parties, to organize the newly enfranchised working class populations. European parties had an incentive to foster close links with their natural social base in the electorate, so that Labour, socialist and communist parties collaborated closely with the organized labor movement, while Christian Democrats created strong links with the Catholic Church and with the business sector. The emphasis on common ideological principles, clear and distinctive programmatic party platforms reflecting these goals, and a sense of one-of-us belonging to a clan with clear boundaries and fee-paying membership demarcating ‘them’ and ‘us’ served multiple functions for parties by helping to mobilize supporters, raise funds, attract volunteers, and therefore contributed ultimately towards their electoral success.

In recent decades, however, due to secular social trends sweeping through postindustrial societies, West European socialist parties have faced the gradual shrinkage in the size of their working class base through the contraction of manufacturing industry and the rise in the
white-collar service sector. Faced with these developments, Kitschelt suggests that some social democratic parties have successfully adapted by altering the basis of their electoral appeals beyond their traditional blue-collar base. The most electorally-successful parties of the left have adopted ‘catch-all’ or ‘bridging’ strategies designed to attract diverse constituencies by selecting moderate leaders and promoting centrist economic policies, as well as by expanding their programmatic agenda beyond redistributive politics to prioritise diverse issues such as environmental protection, human rights, and women’s equality. This strategy is exemplified most dramatically by the popularity of the ‘middle-England’ politics leading to successive electoral victories for Tony Blair’s Labour party in the UK, where Labour ‘leapfrogged’ over the Liberal Democrats to become the party in the centre of the political spectrum. While post-war Labour was pure one-of-us ‘bonding’, concerned with heartland appeals to factory workers, unions and pensioners, and then under Blair’s leadership New Labour perfectly illustrates ‘bridging’ tactics across diverse constituencies. The electoral success of President Bill Clinton’s moderate coalition for the Democrats in the United States is another classic example of this approach. Older illustrations include the German Social Democratic party abandonment of the ‘Bad Godesburg’ Marxist rhetoric in the late 1950s and their successful shift towards the catchall middle ground. Where Labor, Socialist and Social Democratic parties and candidates move towards the center ground in the attempt to develop ‘catch-all’ bridging strategies, they may thereby abandon reliance upon their working class supporters and their trade union base, as well as discarding traditional socialist programs advocating egalitarian income redistribution, nationalization, and Keynesian economic management. Similar strategies could influence West European Christian Democrat parties, such as those in Germany and Italy, when faced with shrinking numbers of regular church-goers. Bridging strategies involve dissolving traditional boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’, adopting whatever ideas and policy proposals seem more practical and effective regardless of their ideological origins, encouraging fuzzy, inclusive, and consensual party platforms, and fostering easy-entry, easy-exit shifting coalitions of informal support built around particular issues, rather than formal fee-paying membership and life-long loyalties. Bridging strategies trample upon sacerdotal principles and traditional one-of-us boundaries. Reducing dependence upon loyalists carries risks as well as benefits, including the dangers of facing widespread desertion in hard times, as well as requiring constant attention to crafting and maintaining popular support, and therefore greater attention to the dark arts of political marketing, including polling, publicity, and the press. But successful bridging strategies also allow parties to ‘cross-over’ and thereby break out of dependence upon limited sectors of the electorate. Therefore according to the theory developed by Przeworski and Sprague, the basis of cleavage politics is not an inevitable sociological process, instead they argue that political actors create, reinforce and maintain the links between political parties and social groups, within the context of institutional arenas, social structures and cultural histories that constrain the strategic alternatives facing politicians.

Building upon these ideas, we can theorize that one of the institutional contexts shaping the incentives for parties to develop strong and stable bonds with core groups of supporters or to adopt catchall bridging strategies concerns the basic type of electoral formula. In particular, Donald Horowitz has suggested that adoption of majoritarian electoral systems in deeply divided plural societies provides incentives for parties to ‘pool votes’ by broadening their electoral base beyond their core constituents. In support of this thesis, Ben Reilly has provided case study evidence that the Alternative Vote system has moderated ethnic appeals made by parties in elections held in Papua New Guinea from 1964 to 1972. If we extend this argument to other core cleavages of class, religion or language, this suggests that majoritarian electoral systems, exemplified by the Alternative Vote or 2nd Ballot systems, should generate strong incentives for political actors to adopt moderate or centrist bridging appeals in heterogeneous constituencies. Indeed this was the rationale for the adoption of the 2nd ballot system by de Gaulle for the Fifth French Republic, as the system was intended to reduce the extreme party fragmentation of the Fourth Republic by encouraging cooperation among rivals within party blocks on the left and right. Under majoritarian rules, parties and candidates must appeal to a great variety of diverse interests if they are to secure an absolute majority (50%+) of votes. As such, they face considerable pressures to adopt broad-church ‘catch-all’ appeals to multiple social groups.
distributed throughout the electorate, including working and middle class sectors, as well as different religious sects and creeds, and varied ethnic minorities. The 2nd Ballot system, with a run-off ballot amongst the two leading contenders, such as that used in single member districts in Hungarian parliamentary elections, and in the Lithuanian and Chilean presidential elections, could be expected to serve this function by encouraging cooperation within party blocs on the left and on the right. Plurality systems exemplified by first-past-the-post could serve a similar function, although with lower voting hurdles, and therefore more modest incentives for cross-group appeals, as parties and candidates can be elected with less than a majority of votes. Single transferable vote or party list elections in small multimember heterogeneous constituencies, each electing about 3-5 members per district, present a similar if weaker logic of electoral incentives where parties and candidates need to spread the distribution of their support. By contrast, in proportional electoral systems with low thresholds and large district magnitudes, exemplified by the Netherlands and Israel, parties and candidates can be returned to parliament by appealing to a far narrower segment of the population, which could be expected to exacerbate class, faith-based, or ethnic bonding strategies in plural societies. Therefore, if electoral systems shape the electoral incentives for political actors to either reinforce their bonds with core homogeneous groups of supporters, or to dilute these linkages with bridging appeals to heterogeneous groups, and if parties have the strategic capacity to respond rationally to these electoral rewards, then cleavage voting should be stronger under proportional than majoritarian electoral systems.

Cultural Values and Modernization Theory

Alternative cultural explanation emphasize that the strength of cleavage politics is primarily the product of ‘bottom-up’ developments in the nature of mass societies. In this view basic social identities of class, religion, gender and ethnicity cannot be created or manipulated at the whim of politicians; instead these reflect deep-rooted cultural phenomenon arising from enduring sociological processes. Political actors and institutions, in this view, are the superstructure arising from the broader social base. This perspective has been developed most fully in theories of societal modernization suggesting that multiple long-term secular trends have transformed political behavior in postindustrial societies in the late twentieth century. Modernization theories originated in the work of Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim, and these ideas were subsequently revived and popularized in the late 1950s and early 1960s by many developmental theorists, notably Seymour Martin Lipset, Daniel Lerner, Walt Rostow, and Karl Deutsch. More recently these ideas have been developed and applied to understanding changes in the mass basis of political culture in the work of Ronald Inglehart and Russell Dalton. Modernization theories suggest that the shift from agriculture towards industrial production leads towards growing prosperity, higher levels of education, and urbanization, which in turn lays the social foundations for democratic participation in the political system and the rise of mass-based party organizations rooted in their electoral base. Traditional societies are characterized by subsistence livelihoods largely based on farming, fishing, extraction and unskilled work, with low levels of literacy and education, predominately agrarian populations, minimum standards of living, and restricted social and geographic mobility. Citizens in agrarian societies are strongly rooted to local communities through ties of ‘blood and belonging’, including those of kinship, family, ethnicity and religion, as well as long-standing cultural bonds. The shift from traditional agrarian society towards industrialized society concerns the move from agricultural production to manufacturing, from farms to factories, from peasants to workers. Social trends accompanying these developments, include migration to metropolitan conurbations, the rise of the working class and urban bourgeoisie, rising living standards, the separation of church and state, increasing penetration of the mass media, the growth of Weberian bureaucratization and rational-legal authority in the state, the foundations of the early welfare state and the spread of primary schooling. This phase occurred in the Industrial Revolution in Britain during the mid-to-late 18th Century and spread throughout the Western world during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Daniel Bell popularized the view that after a certain period of industrialization a further distinct stage of development could be distinguished, as a non-linear process, with the rise of postindustrial societies. For Bell the critical tipping point was reached when the majority of the
work force moved from manufacturing into the service sector, working as lawyers, bankers, financial analysts, technologists, scientists, and professionals employed in the knowledge industries. According to Inglehart, the social and economic shifts characterizing post-industrial societies include the rise of a highly educated, skilled and specialized workforce; the population shifts from urban to suburban neighborhoods and greater geographic mobility including immigration across national borders; rising living standards and growing leisure time; rapid scientific and technological innovation; the expansion and fragmentation of mass media channels, technologies and markets; the growth of multi-layered governance with power shifting away from the nation state towards global and local levels; market liberalization and the expansion of non-profit social protection schemes; the erosion of the traditional nuclear family and growing equality of sex roles within the home, family and workforce.

Most importantly for voting behavior, modernization theories emphasize that in agrarian and industrial societies, religious and class identities orient citizens towards the political system and provide a simple, low-cost guide to voting, enabling information shortcuts that allowed people to decide which politicians and policies to support over successive contests. These cognitive shortcuts are particularly useful for the least-sophisticated citizens with minimal literacy and schooling, and with limited access to political information from the mass media. By contrast, social trends in affluent post-industrial societies have led towards rising levels of education and cognitive-skills, providing the human capital that can help to master the complexities of public affairs and the policymaking process. Better-educated and more sophisticated citizens may have less need to rely upon social cues in electoral choices. Compared with earlier eras, the public in post-industrial societies today has many opportunities to learn about political events and current affairs from regular exposure to multiple non-partisan information sources in the press, television news, and the Internet. These sources allow voters to compare a range of parties, leaders, and public policy issues, potentially exposing them to many dissonant values beyond those shared with friends, family, and colleagues in their local community. Life-style changes in post-industrial society include the rise of a more socially and geographically mobile citizenry, less rooted in their local area. At the same time patterns of secularization in West European societies have emptied church pews and weakened the traditional organizational linkages between the churches and Christian Democratic parties. The capacity of trade unions to generate support among traditional working class communities for parties of the left may also have faded in those societies experiencing the decline of manufacturing industry and falling union membership rolls. Therefore, to sum up, if the modernization thesis correctly identifies the causes of any dealignment, then the strength of cleavage politics should vary systematically among different nations in accordance with levels of socioeconomic and human development. In particular, social class and religion should have least influence on voting behavior in post-industrial societies when compared with industrialized nations. The role of class and religion can also be expected to vary between post-Communist and developing societies, in the light of different political legacies, historical traditions, and social structures, such as the role of the Catholic Church in Latin America and Orthodox religion in Eastern Europe.

Part II: The Strength of Cleavage Politics

How can we evaluate the evidence for these accounts by comparing the available cross-national survey data? In measuring the strength of cleavage politics the classification of voting choices along a consistent left-right scale is critical to the reliability of the analysis. The vote in each legislative and presidential election was recoded into a consistent 10-point left-right scale, based on the party families identified in the CSES dataset by the international teams of collaborators. Party families were classified as follows: (1) Communist (2) Ecology (3) Socialist (4) Social Democrat (5) Left-liberal (6) Liberal (7) Christian Democrat (8) Right-liberal (9) Conservative, and (10) Nationalist/Religious. Parties that could not be categorized reliably by the traditional left-right scale were excluded from the analysis, including regional, ethnic, agrarian, and independent parties. In interpreting the results, a positive coefficient denotes greater voting support for parties of the right. The 10-point scale captures gradations within voting blocs, for example differences between countries in support for communist, socialist and social democratic
For ease of interpretation, however, to illustrate the simple distribution of voting without any prior controls, the 10-point scale was collapsed into a left-wing voting block (including the parties coded from 1-5) and a right-wing bloc (6-10). The CSES data was weighted to produce national samples of equal size. Table 5.1 illustrates the distribution of voting support for the left-right voting blocks showing the legislative elections ranging across the spectrum from Japan, Mexico and Peru, where the right block parties predominated, down to Britain, Denmark and the Ukraine, where the left block were in the clear majority.

For the independent variables, the models monitored the effects of the standard social cleavages that are usually found to influence voting. Models first entered the demographic factors of age (in years) and gender (men=1, women=0). The main indicators commonly associated closely with socioeconomic status were then entered including education (using a 4-point scale from only primary school to university qualifications), household income (using a standardized 5-point quintile scale), occupational class (using a five-point scale recoding the respondent's employment), and whether the respondent was a union member (0/1). In addition, the main language spoken at home (coded 0/1) was employed to gauge linguistic majorities, and the strength of religiosity was compared using the frequency of attending religious services. Lastly, in order to compare the strength of social identities against alternative measures of political ideology, the 10-point left-right self-placement scale was included. Comparison with alternative regression models were tested, to see if the inclusion or ordering of certain variables made a significant difference to the interpretation of the analysis, and the results of the core model presented here were found to be reliable and stable irrespective of the exact operationalization. The social characteristics are presented most simply in Figure 5.2, showing the percentage of each group that voted for either the right-wing or left-wing bloc in the pooled sample of legislative elections in 28 nations, without any prior controls. Multivariate regression analysis then used the 10-point left-right voting scale as the dependent variable with the independent variables entered in the order listed.

The results of the baseline regression model for the pooled sample of legislative elections in 28 nations are presented in Table 5.1. In this analysis, Model A included the structural variables then Model B added the measure of left-right ideology. The results in Model A show two patterns. First, in the pooled sample all the standard structural factors proved significantly related to left-right voting choice in these elections, in the expected direction, confirming many previous studies. Across all countries, younger voters proved slightly more left-wing than their parents and grandparents. Men proved significantly more right-wing than women, displaying the modern gender gap that first emerged in the United States. Overall among the indicators of SES, union membership proved the strongest predictor of voting behavior, followed by income and then education. Language was also important, with linguistic minorities more likely to support parties of the left. Among all the structural factors, the strength of religiosity emerged as by far the best predictor of voting support for parties of the right. Secondly, however, although all the factors proved to be statistically significant, nevertheless all the structural variables in the pooled sample explained only 7% of the variance in voting behavior, as summarized by the adjusted $R^2$. Once the additional ideological measure of the respondent’s left-right position was added in Model B, however, the proportion of variance explained by the model rose to 25% (measured by the adjusted $R^2$). In this model, although all the structural variables remain significant and in the predicted direction, nevertheless none of these proved as strongly related to how people voted as left-right ideology.

But how does this pattern vary across elections in different nations? And in particular does the strength of cleavage politics vary, as different theories suggest, according to (a) the basic type of electoral system and (b) the level of socioeconomic development in a country? To examine this further the results were broken down in a series of regression models for each election, with the results presented in Table 5.2. Given some minor differences in the coding and
inclusion of certain variables in the different national election studies, the comparison of separate models run in each election proved more reliable than models pooled by the type of electoral system and level of development. Elections are ranked by the adjusted $R^2$ to summarize the amount of variance in voting behavior explained by each of the models.

**Socioeconomic Status**

Many observers have documented the decline of traditional cleavage politics based on socioeconomic status and religion in Western Europe, although there has been considerable dispute about the most appropriate measurement and classification of these phenomena. The most comprehensive analysis of the available evidence of postwar trends in class politics in twenty postindustrial nations by Nieuwbeerta and De Graaf (1999) suggests that some degree of dealignment has occurred in many European countries where these linkages used to be strong, and these findings are replicated irrespective of the alternative measures of social class employed for analysis. Even commentators who had argued most strongly in the mid-1980s that class still mattered in Britain, if a revised classification and measurement was used, have accepted more recently that some degree of class dealignment has now occurred. Since the impact of socioeconomic status can be measured, categorized and analyzed in many ways, reflecting alternative conceptions of the underlying concept, we will use alternative indicators to see if these make any substantial difference to interpreting the results.

**Household Income**

The cleavage by socioeconomic status (SES) is commonly understood to represent the basic economic and material inequalities in any society. SES can be gauged by household income, the respondent’s or head of household’s occupational status, educational qualifications, and, as a related proxy, union membership. Employment in the public or private sectors, and shared lifestyle characteristics, function as alternative indicators. The primary classification used in this study is based upon a 5-point standardized household income scale as the most reliable cross-national indicator, given substantial differences in the structure of the labor force in postindustrial and industrial societies, and also the classification of occupation was not included in some election studies in the CSES. Income is a basic indicator of socioeconomic status although, of course, there can be affluent households among the skilled manual workers, such as among self-employed plumbers or electricians, as well as less well-off white-collar workers, such as secretaries, shop assistants, and nurses. Across the pooled sample the analysis shows a steady rise in voting support for parties of the right among more affluent household groups, as expected. The voting gap between the richest and poorest households was 11-percentage points, a significant difference. When the analysis was broken down by country, the multivariate models showed that higher income proved a significant predictor of righting voting in about one third of the elections under comparison, including in all the Anglo-American democracies, as well as in the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, Russia and Mexico.

**Occupational Class**

But are these results due to the use of income to denote socioeconomic status? Because the definition and classification of occupational class produces little consensus in the literature we also need to compare alternative indicators. The respondent’s own main occupation (rather than the head of household, to avoid a gender bias) was classified into five categories: senior managerial and professional, technicians and associated professional, other skilled white-collar (including clerical and service sector workers), skilled manual (such as plant and machinery operators), and unskilled manual (including construction, miners and agricultural laborers). This five-fold classification reflects different levels of pay, skills and qualifications, as well as job autonomy and authority. In the pooled sample, without any prior controls, the results show the predicted polarized pattern; almost two-thirds (63%) of managers and professionals voted for parties of the right, compared with less than half (49%) of the unskilled manual workers, producing a substantial and significant gap, reflecting that already observed by income. Even if there has been secular dealignment over time, as many studies indicate, nevertheless occupational class continues to predict pattern of voting choice in the pooled sample. At the same time we need to be cautious when generalizing about this pattern, as important variations
emerge once the analysis is broken down by nation. In the multivariate regression models, with controls for income and union membership, occupational class is a significant predictor of voting choices in only three nations (Britain, the Netherlands, and Romania). If income and union membership are dropped from the model, class becomes significant in two additional nations (Australia and the Czech Republic).

**Trade Union Membership**

Trade union membership is another proxy measure commonly closely related to occupational class, although this association may have weakened over the years in countries where unions have sought to diversify their traditional blue collar industrial base through expanding their membership among clerical, service, and professional employees. Overall levels of union membership vary substantially around the world, with density levels remaining strongest in the mid-1990s in many post-Communist nations of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in the smaller Nordic welfare states. There are many reasons why union membership should help to predict patterns of party support. Where trade unions are strongly linked to socialist and social democratic parties they can provide organizational resources and mobilizing capacity in election campaigns, including local networks of volunteers, office communication facilities like computers, telephones, and copiers, and financial assistance. Membership of the organized labor movement can also be understood as an expression of subjective class-consciousness, while those who actively attend union meetings become part of social networks that can reinforce left-wing attitudes and partisan affiliations. The results of the analysis in Table 5.1 confirms that even after controlling for other social factors, union membership was significantly linked to voting choices in one third of the elections where this measure was available, proving to be particularly strongly related in West European states (Sweden, Norway, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain) and the Anglo-American democracies (Britain, Australia, the United States, and New Zealand), and by comparison to be insignificant throughout Central and Eastern Europe.

**Education**

Education is the last variable under analysis that is closely associated with socioeconomic status, with school and university qualifications determining many subsequent opportunities in the work force and society. Where education is closely related to social class, we would expect university graduates to be more rightwing in voting choice, even through there could be cross-cutting pressures as numerous studies have also found education to be one of the most powerful characteristics that is consistently associated with liberal attitudes towards many social and political issues. Moreover in countries that have experienced rapid socioeconomic development, education is often strongly associated with other crosscutting cleavages, such as age. The results of the analysis show that overall, with or without any prior controls, in the pooled sample education proved a relatively poor predictor of voting choice. When broken down by nations, patterns in the multivariate models in Table 5.2 also proved inconsistent: in countries such as Norway, the Ukraine, and Romania, as expected, greater education was positively associated with support for parties on the right. In contrast, however, in some countries this relationship proved negative, including in Israel, Switzerland, and Germany, where the more educated proved more leftwing in orientation. The impact of education generates patterns that differ across societies. The analysis so far suggests two main conclusions about the impact of socioeconomic status on voting behavior. First, of all the alternative indicators of social status that we have compared, income emerges as the most significant and consistent indicator of voting choices across the range of societies within the CSES dataset, although social class and union membership were important in some nations. Yet even income was only a significant predictor of voting choice in the expected direction -- with more affluent households showing greater support for parties on the right -- in one third of the countries under comparison.

**Religion**

For Lipset and Rokkan, the other classic pillar of partisan alignment in postwar Western Europe was religion. Many accounts suggest that in recent decades the process of secularization has eroded habitual church going and religious faith in Western Europe. Nevertheless religious beliefs remain strong in many traditional societies, as well as in the United States, and during the
last decade there may even have been a revival of organized religion in post-Communist Europe. Even if some degree of secularization has been experienced in many societies in Western Europe, the results of the analysis demonstrate that religion remains more strongly and more consistently related to voting choice than any of the indicators of socioeconomic status. In the pooled model, almost three-quarters (70%) of the most devout (those who reported attending religious services at least once per week) voted for parties of the right. By contrast, among the least religious, who never attended religious services, less than half (45%) voted for the right. The substantial 25-point mean voting gap by religiosity proved far stronger than that produced by any of the alternative indicators of socioeconomic status. Across all countries, Catholic voters proved more rightwing than Protestants, while atheists were among the most leftwing of any of the social groups under comparison.

The multivariate analysis in Table 5.2 shows that the strength of religiosity (as measured by frequency of attending religious services) consistently predicted support for parties of the right and the association proved significant in two-thirds of the elections where data was available, even with prior social controls. Religiosity was particularly strongly related to voting choice in Israel, the Netherlands and Belgium, all countries where religious divisions have long been regarded as some of the most critical components of cleavage politics, as well as in Hungary and the Czech Republic. The explanation for the strength of the linkage is that churches in Western Europe have long been strongly associated with Christian Democrat and Conservative parties, as well as representing traditional moral values concerning diverse issues such as marriage and divorce, gender equality, and gay rights. In the United States, as well, 'born again' fundamentalist churches are closely linked to the Republicans, especially in the South, emphasizing traditional moral values such as the Right to Life movement and the use of prayer in school. The role of organized religion elsewhere has developed within varying contexts, for example in Ireland, Poland and Italy the Catholic Church has usually expressed conservative positions on issues such as divorce and reproductive rights, and in Latin American societies the church has supported more liberal causes and defended human rights in opposition to the state.

Demographic factors: Generation and Gender

Traditional socialization theories suggest that political attitudes and values can be expected to reflect decisive experiences shaping the formative years of particular generations. These contrasts are exemplified by the experience of growing up with poverty and job insecurity during the interwar Great Depression era of unemployment, inflation and soup kitchens, in comparison with the baby-boom generation that came of age during the postwar era of affluence and the basic safety-net established by the welfare state in postindustrial societies. Substantial generational contrasts can also be expected following the rapid social and political transformations occurring in post-Communist Europe during the 1990s, following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet state, and the sharp shocks of market adjustments. The 'Asian tigers' such as Taiwan and the Republic of Korea have experienced equally profound social and economic transformations in shifting from agrarian to industrialized societies during the late twentieth century. The more fundamental and radical the social change, the stronger the generational differences that can be expected to flow from these developments. By itself, in the pooled sample across countries, all the main age groups display similar patterns of voting behavior. Yet the result of the multivariate analysis of voting choice by age group broken down by countries shows two distinct patterns (see Figure 5.3). In one or two West European nations, including Britain and Portugal, the generation that grew up during the interwar years proves slightly more conservative than the younger postwar cohorts. The generational voting gap in these countries is not large but it is significant. Similar patterns are evident in Australia, Norway and Germany, although not approaching conventional levels of statistical significance. The theory of post-materialism developed by Ronald Inglehart provides perhaps the most plausible explanations for this phenomenon, suggesting that growing levels of affluence and the existence of the welfare state safety net experienced by the post-war baby boom generation in Western Europe fostered more liberal values among the young compared with their parent’s or grandparent’s generations, leading younger voters to prioritize issues such as environmental protection, sexual equality, and international human rights, advocated by many parties of the
In sharp contrast, the reverse pattern is evident in some post-Communist societies, where the youngest generation proves far more rightwing than older voters. This pattern is most evident in Russia, Hungary, and Romania. The values of older generations in post-Communist nations were shaped by the existence of the managed economy and the security of the welfare state for health care, education and pensions. The youngest generation growing up in Central and Eastern Europe have had the greatest experience of the neo-liberal market reforms and ‘shock’ therapies experienced in these countries, as well as the free and fair elections held during the last decade and the consolidation of representative democracy. The younger generation has adapted most rapidly to social and political change so that they now express greater support to parties on the right in this region, while the older generation remains more wedded to the values expressed by the reformed Communist and the Social Democratic parties of the left.

Generational changes are important, not just for themselves, but also for the way that these trends have altered the voting behavior of women and men in different ways. During the postwar era the conventional wisdom in political science held that women in Western democracies were politically more conservative than men. Gender differences in party preferences were never as marked as the core cleavages of class and religion; there were no mass ‘women’s parties’ in Western Europe, such as those associated with trade unions and churches. Nevertheless ‘women’s conservatism’ was seen as a persistent and well-established phenomenon. Part of the reason concerns the patterns of religiosity we have already observed, since more women than men tend to be regular churchgoers. During the 1980s this conventional wisdom came under increasing challenge. In many West European countries a process of gender dealignment appeared, with studies reporting minimal sex differences in voting choice and party preferences. And in America the phenomenon of the gender gap manifested itself in the early 1980s, with women shifting their allegiances towards the Democratic Party, while men moved towards the Republican Party on a stable and consistent basis, reversing the previous pattern of voting and partisanship. The initial explanations of the gender gap in United States focused on factors specific to American politics, such as the appeal of President Reagan, programmatic differences between the parties on issues such as reproductive rights and childcare, or particular social conditions affecting American women. But the most recent comparative research has found that far from being specific to the United States, there is a broader generational transformation evident in many established democracies, so that while older women remain slightly more rightwing than older men, among younger generations in affluent nations this situation is commonly reversed. In post-Communist and developing societies, however, reflecting historical experiences, the generational patterns are different.

The gender gap in the pooled sample of all countries is negligible: 53% of women support rightwing parties compared with 55% of men. Yet once voting patterns are analyzed by nation, the gender gap becomes significant in about one third of the elections under comparison. Nevertheless there are mixed patterns, with women slightly more leftwing than men in a few countries, including Belgium, Canada, and the United States, while women are more conservative than men in Israel. Moreover interesting patterns emerge once the patterns are broken down by age and by type of society. As Figure 5.4 shows, in established democracies there has been a reversal of the traditional gender gap, so that older women remain slightly more conservative than older men, while among the younger generation women are now more leftwing than younger men. Because the values of older women and younger women ‘cancel out’ in the overall figures, there appears to be no significant gender gap in many older democracies. If these patterns persist, however, as cohorts change, then the process of demographic replacement, as older generations die out and younger generations take their place, can be expected to gradually shift women increasingly towards the left in these nations, producing a modern gender gap as in the United States. In contrast among newer democracies, as we can see, there is a different pattern: among the older generation women remain more leftwing than men, perhaps because women have been affected more than men by the economic shock therapy and the cuts in welfare benefits like state pensions and childcare. Yet among the youngest generation in these societies
the gender gap disappears. The patterns lend further confirmation to the existence of the
generational-gender gap that has been observed in a wider range of 75 societies using the World
Values Surveys. The relationship between gender and voting choices is therefore complicated by
the existence of crosscutting generational cleavages and by societal histories and cultures.

Linguistic Cleavages

We also compared the existence of linguistic cleavages, which are expected to divide
party politics most deeply in plural multilingual societies such as Canada, Switzerland and
Belgium. The predominant language was identified in each nation, and coded by the language
usually spoken at home to define linguistic majorities. Of course this is only an imperfect
measure, as second-generational immigrants could be equally fluent in more than one language,
but this provides a proxy measure for ethno-linguistic divisions. The results of the analysis proved
particularly strong in Switzerland (divided by cantons between the German-speaking majority and
the French and Italian minorities), Canada, Belgium (split between Francophones and Flemish
Walloons), the Ukraine (almost evenly divided between Ukrainian and Russian speakers), as well
as significant minority communities in Israel, Taiwan, and Romania. These patterns would
probably have been even stronger if we examined support for the ethno-linguistic regional parties
separately, rather than left-right support, since ethno-linguistic cleavages often crosscut
socioeconomic ones, and this pattern will be further analyzed in chapter 9 when looking in detail
at ethnic minority politics.

Left-Right Ideology

Lastly as well as social cleavages we also expected that the ideological position of voters
would play an important role in predicting patterns of party support. The left-right scale has been
found to be one of the most familiar ways that citizens use to identify their own position and that
of the parties along the political spectrum. In the CSES survey, three-quarters of the public
could identify their location on this scale. Since we expect these values to be generated by social
cleavages, the self-placement of respondents on the 10-point left-right ideological scale was
entered last sequentially in the regression models, after the structural variables. The results show
that ideological values were significant predictors of voting choice in every country except for two
nations (Belarus and Taiwan). The presidential election in Belarus pitted President Lukashenko's,
an old-style ex-Soviet-style apparatchik, against the former reformist prime minister and
opposition leader, Mikhail Chigir, but official observers declared that the election was hardly free
and fair, while in Taiwan the parties were identified mainly by nationalist issues, about
relationships with mainland China, rather than by left-right ideology. Elsewhere the ideological
position of voters proved to be strongly and consistently related to party support.

Part III: The Effects of Electoral Systems on Cleavage Politics

Given the patterns that we have established, the key question that remains concerns how
far the strength of cleavage politics can be related systematically to either the type of electoral
system (as suggested by incentive-based theories) or alternatively to levels of socioeconomic
development (as predicted by culture-based sociological accounts). The adjusted R² in Table 5.1
summarizes the amount of variance in voting behavior in each election explained by the social
cleavages that we have analyzed so far. The results show considerable cross-national
differences, from elections such as those in Sweden, Israel and the Ukraine with a high R² where
social structure and ideology contributed strongly to whether people voted on the left or right of
the political spectrum, down to others such as Taiwan, Peru and the Republic of Korea that are
ranked at the bottom of the table.

If the logic of the incentive-based theory is correct then we should expect to find that in
majoritarian electoral systems parties will focus their electoral strategies on catch-all bridging
appeals, in order to try to maximize their electoral support to secure a plurality or majority of votes
that is necessary to win elected office. Alternatively under proportional representation electoral
systems with low thresholds parties can use bonding strategies among a narrower constituency
and still get elected. Strategic theories are based on the premise that parties and candidates can
either reinforce or weaken the political salience of social identities like class and religion by their
use of either bridging or bonding appeals. Hence socialist parties seeking to mobilize their core working class base can emphasize the issues of economic equality, redistributive fiscal policies, and investment in welfare services for health and education. In the same way, if Conservative and Christian Democratic parties want to appeal to their core constituency they can focus on traditional moral values concerning marriage and the family as well as heartland issues such as law and order, defense, and immigration. If, however, they seek to broaden their electoral support parties can focus on centrist issues such as the importance of economic growth, or the need for efficient public services.

To examine the evidence for incentive-based theories, Figure 5.5 compares the strength of cleavage politics, measured by the $R^2$ listed in Table 5.2 in legislative and presidential elections held under majoritarian, combined and proportional electoral systems. The $R^2$ coefficient can be understood as the amount of variance in the left-right voting scale explained by the combined effects of social structure and political ideology. The result of the comparison confirms although there are considerable differences within each category, nevertheless on balance cleavage politics was stronger under proportional electoral systems. As summarized by the mean $R^2$, the strength of cleavage politics was 25% in the fourteen elections conducted under majoritarian systems, 24% in the nine elections conducted using combined systems, but 36% in the fifteen elections held under PR systems. That is to say, in predicting how many people voted for parties on the left and the right of the party scale, over one-third of the total variance in PR elections was generated by social structure and ideology. As discussed in subsequent chapters, comprehensive explanations of voting behavior would also include many other factors, including patterns of partisanship, the retrospective record of the government’s performance on major economic and social issues, the popular appeal of party images, party leaders, and prospective policy platforms, and the impact of campaign events and media coverage. But nevertheless social structure and political ideology remain important by explaining between one-quarter and one-third of the variance in left-right electoral behavior in the electoral systems under comparison.

But might the results be due to the type of societies that used different forms of elections? Cultural accounts emphasize that in developing and industrialized societies, traditional social identities of class and religion provide voters with strong cues influencing voting behavior and party loyalties. In postindustrial societies, however, modernization theories suggest that rising levels of education, greater cognitive skills, the erosion of traditional communities, and richer information resources from the mass media have reduced voter’s reliance upon traditional social identities and habitual party attachments, increasingly replacing the politics of loyalties with the politics of choice. Figure 5.6 compares the strength of cleavage politics, using the same procedure as before, but dividing societies into industrial and postindustrial levels of human development, classified by the Human Development Index discussed earlier in chapter 1. Again there are important variations within each category but nevertheless the results show quite clearly that, far from being weaker, in fact cleavage politics remains stronger in postindustrial societies. The average amount of variance in voting behavior ($R^2$) explained by cleavage politics was 24% in industrial societies but it was 33% in postindustrial nations. Many other studies have demonstrated that the cues of class and religion have become less influential in many established democracies, but nonetheless social identities continue to have a stronger impact upon voting choices in postindustrial nations. Even if the social bonds anchoring groups to parties have indeed weakened in these nations, as dealignment theories suggest, but this does not mean that they have thereby become irrelevant to electoral choices. Converse’s learning model maintained that the strength of attachment to parties should grow with a history of support for one’s preferred party. In many industrial societies and newer democracies, with much shorter experience of a series of free and fair elections, and with less consolidated patterns of party competition along the left-right scale, these bonds between political parties and voters’ social identities have yet to develop to anything like the same degree.

Accordingly we can conclude that on balance the evidence leans more towards incentive-based than cultural accounts of social dealignment. Of course the indicators remain limited in many important ways. In particular the inclusion of both presidential and legislative elections
could produce some important problems of interpretation, if presidential elections tended towards
stronger bridging appeals than parliamentary contests. This could be a persuasive criticism
because we would expect presidential elections to focus more on personalities and less on
ideological and issue-based appeals. For the time being we will assume that the results
presented in this chapter are the product of the electoral system, not any differences between
presidential and parliamentary systems, and we will examine this issue further in subsequent
chapters that analyze the impact of the personal vote and party reputation for party leaders and
parliamentary candidates. The comparative framework is another important limitation. In the best
of all possible worlds it would be desirable to have electoral studies drawn from many more
countries and regions of the world. In particular, the CSES dataset lacks any newer democracies
and industrialized nations using majoritarian systems for parliamentary elections. Against this, it
has to be said that in fact this dataset represents the broadest range of integrated election studies
that is currently available, including electoral democracies from most continents. As cross-
national collaboration develops among teams of electoral studies, future comparisons will be able
to evaluate how far these generalizations hold within a wider range of contexts.

Moreover without time-series data we are unable to establish trends to demonstrate
whether there has been greater social dealignment within majoritarian systems. The incentive-
based explanation essentially claims that the type of electoral system will predict the
contemporary strength of cleavage politics in different places. If the formal or informal rules of the
game change in important regards, for example if the social composition of constituencies
becomes either more homogeneous or more heterogeneous through the process of boundary
revisions, demographic shifts, or patterns of population migration, then we would expect that this
could have an impact by changing the electoral incentives facing political actors and thereby
weakening or strengthening voter-party bonds. Yet we have no direct historical evidence to
sustain this proposition. What secondary evidence does suggest, however, is that cleavage
politics does appear to have eroded further and faster in postindustrial societies with majoritarian
electoral systems. The most extensive examination of trends in cleavage politics by Franklin et al.
examined election surveys from the mid-sixties until the late-eighties in a dozen postindustrial
societies. The results strongly indicate that countries with majoritarian electoral systems during
this period saw the earliest decline of cleavage politics, including in Canada, the United States,
Britain, Australia, France, and New Zealand. Therefore the type of electoral system may play an
important role in helping to explain the timing of the process of dealignment, and the underlying
conditions in which this occurs, although as a static theory the incentive-based ‘top-down’ theory
cannot by itself satisfactorily explain the process of decline per se, unless the workings of the
electoral system alter in important ways. The theory suggests that we should find significant
differences among countries today, but it lacks a dynamic element.

Lastly, perhaps the most important criticism that could be made of the results is that we
have not established the direction of causality in any relationship; in particular the electoral
system is treated throughout the discussion as exerting an exogenous impact upon parties, which
then shape the political salience of social cleavages. This seems a reasonable assumption in
established democracies where the electoral rules is usually a more or less permanent institution
which generates ‘hard’ incentives and opportunities for particular patterns of behavior by voters,
campaign managers, and party leaders alike. In most older democracies the basic electoral
system has existed for more than a century, although major electoral reforms were introduced in
the last decade in a few countries such as Italy, New Zealand, and Britain, and the specific
administrative arrangements governing voting procedures have altered more regularly. As a
result it is appropriate to regard electoral systems in these nations as exerting an independent
effect on political actors. Yet of course at the time that electoral systems are initially adopted, it
seems plausible that parties will seek to adopt the type of rules serving their rational self-interest.
Hence minor parties in deeply divided plural societies exemplified by Israel and Ukraine will seek
to adopt PR arrangements while major parties in more homogeneous cultures can be expected to
prefer majoritarian rules. In the transition process to democracy, the party system can exert a
decisive influence upon the electoral rules, and therefore in newer democracies it seems more
appropriate to regard electoral systems as both dependent upon parties (when analyzing which
systems are adopted) and also as an independent variable (when explaining the effect of the rules on political behavior).

The central claim in incentive-based theories is not that electoral systems create the social cleavages or their political relevance, but merely that the initial adoption of certain rules (for whatever reason) will create certain incentives to either maintain, reinforce (and possibly exacerbate) one-of-us bonding, or alternatively to modify, downplay (and possibly erode) group consciousness in the political arena by encouraging catch-all bridging strategies. As discussed more fully in chapter 9, this process can be illustrated most clearly by particularly divisive ethnic cleavages, such as the role of racial conflict over civil rights in 1960s America, the clash between Muslims and Christians in Bosnia-Herzegovina, or discord among Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. In these societies, political actors can either seek to mobilize their base by heightening ethnic tensions through adopting populist rhetoric directed to own-group appeals, or alternatively they can seek to maximize their support by downplaying such appeals and proposing consensual policies that will appeal to bridging constituencies. Similar logics follow the politicization of any other major social cleavage such as class and region. The evidence in this chapter suggests that the electoral rules of the game can contribute towards this process as majoritarian rules in heterogeneous geographic constituencies provide greater incentives towards moderate bridging strategies. But do we find similar patterns in terms of party loyalties to those evident concerning social identities? It is to this issue that we now turn.
Table 5.1: Baseline models predicting rightwing voting support, pooled legislative elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model A</th>
<th>Model B</th>
<th>Coding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>S.E.</td>
<td>Beta</td>
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<td>SOCIAL STRUCTURE</td>
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<td>Sex (Male)</td>
<td>.226</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>.05 ***</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>.02 *</td>
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<td>Income</td>
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<td>Union member</td>
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<td>.036</td>
<td>.08 ***</td>
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<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>.311</td>
<td>010</td>
<td>.24 ***</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDEOLOGY</td>
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<td>Left-right ideology</td>
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<td>Constant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
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<td>.248</td>
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</table>

Notes: The figures represent the results of OLS multiple regression analysis models including unstandardized beta coefficients (B), standardized error (S.E.), standardized beta coefficients (Beta) and their significance (P). *** p.001  ** p.01  * p.05.

Voting Choice: For the dependent measure, votes for each party family are recoded using a 10-point scale ranging from left (low) to right (high) as follows: (1) Communist, (2) Ecology, (3) Socialist, (4) Social Democrat, (5) Left liberal, (6) Liberal, (7) Christian Democrat, (8) Right liberal, (9) Conservative', and (10) 'Nationalist/ Religious'. A positive coefficient indicates support for parties on the right. For details of the coding for the independent variables see Appendix B. The pooled sample of legislative elections includes 28 nations and 17,794 respondents. Data was weighted by A104_1 to ensure that the size of the sample is equal per nation.

Table 5.2: Predictors of right-wing voting support in legislative and presidential elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Type of system</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>Type of election</th>
<th>Type of system</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Adjusted R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Brazil</td>
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<td>Prop</td>
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<td>Maj</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>Prop</td>
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<td>.012</td>
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|Notes: The figures represent the results of OLS multiple regression analysis models including unstandardized Beta coefficients (B) and their significance (P). *** p.001 ** p.01 * p.05. Blank cells represent missing data. Voting Choice: For the dependent measure, votes for each party family are recoded using a 10-point scale ranging from left (low) to right (high) as follows: (1) Communist, (2) Ecology, (3) Socialist, (4) Social Democrat, (5) Left liberal, (6) Liberal, (7) Christian Democrat, (8) Right liberal, (9) Conservative, and (10) Nationalist/Religious. A positive coefficient indicates support for parties on the right. For details of the coding used for the independent variables see the baseline model in Table 5.1 and Appendix B. (i) Religiosity was measured by frequency of church attendance. Source: Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, Module 1 1996-2002.
Figure 5.1: The distribution of support for the left-right voting blocks in legislative elections

**Left-Right Vote**: Party vote in legislative elections for the lower house classified on a 10-point scale ranging from communist (1) to Nationalist (10) then dichotomized into rightwing and leftwing blocks. Source: Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, Module 1 1996-2002.
Figure 5.2: The social characteristics of right-wing voters

Figure 5.3: Age cohorts and voting support

AGE COHORT

Cases weighted by CSESWGT

Notes:
Left-Right Vote: Party vote in legislative general elections classified on a 10-point scale ranging from communist (1) to Nationalist (10).
Source: Comparative Study of Electoral Systems Module 1 1996-2002
Figure 5.4: The gender-generation gap

**Older Democracies**

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<th>Older</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Younger</th>
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**Newer Democracies**

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<th>Age groups</th>
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<td>Men</td>
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</table>

**Notes:**

*Age groups:* Younger (Low through 39 years old), Middle-aged (40 thru 59 years old), Older (60+).

*Left-Right Vote:* Party vote in legislative general elections classified on a 10-point scale ranging from communist (1) to Nationalist (10).

Figure 5.5: The strength of cleavage politics by type of electoral system

Note: Legislative Election  
Presidential Elections  
Source: See Table 5.2
Figure 5.6: The strength of cleavage politics by type of society

Note: Postindustrial Societies  Industrial societies

Source: See Table 5.2


3 For a more recent argument that these stable patterns have persisted with considerable continuity displayed within the major ‘left’ and ‘right’ blocks, see Stephano Bartolini and Peter Mair. 1990. *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability: The Stabilization of European Electorates, 1885-1985*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.


The term 'catch-all' was first developed by Kirchheimer to describe the transformation of the German SDP when they abandoned their radical Marxist roots in the late 1950s. See Otto Kirchheimer. 1966. 'The Transformation of Western European Party Systems.' In Political Parties and Political Development, Eds. J. La Palombara and M. Weiner Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.


23 For example in some cases regional parties like the Bloc Quebecois or the SNP are to the left, and in others to the right, of the political spectrum, so it seemed preferable to exclude these rather than coding them on a more arbitrary basis. The excluded parties all attracted relatively few voters in any country so their exclusion did not have a major effect on the interpretation of the results.

24 Missing data in some countries means that caution should be exercised in interpreting the results but nevertheless it seemed important to include the full range of indicators of socioeconomic status, given debates about the most appropriate measures. Other regression models were run alternatively excluding social class, linguistic minorities, and left-right position, as well as using different indicators of religiosity. Although this slightly altered the strength of the coefficients, as expected, this did not have a major impact on their significance or direction. Hence, for example, including income but not class in the models strengthened the coefficients for income but did not change its significance. All regression models were also checked for potential problems of multi-collinearity using tolerance statistics and were found to be unaffected by this.


Cramer’s V = 0.14 Sig. p.000.


